

[STATEMENT RE LOST CREEK QUARTERLY MEETING, TENNESSEE]

From the minutes of North Carolina Yearly Meeting of 8th mo. 1888 It appears that the reports of this meeting were not read and from the report of the Committee appointed in 1883 to assist this quarterly meeting in the settlement of a difficulty in Maryville Monthly meeting and from the minutes made upon the reading of the minutes of the Representative Meeting it appears that the Representative meeting had laid down Lost Creek quarterly Meeting to New Garden and Deep river quarterly Meetings N. Carolina. Thus severing the relationship by which we had so long been bound together and in which we had unitedly labored for the upbuilding of the Redeemer Kingdom. We inquire why this separation and what is the cause. The Yearly Meetings minutes published to the world giving no reason whatever and after careful consideration and an examination of the whole matter our quarterly meeting is united in dissenting from what we consider an illegitimate and uncalled for action of our Yearly Meeting and hold our quarterly meetings and carry on our Christian work Independent of the yearly Meeting whilst the relations existing between us remain as they now are and we deem it proper to enter on our Book of record our reasons therefor. This quarterly Meeting having existed for nearly one hundred years has always been characterized for its unity of action, Christian Love and unity of action and steadfast adherence to the Doctrines and practices of the Orthodox Friends. We therefore declare our belief in and adherence to the several doctrines thus held by the Friends and our intentions to live in the exercise of the practices + usages among Friends that are in Conformity to the plain teaching of the Gospel.

In giving these reasons it is necessary to allude to the action of this meeting and that of N.C.Y.M. and Rep. Mee. and the Com. of the Y. Mee. appointed 8th mo 1888 to assist Lost Creek Q. Mee. in settling a difficulty existing in Maryville monthly meeting.

At our quarterly mee. held at Lost Creek 8th mo 11th 1883 Maryville Mo. mee. failed to send representatives and reported that it was in consequence of a state of disunity among the members of that meeting this meeting appointed a committee to visit that meeting and labor for their help in the settlement of all difficulties existing among them, also the Yearly Meeting to render assistance by a committee to labor in conjunction with our committee in said case.

The Y. M. of 8th mo. 1883 accordingly appointed a committee to assist in the settlement of the difficulty in Maryville Monthly meeting. In 9th mo 1883 the quarterly mee. committee was joined by the Yearly mee. committee at Maryville and in joint action labored for several days to settle the difficulties and recocile the contending parties and made a joint report to the quarterly mee. in 11th mo. of the same year in which they say that they had labored jointly but had not succeeded in the accomplishment of what was designed and expressed the opinion that further care should be extended in the case. We therefore continued our committee for further effort in the case, and from the facts brought before the meeting it was decided that Maryville mo. Mee. was not in a proper condition to transact business

to the honor of truth. The quarterly mee. suspended the power of disciplinary proceedings of Maryville mo. mee. which we believed that according to discipline and the usage of society we had a right to do and thus hold in check the abuses of power and the disgraceful proceedings of that meeting until the committee had time for further effort in the case.

The yearly meeting of 1884 on the reception of the report of its Com. saw fit from some cause to change their Minutes and instead of saying the com. app. to assist Lost Creek quarterly meeting in settling a difficulty in Maryville monthly meeting which would have been in accordance with their form minute in the case and in accordance with the facts they say the Com. app. to settle a difficulty in Lost Creek quarterly Meeting thus according to our understanding they were calling the quarterly Meeting on account. our next quar. held in the 11 mo. following seeing that change in the printed Minutes of N. C. M. and wishing to forward the matter as far as possible + cause as little inconvenience to the com. appointed two of its members Wm. P. Hastings & John C. Jones to take the minutes of our Q. Mee. meet that Com. and represent the Interests of our quarterly mee. before them in all its relations toward the Y. Meeting.

The yearly Meetings committee in its report to the Yearly Meeting in 1884 expresses the opinion that but little if anything had been gained but thought that further care should be extended and intimated a dissatisfaction with the quarterly Meeting in suspending Maryville Monthly Meeting and mentioned a communication from the quarterly Meeting to them which they characterize as a kindly worded instrument thus making the inference plain that we were not truthful that we had not meant what we said thus placing us before the yearly Meeting and the world in general as of questionable veracity. At our quarterly Meeting of 8th mo 1884 after reading and considering the report of our Committee in said case it was decided to appoint a committee of three members from each of the other monthly meetings to reopen and reorganize Maryville Monthly Meeting and to assist in the transacting of its business. Before the time agreed upon for the reopening of said meeting the Yearly Meetings committee forbid them to proceed further therein thus preventing the proper business of the quarterly Meeting as provided for by Discipline. Also said committee in conference with John C. Jones and Wm. P. Hastings Representatives of the quarterly meeting denied us the right of supervision and jurisdiction over Subordinate Meetings and the right of appeal all of which is guaranteed to us by discipline and long established precedent after much discussion in said conference upon the relative rights, privileges, authority and jurisdiction of Meetings the Committees failed to agree upon terms upon which to reopen Maryville Monthly Meeting. The Yearly Meetings committee then notified the committee representing Lost Creek quarterly Meeting that they had decided to refer the matter to the representative Meeting to be held at High Point N.C. where we failed to get a fair hearing our representative not being allowed to present the case of the quarterly Meeting being only allowed to correct misstatements of the yearly Meetings Committee thus making the case entirely one sided. Soon after the session of

the Representative Meetings of 12 mo. 16th 1884 the quarterly Meeting received a communication from the Yearly Meeting Committee admonishing us that we take no further action in the case. In the fifth month following the Yearly Meetings committee attended our quarterly meeting having a minute from the Representative meeting conferring unlimited power upon them. The Yearly Meeting Committee desired power at the hands of the quarterly Meeting to reopen Maryville Monthly Meeting. This the quarterly meeting was evidently unwilling to grant there being no showing for further cooperation in a fair and satisfactory way. After a long discussion upon the matter the quarterly meeting consented for the Yearly Meetings Committee to act upon their own authority + assume all responsibilities.

The Yearly Meetings Committee proceeded at once to Maryville where they organized themselves into a Monthly Meeting which they called Maryville. Appointing one of their number clerk two for overseers thus they proceeded to hold meetings and transact business for several days preferring charges disowning members granting certificates releasing members +c.

At our quarterly Meeting held 8 mo. 1885 the meeting received and read a report from said committee giving information of the opening of said meeting which being considered an expression of dissatisfaction was given. The meeting could not endorse their proceedings because they did not believe they had been Just Disciplinary nor legal. Neither did they think they would be conducive to the best interest of society. It was also shown that said committee had proceeded to Maryville and opened said meeting without giving proper notice to the membership thereof there being only those of Maryville and a few special individuals outside that were apprised of their intentions while there was a large portion of the membership who knew nothing of the matter until after the committee had returned to N.C.

Elihu E. Mendenhall, Hugh W. Dickson, Joel G. Anderson and Nereus Mendenhall of the Yearly Meetings Committee attended our quarterly meeting held 5 mo 8th 1886 desiring a final settlement of the Maryville case. It was mutually agreed that the Yearly Meetings Committee take entire charge of Maryville monthly Meeting the outlying Meetings that composed a part of Maryville Meeting (to wit) Bethel, Happy Valley, Talassee, Union Hill and Hopewell Springs being then and there replaced back under the care of Lost Creek quarterly Meeting Individual members thereof having the privilege if they wished to retain their membership in Maryville monthly Meeting which was fully agreed to by the Quarterly Meeting + by the Yearly Meetings Committee and said committee expressed themselves fully satisfied and said the troubles were now virtually settled and so left for N.C. on the 9th of the month and on the 10th addressed a communication to Lost Creek and Newhope Monthly in which they say that they were informed whether correct or not they did not know that some who had been disowned by them at Maryville had denied the authority of the Committee and ignored their action in opening and conducting Maryville Monthly Meeting and notifying the quarterly meeting and particularly Lost Creek Monthly Meeting that the committee still held the quarterly

meeting + its subordinates under its care + that they must not receive into membership or reinstate such persons without the consent of said Committee.

Which we recognize as a flagrant violation of contract and an outright hostility towards our meetings. No mention was made of the case in the Yearly Meeting printed Minutes of 1887 and no communication was received by the quarterly meeting. At our quarterly meeting held at Bethel 5 Mo. 12th 1888 three persons presented themselves claiming to be part of a committee appointed by the Representative Meeting of N. C. Yearly Meeting exhibiting papers which they represented to be the action of the Representative meeting endorsed by N. Carolina Yearly Meeting but not signed nor countersigned by the Yearly Meetings Clerk which the clerk of the quarterly Meeting refused to read and the quarterly meeting would not recognize as a legal action the Yearly Meeting only being know according to Discipline and the usage of society in setting up and laying down quarterly meetings. But one of the committee Read the papers which purported to be the laying down of Lost Creek quarterly Meeting a report of which we find in the Yearly Meetings printed minutes of 8 mo 1888 as an action of the representative meeting in laying down Lost Creek quarterly meeting and attaching its meeting representing a membership of about six hundred to Newgarden quarterly Meeting, N.C. In consideration of these facts we believe that we are warranted in dissenting from the action of the Representative Meeting and the Yearly Meeting.

1st. Because according to our Discipline and the usage of the Society of Friends Quarterly and Monthly Meetings have the right to deal with Business in their own limits and quarterly meetings have the right to call upon the yearly meeting for counsel and assistance but in so doing they do not in any way relinquish any of their rights and privileges and jurisdiction over their subordinates nor in the management of their business. Neither does any rule of Discipline nor well established precedent of Society warrant the yearly Meeting in assuming the power to override or take the business of such meetings out of their hands and transact it by committees.

This North Carolina Yearly Meeting has done by its authority and endorsement of what its committee has done.

2nd. We understand that according to Discipline and the long established custom of the Society of Friends that every member and meeting as well have a right to a full fair + impartial hearing on all questions of Church or individual interest. This was denied us by the Representative Meeting in not allowing our Representative William P. Hastings to represent our case and interests in their Meeting at High Point 12 mo 16th 1884.

3rd. We understand that the usage of the Society of Friends has been that in setting up or opening meetings that the membership constituting such meeting are to have timely notice thereof and time and place. This was not done when the Yearly Meetings committee opened their Meeting at Maryville they having attended Lost Creek

quarterly Meeting on the 9th + 10th of the Month in which they said that they were not decided whether it would be proper to reopen Maryville Monthly Meeting or not. on Second day following they proceeded to Maryville and on third day the 12th proceeded to open said meeting. No public notice having been given of their intention and there having been no possible chance for at least 4/5 of the membership to know thereof. thus taking advantage of them and depriving them of their rights and privileges as guaranteed by the Discipline and usages of Society.

4th. This committee consisting of five members present organized themselves into a Monthly Meeting appointed officers of their number and thus proceeded to transact business of Discipline pertaining to the interest of society contrary to the expressed wish and will of the membership. This we declare to be an unwarrantable and dangerous usurpation of power against which we enter our most solemn protest.

5th. This committee after its work in opening Maryville Monthly Meeting forwarded a report thereof to this Quarterly Meeting which being read the Meeting expressed its disapproval of their proceedings which we certainly had a right to do but at which the committee seemed to be displeased and called our right in question.

6th. This committee published to the world through the circulation of the Christian Worker and Friends Review certain things relating to J. D. Garner and others which we think was entirely uncalled for and has not the least Sanction by nor precedent among Friends and which should receive no countenance whatever by the Friends Church.

7th. We claim that such business as this does not properly belong to the Representative Meeting that the setting up and laying down of a quarterly meeting being a matter affecting not only the general interest of the Yearly Meeting but the interests of individual meetings and their membership and Should be dealt with by the Yearly Meeting at large and decided by a full + free expression thereof. We therefore claim this has been a matter involving too much of individual and general interest to be disposed of by a dozen or twenty persons in private council.

8th. We understand that it is the universal practice of Friends in dealing with offenders to notify them definitely of the charges against them and give and labor with them and give them opportunity to defend themselves this rule certainly ought to apply to meetings as well. Which privilege has been denied us we never having been notified of any charges against us and consequently not having had any knowledge of the facts in the case and hearing of it only by the minutes of the Representative meeting and the reports of the Yearly Meetings committee which have certainly presented the case in such a distorted and ambiguous manner as to leave the real facts and truth of the matter in the dark So that those who desired that Justice might be done are left in doubt as to the truth in the matter.

9th. It is the long established custom in accordance with the Discipline and practice of London Yearly Meeting as well as others that when a meeting is laid down the meetings and membership are attached to the nearest meeting to them which has not been done in our case but our Monthly Meetings and membership attached to New Garden quarterly Meeting, North Carolina three hundred miles away when Friendsville was within one hundred of the greatest and within fifteen to twentyfive of a large portion of our membership. Now we ask what is the advantage and where is the Justice in all these proceedings + where + how is the Church to prosper under any such arbitrary dealing as we have been subjected to.

(typewritten copy of this copy and 1st draft of this copy from N.C.Y.Mg. Minutes in Maryville Mo. Mtg. papers.)

[Typescript prepared September, 1988 from the original found in the last Lost Creek Quarterly Meeting minute book among the records of Friendsville Quarterly Meeting, Wilmington Yearly Meeting.]