

Sandy Spring Monthly Meeting
Margaret Stambaugh
Notes by Lamar Matthew
10.10.2012

Friends gathered to reflect on 2012 draft of the BYM Faith and Practice, and queries on the same.

#1 We heard our 1988 F&P was a pattern for other YMs and it is thought that the revised edition will be welcomed as a new pattern for other YMs.

It was asked "How many Friends actually use our F&P? How do we assure/encourage Friends to use our F&P as a frame of our beliefs?"

"Don't borrow one (F&P) – Get your own."

I was inspired and informed by 2011 and 2012 drafts.

We are discerning as a community the content.

F&P is a useful guide.

It might be useful/helpful to those who are considering membership to read F&P in its entirety.

F&P is a bending of past and present understanding of Friends understanding of the Divine.

F&P not only explains/makes clear to us but to others – who we are.

#2 Old/seasoned and new not so experienced Friends would profit from reading and studying our F&P.

"Adequate?" That's a difficult word – there are many resources available to us in this day of technology.

Reading F&P as a whole gives understanding to its individual passage.

The notion of "accountability" (one to another) should be reflected – (section 3).

A concern was heard as to the use of quotes from non-Quakers, even though they are "good quotes."

It seems to a Friend that we have not looked well enough to our Quaker roots for voices and advices. The lives of some of the (non-Quaker) voices do not align with Friends integrity or testimonies.

It was noticed that some queries have more voices than others. They seem either weighted or unbalanced (and may give that impression to a reader).

Provide/include voices suitable for marriage and memorial services/meetings, these would be useful.

What does "Quaker process" mean? Is it how we come to clearness (individually or corporately) or is it how we do the business of our meetings?

A Friend believes that F&P's explanation (though not exactly defined in words) was comprehensive.

Quakerism is caught rather than taught. We would not/could not do justice to our understanding of "process" in three sentences. It is the totality of what we are.

A broad definition would be helpful. There probably is no “perfect definition.”

#3 Queries prompt personal/corporate self examination which may lead to continuing revelation. The F&P is our truth at this moment (as adequate or not) and should be looked at as a continuing work – to be edited and improved as Truth is revealed to us.

Our F&P is not prescriptive and should not be so. The preface/intro “Dearly Beloved...” defines how we live/process our daily lives in union with the Spirit.

This F&P is the way I meant to live my life. It has been helpful for me to read.

This F&P has/does encouraged me to let my life speak.

Blank pages (at the back) are an ideal spot to jot down “continuing revelation.”

I put exclamation points by passages that moved me. My copy has a wealth of exclamation points.

Is it perfect? No, what is? But it is a wonderful way to convey in words who we are and what is are belief. The best way to convey who are and what we believe is to be with Friends in communion.