

I. Living Our Faith

1. A Brief History

Quakerism emerged in 17th century England, a period of religious and political upheaval in which the inherent authority of royalty, feudal lords, and the church were all actively questioned. The years had ended in which those who would translate the Bible into English were persecuted. The King James Bible of 1611 made the Scriptures available to more English-speaking people than ever before. Now people could read the Word of God for themselves, ~~one-by-one~~ individually or together, in their native tongue.

Many beliefs that became part of Quaker faith and practice were not original with Quakers, who felt and knew the powerful currents of change in their time. A sect called the Levellers stressed human equality. The Puritans sought simpler forms of worship and believed that individuals, reading the Bible, could hear and understand the voice of God. ~~The Seekers, disillusioned~~ Disillusioned with churches altogether, ~~waited for God to be revealed,~~ the Seekers waited, sometimes in silence, for God to be revealed. The Ranters knew that God was indwelling in each soul, though their ways of expressing what they thought was the Spirit included overindulgence in tobacco and alcohol. The phrase “the Inner Light” was not original with Quakers; nor was the belief that there was something of God in each person.

Yet Quakers survived when other sects did not, absorbing some members from those other groups. Why? Many answers have been suggested, and there is truth in each one:

Quakers had gifted leaders who were committed to ministry and supported each other as “Publishers of Truth.”

Committed Quakers, unlike many in other sects, did not recant when called before the authorities. They were willing to suffer persecution.

When Quakers did suffer persecution, the community held. They supported each other and held “Meetings for Sufferings” to assist the families of those who had been jailed or lost their property. They wrote letters to each other, loved each other, and endured.

The faith and ~~the~~ practice of Quakers were united and balanced. The immediate experience of God ~~induring~~ worship and was interwoven with the social testimonies ~~that grew from that experience were present from from the~~ earliest days. Quaker testimonies grew from the Divine guidance that Friends perceived and discerned as they gathered in expectant silence.

From early on, there were Meetings for Business. If Quakers knew the joy of being lifted by God in worship, they also knew how to be practical and work through problems together. The unity they felt in worship was carried over to their practice of making decisions.

Quaker elders let individuals know when they spoke “out of the ~~light~~” Light” or “walked disorderly”: there was seeking, there was listening, but there was also a foundation of Truth that governed behavior.

Quakers balanced the truth-seeking of individuals with the discernment of respected elders. Far from the spirit of “anything goes,” Quakers knew there was one Voice that mattered, one Light and one Seed, and that not everything people thought they heard came from that source.

The years since our beginnings have brought us more leaders, more ways to practice our faith, and more Meetings worshiping in different cultures and times, each listening for God’s voice and seeking to follow. As Quakers, we look back with gratitude and learn what we can from our history; but as believers in continuing revelation, we each listen to the Inner Light, test what we hear, and live and act in the here and now of our own place and time.

Quaker Leaders

George Fox, who initiated the gathering of the people later called Quakers, was born in Leicestershire in 1624. As a teenager he troubled his parents by refusing to attend Sunday services, preferring to spend the time in Bible reading and solitary meditation. From the age of nineteen, George Fox went on frequent walking

journeys over the midland counties of England, talking about spiritual matters with those he met along the way. Clergymen were often confounded by his incisive interpretation of scripture and could provide little guidance for the young man. After much searching and despair, he reports the following experience in his journal:

And when all my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could I tell what to do, then, ~~Oh~~oh, then, I heard a voice which said, 'There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition'; and when I heard it, my heart did leap for joy. ...And this I knew experimentally.

George Fox, 16471648

Here and there he found kindred spirits, and he continued to experience "openings," such as:

I saw the infinite love of God. I saw also that there was an ocean of darkness and death, and an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness. In that I also saw the infinite love of God, and I had great openings.

And again:

[I saw] that every [one] was enlightened by the Divine Light of Christ ...and that they that believed in it came out of condemnation and came into the Light of Life, and became children of it.

George Fox, 1647

In his later ministry, Fox challenged people to open themselves to the direct experience of that Divine Light, also called the "Seed" and the "Inner Light." Margaret Fell, who later married Fox, recalled the words he spoke when she first heard him preach:

"You will say Christ saith this, and the apostles say this, but what canst thou say? Art thou a child of light and hast thou walked in the light, and what thou speakest is it inwardly from God?"

~~George Fox, 1648~~Margaret Fell, 1652

On a journey northward in 1652, George Fox climbed Pendle Hill in Lancashire and saw a vision of "a great people to be gathered." He continued northward about thirty miles to Preston-Patrick Chapel. There he found a congregation of seekers who had assembled for worship. These people, including their ministers, responded to Fox, and soon more than sixty Quaker ministers, men and women, were traveling in the ministry, sustained and inspired not by words or ideas but by a deep experience that transformed their lives. Within a decade, despite persecution, the message of Quakerism had been carried to every county of England, to Wales, to Scotland, to Ireland, to several countries of Europe, and to such distant places as Constantinople and the American colonies.

At first Fox and his followers called themselves Children of Truth, or Children of Light, or sometimes Friends of Truth. Because of persecutions they were often in courts and prisons. George Fox relates that Judge Bennett of Derby first dubbed them Quakers in 1650 because in their earnestness they trembled. Other early sources report that the origin lay in Friends' own trembling as they felt the presence of the Divine. Eventually, they adopted the name ~~Society of Friends, or~~ the Religious Society of Friends. Today, the name "Quaker," once given in derision, is accepted and often used interchangeably with "Friends."

Fox taught that those who led their lives in strict obedience to God's will would come to "walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone."

This is the word of the Lord God to you all, a charge to you all in the presence of the living ~~God; God~~, be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come; that your ~~life-and-conduct~~carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them. Then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one; whereby in them ye may be a blessing, and make the witness of God in them to bless ~~you: then~~you. Then to the Lord God you ~~shall~~will be a sweet savour, and a blessing.

No clergyman, no intercessor, no liturgy or ritual was required to experience the Divine Presence. The sense of that Presence within and among them became so real to the early Quakers that they marveled that “Christ has come to teach his people himself.”

Even as Friends emphasized each individual’s access to the Inner Light, however, they understood the importance of community. Many Friends came from groups such as the Baptists and Seekers that had organized themselves outside the established church. Quakers adapted the business approaches they were familiar with as they began to care for members in need or in jail, to support ministers, and to handle other affairs.

Acting rightly in the world was always important for Friends, and elders labored to help excitable converts conduct themselves with decorum and integrity. In addition to local Meetings for Worship and less frequent ones for Business, general meetings were held for traveling ministers and elders. One such Meeting, convened at Balby in 1656, was the source of official “advices” on conduct that might be considered an early antecedent for today’s Faith and Practice. These early Friends advised, for example, that “friends in callings and trades are to be faithful and upright” and to pay their debts punctually; that collections are to be made for the poor; that ministers are “to speak the word of the Lord from the mouth of the Lord, without adding or diminishing”; and that none are to “be busybodies in other’s matters.”

Early Friends discovered that Divine revelation came equally to women, men, and children. Some of the most active and intrepid ministers were women. Among those who played key roles in the early history of Quakerism was Margaret Fell, who was “convinced of the truth” in 1652. Swarthmore Hall, the Fells’ home on the northwest coast of England, became a meeting place and refuge from persecution for George Fox and other Quaker ministers. After Judge Fell’s death, Margaret Fell became the wife of George Fox. She corresponded extensively with Friends everywhere and helped sustain the equality of women with men in the Religious Society of Friends. Margaret Fell Fox was a woman of intrepid character as evidenced by her letters to Oliver Cromwell, Charles II, and James II, and by her spending about a half decade of the 1660’s in prison for upholding Quaker values. She also supported the production of hundreds of pamphlets by Fox and others that helped convey Friends’ beliefs.

The early generations were Bible-based Christians, but with a very different understanding of the Bible and of the Divine. They rejected many of the beliefs, traditions, and practices that, over the centuries, had come to dominate the Western European churches. Similarly, they rejected the new denominations that dominated the reformations of the 16th and 17th centuries. The early Friends shared a “fresh reading” of scripture that inspired their search for “primitive Christianity revived.” They rejected professional hierarchy in favor of the ministry “of all believers.” They believed that salvation was available to everyone who labored to live up to the “measure of Light” that God had given them. The first generations of Friends were Christians, who had a more universal understanding of God’s grace and a more concrete understanding of social responsibility.

Early Quaker Testimonies

Had Friends only been a religious group that worshiped together in reverent silence, waiting for the word of God to be spoken through one of their number, they might have attracted little attention from the authorities. However, Friends were also profoundly concerned with how to live in society. As they listened to the Inner Light, they became clear on testimonies, those public actions that bore witness to the Truth they came to know in worship. While some of the testimonies adopted in the vastly different culture of seventeenth century England may seem quaint or obscure now, others are as vital today as when they were adopted.

One of the first testimonies articulated by Fox and adopted by early Quakers was that of *equality of men and women before God*. The testimony was evident in their marriage ceremony where both parties recited identical vows, their encouragement of women as ministers of the gospel, and the setting up of separate women’s Meetings for Business. The idea of gender-separated Meetings was resisted by many at first, but ultimately adopted because it was felt that women would not speak in a mixed Meeting. Our understanding of what equality of men and women means has changed since Fox’s day so that these separate Meetings for men and women, which were seen as radical in their day, seem less so in hindsight. The women’s Meetings were

rarely equal to the men's and paralleled Quaker women's status in their homes. The actions of the women's Business Meetings were subject to final approval by the men, while the men's Business Meetings controlled the money and property.

The testimony of equality was also reflected in Friends' refusal to give the expected deference to social class. It was the practice in the 17th century for men to remove their hats in the presence of their social superiors and even of their peers, but not of their inferiors. Friends refused hat honor in the presence of anyone, a practice which caused them much trouble, especially when they went before the king with their petitions. Friends' practice in Meetings for Worship was to sit with hats on, but to remove the hat while speaking or praying.

Another sign of inequality of the times was in the use of personal pronouns. The words "you" and "your" were used when addressing a single person of equal or higher rank, but to one of lower rank the singular terms "thou," "thee," and "thy" were used. Friends used the singular, more familiar "plain speech" to all, regardless of class. This practice would set them apart in succeeding centuries as the rest of the English-speaking world adopted the universal use of "you" and "your."

The *peace testimony* was clearly stated in 1660 in England when Friends declared they would not fight with outward weapons for any cause whatsoever:

All bloody principles and ~~practices-we~~practices, we ... do utterly deny, with all outward ~~wars,~~ and ~~strife,~~wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence ~~whatsoever,~~and ~~whatsoever~~. And this is our testimony to the whole world. ... That spirit of Christ by which we are guided is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil and again to move unto it; and we do certainly know, and so testify to the world, that the spirit of Christ, which leads us into all Truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of this world.

George Fox, 1660

The testimony of *plainness in speech and living* was also adopted from the beginning. Friends wore clothes that were modest and functional, avoiding ostentation and decoration. The same principle carried over to their homes, Meeting Houses, and furnishings. Art, music, drama, and dancing were considered vanities that took the minds of Friends away from the sober, godly life or were a reminder of the excesses of the established church.

A testimony against the *taking of oaths* came directly from the New Testament, Matthew 5:34-37 and James 5:12.

But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

James 5:12, KJV

Friends objected to double standards of truth, believing that the practice of taking oaths implies that a person might be telling lies on other occasions. This testimony caused Friends much distress, for in the first half-century of Quakerism, a neighbor could accuse a Quaker of being disloyal to the crown and have the accused taken into court and asked to swear the oath of allegiance. Refusal to take the oath might be followed by forfeiture of property, half going to the informer. In spite of such consequences, the testimony against taking oaths was generally observed.

George Fox reminded Friends that the days of the week and the months of the year are named for pagan gods and ancient Roman emperors. As Christians, he felt, they should not pay homage to these gods in the conduct of their everyday lives. Thence developed the custom of *numbering the days of the week* as First Day, Second Day, etc., and the months as First Month, Second Month, etc. Contemporary Friends have largely discontinued this practice.

Holidays, Friends maintain, are no more holy than other days. Some holidays, particularly Christmas and Easter, retained many of the trappings of the pagan holidays which had occurred at nearly the same time of

year as the Christian ones. Fox admonished Quakers to conduct their business on the supposedly holy days as they ordinarily would. While some Friends schools continued to hold classes on Christmas into the twentieth century, most Friends now do recognize major Christian holidays.

Women, along with the men, suffered imprisonment in the early years for their adherence to the testimonies and sometimes for simply having Meetings for Worship. Although women Friends have been recognized ministers since the inception of Quakerism, the testimony of equality of the sexes has been fragile.

Many other activities commonly engaged in by the rest of humanity have been considered at various times to be contrary to the testimonies of Friends. One example is *gambling and speculation*, because the gains from these activities are not earned through one's own labor and can cause serious loss to others. Their pursuit can become an addiction. Friends also *abstained from substances* such as alcohol that can confuse the senses and interfere with the individual's ability to follow the Light within. Another testimony opposes *membership in secret societies* because they are not open in their activities, are exclusive, and may tend to encourage the formation of conspiracies or may reduce sympathy for some portion of society.

A corollary of the fundamental Quaker belief that there is the seed of God in every person is the ~~testimony~~*witness* *against paid ministry*. George Fox found the established clergy to be both corrupt and incompetent in spiritual matters. The Society recognized from its early times that some members possessed gifts of ministry, but abhorred any monetary reward for the practice of ministry as a trade rather than a calling. Friends might be released to travel in the ministry by provision for expenses and support of their families, but any sort of salary for such service was unheard of until the late nineteenth century.

The contemporary understanding of Friends' testimonies, which have been expressed in different ways over time, is addressed in a later section of *Faith and Practice*.

Quakers in Maryland and Virginia

The first Quaker known to visit the colonies of Maryland and Virginia was Elizabeth Harris, who came in 1655 or 1656 and found an immediate response. She was followed by a stream of others traveling in the ministry of the new faith, and many people of Maryland and Virginia joined the new movement. Although few early records of Virginia Yearly Meeting exist, it appears that George Fox initiated the first movement toward organization in that colony during his visits in 1672 and 1673.

In Fourth Month 1672, John Burnyeat, who was about to return to England after a lengthy ministry, called a General Meeting (to last several days) on the West River, south of present-day Annapolis, for all Friends in the Province of Maryland. George Fox and several other English Friends, who had been visiting Barbados and Jamaica, arrived in Maryland in time for that historic meeting, which marks the beginning of Baltimore Yearly Meeting of Friends.

In his Journal George Fox recorded this event:

Then there was a meeting appointed by John Burnyeat about three score miles off, which held four days, which we went to though we were weary. And there came to it ...many considerable people of the world, and a glorious meeting we had. After the public meeting there were men's and women's meetings [for business] and I opened to Friends the service thereof and all were satisfied.

George Fox, 1672

Although little opposition was met in Maryland, which tolerated any Christian sect, the situation was different in Virginia, where only the established Church of England was allowed. There was much persecution, particularly on the Eastern Shore, forcing the Quakers to migrate northward into Maryland. Elsewhere in Virginia, the Quaker movement prospered in spite of opposition. By 1700, Friends in Virginia were able to meet and practice as Friends within the bounds of law.

In the early 18th Century there were about 3000 Quakers in Maryland, possibly the largest religious body in the colony at that time. The Yearly Meeting for Maryland held two sessions annually, one at West River and the other at Third Haven (now Easton) on the Eastern Shore. After 1774 sessions were held but once a year,

alternating between the eastern and western shores of the Chesapeake Bay. In 1785 the western shore meeting place was transferred from West River to Baltimore.

With the building and improvement of roads on the Eastern Shore, Friends there were drawn toward Philadelphia as a center of commerce. At the same time the Friends from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting who were migrating to Northern Virginia, Western Maryland, and adjacent parts of Pennsylvania and establishing Meetings there, found Baltimore to be their urban magnet. In 1790, by mutual agreement of the two Yearly Meetings, all Maryland's Eastern Shore Meetings were assigned to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and all Meetings in Northern Virginia, Western Maryland, Nottingham Quarter and Meetings farther west in Pennsylvania were assigned to Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

Compensation of Native Americans

Unlike Friends settling with William Penn, who ~~purchased~~attempted to purchase their land fairly with freely signed deeds, those moving into the Shenandoah Valley found no natives remaining with whom to negotiate. As early as 1738, Quaker settlers in that area were pricked by their conscience as to how their lands had been procured, and by 1778 many of them had subscribed to a fund designated "for the benefit of the Indians, who were formerly the Native Owners of the lands on which we now live, or their descendants if to be found, and if not, for the benefit of other Indians." Likewise, English Friends of tender conscience helped add to the fund. In 1795, Baltimore Yearly Meeting first appointed an Indian Affairs Committee, one of its charges being to administer these funds. This endowment remains to this day, as does the concern of these early Friends, and the effort for mutual understanding and cooperation continues to be actively pursued.

Slavery, Civil War, and Reconstruction

By the early 1770's many Friends in the colonies of Maryland and Virginia owned enslaved people. Some Friends attending Yearly Meeting sessions at West River (now Galesville) Maryland took the occasion to go onto ships docked nearby to purchase Africans. One Friend, Samuel Galloway, who lived on the West River, made part of his living in the international trade in enslaved persons. An early query from Virginia Yearly Meeting asked Friends who owned enslaved people whether they treated well those they enslaved and whether they instructed them in Christianity. However, some Virginia Quaker tobacco farmers, notably Warner Mifflin and Robert Pleasants, became persuaded that owning enslaved people was immoral, freed those they owned and, with the assistance of antislavery activist Friends like John Woolman and Anthony Benezet, urged fellow Quakers and others to do likewise.

Maryland Yearly Meeting in 1777 and Virginia Yearly Meeting in 1784 decided that owners of enslaved persons should be disowned. By 1790 most Quakers who owned enslaved persons had actually either stopped owning slaves or stopped being Quakers. By the 1800's some Virginia and Maryland Quakers, for example Samuel Janney and Elisha Tyson, were active in opposing enslavement and in resisting efforts to re-enslave those who had been freed. However, others such as William Hartshorne and Phineas Janney, although not enslaving people directly, ran companies that hired enslaved people from those who did, and, in one instance, insured a ship taking enslaved people farther south. Many Friends who did not enslave anyone nonetheless regarded as troublemakers those Friends who sought to persuade lawmakers to abolish slavery. Baltimore Yearly Meeting adopted minutes opposing abolitionism even though it continued to regard enslavement as morally wrong.

In Virginia, schools to educate black children were opened by Robert Pleasants in Henrico County in 1782 and by Goose Creek Friends in 1815. In 1851 Quakers also supported the creation of the Miner School for educating black children in Washington, DC, ~~in 1851~~. Emily Howland, one of the Quaker teachers at that school, went on to coordinate relief work in the camps for black refugees in the DC area during the civil war. Many Friends moved to the DC area after the war to help newly freed people. ~~Also~~ after the war Quakers were also instrumental in the formation of the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Coloured People, which established over 70 schools for black children in the Baltimore area.

As a result of the westward movement, Baltimore Yearly Meeting set off Ohio Yearly Meeting in 1812, the first Friends Yearly Meeting west of the Alleghenies. In 1844 the remnant of Virginia Yearly Meeting decided to become a Half-Year's Meeting within Baltimore Yearly Meeting, Orthodox.

During the Civil War Baltimore Yearly Meeting Friends suffered not only because of their refusal to participate, but also because many of their farms and homes were in the path of the fighting. Young men faced disownment by their Meetings if they enlisted in the army, or imprisonment if they refused to be drafted or hire a substitute. In the North, President Lincoln's understanding of the dictates of conscience moderated the persecution somewhat, but in the South many Friends died in prison because of their refusal to join the army. After the war Friends responded to the overwhelming need of the freed slaves for food, clothing, and education. They also provided aid to Quakers in the devastated states of the South, particularly North Carolina, during the Reconstruction Period.

“Quietism,” Division, and Reunion

Through the 18th and part of the 19th centuries, the Society changed from a movement of convinced Christians bent on spreading the Light of Truth to a group feeling threatened by contamination from an indifferent world. The emphasis shifted to discipline for survival, so that the Truth as seen by their forebearers would not be lost. Marriage outside the Society or before a “priest,” being seen in a church, participation in war or militia drill, failure to attend Meeting, incurring debts, drunkenness, brawling and fornication were typical grounds for the disownments, which greatly reduced the Society.

But new ideas inevitably crept through the walls built around the Quaker communities and tensions arose: sometimes between younger and older, rural and urban, or wealthy and ~~less well-to-do~~ poorer Friends. Sometimes there were divisions even among Meetings in a Yearly Meeting. Theological controversy arose over Christian authority. Which should have primacy: the direct revelation of the Inner Light, or the Scriptures? One's direct experience of God, or personal salvation through Christ's sacrifice?

In 1827 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting split into “Hicksite” and “Orthodox” Yearly Meetings, the former group taking its name from Elias Hicks, a New York Friend who was an apostle of Christian authority through the Inner Light. The following year Baltimore and several other Yearly Meetings did likewise. Four-fifths of the constituency in Baltimore became Hicksite. This controversy did not divide the small Virginia Yearly Meeting, which remained Orthodox.

A further division occurred in the 1840's and 1850's between a conservative branch of Orthodox Friends associated with the name of John Wilbur, and a more evangelical branch of Orthodox Friends who had come under the influence of traveling evangelists, notably Joseph John Gurney from England. This Gurneyite movement partly accounts for the existence today of Friends with an evangelical theology. The Wilburite group long maintained the testimonies of plain dress and speech, and continued the traditional worship based on silence, as did all Hicksites. After 1870 a number of Gurneyite Meetings adopted a programmed form of worship and engaged the services of pastors. This movement only slightly influenced the two Baltimore Yearly Meetings, though it is still ~~widespread~~ practiced elsewhere.

Feelings ran high between the two principal groups, and Meetings not inclined to divide were eventually forced to choose sides (Orthodox and Hicksite). Not until 1866 were the two Baltimore Yearly Meetings able to appoint committees to work together amicably on the sale of the Yearly Meeting pasture land in Baltimore. The fact that two members of the Janney family, each representing one of the separated Yearly Meetings, served on these committees, illustrates the depth of the division.

With the passing of years, the early bitterness between the two Baltimore Yearly Meetings gradually became less acute. Both Yearly Meetings participated in service groups such as the Associated Committee of Friends on Indian Affairs and the American Friends Service Committee. At the urging of young Friends who had been meeting together for several years, the annual sessions of the two Yearly Meetings were held simultaneously, enabling them to have some joint sessions and to appoint some joint committees. Some new Monthly Meetings affiliated with both Yearly Meetings, and most divided local Meetings reunited, taking dual affiliation with both Yearly Meetings.

In 1957 the two Baltimore Yearly Meetings began holding their sessions jointly in the same location. Finally, on January 1, 1968, after 140 years of separation, including three years of intense planning for reunion, the two Baltimore Yearly Meetings became again one Yearly Meeting.

[For a more extensive history of Quakers and of Baltimore Yearly Meeting peruse the references found on page 282.](#)

Statement on Spiritual Unity, 1964

During the process of reuniting, the following statement from the Committee of Ten, 1964, was accepted:

The Committees appointed by the two Baltimore Yearly Meetings to study together the question of what in our religious experience would justify the union of the Yearly Meetings see that much spiritual basis for unity now exists among us. This is evident in the uniting of a number of local meetings, so that at present almost half the membership of the two Yearly Meetings is in united Meetings; in our Young Friends movement; in the joint work of our committees; in our cooperative efforts of many kinds; and in many shared experiences of worship. All these joint activities obviously would not exist without some measure of unity of spirit.

Our two Yearly Meetings have a wide, rich, and diverse heritage, chiefly from historic Christianity interpreted by Quakerism. We not only tolerate diversity, we encourage and cherish it. In every local Meeting we struggle, usually patiently, with the problems that arise from our divergent convictions; and we usually find ourselves richer for our differences. In most if not all of the Monthly Meetings within the two Yearly Meetings will be found, successfully co-existing, persons as far apart in religious vocabulary and practice as there are anywhere in the Yearly Meetings. Yet these Friends worship together every Sunday, and share nourishment for their spiritual life. Such association is beneficial and even necessary.

Friends in our two Yearly Meetings are clear on certain principles which are so basic and essential that we tend to take them for granted and forget that they are essential and probably the only essentials. We all are clear that religion is a matter of inward, immediate experience. We all acknowledge the guidance of the Inner Light, the Christ Within, God's direct, continuing revelation. All our insights are subject to testing by the insight of the group, by history and tradition, and by the Bible and the whole literature of religion. All the Meetings for Worship of our Monthly Meetings aspire to openness to God's communication directly with every person. Worship is primarily on the basis of expectant waiting upon the Spirit, a communion with God in which mediators or symbols are not necessary. We are all clear that faith is directly expressed in our daily living. We all seek to move toward goals of human welfare, equality, and peace.

We have a profound, often-tested, durable respect for each individual's affirmation of his own religious experience, which must be judged not only by his words but also by his life. From the stimulus of dissimilarity, new insights often arise. Each Friend must, as always, work out for himself his own understanding of religion; and each Monthly Meeting must, as always, fit its practice to its own situation and the needs of its members.

The consolidated Baltimore Yearly Meeting continued affiliation with both Friends General Conference (FGC) and Friends United Meeting (FUM), two organizations founded near the turn of the century by the two main branches of Quakerism, Hicksite and Orthodox ~~respectively.~~

respectively. Friends continue even today to listen, understand, and seek unity in the Spirit.

2. The Life of the Spirit

And Friends meet together, and know one another in that which is eternal, which was before the world was.

George Fox, Epistle 149

In one sentence George Fox illuminates the core of ~~Quakerism that informs the life of Quakerism, which informs our life in~~ the Spirit, both for each individual and for the Quaker Meeting as a whole. This one simple

phrase sets forth the spiritual tasks of Quakers: we are to meet together; we are to know one another in that which is eternal.

Certainly each of us is encouraged to follow our individual spiritual path, our inward search for the Light, our deep listening to God within. But we are equally encouraged to bring that Light we have found back to the community, and as a community we are eager to listen to the glimmers of hope, the discoveries of love, the struggles and the acceptance found in those journeys. The community is enriched through this sharing; indeed the Quaker Meeting can be transformed by the words of even the most simple message.

Other religions, other traditions, have emphasized the inward search and the power of discovery. An important component of our practice is the realization that we are a community of seekers: we are not alone. The practice of Quakers is to bring the treasures that we find on our journeys back to the Meeting, and for the Meeting to listen with the tender recognition of a shared experience.

Seekers

The principal characteristic of the human condition may well be that each of us is on a spiritual path, each of us is searching for meaning in our lives, each of us is seeking the essence of Truth. A principal tenet of Quakers everywhere is that seekers who ground their search in love are welcome to our Meetings, to worship with us, to speak their Truth, to share their experiences, and to listen carefully to the movement of the Spirit among us.

Even before George Fox's vision of Quakerism was broadcast throughout the land, groups of ~~Seekers~~~~seekers~~ sat together in silent worship in expectant waiting on new revelations. Shunning creeds, rejecting the authority of the established Church, and self-organized without clergy, this community of seekers was ripe for the evangelical messages of George Fox and his growing following of the convinced. Today we are still a community of ~~Seekers~~~~seekers~~; many of the traditions established over the centuries still form the heart of our practice.

Each of us has a unique approach to the Truth and our own understanding of the way to the Light, an understanding tempered by our origins, our experiences, and our path through the kaleidoscope of family and culture we have encountered. Each of us learns from the storms and calms of our lives an understanding of the world – an appreciation of our place in the varied culture which forms us. And that understanding forms the foundation of our ability to see the world, to see each other, to hear new words, and to discern how those words impact our own lives.

The ~~passion~~~~desire~~ of Friends is not in limiting or directing ~~Seekers~~~~seekers~~ to a particular Truth, a common path. The ~~passion~~~~desire~~ of Friends is in gathering in community to seek Truth, all of us humbly listening for the promptings of the Spirit. In the silence and in the words and actions of each other we discern the full measure of the ~~Light~~~~light~~ within us and around us. We are not each alone in a world of our own Truth but united in the common light of the same Spirit. Friends celebrate the variety of paths that we encounter; we rejoice to find kindred souls fully committed to the unique way that they have found. The ~~passion~~~~desire~~ of Friends lies in embracing the diversity of paths, accepting the variety of religious experience which enriches our own understanding of the life of the Spirit. Your Truth informs my own. I am not constrained to accept your Truth as my own, but I am encouraged to listen to your testimony, to discern the value of your approach and how it affects my own path.

And oh, how sweet and pleasant it is to the truly spiritual eye to see several sorts of believers, everyone learning their own lesson, performing their own peculiar service, and knowing, owning and loving one another in several places.... For this is the true ground of love and unity, not that such a man walks and does just as I do, but because I feel the same Spirit and life in him...and this is far more pleasing than if he walked in just that track wherein I walk.

Isaac Pennington, 1660

The Spiritual Journey

Spiritual paths are as varied as are individuals in community. We each have a unique history, a complex of experiences and events in our lives which undeniably form our worldview. We each carry within us a heartfelt of questions—a yearning to make sense of the world and our place in it. There are powerful questions of the heart, queries which cannot be answered intellectually, answers which can only be found in our inward search for Truth, for light,Light, for meaning.

Have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and to try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language. Don't search for the answers, which could not be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them. And the point is to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer.

Rainer Maria Rilke, 1903

We live the questions, as we continue our spiritual journey; we are coaxed by the Spirit from each question to the next. At each step, we “live up to that lightLight we have,” dwell in the truth that we have been given, and test our leadings with Friends.

Over and over again George Fox exhorted us to go inward, to find the inward Christ, to “wait upon the Lord, that all of you may grow up in the inward man, and be comforted and cherished there, in the things that are eternal” (*Epistle 79*). Jesus proclaimed, “The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is within you” (*Luke 17:21*).

That the inward search is solitary, sometimes lonely, is nearly a guarantee. There is no guide until you find the Inward Christ, the Light Within, the Spirit that awaits your questions, anticipates your next dawn, and may lead you to unexpected places.

Elise Boulding reminded us that central to the Quaker way is the experience of discovery, a journey which is lifelong. She emphasized that what is discovered is not a unique property of Quakerism: “What is unique to the Religious Society of Friends is its insistence that the discovery must be made by each of us individually. No one is allowed to get it secondhand by accepting a ready-made creed. Furthermore, the discovery points to a path and demands a journey, and gives you the power to make the journey.”

Sharing

Quakerism thus has a threefold role for each of us:

- To be intentional about following a spiritual path grounded in love, going deep within to find the ground of our being;
- To bring those findings back to our community, to share our experiences, to tell what has been revealed;
- To be a member of an intentional community of careful listeners, to hear without judgment what is being shared, to suspend our disbelief and allow the witness of our Friends to change our lives.

We are said to have abolished the laity; we are, each of us, ministers of the Truth. We are each of us encouraged to speak of our journey, where our search has led, whom we have met on the way, what has opened our eyes. For change is inevitable: none of us lingers over-long at the same spot. Our spiritual journey can lead to surprising places, unexpected encounters, startling revelations.

Others have observed that it is pointless to praise the practice of Quakerism and preach it if nobody is listening. It is much more needful to teach people the art of paying attention—and how better to teach this art than to practice it? George Fox advised that we should all “be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations wherever you come.” Quakers are called to set a pattern of deep listening, and thereby enrich the life of the Spirit for all.

We have acquired a much greater understanding of non-Christian religions ... and this has increased the sympathy and respect of many Friends for these faiths. This broader approach to religion has led to an affirmation by ‘universalist’ Friends that no one faith can

claim to be a final revelation or to have a monopoly of the truth and to the rejection of any exclusive religious fundamentalism whether based in Christianity or any other religion.

*Alastair Heron, Ralph Hetherington
and Joseph Pickvance, 1994*

Many religions emphasize the importance of engaging the Spirit, of entering on a spiritual path, of considering questions of the heart. How is Quakerism different? How does Quakerism put a unique stamp on that experience?

The Quaker Way

Friends see the Life of the Spirit as not only a personal search for the Light, but also a corporate one. Each enhances the other. Quaker practice offers many windows that enlighten the spiritual life of the community. Each window presents an opportunity for Friends to get to know God and each other.

The expression of the Life of the Spirit is seen not only in the meeting community, but in the daily lives of the members of the community.

Meeting for Worship

The first opportunity in our unprogrammed Meetings is our Meeting for Worship, where Friends settle into the silence in expectant waiting, to see what is now revealed by the Light, to listen for the Word which lies at the heart of our ground of being. While this is a very individualistic search, we recognize that each of us, gathered in this Meeting, is engaged in a similar quest, safe in a trusted environment where Friends all around us are freely worshipping. When thus seeking the Inner Light together we can, especially in this place, sense the eternal which is behind the succession of ordinary events.

At times we realize that some part of our spiritual journey calls to be shared among Friends, and we are unable to refuse the demand to speak. Stimulated by our own personal experience, the message grows beyond our individual concerns and takes on a wider, more universal meaning. We ask, is this a leading? Is it for me or the Meeting? Is now the time? Is it ripe for sharing? We rise, sometimes with difficulty, and speak what is in our hearts, with loving attention to the community and a faithfulness to the message.

We ourselves come to Meeting neither prepared to speak nor prepared not to speak, but always prepared to listen. As listeners we recognize that not all messages are meant for us, that our own spiritual journey may not resonate with the path being revealed to us by another. In reflection we might hold the messenger in the Light, recognizing the courage it took to rise, the strength of commitment expressed, and the struggle being revealed in those few words. Sometimes, however, the words another person speaks will seem exactly what we need to hear and will be the voice of God for us at the moment.

Worship-sharing

Another window Quakers use to open their spiritual journeys is when we gather for worship-sharing. Worship-sharing is a form of worship that helps us listen to each other in a deeply spiritual, loving, and prayerful way. Worship-sharing may focus on a particular query, a topic, a special quotation, an important parable or Biblical verse. It helps us to explore our own experience and share with each other more deeply than we would in normal conversation. It offers a safe and loving environment where Friends are encouraged to give voice to their inner search. It seeks to draw us into sacred space, where we can take down our usual defenses, and encounter each other in vital ways.

Simple principles which have evolved over the years make worship-sharing a deeply successful practice among Friends:

- Reach as deeply as you can into the sacred center of your life.
- Speak out of the silence, and leave a period of silence between speakers.
- Speak from your own experience, about your own experience.
- Concentrate on feelings and meaning rather than on thoughts or theories.
- Do not respond to what anyone else has said, either to praise or to refute.
- Listen carefully and deeply to what is spoken.
- Expect to speak only once, until everyone has had a chance to speak.

Use as few words as possible but as many as are necessary.

Remember that you always have the option to pass.

Respect the confidentiality of what is shared.

Friends are encouraged to come to worship-sharing with an intent to open their spiritual path to the Meeting, to share what has occurred in their experience, to reflect on the direction of their lives, to give witness to the meaning that has been found. But while we are asked to speak once, we are also asked to listen deeply to many intimate testimonies. When that listening is deeply grounded, when your spiritual ear is attuned to the struggles, the openings, the new revelations of Friends, your life can be changed.

Clearness Committees

A more formal practice that is particularly identified with Quakerism is the Clearness Committee: a group of Friends to hear your concerns, to listen to the difficulties confronting you, to help you venture deeper within in your search for clearness.

Ordinarily a Clearness Committee is appointed when a person in the Meeting seeks to reach clarity on how to respond to a concern or dilemma. Clearness Committees have been used when a person applies for membership and when a couple seeks marriage under the care of the Meeting. But beyond these traditional events it can be helpful for you to bring your leadings, your questions, your discoveries to the wider community for testing.

As Parker Palmer remarked, “Behind the Clearness Committee is a simple but crucial conviction: *each of us has an inner teacher, a voice of truth, that offers the guidance and power we need to deal with our problems.* But that inner voice is often garbled by various kinds of inward and outward interference. The function of the Clearness Committee is not to give advice or ‘fix’ people from the outside in but rather to help people remove the interference so that they can discover their own wisdom from the inside out.”

We are taught to abandon the pretense that we know what is best for another person. We are taught instead to ask honest and open questions to help that person come to spiritual clarity. We are taught that our task is not to “fix” a problem, but through simple listening to create the conditions that allow a person to find his or her wholeness within. We are taught a way, a Quaker way, to renew community, a way to free people from their isolation without threatening their integrity, a way to create space for the Spirit to move among us with healing and with power.

It is a powerful discipline for the listener to be present without agenda, without the compulsion to help, abandoning the need or desire to appear knowledgeable, wise, or comforting. There may be no more tellingly difficult spiritual practice than the effort to receive what is being said by someone else hospitably, without editing, without correction, without unsolicited advice.

Life in Community

Quaker life offers many opportunities to connect deeply with others, within and beyond the Meeting. When we approach workshops, committees, fellowship, Meetings for Business, and other events with a ready and open heart, we give and receive priceless gifts. On Support Committees we help Friends get through difficult times or follow leadings. Even in a simple conversation after Meeting we may sense the powerful presence of the Spirit and feel ourselves blessed. Whether the events that draw us together are oriented to work or fellowship, carefully planned or unfolded in unexpected opportunities, Friends seek to remain attentive to the guidance of the Light and the rhythms of each other’s spiritual lives.

In many Meetings Friends and attenders are offered the opportunity to join a “listening group”, “friendly eights”, or form an intentional “spiritual friendship.” In these gatherings we hear each other’s spiritual concerns, leadings, stops, and encounters with the Light, giving each our full attention.

Listening Groups often model a worship-sharing environment focused on the experiences of a single individual at a time. These are intimate gatherings of Friends committed to a confidential inquiry into the spiritual aspect of our lives. Rather than giving advice, rather than responding with similar experiences, rather than joining a search for a solution, this practice employs simple but deep listening to help each speaker give voice to a more profound appreciation of the Life of the Spirit. Friends in Listening Groups work together to develop their mutual understanding of the enduring spiritual principles that lie behind our Quaker practices.

Imagine having a small group of deep listeners at your service. Imagine being able to share not only your concerns, your spiritual trials, your questions of faith, but also your discoveries, your leadings, your promptings of the Light. And imagine that you will be asked to serve regularly as a deep listener to others on their spiritual journey, to be present to a Friend in times of trial, in times of critical questioning, and in times of joy and celebration.

Listening

Quakers wait in expectant silence to hear the voice of God. Whether in study, in meditation, in prayer, or in the silences between spoken messages in Meeting for Worship, we practice patient attention to the spiritual ground around us. Often by creating a safe space, by listening attentively, we are able to hear the voice of God in the authentic words of others.

At the same time that we are encouraged to listen deeply, we bear the weighty responsibility to actively translate the words of others, their metaphors, their experiences into expressions that speak to our condition. All speech is metaphor, all words are packed with nuance, loaded with meaning, connotations, implications and overtones. To hear a person's message is easy, but to listen deeply, to do the work of interpretation, is the Quaker task.

As Gene Hoffman remarks: "I am not talking about listening with the human ear. I am talking about 'discernment,' which means to perceive something hidden and obscure. We must listen with our spiritual ear, the one inside, and this is very different from deciding in advance what is right and what is wrong and then seeking to promote our own agenda. We must literally suspend our disbelief and then listen to learn whether what we hear expands or diminishes our sense of Truth."

Words must not become barriers between us, for no one of us can ever adequately understand or express the truth about God, the depth of our personal spiritual journey, or the essence of what has been revealed to us. Yet words are our tools and we must not be afraid to express the truth we know in the best words we can. We must trust that our faith is robust, and compassionate, and that the Spirit which gives the words is communicated through them.

As we listen to each other's spiritual journey we are encouraged to translate one another's words much as we would a foreign language. Although we may never adopt others' language as our own, we are enriched and brought closer to each other by the experience of listening outside the comfort of our own religious vocabulary. We rejoice in the variety of religious experience, a diversity that leads us to a deepened understanding of our own path.

The skill of the listener who can go beyond words, who can even go beyond the conscious meanings behind words and who can listen with the "third ear" for what is unconsciously being meant by the speaker, furnishes a climate where the most unexpected disclosures occur, where miracles happen. Marcel Proust declaims, "The voyage of discovery lies not in encountering new landscapes, but in seeing with new eyes." And listening with new ears. Friends are, if nothing else, seekers, searchers of the Truth and open to the wisdom of others regardless of the source. Listening is an essential art in this search; truly paying attention to the witness of Friends is central to our search.

Indeed truly paying attention is not only the key to deep listening, but also lies at the core of a common Quaker form of prayer. When Friends ask others to "Hold in the Light" a person or concern, we place our attention wholly with that individual or concern. While Friends may do this differently—for example, with or without images, or with or without words—what lies at the ground of those acts of prayer, those offerings of praise, those appeals for understanding, is each Quaker's complete attention.

The work of "Holding in the Light" can be healing and helpful to others; even simply knowing that this is happening in a difficult time may be a profound blessing. Almost certainly, our own lives will be changed as well. As our awareness embraces the relationship between the Divine and the individual, our own relationship to the eternal is touched. The life of the Meeting will also be changed: the Meeting as a body becomes a community of concern with a common focus, a shared vision, and a gathered sense of loving care.

All this might appear to new Friends as a process that could take a lot of time. Devoting time to listen to the spiritual efforts of others in your community, spending time in reflecting on your own spiritual path, working together to seek God's will, not only in matters of the heart, but also in the many decisions which face

us, all this takes time. As Thomas Kelly puts it: “It is simple. It is serene. It takes no time, but it occupies all our time.” It becomes a way of life: the Life of the Spirit. How else can we expect to know one another in that which is eternal?

Eldering

The eldering function flows not out of a sense of conforming to rigid rules or set patterns, but out of our sensitivity to inner guidance and spiritual perception. For any situation that we may face – positive or negative – there is, at the core, spiritual truth to be discovered.

Marge Larrabee

As a community, Friends are responsible for helping each other live our lives grounded in the Spirit. At times, Friends may be led to express queries or insights that help each other regain or maintain a faithful connection to God. This form of spiritual leadership is called “eldering.” It can boldly interrupt a negative pattern, softly suggest a different way of seeing a situation, evoke a gift, express a truth, affirm or encourage a Spirit-led direction, or change the feeling that is alive in a group and call its members back to loving community.

While we generally associate “elders” and “eldering” with seasoned Friends, the Spirit may speak through a child or through any individual who is open to being so used. In order to be heard and resonate in the heart, a person who is eldering must have a living connection with the Spirit that guides their words or actions. As Marge Larrabee points out in her helpful pamphlet on “Spirit-Led Eldering,” when we are not spirit-led “we are likely to speak merely from our self-centered thoughts and feelings or from unresolved personal issues.” When this is the case, instead of calling individuals or the community to a closer relationship to God, reproofs or criticism that the individual believes to be eldering are likely to have the opposite effect. Uncentered eldering may cause individuals to feel unwelcome or estranged from the meeting.

The meeting offers many structures through which eldering might occur, especially committees responsible for nominating, membership, care for members’ needs and spiritual wellbeing, and nurturing ministry and worship. Friends also may be spiritually led as individuals to take on this task, but to do so with love, compassion, and intuition requires an inner discernment and centering process. For example, one asks:

Am I centered and grounded in the Spirit, or is this my ego speaking?

Do I feel love and compassion for the person or persons I want to address?

Am I attentive to the movement of the Spirit in this moment, or am I “on autopilot”?

Do I want to “fix” a person or situation, or is my intention to bring them to God and leave them there?

Sometimes we fear to speak to each other in this way lest we be seen as interfering, bossy, or out of line. When we are truly living the life of the Spirit, such fears do not guide us. Instead, we are attuned to the still, small voice within, have become accustomed to following it, and have learned to recognize when we are truly “nudged.” Our loving ministry to each other is part of what makes us Friends.

3. Meetings for Worship

Meeting for Worship

Meeting for Worship is the heart and the core of Quakerism. Monthly Meetings within Baltimore Yearly Meeting practice unprogrammed worship. Our worship is based on faith that human beings can commune directly with God. In expectant silence each strives to center inwardly; and collectively, each aided by the seeking and centering of others, the worship becomes a corporate experience.

Friends approach the Meeting for Worship with faith that God speaks to us directly, revealing Divine Will. God’s message may come in the silence or in spoken words. The Divine manifests itself to individuals in different ways. In order to be in touch with the consciousness of the presence of God in worship, the individual

brings the discipline and experience of seeking the Light through such practices as daily meditation and prayer, as well as study of the Bible and other spiritually inspired writings. Each individual's contribution of centering, presence, and relationship with the Divine joins with that of others to create corporate worship. In Quaker Meeting for Worship, the spirituality of the individual is integrated with that of the corporate. Thus, the spirit of God embraces and envelops the corporate body in the Meeting for Worship. On occasions when a complete unity of integration occurs, the phenomenon is called a "gathered Meeting," the experience of which is always dynamic.

While prayer is central to the experience of many Friends in Meeting for Worship, each Friend brings to the gathering a unique understanding of what that means. In many a Meeting for Worship, as in other gatherings of Friends, you might hear a request to hold an individual, a group, or a situation "in the Light," whether in a time of trouble or a time for celebration. As for prayer, each Friend has a personal understanding of the meaning of that phrase.

Simply drawing the worshipful attention of all who are gathered in that Meeting for Worship to a single individual or a single situation can be a powerful motion. Attention is the first requirement of ~~Love~~love; attention is the prerequisite for deep listening. Among many others, Douglas Steere eloquently addressed this:

For when we hold up the life of another before God, when we expose it to God's love, when we pray for the quickening of its inner health, for the power to throw off a destructive habit, for the restoration of its relationship with others, for its strength to resist temptation, for its courage to continue against sharp opposition—only then do we sense what it means to share in God's work, in His concern, only then do the walls which separate us go down and we sense that we are at bottom all knit together in a great and intimate family.

Friends try to avoid the dependence on ritual and outward sacraments in order to prevent stultification and the practice of mere forms. The simplicity of Friends' worship results from an emphasis on the reality of the inward experience. Direct communion with God—the experience of the Spirit—is the core of Quaker spirituality and worship.

[See also a discussion of Meeting for Business below and on page 99.](#)

Vocal Ministry

Quaker faith and practice is based upon the experiential understanding that both individuals and the Meeting community can experience direct relationship and communication with God. In the Quaker tradition, as practiced by Baltimore Yearly Meeting, there are no professional clergy or other persons designated to speak during the Meeting for Worship. Rather, all are understood to commune directly with God and share in the priesthood of all believers (see 1 Peter 2:4-10.)

Friends gather for Meeting for Worship to wait together in openness to discern and experience the movement and voice of the Spirit within their midst. The felt leading to give an oral message during the otherwise silent Meeting for Worship is known as vocal ministry. Vocal ministry demonstrates our Quaker understanding, experience, and conviction that the Spirit not only speaks to all, but that it may also choose to speak through one or more persons.

Vocal ministry is not based on a desire or inclination to speak, but on the persistent sense that one is being compelled to rise and allow the Spirit to use one's heart and mind to speak aloud. Vocal ministry, then, is not a person's own thoughts and words, but those of the Spirit giving itself a voice through the speaker. For this reason no Friend should come to Meeting for Worship with the intention either to speak or not to speak.

Sometimes a message is not ripe yet, or comes clearly but is meant only for the person receiving it, not for the group. If you have to decide whether it is right to speak, consider that it isn't. If the words you have been given are important, the Meeting will find them anyway.

Receive vocal ministry of others in a tender spirit. Reach for the deep meaning within the message, recognizing that even if it is not God's word for you, it may be for others.

Some Friends are led to speak frequently, and others only rarely; yet the timid or brief message of one who seldom speaks may be as moving and helpful as that of a more practiced speaker. The most satisfactory

vocal ministry arises out of a leading that is felt in the silence so strongly that it cannot be ignored. It should be delivered with as few words as possible, yet as many as necessary. Vocal prayer offered on behalf of the gathered meeting can also bring us into closer harmony with God. Even if not a word is spoken, the Meeting for Worship can be profoundly nurturing.

[See also the Queries, Advices, and Voices for Vocal Ministry \(p137\), Meeting for Worship \(p103\), and Meeting for Business \(p99\).](#)

Meeting for Business

[Meeting for business is] about looking for Truth as a body, rather than about our individual senses of truth. We need to enter worshipfully into our meetings for business. We need to wrestle with the issues, to share our glimpses of the Truth as we see it, and then we need to let go and listen deeply until all those glimpses give us a sense of the Truth as a whole. This takes time, patience, and surrender.

Michael Wajda, 2007

Meeting for Business, sometimes called a Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business, is central to the practice of Friends in discerning God's will for the Meeting.

A Meeting for Business that is well grounded in worship will feel very different from the type of secular process in which individuals are arguing in order to ensure their view prevails. Friends approach decisions in Meeting for Business in a spirit of searching and listening rather than a determination to be heard as an individual voice. In each decision, we are seeking to discern the will of God for us as a community. This causes us to listen to each other as we do in Meeting for Worship, knowing that each of us may be given some of the ~~light~~[Light](#) that will help us see our way forward. We further believe that as Truth emerges we will have substantial unity in recognizing it, for Truth is undivided and that of God within each person responds to its presence.

Meetings for Business are held in a spirit of worship. When needed, the Meeting should always be able to return to silent worship in order to release distractions and open more fully to Divine direction. This does not mean that Business Meetings must be overly solemn or devoid of humor. It also does not mean that every item that comes up for review is addressed in the same way. While some business that comes before the Meeting may require prayerful searching, there are also times in the Business Meeting where the task is simply to hear a report lovingly and attentively. It is well to remember that we are called to be faithful in small, routine things as well as large ones. Regardless of the perceived importance of each business item, we strive to remain open to the leadings of the Spirit and to experience its gifts of trust, humility, compassion, and courage.

Both speaking and listening should be marked by respect for others, with speakers saying only what they know to be worth others' hearing, and with listeners seeking the Light as it is revealed through others. An openness of spirit is crucial, especially when differing views are being expressed. The Clerk should make sure that all points of view are clearly stated so that the Meeting may have all it needs to arrive at a right decision. Words and spirit should be offered in loving helpfulness as we seek the right way together, not as a position dogmatically asserted and adamantly held. Although an individual Friend has the designated role of Clerk, each of us shares the responsibility for maintaining a Spirit-led gathering, for the wise use of time, and for a steadfast search for Truth.

Major items of business to be submitted to the Meeting should be prepared as carefully as possible by a Meeting committee or by preparatory work on the part of the Clerk so that pertinent facts and records, including previous Meeting actions, will be available to the Meeting to facilitate the discussion. Members not involved in the preparatory work should trust and value the work of preparation. Care should be taken to avoid reworking business brought to the Meeting in a way that belittles the work already done.

Unity and Sense of the Meeting

When the Clerk senses that there is general unity in the Meeting on a matter that requires a decision, the Clerk states what appears to be the sense of the Meeting. The Sense of the Meeting may be defined as a collective understanding of God's will emerging from a Meeting for Business, gathered and expressed by the Clerk for the approval of the Meeting. If the members approve, a minute expressing the Sense of the Meeting is

immediately written. Especially in matters that are particularly important or complex, it is best for the Meeting to compose, and request approval of, a minute before passing to other business. The Recording Clerk's role in this process, discussed in Section III, clarifies this important practice.

The unity which underlies Sense of the Meeting is not synonymous with consensus. Consensus is a widely used and valuable secular process characterized by a search for general agreement largely through rational discussion and compromise. The Quaker Meeting for Business depends on a religious process characterized by listening for and trusting in God. Both unity and consensus result in a course of action agreed to by all of the participants, but the Sense of the Meeting relies consciously on the Spirit.

Those who are not present at a particular Meeting do not have the opportunity to sense the gentle movements of the Spirit, nor to have their own opinions softened by the love within the gathered body. We must trust that those who were present rightly sensed God's will and that the minutes written in the moment accurately reflect that sense.

When Friends are not in Unity

When the Meeting cannot unite upon a minute, no action is taken on the matter, which may be postponed for further consideration. Any previous action or policy of the Meeting in the same area stands in the absence of a specific Meeting decision to change it. Friends are reminded that failure to act is also a form of judgment and are urged to consider seriously whether they are led to stand opposed to a view that has clearly received the assent of most Friends in the Meeting.

Friends often find themselves most challenged when matters before them call forth strongly held but seemingly incompatible responses. Members should exercise forbearance in discussion and should seek Divine guidance, realizing that Truth will often transcend the understanding of any single individual. When the judgment of the Meeting tends away from a member's view, that Friend should consider whether to stand aside or, by standing in the way, to prevent the unity required for the Meeting's action.

At the same time Friends are mindful of the many occasions when the leading of one or a few people has proven to be the way of Truth. When action cannot proceed because of a lack of unity, the Meeting may find it useful to appoint a special committee to labor with all concerned for a resolution of the impasse. None should remain silent in the belief that the conclusion is foregone, or that an insight apparently counter to that of the body of the Meeting will be divisive.

Friends who feel they cannot agree with what they perceive to be the weight of the Meeting are advised not to yield to the temptation to absent themselves from the Meeting for Business in order to spare both themselves and the Meeting. Such an absence implies a lack of faith in the Meeting's access to Divine guidance and its ability to find unity. Friends who have labored with others to come to unity may "stand in the way" of a decision. In this instance, the Meeting as a whole, guided by the Clerk, must discern whether the weight of that Friend's opposition means that the Meeting does not have the general unity needed to have a Sense of the Meeting. A Friend who has genuine reservations but does not feel called to stand in the way may instead stand aside and allow the Meeting to move forward.

The search for the course of action that will help the Meeting find unity—or the resolution of the problems caused by disunity itself—rests with the entire community.

Queries for a Meeting in Conflict

When disagreement on an issue threatens to divide a Meeting, it may be helpful for the Meeting and each Friend to consider the following questions:

Do all Friends have a clear understanding of the facts related to the matter under consideration?

Have all Friends taken care to fully examine, in a loving and prayerful spirit, the perspective of those with whom they disagree?

Have all Friends truly tried to leave behind their personal desires so they can be led by the Spirit?

Do Friends recognize the spiritual values that underlie members' perspectives?

Have Friends considered whether God's will for them as individuals may differ from God's will for the Meeting?

Do those in conflict regularly reaffirm, in voice and attitude, the love they feel for one another?

Moving Forward in Unity

In situations in which Friends' insights and values lead them in different directions, Friends have found helpful several ways of moving forward in unity:

The Meeting may move to a deeper spiritual searching and sharing, often entering into periods of silent worship.

The Meeting may wait or proceed with other business while a small representative ad hoc committee withdraws, in the hope that they can bring forward a minute or course of action that will lead to unity.

The Meeting may reschedule the matter for another time, encouraging members to continue their search for the right action in the interim, whether in solitary prayer and meditation or in small informal groups.

Friends may feel led to withdraw their objections, being unwilling to stand in the way of the Meeting. Those Friends may feel released from the burden of their concern, having laid it on the conscience of the Meeting. Or they may stand aside while maintaining their objections, asking that their names and the grounds of their objections be minuted.

Friends who stand aside are affirming their continuing spiritual unity with the Meeting. As others proceed with the action on which they feel fully clear, they are required to keep the concerns expressed firmly in mind.

Each of these avenues expresses trust in Divine guidance and a commitment to remaining in unity in the Spirit.

[See also the Queries, Advices, and Voices which focus on Meeting for Business on page 99, and the References given on page 289 for further reading.](#)

Memorial Meetings

Memorial Meetings offer an opportunity for both consolation and celebration. In the Meeting, the community can hold those who are most affected by the death in the Light, share their grief, and help them feel the loving presence of the Spirit upholding them in their loss. The Meeting is also a time to hold, appreciate, and celebrate the life of a unique human being. The deep worship and sharing that are possible support friends and family, affirm community bonds, and cherish the gift of the deceased person's life among us.

For this and other called Meetings for Worship it may be helpful to consider the checklist of possible concerns included in the Appendix: "Called Meetings: Practical ~~Considerations.~~"[Considerations on page 318.](#)

Meetings for Marriage

A Quaker wedding is a called Meeting for Worship [for Marriage](#) where Friends gather in silence to celebrate the love of God and the love of the community that surrounds and supports the couple. As in other Meetings for Worship, a wedding includes an opportunity for Spirit-led vocal ministry arising from the silence; deep listening to the Spirit that lies behind each message; and worshipful contemplation of Divine guidance in each of our lives.

The section on *Marriage and Divorce* in Part III contains details regarding marriage in the manner of Friends, the role of the Clearness Committee, suggestions regarding the ceremony, the responsibilities of the Marriage Committee, and reflections on what it means to take a marriage under the care of the Meeting. Queries for the couple and for the Meeting are also suggested in that section.

Threshing Sessions

It is the practice of Friends when the Meeting is faced with issues that are difficult, complex, and controversial to call a Meeting for Worship to address the particular concern. A threshing session with a focus on a single concern may be called to share factual information, ask questions, and provide an opportunity to express all the individual differences. It is good practice to state the concern in the form of a small number of queries.

Threshing sessions derive their name from the assumption that through them the chaff might be separated from the grain of truth, clearing the way for later action on the issue. No decision is to be made at threshing

sessions. The goal is to progress towards greater agreement through repeated self-examination, listening to how the Spirit is leading others, and waiting upon the Light.

Those planning the Meeting should make an effort to ensure that Friends of all shades of opinion can attend; to the extent that Friends who hold a given view are absent, the usefulness of such a meeting will be impaired. The Clerk or moderator of a threshing session is responsible for ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to speak, drawing out the reticent and limiting contributions from too-ready talkers. The Clerk should urge people not to hold back from sharing whatever troubles them about the matter at hand.

Throughout the meeting, Friends should remain mindful of the need to hear and trust each other in a spirit of community and of the shared desire of meeting members to be led to right action. Although the threshing session is not a Meeting for Business and cannot decide what action will be taken, it may forward a recommendation to the Meeting for Business. A recorder should be appointed to take notes for future reference.

Other Called Meetings

Monthly Meetings may respond to many different situations with Meetings for Worship, vigils, or worship-sharing. It is well for Meetings to consider in advance how they would reach members rapidly in the event of tragedy or loss, disasters, or stress within the community. At such times, drawing together in community to listen and share deeply can renew the Meeting's strength and enable it to receive spiritual guidance.

4. Testimonies

A testimony is an outward expression of an inward leading of the Spirit, or an outward sign of what Friends believe to be an inward revelation of truth.... Testimonies are an outward expression of an inward spiritual discernment, constituting faith incarnated into action. They provide the moral and ethical fruits of one's inward life of the Spirit.

Wilmer Cooper, 2000

~~A Personal Affirmation~~

For more than three hundred and fifty years Friends have acted upon shared concerns. As they felt called to specific forms of witness, they tested them in community and affirmed them through minutes. Many specific forms of the testimonies, such as refusing to give "hat honor" by lifting one's hat to people of rank, are concerns through practices that historically have been distinctive and definitive not so relevant today; yet the principle behind them – equality before God – remains sound. While the specifics of Friends' practice have varied as times have changed, Friends today continue to have concerns and beliefs similar to those of past generations. The word *testimonies* is used to refer to this common set of deeply held, historically rooted attitudes and modes of living in the world.

Testimonies bear witness to the truth as Friends in community perceive it. They arise from our way of worship, which evokes within us an affirmation and celebration of Light that illumines the spiritual longing of humanity. Through the testimonies, Friends strive for unity and integrity of inner and outer life, both in living with ourselves and others, and in living in the world.

The testimonies express our commitment to our fundamental beliefs and arise out of a deep, inner conviction which challenges our normal ways of living. The testimonies do not exist in any rigid, written form; nor are they imposed in any way. All Quakers search for the ways in which the testimonies can become true for themselves. To be a Quaker is not to subscribe to doctrines, but to be convinced that one has personally known an ultimate reality from which those beliefs arise. ~~Our lives today can only testify to the truth that we come to know through our own experience. When we give testimony, it is only valid if it comes from our own first-~~

~~hand experience of continuing revelation, not from anything that we have been told, nor from any standard that we hope to meet.~~

Fixing the World

~~It should be remembered that “God is the Clerk of the Outcomes Committee,” that we are called to be faithful, and particularly we are called to testify, not called to fix the world. As Friends witness to testimonies, we do well not to measure our success by what we can see in our lifetimes.~~ We gauge our effectiveness not by outward acclaim or immediate change, but by whether or ~~not, innot~~ we have been faithful to the leadings of the Inner Teacher. In moments of deep reflection, we feel “easy in spirit” spirit. ~~even if we cannot see the outer signs of hoped-for change.~~ In retrospect, Quaker efforts have often proved to be the quiet “seeding” of social changes that came to historic fruition decades later.

The modern categories of the witnesses of Friends spring from the work of Howard Brinton in the early 20th Century. In his *Guide to Quaker Practice*, he structured the variety of testimonies and principles found throughout the history of Quakerism into a small number of headings.

~~Friends seek to avoid being limited by definitions of these evolving testimonies. It is likely we will be challenged in different ways to live out our key Quaker testimonies.~~ A commonly used ~~mnemonic~~ acronym for six of the traditional testimonies is SPICES (simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and stewardship).

While this acronym is helpful in teaching and learning about our shared testimonies, our understanding of what they ask of us evolves. The Spirit still speaks, and we still listen. As mentioned previously, testimonies against the use of intoxicants and illegal drugs, as well as the misuse of prescription drugs, concern both Community, Simplicity, and Integrity. Friends’ long-standing testimony against the use, production, or sale of tobacco and alcoholic beverages is not fully accepted by some. For many, however, complete abstinence is the only effective way to avoid the dangers of these materials. Friends are in unity against illegal narcotics and mind-altering substances, now readily available. Use of any of these materials has adverse effects which reach beyond the individual to harm the family and the community; for example, dealing with illegal drugs also supports a criminal underground. Even legitimate prescription drugs can be used inappropriately and excessively. All these usages deaden the individual to life and spiritual values as our times challenge us to live them out in new circumstances.

Simplicity

~~Balance, Priority, Clearness, Sincerity~~

Simplicity is a testimony which has assumed many forms. It implies sincerity, clarity, balance, genuineness, and avoidance of superfluity. It has been commonly referred to in books of discipline as “simplicity in dress, speech, and behavior.” This description can be misleading, however, since it refers to the external manifestation without articulating its purpose. John Woolman reduced the size of his business three times because it had grown so big that it took too much time away from his being with God. For Friends, the purpose of a simple life is to remove the distractions that interfere with our conversations with the Divine.

Excessive preoccupation with how we look to others, how much we are paid, what awards we have received, or indeed anything that becomes an obsession for us can create “noise” that keeps us from hearing and honoring the voice of the Inner Teacher.

Simplicity ~~is not about an antique form of dress or speech.~~ It is a reminder that today, as surely as hundreds of years ago, we can choose to allow God to order our lives. It asks us to set aside time for prayer and spiritual discipline that open us to wisdom and guidance beyond our own. Today, as then, it refers to a life lit from within by the Inward Light, ordered by the Love that nourishes the core, and freed by the Spirit from bondage to the superficial.

Early Friends found excessive drinking led to disordered lives that harmed both individuals and those they loved. William Penn wrote in 1678:

Drunkenness, or excess in drinking, is not only a violation of God’s law, but of our own natures...it fits [people] for that which they would abhor, if sober...It renders [us] unfit for

trust or business, it tells secrets, betrays friend, and disposes [us] to be tricked and cheated; finally it spoils health, weakens the human race, and above all provokes the just God to anger.

William Penn, 1681

Though written 300 years ago, those who have experienced how excessive use of alcohol or drugs changes the mind and spirit can testify to this truthful description of their impact on our lives. Gambling and other activities may also become tyrants that rule our lives. Once an individual has become addicted, it will take the help of Spirit, friends, experienced counselors, and community to support the individual in recovering a healthy life.

The key query posed to Friends is, “What in my present life most distracts me from God?”

Peace

Harmony, Understanding, Reconciliation, Nonviolence, Serenity [See also the Queries, Advices, and Voice on Simplicity on page 124.]

Peace

All bloody principles and practices we do utterly deny, with all outward wars, and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence whatsoever, and this is our testimony to the whole world. That spirit of Christ by which we are guided is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil and again to move unto it; and we do certainly know, and so testify to the world, that the spirit of Christ, which leads us into all Truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of this world.

George Fox, 1660

Seekers have often been attracted to Quakers because of the Peace Testimony. The enthusiasm with which Friends follow their leadings to “speak truth to power” in the pursuit of peace has garnered the admiration of many. But it is later that attenders and others realize that peace activism is again an external manifestation of an internal conviction, often expressed in terms of “that of God in everyone.”

We are called as peacemakers to deal with the violence and aggression within ourselves, and in doing so, to find ways of living in harmony with our neighbors. A simple life style is useful in this connection, since the pursuit of excessive material wealth or power may entail exploitation of others. As John Woolman urged, “May we look upon our treasures, the furniture of our houses and our garments and try whether the seeds of war have nourishment in these our possessions.” Friends are focused as well on the need to go inward, and to find peace within, in preparation for bringing that peace, that harmony, to others.

History has shown that when a future outcome, however noble, seems of greater worth than the human being before us, any means, any atrocity, is possible. To work for peace without being divisive, we need to work within a place of faith, truly trusting in the movement of the spirit.

Peace is the state in which we are in accord with God, ourselves, others, and the earth. We know that true lasting peace among us flows from unity in the life of the spirit.

[See also the Queries, Advices, and Voice on Peace on page 118.]

Integrity

Honesty, Sincerity, Truth, Trust

Testimony to integrity and truth refers to the way we bear witness to the belief that one should live a life that is true to God, true to oneself, and true to others. To Friends the concept of integrity includes personal wholeness and consistency, as well as honesty and fair dealings. From personal and inward integrity flow the outward signs of integrity, which include honesty and fairness. It is not only about telling the truth—it is applying our understanding of the truth to each situation.

Early Friends did not regard truthfulness as merely an element of their faith. The essence of the testimony of integrity is placing God at the center of one’s life. Quakers are then called foremost to listen for and

acknowledge Divine Truth, then to speak and to act in accordance with that truth throughout all activities, and in all relationships in our lives. Integrity implies a harmony within, a music created through attentive listening to expressions of God in ourselves and each other.

When we live with integrity, our sense of self is lit from within by the same steady Light whether we are with our family, in Meeting, or at work. When we live with integrity, we do not allow fear or desire for approval to shape the face we present to the world. We may express the truth we know differently so that different people can better hear it, or we may be silent because we feel it is not the time for certain words; but we are willing to allow the Inner Light to guide us in ways consistent with the truth as we understand it. Rooted in an awareness of God's guiding presence in all times and places, each of us finds the strength and nourishment we need to be faithful.

[Community](#)[\[See also the Queries, Advices, and Voice on Integrity on page 89.\]](#)

Caring, Inclusion, Interdependence, Welcoming Community

Friends' testimonies on simplicity, peace, integrity, equality, and stewardship, come together in our testimony on community, which calls us to sustain caring relationships for all. In today's interconnected world, human survival depends more than ever on discerning and actualizing the truth of our corporate experience, on mutual regard and support, on nurturing our relationships with one another and society, and with the environment as a whole.

We need to find the courage to assert and act upon the hope, however naive, that community can be found, because only by acting "as if" can we create a future fit for human habitation... Community means more than the comfort of souls. It means and always has meant, the survival of the species....

Parker J. Palmer, 1977

Community is the necessary foundation for justice and peace. As we live in a community to honor that of God in all, we are, as individuals, strengthened in the work to which we are called. We see and speak from that of God in ourselves to that of God in all others when we discover and acknowledge our common ground and common good. We see Jesus's command to love one another as a command to be in community.

An inspired leading is a gift of grace and demands obedience. By living in a close and trusted community we are given the support and the means to test that leading in conversation, in worship, or in a clearness committee. Trust in the love of a listening community, commitment to the process of sharing our convictions, enables and enlivens us to move forward with the leading we have been given.

Within Friends' spiritual community, the collective search for truth, undertaken in the Meeting for Worship, is the foundation for the beloved community to which Friends aspire. Living our faith is not a private matter. It calls us outward to the needs of the community at large. To be true to the Spirit, we must recognize and nourish the spiritual worth of all people, particularly those who have been devalued or excluded. Following the Spirit's leadings together, we hope to overcome the causes of racism, sexism, and homophobia, and the neglect of children, the poor, and the socially marginalized.

Equality

~~Justice, Fairness, Respect~~ [\[See also the Queries, Advices, and Voice on Community on page 66.\]](#)

Equality

The testimony of equality is rooted in our belief that there is that of God in every person. When taken fully to heart, this conviction lays on us the obligation to treat each person with respect, in the understanding that God may speak to us through any voice. The practical manifestations of this belief have been many. From early in Quaker history, Friends acknowledged the gifts and rights of women. Much later Friends accepted that they were participating in the evils of slavery and freed their own slaves. As time has passed, Friends have been called to act and to speak out against the blatant mistreatment and deprivation of many.

Friends believe that everyone is a child of God and that we should relate to one another in those terms. Each person is of infinite worth and is to be treated as someone who can be drawn by love, to live a full and

worthwhile life, which manifests respect and consideration for others. When Friends are at their best, that love leads to unity in our Meetings.

Equality is at the heart of our conviction that the truth can be revealed to every person. Friends are called to hallow the ordinary, to see the Divine at work everywhere, and to answer that work wherever we find it. Friends have been led not only to see discrimination and injustice, but also to translate that awareness into action, living our lives with honor, with respect, and with fairness. Friends and other seekers may indeed be on different paths; our journeys may lead to unaccustomed places. That diversity is a strength which teaches us the value of new visions, new perspectives, new ways to live in the Light.

[\[See also the Queries, Advices, and Voice on Equality on page 80.\]](#)

Stewardship

~~Responsibility, Conservation, Protection, Nurturing~~

John Woolman's simple statement in *A Word of Remembrance and Caution to the Rich* (1793) may serve as a beginning for all consideration of stewardship: "As Christians, all we possess is the gift of God, and in the distribution of it we act as his stewards; it becomes us therefore to act agreeable to that Divine wisdom which he graciously gives to his servants."

The principle of stewardship thus applies to all that we have and are. We seek to apply the same spirit to the use and contribution of our corporate resources. We are obliged to cherish the earth and to protect all its resources in a spirit of humble stewardship, committed to the right sharing of these resources among people everywhere.

"To turn all we possess into the channel of universal love becomes the business of our lives." This, in the words of John Woolman, is the meaning of Quaker stewardship. To be good stewards in God's Kingdom means that we are not to be possessed by our possessions, but rather that we learn to live more simply and with a willingness to share with others. In the contemporary world, which makes increasing demands on the earth's finite resources, Friends are challenged to exercise the care and concern that can assure that future generations may inherit an earth on which they can live in hope and dignity.

[\[See also the Queries, Advices, and Voice on Stewardship on page 132.\]](#)

Continuing Revelation

The testimonies point the way as we put our faith into action. Communal and individual concerns and actions are weighed in the light of these testimonies. The critical question remains "Is this ~~of God?~~ ~~not~~ ~~"Is this right?"~~ action consistent with the Inner Light and the Truth it reveals?"

In *Quaker Strongholds*, Caroline Stephen writes "Our strength seems to me to depend largely upon our consistency in appealing to the gospel rather than to the law—in trusting to the purifying power of an indwelling, informing Spirit, rather than to any external framework of regulations." She is warning us against becoming rigidly attached to any interpretation of testimony that excludes continuing revelation. We are being told to submit all testimonies or traditional practices to regular tests for Divine leading.

Quakers have accepted a certain body of religious and social doctrines inherited from the past and subject always to new interpretations as more Truth is apprehended. Tested and established practice in a religious society is as important as are good habits for the individual. Yet such practices must not become so fixed that they are no longer subject to improvement and growth.

Howard H. Brinton, [1955](#)

The Quaker conviction that revelations are not a thing of the past—that the word of God continues to be heard throughout the world—forms the basis of our worship, our practice, and our testimonies. Just as we worship with attention to the voice of God, the Light, expecting new revelations, so those new revelations, once tested by the gathered Meeting of Friends, can lead us to testify to the world about these new truths. Over time the visible testimonies of Quakers have evolved. So, with attention to the word of God, will new Quaker testimonies arise.

II. Queries, Advices, and Voices

The **Queries** are a device long used by the Religious Society of Friends for prompting both corporate and individual self-examination. Queries are an encouragement to continue your search, deepen your journey, and engage the mystery.

The **Advices** gather the essential suggestions and critical ideas that might serve to guide your meditations, your reflections, and your choices about how to live. Gleaned from our readings, our worship-sharing, and our prayerful meditations, these advices articulate our understanding of the concern.

The **Voices** speak eloquently, emphatically, and clearly to our condition. These words illuminate both the wisdom of the past and the issues of the present, connecting our own concerns with those of our history. We have chosen voices from our Quaker tradition as well as others which echo the Quaker spirit. These voices will not speak equally to each of us. Nor do we believe that the language in which each voice speaks is necessarily the same language we would choose today.

It is not opinion, or speculation, or notions of what is true, or assent to or the subscription of articles and propositions, though never so soundly worded, that ... makes a man a true believer or true Christian. But it is a conformity of mind and practice to the will of God, in all holiness of conversation, according to the dictates of this Divine principle of Light and Life in the soul which denotes a person truly a child of God.

William Penn, 1692

While it had been a tradition to consider one of twelve queries each month, additional sets of queries are now presented. Friends are encouraged to see this as an opportunity, rather than a problem.

In an attempt to offer Friends more ways to experience the challenges that the Queries offer, some are presented using a different syntax than Friends may be accustomed to. Friends may find that some phrasing challenges the intellect, while other phrasing speaks more directly to the heart. Newcomers may find some approaches more useful than others.

No particular usage of this section is prescribed; Friends should feel free to select, to combine, to discuss, and to reflect on these in the order that works best for their situation. Friends might consider at Meeting for Business using queries that pertain to the issues at hand.

1. Aging

Queries:

Do we welcome the approach of old age, both for ourselves and for others, as an opportunity for wisdom, for detachment from turmoil and for greater attachment to the Light?

How might I attend to what love requires of me in each new stage of my life?

Have I arranged the practical matters regarding possessions, location of documents, burial, etc. that will arise when I die or am unable to communicate so my family is not unduly burdened?

Am I comfortable with the relationships I will leave behind?

How can we support that of God in one another in the face of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral challenges?

How do we support caregivers who may be overwhelmed by the chronic needs of the one receiving care?

Advices:

Aging begins the moment we are born and cells within us keep growing until we die. We need to approach old age with courage and hope, with receiving and giving, and with forgiving and being forgiven. Aging is a natural part of human life. At no time should people be on the periphery of society because of their age. Older persons, who represent an increasingly large portion of the population, have varied talents, interests, and concerns. Friends have a long tradition of appreciation of the gifts of older members, and our Meetings should continue to encourage participation of all ages in Meeting activities.

As much as possible, make arrangements for your end of life care in good time, so that an undue burden does not fall on others. Although growing older may bring increasing disability and loneliness, it can also bring serenity, detachment, and wisdom. Pray that in your final years you may be enabled to find new ways of receiving and reflecting God's love.

A Meeting will be rewarded by a mutual relationship in which younger Friends are able to appreciate the presence and worth of the older Friends in their midst. We should help older Friends know that they are needed, cared for, loved, and will be remembered.

Voices:

Those of you who are kept by age or sickness from more active work, who are living retired lives, may in your very separation have the opportunity of liberating power for others. Your prayers and thoughts go out further than you think, and as you wait in patience and in communion with God, you may be made ministers of peace and healing and be kept young in soul.

London Yearly Meeting, 1923,

I believe eternal life is in each moment of life, here and now; the real tragedy is not how or when we die but if we do not live the life we are given to our full potential.

Jenifer Faulkner, 1982

We may grieve as we resign ourselves to giving up the desires and ambitions of our youth, but as we give up those desires, we become more open to accept God's will, including accepting the service that God would have us do. Then God may call us to a ministry that we never thought possible for ourselves.

Elizabeth F. Meyer, 2004

I am convinced it is a great art to know how to grow old gracefully, and I am determined to practice it... I always thought I should love to grow old, and I find it is even more delightful than I thought. It is so delicious to be done with things and to feel no need any longer to concern myself much about earthly affairs... I am tremendously content to let one activity after another go, and to wait quietly and happily the opening of the door at the end of the passageway that will let me into my real abiding place.

Hannah Whitall Smith, 1903

In primitive tribes we observe that the old people are almost always the guardians of the mysteries and the laws, and it is in these that the cultural heritage of the tribe is

expressed. How does the matter stand with us? Where is the wisdom of our old people, where are their precious secrets and their visions?

Carl Jung, 1955

As I grow older, I seem to need more time for inner stillness.... This can happen in the midst of daily chores or when walking in a crowd or riding in a train. It means being still, open, reflective, holding within myself the crucible of joy and pain of all the world, and lifting it up to God. Praise comes into it, and thankfulness for all the love I have known and shared, the realization of how much of the time I am carried, supported, upheld by others and the love of God.

Dorothy Steere, 1995

Accepting the fact of death, we are freed to live more fully. In bereavement, give yourself time to grieve. When others mourn, let your love embrace them.

Australia Faith & Practice, 2011

Indeed, bereavement often anticipates death where frailty and cognitive impairment in those that we loved get in the way of recognizing the whole person that once lived.

Jim Rose, 2013

It may be hard, at times, to find beauty and harmony in the dying process. On the surface, there is often much ugliness, much suffering or struggle, much that seems to be "falling apart" rather than "coming together." And yet, just below this troubled surface, there is harmony – a true beauty that reflects something beyond the immediate circumstances of death. As one person's life comes to its culmination, and others are touched at the heart by loss and love – then, unexpectedly perhaps, we may find ourselves "walking in beauty" together.

Kirsten Backstrom, 2001

In addition to taking care of the practical supports and planning for death and dying which in themselves can be overwhelming or unfamiliar, we are all faced with deeper issues related to the end of a life. What is most important to us as we make this final passage? How can we accompany someone and provide spiritual support through their final journey? Can we make plans that are consistent with lifelong values? Is there a sense of unfinished business, a need to forgive or be forgiven?

Quaker Aging Resources, 2013

They that love beyond the World,
cannot be separated by it.
Death cannot kill what never dies.
Nor can Spirits ever be divided
that love and live in the same Divine Principle,
the Root and Record of their Friendship.
If Absence be not Death, neither is theirs.

William Penn, 1682

Death often faces us with the most difficult of questions, yet it may be the occasion of our most profound insights into the meanings of life. As we try to surround the bereaved with love and care, God's sustaining power can bring to all concerned not only courage but a transforming Truth about death and life itself.

New York Yearly Meeting, 1998

1.2. Caring for One Another

Queries

In what ways do I show respect for that of God in every person?

Do I reach out ~~to those in distress? If I find this difficult, what holds me back?~~ with spiritual and practical care to those with special needs?

Am I comfortable making my own needs known to my Meeting?

How do we share in the diverse joys and transitions in each other's lives?

Do you consider the needs of grandparents and older members of the family circle?

Advices

Our Meetings are strongest when Friends are concerned about the welfare of every member of the Meeting community. While we need to guard against prying or invasion of privacy, it is nevertheless essential that Meetings be aware of the spiritual and material needs of members of the community and express caring concern in appropriate ways. To this end, we are to live affectionately as friends, entering with sympathy into the joys and sorrows of one another's lives.

As we are willing to offer help, so we need to be willing to make our needs known and to accept help. In bereavement, we need to give ourselves time to grieve. When others mourn, we need to let our love embrace them with the simple things of life: praying together, talking, planning meals, caring for children, and otherwise being of comfort. In offering pastoral care, it is not necessary to find the right words; it is important to be present.

Just as we do not leave pastoral care to a pastor, so we may not leave this most essential function to a committee alone. It is important to recognize when it may be appropriate to reach within or beyond the Quaker community to involve persons with special expertise.

Voices

When the members of a fellowship know one another, care for one another, visit one another in their homes, consult one another, hold one another up in the silence and feel responsibility before God for one another, then when they meet together for worship they are truly open as a corporate group for the deepest working of the Spirit.

Douglas Steere, 1940

Let us seek to live in compassion and patience with one another. Grace and latitude should mark our relationships. All too often we can injure each other unduly in our zeal for justice and truth and righteousness. The spirit of condemnation can creep into our relationships so subtly. We can begin to look at each other's possessions with a mental calculator. But there is a more excellent way: we simply need to be with one another, loving, supporting, caring. Of course, we live and speak the truth as it has been given to us, but the business of straightening each other out belongs to God, not us.

Richard J. Foster, 1981

Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness, and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another – and helping one another up with a tender hand, if there has been any slip or fall.

Isaac Penington, 1667

In a true community we will not choose our companions, for our choices are so often limited by self-serving motives. Instead, our companions will be given to us by grace. Often they will be persons who will upset our settled view of self and world. In fact, we might define true community as the place where the person you least want to live with always lives!

Parker J. Palmer, 1977

Loving care is not something that those sound in mind and body “do” for others but a process that binds us together. God has made us loving and the imparting of love to another satisfies something deep within us. It would be a mistake to assume that those with outwardly well-organized lives do not need assistance. Many apparently secure carers live close to despair within themselves. We all have our needs.

Britain Yearly Meeting, 1999

And all such as behold their brother or sister in a transgression, go not in rough, light or upbraiding spirit to reprove or admonish him or her, but in the power of the Lord, and the spirit of the Lamb, and in the wisdom and love of the Truth, which suffers thereby, to admonish such an offender. So may the soul of such a brother or sister be seasonably and effectually reached unto and overcome, and they may have cause to bless the name of the Lord on their behalf, and so a blessing may be rewarded into the bosom of that faithful and tender brother or sister that so admonished them.

George Fox, 1669

How does a man in the dark prison environment follow his leadings, adhere to the foundations of his faith and live in the Light? Queries such as these are what bring men to Quaker worship. Queries such as these provide guides as we seek for to find our way. The men at South Mountain Friends Fellowship are grateful for the path that has remained lit for us, and for others to follow.

South Mountain Friends Fellowship, 2006

In addition to its many religious forms, Healing also includes many arts and sciences. There is the art of listening, the art of smiling, the art of empathy, of knowing just what people need, and not rushing in to offer help that is not suitable. Then there is the healing that comes through prayer in its various forms, through the laying on of hands, through music and dance, painting and colour, through communion with and understanding of the world of nature, and through friendship.

Jim Pym, 1990

The resources of the Meeting can be important for families undergoing crises. Friends should be particularly mindful of the needs of children who are experiencing pain or loss. A Meeting can provide care and understanding, acting as an extended family. Not only are we brothers and sisters in the spirit, but we may be beloved aunts and uncles of all the children in the Meeting. The resilience of the Meeting as a nurturing community encompassing many generations supports each of us throughout the many stages of our lives.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting, 1988

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

John 13: 34-35 (NRSV)

Those who go forth ministering to the wants and necessities of their fellow beings, experience a rich return, their souls being as a watered garden, and as a spring that faileth not.

Lucretia Mott, 1850

2. Children and Young People

Queries

How do we provide young people with guidance in Quaker faith and practice? **19. Youth**

Queries

Do you establish family standards including the mutual obligations of youth and adults?

How do we get to know and care for our ~~children and young people~~youth as individuals?

What have we learned from the wisdom expressed by our ~~young people~~?youth?

How do we share our deepest beliefs with ~~children, our youth~~, while leaving them free to develop as the spirit of God may lead them?

Advices

Rejoice in the presence of ~~children and young people~~our youth in meeting. Recognize and affirm the gifts that they bring to the life of the meeting community, and ensure to the maximum extent possible their well-being and safety.

~~Children and young people~~Our youth need their peer groups. They also need opportunities to join with the whole group as an integral part of the meeting, sharing experiences that deepen relationships. Part of sharing is learning to know of our past as Quakers. Even more important is sharing what we as Quakers understand to be the Truth today and expressing the ways in which it shapes our lives.

Parents are their children's first teachers; the Meeting along with the parents need to help ~~children~~our youth understand what it means to attend Meeting for Worship. ~~Children~~Our youth need specific expectations placed upon them. It is important that our youth learn to be accountable for their own actions.

All Friends need to be mentors to the ~~children~~youth in their Meeting.

Voices

To watch the spirit of children, to nurture them in Gospel Love, and labour to help them against that which would mar the beauty of their minds, is a debt we owe them; and a faithful performance of our duty not only tends to their lasting benefit and our own peace, but also to render their company agreeable to us. A care hath lived in my mind, that more time might be employed by parents at home, and by tutors at school, in weightily attending to the spirit and inclinations of children, and that we may so lead, instruct and govern them, in this tender part of life, that nothing may be omitted

in our power, to help them on their way to become the children of our Father who art in heaven.”

John Woolman, c.1760

But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.

Mark 10:14 (NRSV)

We seek to affirm in each child at school, each member of the meeting, each person we meet in our daily lives, the person that he or she may with God’s help grow to be. We are all the merest infants in God’s world, struggling to stand upright and walk unaided, trying in vain to articulate our halting thoughts and feelings. We stumble and fall. We give way to self-pity and shame. God hauls us to our feet again and makes sense of our childish babble, never ceasing to believe in what we may ultimately become. Do we do the same for our children and one another?

Barbara Windle, 1988

All children are listeners, but some stop listening and remembering sooner than others. ...It makes me sad when I hear discussions about not introducing children to God until they are old enough to understand. I grew into the Lord’s prayer, and I am still growing into it. All religious language, all devotional books, and particularly the Bible, provide growing room for young minds and spirits.

Elise Boulding, 1975

I lament more than I can express that a military education and training is being introduced into our public schools. It has no business there. With such profession as we are making, a Christian profession, we have no right to be instructing children in the art of war, in the art of murdering their fellow beings.

Lucretia Mott, 1869

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise.

Deuteronomy 6:5-7 (NRSV)

I want that we may all show our faith by our works, by our honesty and justice and mercy and love; I want love to begin with little children; they should be governed by love, and love only. I am glad the rod is so far banished in the family circles and the schools. Children love peace. The little child knows when it says, Mother, I love everybody. There is a Divine instinct in them which prompts to this feeling.

Lucretia Mott, 1876

4. Diversity

Queries

Does your vision of a just society include people living their lives without fear of discrimination based on who they are, what they believe, and whom they love?

Are we willing to be in communion with each other, open to our differences yet secure in the one Spirit that calls us all to be Friends?

Do my decisions reflect the voices of people of color, people with different sexual identities, people of different ages and economic conditions? Do I take the risks that right action demands?

Do I seek out and listen to perspectives that promote equal access, inclusion, and welcome for people of all cultures and backgrounds?

How do we work toward creating a community of different people, rather than being a community that just lets different people in?

Do we take the time to see what we want to become as people and as a global community, and do we humbly acknowledge that we have some work to do?

Advices

Celebrating diversity is more than affirming equality. That celebration leads to embracing Friends of different persuasions, a real sense of inclusion that goes beyond an arms-length acceptance, a partnership with all who seek to deepen their spiritual lives. Meetings are enriched when they are open and welcoming, when they earnestly embrace seekers from different cultural backgrounds into the life of the Meeting.

In our discussions of spiritual and theological diversity, we are perhaps too quick to search for commonalities, for that which transcends the differences between us. To love genuinely is not to care for people despite their individual peculiarities, nor to ignore those peculiarities, but to care for the person wholly, in full light of those blessed peculiarities.

Addressing prejudice and its consequences is not something that just happens on an intellectual plane-- it must occur in our spiritual/emotional being as well if the change is to be meaningful and underpin changed action. Acknowledge and dispel stereotypes and prejudices about differences you encounter. Dredge up the embedded, irrational fears and emotions attached to these images. Let go of those fears and negative feelings, and replace stereotypes with a personal assessment and a motion of love.

Voices

By getting beyond our differences, we dare to believe that we can bring about a Kingdom of God on earth, where we transcend our differences, not ignoring our disagreements, but finding a way to go through them and beyond our fears. We recognize that this is not easy work, but have faith that this is our work, and it is work that we cannot rightly lay down.

Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
& Queer Concerns (FLGBTQC) 2007

We urge Friends to put new energy into the struggle to end the oppression, often unconscious, that is imposed on people because of their sex or their sexual orientation. Men and women must be freed of the rigid roles society teaches them. The myths about bisexuality and homosexuality, myths that perpetuate deep rooted discrimination, need to be dispelled through educational efforts, perhaps undertaken by the Monthly Meetings. Equally important are the efforts each individual must make to develop positive attitudes towards his or her sexuality and the sexuality of others,

and to build mutually affirming relationships. In accordance with Friends' testimony of the right and responsibility to follow the Inner Light, we hope we will come to respect the decisions of others about their own sexuality.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting, 1973

Each of us inevitable,

Each of us limitless—each of us with his or her right upon the earth,

Each of us allow'd the eternal purports of the earth,

Each of us here as divinely as any is here.”

Walt Whitman, 1900

The choice to find commonality with others attracts those of us who hate conflict and would wish away oppression in a desperate hope that the situation isn't really that bad. Yet this attitude still keeps us separate by excluding all of our experiences of racial, ethnic, class, and religious identity and interaction from the conversation. If we don't name those experiences and talk about them, other people cannot be sure we know they exist, and therefore they cannot be sure that they are being fully seen.

Pamela Haines, 2012

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female; for you all are one in Christ Jesus.”

Galatians 3:28 (ESV)

Let us make the same effort to enter into the skins of our fellow-members that we would like them to make with respect to those under the burden of discrimination. Let us recognize that the most important aspect of any of this work is not where we or they are today, but in what direction we are moving and how fast.

David Scull, 1961

The time for healing is now! Let us work to change our pattern of relating with one another into one that honors freedom, equality, and peace. Speak to that of God in each person you meet. Honor their humanity by working to see God inside them.

Vanessa Julye, 2009

The only way to treat people with dignity and justice is to recognize that racism has a profound negative effect upon our lives, and therefore noticing color helps to counteract that effect. Instead of being color neutral we need to notice much more acutely and insightfully exactly the difference that color makes in the way people are treated.

Paul Kivel, 2002

There is a principle which is pure, placed in the human mind, which in different places and ages hath different names: it is, however, pure and proceeds from God. It is deep and inward, confined to no form of religion nor excluded from any, where the heart stands in perfect sincerity.

John Woolman, 1762

Adelphi Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends understands that God, who loves all people unconditionally, is leading the Meeting to honor the gender identity of each person, as that person determines it.

In addition to welcoming transgender persons to worship with us, in 2009 our Meeting supported a Friend and her family through her gender transition as she claimed her wholeness as a woman. Our testimonies of equality and community confirm that when we embrace that of God in everyone, including the full spectrum of gender identities in our Meeting, our worship deepens and our community is enriched.

Every person should be able to live out fully what the Spirit is leading them to be. Adelphi will be an affirming, safe, and nurturing place for everyone. We extend our loving care to all transgender persons, and their families and friends, who seek to share our Quaker spiritual journey and corporate life.

Adelphi Monthly Meeting, 2013

For everyone born, a place at the table,
to live without fear, and simply to be,
to work, to speak out, to witness and worship,
for everyone born, the right to be free.

Shirley Erena Murray, 1996

35. Education

Queries

How can we most effectively foster a spirit of inquiry with a loving and understanding attitude?

What effort are we making to be better acquainted with Quaker faith and practices and the beliefs of other faiths?

Do we take an active and supportive interest in schools, libraries, and other educational resources in our communities and elsewhere?

Do we also see nature as a teacher and a guide?

Do I strive to develop my physical, emotional and mental capacities toward reaching my Divinely given potential?

How do we prepare ourselves and our children to play active roles in a changing world?

Advices

Seek for ourselves and for our children the full development of God's gifts, which is true education. ~~Realize that education should continue~~ Education continues throughout life, ~~and that; our communities are strengthened when we~~ all ~~should~~ share its opportunities and privileges. Be ready at all times to receive fresh light from whatever quarter it may come; approach new theories with discernment.

~~Friends are concerned to educate for~~ Education not only fosters individual growth, community responsibility, and a knowledge of God's world, ~~and but also~~ a sense of wonder at continuing revelation in this changing universe. ~~Religious—When religious~~ education begins early is practiced in the home ~~as the child participates, all members participate~~ in family silence, in prayer, in readings from the Bible and other religious works, and in family discussions. ~~We~~ Our youth develop a sensitivity to God and an appreciation of the wonders of the world when we set an example in our ~~own lives and seek actively to guide our children's development of sensitivity to God and the world.~~ own lives. Thus children can learn how God works through and among all of us as exemplified in the life and ministry of Jesus. See ciricula advices at <https://sites.google.com/site/bymreligious/>

~~Meetings should~~ Friends are encouraged to foster educational activities that bring all age groups together. Conferences, workshops, and retreats, organized by Monthly, Quarterly, or Yearly Meetings or other Friends' bodies, provide contacts with a variety of Friends' viewpoints. ~~We should encourage~~ Encourage adult members to follow their leadings in seeking education of all kinds ~~and to be.~~ Be sensitive in offering the financial assistance sometimes needed to take advantage of such opportunities. (See also the Religious Education committee functions on page 183.)

For many years Friends have been concerned about the problem of exclusivity in private schools, especially those carrying the name of Friends. Those concerned with any Quaker-related school would agree that each institution has a continuing responsibility to discourage snobbishness and feelings of false superiority, to encourage economy and simplicity, and to cultivate a realization that with special opportunities go special obligations. A Meeting that has direct responsibility for a Friends' school, or that has any Friends' school in its community, should assist the school to maintain its Quaker character.

Friends have supported public education from its inception, recognizing that Truth prospers best among a populace that is "led out" from illiteracy and ignorance. In local Meetings we share responsibility with our communities for public education. Through involvement as teachers, school administrators, parents or interested citizens, Meeting members can work to improve the programs of public schools. Opposition, for example, to overemphasis on competition, to military exercises in

schools, or to overly lax or overly severe discipline can be a prelude to positive suggestions of alternatives. We should continue to use our influence as citizens to elevate the standards of the public schools, recognizing that the crux of education is how the school system treats the individual. The Quaker ideal is to develop each child's spiritual strength as well as intellectual and practical skills.

Voices

The belief that there is "that of God in each person" is the foundation of the Quaker approach to education. Education cultivates the fullness of the human spirit through both openness and discipline. We are open to the knowledge, understanding, and wisdom that come from history, from our own life experience of God, and from the works and lives of others. We recognize all of life as an educational enterprise, that we are all teachers as well as learners.

Northern Yearly Meeting, 2006

But I showed them by the scriptures that there was an anointing within man to teach him and that the Lord would teach his people himself.

George Fox, 1648

How is the Inward Teacher known? In joy and health, but also in loneliness and alienation; in the deepest encounters with other people and in dialogue with great ideas and works; in love but also in emptiness; in hunger but also in plenitude; in solitude but also in community. Wherever we are is the starting place for encountering the voice which can speak to our condition. We cannot compel the inner voice to speak, we can only try to practice openness and attention, and when we hear the voice we can only practice minding and answering.

Paul A. Lacey, 1988

The last reaches of religious education are not attained by carefully planned and externally applied lessons, taught to people through the outward ears. The fundamental religious education of the soul is conducted by the Holy Spirit, the living voice of God within us. He is the last and greatest teacher of the soul. All else is but pointings to the inward Teacher, the Spirit of the indwelling Christ. Until life is lived in the presence of this Teacher, we are apt to confuse knowledge of Church history and Biblical backgrounds with the true education of the soul that takes place in the listening life of prayer.

Thomas R. Kelly, 1942

What is to be the content of Quaker Religious Education? Lacking a creed, what is it we teach? Theology has been defined as faith reflected upon. For Friends, theology, or what takes the place of theology, is experience reflected upon. We begin by reflecting on our own experience, but as members of the Religious Society of Friends we are engaged in a corporate endeavor. Ours is not a do-it-yourself religion but a do-it-together religion.

Gene Hillman, 2003

True education nurtures the insights that unite knowledge with behavior and ability with desire, changing one's life, not merely one's ideas.

Carol Murphy, 1952

4.6. Equality

Queries

Do you search yourself for and strive to eliminate prejudices?

~~In what ways~~ *How* do we respond, as individuals and as a community, to prejudice and injustice?

How do we benefit from inequity and exploitation? ~~How are we victims of inequity and exploitation?~~
~~In what ways can we address these problems?~~

Do you oppose the use of our resources for human exploitation?

How do we show through our ways of living that love of God affirms the equality of all people;
~~treating them with dignity and respect?~~

Advices

It is important to realize that equality does not mean sameness. Each person is a separate individual and should have the opportunity to pursue her or his own gifts. To deny anyone the right to develop his or her full potential for any reason is not equality. Cultural and other differences among us weave a tapestry that is immeasurably enriched by our diversity. It is the right of every person to be treated with dignity and respect.

In our Meetings for Worship, God's message may be delivered through any person attending that meeting. In our Meetings for Worship with a Concern for Business, each person present may shed Light on a matter under consideration. We also need to recognize that the young among us need to be listened to as any adult, for their words might bring the spark of unity among us.

We need to be careful that we speak in positive terms when talking about others, especially those who might be different from ourselves or our close community. Adults have a specific responsibility to model Friendly values to children, who do not see other children as different until they are taught that others may be different and in some way may not be as "good" as they are. Speaking in a negative way about a person or group of people may be a form of violence, especially if the statement is not carefully qualified to show the rationale and purpose of the remark.

Voices

I believe that Meeting for Worship has brought the same awareness to all who have seen and understood the message that everyone is equal in the sight of God, that everybody has the capacity to be the vessel of God's word. There is nothing that age, experience, and status can do to prejudice where and how the Light will appear. This awareness—the religious equality of each and every one—is central to Friends.

Ursula M. Franklin, 1979

~~There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.~~

Galatians 3:28 (KJV)

To consider mankind otherwise than brethren, to think favors are peculiar to one nation and exclude others, plainly supposes a darkness in the understanding. For as God's love is universal, so where the mind is sufficiently influenced by it, it begets a likeness of itself and the heart is enlarged towards all men.

John Woolman, c.1760

Guided by the Light of God within us and recognizing that of God in others, we can all learn to value our differences in age, sex, physique, race and culture. This enables mutual respect and self-respect to develop, and it becomes possible for every one to love one

another as God loves us.... Jesus stressed the unique nature and worth of each individual. It is unreasonable to expect assimilation or to ignore difference, claiming to treat everyone the same. This denies the value of variety. Personality, sex, race, culture and experience are God's gifts. We need one another, and differences shared become enrichments, not reasons to be afraid, to dominate or condemn. We need to consider our behavior carefully, heeding the command of Jesus that we should love our neighbors as we love ourselves.

Meg Maslin, 1990

Our experience has been that spiritual gifts are not distributed with regard to sexual orientation or gender identity.

Our experience has been that Alexandria Monthly Meeting has been immeasurably enriched over the years by the full participation and Spirit-guided leadership of Friends of all sexual orientations and gender identities. We will continue to listen to and honor those voices and gifts.

We believe it is inconsistent with God's Truth to silence the voices of Friends based on whom and how they love.

Our experience confirms that we are all equal before God, as God made us, and feel blessed to be engaged in the work of Alexandria Monthly Meeting together.

Alexandria Monthly Meeting, 2004

In the days ahead we must not consider it unpatriotic to raise certain basic questions about our national character. We must begin to ask, "Why are there forty million poor people in a nation overflowing with such unbelievable affluence? Why has our nation placed itself in the position of being God's military agent on earth...? Why have we substituted the arrogant undertaking of policing the whole world for the high task of putting our own house in order?"

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. 1967

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody helps ME any best place. And aint I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm. I have plowed, I have planted and I have gathered into barns. And no man could head me. And aint I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it—and bear the lash as well. And aint I a woman? I have borne children and seen most of them sold into slavery, and when I cried out with a mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me. And aint I a woman?

Sojourner Truth, 1851

It is time for the preachers, the rabbis, the priests and pundits, and the professors to believe in the awesome wonder of diversity...It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength. We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter their color; equal in importance no matter their texture. Our young must be taught that racial peculiarities do exist, but that beneath the skin, beyond the differing feature and into the true heart of being, fundamentally, we are more alike, my friend, than we are unlike.

Maya Angelou, 1994

In those first days in the South...a white kid of nine or ten was hanging over the roof of the Royals' dugout. Above the chorus of boos, [Jackie] Robinson could hear him shouting, "Atta boy, Jackie, nice try! Atta boy, Jackie!" ...He knew that never in his life would he forget the face of this boy who was honest at heart, not yet filled with the poison of prejudice, who shouted a word of encouragement above the cries of the mob.

Carl T. Rowan, 1960

Gay and lesbian Friends and couples bless our Meeting. Their gifts of courage, love, and devotion speak to us of God, and move us closer to that of God within us all. We offer our experience of these gifts to other Meetings as they seek the Light on this issue.

Charlottesville Monthly Meeting, 1997

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:27 (NRSV)

One has to fight for justice for all. If I do not fight bigotry wherever it is, bigotry is thereby strengthened. And to the degree that it is strengthened, it will thereby have the power to turn on me.

Bayard Rustin, 1953

Though all of us are attracted to physical beauty, cleverness, wittiness, and intelligence, the Quaker affirmation that there is that of God in each person asserts that being worthy of respect does not depend on possessing attractive qualities or skills. Until we can respect another person without justification except that he or she is a child of God, it is not really respect.

Paul A. Lacey, 1998

My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together.

Desmond Tutu, 1984

5. ~~Fostering~~3. Community

Queries

Are love and ~~harmony within the Meeting community fostered by a spirit of open sharing?~~unity maintained among you?

What helps our Meeting build trust in one another?

How do we get to know one another in our spiritual community and in other religious communities?

How do we make time in our lives for our Meeting?

How do our conflicts have the potential to enrich the life of our community?

Advices

The Meeting can consciously cultivate fellowship and community, and is enriched when all members and attenders participate actively. The working of the Spirit in our lives is expressed through ministry, pastoral caring for each other, and the example provided by lives lived in the Light. As we worship, work, and laugh together, we forge bonds of trust, understanding, and communication.

When need arises to address contentious issues, they then may be addressed openly and honestly. Conflict thus experienced can also build trust and intimacy. When resolution is not immediate, the Meeting can make room for different expressions of continuing revelation, while persisting in earnest search for unity. Convictions that might divide or disrupt a Meeting can, through God's grace, help to make it creative and strong. The larger Quaker community has many resources that can help meetings address internal conflict.

For further advice on caring for Friends, see the section on "Caring for Members' Needs and Spiritual Wellbeing on page 176.

Voices

The life of a religious society consists in something more than the body of principles it professes and the outer garments of organization which it wears. These things have their own importance: they embody the society to the world, and protect it from the chance and

change of circumstances; but the springs of life lie deeper, and often escape recognition. They are to be found in the vital union of the members of the society with God and with one another, a union which allows the free flowing through the society of a spiritual life which is its strength.

William Charles Braithwaite, 1905

Where, then, can seeking men and women find a community in which meditation, worship, religious education of children, common undertaking and adventurous experiments, common festivals, and spiritual therapy are all going on, not as part of an expensive organized professional program, but as part of the informal natural life of a close religious fellowship?

Douglas V. Steere, 1940

Our belief in the universality of the Inner Light requires us to “walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone” as George Fox urged. No human being is excluded from our sense of community, for we are led by our faith to view human beings as children of God rather than as stereotypes of cultures, nations, or ideologies. It is individual people with whom fellowship must be established, and each Friend must seek in the quiet of worship the personal strength to work at the establishment of community.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting, 1988

How can I participate in a fairer distribution of resources unless I live in a community which makes it possible to consume less? How can I learn accountability unless I live in a community where my acts and their consequences are visible to all? How can I learn to share power unless I live in a community where hierarchy is unnatural? How can I take the risks which right action demands unless I belong to a community which gives support? How can I learn the sanctity of each life unless I live in a community where we can be persons, not roles, to one another?

Parker J. Palmer, 1977

And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Leviticus 19:33-34 (KJV)

I believe that much could be accomplished by carefully planned intervisitation. There are highly gifted persons in a few meetings, who ought to circulate much more than is now the case. Their absence occasionally from their own meeting would throw the sense of responsibility on other members of it, which would have a wholesome effect, and they would bring fresh life and inspiration where they visited.

Rufus M. Jones, 1941

Friends who restrict their experience of the Society to their local Meeting are missing rich experiences of fellowship in the wider community. Quarterly, Half-yearly and Yearly Meetings as well as larger gatherings provide opportunities for Friends of all ages to broaden their experience of the Society and the circle of their spiritually-based friendships.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting, 1988

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Galatians 5:13-14 (KJV)

The Inward Light is a universal light given to all men, religious consciousness itself being basically the same wherever it is found. Our difficulties come when we try to express it. We

cannot express; we can only experience God. Therefore we must always remember tolerance, humility, and tenderness with others whose ways and views may differ from ours.

Pacific Yearly Meeting, 1953

It is not easy to find community and fellowship in the modern world. Many Friends view relationships within the local Meeting as similar to partial relationships established with people met regularly at work, at play, and in the neighborhood. It is perhaps too much to expect that we all will make the Meeting central to our lives. But unless the Meeting fellowship can be made to speak to something deep in our lives, our Society falls short of fulfilling the true spiritual needs of its members.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting, 1988

We all need other people to invite, amplify, and help us to discern the inner teacher's voice for at least three reasons:

** The journey toward inner truth is too taxing to be made solo; lacking support, the solitary traveler soon becomes weary or fearful and is likely to quit the road.*

** The path is too deeply hidden to be traveled without company; finding our way involves clues that are subtle and sometimes misleading, requiring the kind of discernment that can happen only in dialogue.*

** The destination is too daunting to be achieved alone: we need community to find the courage to venture into the alien lands to which the inner teacher may call us.*

Parker J. Palmer, 2004

Perhaps community is a constellation. Each one of us is a light in the emerging collective brightness. A constellation of light has the greater power of illumination than any single light would have on its own. Together we increase brightness.

John O'Donohue, 2000

6-7. Home and Family

Queries

Do you regularly seek God's guidance?

~~In what ways do~~Do you make your home a place of affection where God's presence is felt?

Do you allow time for family worship and spiritual exploration, taking care to include both the very young and very old?

How do you take care that commitments outside the home do not encroach upon the time and loving attention the family needs for its health and well-being?

How does the Meeting support families of all kinds in their attempts to improve communication, family life, and the rearing of children in an atmosphere of love?

Do you cultivate healthful and moderate habits, avoiding the hazards of drugs, intoxicants, and over-indulgence generally?

Can you keep a sense of humor and avoid taking yourself too seriously?

Advices

Our Meetings and communities are composed of persons who live in many kinds of home situations. ~~The efforts of making a home embraces~~Our home life is enriched when we embrace with tender regard the needs and abilities of all members and their unique contributions. In the eyes of our children, in the loving expression among adults, in the concern we have for the well-being of all in the Meeting family, we feel God's love at work on earth.

~~It is in the family that we initially seek to live with~~Families are strengthened when we live our testimonies: engaging in various forms of stewardship; practicing equality and being aware of its limitations; ~~integrity in its many guises;~~living with integrity; pursuing simplicity in all its complexities; and ~~how hard but how satisfying it is to be peaceable.~~finding the satisfaction of a peaceful approach to the world. As we strive to create the peaceable kingdom at home we need to be particularly careful about anger and its expression. Stressful situations need to be addressed openly and lovingly. Participation of all family members in discussions and decisions regarding joint family possessions and activities helps children develop judgment not only in their personal decisions and the decision-making process, but also with respect to time values and the worth of the activities themselves.

Meetings should be aware of situational stresses encountered by families whose members have special needs because of physical or mental illness, developmental disability, addiction, or handicap. These families may require extra loving support and sensitivity to their needs. See the advices on caring for members' needs and spiritual wellbeing on page 176.

We need to be mindful of those who live alone, for frequently the Meeting community *is* their family. We need to be aware of circumstances such as illness, the infirmities of age, or unusual stress, in which those living alone may require assistance or companionship.

See advices on reading the Bible and other spiritual writings on page 34.

Voices

In the busy years of home life the family members are upheld and strengthened by their dependence upon God and upon one another.... Homemaking is a Quaker service in its own right. It should be recognized as such and a proper balance preserved, so that other activities—even the claims of Quaker service in other fields—are not allowed to hinder its growth.

New England Yearly Meeting, 1986

A Quaker home seeks to bind its family members together. Such a home cultivates recognition of authority while at the same time allowing each member appropriate freedom to develop fully. Conflict in a family is natural; when lovingly and constructively dealt with, it is an opportunity for growth and sometimes also an affirmation of individual leadings. The natural give-and-take with one's peers begins at home. Learning to handle disagreements in a calm and fair manner prepares the way for solving differences in school, the neighborhood, and the larger society.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 2002

Love reaches further than words, and we experience the Spirit long before any words. The family is a precious spiritual community, and we rejoice and are nourished in homes full of friendliness, refreshment, and peace, where God becomes real to those who live there and all who visit. We joyfully acknowledge the sustaining, enriching presence of loving unions among us, and we want the meeting's strength to undergird these covenants.

New York Yearly Meeting, 1998

There is something quite special about relationship with one's grandchildren, perhaps most of all in early childhood, when one slips into the garden of Eden with them for a spell. I don't even want to analyze what is so happy-making about this two-way relationship, although I constantly dwell upon it as one of the remarkable bonus joys of these later years of life. It is

an experience that I have tasted for more than twenty years now, with six very different variations on the same theme.

Ruth Fawell, 1987

The exercise of inappropriate power in close relationships can result in physical, psychological, or sexual abuse. In the face of the social isolation often associated with an abusive home, those victimized may feel alone and desperate. Meetings are advised to educate themselves about domestic abuse and to become particularly sensitive to signs of such situations and to be bold in offering assistance. Meetings are encouraged to create communities of trust in which those who are being abused can seek the support of the meeting.

Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting, 2013

In joining the Society of Friends that spring forty-six years ago, I committed myself to becoming a peacemaker. But I didn't know very much about peace-making. Kenneth Boulding, ten years older, served as teacher-companion-guide. Entering the marriage we both saw our task as creating a home of peace from which to help to build a more peaceful world. When the impatiently awaited babies finally started coming in 1947, the practice of peace in the home became more difficult and challenging than when there were only the two of us. But we knew we had to practice at home what we wanted for the world.

Elise Boulding, 1989

7.8. Integrity

Queries

How do we seek truth by which to live? How do we recognize it?

In what ways does my life speak of my beliefs and values?

Do I strive to be truthful at all times, avoiding judicial oaths?

In what way is my life ~~out of~~ in harmony with truth as I know it?

Advices

When we live with integrity, alone or as a faith community, our words and deeds ring true. We are able to hear when there is discord between our values and our words or actions, and we often sense when others in our community are “out of tune” with their own truth, or when, as a community, we do not seem to be following the same conductor.

Giving testimony to truth and integrity also means refusing to place things other than God at the center of one's life—whether it be one's own self, possessions, the regard for others, belief in principles (such as rationality, progress, or justice) or something else. It is the understanding that even good things are no longer good when they supplant God as one's center.

Community plays a critical role in discernment. Integrity calls us to recognize our gifts and our flaws alike with humility, helping each other lovingly to “let our lives speak,” the truth as we know it. When we live with integrity, we hold the imperfections and dark places in our selves and our communities to the Light, remembering that our mistakes and flaws may help us understand the pain and burdens of others or even become a spring for ministry. Living with integrity requires that we not “outrun our guide.” Rather, as ~~Carolyn~~ Caroline Stephen wrote, we do our best to “live up to the Light we have,” knowing that “more will be given” when we are ready.

Voices

The essence of early Quakerism is precisely in a demand for complete integrity of the individual in relation to God, to other people, to self.

Cecil Hinshaw, 1964

At the first convincement, when Friends could not put off their hats to people, or say You to a single person, but Thou and Thee; when they could not bow, or use flattering words in salutations, or adopt the fashions and customs of the world, many Friends, that were tradesmen of several sorts, lost their customers at the first; for the people were shy of them, and would not trade with them; so that for a time some Friends could hardly get money enough to buy bread. But afterwards, when people came to have experience of Friends' honesty and truthfulness, and found that their Yea was yea, and their Nay was nay; that they kept to a word in their dealings, and that they would not cozen and cheat them; but that if they sent a child to their shops for anything, they were as well used as if they had come themselves; the lives and conversations of Friends did preach, and reached to the witness of God in the people.

George Fox, 1653

...and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

Micah 6:8b (KJV)

A neighbor...desired me to write his will: I took notes, and, amongst other things, he told me to which of his children he gave his young negro: I considered the pain and distress he was in, and knew not how it would end, so I wrote his will, save only that part concerning his slave, and carrying it to his bedside, read it to him, and then told him in a friendly way, that I could not write any instruments by which my fellow-creatures were made slaves, without bringing trouble on my own mind. I let him know that I charged nothing for what I had done, and desired to be excused from doing the other part in the way he proposed. Then we had a serious conference on the subject, and at length, he agreeing to set her free, I finished his will.

John Woolman, c.1760

Any great issue has transformative power, once we engage it. Slavery led John Woolman through a lifetime of spiritual transformation, of renewal in his own heart. Whether our own faith is centered on Christ or other core beliefs, our journey can be animated as Woolman's was by compassion and a love of truth.

David Morse, 2001

Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come; that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them. Then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one; whereby in them ye may be a blessing, and make the witness of God in them to bless you. Then to the Lord God you will be a sweet savour and blessing.

George Fox, 1653

Regarding the quote from George Fox, "Walk cheerfully over the world, answering to that of God in everyone": The word "cheerfully," in addition to the way we use it, had another meaning in 17th century England. It meant "encouragingly" (this is the way Shakespeare used it) as in our modern sense of "to cheer someone on." If I were to paraphrase a small part of Fox's message it might go something like this: "Always be examples of your best conduct and behavior where ever you are. Then you will come to walk through the world, encouraging others to do likewise." This is a very different message from how cheerfully is usually understood in our time, but it is much more consistent with the rest of Fox's writings.

Bruce Folsom, 1994

Integrity is one of the virtues for which Quakers in the past have been praised. It is a quality worth having, but it is doubtful if it can be reached by self-conscious effort or by adherence to a principle.... Integrity is a condition in which a person's response to a total situation can be trusted: the opposite of a condition in which he would be moved by opportunist or self-seeking impulses breaking up his unity as a whole being. This condition of trust is different from the recognition that he will always be kind or always tell the truth. The integrity of some Dutch Friends I have met showed itself during the war in their willingness to tell lies to save their Jewish friends from the Gestapo or from starvation.

Kenneth C. Barnes, 1972

Friends consider integrity a way of life. In the stillness of worship we come into the Divine Presence and open ourselves to the Light; we hide nothing of who we are. In keeping with that openness of spirit, Friends express themselves with honesty in their dealings with others. Plain truth needs no decorative flourishes. We speak with simple clarity to reflect in our words the reality of our perceptions and thoughts.

Intermountain Yearly Meeting, 2006

Sing and rejoice, ye children of the day and of the light; for the Lord is at work in this thick night of darkness that may be felt. And truth doth flourish as the rose, and the lilies do grow among the thorns, and the plants atop of the hills, and upon them the lambs do skip and play. And never heed the tempests nor the storms, floods nor rains, for the seed Christ is over all, and doth reign. And so be of good faith and valiant for the truth: for the truth can live in the jails.

George Fox, 1663

It is in our lives and not our words that our religion must be read.

Thomas Jefferson, 1816

8.9. Listening

Queries

When is it hardest for me to be ready to listen?

To what extent do I open myself to the risks of listening?

How have I been changed by deeply listening to another, to God, to nature?

How does my own perception affect the way I understand what others say?

Advices

Listening to the Spirit, to the Inward Teacher, enables us to hear “where the words come from”¹ when others speak. Hearing truth as others understand it is a way of deepening our own faith.

Just as compassionate listening can be a healing experience, inattentive conversation can be unkind and hurtful. Undivided attention is a precious gift.

Speak with your own, authentic voice, using the terms true to your experience. Encourage and welcome others to do the same. Read between the lines. Listen between the words.

¹ The quoted words come from John Woolman. In his *Journal* he gives his reason for visiting neighboring Indians with the following words: “That I might feel and understand their life and the spirit they live in, if haply I might receive some instruction from them, or they be in any degree helped forward by my following the leadings of Truth amongst them.” On that journey, when Woolman spoke without interpretation, an Indian who didn’t understand English said, “I love to hear where the words come from.”

Voices

Listening is a rare happening among human beings. You cannot listen to the word another is speaking if you are preoccupied with your appearance, or with impressing the other, or are trying to decide what you are going to say when the other stops talking, or are debating about whether what is being said is true or relevant or agreeable. Such matters have their place, but only after listening to the word as the word is being uttered. Listening is a primitive act of love in which a person gives himself to another's word, making himself accessible and vulnerable to that word.

William Stringfellow, 1973

With the gift of listening comes the gift of healing, because listening to your brothers and sisters until they have said the last words in their hearts is healing and consoling.

Catherine de Hueck Doherty, [c1975](#)

When listening, Friends need to be aware that certain words carry powerful emotional weight for them personally, and that they may hear meanings which reflect their own emotions and sensitivities rather than the intentions of the speaker. Each person is encouraged to be faithful in using the language which feels authentic and appropriate to their message, and those listening are encouraged to hold the actual words as lightly as possible, while seeking to be open to the Spirit which enlivens them.

New England Yearly Meeting, 2006

Never before did there seem so many things to be done, to be said, to be thought; and in every direction I was pushed and pulled, and greeted with noisy acclamations of unspeakable unrest. It seemed necessary for me to listen to some of them, and to answer some of them, but God said, 'Be still, and know that I am God'. Then came the conflict of thoughts for the morrow, and its duties and cares; but God said 'Be still'. And as I listened, and slowly learned to obey, and shut my ears to every sound, I found, after a while, that when the other voices ceased, or I ceased to hear them, there was a still, small voice in the depths of my being that began to speak with an inexpressible tenderness, power and comfort.

John Edward Southall, c. 1900

As we learn from each other, we may initially need to translate the words other Friends use to describe their faith, much as we would a foreign language. With practice this becomes easier, and although we may never adopt their language as our own, we are enriched and brought closer to each other by the ongoing practice of being able to listen outside the comfort of our own religious vocabulary.

New England Yearly Meeting, 2006

I am not talking about listening with the human ear. I am talking about "discernment," which means to perceive something hidden and obscure. We must listen with our spiritual ear, the one inside, and this is very different from deciding in advance what is right and what is wrong and then seeking to promote our own agenda. We must literally suspend our disbelief and then listen to learn whether what we hear expands or diminishes our sense of Truth.

Gene Knudsen Hoffman, 2003

Authentic listening is an act of love. To listen is to become vulnerable, to risk being drawn into someone's suffering, to expose our assumptions to challenge. Listening can require great courage, which is why we will often tolerate injustice or even strike out in violence rather than risk listening.

You cannot truly listen to anyone and do anything else at the same time.

M. Scott Peck, 1978

The fathomless depth of the listener who can go beyond words, who can even go beyond the conscious meanings behind words and who can listen with the third ear for what is unconsciously being meant by the speaker, this fashion of attentive listening furnishes a climate where the most unexpected disclosures occur that are in the way of being miracles in one sense, and the most natural and obvious things in the world, on the other.

Douglas Steere, 1955

Simple, respectful, prayerful listening is at least as good for the soul of the listener as for the person listened to.

Patricia Loring, 1997

It is a powerful discipline for the "listener" to try to listen without agenda, without the compulsion to help, abandoning the need or desire to appear knowledgeable, wise or comforting. There may be no more tellingly difficult spiritual practice than the effort to receive what is being said by someone else hospitably, without editing, without correction, without unsolicited advice. Yet it is this open listening that makes room for the Spirit of God to be present in the midst of the interaction, illuminating and guiding what is taking place.

Patricia Loring, 1997

"Let anyone with ears to hear listen!" And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear; the measure you give will be the measure you get, and still more will be given you."

Mark 4:23-24 (NRSV)

Our greatest Treasure [which Friends have to offer a hurting world] is listening—listening to God for nurture and direction, listening to the pain and desire for justice and peace in the human community, listening for our gifts and the way to give them.

Georgia Fuller, 1995

Since we believe that there is in each person something divine, or what Jefferson called a moral sense, we are naturally called upon to listen to what other persons have to say, to what their hopes and aspirations and concerns are at the deepest level to which we can reach. There are many occasions where such listening is needed, and part of what it means to be a Friend in the world today is to slow down and listen carefully on at least some of those occasions.

Newton Garver, 1983

Careful listening is fundamental to helping each other; it goes beyond finding out about needs and becomes part of meeting them. Some would say that it is the single most useful thing that we can do. Those churches that have formal confession understand its value, but confession does not have to be formal to bring benefits. Speaking the unspeakable, admitting the shameful, to someone who can be trusted and who will accept you in love as you are, is enormously helpful.

Britain Yearly Meeting, 1999

9.10. Meeting for Business

Queries

Are our Meetings for Worship with a Concern for Business held in the spirit of worship, ~~seeking the guidance of God?~~understanding and forbearance?

In what ways do we each take our right share of responsibility in the service of the meeting?

Do we humbly set aside our own preconceived notions as to proper action, seeking instead Divine guidance as to the right course?

When direction seems lacking, is this seen as a challenge to a more prayerful search for truth?

Is the Meeting aware that it speaks not only through its actions but also through its failure to act?

Advices

Participation in the Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business is the responsibility of all. Come with open minds, seeking the Spirit, listening carefully, discerning the truth in what others have to offer. Proceed with forbearance and warm affection for each other. If you cannot attend, prayerfully uphold the Meeting.

We do not seek a majority decision nor even consensus. As we wait patiently for God's guidance, our experience is that way will open and we shall be led into unity. Speak only when God gives you new insight into the matter at hand. Think it possible that you may be mistaken.

Voices

And that all may be careful to speak short and pertinent to matters in a Christian spirit, and dispatch business quickly, and keep out of long debates and heats; and with the spirit of God keep that down, which is doting about questions and strife of words, that tend to parties and contention: which in the church of God there is no such custom to be allowed. And likewise not to speak more than one at a time; nor any in a fierce way; for that is not to be allowed in any society, neither natural nor spiritual; but as the apostle saith, "Be swift to hear, and slow to speak;" and let it be in the grace, which seasons all words.

George Fox, 1690

The meeting for the transaction of church business is as distinctly a religious exercise as is the meeting for worship, but it has a different objective. The meeting for worship is focused upon the divine-human relationship and the meeting for business is mainly concerned with inter-human cooperation, the two being interdependent. From another point of view, the meeting for worship concerns being while the meeting for business concerns doing. What is implicit in worship becomes explicit in action.

The meeting for business should, therefore, be preceded by a period of worship in which the hard shell of ego-centricity is dissolved and the group united into a living whole. It is also well to conclude the business meeting with a period of silent devotion.

Howard H. Brinton, 1952

Partly because of its rarity, sense of the meeting is a gift of enormous worth, more valuable, perhaps, than any other Quaker gift or practice. Quakers are not the only people who worship in silence. They are not alone in waiting for continuing revelation by attending to the Light within.... But where, except among Friends, has the practice of discovering the sense of the meeting become so entrenched?

Barry Morley, 1993

Friends have traditionally so valued the fruit of group discernment that they have been willing to labor hard and to wait long to come into unity with one another before proceeding in a matter of substance.

Patricia Loring, 1992

Our meetings for church affairs, in which we conduct our business, are also meetings for worship based on silence, and they carry the same expectation that God's guidance can be discerned if we are truly listening together and to each other, and are not blinkered by preconceived opinions. It is this belief that God's will can be recognized through the discipline of silent waiting which distinguishes our decision-making process from the secular idea of consensus. We have a common purpose in seeking God's will through waiting and listening, believing that every activity of life should be subject to divine guidance.

This does not mean that laughter and a sense of humour should be absent from our meetings for church affairs. It does mean that at all times there should be an inward recollection: out of this will spring a right dignity, flexible and free from pomp and formality.

Britain Yearly Meeting, 1999

Consensus—a secular method, involving a rational process and producing general agreement. The authority is the group.

Sense of the Meeting—a religious method involving a spiritual process and producing a spirit-led decision. The authority is God as discerned by the group in worship.

Arthur Larabee, 2002

Central to the Quaker understanding of unity-based decision making is Fox's idea that there is "that of God in every one." When a group of believers comes together to deliberate about the best way to serve God here and now, each looks to find in others some manifestation of "that of God," and looks for the mark of the Spirit of Christ—Truth with a capital 'T'—in everyone else's remarks. In short, since the same Spirit speaks in each heart, the members expect to end their meetings united.

Michael J. Sheeran, 1996

10.11. Meeting for Worship

Queries

~~In what ways do~~Do I prepare my heart and mind to receive the power of God's presence and love?

How does worship deepen my relationship with the Divine? How is this inspiration carried over into my daily life?

Are our Meetings for Worship held in expectant waiting for Divine guidance?

~~When direction seems lacking, is this seen as a challenge to a more prayerful search for truth?~~

How does our worship inspire our Meeting's activities?

Advices

The heart of the Religious Society of Friends is the Meeting for Worship. In worship we are called to seek God's will with our entire being: body, mind, and soul.

Worship is the adoring response of the heart and mind to the influences of the Spirit of God. It stands neither in forms nor in the formal disuse of forms. "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24 NRSV).~~We treasure silence as a path towards inspiration and guidance that leads~~Silence can lead to communion with ~~God.~~

God, offering inspiration, refreshment, and guidance.

In our Meetings for Worship, we are called to listen with prayerful obedience to God, with a willingness to give as well as to receive. In speech or in silence, each person contributes to the Meeting. Worshipping God

together, we can strengthen one another, and our bodies and minds can be refreshed in the life of the Spirit. As Britain Yearly Meeting said in 1999: "Let Meeting for Worship nourish your whole life."

Give adequate time for study, meditation, and prayer, and other ways of preparing for worship. Be mindful that worship is the fusion of individual and collective waiting to experience the love of God. Come regularly to Meeting for Worship, even when you are angry, depressed, tired, or spiritually cold. In the silence ask for and accept the prayerful support of others joined with you in worship.

During the Meeting for Worship, Friends may be led by the Spirit to testify, to share an insight, to pray, to praise. When speaking, we should do so clearly and simply, using as many words as necessary and as few as possible. When another speaks, listen with an open spirit, holding the speaker in love. Rest with the message, recognizing that even if it is not God's word for you, it may be so for others.

[For further guidance on sharing spiritual insights and encouraging special gifts see "Nurturing Ministry and Worship." on page 173](#)

Voices

Friends, meet together and know one another in that which is eternal, which was before the world was.

George Fox, 1657

Do you come to meeting for worship with heart and mind prepared? What is the preparation that readies us ...for the life and power of the seed? It is not simply a matter of arriving for meeting on time, though with our hectic lives even that is not always easy. Preparation for worship is a life that integrates prayer, meditation, edifying reading, and deep conversation into the busy routines that most of us pursue. We cannot expect to dive casually out of the heat of the world into the coolness of divine communication for an hour per week. That only brings the heat of the world in and disturbs the waters, leaving no place for peace.

Douglas Gwyn, 1997

For, when I came into the silent assemblies of God's people I felt a secret power among them which touched my heart; and as I gave way unto it I found the evil weakening in me and the good raised up; and so I became thus knit and united unto them, hungering more and more after the increase of this power and life, whereby I might feel myself perfectly redeemed.

Robert Barclay, 1678

In worship we have our neighbors to right and left, before and behind, yet the Eternal Presence is over all and beneath all. Worship does not consist in achieving a mental state of concentrated isolation from one's fellows. But in the depth of common worship it is as if we found our separate lives were all one life, within whom we live and move and have our being.

Thomas R. Kelly, 1938

A Friends' meeting, however silent, is at the very lowest a witness that worship is something other and deeper than words, and that it is to the unseen and eternal things that we desire to give the first place in our lives. And when the meeting, whether silent or not, is awake, and looking upwards, there is much more in it than this. In the united stillness of a truly "gathered" meeting there is a power known only by experience, and mysterious even when most familiar. There are perhaps few things which more readily flow "from vessel to vessel" than quietness.

Caroline E. Stephen, 1908

Group, like individual worship, is an offering; and let none think that because he comes to meeting dry and empty or in great perplexity or need of help, he has "nothing to offer." He

has not only his "outward testimony" to bear, but he has his weakness itself to lay before God in trust and love; and if the meeting is truly "gathered," that offering may bring it to a deeper place than any surface happiness and praise could do.

Beatrice Saxon Snell, 1965

Yea, though there be not a word spoken, yet is the true spiritual worship performed, and the body of Christ edified; yea, it may, and hath often fallen out among us, that divers meetings have passed without one word; and yet our souls have been greatly edified and refreshed, and our hearts wonderfully overcome with the secret sense of God's power and Spirit, which without words hath been ministered from one vessel to another.

Robert Barclay, 1677

On one never-to-be-forgotten Sunday morning, I found myself one of a small company of silent worshippers, who were content to sit down together without words, that each one might feel after and draw near to the Divine Presence, unhindered at least, if not helped, by any human utterance. Utterance I knew was free, should the words be given; and, before the meeting was over a sentence or two were uttered in great simplicity by an old and apparently untaught man, rising in his place amongst the rest of us. I did not pay much attention to the words he spoke, and I have no recollection of their purport. My whole soul was filled with the unutterable peace of the undisturbed opportunity for communion with God, with the sense that at last I had found a place where I might, without the faintest suspicion of insincerity, join with others in simply seeking His presence. To sit down in silence could at least pledge me to nothing; it might open to me (as it did that morning) the very gate of heaven.

Caroline E. Stephen, 1872

There are times of dryness in our individual lives, when meeting may seem difficult or even worthless. At such times one may be tempted not to go to meeting, but it may be better to go, prepared to offer as our contribution to the worship simply a sense of need. In such a meeting one may not at the time realise what one has gained, but one will nevertheless come away helped.

Berks & Oxon Quarterly Meeting, 1948

If meeting for worship becomes persistently and repeatedly jarring and meaningless, that may be God's challenge to you to rethink your Christianity and come, with his help, to a conclusion as to what you really believe. Feelings always mean something, and by taking counsel with God in prayer we may come to find whether they are the result of spiritual neglect or spiritual growth.

Beatrice Saxon Snell, 1965

Finally, remember that our manner of worship is ultimately a mystery under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Each Meeting for Worship is a spiritual adventure, unique and unpredictable. Let us remember in humility that "the end of words is to bring us to the knowledge of things beyond what words can utter."

Isaac Penington, 1670

...I have never lost the joy of sitting in silence at the beginning of Meeting, knowing that everything can happen, knowing the joy of the utmost surprise; feeling that nothing is preordained, nothing is set, all is open. The Light can come from all sides. The joy of experiencing the Light in a completely different way than one has thought it would come is one of the greatest gifts that Friends' Meeting for Worship has brought me.

Ursula M. Franklin, 1979

And as many candles lighted, and put in one place, do greatly augment the light and make it more to shine forth; so when many are gathered together into the same life, there is more of the glory of God, and his power appears, to the refreshment of each individual, for that he partakes not only of the light and life raised in himself, but in all the rest.

Robert Barclay, 1678

11.12. Membership

Queries

How can I actively support the meeting community?

How can I support the Clerk of Meeting and clerks of committees?

How am I maturing into the fullness of membership in this spiritual community?

How does the meeting community nurture my spiritual growth and transformation?

In what ways does the Meeting make its needs clear to each of us?

Advices

~~Just as Friends have “affirmed the priesthood of all believers,” so we also~~We affirm that each Friend, not just the Clerk, has a direct responsibility for the Meeting.~~As we are all ministers of the Word, so are we all are ministers to each other and to the community as a whole. As members of a community we look not to our~~rights, liberties, and privileges, but to our obligations, responsibilities, and duties.

Membership in the Religious Society of Friends is a spiritual commitment. To become a member, we expect an applicant~~person seeking membership~~ to have come experientially into general agreement with the Society’s principles of belief and testimonies as expressed in our *Faith & Practice*.

Membership carries with it spiritual obligations. Each of us, as members, ~~are~~is called to participate in the Meeting’s spiritual life and to attend worship regularly. Members need to nurture each other’s God-given gifts and talents. As members, we are invited to seek guidance from one another and the Meeting in discerning God’s will for ourselves. ~~We pray~~Pray for one another.

The basic spiritual commitment of membership creates practical obligations. The vitality of each Monthly Meeting depends on its members’ investments of time, energy, and financial support. ~~As Friends, we put practical meaning into our spiritual commitment~~Friends can strengthen their Meeting through regular participation in Meetings for Business, service on committees or as officers, regular financial giving, taking part in service projects under the care of the Meeting, assisting in maintenance of Meeting property, and representing the Meeting in community and wider Friends’ organizations.

Voices

For as in one body we have many members, and not all members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.

Romans 12:4-5 (NRSV)

So the measuring line of righteousness is in this known; . . . So wait to know every particular of yourselves, to be heirs of this; and know your portion, the power of God, the gospel fellowship, then are ye members one of another, and living stones, that build up the spiritual household.

George Fox, 1664

As Quakers, we have no creed to recite, no confession to confess, no rituals to undergo that will reliably bring us into the fullness of membership. But we do have a rich and inspiring

tradition; we have each other; and we have the Spirit of God which, we are promised, will “lead us into all things.”

Thomas Gates, 2004

When early Friends affirmed the priesthood of all believers it was seen as an abolition of the clergy; in fact it is an abolition of the laity. All members are part of the clergy and have the clergy’s responsibility for the maintenance of the meeting as a community. This means helping to contribute, in whatever ways are most suitable, to the maintenance of an atmosphere in which spiritual growth and exploration are possible for all.

Britain Yearly Meeting, 1999

Membership is costly ... It is not just about belonging, feeling accepted, feeling at home. It has also to do with being stretched, being challenged, being discomforted ... We can never be entirely sure of where the venture will lead us ... [but] the one thing we can be sure of is that the process, taken seriously, will call us to change.

Helen Rowlands, 1952

Membership in a Quaker meeting is a spirit-led journey of coming to know ourselves as individual-in-community, a journey on which we experience meeting as a place of acceptance, a place of shared values, a place of transformation, and a place of obedience.

Thomas Gates, 2004

Worthiness has nothing to do with membership. God has already accepted us in our imperfection and is loving us forward toward a more perfect image of God’s self. The real issue in membership is commitment on the part of both the meeting and the applicant to remain faithful to the development and requirements of the process within Quaker tradition.

Patricia Loring, 1997

Like all discipleships, membership has its elements of commitment and responsibility but it is also about joy and celebration. Membership is a way of saying to the meeting that you feel at home, and in the right place. Membership is also a way of saying to the meeting, and to the world, that you accept at least the fundamental elements of being a Quaker: the understanding of divine guidance, the manner of corporate worship and the ordering of the meeting’s business, the practical expression of inward convictions and the equality of all before God. In asking to be admitted into the community of the meeting you are affirming what the meeting stands for and declaring your willingness to contribute to its life.

Britain Yearly Meeting, 1999

12.13. Outreach

Queries

How does my life witness to my Quaker faith?

In what ways How do I reach out to new attenders and encourage their exploration of Quakerism as a spiritual path?

How does our Meeting convey Quaker faith and practice to the wider community?

Do you find ways to encourage members, attenders, and all seekers to continue attending Meeting?

Advices

What does it mean when Friends are admonished to “Let your life speak”? This simple sentence reminds us that it is our lives, not our words, that speak most reliably about who we are and what we believe. Our lives are our ministry, not the specific acts we think of as “official” ministry, such as speaking in meeting, following leadings, or carrying out our roles on committees. Jesus teaches us not to hide our lights; but to let them shine every day, in every way. Outreach in this broad sense is not something we think about and plan; rather, it simply happens as we walk our paths in the world, lighted by “that of God” within us.

Advancement and outreach are natural and integral aspects of the Quaker way of life. Realizing that we are all children of God means that there is an infinite opportunity to search for God in our relations with others. Our fellowship begins, grows, and is nurtured in home and meeting. It reaches greater fulfillment as we carry our love of God and humankind to our relationships with persons in the wider community of which our Meeting is a part, with members of other Meetings, and with all persons whom we meet.

Outreach is not a monologue, but a dialogue—an adventure undertaken in the spirit of a musical improvisation with many instruments. Take time to learn about other people’s experiences of the Light and, as you learn, give freely from your own. Respect the experiences and opinions of others, but do not be afraid to say what you value and to speak with conviction. Welcome the diversity of culture, language, and expressions of faith among Friends, as well as members of other faiths.

Outreach also includes being open to others who may be tentatively “reaching in” to explore the Quaker faith. The sense of welcome is expressed in countless small details: the coffee is warm, the biscuits are good, the potluck is plentiful, and people say, “Hi.” Most important, when someone walks in and asks, “What do Quakers believe?” it is the meeting’s task to be sure that they get a well-informed answer.

Meetings are encouraged to consider using technology to communicate with existing and potential members, while at the same time remembering that not all Friends have access to it. Web pages, blogs, and social media tools are examples of effective outreach.

Voices

Let all nations hear the sound by word or writing. Spare no place, spare no tongue nor pen, but be obedient to the Lord God; go through the world and be valiant for the truth upon earth; tread and trample all that is contrary under.

George Fox, 1656

Indeed if one has been visited by a direct sense of inward presence, he is driven to tell everyone who will listen to him. Strange and unendurable irony—that Friends who speak so much about the Inward Light should so timidly hide their own light under a bushel! The time has come to preach the faith we have resolved to practice. If we have good news for our brothers, and I believe we do, let us shout it from the housetops! Let us learn to be publishers of truth about our faith as well as our social concerns.

John Yungblut, 1974

This story is told of a German woman living in Cologne in 1946. Her husband had been killed during the war and she was left with two small children. Their home was a damp basement beneath the ruins of a house... It is no wonder that she was a cynical and embittered woman when the Service Committee Workers found her. They were of the same nationality that she had been taught to hate, the ones who had killed her husband. But these people brought clothing, medicine, and food and above all sympathy and understanding. “Why do you do it?” she asked, and they tried to tell her something of the spirit that had sent them forth. Finally with tears in her eyes she exclaimed: “This is too good to keep to yourselves – Oh, why don’t you preach what you practice!”

John Hobart, 1954

The sharing of our spiritual values with others, from our neighbors to the larger world, makes our outreach and advancement activities meaningful. Without spiritual motivation, our witness falls short.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting, 1988

Outreach is simply the process of making Quakerism available to those who are seeking, to those who may find value in its process. Whether these people become Quaker is of no consequence to the person who conducts true outreach. True outreach is an act of spiritual hospitality. It is an act of service to others to find and take what they need so they can find that of God in themselves and others.

Barry Crossno, 2005

Outreach is the natural result of the second great commandment that we love our neighbors as ourselves. It grows out of the spiritual attitude of caring and can take many forms, limited only by our imagination.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1986

Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every person has received the gift, even so minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

I Peter 4: 9-10

My new acquaintance was told by my friend that I walked a Quaker path. The acquaintance's face lit up. "What is that?" she asked. For the next hour she peppered me with questions about the Quaker path. I could not evade or sidetrack her. She was intense. At the end she exclaimed, "If I had known all of this twenty years ago, I would have lived a different life!" I sat stunned, moved, elated, and saddened all at the same time... She had heard of Quakers all her life, but she never met a Quaker that would explain what it meant. To borrow and butcher a phrase from the Bible: it's time to stop hiding our light under a bushel.

Barry Crossno, 2005

We dimly see that this Gospel, before it has finished with us, will turn our lives upside down and inside out. Our favourite Quaker vice of caution holds us back. We have much more to learn before we are ready to teach. It is right that we have much to learn; it is right to recognise the heavy responsibility of teaching; but to suppose that we must know everything before we can teach anything is to condemn ourselves to perpetual futility.

George B. Jeffery, 1934

Why have we been reluctant to share our faith? Has our message lost its value? Certainly not. How is it then that Friends retreated from a very active, prophetic kind of outreach, making their beliefs public at the risk of life, limb, and liberty, to our current position where outreach is low on our list of priorities, even actively opposed by some? For when we place a low priority on outreach we suggest either that our message isn't that important, or that somehow the rest of the world couldn't appreciate it, or that Quakerism is only for the select few.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1986

Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

Hebrews 13:1-2 (KJV)

Queries

How does my life reflect “the virtue of that life and power which takes away the occasion for war”?

Where there are hatred, division, and strife, how are we instruments of reconciliation and love?

How do our lives illustrate our understanding of the basis of our peace testimony?

As we work for peace, are we nourished by peace within and among ourselves?

How do we regard those we believe have harmed us or others? How does this affect our spiritual lives?

Advices

Since its founding over 350 years ago, the Religious Society of Friends has testified to the worth of every individual by refusing to participate in war. We repudiate war because it violates the primacy of love, destroys lives that God has given, and tears the fabric of society. Members of our Society have traditionally refused to serve in the armed forces. The Peace Testimony is, however, more than a mere refusal to participate in war.

Fox’s assertion that he “lived in that light and power that takes away the occasion for war” and Woolman’s advice that we “examine our lives to see that the seeds of war are not contained therein” firmly establish connections between this and other testimonies. As we work for peace in the world, we Friends need to search out the seeds of war in ourselves and in our way of life. We refuse to join. Instead of joining in actions that may lead to destruction and ~~death. We seek ways~~ death, Friends are urged to cooperate to save life and strengthen the bonds of unity among all people. We ~~e~~ work to create the conditions of peace, such as freedom, justice, cooperation, and the right sharing of the world’s resources. Seek not only peace with one another, but peace with the earth. Recognize that wars can arise when poor environmental practices lead to scarcity and unjust distribution of resources.

Our faith calls for us to be fully present to the person before us. We need to bring into God’s light those emotions, attitudes, and prejudices in ourselves which lie at the root of destructive conflict, acknowledging our need for forgiveness and grace.

Voices

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Matthew 5:7-9 (NRSV)

Our work for peace must begin within the private world of each one of us. To build for man a world without fear, we must be without fear. To build a world of justice, we must be just. And how can we fight for liberty if we are not free in our own minds? How can we ask others to sacrifice if we are not ready to do so?... Only in true surrender to the interest of all can we reach that strength and independence, that unity of purpose, that equity of judgment which are necessary if we are to measure up to our duty to the future, as men of a generation to whom the chance was given to build in time a world of peace.

Dag Hammarskjöld, 1953

Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

George Fox did not say that he believed war to be wrong, or that in his opinion brute force never settled anything; he went straight to the heart of the matter and said that he “lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars.” To uphold such a testimony involved a dedicated life. The Quaker peace testimony is more than a repudiation of war, and more than a denial of the use of force; it is a way of life to which we must be

faithful in small things as well as in great, in our human relationships, our business and social activities, and in the life and witness of our meetings.

Elfrida Vipont Foulds, 1966

We are too ready to retaliate, rather than forgive, or gain by Love and Information. And yet we could hurt no Man that we believe loves us. Let us then try what Love will do: For if Men did once see we Love them, we should soon find they would not harm us. Force may subdue, but Love gains: And he that forgives first, wins the Lawrel. If I am even with my Enemy, the Debt is paid; but if I forgive it, I oblige him for ever.

William Penn, 1682

We actively oppose all that leads to violence among people and nations and violence to other species and to our planet. Refusal to fight with weapons is not surrender. We are not passive when threatened by the greedy, the cruel, the tyrant, the unjust. We will struggle to remove the causes of impasse and confrontation by every means of nonviolent resistance available. We must start with our own hearts and minds. Together, let us reject the clamour of fear and listen to the whisperings of hope.

New Zealand Quakers, Aotearoa/New Zealand Yearly Meeting, 1987

Universal peace is an active movement toward the one-ness of all humanity and the realization of the Kingdom of God on Earth. The Testimony for Peace is not an artificial appendage to our faith, which can be dropped without injury to the whole. Our central faith requires that we should proclaim, in deed as well as word, that war, with the whole military system, is contrary to the spirit of the God whose name is Love. The same spirit must animate our business and social relations and make us eager to remove oppression and injustice in every form.

London Yearly Meeting, 1912

May we look upon our treasures, the furniture of our houses, and our garments and try whether the seeds of war have nourishment in these our possessions.

John Woolman, c. 1760

Why are we here? If I understand the message of God, his response to that question is that we are to take part in the creation of the Peaceable Realm of God. Again, if I understand the message of God, how we take part in the creation of this realm is to love God with all our heart, our mind and our strength and to love our neighbors and enemies as we love God and ourselves. In its essential form, different aspects of love bring about the creation of the realm.

Tom Fox, 2005

...There have been a number of times that I have been in some real or potential danger - at peace actions, working in the ghetto, or confronting irrational or violent people. In those times I have not been without fear, but I have never since felt the fear I felt when I first made the commitment to give up reliance on violence to protect me. I believe that when I became convinced of the peace testimony, I was given a leading which, in effect, immersed me in terror and the stuff of violence so that I could know my condition and work with it. I was tested and strengthened in conditions of safety before I was ever tested in real conflict.

Paul Lacey, 1985

We cannot have peace if we are only concerned with peace. War is not an accident. It is the logical outcome of a certain way of life. If we want to attack war, we have to attack the way of life.

A.J. Muste, c. 1967

When the song of the angels is stilled,

*When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins;
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nation,
To bring peace among brothers and sisters,
To make music in the heart.*

Howard Thurman, c. 1961

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. This is not a way of life at all in any true sense. Under the clouds of war, it is humanity hanging on a cross of iron.

Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953

If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner.

Nelson Mandela, 1995

I hope...that mankind will at length, as they call themselves reasonable creatures, have reason and sense enough to settle their differences without cutting throats; for in my opinion there never was a good war, or a bad peace.

Benjamin Franklin, 1783

I do not want the peace which passeth understanding, I want the understanding which bringeth peace.

Helen Keller, 1917

We must be prepared to make the same heroic sacrifices for the cause of peace that we make ungrudgingly for the cause of war. There is no task that is more important or closer to my heart.

Albert Einstein, c.1930

It is not our Quakerism, or our pacifism, or our knowledge, or skill, or emotion that overcomes hate and violence. We shall surely fail if we become proud of our virtue and traditions and become vain in our witness. We shall fail if we think the power that may move through us is our own. The power is not ours, it is God's.... The foundation is faith in the power of God's love to transform us and our society and to bring justice to the poor and the oppressed. Our task is to act, as best we understand what we are led to do, in obedience to that power.

Mary Lord, 2002

14.15. Simplicity

Queries

Am I aware that the ways in which I choose to use my time, my possessions, my money, and my energy reflect my most deeply held values?

How do we support one another in our search for a simpler life?

What am I ready to release so that I can give my attention to what matters most?

What in my present life most distracts me from God?

Advices

How are we to honor the testimony of simplicity in our modern world? To many of us, our culture seems so “busy” and so complex, so full of disturbing news and distractions, that we are sometimes overwhelmed. Our time is often overcommitted, and our wants are manipulated to make us desire what we do not need. Our consumption of goods as a nation is out of control. In our world, the word “simplicity” may be quickly followed by guilt and then by a sense of frustration, or even despair. We need to think of simplicity not as an impossible demand, but as an invitation to a more centered, intentional, and fulfilling Spirit-led life.

Simplicity flows from well-ordered living. It is less a matter of doing without, than a spiritual quality that simplifies our lives by putting first things first. A simple way of life, freely chosen, is a source of strength, joy, and comfort. Friends are advised to strive for simplicity in the use of our earnings and property, and in our style of living, choosing that which is simple and useful. This does not mean that life is to be poor and bare, destitute of joy and beauty. Each must determine, by the Light that is given, what promotes and what hinders the compelling search for inner peace that enables us to listen deeply to God.

The testimony of simplicity is like a bell that calls us to an awareness of the Center. It challenges us to ask “What matters?” It reminds us that much of what worries us and stresses us is not important. It asks us to recognize the burdens we carry needlessly and to lay them down: our anxiety about our appearance, our struggle to afford what we do not need, comparisons between our lifestyle and the lifestyles of others, squabbles born of tension and stress, worries that leave us exhausted and unable to find time for what matters in our lives.

Voices

I saw that a humble man, with the Blessing of the Lord, might live on a little, and that where the heart was set on greatness, success in business did not satisfy the craving; but that commonly with an increase of wealth, the desire for wealth increased. There was a care on my mind so to pass my time, as to things outward, that nothing might hinder me from the most steady attention to the voice of the True Shepherd.

John Woolman, c. 1744

There is enough for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed.

Mohandas Gandhi, 1942

I wish I might emphasize how a life becomes simplified when dominated by faithfulness to a few concerns. Too many of us have too many irons in the fire. We get distracted by the intellectual claim to our interest in a thousand and one good things, and before we know it we are pulled and hauled breathlessly along by an over-burdened program of good committees and good undertakings.... [W]e learn to say No as well as Yes by attending to the guidance of inner responsibility. Quaker simplicity needs to be expressed not merely in dress and architecture and the height of tombstones but also in the structure of a relatively simplified and coordinated life-program of social responsibilities.

Thomas R. Kelly, 1941

But the wonderful thing about simplicity is its ability to give us contentment. Do you understand what a freedom this is? To live in contentment means we can opt out of the status race and the maddening pace that is its necessary partner. We can shout “NO!” to the insanity which chants, “More, more, more!” We can rest contented in the gracious provision of God.

Richard J. Foster, 1981

*Tis a gift to be simple, 'tis a gift to be free
'Tis a gift to come down where we ought to be*

*And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
We will be in the valley of love and delight.*

*When true simplicity is gained
To bow and to bend we will not be ashamed;
To turn and turn will be our delight
Till by turning, turning we come 'round right.*

Shaker spiritual

The ability to simplify means to eliminate the unnecessary so that the necessary may speak.

Hans Hoffmann, 1952

Jesus spoke to the heart of the matter when he taught us that if the eye were single, the whole body would be full of light (Matthew 6:22). Dietrich Bonhoeffer, before he died at the hands of the Nazis, said, "To be simple is to fix one's eye solely on the simple truth of God at a time when all concepts are being confused, distorted, and turned upside down."

Richard J. Foster, 1981

15.16. Social Concerns

Queries

How do I express my faith in action? How are my actions grounded in my faith?

Is my sense of justice based in love?

Do I endeavor to face the pain of the world and respond to it with forgiveness and compassion?

Are you concerned for those in our society who are disadvantaged?

Do I make an idol of that which I am led to defend?

How do I avoid demonizing those who march against my concern?

Do I take my full share of civic responsibility?

Do I avoid partisan assumptions and rhetoric?

Advices

Our testimonies are not the heart of our faith but are the fruits of our religious convictions. ~~Our~~ Assure that your actions in the world arise from your love of the Light in every person. ~~We regard no person as our enemy. While we often oppose~~ Regard no person as your enemy. When opposing specific actions and abuses of power, ~~we~~ seek to address the goodness and truth in each individual.

For example, prison ministry has been a long-standing social outreach among Friends. Our guiding doctrine of the Inward Light holds that the presence of God resides in all humanity, including those incarcerated. Therefore, we accept all people as children of God and believe that everyone, even those who have committed crimes, can transform their lives.

Friends are aware that our tasks are founded on witness, not results; that our testimony to the world is the substance of our truth. ~~We assert~~ Assert the transforming power of love and nonviolence as a challenge to injustice and aggression and as an instrument for reconciliation.

While faith without works is dead, ~~Friends are convinced that~~ works without faith are ~~futile, hollow~~. Because we understand that activism is often spawned from an egocentric center, Friends are urged to test their leadings that their outward works are grounded in the Spirit. (See also Witnessing for Peace and Social Concerns on page 184.)

Voices

What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

James 2:14-17 (NASB)

It seems to me that the moving force behind the Quaker social witness has got to be some vision, however faint and tantalizing, of what the world would be like if we were really obedient to God.

Deborah Haines

True godliness don't turn men out of the world, but enables them to live better in it, and excites their endeavor to mend it: not hide their candle under a bushel, but set it upon a table in a candlestick.

William Penn, 1682

Meister Eckhart says that we can only spend in good works what we earn in contemplation, and that is undoubtedly a valuable admonition to those of us serving Quaker institutions, but it is probably equally the case that what is earned in contemplation cannot be saved up indefinitely but must be spent regularly in service to others.

Paul A. Lacey, 1988

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

1 Cor. 13:1-2 (KJV)

Jesus's ministry made clear that acts of reconciliation, of healing, and of service nurture the Seed and extend the Gospel. He demonstrated that the religious life is incomplete without the religious act, the practice of worship sterile without the practice of loving concern for distressed people. The truth He demonstrated has caused Friends to make labor in the areas of their social concerns an essential part of their religious life.

New England Yearly Meeting, 1985

The great social movements of our time may well be part of our calling. The ideals of peace and justice and equality which are part of our religious tradition are often the focus of debate. But we cannot simply immerse ourselves in these activities. We need to develop our own unique social witness, in obedience to God. We need to listen to the gentle whispers which will tell us how we can bring our lives into greater harmony with heaven.

Deborah Haines, 1978

When we begin by demonizing the opposition, we have taken the first step to ensuring no possibility of resolution. However, there is another path: one which is far more likely to result in a positive resolution. Instead of beginning with what divides us, we should begin with our common ground.

Lawrence M. Hinman, 2005

When Joseph Hoag in 1812 was pleading his peace principles a man in his audience said, "Well stranger, if all the world was of your mind, I would turn and follow after." Joseph replied, "So then thou hast a mind to be the last man in the world to be good. I have a mind to be one of the first and set the rest an example" (Hoag's Journal, 1861, p. 201).

Howard H. Brinton, 1967

It is said that one should never attempt the works of charity unless the motion springs from love in the heart. But God can lead us by more ways than one. Some he makes ready before he sends them out; others he sends out that they may be made ready.

Mildred Binns Young, 1961

Our witness will lack in power unless it springs from our deep spiritual communion with the divine presence and with one another. We were made for that community and it alone will satisfy the deepest longings of our hearts.

Marcelle Martin, 2003

Service is the rent we pay for the privilege of living on this earth. It is the very purpose of life, not something you do in your spare time.

Shirley Chisholm, 1972

There is a need of preachers against the excesses of the age. There is a need of preachers against existing monopolies and banking institutions, by which the rich are made richer and the poor poorer. It is contrary to the spirit of this Republic that any should be so rich.

Lucretia Mott, 1858

Seeking to live at all times in a divine order of life, Quakers have always counted social service part of Christianity. In fidelity to the genius of their inward experience, they have set themselves the task of developing their own spiritual sensitiveness to the light of truth; and have then resolutely confronted the unawakened conscience of the world with the demands of the new light, and have borne witness to it with undaunted patience. This has resulted in progressive enlightenment for themselves, and in the slow but sure triumph of many of the causes of which they have become champions.

William Charles Braithwaite, 1919

16.17. Stewardship

Stewardship of Personal Resources

Queries

Do we regard our resources as gifts from God, to be held in trust and shared according to the Light we are given?

What are we doing as individuals and as a meeting to nurture our gifts?

How do we encourage the members of the larger community to be careful stewards of their gifts?

Advices

“To turn all we possess into the channel of universal love becomes the business of our lives”: this, in the words of John Woolman, is the meaning of Quaker stewardship.

And this applies to all that we have and are, as individuals, as members of groups, and as inhabitants of the earth. As individuals, we ~~are obliged~~need to be careful to use our time, our various abilities, our strength, our money, our material possessions, and other resources in a spirit of love, aware that we hold these gifts in trust and are responsible to use them in the Light.

Investment of assets and consumption of resources require our careful stewardship. As Friends, we can direct our investments toward socially desirable ends, avoiding speculation and activities wasteful or harmful to others. ~~We seek~~Seek to participate constructively and without greed in the economic life of the ~~community~~community.
~~and to refrain from undue accumulation of wealth as well as irresponsible borrowing.~~

Voices

Of the interest of the public in our estates: Hardly any thing is given us for our selves, but the public may claim a share with us. But of all we call ours, we are most accountable to God and the public for our estates: In this we are but stewards, and to hoard up all to ourselves is great injustice as well as ingratitude.

John Woolman, 1720

In reading those short last essays of John Woolman, which are little treatises on economics, I have been struck by his intuition that wrong roads were being taken by his contemporaries, upon which we their descendants should find our direction almost irreversibly fixed. Unrighteous use of other human beings, unrighteous use of one's own powers, irresponsible use and waste of land and other natural resources - he touches on them all. It is evident that he was convinced that the spiritual life of men and women is deeply conditioned by their economic life.

Mildred Binns Young, 1966

Friends need to examine their decisions about obtaining, holding, and using money and other assets, to see whether they find in them the seeds, not only of war, but also of self-indulgence, injustice, and ecological disaster. Good stewardship of economic resources consists both in avoidance of those evils and in actions that advance peace, simple living, justice, and a healthy ecosystem.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1986

To "stretch beyond one's compass" grasping at shadows, and encumbering oneself with more than is needed for simple, wholesome living, is at variance with all our best traditions.

Caroline E. Stephen, 1890

Stewardship of the Earth

Queries

~~How do we show appreciation for the interconnectedness of all life?~~ Do you seek to preserve the beauty and balance of God's world?

How do we use the world's resources with care and consideration for future generations and with respect for all life?

~~In what other ways do we carry out our commitment to stewardship of the Earth?~~ Do you endeavor to understand the detrimental changes affecting earth systems and humanity?

Do you seek to meet your needs in a sustainable way by preserving resources, enhancing the health of the earth, and by protecting the future?

Do we intentionally explore and live our conviction that there is that of God in all creation?

Advices

~~Friends have connected~~ Connect with the earth and all it holds as part of your spiritual development. ~~From George Fox walking throughout England searching for his spiritual identity to current times, we are~~ As John Woolman was concerned about the injury man was doing to the Earth, be aware that we are stewards of a gift of God for future generations. Misuse of the Earth and the abundance it offers often leads to injustice and war. Some only stewards, not owners of common present practices so violate our sense of stewardship that they seem to constitute a war on the Earth. We need to be constantly aware of how our actions affect the rest of the

world. By not using more than we need and by sharing with others, we help ensure that the earth will continue to support everyone.

Voices

Sustainability as a concept has recently acquired new spiritual depth of meaning to include a resolve to live in harmony with biological and physical systems, and to work to create social systems that can enable us to do that. It includes a sense of connectedness and an understanding of the utter dependence of human society within the intricate web of life; a passion for environmental justice and ecological ethics; an understanding of dynamic natural balances and processes; and a recognition of the limits to growth due to finite resources. Our concern for Sustainability recognizes our responsibility to future generations, to care for the Earth as our own home and the home of all that dwell herein. We seek a relationship between human beings and the Earth that is mutually enhancing.

Quaker Earthcare Witness, 1998

We are called to assist the Earth to heal her wounds and in the process heal our own—indeed to embrace the whole of creation in all its diversity, beauty and wonder.

Wangari Maathai, 2004

The produce of the earth is a gift from our gracious creator to the inhabitants, and to impoverish the earth now to support outward greatness appears to be an injury to the succeeding age.

John Woolman, c. 1760

As a Religious Society of Friends we see the stewardship of God's creation as a major concern. The environmental crisis is at root a spiritual and religious crisis; we are called to look again at the real purpose of being on this earth, which is to till it and keep it so as to reveal the glory of God for generations to come.

London Yearly Meeting, 1988

That the sweat and tedious labor of the farmer, early and late, cold and hot, wet and dry, should be converted into the pleasure of a small number of men—that continued severity should be laid on nineteen parts of the land to feed the inordinate lusts and delicate appetites of the twentieth, is so far from the will of the great Governor of the world, [it] is wretched and blasphemous.

William Penn, 1668

All things are bound together. All things connect. Whatever befalls the earth, befalls also the children of the earth.

Oren Lyons, ~~Chief of the~~ Onondaga Nation

In addition to taking care of the practical supports and planning for death and dying which in themselves can be overwhelming or unfamiliar, we are all faced with deeper issues related to the end of a life. What is most important to us as we make this final passage? How can we accompany someone and provide spiritual support through their final journey? Can we make plans that are consistent with lifelong values? Is there a sense of unfinished business, a need to forgive or be forgiven?

John Woolman, c1760

17.18. Vocal Ministry

Queries

How do I discern when to speak and when not to speak, both in Meeting and elsewhere?

How do we encourage Friends to allow ample time to absorb the previous message before speaking?

How do I practice listening to the Truth which may be revealed by others?

Advices

Once Meeting begins, take time to enter fully into the spirit of worship. Gently offer up distractions as you center down and open yourself to the workings of the Spirit. Come to Meeting with neither a resolve to speak, nor a determination not to speak, but rather with an attitude of expectant waiting and openness.

If you feel moved to speak, take a moment to test your leading. Is your message from the Spirit, or somewhere else? If it is from God, is it meant only for yourself, or for the entire Meeting? Genuine ministry is often preceded by a physical uneasiness, a “heart pounding weakness,” from which our name Quaker is derived. Remember that silence is not just the space between messages, but a deep and living communion with the “Spirit which gives life.” Your silent prayer and openness to God are themselves a form of ministry that enriches the Meeting community. Allow adequate time between spoken messages, so that all may listen to God and truly hear the previous message.

Brevity is an under-appreciated virtue. If you speak, do not feel compelled to explore all the implications of your insight. Rather, leave room for the Spirit to work through the next person, potentially building on your words and possibly extending them in an unexpected direction.

Inevitably, not all vocal ministry will be equally meaningful to all present. Remember, ministry that does not speak to you may nevertheless be valuable to others. If you find yourself struggling with another’s words, learn to listen for the Spirit behind the words.

In regard to any impulse to speak a second time during worship, Friends have traditionally counseled restraint. Partly this is a matter of equity (since most present will not speak at all, none should speak more than once), and partly a recognition that to offer genuine vocal ministry is a weighty matter, requiring a degree of spiritual discernment and obedience beyond what most of us can muster twice in a single hour.

Friends in the unprogrammed tradition rarely include music in their worship, but enjoy singing and instrumental music in other contexts. Spontaneous musical contributions, however, may be appropriate in a meeting for worship.

Remember that our manner of worship is ultimately a mystery under the direction of the Spirit. Each Meeting for Worship is a spiritual adventure, unique and unpredictable. Let us remember in humility, as Isaac Pennington wrote, that “the end of words is to bring us to the knowledge of things beyond what words can utter.” Know that you are a channel for the Light. If you have a deep sense of the urging of the Spirit, consider your obligation to pass the message on.

Voices

I remembered God and was troubled, and in the depth of my distress he had pity upon me, and sent the Comforter. I then felt forgiveness for my offence, and my mind became calm and quiet, being truly thankful to my gracious Redeemer for his mercies. And after this, feeling the spring of divine love opened, and a concern to speak, I said a few words in a meeting in which I found peace. This I believe was about six weeks from the first time, and as I was thus humbled and disciplined under the cross, my understanding became more strengthened to distinguish the language of the pure spirit which inwardly moves upon the heart, and taught me to wait in silence sometimes many weeks together, until I felt that rise which prepares the creature to stand like a trumpet, through which the Lord speaks to his flock.

John Woolman, 1741

Some think, through a mistaken judgment, that they must be doing something every meeting, (like the preachers of the letter, who must either be singing, preaching or praying all the time) and by such a conduct they lose their interest and place in the hearts of friends by too long and too frequent appearing in both preaching and prayer: For the avoiding of which, keep close to thy gift, intently waiting to know thy place, both when to speak and when to be silent; and when thou speakest, begin under a sense of divine influence, whether it be in preaching or praying; and without it, do not either preach or pray.

Samuel Bownas, 1750

In Friends' meetings also, from the fact that everyone is free to speak, one hears harmonies and correspondences between very various utterances such as are scarcely to be met elsewhere. It is sometimes as part-singing compared with unison. The free admission of the ministry of women, of course, greatly enriches this harmony. I have often wondered whether some of the motherly counsels I have listened to in our meeting would not reach some hearts that might be closed to the masculine preacher.

Caroline E. Stephen, 1890

Near evening I was at [a meeting with Indians], where the pure Gospel love was felt, to the tendering some of our hearts; and the interpreters endeavoring to acquaint the people with what I said, in short sentences, found some difficulty, as none of them were quite perfect in the English and Delaware tongues, so they helped one another and we laboured along, Divine love attending. Afterward, feeling my mind covered with the spirit of prayer, I told the interpreters that I found it in my heart to pray to God, and believed if I prayed aright, he would hear me, and expressed my willingness for them to omit interpreting; so our meeting ended with a degree of divine love. Before the people went out I observed Papunechang...spoke to one of the interpreters; and I was afterward told that he said in substance; "I love to feel where words come from."

John Woolman, c. 1760

As the worshiper sits in silence some message may arise out of the depth of the soul that by its nature is intended not simply for the worshiper but for the gathering as a whole. If it is left unexpressed, the worshiper feels burdened with a sense of omission, but if it is faithfully uttered, the worshiper feels a sense of clearness and relief. This peculiar sense of urgency is usually the sign of divine requirement. There is no sure or single test of guidance.... Though a message may seem intellectually fitting it should not be given unless it glows with life.

Howard H. Brinton, 1942

Ministry is what is on one's soul, and it can be in direct contradiction to what is on one's mind. It's what the Inner Light gently pushes you toward or suddenly dumps in your lap. It is rooted in the eternity, divinity, and selflessness of the Inner Light; not in the worldly, egoistic functions of the conscious mind.

Marrianne McMullen, 1987

Waiting upon the Holy Spirit in silent expectation and prayer is the basis of our meeting for worship. Vocal ministry should arise out of a sense of being inwardly moved to share a message aloud. Sometimes a message is not ripe yet, or comes clearly but is meant only for the person receiving it, not for the group. Some Friends are led to speak frequently, and others only rarely; yet the timid or brief message of one who seldom speaks may be as moving and helpful as that of a more practiced speaker. The most satisfactory vocal ministry arises out of a leading that is felt in the silence so strongly that it cannot be ignored. It should be delivered with as few words as possible, yet as many as necessary.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting, 1988

*Our worship is our gift to God,
Ministry through words is God's gift to us.
As we seek the Presence,
Let us honor these gifts by testing our leadings to speak,
Discerning that they are truly guided by the Holy Spirit
That they are messages for the assembled body
And not ourselves alone,
And by allowing each message to settle
Into the heart of those who need it
By keeping silence between each ministry.
Let us allow ourselves to be gathered
By the power and grace of the light.*

Friends General Conference, 1995

Offer whatever you have to God, and be prepared to let it go. ...Nowadays if words come to my mind I try to remember to pray, "O Lord, if this is not for this time and place, please take it from me," and very often he does.

Beatrice Saxon Snell, 1965

When we gather together in worship let us remember that there is committed to each of us, as disciples of Christ, a share in the priesthood. We should help one another, whether in silence or through spoken prayer or words of ministry. Let none of us assume that vocal ministry is never to be our part.

If the call comes, there should be no quenching of the spirit; the sense of our own unworthiness must not exempt us from this service, nor the fear of being unable to find the right words.

Faithfulness in speaking, even very briefly, may open the way for fuller ministry from others. The tender and humble-minded utterance, given faithfully, can carry its message to the hearts of its hearers.

London Yearly Meeting, 1973

Gradually I realized that the most powerful ministry is a wordless radiation of the Love of God. As I began to experience this secret, undramatic, invisible ministry flowing out from me, I realized that my sometimes dramatic gifts in the ministry had depended all along on the secret, silent ministry of a woman here or a man there who never spoke in meeting. With humility I came to understand how their ministry of being deeply present to God and then radiating the Love of Jesus Christ is the most important ministry of all, for it helps everyone in the meeting to come into a state of living communion and transformation. Words are important of course - they can be a matter of life and death - but they are only words. What really counts is the powerful transformation of human character which can occur in a meeting deeply gathered into the body of Christ.

Bill Taber, 1998

*My piece was pat and all ready to say,
She rose first. I threw my piece away.
My well-turned stuff
Was not so rough
As hers, but easy elegant and smooth.
Beginning middle end
It had, and point
And aptly quoted prophet priest and poet.
Hers was uncouth*

*Wanting in art
Laboured scarce-audible and out of joint.
Three times she lost the thread
And sitting left her message half unsaid.
'Why then did thee throw it
Into the discard?'
Friend,
It had head (Like this).
Hers, oh hers had heart.*

Robert Hewison, 1965

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III. Our Quaker Communities

I was moved to recommend the setting up of Monthly Meetings throughout the nation. And the Lord opened to me what I must do . . .

George Fox, 1667

The Religious Society of Friends began not as a structured organization, but as a fellowship of Friends of Truth. As the need arose for service to members or others, Meetings were established and named for the times or intervals of their regular sessions for business, as Monthly Meetings, Quarterly Meetings, or Yearly Meetings.

The Monthly Meeting is the basic unit of the Religious Society of Friends and the body in which membership resides. The Monthly Meeting consists of Friends (members and attenders) who meet together at regular intervals to wait upon God in Meeting for Worship (often weekly) and Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business (often monthly). In a Quaker Meeting, Friends are “joined with God and with each other” and there is order, unity and power. It is upon this concept of a Meeting that the good order of Friends is based. To accomplish the work of the Meeting, each Monthly Meeting establishes committees and appoints officers to carry out such functions as pastoral care, record keeping, finances, and social witness.

The members of Monthly Meetings also constitute Quarterly and Yearly Meetings. Within Baltimore Yearly Meeting, Quarterly Meetings, which are somewhat formal associations of several Monthly Meetings in a region, have been formed or have dissolved over the years as way opened. The names of these assemblies reflect how often they meet for business, not a hierarchy of authority. The Monthly Meeting is at the core. Quarterly and Yearly Meetings are organized to explore and realize common purposes of Friends and the Monthly Meetings to which they belong.

The work of the Yearly Meeting is done largely in its committees, and corporately at its annual session and Interim Meetings. Friends who attend the session do not participate as instructed delegates, but as a group of Friends whose views may well reflect the diverse views of the Yearly Meeting as a whole. There are many Yearly Meetings across the globe. Many share joint undertakings, and communication among them is treasured. At each year’s annual session, Baltimore Yearly Meeting prepares an “Epistle to Friends Everywhere” for distribution. During the session, excerpts are read from the many such Epistles received.

Beyond the Yearly Meeting is the wider Quaker community, which is comprised of organizations like Friends General Conference, Friends United Meeting, Friends World Committee for Consultation, American Friends Service Committee, Friends Committee on National Legislation, and many more. Monthly and Baltimore Yearly Meetings are often members of these wider organizations. Meeting is a participating member of the first three of these organizations.

Often one finds other organizations of Friends that are either independent or are under the care of a Monthly Meeting. These include Worship Groups, Indulged or Allowed Meetings, and Preparative Meetings.

1. Monthly Meetings

The Monthly Meeting is the fundamental spiritual community in the Religious Society of Friends. It is so called because its members meet monthly to conduct its business. It conducts Meetings for Worship weekly or more often. It is a caring community that is as responsive as it can be to the spiritual, social, educational, and material needs of its members.

The Monthly Meeting encourages members and attenders to live their lives under Divine guidance. It nurtures spiritual gifts, and relates to the Yearly Meeting and other bodies of Friends. With Divine assistance the Monthly Meeting fulfills a wide range of responsibilities including:

- providing a worshipful environment
- recording membership and its transfer or termination
- celebrating marriage and ceremonies of commitment

commemorating the lives of Friends who have died
consoling the bereaved
nurturing young people
fostering the gifts and leadings of Friends
providing pastoral care within the community
enjoying fellowship and recreation
encouraging Friends in their social witness, and
raising funds needed for the work of the Society.

Membership

Membership in the Religious Society of Friends is a spiritual commitment. It is a privilege and a responsibility. It is the outward sign of an inner experience of the Living God and of general agreement with the Society's beliefs.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting is without a binding creed. Its beliefs are based on its Judeo-Christian heritage and adherence to the Spirit of Christ, the inward Light, the Divine Seed, and That of God in everyone. As Friends seek truth, peace, and harmony in the Light of that Spirit, our testimonies emerge.

Membership carries with it spiritual obligations. Each member is called to participate in the Meeting's spiritual life and to attend worship regularly. Members need to nurture each other's God-given gifts and talents. They seek guidance from one another and the Meeting in discerning God's will for each other. They pray for one another.

The spiritual commitment of being a member entails practical obligations. The vitality and viability of each Monthly Meeting depends on its members' investment of time, energy, and financial support. Friends express their spiritual commitment in various ways: for example, through regular participation in Meetings for Business, service on committees or as officers, and regular financial giving.

Only Monthly Meetings are empowered to accept individuals into membership and to record them as members of the ~~religious~~Religious Society of Friends. Members of a Monthly Meeting are also members of Baltimore Yearly Meeting and of a Quarterly Meeting, if one exists.

Application for Membership

It is essential that those who have a spiritual leading to join the Monthly Meeting also recognize that they are asking to become members of the wider Religious Society of Friends. That spiritual leading is indicated by regular attendance at Meetings for Worship as well as by support for the Meetings for Worship with Concern for Business.

~~Applicants~~Those seeking membership are encouraged to review *Faith and Practice* thoughtfully, as well as other writings of Friends, to deepen their understanding of Quaker ways: our mode of worship and transacting business, the meaning of Friends' testimonies, and the responsibilities of membership. Participation in a Meeting committee is also helpful preparation for membership.

Application for membership starts with a letter to the Monthly Meeting explaining why the ~~applicant~~person is drawn to the Religious Society of Friends. In many Meetings, but not all, the letter is read at the Monthly Meeting for Business and referred to the appropriate Meeting committee. This committee either meets with the ~~applicant~~person seeking membership or appoints a clearness committee to do so. If a clearness committee is appointed, it reports its recommendation to the appropriate committee, which makes a recommendation to the Monthly Meeting. If the committee itself meets with the ~~applicant~~person, it reports its recommendation directly to the Monthly Meeting.

If the committee feels that the ~~applicant~~person is not yet ready for membership, action may be postponed. It is then the responsibility of the committee to become better acquainted with the prospective member and to offer instruction and guidance as seems appropriate.

In rare cases, the committee will conclude that for this person, Meeting membership is not appropriate. The committee should be sure that the ~~applicant~~person seeking membership understands the reasons for ~~their~~its conclusion.

If the committee feels that the applicantperson is ready for membership, it brings the application to the Monthly Meeting with a recommendation for acceptance. Some Meetings follow the practice of laying over final action until a subsequent Meeting for Business in order that Friends may become better acquainted with the prospective member. When any application is approved, the Monthly Meeting minutes the person's acceptance into membership.

When the Monthly Meeting accepts a new member, it is good practice to appoint a few Friends to arrange for an appropriate welcome. These Friends accept a continuing responsibility to nurture the new member and support the member in his or her spiritual journey.

Guidelines for Considering Applications for Membership

To reach clearness together about the rightness of membership for the applicantperson, the committee and the applicantperson seeking membership should discuss all the issues in a deliberate fashion. The committee should:

Ask about the spiritual journey of the applicantperson seeking membership and listen attentively and prayerfully to the applicant'sperson's response. Does the applicantperson seem to be genuinely led by the Holy Spirit in seeking membership and willing to respond to Divine guidance in making other decisions?

Inquire as to the applicant'sperson's understanding of Quaker history and experience.

Inquire whether the applicantperson finds harmony with Quaker testimonies and with the Meeting's expressions of these testimonies. The committee might also inquire how the applicantperson sees his or her life, including vocational choices, and other associations, being affected by these testimonies.

Consider whether the applicantperson seeking membership is involved in the life of the Meeting, and whether the applicantperson is prepared to make a commitment to the Meeting community and to the Religious Society of Friends as a whole. Is the applicantperson prepared to seek clearness for individual leadings through the Meeting?

Discuss the applicant'sperson's familiarity with Friends' decision making processes. Has the applicantperson had opportunity to observe the Meeting conducting its business in order to understand this aspect of the Meeting's life?

Inquire as to other religious affiliations of the applicantperson seeking membership and discuss whether they are to be terminated or continued.

Inquire about the attitude of other family members toward the application. Are there concerns the applicantperson seeking membership will need to address with the support of the Meeting?

Inquire whether anything further is needed to help the applicantperson reach clarity about the decision.

Sojourners

A Friend residing temporarily at a distance from the Monthly Meeting where membership is recorded, and not wishing to transfer membership to the Monthly Meeting that is convenient to attend, is welcomed to all the meetings and activities of the "host" Monthly Meeting. Such a sojourner may request the home Meeting to supply a minute addressed to the host Meeting, asking for sojourner status in that Meeting. The host Meeting accepts the sojourner member at the Business Meeting at which the request is presented. The Meeting minutes its acceptance of the new member, but it does not include the sojourner in its statistics of membership. The sojourner is expected to participate fully in the life and work of the host Meeting. Sojourning status terminates when the sojourner leaves the area of the host Meeting, which should then notify the home Meeting.

A sojourner who continues to reside in the area of the Meeting for an extended time should consider transferring full membership to the Meeting. If sojourning continues for an extended time, the host Meeting should discuss with the sojourner the possibility of transferring membership to the host Meeting.

Transfers

Members moving away from their Monthly Meeting are advised to transfer their membership to a nearby Monthly Meeting. Friends moving to a place where there is no Meeting may retain their existing membership and should maintain contact with their Meeting.

Members wishing to transfer need to notify their Monthly Meeting. Following that Meeting's approval of the request, the Clerk writes to the Clerk of the receiving Monthly Meeting to ask that the member be accepted.

The receiving Meeting normally accepts the transfer request at the Business Meeting at which it is presented. When the transfer has been accepted and recorded, and the original Monthly Meeting notified of the acceptance, the Friend becomes a member of the receiving Meeting. Suggested formats for use by Meetings involved in transfers are contained in the Appendix.

Transfer members should be welcomed into the Monthly Meeting in the same manner as other new members. However, a clearness committee is not required for the transfer of membership.

Attendees

Meetings are encouraged to welcome each attendee and to offer more information about Quakerism. Some Monthly Meetings invite new attendees to leave their contact information so that Friends can follow up.

Meetings should encourage attendees to become acquainted with the Meeting and its members and to be active in the life of the Meeting. The Religious Society of Friends depends in a unique way on the shared efforts of all in the Meeting community for worship, Meeting for Business, committee tasks, and the Meeting's concerns. Attendees are welcomed into all Meeting activities, but generally do not serve on Ministry and Counsel, Trustees, Pastoral Care, or Nominating Committee, or as Meeting officers.

Attendees as well as members should be encouraged to become further involved in the wider Quaker community.

Membership of Children

When a young person has the understanding needed to commit to full membership in the Quaker Meeting, he or she may apply. Children too young to make this commitment may be recorded as junior/associate junior, associate, or even full members at the request of member parents or guardians. Children are an invaluable part of the Meeting and should be encouraged to be active in the Meeting.

As our youths mature, the Meeting should consult with them to determine if they are committed to the spiritual and practical responsibilities of adult members. If they do not indicate such an intent during the Meeting's contacts over a period of several years, the names of junior/associate members ~~should~~may be removed from the membership rolls and they should be so notified. Young people who do not wish to become full members may continue to be welcomed as attendees.

Isolated Members

It is the responsibility of each Monthly Meeting, through the appropriate committee, to keep in touch with its members. It is recommended that, at least once a year, each Meeting communicate with those members who reside at a distance, and particularly with those who are remote from any Friends' Meeting. This communication should express kindly interest and inquire as to their religious life and activities.

Resignations

Should a member wish to resign, the Monthly Meeting is advised, as way opens, to request the appropriate committee to visit the member in a spirit of loving care to inquire into the cause of the resignation. If a member does resign, the minutes should reflect that the release is being made at the member's own request and the member should be informed of the action.

Termination of Membership

After repeated attempts over a period of five years to contact absent Friends, their names may be dropped from the list of members at the concurrence of the Meeting.

Members who substantially disregard the obligations of membership should be visited by the appropriate committee to inquire about their interest. If extended efforts do not bring about resolution, and the Monthly Meeting concurs in the judgment of the committee, the members may be dropped from the list of members, and if possible be notified by the Clerk of the Meeting.

If a member's conduct or publicly expressed views are in flagrant conflict with Friend's beliefs and practices, or discredit the Religious Society of Friends, the appropriate Meeting committee should appoint a few well-qualified Friends to meet with the member. These Friends should labor with the member lovingly and patiently in a spirit of reconciliation for as long as there is reasonable hope of benefit from their efforts. If such efforts are unsuccessful, the Friends appointed to labor with the member may recommend that the person's

membership be terminated. If the committee agrees, it should take the recommendation to the Monthly Meeting after notifying the person of its decision. The Monthly Meeting, if it agrees, records the termination of membership for cause in its minutes. A copy of the minute should be delivered to the person whose membership is terminated.

One Meeting recently adopted the following minute:

We do not permit violent physical, verbal, or other behavior that we find, through corporate discernment, violates the Divine Spirit. Any in our midst whose behavior disrupts our meeting community or threatens the physical or emotional safety or integrity of another must leave. Failure to conform to the expectations in this Minute may result in termination of recorded membership.

One whose membership has been terminated may subsequently apply for membership according to the established procedure.

Officers

The Monthly Meeting meets regularly for business, normally at monthly intervals. It appoints suitable persons for stated terms as Clerk, Recording Clerk, Treasurer, and Recorder. Other officers, such as Assistant Clerk and Assistant Treasurer may be appointed as needed.

The Clerk

The Clerk is the servant of the Meeting for the execution of its business affairs, convening regular or specially called Meetings for Business, guiding deliberations, and carrying out the Meeting's instructions for actions between business sessions. The Monthly Meeting reposes great trust in its Clerk and can be greatly assisted if that officer understands the particular functions of the office. There is great virtue in giving several members the experience and the tempering which comes with the responsibility of the clerkship. Hence it is desirable that the occupant of the position be changed at reasonable intervals.

Advices to Clerks

When you accept the appointment by your Meeting as Clerk, you accept the obligation to focus time, energy, and gifts in the fulfillment of that trust. Remember that you, as Clerk, are the servant of the Meeting, and by your attitude and arrangement of the agenda, set the pattern of worshipful listening that should characterize our Meetings for Worship with a Concern for Business. The Meeting is likely to repose great trust in you, and you bear an important responsibility in enabling the Meeting to listen and wait for God's guidance in its deliberations.

As we approach our business we need to put aside how the world reaches decisions in temporal affairs and to recollect that we have come together to seek not equity, nor compromise, nor even the most "democratic" solution to the matter at hand but the Truth as God gives us to see the Truth. We believe that God is revealed and gives guidance to all who seek. Thus, in Business Meeting, we should listen to the views of all, just as we do in Meeting for Worship. We further believe that as Truth emerges we will have substantial unity in recognizing it, for Truth is undivided and That of God within each person responds to its presence. Modesty and reflection on our experience might reveal that we are often slow to comprehend the wholeness of the truth.

Major items of business to be submitted to the Meeting should be prepared as carefully as possible by a Meeting committee or by preparatory work on the part of the Clerk so that pertinent facts and records of previous Meeting actions will be available to facilitate the discussion. Members not involved in the preparatory work should trust and value the work of preparation. Care should be taken to avoid reworking in a way that belittles the work already done.

Do not leave all your preparations to the last minute. Check beforehand all facts which may be in question, so as to avoid fruitless and time-wasting speculation. When introducing business try to provide a

brief but sufficient outline of needed background to set the Meeting purposefully on its course. In the subsequent deliberations you may need to advise on procedure or make an occasional suggestion. However, your main task is to discern the Meeting's leading. You may find that this very discipline of detachment leads to a new and deeper relationship with other members of the Meeting. If you are deeply involved in a decision to be reached, the Meeting should be invited to ask another Friend to act as Clerk for the occasion.

The Clerk helps the Meeting move through the agenda, with efficient but unhurried dispatch, keeping the members' attention on the matters to be considered. The Clerk listens, learns and sifts what is said, to discern the sense of the Meeting. The Clerk encourages those who are reluctant to speak, and in like manner restrains those who tend to speak at undue length or speak too often. When strong division of opinion seems to threaten the worshipful basis of the Business Meeting, a period of silent and prayerful waiting on the will of God may well have a calming and unifying effect. The Clerk may also call for silence between messages, so that each Friend's insight may be fully heard.

Do not be afraid to ask the Meeting to hold the Clerk's table in the Light while a minute is being prepared. Minutes need to be specific and clear and include any necessary names and dates. Remember that the minute will be consulted in the future to understand the Meeting's leading. Therefore it is important that each minute be specific, clear, and complete. Details regarding committees and individuals named to tasks, and any dates which are germane, should be included. Each minute that records a significant decision should be written out in full and presented, revised as needed, and approved before the close of the Meeting for Business during which the matters were considered.

Be careful to maintain the right balance in exercising the authority that the office of Clerk lays upon you. Use discretion in deciding which matters should be brought before Friends and which may be dealt with by you. When contentious difficult issues arise, take care not to take sides, but to uphold Quaker process, counseling the Meeting to have patience, go back to the center, hear each other, and listen for the Spirit. Beware of exceeding your authority and if in doubt confer with Friends of experience. You may find a support committee of such experienced Friends beneficial. Remember that the right exercise of the Clerk's authority is of great service to the Meeting in promoting the smooth and expeditious handling of its business.

When a Friend from outside comes to your Meeting to speak, by invitation or under a concern, try to ensure that the agenda is arranged to allow adequate time for the matter, before the Meeting is fatigued or overwhelmed with other business.

Putting an agenda together is an art. You may wish to put items that will require lots of energy early in the agenda. Do not try to put those that may be met with conflicting views at the end. Do not be afraid to lay over business until the next month or until a called Meeting for Business can be arranged. When a time management issue arises, it can be referred to the Meeting.

Members should exercise love and forbearance in discussion and should seek Divine guidance, realizing that Truth will often transcend the understanding of any single individual. When the discernment of the Meeting appears to be tending away from the opinion of a member, that Friend should consider whether to stand aside or to prevent the Meeting's action. When the Meeting cannot unite upon a minute, no action is taken on the matter, which may be postponed for further consideration. Any previous action or policy of the Meeting in the same area stands in the absence of a specific Meeting decision to change it. Friends are reminded that failure to act is also a decision and are urged to consider seriously the nature of their guidance to stand opposed to a view which has clearly received the assent of most Friends in the Meeting. At the same time Friends are mindful of the many occasions when the leading of one or a few has proven to be the way of Truth.

When action appears to be blocked by one or a few Friends, the Meeting may find it useful to appoint a special committee to labor with all concerned for a resolution of the impasse.

Keep a sense of proportion and a sense of humor. Think affectionately between meetings of the needs of the community which has appointed you and how they can best be met. Ask guidance of God continually in the performance of your task. Pay attention to a regular spiritual practice that will help you remain anchored in the Spirit.

The Recording Clerk

~~Part of the decision-making process~~As part of the process of making and implementing decisions in the Religious Society of Friends ~~is recording~~Friends, it is important to record the decisions in the minutes ~~made by the Monthly Meeting of the Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business.~~ This is the responsibility of the Recording Clerk (sometimes named the Assistant Clerk). The Recording Clerk works closely with the Clerk in preparing for Meeting for Business and in formulating proposed minutes. The Recording Clerk is responsible for preparing an accurate final copy of the minutes, which becomes a permanent record of the Monthly Meeting.

The minutes of each business session should be dated and signed by both the Presiding Clerk and the Recording Clerk. Attachments such as the annual budget and financial report, the annual committee assignment list, and other communications of importance, should be kept with the minutes to which they relate. The Recording Clerk is responsible for maintaining a notebook for the current year including the minutes, copies of any reports received, and any other relevant documents. At the end of the year, the Recording Clerk is responsible for providing this minute book to the Recorder or Archivist as a permanent addition to the records of the Meeting.

Advices to Recording Clerks

Decisions are made in a Friends' Meeting for Business based on the collective discernment of God's will. It is the responsibility of the Recording Clerk to strive to put into words what those present heard together and how they were led on each agenda item. It is advisable to read each minute (or at least each minute that reflects a decision) back to the group for approval before going on to the next agenda item. The Clerk may pause and ask the body to hold the Clerk's table in the Light.

Those who are not present do not have the opportunity to sense the gentle movements of the Spirit, nor to have their own opinions softened by the love within the gathered body. We must trust that those who were present rightly sensed God's will, and that the minutes written in the moment accurately reflect that sense.

Friends have traditionally avoided minuting the steps along the way to the decision. Friends expect parts of the Truth to be expressed by various Friends, and the final wholeness to be gathered up by the Clerk out of the growing sense of the Meeting. Therefore the conclusion is the important thing. It is actually detrimental to the concluding sense of unity to have the minutes remind Friends of the different opinions and partial insights that eventually led to the whole. A gentle reminder of the concerns which were heard and considered may, however, be useful, especially to those who were not present, but who wish to know that their concerns were heard.

Friends are clear that any insights or helpful additions to the discussion are prompted by God's Spirit, not from individual human cleverness. Therefore the names of the individuals making the comments are not recorded. It is God's work through them that is important. If someone presents a report in his or her capacity as Clerk or representative, then the position might be noted, but it isn't generally felt necessary to name the person. When names are given they tend to be those appointed to a specified task or committee. Then the names are important to remind Friends of who should be held accountable for properly completing the service.

Minutes of a Meeting also include mention of reports received, referrals of business to committees, and other, similar actions which, although they do not reflect a final decision by the Meeting, do constitute the orderly flow of business.

There is more to taking Friends' minutes than the content. It is helpful if the Recording Clerk not only has writing skills, but also is able to discern the sense of the Meeting, the working of the Spirit, in arriving at unity among Friends. It is particularly important that the Recording Clerk have a gift for expressing things clearly and unambiguously. In addition, a person doing this task needs to be constantly aware of the ease with which important details such as full name, term of service, and dates can escape notice.

Our tradition provides support for the underlying purposes of our practice. Our corporate practice can encourage us to be increasingly mindful of our dependence on Divine guidance in our decision making. Good recording can enhance the sense of worship in our Meetings for Business.

The Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for the custody and disbursement of Meeting funds as directed by the Monthly Meeting. Larger Meetings may appoint a separate Bookkeeper who must keep accurate records and report to the Treasurer and Finance Committee regularly. In the interest of sound financial health it is good practice to report on revenues and expenditures to the Meeting monthly, or at least quarterly. The Meeting may appoint someone to function in the Treasurer's absence. The Treasurer is an *ex officio* member of the Monthly Meeting's Finance Committee.

The Monthly Meeting should appoint an independent auditor or an auditing committee to examine the accounts. This might be done each year in larger Meetings.

Advices to Treasurers

The Treasurer of the Monthly Meeting is responsible for keeping accurate records and fulfilling the legal requirements of the position. Doing so requires a thorough understanding of financial reports. It helps to have some financial background; therefore supplemental training may be needed. The level of expertise required will vary depending on the complexity of the Meeting's financial picture. In addition, a treasurer's responsibilities include leadership in the financial life of the Meeting. Working in concert with the financial committee, this person should be able to:

- Translate financial information and financial concepts for the Meeting. The Treasurer may need to help explain and re-frame until everyone understands the reports. It's also the Treasurer's role to interpret and translate the Meeting's questions, goals, or concerns about the financial information or financial situation to committees.

- Work with the Committee Clerks to develop a useful budget. Budgets are the financial version of an annual or strategic plan. It is important that the Treasurer ensure that budget priorities and decisions reflect the intentions and objectives of the Meeting.

- Work closely with the Meeting's trustees so that they are confident that the Meeting's resources are efficiently used and are aware of whether they are adequate.

- Treasurers often go beyond annual budgets, audits, and financial reports to bring financial understanding to the Quaker Meeting. It is important to look down the road to find the financial options and decisions needed for longer-term goals and initiate discussions to connect finance with the visions of the Meeting.

To work with these responsibilities successfully within a Quaker Meeting, ensure that you have sufficient support from your Meeting, such as a support group or an assistant treasurer. Having others who understand your work will make it easier to share some tasks and duties, particularly at busy times.

The Recorder

Friends have traditionally taken great care of records for current use as well as preservation for future generations. The Recorder keeps records of births, deaths, marriages, and changes in membership and marital status. The Recorder is responsible for maintaining the roll of members and keeping it up to date. It is good practice to report these statistics back to the Meeting at least once a year.

Minutes of committees should also be carefully kept, in chronological order, and turned over to the Recorder or Archivist for preservation when no longer needed by the committees. An exception is minutes of a confidential nature, which are kept within the committee or in a locked file. As with Monthly Meeting minutes, they should be signed and dated.

Other documents important to the life and good order of the Meeting or its members may include copies of legal documents (deeds, notes, trusts, insurance policies), marriage licenses and certificates, newsletters, burial instructions, and correspondence. The Recorder has general charge of these and all permanent records of the Monthly Meeting, and all officers of the Meeting should have access to these documents.

Preservation of Records

Each set of records, including membership, Business Meeting minutes, financial records, committee minutes, and the newsletter, should be kept on acid-free paper. No attachments should be made to pages by the use of metal fasteners, paste, glue, or gummed tape, as all will eventually eat through the paper and destroy the record. Each set of records should be kept in chronological order in acid-free folders or binders and boxes. If binders are used, it is best not to allow direct contact of metal with the contents, and it should be possible to

remove pages for microfilming. Electronic records are not a substitute for paper records. Records kept electronically should be backed up frequently and printed on acid-free paper.

Retention and Disposition of Records

In addition to sending copies of the Meeting's membership roll, minutes, and newsletters to the Baltimore Yearly Meeting office, the Recorder or Archivist is responsible for ensuring the permanent records of the Meeting are properly archived locally. [The Haverford College Quaker Collection contains records of Baltimore Yearly Meeting \(Orthodox\) and remains the depository for many of the monthly meetings and for Virginia Half-Years Meeting.](#) The Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College serves as the official depository for records of Baltimore Yearly Meeting and its constituent Monthly Meetings. Comprehensive directions for Clerks and Recorders of Monthly Meetings are available on the Swarthmore web site. That information includes what records to keep; collection and maintenance of current minutes and reports; maintenance of membership records and related statistical data; histories of the Meeting and recollections of members; where to deposit records; when to deposit records; how to deposit records; and microfilming records.

Monthly Meeting Committees

Within the Religious Society of Friends a committee is a group that is responsible for specific duties or the pursuit of an inquiry which the Meeting as a whole cannot accomplish efficiently or appropriately. A committee is expected to work on behalf of the Meeting in matters that come within its charge. It reports to the Meeting such of its business as does not betray confidences, seeking guidance from the Meeting before going beyond its stated charge.

From time to time it is helpful for a committee to examine and state its function and responsibility for review by the Meeting as a whole. At times minutes arise from the work of the committee. These may be brought to the Monthly Meeting for its consideration.

Members and attenders should be aware that the Meeting's committees are resources to address their concerns and test their leadings. Each Meeting committee should, in turn, be aware of Yearly Meeting committees or other Quaker organizations that offer a possible resource for information sharing and assistance.

A committee is responsible to the Meeting for what it does. It is also responsible to the Spirit that moves in any Quaker Meeting, and may sometimes be led in unexpected directions. Committees need to be sensitive to these two responsibilities—to the Meeting and to the Spirit—and to the desirability of carrying the whole Meeting forward toward the Light. Balancing that aim with the risk of outrunning the Meeting's Guide can be the most challenging part of committee work.

Most committee meetings are open to any interested Meeting member and attender and for this reason are held at stated times and places or, if specially called, should be well announced. Some committees, however, may deal with matters of such confidentiality as to require closed meetings.

Advices for Committee Clerks

As committee clerk, you serve the Meeting by coordinating the work of your committee, nurturing the fellowship of committee members, and setting a tone that allows decisions to be made with respect for each member and with attention to the Light among and within you at each meeting. The following advices are intended to help you perform your important role:

- Prepare an agenda for each meeting, circulate it ahead of time, and allow members an opportunity to amend the agenda. Organize the agenda to ensure that critical topics are given adequate time.

- Begin and end each meeting with a period of worship. When a difficult decision faces you, remember that you, or any member of the committee, may ask for a period of silence in which human emotions may subside and the guidance of the Spirit may be heard more clearly.

Ensure that minutes are taken at each meeting and circulated among members. Keep track of the minutes so that they may be presented to the next committee clerk and become part of the permanent record of the Meeting.

When a matter has been discussed, help members consider how they are led to act. Be sure that when a course of action is agreed on, it is clear who will be responsible for each required task.

When you report to the Monthly Meeting for Business on a weighty matter, consider preparing a written report that can be circulated in advance. The report may give members an opportunity to absorb information and prepare to consider the issue together. It will also assist the Recording Clerk.

When reporting to the Meeting, be careful not to overstep by introducing topics that have not been brought before your committee.

Prepare presentations to the Meeting thoughtfully. Remember that the Meeting comes together not to hear everything that might be heard on a subject, but enough to move forward with it.

If a member of the committee is unable to fulfill his or her responsibilities, confer with the member to determine if he or she wishes to continue as a committee member. Notify the Nominating Committee and the Monthly Meeting of any changes in committee membership.

Advices for Committee Members

Committees serve the Monthly Meeting not only by carrying on routine delegated functions, but also by doing important background work in preparation for decisions at the Meeting for Business. They examine matters in depth, identify the issues, gather the most useful information, and make seasoned recommendations for decision by the Meeting. When this work is done well, the Monthly Meeting is able to focus quickly on the matter at hand. As a committee member, bear in mind the following advices:

When you agree to serve on a committee, commit to it. Your service will be most rewarding when you give it your best.

Whenever possible, bring matters of concern to the attention of the Clerk in advance so that he or she may plan to include them on the agenda.

Take careful notes on what you agree to do for the committee and be prepared to report back.

Remember that fellowship and spiritual community are fostered by warm and caring relationships in committees. You have an opportunity to get to know your fellow committee members, which will make belonging to the Meeting more rewarding.

Listen for the Light in everything that is said.

When needed, ask for silence to allow the Spirit to be heard.

Allow your work to flow from your sense of Truth.

Functions Commonly Performed by Committees

There are differences from Meeting to Meeting in how work is organized and how committees are named. Variations may exist in what work is done by the Meeting as a whole, through committees, or by individuals. These differences flow from Meeting size, the resources available, the skills of members, and other considerations. To take these differences into account, the following advices are offered according to Meeting functions, with the understanding that Monthly Meetings will organize themselves to address them in various ways. Please note that although the word “committee” may be used for convenience in the following section, it is understood that the function may not be the role of a committee in every Meeting.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting has standing committees, working groups, and *ad hoc* committees that work to support Monthly Meeting activities and responsibilities. Details on the operations of each of these committees are found in the *Manual of Procedure* maintained by the Yearly Meeting and available on its web site. The following section will briefly mention ways in which Baltimore Yearly Meeting committees may support those who are providing similar functions at the Monthly Meeting level.

Nominating People for Committees and Offices

The Nominating Committee is usually responsible for identifying individuals best suited to carry out the roles of officers of the Monthly Meeting, committee members, and liaisons to Quaker organizations with which the Meeting has an ongoing relationship.

The Nominating Committee of a Meeting fulfills an important role in the life of the Meeting. The effectiveness of the Meeting's operation as a corporate body of Friends is, in large part, dependent upon the ~~sensitive yet~~ worshipful and forthright consideration by this committee of persons to be recommended to the Meeting for service. Through its careful selection of Friends to serve the Meeting in specific ways, the committee helps strengthen the Meeting's corporate life by fostering individual growth.

Specific responsibilities of committee members include:

Understanding the roles of each committee or appointed position.

~~Identifying~~ Discerning the gifts and talents of Meeting members and calling out special gifts of Friends.

Contacting individuals to hear their leadings in the service of the Meeting and suggest ways they may serve.

As this committee does not make suggestions for its own membership, the Meeting is advised to establish a careful process for the selection of knowledgeable, sensitive, experienced, caring, and forthright Friends to serve on the Nominating Committee. For example, some Meetings establish a special Nominating Committee approved by the Meeting to select members of the Nominating Committee.

Considerations in nominations

Officers of the Meeting, Trustees, and committee clerks should be members of the Monthly Meeting. Experience has also shown that Monthly Meetings are best served when members of committees responsible for pastoral care and ministry are also members of the Monthly Meeting. These positions and committees require a high degree of understanding of the faith and practice of Friends, familiarity with the Meeting community, and the ability to maintain confidentiality in matters before the committee.

In suggesting appointments, the Nominating Committee is advised to consider capabilities, experience, personal attributes, and willingness to serve, as well as special gifts and talents. In order to foster individual growth and fellowship, it is generally advisable to rotate assignments of individual Friends after an appropriate term of service.

Adding members to committees

In addition to persons nominated to committees and formally approved by the Meeting, committees that are open to nonmembers are free to add any other Meeting member or attender who shows sufficient interest and is willing to attend meetings and perform committee duties. These "co-opted" members are not subject to approval by the Meeting as a whole. However, their membership should be recorded in the committee's minutes and communicated to the Clerk of the Meeting and the clerk of the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee can look at the discharge of responsibilities by co-opted committee members to find candidates for regular appointment to the committee.

Nurturing Ministry and Worship

All Meeting members are called to care for one another and for the Meeting. Some members, well-seasoned in Quaker ways, are asked by the Monthly Meeting to give special care to ensure that worship and Meeting for Business are held in the Light, with reverence for the Spirit. They also are asked to be attentive to how that Spirit is manifest through silence and through ministry. The committee responsible for this function seeks to ensure that each Meeting for Worship or business begins with quiet and reverent assembling; that it proceeds on the basis of a silent and attentive search for Divine guidance; and that when spoken messages are offered, they are spiritually grounded. Humility of spirit and confidence that the power of the Light will work in each person are essential to this service.

Responsibilities of committee members include:

Counsel and support those who are led to speak out of the silence in Meetings for Worship. Those who are inclined to speak unacceptably, at undue length, too often, or too soon after another speaker, may need prompt and loving counseling.

Assure that appointed Meetings for such occasions as marriages and memorials are held in the manner of Friends.

Arrange special Meetings for Worship on behalf of those who are ill or unable to attend Meeting for other reasons.

Welcome newcomers and visitors to Meeting. Leaflets to help newcomers understand Friends' practices and a visitors' book to record names and addresses are useful in this regard.

Consider requests for travel minutes and make recommendations on them to the Monthly Meeting.

Recognize and nurture Friends' gifts, especially gifts for ministry.

Offer opportunities for attenders and the wider community to learn about Quakerism, as well as for more seasoned Friends to share their spiritual journeys, deepen their faith, and consider how Friends' testimonies may be reflected in their lives.

Report annually to the Yearly Meeting on the Spiritual State of the Meeting.

Members of this committee should encourage those whose vocal ministry gives evidence of true spiritual insight and offer guidance to those whose messages seem inappropriate to a Meeting for Worship. The depth and timeliness of the message and its harmony with the spirit of the Meeting are more important than the form. The example of one struggling to be faithful in a difficult task may be more helpful than a polished address. Although vocal ministry serves an important purpose, Friends should be constantly aware that the opportunity for silent communion with God is basic to their religious practice.

Report on the Spiritual State of the Meeting

Each Monthly Meeting prepares a Spiritual State of the Meeting Report that is submitted to Baltimore Yearly Meeting, read carefully, and shared with other Meetings. The report is intended to answer the ancient question of Friends, "how fares the Truth among you?" Answering the question requires a prayerful assessment of the Meeting's spiritual condition and needs. The committee responsible for preparing the report gathers information through discussions with committee clerks, reflection on Meetings for Worship and Meetings for Business, and sometimes through worship-sharing involving the Meeting as a whole.

The report should cover such matters as:

The spiritual condition of the Meeting, including its strengths, failings, and spiritual challenges faced during the past year.

The nature of Meetings for Worship during the year, including the quality of the silence, and the content and quality of the spoken ministry.

The spiritual depth of the Meetings for Business during the year, as well as the range of concerns considered, attendance of members, and implementation of the Meeting's decisions.

The contributions of committees to the spiritual life of the Meeting, including both the business brought forward and faithfulness in carrying forward decisions of the Meeting.

This report should be a searching self-examination by the Meeting and its members of their spiritual strengths and weaknesses and of the efforts made to foster growth in spiritual life. An overly detailed Spiritual State of the Meeting report may not be helpful.

After approval by the Monthly Meeting, this report is forwarded to the Quarterly Meeting (if there is one) and to the Yearly Meeting.

At the Yearly Meeting level, the Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee is responsible for writing the Spiritual State of the Yearly Meeting report, which is based on the reports written by each Monthly Meeting within Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

Care for Members' Needs and Spiritual Wellbeing

Because we see each person as a minister, Friends collectively accept responsibility for the pastoral work that would be performed by a paid minister. Committee members should be good listeners rather than givers of advice; respectful and tender rather than judgmental; and able to listen for the guidance of the Spirit, suspending their initial opinions to hear more deeply in the moment.

Responsibilities of members include:

Provide for the spiritual refreshment of all members and attenders

Be acquainted with all members and regular attenders, and be aware of needs for encouragement, counsel, and support.

Receive and consider requests for changes in membership status or transfers and recommend action to the Meeting.

Provide clearness committees for those who are led to apply for membership.

Provide clearness committees to assist couples contemplating marriage or ceremonies of commitment under the care of the Meeting and establish committees to help plan the ceremony.

Ensure that Friends who are troubled, financially distressed, or faced with tasks that require the Meeting's support are visited and helped.

Get in touch with absent members and keep in contact with non-resident members.

Help to reconcile differences which may arise in the Meeting.

Provide opportunities for worship sharing on issues of Faith.

Help young people, attenders, and seekers to understand Friends' principles and testimonies and encourage them to apply for membership when appropriate.

Assist in setting up clearness and support committees for those who need or request them.

Many matters that come before this committee are delicate and personal. In such areas, the committee's proceedings are kept confidential and the dignity of the persons concerned is respected.

Many meetings have been profoundly challenged by efforts to assist members with mental health issues and their families. Members are asked to remember that their primary role is to provide spiritual support, helping to ground people who are coping with problems that disorient the mind – whether temporary and situational or long-term – in a deep sense of their worth as human beings, the love of God and others, and the hope of recovery. Second, it is helpful to be prepared to refer members and their families to competent counselors who can help individuals and, as needed, their families. Third, in order to support the individual and his or her family, it is sometimes helpful for committee members to learn more about the mental illness a person is living with. A few resources are listed in the appendix.

Sometimes, although rarely, mental illness can cause individuals to vent anger or make threats uncontrollably. When this behavior disrupts meeting for worship, causes pain, or causes individuals to stop attending the meeting, committee members will need to balance their love and concern for the individual with their love and concern for the meeting community as a whole. Many meetings, after long struggle, have offered to meet with individuals whose behavior repeatedly harms others in a separate meeting for worship or, if all else fails, to bar them from attending meeting. When such actions must be taken, Friends will need to make every effort to clarify that their concern is with the individual's behavior, not the human being. Friends may also need to thoughtfully choose ways of healing the meeting when it has been deeply divided by this problem. Please see the section of Faith and Practice called "Healing the Meeting." on page 209.

Advices on Addiction

Addiction is common and may be of several kinds. Individuals may be addicted to drugs, alcohol, nicotine, or to compulsive behaviors such as gambling. When people become addicted, brain changes occur that make changing the behavior very difficult. Inevitably, their addiction affects every member of the family. Often, not only the individual but the entire family denies the presence of the addiction. In some cases, the addiction is the individual's way of "self-medicating" an underlying mental health problem, and both problems will need to be addressed.

Individuals responsible for spiritual nurture within the meeting are asked to consider the following advices:

Addiction is a disease of the spirit as well as the mind and body. Spiritual support is often essential in recovery.

The individual who has chosen the path of recovery should be seen and assisted as one on a spiritual journey that will require the support of the community.

Relapse can and does occur when individuals attempt to recover. When this occurs, the meeting can help by avoiding judgment, shaming the individual, or communicating a sense of hopelessness. Instead, help the person learn from the relapse, strengthen their resolve, and go on.

For individuals and families who are in denial, seasoned community members who know the family or individual well may open a dialogue focused on the behaviors they have seen. Sometimes, they may choose to take part in a counselor-led intervention in which the individual is confronted, lovingly but firmly, regarding his or her addiction and its effects, both on the individual and on others.

The meeting should be prepared with referral sources. The Appendix on page 297 contains both resources and sources of referral.

The Yearly Meeting does not have a corresponding committee for these functions. However, the Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee does provide care for Monthly Meetings if they request help with a problem.

Managing Meeting Finances

Monthly and Preparative Meetings raise funds from their members and attenders sufficient to meet their responsibilities as a Meeting, to care for their property, to meet their obligations to the Yearly Meeting, and for other activities approved by the Meeting, such as supporting Quaker and other organizations. The Treasurer is an *ex officio* member of this committee and provides committee members with periodic reports and the status of contributions. Specific responsibilities of the committee include:

- Prepare an annual budget for consideration by the Meeting with input from committees.

- Keep the Meeting informed regularly on revenues and expenditures, and how they compare to the approved budget.

- Oversee the Treasurer's disbursement and collection of funds.

- In consultation with the Trustees, consider the long-term financial health of the Meeting, including establishing reserves to cover unexpected expenses or unexpected drops in contributions.

- Facilitate discussions around giving in a Spirit-led manner.

At the Yearly Meeting level, the Stewardship and Finance Committee is responsible for carrying out financial duties similar to those of the Finance Committee of a Monthly Meeting. This committee organizes an annual meeting for Meeting Treasurers and/or Finance Committee Clerks to review the proposed Monthly Meeting apportionments to Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

Serving as Trustees for Investments or Property

Any Meeting that accepts substantial funds for investment or holds ~~appreciable~~ real property is encouraged to ~~incorporate and~~ incorporate, or at least to appoint trustees. Meetings that are not incorporated should ~~also~~ appoint trustees to hold title and execute legal business pertaining to real property and trustees or other financial officers to execute legal business pertaining to other property and securities held by the Meeting. The trustees are held legally responsible for the administration of Meeting property and serve as the Meeting's legal representatives in transactions.

The Yearly Meeting has members in five jurisdictions, and the Monthly Meeting should seek advice from an attorney practicing law in that jurisdiction.

All Monthly Meetings are advised to purchase liability insurance for their trustees and officers. ~~This may be available through the Yearly Meeting, or the Monthly Meeting may purchase its own insurance.~~

Trustees and other financial officers should seek to be as responsive as possible, within the limits of legally imposed restrictions, to the considered judgment of the whole Meeting on matters of policy. Care must always be taken that the Meeting's paramount role as a mutually supportive religious fellowship is not weakened by excessive concern for the custody of property or investments.

Specific responsibilities of trustees or other financial officers include:

- As needed, accept stocks, bonds, or other securities.

- Manage the capital investments of the Meeting.

- When necessary, borrow money on behalf of the Meeting.

Ensure that gifts held in trust are managed as ~~designated by the donors, restricted by the donors and accepted by the Meeting~~. Seek advice from the Meeting if these purposes become obsolete. (See the section on Bequests in the Appendix.)

Keep accurate records of the terms of the trusts held by the Meeting.

Report at least annually to the Meeting on its assets.

While trustees ~~or other financial officers~~ must be conscious of their fiduciary obligation to preserve the assets of the Meeting, they must also be continuously sensitive to the spirit of the Meeting and its wish to fulfill the social testimonies of the Religious Society of Friends. The Meeting, in turn, should be sensitive to the legal responsibilities of trustees which can, in certain circumstances, make them personally liable for actions taken in the name of the Meeting.

Meetings recognize that the ways in which capital funds are invested often have important implications in terms of Friends' testimonies and concerns. It is good practice for the Meeting to give policy guidance to the ~~Trustee~~ trustees from time to time. Taking such guidance into account, and considering social and moral factors, it is expected that the ~~Trustee~~ trustees will on the one hand avoid certain types of investment regardless of the expected rate of monetary return, and will on the other hand have liberty to make some other investments involving a somewhat lower monetary return or a greater monetary risk.

No Meeting property may be distributed among individual members of a Meeting. If any Monthly Meeting ceases to exist, its property passes to the Yearly Meeting. Baltimore Yearly Meeting ~~Trustees, trustees,~~ in concert with the trustees of the Meeting involved, make a recommendation to the Yearly Meeting for the sale or other use of the property.

At the Yearly Meeting level, the ~~Trustee~~ trustees are responsible for caring for the assets of the Yearly Meeting and seeing that the funds held by the Yearly Meeting are used for the purpose for which they are intended.

Outreach to the Wider Community

Advancement and outreach are natural and integral aspects of the Quaker way of life. Realizing that we are all children of God means that there is an infinite opportunity to search for God in our relations with others. Our fellowship begins, grows, and is nurtured in home and Meeting. It reaches greater fulfillment as we carry our love of God and humankind to our relationships with persons in the wider community of which our Meeting is a part, with members of other Meetings, and with all persons whom we meet.

Responsibilities of the committee charged with outreach on behalf of the community include:

Coordinate forms of outreach and witness to the community such as public lectures, letters to newspapers, radio talks, blogs, and relationships with other faith groups.

Publicize the date and time of Meetings for Worship and other events in ways likely to reach new attenders.

Reach out to persons of diverse backgrounds and help the Meeting welcome them into our spiritual community.

Our efforts to express our values in action are part of our outreach. Committees established to seek peace or social justice are as much involved in the advancement and outreach of the Meeting as the committee bearing this name. It is, however, the special concern of this committee to carry the message of Quakerism to seekers in the community. It is frequently said that someone who joined one of our Meetings "had been a Friend without knowing it." This committee seeks to reach such persons.

The Advancement and Outreach Committee of the Yearly Meeting is a source of support for this function, especially if a Monthly Meeting does not have a separate committee for outreach.

Religious Education

This committee is charged with guiding and conducting the formal religious education of the Meeting. The aim of religious education in the Religious Society of Friends is to enhance opportunities for individuals to experience and be guided by the Inner Light. In a real sense, such education begins in the home from the earliest days of a child's life, but religious education continues throughout the lifespan.

Responsibilities of this committee include:

Offering Adult Discussion Groups, speakers, reading groups, and other activities that speak to members' concerns and deepen their understanding of Quaker faith and practice.

Identifying, developing, or adapting curricula for First Day Schools that allow young people to grow in faith and in understanding of Friends' testimonies. Resources often include the Bible, Quaker history, and other suitable sources.

Seeing that a Youth Safety Policy is in place and that all those working with the youth in the Meeting are aware of the policy.

Religious education activities are part of an integrated worship process. To achieve this, it is desirable to have First Day School children share at least a part of the Meeting for Worship.

Members of the Meeting should treat seriously the responsibility and the opportunity to share in First Day School, either as members of the Religious Education Committee or as teachers. Care in developing a balanced curriculum suitable to our times, and as well as preparation for teaching, are needed to assure that religious education is a vital part of the life of the Meeting.

The Religious Education Committee of the Yearly Meeting is a source of assistance for Monthly Meetings with religious and spiritual programs for their youth.

Witnessing for Peace and Social Concerns

Meetings may be led in different ways, individually and corporately, to give testimony regarding Friends' beliefs and values. Meetings may establish committees that help the Meeting channel its witness on issues of concern to Friends. People whose concerns have led them to understand community resources, opportunities for volunteers, and forms of witness available to the community are ideal members for such committees.

Responsibilities may include:

Maintaining literature on community resources for persons who are homeless, in need of financial support, have mental health or substance abuse problems, or otherwise are in need.

Suggesting forms of witness to the Meeting, such as vigils or letter writing.

Maintaining contact with Friends organizations that represent our testimonies and support their work.

Identify volunteer opportunities to interested community members.

Listening carefully to the expressed concerns of members.

Maintaining liaisons with like-minded religious and other organizations, joining in to reinforce efforts that are in harmony with testimonies.

Articulating Friends' values for the wider community when opportunities are offered.

Overseeing and supporting groups that form to carry out specific leadings of members that are embraced by the community.

The Peace and Social Concerns Committee of the Yearly Meeting can offer support to Monthly Meetings on these functions.

Communications

Monthly Meetings may choose from many forms of communications to reach members and the wider community. Options range from traditional forms such as newsletters (printed or online) to digital forms of communication such as listservs, blogs, websites, and social networking. Meetings may wish to appoint webmasters, Publications Committees, or other entities to ensure that members are informed about Meeting activities and that the wider community has access to basic information about the Meeting. Communications functions may be part of the responsibilities of the Outreach Committee or may be separate, depending on the Meeting's size and needs.

It should be remembered that not everyone has access to electronic means of communication. Care must be taken not to marginalize those who don't have email or internet access.

The vast array of electronic means of communication offers Friends both opportunities and challenges. Varied information is available from many internet sites. Web pages offer Monthly Meetings and committees ways to communicate with the wider circle of Friends. Email makes possible rapid communication and sharing of information and draft documents. Thus preparation for committee meetings is made easier, and conference calls are sometimes used to good effect by committees.

The very ease that these developments present has its own problems, however. There is no such thing as a virtual meeting for worship. In the Society of Friends decisions are made in worship based on the sense of the meeting. Discernment of the will of God is best made when Friends are gathered together in worship.

At the Yearly Meeting, there is no committee responsible for communications, as it is a function of the office staff. The Yearly Meeting maintains a website with comprehensive information, including a calendar of events and a blog for each Monthly Meeting and Yearly Meeting committee. The Baltimore Yearly Meeting office also sends an electronic monthly bulletin on events within the Yearly Meeting to subscribers. The *Interchange*, the Yearly Meeting newsletter, is sent out three times a year; the spring issue is devoted to information about the Annual Session in August. The *FireCircle* is sent annually to those who have participated in the camping program and to other interested Friends. Both of these publications are available in digital as well as paper formats.

Growth and Change

Ye that are turned to the light, and gathered into it, meet together and keep your meetings, that ye may feel and see the life of God among you, and know that in one another.

George Fox, Epistle 186 (1659)

In his Pendle Hill Pamphlet, “How They Became Friends,” Howard Brinton addresses some fundamental questions:

From the outset of the Quaker movement in the middle of the 17th century meetings for worship were based on silence, a silence frequently, but by no means always, broken by spoken words. For this statement we have ample evidence in early Quaker literature. How can such a religion be propagated? Yet propagated it was with power and success, despite extreme persecution by Church and State. How can a religion based primarily on an attempt to heed the voice of God within the soul be communicated to others by any outward means? We are thinking not only of its communication to the public, but also to the oncoming generation of its own members.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting encourages all who are moved to worship God after the manner of Friends to do so by participation in a Friends Worship Group, a Preparative Meeting, or a Monthly Meeting. Moreover, Baltimore Yearly Meeting advises Monthly Meetings, especially large Monthly Meetings, to offer encouragement, support, and care to those who might wish to form new gatherings.

Friends Worship Groups

A Worship Group is a gathering of persons who meet regularly for public worship after the manner of Friends and desires to be identified as a Friends group. In areas where no Friends Meetings exist, individual Friends and those drawn to Friends’ ways are encouraged to meet together for worship and to seek Divine guidance. A Friends Worship Group may also be formed when an established Monthly Meeting has grown so large that it becomes desirable for a group to meet separately, or when some of its members live a great distance from the established Friends Meeting.

Each Friends Worship Group should organize only to the degree that is right for it at a particular time, neither over-organizing nor avoiding whatever organization is needed to nurture the interests and concerns of its participants, including children.

While Friends are not required to associate with an existing Monthly Meeting, the guidance, care and support available in such a relationship can be valuable. A Worship Group may apply to a Monthly Meeting for recognition as an Allowed (or Indulged) Meeting. Such a Meeting would be under the care of the Monthly Meeting and is not expected to conduct a regular Meeting for Business.

Whatever organization and activities members of the Worship Group are led to take up, they can elicit support and assistance from nearby Monthly Meetings. For example, help with organizing a “Newcomers packet,” placing announcements in local newspapers, creating a web presence, and other outreach activities can come from the Monthly or Yearly Meeting. Resources on forming First Day School, initiating a library of

Quaker literature, as well as help in contacting Friends in the wider Quaker community will also be forthcoming if desired.

If a Monthly Meeting accepts a Worship Group under its care as an Allowed Meeting, it will appoint a Committee of Care to be available for support and guidance. This committee will pay particular attention to the right ordering and growth of the Allowed Meeting. This experience will help the Worship Group learn about and be guided in Friends practice. It is expected that members of the Committee of Care and others from the Monthly Meeting will join the Allowed Meeting occasionally in Meeting for Worship.

Advices for a Friends Worship Group

Worship Groups may find Meeting for Worship their only group activity. It is acceptable to continue in this fashion for an indefinite period of time.

Some Worship Groups may have shared meals, reading groups, study groups, and discussion groups. With the guidance and support of their Monthly Meeting or Yearly Meeting Committees they may have service projects, religious education, public witness, or Worship-sharing groups.

Worship Groups need to be mindful of the dangers of attempting too many things during their initial enthusiasm or of having an individual or couple carry all of the responsibility. Be mindful that Quakerism is a group religious responsibility.

It is essential that those who participate in a Worship Group be dedicated to the leadings of the Light and that the group be devoted to growth in the Spirit.

Worship Groups may suffer discouragements and setbacks due to the departure of participants or other difficulties that may arise. This is an opportunity for patiently working through problems or conflicts in a loving manner. It is important to persevere and continue to meet regularly for worship at the appointed hour even though only two or three are able to meet. In doing so, hold absent attenders in the Light and in prayer that all may come to know the comfort of an ongoing Worship Group.

A Friends Worship Group may name one of the group to serve as the convener and correspondent. It is beneficial if the convener/correspondent is a member of the Religious Society of Friends. The correspondent becomes the first point of contact with the Worship Group.

Allowed (or Indulged) Meetings are encouraged to maintain regular contact with the Committee of Care of the sponsoring Monthly Meeting and ask for help as needed. The purpose of a Committee of Care is to nurture and guide the Meeting under their care.

Preparative Meetings

After a period of seasoning, a Friends Worship Group often becomes a Preparative Meeting. A Preparative Meeting is a group of Friends that holds its own Meeting for Business and is under the care of a Monthly Meeting. The Monthly Meeting and the Preparative Meeting are expected to maintain close contact.

Alternatively, a group of experienced Friends from a Monthly Meeting may decide they are ~~prepared~~ready to form an independent Meeting and apply to the Monthly Meeting for assistance in the form of a Committee of Care. This committee should include Friends from both the proposed Preparative Meeting and the sponsoring Monthly Meeting. It is helpful to have Friends on the committee experienced with Friends' business procedures.

When a Worship Group or group of experienced Friends feels it is ready to organize and conduct business in the manner of an established Monthly Meeting, it asks the Committee of Care of the Monthly Meeting for Preparative Meeting status. After a clearness process, that committee may then prepare a minute recommending the establishment of a Preparative Meeting. Approval of such a minute at the Monthly Meeting for Business is sufficient to establish the new Preparative Meeting.

A Preparative Meeting has officers and committees as needed, and holds monthly Meeting for Business. A Preparative Meeting has a budget that is a sub-budget of the budget of the ~~Monthly Meeting that is caring for the Preparative~~sponsoring Monthly Meeting. Each month it sends a copy of the minutes of its Meeting for Business to the Monthly Meeting. When the Preparative Meeting begins the practice of Meeting for Business it should also follow the same practice of caring for minutes as a Monthly Meeting.

~~The following actions may be carried out~~A Preparative Meeting may act formally as a Monthly Meeting only with the help and clearness of the ~~Monthly Meeting that has care of the Preparative Meeting:sponsoring~~ Monthly Meeting: These acts include:

Receiving requests for membership in the Monthly Meeting,
Receiving or holding charitable contributions for tax deduction purposes,
Holding weddings or Memorial Meetings,

~~Or otherwise acting formally as an established Monthly Meeting.~~

Preparative Meetings are encouraged to send a delegate to BYM Meetings and to ~~prepare~~write an annual Spiritual State of the Meeting report ~~to be considered~~for consideration by Yearly Meeting's Ministry and Pastoral Care committee. With the guidance ~~offrom~~ the Monthly ~~Meeting having care for the Preparative~~ Meeting, Friends will determine which Meeting (Monthly or Preparative) is responsible for paying the annual apportionment to Baltimore Yearly Meeting, and ~~will decide~~ how to allocate the responsibility for other functions typical of a Monthly Meeting.

Preparative Meetings often look forward to such growth and development as may enable them to become Monthly Meetings. This process depends upon many factors, and there may be great ~~differences~~variance, from case to case, in the time required.

See also Appendix 7: A Suggested Procedure for Establishing a Preparative Meeting on page 322.

The practice of preparative meetings in Britain Yearly Meeting has, in general, not carried over to the United States. However, one Monthly Meeting in Baltimore Yearly Meeting follows the British practice of having more than one worshiping congregation in the Monthly Meeting. These worshiping congregations are also called Preparative Meetings, but they are not in the process of becoming independent Monthly Meetings. Rather, they prepare business for the Monthly meeting.

Advices for a Preparative Meeting

It is essential that the Preparative Meeting be faithful to the leadings of the Light and devoted to growth in the Spirit.

A Preparative Meeting, when organizing itself, should first appoint a Clerk and Recording Clerk, and then hold Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business regularly. The Recording Clerk will prepare the minutes from the Meeting for Business and send them to the Committee of Care of the Monthly Meeting.

A Preparative Meeting appoints committees and committee clerks as needed to accomplish its goals. Establishing an effective method of communication, such as a newsletter or website, is ~~an~~ advisable way ~~to further~~to promote contact with Friends. The Preparative Meeting can expect their sponsoring Monthly Meeting to assist in these endeavors.

Preparative Meetings should be large enough to undertake, with the guidance and support of their Monthly Meeting Committee of Care, such activities as service projects, religious education, public witness, or worship-sharing groups.

Preparative Meetings need to be mindful of the danger of having too many activities or having an individual or a very small group carry all of the responsibility, for this can invite exhaustion and disillusionment.

Preparative Meetings may suffer discouragements and setbacks due to the departure of participants or other difficulties that may arise. It is important to persevere and continue to meet regularly for Meeting for Worship and Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business at the appointed hour.

Preparative Meetings and their Committee of Care should maintain regular contact with one another. The committee's purpose is to nurture the Preparative Meeting and help all Friends discern God's will.

See also Appendix 8: Queries to Consider in Granting Monthly Meeting Status to Preparative Meetings on page 326.

Advices for the Committee of Care

The Committee of Care ~~affirms that this work is undertaken~~undertakes its work in a spirit of celebration ~~and~~ with an eye ~~upon how each committee can best serve and~~to facilitate the joyous event of forming a new Monthly Meeting.

The Committee of Care has the responsibility to nurture the growth and education of the Preparative Meeting in the ways of Friends.

The Committee of Care should monitor the progress of the Preparative Meeting and encourage ~~them to~~ apply application for Monthly Meeting status when it appears suitable ~~to do so~~.

It is important ~~that for~~ the Preparative Meeting to understand that nurturing the community is a group responsibility. The Committee of Care is charged with helping ~~them~~ Friends accept their role as loving ministers to one another in the blessed community.

The greatest gift the Committee of Care can give to this work is their loving presence in the life of the Preparative Meeting. The committee should ~~be prepared~~ stand ready to have at least one member participate in Meetings for Worship throughout the Preparative Meeting's process of becoming a new Friends Monthly Meeting.

New Monthly Meetings

When a Preparative Meeting, through a clearness process with its Committee of Care, feels ready to become a Monthly Meeting, it sends a letter to the Clerk of the Monthly Meeting requesting a change in status. ~~The Monthly Meeting forwards the letter to the Yearly Meeting.~~ The letter states why the Preparative Meeting wishes to become a Monthly Meeting and why it feels it is ready for this step. If the Monthly Meeting concurs, it forwards this request and a Minute of Agreement to the Clerk Presiding and Interim Meeting Clerks of Baltimore Yearly Meeting. ~~The Interim Meeting considers the request and forwards s a recommendation to the~~ Yearly Meeting in session. In the time between the first reading at session approves Interim Meeting and Annual Session, Friends are encouraged to visit the Preparative Meeting. At the next Annual Session, Friends consider whether to approve the establishment of ~~that the~~ new Monthly Meeting.

The following guidelines and queries are suggested for consideration by the Monthly Meeting in determining whether the Preparative Meeting is ready to become a Monthly Meeting:

Recording

The Preparative Meeting compiles a complete list of names and addresses of its regular attenders, noting those who are members of the a Monthly Meeting, indicating which Monthly Meeting and Yearly Meeting, if other than Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

Spiritual Condition.

Does the Preparative Meeting function under Divine guidance?
Is the Meeting for Worship the center of life of the Preparative Meeting?
What is the vitality of the Meetings for Worship?
Are they held in the spirit of expectant waiting and communion with God?

History and Experience.

How long has the Preparative Meeting been gathering?
What relations does it have with other Meetings?
What geographical area does it serve?
Where and when is its Meeting for Worship?
What is the usual attendance?
How many Friends, regular attenders, and children are there in the Meeting?
Of the individuals and families taking responsibility for the Meeting, how many appear well settled in the area?
How do the lives of the people in this Meeting speak to the outside world?
Are responsibilities for the Meeting's business and activities shared fairly by all?

Evidence of Good Order.

Has the Preparative Meeting studied the *Faith and Practice* of Baltimore Yearly Meeting?
Does it hold a monthly Meeting for Business in the manner of Friends?
How are the minutes taken and approved?
Are the functions of Clerk and other officers understood?

What Committees does the Meeting have?

Are the functions of the Committee(s) on Ministry and Counsel understood and carried out?

Are financial matters being handled in a competent manner according to Friends' principles?

How are the Meeting's officers and committees and Nominating Committee selected?

How are children included in the life of the Meeting?

Are there religious education programs for children and adults?

Unaffiliated Groups and Transfers

Unaffiliated worship groups or organized Friends Meetings within the historic boundaries of Baltimore Yearly Meeting may wish to affiliate with the Yearly Meeting. Application may be made to the most convenient Monthly Meeting for acceptance as an Allowed or Preparative Meeting. They also may apply directly to the Yearly Meeting through Interim Meeting for Monthly Meeting status.

A worship group or organized Meeting that is already affiliated with another Yearly Meeting or Quaker body, or that is not within the boundaries of Baltimore Yearly Meeting, may wish to establish a formal relationship with Baltimore Yearly Meeting. In such cases application is made directly to the Interim Meeting, which will recommend appropriate action to the Yearly Meeting in session. If possible, a letter of transfer should be obtained from the other Yearly Meeting commending the Meeting into the care of Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

When discerning whether to accept an unaffiliated group or a transfer into Baltimore Yearly Meeting, Friends should consider the evidence of good order described above.

Laying Down a Meeting

A Monthly Meeting that has so little business or member interest that it is unable to hold Meetings for Business at least four times per year should apply to its Quarterly Meeting or to the Yearly Meeting for assistance. The Quarterly Meeting or the Yearly Meeting may initiate steps to lay down a Monthly Meeting that is entirely inactive. Any To ensure that no assets of a Monthly Meeting accrue to the benefit of any individual, any property of a Monthly Meeting that is laid down is normally transferred to the Yearly Meeting. Remaining members of a Monthly Meetings laid down are encouraged to join another Meeting.

Clearness and Support Committees

Friends believe that each individual has an Inner Light that can guide us to act with integrity in the most difficult situations. From the beginning of Quakerism, however, Friends also have had a healthy respect for the extent to which ~~the desires and tendencies of~~ our personal egos can create "noise" that confuses and undermines spiritual promptings. Too easily, ~~we can unconsciously~~ and sometimes unconsciously, we choose to hear only part of a message or warp it to suit our inclinations.

Knowing this, we turn to other trusted Friends to help us listen well to the Inner Light and to enrich our understanding of the current situation and the path forward. Serving on clearness and support committees is not only a gift of time and love to the person whose needs have brought the committee ~~together—~~ together, but also ~~hereafter called "the person" but~~ a precious opportunity for each member of the committee to grow in faith, insight, and love.

Clearness and support committees tend to focus either on a personal concern or on a leading. In the following sections, you will find a general discussion of each type of committee—clearness or support—followed by comments on considerations that arise when that type of committee addresses personal concerns or leadings. Whatever the focus of your concern, you are advised to read the entries under both clearness and support. Over time, a clearness committee sometimes becomes more like a support committee; also, conversely, a support committee may come to a basic unresolved issue and begin to look more like a clearness committee. When these shifts occur, it is important for committee members to be aware of their changed role. Please see:

“Clearness to follow leadings” and “Support in following leadings,” as well as
“Clearness for personal decisions” and “Support in difficult times.”

Clearness Committees

Friends seek to follow the Light Within when they reach major choices in life, but the Light does not usually give us unmistakable road signs or route maps. Instead, we pray, follow spiritual disciplines, sit with an issue in worship, and talk to individuals who have ~~some~~ perspective or insight to ~~offer us.~~ offer.

For some decisions that we ~~face the choice of a vocation,~~ face what vocations to follow, whether to join a faith group, whom to marry, ~~or~~ whether to adopt a child with special needs—the spiritual dimensions of the choice are especially striking. ~~We know that if~~ If our choice is not in harmony with our deepest values and the guidance of the Spirit, the consequences may be serious. Friends may gain a deep sense of ease and grace from knowing their decision has been made with the aid of caring Friends who have listened together for the counsel of the Spirit.

General Guidance

A clearness committee is shaped and focused to meet the needs of the individual, the decision, and factors that come into play in specific situations ~~(for example, a need to make a decision within a time frame).~~ or time frames. A clearness committee may be formed by ~~the person, or the person may ask an individual personally, or~~ by application to the appropriate Meeting committee ~~to form one.~~ Sometimes a Friend who sees a community member struggling with a weighty decision may suggest a clearness committee and, if the response is positive, may also help the Friend identify committee members.

It is important that Friends contacted to serve on the committee understand the nature of the decision, why they ~~were asked to serve on the committee, and the likely amount of time the commitment will require.~~ are asked, and the estimated time commitment.

Each committee has a ~~convener.~~ Usually, this individual ~~convener, who usually~~ contacts ~~or helps contact~~ potential committee members, explains the nature of the request, and arranges ~~the~~ a time and place for the first meeting. The convener also accepts ~~the~~ responsibility for facilitating the meeting and helping to ensure it is well grounded in worship.

Members of the committee should be selected with the following in mind: their relationship with the person seeking clearness; their empathy and experience with the situation being considered; their centeredness; their ability to listen well without jumping in to give advice; their openness as to what the outcome should be; ~~and their ability to empathize with the person in this type of decision.~~

~~The person~~ Friends can gain most from ~~the~~ a clearness committee ~~if he or she has~~ when they have prepared for it. It is ~~usually~~ often helpful, both for the person and for committee members, to begin by expressing in writing the basic question and the issues surrounding it ~~in writing.~~ This statement can be given to committee members ~~prior to~~ before the first meeting to help them prepare. Prayerful searching, ~~a~~ meditative walking ing, or a creative activity such as making a collage or poem also may help ~~the person seek~~ shed Light.

The committee may have one meeting or several. When necessary, it ~~could~~ may consist of a few Friends who convene after meeting without prior notice to help the person address an urgent decision.

Recommendations regarding Clearness for Marriage and Clearness for Membership are described in a separate section. The following guidance addresses the clearness process as it applies to personal decisions and discernment related to leadings.

Clearness for Personal Decisions

A clearness committee for personal discernment meets with the individual or family, not as professional counselors nor as friends discussing a problem and giving advice, but rather as caring Friends, drawing on the resources that bind us together in our meeting for worship. Maintaining a spirit of openness and prayerful waiting, the committee seeks to help the individual become clear about an impending decision by serving as a channel for divine guidance. The members of the committee are there to listen without prejudice, to help clarify

alternatives and their implications, to facilitate communication if necessary, and to provide emotional support as an individual or family seeks to find God's will.

New England Yearly Meeting, 2001.

A clearness committee usually follows the following process at the first meeting:

The convener briefly summarizes the nature of the request and establishes time parameters for the meeting.

He or she then explains the process to be followed.

At the request of the convener, the group settles into silence.

The person speaks out of the silence when ready, stating the basic question that must be answered and briefly describing the issues around the decision. This includes the feelings and influences the person is experiencing, the implications of the decision for the person and for others, and the person's sense of what is at stake.

Members of the committee ask questions, allowing space for the person to consider and answer. They listen carefully to what they hear. One member's question may follow from an answer or explore a question from a different angle.

Committee members also reflect back and test what they have heard: "I have the sense that Am I hearing that right?"

About 20-30 minutes before the end of the meeting, the convener calls for silence and asks each person to share his or her sense of what has emerged.

The convener suggests next steps: is another meeting needed? If so, when and where? Would anyone like to suggest specific steps that might help reach clarity?

It is important that members of the committee refrain from giving advice. Committee members are there to help the person listen well to the promptings of the Spirit, and strongly held opinions can make this difficult. Clearness is most likely to be found when all members are centered, open, and alert for what John Woolman called "motions of love."

Questions should arise not from curiosity, but from the desire to be helpful. They may address matters of fact ("Could you tell us more about...?") or feeling ("How do you feel about...?") or explore the possible consequences of a choice ("How would it affect your decision if...?" "Have you considered the implications of...?"). If the person finds some questions too personal or painful, or does not know the answer, members should respect his or her preference for silence; however, the individual may want to note these questions to consider later.

While members' own experiences in similar situations are sometimes helpful in illustrating options, sharing them extensively can also lead members away from the unique decision facing the person. Clearness committee members should be willing to share what they have found "experimentally," but not place so much weight on their own experience that it becomes an obstacle for the person. Committee members should also be careful not to take responsibility for the problem away from the individual or try to "fix" it. Each member is present as a channel for the Light.

The foundation of the clearness process is trust: trust that the Spirit can light the path, trust that God is present in the clearness process and within each member of the committee, and trust in the individual's own ability to discern the best course. As Jan Hoffman (NEYM) writes, "the answers sought are within the person seeking clearness, though they may not be revealed until some time after the meeting."

Clearness to Follow Leadings

Powerful emotional currents accompany a strong sense of calling: compassion, horror, desire to prove oneself, a yearning to be the source of change. These currents can lead us to act too soon, act wrongly, or act for the wrong reasons. Clearness committees must be wary of assuming that because the person is responding to a genuine need, the leading is genuine. The committee's task is to separate the ego-driven motives from the promptings of the Spirit, distinguish between a vague desire and a "motion of love," and test the feasibility of the leading while at the same time trusting that way may open.

An individual usually requests the Meeting's involvement in testing a leading through the designated Meeting committee. As for clearness committees for personal discernment, a convener is appointed who brings

members together at a particular time and place and who guides them through the same basic process described for the clearness committee for personal discernment. When the person speaks out of the silence, he or she tells the “story” of the concern and the possible leading:

When did it begin?

How has it grown or changed over time?

What actions have been taken already to learn more about the concern or test the leading?

Are you open to guidance and support and do you give thanks for them?

Questions the committee may want to explore include:

Is the leading consistent with Friends’ testimonies?

Is the leading consistent with the person’s life?

Does the person have the skills to carry out the leading?

Is the leading “ripe”? Are the details clear enough to proceed?

Does the person have preconceived ideas about the nature of the problem that may be unsound?

Is the person hoping to “fix” or change a situation without first having explored its causes?

Has the person listened to those most affected by a situation to understand their own sense of what is needed?

How does the person propose to involve those who are most affected by the concern?

Signs that a leading may not be of the Spirit, or that it is not yet ripe for action, include:

The person wants to make a general contribution (such as promoting conflict resolution in schools) but has not looked into what is already being done.

The person wants to help bring needed change to a situation, but has not talked to those affected most directly by the situation.

The person is so personally involved in the situation that his or her judgment is questionable.

The person’s self-image or ego is strongly invested.

The person envisions a specific outcome, without which he or she perceives the effort has been “wasted.”

When the clearness committee affirms that a leading is of God, its members often feel called to help the individual discern and take the next steps in following that leading. The Meeting as a whole may have a role in supporting the individual. Members with the skills and talents required may form a committee to carry out the leading as a team, reporting back to the Meeting periodically on their progress.

Support Committees

Friends look to their religious community to steady and strengthen them in challenging times and to help them follow leadings. Each of these two purposes calls for different kinds of support from the Meeting, which may be initiated and structured in different ways to meet the need of the specific individual and situation.

General Guidance

A key purpose of any support committee is to help the individual find solid footing and Light in a challenging situation. This involves a measure of ongoing discernment. When the support committee is seeking the way forward or resolving a difficulty, it overlaps in nature with the clearness committee and may use the tested approaches to seeking clearness that were described in the preceding section. The difference is that unlike the clearness committee, the support committee is not drawn together by a question or a single important decision, but by a need.

Often, people outside the Religious Society of Friends itself are appropriate members of support committees. They may know the individual or situation well and may have special skills or insights that make them valuable members. Whatever their faith, other members bring their own Inner Light and wisdom to the committee’s task. However, as for clearness committees, members from other faiths will need grounding in how Friends use this type of committee to discern and follow God’s will, and how they can bring their own wisdom, experience, and Light to bear on the situation.

When a support committee is held, the convener should be sure the following are clear at the outset:

What support is the committee being asked to provide? For example, is there an expectation of financial support or assistance in addressing practical concerns?

Does the committee feel it can and should provide all the types of support requested? If not, can the committee suggest other resources to address needs that it cannot address by itself?

What is the expectation regarding confidentiality?

What are the spiritual dimensions of the person's current situation?

How long are Friends expected to serve on the committee?

How often will the support committee meet?

Serving on a support committee can be tough at times. Committee members may be stressed as difficult obstacles present themselves, discouraging news is heard, and hard facts must be accepted. Friendly practices are an integral part of any support committee. Silent worship is essential at the beginning and end of meetings, or whenever a deeper connection with the Spirit is needed.

Support committees of any type should not go on indefinitely. Members should review their status and consider the committee's role from time to time. Periodic review offers a chance to recommit, develop a new sense of mission, or realize it is time to lay down the committee.

Support in Difficult Times

The spiritual strength of a meeting finds important expression through the loving community of its members. Out of awareness and responsiveness of its members to each other grow the bonds of trust and love that allow the meeting to find coherence in its spiritual life and unity in its actions.

New England Yearly Meeting, 2001

Experiences such as the loss of a partner, the need to act as a caretaker for a family member, a terminal diagnosis, or the responsibility of parenting a child with a disability test us to the core and call us to live our faith. Tensions, strong emotions, and high demands on personal resources may threaten to overwhelm us and displace us from our center. Friends can help each other maintain awareness of the Inner Light, accept their personal limitations, and find strength within the community. Sometimes, drawing on their own experience or knowledge, others can also help address the practical difficulties and demands of a tough situation.

A This type of support committee (also called a "care committee") may be formed at the request of an individual, or community members who perceive a need for support may suggest to the person that a support committee may be helpful. It is important to be aware of people who may need and benefit from support but who may have difficulty asking for it. While it is appropriate to offer the individual a channel for loving support, however, it is the person's decision alone whether or not to accept it.

Members who have experienced similar difficult situations are often good choices to serve, but it is important for them to be able to keep the present experience of a different individual before them rather than continually comparing the Friend's situation to their own. Individuals weather similar crises differently, so we should avoid assuming that what worked for us will always be right for someone else. Deep listening is essential and lends support in itself.

A shared understanding of the role of the support committee, and what is outside its scope, is critical. For example, it is wrenching to the Meeting, as well as to the couple, when a marriage ends in divorce. A support committee for each of the individuals involved may help encourage the use of mediators and counselors, reducing recriminations and conflict. It may help individuals stay spiritually grounded in a turbulent time. It may express the ongoing love and concern of the spiritual community. However, the support committee should never allow itself to be used as a means of swaying the community to one individual's "side" or to substitute for the services of a qualified mediator. In such cases, the Meeting will also want to consider how best to support any children affected by the divorce.

Similarly, when an individual experiences serious emotional distress, threatens others, or becomes suicidal, the Meeting plays an important role in affirming its love and concern, as well as in helping the person

access the Inner Light and find a steady course through the turbulent period—but it cannot play the role of a psychiatrist or licensed counselor.

It is often helpful for an appropriate committee to stay in touch with both the individual and the convener to ensure the support committee is working together in the manner of Friends, staying on course, and meeting the need.

Support in Following Leadings

It has been the practice for a Friend, who believes that she or he has heard a call, to bring the concern before the gathered community of Friends in the monthly meeting, that it may be tested as a true leading of the Spirit. The practice is an expression of our membership one of another, of a mutually accepted obligation, that of the individual Friend to test his or her concern against the counsel of the group and that of the group to seek the guidance of God in exercising judgment. It may bring enrichment both to the individual and to the group, even though the meeting may advise the Friend that he or she is mistaken. If the individual is encouraged to go forward, the prayers of Friends will strengthen him or her in the service.

London Yearly Meeting, 1980

Support committees may be formed for the distinctly different task of helping a member of the community follow a leading. The leading may be an individual calling that does not involve the Meeting directly or one that the Meeting has affirmed and feels led to support in specific ways. In either case, members work together to keep focused on the most significant questions and issues, listening for the guidance of the Spirit together and helping the individual stay faithful to the leading.

Individuals may accept significant tasks that they feel challenge them to live their faith. For example, Meeting members may have opportunities to chair a community board in time of crisis, lead a task force, or guide a difficult negotiation. They may ask for a support committee to help them stay spiritually grounded to fulfill this challenge.

Individuals may also have leadings that require the confirmation and support of the Meeting as a whole. Often, these leadings are tested by a clearness committee, which reports to the Meeting for Business. Sometimes, however, they require a quick response and are brought immediately to the Business Meeting for action. If the Meeting affirms the leading, the Meeting may establish a committee to carry out the leading on behalf of the Meeting community. A committee such as this, which is focused on practical tasks, is distinct from a support committee for the individual. The need for a support committee that is focused on helping the individual stay centered should be considered, especially when the leading is long-term or emotionally demanding.

“Released” Friends are those who have come to their Monthly Meeting with a leading for ministry that is affirmed by the Meeting and that the Meeting supports through financial resources or by addressing other practical concerns. The Meeting may also release the Friend from other obligations to the Meeting while the leading is pursued. For example, a Friend with a specific concern may feel led to travel widely among Friends. Following a clearness committee that affirms the leading, the Meeting may minute its support for the leading and also establish a means of making the ministry possible.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting has developed specific guidance for ministry that is “embraced” and supported at the level of Baltimore Yearly Meeting. In general, Friends seek to have their ministry embraced at this level when the ministry to which they are called exceeds the geographic bounds or financial scope of the Monthly Meeting.

Healing the Meeting Community

Forgiveness does not mean “forgive and forget.” It stares the beast in the eye, names the hurt, and refuses to return it, seeking not to punish but to heal.

Desmond Tutu, 2007

A Meeting community may at times face conflicts and discords. How do we work through these challenges and make them opportunities for spiritual growth?

Conflicts may occur over differences of opinions and feelings regarding issues facing the Meeting, individuals whose behavior challenges the Meeting, marital discord and divorce, different understandings of what it means to be a Quaker, disagreements about the use of Meeting resources, or many other causes. Rarely, the Meeting may have to deal with a member or attender who fails to understand the Quaker process. It is natural that we do not always agree, even on matters where we feel an important value or testimony is involved.

Responding to conflict requires a culture of deep listening and the commitment to understand and collectively resolve different points of view. Meeting members need to seek the common center in the Light Within, remaining open to the possibility that Truth is greater than what we see as individuals. This culture requires intentional nurturing. Before a conflict develops, Meetings would do well ~~also~~ consider thoughtfully how they would wish to respond.

Meetings have different structures in place to respond to conflict. Where there exists no specific committee charged by the Meeting to work towards healing and reconciliation, issues are often brought to the Ministry and Counsel Committee. This committee might organize listening sessions or organize an ad-hoc committee of its choice. The committee may take the situation to the whole Monthly Meeting when deemed necessary. Some Meetings have a Healing and Reconciliation committee composed of people gifted in listening who actively move toward situations in which conflict is developing and offer their care and insight.

When discord persists, Meetings may try many different approaches to healing, depending on the situation. It is invaluable to be clear that the Meeting is actively seeking a way to heal the community. It may be helpful to offer a workshop, to invite a skilled Friend outside the Meeting to assist, or to hold Listening sessions. The Meeting should also recognize when outside help is needed or is more appropriate. For example, it may recommend that families seek help from a family therapist or that divorcing couples consider seeking a trained mediator.

The Meeting that has strong spiritual roots will be better grounded when it faces conflict. It is encouraged to nurture relationships, to build the skills needed to prevent or resolve these conflicts, and to foster a sense of community.

Queries for Meetings

How are conflicts dealt with in our Meeting community?

Does the community have a culture of listening?

Do we have a structure in which it is clear what committee can best hear and help resolve issues?

Do we honor the Peace Testimony within our Meeting, as well as in the world?

Do we offer opportunities to strengthen our relationships with each other, so that we have the resilience to respond to conflict?

Do we offer workshops for members on topics such as listening skills, forgiveness, communication, and conflict prevention and resolution? Are children given such opportunities?

When conflict persists, how can the Meeting ~~organize~~open itself to ~~heal itself?~~healing?

Are we aware of skilled individuals and resources outside the Meeting who might be able to help us address internal conflict?

Queries for individuals

Am I able to truly listen to others with whom I disagree?

Do I fear conflict?

Am I able to be in community with individuals who do not share all my views and values?

When I experience conflict in the Meeting community, do I seek a Spirit-filled resolution?

In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures. You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger.

James 1:18-19 (NRSV)

Marriage and Divorce

For the right joining in marriage is the work of the Lord only and not the priest's or the magistrate's; for it is God's ordinance and not man's; and therefore Friends cannot consent that they should join them together; for we marry none; it is the Lord's work, and we are but witnesses.

George Fox, 1669

Marriage, as understood by Friends, is a relationship involving two individuals, God, and the religious community that witnesses, recognizes, and supports it. It is earnestly advised that the community and the individuals contemplating this important step seek Divine guidance in reaching their decision. The religious dimension of marriage includes the understanding that we will humbly seek unity with God's will and we will take this opportunity to practice love.

The love of one another to which God calls us is always a journey, a work in progress. Marriage involves a mutual commitment to share life, following a path of love together, requiring growth, integrity, and mutual respect.

Overview of the Marriage Procedure

The following briefly describes the process of marriage in the manner of Friends. Each Monthly Meeting needs to carefully consider the details of their practice.

The process for marriage under the care of the Meeting starts with a letter from the couple to the Meeting, signed by both, stating the intention of marriage and asking to be married under the care of the Meeting. The letter may include a tentative date; couples are cautioned that Friends' process typically takes 3-6 months.

The Clerk may refer this request to the appropriate committee to name a clearness committee, or the Monthly Meeting may appoint a clearness committee directly. In either case, the Business Meeting hears the letter of request and the recommendation of the Clearness Committee. After approval of the request, the Meeting may appoint a committee to oversee the ceremony and ensure that it is carried out in good order.

While most Friends' marriages conform to civil law, couples who do not want, or are not eligible to have, a legal marriage sanctioned by the State, occasionally ask for a ceremony of commitment or a marriage under the care of the Meeting. The Religious Society of Friends has long asserted its freedom to conduct marriage ceremonies that do not conform to civil law.

When neither partner in the marriage has a close connection with the Meeting, often that Meeting will feel clear to offer them a wedding "in the manner of Friends," which does not require ongoing support from the Meeting. It would be good practice for Meetings to discern their position on this form of marriage so they can respond to requests in a timely manner.

Clearness Committees

The clearness process for marriage or commitment under the care of the Meeting brings Quaker faith and practice into central focus. Friends take this opportunity to help the couple explore what their commitment means, now and in the future, and to provide them with tools of self-examination and communication for a lifetime.

Meetings are advised to appoint well-seasoned Friends who have a firm grounding in Quaker faith and practice and are sensitive listeners in situations that might involve stressful topics.

The purpose of clearness is well served when members of the committee ask thoughtful questions and listen deeply, leaving space for worship in the exchange. Potential difficulties can be carefully and openly explored. The committee should seek Divine assistance in this process. A committee under the weight of the couple's future success knows that failing to speak truth in kindness may create a risk of later suffering.

Queries for Clearness

Below are suggested queries that can be used to explore the couple's clearness for marriage. Additional sources of queries can be found in the References. It is not expected that every query will apply, and you may have other queries that suit the situation. It would be helpful to give the couple a copy of the queries well in advance of the first meeting.

Spiritual Grounding

- Have you sought Divine guidance in your decision to marry?
- Are you secure in the knowledge that God guides your lives and your plans to establish a home?
- How do you expect your faith to inform your decision-making as a couple?
- Do you consider promises made "in the presence of God and these our friends" binding?
- Are you willing to listen together for spiritual guidance when you face a problem without a clear answer?
- How will you make marriage a sacred and lifelong relationship?
- How will you uphold and strengthen the relationship with the passage of time?
- Do you understand and have respect for each other's religious convictions, whether or not you are in harmony with them?

Being Partners

- Are you aware that one can impose a role expectation on another unintentionally?
- Do you share interests which you can enjoy together? Do you respect each other's individual interests?
- How will you support each other through times of trial, unexpected life changes, or unfulfilled hopes and dreams?
- How will you balance the needs of your marriage with your friendships and responsibilities outside the home (for example, work, volunteer activities, and education)?
- Are you willing to postpone personal fulfillment if your partner is not ready for what that might entail?
- To become better acquainted with your partner, would it be better to wait longer before marriage?
- Do you have the willingness to listen to each other and to seek openness of communication?

Handling Conflict

- Have you considered together how you will work to reconcile inevitable differences?
- Are you willing to make a strong commitment to permanence in your marriage?
- Are you ready to make adjustments in your personal living to meet, with kindness and understanding, areas of possible conflict?
- Does either of you have emotional or other commitments to a third person which would interfere with this marriage?
- What is so important to you that problems in this area would lead you to consider ending the marriage?

Children

- Have you discussed whether you want to have children? How large a family do you envision?
- What are your expectations about how you will raise, discipline, and educate your children?
- Are you in unity with Friends' testimonies on simplicity and concerns for the environment and world populations?
- Have you considered together adoption or foster care?
- If either of you has children, have you considered the impact of this marriage on them?

Responsibilities

- Do you share each other's attitudes on earning, spending, saving, and the handling of finances?
- How are family responsibilities to be shared?
- If this relationship will not be legally recognized by the state, how will you protect each other's legal rights?

Relationship to the Meeting

- What do you anticipate your relationship with the Meeting to be in your life as a couple?
- Will you welcome the continuing concern of the Meeting?
- How could the Meeting support your marriage in the years to come?

In times of difficulty will you consider asking your Marriage Committee or a clearness committee for assistance?

Family

What are the views of your families regarding the marriage?

How do you intend to keep close relations with family members who may live far away, especially in cases of illness or old age?

Queries for older, widowed, or divorced Friends merit special attention. They bring a special set of issues to the relationship that first-time marriages do not have. The Clearness Committee needs to be sensitive to the complexities of these relationships, and attend to the special concerns raised by the joining of two families.

There may occasionally be a situation where clearness is not reached. If either the couple or members of the Clearness Committee do not feel clear, the committee and the couple should address the concerns and issues. This situation may require additional time for the clearness process, or taking a break with agreement to come back after some interval. It is possible that one member of the couple may feel uneasy, and time must be allowed for their decision.

Marriage Committees

The Marriage Committee works with the couple and their families to arrange a called Meeting for Worship at which the couple will enter into a covenant with each other. The Committee will help the couple obtain a Quaker wedding certificate, and decide its final wording. This Committee is also responsible for supervising the signing of the certificate by all who were present. The certificate may be copied and filed in the Meeting records. The original is retained by the newly married couple. A report on Meeting for Worship for Marriage will be made to the next Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business.

While many Meetings view the Marriage Committee as having a special responsibility for continuing care of the marriage, others view it as part of the responsibilities of the committee responsible for pastoral care, Meeting elders, or a Family Life Committee.

Meetings that extend marriage under the care of the Meeting to same-sex couples are advised to acquaint themselves with the laws of their state in order to ensure that the couple has taken necessary steps to protect their relationship to the extent possible. A couple that is not married in the eyes of the State needs to pay special attention to the preparation of wills, powers of attorney for health care, and durable powers of attorney, for example.

Responsibilities of Marriage Committees

To meet with the couple to discuss plans for the ceremony. This includes arranging for the rehearsal and designating persons to introduce attendees to Quaker practice, read the certificate, close the meeting, and other necessary tasks.

To see in advance that all applicable legal requirements have been met and that the proper license has been obtained. To see that the license is dated and signed by the couple, the required witnesses, and the designated person approved by the appropriate jurisdiction. To ensure that the license thus signed is returned to the office from which it was obtained within the time required by law.

To discuss with the couple whether they want to use the traditional wording of the vows or write their own.

To see that the marriage and reception, if any, are accomplished with dignity, reverence, and simplicity.

To arrange for the care of the certificate following the Meeting for Worship and to see that it is signed by those who were present as witnesses.

To deliver the certificate to the recorder for copying or duplication for the records of the Monthly Meeting and to ensure that the original is returned to the couple.

To report to the Monthly Meeting whether the marriage has been suitably accomplished; whether the applicable legal requirements have been satisfied; and to report any name changes that result from the marriage.

The Called Meeting for Worship for Marriage

The wedding celebration should reflect Friends' testimonies of simplicity, community, integrity, and equality. In light of this, the Marriage Committee reviews the couple's wording of the vows and the certificate. When there are other traditions to be incorporated (for instance, if only one of the couple is a Friend), the Marriage Committee needs to be flexible and sensitive both to Friends' principles and to others' cultural and religious experiences.

Early in the called Meeting for Worship for the solemnization of a marriage or commitment, it is usual practice for one member of the Marriage Committee (the Clerk or another chosen by the couple and the committee) to explain the procedure for the benefit of those unfamiliar with Friends' weddings. It is also customary to have this printed in the program or on a separate handout for worshippers to read.

After a significant period of silent worship, the couple stands and, each taking the other by the hand, says their vows to the other. If a couple wants to write their own vows, this should be cleared with the Marriage Committee. (The traditional vows and wording of the Certificate will be found in the Appendix.)

The couple will then sign the certificate, which also contains the vows, and a family member or special friend will read the certificate aloud in the Meeting for Worship. The Meeting for Worship continues in the manner of Friends. Ministry may arise, continuing until members of the committee recognize its conclusion by shaking hands.

At the rise of Meeting it is customary that all present sign the certificate as witnesses of the ceremony.

Under the Care of the Meeting

We thank God, then for the pleasures, joys and triumphs of marriage; for the cups of tea we bring each other, and the seedlings in the garden frame; for the domestic drama of meetings and partings, sickness and recovery; for the grace of occasional extravagance, flowers on birthdays and unexpected presents; for talk at evenings of the events of the day; for the ecstasy of caresses; for gay mockery of each other's follies; for plans and projects, fun and struggle; praying that we may neither neglect nor undervalue these things, nor be tempted to think of them as self-contained and self-sufficient.

London Yearly Meeting, 1959

A wedding is at once the occasion for the couple to enter into matrimony and the Meeting's act of witness and loving support of this covenant. There are two important implications that flow from this. First, the Meeting needs to be involved in a timely way in the discernment process that leads to taking the marriage under its care. Second, the Meeting needs to accept the responsibility to support the marriage in years to come. Indeed the Meeting needs to take under its care each committed relationship, between couples, between parents and children, between families and friends in and beyond the Meeting. This is the essence of being a supportive community.

Being mindful of the health of relationships within the Meeting is essential. It requires contact and loving interest. We celebrate the deepening of marriage relationships over time, and we remain attentive to the struggles and concerns that also emerge over time. Each of us should be sensitive to distress signals and take the time for conversations when requests for help can be made.

Care of a marriage may occur through regular, supportive interaction with the couple by members of the Marriage Committee, by a group of couples providing mutual support, by outreach from elders or members of a committee, or simply through loving attention from friends in the Meeting. The Meeting may also benefit from the ministry of Friends who offer workshops to help families and couples grow in the Spirit and by having helpful books in the Meeting library.

Ideally the Meeting community is able to offer the couple pastoral assistance about any problem before a problem becomes overwhelming. Members of the Meeting community should pay attention, for example, when a spouse labors under the burden of providing long-term care, when unemployment stresses a family, or

when the family struggles to raise children with disabilities or emotional issues. In each case, members of the Meeting should reach out lovingly and not allow the family to become isolated. It is often helpful to suggest resources that may be of use to the couple, such as hospice care or support groups. It is important to remember that the family member who is most vocal or most clearly in distress is not the only one who needs support.

Sometimes Friends believe they want to respect the privacy of the couple or family, and other times the couple does not let anyone know of their need for support. But it is the mark of a true community to pay attention. Denial of the existence of problems and concerns is not an expression of care. Friends may not be able to resolve conflicts or see a way forward; but the single act of paying attention can create a safer environment to listen to the voice of the Spirit.

The following queries for the Meeting, and those for individuals in a relationship, might be considered periodically during the year.

Queries for Friends in Committed Relationships

In what ways do I honor the vows I made on the day of my marriage or ceremony of commitment?
Do we pay attention to each other? Do we make time to do the things that nourish our relationship?
Are we mindful of each other's spiritual journeys? How does my partner's journey affect my own?
Have we met the challenges that arose as loving partners? Where we have faltered as a couple, have we reached for support in strengthening our marriage? How will we meet future challenges?
In John Woolman's words, "Do we delight in each other's happiness?"

Care of Marriages: Queries for the Meeting

Are we attentive to "distress signals" from family members?
Are we able to respond to them lovingly and non-judgmentally?
Does the Meeting offer resources and events to help couples nurture their relationship and share their spiritual journeys?
In what ways do we as a community celebrate each other's deepening relationships, support couples enduring stressful times, and remain mindful of the presence of God in each marriage?
At the time of membership transfer, do we inquire whether a couple would like the care of their marriage transferred as well?

Marital Distress, Separation, and Divorce

In today's society many marriages are later followed by separation or divorce. These situations present challenges to Quaker Meetings as they seek to show care and support for the couple and their children.

If there is a conflict within a marriage, the couple is encouraged to seek assistance early, long before differences become irreconcilable. This may take the form of a request to meet with the marriage care committee, the establishment of a clearness committee, or counseling.

Meetings are advised to recognize their role as providing spiritual support. If there is a need for professional counseling, this assistance should be sought outside the Meeting. The Meeting is encouraged to maintain a list of qualified counselors who understand Quaker values as a reference for couples who may desire professional help.

It is important that the Meeting be open to both sides when there is conflict in a relationship and ensure that both partners feel welcome at Meeting for Worship. Members of the Meeting, especially those who serve on committees that provide pastoral care, should strive to keep lines of communication open between the parties, avoid blaming individuals, and help each individual act with integrity in a stressful and emotional time. Confidentiality is essential. The Meeting's role is to support the couple and help them grow in God's love, but it cannot determine whether the marriage will be terminated.

When there are children involved, the Meeting should take care to ensure that they are welcome and feel the loving support of the Meeting. Be aware that children may feel bewildered, blame themselves for the difficulties their parents are experiencing, or feel caught in the middle. If a child asks for a clearness committee, this should be provided. If the child attends First Day School, the teacher is encouraged to listen to

the child's concerns. If it seems advisable, the teacher may recommend to the parents counseling for the child, or seek assistance from the committee responsible for pastoral care in supporting the child.

If, following a period of separation, and after seeking spiritual support from the Meeting and professional counseling, the couple recognizes that the most loving course is a divorce, the couple may want to meet with a clearness committee to consider how the Meeting can support them during the divorce proceedings and after the divorce is final. This could include practical support such as assistance with housing, jobs, and childcare, emotional support as the individuals deal with the transition, and spiritual support. If desired, the couple may request a called Meeting for Worship during which they each rise and ask God's support in releasing each other from their marriage commitment.

Queries Addressing Separation

For the Meeting:

Does the Meeting actively and sensitively reach out to persons or couples who may be troubled?

Does the Meeting recognize that strong emotions may lead to different perceptions of what is true? Is it able to honor emotional truth without "siding" with anyone?

Is the Meeting prepared to offer a Clearness or Support Committee if requested by the couple?

If a couple so desires, can the Meeting provide a list of professional counselors who understand Friends' views?

Does the Meeting know divorce mediators who are able to understand and work to address the needs of each partner and their children?

Can the Meeting as a community reach out in love to all persons involved, accepting the couple's decision without being judgmental, helping them to grow past their animosities, and providing practical assistance?

If the Meeting finds itself too emotionally involved to help, will it consider calling on another Monthly Meeting, Quarterly Meeting, or Yearly Meeting for resource persons?

For the couple:

Are you open to seeking Divine guidance through a clearness process or asking for professional help when difficulties or distress become evident?

Do you seek to keep God's love as a vital force in your life to help you deal with the changes that come with separation or divorce?

Do you avoid hurting your former spouse through your relationships with others, either in or out of the Meeting?

For couples with children:

As individuals, are you committed to the reality that you are both still parents of your children and must continue to find creative ways of living this responsibility?

Are you mindful of the needs of your children for a continuing loving relationship with each parent?

Are you mindful of your children's pain and suffering?

Can you avoid both shutting your children out of your own pain and leaning on them too much?

Are you mindful of the special love between children and grandparents or extended family, and do you endeavor to further strengthen these ties?

For relatives:

Do you give loving support and encouragement, and avoid giving unwelcome advice?

Are you mindful of the needs of each individual involved?

Death and the Celebration of Life

They that love beyond the World cannot be separated by it. Death cannot kill what never dies. Nor can Spirits ever be divided that love and live in the same Divine Principle....They live in one another still.

William Penn, 1682

Death is no more than a turning of us over from time to eternity.

William Penn, 1682

Death comes as the culmination of life and is both inevitable and natural. The mystery of death is no greater than the mystery of life. Friends should consider their own death and make appropriate provisions in advance to spare their loved ones trouble, expense, pain of unanticipated decisions, or difficulty in disposing of possessions.

Monthly Meetings should be ready to help Friends facing death, and assist their families prepare for life's final experience. The committee charged with nurturing ministry and worship can help the family arrange a memorial meeting in the manner of Friends. The committee that nurtures members' needs and spiritual wellbeing should be prepared to provide information on legal requirements, simple burials, and cremations.

Grief is natural after the death of a loved one, whether the death is sudden and unexpected or long-impending. When the death is unexpected or violent, an immediate Meeting is sometimes called in which members draw together to share their loss and seek the consolation of the Spirit. The Meeting community should assist the family and friends to express their grief and work through it to a sense of unity with all creation, so that the deceased can be remembered joyfully. Meetings frequently do this by holding a memorial meeting for worship in celebration of the life of the member or attender who has died.

The Memorial Service

It is usual practice to prepare a memorial minute that lovingly recalls the life of the individual, the person's gifts, and the ways in which this unique spirit was expressed. The minute is prepared by members of the Meeting community who knew the deceased well in collaboration with the family. Memorial minutes are normally read and approved in Meetings for Business and entered in the minutes of the Meeting. Copies are given to the family of the deceased Friend. If the deceased was active in Quarterly or Yearly Meeting affairs, the memorial minute should be forwarded to those Meetings.

The Memorial Meeting for Worship may incorporate music or readings that are meaningful to the family or the deceased. Early in the Memorial Meeting, it is usual practice for one member of the meeting community to explain the procedure for the benefit of those unfamiliar with Friends' memorial service. It may be printed in the program or on a separate handout for worshipers to read. A sample of such an introduction may be found in the Appendix on page 320. After a period of silent worship, a designated person rises to read the memorial minute in its entirety. The memorial minute may be included in the program as well.

The Memorial Meeting for Worship continues in the manner of Friends. Ministry may arise, focused on appreciation for the life and spirit of the individual and on the person's treasured gifts to individuals and the community. Those present may be drawn to speak of their memories – poignant, loving, grateful, even humorous. Messages and prayerful silence continue until a designated member recognizes its conclusion by shaking hands.

Burial or the scattering of ashes may precede or follow such a meeting, may be separately arranged, or may constitute the only observance, and done as an act of worship under the guidance of the Spirit. Friends often avoid display or excessive expense in funeral arrangements. The family may wish to suggest that memorial contributions be made for some special concern of the deceased.

2. Quarterly Meetings

We are called into community with each other, not only in our local Meetings but also in the wider community of Friends. The Religious Society of Friends consists of many interwoven circles. Providing mutual support and enhancing communication among those circles have

been vital practices since our earliest days. Today, we need to keep that woven fabric whole as much as ever. Quakers are few and somewhat scattered. Some Meetings are small and isolated. Individual Friends can also feel isolated within their own Meetings. Coming together to share nourishes us, enriches us, and helps deepen our sense of the wider community of Friends. This can be especially important for our children. Large or small, our Meetings have much to gain from each other and much to offer as well.

Chesapeake Quarterly Meeting

Historically, Quarterly Meetings have served as Business Meetings intermediate between Monthly Meetings and the Yearly Meeting. In recent years some have been laid down, while some of those remaining no longer conduct Business Meetings. Instead, Quarterly Meetings are primarily held for fellowship and conference purposes, bringing together members of all Meetings in a geographic area. As in our Monthly Meetings, Friends in the Quarterly Meeting worship together, and develop or renew friendships. Friends participate in programs of interest that stimulate and support spiritual journeys and social witness.

Some Quarters continue to conduct business relevant to the Quarter, seeking what God is calling us to do, exploring and affirming their Quaker faith and their collective witness to the world that arises from that faith. Often Friends in Quarterly Meetings especially strive to provide opportunities for children, Junior Young Friends, and Young Friends to build relationships, both drawing on and helping support the relationships nurtured at the Yearly Meeting level.

Quarterly Meetings can provide the opportunity for Meetings and individuals who are supported by their Meeting to share a leading, to develop a clearer sense of a ministry, and to find ways to serve and take Spirit-led action in the wider community. Through Meetings for Worship with a Concern for Business, Friends may seek clarity, support, or collaboration in these efforts. In recent years, Friends have sought and received support for minutes to further their ministry or witness in several areas, including population concerns, health issues, and violence prevention. When the Quarter takes a witness or ministry under its care, it is ready to ask for regular communication to help discern whether and how to continue that care. Some Quarterly Meetings gather to read reports on the spiritual state of the Monthly Meetings and memorial minutes for deceased Friends well known in the Quarter.

3. Young Friends Communities

Building and sustaining community is a core practice of our faith which we approach intentionally; we actively and specifically seek ways to build intergenerational community as well as providing a space for our youth to experience ownership of and responsibility for their own community through both the camp and youth programs.

Quaker Camps

Baltimore Yearly Meeting operates a camping program, which engages campers aged 9 to 16, counselors, other staff, and work grant volunteers. They create a lived community of Quaker testimonies over a series of summer weeks in wilderness spaces. People connect to nature and to each other without technology. They live outside of competition, trying to meet all needs without sacrificing others. There is a lot of creative problem solving. Sometimes, it is the first time that young Quakers learn there are others like them, and that they all belong to one larger Society. Most importantly, the camps are set up as youth-centered communities, which make it possible for us to hear the voice of God through their mouths. Camps exist with the notion that all people (young and old) have truth, gifts, and skills that will contribute to the community. Young people learn Quaker values through the experience of living in community.

Religious Education occurs as young Quakers learn how to live in spiritual community with others. They are given both physical and emotional challenges with support, not put in danger or protected from it, and must

draw upon their inner strength to rise to those challenges. They often do things they *knew* they couldn't do, which grows their self-esteem. Typically, a camper goes home a more competent, confident person whose spiritual roots have deepened and whose ties to the broader Quaker community have strengthened.

The camp experience continues for those who are hired to be counselors. These young Adults live in community with each other, while they serve as staff for camp. It helps with the transition from youth to adulthood, as they are responsible for creating programming instead of recipients of it. They must teach Quaker values, and in turn become more confident of their own spirituality. They become dedicated to the camp community, and in turn to community in general. As they carry out the needs of the community, they develop the awareness that all communities have needs, and are more likely to fill them in leadership and service outside of the camp community. We have high expectations for our counselors, which are met and regularly exceeded. They leave more able to accomplish tasks, lead, and work with others. We know this investment pays off in society at large.

The camping program also serves non-Quaker families. It is great outreach into the world, as more people know Quaker values from the inside. As a result some join the Society of Friends. Regardless, their youth receive a great gift of self esteem and inner knowledge that serves them for the rest of their life, wherever they go.

Junior Young Friends

During the school year, there are four weekend retreats for 11-14 year olds (6th-8th graders) called Junior Young Friends (JYF) conferences. Many JYFs have attended Junior Yearly Meeting or a camp for a few years before they attend a JYF Conference, and their relationships with each other deepen. Others come directly from Monthly Meetings in BYM, and yet others are friends of Friends.

These conferences are a time for fun and acceptance. The participants are free spirited and their self confidence grows from time spent being their authentic selves. As a step in the progress from fully adult-led Junior Yearly Meeting, to counselor-led camp, this is the next step in youth development in BYM. Adult volunteers (Friendly Adult Presences or FAPs) plan the program, the food, and make sure it all happens, but JYFs clerk a Meeting for Business during the conference as a beginning of stewarding their own community. At one of these Meetings for Business, they choose the theme for the workshops over the course of the year. These workshops often try to answer questions about life that are not taught in school. Within their loving community, through workshops and community service, our youth develop a strong sense of what the world can be.

Young Friends

“Young Friends is a group of members and attendees of the Religious Society of Friends from the Baltimore Yearly Meeting region, primarily of high school age. The Young Friends program seeks to build a community which nurtures the personal and spiritual growth of all youth and adult participants. Young Friends also provides opportunities to take an active part in the affairs and concerns of the Religious Society of Friends. Young Friends promotes individuality as well as the unity of being in the community. Decisions are made according to Quaker process, seeking unity among those gathered. With the exception of certain legal and bureaucratic matters, youth are responsible for all aspects of the Young Friends Community. The Quaker Young Friends community expands beyond the borders of our Meetings. High school students who are not affiliated with a Meeting are welcomed to attend all Young Friends conferences.”

The Young Friends Handbook, Page 3

Young Friends is defined in large part by several key characteristics; these include self-governance, spirituality, and a caring, fun-loving community. Young Friends gather together at conferences five times throughout the school year. At these conferences, Young Friends independent governing practices teach that leadership is not about power, but about community. Baltimore Yearly Meeting Young Friends is the only such organization in the country that is entirely governed by the youth themselves. While Young Friends are responsible for their own program, adult volunteers (FAPs) are present in a supportive role.

The responsibility for self-governance granted to the Young Friends facilitates spiritual and emotional growth among all attendees, providing an empowering foundation of confidence which helps them thrive in other areas of their lives. Young Friends share the beliefs of Quakerism and its testimonies, practicing them in the community. Young Friends also provides a space for young people to learn about and own their Quakerism; Young Friends use Quaker process in their proceedings and hold Meeting for Worship at conferences. There is a strong sense of spirituality within Young Friends, due in part to the unconditionally loving community. Young Friends builds relationships that will last and gain leadership skills that help them to be productive members of Quaker and other communities.

Young Adult Friends

The Young Adult Friends (YAF) community welcomes Quakers aged 18-35. They gather together for fellowship and mutual support through these difficult transitional years. Gatherings are generally twice a year and organized through the BYM YAF facebook page. Young Adult Friends strives to maintain two Co-Clerks, a treasurer, recording clerk, and a web-master. YAFs often find them selves spread out all over the world but the YAF community ensures we all have somewhere to come home to.

4. Yearly Meeting

The Yearly Meeting is the central organizing unit of the Religious Society of Friends. Books of discipline such as this *Faith and Practice* are developed and approved at the Yearly Meeting level. It is the Yearly Meeting that knits local Meetings into the Religious Society of Friends. Friends who become members at the local level may not realize that they are also joining a Yearly Meeting, but it is their Yearly Meeting membership that makes them part of a larger Quaker movement. In fellowship, in deep listening, in waiting worship, in commitment to each other, it richly rewards those who embrace the challenge of being a Yearly Meeting Friend.

Like a Monthly Meeting, the Yearly Meeting builds community, supports the life of the Spirit, discerns right action, and bears witness in the world. Like a Monthly Meeting, it carries out these responsibilities through shared worship, regular Meetings with a Concern for Business, ongoing committee work, and sponsored projects. A Yearly Meeting, in other words, can best be understood as an ordinary Friends Meeting, but on a much larger scale.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting is a regional Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends that has existed for more than 300 years. Geographically, it includes most of Virginia, all of Maryland west of the Chesapeake Bay, the District of Columbia, central Pennsylvania, and portions of West Virginia.

The Yearly Meeting exercises only general oversight and loving care over constituent Meetings, leaving to them the proper ordering of their worship, fellowship, and service. Information on the structure and operation of the Yearly Meeting is contained in the Manual of Procedure and the Yearbook found on the web.

For many years Baltimore Yearly Meeting has supported an active camping program for its youth. The camping experience offers a deeper experience which challenges our youth to turn inward toward the Light. The goal is to foster the kind of self-esteem that facilitates spiritual growth in our young Friends. Baltimore Yearly Meeting has programs specifically for Young Friends (High School age) and Young Adult Friends (18-35 years).

Annual Session and Interim Meetings

Baltimore Yearly Meeting holds its Annual Session for a week in early August for gathered worship and corporate discernment, seeking to know God's will. Between Annual Sessions, the Yearly Meeting has three day-long Interim Meetings, generally in October, March, and June. These Interim Meetings address any

business of the Yearly Meeting that has been held over from the Annual Session. They also consider new items that need attention before the Annual Session.

The functions of the Annual Session are:

To hear reports from Quarterly Meetings, Monthly Meetings, and the committees established by the Yearly Meeting, and to take action on these as needed.

To consider and to implement as proper the concerns of groups or of individual Friends.

To nurture an atmosphere within the Society which strengthens the spiritual life of Friends and of the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings.

To disseminate and widely proclaim the principles and testimonies of the Religious Society of Friends.

To receive epistles from other groups of Friends and to dispatch epistles to them.

To accept the minutes of visiting Friends.

To prepare or endorse minutes for its members who wish to visit among Friends outside the Yearly Meeting.

To discern how the Yearly Meeting will participate in the work of wider Friends' organizations.

To approve a budget and to determine the Monthly Meeting apportionments.

Participation in the Annual Session, Interim Meetings, and service on Baltimore Yearly Meeting Committees are open to all within the Yearly Meeting. In order to encourage attendance at the sessions of the Yearly Meeting, each Monthly Meeting is asked to appoint a representative.

Committees

Committees are the working groups ~~of~~ⁱⁿ Baltimore Yearly Meeting. The work done in committee meetings is the seasoning before going to the larger decision making body: Interim Meeting or the Annual Session. This brief introduction to the Yearly Meeting committees is excerpted from the more complete information found in the *Manual of Procedure*.

Administrative Committees

Camp Property Management Committee oversees the management of the properties the Yearly Meeting uses for camping programs, retreats, and other similar activities. Members plan ahead for long-term needs of the camp properties, and oversee the content and directions of the Camp Property Manager's work.

Development Committee guides, supports, and assists the Development Director. Members have oversight of fundraising efforts that other Yearly Meeting Committees may initiate. The Development Committee reviews requests for one-time use of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting mailing list for use by committees and organizations.

Faith and Practice Revision Committee receives proposed changes and develops new text where needed. Members circulate proposed revisions to all the Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups in Baltimore Yearly Meeting for consideration prior to final approval by the Yearly Meeting.

Manual of Procedure Committee is responsible for updating the Manual of Procedure. The purpose of this Manual is to provide a basis for the good order of the Religious Society of Friends within Baltimore Yearly Meeting by outlining the organizational structure of the Yearly Meeting, its officers and committees, and its relations to other Friends' bodies. Updates are presented at an Interim Meeting for approval and forwarded to Annual Session for final approval.

Nominating Committee recommends persons to serve on all committees not covered by the Search Committee. The recommendations are made at Annual Session. For any positions not filled at Annual Session, names may be presented at an Interim Meeting. The Nominating Committee should be aware of persons who have gifts for one or more committees.

Program Committee is responsible for planning and carrying out all the activities at Annual Session except for the Meetings for Worship with a Concern for Business. Members are responsible for finding a site for the Annual Session. They select the speakers for plenary sessions, and work with the clerks of Junior Yearly Meeting, Young Friends, and Young Adult Friends. They choose the registrar and bookstore manager when necessary.

Search Committee nominates people to serve as Presiding Clerk, Recording Clerk, Clerk of Interim Meeting, Recording Clerk of Interim Meeting, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, members of the Supervisory Committee, and members of the Nominating Committee. These recommendations are presented to Interim Meeting and forwarded to Annual Session for final approval.

Stewardship and Finance Committee prepares the budget and Monthly Meeting apportionments to be considered at Annual Session. Members oversee the accounting methods and ensure the adequacy of financial reports.

Supervisory Committee guides and supports the General Secretary and ensures the support and nurture of the staff. Members review staff compensation and make recommendations to the Stewardship and Finance Committee each year. They oversee the office property and grounds and maintain the office equipment.

Trustees are expected to act for the whole Meeting in carrying out their responsibilities under the law. While the ~~Trustee~~trustees must be conscious of their fiduciary obligation to preserve the assets of the Yearly Meeting, they must also be continuously sensitive to the Spirit of the Meeting and its wish to fulfill the social testimonies of the Religious Society of Friends.

Ministry Committees

Advancement and Outreach Committee provides tools and resources to local Meetings looking for outreach ideas, for help starting new Meetings, and for ways to help those new to Friends learn about the Religious Society of Friends.

Camping Program Committee oversees and coordinates the philosophy, policy, financing, and program emphasis of all Yearly Meeting endeavors in the field of outdoor religious education. Through a variety of camping styles it seeks to provide for all the various ages and interests of our Yearly Meeting.

Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee is concerned with deepening the spiritual life of Baltimore Yearly Meeting and of its constituent Monthly Meetings. The committee carries an active concern for calling forth and nurturing the gifts of the Spirit in the Yearly Meeting. Members encourage and support Monthly Meetings as they recognize, publicly affirm, and practically support individuals who exercise their gifts in faithful ministry and service. They provide programs, retreats, and workshops, both at Annual Session and throughout the year. The Working Group on Racism, the Spiritual Formation Program, and an annual silent retreat are currently under the care of this committee.

Religious Education Committee supports Monthly Meeting Religious Education Committees and First Day School teachers in their work with all age groups. This is done through curriculum planning, resource information, and consultation with committee members as well as through workshops, teacher preparation programs, and retreats.

Youth Programs Committee oversees and coordinates Yearly Meeting youth programs for junior high/middle school and high school youth, with the exception of the Camping Program and Junior Yearly Meeting programs. Members provide support and advice for the Youth Program Secretary. They recruit, train, evaluate, and mentor adults, known as Friendly Adult Presences (FAPs), who have a leading to work with the youth in the Yearly Meeting.

Peace and Social Action Committees

Educational Loan Committee helps Friends secure secondary and post-secondary education by providing ~~loans~~grants from funds set up for this purpose. The Committee meets each May to read and consider the applications for loans~~grants~~ and award funds as ~~possible. Members also keep in touch with the students on the status of possible~~
~~their loans.~~

Indian Affairs Committee stimulates interest in and activity concerning Native American Indians. Members cooperate with other Yearly Meetings and other Friends' organizations in projects such as supporting legislation on local, regional, and national levels involving Native American issues.

Peace and Social Concerns Committee recognizes that an enduring peace requires social justice and that the two are inextricably bound together. The Committee and working groups under its care stimulate

and coordinate activities of Monthly Meeting Peace and Social Concerns Committees regarding those issues that affect the fabric of society and on which Quaker testimonies can be brought to bear. It serves as a resource to Baltimore Yearly Meeting and its constituent Meetings, gathering and disseminating information.

Sue Thomas Turner Quaker Education Fund Committee administers a fund targeted for, but not limited to, Friends schools under the care of a Friends Meeting. Funds are used for activities that promote the understanding and practice of Quaker faith in Friends' schools. They also support members of the school communities in their spiritual lives.

Unity with Nature Committee recognizes that the entire world is an interconnected manifestation of God. Members seek to incorporate into the beliefs and practices of the Yearly Meeting the principles that God's Creation is to be respected, protected, and held in reverence, and that human aspirations for peace and justice depend upon restoring the Earth's ecological integrity.

BYM as a Staffed Organization

Baltimore Yearly Meeting has a staff to help Yearly Meeting committees get the work done. While many committees do not require staff, there are some programs that benefit from the help of staff to keep the programs running. It is through their experience and expertise that the staff are able to supply the committee with information to make necessary and informed decisions, although the staff themselves are not further involved in the decision-making.

The General Secretary is the head of the staff. Currently there are three supportive positions: Administration Manager, Accountant, and Development Director. There are staff who work specifically with programs: Youth Programs Manager; Camp Program Manager, and two camp caretakers.

The Yearly Meeting office is the place where Monthly Meetings and Yearly Meeting committees, as well as the general public, can get information. For further information read about the role of the Yearly Meeting's Supervisory Committee in the Manual of Procedures found at the end of the Yearbook.

Important Minutes

The following minutes are the major minutes of Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (BYM) approved since the consolidation of Baltimore Yearly Meeting of Friends, Homewood (Orthodox) and Baltimore Yearly Meeting of Friends, Stony Run (Hicksite) in 1967.

For the sake of brevity, only the subject is given. They are referenced by year, Representatives Meeting (RM), Interim Meeting (IM) or Yearly Meeting (YM), page in Yearbook, and, number of minute (#).

1967 "Thereupon Baltimore Yearly Meeting of Friends, Stony Run, and Baltimore Yearly Meeting of Friends (Orthodox) each separately approved the Articles of Consolidation. This action, to become effective January 1, 1968, draws together in one body our members torn asunder one hundred and forty years ago" (YM, p3).

1968 Report of the Yearly Meeting Trustees recommending that the Executive Committee proceed with the construction of the Yearly Meeting office and residence of the Executive Secretary in Sandy Spring (YM, p7, #40).

1968 General Epistle of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting. "In our 297th annual session, when we are once again a united Yearly Meeting after a separation of 140 years, we experience joyous feeling of unity and fellowship" (YM, #21).

1968 Statement Regarding the Selective Service System (YM, #22).

1969 The Executive Committee and Trustees to proceed with the signing of the building contract and the borrowing of the necessary funds to complete the office-residence with all reasonable speed (YM, p10, #26).

1969 A concern that there is need for a better dissemination of information about Yearly Meeting business and concerns (YM, p14, #37).

1970 "With the moving of the Yearly Meeting office to the new building in Sandy Spring on May 12, the pattern of work for the executive secretary and office secretary has already begun to change" (YM, p43).

1971 300TH Annual session of Baltimore Yearly Meeting. A history of Baltimore Yearly Meeting, 1672 - 1972, is being written by Bliss Forbush (YM, p2).

1971 Bethesda was welcomed as a new Monthly Meeting (YM, p3, #5).

1971 Executive Secretary suggested it was time to consider writing new *Faith & Practice* (YM, p4, #18).

1972 Minute on the People's Blockade was approved to support members and others who attempt non-violently to prevent shipment of weapons of war (YM, p15, #66).

1972 Young Friends minute supporting non-payment of taxes that go for war related purposes (YM, p15, #67).

1972 Minute on Racism approved (YM, p17, #72).

1973 Welcome to our new Meeting, Gettysburg Monthly Meeting. Pipe Creek and Gunpowder Meetings are part of both FUM and FGC (YM, p1).

1973 Minute on Amnesty was approved (YM, p6).

1973 Minute on disposition of real property was approved (YM, p12).

1973 Minute on membership on Yearly Meeting committees was approved (YM, p14).

1973 Minute of concern on espionage was approved to be sent to our Congresspersons (YM, p15).

1973 The Meeting approved a minute from Young Friends on Sexuality (YM, pp16-17).

1973 Minute on Implications of "Watergate" (YM, pp17-18).

1974 Black Creek Meeting House and Parsonage in Sedley, VA, was sold. The proceeds are to be used in the Virginia Quarter area (YM, p3, #9).

1974 Non-Friends may serve on a Yearly Meeting Committee if recommended by their Monthly Meeting (YM, p7, #26).

1974 Homewood Friends Meeting accepted the Meeting at Columbia, MD, as a preparative Meeting (Executive Committee, p37, #73-46).

1975 The deed transferring West Nottingham Meeting House and burial ground to the Cecil County Historical Society has been signed (YM, p2, #9).

1975 Centre Monthly Meeting asked to be laid down. They have no property or burial ground. This was approved (YM, p3, #15).

1975 Friends approved a minute concerning the long-standing and extensive problem of secret imprisonment and the torture, rape, and severe maltreatment of political prisoners throughout the world (YM, p13, #83).

1975 Friends approved a minute deploring the abuse of working men and women, particularly migrant workers (YM, 16, #95).

1975 Friends approved a minute opposing the sale of military arms (YM, p17, #100).

1976 Executive Committee recommended changing its name to Representative Meeting This was approved (YM, 4, #13).

1976 New worship groups were reported in Washington, VA, Lynchburg, VA, and Reston, VA, and Westminster, MD. A Meeting is held once a month at Brick Meeting House, Calvert, MD (YM, p5, #18).

1976 Friends approved changing the Manual of Procedure to use "Clerk" and "Assistant Clerk" instead of "Chairman" and "Vice-Chairman" where appropriate (YM, p12, #77).

1976 Friends approved the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee on FUM/FGC Sections that they meet only on call as needed (YM, p3, #80).

1976 Four minutes brought by the Peace Committee were approved: 1) war and disarmament; 2) Continental Walk; 3) simplicity; and 4) conflict (YM, pp16-17, #92-95).

1976 Minute concerning torture brought by the Socio-Economic Coordinating Committee was approved (YM, p19, #98).

1976 A minute proposed by the Advancement & Outreach Committee pertaining to Meetings for Worship within penal institutions was approved (YM, p20, #105).

- 1977** Bethel Friends Meeting requested that their membership in Baltimore Yearly Meeting be transferred to North Carolina Yearly Meeting (FUM). They are closer physically to North Carolina Eastern Quarter. Friends approved this request with love and affection (YM, p2, #4).
- 1977** The Peace Committee brought forth a letter to President Carter warmly commending his decision to halt the B-1 bomber and urged him to do the same for the neutron bomb and cruise missile. The letter was approved (YM, p11, #53).
- 1977** A letter from the Peace Committee on the Genocide Treaty was approved. This will be sent to Senators (YM, p11, #54).
- 1978** The Socio-Economic Committee asked Baltimore Yearly Meeting to endorse and support a program entitled "Friends for Creative Conflict Resolution. This was approved and an appeal for funds was sent (YM, p6, #24).
- 1978** The Social Order Committee presented a minute concerning the Olympic Prison to be at the site of the 1980 Olympic games. The Committee opposes not only this prison but the whole prison system in this country. Friends approved the minute (YM, pp10-11, #50).
- 1978** Friends approved a minute brought by the Peace Committee on compulsory national service (YM, 11, #51).
- 1978** Friends approved a minute by the Peace Committee on the United Nations Special Session on disarmament (YM, p11, #53).
- 1978** Minute from Langley Hill Meeting concerning the AFSC affirmative action program was approved (YM, p17, #87).
- 1979** The Peace Committee presented a minute opposing the arms bazaar to be held in Washington. This was approved (YM, pp7-8, #31).
- 1979** The Meeting approved a minute opposing a Constitutional Amendment that would outlaw abortion (YM, p8, #34) (see p13, #65).
- 1979** A minute on Affirmative Action in Employment was approved (YM, p10, #46).
- 1979** Three minutes from the Peace Committee were approved: 1) against reinstating the draft registration; 2) to defeat part of the SALT II Treaty and ratify other parts; 3) against nuclear fission power plants (YM, pp11-12, #56).
- 1979** Ministry & Counsel Committee set up a Yearly Meeting Counseling Service, allowing Friends to seek counseling at a minimum cost and subsidized by the Yearly Meeting (Report, 31).
- 1979** Supervisory Committee approved a minute stating that a sojourning Friend would be accepted for membership on a committee (RM, p51, #79-7b).
- 1980** Three new worship groups were mentioned: Reston, VA; Patuxent, MD; and Frostburg, MD (YM, p11, #48).
- 1980** There is a new worship group in Frederick MD (YM, p15, #61).
- 1980** A report on Meeting records was given. All records have been sent to the Maryland Hall of Records to be microfilmed and then deposited in the Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College or the Quaker Collection in the Haverford College Library. They are to be open to all (YM, p16, #64).
- 1981** The Meeting approved a minute on the Law of the Seas Treaty (YM, p12, #42).
- 1981** The Clerk recognized several new Meeting groups: Williamsburg Worship Group, Reston Preparative, Patuxent Allowed, Frederick Worship Group, and Frostburg (YM, p20, #59).
- 1981** A letter to President Ronald Reagan asking him to demonstrate a higher priority for peace and human need in his actions was approved (YM, p24, #70).
- 1981** The Circuit Court in Montgomery County overturned the Maryland Tax Court decision and restored full tax-exempt status for Yearly Meeting property (RM, p44, #81-2).
- 1981** Representatives Meeting approved a minute on our standards of appropriate behavior among Young Friends (RM, p40 in 1982 Yearbook, #82-4).

- 1982** A letter to President Reagan, U.S. and President Brezhnev, U.S.S.R. was sent along with 1000 paper cranes that had been folded at Yearly Meeting, 500 to each (YM, p16, #54).
- 1982** Friends approved a minute on military taxes (YM, p16, #55).
- 1982** Friends approved a minute on draft resistance (YM, p16, #57).
- 1983** There is a new Preparative Meeting in Harrisonburg, VA (YM, p2, #7).
- 1983** The Meeting approved a minute on asylum and refuge for illegal immigrants (YM, pp20-21, #68).
- 1984** The Meeting approved a minute welcoming contributions from Monthly Meetings and individuals for counselor scholarships (YM, p10, #35).
- 1984** One hundred and seventy-five years ago Baltimore Yearly Meeting helped start some Quarterly Meetings in Ohio (RM, p46, #84-27).
- 1985** A minute brought forth by the Stewardship Committee was approved stating the use of the Yearly Meeting mailing list to be used by Monthly Meetings, Quaker organizations, and BYM Committees (YM, pp15-16).
- 1985** The Meeting approved a minute brought forth by the Social Order Committee concerning Apartheid (YM, p18, #52).
- 1985** A revised minute from the Peace Committee was approved (YM, p18, #54).
- 1985** The Spiritual Formation program was set up under the Nurture and Recognition of Ministry (YM, p21, #68).
- 1985** Minute concerning remaining part of Friends United Meeting was read and approved (YM, p22, #73).
- 1986** A minute recommended by Representatives Meeting concerning BYM Young Adults was approved (YM, p2, #6).
- 1986** Friends approved a minute presented by the Peace Committee as the "Draft Registration Minute", otherwise known as the Solomon Amendment Minute (YM, pp15-16, #59).
- 1986** There was hearty approval of Harrisonburg Preparative Meeting be set off as an independent constituent Monthly Meeting (YM, p20, #74).
- 1986** A Spiritual Friendship oversight committee was formed under the care of the Ministry and Counsel Committee (RM, p44, #85-45).
- 1986** A proposal for establishing a BYM Young Adult "Committee" was presented, consisting of several parts. Representatives Meeting endorsed sections 3 and 4 and asked that travel money be put in the budget (RM, pp48-49, #86-11).
- 1987** The Peace Committee proposed a minute to make the Baltimore Yearly Meeting's properties a nuclear-free zone. This was approved (YM, p17, #60).
- 1987** The Social Concerns Committee presented a minute on the death penalty. This was approved (YM, p17, #62).
- 1987** Patuxent worship group was approved to be an Allowed Meeting under the care of Annapolis Meeting (YM, p22, #85).
- 1987** Richmond Meeting recommended that Williamsburg become a Monthly Meeting. This was approved (YM, p22, #86).
- 1987** There was approval that Reston become a full Monthly Meeting (YM, p22, #87).
- 1987** Friends approved a minute on Central American refugees brought forth from the Social Concerns Committee (YM, p22, #91).
- 1987** There was approval of a Peace Minute brought forth by the Peace Committee that recorded "profound acceptance of the Peace Testimony of the Religious Society of Friends (RM, p51, # 86-49).
- 1987** Allegheny Preparative Meeting has been formed under the care of Dunning's Creek Meeting (RM, p58, #87-7).

- 1988** The Staff Search Committee recommended Frank Massey to be the new General Secretary of Baltimore Yearly Meeting. This was approved (RM, p23, #88-45).
- 1988** A minute on gun-control was presented by the Social Concerns Committee and approved (YM, p16, #6).
- 1988** The Faith & Practice of Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends was approved (YM, pp20-21, # 8).
- 1988** The Social Concerns Committee presented a minute concerning the appointment of homosexuals by Friends United Meeting. This was approved (YM, pp21-22, #9).
- 1988** Little Falls Meeting celebrated their 250th Anniversary in September (YM, p23, #19).
- 1988** The Meeting approved a letter from the Indian Affairs Committee to FCNL concerning issues relating to Native Americans (YM, p31, # 11).
- 1988** Warrington Quarter recommended that Carlisle Preparative Meeting become a Monthly Meeting. This was approved (YM, p31, # 13).
- 1989** The Yearly Meeting agreed to support Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in a suit against the Internal Revenue Service concerning not withholding of war tax from employees (RM, pp12-13, #89*16).
- 1989** Representatives Meeting agreed to support the American Friends Service Committee in their challenge to the Immigration Control and Reform Act of 1986 (RM, p13, #89-17).
- 1989** Representatives Meeting approved a minute concerning the Immigration Control and Reform Act (RM, pp14-17, #89-25).
- 1989** Representatives Meeting approved a minute concerning the war-tax resistance issue (RM, pp17-20, #89-26).
- 1989** The Modesty Skirt for the clerk's table was introduced as a plain piece of material waiting for a square from each Monthly Meeting to be stitched onto it (YM, p45, #10).
- 1989** Approval was given for a minute on the American flag and its meaning and purpose (YM, p48, #5).
- 1990** Maury River, formerly Lexington Preparative Meeting under the care of Charlottesville Meeting, became a Monthly Meeting. There is a worship group in Farmville, VA, that is considering becoming an Indulged Meeting under the care of Richmond Meeting (YM, p35, #29).
- 1990** Friends approved a minute asking Monthly, Quarterly, and Half-Yearly Meetings within Baltimore Yearly Meeting to examine the relationship between the American Friends Service Committee and the wider Religious Society of Friends (YM, p51, #68).
- 1990** A minute on Human Rights in Kenya was approved (YM, p52, #72).
- 1990** Queries, and responses, for Consideration during a Threshing Session on Quarterly Meetings (YM, pp59-62).
- 1991** Friends approved a minute to be sent to Friends Church Southwest Yearly Meeting concerning our inability to unite with their minute on the realignment of Friends (YM, pp60-62, #65).
- 1991** A Peace Committee minute concerning military personnel who want to claim conscientious objector status was approved (YM, p63, #72).
- 1992** The purchase of "The Quaker Camp at Shiloh" was approved (RM, pp6-7, #46).
- 1992** New Meetings in Virginia: Roanoke/Blacksburg became two Monthly Meetings. Floyd Meeting was recognized as a Monthly Meeting. Norfolk Preparative Meeting came under the care of Williamsburg Monthly Meeting (YM, p52, #56).
- 1993** Friends approved a minute brought forth by Baltimore Monthly Meeting, Homewood on concerns of overpopulation. The Yearly Meeting approved this concern along with four queries relating to the minute (RM, pp16-17, #5).
- 1993** A request to set up an Ad-Hoc Committee on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns was approved (YM, 49, #58).

- 1993** The G.O.O.D. (Get Out Of Debt) Committee raised \$17,000 in pledges to reduce the debt of Shiloh during this Annual Session and promises of early payment of \$35,000 have been received (YM, p50, #65).
- 1994** Friends approved a minute against state sponsored gambling (RM, p22, #25).
- 1994** Approval was given for a minute on Family Planning (RM, p22, #25).
- 1994** Friends approved a minute protesting the U.S. Army School of the Americas that trains soldiers from Latin America (YM, p49, #47).
- 1994** The ownership of Catoctin Quaker Camp to Baltimore Yearly Meeting was approved (YM, pp54-55, #54).
- 1995** The Friends Peace Team Project asked to be taken under the care of Baltimore Yearly Meeting until a permanent home was found. Friends approved (RM, p22, #24).
- 1995** Three new Monthly Meetings were announced: Patuxent with thanks to Annapolis Meeting for their patient support; Quaker Lake Monthly Meeting expressed appreciation for Charlottesville; Midlothian Monthly Meeting thanked Richmond. Frederick is now a Preparative Meeting. Midlothian has under its care Colonial Heights Worship Group.
- 1996** An announcement was made that there is a new Worship Group in Montgomery County, MD. The name has not been finalized, but will probably be Seneca Valley (RM, p18, #30).
- 1996** Friends approved laying down the G.O.O.D. Committee, with many thanks for their hard work (YM, p29, #7).
- 1996** Final approval to have Catoctin Quaker Camp transferred to Baltimore Yearly Meeting (YM, p33, #18 and YM, p44, #4).
- 1996** A F.U.T.U.R.E. (Friends Uniting To Use Resources Effectively) Committee to raise money for many projects was approved (YM, p65, #71).
- 1996** Friends approved a minute opposing the death penalty (YM, p66, #74).
- 1997** Friends had a lengthy discussion concerning not paying the portion of income tax withholding from war tax resisters and the consequences of the officers (RM, pp10-17, #5).
- 1997** It was announced that there is a new Worship Group in Willis Wharf, VA, on the Eastern Shore that is under the care of Williamsburg Meeting (RM, p22, #22).
- 1998** The Program Committee brought forth a minute disallowing use of alcohol or any illegal drugs at Baltimore Yearly Meeting functions and discouraging the use of tobacco (RM, p18, #28).
- 1998** We learned of the revival of Fawn Grove Preparative Meeting under the care of Deer Creek Meeting. Fawn Grove had been dormant for a century.
- 1998** A minute from the Criminal and Restorative Justice Committee urging the elimination of the death penalty was sent to governors and legislatures of the states of Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and the Mayor and Council of the District of Columbia (YM, p65, #66).
- 1999** It was announced that Deer Creek Meeting has withdrawn from Nottingham Quarterly Meeting (RM, p9, #7).
- 1999** Virginia Half-Year's Meeting presented a minute concerning Equality of Marriage Rights (YM, p28, #23).
- 1999** It was reported that Hopewell and Winchester Center Meetings have merged. They will meet at Hopewell Meeting and will be called Hopewell Centre Meeting (YM, p36, #34).
- 2000** It was reported that there is now a Worship Group in Shepherdstown, West Virginia (RM, p19, #12).
- 2000** The Criminal and Restorative Justice Committee brought forth a minute on the Moratorium 2000 Campaign to be endorsed by Baltimore Yearly Meeting. This was approved (YM, p37, #39).
- 2000** The Peace and Social Concerns Committee presented a minute opposing the Missile Defense System. This was approved (YM, pp47-48, #71).
- 2000** A minute initiated by the American Friends Service Committee and the Fellowship for Reconciliation regarding the U.S. sanctions against Iraq was approved (YM, p48, #71).

- 2001** The Peace and Social Concerns Committee presented a minute concerning the conditions on the West Bank and Gaza. This minute was approved and will be sent to Ramallah Monthly Meeting and to Friends United Meeting (RM, pp17-18, #8).
- 2001** Trustees recommended that the money from the Conservation Easement on the Catoctin property be put into a temporary restricted fund to be used for capital projects (YM, p67, #38).
- 2001** It was announced that as of 2nd day of Seventh Month Patuxent Meeting now owns their own building (YM, p71, #53).
- 2002** Friends accepted a minute from Friends United Meeting (YM, pp42-43, #27).
- 2002** Young Friends presented a minute that they had approved that the Yearly Meeting should embrace same-sex marriages (YM, p44, #29).
- 2002** There was approval that Patapsco Friends Meeting become a full Monthly Meeting (YM, p48, #40).
- 2002** Friends approved a minute brought forth by the Peace and Social Concerns Committee concerning the “Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund (YM, pp53-54, #42).
- 2002** A *Minute on House Concurrent Resolution #368* that states “that it is the sense of Congress that reinstating the military draft, or any other form of compulsory military service in the U.S. would be detrimental to the long term military interest of the US, violative of individual liberties protected by the Constitution, and inconsistent with the values underlying a free society as expressed in the Declaration of Independence.” This was approved (YM, p54, #42).
- 2002** Friends approved a minute brought forth by the delegates to the Friends United Meeting Triennial held in Kenya in 2002 (YM, pp55-56, #43).
- 2002** A minute on Restorative Justice was approved by Friends (YM, pp58-59, #51).
- 2003** Friends approved a Minute on Reaffirming the Peace Testimony (IM, pp5-6, #38).
- 2003** Peace and Social Concerns Committee brought forth a minute on the current situation in Iraq. This was approved (IM, p6, #39).
- 2004** Friends approved a minute on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (YM, pp78-80, #61).
- 2005** Friends heard a report concerning Friendly Adult Presence (FAP) and the safety of our young people (IM, pp13-18, #26).
- 2005** A mission statement for the Intervisitation Program was presented and approved (IM, p35, #3).
- 2005** A Minute against the Federal Marriage Amendment was approved (IM, pp50-51, #14).
- 2005** Friends approved a Minute on Torture and Abuse of Prisoners (YM, pp79-80, #12).
- 2006** Friends approved a Minute for the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Bill (IM, p41, # 12).
- 2006** A Minute to Honor and Continue Tom Fox’s Work on Iraqi Detainees was approved (IM, pp42-43, # 13).
- 2006** The Peace and Social Concerns brought forth a “Letter to the President on the Humanitarian Crisis facing the Palestinian People.” This was approved (IM, p74, #52).
- 2006** ~~Committee on National Legislation~~ The Criminal and Restorative Justice Committee presented a minute to Friends concerning the “Enemy Combatant Military Commission” (YM, p125, #68).
- 2007** Friends approved having the Friends Wilderness Center listed as an organization appointing to which one or more representatives would be names (IM, pp13-14, #62).
- 2007** The Peace and Social Concerns Committee brought forth a minute on Supporting Peace in Sudan. This was approved (IM, p25, #69).
- 2007** BYM representatives to Friends United Meeting reported serious concerns about the current direction of the FUM Board (YM, pp68-73, #21).

- 2007** It was announced that Maury River Meeting has established a new Preparative Meeting, Greenbrier Valley Friends, in Beckley, West Virginia. Also South Mountain Friends Fellowship, under the care of Patapsco Friends Meeting, has been formed in the prison near Hagerstown, MD (YM, p82, #40).
- 2008** A letter from the Peace and Social Concerns Committee concerning the violence in the Middle East. Friends approved this letter (YM, pp104-105, #71).
- 2009** Abingdon Friends Meeting, Abingdon, Virginia, was welcomed into the Baltimore Yearly Meeting community (YM, p84, 13).
- 2009** The Advancement and Outreach Committee proposed that Baltimore Yearly Meeting take the Friends Meeting School under its spiritual care. Friends approved the recommendation (YM, p129, #61).
- 2010** Friends were presented with a Youth Safety Policy document. This has been worked on for quite some time. Friends approved (IM, pp15-16, #47).
- 2010** Dunnings Creek Meeting and Fishertown Meeting are reunited after many decades of separation (IM, p44, #04).
- 2010** A letter from the Peace and Social Concerns Committee protesting the sale of arms to Israel to be sent to President Barrack Obama was approved (YM, pp111-112, #58).
- 2011** Friends approved laying down Quaker Lake Meeting (IM, p13, #43).
- 2011** The Indian Affairs Committee brought forth a minute for the United States to endorse the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This was approved (IM, p14, #46).
- 2011** Monongalia Monthly Meeting, Morgantown, West Virginia, and Buckhannon Preparative Meeting, Elkins, West Virginia, transferred their memberships from Lake Erie Yearly Meeting to Baltimore Yearly Meeting, Friends welcomed those present with great joy (YM, p91, #31).
- 2011** Friends have been working on a Visioning Statement for Baltimore Yearly Meeting for some time. The statement was presented and approved. It was also approved to lay down the ad hoc committee (YM, p91, #50).
- 2011** The Miles White Beneficial Society was accepted as a supporting organization of Baltimore Yearly Meeting (YM, p96, #72).

Clerks of the consolidated Baltimore Yearly Meeting

1968 – 1972	Ellis Williams	Western Maryland College
1973 – 1975	John Sexton	Western Maryland College
1976 – 1979	Virginia Sutton	Western Maryland College
1980 – 1983	David Scull	Western Maryland College
1984 – 1988	Winnie Walker Jones	Shenandoah College
1989 – 1990	Katherine Smith	Shenandoah College
1991 – 1992	Katherine Smith	Wilson College
1993 – 1998	Miriam Green	Wilson College
1999 – 2001 2000	Lamar Matthew	Wilson College
<u>2001</u> – 2002	<u>Lamar Matthew</u>	<u>Randolph-Macon College</u>
<u>2003</u> – 2004	Lamar Matthew	James Madison University
2005 – 2007	Lauri Perman	James Madison University
2007 – 2009	Howard Fullerton	Frostburg State University
2010 –	Elizabeth Meyer	Frostburg State University

General Secretaries of Baltimore Yearly Meeting

1968 – 1979	Theodore “Ted” Mattheiss
1979 – 1988	Thomas Jeavons
1988 – 2005	Frank Massey
2006 –	Robert “Riley” Robinson

4. Quaker Organizations

American Friends Service Committee

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) carries out service, development, social justice, and peace programs throughout the world. Founded by Quakers in 1917 to provide conscientious objectors with an opportunity to aid civilian war victims, AFSC’s work attracts the support and partnership of people of many races, religions, and cultures.

The AFSC has offices in several places throughout the United States. The office that covers the area of Baltimore Yearly Meeting is in Baltimore, Maryland. The main office is in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

AFSC	AFSC South Region <u>Baltimore Office</u>
1501 Cherry Street	3600 Clipper Mill Rd. #212
Philadelphia PA 19102	Baltimore MD 21211
215.241.7000	410.323.4200
www.afsc.org	www.afsc.org

Earlham School of Religion

Earlham School of Religion is a Christian graduate theological school in the Quaker tradition. ESR prepares women and men for leadership that empowers and for ministry that serves. This mission grows out of our belief that God calls everyone to ministry. Using a transformative model of education, ESR encourages students to explore the intellectual, spiritual, and practical dimensions of their calls to ministry.

Earlham School of Religion
228 College Ave
Richmond IN 47374
800-432-1377
www.esr.earlham.edu

Evangelical Friends Church International

Evangelical Friends Church International helps Friends churches around the world meet the spiritual needs of their communities. Their desire is to stretch across racial, cultural, national, even denominational barriers, to reach people with the life-changing love of Christ. Over 1,100 Evangelical Friends churches representing more than 140,000 Friends in 24 countries are actively carrying out this mission.

EFC-NA c/o EFC-ER
5350 Broadmoor Circle NW
Canton OH 44709
330.493.1660
www.evangelicalfriends.org

Friends Committee on National Legislation

The Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) is the largest peace lobby and the oldest registered ecumenical lobby in Washington, DC. Founded in 1943 by members of the Religious Society of Friends, FCNL staff and volunteers work with a nationwide network of thousands of people from many different races, religions, and cultures to advocate social and economic justice, peace, and good government.

The organization's legislative priorities and policies are set by a General Committee made up of some 220 Quakers from around the country. FCNL's multi-issue advocacy connects historic Quaker testimonies on peace, equality, simplicity, and truth with peace and social justice issues that the United States Government is or should be addressing.

FCNL is a nonpartisan 501(c)4 public interest lobby. It is neither a political action committee nor a special interest lobby. The FCNL Education Fund is a parallel 501(c)3 organization that supports the research, analysis, and education for which FCNL is known and respected.

Friends Committee on National Legislation

245 Second Street NE

Washington DC 20002

202.547.6000

www.fcnl.org

Friends Council on Education

Friends Council on Education (FCE) nurtures the spiritual life of Friends schools, strengthens the connections between the schools, and promotes Friends education through providing consulting services, professional development seminars, peer network meetings and publications to support Quaker testimonies in school life.

Friends Council on Education

1507 Cherry Street

Philadelphia PA 19102

215.241.7245

www.friendscouncil.org

Friends General Conference

Founded in 1900, Friends General Conference (FGC) has grown from a voluntary organization of seven Yearly Meetings created to hold a "general conference" every other year into a vibrant association of 14 mainly unprogrammed, Yearly Meetings and regional groups. Besides the now annual Gathering of Friends, which is held at locations throughout the United States, FGC has a large bookstore of Quaker and other publications that hold to the basic Quaker principles.

FGC has many programs and services that serve the wider Quaker communities. Among these are Advancement and Outreach, Religious Education, Quaker Youth, Ministry on Racism, Quaker and Interfaith Relations, and Quaker Quest.

Friends General Conference

1216 Arch Street Suite 2B

Philadelphia PA 19107

215.561.1700

Bookstore 800.966.4556

www.fgcquaker.org

Friends Journal

An independent, international monthly magazine of current Quaker thought and life, *Friends Journal* publishes articles, art, poetry, news of Quaker organizations, book reviews, a reader's forum, advertising, and a listing of Friends Meetings.

Friends Journal provides a forum and connection for Friends across North America and throughout the world. It is found in Quaker homes, libraries, Meetings, and retirement communities. It is used widely in Quaker schools and adult study programs.

Friends Journal
1216 Arch Street Suite 2A
Philadelphia PA 19107
215.563.8629
www.friendsjournal.org.

Friends Peace Teams

Friends Peace Teams (FPT) is a Spirit-led organization working around the world to develop long-term relationships with communities in conflict to create programs for peacebuilding, healing, and reconciliation. FPT's programs build on extensive Quaker experience combining practical and spiritual aspects of conflict resolution.

They use processes and methods that respect individuals and help conflicting groups through such programs as the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP), trauma healing, community reconciliation, and peace education. In all of these programs, they bring together people or groups in conflict from different ethnic, political, gender, religious, and/or other conflicting groups.

Friends Peace Teams is a network of individuals and organizations dedicated to practicing and promoting Quaker Peacemaking philosophies and methods. The FPT family includes partners, working group members, active Yearly Meeting members, donors, volunteers, staff, and others.

Friends Peace Teams
1001 Park Ave
St. Louis MO 63104
314.588.1122
www.aglifpt.org; dave@aglifpt.org

Friends United Meeting

Friends United Meeting (FUM), founded in 1902, includes thirty Yearly Meetings along with several smaller groups, local Meetings (churches), and affiliated organizations. FUM is an international association of Friends Meetings and Churches, organized for evangelism, global partnership, leadership development, and communication.

FUM works in cross-cultural missions and cooperative ventures with member Yearly Meetings through their offices in Richmond, Indiana (USA) and Kisumu, Kenya. (Kenya has more Friends than any other country in the world.)

Friends United Meeting
101 Quaker Hill Drive
Richmond In 47374
765.962.7573

Friends Wilderness Center

The Friends Wilderness Center (FWC) is a very small retreat facility sharing 1400 acres of wilderness with two other groups. It is located in the very southeastern corner of the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia, between the Appalachian Trail and the Shenandoah River. Miles of trails wander through the woods, crossing beautiful little brooks. Sitting by one of the two ponds gives individuals a place to renew their spirit and escape the hectic world of work, family, and school. Visitors may camp on the site or stay in one of the two bedrooms in the Niles Cabin.

Friends Wilderness Center
305 Friends Way
Harpers Ferry WV 25425
304.728.4820
www.friendswilderness.org

Friends World Committee for Consultation

The purpose of the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) is to encourage fellowship and communication among all groups within the Religious Society of Friends. This Quaker community circles the globe, spanning a rich diversity of regional cultures, beliefs, and styles of worship. FWCC programs unite Friends around the world through Spirit-led fellowship.

In 1937, after years of concerned work to reconnect a fragmented Quaker world, the Second World Conference of Friends created the FWCC “to act in a consultative capacity to promote better understanding among Friends the world over.” Today, Friends from Yearly Meetings and groups in 75 nations continue this work. Around the world there are four cooperating, autonomous FWCC sections serving Africa, the Americas, Asia and the West Pacific, Europe, and the Middle East. FWCC’s World Office is in London. The Section of the America’s office is in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

FWCC’s association with the Quaker United Nations Office offers a means to monitor and explain Quaker contributions to world affairs, both in New York City and in Geneva, Switzerland. Their consultation extends to those of other faiths through work with the World Council of Churches.

Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas
1506 Race Street
Philadelphia PA 19102
215.241.7250
www.fwccamericas.org.

Pendle Hill (USA)

Pendle Hill is a Quaker center for spiritual growth, study, and service. At Pendle Hill, students and staff live, work, worship, and study together. Located on 23 wooded acres just outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Pendle Hill is where adults and youth come for inspiration and renewal. Founded by Quakers in 1930, Pendle Hill is a community that welcomes people from many faiths and countries. The name is taken from the hill in England that George Fox climbed and where he “saw a great people to be gathered.”

Pendle Hill provides an environment of love, challenge, and support for people seeking to gain insight and prepare for service in the world. Through the Resident Study Program, adults of all ages spend up to a year in

reflection and service. Retreats and workshops provide deep insight in a shorter time frame. For youth and young adults, they offer leadership programs. Their bookstore has a unique selection of spiritual and educational publications. Pendle Hill welcomes people from across the country and the world.

Pendle Hill
338 Plush Mill Road
Wallingford PA 19086
610.566.4507
www.pendlehill.org

Right Sharing of World Resources

From its beginning in 1967 the basic idea of RSWR has been wealth redistribution. In 1967 we called it “right sharing”. Today, we also understand it as Jubilee justice or Sabbath economics, recalling the Biblical teaching of Sabbath and Jubilee. We believe God is calling Quakers and other persons of faith in the United States to this practice.

101 Quaker Hill Drive
Richmond, IN 47374
765.966.0314
<http://www.rswr.org/>

William Penn House

William Penn House is a Quaker lodging and program center located in Washington DC. It is five blocks from the US Capitol Building and near the historic Eastern Market. It offers clean, safe, affordable lodging and conference facilities, daily silent worship, weekly yoga, and monthly potlucks, as well as community dialogues, seminars, and workshops.

William Penn House seeks to promote peace and justice in all that it does so that visitors may become greater peacemakers when they leave its doors. You are invited to enjoy their hospitality services.

William Penn House
515 East Capital Street SE
Washington DC 20003
202.543.5560
www.williampennhouse.org

Retirement Communities

Broadmead is an independent life care facility for people over the age of 65.

13801 York Road
Cockeysville MD 21030
410.527.1900
www.broadmead.org

Foxdale Village is an independent life care facility for people over the age of 65.

500 East Marylyn Avenue
State College PA 16801

814.238.3322

www.foxdalevillage.org

Friends House is a Continuing Care Retirement Community for people 62 and older, including those with limited income and resources. They offer independent living apartments and houses, assisted living and full care nursing, including Alzheimer's care and short-term rehabilitation.

17340 Quaker Lane

Sandy Spring MD 20860

301.924.5100

www.friendshouse.com

Kendal at Lexington is a Virginia Continuing Care Retirement Community serving older adults in the Quaker tradition

160 Kendal Drive

Lexington, Virginia 24450

540-463-1910

kalex.kendal.org/

Baltimore Yearly Meeting Camps

Catoctin Quaker Camp, 12611 Tower Road, Thurmont MD 21788, 301.271.2184

Opequon Quaker Camp, 2710 Brucetown Road, Brucetown VA 22722, 540.678.4900

Shiloh Quaker Camp, 4774 Middle River Road, Stanardsville VA 22973, 540.948.5226

Teen Adventure, 495 Snakefoot Lane, Lexington VA 24450, 540.463.7234

For more information on the Baltimore Yearly Meeting camps, call 301.774.7663 or go to www.bymcamps.org

Friends Schools

Friends Community School, 5901 Westchester Park Drive, College Park MD 20740, 301.441.2100, Grades K-8, www.friendscommunityschool.org

Friends Meeting School, 3232 Green Valley Road, Ijamsville MD 21754, 301.798.0288, Grades PK-12, www.friendsmeetingschool.org

Friends School of Baltimore, 5114 North Charles St., Baltimore MD 21210, 410.649.3200, Grades PK-12, www.friendsbalt.org

George Fox Friends School, 2009 Gap Newport Pike, Cochranville PA 19330, 610.593.7122, Childcare (8wks+), Nursery, PK-K, www.gffs.org

Harford Friends School, 2230 Rock Spring Road, Forest Hill MD 21050, 443.640.6300, Grades K-8, www.harfordfriends.org

Sandy Spring Friends School, 16923 Norwood Rd., Sandy Spring MD 20860, 301.774.7455, Grades PK-12, Boarding 9-12, www.ssfs.org

Sidwell Friends School, 3825 Wisconsin Ave NW, Washington DC 20016, 202.537.8100, Grades PK-12, www.sidwell.edu

State College Friends School, 1900 University Dr. State College, PA 16801, 814.237.8386, Grades PK-8, www.scfriends.org

Tandem Friends School, 279 Tandem Lane, Charlottesville VA 22902, 434.296.1303, Grades 5-12, www.tandemfs.org

5. Visiting Among Friends

The spiritual life of the Religious Society of Friends has long been nourished by visitation outside one's own Meeting. Visits affirm the values of friendship, of fellowship, and of the life of the Spirit. They expand the woven network of Friendly connections, open new windows to stir our spirits, and enlarge our understanding of what it means to be a Friend. Whether they are motivated by a special mission or not, the visits of those who come in love and fellowship are likely to enrich those involved, and indeed the life of the Society.

Friends who travel on business or vacation are urged to visit Friends' Meetings and homes as way opens. Such travelers may take along letters of introduction from their Monthly or Preparative Meetings. A letter (see Appendix) may be in the form of a minute of the Meeting, confirming the visitor's membership, giving some information about his or her participation in Friends' affairs, and conveying greetings from the Meeting.

Traveling with a Concern

A Friend who is led to take a concern to the wider Quaker community does well to first test the leading through a clearness process. If the Meeting unites with the concern, it should record a minute describing its member's leading and proposed service, expressing the Meeting's approval and support, and asking for the assistance of Friends who will be visited. Openness to Divine guidance and sensitivity to the conditions of those who will be met are both vital qualifications of visitors. The Friend who sets out on such a journey should be accompanied, when practicable, by a Friend in sympathy with the concern and able to give counsel and companionship. This accompanying Friend may hold everyone in the Light as the concern is shared and help to listen to comments from those present.

IV. Appendices

1. Glossary

Advices: Ideals stated as a continuing reminder of the basic faith and principles held to be essential to the life and witness of Friends, often formulated as queries to strengthen faith and practice. Friends have found it useful regularly to remind each other of their nature through periodic reading and discussion along with related queries.

Affirm: A legal declaration made by Friends or others who conscientiously decline to take an oath. “I affirm such and such is so” rather than “I swear” Swearing an oath implies having a double standard in regard to speaking the truth.

Allowed or Indulged Meeting: A Worship Group less formally organized than a Preparative Meeting, under the care of an organized body of Friends, usually at Quarterly or Monthly Meeting level.

Anchor Committee: An Anchor Committee, or Anchoring Committee, is a Support Committee that guides and nurtures a Friend who is pursuing a ministry that leads him or her to travel away from the Meeting frequently. This term is most frequently heard in reference to traveling ministries supported by Friends General Conference (FGC).

Archivist: The person appointed by a Meeting to maintain the minutes and other reports important to the Meeting (see Recorder).

Associate Member: One of several statuses of membership in the Religious Society of Friends used by many Monthly Meetings. An Associate Member is ~~an~~ **minor** child recorded as a member at the request of parents, one or both of whom are members of a Monthly Meeting. Associate Members may be transferred to full membership status at their own request, preferably in writing, after they have reached an age of decision and when they are familiar with Friends’ principles.

Attender: Someone who comes with some frequency to Meeting for Worship and other Meeting functions, but who has not yet sought or been accepted into membership.

Beanites: A term originally referring to the liberal followers of Joel and Hannah Bean. These Friends later began three Yearly Meetings in the western United States: Pacific, North Pacific and Intermountain Yearly Meetings. Together they publish the magazine *Western Friend*.

Birthright Member: A Friend born of Quaker parents and recorded at birth on the membership rolls of the Meeting. Most Meetings no longer have this category of membership, using some form of Associate status for children.

Book of Discipline: A book describing a Yearly Meeting’s history, structures, and procedures, including advices, queries, and often quotations, or extracts, from the experience of Friends. *Faith and Practice* is a Book of Discipline. The word discipline comes from the root word “disciple.”

Breaking Meeting: A term used to designate the ending or closing of the Meeting for Worship when a designated member shakes hands with Friends nearby. Friends then greet their neighbors similarly.

Called Meeting: A meeting of the Monthly, Quarterly, or Yearly Meeting especially called by its Clerk to address some concern or item of business. In a called Meeting for Business, decisions are recorded as in a regular Meeting for Business.

~~Center Down:~~**Centering:** An endeavor to quiet our restless thoughts and open our hearts, in order that we may hear God speak directly to us.

Christ Within: That of God in everyone, especially as illustrated in the teachings of Jesus. Also called the Truth, the Spirit of Guidance, the Inward Light, the Seed, or the Holy Spirit.

Clearness: Confidence that an action is consistent with the Divine will.

Clearness Committee: A group of Friends appointed or selected to assist a person, or the Meeting, to clarify a decision or concern.

Clerk: The person responsible for the administration of a Friends' body and sensitive to the guidance of the Spirit in the conduct of the business of that body. This includes preparation, leadership, and follow-up of Meetings for Business.

Concern: A concern, whether of an individual or a Meeting, is a spiritual leading so deep and vigorous that it motivates the individual or group to action. When completed, the concern is laid down.

Conscientious Objection: A principled refusal to participate in certain social or political practices; commonly applied to the refusal to undertake military service or pay war taxes.

Consensus: A secular method, involving a rational process and producing general agreement. The authority is the group. Not to be confused with Sense of the Meeting.

Conservative Friends: Three ~~unaffiliated~~ Yearly Meetings—Iowa, North Carolina and Ohio—call themselves Conservative. Historically, they share John Wilbur's objections to the pastoral system; at the same time they are more explicitly Christ-centered than most meetings in Friends General Conference (see Wilburites).

Continuing Revelation: A central Quaker belief that the revelation of God's will is an ongoing process.

Convener: A member of a committee, usually the first person listed, who is asked to convene the first meeting. Also the correspondent or contact person of a Worship Group.

Convinced Friend: A person who, after deciding that the Religious Society of Friends provides the most promising home for spiritual enlightenment and growth, becomes a member of a Monthly Meeting. Traditionally distinguished from a birthright Friend.

Corporate Worship: The action of a group's seeking together the will of God for their individual and community life. The Meeting for Worship is corporate worship. The activity of the group decision process—quiet waiting and group discussion—is intended to reflect the group's corporate search for truth.

Covered Meeting: A Meeting for Worship or Business in which the participants feel the power and inspiration of God so strongly that they are united in a silence that is the reward of waiting upon God (see Gathered Meeting).

Discernment: The process of arriving at the right course of action through spiritual perception and clear rational thought.

Discipline: Following a particular path. Also see *Faith and Practice*.

Disownment: The practice of dismissing an individual from membership in their Monthly Meeting. Historically, a person could be put out of Meeting ("read out") by a Monthly Meeting for violating prohibitions or practices of the Society.

Elders: Historically, those appointed to foster the vocal ministry of the Meeting for Worship and the spiritual condition of the members.

Eldering: The act of encouraging and/or questioning an individual's behavior and/or expression. Eldering is to be done with courtesy and loving concern for the individual, especially when it is offered as a correction. [See discussion on page 32.](#)

Embraced Friend: A Friend whose leading for ministry has been affirmed by the Yearly Meeting and is supported at the Yearly Meeting level.

Epistle: A public letter of greeting and ministry. Such letters are sent from a Friends Meeting or organization to other Friends' groups to supply information, spiritual insight, and encouragement.

Evangelical Friends: Friends who endorse a theology that has a strong scriptural basis and follows George Fox's view that Scripture is to be "read, believed, and fulfilled." They subscribe to the basic beliefs of other evangelical Christians, but differ in generally not observing the outward

sacraments (water baptism, etc.) and in their concern for traditional Friends testimonies such as peace, simplicity, and equality.

Facing Bench: Historically, the benches or seats in the front of the meeting room, facing the body of the Meeting, on which Friends' ministers and elders generally sat. In recent times, many Meetings have adopted a circular or square arrangement to eliminate the facing-bench distinction.

Faith and Practice: An official book of Friends' testimonies, beliefs, and practices compiled by a Yearly Meeting body of Friends. The book is meant to provide guidance (queries and advices) for individuals and organizational groupings of the religious body. The structure and membership of the group, the procedures of well-ordered business, the legalities of marriage, and stewardship of group property are explained. These are sources of tradition and not dogma. They are periodically updated to respond to current needs. Sometimes called "A Book of Discipline."

First Day: Sunday. Quakers have traditionally referred to the days of the week by number, avoiding the days named for pagan gods. This is not a firm Quaker custom today but more a familiar usage. We would tend to refer to First Day school rather than Sunday school for the children.

FLGBTQC: Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns is a Quaker faith community within the Religious Society of Friends.

Friends: Members of the Religious Society of Friends; also called Quakers. The term "Friends" or "Friends in the Truth" was used as early as 1652.

Gathered Meeting: A phrase used to describe those special occasions when the Meeting for Worship attains a generally felt sense of Divine presence, touching the hearts of all worshipers and uniting them in a common experience of holy fellowship (see Covered Meeting).

Good Order: Those procedures for the conduct of Friends' business and witness that encourage a Meeting to carry out its corporate activities under Divine leading. The term "rightly ordered" is also used in this sense.

Gospel Order: A term used by George Fox and others to describe the new covenant order of the church under the headship of Christ. It concerns how we live faithfully in relationship with God and with each other.

Gurneyites: Orthodox Friends who, in the 19th Century, agreed with Joseph John Gurney concerning the importance of studying the Holy Scriptures and proclaiming Quaker faith and practice in strong programs of evangelical outreach.

Hicksites: Liberal Friends who assert the sufficiency of the Inner Light in religious life. Called "Hicksites" by their opponents in reference to Elias Hicks, a prominent Quaker preacher.

Hold in the Light: To ask for God's presence to illumine a person, situation, or problem, whether in concern or thanksgiving.

Indulged Meeting: See Allowed Meeting

Inner Light: The presence of God in our hearts and lives, a reality that guides and directs us, gives us strength to act on this guidance, and thus brings us into unity with the Spirit of God. Also called the Truth, the Spirit of Guidance, the Inward Light, the Christ Within, or the Holy Spirit.

Integrity: One of the basic practical principles or testimonies of Friends. It involves both a wholeness and harmony of the various aspects of one's life and truthfulness in whatever one says and does. See also "Integrity" in "Advices and Queries."

Interim Meeting: A broadly representative body meeting to conduct the business of the Yearly Meeting between its annual sessions (formerly called Representative Meeting).

Lay Down: A decision to discontinue a committee when its work is complete; occasionally, a decision to discontinue a Meeting or other Friends organization when it is no longer viable.

Lay Over: In Quaker business process, to postpone a significant decision to allow time for further reflection and discussion.

Leading: An inner conviction that impels one to follow a certain course under a sense of Divine guidance. A Friend may submit a leading to the Meeting for testing by corporate wisdom.

Letter of Introduction: A Friend who is traveling socially or otherwise may request a “Letter of Introduction” from her or his Monthly Meeting to affirm association with Friends.

Liberal Friends: Liberal Friends hold that belief must be verified by religious experience. Religious experience derives from the direct revelation of God through the Light of Christ within. For Liberals, Jesus’s life, teachings, and death are a supreme example of love. Historically, Liberal Friends have reconciled science and religion, incorporating freedom of thought, tolerance, and humanitarian service in their expression of religious faith and practice and maintaining a balance between individual liberty and community.

Marrying Out: Marrying someone who is not a member of the Religious Society of Friends. Until 1859, many were disowned for marrying those who were not Quakers.

Meeting for Business: The gathering of members and attenders where the business of the Religious Society of Friends takes place. For a particular local grouping of Friends, this is on a monthly basis, thus the name Monthly Meeting. Business follows the traditional practices of Friends; there is no voting. Agreement for group action is reached by arriving at “a Sense of the Meeting,” a process similar to but not the same as consensus. Often called “Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business.”

Meeting for Worship: The gathering of Friends for the purpose of worshipping God. Traditionally, Friends meet in silent, expectant waiting for leadings of the Spirit, which might inspire anyone of the group to offer a message or prayer.

Meeting House: The building in which Friends meet. The name is used in place of “church.”

Message: A spoken message or vocal ministry by an individual inspired by Divine leading in a Meeting for Worship. A message may come to an individual that is personal or not for the group, and it is a matter of discernment whether or not to stand and deliver the message to the gathering.

Mind the Light: An expression used to remind us that there is an “Inward Light” in each of us that can reveal God’s will and direction.

Ministry: Sharing or acting upon one’s gifts, whether in service to individuals, to the Meeting, or to the larger community.

Minute: A record of an agreement reached in Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business formalizing the Sense of the Meeting.

Minute of Exercise: An expression of a Clerk’s insights and concerns at the close of a Meeting for Business. Historically, a closing summary of vocal ministry and spiritual concerns expressed during Yearly Meeting sessions.

Minutes: A record of the proceedings of a committee meeting or a Meeting for Business.

Monthly Meeting: A local community of Friends who meet together at regular intervals to wait upon God in Meeting for Worship.

Moved: Led or prompted by the Spirit.

Nontheist Friends: Friends (Quakers) who do not believe in God, or in supernatural entities or events, in general. This broad term encompasses Friends who might describe themselves as atheists, agnostics, naturalists, or humanists, as well as those who are comfortable using theistic language as a metaphor for some aspects of human experience.

Notion: An approach to religiously important matters that is not based on first-hand spiritual experience.

Opening: A moment of unexpected enlightenment or inspiration from God.

Outrunning One’s Guide: Rushing to action rather than searching for clearness and allowing a leading to season.

Overseers: A term traditionally used for the members of a committee that gives pastoral care and nurture to all members and attenders.

Pacifist: A person who renounces war and any use of violence and seeks to resolve conflicts peacefully.

Plain Dress: The simple and unadorned garments worn by early Friends.

Plain Language: Friends' use of "thee," "thy," "thine," and both first and last names with no titles, as an expression of equality. Because the months and days were named for heathen gods, goddesses, and emperors, many Friends preferred to use "First Day," "Second Day," and "First Month," "Second Month," etc.

Popcorn Meeting: As implied, numerous speakers "pop up" to minister to the Meeting, leaving very little time to honor the message.

Preparative Meeting: (1) A body of Friends, generally under the care and guidance of an established Monthly Meeting; (2) Originally, and still in some Yearly Meetings, one of a group of Meetings that meet for worship and to "prepare" business to be brought before their Monthly Meeting. See section on "Growth and Change."

Proceed as Way Opens: ~~Taking one step at a time (prayerfully), so as to become clear what to do.~~ To undertake a service or course of action without prior clarity about all the details but with confidence that divine guidance will make these apparent and assure an appropriate outcome.

Programmed Meeting: A Friends Meeting under the leadership of a pastor, with an arranged order of worship that usually includes a period of open worship.

Quaker: Unofficial name of a member of the Religious Society of Friends.

Quaker Universalist Fellowship: The Quaker Universalist Fellowship is an informal gathering of persons who cherish the spirit of universality that has always been intrinsic to the Quaker faith. See www.universalistfriends.org

Quarterly Meeting: A regional gathering of members of constituent Monthly Meetings, traditionally on four occasions each year.

Queries: A set of questions, based on Friends' practices and testimonies, that are considered by Meetings and individuals as a way of both guiding and examining individual and corporate lives and actions. As such, they are a means of self examination. Queries to be considered regularly are included in *Faith and Practice*; others may be formulated by a committee or Meeting that seeks to clarify for itself an issue it needs to address. See also "Queries, Advices, and Voices."

Quietism: Quietism, which is not unique to Quakerism but had widespread influence during the 18th Century, emphasized the quieting of creaturely activities so that in the "silence of all flesh" God could be heard.

Recorded Minister: An historical practice now discontinued in Baltimore Yearly Meeting of acknowledging gifts of Friends (such as vocal ministry or of the written word) by recording their names.

Recorder: The person appointed by a Meeting to maintain statistics of the members and attenders of that Meeting.

Recording Clerk: The person who records the actions of a Friends' Meeting for Business.

Released Friend: A Friend whose leading to carry out a particular course of action has met with approval from a Meeting, which then promises to provide such support as would enable the Friend to follow that leading.

Religious Society of Friends: Official name for Quakers.

Rise of Meeting: A term used to indicate the end of a Meeting for Worship or Business. Meetings for worship are "broken" (are sensed complete) by the Clerk or other designated person, often indicated by the shaking of hands to signify the Meeting is over. Also called the "close of Meeting."

Seasoning: Taking the time to seek the Light rather than moving into a matter hastily.

Sense of the Meeting: A collective understanding of God's will emerging from a Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business, gathered and explained by the Clerk for the approval of the Meeting (not to be confused with consensus).

Set off: To foster a new beginning; e.g. when Ohio Yearly Meeting was "set off" from Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

Settled: When all gathered have come under the leading of the Spirit.

Silence: A time of quiet meditation and solemn expectant waiting in Meeting for Worship.

Simplicity: Cutting away all that is extraneous, as opposed to "sincerity," which is being without sham, or "integrity," which is being all of a piece.

Sojourning Friend: A Friend temporarily residing in the area of another Monthly Meeting and accepted by that Meeting as a participating member.

Speak to One's Condition: The experience of receiving a message directly from God, or through another person, which touches one at the deepest level or helps one solve a problem or make a right decision.

Standing Aside: An action taken by an individual who has genuine reservations about a particular decision, but who also recognizes that the decision is clearly supported by the weight of the Meeting. The action of standing aside frees the Meeting to reach unity. A person may ask to be recorded as standing aside.

Standing in the Way: A seasoned Friend who feels a Spirit-led objection to a decision or proposed action of the meeting may stand in the way, thus preventing further action.

Stop in the Mind: An expression used by Friends when they feel uneasy and cannot follow a course of action.

Stewardship: ~~Directing the use of~~Caring for resources in accord with God's will. See also "Stewardship" in "Advices and Queries."

Testimonies: Friends' testimonies are an outward expression of inward spiritual leadings and discernments of the will of God. They constitute the moral and ethical fruit of the inward life of the Spirit.

That of God in Everyone: A Quaker belief that all humans have a Divine spirit enabling them to hear, be aware of, and respond to the movement of the spirit of God in the heart.

Threshing Session: A meeting to consider in depth a controversial issue, but without the necessity of reaching a decision.

Traveling Minister: A Friend traveling with a concern and under the care of their Meeting.

Travel Minute: The endorsement a Meeting gives to one of its members who is traveling under weight of a concern.

Unity: A recognition of the truth emerging from a group's corporate search and yielding to the Holy Spirit in its decision-making.

Universalism: The belief that there is a universal spiritual truth to be found as a base of all religious traditions.

Unprogrammed Meeting: A Meeting for Worship without pastor or prearranged program. Gathered Friends come together in silence, waiting upon God and "leadings of the Spirit" that may give rise to vocal messages to share with the Meeting. Meetings for Worship in which the whole time is spent in quiet worship can also be occasions of great inspiration.

Visitation: Formal visiting among Friends for any one of several purposes.

Vocal Ministry: The sharing of a message from God during Meeting for Worship. See also "Vocal Ministry" in "Advices and Queries."

Waiting upon God: Actively seeking and attending to God's will in expectant worship.

Way Opens: See "Opening" above.

Weighty Friend: A Friend who is respected for spiritual depth, wisdom, and long service to the Religious Society of Friends.

Wilburites: John Wilbur began the “Second Separation” (after the Orthodox-Hicksite split) in opposition to the Gurneyites. The main doctrinal dispute concerned waiting for Divine leading as against human initiatives; between the Spirit (Wilburites) and the Bible (Gurneyites).

Witness: To let one’s life speak. To stand up for a truth or deeply held belief.

Worship Group: A gathering of Friends for worship that has not applied for any formal Meeting status.

Worship-sharing: Sharing personal and spiritual experiences, thoughts, and feelings, in a worshipful setting, often in response to a query or theme and in a manner that acknowledges the presence of God. See also “Worship-sharing” in “The Life of the Spirit.”

Yearly Meeting: Those Friends from a geographically extended area who gather in Annual Session to worship and conduct business together. The Yearly Meeting has an advisory and supportive role to Monthly Meetings.

The Faith and Practice Revision Committee used several sources to prompt our work on this glossary. Among the most useful references were:

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Part I: Living our Faith

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<http://www.samhsa.gov/treatment/?WT.ac=AD20100918FINDTREATMENT>

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): <http://www.nami.org/>

National Institute of Mental Health: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml>

Twelve-Step Programs such as Emotions Anonymous are peer-led and helpful to many people

Addiction

Al-Anon Family Groups: <http://al-anon.alateen.org/how-to-find-a-meeting?gclid=CO-DgfSijLcCFQYaOgodWIUA4w>

American Society of Addiction Medicine: <http://www.asam.org/for-the-public/what-is-an-addiction-specialist>

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA): <http://www.drugabuse.gov/>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, "Find Treatment" tab: <http://www.samhsa.gov/treatment/?WT.ac=AD20100918FINDTREATMENT>

Twelve-Step Programs provide peer support for those seeking lives free of many forms of addiction

3. Readings and Resources

Certainly this list of resources is incomplete. This collection however has been found useful in many meetings in teaching about the origins of Quakerism and generating discussions about Quaker ways. Your Meeting library is an excellent source. Lists of more abundant references can be found at the web sites cited at the end.

History

Bacon, Margaret Hope. *The Quiet Rebels*. Pendle Hill, 1999. The story of the Quakers in America. An overview of Friends in social action and humanitarian service.

Bacon, Margaret Hope. *Valiant Friend*. Quaker Press, 1999.

The story of Lucretia Mott: Quaker minister, anti-slavery leader, and champion of the feminist cause. This is also a good look at the time of the Quaker separation of 1827.

Brinton, Howard. *Friends for 350 Years*. Pendle Hill, 2002.

This is the updated edition of Brinton's classic overview of basic Quaker understandings, practices, and history. Topics covered include the Light Within, Meeting for Worship, vocal ministry, reaching decisions, the Meeting community, the Meeting and the world.

Hamm, Thomas. *The Quakers In America*. Columbia UP, 2003.

A concise history of the Religious Society of Friends and a vivid picture of the culture and controversies of the Friends today. Reflecting Friends' diversity, this book includes lively vignettes of Conservative, Evangelical Friends as well as Friends General Conference, and Friends United Meeting.

Ingle, H. Larry. *First Among Friends*. Oxford UP, 1996.

In *First Among Friends*, the first scholarly biography of George Fox (1624-91), H. Larry Ingle examines the fascinating life of the Reformation leader and founding organizer of the Religious Society of Friends.

Quaker Classics

- Barclay, Robert. *Barclay's Apology In Modern English*. Ed. Dean Freiday. Barclay Press, 1991.
The classic systematic statement of Quaker faith by the first Quaker theologian, edited and re-written in modern English.
- Fox, George. *The Journal Of George Fox*. Ed. John Nickalls. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting 1997.
Foundational writings for 17th Century Friends. George Fox's *Journal* was written later in his life with the benefit of hindsight, at a time when the Religious Society of Friends was struggling for acceptance.
- Jones, Rufus. *Rufus Jones, Essential Writings*. Ed. Kerry Walters. Orbis, 2001.
A collection of writings of a well-loved Quaker mystic and social activist.
- Penn, William. *Twenty-first Century Penn*. Ed. Paul Buckley. Earlham School of Religion, 2003.
Five key texts in readable English, including Penn's important essay "Primitive Christianity Revived."
- Stephen, Caroline E. *Quaker Strongholds*. 1891.
The author bridges the points of view of those to whom Quakerism is new and strange, and of those well-versed in its belief and practice.
- Woolman, John. *The Journal And Major Essays Of John Woolman*. Ed. Phillips Moulton. Friends United Press, 1989.
John Woolman was a Quaker minister and prophet who deeply understood the relationship of the Divine connection with human action. Woolman's analyses of the roots of social evil carefully trace individual responsibility from motive to action, and follow the ever-widening consequences of that action.

Anthologies

- Barbour, Hugh and Arthur Roberts. *Early Quaker Writings: 1650-1700*. Morehouse Publishing, 2004.
Contains thoughtful, representative examples of 17th century Quaker writing enhanced by extensive introductory essays. The book is fully annotated with an extensive biographical index.
- Garmen, Mary, et al. *Hidden In Plain Sight: Quaker Women's Writings 1650–1700*. Pendle Hill, 1995.
A collection of early Quaker women's writings and a work of great scholarship. The included tracts, letters, epistles, and excerpts from journals are reprinted with only minor revisions.
- Steere, Douglas. *Quaker Spirituality, Selected Writings*. Paulist Press, 1984.
Includes extensive selections from the writings of George Fox, Isaac Penington, John Woolman, Caroline Stephen, Rufus Jones, and Thomas Kelly.

West, Jessamyn. *Quaker Reader*. Pendle Hill, 1990.

A comprehensive sampling of Quaker writings throughout our history. Writings represent a wide range of perspectives; includes fine biographical notes at the beginning of each passage.

Worship and Spirituality

Borg, Marcus J. *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*, HarperOne, 1995.

Borg provides an account of contemporary Jesus scholarship, and of his personal struggle to find authentic, mature faith.

Kelly, Thomas A. *Testament Of Devotion*. HarperCollins, 1996.

Five compelling essays that urge us to center our lives on God's presence, to find quiet and stillness within modern life.

Loring, Patricia. *Corporate Spiritual Practice Among Friends: Listening Spirituality*. Vol 2. Openings Press, 2003.

This book examines how Friends communal practice in Meeting is a spiritually formative influence on us, and an expression of the transformed life we seek to lead together.

Spong, John Shelby. *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism*, HarperOne, 1992

A Bishop rethinks the meaning of scripture.

Friends and Social Concerns.

Bacon, Margaret Hope. *Mothers Of Feminism, The Story Of Quaker Women In America*. Harper and Row, 1986.

A survey of the many Quaker women pioneers.

Birkel, Michael. *A Near Sympathy, The Timeless Quaker Wisdom Of John Woolman*. Friends United Press, 2003.

Woolman's deep spiritual life empowered him to engage the world as a witness on behalf of the disenfranchised, and for the earth and all its creatures. The book includes a group discussion guide.

Whitmire, Catherine. *Practicing Peace*. Soren Books, 2007.

Stories of successful nonviolent movements throughout history are partnered with quotes from over 350 years of Quaker teachings on peace.

Business and Practice

Sheeran, Michael J. *Beyond Majority Rule*. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1993.

This book is the result of a two year study and includes detailed descriptions of Quaker process at work and draws conclusions about what works well and what does not.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting, *Manual of Procedure*, www.bym-rsf.org/publications/mop/

Youth

Baltimore Yearly Meeting, *Manual of Procedure*, Youth Safety Policy

Baltimore Yearly Meeting, *Young Friends Handbook*, <http://www.bym-rsf.org/publications/yfhandbook/>

Journals and Bookstores

American Friends Service Committee Bookstore, 980 Fair Oaks Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91103.
<http://www.afscstore.org/>.

Friends Journal, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102. <http://www.friendsjournal.org/>.

Friends United Press (and Quakerhill online Bookstore), 101 Quaker Hill Drive, Richmond, IN 47374.
<http://www.fum.org/bookstore/>.

Pendle Hill Publications, 338 Plush Mill Road, Wallingford, PA 19086.
<http://www.pendlehill.org/bookstore>.

Quaker Books of Friends General Conference, 1216 Arch St. #2B, Philadelphia, PA 19107.
<http://www.quakerbooks.org/>.

Pamphlets

No account of Quaker literature is ever complete without a special mention of the Pendle Hill pamphlets. Initiated in 1934 and published several times a year, there are now over 400 essays in this formidable collection. The citations below are meant just to whet the appetite.

Rufus Jones, *Rethinking Quaker Principles*, 1940, #8.

Douglas Van Steere, *Community And Worship*, 1940, #10.

Abraham John Muste, *The World Task of Pacifism*, 1942, #13.

Thomas R Kelly, *Reality Of The Spiritual World*, 1942, #21.

Anna Brinton, ed., *William Penn's No Cross No Crown*, 1944, #30.

Gilbert Kilpack, *Our Hearts Are Restless*, 1946, #32.

Howard Haines Brinton, *The Quaker Doctrine Of Inward Peace*, 1948, #44.

Howard H. Brinton, *The Nature of Quakerism*, 1949, #47.

Herrymon Maurer, *The Power of Truth*, 1950, #53.

Howard H. Brinton, *Prophetic Ministry*, 1950, #54.

Caroline E. Stephen, *Quaker Strongholds*, 1951, #59.

Wilmer J. Young, *Visible Witness: A Testimony For Radical Peace Action*, 1961, #118.

Barry Morley, *Beyond Consensus: Salvaging Sense Of The Meeting*, 1996, #307.

Patience Schenck, *Living Our Testimony On Equality: A White Friend's Experience*, 2012, #415.

[John Yungblut, *On Hallowing One's Diminishments*, 1990, \)#292](#)

Web Resources

Baltimore Yearly Meeting Religious Education:

<http://sites.google.com/site/bymreligioused/>

Curricula and more.

North Pacific Yearly Meeting: A Quaker Bibliography:

<http://www.npym.org/fnp/sec4.html#bibliography>

Quaker Pamphlets:

<http://pamphlets.quaker.org/>.

Pendle Hill pamphlets, William Penn Lectures, Quaker Universalist.

Quaker.org: A resource for all things Quaker:

<http://www.quaker.org/book-list.html>.

Quaker blogs:

<http://www.quakerquaker.org/>.

4. Forms and Letters

The following examples of correspondence, forms, and letters are illustrative only. The Monthly Meeting is encouraged to make appropriate alterations to these models to fit individual situations.

1. Transfer to Another Meeting

In transferring a membership to another Meeting, a Monthly Meeting may use a letter or a standard form with blanks, which may be called a Certificate of Transfer or Certificate of Removal. Wording may vary, but it is suggested that all of the information contained in the suggested format below be included. The letter or form should be on the letterhead of the Meeting, if available, and should contain a full mailing address for reply.

(Date)
(Name of receiving Meeting)
(Address)

Dear Friends:

At our Monthly Meeting held on (date), we approved the request of the following full member(s) in good standing of our Meeting for transfer of membership to your Monthly Meeting:
(full name or names)

[This request for transfer also includes the following child(ren) of the full member(s) who is/are (a) junior (associate) member(s) of our Meeting:
(full name or names)

We commend him/her/them to your loving care. We enclose the appropriate Recorder's information for your records.

We would appreciate receiving your acknowledgment of this request and notice of your action upon it.

On behalf of (name of Meeting),

(Signature)
(Typed or printed name of signer)
Clerk (Recording Clerk/Corresponding Clerk/Recorder)

2. Acknowledgment of Transfer

When the transfer is accepted by the receiving Meeting, the Meeting requesting the transfer should be promptly notified. The member(s) remain(s) on the rolls of the requesting Meeting until the transfer is completed. The following format may be used:

(Date)
(Name of receiving Meeting)
(Address)

Dear Friends:

In accordance with your request, the following was/were accepted as (a) full member(s) of our Monthly Meeting by transfer from your Meeting on (date):

(full name or names)

[Also accepted at that time as (a) junior (associate) member(s) was/ were the following child(ren) of the full member(s):

(full name or names)]

On behalf of (name of Meeting),

(Signature)
(Typed or printed name of signer)
Clerk (Recording Clerk/ Corresponding Clerk/Recorder)

3. Letter of Introduction

Meeting Letterhead and Date

Dear Friends,

Please welcome _____ as he/she travels among you. _____ is a member of our Meeting in good standing. We send you our loving greetings and commend _____ to your loving care during his/her journey.

In peace,
Clerk

4. Travel Minute

Meeting Letterhead and Date

Dear Friends,

_____, a beloved member of this Meeting, has opened to us his/her leading to travel among [New England's] Meetings [Insert brief indication of concern].

He/she anticipates that _____, a member of _____ Meeting, will join him/her and that they will travel in this ministry between ____ and ____, 20__.

This Meeting unites with _____'s leading. We trust that you will benefit as we have from sharing his/her insights and quiet faith. We commend him/her/them to your care and hospitality.

Approved and minuted at our Meeting for Business held ____, 20__.

_____, Clerk

5. Endorsement

Dear Friends,

_____ was present with us during Meeting for [Worship, Business] today. His/her ministry here was appreciated. We are holding him/ her in the Light as he/she continues this journey.

Date _____
_____ Clerk,
_____ Monthly Meeting

6. Marriage Vow

In the presence of God and of these our Friends, I _____ take thee _____ to be my husband/wife/partner/spouse, promising with Divine assistance to be unto thee a loving and faithful wife/husband/partner as long as we both shall live.

7. Marriage Certificate

~~The form~~ This is the traditional language of the Marriage certificate ~~shall be substantially as follows: and is repeated here as a guide:~~

WHEREAS, A. B. of _____, son of S. B. and M. B. of _____, and D. E. of _____, daughter of F. E. and S. E. of _____, having declared their intentions of marriage with each other before _____ Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, held at _____, according to the good order used among Friends, their proposed marriage was allowed by that Meeting.

Now these are to certify to whom it may concern, that, for the accomplishment of their intentions, this ____ day of _____ month, in the year _____, they, the said A. B. and D. E., appeared in a public meeting* of the Religious Society of Friends, held at _____.

A. B., taking D. E. by the hand, did on this solemn occasion, declare that he took her, D. E., to be his wife, promising with Divine assistance to be unto her a loving and faithful husband as long as they both should live; and then, in the same assembly, D. E. did in like manner declare that she took A. B. to be her husband, promising with Divine assistance to be unto him a loving and faithful wife as long as they both should live.

Moreover, they, the said A. B. and D. E., [she, according to the custom of marriage, assuming the surname of her husband,] did, as a further confirmation thereof, then and there, to these presents set their hands.

A. B. D. B.

We, whose names are also hereunto subscribed, being present at the said marriage have, as witnesses thereto, set our hands the day and year above written.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

*When the marriage is accomplished at a private house, instead of the words "in a public ... Friends, held at _____," write "at a meeting held in the home of _____ in the _____ of _____."

5.6. Estates and Bequests

The Yearly Meeting and Monthly Meetings are grateful for the generosity of spirit which has led to the receipt, over the years, of many bequests.

The greatest heritage any generation can leave to the next is the example of faithful lives. Causes to which such lives have been devoted should be cherished even though material successes have been achieved or new conditions have created new priorities. Friends who have felt themselves a vital part of the Yearly Meeting fellowship, or who have supported worthwhile causes as an expression of Quaker concern, are often moved to include in their estate plans bequests of money or property to the Yearly Meeting. We express our gratitude for this spirit of giving which motivates such action and invite active consideration of further bequests. In this way, past, present, and future generations are linked in a continuity of the spirit.

Advice to Individual Friends

Individual Friends are advised and encouraged:

To give careful thought to the making of wills, to arranging for insurance, and to reasonable provision against the needs of old age and the possibilities of serious illness, insofar as means will permit.

To consider with great seriousness their role as stewards of a portion of the Lord's bounty, not endeavoring merely to accumulate large material estates.

To consider how their plans for distribution of their estate reflect their deepest values and concerns.

To consult a suitable person or persons in their Monthly Meeting, particularly with respect to intended charitable and religious donations but also with respect to general arrangements. Professional legal, investment, and accounting advice is often essential and is in fact usually sought when substantial amounts are involved. But if we are to be fully aware of our responsibilities, counseling on more than a purely secular basis is also needed.

To consult with the planned recipient of a bequest when the bequest is restricted to a specific purpose or conditions, to be sure the recipient can accept the restricted terms. See also Yearly Meeting Policy below.

Advice to Monthly Meetings

Each Monthly Meeting is advised and encouraged:

To seek to develop a healthy attitude within the Meeting toward personal stewardship of money and philanthropy, and to encourage periodic open discussion of this topic as well as the Meeting's financial needs, property, investments, and financial position generally.

To make suitable arrangements for consultation for individuals as indicated in Advice to Individual Friends above. Responsibility may be entrusted to a standing committee, or perhaps to one or more well-qualified individuals selected by the Ministry and Counsel and the Stewardship and Finance Committees. In the case of a small meeting, or where there are several meetings in an area, the resources of a group of meetings may be called on.

To adopt policies similar to those for the Yearly Meeting (below) for the Monthly Meeting.

Yearly Meeting Policy

The following provisions are intended to guide both the Trustees of the Yearly Meeting and prospective donors. They should be especially noted in the making of a will, since in the case of a living donor the terms of a gift can be discussed and altered until it is clear that full agreement has been reached. Every effort shall be made to see that this policy is familiar to members, and that all possible encouragement and assistance is given to those who may contemplate making a gift or including a bequest in a will.

The Yearly Meeting welcomes gifts whose terms are liberating rather than restrictive.

Generally the interests and intentions of a donor should be expressed in broad terms. A will should contain the fewest possible legally binding restrictions, with preferences being expressed in terms of guidance. Detailed preferences as to the administration and use of funds are likely to be more appropriate for a supplemental letter than for the will itself.

Even though the donor's wishes are stated as a matter of preference rather than as a legally binding restriction, the Yearly Meeting, in accepting a bequest, feels a moral obligation to comply with those wishes as far as, and as long as, it is possible to do so. Fifteen years after the receipt of a bequest, the Yearly Meeting may review the uses to which the bequest is being put, and other relevant conditions. Changes may be made by the Yearly Meeting if they appear necessary and desirable. However, even if a modification were to be made, this would be done while adhering as closely as possible to the original intent.

The Yearly Meeting hopes that the naming of the bequest be left to the judgment of the Yearly Meeting. Recommendations could be made in a letter submitted along with the will.

With respect to endowment funds administered by the Yearly Meeting, stipulations which were legally binding at the time the gift or bequest was accepted will continue to be honored, unless and until some serious conflict arises and there needs to be some legal resolution of a restrictive situation.

With respect to future gifts which are offered to the Yearly Meeting, during the lifetime and competence of the donor, the Trustees are directed, through an appropriate representative, to discuss the terms, and to accept the gift when these are in harmony with the policy of the Yearly Meeting.

With respect to bequests which may hereafter be offered to the Yearly Meeting, the Trustees are authorized to accept those whose terms are substantially in harmony with this statement of policy. If a bequest is offered with terms plainly out of harmony with the spirit and intent of this policy and without special

extenuating circumstances, the Trustees are directed to notify the executor that the bequest cannot be accepted.

With respect to a bequest which is offered in terms which are not entirely consistent with this policy, but which the Trustees feel for good reason ought to be accepted or at least considered by the Yearly Meeting, they are instructed to draw up an appropriate statement of the circumstances together with their recommendation and to present the same for action at the next interim or annual session of the Yearly Meeting.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting is primarily a religious fellowship whose work and program reflect the living concerns and the deepest insights of its active members, under Divine guidance, seeking to make responsible decisions in the light of present conditions and of future needs. It is proper for the donor to be able to feel that a beneficial influence is extended in a direct and effective way beyond his or her lifetime. Such gifts need to be made with the full realization that their function is to enable each current generation of Friends to extend, and to be more effective in, the Quaker faith and its practical expression. Attention should not be diverted from those concerns which are felt to be most central and to have the highest priority by the existence of funds irrevocably committed to specific purposes which are no longer as relevant as when the gift was made.

Care must be taken not to allow this, or any future generation, to be dependent on bequests or on endowment income so as to relieve the current membership of a vital sense of responsibility for operating expenses, services, and wider outreach.

5. Called Meetings

~~6. Called Meetings:~~ Practical Considerations

Called Meetings such as ~~weddings~~Meetings for Marriage and Memorial Meetings in the manner of Friends often require special attention to practical considerations. This is especially true when a large number of people are to attend or when a number of people unfamiliar with Quaker practice are expected.

Can members of Meeting offer hospitality to friends and relatives from out of town?

In the case of a Memorial Meeting, should someone remain at the home while the family is at the called meeting? Is there some Meeting member not close to the family who might do this?

Is child care needed? Who can provide it and where will it be?

Parking for a large gathering may be a problem. It is helpful to designate someone (or two or three) to direct people where to park. Reserve a few spaces near the entrance for those who need this convenience.

An introductory welcome and explanation of Quaker service is very helpful to those who have not been to a Quaker Meeting previously. What is to be said? Who will say (or read) it? Will family members wish to add elements to the Meeting that are meaningful to them, such as a particular poem or song? It is particularly helpful to include information about how to know when the service is over.

Approximately how long should the Meeting be, and who is to close the Meeting?

Memorial Minute: its purpose is to appreciate and communicate the essence of the person. It is written in tenderness and may be enlivened by specific memories, sayings, talents, or stories that illuminate the life. Such minutes may be cherished by family members and become part of the Meeting's archives. When the individual is active in Quarterly or in Baltimore Yearly Meeting, the minute may be forwarded to these Meetings as well. If there is a Memorial Minute or wedding certificate, who will read it? And when?

Are there any particular people to be asked to speak? Who will make the request?

Is there to be music? Who will arrange or perform it? Is special equipment needed? Should it be at a pre-arranged time or as the Spirit moves? (Adequate lighting should be assured for anyone needing to read music.)

How many people might attend? Are facilities adequate? If not, what can be done or what other location may be used? (Possibilities should be considered in advance of need as much as possible, particularly for Meetings which do not have their own Meeting Houses.)

Does the family wish to sit in a particular place? How are the places to be reserved?

Are there to be flowers? Who will supply and transport them? Who will remove them?

For Memorial Meetings, does the family want casket or ashes present? If so, where should they be placed?

How and when will they be placed and removed?

Will there be a guest book? Who will obtain it? Where will it be placed? See that a pen is available too.

Are there to be refreshments afterwards? Who will provide them, where will they be served, and who is responsible for cleaning up?

Introducing Weddings

Some Meetings have used the following language in introducing the marriage ceremony. Friends are urged to take this language as a guide, making whatever modifications seem appropriate.

Friends, we are gathered here today in a meeting for worship in the manner of the Religious Society of Friends, to witness the marriage of _____ and _____. They have asked me to say a few words about what will happen, especially for those who may not have experienced either worship or marriage in the manner of Friends.

When Friends gather for worship, they come together sure in the knowledge that God, which some call The Inner Light, the Truth. Love, the Spirit of Christ, will be with us. You are invited to join us in the silent power of this corporate worship. Because your presence and attention is requested and because it would be distracting to others, we ask that you do not take photographs during the worship. There will be plenty of time later for taking photographs. _____ and _____ have asked me to extend a special welcome to young children, who are encouraged to join with us for as long a period as they and their parents are comfortable. At such a time as they would prefer, children are welcome to join in the child care, which is being provided _____ (at this location) _____.

When these comments are finished, we will settle together into a period of silent worship. When they are ready, _____ and _____ will stand and, facing each other, they will exchange their marriage vows. In the manner of Friends, they will join themselves in marriage with out the intercession of a minister or other official. After the vows, a religious certificate will be brought to them which they will sign. At the rise of meeting each of us – children included – will be asked to sign the certificate as witnesses to this marriage. When _____ and _____ have signed the certificate, it will be read aloud to us and returned to place.

At that time we will enter again into a period of corporate worship, opening our hearts to the joy of this occasion and reflecting upon our hopes and prayers for _____ and for _____ and for their life together. Out of this second period of silent worship, it may be that some are led by the spirit to offer a message to _____ and to _____ and to all of us assembled. This message might take many forms – a prayer, a song, a poem, or a simple spoken statement. If you should offer such a message, you are asked to stand if you can and to speak in a clear, loud voice because others will want to hear what you have to say. We ask that messages come out of the silence and that we return together into the silence after each message so that we can take it into our hearts and understand it better. Please do not hurry, we will have enough time.

Once the time is right, worship will be closed by the shaking of hands. At that time please remain in your seats to receive further instructions about the signing of the wedding certificate. Let us now enter with _____ and _____ into the silence with joy and expectation.

Introducing Memorial Meetings

Some Meetings have used the following language in introducing memorial meetings. As the previous section, this language is meant only as a guide.

Friends, we are gathered here today in a meeting for worship in the manner of the Religious Society of Friends, to remember and celebrate the life of _____. I have been asked me to say a few words about what will happen, especially for those who may not have experienced either worship or memorial services in the manner of Friends.

When Friends gather for worship, they come together sure in the knowledge that God, which some call The Inner Light, the Truth. Love, the Spirit of Christ, will be with us. You are invited to join us in the silent power of this corporate worship. The family of _____ has asked me to extend a special welcome to young children, who are encouraged to join with us for as long a period as they and their parents are comfortable. At such a time as they would prefer, children are welcome to join in the child care, which is being provided _____ (at this location) _____.

When these comments are finished, we will settle together into a period of silent worship, opening our hearts to the memories and reflections on the life of _____. At this time it may be that some are led by the spirit to offer a message to _____'s family and to all of us assembled. This message might take many forms – a prayer, a song, a poem, or a simple spoken statement. If you should offer such a message, you are asked to stand if you can and to speak in a clear, loud voice because others will want to hear what you have to say. We ask that messages come out of the silence and that we return together into the silence after each message so that we can take it into our hearts and understand it better. Please do not hurry, we will have enough time.

Once the time is right, worship will be closed by the shaking of hands. Let us now enter into the silence with joy and expectation.

7. A Suggested Procedure for Establishing a Preparative Meeting

NOTE: The procedures below apply to those Preparative Meetings that are established under the care of a separate Monthly Meeting, not those which are formed as equal parts constituting one Monthly Meeting.

When Friends are ready to establish a Preparative Meeting under the care of a Monthly Meeting, an ad hoc committee may be established by the Monthly Meeting to consider details and to bring forward a proposed *Minute to Establish the [—] Preparative Meeting* for the consideration of the Monthly Meeting. This committee should include Friends from both the proposed Preparative Meeting and the sponsoring Monthly Meeting. It is helpful to have Friends on the committee experienced with Friends' business procedures.

The committee should consider such matters as the place of meeting for worship of the new group, what officers and committees are necessary for the Preparative Meeting, and what the relationship will be to the Monthly Meeting regarding finances, membership, marriages, property, business, and similar concerns. Care in

recording and documenting these deliberations is needful, and these records should be preserved with Monthly Meeting records.

When the committee has formulated a minute, has presented it to the Monthly Meeting, and the minute has been approved, the committee is laid down. Upon approval of the minute by the Monthly Meeting in session, the Monthly Meeting should name a temporary nominating committee to seek Friends to serve the new Preparative Meeting as a Nominating Committee. This Nominating Committee then will seek to fill the positions required by the Preparative Meeting. Upon approval by the Preparative Meeting, these names will be recorded by the Monthly Meeting. The new Preparative Meeting is then in being.

Close liaison between committees of similar responsibilities from Preparative and Monthly Meetings will be helpful. A regular report (annual or semi-annual) should be made by the Preparative Meeting to the Monthly Meeting.

1. Sample Minute to Establish a Preparative Meeting

[Name] Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, held at [place (city/town, state)], hereby establishes as a Preparative Meeting under its care the [Name] Preparative Meeting to be held at [place (city/town, state)].

2. Membership

Members of [Name] Monthly Meeting who worship with [Name] Preparative Meeting will retain their membership in the Monthly Meeting until the Preparative Meeting is established as an independent Monthly Meeting.

Persons interested in the Preparative Meeting, who are now members of other Friends Meetings, should request transfer of their membership to the Monthly Meeting.

Persons interested in the Preparative Meeting who desire membership in the Religious Society of Friends should apply for membership in the Monthly Meeting. Their applications for membership should initially be considered by the Preparative Meeting Committee on Ministry and Oversight and forwarded with its recommendations to the Committee of Overseers of the Monthly Meeting.

As members of the Monthly Meeting, members of the Preparative Meeting are also members of the appropriate Quarterly Meeting and of Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

3. Finance and Property

Any real and personal property acquired by the Preparative Meeting shall be legally held by the Trustees of the Monthly Meeting. When the Preparative Meeting becomes a Monthly Meeting, title to such property will be transferred to the Trustees of the new Monthly Meeting.

The Monthly Meeting is responsible for the financial support of the activities of the Preparative Meeting. The Preparative Meeting will prepare an annual budget to be submitted to the Monthly Meeting for approval. Friends from the Preparative Meeting expect to contribute funds to meet these expenses. Preparative Meeting Friends also accept the responsibility to contribute to the Monthly Meeting budget, including its Baltimore Yearly Meeting apportionment.

The Monthly Meeting may authorize separate bank accounts for the Preparative Meeting and may appoint, in consultation with the Preparative Meeting, an Assistant Treasurer authorized to handle such accounts. Funds and records should be handled according to procedures worked out by the Treasurer and the new Assistant Treasurer, with the approval of the Finance Committees of both the Preparative and Monthly Meetings.

4. Business, Officers, and Committees

The Preparative Meeting should hold regularly scheduled business meetings. The business-handling procedures outlined in Faith and Practice of Baltimore Yearly Meeting apply.

The Preparative Meeting may consider and act on business which concerns it alone. Copies of minutes of Preparative Meeting business meetings should be forwarded to the Clerk of the Monthly Meeting who may ask the Monthly Meeting to consider any of the items.

The Preparative Meeting may consider other business and may forward recommendations to the Monthly Meeting.

The Preparative Meeting should appoint a Clerk and Assistant (or Recording) Clerk and other officers as necessary. The Clerk and the Assistant Treasurer from the Preparative Meeting will be considered officers of the Monthly Meeting and will serve on the Monthly Meeting Executive Committee, if there is one.

Preparative Meeting Friends may be considered for membership on the standing committees of the Monthly Meeting. The Preparative Meeting may establish committees, and also may consider Friends from the Monthly Meeting for membership on its committees.

Weddings are held under the care of the Monthly Meeting. Friends from both the Preparative and Monthly Meetings should be appointed to the clearness committee to meet with Preparative Meeting Friends seeking marriage under the care of the Meeting.

Memorial Meetings or other special occasions involving Friends from the Preparative Meeting should be jointly planned by committees from the two meetings.

Careful records of committee and business meetings of the Preparative Meeting should be maintained with copies of business meeting minutes forwarded to the Clerk and Recorder of the Monthly Meeting.

8. Queries to Consider in Granting Monthly Meeting Status to Preparative Meetings

Is a sense of community present among members and attenders of the Preparative Meeting? Is spiritual nurturing experienced within it?

Are meetings for worship and business held regularly and attended appropriately?

Is there a core group with the commitment to give permanence to the Meeting?

Is contact maintained with organizations in the wider community of the Religious Society of Friends?

Is witness for traditional social testimonies of Friends fostered?

Does the Preparative Meeting maintain a library of Friends materials? Does it encourage its members and attenders to grow in the knowledge of the Society?

Has the Preparative Meeting established relationships with other religious groups in its community?

7.9. History of Faith and Practice

At Fall Committee Day, 1971, the Ministry and Counsel Committee considered the concern for the development of a new Discipline for Baltimore Yearly Meeting and forwarded a minute to Executive Committee requesting the formation of an ad hoc committee. Executive Committee approved the following minute: "The Executive Committee believes that it is now the time for the Yearly Meeting to begin the work of writing a new Discipline..."

Representatives of 16 Monthly Meeting Ministry and Counsel Committees met 3/11/72 at Stony Run Friends Meeting House "to consider the wisdom and timeliness of devising a Book of Discipline for Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends." Harry S. Scott, Jr. reported to the Yearly Meeting, "Friends present at this gathering concluded it is right to begin some parts in this, our three-hundredth year." Ministry and Counsel proposed that this work begin with Monthly Meeting review of the queries "with specific reference to the adequacy with which they express current feeling on both faith and practice."

Yearly Meeting in session, 1973, asked that a Ministry and Counsel subcommittee review Monthly Meeting work on the queries and prepare suggestions for the next Yearly Meeting. By 1974, the subcommittee prepared and circulated a working paper, which was used for worship-sharing at Yearly Meeting sessions.

Forty Monthly Meetings, study groups, and individuals had sent comments to the subcommittee by spring 1975.

In 1975, the Yearly Meeting agreed to a two-year trial period for use of the new Queries, laid down the subcommittee, and directed the Executive Committee to name an *ad hoc* committee on the Discipline. Friends who served on the subcommittee that prepared the new Queries included:

Romaine Blackburn	W. Herbert Brown
Edmund D. Cronon	Judith Farquhar
Timothy E. Felton	Katharine G. Gelder
James R. Hibbs	Ross W. Sanderson, Jr.
Lois S. Vaught	Ellis T. Williams

The Yearly Meeting's Ad Hoc Committee on the discipline began its work in 1976: drafting new sections, circulating them to the Monthly Meetings, and redrafting to incorporate the comments and suggestions of various Friends. In 1982, the Yearly Meeting, approved the recommendations of the ad hoc committee, published a *Provisional Faith and Practice* for use for the next three years and laid down the Ad Hoc Committee on the New Yearly Meeting Discipline. Friends who served on the committee included:

Karl F. Bach	Katharine G. Gelder
Robert G. Gronewald	James R. Hibbs
Margaret M. Hunter	Herbert L. Kinney
Katharine J. Newman	Harry S. Scott, Jr.
Lloyd B. Swift	Virginia R. Sutton
Arnold B. Vaught	

Yearly Meeting in session, 1984, discussed needed improvements in the *Provisional Faith and Practice* and agreed to establish a Faith and Practice Review Committee to receive, collate, and interpret comments and report to the next Yearly Meeting. Friends shared their leadings about specific sections during Yearly Meeting sessions in 1985, 1986, and 1987. The Faith and Practice Review Committee incorporated the wide variety of concerns into the final version, which the Yearly Meeting joyfully approved in 1988. Friends who served on this committee 1984-1988 included:

Christina Connell	Elsbeth Inglis
Cynthia Kerman	Caroline Kirk
Joan Oehser	William S. Samuel, III
S. Clement Swisher	Claire G. Walker
Jay W. Worrall	

Thanks to all these Friends!

Katharine J. Newman

[Taken from the *Baltimore Yearly Meeting Yearbook*, 1988, pp 16-17 of the Minutes]

At Interim Meeting in 2002, a proposal was made to renew the Faith and Practice Revision Committee. The name of the committee had been listed in the Yearbook since 1988, but no names had been shown for many years. It was recommended that the upcoming annual session consider filling that committee. The following names were approved by the annual session in the year indicated:

Sheila Bach, Clerk (2002)	Martha Gay (2002)
Margaret Stambaugh (2002)	Ron Mattson (2002)*
Chip Tucker (2002)*	Mochiko DeSilva (2004)
Sam Legg (2004) §	Pamela Cook (2004)*

Julie Gouchenour (2004) Jim Rose (2004)
Susan Hills (2005)*

The committee extends its thanks to our editors, Susan Kaul and Elizabeth Krome.

*resigned
§decesased