

Report, Recommendations, and Plan BYM Ad Hoc Vision Implementation Committee For Annual Session 2014

Summary and Outline

The Ad Hoc Vision Implementation Committee took on the task of examining all of BYM, or as much as we could, in light of BYM's Vision Statement, approved in 2011 (a copy of the statement is on the last page of this document for reference). After more than two years of exploration and conversation, we have devised several sets of recommendations that we ask the Yearly Meeting to consider. Approval is not needed. We hope that the Yearly Meeting, Monthly Meeting, BYM Committees, and BYM Staff will find it helpful to consider the recommendations and then report back to Annual Session in 2015

Although we took a long time to take a long look at our Yearly Meeting, we did not get to everything, even some very important things. These will be listed with information about moving forward on some of these.

All our conclusions and recommendations are based on our direct experiences of BYM. We began by sharing our experience of being part of a Monthly Meeting and serving on committees of the Yearly Meeting. We then began to listen to the experience of others within our Yearly Meeting – over time we visited committees and Quarterly Meetings, created gatherings for people to talk about topics of interest, and visited almost all of the Monthly Meetings. We heard reports from some committees, and heard individually from a number of you. All of this experience serves as the base from which our recommendations arise.

As we did our work, certain concerns were articulated a number of times and in a number of different situations. We paid attention to these, and sought to understand them further. These concerns form the basis of many of our recommendations.

As you will see, this report does not go line for line through the Vision Statement. Instead, we suggest ways that the Yearly Meeting can realize the whole Vision Statement more fully.

The areas of concern that kept arising are part of many of our recommendations:

- Strengthen BYM Committees and enhance committee life overall
- Develop better practices within each entity of BYM
 - Reach beyond the borders of any part of BYM that we are in, and connect meaningfully and in an ongoing way with other parts of BYM
 - Reach out in a proactive way and not just be available when called upon or when we desperately need help

- Use what we have more brilliantly.
 - Make better use of electronic resources, including websites and documents – go search for these and ask for help in the search
 - Call on experienced Friends to provide information or leadership in specific situations
- We need to provide introductions, trainings, mentoring in all phases of BYM and Monthly Meeting committee work, business process, and other essential parts of our life together.
- We need to knit all age groups into the life of Monthly Meetings and our Yearly Meeting because we need the experience and wisdom of each age group.

An outline follows for the following report, recommendations, and plans:

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Vision Statement of Baltimore Yearly Meeting

A. Report on Our ad hoc Committee's work

a. Our process. The adventure of the visioning process has continued for three years after the approval of the 2011 Vision Statement of Baltimore Yearly Meeting. Our committee was formed in the fall of 2011, a few months after the Vision Statement was approved at Annual Session. On the advice of the Ad Hoc Visiting Ministers Committee, who drafted the vision statement, a committee was formed to

“ . . . study the implications of the vision statement upon Yearly Meeting activities, structures, staffing (both paid and volunteer) and finances. This ad hoc committee would then make recommendations to the Yearly Meeting through Interim Meeting or in Annual Session for implementation of its findings” (Minutes of 2011 Annual Session of BYM).

The following report explains our work and suggests next steps for how the work of implementing BYM's vision should continue. If you would like to know more about the work on visioning that came before our ad hoc committee's work, please see the minutes of 2011 Annual Session in the supporting documents section of this report.

Presiding Clerk, Betsy Meyer, and Clerk of Interim Meeting, Meg Meyer, together selected the members and Clerk for this committee. Fourteen Friends were selected with a goal of having a group diverse in geographical distribution, age, professional background, and experience in BYM. Those chosen were Betsy Meyer (Sandy Spring) and Meg Meyer (Stony Run), two staff persons, Riley Robinson, General Secretary (Washington) and Alison Duncan, Youth Program Manager (Adelphi), and a former Clerk of BYM, Katherine Smith (Maury River). Others Friends selected were: Jenifer Brooks (Sandy Spring), Andrei Israel (State College), Rich Thayer (Stony Run), Brad Ogilvie (Washington), Mary Ellen Saterlie (Little Falls), Betsy Tobin (Frederick), Rich Liversidge (Sandy Spring), Ellen Massey (Sandy Spring), and Marcy Seitel (Adelphi), who served as Clerk of the Committee.

Since our first meeting in February 2012, our committee met in person fifteen times, and one time in a conference call. Between meetings we accomplished significant work. To begin, we looked at some of the major activities of BYM – the camps, religious education, and Friends witness in the world. We also looked at the interconnections within BYM – how the Yearly Meeting and Monthly Meetings work together and how Monthly Meetings interact with one another.

Through our discussions of these topics, we shared our experiences of working on various committees of BYM and within our Monthly Meetings. We came to see that our committees sometimes do wonderful work that really serves our Meetings and Yearly Meetings, but at other times committee work is frustrating. And more seriously, some work does not get done because the committee is weak, which affects the vitality of Monthly Meetings and of our whole Yearly Meeting. We began to look at what needs to happen to help committees do the work charged to them year to year, without significant low periods. In our visits with BYM staff, we explored ways staff persons can

help committees keep on track through the year, keeping everyone aware of deadlines, opportunities, and good practices of committees.

As we worked, we began to reach out beyond our own committee to organize gatherings of Friends to prayerfully discuss issues. We found this to be a powerful way to implement BYM's vision. First we gathered five committees to look at issues related to the camping program. In an all-day event with lunch, we heard a director of a non-BYM camp talk about bringing operational and financial success to an independently-operated camp based in Quaker principles. Fees, scholarships, outreach, and staffing were also discussed. This was a significant time for representatives of all the committees that oversee the camps to be together in one room, discussing issues that crossed the lines of their committees. While we raised more issues than we could answer that day, it was very good to hear issues clearly stated and new ideas considered.

Another kind of gathering we organized was for Monthly Meetings. The "Connecting Monthly Meetings" discussion groups that we planned for Annual Session in 2013 with the Program Committee, centered on issues important to the life of Monthly Meeting, proved very successful. Our ad hoc committee organized two similar events during the year. The format for all of these was the same: a seasoned Friend led each discussion group, much time was given for Friends to share their knowledge and experience, and notes were taken. The topics of these events were issues facing those involved in Pastoral Care in their Meetings, and Quaker faith witness in the world today. As a committee, it was important for us to hear the issues that Monthly Meetings face. This would be true of any committee in the Yearly Meeting whose work supports Monthly Meetings. The events brought fresh knowledge that could be taken back to the Monthly Meetings.

Our Yearly Meeting has many thoughtful, knowledgeable, experienced Friends, and when we gather, we are able to help, empower, and spiritually support one another. This is an important way to support Monthly Meetings and invigorate our whole yearly meeting. This kind of event can easily be organized by BYM committees with the help of the staff. Some programs are already doing this, and can serve as guides for how to do this.

In our second year, we visited all the Monthly Meetings within BYM. The Visiting Ministers in 2012 recommended that visiting on behalf of BYM continue, and our committee was able to fulfill this. The Faith and Practice Committee had visited Meetings the year before, so we were the third round of visitors to go to BYM's Meetings. For our committee, it was essential to see the diversity among our meetings – in religious education, welcoming newcomers, caring for property, and so forth. We agree that visiting is important – it helps us see in real time how the bonds within a Meeting and within our yearly meeting are kept strong. It takes great commitment; we learned that visiting should take place at a pace that supports the rest of the committee's work.

We also visited the Young Adult Friends (YAF's), and heard from them about their growing community that spiritually supports one another. We learned how older adults

can be more supportive toward young adults. A co-clerk of YAF then wrote a piece for the *Interchange* that was helpful to many.

We visited the BYM Staff two times, and, among other things, discussed ways that staff can strengthen their support of committees and ways that the camps could be used to support adult spiritual nurture. We visited the Women's Retreat, and sat in on a number of committee meetings, Quarterly Meetings, and the Blue Ridge Gathering.

The report we present to you is grounded in our prayerful searching, our experiences with BYM, and all we learned from all of you, our Yearly Meeting.

b. From our process we learned that it is important to look at the Yearly Meeting all at one time. Visiting Monthly Meetings is a wonderful practice that brings home how important each Monthly Meeting is to the vitality of the whole Yearly Meeting. While visiting is always worthwhile, visiting with the goal of knowing how the whole Yearly Meeting is doing is an important practice to institutionalize.

Similarly, we learned that talking with Friends in person is very important, even in this age when so much electronic communication is used. Hearing from Young Adult Friends directly, hearing from the staff directly, from committees, seeing Quarterly Meetings in action, talking with Friends at Monthly Meetings – each time we came away with the sense of knowing a lot that we simply didn't know before we visited. While most of our visits were nurturing to our own spirits, some were more challenging. But we came away knowing important things about our Meetings and Yearly Meeting.

Even though most experiences with BYM are enriching, some Friends bear hard feelings about past events that were not resolved in satisfying ways. We heard these on our visits, and in one case, the feelings were so strong that the visit was not successful. It seems that the Yearly Meeting and Monthly Meetings do not have processes in place, or that members are not aware of how to use these processes, to work through conflicts to a resolution, or to encourage friends to do the personal work of acceptance and peace.

We learned that different people have different ideas about what BYM is. It can mean the staff, committees, an annual event, and so forth. So it is always important to be clear what part of BYM one is referring to. We are trying to practice this in this report. Also, not everyone feels equally connected to BYM. Those involved in BYM committees or on the staff see everyone as part of BYM, Monthly Meetings and committees, associated organizations, and everyone involved in these entities. However, some Friends don't know much about BYM or don't feel any particular connection. Even the involvement of a small number of Friends in BYM activities can bring resources and perspectives to a whole Monthly Meeting.

What Friends long for is in most cases very attainable. We have great resources within our Yearly Meeting, but have not found ways to know about and use these easily. There are Meetings who have overcome challenges that other Meetings are

still facing – there are important ways for us all to be resources for one another. As a worshipping community, we are strengthened when we share our journeys with one another, even if the part of the journey is on the surface quite mundane.

It is an awesome task to pull together all we have learned and also to see within the Yearly Meeting the ways to fine tune practices so that we can grow together and live more nearly our Vision Statement.

B. A look at the Vision Statement of 2011

Very simply, the Vision Statement is a statement that describes our vision of who we are, not just individually, but corporately. It is reflection of ourselves when we are at our best, expressing our beliefs and testimonies. The Vision Statement establishes that we are a worshipping community, not a membership organization, and describes the things that are most important to us, now at this time in BYM's history. The last statement of our togetherness was made in 1968 when the two Baltimore Yearly Meetings were brought back together into one organization, after being separated for over a hundred years. This statement is still true of us. It has been suggested that BYM needs a Mission Statement, such as Friends Committee on National Legislation has, or a list of goals to strive for in the next few years. We encourage Friends to take on the initiative of creating more statements as they are led to do so.

For now, this statement is concise, and can help newcomers get to know a Meeting and our Yearly Meeting. It could serve as an introduction to Faith and Practice and other much longer documents that describe Quakerism and our Yearly Meeting. It is only since 2011 that the Yearly Meeting has had such a statement. We find that Friends are still learning to use it, and even to make sense of why we have such a statement. We have found the statement to be a good guide, to be used as a sort of spiritual map to help us search ourselves and our togetherness in the life of the Spirit.

C. What do we mean by BYM?

A short course for newcomers, a refresher for seasoned Friends

A decision-making body – a governing body. Friends from the forty-two Monthly Meetings that are part of BYM meet four times a year to do business: at Annual Session and three Interim Meetings. The decision-making body speaks for the Yearly Meeting on social issues and as the Yearly Meeting relates to other Yearly Meeting and umbrella Quaker organizations.

Series of entities. Monthly Meetings, Quarterly Meetings and other regional gatherings, committees, programs, staff, and relationships. It is important to specify which entity one is speaking of when saying BYM.

Sets of relationships. Our relationships with one another, the ties that bind us, are what keep our Yearly Meeting together. Volunteers and staff working together keep BYM committees and camps vital, and keep our Yearly Meeting a community.

People. Friends who are of all ages, abilities, backgrounds, stages of life – we are people who are actively seeking the Spirit’s presence in our lives, in our life together, and we are changing through our lives. Friends belong individually to BYM, not just through their Monthly Meetings.

A place on Planet Earth. Our Yearly Meeting includes Meeting Houses, though it does not own them, along with burial grounds and camp properties, which the Yearly Meeting does own. The camp properties are our most sizeable properties. There are schools, retirement homes, and Quaker organizations within the geographic area of the Yearly Meeting that are associated with BYM but not directly part of it. Caring for all this property is a major concern of the Yearly Meeting and its Monthly Meetings. It is also the way that many people in our region know about Quakers in the world today.

Part of a historical process. Our Yearly Meeting has been meeting for over 300 years. We have come through slavery and the war that ended it, along with other wars and many innovations to improve our lives and bring peace. BYM has had its own division over a century ago, and a reuniting just a few decades ago. “The Spiritual Basis for Unity,” approved in 1964, is the statement that describes the united Yearly Meeting, and gives a beautiful description of who we are (see Manual of Procedure). Today, we are part of all the history of BYM that has come before us.

A non-profit organization. It is the staff and volunteers who make the work of serving over 7000 Friends in BYM possible. Unlike most other non-profits in the US, BYM has no board of directors - it is the body of the Yearly Meeting that governs the organization. Still BYM meets the requirements of a nonprofit organization in our country and has a budget of over a million dollars. The staff has six full-time and three part-time employees, and many more employees seasonally for our camps. The number of volunteers is in the hundreds.

D. What we learned about BYM

About our Camps and other Committees. The biggest part of our Yearly Meeting’s property, budget, and efforts is in our programs for young people. The camping programs and properties bring the greatest number of resources, and pull the greatest resources from, the Yearly Meeting. The other programs for youth are also a major program of BYM. These programs serve as the primary way that many people interact with BYM. They are BYM’s way of bringing Quaker faith, practices, love of nature, and nurture of young people into the world. These goals are close to the hearts of all of us in BYM.

Our camps are very much embedded in the Yearly Meeting. Some other camping programs in time become independent organizations. There is no suggestion within

BYM to move in this direction. The camps are a spiritual program, at home in, and embraced by, the Yearly Meeting.

Questions were raised about our camps, though, that would be good to answer, and might bring together our Yearly Meeting more around the camps. Some of these have to do with how BYM reaches out to young prospective campers in our Monthly Meetings, fees for BYM children, and other such topics. Working on these questions would help clarify the relationship of the camps to the Yearly Meeting.

The committees and programs of BYM that do not have a regular annual goal to accomplish, such as a camping program, programs for youth, or Annual Session, tend to be smaller and are more diffuse in purpose. Yet the contribution of these committees is vital to the well being of the Yearly Meeting and the Society of Friends. These committees have times of being strong and accomplishing a lot of work, and then at other times are quite weak, lacking the needed membership numbers, inspiration, or leadership to accomplish things.

Every committee within BYM is essential to the vitality of the Yearly Meeting as a whole. Finding a way to strengthen committees so that their work stays on an even keel is much needed, allowing more good work to be done and helping committee members feel more effective.

About our structure and our ways of communicating

BYM is nonhierarchical but might be called multi-channeled, at the Meeting and Yearly Meeting levels. When people reach out, it can be unclear about where to turn because there are different options – contact a friend, call the Yearly Meeting Office, call the clerk of a committee, and so forth. The strength of this is that there are multiple channels at any given time, and there is likely to be one that feels comfortable to the person seeking information or help.

We have the possibility of having more information at our fingertips now than ever before. We can keep track of the concerns and programs that Meetings are undertaking, and share it electronically with other Meetings. We can create lists of resources and make them available online. More of our work can be done electronically and more efficiently. We are only midway in making use of these processes.

Friends do not yet fully utilize the information available to us. Much information is put into the Interchange, the BYM website, and monthly emailed announcements. Information is provided for new committee clerks. It seems that there is a step missing – the information is available, but people do not fully make use of it. It will take intentional, mindful work to learn best ways to gather and share information, and to retrieve and make use of it.

About the relationship between Monthly Meetings and our Yearly Meeting

Friends in Monthly Meetings are looking to the BYM staff and committees to help them be well grounded in Friends practices, help them provide nurture and

guidance to all of their members and attenders, and help them solve problems in a timely way when they arise. When facing difficulties, Monthly Meetings are aware that they need to reach beyond themselves. When a meeting struggles with Meeting for Worship, Meeting for Business, or any other aspect of meeting life, Friends would like to turn to the Yearly Meeting and find help in a timely way, and they would like to be part of gatherings where they get to share their concerns about their Meeting. A mix of electronic resources and in-person conversations may help further this work along in ways not possible before.

Monthly Meetings would like the Yearly Meeting to reach out to them. While everyone knows that BYM is a resource, Meetings would like to have regular contact from people who represent BYM. Being visited by representatives of BYM, staff or volunteer, has been important to Meetings. Other kinds of contact are important as well.

Monthly Meetings seek to be linked together by the efforts of the BYM staff and committees. Monthly Meetings do not always know how to link up with other Monthly Meetings to share their knowledge and experience and find fellowship, and they would like the Yearly Meeting to take the lead in this.

Who we are and who participates

Many Friends within our Yearly Meeting are new to Quakerism, and new Friends often want to become active quickly in their new Meetings. But our way of doing things is usually very different from what people have experienced before in a place of worship. We want to be open and welcoming, and affirm each new person for the special gifts and experience they bring to the community. And we also want to keep the integrity of Friends practices and honor the beautiful, powerful tradition of which we are all part.

Newcomers to our Meetings and Yearly Meeting can be any age; age and experience do not always go together. Some older Friends are new to Quakerism, and some young Friends may have extensive experience with Friends business practices even though they are only 18 or 20. Our camps and Youth Programs offer much guidance, mentoring, and experience with Friends practices, a kind of education that adults entering our Meetings and Yearly Meeting cannot readily find.

Most people who are members of committees, and/or attend Annual Session and Interim Meeting, are Friends over 40 years of age, or 50, or 60. There is a sense that we are not including everyone when we meet for Yearly Meeting business. Our processes take a lot of time – a week in summer, a half-day in various locations during the year for Interim Meeting. Our children and youth program at Annual Session provide the childcare that parents need to attend business meeting and other activities, but our Interim Meeting days do not provide the same kind of well organized program.

With some exceptions, our Monthly Meetings are usually low in the number of Young Adult Friends. And Meetings long to have this age group better represented

in their Meetings. The Young Adult Friends group of BYM has been growing in recent years, and seek to be a strong group of their own while also participating more in committees and business meetings of BYM. This year, YAF's provided guidelines that can help older Friends speak with them in ways that will bring more understanding and closeness between younger and older Friends.

Meetings differ in how many children they have. Larger Meetings tend to have a vibrant children and youth First Day School program. Some smaller Meetings long for more children and have different strategies in place to try to draw young families. Sharing this knowledge with one another might help support these meetings.

Membership seems to be a sensitive area for Friends Meetings. Some active Friends remain attenders for years, while for others seek membership quite soon after beginning to attend Meeting. Young Adult Friends often feel more at home in their group of YAF's and less connected to a Monthly Meeting, yet the Monthly Meeting remains the unit in which attenders become Friends, become members of the Yearly Meeting and the Religious Society of Friends.

Individual concerns and leadings are important to Monthly Meetings and the Yearly Meeting. Usually a small number of Friends have a concern for something and devote themselves to it, such as participation in peace and social justice events, participation in Yearly Meeting committees, programs, activities, and other things. Some Meetings formally embrace a member's ministry, and sometimes bring forward to the Yearly Meeting embracing of the ministry (see Guidelines for Embracing Friends on website). Meetings are called on to provide clearness and support for these Friends, a meaningful undertaking for those seeking support and those giving it. Other work is done in an ongoing way, such as participating in Yearly Meeting events serving on BYM committees, or representing BYM in a Quaker Organization. The whole Meeting is enriched when Friends report back to the Monthly Meeting and let everyone know of their work

Geography - a gift and a problem

Within our Yearly Meeting, Friends are spread far and wide. Much of the population of the Yearly Meeting is in the Baltimore and Washington area, yet Friends live as far south as Abingdon, Virginia, and as north as State College and Grampian, Pennsylvania. Attending committee meetings, singing days, workshops, Quarterly Meetings, the Blue Ridge Gathering, and other yearly Meeting events usually will involve a great deal of travel for some of those who attend. While in a sense this is a fact of life for a regional organization such as BYM, we might be able to find more creative ways to meet, convey information, and otherwise gather together.

Physical care of Meeting Houses

Taking care of a Meeting House and its property, along with one or more burial grounds for some Meetings, takes a lot of work. How much time, money, and attention to give to the physical premises is something that Friends need to engage, and in most cases, struggle with, no matter the size of the Meeting House or the

group of Friends who worship there. Maintaining burial grounds is a major concern for some meetings, and it takes a great deal of time. Meetings have sought to become environmentally more sustainable. A number of Meetings are seeking to become more accessible for people with handicaps. Meetings are also working on being more welcoming to a wider group of potential Friends of a variety of cultural and economic backgrounds.

E. Concerns we did not take on and pass to the body of the Yearly Meeting

- The problem of our geographic spread. Our Yearly Meeting covers such a wide area and this makes equal participation in important events impossible. There are steps that could be taken to ensure that everyone through the Yearly Meeting can benefit from talks and workshops given in one place, such as by repeating events or creating ways for Friends to participate electronically so that obstacles of physical distance could be overcome.
- The question of whether we provide the education and nurture needed to develop spokespersons for the Religious Society of Friends, people who can readily speak publically about Quakerism in the face of national and international issues. How to do this could be further explored.
- The diversity of individual beliefs within our Yearly Meeting can often lead to Friends feeling different and distant from one another, and not trusting. It would be good for a committee to explore how Friends can talk about their worship experience safely and truthfully when Meetings have a wide diversity of beliefs.
- Our heritage as Friends is based in Christian belief, yet Friends today vary greatly on their view of Christianity. The Faith and Practice Revision Committee will work on this topic, and other Friends are invited to consider how our Yearly Meeting expresses our corporate understanding of Jesus and the Inner Christ, and the way that this connects us to earlier Friends.
- A retreat center, one that is open and accessible all year, is something our Yearly Meeting would greatly benefit from. It could be a sort of Pendle Hill or Powell House, and provide nurture and support for the adult spiritual journey.
- NOTE: *A concern we did not take on but Supervisory Committee is taking it on:* We found that there are many issues to explore before getting to questions of staffing and finance. The Yearly Meeting had asked us to look at these areas. We had thought that we would get to these after we explored everything else, but we did not have time. It may be that we were not the right body to do this. Many organizations hire outside consultants with expertise and a bit of distance for handling these areas. Our ad hoc committee hopes that by doing the exploring that we did, the way will be clearer for those who explore questions about staffing and finance.
- NOTE 2: Do we need a stronger executive function within BYM? A number of needs were identified that might be better handled by a committee serving in an executive role. A number of years ago BYM's Supervisory Committee provided some of these functions, but it has become more explicitly a

personnel committee. In addition, some activities which were not previously needed are needed now and will continue to be needed in the future. However, it might be that these tasks can be given to committees that already exist, and to staff. We recognize that having an “executive” sort of committee is uncomfortable for Friends who treasure the equality among Friends and the strength of the worshipful business meeting of the body of the Yearly Meeting. On the other hand, Friends do want the organization of BYM and our work to function well on a day to day basis.

The following needs were identified:

- Respond to needs in a timely way
 - In general, some issues arise that should be handled more quickly than they are currently being handled.
 - Between Interim Meetings and Annual Session there are some long stretches of time, especially between October and March meetings.
- Provide a place for Presiding Clerk and Interim Meeting Clerks to talk through what actions are needed – there is no place to do this now
- Strengthen Interim Meeting
 - Help in planning Interim Meeting agendas
 - Help in planning Interim Meeting days – to include a component for children and youth similar to the work of Junior Yearly Meeting and Youth Programs Committee
- Support organizational growth of BYM
 - Look at the whole organization and see how the organization can function best
 - Do long-term visioning

F. Recommendations for the Whole Yearly Meeting

The recommendations are presented here to show how different parts of the Yearly Meeting can work together to make important things happen. These recommendations will appear again in later sections, under the recommendations for Monthly Meetings and BYM Committees. There is a purpose in this apparent redundancy!

1. Strengthen BYM committees

- Give more support to committees that do not have staff persons in a continuous, active way, which also includes discovering what kind of support is really needed. Staff support would be helpful in the areas of supporting a new clerk in terms of making minutes and documents available and providing information about the life of the committee, helping a committee to use more fully the resources available within the Yearly Meeting, following through on plans made, and helping committees to reach out more regularly to Monthly Meetings through contact, visits, and gatherings.
- Review the charges of each committee and offer changes for the Manual Procedure as they are needed. It would be helpful to new and seasoned Friends if committee descriptions specified the mission of each committee with language that would help newcomers to BYM and to the committee.
- Prepare new members for service on this committee and help all members feel satisfied about their committee service. This might include providing written materials or brief presentations/workshops on the skills needed for committee service in general, and for the particular work of some committees. We do things differently within BYM and understanding what these differences are and how to work effectively in Friends practices is important to convey to people new to Friends.
- Develop practices for clarifying the work of committees and of the staff that support them so that tasks can be accomplished in a timely and satisfying way. Goals and/or milestones can be set each year and reviewed through the year. This may help volunteers and staff avoid unnecessary work and find more satisfaction in all we do.
- The Interim Meeting Clerk could assess what is needed to strengthen the work of overseeing the wellbeing of the committees, perhaps including work with the Nominating Committee to create a plan for working with volunteers overall, a plan for helping committees function more effectively, and to work with the Manual of Procedure Committee to ensure that missions and goals of committees are clearly made known to others.

2. Respond to needs of Monthly Meetings in a timely and meaningful way

- Develop a Visiting Ministers/Resource Friends program. This would involve creating and maintaining a list of Friends who have expertise in particular areas that can be helpful to Monthly Meetings. These Ministers/Friends could be available to talk with members of a meeting, provide a workshop, visit and lead a discussion, or in any way provide help that is needed.

- Create a kind of list and conceptual map for finding needed information to help address problems, a list of resources and where they might be available, including which members of BYM's staff could be helpful on certain topics. There could be a list of printed material, websites, links to offerings of other Quaker organizations, and other things.
- Connect Meetings with one another to share experiences and information

3. Establish more proactive and intentional contact with Monthly Meetings in an ongoing way.

- Committees could initiate contact with Monthly Meetings individually – a phone call or email to ask about how a committee is going and finding out vital information about the committee and how it relates to the rest of the Monthly Meeting
- Committees organize an event every year or two related to an issue that is of concern to Monthly Meetings
- Committees should plan to visit Monthly Meetings or ask others who wish to visit to do so on behalf of their committee – just the committee could be visited or the whole Meeting
- Staff should find ways to keep up with what is happening in all of the Monthly Meetings, even if they do not personally know or work with people in some meetings.
- The BYM Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee could work more proactively with the information they receive from Monthly Meetings about specific difficulties or needs they discuss in their annual Spiritual State of the Meeting Reports. M and PC could convey that information to the Yearly Meeting committee that works in the area of concern so that specific, timely and appropriate help could be given.
- The Presiding Clerk, with the Intervisitation Working group, should oversee the visiting of Monthly Meetings, help it to happen, and help find visitors so that visiting Monthly Meetings by some part of BYM takes place every year (or two if necessary).

4. Support newcomers

- Provide opportunities for newcomers to gain the skills and knowledge needed to be full active participants in our community business meetings, while also finding ways to express the unique gifts and knowledge that they bring to us.
- Expand our idea of religious education so that it is much more comprehensive, including what people need to know to be part of the spiritual community of a Monthly Meeting
- Provide support for the specific kind of involvement that newcomers need to begin to serve on a committee or otherwise take part in meeting life
- Provide the spiritual nurture that each newcomer needs as he or she comes to be part of the Meeting
- Encourage membership in the Meeting and find ways to do this comfortably.

5. Encourage and enhance the participation of Friends of all ages in our Meetings and Yearly Meeting

- In all parts of the Yearly Meeting, begin a dialogue with Young Adult Friends who are connected with the Yearly Meeting and with Monthly Meetings. Build on the relationships we have and share the wisdom we have. Begin by reading Amrit Moore's article in the Winter 2014 *Interchange*.
- Set aside time to hold this concern as a Meeting or Committee, strengthening the efforts already underway.
- Business meeting and committee meetings are encouraged to have Friends of all ages share their knowledge and experience of Quaker business processes
- Make use of resources available from other Friends organizations, such as FGC's book, 'Build It: A Toolkit for Nurturing Intergenerational Spiritual Community'
- Perhaps there will be those with gifts for helping in this area who will come forward and can be supported.

G. Recommendations For Monthly Meetings

Monthly Meetings are entities unto themselves and at the same time part of BYM. When BYM functions well, Monthly Meetings are strengthened, even if only a small number of people in a Meeting actually take part in BYM activities. And when Monthly Meetings function well, the Yearly Meeting is strengthened. Committee service, mentoring, problem solving, spiritual depth are possible in the Yearly Meeting because these things are strong in the Monthly Meetings.

Recommendations:

1. Provide and encourage spiritual nurture and guidance in all aspects of the life of the Meeting.
 - Provide the preparation, guidance, and/or training needed to take part in Friends business processes and community life. Adult religious education hours, book groups, time spent during business meeting, etc. are possible times.
 - Prepare newcomers for participation in the full community life of the Meeting, clarifying what it means to participate in a faith in which every participant is considered a minister and together cover the responsibilities of clergy.
 - Help each committee understand its charge and discern the work it should do during the course of a year.
 - Offer guidance and mentoring for the learning of skills for committee work
 - Be aware of the stages of life of Meeting members and attenders, and seek speakers and counselors who may bring a deepening of spiritual experience to those in particular life stages, such as young adults, parents, people caring for aging or ill family members, etc.

2. Have separate committees for the religious education of adults and of children or otherwise take special care so that both programs will be vital within the Meeting.

3. Reach beyond the boundaries of the Meeting to strengthen Meeting practices and share the wisdom the Meeting has to offer.
 - Become part of a group of Monthly Meetings, such as a Quarterly Meeting a regional association
 - Develop informal relationships with other Monthly Meetings as they handle circumstances that are similar to one another's
 - Reach out to the BYM staff and/or to other Monthly Meetings when facing a challenging situation so that others can share your burden and offer insight and support
 - Recognize the strengths and gifts of your Meeting and be ready to share your experience with other Meetings

4. Seek ways to bring more young adults into the life of the Meeting in meaningful ways by staying in touch with, having dialogues with, and being willing to change committee and other work so that it will be more meaningful to young adults.

5. Discern how to create a greater diversity of Friends in the worshiping community and to foster an atmosphere of welcome for a wider variety of people.

6. Designate a committee to develop a path to membership for your Meeting or take time to encourage membership in the Meeting for those who have begun to attend regularly and show they are interested in forming a deeper commitment to the meeting.

7. Offer care and support for Friends who are serving as representatives to Quaker organizations. This may include logistical support and/or encouragement.

H. Recommendations for all BYM Committees

There are also recommendations for individual committees

1. Develop good practices for committee work that can be sustained over time.
 - Be proactive about getting to know the resources available to support the work and wellbeing of committees from the Yearly Meeting office at the start of the year and throughout the year.
 - Clarify the work that a committee will take on each year so that goals can be known and shared, and committee members can know what is expected of them individually and as a group.
 - Prepare, even train, new members for service on committees generally in BYM, and specifically for the work on a particular committee, introducing the knowledge and processes that will be needed.
 - Practice corporate spiritual discernment and otherwise welcome the search for the Spirit in the course of our committee work.
 - Deepen our knowledge of the Society of Friends through history, and how our committee's work relates to this history.
 - Offer spiritual nurture through committee's work. An annual retreat, a spiritual check in before each meeting, or other such practices can bring spiritual nurture to committee members.

2. Reach out to Monthly Meetings.
 - Offer an event every year or so to connect Monthly Meetings with one another so that Friends can share the knowledge, experience, and concerns related to a specific topic important to Monthly Meetings. While we hosted gatherings in person, it may be that online gatherings, webinars, and other forms would work as well.
 - Visit Monthly Meetings in an ongoing way and when there is a special concern. Committee members could visit a handful of Meetings each year to hear firsthand how things are going in the Meeting, and to share the knowledge and experience of the committee.

3. Each year, identify several Friends with gifts in areas related to your committee's work who could serve as Travelling Ministers, Friends who travel to or otherwise are in touch with Monthly Meetings to help them solve certain problems and/or deepen the life of the Monthly Meeting.

4. Have ongoing contact with other committees to keep up with what others are doing and coordinate our work when needed. Perhaps one committee member can be given this task. Perhaps before each Interim Meeting, Committee Clerks could make a quick list of items their committee is working on, and then circulate the list to other Committee Clerks. This would facilitate mutual help and finding out quickly if Committees are overlapping in their work.

5. Build diversity on the committee by being aware of ways that the committee's work might be less comfortable or less possible for some BYM members.

- Draw more younger and/or older members
- Develop other kinds of diversity on our committee, including geographical, theological, heritage, and work in the world.
- Help with logistical support to members who need such help

I. Recommendations for Specific Committees

Religious Education

Encourage and support Meetings to create programs in which Friends of all ages are reached with RE programs

- Serve as a resource for RE resources for all ages, children through adults; keep up to date on what is available and help Meetings get to know these resources
- Reach out to Meetings so everyone knows that the committee is serving as a resource
- Plan gatherings or forums of electronic communications in which Monthly Meeting share their experiences with Adult Religious Education programs and activities
- Provide guidelines to Monthly Meetings for what to teach to different age groups, including
 - A list of significant Friends for our children to know about
 - Ways to approach Bible study
 - Guidance in helping children talk about their faith with other Friends and in the outside world
- Broaden idea of what to teach to include skills for community life in a Meeting, history of Friends business practice, and other knowledge about the spiritual underpinnings of our tradition and life together

Advancement and Outreach

1. Deepen conversation about outreach in Monthly Meetings by asking Meetings to consider broad topics such as

- How a Meeting wants to be known in the wider community
- How a Meeting 's outreach efforts could be affected by fears or worries within a Meeting community about the Meeting growing larger, and how to initiate discussions and clearness on this topic
- How Monthly Meeting could make connections with other Monthly Meetings with similar demographics so that members can share their outreach approaches and concerns. This might include Meetings located near a college or university, near a military installation, rural Meetings, etc.
- How the spiritual nurture extended toward Meeting members and attenders can be made known to and extended to newcomers

2. Guide Monthly Meetings in using the resources of Quaker organizations such as FGC.

Ministry and Pastoral Care

1. Make better, more specific use, of the information related to the committee each year through the Spiritual State of the Meeting reports. In addition to writing the Spiritual State of the Yearly Meeting Report, the committee could also:

- Transfer the information in each report to the Yearly Meeting committee and/or staff that care for the area of concern. For example, if growth in or problems with the religious education program of a Meeting is mentioned, then the concerns and the name of the Meeting with the concern could be transferred to the BYM Religious Education Committee.
- Look for trends in the experiences of Monthly Meetings, and report to the Yearly Meeting about what these trends are, and then plan workshops, speakers, visitors, and other sources of support for these Meetings

2. Work with the BYM Staff to create and maintain a list of Visiting Ministers/Resource Friends, Friends who have expertise in particular areas that can be helpful to Monthly Meetings. These Ministers/Friends could be available to talk with members of a meeting, provide a workshop, visit and lead a discussion, or in any way provide help that is needed.

3. Create an advisory group who can specifically look at ways that Monthly Meetings and the Yearly Meetings can better deal with conflicts internal to these groups so that Friends can experience the spiritual growth that conflict brings and so that these precious communities can remain strong.

Faith and Practice Revision

Support the strengthening of committees by including a section on best practices for committees in the new Faith and Practice. Consider using this document's Recommendations for all Committees as a resource for this work.

Grant giving committees

Help younger and older Friends find the support that is available to them through our Yearly Meeting by working together to

- Create a common index and webpage for the funds that are available. Some are available to Meetings and schools, others to young people for education or service projects.
- Create a web page or website to show the funds available, who qualifies, what funds are for, and other vital information, along with online applications.
- Reach out especially to Young Friends and Young Adult Friends through personal interaction and social media to help connect funds and young people
- Offer encouragement and support to Young Adult Friends who often feel uncomfortable about asking for funds from BYM, and take steps to help YAF's become comfortable with asking for funds.

Peace and Social Concerns

As the committee implements interactive electronic ways for Monthly Meetings to connect on specific social issues and actions their Meetings are taking, it could also

help Monthly Meetings to foster and maintain a strong spiritual basis in all of their work.

- Facilitate discernment processes within each Meeting around which actions they are led to take in terms of peace and social concerns. This could be a series of queries or guidelines that are posted and otherwise made available for Meetings to consider, led by their own Peace and Social Concerns Committees. Discernment would include discernment around taking up an issue, how the work should be done, and in time laying down the issue and its work.
- Encourage and guide Meetings in maintaining a spiritual grounding in all of their work on peace and social concerns, and to support one another as this work is carried out
- Facilitate Monthly Meetings sharing their experience of carrying out the work of peace and social concerns
- Link Monthly Meetings with specific concerns about things happening in the world to the Quaker Organizations that deal with that concern.

Program Committee

- Continue “Connecting Local Meeting” gatherings at Annual Session each year
- Continue to provide space for Monthly Meetings to share photos, minutes, documents, and other things in a visual way at Annual Session by providing space for Monthly Meetings to highlight their accomplishments and events
- Consider how to prepare and support newcomers for participation in the Business Meeting of Annual Session. This might include providing a workshop or discussion group, in addition to the orientation that is already given, and that could be held early in the week of Annual Session. It also could mean providing mentors who could be available during business meeting to answer questions or otherwise help a newcomer feel more comfortable with what is going on. The committee could consider how this kind of preparation and support could best be given.
- Consider how to make known to Monthly Meetings the good content that is available at Annual Session – the speakers, workshop leaders, and so forth.

Stewardship and Finance

- Build on the progress that was made in defining and circulating information about apportionment and the nature of the apportionment process
- Find ways to reach out to Monthly Meetings with clarifying information about the finances of the Yearly Meeting and apportionment. This could be through visiting, speaking with Monthly Meeting clerks, or the Monthly Meeting’s treasurer or Stewardship and Finance Committee, or otherwise making contact with Monthly Meetings each year.
- Network with other Committees that have financial responsibility for the Yearly Meeting in an ongoing way, including Trustees, Camps, and the Development Committee

Supervisory Committee

- Work on clarifying the relationship between staff and committees and let the Yearly Meeting know best practices for staff and committees working together now, in 2014-2015, considering electronic communication and information dissemination.
- Clarify the kinds of supportive tasks that staff can offer most committees that empower and equip committees with what they need
- Work with staff to develop a plan for improving preparation of volunteers for committee work and improving overall the experience of volunteers
- Supervisory Committee brought forward two recommendations for their work:
 - The general secretary should formulate and season (with BYM staff and volunteers) a staffing structure that is pragmatic and consistent with the vision of the Yearly Meeting.
 - Supervisory Committee, working with Trustees, should appoint a small (three to four members) *ad hoc* Committee to look at staffing recommendations from the general secretary and to study the governance structure of the Yearly Meeting. These members should be BYM Friends who have extensive experience with Quaker and/or other organizations, but they should not currently be serving in BYM leadership positions. This *ad hoc* Committee will take a fresh look at staffing recommendations from the general secretary and at BYM's governance, and will make findings and recommendations. The Supervisory Committee and the Trustees will consider these recommendations, acting on them as discerned by these committees.

Representatives to all Quaker organizations

Friends who are appointed as representatives to Quaker organizations should report back to the Yearly Meeting and Monthly Meetings about their experience and the organization's accomplishments. This can be done through the Interchange, report to Annual Session, etc. This lets other Friends know what is happening in the wider Quaker world, and gives an opportunity for Friends to support those who have served as representatives.

Monthly Meetings should give the care and support needed for those in their membership to become representatives to Quaker organization, and so Friends who are or would like to be representatives should know to let their Monthly Meetings know of their service as a representative, and should ask for their Meeting's support. This may include logistical support, a support committee, or simple encouragement at various points in the time of service.

Unity with Nature

Help the Yearly Meeting and Monthly Meetings be good stewards of all our properties, and help BYM speak with one voice in taking steps to be more in Unity with Nature.

- Compile a list of the significant steps that Monthly Meetings have taken to upgrade their buildings to be more in unity with nature, and make this list available to everyone in BYM

- Serve as a resource to help Monthly Meetings share their experiences in improving their Meeting Houses and the life of their meetings in the context of Unity with Nature
- Serve as a resource to help Monthly Meetings educate each other about what they have done to improve their meetings and the life of their meetings in the context of Unity with Nature
- Initiate and facilitate dialogues with camps and other committees as appropriate to show connections between Unity with Nature and the concerns of the committees to help make more conscious our witness as a Yearly Meeting of being good stewards

Manual of Procedure

Support the strengthening of BYM Committees.

- Initiate contact and follow up support for committees as they reconsider their charges. This work is not obvious, and support will likely be needed.
- Review the charges of committees and make sure that the language used is clear for people new to BYM and committee work, and tells clearly what the specific work of the committee is.
- Consider whether any recommendations given in this document have implications for materials that should be included in the Manual of Procedure

Nominating Committee

Work with the staff and the Clerk of Interim Meeting to further develop practices for working with volunteers within BYM, especially those serving on committees.

Youth Programs

Continue to reach out to Meetings that have few children and teens by visiting and otherwise being in touch with those Meetings so that they will be aware of the programs of the Yearly Meeting that are offered to youth.

Camps

1. Deepen relationship with BYM

- Serve as a role model for accomplishing committee work that is done according to an annual schedule while providing spiritual nurture for its members
- Encourage and prepare campers to share their experience of camping in the Yearly Meeting and each camper's Monthly Meeting.
- Increase outreach to BYM children and youth
 - Make personal visits to Monthly Meetings to encourage young people to sign up
 - Encourage Meetings without many children to find ways to support campers within their towns and regions

2. Explore increasing outreach to BYM adults

- Consider recasting work days for adults so that the spiritual nurture of these events is clearly stated

- Consider creating camping programs for adults

J. Recommendations for Staff

1. Grow as a staff

- Continue working to create statements and otherwise develop structures that will help staff members better define their work, know when work is satisfactorily completed, and make decisions about future work. This recommendation comes from the staff retreat in 2013.
- Develop a plan for working with volunteers, especially with a possible growing number of volunteers who are retiring from their paid jobs, using some of the many resources available on developing a strong body of volunteers in a religious organization.
- In ways that are not invasive but are helpful, quantify the number of hours that non-camp staff members use on work with the camps and with other programs, as well as the amount of office resources devoted to the camps and other programs. This could help everyone make more informed decisions about future staff and volunteer needs.

2. Enhance support for Monthly Meetings

- Become more proactive in working with Monthly Meetings so that knowledge of significant problems and great triumphs of Monthly Meetings can be known as these things happen, and not after the fact.
- Develop practices for keeping up on what is happening in all the Monthly Meetings, even those who are not reaching out to BYM (this is a goal shared by the staff), in such a way that the staff is not burdened by this activity. What are some things that the staff could try? Making this known at Interim Meeting or Annual Session 2015 would help us all help this to happen
- With the Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee, develop a Visiting Ministers/Resource Friends program. This would involve creating and maintaining a list of Friends who have expertise in particular areas that can be helpful to Monthly Meetings. These Ministers/Friends could be available to talk with members of a meeting, provide a workshop, visit and lead a discussion, or in any way provide help that is needed.
- Create a list and conceptual map for finding needed information to help address problems, a list of resources and where they might be available, including which members of BYM's staff could be helpful on certain topics. There could be a list of printed material, websites, links to offerings of other Quaker organizations, and other things.

3. Help strengthen BYM Committees

- Further develop structures for working with volunteers, including committee members
- Consider ways that committees without staff persons can be supported to help them keep on track through the year - staying aware of deadlines,

- opportunities, and good practices of committees - and to help committees make achievable plans and then follow through on those plans.
- Facilitate communication among Committee Clerks before each Interim Meeting, reminding Clerks to make a list of the work they have been doing and prepare it to be circulated to other Committee Clerks.
 - Figure out how to provide real conversations and nurturing interactions to help Committee members and Clerks that goes beyond sharing resources, and yet does not burden staff members
4. Support committees' connection with Monthly Meetings
- Initiate conversations with and offer guidance to committees in how to reach out more regularly to Monthly Meetings through contact, visits, and gatherings. Offering examples of how others have done these things in the past, and might do so in the future.
 - Support committees as they initiate ways to connect Meetings with one another to share experiences and information

K. Next Steps

Our committee asks that all of BYM – Monthly Meetings, BYM Committees, Programs, and BYM Staff - set aside time in the next year to consider the recommendations that we are presenting to you today and to report back on your findings at Annual Session in 2015. Because we have found that to accomplish tasks in a timely and satisfying way, direct support for those involved is necessary. Rather than just give recommendations to committees and Meetings with no follow-up, we ask that support be given to this process.

To support this process, we ask that

1. Interim Meeting and its Clerk act as a supportive presence for all BYM committees and the staff through this process. The Clerk of Interim Meeting might want to appoint a small committee to help with this work, and should do this work in consultation with the Presiding Clerk of BYM.
2. The Presiding Clerk of BYM along with Ministry and Pastoral Care and the Inter-Visitation Working Group give support to the Monthly Meetings as they work with these recommendations.
3. Look at the suggestions for ways for committees to work together to accomplish some of the goals – a sort of pathway is provided in this document for some of the recommendations.

This step of the process would end with reports to Annual Session in 2015 through the usual channels of Annual Report of Committees and Spiritual State of the

Meeting reports from Monthly Meetings. Perhaps there will be other next steps recommended at that time.

And finally, if there are others who would like to craft different statements that reflect more of Friends' work in the world for peace and justice, that could be taken up by a body of people who feel led to do so. Or a statement that sets goals for our corporate work together in the world might be needed. We pass this on to the body of the Yearly Meeting to consider.

In Closing

We submit the report, recommendations, and plans for your tender and faithful consideration.

Respectfully submitted by
Marcy Seitel
Clerk
BYM Ad Hoc Vision Implementation Committee

Vision Statement of Baltimore Yearly Meeting

Approved at Annual Session 2011

Dearly beloved friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by, but that all, with the measure of light which is pure and holy may be guided; and so in the Light walking and abiding, these things may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not from the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. The [Quaker] Elders at Balby: 1656 (quoting 2 Corinthians 3:6)

Baltimore Yearly Meeting is a worshipping community, gathered in the presence of the Divine, affirming that of God in every person. The Yearly Meeting knits Friends from the Chesapeake to the Appalachians into the larger Religious Society of Friends. As Quakers, we seek to know and follow God's will for us as a gathered people, to speak the truth that is revealed to us, and to listen to the truth that is revealed to others.

We aspire to listen deeply and inclusively to each other, to actively welcome all, and to attend in joy and faith to the Inward Teacher, whom some call Light, some call Spirit, and some call Christ.

We aspire to teach and nourish Quaker ways of worship and service for this and future generations, to uphold and promote Quaker values and to support Friends Meetings in our region.

We seek to expand opportunities for Friends to meet together and know each other in that which is eternal.

We seek to serve others in love, to share our gifts and resources, to reach out to those in need, both friends and strangers, and to witness in the world to our shared experience of the infinite love of God.