

MINUTES OF THE SHEPHERDSTOWN MEETING COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT FAITH AND PRACTICE
24 MARCH 2013

PRESENT: MARGARET STAMBAUGH (Representing the Faith And Practice Revision Committee), ANN MUMMERT (Traveling companion and note taker), and 12 members and/or attendees of the Sheperdstown Monthly Meeting

I. Sheperdstown Monthly Meeting had previously held a meeting to discuss the 2012 draft Faith And Practice. The minutes from that meeting will be e-mailed to Margaret Stambaugh.

II. Comments:

1. Arthur Larrabee, General Secretary of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, led a class on Clerking, and commented to an attendee: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting grew so disorganized in its beliefs that he did not know what it stood for anymore. We (in Baltimore Yearly Meeting) need to have some sense that our worship community has a worship philosophy that is in sync with and compatible with our individual values. We, as a Yearly Meeting, do have core beliefs.

2. On-going revelation is an essential belief of Quakerism. It would be helpful for Faith And Practice to discuss this process of on-going revelation. While the first chapter is about the history of Quakerism, it should also emphasize that Quakers are constantly evolving beyond that history.

3. One attendee commented that this draft Faith And Practice is as uncomfortable to her as the 1988 Faith And Practice, because she is a Universalist Quaker.

4. General approval for layout and structure, although some people have problems with some of the content.

5. Comment on section on Listening: better than in previous Faith And Practice.

6. Margaret told those attending the meeting that this draft will be revised to include more information on Quaker Youth.

7. Membership section on page 133 is difficult for many because of emphasis on Judeo-Christian tradition. Many are attracted to Quakerism precisely because they have been hurt by the Judeo-Christian tradition. Comment that Quakers are about the experience of the Divine, not the experience of any particular tradition (Judeo-Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, pagan, Wiccan, etc.) There is a tension between many individual Quakers and the roots of their various faith traditions, yet we need to be inclusive. "Quakerism is about questions; many other religions are about answers." Perhaps specify on p. 133 that Quakerism was originally Judeo-Christian but now is based on individual search for the Divine.

8. Re Query: Is this Faith And Practice adequate to inform a person new to Quakerism? A new Quaker said yes.

9. Section on Application For Membership: sounds a little bit like application for Country Club, i.e., specific requirements. Perhaps spend more time emphasizing that you will be spending a lot of time working on Queries, and becoming a Member is only a part of the process of being a Quaker. Unhappy with statement in section that the Committee decides the applicant is ready to become a Quaker.

10. Would appreciate more information on processes to be used when Friends disagree.

11. Discuss how Meetings include members, attendees, and birthright members. (Note: Baltimore Yearly Meeting does not have birthright membership; Philadelphia Yearly Meeting still has it; the decision is made by individual yearly meetings.)

12. A concept that should be discussed more in Faith And Practice: Honor diversity and try to learn from others explaining their beliefs. Respect the spiritual path of each person. Seeking the Light in others is essential to Quaker faith

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Mummert