

Little Falls Monthly Meeting

January 20, 2013

From the Committee: Jim Rose

We heard that the Meeting has met several times over the last few years to consider various sections of Faith and Practice. We heard that they have individually and as a Meeting sent their concerns to the Committee, but have not heard either response or acknowledgement.

From the November 2009 response.

Length

We heard that “the proposed *Faith and Practice* is too cumbersome and daunting in bulk and should be culled in some way.” But we didn’t hear what that culling should involve.

We heard that there should be twelve Queries in order to assure regular annual review. This would mean combining some on the new list. The Meeting approved a combination of Queries.

We heard a recommendation to limit “Voices” to three or four under each Query and publishing the others as a separate booklet for reference. We heard that this would streamline the volume considerably.

Queries

We heard that, despite their continued use of the 1988 Faith and Practice, the group generally approves the new softer “How do ___” or “In what way_____” introductory tone in the Queries.

Living our Faith

We heard congratulations on the introduction and “Living Our Faith” sections.

We heard that the section, ‘Living Our Faith’, might be excerpted in the future to be a pamphlet introduction to Quakerism for serious newcomers.

Testimonies

We heard that “Testimonies” summarizes the real essence of a Quaker life and that the title doesn’t convey that. We heard that perhaps “Quaker Practice” would be a more appropriate title. We also heard that “Fixing the World” in that section might better be “Seeding Social Change”.

Cross-References, Organization, and Section III

We heard that Cross-references in parentheses would be helpful in many places as needed.

We heard that Section III adds a great deal of information non-existent in the 1988 version and should be very useful. We heard a suggestion to title it “Organization of our Quaker Communities”.

We heard a variety of specific concerns about numbering the various sections of the document. (See attached letter.)

From the January Meeting:

We heard that the Meeting felt the Proposed Faith and Practice was inconsistent and duplicative, but we didn't not hear of specific problems.

Length

We heard again that the length of the document was too large, and that consequently no one would read it.

We heard that a smaller document was desired: one that contained only the Queries and Advices (like Britain Yearly Meeting.)

We heard that the briefness and limitations of the 1988 version led Friends to investigate more on their own. We heard that the current edition is too inclusive and tries to do too much.

We again heard that the Voices be culled so that no Query section is larger than 4-5 pages. [Actually only three Queries exceed five pages: Meeting for Worship, Peace, Vocal Ministry.]

We heard that the quotations were excessive and were 'hamburger helper' filling – not useful. We heard that the 'Voices' don't belong in a Faith and Practice.

Lack of consensus on new version

We heard that Friends felt the document may be the consensus of the Faith and Practice Revision Committee, but it certainly did not express the consensus of Baltimore Yearly Meeting. One Friend allowed that the document was too thick to ever be a consensus.

We heard that the proposed Faith and Practice appeared to be a collection of opinions of the Committee, not the body of Baltimore Yearly Meeting. The new document does not have a 'corporate feel.'

We heard that there is a lack of clarity whether we have a Faith and Practice today. It seemed that the 1988 version has been superceded, but that the proposed version is in flux.

We heard that Friends would like to know the responses of other Meetings regarding the proposed Faith and Practice. We heard a request to make public the requests, insights, and contributions of all Meetings over the decade the Committee had been deliberating.

We heard that Little Falls Meeting still values its 1988 Faith and Practice and still uses it and gives it to Members.

Authority

We heard questions about the authority of the Faith and Practice Revision Committee. Who did we report to? And to whom were we accountable? [A copy of the Manual of Procedures would have been useful.]

We heard that individual Meetings wanted the authority to ratify major documents of Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

We were asked what were the objectives of the Faith and Practice Revision Committee? And have those objectives been met? Betsy Meyer's letter refers to "Some of [the 1988 FnP] has become out of date." What is out of date and how is that addressed?

We heard that the name of the document should not be entitled "Faith and Practice" but "Reflections on Faith and Practice by the Committee"

We heard a quotation from Britain Yearly Meeting pamphlet explaining what Faith and Practice is.