

**What we heard
At
Langley Hill Friends Meeting
2/24/2013**

Notes taken by Jim Rose.

One Friend noted that the section on Vocal Ministry spoke to his condition. The Voices in that section were specifically meaningful to that Friend.

Another Friend spoke at length about the bias he felt was represented in the new Faith and Practice: that seekers were well represented but that finders got short shrift. The notion that Friends espoused 'Absolute Truth' was not addressed adequately – that the active presence of the Spirit was underplayed. It is possible to talk with certainty about God as had many writers in the Quaker past, notably Thomas Kelly who was quoted at length. This Friend presented the committee with his points in writing, and those notes are attached.

He made special mention of Arthur Larrabee's expression for Friends: "Christian Universalist" He hoped that the Faith and Practice would reflect that perspective.

Another Friend spoke of her conviction to become a Quaker after growing up in a secular society. What she valued was the existence of the 'spiritual realm of awareness' and she found that missing in the new Faith and Practice.

Another Friend was discouraged reading the 2012 version of this Faith and Practice and couldn't continue reading beyond page 43. She noted that she found the process followed by the committee to be a real failure: she felt that she had only two choices: to ignore this Faith and Practice or to stand in the way. She would chose to stand in the way.

This Friend was deeply concerned that the Yearly Meeting had little opportunity to discuss some of the underlying assumptions behind this Faith and Practice, and that this edition did not represent any sense of the Meeting.

This Friend felt that the origins of Quakerism were ignored; that Quakerism was biblically based and that too few references to the Bible were included in this draft. When she made suggestions to the committee regarding what biblical passages should be included, in some cases the committee selected the passage from the King James Bible which was a total abomination.

This Friend felt that there were too few women's voices. Especially the reference to God as the clerk of the Outcomes committee were her words yet were not attributed to her.

This Friend had written to the committee about including language referring to the resurrection of Christ, yet the committee ignored her suggestion.

This Friend put together twelve pages of notes making specific recommendations. Those notes are attached.

Another Friend noted that there exist a great diversity within the Meeting and the Yearly Meeting communities. Friends did not feel that they had opportunities to discuss fundamental issues.

A Friend suggested that the Yearly Meeting discuss not only what was disturbing in the Faith and Practice, but also identify what was worthy: what we can agree on. There are components in the proposed Faith and Practice, especially the practice portions, that are well considered and are useful.

Yet another Friend spoke to the diversity of theology and felt that the focus of a Faith and Practice should elaborate on how Friends should answer that of God in everyone. He felt that the emphasis should be on “helping each other to evoke that of God in themselves and others.” This Friend felt that putting labels on different theological camps – such as liberal or conservative – was sacrilege. This Friend had written an essay on Unity which he thought the committee might consider. That essay is attached.

Another Friend spoke to the language used in the Queries and Advices: that they were not written in the language of very young children. She encouraged the committee to spread the good words about intergenerational worship sharing and how to include young people in our worship activities. [There might be an opportunity to produce a young persons guide to Faith and Practice as a spin-off edition. Also involving the Quaker schools in this. JR]

A Friend admitted he was unable to read past page 53. He commented on the History section that this was not a history, but an analysis of history. He felt that the History section did not belong at the beginning of the Faith and Practice – people are not interested in history. This Friend also suggested that the Voices be presented in chronological order. [Another Friend agreed strongly with this point.] This Friend pointed to the booklet produced by the Freedom Friends Church entitled “Open.” He felt that that small volume said everything we had to say in many fewer pages. He implied that we didn’t need to have Voices at all.

Another Friend noted that Unity with Nature was working on Queries to be included. [I answered that we had received those queries and have acted on their suggestions. JR]

Still another Friend was disturbed that many of the advices were untrue. For example the advice that stated that Friends care for all members and attenders was untrue. This advice could have been stated in a way that helped. [Didn’t get the wording.]

Another Friend noted that the approach of other Yearly Meetings on issues like membership, and queries, and faith were quite different. She asked ‘What is the purpose of Faith and Practice?’ How can we evaluate this effort without knowing the answer to that question.