FAITH AND PRACTICE

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Note: Biblical quotations throughout the book are from these translations, noted by title initials:

CCD: Confraternity for Christian Doctrine, 1959
JB: Jerusalem Bible, 1968
KJV: King James Version, 1611
NEB: New English Bible, 1970
NJB: New Jerusalem Bible, 1987
NRSV: New Revised Standard Version, 1988
REB: Revised English Bible, 1991

The preparers of this volume have been most grateful for the writings of Friends past and present and for the chance to include quotations from some of of them in this edition. Friends and others are free to quote from this book as well: there is no copyright.

INTRODUCTION

This Faith and Practice is the revised (2001) edition of the Book of Discipline (to use the traditional terminology) of the New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. It follows a long line of books of discipline going back almost to the beginning of the Society.

> A Book of Discipline seems necessary to make our testimonies clear and to ensure the orderly transaction of business.... The use of the word "Discipline" is objectionable to many as being somewhat misleading, both as to the nature and the extent of the material in this book. For the "Discipline" might seem to suggest a rigorous enforcement of rules and regulations such as Friends would never recommend or tolerate. Actually what we find in these volumes or "Disciplines" is more in the nature of guidance in self-discipline.
>
> *– Jane P. Rushmore, 1959*

For almost a decade following the beginning of the ministry of George Fox, the founder of the Religious Society of Friends, his fellow believers were without formal organization. As they grew in numbers, they recognized responsibilities to encourage, admonish, and help one another in spiritual and temporal affairs, and, later, they found it necessary to provide for the preservation of order in their fellowship and for the care of the poor and of those who suffered for the sake of conscience.

In 1656, elders assembled at Balby, in northern England, wrote twenty "advices," printed halfway through this volume, which were among the first such written attempts to detail the principles of the new Society. Later, in 1668, George Fox drafted advices and regulations that served for a long time as guides for the Society. They have formed the basis for the book of discipline of Britain Yearly Meeting and for all later books of discipline. As the various yearly meetings were established in

America, most prepared and adopted their own books, and for a considerable period there was much similarity because of the use of common material.

The principal function of these early writings appears to have been to set up guidelines for the instruction of members and even the expulsion of those who did not measure up to standards established by decision of corporate bodies such as a yearly meeting. Examples of this severe practice may be found in early minutes of the London Yearly Meeting and in many older disciplines.

As disciplines have gradually evolved, however, both the purposes served and the manner of writing and preparation have become more varied. They provide not only instruction and guidance for the existing membership, but also information and nurturing resources for attenders and new members. Some of them have become important sources of inspiration. While following the tradition of more than three centuries of Quaker thought, each tends to reflect the circumstances and the aspirations of its yearly meeting.

> It was not until the edition of 1810 that any member might own, or readily see, except by courtesy of the Clerk, the Discipline by which he was expected to live. Under these conditions a rigid administration of the rules was maintained. Disownments were greater in number, and for more trivial offenses (as we now see the matter) in the period from the middle of the eighteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century. All this is long past, and the simplification of the Discipline, coupled with a kindlier administration of it, progressed about equally at Twentieth Street and at Fifteenth Street, until now, when the Discipline may be said to be lived rather than administered.
>
> *– John Cox, Jr.,*
> *Quakerism in the City of New York, 1930*

(The Twentieth Street and Fifteenth Street meeting houses in New York City housed the largest meetings in their respective Orthodox and Hicksite branches.)

After Friends in the New York area split into two yearly meetings in 1828, their disciplines tended over the years to reflect the differences between them. When the two groups agreed, in 1955, to become one again, neither of their disciplines adequately expressed their common beliefs or the desired organizational structure of the unified yearly meeting. Through two revisions (1964 and 1974) Friends labored to express the spirit of the group without compromising the integrity of any member's deepest convictions. Both former disciplines were freely drawn upon, as were the disciplines of other yearly meetings, the writings of Friends, and fresh insights that spoke to the condition of the New York Yearly Meeting in the mid-twentieth century.

The present edition is the result of committee work begun in 1978. It includes an historical sketch of Quaker origins and describes the basis of our faith as well as our methods of practice and procedure, using many quotations to remind us of our inheritance. A glossary is included in the appendix for those unfamiliar with traditional Quaker terminology. There are also sample membership forms that meetings may copy and use.

> It seems to me to be a major issue for the Society of Friends ... whether on the whole the emphasis is to be for a type of open, expectant religion, or whether it is to seek for comfortable formulations that seem to ensure safety, and that will be hostages against new and dangerous enterprises in the realm of truth. Are we charged with hope and faith and vision, or are we busy endeavoring to coin repetitive phrases and to become secure resting places for the mind?
>
> *– Rufus M. Jones,*
> *Rethinking Quaker Principles, 1940*

This discipline emphasizes that seeking the Spirit remains the firm basis for our life together and for the testimonies and social concerns by which we try to make manifest God's purpose in the world.

PART ONE – FAITH

The well-known and often-quoted postscript to the Balby Advices – "given forth at a General Meeting of Friends at Balby in Yorkshire, in the ninth month 1656, from The Spirit of Truth to the Children of Light" – still describes the spirit in which this and all other books of discipline should be written and read.

> 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 may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not from the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.

THE SPIRIT

> The humble, meek, merciful, just, pious, and devout souls are everywhere of one religion; and when death has taken off the mask they will know one another though the divers liveries they wear here makes them strangers. This world is a form; our bodies are form; and no visible act of devotion can be without forms. But the less form in religion, the better, since God is a spirit....
>
> *– William Penn, Some Fruits of Solitude, 1693*

The Religious Society of Friends arose from personal experience of direct spiritual encounter with God as revealed in Jesus Christ. The conviction that God can and does speak to the condition of all persons emerged from that experience and spread with great rapidity among religious seekers of the seventeenth century. They became convinced that God strengthened, directed, and worked through them, and this conviction has remained at the center of Friends' faith and practice.

> Dwell in the cool, sweet, holy power of God.... Dwell in the endless power of the Lord ... that hath the wisdom which is sweet and cool and pure.
>
> *– George Fox, Letters*

In speaking of God, we use various words, but we need to hear the truth beyond those words. The Divine Spirit, which Friends have variously called "The Inward Light," "The Christ Within," "The Seed," and "That of God in Everyone," has the power to raise up the good and to overcome the evil in our hearts. It can also render us capable of carrying out God's will in individual and social life. The source of Friends' testimonies and concerns is found in hearing and obeying this Spirit.

> And [George Fox] said, "Then what had any to do with the Scriptures, but as they came to the Spirit that gave them forth. You will say, Christ saith this, and the apostles say this; but what canst thou say? Art thou a child of Light and hast walked in the

> Light, and what thou speakest is it inwardly from God?"
>
> This opened me so that it cut me to the heart; and then I saw clearly we were all wrong. So I sat me down in my pew again, and cried bitterly. And I cried in my spirit to the Lord, "We are all thieves, we are all thieves, we have taken the Scriptures in words and know nothing of them in ourselves."
>
> *– Margaret Fell,*
> *Introduction to The Journal of George Fox, 1694*

The Spirit heals, renews, uplifts, encourages, shelters. It illuminates Friends' unceasing search for Truth. We believe the Spirit calls us to answer to that of God in every person; as we do so, it unites us in a community of God.

Calling themselves "Friends of Truth" and "Publishers of Truth," early Friends used "Truth" to refer to the nature of God and God's purposes, to Christ Jesus, to something beyond themselves and not susceptible to complete comprehension. Our manner of worship reflects what we hold about Truth: It continues to reveal itself to all who listen for it tenderly in silence, in the Bible and other writings, in each other, in diverse religions, cultures, times, and disciplines.

> There is a principle which is pure, placed in the human mind, which in different places and ages hath had different names. It is, however, pure and proceeds from God. It is deep and inward, confined to no forms of religion nor excluded from any, where the heart stands in perfect sincerity. In whomsoever this takes root and grows, of what nation soever, they become brethren.
>
> *— John Woolman,*
> *"Considerations on Keeping Negroes," 1746*

Our faith unites the historic beliefs of its Christian foundation with the corporate and individual search for the experience of God for today. This faith draws us into a community that emphasizes the integration of worship and work, faith and prac-

tice, in which we strengthen and challenge each other. Through this fellowship God's love and power can work towards the healing of the world.

We find – if we will but seek – that the power of the Living Spirit guides each of us and helps us to meet one another in harmony and love.

> If we mutually keep to that Spirit and Power which crucifies to the world, which teaches us to be content with things really needful and to avoid all superfluities, giving up our hearts to fear and serve the Lord, true unity may still be preserved amongst us.
>
> *– John Woolman*

We urge Friends to accept one another's revelations with tender hearts, knowing that anyone can speak truth, and we can participate in one another's joy in spiritual growth. Such shared experiences enrich our faith.

George Fox and others brought the message that "Christ has come to teach his people himself." This direct experience of the Divine Spirit exhilarated the first small groups of Friends and called them to witness to the power of God. That inspiration continues today.

> It is an overwhelming experience to fall into the hands of the living God, to be invaded to the depths of one's feelings by His presence, to be, without warning, wholly uprooted from all earthborn securities and assurances, and to be blown by a tempest of unbelievable power which leaves one's old proud self utterly, utterly defenseless, until one cries, "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." Then is the soul swept into a loving center of ineffable sweetness, where calm and unspeakable peace and ravishing joy steal over one.
>
> *– Thomas R. Kelly, "Holy Obedience,"*
> *in A Testament of Devotion, 1941*

SEEKING THE SPIRIT ...

> My faith is firm in the blessed, the eternal doctrine preached by Jesus and by every child of God since the creation of the world, especially the great truth that God is the teacher of his people himself; the doctrine that Jesus most emphatically taught, that the kingdom is with man, that there is his sacred and divine temple.
>
> *– Lucretia Mott (1793-1880),*
> *in Margaret Hope Bacon, Valiant Friend, 1980*

There is that of God in everyone. This principle of the Inward Light, the Christ Within, illumines for us every corner of religion, philosophy, ethics, morals, daily living, social relationships, and international relations.

Before we can express this faith to others, whether in words or in deeds, we must first experience the reality of the Inward Light in our own souls. Then we are released to be faithful to this Spirit. The corporate and personal disciplines Friends have used are the means by which we have found and experienced the presence of God. Through these disciplines we have been able to remain faithful in our witness to the world.

> Cast aside, now, thy burdensome cares and put away thy toilsome business. Yield room for some little time to God.
>
> *– Anselm (1033-1109), Proslogium*

"Seek, and ye shall find," said Jesus. From the beginning Friends have emphasized the search. We do not have the whole truth. But we can search diligently for understanding and use some of the guides that help us grow toward the Light.

> I am morally certain, that I have many a day gone through the cares and concerns of life, with much more composure, stability, satisfaction and propriety, for the strength and assistance I have found in drawing near to God in solemn silence in my family.
>
> *– Job Scott, Journal, 1797*

> [Early Friends] made the discovery that silence is one of the best preparations for communion [with God] and for the reception of inspiration and guidance. Silence itself, of course, has no magic. It may be just sheer emptiness, absence of words or noise or music .... But it may be an intensified pause, a vitalized hush, a creative quiet, an actual moment of mutual and reciprocal correspondence with God.
>
> *– Rufus M. Jones, "Spiritual Message of the Religious Society of Friends," 1937*

We value our times of waiting silently in holy expectancy. Many of us have quiet periods alone regularly; we share quiet before or after meals or with others in our meetings; silence is the context of our worship. Silence is also the context in which we come to inward reliance upon God. It brings us to our true commitment, our concerns, and our leadings.

> By 1660 [George Fox] had taught some 50,000 Friends, as he called them, to sit in silence under the inwardly searchlighting truth which showed up every act or impulse of self-will or self-righteousness. Naturally, they quaked, struggled, and despaired for months, upheld meanwhile by fellow-quakers alert to self-made escapes, until finally a “new man” was born within, able to respond freely to positive leadings of the Light, and joy broke

> through. The Light was also the Spirit of Christ, whose power and judgment Friends had found to be loving.
>
> *– Hugh Barbour,*
> *"William Penn, Model of Protestant Liberalism,"*
> *in Church History, 6/1979*

We benefit from reserving times for quiet reflection on our lives and on those "promptings of love and truth in our hearts, which are the leadings of God." Our worship, deeper than words, reminds us that we wish to give the first place in our lives to the unseen and eternal. Friends look forward to sharing silence with other Friends, to sharing insights in worship, and to sharing leadings.

> And while waiting upon the Lord in silence, as often we did for many hours together, with our minds and hearts toward him, being staid in the light of Christ within us, from all thoughts, fleshly motions, and desires, in our diligent waiting and fear of his name, and hearkening to his word, we received often the pouring down of the spirit upon us, and the gift of God's holy eternal spirit as in the days of old, and our hearts were made glad, and our tongues loosed, and our mouths opened, and we spake with new tongues, as the Lord gave us utterance, and as his spirit led us, which was poured down upon us, on sons and daughters.
>
> *– Edward Burrough, "Epistle to the Reader,"*
> *in George Fox, The Great Mystery of the*
> *Great Whore Unfolded, 1659*

Silent times help to heal us from hurts of the mind and body. The quiet has brought us refreshment and strength to do what we thought ourselves unable to do or even to contemplate. Especially in the worshipping group, many have found "the evil within us weakened and the good raised up," despair and turmoil lessened, and steadfastness of purpose strengthened. We have often come to understand others' cares and unite with their concerns.

Generations of Friends have remarked how well they began to appreciate the silence when, as children, they worshipped daily with their families and attended worship with Friends at meeting. Cultivating quietness and inward listening makes us increasingly able to remain silent when it is not necessary to speak or to speak the wisdom that comes from stillness.

> When your heart is wandering and distracted, bring it back quickly to its point, restore it tenderly to its Master's side, and if you did nothing else the whole of your hour but bring back your heart patiently and put it near our Lord again, and every time you put it back it turned away again, your hour would be well employed.
>
> *– Francis de Sales, in Thomas Green, "Preparation for Worship," 1952*

. . .IN SOLITUDE

The capacity to be alone is a necessary balance to the press of social life, and the healing power of solitude is central to our well-being. It promotes self-understanding and contact with those inner depths of being that often elude us when meeting the demands of daily living. Above all, solitude provides the opportunity to be alone with God and opens us to the workings of the Spirit.

> Remember, it is a still voice that speaks to us in this day, and that it is not to be heard in the noises and hurries of the mind. Jesus loved and chose solitudes, often going to mountains, to gardens, and seasides to avoid crowds and hurries to show his disciples it was good to be solitary and sit loose to the world.
>
> *– William Penn, Preface to The Journal of George Fox, 1694*

> Walk and talk and work and laugh with your friends. But behind the scenes keep up the life of simple prayer and inward worship. Keep it up throughout the day. Let inward prayer be your last act before you fall asleep and the first act when you awake.
>
> *– Thomas R. Kelly,*
> *A Testament of Devotion, 1941*

Our prayer is communion with God. We may express it in expectant longing for wisdom and help, or in praise, confession, petition, intercession, thanks, relief, awe, or grief. We can set aside a daily period for prayer and cultivate with patient persistence the habit of inward prayer in the midst of outward activity. In meetings for worship, including those with a concern for business, humble prayer spoken with tenderness towards others can help make the group aware of the presence of God.

We lay before God not only our personal needs but the needs of others as well. Even as the Spirit finds expression through words of truth and acts of love, so it touches those in need of comfort through our prayers of tender concern.

In bringing our concerns before God we must be ready to accept God's guidance. Accordingly, faith in prayer can be complete only if we leave to God the form of that guidance and ready ourselves to follow it. Through prayer, our wills may come to correspond more closely with the divine will.

> After thou seest thy thoughts and the temptation, do not think but submit, and then power comes. Stand still in the Light and submit to it ... and when temptations and troubles appear, sink down in that which is pure, and all will be hushed and fly away. And earthly reason will tell you

> what ye shall lose. Hearken not to that, but stand still in the Light.
>
> – *George Fox, Epistle 10*

We testify to the reality of a spiritual universe that we do not fully comprehend. We seek to live under its order and in its strength, each according to the measure of light given. Prayer made in faith can restore and heal the body, mind, and spirit, and we encourage Friends to undergird all medical and psychological treatment with this power of prayer.

. . .IN SCRIPTURE

> This is the great work of the Scriptures, and their service to us, that we may witness them fulfilled in us, and so discern the state of God's spirit and ways upon them, by the inward acquaintance we have with the same Spirit and work in our hearts.
>
> – *Robert Barclay, Apology, 1676*

From the beginnings of the Society, Friends have turned to the Bible, and especially to the life and teachings of Jesus, to deepen our spiritual understanding, to seek guidance in our lives, and to gain inspiration and courage to put our testimonies into practice. Scriptures record some of the workings of God's spirit among men and women and their attempts to understand God's purpose for the world. These writings link us to those in the past who bore witness to truth, justice, and love, and their messages can awaken a yearning for these same values in our own lives as we increase our understanding of the Scriptures.

Because the Bible expresses the work of the Spirit, its authority is dependent on the Spirit itself. The same Light that inspired the prophets and apostles can illumine anyone who seeks to understand the truth. Such illumination is itself the highest authority. It unites us in the gospel of forgiveness, love, and community taught and lived by Jesus, and draws us into his struggle to realize the Kingdom of God, a world brought into unity with God's will.

We acknowledge differences among ourselves about the nature and degree of authority we ascribe to the Bible and its parts. Many of us bring to its study the results of research and interpretation that have helped us to discover that which can truly speak to us. We believe that the spirit of God continually reveals itself to all peoples, and the writings of inspired men and women of all ages can speak to everyone today.

. . .IN DEVOTIONAL READING

Other seekers have gone before us, and many have left a legacy of their journeys. From these accounts of questions asked, of answers received, and of ways taken, we can find help as we listen for truth in our own hearts. For many of us the Bible is the most precious of these writings. Yet the record of God's grace did not begin or end with the Bible. Quakers feel particularly attuned to the works of George Fox, Margaret Fell, John Woolman, Elizabeth Gurney Fry, Rufus Jones, Thomas Kelly, Mildred Binns Young, and other Friends whose inspiration is available to us. We value also many writings of seekers of all persuasions, aware of the diversity of vision among those whose hearts are fixed on God. We come to understand that the Light that inspired seekers of all times will illumine us as we search diligently to discern the Truth.

We know that God shares the Truth in many ways. If we bring open hearts and minds, we can find the Holy Spirit in unexpected places and in the contributions of men and women of all ages and all religions, sometimes in the form of stories, poetry, dance, music, art, or drama that give insight into humanity's highest values.

. . .IN TRADITION

While seeking the Truth in their own experience with God and Christ, early Friends read and discussed the newly printed Bible and the writings of mystics such as Francis of Assisi and Marie de Guyon and began to write their own spiritual literature, journals, and tracts. Their seeking led to practices such as refusing "hat honor" (to take off one's hat to social superiors),

referring to days of the week and months by numbers to erase all non-Christian reference, and using "plain" language to avoid the then common honorific "you" for social superiors. Refusal to participate in war, strict honesty in business, equality of men and women, the gentle upbringing of children, noncoercion of conscience, the settlement of differences without suing each other in courts of law, declining to observe traditional religious holidays, and nonconformity to fashion in dress and conduct became some of the more enduring traditions of the Society. Meetings for worship to celebrate marriage or the life of a deceased Friend still take place with simple arrangements; these traditions testify to the spiritual nature of our lives and gather us into community. Silence before meetings for business, committee meetings, and meals has been another Friends' custom.

Yet, tradition is no substitute for faith; practices may become empty.

. . .IN GOSPEL ORDER

> Gospel order is life lived in God's transforming, guiding, and sustaining power.
>
> *– Sandra Cronk,*
> *Gospel Order (Pendle Hill pamphlet 297)*

Early Friends identified a need for the right ordering of community life, which they called "gospel order," based in the life and teachings of Jesus. George Fox called this order the New Covenant of Jesus Christ, a divine, not an institutional, structure by means of which Christ could be "present in the midst of his people as ruler, governor, and orderer." Instead of the rules common to churches of their time, Friends developed some essentials of faith and practice embodied in queries and advices. These practices encouraged them to base their inward life on worship and waiting on the Lord, to obey the promptings of the spirit through what became our social testimonies, to conduct meeting business as worship with reverence for God and love and respect for each other.

Friends believe that the gospel calls us to align our lives to the spirit of Christ and to commit ourselves to follow that spirit; our practices allow us to wait for the guidance of the spirit in our corporate life. This right ordering allows us to make corporate decisions according to the sense of the meeting, to test decisions through the process of carefully constructing minutes, and to organize the community into committees entrusted with defined responsibilities.

> If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church....
>
> *– Matthew 18:15-17 (NRSV)*

These words from Jesus help us to respond creatively to conflict. Individuals first meet to air and resolve conflicts; if the first meeting is unsuccessful, they may meet a small group of Friends, sometimes called a committee of clearness, to try again to settle the matter; if there is still no resolution, Friends can bring the issue before the entire meeting for business. Although in this way Friends first reproved and corrected those who "walked disorderly," the process gradually came to express the mutual accountability of Friends to one another, and led to the appointment of elders to exercise nurture and disciplinary care for their meetings.

The power behind all our communal practice derives from Jesus's words, also in Matthew 18, that "where two or three come together in my name, there am I also." We pray that this power will enable us to minimize backbiting, talebearing, and personal misunderstandings, and to provide for the acceptance and resolution of the contrary feelings which are inevitable when Friends work together.

> Maintain that charity which suffereth long, and is kind; put the best construction upon the conduct and opinions one of another which circumstances will warrant. Take heed ... that the enemy produce no dissensions among you; that nothing like a party spirit be ever suffered to prevail. Let each be tender of the reputation of his brother; and be earnest to possess the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. Watch over one another for good, but not for evil; and whilst not blind to the faults or false views of others, be especially careful not to make them a topic of common conversation. And even in cases in which occasion may require that the failings of others should be disclosed, be well satisfied, before they are made the subject of confidential communication, either verbally or by letter, that your own motives are sufficiently pure.
>
> *– London Yearly Meeting, 1834*

. . .IN CORPORATE WORSHIP

> 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; and indeed this is the surest way to become a Christian....
>
> *– Robert Barclay, Apology, 1676*

We approach the meeting for worship confidently, listening to the still, small voice within. Each worshipper is a listener. In active waiting, we strive to dissociate the mind from distractions and to focus inwardly. As each of us helps and strengthens others in this process, worship becomes a corporate experience.

> 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, Apology, 1676*

Direct communion with God – experience of the Holy Spirit – makes observance of sacraments unnecessary, and for some even a hindrance. Guidance from the Spirit can take place anywhere and at any time under any conditions. No place is particularly holy, and all places are holy.

> We do not say that to observe the sacraments is wrong, but that such observance is not essential to wholehearted Christian discipleship and the full Christian experience. We do not judge our fellow Christians to whom the outward sacraments mean so much. Rather do we wish, by prayerful fellowship with them, to be led unitedly with them to a deeper understanding of what underlies those sacraments, and so to share a richer experience of the mind of Christ.
>
> *– Gerald K. Hibbert, Quaker Fundamentals, 1941*

Meetings for worship may be programmed or unprogrammed, structured or unstructured, pastoral or nonpastoral. The components of programmed worship, such as music, the sermon, reading of scripture, vocal prayer, and silence, draw the worshipper into the presence of God. A hymn may express deeper feelings than can its words alone. A sermon may challenge, support, sustain, and encourage us. A message specifically for children may offer insight to each of us. Giving an offering may make us aware of how gifts to the meeting can be used in God's service. In programmed and in unprogrammed worship, our awareness of the presence of God has much to do with what we bring to meeting. When we have meditated and prayed throughout the

week, we are more prepared to feel the workings of the spirit in meeting than if we come anticipating that the pastor and others will have done our preparation for us. In unprogrammed meetings there is no set order of worship and no appointed leader; in programmed meetings the appointed pastor helps find a spiritual focus. Either form of meeting calls us to be fully engaged in worship.

Let us listen tenderly to all messages, even those that may not seem to speak to our condition. The call to ministry may come to any worshipper, and the more we listen, the more we ourselves become aware of – and are able to follow – spiritual leadings, including those to speak in meeting.

> When you come to your meetings ... what do you do? Do you then gather together bodily only, and kindle a fire, compassing yourselves about with the sparks of your own kindling, and so please yourselves, and walk in the "Light of your own fire and the sparks which you have kindled"? Or rather, do you sit down in True Silence, resting from your own Will and Workings, and waiting upon the Lord, fixed with your minds in that Light wherewith Christ has enlightened you, until the Lord breathes life in you, refresheth you, and prepares you ... that you may offer unto him a pure and spiritual sacrifice?
>
> *– William Penn, "A Tender Visitation," 1677*

In gathered or covered meetings individual separateness recedes, and we become more of a community under divine guidance. Words offered by different speakers may relate to a common theme and echo the unspoken worship without seeming to break the silence.

> Here indeed is a service of worship that demands that all believers be their own priests. For in the Quaker meeting for worship, the members must still their bodies, still their minds, must attend to the presence of God, must thank and adore God for

> being what God is, must feel the incongruities of their own lives that are out of keeping with such a presence, must long for their removal and forgiveness ....
>
> *– Douglas V. Steere, On Listening to Another, 1955*

Thanksgiving, confession, calming of fears, forgiveness, reproof, chastisement, awareness of our many blessings, instruction, exhortation, support, comfort, challenge, and openness to joy and truth are some aspects of worship we may meet.

But there will be times for all of us when worship will not offer us comfort, uplift our spirits, or speak to our condition. At times we may feel distant from God and our fellow-worshippers; faith and perseverance are necessary to bring us through these dry spells. At other times the spoken ministry may be pointed, prophetic, or disturbing. Worship offers us the experience of the power of the Spirit, but that power is not tame, and our lessons from meeting are not always those we expect.

> Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.
>
> *– Revelation 3.20 (NRSV)*

Vocal ministry in the meeting for worship should arise from inward prompting, an experience that may come at times to all earnest worshippers. Ministers who can speak at length and maintain a genuine spirit of prophecy are rare and appreciated, but the experienced speaker should be watchful not to speak too often or at undue length. A simple thought, briefly expressed by a timid speaker, may be the message most needed; the shy worshipper is encouraged to speak, however haltingly.

> When one rises to speak in [a gathered] meeting one has a sense of *being used*, of being played upon, of being spoken through. It is as amazing an experience as that of being *prayed through*, when we, the praying ones, are no longer the initiators of the

> supplication, but seem to be transmitters, who second an impulse welling up from the depths of the soul. In such an experience the brittle bounds of our selfhood seem softened and instead of saying, "I pray" or "He prays," it becomes better to say, "Prayer is taking place."
>
> *– Thomas R. Kelly, The Eternal Promise, 1966*

The most satisfactory ministry in our meetings arises when we speak with discipline about an insight that we find when we wait silently upon the Lord.

> Is this a genuine moving that deserves expression in a meeting for worship, or had I best curb and forget it? May it have some real meaning for others, and is it suited to the condition of the meeting? Can I phrase it clearly and simply? If it passes these tests, I regard it as something to be said, but I am not yet sure it should be said here and now. To find out how urgent it is, I press it down and try to forget it. If time passes, and it does not take hold of me with increased strength, I conclude that it is not to be spoken of at this time. If, on the other hand, it will not be downed, if it rebounds and insists and will not leave me alone, I give it expression.
>
> *– N. Jean Toomer,*
> *An Interpretation of Friends' Worship, 1947*

> Once I sat in meeting for worship absolutely certain that I had a message which needed to be shared. However, I felt no leading whatsoever that I was the one to give the message. I waited and waited, feeling I would burst from the tension, until a woman across the room got up and gave my message much better than I could ever have given it. What was happening here? What did this mean in terms of the movement of the Spirit in our lives?
>
> *– Shirley Dodson,*
> *"Theology for Each of Us," Friends Journal, 9/1/80*

. . .IN MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP WITH A CONCERN FOR BUSINESS

> Friends are not to meet [in meetings for business] like a company of people about town or parish business ... but to wait upon the Lord.
>
> *– George Fox, Letters*

We look with tender hearts, especially during meetings for worship with a concern for business, for one another's spiritual vision. Truths of the Spirit may come from any of us.

> In each of us the Spirit is manifested in one particular way, for some useful purpose.... But all these gifts are the work of one and the same Spirit, distributing them separately to each individual at will. For Christ is like a single body with its many limbs and organs, which, many as they are, together make up one body.
>
> *– 1 Corinthians 12:7,11-12 (NEB)*

Our belief that people can continually discover more about the will of God makes us eschew dogma. We search for ways to meet human need in shared worship and open ourselves to disagreement as a path to God's higher truths. The Spirit leads our community to creative action, occasionally in ways that transcend reason, as we listen for God's voice in our prayers and in the messages we have for each other.

LEADINGS AND CONCERNS

> Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts, which are the leadings of God.
>
> *– Britain Yearly Meeting,*
> *Quaker Faith and Practice, 1995*

Early Friends found that the Light opened their lives to the painful knowledge of their own inadequacy. Margaret Fell urged

Friends to "let the Eternal Light search you ... for this will deal plainly with you; it will rip you up, and lay you open ... naked and bare before the Lord God, from whom you cannot hide yourselves" (Barbour, Quakers in Puritan England, p.98). But at the end of this painful experience of the Light, at the end of human resources and evasions, the same Light showed Friends the presence and warmth of God's love. This testing process opened Friends to the shared experience of the life and guidance of the Spirit, which became a constant source of inspiration and energy in their lives. So it can be for us today.

We may find that the guidance of the Spirit leads us toward specific actions; such leadings should be cherished. Our first leading may simply be to rise to speak in meeting for worship despite our diffidence. We may feel a leading toward some service, perhaps involving a social problem or a meeting or community need. A real concern is a gift of grace and demands our obedience, but we should also consider how early Friends sought to distinguish true leadings from false ones: We question our motives to find whether any selfish desire or unanswered personal need lies at the bottom of our impulse. We wait in patience to test our leading over time. We seek to find out if our leading is consistent with other revelations of the Spirit. We seek the counsel of other Friends, either individually in conversation or by asking for a clearness committee, where members meet in worship over a concern to test its validity and weight and to clarify its implications for action.

> The true "concern" [emerges as] a gift from God, a leading of the Spirit which may not be denied. Its sanction is not that on investigation it proves an intelligent thing to do – though it usually is; it is that the individual (and if the concern is shared and adopted by the meeting, then the meeting) knows, as a matter of inward experience, that here is something which the Lord would have done, however obscure the way, however uncertain the means to human observation. Often proposals for action are made which have every appearance of good

> sense, but as the meeting waits before God, it becomes clear that the proposition falls short of "concern."
>
> *– Roger C. Wilson,*
> *"Authority, Leadership, and Concern," 1949*

A personal concern, meant for us individually, might become a concern involving our meeting. Individual concerns can become the means by which the community can bring the power of the Spirit into social action; the method Friends have developed to do this involves the progression and deepening of concerns from monthly to quarterly to yearly meetings. This process is another part of our gospel order, by which we wait with a concern and test it individually, then with a friend or family member, then with a group of Friends and the monthly meeting itself, and finally with quarterly and yearly meetings. Friends are thus available at each step to "test the concern in the Light," to consider the concern in relation to all they know about the situation and the persons involved and, most important, to hold the concern up to the light of the Inward Teacher, although we do not need to share, agree with, or endorse each other's concerns in order to support them. Each group may support the concern; possibly it may commend the concern as a call to action for the greater group of Friends.

In this way Friends have developed (sometimes slowly and painfully) the social witness that we have traditionally called our testimonies. Even such seemingly self-evident truths as the peace testimony or the testimony against slavery did not spring up fully articulated; rather, Friends worked each out over time and in social circumstances that resulted finally in its acceptance as part of our understanding of the will of God.

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.
>
> *– Galatians 5:22-3 (KJV)*

The Religious Society of Friends does not impose laws or rules for conduct upon its members but lays upon us the responsibility to live by the Spirit of Light and Truth in each of us and provides Advices and Queries as an aid to faithfulness. This Spirit can direct every aspect of our lives if we open ourselves to it. It can enable us to reach out to the same Spirit in others. The fundamental emphasis of our personal lives should be the desire to fulfill God's purpose.

FAITHFULNESS

> The Kingdom of Heaven did gather us and catch us all, as in a net, and his heavenly power at one time drew many hundreds to land. We came to know a place to stand in and what to wait in; and the Lord appeared daily to us, to our astonishment, amazement, and a great admiration, insomuch that we said one unto another with great joy of heart: 'What, is the Kingdom of God come to be with men?' ... And from that day forward, our hearts were knit unto the Lord and one unto another in true and fervent love, in the covenant of Life with God; and that was a strong obligation or bond upon all our spirits, which united us one unto another. We met together in the unity of the Spirit, and of the bond of peace, treading down under our feet all reasoning about religion.
>
> *– Francis Howgill, in Edward Burrough, The Memorable Works of a Son of Thunder, 1672*

God-directed personal conduct calls for discipline in every area of our lives. We need to strive constantly toward wholeness. This is not easy. We shall stumble and make wrong turns. We must learn how to forgive ourselves, even as God forgives us, and take comfort in the knowledge that we are not alone in our quest: With us go God's unfailing love and mercy, the companionship of other Friends, the guidance of Jesus, and the wisdom of others on whom the Spirit has left a vivid imprint. The paradox of discipline is that it frees us to respond creatively to God.

> Miraculously, God can still work through our blocked minds, deficient vision, and dulled spiritual hearing. Once in a while, when we are experiencing a bit of humility and feeling less protective of our egos, wonderful things can happen. It is then that God lets us know the peace of a worry-free moment. It is then that insoluble problems seem to work themselves out, without our attention. We must hold fast to the memory of these experiences of faith because they hold the promise of more faith and encourage us to surrender to God's Wisdom.
>
> *– Virginia W. Apsey, "Worry, Trust, and Faith," Friends Journal, 3/87*

TRUTHFULNESS, INTEGRITY, AND COMMUNICATION

We are called to a genuineness of life and speech that leaves no room for deceit or artificiality. Early Friends took very seriously the advice of Jesus: "All you need say is 'Yes' if you mean yes, 'No' if you mean no; anything more than this comes from the evil one" (Matthew 5.37), and throughout our history we have borne witness against judicial oaths as suggesting a double standard of truth. Devotion to what is true and eternal requires openness, honesty, and careful speech in social, business, and family relationships. As early Friends took care to avoid honorific titles and phrases, modern Friends need to discourage insincerities and extravagances. Flattery, public expressions of gratitude, and eulogies draw attention to individuals rather than to the Spirit that speaks through each of us. We must speak the truth with cordiality, kindness, and love.

> All of us ... are diminished and dishonoured when we do not meet each other half way. How can we in truth and lovingly help one another in this? Because we must remember that truth without love is violence. And love without truth is sentimentality. We do need both.
>
> *– Muriel Bishop, "Integrity," 1990*

It is a difficult task to live according to our faith that God's

power operates in us. As we attempt to conform our lives to the leadings of the Spirit, to integrate our beliefs and our actions, and to become more honest and authentic, we receive the strength and courage to follow our religious principles.

> No average goodness will do, no measuring our lives by our fellows, but only a relentless, inexorable divine standard. No relatives suffice; only absolutes satisfy the soul committed to holy obedience. Absolute honesty, absolute gentleness, absolute self-control, unwearied patience and thoughtfulness in the midst of the ravelling friction of home and office and school and shop.
>
> *– Thomas R. Kelly, "Holy Obedience," 1939*

Friends have been concerned to communicate with integrity, to make our words and action fit the truth of our lives. We endeavor to speak the truth as we know it, honestly and forthrightly, speaking plainly from our own lives. Sometimes this practice has been difficult; sometimes the results surprise and delight us.

> I was shown that my words should be few, savoury, and seasoned with grace.
>
> *– George Fox, Journal, 1694*

> The person who will listen and not give advice is a precious presence on this earth.
>
> *– Robert P. Wightman,*
> *in "Listening with a Simple Heart,"*
> *15th Street Meeting Book of Quotations, 1989*

Thoughtful listening is as important as speaking, and a necessary part of resolving our conflicts. If we listen attentively to the expression of the Spirit, in ourselves and in others, words and action can become a means of knowing God, a form of prayer. To speak, write, or act from the truth of our lives brings spiritual force to bear on us in ways that may develop into concerns or leadings if we listen further.

> We need symbols to communicate our experience of God, but let us not confuse the description with the reality, or assume that everyone has the same angle of vision. Rather let us say, THIS I KNOW EXPERIMENTALLY, and then ask, WHAT CANST THOU SAY?
>
> *– Elizabeth Watson, 1977 Friends General Conference Rufus Jones Lecture*

The Hebrew prophets, our Society's founders, and dissidents in all times often found themselves in conflict with others for speaking from inward-directed truth. This habit is a source of controversy today, even amongst ourselves, when our experiences and the ways in which we communicate them do not fit others' perceptions or convictions. We encourage Friends to express, listen to, and welcome disagreements as new ways to understand the truth.

> I am fully persuaded that if there was less tattling and scribbling and more praying, there would be happiness among us. The spirit of bitterness and malignity is like the whirlwind, that threatens to carry us away in the tempest.
>
> *– Edward Hicks, Journal, 1825*

Do our words tend towards the harmony, love, and truth that glorify God? To speak the truth is important, and sometimes truth will necessarily cause pain in the process of healing, but we would do well before we speak to consider that our words may hurt others or stir up ill feeling or partisanship. Backbiting, talebearing, and complaints about others are to be avoided. Our communication, as spoken deeds, helps build or destroy what Jesus called the Kingdom of Heaven. We urge Friends to avoid speaking or acting in ways that divide insiders from outsiders.

The best of Friends' humor has come from the forthright wit of our witness to truth and from the joy with which we behold the presence of God around us. But we caution against the use of sarcasm at the expense of others; the cooling, uniting pres-

ence of truth among us is diminished by this kind of anger masquerading as humor.

In life as in meetings for worship, sometimes a silent message is most fitting.

> God, set a guard at my mouth, a watcher at the gate of my lips.
>
> *– Psalm 141.3 (NJB)*

PUBLISHING THE TRUTH: OUTREACH

> Let all nations hear the word by sound or writing. Spare no place, spare not tongue nor pen, but be obedient to the Lord God and go through the world and be valiant for the Truth upon earth.... And this is the word of the Lord God to you all, and a charge to you all in the presence of the living God, 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 in God in them to bless you.
>
> *– George Fox, Journal, 1694*

We are called to share with others our experience that God is actively present in the world and in every human heart and may be encountered by those who turn to God in openness and expectation. The Religious Society of Friends is a fellowship of persons who have this faith, and we invite those who have not found a spiritual home to enter into our fellowship. We know that words alone cannot witness to these truths. When our lives speak, when they reflect an enthusiastic, contagious appreciation of Jesus and his teachings, our words of witness will bear convincing authority.

Outreach begins in our meetings for worship, in our family

lives, and in our daily encounters with others. We can make our witness public through casual conversation, through lectures, letters to newspapers, published works, and radio and television appearances. Our witness may encourage action by others who have been shy or reticent. We broaden our fellowship and deepen our understanding of each other by sharing the insights and experiences that have led us to God.

SIMPLICITY

> The cares and pleasures of this life choke and destroy the seed of the kingdom, and quite hinder all progress in the hidden and divine life.
>
> *– William Penn, No Cross, No Crown, 1682*

The testimony of simplicity, of detachment from possessions and worldly aspirations, arose from Friends' conviction that simplicity would enable us to grow in communion with God and to discern God's will for us.

When we open ourselves to God, we want to unclutter our lives, to free ourselves from dependence on our possessions and self-indulgences, or from encumbering details and self-appointed tasks and activities that consume and distract us. We endeavor to live free from the potential dangers involved in the use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco, the practice of gambling, and excessive eating. We realize the tragic results of these practices, not only to the practitioner, but to family, friends, and others. Social custom often makes it difficult or embarassing to decline to use or to serve intoxicants, and we may help others by our example of standing clear from the use of these substances. Simplicity releases us from that which drains and depletes us and redirects our energy toward God.

> Simplicity clears the springs of life and permits wholesome mirth and gladness to bubble up; it cleans the windows of life and lets joy radiate.
>
> *– Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Faith and Practice, 1955*

> Learn the lesson that, if you are to do the work of a prophet, what you need is not a scepter but a hoe.
>
> *– Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153)*

Work is part of a full life and can be a means of self-expression. When done with others, it fosters community. It provides the necessities of living.

Coming to a consciousness of the spiritual nature of our work can be a slow process, but many forms of work can be honorable if we approach them with integrity, diligence, and concern. The workplace, whether ideal or not, enables us to put into action conflict negotiation, mediation, centering, listening, silence, and love. In fact, in the marketplace our strengths may be most tested, and our faithfulness most treasured.

All of the business relationships of Friends should be carried on in a spirit of love and service. If we keep before us the faith that there is an indwelling Spirit in every person we encounter, then personal dealings and relations of management and labor become integral to our religious lives and allow us to witness to our testimonies. Work can be an opportunity for personal ministry, and many Friends try to choose paid and voluntary work that furthers justice, freedom, and equality and that helps to remove the seeds of war and conflict.

> The time of business does not with me differ from the time of prayer, and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquility as if I were my knees at the blessed sacrament.
>
> *– Brother Lawrence (1611-91),*
> *Practice of the Presence of God*

The light of Friends' principles can transform dealings with authorities and co-workers, ambition and the desire for success,

competition, and management hierarchies. This light can lead us back to the still center to listen for God's word in all our wordly concerns.

QUAKER COMMUNITY AND FELLOWSHIP

> For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.
>
> *– Matthew 18:20 (KJV)*

Living together in Christian community gives us an opportunity to practice Jesus' teachings. The core of our meetings is the meeting for worship. The unifying experience of worship offers loving support, comfort, and inspiration as we seek together God's will for ourselves and for the community.

Our worship together gives us an opportunity to commune with God and one another. The life of Jesus with his disciples was such a fellowship. As he lived with them, so we can live with one another. As the spirit of love and truth grows among us, it will help us in times of trial to meet hostility with compassion and understanding and so hold us together precisely when we disagree.

> Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand.
>
> *– Isaac Penington, Letters, 1667*

Meetings do well to exercise a tender concern for those facing personal difficulties. A clearness committee can enable persons to meet in a spirit of worship with other Friends to seek guidance and support in times of need.

We value visitation with other Friends, including visits beyond monthly and yearly meetings. This practice furthers our experience of an extended family. Some Friends are led to travel

in the ministry among Friends with a particular concern, and this experience enriches the travelling Friend as well as those visited.

Through worship the community seeks to find the spark for action. Continually discovering the will of God helps us to discern creative solutions to disagreements and new ways for meeting human need that sometimes transcend rational decision making. Community offers us

> the promise that God will continually move among us and within us, bringing fresh vitalities and new possibilities to life... if we have eyes to see and ears to hear, if we are capable of receiving the stranger.
> *– Parker Palmer, The Company of Strangers, 1981*

COVENANT RELATIONSHIPS

> But this is the covenant that I shall make with the house of Israel after these days, says the Lord; I shall put my law within them, and I shall write it on their hearts; and I shall be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach one another or say to each other, "Know the Lord," for they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I shall forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more.
> *– Jeremiah 31:33-4 (NRSV)*

The Biblical witness to a covenant with God is also our witness to the precious presence of the living Spirit in us and among us. God is present in our relationships with one other, animating our interactions with extended families, meeting members, friends, and neighbors. All of these relationships are part of God's covenant with us, written in our hearts.

To be faithful to the Spirit in our life together is never more difficult or more rewarding than in family relationships – spou-

sal, parental, filial –, which depend on God's help as well as mutual trust and love. When we call our family ties "covenant relationships," we acknowledge the involvement of God and our meetings in maintaining and upholding these precious commitments.

Marriage is solemnized in God's presence and nurtured with divine assistance in reverence and love. Couples covenant with God, their meetings, and each other to clarify and strengthen their commitments. When two people make their vows to each other in the presence of God and their friends, they take each other as lifelong partners, promising with divine assistance to be faithful to each other.

Early Friends believed that marriage depended on the prayerful inward life of the couple's deep, abiding commitment to each other and to God, not on the outward forms of ecclesiastic blessing or legal contract. Our witness today must uphold the same high standards for ourselves in our covenant relationships: standards of love, fidelity, and discipline that bear witness to the presence of the Spirit among us rather than to the self-interest and immediate gratification of desires prized in our culture. Sexual relationships, especially, are too tender and powerful to be left to unspoken understandings.

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 to 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.

> God has created no man or woman even nearly perfect. But we grow in both our virtue and our capacity to love by the testing, against the world and each other, of those weaknesses which by the grace of God we can convert into strengths; and by the finding of those strengths and beauties in each other which we hardly dared suspect were

> there. But these are the rewards of unfolding years; years, not weeks or months. The glory of a great marriage lies in the surprises which loving support, acceptance, and graceful forgiveness can bring forth.
>
> *– R.B. Crowell, "Words at a Quaker Wedding," Friends Journal, 11/74*

Some of us live alone and find love and community among our friends. Some of us are single parents, caring for our children. Some members' families follow traditional patterns; others do not. Just as there is that of God in every person, there is that of God in every relationship that calls upon God. We seek to treat responsible, loving relationships tenderly and respectfully. We seek to hold each other in the light of our ideal that Spirit-filled covenant relationships are the one sure basis for love and sexuality.

In prayer and worship, each meeting can speak truthfully to the particular needs and difficulties of its members and their relationships. Through committees of clearness, for example, a meeting can respond with great care and concern to the requests for marriage that come before it, following the marriage procedures described in the Practice and Procedure section of this book of discipline. The monthly meeting can also advise and counsel those who are overwhelmed by social pressures and confused by our culture’s conflicting attitudes toward sexual morality.

Marriage is a covenant intended for life, and it is with deep sorrow that we note divorce among members. Separation and divorce are spiritually, psychologically, and sometimes physically devastating for children.

Families need the support of monthly meetings and their marriage-oversight committees long after the wedding vows are spoken. These groups can support the couple, offering to help explore options and seek constructive solutions with waiting and prayer. The partners should be encouraged not to give up their commitments easily. However, some relationships can be

unwise or become unhealthy, even psychologically or physically abusive. We urge Friends to treat conflict in relationships, separation, and divorce among members with the same careful concern for clearness as they use before marriage.

Care and concern are especially necessary during difficult times, such as illness or death, when friends and family may need expressions of love, prayer, meals, conversation, and companionship. We also urge Friends to be sensitive to the special needs of children at such times; meetings can nurture children who feel bereft or disturbed.

We pray that our individual covenants with one another mirror the love that Jesus gave to us as part of his blessed community. In our concern for a definition that encompasses our marriage relationships, we also remember how God's covenant embraces each of us and commits us to each other as part of a universal covenant of trust, discipline, and love.

> Put on, then, garments that suit God's chosen and beloved people: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience. Be tolerant with one another, and forgiving, if any of you has cause for complaint: you must forgive as the Lord forgave you. Finally, to bind everything together and complete the whole, there must be love. Let Christ's peace be arbiter in your decisions, the peace to which you were called as members of a single body. Always be thankful. Let the gospel of Christ dwell among you in all its richness; teach and instruct one another with all the wisdom it gives you. With psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, sing from the heart in gratitude to God. Let every word and action, everything you do, be in the name of the Lord Jesus, and give thanks through him to God the Father.
>
> *– Colossians 3.12-16 (REB)*

> People were bringing little children to him, for him to touch them. The disciples turned them away, 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. I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." Then he put his arms round them, laid his hands on them, and gave them his blessing.
>
> *– Mark 10.13-16 (JB)*

Children remind us of the miracle of life and of the continuing opportunity for renewal. We recognize that children have that of God in them as do adults. We are called, therefore, to treat them with respect and dignity and to stay in dialogue with them. While their abilities and 'weightiness' vary according to their experience and clarity, we cherish the contributions that they make to family, meeting, and social life.

> Our children are given to us for a time to cherish, to protect, to nurture, and then to salute as they go their separate ways. They too have the light of God within, and a family should be a learning community in which children not only learn skills and values from parents, but in which adults learn new ways of experiencing things and seeing things through young eyes. From their birth on, let us cultivate the habit of dialogue and receptive listening. We should respect their right to grow into their own wholeness, not just the wholeness we may wish for them.
>
> *– Elizabeth Watson, 1980*

We recognize that Friends' families come in many patterns, each one with its own gifts, abilities, and challenges. Friends try to harmonize daily life with spiritual belief and seek to meet

the challenges and opportunities of a changing world. We note also the pressures that children and young people feel from the surrounding culture and especially from their peers. Even such positive changes as increased freedom and equality for women may cause new tensions as working parents seek to provide for children the caring atmosphere that was once the primary responsibility of an at-home parent and the extended family.

> 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.
>
> *– John Woolman, 1758*

It is the responsibility of the family, however constituted, to nurture and reinforce our children's fundamental spiritual life and growth. Family members need to value each other's feelings, thoughts, and questions, in addition to loving each other. Such a foundation gives children assurance and security to order their relationships with God, with others, with nature, and with themselves. Respectful communication between family members, seasoned with a sense of humor, fosters self-respect and consideration for others, even with the youngest children.

When children learn to pray within the family, prayer becomes a precious part of their daily lives. Speaking to God in their own way, they learn that answer to prayer comes in ways that are sometimes unexpected. Through daily devotions and quiet waiting upon the Spirit, parents help their children to grasp Friends' approach to religion and to feel God's love. Experiencing the essence of worship is also fostered through the whole family's sharing of attendance at meeting.

> There is no generation of young minds that finds the truths and realities of religion easy of apprehension. Faith is never ready made; it must always be *built.* The building process is easier in some ep-

ochs than in others, but the structure of the spirit must be reared in every case in the face of real difficulties.

– Rufus Jones, The Trail of Life in College, 1929

Children learn moral values at home by teaching and example. Friends can be patterns for their children of Christ-like love, self-discipline, and spiritual development. A parent has daily opportunities to show young people how to strengthen integrity through making minor as well as major decisions, for in the family children are introduced to an atmosphere of equality, simplicity, nonviolence, and justice. The family that lives in simplicity, for instance, does not need to preach it. Children who share in the division of household tasks not based on gender learn the importance of equality between men and women. Friends often express the peace testimony by refusing to buy war toys and refraining from corporal punishment. They help their children learn constructive uses of anger, the consequences of violence, and the dangers of addiction. The focus of discipline on loving guidance and setting reasonable limits rather than on harsh punishment helps children to learn self-discipline. Instilling in our children the Quaker principle of egalitarianism and respect for individual personhood will help them to live more harmoniously in their relationships with others.

As children and growing adolescents face the often destructive pressure of culture and conflicting community values, particularly in sexual practices, parents should guide young people to recognize the importance of integrity by emphasizing the need for mutual trust and mature understanding in achieving a long-lasting intimate relationship. Parents will recognize that a truly committed sexual relationship is likely to be beyond the power of a young adolescent, and they will encourage abstinence.

Undergirding a Quaker family is the community of Friends, which bears corporate and individual responsibility for the meeting's children. Meetings should invite and integrate children and young people into as many of their activities as possible and cultivate their gifts. They should recognize that children and young adults can often do jobs and share insights within

the meeting that are usually reserved for the greater maturity and experience of their elders. Younger Friends can strengthen our corporate life with a fresh perspective, with energy and enthusiasm, and with a feeling of accomplishment that can bind them more closely to their meeting and its life as they find respect and meaning in service to their spiritual faith community and to society at large.

Meetings have a particular responsibility to concern themselves when families are in distress. Too many Friends feel the effect of physical or emotional violence inflicted by members of their own families. There may be serious illness, financial difficulties, or other problems within the family. Healing comes through counsel, time, hard work, and supporting relationships. Prayer, love, and forgiveness, with divine grace, are powerful forces in restoring healthy personal interactions.

A monthly meeting alive with the Spirit provides support for its children, parents, families, teachers, and caregivers. In identifying and nurturing the gifts of our children and youth, we pass our heritage on to the coming generation, and they in turn are being prepared to become the future of our religious community.

> I have long been convinced that families are the primary agents of social change in any society. It is in this setting that individuals first become aware that the passage of time means growth and change, that tomorrow is never like yesterday. It is in this setting that one's first daydreams about a different future take place.... The family is not a barrier between us and a better society, but a path to that better society.
>
> *– Elise Boulding,*
> *"The Family as a Way Into the Future,"*
> *Pendle Hill pamphlet 222*

ACCEPTANCE OF DEATH

The presence of death makes us humble; life is enhanced and regarded as a gift. However, the death of a loved one or the simple recognition of human frailty may lead to despair and doubt.

We have to understand the special needs of both the dying and the bereaved. The dying mourn their own deaths as they anticipate the completion of their lives. The bereaved mourn the deaths of their loved ones. The natural process of grieving to express loss can be encouraged along to its completion in both cases. Expression of such emotion is a healthy reaction, testifying to life's significance.

> And this is the Comfort of the Good,
> that the Grave cannot hold them,
> and that they live as soon as they die.
> For Death is no more
> than a turning of us over from time to eternity.
> Death, then, being the way and condition of life,
> we cannot love to live,
> if we cannot bear to die.
>
> 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, Some Fruits of Solitude, 1693*

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. Although life instinctively avoids death, death is not the opposite of life. It is essential to the ongoing, changing nature of life.

Let us spend time with a Friend whose spouse, near relation, or friend has died: praying, talking, and planning meals together, taking care of children, arranging finances, and otherwise being of comfort. In order to prepare ourselves for death, our own and that of others, it may be well for meetings to discuss its religious and practical aspects. The local memorial society is often a resource in this connection.

We have a history of celebrating a Friend's life in a memorial meeting. It is a valuable and comforting custom to gather to remember and honor loved ones who have died. Our sympathy and affection for Friends who are in sorrow is expressed in quiet, dignified procedure, adhering to simplicity and avoiding excessive expense. The overseers, or ministry and counsel, help Friends to arrange a meeting in which attention is focused, not upon a lifeless form, but on a living spirit and radiant faith. The section, Memorial Meetings and Funerals, in the Practice and Procedure part of this book describes these meetings. The family might wish certain friends to take part in a memorial meeting or request short readings and music. Attenders are free to give brief messages. A loved one has left; we rejoice that this Friend has been with us.

WITNESS

> The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.
>
> – *Mark 12.29-31 (KJV)*

We participate through God in a unity that we did not create and cannot annul. To the question, "But who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied with the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10). Jesus welcomed into his kingdom those who could see in the

unfortunate of the world his own presence. “For when I was hungry, you gave me food; when thirsty, you gave me drink; when I was a stranger you took me into your home, when naked you clothed me; when I was ill you came to my help, when in prison you visited me” (Matthew 25.35-6 NEB).

Our attempt to treat all other persons with respect, integrity, and love informs our practice and concerns in all our lives, from close interpersonal relationships to the conduct of meetings for business, to the search for international peace. It may be that we shall find unity in Jesus’s simple admonition to “Love one another as I have loved you” (John 13.34 KJV).

EQUALITY

> 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)*

The history of Friends as a persecuted movement ought to make us sensitive to the feelings of those who suffer from prejudice. Anti-Semitism, racism, the denial of rights to those who espouse unpopular causes and to groups who have alternative manners of living, and any other insult to human dignity demand that we speak out and work for a society that is just.

Much misunderstanding, fear, and hatred throughout the world stem from a common tendency to stereotype people and speak of groups as solid blocs and to lose sight of the varied and precious individuals who compose them. Friends are committed to accept individuals as God’s creatures and to look for the working of the divine Spirit in their lives.

The Holy Spirit, which we all share, makes us equal. We differ in our class backgrounds, intelligence, manners, experiences, talents, skin color, language, gender, sexuality, and customs; these differences can serve to remind us of the infinite number of ways the Spirit presents itself. But our differences can also

create barriers because of our inability to interpret accurately the actions, motives, and goals of others. This failure to understand lies at the heart of racial and ethnic prejudice, for when we fear the unfamiliar or unknown, we tend to reject and thrust it from us.

Our Society has many opportunities to welcome different kinds of people; indeed, we are many different kinds of people. We can reach out to make sure that our meetings cultivate the presence and participation of people of different backgrounds and interests. Our practice today may not be what we hope for; yet we seek to accept, welcome, enjoy, and nurture each other's differences.

To take on this vision may require changes in us. We would do well to search our own hearts in order to recognize and face the prejudice, criticism, and defamation that may come from each of us. When we put aside our fears, we can accept human differences. We aim at an international community that embraces us all and whose public and private enterprises make opportunities available equally for schooling, justice, medical care, employment, income, and housing.

> Those that speak against the power of the Lord, and the Spirit of the Lord speaking in a woman, simply by reason of her sex or because she is a woman, not regarding the Seed, the Spirit, and power that speaks in her: such speak against Christ and his Church.
>
> – *Margaret Fell, "Womens Speaking Justified," 1666*

Friends invite everyone to participate in corporate fellowship and to share in the vocal ministry in full equality. We encourage a relationship of mutuality between men and women. We continue Friends' witness to work for the rights of all women and men to dignity, safety, and political and economic equality.

God gives us tenderness, gentleness, strength, and courage without regard to sex. We try to sustain and bless spiritual

leadings and calls to minister, regardless of gender, in all aspects of our lives. We should not allow traditional roles at work and home to interfere with such leadings.

> Thus we see that Jesus owned the Love and Grace that appeared in Women and did not despise it; and by what is recorded in the Scriptures, he received as much love, kindness, compassion and tender dealing toward him from Women, as he did from many others .... Mark this, you that despise and oppose the message of the Lord God that he sends by Women: what had become of the redemption of the whole body of mankind, if they had not believed the message that the Lord Jesus sent by these Women, of and concerning his resurrection.
>
> *– Margaret Fell, "Womens Speaking Justified," 1666*

NONVIOLENCE AND RECONCILIATION

> Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.
>
> *– Matthew 5.44-45 (KJV)*

> We are called upon to love the loveless and the unlovable, to reach out to the racists and the torturers, to all who hurt and damage, cripple and kill .... God, through us, and in many other ways, offers them healing love and divine pity and takes their hurts away.
>
> We are called to that obedience which freely gives up self, possessions, life, beliefs, in following that vision, that greater love in which alone is life and peace. This does not mean that we lie down like

> doormats to be trampled on, or that we give up our freedom or our grasp of truth – it means that we join ourselves to the risk of creation, to the venture of authentic human being, that we "stand in the Light," reveal that measure of truth that is known to us... that we face the pain of the world, and match it with forgiveness.
>
> *– Janet Scott, "What Canst Thou Say," 1980*

Nonviolence is a way of living every day, every hour, in our personal choices as well as mass struggles for justice. Through it, we affirm the divine Light in every human being and act on the belief that truth and love can overcome ignorance and hate. Nonviolence addresses the misuse and abuse of power in all spheres of life, from quarrelling to domestic violence to war.

Our faith calls for us to be fully present to the person before us. 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. Non-violence as a way of life is based on the realization that the means determine the ends, that the means are how we live our lives.

> We should carry on this struggle on the lines of strict non-violence, i.e., by suffering in our own persons.... I want you to feel like loving your opponents, and the way to do it is to give them the same credit for honesty of purpose which you would claim for yourself.
>
> *– Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi,*
> *Gandhi on Nonviolence*

When we act in the humble recognition that every party to a problem or dispute has some portion of the truth, our object becomes not winning but reconciliation. We seek methods to deal with conflict, such as mediation, that build and develop cooperation and community. Conflict, an inevitable fact of life, becomes creative opportunity when we can fashion from our differing approaches a combined vision that is closer to Truth than any of our original positions.

> I told them that I lived in that life and power that takes away the occasion for all war.
>
> – *George Fox, Journal, 1694*

We repudiate war because it violates the primacy of love, destroys lives that God has given, and tears the fabric of society. War is a test of power, not a search for truth or justice. We thus urge the use of peaceful methods, consistent with the ends we seek, which may heal the hates and hurts of individuals and nations. We support all who take the stand of conscientious objection to war and violence. While we do not question the bravery and commitment of people who fight, the question that sets us apart from them is, "Can any war truly be the will of God?"

We hold that it is inconsistent with our religious principles to participate in military service. There are and have been among us those who have accepted imprisonment or alternative service on the grounds of conscience and religious conviction. New York Yearly Meeting in 1960 and again in 1990 reaffirmed the traditional testimony against war of the Declaration of Friends to Charles II in 1660:

> We utterly deny 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. The spirit of Christ, by which we are guided, is not change able, 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.

Resistance to the war system is vital. We support the testimony of those who have refused to pay war taxes. The world's governmental investment in the technology of war dwarfs any

similar investment in the technology of peace. We also continue to work for disarmament, and to root out the seeds of war in unjust economic and social practices. Building a peace system calls for us to educate ourselves and others and to be part of efforts to demonstrate the effectiveness of the technology of peace.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

> Oppression in the extreme appears terrible: but oppression in the more refined appearances remains to be oppression; and where the smallest degree of it is cherished it grows stronger and more extensive. To labor for a perfect redemption from this spirit of oppression is the great business of the whole family of Christ Jesus in this world.
>
> *– John Woolman, "A Plea for the Poor," 1763*

The Religious Society of Friends possesses no blueprint for social order. However, our Society, since its founding, has labored for the ordering of a community life in which all may have free and full opportunity to express and develop that divine potential with which everyone is endowed.

> We should like to see a greater unity between the religious service of our meetings and the social service of Friends, each being complementary to the other, since they are rooted in the same life and spirit; and to see this expressed in meeting houses which act as centres for varied activities of the surrounding neighbourhood.
>
> *– London Yearly Meeting, 1944*

We can draw no clear line between religious and secular affairs. We find ways to serve God in the world. We expect each Friend to live each day in holy obedience, secure in the faith that the Light illumines all relationships. Accordingly, Friends are enjoined to have a deep concern for the welfare of the community. This involves intelligent care for the dignity and wel-

fare of all; love for adversaries, not merely for those who love us; and special care for those whom the world neglects, exploits, or condemns.

The task is never over. The vision is never complete.

We have a concern, based partly on Friends' three-hundred-year history of imprisonment for conscience's sake, for the humane treatment of those held in prison. There are many ways to help those convicted of a crime, as well as their victims, to rethink and remake their lives, and it is important in doing so that we avoid activities that support the destructiveness of the prison system. Many Friends encourage and support meetings for worship among prisoners, teach prisoners and staff, work with and counsel lawyers and offenders, and help released prisoners to find work and to build new lives.

While we recognize a need to restrain those whose dangerous behavior is a threat, that restraint and any help offered must reflect our concern for that of God in everyone. The prejudice, dishonesty, and racism prevalent in society frequently lead to unfair and unjust sentences and to brutality in the handling of prisoners. Improvement in the parole system and the reduction of pretrial time are greatly needed.

We have consistently opposed capital punishment. Each person is uniquely valuable and divine, and none is totally beyond redemption. Capital punishment rejects the message of forgiveness. In some cases, it legally destroys innocent persons, and in all cases it degrades the humanity of the executioners and of the society that endorses the act.

POVERTY AND STEWARDSHIP

> Jesus said, if you wish to be perfect, go and sell what you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.
>
> *– Matthew 19.21 (JB)*

Those of us fortunate in worldly goods need to be aware of the suffering that poverty imposes on much of humanity. All that we have, spiritual or material, belongs to God and should be used in God's service.

Hundreds of millions of people live in privation hard to imagine here in America. As we seek social justice, we find that physical need is often the root of lawlessness, alienation, oppression, and prejudice.

> We have seen that peace stands on a precarious footing so long as there is unrelieved poverty and subjection. Subjection, poverty, injustice, and war are closely allied. This situation demands sweeping political and economic changes; and we are convinced that the hope of freedom does not lie in violence, which is at its root immoral, but in such changes as may be brought about by fellowship and mutual service.
>
> *– London Yearly Meeting Epistle, 1937*

In the United States millions of people live in poverty without adequate food, shelter, clothing, and medical care; and they are often shamed by the very fact that they need help. Our concern for equality and justice encourages our support of government policies that might alleviate poverty and our involvement in private efforts to extend direct, personal help to friends and neighbors.

Let us reflect on our own participation in an oppressive economic system, remain sensitive to the potentials for violence in the ways we acquire and use material wealth, and consider whether we are gathering more than we need to live examined, committed lives. Accumulation of wealth beyond prudent requirements in a world of dire need may pose a threat to the life of the Spirit. It often leads to an attachment to financial reserves, which may obscure the call to bind up the wounds of the afflicted and to look to God for our true security.

> Our gracious Creator cares and provides for all his creatures. His tender mercies are over all his works; and so far as his love influences our minds, so far we become interested in his workmanship and feel a desire to take hold of every opportunity to lessen the distresses of the afflicted and increase the happiness of the creation. Here we have a prospect of one common interest from which our own is inseparable, that to turn all the treasures we possess into the channel of universal love becomes the business of our lives.
>
> *– John Woolman, A Plea for the Poor, 1763*

We should seek opportunities to make a positive impact on society by supporting socially responsible methods and institutions and avoiding those that oppress others and block a more equitable distribution of wealth. We who have at our disposal or under our direction funds for investment should avoid projects, no matter how rewarding, that might serve anti-social or immoral ends. We should also avoid the illusory benefits of highly speculative schemes or practices that seem, like gambling, to promise something for nothing. Especially we should avoid activities, whether involving money or work, that can bring benefit to us by hurting someone else.

EDUCATION

In the quest for truth, training our minds is one way to improve our understanding of God's world. The home is the primary source of education. Quaker parents take serious responsibility for their roles as parents. Experience, well evaluated, is perhaps the highest form of learning.

We hope schools will be environments of respect, receptivity, and excitement. Friends' schools encourage acceptance of individual differences within a caring community, the development of creativity, and spiritual as well as mental growth. The curriculum should be true to specific facts as well as to the whole of life and should be presented to students with the wonder,

energy, awe, and love that nourish the life of the spirit.

Many Friends are engaged in working to improve public education. We have a concern that schools provide an opportunity for young people to learn to care for each other and to practice the principles of cooperation. We want to talk about teaching methods and content with legislators, school boards, administrators, and teachers.

> The aim of learning, whether it be in a school or at home, is to make whatever testimonies we live by more of a need than a choice.... So that it becomes unthinkable *not* to serve others. So that it becomes unthinkable *not* to consider all humans part of the same family. So that a Schweitzerian "reverence for life" becomes a need rather than a self-conscious choice. Then, perhaps, some of our testimonies may have more meaning.
>
> *– Richard L Eldridge, 1984*

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Spiritual growth is on-going in all parts of our lives. Religious education is a useful part of this growth. It should be carefully planned to meet the needs of varying ages, but everyone in the meeting can help us understand that religion and everyday life are one and the same.

> Do we give our young people, starting well before senior high age, a good grounding in Quaker ideas and activities including worship and the process of business, so that they know what this religion is, and how we are putting our principles into action in our lives and our world?
>
> Do we make it clear what the joys and responsibilities of membership are so that they know what is and isn't expected?
>
> Do we make it clear that we are seeking too?
>
> Do we involve them regularly in activities that

include people of all ages? Do we involve them in the workings of the meeting: committees, planning and running activities including business meetings?

Do we try to keep our business meetings from being “dull, boring, and uninteresting”?

Do our adults know our young people as individuals, not just as a collective group of “them” or as “so-and-so’s children”? Are we really Friends?

Is there joy in our worship, business, first day school, and other activities?

Do we celebrate together?

– New York Yearly Meeting, 1979

Specifically, through a realization of the living presence of God, religious education should enlarge and enrich our lives in such areas of experience as worship, the world of nature, the Bible, the life and teachings of Jesus, the history and testimonies of Quakers, the examples of other great religious leaders, the work and play of the meeting, and sharing with other peoples.

Meetings often appoint a religious education committee. This committee, or the monthly meeting on ministry and counsel, provides guidance and suit able material for classes for children, young persons, and adults. Meeting retreats and conferences provide times to grow spiritually and to expand awareness of the ways of Friends in other places and of people of other faiths.

RESPONDING TO THAT OF GOD IN THE CREATION

"The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof." All things are parts of God’s creation: the air and sky, rocks and minerals, animals and plants, the human race, the order of the universe. All natural resources are God’s gifts, to be held and used by us as a sacred trust.

Our growing knowledge of ecological processes teaches us that abuse of this trust threatens not only our own health and welfare, but the integrity of the earth itself. Economic power made possible by the exploitation of God’s natural gifts domi-

nates much of our political and economic system. We work to counter the effects of this abuse on our politics and environment, since we know that acting responsibly in the wise, careful use of the earth for the benefit of all creation will bring us into harmony not only with the world beyond humanity, but with its creator.

Biblical history describes a covenant of trust and responsibility in which we are to care for the earth as well as to give thanks for all of the creator's gifts. An ecological ministry aims to protect and restore the physical world, to serve the healing processes of the land, and to aid the victims of ecological destruction. We are called to recommit ourselves, joyfully and in love, to this covenant in which both the earth and we ourselves can be sustained by God's care, wisdom, and healing power.

If we listen to the earth, we will hear it proclaim the glory of God. If we enjoy and preserve the earth, it will become our home. And as we unite with creation, we draw ever nearer to God.

HISTORICAL STATEMENT

> The Truth is one and the same always. Though ages and generations pass away – one generation goes and another comes; yet the Word, and the Power, and the Spirit of the Living God endures for ever and changes not.
>
> *– Margaret Fell Fox,*
> *A Brief Collection of Remarkable*
> *Passages Relating to..., 1710*

The seventeenth century in England was a time of great political, economic, and religious vitality, ferment, and upheaval. This century saw the English Civil War and the beheading of Charles I (1649), the Puritan Commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell, and the restoration of the monarchy under Charles II (1660). In religion, it was a period of bitter struggle between the established (Anglican) Church, the remnants of the Roman Catholic Church from which it had separated in 1534, the Puritans, and other Protestant sects. The printing press and newly allowed English translations of the Bible helped intensify this struggle. By the time of George Fox's birth in 1624, more than a century had passed since the beginning of Luther's reformation. The Protestant movement had begun in an attempt to instill a new spiritual life into Christianity, but it had often fallen victim to the rigidity it had earlier criticized in the Roman Catholic Church. Friends were not the first to protest that dogmatic belief had replaced living faith and authoritative Scriptures had replaced direct revelation; many religious groups throughout Europe were discontented with established religion and searched for a living faith.

In this violent, seeking world George Fox in 1652 initiated a vigorous spiritual movement, later called the Religious Society of Friends, that stood in protest against a Christianity that many felt had idolized its forms and lost its inner spiritual life. As it grew and took hold, this movement drew into its fellowship many of those already involved in struggles with organized religions: many Seekers and members of the group called Diggers, and others like Elizabeth Hooten, Isaac Penington, and

John Lilburne, the leader of the Levellers, who found many of their egalitarian aspirations shared among Friends.

THE FOUNDING

George Fox, born the son of a weaver in Leicestershire, England, like others found little to sustain him in contemporary religion. At the age of 19, he began his search for truth and founded a movement that before his death in 1691 numbered over 50,000 members in England alone.

Fox had little formal education but possessed a fertile and active mind. As a youth, he suffered from what he called a "temptation to despair," even of his faith in God. In this spiritual condition he received no help from those clergy he consulted. After several years of seeking and great inward crisis, he received the first of many inner, spiritual illuminations, which he referred to as "openings." He wrote of this experience, one that proved to be the turning point in his search:

> When all my hopes in them [the clergy] and in all men, were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could I tell what to do, then, O! 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.

This was first-hand religious experience like Paul's vision and experience of Christ 1,600 years earlier.

Periods of depression still tempted Fox, but less often. His openings led him in a very personal, direct way into a new life. He reported one of these revelations:

> 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 also I saw the infinite love of God.

Another opening showed him

> That every man 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.

Through these experiences Fox received his life's mission, one centered in the living Christ. In the Old Testament, Fox had read of the prophets' expectation of Christ, and in the New Testament, he had learned of Christ's historical appearance. Now that which he had known by report became his own experience. He knew the Christ Within; he became Christ's disciple. He had come to know the same spirit that those who wrote the Bible had known:

> For though I read the Scriptures that spoke of Christ and of God, yet I knew him not, but by revelation, as He who hath the key did open, and as the Father of life drew me to His Son by His Spirit.

This divine spirit, this inward light, was both illumination and inspiration, a voice to be heard and obeyed. Looking back upon his own experience, Fox declared that anyone who has not experienced the light stands in darkness, regardless of creed or moral righteousness. He preached that Christ had come to teach his people himself.

The mission to which he was called and upon which he entered in the year 1647 was, he wrote, "to turn people to that Inward Light, Spirit, and grace, by which all might know their salvation and their way to God – even that Divine Spirit which would lead them into all truth." His earliest associates were called Children of the Light. "I was sent to turn people away from darkness to the light that they might receive Christ Jesus; for, to as many as should receive him in this light, I saw that he would give power to become sons of God; which power I had obtained by receiving Christ."

The salvation to which he was calling others was not simply

for individuals, just as it was not simply a matter of subjective feeling. He inspired a community that heard and obeyed the voice of God and would be "renewed up again in God's image." He saw his mission as one of Christian renewal in a time of falling away from truth and obedience. He drew his fellow believers from the dissenting sects, the Seekers, and the established church – wherever he found listeners "tender," as he said. They were concerned to live the implications of their faith and testified against war, church taxes, hat honor, the language of privilege and flattery, the use of oaths, and price-bargaining.

Fox's concept of "that of God in every person" was radical in its day not only for sweeping away distinctions of social class, wealth, and race, but for including women fully in the religious and social community as equals. In a time when there was serious argument over whether women had souls, Fox quoted the words of Mary, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour." How could Mary speak thus, he reasoned, if she had no soul? He believed that the dominion of men over women was a result of the fall, but Christ had brought restoration of a "new Eden" where women and men were again equal and "helpsmeet." Because women possessed the Inward Christ just as did men, they had equal measure of the gifts of prophecy and the ability to preach. Many women were drawn to Fox's new movement, and early women Friends, imbued with a sense of participation in that which is holy, and freed and encouraged by their communities and families, developed their gifts in the ministry, often travelling, alone or in pairs, over great distances and sometimes at great risk, to preach, to teach, and to establish meetings.

Early Friends owed much to the enthusiasm, encouragement, spiritual insight, and organizational gifts of Margaret Fell. Born in Lancashire, England, she was a devoted Christian, yet restless and spiritually dissatisfied with the Anglican church she had long attended. On first hearing Fox preach in 1652 she found that his message spoke clearly to her condition. She believed with utter conviction that God's truth was opening the way for the creation of a new religious experience. Her husband, Thomas Fell, a judge of the Assizes, offered their home, Swarthmoor

Hall, for meetings for worship. She made it a haven for those persecuted and suffering for their Quaker beliefs and the center of early efforts to provide encouragement and organized support for travelling ministers. She helped establish the Kendal Fund (1654) to provide early Quaker missionaries with basic necessities. The fund was later expanded to include financial aid to prisoners (who were being charged for their beds), the printing of books, and aid to meetings in their hospitality to visiting Friends. In 1669, eleven years after Thomas Fell's death, Margaret Fell and George Fox married, and together they devoted themselves to the nurture of her children and the organization of the Society of Friends.

In October 1668, after the end of Margaret Fell's imprisonment in Lancaster for holding meetings for worship in her house, the Swarthmoor women's monthly meeting met for the first time. Separate monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings for women eventually came into being throughout the Society. The practice, encouraged by George Fox and other men Friends, lasted into the twentieth century and was a means for women's social education as well as a considered and careful way for Friends to listen to God's leadings.

Margaret and her daughters wrote detailed instructions for conducting business meetings. They also organized Friends' marriage procedure: while family and community approval and support were considered vital to marriage, the partners gave themselves to one another; the woman was not "given" by her father, as though a possession of which he had the right to dispose.

THE SPREAD OF THE MOVEMENT

Following his leading on the importance of "gospel order" for the emerging community, George Fox as early as 1652 began to encourage his followers to set up their own worship meetings. Soon monthly meetings for business were established. In 1656 he organized men's quarterly meetings. What is now Britain Yearly Meeting began to meet regularly in 1668. The Meet-

ing for Sufferings was established to aid the victims of persecution and soon became the general executive body of Friends in Britain.

Fox and his early followers variously called themselves Children of the Light, First Publishers of Truth, and Friends of Truth. Because of their religious enthusiasm, they were later called Quakers, a name that Fox himself disliked. Their movement for renewal of the community of Christ spread with great rapidity in England and from there to the other parts of Europe and to the American colonies. Authorities often reacted harshly, partly because of Friends' uncompromising attitudes and their refusal to follow the customary patterns of social life. Because they refused to take oaths at a time when oaths were a test of loyalty to the Commonwealth and later to the monarchy, and also because they refused to attend or pay tithes to the Church of England, Friends were imprisoned by the thousands. Due to the extreme hardships imposed on them, some 450 died in England under this persecution.

In the New World, mistreatment was most harsh in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, where Marmaduke Stevenson and William Robinson had been hanged in 1659, as were Mary Dyer and William Leddra a few months later. Out of their desire to have a safe haven in the colonies, Friends bought West Jersey in 1674. William Penn obtained Pennsylvania in 1681, and he and other Friends obtained East Jersey the following year. Friends also controlled Rhode Island, North Carolina, and Barbados at various times and tried to govern all these colonies according to Friends' principles.

The worst of Friends' sufferings in England and the colonies came to an end with the Act of Toleration of 1689.

EARLY FRIENDS IN THE NEW YORK AREA

The first Friend known to have a permanent residence in the New York area was Richard Smith, who lived in Southampton, Long Island, in 1654. In 1657, the ship Woodhouse, a tiny ves-

sel with a Quaker captain, brought a group of eleven Friends to New Amsterdam, where five remained while the others proceeded to Rhode Island. Several of the former went to Long Island, which was largely settled by English people, many of them Anabaptists who had fled Massachusetts Bay to obtain religious freedom. From these seeking people Friends received a warm welcome. Lady Deborah Moody, of Gravesend, now in Brooklyn, had to violate the law to open her home for Friends' meetings. In 1657 New Netherlands' Governor Peter Stuyvesant began to persecute Friends in order to drive them out of the colony. He forbade religious meetings except those of the Dutch Reformed Church. As a result, residents of Flushing drew up the Flushing Remonstrance in that same year, protesting against the curtailment of their liberties as granted by charter. John Bowne allowed Friends to meet in his house in Flushing in 1661, the year he built it. (It still stands as a memorial.) The following year, he was arrested, fined, and imprisoned. He refused to pay the fine, so he was sent for further discipline to Holland. Acquitted, he returned to America in 1663 with a letter instructing the governor to halt religious persecution. In this way, religious freedom came to New Amsterdam twenty-six years before the English Toleration Act.

The first known meeting in Manhattan took place in 1671, the same year that Friends set up meetings in Oyster Bay, Matinecock, and Westbury, Long Island. The visit of George Fox in the following year acted as a spur to the spread of Quakerism in the colonies. Fox called meetings and preached on Long Island, Shelter Island, and at Shrewsbury, New Jersey. Thirty years later, in 1702, some 2,000 persons attended the half-yearly meeting at Flushing. The first organized yearly meeting in the colonies was New England, in 1661. The New York Yearly Meeting was set up at the New England Yearly Meeting in 1695; its first meetings were in 1696.

SOCIAL ISSUES

One area of increasing concern, the growing opposition to slavery, brought tensions and controversy among Friends as they

wrestled with their varied attitudes to the problem. In 1688, a letter opposing slavery was brought before the Germantown, Pennsylvania, Monthly Meeting. Though action was deferred, it appears that this was the first protest against slavery raised by any religious group in America. In 1711, the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting influenced the then Quaker-controlled Pennsylvania Assembly to forbid the importation of slaves, but the Crown failed to approve it. John Woolman (1720-1772) was one of the strongest witnesses against the traffic and holding of slaves and played a large role in persuading Friends to free their slaves.

William Burling of Flushing expressed the first recorded concern on the subject of slavery in New York Yearly Meeting in 1718. No action was taken at that time, but in 1767 the Oblong Monthly Meeting reopened the concern with the Purchase Quarterly Meeting. The yearly meeting considered this issue in 1776, and in 1777 directed New York Friends to manumit their slaves. By 1790, it appears that no Friends in the United States owned slaves, and many were actively working for abolition. Among these were several women, notably Lucretia Coffin Mott (1793-1880) and Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906), who, even before the end of the Civil War, worked with other women for peace, temperance, and rights for women.

After 1750, the French and Indian Wars in America resulted in Friends concluding that they must withdraw from active involvement in government in order to maintain the peace testimony. In its militia law of 1755, New York's provincial government exempted Quakers from service on payment of a fee. This arrangement was unacceptable to the Quakers. However, in complying with the authorities' demand for lists of those Friends eligible for the exemption, the monthly meetings provided the first semblance of membership lists of the Society in New York. Later, the War for Independence further separated Quakers from their neighbors as most Friends attempted to maintain a neutral position, neither Patriot nor Loyalist.

As the abolition movement came increasingly to accept violent means to root out the evil of slavery, Friends were under

great stress trying to maintain their testimony against war. During the Civil War, meetings disowned a number of Friends for violating the testimony against war by serving in the armed forces even though they were upholding that against slavery.

Although many Friends were active in social reform movements, many others, influenced by the Quietism spreading through other sects, gradually dissociated themselves from worldly issues and lessened active witness in and to the world. They began to emphasize the care of the individual soul and the meeting. Friends formed their own close communities, holding to their pacifist witness and the customs that set them off as a "peculiar people," and sought the guidance of God in their inner lives. They stressed the belief in absolute human helplessness before God and our tendency toward error and evil when we act in our own wisdom. Friends in worship waited in silence for the inner movement of God's spirit to reprove, guide, and strengthen them; and they came to value their meetings more for the quality of the silence than for the quality of the ministry. They considered each individual an instrument upon whom God plays, an instrument whose usefulness to God would become apparent only through self-negation and quiet waiting.

Friends tried to witness for God's peaceable kingdom within their communities, and each yearly meeting came to adopt a book of discipline that provided the basis for sound Quaker business and social structure. The advices and queries contained within these disciplines gave guidance for corporate and personal conduct without establishing a creed. But as Friends became more insular and self-contained, they paid much attention to prescribing and enforcing rules of behavior. Such rules as forbidding marriage to non-members resulted in the disownment of valuable members and the alienation of many others.

A markedly greater number of women became active in the ministry during this time. Meetings formally recognized the call to ministry in many men and women; these ministers were nurtured by the increased emphasis on care for the individual soul and often felt inward calls to visit other meetings. Friends, even in areas very far from other settlements, kept in touch with each

other by means of these travelling ministers. The travellers themselves helped gather into meetings with Friends persons who felt Christ's light. The practice of appointing younger Friends as companions to travelling ministers afforded a kind of apprenticeship in the ministry. Several generations found themselves stronger Friends because of these visits in their youth.

Friends had already been concerned and involved in education. They extended this concern to those whom society excluded from schooling – females, blacks, and Indians – despite opposition from the non-Quaker community and from the Indians themselves. As early as 1779, the New York Yearly Meeting recommended that the quarterly and monthly meetings establish schools for Friends' children. In 1791, several were in operation, and in that same year the yearly meeting called on preparative meetings to establish schools. Friends Seminary in New York City opened in 1786. The Nine Partners Boarding School, founded in 1796 as the yearly meeting school, preceded the Friends Academy at Union Springs, opened in 1858, which in 1920 moved to Poughkeepsie as the present Oakwood Friends School.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, New York Yearly Meeting Friends helped found several other schools: the New York City public schools in the early 1800s, Brooklyn Friends School (1867), Friends Academy in Locust Valley (1877), the Westbury Friends School (1957), Friends World College (1965), and the Mary McDowell Center (1983), in Brooklyn. Some of them continue under the care of Friends.

DIVISIONS IN THE SOCIETY

American Friends faced a new set of issues in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The United States during this period became a nation, and the spread of liberalism and democracy increasingly challenged authoritarian regimes. Methodism had spread across England and the United States; it brought religious enthusiasm and disciplined living to many people and stirred up many Friends' groups.

By 1825 many Friends' meetings seemed to share the spiritual inertia that had characterized the English churches when George Fox began to preach. Rather than encouraging vital spiritual experience, Quakerism had become largely a religion of habit and form that held to a glorious past without its substance. Behind this complacency, however, were tensions; first, between historical Christian beliefs and the assertion of the primacy of the Inward Light of Christ, with its degree of freedom from some commonly-held traditions of historical Christianity; second, the elders' enforcement in some meetings of rules that others saw as intrusive; third, social-class and urban-rural differences of thought and behavior. In some meetings Friends bore all these tensions, as generally orthodox-Christian, elder-supporting, richer, urban Friends and Inward-Light-oriented, elder-questioning, less-well-off, rural ones acrimoniously and resentfully opposed each other. As Friends confronted the world less and concentrated more on their beliefs, these tensions grew and separated Friends from Friends in several bitter divisions over the years. Some opposed these separations and continued communication between otherwise estranged Friends.

The first of these separations arose around the testimony of Elias Hicks (1748-1830) of Long Island. He taught, very persuasively, that the Indwelling Christ is the heart and center of Quakerism. This he believed to be original Quaker teaching as well as expressive of his own experience. Others, influenced partly by several visiting British Friends, were concerned that the teaching of Hicks left out what they considered essentials of historic Quaker faith, especially its relation to the historic Jesus and the Bible. Conflict broke into the open in the early 1820s and caused the separation of five yearly meetings into two groups: the "Hicksites," who emphasized the Christ Within; and the "Orthodox," who emphasized the historical Christ Jesus. The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting was the first to divide (1827), followed by New York, Ohio, Indiana, and Baltimore (1828).

A later controversy, centering on Joseph John Gurney (1788-1847) and John Wilbur (1774-1856), led to further separation among Orthodox Friends. Gurney stood for the authority of the Bible and the necessity for its careful study, the use of evange-

listic methods, and reliance upon the atonement of Jesus Christ. Wilbur, feeling himself the defender of the original Quaker message, held to the infallibility of the Inward Light and stood for a less theological, non-evangelical type of Quakerism. This led to divisions into Gurneyite (still called Orthodox) and Wilburite (or Conservative) yearly meetings in New England in 1845 and later in New York (1853) and other yearly meetings.

GROWTH AND RECONCILIATION

In the late 1700s Friends from the Philadelphia and New York yearly meetings had settled in Ontario. They set up monthly meetings that became affiliated with the New York Yearly Meeting, underwent three separations, and eventually became the Canadian Yearly Meeting. New York Yearly Meeting Friends also settled and set up meetings in Michigan. During the nineteenth century many Friends moved into newly-opened western territories and established yearly meetings. Because Friends could worship without pastors, their meetings were often the first religious gatherings in new communities and became the centers of religious life, often with many attenders who had no background in Quakerism. The roots of programmed worship and evangelical Quakerism go back to this time, as the demand arose among Quakers for trained leadership, and as other vigorous Protestant movements, especially Wesleyan Methodism, spread across the United States. Quaker revivalism, which started in 1860 among young Orthodox Friends in Richmond, Indiana, added many new members and further increased the desire for schooled leaders. In the twentieth century some strongly evangelical meetings, dissatisfied with what they considered to be too liberal tendencies in other Orthodox meetings, drew away from the latter to form their own yearly meetings and an international association of them.

In the eastern United States the mid-1800s was a time of precipitous decline in the number of Friends' meetings and in their vigor. Outside of Philadelphia the Orthodox countered this trend by instituting revivalistic methods and by adopting the pastoral system. The Hicksites were slower to respond to the challenge

but did begin to foster First-Day Schools, to found new schools and a college, to expand philanthropic activities, and, in the closing years of the century, to institute biennial national educational conferences.

The hiring of full-time pastors was initiated in Glens Falls, New York, in 1875. This practice was later followed by most Orthodox meetings outside of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. There are several pastoral meetings in the New York Yearly Meeting. Most meetings adopting pastoral or programmed patterns of worship and ministry did not use liturgies, formulated prayers, or litanies and creeds and refrained from observing sacraments. These meetings added music, spoken prayers, Bible readings, offerings, and prepared messages, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. In recent years, some pastoral or programmed meetings have included more silence in worship and invited active participation of worshippers in vocal ministry and prayer. Meetings or churches of Evangelical Friends International, most of the meetings of Friends United Meeting, and some of those affiliated with both Friends United Meeting and Friends General Conference have this kind of programmed worship. Conservative Friends, most of those who affiliate with Friends General Conference, and many of the unaffiliated groups have unprogrammed worship, during which the worshippers gather in silent waiting out of which may arise vocal messages or prayer from any of the participants as they feel led.

After the First World War, many people who had not grown up in the Society began to come to meetings for worship. Some had attended Friends' schools, others knew about the newly-tested peace testimony and Friends' ambulance and social work during and after the war, and others sought non-liturgical worship and non-hierarchical religion. This attraction to the Society continued and grew after the Second World War and during the Korean and Vietnam Wars. New groups of Friends gathered in long-disused meeting houses. Independent groups, often in college or university towns, worshipped without the sponsorship of any existing meetings. As the Society changed, some unprogrammed meetings became programmed and vice versa. Others changed their yearly meeting affiliation. New Friends

often instigated reunions of meetings, or new meetings joined both the Friends General Conference and the Friends United Meeting. All gradually began to welcome convinced Friends, members who had come into the Society as adults, as had the first generation of Friends. In spite of this, through the century, the number of recorded members of meetings in this area has steadily declined.

A transformation came with these new attenders, who did not feel bound by history or family ties to the Society's traditions and who often thought some of Friends' traditional ways confined the life of the spirit unnecessarily. They felt attracted to Friends' commitment to go into the world to mend it, and they wanted to live the other testimonies, which they had found anew. But some of these new attenders were antipathetic to the religious traditions of their youth and to some of the commonly-held Christian ideas, language, and assumptions of many Friends. Further, increased mobility changed the nature of the closeness of meetings as Friends moved more frequently and transferred their membership to other meetings.

The newcomers' concerns for peace, education, equal and civil rights, and for people who are poor brought still more people to Friends. The anti-war and civil rights movements in this country beginning in the 1940s grew from the inspiration of people who found war, segregation, and poverty evil and incomprehensible, many of them new Friends, and many of these former soldiers or sailors or people who had lived or worked in multi-ethnic communities. The later feminist and gay-rights movements also drew many Friends determined to reflect their convictions in meeting life as well.

In recent years, this yearly meeting has become more diverse in ethnic background and schooling. Many came into the Society divorced or remarried or became so as members. Some came seeking the inward power and religious authority they missed elsewhere. Many new attenders came to meetings that offered child-care and children's classes. A number of gay men and lesbians joined; others found their orientation as members. As with many faith groups, this yearly meeting has struggled in recent

years to discern God's will with respect to changing sexual mores, attitudes towards marriage, and family patterns. In particular, many have challenged Friends to affirm committed gay and lesbian relationships and the possibility of same-sex marriages. Up to this point, the yearly meeting has not united on this issue, and Friends have dedicated ourselves to continue the search for unity in faith and hope that God will eventually answer our prayers if we are faithful to an honest and open search for divine guidance. As a result of these various developments, the Religious Society of Friends, particularly in the United States, includes individuals, monthly meetings, and yearly meetings that differ significantly in theological beliefs and in method of worship. But we remain united in the belief George Fox expressed, that there is that of God in everyone, and that our intimate communion with the Living Christ or Inward Light can change and revitalize our individual and corporate lives.

QUAKER GROUPS

Three organizations have formed to join in loose confederation those yearly meetings that stand in general agreement with one another: Friends General Conference, Friends United Meeting, and Evangelical Friends International.

The Friends General Conference was organized in 1900 as an association of Hicksite meetings to provide a channel of coordination for them. Today it includes any Quaker meeting interested in the services it provides, such as religious education materials and annual conferences.

Friends United Meeting (formerly the Five Years Meeting) comprises many Orthodox and United meetings worldwide. It had its origins in conferences held in Richmond, Indiana, in 1887 and 1892, at which approval was given for a declaration of faith. Friends made plans at the same time to develop Friends' missionary activities that have, amongst other things, supported the founding and gathering of Friends' meetings in East Africa, India, China, Japan, Central America, the Caribbean, and the Middle East. Eleven yearly meetings adopted the Five Years

Meeting's Uniform Discipline of 1901.

In 1965, the Evangelical Friends Alliance (now Evangelical Friends International) formed to draw together evangelical yearly meetings that place more emphasis on the Holy Spirit and the inspired rule of the Bible and less on the Light Within. They focus on the importance of salvation and of Jesus Christ's atonement for our sins. These Friends place great emphasis on evangelical outreach; they are especially active in foreign missions in central Africa, Alaska, Bolivia, and China and are also active in peace work.

In addition to these formally organized groups, there are three Conservative yearly meetings – Iowa, North Carolina, and Ohio – that have been meeting together as led since 1965. Several independent yearly meetings, as well as a number of monthly meetings of Friends, have no formal affiliation to these larger groups.

Some of the distinctions among groups of Friends have lessened as the heat of past controversies has subsided, and Friends of all persuasions have discovered much in common through opportunities to join together in service. As far back as 1690, Friends supplied food to military prisoners during the troubles in Ireland. In 1917, soon after the United States entered the First World War, Rufus M. Jones and other Friends formed the American Friends' Service Committee with the double purpose of sending relief workers abroad and assisting those at home who were conscientious objectors to war. Friends from various yearly meetings helped provide support and personnel for this work. After the war, the work continued and enlarged in scope to address a wide variety of issues, such as housing, disarmament, immigrant rights, and racism. Just as the Religious Society of Friends has experienced deep differences over certain issues, so too some Friends have felt estranged from some of the AFSC's positions and actions on public issues. The Service Committee continues to reach out to these Friends and to attempt to clarify the Quaker basis of its witness in the world today.

Many yearly meetings participate in the work of the Friends

Committee on National Legislation, formed in 1943 to help translate Quaker concerns into public policy.

American Friends, along with Friends everywhere, join in the activities of the Friends World Committee for Consultation, founded at a world conference at Swarthmore and Haverford Colleges in Pennsylvania in 1937. The Committee encourages communication and intervisitation among Friends around the world, who now number 200,000 in more than 85 yearly meetings in 37 countries. World gatherings are held every few years at locations all over the globe.

REUNION

Informal cooperation in these agencies and in other ways has, in some instances, led to reunion of some of the the yearly meetings that split in the 1800s: New England, Canada, Philadelphia, New York, and Baltimore. Except for Philadelphia, these reunited meetings now affiliate with both the Friends General Conference and Friends United Meeting.

The reunion of the two New York Yearly Meetings – Hicksite and Orthodox – took place in 1955. It soon included the few Friends living in New York State who were members of the Canada Conservative Yearly Meeting and Genesee Yearly Meeting, a meeting set up in 1834 to include Hicksite meetings in Western New York and in Canada. The epistle of the reunited yearly meeting, announcing our longed-for healing, follows:

GENERAL EPISTLE TO FRIENDS EVERYWHERE

Dear Friends:

This is the message of our love.

We have been united with you this week in closer fellowship which transcended our diversity, as New York Yearly Meeting became again one body of Friends.

We wish to share with you our joy that the way to unity has been found.

We shall continue to share our differences, which serve a useful purpose. God does not ask us for conformity, but calls us to unity, in obedience to the leadings of the spirit.

We seek to recapture the radiance of simple, uncomplicated love ... such love as will resist evil without violence, without hatred of the wrongdoer, and without compromise.

To the false standards of our time we would offer the greatest opposition, combined with the greatest love. To the lonely seekers in this hurried and soul-hiding world, we would say, “Dear Friends, we are walking beside you ... seekers, too.”

Have lovingkindness toward one another. Have faith in the Lord, and he will help you.

– signed on behalf of New York Yearly Meeting,
Horace R. Stubbs, Alfred J. Henderson, clerks, August 4, 1955

THE BALBY EPISTLE

The elders who assembled at Balby, in the north of England, in 1656 wrote twenty “advices,” which included the first detailed directions about what to do in certain circumstances such as when “any person draw back from meetings and walk disorderly.” Their epistle, which follows, prepared the ground for later books of discipline.

To help us understand something of our heritage, this book of discipline contains this early statement of Friends' principles. Yet it is important to re-examine these advices in the Light as we know it and to restate them freshly in the language of today. There will continue to be revisions of our discipline so that the words of this volume and the rewordings of future times serve the same spirit and reinterpret the same truth.

ADVICES FROM THE ELDERS AT BALBY

1. The settled meetings to be kept each first-day. General Meetings, as a rule to be on some other day of the week.

2. As any are brought in to the Truth new meetings are to be arranged to suit the general convenience, without respect of persons.

3. Persons ceasing to attend meetings are to be spoken to. Persons who walk disorderly are to be spoken to in private, then before two or three witnesses; then, if necessary, the matter is to be reported to the Church. The Church is to reprove them for their disorderly walking, and, if they do not reform, the case is to be sent in writing "to some whom the Lord hath raised up in the power of the Spirit of the Lord to be fathers, – His children to gather in the light" so that the thing may be known to the body and be determined in the light.

4. Ministers to speak the word of the Lord from the mouth of the Lord, without adding or diminishing. If anything is spoken out of the light so that "the seed of God" comes to be burdened,

it is to be dealt with in private and not in the public meetings, "except there be a special moving to do so."

5. Collections to be made for the poor, the relief of prisoners, and other necessary uses, the moneys to be carefully accounted for, and applied as made known by the overseers in each meeting.

6. Care to be taken "for the families and goods of such as are called forth in the ministry, or are imprisoned for the Truth's sake; that no creature be lost for want of caretakers."

7. Intentions of marriage to be made known to the Children of Light, especially those of the meeting where the parties are members. The marriage to be solemnized in the fear of the Lord, and before many witnesses, after the example of scripture, and a record to be made in writing, to which the witnesses may subscribe their names.

8. Every meeting to keep records of births, or of burials of the dead that died in the Lord. Burials to be conducted according to scripture, and not after customs of "heathen."

9. Advice to husbands and wives, as in I Peter iii:7. Advice to parents and children, as in Ephesians vi:1-4.

10. Advice to servants and masters, as in Ephesians vi:5-9.

11. Care to be taken "that none who are servants depart from their masters, but as they do see in the light: nor any master put away his servant but by the like consent of the servant; and if any master or servant do otherwise in their wills, it is to be judged by Friends in the light."

12. Needs of widows and fatherless to be supplied: – such as can work and do not be admonished, and if they refuse to work, neither let them eat. The children of needy parents to be put to honest employment.

13. Any called before outward powers of the nation are to obey.

14. "That if any be called to serve the Commonwealth in any public service which is for the public wealth and good, that with cheerfulness it be undertaken and in faithfulness discharged unto God, that therein patterns and examples in the thing that is righteous yet may be to those that are without."

15. Friends in callings and trades are to be faithful and upright, and keep to yea and nay. Debts to be punctually paid, that nothing they may owe to any man but love one to another.

16. None to speak evil of another, nor grudge against another, nor put a stumbling-block in his brother's way.

17. None to be busybodies in others' matters.

18. Christian moderation to be used towards all men.

19. The elders made by the Holy Ghost are to feed the flock, taking the oversight willingly, not as lords, but as examples to the flock.

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 may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not from the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.

ADVICES AND QUERIES

It is recommended that the following advices and queries be read at a meeting at least twice during the calendar year. The reading of them should remind us that all aspects of our lives are regarded as under divine guidance.

ADVICES

1. From the beginnings of our Society, we have considered it necessary to assemble frequently for the purpose of public worship held in expectant waiting for divine guidance, thereby manifesting our belief in and dependence upon our creator. Meeting for worship is fundamental for us, and we should be diligent and punctual in our attendance. We seek, through communion with God, the strengthening influence of the Holy Spirit to enable us to discharge with fidelity the services we owe to God, to each other, and to all people.

2. Friends are advised to read frequently the Scriptures and such other books as will inspire and instruct, and to encourage the practice by their families and others.

3. Friends are advised to be mindful of their conduct and conversation and to observe the testimonies of simplicity and moderation.

4. Friends are advised to observe our Christian testimony for a faithful ministry of the gospel under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Members are reminded that all have a responsibility in ministry.

5. Remembering the tenderness of Jesus for children, we recommend that parents and those who have the important charge of educating youth exercise a loving and watchful care over them. Meetings are urged to help parents and children share religious experiences at home and in the meeting for worship and to give them an understanding of the principles and practices of Friends.

6. Parents and older Friends are advised to be sensitive to the insights of younger people and to keep a close and sympathetic contact with them. Children are urged to love and respect their parents that all may be led together to the Light Within.

7. Friends are advised to work toward removing the causes of misery and suffering. They are urged to support efforts to overcome racial, social, economic, and educational discrimination; to bear testimony against all forms of oppression; to exert influence for such treatment of prisoners as may help reconstruct their lives; and to work for the abolition of the death penalty.

8. Friends are earnestly advised to refrain from practices that are detrimental to the body or the mind, for example, the use of intoxicants and tobacco, and the misuse of drugs.

9. Care should be taken that all of our members avoid participation in lotteries, gambling, and betting, including such schemes of chance that appeal as benevolences. Friends should refrain from hazardous speculation and are cautioned against engaging in business that may be questionable. They are responsible for the manner of acquiring, using, and disposing of their possessions.

10. Friends are advised to observe integrity in their living and to inspect frequently the state of their temporal affairs. In their dealings with everyone they should endeavor to maintain a truly Christian character, ever bearing in mind the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

11. In the contemplation of marriage, Friends should seek divine guidance. Marriage is a life-long union of spiritual as well as temporal concerns and presents considerations of vital importance. When two persons are united in their religious faith, they are likely to find not only a firmer bond of union but also greater strength in fulfilling all of life's undertakings. Therefore, Friends contemplating marriage should early acquaint their families and meetings with their intentions, seeking their approval, that they may avoid the far-reaching consequences of hasty and ill-considered action. It is tenderly recommended that

Friends keep to the simple and solemn form of our marriage ceremony.

12. The attention of Friends is called to the propriety of conducting funerals and memorial meetings in a sincere spirit of worship. They are advised to avoid the display of floral decorations and the wearing of mourning and to adhere to our simple ceremony.

13. It is recommended that Friends take the opportunity, on occasions when special statements or oaths are required, to advance the cause of truth by simple affirmation, thus emphasizing that their statement is only a part of their usual integrity of speech.

14. Friends are earnestly cautioned against the taking of arms against any person, since "all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons" are contrary to our Christian testimony. Friends should beware of supporting preparations for war even indirectly, and should examine in this light such matters as non-combatant military service, cooperation with conscription, employment or investment in war industries, and voluntary payment of war taxes. When their actions are carefully considered, Friends must be prepared to accept the consequences of their convictions. Friends are advised to maintain our testimony against war by endeavoring to exert an influence in favor of peaceful principles and the settlement of all differences by peaceful methods. They should lend support to all that strengthens international friendship and understanding and give active help to movements that substitute cooperation and justice for force and intimidation.

15. All are especially cautioned against any harshness of tone or manner when administering counsel or reproof, either privately or in meetings. Friends should speak truth with love, remembering that if they would do God's work, they must abide in God's love. Even a seeming harshness may check the beginnings of true repentance, and a lack of sympathy may cause harm where only good was intended.

16. Friends' business meetings are meetings for worship with a concern for business. When there seems to be disagreement, a free expression of all opinions should be encouraged. Those who speak in meetings for business are advised not to be unduly persistent in advocacy or opposition, but, after having fully expressed their views, to recognize the generally expressed sense of the meeting. A deep and seeking silence can help to reconcile seemingly opposing points of view. Meetings should be conducted in the spirit of wisdom, forbearance, and love.

QUERIES

1. Are meetings for worship and business held in expectant waiting for divine guidance? Are we regular and punctual in attendance? Are we willing and faithful in the service of our meeting and in financial support of its activities?

2. Do we make opportunity in our daily lives for communion with God and the opening of our hearts to an awareness of the Christ Within? Are we thankful for each day as an opportunity for a new adventure of life with God?

3. Are we careful that our ministry is under the leading of the Holy Spirit? Are we concerned to take time for the study of Scripture and other writings of spiritual value? Are we concerned for the spiritual growth of one another?

4. Are love and unity fostered among us? If differences arise, do we endeavor to reconcile them in a spirit of love and truth? Are we careful not to manipulate and exploit one another? Do we avoid talebearing, and are we careful of the reputation of others?

5. Do we keep to moderation and simplicity in our daily lives? Have we allowed the acquisition of possessions to interfere with God's purpose for us? Are our homes places where the presence of God is felt by those who live there and those who visit there? Do we choose such recreations as are wholesome and consistent with Christian character? Are we careful in our choice of ways to use our time and energy?

6. Do our children receive the loving care of the meeting? Does the influence of the meeting promote their religious life and give them an understanding of the principles and practices of Friends? Do we offer our young people opportunities for fellowship, for service, for religious instruction, and for participation in the life of the meeting?

7. Do our vocations provide constructive and beneficial service? Do we observe integrity in our business transactions? Do

we avoid involving ourselves beyond our ability to manage? Are we careful to conduct our affairs punctually, justly, and honorably? Do we avoid participation in lotteries, betting, and gambling?

8. Have we confronted our own decisions about our use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, and do we encourage others to do likewise? Have we considered the cost in human suffering that might result from such use?

9. Do we participate actively and intelligently in the political life of our country? Are we conscientious in fulfilling all obligations of state and society that are not contrary to the leading of God? Do we do all in our power to secure civil rights for all? Do we emphasize the single standard of truth, and are we free from the use of oaths?

10. Do we support measures to avoid pollution of air and water? Do we support measures to establish the conservation and right use of natural resources?

11. Do we foster reverence for life? Do we strive to find, to understand, and to remove causes of misery and suffering? Do we, in loving concern, extend assistance to those who require it?

12. Do we acknowledge the oneness of humanity and foster a loving spirit toward all people? Do we honor Friends' traditional testimony that men and women are equal? How do we work to make these ideals a reality?

13. Do we maintain Friends' testimony against war? Do we "live in the virtue of that life and power which takes away the occasion of all wars"? Are we exerting our influence in favor of settlement of all differences by truly nonviolent methods? Do we strive to transmit to everyone an understanding of the basis of our peace testimony?

14. Do we make ourselves available in a tender and caring way when we sense a need for assistance in time of trouble? Do we

trust each other enough to make our needs known to someone in our meeting?

15. Do we partake of the joy of the love of God and make our lives a celebration of the sharing of this love? Do our daily lives so demonstrate Friends' testimonies as to commend them to others?

PART TWO – PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE

1 - ORGANIZATION AND BUSINESS PROCEDURE

> Dwell in the pure, peaceable, heavenly wisdom of God, that is gentle and easy to be entreated, that is full of mercy;all striving to be of one mind, heart, soul, and judgement in Christ, having his mind and spirit dwelling in you, building up one another with the love of God....
>
> *– George Fox, 1690 epistle*

Their fellowship in Christ led early Friends to a vision of the kingdom of God that soon found expression in the arrangement of monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings we have now. Their choice of the term Society gives a clear indication of their attitude towards organization. To them, the word Society meant a body held together by the spirit of Christ freshly operating through each individual, without creed, ritual, or outward sacraments. The indwelling Christ is its head, and there is no human intermediary between the individual and God.

Although each of us must ultimately follow personal leadings as to truth and duty, experience has shown that the movement of the spirit may transcend and transform the knowledge and judgement of individuals. Each member's spiritual discernment is sharpened by the stimulus, counsel, and judgement of all.

Friends believe that God's presence and guidance are available to all seekers. We should listen attentively to, and reflect on, the messages and views of all members.

A. General Business Procedures

In the transaction of business the same reverent waiting upon the Lord should prevail as in meetings for worship. Friends should give patient and sympathetic consideration to all proposals and expression of opinion. We reach decisions through a sense of the meeting rather than by vote.

The meeting for worship with a concern for business provides an opportunity for consideration of individual concerns. The meeting may choose to act corporately on such concerns.

However, if the meeting does not feel that it can adopt a concern as part of the corporate policy of the meeting, it may authorize the person who has proposed it to proceed as an individual, with the clear understanding that the name of the meeting is not to be involved. In this case the meeting will usually offer prayerful support and provide guidance or counsel. Where circumstances warrant, it may provide financial assistance for the individual or the individual's family.

When an individual lays a concern before a meeting, much depends upon the degree of the concern and the care that Friend takes in advance to develop the idea by prayerful consideration and by testing it in conversation with other Friends. Much depends too upon the openness and sensitivity of the group and its willingness to accept new ideas that have merit, once they have been properly proposed and weighed in the meeting for business. The Quaker business procedure rests on faith that God is giving a measure of Light to everyone. It follows that people may come to know God's leading through others' experience as well as their own. One of the deeply spiritual experiences of Quakerism comes when a meeting for business responds to the essential goodness and truth in a well-proposed concern with an awesome silence and then messages of approval.

There should be a willingness to speak or be silent as led. Friends should rely on the power of the spirit of truth and seek to keep their speech simple and straightforward. If the meeting is to reach a group decision, participants need considerable personal discipline and an allowance for humble or tentative conclusions.

Such a method is not without tensions, but these can be creative if partisanship and self-interest are subordinated to the authority of God's Spirit. What may seem to be minority positions at first, if taken into account with humility and loving patience, often lead to completely unforeseen conclusions. Friends

may differ in their judgement of the suitability of an action, some favoring caution, others wishing to move forward more adventurously, but with perseverance a decision satisfactory to the entire group will be arrived at.

In deliberations of this kind, tradition has no value merely for its own sake, and Friends should not allow it to become a dead weight. But tradition may represent the judgement and testing of time, and it is well to evaluate thoroughly and carefully any radically new departure.

There needs to be constant reference to the standard of the witness and teaching of Jesus and the relevance of this for our time. A meeting for business should remain close to divine guidance, and, if Friends show no clear direction on a matter or lose their leading and wander off into argument, a period of silent waiting on God can show the way. The words of those who speak after prayerful consideration have a different quality and purpose from words uttered in dispute. It is Quaker custom, too, for persons who have once expressed their views clearly and adequately not to address the meeting again.

Friends should not allow the meeting for business to become entangled in minor or trivial decisions. These can divert the meeting from dealing adequately with matters of greater spiritual import. Minor matters are often more divisive, too, than major decisions and can well be delegated to an appropriate person or committee for disposition.

The meeting for business names a clerk who convenes and conducts its sessions. As with any Friends' appointment, this office carries no arbitrary authority. The clerk is the servant of the meeting attempting to record the collective will of the business session. The clerk will find it easier to execute this task and prepare the agenda if committee clerks and others with business to bring before the meeting consult the clerk in advance.

In conducting the business meeting, the clerk's concern should be to facilitate worshipful consideration of matters before Friends. The clerk needs to remain objective and neutral, listen-

ing carefully to all who speak and being sensitive to those who may keep silent. If Friends should fall into dispute or fail to keep to the point, it is the responsibility of the clerk to remind them, corporately or individually, of their proper focus. The clerk should keep Friends mindful of the time without "rushing the spirit." Most importantly, the clerk must be alert to when unity has been reached, suggesting a minute to express the sense of the meeting. When approved in its original or modified form, it becomes a part of the permanent record of the meeting and is accepted by the members as final unless called up for reconsideration.

It is the privilege of any member to offer a substitute for the clerk's minute. The meeting may approve, modify, or reject it in exactly the same manner as if the clerk had submitted it.

When a meeting cannot unite upon a minute, the old policy remains unchanged, and the subject is dropped or deferred.

Although Friends' business procedure frequently requires more time and patience than voting, the results are generally more satisfactory to all concerned. One may not find it easy to give way to someone else or another point of view, but when the Spirit of God is moving in a meeting, Friends are awakened to a new revelation of truth.

B. General Organizational Structure

Friends' organization follows the historic pattern of monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings, these terms being related to the frequency with which various groups meet to consider business matters. In practice these terms have also acquired parallel geographic significance as local, regional, and general meetings, respectively, representing progressively widespread assemblages of the membership. Over the years Friends have used a variety of other descriptive names of meetings to identify different functional subdivisions or combinations of the membership and different times of meetings for business. Succeeding sections describe these.

The fundamental working unit in matters of business is the local group, known usually as the monthly meeting. This meeting has primary responsibility for meetings for worship and for relations among individual members, such as receiving applications and recording membership, approving and overseeing marriages, and providing pastoral care. An executive meeting is in all respects the equivalent of a monthly meeting, except for the frequency of its business meetings.

A monthly meeting sometimes comprises two or more congregations holding separate meetings for worship and organized as preparative meetings. These have limited authority to conduct business mainly related to local property and finances, and to the preparation of business for submission to the monthly meeting.

Two or more monthly meetings in the same area usually form a quarterly meeting in order to worship and counsel together and conduct business of common interest and concern. Equivalent meetings in scope and responsibility are half-yearly meetings and regional meetings.

Two or more quarterly or equivalent meetings in a still larger area may unite in a general meeting usually known as the yearly meeting. In this country, such meetings commonly serve an entire state or a multi-state area. The New York Yearly Meeting, for example, includes meetings in New York state, northern New Jersey, and western Connecticut.

The New York Yearly Meeting is affiliated with certain other yearly meetings in this and other countries through the Friends General Conference, Friends United Meeting, and the Friends World Committee for Consultation. It sends representatives to the American Friends Service Committee, the Friends Committee on National Legislation, and other agencies.

C. Establishment of Meetings

In general, any proposal for establishment, subdivision, consolidation, or merger of a Friends' meeting should be presented

to an established meeting having responsibility as indicated in following paragraphs. The responsible meeting should make suitable examination of the proposal, usually by appointing a special committee for the purpose with instructions to report to a subsequent meeting. When Friends approve the proposal, the authorizing meeting for business should appoint a time and place to conduct the initial organization meeting, designate one or more Friends to have charge of this meeting, and report the action to its quarterly and the yearly meeting clerks. The initial meeting should include appointment of such officers or committees as may be needed at that time to conduct the business of the new meeting.

MONTHLY MEETINGS. A monthly meeting may be established upon the initiative of a quarterly or equivalent meeting, or by that body upon the request of a group of members desiring to organize a monthly meeting. In the case of a remotely located group of Friends or in the absence of an active quarterly meeting, corresponding procedures may be initiated by the Nurture Section of the yearly meeting and submitted for approval to the yearly meeting. Where the Nurture Section takes action, it should seek to involve experienced Friends in the area where the proposed meeting is located but in other respects takes responsibility for the functions normally assigned to the quarterly meeting. Continuing activity of the new meeting in association with other meetings of the area should be encouraged wherever practical.

If a monthly meeting deems it advisable to separate into two monthly meetings or to establish a new monthly meeting within its limits, the monthly meeting should bring the matter before its quarterly or equivalent meeting or the Nurture Section of the yearly meeting. If approved, the necessary organization meeting is arranged in accordance with the general procedure.

If a group of Friends, members of various monthly meetings, feel it is right to organize a new monthly meeting, they should bring their request before a nearby quarterly meeting or to the Nurture Section. When the new meeting becomes formally organized, the members involved should ask their monthly meet-

ings to transfer their memberships to the new monthly meeting.

If a group of persons, not Friends, become interested in the principles of Friends and believe it would benefit their religious life to be organized as a Friends' meeting, they are advised first to make application, as individuals, for membership in an established monthly meeting. When accepted into membership they may proceed as in the preceding paragraph.

PREPARATIVE MEETINGS. A preparative meeting, like the monthly meeting of which it is a part, has a definite membership list and meets regularly to conduct business, but does not have final authority to receive, transfer, or dismiss members, or to perform marriages. A preparative meeting may be established by a monthly meeting on its own initiative or on request of a group of members desiring to organize a preparative meeting. The preparative meeting may hold property and collect and disburse funds on behalf of its constituent members but in matters of membership and marriage can only bring recommendations to its monthly meeting.

INDULGED MEETINGS. An indulged meeting, unlike a monthly meeting, holds no business meetings. An indulged meeting can be initiated by a sufficient number of interested persons desiring to hold meetings for worship together under the care of the most convenient monthly meeting (or meetings, if thought desirable, when more than one is represented in the group). Committees of oversight should be appointed by the monthly meeting, or meetings, jointly, to assume such official duties as may be necessary for the orderly conduct of the indulged meeting.

EXECUTIVE MEETINGS. An executive meeting has the same authority and responsibility as a monthly meeting but has insufficient business to meet monthly. Business sessions may take place at such intervals as the meeting may determine, but not less frequently than one in three months.

QUARTERLY MEETINGS. A quarterly meeting may be established either upon the initiative of the yearly meeting or upon

that body's approval of a request from two or more monthly meetings. The yearly meeting may similarly receive a request from a quarterly meeting that deems it right to divide into two such meetings. The yearly meeting, in either case, should provide for preliminary consideration and follow-up in accordance with the general procedures for establishment of meetings. The quarterly meeting meets four times a year.

HALF-YEARLY MEETINGS. Where there is insufficient business to warrant meeting quarterly, the group may decide to hold meetings for business twice each year. In such a case a half-yearly meeting may be organized with the same authority and responsibility as a quarterly meeting. An established quarterly or regional meeting may change to a half-yearly meeting by giving notice to the yearly meeting. A new meeting group should follow the same procedure as given above for a quarterly meeting.

REGIONAL MEETINGS. As an alternate to either quarterly or half-yearly meetings, the group may decide to organize as a regional meeting with a flexible schedule of meetings for business. Established quarterly or half-yearly meetings may make such a change by giving notice to the yearly meeting. New meetings should follow the same procedure as described above for quarterly meetings. Regional meetings should hold at least one meeting for business annually, but may call additional meetings to the extent that interests and concerns of the group may warrant.

D. Discontinuance of Meetings

If it becomes desirable in the judgement of the members of any meeting to discontinue it, or to unite with another, the meeting in question or those Friends engaged in closing its affairs should lay the request before the meeting having responsibility for establishment of a corresponding type of meeting. For example: a preparative meeting should not be discontinued or suspended without first consulting the monthly meeting of which it forms a part; a monthly meeting should obtain the approval of the quarterly or equivalent meeting or of the yearly meeting;

and the yearly meeting should act on a request to discontinue a quarterly or equivalent meeting. When circumstances warrant, the larger meeting may begin action for discontinuance, but with due consideration for the particular interests of any individual members of the affected meeting.

The request for discontinuance should be considered by the meeting having responsibility. In most cases it may wish to appoint a committee to examine and advise concerning the proposal before giving its approval. After approval, the responsible meeting should continue its committee or appoint a new one to assist in making necessary business arrangements. In case of discontinuance of a monthly meeting, the committee should arrange for proper transfer of individual members to another monthly meeting. The clerk of the meeting having responsibility should report the action concerning the discontinuance to the yearly meeting office promptly.

If a preparative meeting ceases to exist, all its property automatically passes to the monthly meeting of which it is a part. If an executive, monthly, or quarterly or equivalent meeting ceases to exist, all of its property passes to the yearly meeting. If two monthly or two quarterly meetings, or their equivalent, merge or consolidate, all property of both becomes the property of the combined meeting.

The successor meeting in all cases of discontinuance or merger has full responsibility for administering any remaining trust funds in accordance with the directions of the original donors. In other respects, the successor meeting has authority to assign or hold in trust any unrestricted funds or property that it may receive, but such funds or property shall be used solely to advance the general interests and purposes of the Religious Society of Friends.

E. The Monthly Meeting

The basic unit in the Religious Society of Friends is the monthly meeting. It has as its primary concern the meeting for worship. The monthly meeting receives, transfers, and dismisses

members; provides for the oversight of marriages and funerals; and treats in a spirit of restoring love those who depart from Friends' principles and testimonies. It collects funds required for the work of the meeting; holds and administers real estate and other property for the use of the meeting; appoints members and committees for special service and considers and approves their reports. The individual member and the group are strengthened in faith and practice by prompt and regular attendance at these meetings. Queries and advices should be read at frequent intervals.

Friends may adjourn a session of a monthly meeting and continue it at a later date. Special meetings of the monthly meeting can be called by either the clerk or the assistant clerk or upon the request of three members. The clerk shall give notice at a regular meeting for worship at least seven days prior to the date of holding the special meeting. This notice should identify the business to be considered and the persons calling for the special meeting. No business may be considered at a special meeting other than that for which it was called. Each monthly meeting should define a quorum for the transaction of business in its special sessions.

CLERK. Each monthly meeting appoints a clerk and an assistant clerk unless the meeting is too small to require more than one. The clerk conducts all business sessions, sees that the business is properly presented to the meeting for consideration, and announces decisions when made. The clerk keeps an accurate set of minutes, properly dated and signed, showing all matters discussed and actions taken. The clerk carries out the instructions of the meeting and signs necessary documents on its behalf.

An assistant clerk, if the monthly meeting appoints one, shall have such duties as the clerk may delegate. In the absence of either clerk, the meeting shall appoint a clerk-for-the-day from among those present.

RECORDING CLERK. A recording clerk, if the monthly meeting appoints one, writes minutes of the business meeting, sub-

ject to the meeting's approval.

TREASURER. The monthly meeting appoints a treasurer and, where appropriate, an assistant treasurer to receive and disburse funds. These officers are governed by such rules as the meeting considers suitable. The treasurer keeps the account books of the meeting and reports regularly to the meeting. Each year the meeting should appoint a person or committee to audit these accounts.

CORRESPONDENT. Monthly meetings may, if need exists, appoint a correspondent other than the clerk to provide for the transmission, reception, and acknowledgement of communications.

RECORDER. The monthly meeting should appoint one or more recorders (or registrars) to keep a record of all matters pertaining to membership such as births, parentage, marriages within or outside the meeting, applications, transfers, deaths, other removals, and up-to-date mailing addresses, and to keep the yearly meeting office promptly informed of them (see also section K). The importance of accurate and detailed records cannot be stressed too strongly, since they are the statistics of the membership of the meeting and the foundation for many operations of the yearly meeting. They may serve as proof of religious affiliation.

The meeting should establish and maintain procedures to assure prompt and accurate communication to its recorder of all additions or changes affecting the membership records. The clerk of the meeting must assume a major role in this regard, but this responsibility should also be shared by overseers, correspondents, committee clerks, and the entire membership of the meeting. Records should be kept in accordance with forms furnished or recommended by the yearly meeting.

Recorders are urged to issue an up-to-date list of names and addresses of all members each year.

TRUSTEES. Monthly and other meetings are advised to incorporate under the laws of their state or to appoint trustees. (See

also section I.)

Meetings holding or acquiring property when not incorporated should appoint a suitable number of members, usually three, as trustees to hold title and to execute necessary documents on behalf of the meeting. Such trustees have no independent authority or discretion, and they may act only in accordance with the direction of the meeting as inscribed in the minutes. (The foregoing does not apply to meetings that are specially incorporated under state law, in which case the statutory procedure should be followed.)

STANDING COMMITTEES. The meeting as a whole may carry on any of its functions, or it may appoint committees of its members for particular tasks such as overseers, ministry and counsel, nominating, finance, or advancement. Attenders, as well, may serve on religious education, peace and service, and other specified committees not named above. (See ATTENDERS) Newly appointed committees should meet as soon as possible after their appointment to name a clerk and to organize their activities. Unless otherwise designated by the meeting, the first person in the list of appointments acts as convener for the first meeting. Committees shall conduct their business according to the principles described in Section A: General Business Procedures.

Meetings are advised to maintain a planned committee structure with clearly allocated responsibilities. However, the use of particular committees is not mandatory, and the meeting itself may perform any committee function without appointing a special committee.

A committee is a group of individuals who meet under appointment and out of a calling or concern with the responsibility for being particularly aware of some aspect of the life of the meeting. Committees often give the corporate support and guidance needed to carry forward an individual concern, but they should never become a substitute for personal leading and action.

A faithful committee works and grows together and does not permit personal differences in emphasis to destroy their unity of purpose. It does not require all to walk in the same path, but in the same direction! It carries out the wishes of the meeting and forges into the unknown as well, helping both committee and meeting members to stretch and grow beyond the point they have attained.

Friends should not accept appointments lightly. Before accepting, nominees should be clear that they can make the necessary commitment of time, energy, and spiritual resources. Their acceptance should mean willingness to be regular in attendance, to work with others, and to share and to listen.

TENURE. Monthly meeting appointments should be for one year unless otherwise stated. All appointees hold their positions until their successors are appointed. The responsibilities of holding office and of committee membership should be shared as widely as possible. Where numbers permit, committee members may be appointed to a two-year or three-year cycle. In any event, a meeting should establish a regular policy of limiting the number of successive terms that appointees may serve in any capacity. To avoid the possibility of abuse, Friends should not allow appointments to become the purview of a few individuals.

NOMINATING. The nominating committee should be appointed to make nominations throughout the year for officers, committees, representatives, and trustees as the monthly meeting directs. Care should be taken that members of this committee be chosen with due regard to their discernment, seasoned judgement, and knowledge of the membership of the meeting. Nominating committee members should confer with Friends they nominate before they propose their names to the monthly meeting for appointment. Any member of the meeting has the right to suggest changes in the nominations. A member of the nominating committee shall not be eligible for reappointment after service of three years except after an interval of one year.

MINISTRY AND COUNSEL, OVERSEERS, ELDERS. (See Section 3)

REPRESENTATIVES. The monthly meeting is responsible for naming representatives to regional or general gatherings of Friends, giving assistance where necessary for travel arrangements and incidental expenses of its representatives. In some cases this may involve regular appointments to standing committees for stated terms of office in accordance with established procedures, or it may be a special appointment to attend a particular meeting, conference, institute, or similar gathering. Meetings should choose their representatives with a view to their ability to reflect the general attitudes of their meeting on matters of business to be considered. However, representatives should not be bound by the will of their meeting when appointed but must be open to the gathering's corporate search for truth. Representatives should expect to report fully to their home meetings on the proceedings.

Principal among regularly recurring appointments will be the designation of members of the representative meeting and of the yearly meeting on ministry and counsel. There may also be regular appointments to standing committees of the quarterly or equivalent meeting.

In all cases the meeting making appointments should notify promptly the clerk or other designated person of the regional or general gathering of the names of its representatives. Where regularly appointed representatives are unable to attend, they should notify their own meeting in sufficient time so that a temporary or permanent substitution may be made by the meeting. Clerks should report such alternate appointments and the time period to which they apply promptly to their quarterly meetings and the yearly meeting office. An annual review and correction of listings of representatives is recommended even though appointments may be for longer terms of office.

COMMUNICATIONS. The monthly meeting is responsible for reporting activities and otherwise maintaining contact with its quarterly and the yearly meeting. It is also responsible for rou-

tinely sending to the yearly meeting office names of newly appointed officers, changes in membership of the meeting, appointments to quarterly or yearly meeting committees, and State of the Meeting reports. In addition, the meeting may wish to present concerns for action by or requests for advice and assistance from the larger meetings. The monthly meeting is at liberty to address special communications directly to the yearly meeting or representative meeting, and it may refer matters for consideration to the quarterly or equivalent meeting.

Where proposals concern change in general policy or practice, the local meeting is advised to seek consideration and support of its quarterly meeting before submission to the yearly meeting.

F. The Quarterly or Regional Meeting

The quarterly or regional meeting is an association of neighboring monthly meetings.

FUNCTIONS. Quarterly or equivalent meetings bring together, for worship and counsel, Friends from several monthly meetings. Through pooling of effort and resources, they can consider wider and more varied concerns.

Among the more important services quarterly or equivalent meetings perform are the creation of opportunities for social mingling and better acquaintance of Friends from different meetings and the conduct of special meetings for discussion and consideration of the deeper interests of the Religious Society of Friends. To that end, these meetings are encouraged to organize a variety of social functions as well as educational and inspirational events such as lectures, institutes, conferences, worship-sharing groups, or special interest discussion groups, which may help to unite Friends in matters of common concern.

The quarterly or equivalent meeting may engage in matters of business of the same general character as that of monthly meetings. It may hold property and trusts in the same manner as a monthly meeting, and it may collect and administer funds for

the performance of its functions. Operating funds normally will be covered by an annual budget to be collected through the local meetings. It also apportions requirements of the yearly meeting budget to the local meetings, with consideration of each meeting's ability to pay. It appoints members of the yearly meeting Nominating Committee.

ORGANIZATION. Where the activities and interests of the associated meetings may warrant, the quarterly or equivalent meeting will hold meetings for business involving the entire membership of the constituent monthly meetings and appoint officers and various standing committees according to its needs.

Alternatively, the regional meeting may delegate the business of the meeting to an administrative or executive committee for the region. This regional committee comprises the clerks of the constituent monthly meetings or of alternates particularly appointed to this service by those meetings. There should be at least one representative from each monthly meeting, but this number may be expanded at the discretion of the regional group.

Regional groups should determine specific plans for organization and conduct of area affairs, which the constituent monthly meetings or the entire membership in general session should approve. Appointments to offices or committees of quarterly or equivalent meetings should be for terms of one year unless otherwise indicated by the organization plan of the region. The programs of the region should, however, provide for one or more gatherings of the general membership each year for inspirational, social, and business purposes.

G. The Yearly Meeting

MEMBERSHIP. The yearly meeting comprises the entire membership of constituent monthly meetings, all of whom share in its deliberations. Members of other yearly meetings are welcome to attend yearly meeting sessions.

FUNCTION. The yearly meeting exists principally to worship together. It is a meeting for the transaction of business and can

engage in any activity or foster any work that the membership considers appropriate, including provision of funds and supervision for such common projects. Through pooling efforts and resources, the yearly meeting can consider wider and more varied concerns.

Among its numerous functions, the yearly meeting issues to the monthly meetings queries, advices, and reports of its proceedings, and it maintains contact with other yearly meetings and Friends' organizations. It alone has authority to establish or change the Book of Discipline, or to issue statements of faith.

The yearly meeting should inspire and support its constituent meetings, broaden their awareness of other Friends' concerns, and help them develop their own concerns. Much of the work is carried forward by yearly meeting committees. The yearly meeting receives reports from them and from its constituent meetings. It reviews the State of the Meeting reports and considers communications addressed to it. It provides for the due consideration of epistles and of minutes of Friends from other yearly meetings.

It provides for participation in the work and financial support of Friends' groups including the Friends General Conference, Friends United Meeting, and the Friends World Committee for Consultation.

ORGANIZATION. The yearly meeting follows the general principles of organization and uses the same general business procedures as do monthly meetings, but it is more elaborate in structure due to the multiplicity and variety of functions that it performs. The New York Yearly Meeting is incorporated under Section 15 of the New York State Religious Corporation Law for the purpose of holding title to and administering property of the meeting and deeds of trust committed to its care. As such, any business meeting of the yearly meeting or representative meeting constitutes a meeting of the corporation, and all members of the yearly meeting are likewise members of the corporation.

The yearly meeting appoints a clerk to preside at its sessions, including representative meeting, and carry out associated administrative functions. It also appoints an assistant clerk and such recording and reading clerks as may be needed to assist the clerk in the conduct of the meetings. It appoints a treasurer, assistant treasurer, and such administrative secretaries as it may decide to engage for designated functions.

The activities of the yearly meeting are carried on by four specialized sections – the Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel, General Services, Nurture, and Witness – having the following functions:

- to develop and coordinate services and programs, implementing them directly or through committees, task groups, staff, or volunteers;

- to explore new ways of service and respond to concerns of individual Friends and monthly and regional meetings;

- to recommend for yearly meeting action any major change of activity within their general areas of responsibility;

- to help plan yearly meeting and representative meeting programs.

The Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel exercises general care of the ministry and spiritual life of the yearly meeting and receives and considers concerns of members or meetings regarding their spiritual needs. Its executive body is the Coordinating Committee for Ministry and Counsel.

The Section on Nurture is responsible for the advancement of the principles of Friends and for educational functions and personal services to members of the yearly meeting. Some of its interests have become the responsibilities of separate corporate entities, such as Powell House, the Oakwood Friends School, and the Yearly Meeting Friends Home (The McCutchen).

The Section on Witness makes visible both the traditional

testimonies and the newer concerns of Friends in ways that extend beyond the Religious Society of Friends. Its work attempts to express beliefs in action.

The Section on General Services provides the main administrative, financial, and reporting services of the yearly meeting, including the operation of the yearly meeting office.

(More detailed information on the sections is to be found in the current edition of the yearly meeting *Handbook*.)

Each section has a coordinating committee, composed of representatives chosen by its constituent committees and groups, as well as members-at-large appointed by the yearly meeting.

The Coordinating Committee for Ministry and Counsel includes, in addition, a representative appointed by each quarterly or regional meeting (two from Farmington-Scipio) for a three-year term, according to established rotation.

The coordinating committees are enabling bodies. They consider the activities within their respective sections in relationship to each other, assist in their coordination, and help allocate the resources of people, time, and money. They prepare the section budgets, are responsible for their overall administration, and participate in preparation of the total yearly meeting budget.

The yearly meeting may establish or lay down committees according to the need for the conduct of particular functions of the meeting. Regular standing committees include, among others, Advancement, Religious Education, Financial Services, and Sessions. The yearly meeting also appoints representatives to various Friends' groups such as the American Friends Service Committee, Friends United Meeting, Friends General Conference, and the Friends World Committee for Consultation, and the governing boards of various other institutions or agencies.

When the yearly meeting establishes a committee, it must also determine and approve a statement of its purpose and func-

tions and provide adequate funding. All appointments are to be made for a specified term. The representative meeting may make interim appointments to fill vacancies. A current record of all committees and their membership is published annually in the *Yearbook* of the yearly meeting.

Four committees of the General Services Section fulfill specific administrative functions:

SESSIONS COMMITTEE. The Sessions Committee is responsible for selecting and arranging a suitable place for the sessions of the yearly meeting and representative meeting and for the preparation of schedules and programs. It advises committees on presentation of reports to the yearly meeting and representative meeting and serves as an advisory committee to the clerks during the sessions. It is responsible for publicity, hospitality, and financial arrangements for these meetings. The composition of the Sessions Committee appears in the yearly meeting *Handbook*.

FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE. The Financial Services Committee holds responsibility for preparation of yearly meeting budgets and for collection of funds for the support of the yearly meeting and its offices and committees. It may establish procedures for raising funds from the constituent meetings or the general membership.

This committee advises the treasurer as needed. It receives financial reports from all yearly meeting committees, establishes rules to examine committee accounts, and serves in an advisory capacity in financial matters to the yearly meeting and to the various committees, as requested. The committee may assign such functions as appropriate to subcommittees that it appoints from its own membership.

Budget requests by the yearly meeting sections are made to the Financial Services Committee at such times as this committee may request. Should they need other funds in unforeseen circumstances to supplement their budget appropriations, coordinating committees may make requests to the yearly meeting

or representative meeting, either of which may authorize withdrawals from any available reserve funds in the hands of the yearly meeting treasurer. No yearly meeting committee may undertake direct fund-raising unless the yearly meeting or the representative meeting authorizes this by a general rule or by specific minute.

AUDIT COMMITTEE. The Audit Committee arranges an annual audit of the financial accounts of the yearly meeting and its committees.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE. The Personnel Committee supervises the yearly meeting staff, whom the yearly meeting has appointed upon the committee's recommendation. It proposes the budget for total staff compensation, fixes salaries of individual staff members, and may authorize short-term employment.

YEARLY MEETING NOMINATING COMMITTEE. The Nominating Committee recommends the names of Friends for all yearly meeting appointments. They prepare most nominations for action at yearly meeting sessions. They make nominations to fill vacancies at the first opportunity to either yearly or representative meeting.

Nominations in general originate in the Nominating Committee, but this committee may receive suggestions from presiding officers of existing committees or other Friends. Such suggestions are advisory but not binding upon the Nominating Committee.

Normally, nominations are confined to members of the New York Yearly Meeting, but committees may request inclusions of Friends from other yearly meetings. Under special circumstances, which the yearly or representative meeting must consider and approve, the nominating committee may propose names of non-Friends. Committees may consult others, either Friends or non-Friends, without their becoming members of the committee.

Committee members who have served six consecutive years or two terms, whichever is the longer, ordinarily should not be renamed without an intervening period of one year.

Committee members or other appointees who ask for release from service before the completion of their terms do so by letter to the clerk of the yearly meeting and the clerk of the Nominating Committee.

Members of the yearly meeting Nominating Committee are appointed by the quarterly or equivalent meetings on the basis of one member for each 200 members of their respective areas or additional fraction thereof, with at least one member from each such area. These meetings should designate an alternate to serve on the Nominating Committee whenever notified that a regular member cannot attend.

Appointments to the Nominating Committee should be made in the spring months of the year for three-year rotational terms, with new terms becoming effective at the close of the next succeeding yearly meeting sessions. The yearly meeting office assigns and coordinates schedules for these appointments so that about one-third of the terms will expire each year.

H. Representative Meeting

FUNCTION. Representative meeting transacts business for the yearly meeting between its annual sessions.

It approves the yearly meeting's annual operating budget and assigns shares to the quarterly and equivalent meetings. It receives memorials of deceased Friends from the monthly and quarterly meetings and in exceptional cases may forward them to the yearly meeting.

While it acts for the yearly meeting in all other matters, representative meeting shall not make changes in the Book of Discipline or issue any statement of faith.

ORGANIZATION. Each monthly or executive meeting ap-

points at least one and not more than three representatives for terms of three years, during the spring quarter of the year. The clerk and treasurer of the yearly meeting and the clerks of the yearly meeting section coordinating committees or their alternates are members of the representative meeting.

If a named representative cannot attend the representative meeting, the appointing meeting should name an alternate at the earliest possible time and notify the yearly meeting office.

The yearly meeting clerk presides at sessions of the representative meeting, with the yearly meeting assistant, reading, and recording clerks to assist in the conduct of the meetings and recording of their proceedings.

MEETINGS. Meetings of the representative meeting occur at least twice a year, at such time and place as the representative meeting may fix, and may be continued by adjournment. Special meetings may take place upon the call of any five named representatives upon ten days' notice by mail, telephone, or telegram to all members.

I. Funds, Property, Trusts

All money and property held by any meeting are considered as held in trust for the objectives, uses, and purposes of the Religious Society of Friends, subject to any special conditions of trust. No meeting may distribute or partition its property among individual members of a meeting. If any meeting ceases to exist, its property shall pass to the yearly meeting or otherwise as indicated in Section D, "Discontinuance of Meetings."

Meetings, in making investments, should bear in mind that the way investments are made can sow seeds of violence and be hurtful to society. Therefore, in considering investment possibilities, they should weigh not only security and rate of return, but also the conditions under which income will be produced, in order that Friends may not, even unwittingly, be profiting by human oppression or the despoiling of God's earth. The discovery and promotion of socially and economically beneficial en-

terprises are prime objectives of Friends' investing.

Meetings and trustees having care of property or funds received in trust are obligated to maintain strict integrity in carrying out intentions and directions of testators or donors. When trusts are restricted to use of income only, management of capital investments must take into account both long and short term needs toward accomplishing the purposes of the gifts. While seeking also to make investments of social benefit in keeping with Friends' testimonies, selections should be such as are prudently calculated to assure continuing income at a reasonable level.

Meetings are encouraged to obtain legal advice as to the manner of holding and investing meeting property, and to make suitable provision for incorporation or for the appointment of trustees, and for periodic reviews of titles to property and the investment of funds. Under the By-Laws for New York Yearly Meeting Trustees (printed towards the end of this book), title and management of yearly meeting property and trust funds are vested in the trustees appointed by the yearly meeting, usually through the representative meeting. No person shall be a trustee of more than one meeting at the same time.

Monthly and preparative meetings should raise from within their membership a fund sufficient to meet their responsibilities, to expand their interest, to care for their properties, and to provide for their annual shares of the yearly meeting budget arrived at by the yearly meeting or by a quarterly or equivalent meeting. Each monthly meeting should pay its share to the treasurer or other designated collector of the respective meetings in the amount and at the times requested.

J. Records

All meetings and yearly meeting committees keep records of their minutes and proceedings. The historic value of these records cannot be stressed too strongly, and in preparing them the clerk should be aware of the significance they may have in the future. Records should be clear and contain sufficient detail

to be intelligible many years later. They should be typed on acid-free paper and kept in suitable books. Advice on record-keeping for the guidance of meetings and committees is available from the Records Committee of the yearly meeting.

The Records Committee is the authorized caretaker of all noncurrent records originating within the area of the New York Yearly Meeting. These should be placed on deposit in the Friends' Historical Library at Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania. Copies of these records are also available at several public libraries in the area of the yearly meeting. There they may be consulted, subject to the regulations of the Records Committee.

Records of a meeting may be returned on loan to that meeting only on written request of its clerk or its trustees. Permanent surrender of official records that have been deposited in the Friends' Historical Library at Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, can be made only on approval of the yearly meeting.

K. Statistics

Each monthly meeting appoints a recorder to keep accurate and complete records of the membership, including births, adoptions, marriages, divorces, deaths, and transfers. These recorders in turn are responsible for keeping the yearly meeting informed of various items of information necessary to the operation of the yearly meeting. Three basic functions are served by the recorder's reports to the yearly meeting: 1) to maintain an up-to-date mailing list of members for the office, 2) to provide the basis of the annual statistical report, and 3) to establish the financial responsibility of meetings to the yearly meeting.

The yearly meeting office is responsible for providing suitable forms and instructions both for the maintenance of executive and monthly meeting records and for periodic reports to the yearly meeting. Recorders should forward current information promptly to the yearly meeting office whenever changes affecting membership or addresses occur.

2 - MEMBERSHIP

Friends accept into active membership those whose declarations and ways of life manifest such unity with Friends' views and practices that they may be expected to enter fully into religious fellowship with the meeting. Part of the essential genius of the Society is the experience of growth through common worship and the loving acceptance of an individual by the group. It is an open fellowship that recognizes that of God in everyone.

Those inclined to join us should review carefully this entire book of Faith and Practice and other Friends' literature so as to gain an understanding of the basis of the Quaker faith, mode of worship, and manner of transacting business. They should attend meetings for worship and for business for a sufficient period of time to become convinced that membership will nourish and enrich their continuing growth in the life of the Spirit. They should be aware that this growth may entail changes in every aspect of their lives. Membership in a monthly meeting includes membership in the quarterly or equivalent meeting, the New York Yearly Meeting, Friends United Meeting, and Friends General Conference. Prospective applicants for membership should also have knowledge of the Wider Quaker Fellowship, the Friends World Committee for Consultation, the American Friends Service Committee, and the Friends Committee on National Legislation. They should discuss any questions or doubts with members of the meeting, particularly overseers or members of ministry and counsel.

Membership is a privilege and entails a corresponding responsibility. Members should be prepared to give bountifully of their resources of time and money. The shared ministry of the Society and the importance of the proper functioning of committees and meetings demand participation and cooperation. Membership is a commitment to enter wholeheartedly into the spiritual and corporate activities of the Society and willingly to assume responsibility for both service and support as the way opens.

Only monthly and executive meetings have the power to ad-

mit individuals to membership in the Religious Society of Friends.

ADULTS. Membership may be extended to adults by individual application or by certificate of transfer from another monthly meeting.

CHILDREN. Friends have a particular responsibility to bring children under the loving care of the meeting. Friends should be sensitive to the needs of these young people, nurturing their spiritual well-being and helping them grow into mature and concerned members.

Meetings differ in the ways in which they encourage children's participation. Some monthly and executive meetings record children as members at birth or adoption when both parents are members, unless parents request otherwise. Meetings may also extend membership to children under age 18 a) by written request of both member parents, b) by request of a member parent and written consent, if possible, of the nonmember parent, c) by request of a guardian, d) by request of the child upon recommendation of the overseers or the meeting on ministry and counsel. Some meetings record children as associate members.

> [It is] our desire that all persons on whom involuntary membership has been conferred, either by birth or through entrance of parents into membership, be reaffirmed by commitment at an age which would make this appropriate.
>
> – *Yearly Meeting Minute #13, 1976*

All members age 18 and over are considered adult members for statistical and financial purposes.

SOJOURNING MEMBERSHIP. Friends who expect to be residing temporarily within the limits of monthly meetings not their own may request from their own meetings recommendations of sojourning membership. If their meetings approve, they may issue certificates commending these Friends to the other meetings and stating the lengths of time during which the so-

journing memberships are to be effective. This temporary residence may include intermittent periods, such as that of students attending school or college or of Friends working under concerns that take them from home.

Following the general procedures for membership applications, the meetings with which they wish to associate may accept Friends into sojourning membership, according them the same privileges and responsibilities as full members but not including them in the total membership of the meetings for statistical reports.

A certificate of sojourning membership does not terminate the membership in the originating meeting.

APPLICATION. An applicant for membership should address a letter to the monthly meeting, stating the reasons for wishing to join the Religious Society of Friends and indicating the extent of unity with its principles and testimonies. This letter, addressed to the monthly meeting, is sent to the overseers or the meeting on ministry and counsel, who should acknowledge it promptly.

The meeting on ministry and counsel or the overseers will appoint from among their members a clearness committee, which has the responsibility to evaluate an applicant for membership. Monthly meetings without a meeting on ministry and counsel or overseers will undertake this responsibility directly. Although not requiring acceptance of any specific statement of faith or theological formulation of belief, the clearness committee should ascertain by personal visits the religious background and views of the applicant and the person's knowledge and acceptance of Friends' principles and practices. In particular, the applicant should be acquainted with the varieties of religious interpretation existing throughout the Society and with its emphasis on the loving spirit and teachings of Jesus. The applicant should discuss frankly with the clearness committee any reservations concerning Friends' beliefs and practices.

The clearness committee will explain the responsibilities and

opportunities inherent in membership. These include faithful attendance at meetings for worship and business, service on committees, sharing in financial support of the meeting, and involvement in regional and yearly meeting activities.

The clearness committee will report to the monthly meeting on ministry and counsel or overseers, who will then make a recommendation to the monthly meeting. If the overseers or the meeting on ministry and counsel report that they find no obstruction, the monthly meeting may immediately receive the applicant into membership. If the overseers or ministry and counsel feel that the applicant is not yet ready for membership, they may postpone recommending action until a subsequent meeting. It is then their responsibility to become better acquainted with the applicant and to offer such instruction and guidance as seem appropriate.

When the monthly meeting accepts an applicant into membership, the clerk records the action and furnishes the new member a copy of the approving minute. The meeting may appoint a welcoming committee.

Each meeting has a corporate personality of its own so that it is inevitable that there will be local coloration in the interpretation of membership requirements. This should not be construed, however, as license to impose additional requirements for membership or to set aside the guidelines in this Discipline. The receiving meeting must be mindful of the fact that it acts not only in its own behalf but in the name of the Religious Society of Friends in its entirety.

ATTENDERS. Attenders are those who manifest a continuing interest in the life of the meeting. Friends should welcome their participation in activities of the meeting, but they may not serve as clerks of the meeting, treasurers, overseers, elders, trustees, or members of ministry and counsel, or on the Finance, Advancement, or Nominating Committees, and they should know that it is the members who must make the decisions in the meetings for business.

WIDER QUAKER FELLOWSHIP. This is an international group who desire Quaker fellowship without formal membership in the Religious Society of Friends. Further information is available from the yearly meeting office.

TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP. When a monthly meeting receives a request for transfer from one of its members, the overseers or the meeting on ministry and counsel should carefully inquire into the condition of the member's religious and temporal affairs. If, on such inquiry, it seems proper to do so, the meeting should direct its clerk to issue a minute of transfer and promptly forward it to the monthly meeting to which transfer is desired. Transfer minutes for those recorded in the gifts of ministry should so state. If objection to a transfer appears, the clerks of the meetings involved should confer.

When the meeting to which the member wishes to transfer receives the minute, its clerk should refer it to the overseers or the meeting on ministry and counsel. Unless objection appears, the meeting should accept and record the Friend as a member. Until this is done, the Friend remains a member of the former meeting. The clerk of the meeting accepting the transfer should notify the former meeting of that action. One or more Friends should be appointed to visit the transferred member and extend a welcome.

JOINING OTHER DENOMINATIONS. If a member wishes to join another religious denomination, the monthly meeting may grant a letter of recommendation and remove the individual's name from membership. When any member has joined another denomination without requesting a letter of recommendation, the monthly meeting should remove the individual's name from the list of members, the clerk sending notice of this action to the person concerned.

RELEASE FROM MEMBERSHIP. When a member requests the monthly meeting to release her or him from membership, the monthly meeting or overseers should appoint Friends to visit (or write to) the member and to inquire sensitively into the matter. If the member does not reconsider, the meeting should re-

lease that Friend from membership. The clerk should write to the former member, quoting the minute of release. For reinstatement, the applicant must follow the usual order of application for membership.

DISCONTINUANCE. After having made sustained and diligent efforts to reclaim the commitment of those Friends who have lost touch with meetings, monthly meetings may discontinue their membership. Before taking that action, the meeting should have sent letters of loving inquiry to such members at least once a year for a period of three years. Having received no satisfactory replies, the monthly meeting clerk may make a minute discontinuing membership and so inform the persons concerned.

DISOWNMENT. A monthly meeting should not disown a member until every method of reconciliation has been exhausted. Formal complaints against a member should be considered prayerfully by the meeting on ministry and counsel or the overseers. A committee appointed to confer with the member should labor in love to try to resolve the problem. Care should be taken to distinguish between the deed and the doer. If the committee is unable to restore the member to fellowship with the meeting, the matter should be brought before the monthly meeting which will, if it still be unresolved, prepare a minute of disownment. The member shall be given a copy of the minute and the membership records corrected accordingly.

A disowned member may appeal the disownment to the quarterly meeting within six months for a review. If the quarterly meeting upholds the decision of the monthly meeting, the individual can still appeal to the yearly meeting.

When there is a review before a quarterly or the yearly meeting, a committee of three should be appointed to represent the meeting from which the appeal is taken. Review may, by common accord, be conducted before a judicious and representative committee appointed by the meeting to which appeal is made rather than before the entire meeting.

3 - MINISTRY AND COUNSEL

A. Purpose

The meeting on ministry and counsel has particular responsibility for nurture of the religious life of the meeting. Its purposes are:

- to exercise general care of meetings for worship and support of the spiritual ministry, and

- to provide pastoral care of the membership.

Though Friends serving on ministry and counsel have those direct responsibilities, all members of the meeting should be under the weight of this concern and take responsibility for their own participation.

Members of ministry and counsel should be familiar with the contents of Part One – Faith, and particularly Section 2 of that part, dealing with "Seeking the Spirit."

B. Organization

Ministry and counsel is organized and functions as a meeting at monthly, quarterly, and yearly meeting levels. Membership appointments originate in monthly meetings, but these appointments carry with them related responsibility for participation in the larger meetings.

THE MONTHLY MEETING. In individual meetings, organization varies widely. Because of size or established practice, some meetings may designate some of the functions of ministry and counsel to elders or overseers, who may hold separate meetings for consideration of their particular responsibilities. Monthly meetings are free to determine the type of organization suited to their needs but should clearly delineate the separate areas of responsibility if ministry and counsel is subdivided. Suggestions for subdivision are given below in the further description of "Functions of Ministry and Counsel."

ELDERS. If the monthly meeting decides to continue or establish the office of elder, it should appoint a special nominating committee to propose names of qualified members for appointment to terms of five years with varying expiration dates. The monthly meeting determines the number of elders. Elders, by reason of their office, are members of ministry and counsel but may also meet separately (see the later paragraphs on "Ministry and Spiritual Life").

OVERSEERS. Where a monthly meeting decides to appoint a separate group of overseers, appointments are made on recommendation of the regular nominating committee of the meeting on the same basis as appointments to ministry and counsel described below. The monthly meeting determines the number of overseers. Overseers regularly hold separate meetings for conduct of their activities and are not considered members of ministry and counsel unless the monthly meeting so directs. However, it is recommended that occasional joint meetings with ministry and counsel be held for sharing of common concerns (see the later paragraphs on "Ministry and Spiritual Life").

MINISTRY AND COUNSEL. Appointments to ministry and counsel should be made by the monthly meeting after careful consideration and proposal by the regular nominating committee of the meeting. Length of service is an important matter. Long-time appointments of some may hinder the development of others with latent ability for ministry, eldering, or counsel. Too-frequent change may leave the meeting without the depth of spirit that is nurtured through service. The term of office is three years, with one-third of the members appointed each year. The monthly meeting determines the number of members. In some cases, where previously appointed Friends manifest special ability and concern, the meeting may find it desirable to reappoint them to a second successive term. Whenever possible, after serving two terms, a member should not be reappointed a third time without an interval of one or more years.

Where the monthly meeting comprises several preparative meetings, it is important that each preparative meeting have adequate representation. The membership of ministry and coun-

sel should be subdivided, with each group assigned responsibility for a particular preparative meeting; but it is expected that the entire meeting on ministry and counsel of the monthly meeting will also meet and act jointly.

Where a meeting has a pastor or a meeting secretary, this person is generally also a member of the monthly meeting on ministry and counsel.

The meeting on ministry and counsel should annually appoint one of its members as clerk to preside at its meetings and, where appropriate, a recording clerk to keep minutes.

Preferably, the meeting on ministry and counsel should meet each month, but not less frequently than once in three months. The ministry and counsel clerk may call special meetings at the request of two members. Regular meetings may be limited to ministry and counsel members for the consideration of special problems or concerns. However, it is also advised that other meetings be held with members of the religious education committee and other standing committees of the monthly meeting, or with members and attenders at large.

The meeting on ministry and counsel of the monthly meeting should appoint such representatives as the regional meeting or the yearly meeting on ministry and counsel may request. Despite appointment of any such representatives, all individual members have the responsibility to attend the larger general membership meetings and to share equally in the deliberations of those meetings.

THE QUARTERLY OR REGIONAL MEETING. In quarterly meetings, organization will generally follow that of the related meeting for business. Where the latter meeting is fully organized as a general membership meeting, a similar structure may be chosen for ministry and counsel. Alternatively, ministry and counsel may wish to organize and delegate most of its work to a regional committee. This committee may function separately, but it should coordinate its work with that of the regional committee or meeting on business affairs.

If organized as a regional committee, this committee should provide for occasional general membership meetings centering on the special interest and concerns of ministry and counsel members. The clerk of this committee should also function as clerk of any general meeting of ministry and counsel members. The quarterly or regional meeting clerk should report the name of the ministry and counsel clerk to the yearly meeting office.

THE YEARLY MEETING. The Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel includes the Coordinating Committee for Ministry and Counsel (described in Section G), representatives appointed by each monthly and executive meeting for three-year terms, all recorded ministers, pastors, and meeting secretaries, and all members of committees within the Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel. The meeting meets at least twice a year and the coordinating committee at least four times. The coordinating committee appoints clerks annually after prior consideration and recommendation of a special nominating committee appointed at the preceding yearly meeting sessions. The coordinating committee administers interim activities between sessions of the yearly meeting.

C. Functions of Ministry and Counsel

THE MONTHLY MEETING ON MINISTRY AND COUNSEL.

SPIRITUAL CARE OF MEMBERS. Members of ministry and counsel should be concerned:

- to foster the spiritual growth of the meeting membership and enhance their religious life and fellowship, including especially the supervision and strengthening of corporate worship of the meeting;

- to consider individual needs for guidance and to make provision for personal counsel and assistance in matters of interpersonal relationships among members and in individual and family problems pertaining to illness, financial matters,

marital relations, and decisions of conscience, and, where appropriate, to recommend professionally-trained counsel for especially difficult problems;

- to review annually the spiritual condition of the meeting and its membership and to write the State of the Meeting reports;

- to develop programs and conferences, study groups, and public meetings to disseminate information regarding Friends' spiritual concerns and to assist members and attenders to deepen the life of the spirit;

- where desired by local meetings, to consider qualifications and make recommendations concerning recording gifts in ministry or engagement of pastors or meeting secretaries.

COMMITTEE ON CLEARNESS. In addressing particularly stressful personal needs, reconciliation between aggrieved Friends, witness, and travel in the ministry, the monthly meeting on ministry and counsel may appoint a committee on clearness at the request of a member or group of members. The committee on clearness meets as a meeting for worship with a particular concern. It searches as a group for divine guidance and is not intended as a vehicle to give advice or as a substitute for professional counsel when that is needed.

PASTORAL CARE OF THE MEMBERSHIP. (NOTE - These functions are usually considered the special duties of overseers in meetings where such a group is appointed in addition to ministry and counsel.) Members of ministry and counsel should:

- endeavor to acquaint themselves with all members and to keep informed about their various needs for personal encouragement and assistance;

- keep in touch with members, especially those isolated or non-resident, by personal visits and correspondence;

- be concerned with the welfare of any who may be ill or

incapacitated;

- arrange for material aid where it may be needed;

- encourage all members to participate in the work of the meeting;

- help new members acquaint themselves with the organization and function of the meeting and find their best places in its various activities;

- keep in touch with members who have lost contact, bearing a concern to restore their interest;

- be concerned with the instruction of attenders and seekers who manifest an interest in the Society;

- where appropriate, extend an invitation to membership to those who show an understanding of Friends' principles and manifest an interest in the meeting and who give evidence of willingness to share in the service and responsibility of membership;

- consider and make recommendations concerning applications for membership, transfer or termination of membership, and proposals for marriage before they present these to the monthly meeting for action;

- assist families in funeral and burial arrangements, including conduct of memorial meetings or funeral services under the care of the meeting. (See Section 6.)

MINISTRY AND SPIRITUAL LIFE. (NOTE - These functions are usually the special responsibility of elders, in meetings which appoint elders.) Members of ministry and counsel should concern themselves particularly with the vocal ministry of the meeting for worship and the spiritual condition of the membership, although this does not lessen the responsibility in the matter of all members of the monthly meeting. Humility of spirit and confidence that the power of God is at work in each person are

essential to this service.

Members of ministry and counsel should encourage those who give evidence of true spiritual insight and expression. They should provide guidance into more helpful lines of service for those whose messages are not acceptable to the meeting. They should bear in mind Friends' individual differences in mental training, fluency of expression, and power of interpretation. The spirit of the message is more than the form, and the example of one struggling to be faithful in a difficult task may be more helpful than a polished address.

Ministry and counsel members should encourage Friends' private worship and meditation, devotional reading, and religious study. They should develop activities to promote growth in the spiritual life and prepare each worshipper for the corporate meeting for worship. They should direct attention to the timeliness of messages to the end that vocal utterances in meetings for worship may be in season and in harmony with the spirit of the meeting. This is of special importance in a large gathering when many accustomed to speak are present.

Though the vocal ministry serves an important purpose, Friends should be constantly aware that the opportunity for silent communion with God is basic to our religious practice, and the quiet portion of corporate worship should not be unduly limited by an excess of vocal expressions. Those who may be inclined to speak unacceptably, or at undue length, or with too great frequency, should be advised with loving counsel.

Members of ministry and counsel should tenderly advise members of the meeting as to their spiritual condition and provide Friendly help toward the attainment of a high standard of Christian life and unselfish service. The discovery and development of particular gifts and concerns is a very significant responsibility of ministry and counsel members.

Eldering embraces the positive aspects of nurturing, supporting, and helping members and attenders grow spiritually. When a member or attender is found to be acting in ways not in accor-

dance with our faith and practice, either in meeting for worship or business or at other times, Friends' custom is to appoint two or more members to perform what is known as eldering. Those appointed must go in love to the person to be eldered and speak gently and sensitively, but truthfully, in an attempt to help the person understand the discord.

STATE OF THE MEETING REPORTS. Once each year, at a time sufficient to meet the request of the yearly meeting, the monthly meeting on ministry and counsel should appoint one or more of its members to prepare and present a report on the spiritual condition of the meeting. This should be reviewed in turn by ministry and counsel and by the meeting for business of the monthly meeting. When the monthly meeting approves it, with or without revision, the clerk should forward the report to a designated person or committee of the yearly meeting's Coordinating Committee for Ministry and Counsel and also, usually, to the clerk of ministry and counsel of the quarterly or equivalent meeting of which the meeting is a part.

The State of the Meeting 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 the spiritual life. Reports may cover the full range of interests and concerns but should emphasize those indicative of the spiritual health of the meeting. A suggested list of topics for consideration follows:

- quality of worship and spiritual ministry
- efforts to foster spiritual growth
- stands taken on Friends' principles
- personal and family relations
- relations with community and other religious groups
- participation in general activities of Friends
- significant activities or concerns of the local meeting

Those preparing the report may be guided by consideration of the general queries and advices or by any special queries that may be directed to the local meeting from time to time by the quarterly or yearly meeting on ministry and counsel.

MEMORIAL MINUTES. Memorials for deceased members of the meeting may be prepared by the meeting on ministry and counsel in cases those Friends deem appropriate. If the monthly meeting approves, the clerk should enter such memorials in its minutes. If the deceased member was active or well known in the yearly meeting or in the wider circle of Friends, the monthly meeting may forward the memorial to the next representative meeting or yearly meeting. Copies may also be sent, where appropriate, to the quarterly meeting.

Whether or not memorials have been prepared, it is further recommended that monthly meetings send names of deceased members and date of death annually to the spring meeting of the representative meeting.

RECORDING OF GIFTS IN MINISTRY. Some meetings may wish to continue the practice of recording ministers. In cases when a member has spoken in the public ministry to the edification and spiritual help of the congregation and has rendered this service to such an extent as to afford a basis for judgement as to the nature of those gifts and calling, the meeting on ministry and counsel should carefully consider whether there is evidence of a gift in the ministry that should be officially recognized. While a spoken message may be helpful in its place and should be esteemed and encouraged accordingly, not every person who speaks in public should be given official recognition. Friends should bear in mind that such recognition in ministry is not only a seal of approval of one who is locally helpful but that it also involves extension of service beyond the local community. Recorded ministers not only have opportunity for service among Friends generally, but, because of the increase in interdenominational activity, such recognition opens the way for contacts and associations with ministers and members of other religious groups.

When the monthly meeting on ministry and counsel is satisfied that a member has a gift in the ministry that they consider to be of suitable character and aptitude, they should report this to the monthly meeting. If the monthly meeting approves, the monthly meeting on ministry and counsel should prepare a

minute for the consideration of the yearly meeting's Coordinating Committee for Ministry and Counsel, which, in turn, should refer the proposal to a designated committee for examination and recommendation. If, after due consideration, the way seems clear, the Coordinating Committee for Ministry and Counsel shall forward their recommendation to the Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel, who may approve the recording and furnish a copy of its minute to the monthly meeting of which the individual is a member. The action should also be reported to the yearly meeting for record. If they do not approve a proposal to record, they should so inform the originating meeting.

In case a member who has been recorded as a minister appears to have lost the gift and usefulness in the ministry, a proposal to rescind the action recording the member as a minister may originate with the overseers or ministry and counsel of the monthly meeting of which the minister is a member or with the yearly meeting on ministry and counsel. Final action rests with the yearly meeting on ministry and counsel. The individual concerned and the monthly meeting to which that person belongs shall be notified before final action is taken, and care should be exercised that any rights involved are fully safeguarded.

The status of a minister is transferable with the certificate of membership from one monthly meeting to another and from one yearly meeting to another. It is expected, however, that a minister planning to engage in the pastoral ministry in another yearly meeting will endeavor to meet the requirements of the yearly meeting to which transfer is made.

APPOINTMENTS OF PASTORS AND MEETING SECRETARIES AND OTHER STAFF. In order to facilitate and expand pastoral and other activities within and outside the meeting, it is the practice of some meetings to employ the services of people who can devote time to this work. Meetings may designate such people as pastors, meeting secretaries, or counsellors.

Pastors, who are usually recorded ministers, are expected to serve the meeting in the field of public ministry, although they should always have due regard for other ministers in the meet-

ing and for visiting Friends who have service to render. Due consideration should also be given to the value of silent worship and freedom of expression, vital to group worship. Pastors and meeting secretaries are co-workers with the members of the meeting, developing and encouraging initiative and the assumption of responsibility by the members, who are also called to minister according to their gifts.

The services of a pastor, meeting secretary, or other staff should provide inspiration for members to cultivate and expand their own sphere of Christian service. Any temptation for members to relax their feeling of responsibility in meetings for worship and business or in any other areas should be resolutely resisted.

Monthly meetings may ask pastors, meeting secretaries, and other staff to maintain a cooperative relationship with some or all of the committees of the meeting, assisting in their programs and policies.

Meetings desiring the help of a pastor or meeting secretary may request the meeting on ministry and counsel to consider the qualifications of candidates and to make a recommendation. This should include a recommendation, determined jointly with the finance committee, of a suitable salary. Pastors and meeting secretaries should not be engaged or dismissed, however, except by action of the monthly meeting.

THE QUARTERLY OR REGIONAL MEETING ON MINISTRY AND COUNSEL

The quarterly or equivalent meeting on ministry and counsel has general responsibility for the spiritual welfare of constituent meetings. It receives reports of constituent meetings on ministry and counsel and gives attention to the problems of those meetings. It should concern itself particularly with new congregations and meetings, weak meetings, and those meetings without ministry, offering advice and assistance including programs of intervisitation for the strengthening of the ministry.

All matters described as responsibilities of the monthly meet-

ing on ministry and counsel (including those of elders and overseers) should be considered by the quarterly or equivalent meeting as the need arises. Programs of meetings for the general membership should be planned on various aspects of Friends' ministry. Such meetings should emphasize the spiritual quality of Friends' practices and faith and seek to strengthen God's presence in the lives of all members.

The quarterly meeting should be apprised of communications addressed by constituent meetings to the yearly meeting on ministry and counsel, and it may, on its own initiative, supplement or address additional communications to the yearly meeting on ministry and counsel on matters within its sphere of interest and concern. It may, from time to time, receive recommendations of the yearly meeting on ministry and counsel and carry out requests on behalf of that meeting.

4 - VISITING AND VISITATION AMONG MEETINGS

The importance of visitation among Friends cannot be overemphasized. New voices are needed in local meetings to broaden viewpoints and introduce fresh insights into truth. Over a wider area, visitation can help keep the balance between the differing interpretations of Quakerism and increase understanding between members of the various meetings, regions, and branches of the Religious Society of Friends.

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION. Where visiting among Friends is merely incidental to travel for some other purpose, a monthly meeting may issue a letter of introduction for a member in good standing. Such a letter requires no further endorsement. Quarterly or yearly meetings may originate similar letters as occasion warrants.

MINUTE OF TRAVEL. Where a member proposes to travel under the weight of a concern, the monthly meeting may issue a minute of travel releasing the Friend for a particular service. The minute of travel is a certificate endorsing the Friend's concern, indicating that the meeting is in unity with and in support of this venture.

The service undertaken may include arranging public addresses, informal conferences, visiting in families, appointing meetings, or making group visits, prompted by a desire to deepen the religious life of the Society or promote a specific form of social action. At the business meeting where the proposed minute is taken up, and in advance of that meeting, where possible, Friends should give counsel and sympathetic consideration to the individual and the concern.

Discretion and sensitivity to divine guidance, as well as to the conditions of those who will be met, are vital qualifications for visitors. A minute of travel should not be granted lightly, and the monthly meeting's preparers should so phrase it that there can be no doubt of the purpose for which the monthly meeting issued it or any basis for confusion with a letter of introduction.

When a monthly meeting approves a minute of travel under specific concern that involves visitation among non-Friends or Friends outside the limits of the yearly meeting, the monthly meeting clerk should forward the minute of travel to the next succeeding session of either the representative meeting or the yearly meeting for further consideration and endorsement before delivery to the travelling Friend. Similar treatment should be accorded a minute of travel originating in a quarterly or equivalent meeting. The representative meeting or the yearly meeting may originate minutes of travel.

It is desirable that Friends travelling under a concern to other yearly meetings consult the Friends World Committee for Consultation, Friends General Conference, Friends United Meeting, and the office and appropriate committees of this yearly meeting (where their scope is related to the purpose of the visit). Helpful suggestions and literature are also available from the Friends World Committee for Consultation. Persons who have been granted minutes of travel should return them to the issuing meeting within a reasonable time after the service is completed. Minutes for an extended period of service should be considered to have expired after one year unless renewal has been requested and granted.

Friends are advised not to let the prosecution of any proper spiritual concern of a member be hampered by lack of funds. The meeting issuing or endorsing a minute of travel should consider whether it is under obligation to aid in the accomplishment of the service and contribute toward the expense, if necessary.

5 - MARRIAGE PROCEDURE

Couples contemplating marriage are earnestly advised to seek divine guidance in making their decision, to give serious consideration to the importance of harmony and sympathy in religious convictions, and to seek early the approval of parents and guardians in order that family unity may be preserved and hasty and improper marriages avoided.

Couples who wish to marry after the manner of Friends shall address a written proposal to the monthly meeting of either. The letter, signed by them both, and substantially as follows, should be submitted well in advance of the contemplated date.

> To the _____ Monthly Meeting:
>
> We, the undersigned, propose taking each other in marriage, and we hereby request the approval of the meeting.
> (Signatures of both)

The proposal may be accompanied by the written consent of the parents or guardians of either person. If either person is under the age of 18, the proposal must be accompanied by written consent of parents or guardians of such person or by a statement explaining why it cannot be obtained.

The clerk should immediately refer the proposal to the overseers or the meeting on ministry and counsel.

The overseers or the meeting on ministry and counsel shall appoint four members of the monthly meeting, at least one of whom is a member of ministry and counsel or is an overseer, to

inquire into the couple's clearness to proceed in the marriage. They should present their report to the next monthly meeting.

The term "clearness" referred originally to clearness from other entangling engagements. There has been in recent years a broadening of the concept to an exercise of the loving care of the meeting by making sure, as far as possible, that there is nothing to interfere with the permanence and happiness of the marriage.

It is wise to treat all applications with the same care. The clearness committee should explore with the couple their mutual commitment to God and their capacity for the unselfish love that endures. The committee should discuss with the couple any previous marriages or commitments, the making of decisions, including those concerning finances, having and raising children, commitments to extended family, and other areas of concern. In addition, the committee may also need to raise questions about sexual preference, potential drug and alcohol abuse, and medical and genetic considerations.

If the couple are members of different meetings, both meetings should reach clearness before the wedding takes place.

When one or both are members of the Religious Society of Friends but for adequate reasons have chosen to wed in a meeting to which neither belongs, the usual procedure for securing the approval of the home meeting is carried out, and the clerk communicates with the clerk of the meeting where the wedding is to take place, asking for its cooperation. The meeting that allows the marriage should appoint a committee of oversight; it may include members of another meeting when distance makes such an arrangement desirable.

The couple should be present, if possible, at the monthly meeting when the reports on clearness are presented. If no obstruction appears, they shall be at liberty to wed according to the custom of the Religious Society of Friends in a regular or appointed meeting at such time and place as the monthly meeting may approve.

The monthly meeting shall appoint a committee of at least two men and two women to attend and oversee the wedding. The couple are at liberty to propose the time and place of the meeting at which the marriage is to be solemnized and may suggest the names of the Friends who are to serve as the committee of oversight, if approved.

The duties of the committee of oversight are to advise the parties as to the proper procedure for the accomplishment of the marriage, to see that they have obtained a marriage license and a wedding certificate, to attend the wedding and see that it is properly conducted and that other requirements of the law are fulfilled, to make sure that the necessary information is delivered to the recorder for recording, and to report to the monthly meeting.

The overseers or the meeting on ministry and counsel may, but only when in their opinion there is urgent necessity therefor, approve the proposed marriage, fix the time and place of the wedding, and appoint the committee of oversight to attend. In such case the overseers or the meeting on ministry and counsel are to report their action to the next monthly meeting, stating reasons for it. This procedure is to be followed only under the most pressing and unusual circumstances.

The marriage having been authorized, and the meeting at which it is to be solemnized having gathered, it is recommended that the meeting begin with a period of silent worship. At a suitable time in the meeting, the couple should rise and, taking each other by the hand, declare in words to the following effect, each speaking in turn:

> In the presence of God and before these our friends, I take thee, ____, to be my wife/husband, promising with Divine assistance to be unto thee a loving and faithful wife/husband so long as we both shall live.

After these declarations, the couple are to sign the wedding certificate, and, either then or later, the members of the committee of oversight are to do so too. Some designated person should then read the certificate aloud. A period of worship should follow, and, at the conclusion of the meeting, others present should

sign the certificate as witnesses.

The form of the wedding certificate shall be substantially as follows:

> Whereas ____(woman/man's full name), of ____ (place), daughter/son of ____ and ____ (parents' names), of ____ (place), and ____ (woman/man's full name), of ____ (place), daughter/son of ____ and ____ (parents' names), of ____ (place), having declared their intentions to marry each other to the ____ Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, held at ____ (place), according to the good order used among them, and, (insert this clause if applicable) having the consent of parents (or guardians), that meeting allowed their proposed marriage.
>
> Now this is to certify that for the accomplishment of their marriage, this ____ day of the ____ month, in the year ____, they, ____ and ____ (couple's names), appeared in a meeting for worship of the Religious Society of Friends, held at ____ (place), and ____ (woman/man's name), taking ____ (woman/man's name) by the hand, did, on this solemn occasion, declare that she/he took her/him to be her/his wife/husband, promising, with Divine assistance, to be unto her/him a loving and faithful wife/husband so long as they both shall live (or words to that effect), and then in the same assembly ____ (woman/man's name) did in like manner declare that she/he took her/him to be her/his wife/husband, promising, with Divine assistance, to be unto her/him a loving and faithful wife/husband so long as they both shall live (or words to that effect); and moreover, they, as a further confirmation thereof, did, then and there, to this certificate, set their hands.
>
> (full signatures of the couple)
>
> And we, having been present at the wedding, have as witnesses set our hands the day and year above written:
>
> (signatures of witnesses)

Printed wedding certificates are available on order with two months' notice from the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting; 1515 Cherry Street; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19102. Assistance is also available from the New York Yearly Meeting office.

When the couple prefers, the marriage may be solemnized by a pastor or other Friends' minister whom the county and state recognize as qualified to perform the functions of a cleric for this purpose. In such a case the couple should follow the procedure above outlined to obtain the monthly meeting's approval, except that, instead of proposing the names of Friends for appointment as a committee of oversight, the couple should state the name of the pastor or minister whose assistance in the ceremony they desire and the names of two witnesses to be in attendance, and the wedding certificate shall be in form appropriate to these circumstances.

In such cases, and in the solemnization of any other marriage, the pastor or minister is earnestly advised to employ a wedding ceremony in keeping with the ideals of Friends and to impress upon the couple the fact that marriage is a solemn religious engagement. The committee of oversight must exercise due care to ascertain that all legal requirements precedent to the marriage have been met and must comply fully with the laws in reporting the marriage to the proper officials. Any marriage solemnized by a pastor or minister shall be reported to the monthly meeting that had approved the marriage.

It is affectionately advised that moderation be observed in all of the proceedings of the wedding day, including simplicity of dress and surroundings, and that the occasion be characterized by the dignity becoming its serious spiritual purpose.

Non-members may marry in the meeting, subject to the laws of the respective states and the considered judgement of the monthly meeting and according to the good order of Friends.

A condensation of the duties of individuals may prove useful:

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PERSONS TO BE MARRIED

1. To write a letter to the clerk of the monthly meeting under whose care they wish to be married, signed by both of the couple, stating their intention to marry and enclosing, if needed and available, the consent of parents or guardians.

2. To write a second letter to the clerk for presentation to the session of the monthly meeting at which the committee on clearness makes its report requesting permission to marry in a regular or appointed meeting for worship (the latter is more usual) and proposing, if they so desire, the names of Friends they suggest to serve as a committee of oversight for the wedding. The day, hour, and place where they wish to have the marriage solemnized should be included.

3. To refrain from sending wedding invitations until the monthly meeting allows their proposed marriage.

4. To meet the committee of oversight, at a time and a place suggested by the committee, to discuss plans for the wedding, including such matters as the choice of persons to read the wedding certificate and to close the meeting for worship.

5. To have the Friends' wedding certificate prepared in ample time. Information concerning the details involved in this part of the procedure may be obtained at the yearly meeting office.

6. To inform themselves of the legal requirements of the state in which the wedding is to take place and to obtain the forms to be used to comply with them.

7. To be sure that the license is given to the committee of oversight before the wedding and that the wedding certificate is ready.

8. To commit to memory long before the wedding day the promises they will say to each other.

9. To sign the wedding certificate after they have spoken their promises.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CLERK

1. To refer the letter of intention to marry and the letters from the parents or guardians, if needed and available, to the overseers or to the meeting on ministry and counsel immediately following their receipt.

2. To provide for time to receive a report on clearness at the monthly meeting.

3. When the monthly meeting has accepted the report:

(a) to request that the meeting appoint a committee of oversight for the wedding and also that it grant permission for a meeting for worship to be held at the time and place requested for the wedding;

(b) to inform the couple that they are free to proceed with their plans.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE ON CLEARNESS

1. To make inquiry and conscientiously satisfy itself that there is nothing to interfere with the accomplishment of the marriage. The couple should be interviewed both separately and together. (See the beginning of this section on marriage.)

2. To report its findings and recommendations to a subsequent session of the monthly meeting.

3. To make available books and pamphlets on marriage and, when appropriate, to refer the couple to an available marriage counsellor.

4. To be informed concerning legal requirements for obtaining a marriage licence.

5. To make sure that the rights of children have been legally secured, if either of the couple has children by a former marriage.

6. To be available to assist in any way that may be needed.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT

1. To see that the wedding is takes place with dignity, reverence, and simplicity.

2. To meet the persons being married to discuss plans for the wedding, including the choice of persons to read the wedding certificate and to close the meeting.

3. To see in advance that all legal requirements have been met and that the proper license has been secured, executed, and filed with the public authorities within the specified time.

4. To arrange for the care of the wedding certificate following the meeting for worship and to see that opportunity is given for those present to sign it.

5. To arrange for the recorder to record the marriage, as the monthly meeting requires.

6. To report to the monthly meeting whether the wedding has suitably taken place, whether the legal requirements have been satisfied, and whether the marriage has been properly reported to the recorder.

MARRIAGE OF MEMBERS NOT UNDER THE CARE OF THE MEETING

If a member is married not under the care of the meeting, the overseers should either visit or correspond with the newly married couple, expressing the interest of the meeting in their new home. It should be assumed that the relationship of the member with the Society will continue, and the non-member will be made welcome and invited to attend meeting.

6 - MEMORIAL MEETINGS AND FUNERALS

When Friends suffer a loss through death, there is sustaining strength in the loving concern and helpfulness of members of the meeting. It is the responsibility of the overseers, or of ministry and counsel, to give such specific help as may be necessary when death comes to a family, and Friends are urged to seek their assistance. The monthly meeting may entrust these responsibilities to a pastor.

The sympathy and affection of Friends for their members who are in sorrow because of such a loss is best shown by a quiet, dignified procedure at funerals. Friends should keep to true simplicity and avoid excessive display or expense.

Individual Friends may have definite wishes concerning their own burials or cremations and the type of service they would prefer. Such wishes should be stated in writing and made known to the family. Membership in a memorial society has been found to be useful in planning a simple, dignified funeral. The type of service is determined by the family. If the family desires, the meeting house should be made available as the appropriate place to hold the meeting, but at times it may be more suitable or convenient to hold it at home or in a funeral home.

The attention of Friends is directed to the desirability of a memorial meeting, held after interment, as an alternative to the more traditional funeral. It has been noted that at a memorial meeting “attention was focused, not upon a lifeless form, but on a living spirit and a radiant faith.” When such a memorial meeting is held, it is recommended that it be in the meeting house and within a week or two after the death.

Whatever the form of religious ceremony, there is usually a brief service of committal at the grave or crematory. Any whom the family especially wishes to attend or speak should be notified in advance.

Where no family survives, or in other special circumstances, the overseers, ministry and counsel, or the pastor – with the closest friends – should see that the appropriate arrangements take place.

If the preference is for a traditional Friends' meeting, this should be conducted in the same manner as a meeting for worship. The family will often express the desire that certain friends take part and may request the reading of appropriate selections. Others present are free to speak, but all messages should be brief. It is recommended that the messages be of such nature as befits a meeting for worship and that they not include any long eulogy. Neither should the meeting be impersonal. A loved one has left; rejoice that this Friend has been with you.

7 - BURIAL GROUNDS

Meetings maintaining their own burial grounds should establish rules and regulations governing interments, the marking of graves, and the keeping of records. The meeting should appoint a committee of two or more Friends to have oversight of the burial grounds and to see to the enforcement of the rules.

In establishing regulations as to gravestones, meetings should be careful to observe the principles of moderation and simplicity.

8 - REVISION OF DISCIPLINE

Proposals for change of this discipline may originate in the monthly meeting; and, if so, they should receive the approval of the quarterly meeting and then be transmitted to the yearly meeting for final action; or they may originate in the yearly meeting itself. In either case, final action may not be taken until the yearly meeting sessions of the year following the publication of the proposed changes in the minutes of the yearly meeting.

BY-LAWS FOR NEW YORK YEARLY MEETING
TRUSTEES
(ADOPTED 19th MAY 1973. AMENDED 4th APRIL 1992.)

Section I – Appointments and Duties

The corporation shall appoint a Board of Trustees of not less than five nor more than seven members, which shall be responsible for holding title to and administration of properties, both real and personal, owned by the Yearly Meeting, and for the management of bequests and deed of trust received by the Yearly Meeting in a fiduciary capacity. Appointment of Trustees shall be for individual terms of five years each, with rotating dates of termination so that one or two Trustees are appointed each year. Trustees are eligible for two successive reappointments of five years each. Any session of Yearly Meeting, or any meeting of Representative Meeting, may appoint Trustees to succeed those whose terms have expired, or to fill vacancies for unexpired terms.

Section 2 – Officers

The Trustees shall appoint from their own number a Clerk-President, a Secretary and a Treasurer, with such duties as the Trustees may direct.

Section 3 – Investment Committee

The Trustees shall appoint not less than three members of their Board to constitute an Investment Committee. This committee shall have interim responsibility for supervision of investments, including decisions regarding purchases and sales of securities, but subject to such policies and directions as the Board may determine. The Trustees may engage the services of an investment adviser, a custodian of securities, and such clerical assistance as may be necessary.

Section 4 – Meetings of the Board

The Trustees shall meet at such times as they may determine

or may fix by adjournment. Special meetings shall be called by the Clerk-President, or by the Secretary upon request of two Trustees. At least ten days' notice of special meetings shall be given by mail to each Trustee, and the purpose for which the meeting is called shall be stated.

Section 5 – Quorum

A majority of the Trustees shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, but one less than all the Trustees then in office shall constitute a quorum for action by mail or telephone poll.

Section 6 – Reports

The Trustees shall report annually to the Yearly Meeting or to the Representative Meeting.

GLOSSARY

This is a list of terms Friends have used. Some appear in this Faith and Practice, all in Friends' speech and writings.

ADVICES. Ideals stated as a continuing reminder of the basic faith and principles held to be essential to the life and witness of Friends. Friends have found it useful regularly to remind each other of their nature through periodic reading and discussion along with related queries.

AFFIRMATION. A legal declaration made by Friends or others who conscientiously decline to take an oath.

ATTENDER. One who attends and participates in meeting activities fairly regularly but has not become a member.

BIRTHRIGHT MEMBER. Friend born of Quaker parents and recorded at birth on a monthly meeting's membership rolls.

BREAKING MEETING. Term used for the closing of the meeting for worship when a designated Friend shakes hands with the persons next to her or him. Following this, all shake hands with their neighbors.

CENTER DOWN. A process by which we still or direct our conscious thought and open our minds in order that we may hear God speak directly to us.

CLEARNESS. A condition in which there are no perceived obstacles to a proposed course of action by an individual or meeting.

CLEARNESS COMMITTEE. A group of Friends appointed or selected to assist a person or the meeting to clarify a decision or concern.

CLERK. A member who presides at meetings of Friends. A meeting for worship with a concern for business may have recording and reading clerks.

CONCERN. A deep interest, whether by an individual or a meeting, in some spiritual or social matter, an interest so deep and vigorous that often it must be expressed in action.

CONTINUING REVELATION. The belief that God speaks to persons directly today.

CONVENER. Member of a committee, usually the first-named, whom the meeting asks to call together the first meeting of that committee.

CONVINCED FRIEND. A person who becomes a Friend as a result of being led to this decision by the Inward Teacher after careful study, thought, and seeking.

CORPORATE. Description of the body of a Friends' meeting. While God may speak differently to individuals, the gathered meeting provides a clear perception of divine guidance for the community.

COVENANT. A commitment between two persons with God as the third party.

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 silence that is the reward of waiting upon the Lord.

DISCIPLINE. 1. Term related to discipleship: following a particular path. 2. The book of Faith and Practice of the Religious Society of Friends. Each yearly meeting may draw together its own book of discipline, so Friends may refer to Britain Yearly Meeting's discipline, for example, or that of other yearly meetings.

ELDERING. Gently admonishing in love the ways, habits, or thoughts of a Friend or attender after serious consideration by or consultation with respected members of the meeting.

ELDERS. Historically, those appointed to foster the vocal ministry of the meeting for worship and the spiritual condition of the members.

EPISTLE. A letter of serious import sent either by an individual or a group. Usually a formal letter sent annually by each yearly meeting to all Friends everywhere stating the condition, exercises, and experience of the yearly meeting.

EXERCISE. The exploration of a deep concern that has been brought to a meeting. The meeting may record this exploration as a "minute of exercise(s)."

FACING BENCHES. 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.

GATHERED MEETING. The special occasion when the meeting for worship or business attains more than the usual sense of divine presence, which touches the worshippers and unites them in holy fellowship and shows in united themes of ministry. (See Thomas R. Kelly, "The Gathered Meeting," in A Testament of Devotion.)

GOOD ORDER. The procedures, found through Friends' experience, that facilitate our business and committee meetings as we seek to find and carry out God's will.

GOSPEL ORDER. A fellowship of the disciples of Christ that comes into being as the result of the preaching and experience of the Gospel. Our order, organization, testimonies, and closeness come from God through the relationships between people that Jesus described in parables and showed through his healing, counsel, and prophecy. Jesus lives amongst us, counsels and chastises, and leads us in living this order. Our fellowship is local, regional, national, and international at the same time, since we are a spiritual group that Christ heads rather than an episcopal, congregational, or bureaucratic system managed po-

litically.

HOLD IN THE LIGHT. To ask for God's presence to illumine a person, situation, or problem, whether in concern or thanksgiving.

INWARD LIGHT. This refers to the power and inspiration of God and Christ coming inwardly to us to show us our motivations and true selves, correct us, guide us, and lead us, and give us strength to act on this guidance. It thus brings us into unity with the spirit of God. The concept differs from that of conscience, which is a developed awareness of the merits or faults of our conduct, intentions, or character and the sense of obligation to do right. Conscience and the Inward Light are not alternatives or substitutes for each other. The "Inward Light" is also called the "Light Within," the "Christ Within," the "Light of Christ," the "Holy Spirit," and "The Seed." Often, the term is written "Inner Light," implying that the light comes from each of us, an implication that is not part of early Friends' concept.

LABOR WITH. An effort by one or more Friends to help another struggle with a concern or a difficulty and come through to a resolution.

LAY DOWN. To terminate a committee when its work is completed or no longer felt necessary. A monthly meeting may be laid down when it is no longer functioning as such.

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.

MEETING FOR SUFFERINGS. A committee to support and care for members and their families who suffer because of their commitment to Friends' principles. In Britain in recent years it refers to a representative committee that acts in a deliberative and executive manner for the Religious Society of Friends when the yearly meeting is not in session.

MINDING 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.

MINISTERS. Those recognized and recorded by a meeting as having a special gift for the ministry. (See "Recording of ministers.")

MINUTE. A statement of an item of business approved by those in attendance at a given meeting for worship with a concern for business.

MOVED TO SPEAK. An experience, in the quietness of the meeting, of feeling led by God to speak.

OPENING. Moment of unexpected enlightenment or inspiration from God.

OVERSEERS. A committee that has pastoral care of the meeting's membership.

PLAIN DRESS. Undecorated garments without bright colors used by Friends to express simplicity in dress. Today the term refers to the wearing of Quaker dress of that early period.

PLAIN SPEECH. The "thee," "thy," and "thine" used by Friends, especially up to the early twentieth century. Plain language bears witness to the testimony of early Friends for democracy and equality. In the 1600s, a wealthy person or member of the nobility was addressed by the plural pronoun "you" while inferiors or children were addressed by the singular pronoun "thou." Friends and many others refused to recognize such distinctions: they said "thou" to everyone and thus brought on themselves much persecution that the use of "you" might have spared them. Because the days and months were named for non-Christian gods, goddesses, and emperors, Friends preferred to use "first-day," "second-day," "First Month," "Second Month," etc. All of these usages are still common among some Friends and in some minutes of Friends' proceedings. Also refers to forthright and divinely-led speech.

PREPARATIVE MEETING. 1. Originally, and still in Britain Yearly Meeting, a term used to refer to one of a group of meetings that "prepare" business to be brought before the monthly meeting. 2. A group of Friends generally under the care and guidance of an established monthly meeting, preparing to become a monthly meeting.

PROGRAMMED MEETING. A meeting for worship, usually conducted by a pastor, with pre-arranged program including music, collection of money, sermon, and periods of silence and waiting when Friends feel free to speak from the body of the meeting.

PROCEED AS WAY OPENS. To wait for guidance from God; to avoid hasty judgement or action; to wait for future circumstances to help solve a problem.

QUAKER. Unofficial name of a member of the Religious Society of Friends. Originally pejorative.

QUERIES. The questions that, in conjunction with the "advices," enable individuals and meetings to examine themselves in relation to the standard of conduct that the Religious Society of Friends has established for itself.

RECORDING OF MINISTERS. A Friends' meeting may minute the designation as a minister of a member whom the meeting recognizes as having the gift of ministry or a special gift of service to the meeting or community. The yearly meeting on ministry and counsel confirms the recording.

RELEASE. 1. To set free a concerned and qualified Friend for religious service, as travelling among Friends. This may require the meeting to take over responsibilities of the concerned person while that person is away. 2. To remove from committee or membership rolls.

SEASONING. A process to ensure that decisions are truly grounded in God's will.

SENSE OF THE MEETING. A perception of Truth that emerges from the corporate business process as Friends seek God's will. After full consideration of a matter and allowing for the development of new insights with God's leading, if the clerk feels that a decision has been reached, she or he states the sense of the meeting as a minute for the meeting's approval. No vote is taken. Unity is sought for, but if it is not attained to a reasonable degree, the clerk can minute postponement. (The clerk must decide on the degree of unity required, basing that judgement on the importance of the subject and the experience and wisdom of those who speak to it.)

SOJOURNING MEMBER. A Friend who is temporarily residing in the area of another monthly meeting, accepted by that meeting as a participating member but not included in their statistics for financial purposes.

SPEAK TO ONE'S CONDITION. The experience of receiving a message directly from God, or through another person, that touches one at the deepest level or helps one solve a problem or make a right decision.

STANDING ASIDE. The withdrawal of opposition by a member not able to unite with a proposed minute, thus freeing the meeting to proceed.

STANDING IN THE WAY. The declaration of a member unable to unite with a proposed minute. The clerk must decide if this declaration prevents unity or is merely to be recorded.

STATE OF THE MEETING. The statement of condition from the monthly meetings to the quarterly meetings and then to the yearly meeting, prepared each year for Friends' consideration. The yearly meeting summary of these reports is known as the State of the Society Report.

STOP IN THE MIND. An expression that Friends may use to explain that they cannot follow a course of action. Scruples about engaging in an activity or approving a minute that may be partly conscious, usually not fully thought out but rather felt.

TESTIMONIES. Public statements or witness based on beliefs of the Religious Society of Friends that give direction to our lives.

TRAVEL MINUTE. The endorsement a meeting gives to one of its members who is travelling, usually among Friends, under the weight of a concern. This is distinct from a letter of introduction, which the meeting may approve for a Friend who plans to visit Friends in the course of travelling. For travel outside the yearly meeting, the yearly meeting must endorse this minute.

UNITY. A shared perception in a business meeting that the minute arrived at through the corporate search is Friends' best understanding of God's will for them. It implies that everyone will take part in or support the concern under consideration.

UNPROGRAMMED MEETING. A meeting for worship sometimes erroneously referred to as a "silent meeting." No pastor is in charge. The gathered Friends sit in silence, waiting upon God and "leadings of the Spirit," which may give rise to vocal messages to share with the meeting, although meetings for worship in which Friends spend the whole time in silence can also be occasions of great inspiration.

VISITATION. Formal visiting among Friends for any one of several purposes.

WAIT UPON THE LORD. Actively to seek and attend to God's will in expectant, quiet worship.

WEIGHTY FRIEND. A member whom Friends informally recognize as having special experience and wisdom.

WITNESS. Used as a noun or a verb; one who testifies to or shows evidence of religious beliefs and convictions, or the act of doing so.

WORLDLY. Having to do with non-spiritual values. Originally referred to non-Quaker values.

MONTHLY MEETING MEMBERSHIP RECORD

Member's full name _____
(If married name is different, put name at birth in parentheses)

Birth date _____ Birth place _____

ADMITTED TO MEETING MEMBERSHIP

Date _____ By request _____ By request of parents _____

By birth _____

By transfer certificate from the _____ Monthly Meeting

PARENTS

Father's name _____

Mother's name _____

ADDRESSES

Year	Street	Town	State

REMOVAL

Date membership ended: _____ by death _____ by release _____

by certificate of transfer

to the _____ Monthly Meeting

Place of burial _____

REMARKS:

(Monthly Meeting Membership Record – reverse side of page)

Date record closed _____

MARRIAGE

To whom _____

Date _____ Place _____

Membership of spouse (where) _____

Spouse deceased date _____ Place of burial _____

Date separated or divorced _____

CHILDREN

Name _____ Membership (where) _____

Birth date _____ Birth place _____

Marriage date _____ To _____

Name _____ Membership (where) _____

Birth date _____ Birth place _____

Marriage date _____ To _____

Name _____ Membership (where) _____

Birth date _____ Birth place _____

Marriage date _____ To _____

Name _____ Membership (where) _____

Birth date _____ Birth place _____

Marriage date _____ To _____

CERTIFICATE OF TRANSFER

Date _____

To the _____ Monthly Meeting,

Address _____ Postal Code _____

Dear Friends,

This CERTIFICATE OF TRANSFER has been requested by a member of this monthly meeting who now resides in your area. We have given consideration to this request, and, no obstruction appearing, we recommend

_____ to your Christian care and remain with love your friends.

Removal minutes (date) _____ by the _____ Monthly Meeting,

Address _____

_____

(Signature of monthly meeting clerk or of a membership records clerk)

enclosure: ACCEPTANCE OF TRANSFER form, PARTIALLY filled in by us. Only when you complete the form and return it to us will the transfer be concluded.

ACCEPTANCE OF TRANSFER

Date _____

To the* _____ Monthly Meeting,

Address* _____ Postal Code* _____

Dear Friends:

This is to inform you that your CERTIFICATE OF TRANSFER

dated* _____ for* _____ , who now resides within our area, was read and accepted by our monthly meeting on

(date) _____ .

On behalf of the* _____ Monthly Meeting,

Address* _____ Postal Code* _____

_____

(Signature of monthly meeting clerk or of a membership records clerk)

*Monthly meeting clerk preparing transfer certificate should fill in these blanks before sending the form to the new meeting.

INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS ON FINAL AFFAIRS

Name _____ Date _____
Address _____ Soc. Sec. No. _____

I request that the Religious Society of Friends carry out the following upon my death:

The information below may help those responsible carry out my wishes:

1. Persons to notify at once: (next of kin, co-workers, executor, &c.)
   Name _____ Name _____
   Address _____ Address _____
   Telephone _____ Telephone _____
   Relationship _____ Relationship _____
2. Member of memorial society:
   Address _____ Telephone _____
3. Disposal of body: burial __ cremation __ medical research __ organ donations __
   Disposal of ashes _____
   Cemetery preferred _____ Common plot _____
   Location of deed _____ Family plot _____
   Location of release papers _____
   Undertaker preferred _____
4. Burial insurance: Insurance company _____
   policy number _____
   If no insurance, expenses to be met as follows: _____
5. Memorial meeting for worship desired?
   Special requests: _____
6. Flowers accepted _____ Where _____
   In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to: _____
7. Special instructions if death is distant from home: (over)
8. My will is located at _____
   _____
9. If no surviving parents, instructions on care of minor children: (over)
10. Information for death certificate (must agree with legal records and policies):
    Full legal name _____
    Present address _____
    Birth date _____ Birth place _____ Citizenship _____
    Occupation _____ Present employer _____
    Job title _____ Address _____
    Father's full name _____
    Mother's full name _____
11. My signature to this document _____

Received for the monthly meeting: date _____
(clerk's or recorder's signature)

_____ Monthly Meeting
(print monthly meeting name)

Address _____

The New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

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