

Ministry Coordinating Committee
Fall Sessions November 15, 2014

Present: Buffy Curtis, Elizabeth Edminster, John Edminster, Carolyn Emerson, Charley Flint, Cheshire Frager, Irma Guthrie, Kenn Harper, Lu Harper, David Herendeen, Mia Kissil-Hewitt, Elaine Learnard, Sarah Miller, Anne Pomeroy, Emily Provence, Tom Rothschild, Claire Simon, Anne Wright

1. Meeting began at 4:15 with a period of Worship.
2. Gathering: Clerk Irma Guthrie invited Friends to share a short word or phrase that grounds them as a Friend.
3. The Clerk reviewed the Agenda
4. Report from the Ad Hoc Task Group on Recording Gifts in the Ministry. Lu Harper reported for the Task Group. Friends approved the proposed new language for Faith & Practice, and approved sending the language to Yearly Meeting for first (Spring Sessions 2015) and second readings. (Report attached)
5. Discussion of Laying Down the Yearly Meeting on Ministry & Counsel (YMMC). Irma read the language sent by Liaison committee at summer sessions recommending laying down the Yearly Meeting on Ministry & Counsel. Friends asked whether bringing this recommendation to the YM body might need to wait upon the approval of the language on recording gifts of ministry. Friends were clear to bring both changes for first reading at the same time. If the new language on recording gifts is approved at its 2nd reading, then the minute on laying down YMMC will be brought for a 2nd reading. Friends also recommended bringing a minute to Spring Sessions 2015 recommending continued suspension of the YMMC pending resolution of these two changes to F&P.
6. Announcement of the White Privilege Conference 2016: Task Group on Racism. Charley Flint reported that the White Privilege Conference 2016 will be held in Philadelphia in 2016. MCC is asked to recommend to the YM that it sponsor the conference. Other YM committees are willing to provide funding. A number of NYYM Friends are on the planning committee. Each coordinating committee is being asked to request that the Yearly Meeting sponsor the conference. Friends approved the recommendation. The task group plans visitation to monthly meetings as a resource, and invites MCC Friends to join the task group in that visitation. The task group is working with interested individuals on a planned UN Decade of the Afro-Descendants.
7. Discussion of Process for the State of Society Report: Irma noted that there is only one person on the State of the Society committee and reported that a question was raised as to whether the committee was still needed. Elaine Learnard from Nominating Committee reported that they are working on bringing two additional names for the committee. Friends noted that we haven't been clear in our direction to the State of the Society committee as to whether we want a summary or an actual State of the Society report that synthesizes the information gleaned from the monthly meetings' reports. A Friend spoke to the valuable information that the monthly meetings' reports provide, that is different from both the reports of the General Secretary and the reports of the Meetings for Discernment. If our work is to be based upon what we hear from the body, then we need to listen very carefully to all such reports. The Friend also noted that there is no handbook page for the State of Society committee. In the past the committee was internally nominated by MCC and names are now brought by Nominating Committee, which instructs committee members to provide a synthesis, not a summary. The lack of a handbook page should be addressed. Friends spoke to the reports as valuable evidence of how Truth prospers among us, an important

part of our established practice. Friends recommended to Nominating Committee that the individuals it hopes to name to the committee be coopted this year, since the nominations will not come to the YM body until Spring Sessions. Friends are clear that State of the Meeting Reports should come to this body. Friends agreed to revisit what we want from the committee at Coordinating Committee Weekend.

8. Report from Committee to Record Margaret Web in the Ministry. Irma read an email from Kathy Slattery from the committee. A hoped for meeting was postponed until Margaret Webb and Gabi Savory-Bailey (committee member) returned from their respective maternity leaves.
9. Carolyn Emerson reported on additional language to the definition of worship groups in Faith & Practice relating to allowed or indulged meetings. Friends referred this back to committee.
10. Updating our Section of the Website: Responding to Steve's email.— not done
11. Continuing the Discussion of our role in Implementing the Priorities— not done
12. Request from the POHO Committee: Kenn Harper reported that Ann Davidson intends to retire at end of June 2016. MCC is requested to name a member to sit on the search committee to fill her position as Director of POHO. Friends approved Tom Rothschild to sit on the search committee.
13. Report from the Committee on Conflict Transformation and a request for an addition to their handbook page. Sarah Miller reported on the many venues to which the committee has brought and is bringing its workshop, including many outside the YM. The committee is looking for funding to distribute the film that is on the YM website. The committee has an operating budget and a separate fund. Sarah read a draft definition of this latter fund (attached), to be added to the committee's handbook page. Friends approved bringing the revised handbook page to the YM for approval.
14. Update to list of Friends approved for traveling for the Intervisitation Group. David Herendeen reported that Tom Goodrich from Mornngside Meeting is recommended for travel under the auspices of the group. Friends approved. David affirmed the original aim of the Intervisitation Group to reach out from the Yearly Meeting to small or struggling monthly meetings as a prayerful presence. The Group is considering enlarging its scope of visitation. The Group hopes to meet for a one-day retreat in January. Friends were asked to raise up the names of Friends in the Central & Western portions of the state who might be led to travel. Friends were also encouraged to ask their meetings whether they would like to invite such visits.
15. Announcement: Coordinating Committee Weekend: January 30-31, 2015 Powell House
16. The meeting closed at 6:29 p.m.

10/4/2014

Report of the ad hoc Task Group on Recording Gifts in Ministry

Friends met at New Paltz meeting on 4 Tenth Month 2014 to discern recommendations for where the process of recording gifts in the ministry should lie in the event that the Yearly Meeting lays down the Yearly Meeting on Ministry & Counsel (YMMC) [Ministry Coordinating Committee (MCC) Summer Sessions 2014 minute #5]. John Edminster, Kenn Harper, Lu Harper, Sarah Miller and Anne Pomeroy were present.

Friends held the charge in worship and continued our discernment worshipfully. We reviewed the Yearly Meeting's history of recording gifts since the suspension of the YMMC in 2007.

Friends were clear about the following:

- A vital ministry among Friends is important to the spiritual life of all Friends. The support of ministries under the care of the Yearly Meeting is one way we manifest our being a spiritual community.
- Gifts of ministry are given to communities through the individuals who carry the gifts.
- Gifts of ministry are not limited to vocal ministry. We were clear that it is not helpful to try to define what encompasses gifts of the Spirit.
- There is a natural life cycle to ministry, from naming to nurturing, accountability, evolving and possible withdrawing of the gift.
- We were clear that we are all invited to experience the gifts that are carried among us, to be enriched by the exercise of others' gifts, to hold and nurture them, and to mutually be accountable for their right use.
- Monthly meetings are encouraged to grow in their nurture of the ministries under their care. We were clear that the responsibility for beginning the process of recording gifts in the ministry lies solely with the monthly meeting. A decision to not record any gifts minimizes the meeting's responsibility to care for the ministries under its care, and so tends to impair its own ability to do so.
- When we record we are taking the ministry under our care as a yearly meeting. We recognize not all meetings currently embrace our practice of recording. Meetings are not obligated to record a gift of ministry. However, when a gift of ministry is recorded by the Yearly Meeting, the recording is to be considered valid in every Friends' body within the Yearly Meeting.
- We named the fears of hurting people by recording gifts and by not recording gifts; the fear of raising up individuals and empowering an elite group; as well as the fear of entire meetings leaving the Yearly Meeting over this issue. We were clear to proceed as we were led, and not to be led by fear.
- We heard the pain that was felt at Fall Sessions 2011 when our disunity around recording gifts of ministry became clear. We affirmed MCC's report to Spring Sessions 2013 that stated that we are a yearly meeting that records gifts in the ministry, and we hold the concerns of all Friends tenderly, trusting that God will lead us to a place of love where all the gifts we are given will be utilized, recognized and supported.
- We wrestled with the meaning of accountability and authority. Authority for the exercise of gifts of the Spirit rests with God. Our responsibility is to support the development and fulfillment of spiritual gifts. Care of the ministry requires mutual accountability. The individual may be faithful and the monthly meeting may not be doing their work or vice versa. MCC's responsibility is to care both for the flourishing of the gifts and for the spiritual life of the monthly meeting.

- We labored long and deeply about where the process of recording should occur. We see value in the whole body of the Yearly Meeting being able to unite to support the ministries held in our care. We see our current condition as unable to prayerfully hold these ministries as the Yearly Meeting body while we are in disunity about the practice of recording gifts of ministry. We are clear that at present the process of recording should lie with Ministry Coordinating Committee and reported to the Yearly Meeting. Given our current condition, we are likewise clear that the whole Yearly Meeting should not at present be involved in the rescinding of a recording.
- We look forward to the time when the whole Yearly Meeting body is prepared and equipped to hold all ministries under our care.
- We were clear that there is a gap in the provisions of Faith & Practice between the time of the initial recording of a gift and the time when the gift may be recognized as having been withdrawn, with attendant rescinding of the recording, We propose language to name the need for nurture and accountability over the life cycle of the gift, and further propose that the title of this section be changed from RECORDING OF GIFTS IN MINISTRY to CARE OF MINISTRIES AND RECORDING OF GIFTS IN MINISTRY to reflect this additional language.
- We considered the sentence at the end of the section of Faith & Practice on recording gifts that mentions “rights” and have left it in for now because it may have an associated impact upon pastoral ministers’ livelihood.
- Recording is held by the Yearly Meeting and is transferable.

Friends identified “parking lot” items that were either outside the scope of the group’s charge or outside of what we could accomplish in a day long meeting:

- Is there a need at MCC to have a check in by recorded ministers? Feedback needs to get back to both the MM and MCC for their stewardship of the gifts.
- Ongoing engagement with monthly meetings and the Yearly Meeting as a whole to equip the Yearly Meeting to faithfully hold gifts of ministry:
 - describing the variety of spiritual gifts that can be carried as ministry
- In Faith & Practice, p. 121, the membership of the YMMC explicitly included “all recorded ministers, pastors, and meeting secretaries.” How does MCC include these Friends in its makeup?
- Queries from Dorothy Grannell from NEYM: What structures will support and strengthen the witness of Friends? Do the meeting structures of the past (recording, rescinding, meeting times, memorial minutes etc.) still serve the Society of Friends in ways that grow our spirit and our movement in God’s world? Do we need new or different structures to help us in today’s world? Are our structures life giving?
- We noted that in Faith & Practice under the Functions of the Yearly Meeting there is no mention of care of the spiritual life of the Yearly Meeting (it does, however, appear under Organization, Yearly Meeting Ministry & Counsel, p. 104). Should this be addressed?
- The current scope of responsibilities given in the handbook for Ministry & Pastoral Care is so broad that it impairs the function of the committee.

We propose the following changes to Faith & Practice:

Faith & Practice p. 121-122 (with strikethroughs and insertions noted)

Functions of Ministry and Counsel

THE MONTHLY MEETING ON MINISTRY AND COUNSEL.

SPIRITUAL CARE OF MEMBERS. Members of ministry and counsel should be concerned: [add bullet at the end of section]

- to seek guidance in nurturing gifts of ministry throughout the life cycle of gifts from naming gifts, to care and oversight and including changes in the gift.

Faith & Practice p. 121-122 (clean copy with proposed changes)

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;
- to seek guidance in nurturing gifts of ministry throughout the life cycle of gifts from naming gifts, to care and oversight and including changes in the gift.

Faith & Practice p. 127 (with strikethroughs and insertions noted)

~~RECORDING OF GIFTS IN MINISTRY CARE OF MINISTRIES AND 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 [insert: given] public ministry ~~to the edification and spiritual help of the congregation~~ [insert: which is sustained, consistent and enlivening] 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 [insert: recording of gifts] 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.~~ [insert: a recognition of the gift of the Spirit to the community and a recognition of the need for care and nurture of that gift.]

When the monthly meeting on ministry and counsel is satisfied that a member ~~has~~ [insert: carries] 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~~ [insert: Ministry Coordinating Committee], 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~~ [insert: designated committee] shall forward their recommendation to the ~~Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel~~ [insert: Ministry Coordinating Committee], 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~~ [insert: Ministry Coordinating Committee does] not approve a proposal to record, they should so inform the originating meeting.

[Insert:

The recording of an individual's gifts in ministry carries a responsibility on the part of Friends in the monthly, regional/quarterly and yearly meetings to nurture, support and hold accountable the individual in the exercise of those gifts, including by being present during the exercise of the gifts, knowing the spiritual condition of the individual, hearing reports of the ministry, etc.

In naming the gift of ministry, the monthly meeting carries the primary responsibility for nurture and oversight of the gift throughout its life cycle, including naming changes in the gift and its possible withdrawal. Care committees, peer groups, etc. may provide structures for this work, which may also be carried by the regional/quarterly meeting.

In recording the gift of ministry, Ministry Coordinating Committee carries a concern for both the individual carrying the gift and the meeting in which the gift is manifested.

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~~In case a member who has been recorded as a minister appears to have lost the gift and usefulness in the ministry [insert: cases where the gift has been withdrawn], 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 [insert: Ministry Coordinating Committee]. Final action rests with the yearly meeting on ministry and counsel [insert: Ministry Coordinating Committee]. 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.

Faith & Practice p. 127 (clean copy with proposed changes)

CARE OF MINISTRIES AND RECORDING OF GIFTS IN MINISTRY. In cases when a member has given public ministry which is sustained, consistent and enlivening and has rendered this service to such an extent as to afford a basis for judgment as to the nature of those gifts and calling, the monthly meeting on ministry and counsel should carefully consider whether there is evidence of a gift in the ministry that should be officially recognized. Friends should bear in mind that such recording of gifts of ministry is a recognition of the gift of the Spirit to the community and a recognition of the need for care and nurture of that gift.

When the monthly meeting on ministry and counsel is satisfied that a member carries a gift in the ministry that they consider to be of suitable character, 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 Ministry Coordinating Committee, which, in turn, should refer the proposal to a designated committee for examination and recommendation. If, after due consideration, the way seems clear, the designated committee shall forward their recommendation to the Ministry Coordinating Committee, 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 Ministry Coordinating Committee does not approve a proposal to record, they should so inform the originating meeting.

The recording of an individual's gifts in ministry carries a responsibility on the part of Friends in the monthly, regional/quarterly and yearly meetings to nurture, support and hold accountable the individual in the exercise of those gifts, including by being present during the exercise of the gifts, knowing the spiritual condition of the individual, hearing reports of the ministry, etc.

In naming the gift of ministry, the monthly meeting carries the primary responsibility for nurture and oversight of the gift throughout its life cycle, including naming changes in the gift and its possible withdrawal. Care committees, peer groups, etc. may provide structures for this work, which may also be carried by the regional/quarterly meeting.

In recording the gift of ministry, Ministry Coordinating Committee carries a concern for both the individual carrying the gift and the meeting in which the gift is manifested.

In cases where the gift has been withdrawn, 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 Ministry Coordinating Committee. Final action rests with the Ministry Coordinating Committee. 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.

Draft Descriptive Statement for the Conflict Transformation Fund

Conflict Transformation Fund: Under the care of the Committee on Conflict Transformation, the fund receives money contributed by Quaker meetings and organizations, individuals or foundations in support of the Committee's work. The fund supports projects and initiatives relating to the charge of the Committee that might not otherwise be possible through use of the operating budget. In the event that the fund is deemed by the Committee or the Treasurer to no longer serve a useful purpose, it may be laid down and the remaining balance applied to the operating budget of the Committee for the year after such action is taken.