

NYYM Handbook page revision:

**COMMITTEE TO REVISE FAITH AND PRACTICE,
The Book of Discipline of the Yearly Meeting
(2017)**

Presented to Spring Sessions 2017 for first reading

History

The Committee to Revise Faith and Practice (“the Committee”) was created in the fall of 1977 by the clerk of the Yearly Meeting and subsequently by the Representative Meeting. Initially its charge was to address the membership of children.

From 1977 until 1988, the Yearly Meeting appointed members to one-year terms. Since the Committee was considered *ad hoc*, there were no restrictions on successive appointments during the early years.

With the passage of time, the Committee identified additional sections of *Faith and Practice* in which material needed to be changed or added: sexist language, prison reform, troubled marriages, separation and divorce, death and dying, and human sexuality. The Committee also considered matters of Quaker spirituality, such as ensuring that references to Christ remained in our Book of Discipline while recognizing that the spirituality of our faith ranged from Christian to universalist, including atheists, non-theists and agnostics as Members. Friends individually, and through suggestions from monthly meetings, called on the Committee to consider most sections of the book. The second part of the book, “Practice and Procedure,” received final approval in July 1987; the first part, “Faith,” in July 1995. The most recent printed edition was approved in April 2014. Changes approved subsequently are posted on the Yearly Meeting website.

Committee Responsibilities and Process for Proposed Changes

The Committee is charged with the consideration of proposed changes to our Book of Discipline and the preparation and presentation of such proposals to the Body at Sessions.

The process associated with its charge was approved at Summer Sessions 2016 as follows:

“Proposed revisions to *Faith and Practice* may originate in a monthly or regional or a Yearly Meeting body. When the proposed revision has been seasoned by the Committee to Revise Faith and Practice and approved by Ministry Coordinating Committee, the Committee to Revise Faith and Practice may bring the proposed revision to any Yearly Meeting session for a first reading. After being brought forward the first time, the proposed revision is brought for a second reading and final approval to a subsequent Yearly Meeting session.”

Functions and Activities

1. The Committee functions under the care of the Ministry Coordinating Committee, to which the Committee reports. The Ministry Coordinating Committee may offer guidance and counsel to the Committee’s work and help facilitating Friends’ understanding of Committee proposals for revision.
2. The Committee meets at all Sessions and at other times as needed to fulfill its responsibilities. Between Committee meetings originating bodies (*i.e.*, a monthly, regional or Yearly Meeting body) may write suggestions for new sections or for changes in sections already published as set forth above in the section entitled “...Process for Proposed Changes.”
3. The Committee is on call to explain suggested revisions and to listen to Friends’ thoughts and concerns.

Organization and Method of Appointment

Committee members are appointed for three-year staggered terms, with about one-third of the members having their terms end each year. The Yearly Meeting’s limit of two successive terms applies to appointees. The Yearly Meeting’s Nominating Committee recommends appointments, for subsequent approval by the Yearly Meeting.

Only members of the New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends may be appointed to the Committee.

The Committee selects its own clerk and recording clerk for one-year terms and names a representative to the Ministry Coordinating Committee for a one-year term as well.

Meeting Times & Places

The Committee meets at all Sessions, at a date, time and place selected by the Committee’s clerk, typically on site at the scheduled Session, and announced in

advance, typically in SPARK and on site at the scheduled Session. All Committee meetings at Sessions are open meetings. The Committee's clerk may schedule additional meetings.

Communication on all matters in connection with the Committee's work abide by the guidelines set forth in the minute approved at Fall Sessions 2016 entitled "Use of Technology In The Conduct Of Business".

Finances

The expenses of the committee are met by an appropriation in the Operating Budget. Sales of *Faith and Practice* are intended to cover the costs of its printing.