

Message for New York Yearly Meeting

7-24-2015, 3:30 PM

Jeffrey L. Hitchcock, clerk

A ministry of love without an understanding of justice is a tool of the privileged.

A witness of justice without an understanding of Spirit is like a rudderless ship that takes us no place and may do harm as it collides with others in the harbor.

When we do it well, our ministry and our witness are not so different. They are really the same thing.

We are NOT the Religious Society of the privileged.

We are NOT the Secular Society of Friends

We are the Religious Society of Friends

My pathway into the Yearly Meeting, nearly 20 years ago, came through our witness activities, and from there I grew a broader understanding of who we are.

When I became Assistant Clerk, I was pulled into a journey of spiritual development that still continues. I came to understand that our Yearly Meeting had experienced hurt and division in the not so distant past, and that many Friends had worked hard to heal those wounds and ground us in Spirit. Eventually I came to see and understand how that spiritual work, and our collective and growing understanding of Spirit-led eldership was, and is, the foundation of our Yearly Meeting. If we lose that, we lose ourselves as a Yearly Meeting. I have felt myself held, and I have experienced our Yearly Meeting being held by Friends who have done this work of eldership. There is some mystery to it. But it is a learnable task and role, and one that does not necessarily have to do with age.

I believe that our foundation remains strong; and that it will be this way as long as we attend to it. And then we have, and will have something on which to build our collective witness and ministry, and it feels to be so wonderful to be part of that.

Jeffrey L. Hitchcock
serving as Presiding Clerk