

MCC 1/25/14 morning session

Present: Gabi Savory Bailey, Ann Davidson, Cheshire Frager, Irma Guthrie, Mia Kissil Hewitt, Jeff Hitchcock, Sarah Miller, Anne Pomeroy, Claire Simon, Ann Wright,

1. Meeting began at 10:05 am with a period of worship. Clerk Irma Guthrie read from St. Catherine of Siena:

What kind of God?

What kind of God would He be
if He did not hear the
bangles ring on
an ant's wrist

As they move the earth
in their sweet
dance?

And what kind of God would He be
if a leaf's prayer was not as precious to creation
as the prayer His own son sang
from the glorious depth
of his soul—
for us.

And what kind of God would He be
if the vote of millions in this world could sway him
to change the divine
law of
love

That speaks so clearly with compassion's elegant tongue,
saying, eternally saying:

All are forgiven—moreover, dears,
no one has ever been
guilty.

What
kind of God would He be
if He did not count the blinks
of your
eyes

and is in absolute awe of their movements?

What a God—what a God we
have.

And from St. Thomas Aquinas:

If it had not believed

Would any seed take root if it had not believed
His promise, when God said,
“Dears, I will rain. I will help you. I will turn into
warmth and effulgence,

I will be the Mother I am
and let you draw from
My body

And rise, and
rise.”

2. Irma invited Friends to share one way they find joy in their life.
3. Irma then reviewed the agenda.
4. Discussion in response to the presentation by the Priorities Working Group. Irma asked Friends to respond to the following questions: What aspects are we led to raise up? How do we as a coordinating committee hold the ministry of our Yearly Meeting as we transcend these changes?

Irma Guthrie read a passage from The Message version of Matt 10:16: “Stay alert. This is hazardous work I’m assigning you. You’re going to be like sheep running through a wolf pack, so don’t call attention to yourselves. Be as cunning as a snake, inoffensive as a dove.”

Friends spoke of the centrality of knowing ourselves in spiritual connection and being seen by others as connected, and the importance of sharing our spiritual experiences individually and in small groups as a way to draw us into spiritual connection. Friends shared suggestions of tools MCC can provide to monthly meetings, quarters & the region to invite Friends into such sharing. Monthly meetings are places of comfort & shelter; Friends in their monthly meetings are not necessarily looking for connections to the broader YM. Young Adult Friends are considering how to hold one another accountable between opportunities to be together. MCC can let individuals and the monthly meetings know that worship is important to us, that in concrete ways we support the worship experience. We can offer a prayerful presence. We can offer workshops on prayerful support [pastoral care]. Friends held up the sense that the Priorities WG found a pervasive sense of detachment among monthly meetings. How can we put an end to the we/they sense? Can we arrange business on Firstdays of Fall & Spring Sessions so that some among us can attend local meetings during their meeting for worship? Communications from YM committees tend to be requests for action which can be perceived by monthly meetings as “we only hear from you when you want something from us;” can YM committees start their year by communicating to monthly meetings, inviting them to respond, sharing concerns and ideas with the YM committees. Friends held up the importance of visitation: meetings have responded positively to Priorities WG, saying “you came.” Can we develop a practice of inter-visitation that is more

than just “I’m going to worship with such & such meeting this week.” We can use the detailed notes from Priorities Working Group to respond to specific needs requested by individual monthly meetings to guide inter-visitation. Priorities Working Group or some other body could sort through and share these specific needs of individual monthly meetings with the appropriate coordinating committees (and/or regions/quarters) for followup. All the detailed reports are available [where?]. Perhaps this could be done as a work weekend?

5. Jeff Hitchcock reported on an idea for encouraging inter-visitation among monthly meetings. The Clerk of the YM, in consultation with the General Secretary, plans to offer a challenge to visit other monthly meetings for meeting for worship, and to keep records of the visits, not in a sense of accountability, but to document the degree of inter-visitation taking place. Jeff envisioned setting a goal of 500 total visits this calendar year (less than 1 visit per month per meeting). Sarah Miller reported on Northeast region’s goal over the last two years of increasing visitation, and reporting back. Northeast’s experience might be a model for other quarters/regions. Exchanges between meetings might be a creative solution for tiny monthly meetings who would miss a member leaving to visit another meeting. Anne Pomeroy shared a comment from a consultation on inter-visitation that “inter-visitation unlocks prophetic ministry.” There is a mutual exchange, mutuality of gaining from the experience. How do we carry one another in our hearts? Inter-visitation is an opportunity, not a task. Irma Guthrie reported on a past practice between Ithaca & Perry City meetings of meeting with one another once a year. Creative opportunities to meet this goal of increased visitation could be considered. Friends encouraged the clerk to move ahead with this opportunity.

Friends approved the minutes.

6. Irma Guthrie reminded Friends that she is still officially clerking the Committee to Revise Faith & Practice, and needs to lay down clerking Faith & Practice now that she is clerking the coordinating committee. She asked for suggestions of Friends who might be encouraged to join the committee as clerk.
7. State of Society committee is currently working without a clerk.
8. Friends closed the morning session at 11:57 am.

Afternoon sessions:

9. Our sessions resumed at 1:35 pm. Nathaniel Corwin and Christopher Sammond joined the afternoon session.
10. Ann Davidson reported for Worship at Sessions that Maggie Edmondson, pastor, Winthrop Center, Maine, has agreed to lead Bible Study at Summer Sessions.
11. Anne Pomeroy reported from Ministry & Pastoral Care. The Stevens Fund is stable, with a \$6000 dividend. The committee recommends funding \$1500/year to be distributed in June & November. Ruth Kinsey, Deb Dickinson, Bea Kimble & Dorothy Garner are the proposed recipients. Friends approved.
12. Anne reported that the Travelling Friends Advisory Group is being reconstituted under the name Intervisitation Group. Co-clerks are Buffy Curtis and David Herendeen. They are in the process rethinking their mission and scope, and of identifying a group of people to travel appointment by MCC. [Anne to give me a list...to be approved at Spring Sessions] There are legal restrictions on how the traveling friends fund may be used.
13. Lu Harper reported on the 2nd joint retreat of NEYM/NYYM elders, to be held at Powell House February 7-9th, 2014. Facilitator will be Jan Hoffman of Mt. Tobey Meeting, NEYM. Substantial

support for registration was received from the Shoemaker Fund. There was a planning team of Lu Harper, Anne Pomeroy, Janet Hough & Ann Dodd-Collins & Ann Davidson. Anne Pomeroy reported on beginning planning for a 3rd retreat series to be held at Powell House to nurture the life of the YM.

14. Friends approved the minutes so far.
15. Irma invited discussion of next steps after the YM's approval of the Apology to Afro-Descendants. Christopher Sammond discussed ways in which the news of the YM's approval of the Apology has been communicated to the media. A Friend wondered whether there might be a need for a retreat at Powell House for those doing anti-racism work to support one another and learn from one another's experiences. We wish to encourage Friends to work against racism. Friends were invited to attend Meeting for Worship for Racial Healing at Summer Sessions. Friends responded tenderly to the query, How can we lead by example? Can we create an opportunity at Summer Sessions for Afro-American Friends to share their experiences of racism within Quaker circles broadly and within NYYM in particular and to be listened to? Could we create a similar opportunity for white Friends to share how racism affects them? How do we help one another to see each other wholly? Friends brainstormed ways in which the YM as a whole could be invited to commit to reading one book about racism. Irma Guthrie reported that the Task Group on Racism will meet again in February. The Task Group plans to engage young Friends in conversations around racism. Friends asked whether the Task Group might send the YM a series of weekly email quotes or queries prior to Spring Sessions. The following minute was forwarded to Sessions Committee:

Ministry Coordinating Committee has minuted its recommendation that the theme for summer sessions reflect the great work that we as New York Yearly Meeting have undertaken in adopting the Apology to Afro-Descendants.

We encourage Sessions committee to weave into our activities the consideration of racism in all its forms. This could take the form of a plenary panel discussion/ presentation by Friends who are affected by racism in New York Yearly Meeting as well as those who are addressing the concern. Another manifestation could be a query at the start of each business session. These queries would also be the focus of small group reflection. We encourage this work to take place in age-appropriate ways in JYM. We encourage all efforts to reflect our unity and diversity.

16. Friends raised the ongoing concern around drug use at Silver Bay and the need to create a safe environment for the spiritual growth of all. Friends who are parents noted concerns expressed by their children. Friends noted that there are no evening programs for the teens at Summer Sessions, but that could change if the YM asked JYM to do so. Drug & alcohol use is forbidden by Silver Bay, is illegal & creates a divided experience for Friends of all ages. Drugs are not who we are as a YM. There has been a historic culture of such use by some who attend Sessions that we continue to need to challenge. Friends reported less drug & alcohol use last year. Deb Wood reported that Nurture Coordinating Committee is pulling together a drug and alcohol task group, which will be convened by Jen Perry.
17. Deb Wood reported on plans by Nurture Coordinating Committee for a retreat in September 2014. Gabi Savory Bailey will be planning regional mini-retreats for young adult friends, perhaps to coincide with Spring and Fall Sessions, or Meetings for Discernment.
18. Friends approved the minutes.
19. Meeting closed at 3:45 p.m.