

MCC  
Coordinating Committee Weekend  
31 January 2015

Present: Mary Pugh Clark, Ann Davidson, Elizabeth Edminster, John Edminster, Irma Guthrie, Kenn Harper, Lu Harper, David Herendeen, Jeff Hitchcock, Anne Pomeroy, Emily Provence, Tom Rothschild, Kathy Slattery, Ann Wright

1. Opening Worship: Meeting began with a period of open worship at 10:15 a.m.
2. The clerk reviewed the agenda.
3. Gathering: Friends were invited to introduce themselves and to speak to the query, What are some priorities in your life.
4. Addressing the Priorities of the YM: The clerk raised the following queries:
  - a. What is our role as MCC (and the committees and task groups comprising MCC) in helping to implement these Priorities?
  - b. How are we open to the leadings of the Spirit in this process?
  - c. What support are we able to provide?
  - d. What do we envision resulting from these Priorities?
  - e. What kind of support do you personally need to step forward in this work?

Friends reflected on the queries, asking, How do we listen to one another across our faith experience? How can we stay open to the leadings of the Spirit, and deeply grounded in our Faith and also be deeply gathered into one body? How can we hold a deep understanding of the joy of mutual accountability in our thinking about how to be transparent and accountable to one another from monthly meetings to the yearly meeting. What rises up from monthly meetings: minutes of conscience, Friends with leadings. The reality of monthly meetings being insular, struggling to meet their own needs: the impetus may also not come from gathered NYYM Friends in sessions. Next generation: we think about children & teens as belonging to Nurture CC because that's where the Youth Committee is (ditto elderly). How does the work of our committees and task groups involve those who are under the age of 18, or those who are new to meetings. How can we end retreats or meetings with the question, how are we going to take this back to the monthly meeting? Invitation: How do we invite meetings into relationship coupled with education in Quaker process? What communication modality works best, what is the human face to the communication? There can be no transparency or accountability without inclusion. Quaker practice & spiritual accountability are spiritual practices: are we following the leadings of the holy spirit? Quaker process can be heard and interpreted differently in different meetings.

What do we envision resulting from these priorities: how does Quakerism adjust to the modern world where we are not in small communities where Meeting for Worship is central? How do we create societies in tune with our values that are more extensive than just showing up on Firstday? What local networks can we create? How do we make links between local meetings and local non-Quaker

connections, communities that are diverse? Can we be witnesses to the dignity & worth of all people through our work in causes such as earthcare, racism, etc.? Friends are heartened by the developing intervisitation that connects Friends and meetings, and lessens the sense of isolation or insularity among some meetings, creating reasons for hope. The role or quarters and regions can also build communities among Friends. A Friend noted the difference between isolated and isolationist, and that each condition might require different approaches. This work will be made real as each of us connect face to face, modeling how we wish things to be.

Friends held up the importance of being grounded in our faith: importance of grounding, yet huge diversity of understandings of faith. What unites us? How can a common vision unite us? A friend referred to Gauguin's *Who are we? Where are we going?* Can we encourage Friends to think about their vision, how can we be emissaries who listen and nudge? What we put our attention comes about. Meetings struggle around who they are. How do we invite individuals and meetings to hold the question of who are we as a meeting? What is your dream? Is it being realized? As members of MCC, we are invited into intervisitation, inviting those we meet with into the more.

Friends suggested we explore spiritual accountability as a committee.

What support are we able to provide to make these things happen? This question will be held over until later this afternoon.

5. Reflecting on the Report from the PWG to Fall Sessions 2014
  - a. MCC Priorities Assessment Committee oversight

Friends made the following comments: In the section on Laying Down, should the proposal state the end of the priorities as the time for laying down, unless otherwise extended? Can the language reflect the dynamic nature of the process? In last sentence of paragraph 1, "the committee shall" rather than "should."

Where is the joy in the committee description? How does the work of this committee replace or duplicate the work of the State of Society report?

The committee is "toothless," reporting back to the YM. Statement of Leadings & Priorities is not the YM's only listening venue, we have reports from staff, from the Meeting for Discernment, from Intervisitation group, etc. Who is following up on these reports? Why would we create a committee that is only responsible for one particular listening venue, and doesn't call us into accountability?

Spiritual Accountability is not reflected here. implementation notes are primarily going to Financial Services?

Relating to #1: Purposes and objectives: It's less about progress than it is about faithfulness. Changing the emphasis to be about spiritual/whole life accountability explicitly. We don't want this to be a mechanical tool, a mechanical reporting, but a body that is engaged in faithfully living the priorities, in faithfully being accountable around the priorities.

Suggest ending #3 at "To communicate, visit and obtain information from all parts of the Yearly Meeting in order to assist the committee in discerning our faithfulness in implementing the Leadings and Priorities." then start a new # with the subpoints...

6. Meetings for Discernment, March 7<sup>th</sup>: we need a representative from MCC. Friends co-opted Emily Provence as a member of MCC and appointed her to be the representative from MCC.

Friends closed the morning session after a period of worship at 11:56 a.m. The afternoon session began with a period of worship at 2:35 p.m.

7. State of the Society Report
  - a. Julia Giordano has agreed to serve on the committee. Also on the committee for a second year is Joy Weaver. Friends discussed what we want in the report: a summary, synthesis, contrasts and/or analysis that speak to the totality of the reports. What are the joys & concerns that rise up that need to be called to our attention? MCC members might point out sections of reports that rise up for them. We encourage the committee to be faithful in the presentation of the state of society at summer sessions, but not necessarily to read the report in full at sessions. Friends were clear that we should trust the committee's discernment and invite them to tell us what, if any, support they want.
8. Proposed changes to sections of Faith and Practice: Covenant Relationships and Growth and Reconciliation: Elizabeth Edminster passed out copies of the proposed changes.
  - a. Changes to the Covenant Relationships section: Friends approved the changes with modifications: [attached]
  - b. Changes to the Growth and Reconciliation section: Friends labored with this section, and sent it back to the Committee on Faith & Practice for further work.
9. Friends noted that we need to take the filters off our heart that result in lack of diversity, and asked how we might take under our care the fostering of a spirit of welcome and hospitality. A Friend held up intervisitation: to go prepared, grounded, non-judgmental & openhearted, and to model all that we would hope for if we were the ones being received. How can we invite those we meet into deeper relationship? How can we welcome anyone who comes, to be in community & connection with people who are completely

different from us? A Friend held up the work of FWCC in Africa. Love softens hearts. Friends were asked to hold Rochester Meeting in the Light on Thursday, February 5<sup>th</sup> as they hold a meeting for healing for the meeting community. Carrying & holding in prayer the diversity among us is our loving concern. Chronic illness, learning disabilities, personal difficulties & emotional triggers can be invisible to us, and difficult to hold until we know one another deeply enough to see them. A Friend held up a concern for developing supports for individuals with mental health issues. How do we communicate to one another when someone has been hurt by words spoken in meeting, or by people behaving badly. It is important for us not to belittle other individuals and groups. How do we address conflict in meetings? When do we have to do triage? When is anger an expression of approval or control, neither of which is our right? Friends expressed gratitude for this time of deep sharing.

10. Friends reflected on how we support the leadings & priorities of the YM. There will be a retreat in March of Ministry & Pastoral Care, Spiritual Nurture Working Group, Advancement, Young Adult Concerns Committee, Intervisitation Group, representatives from the POHO committee, to come together to examine our charges, our “listening devices” and to see how we are led to work together.
11. The meeting closed after a period of silent worship at 4:25 p.m.