

2015 NYYM Spring Sessions
Oakwood Friends School
Saturday, April 11, 2015
12:45 – 2:00 PM

Report on the Saturday Afternoon Session Considering How We Are Led to Implement the Leadings and Priorities We Have Discerned.

Friends assembled and heard a description of the plan to be followed for the session. First, Friends were invited to form into small groups and discuss a handout (see complete handout, attached) that contained some background and a set of four queries. Following a discussion period of approximately 20 minutes, Friends then entered into the silence and upon being recognized by the clerk, spoke to the queries as led. Notes were taken by a recording clerk, whose task was not to record ministry directly but rather to capture and summarize the sense of what was heard. Friends were advised that the recording clerk, presiding clerk, assistant clerk, and general secretary would compile the notes into a report to be shared with all Friends.

The queries: (see handout for background)

How are Friends from monthly meetings led to help other monthly meetings achieve the priorities our meetings have collectively identified?

How might Friends from other monthly meetings help your monthly meeting?

How can the NYYM committee structure help Friends help each other achieve the priorities we have discerned together?

What are other ways we might help each other live into our priorities?

Responses to the Queries

Monthly Meetings and Individuals have their own priorities. How can the Yearly Meeting discern and evaluate the implementation of the Leadings & Priorities?

Our work in the morning session only focused on the financial dimension. There are other dimensions to implementing the priorities.

The Yearly Meeting committees need to be charged to reconsider their work in the light of the Leadings & Priorities. The mechanics will be ineffective and painful unless it starts with the committees.

ARCH is a part of the Yearly Meeting that is a successful program that nurtures and helps all of us. We are doing the work and are making progress – look at the great strides we are taking on.

We are not in the habit of doing certain things. We need to stretch out of our comfort zone – ARCH does this – and it leads to Spiritual Growth through inter-visitation.

The queries all use the word “help,” which jumps out. Fellowship is the key to implementing. We are each other’s greatest resource in the spirit of love.

Our meeting did its State of the Meeting Report in the light of the Leadings and Priorities and it went very well. Our meeting also worked with Aging Concerns.

Troubled by the first query – How are Friends from monthly meetings led to help other monthly meetings achieve the priorities our meetings have collectively identified? – which emphasized the Monthly/Yearly Meeting relationship. Priorities arose out of a Yearly Meeting exercise.

How do we help our Monthly Meetings examine the priorities and determine what fits and then help them achieve their priorities?

The priorities are sufficient and need to be applied in all that we do.

These priorities are not necessarily the priorities of each monthly meeting, or of each individual Friend. Using the Priorities Working Group process in a monthly meeting will help the monthly meeting to define its priorities. Share them among other meetings in the region to identify best practices. Work needs to be done by the Monthly Meeting. I'm having trouble with the Yearly Meeting priorities, it will come to the work of the Financial Services Committee, then we'll see if it meets our needs.

Looking at the ways in which we listen to one another in the Yearly Meeting – the Statement of Leadings and Priorities is one, but also the State of the Meeting Reports, and the Meeting for Discernment. Aging Concerns was mentioned a lot in the State of the Meeting Reports. Monthly Meetings doing Outreach kept coming up in Meeting for Discernment. The Statement of Leadings & Priorities is good, but not the whole story. It gets us to listen to one another. Structure can't make us do it, this requires a cultural change: What pieces of this am I called to minister to?

ATTACHMENT

Spring Sessions 2015

HANDOUT FOR SATURDAY AFTERNOON BUSINESS SESSION

12:45PM to 2:00PM

Background:

Monthly meetings and worship groups, through the vehicle of the Priorities Working Group, have collectively identified our needs and priorities. The gathered body of NYYM has accepted these priorities as the work of the Yearly Meeting, and we are moving now toward implementing them.

The work of the Yearly Meeting is done by Yearly Meeting staff, and also by Friends who volunteer their time. If we consider the total hours of work performed by staff and volunteers combined, the volunteer hours amount to as much as 75% of the total work performed.

Three things characterize this work and the volunteers who perform it.

- 1) The volunteers are Friends from our monthly meetings, from your meeting and from many other meetings. Thus a substantial portion of work performed by what we call the “Yearly Meeting” is actually done by Friends from monthly meetings. (And, of course, our staff are also Friends from monthly meetings.) This work impacts our monthly meetings, which are both beneficiaries of the work, and the source that supplies the Friends who perform it.
- 2) The work of volunteers from our monthly meetings who serve the “Yearly Meeting” is almost entirely channeled through the NYYM committee structure. The NYYM committee structure provides a means of coordinating this work across our monthly meetings.
- 3) Friends perform the work they are led to perform. The Yearly Meeting cannot simply redirect their work if the Friends who volunteer are not led to do it. Nor will monthly meetings necessarily gain the volunteer hours of a Friend if the Friend no longer works within the Yearly Meeting committee structure. These things may or may not happen, depending on how Friends are led to serve, and not by the direction of either the Yearly Meeting as an organization, or monthly meetings as organizations.

Our monthly meetings have voiced our priorities, and we as a Yearly Meeting as a whole have agreed to work on them.

Queries:

How are Friends from monthly meetings led to help other monthly meetings achieve the priorities our meetings have collectively identified?

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