

## Faith and Practice Revision Group Report to Annual Sessions 2014

The Faith and Practice Revision Group, appointed by the Yearly Meeting in 2009, has been meeting regularly. We record with sadness the death on June 11, 2014, of our member, Ann Yasuhara, Princeton Monthly Meeting, who was an integral part of the working group since its formation. We minute our deep appreciation for her insightful suggestions, deep understanding of and commitment to the Religious Society of Friends, and her abundant gifts of friendship, humility, intellect, appreciation of beauty, and joy.

We wish to express our gratitude to the many Friends and monthly meetings who have provided incredibly, helpful feedback as we focus our attention on three main sections of the revised book of *Faith and Practice*. These three sections, I. Experience and Faith, II. Faith Reflected in Our Practice and Daily Lives, and III. Faith Reflected in Our Organization, and the organization of the book, have been revised and posted on the PYM website on the Faith and Practice Working Group page:

[www.pym.org/faith-and-practice-revision-group](http://www.pym.org/faith-and-practice-revision-group)

Limited numbers of reading copies of this material are available during Annual Sessions at the *Faith and Practice* table in the hallway and in the Library. We are not asking for time this morning to review those sections.

We would like to update you on our progress and outline future steps:

July 2014	Post the three main sections of the revised text online.	✓
March 2015	Post the remaining sections of the book online (Foreword, Preface, Historical Background, Wider Religious Fellowship, Advices and Quotations, Resources for Monthly Meetings and Tools for Discernment).  Solicit feedback and suggestions for remaining sections.	
Spring 2015	Called session of PYM to review remaining sections of the book.	
Annual Sessions 2015	Preliminary reading of entire book.	
Annual Sessions 2016	Second reading of entire book for acceptance. If accepted, lay down the <i>Faith and Practice</i> Working Group. Assign Publications Committee (or other group) the task of preparing and publishing the approved manuscript.	

To accomplish this timetable, we have asked PYM Nominating Committee to augment our group which now consists of four Friends:

Annette Benert (Lehigh Valley MM, Bucks QM)  
Joan Broadfield (Chester MM, Chester QM)  
Martha Bryans (Uwchlan MM, Caln QM), Clerk  
Howard Cell (Germantown MM, Philadelphia QM)

Thomas Swain, Clerk of PYM Nominating Committee, welcomes the suggestion of individuals to be considered for appointment. We anticipate that the next six months will involve focused work on the quotations section, the resources for monthly meetings and tools for discernment section, and general assistance in reviewing and editing drafts. The task ahead is focused, of definite duration, and of real importance to the Yearly Meeting.

We have prepared a handout for discussion today that describes the evolution of the Yearly Meeting's books of *Faith and Practice* and highlights the major changes in the draft under revision. We welcome your comments and questions. [Working Group members respond].

We propose including a new section in the revised edition that we are tentatively naming "Procedures, Resources, and Tools for Discernment." We think there is merit in putting in one place the General Queries, the Meeting Checklist, marriage and membership procedures, and various guidelines. The handout, Organization of Faith and Practice – July 2014, includes some of the potential components of this section. We welcome your suggestions of other things that would be useful to your meeting. [Working Group members record suggestions].

We feel the flow of moving, living water within our faith community. This rush of fresh, living water is stirring up the silt at the bottom, taking apart log jams, and moving us toward our destination. We hope that our work reflects this energy and that the revision of *Faith and Practice* expresses that renewal and reinvigoration of our beloved Yearly Meeting.

In gratitude and looking forward,

Martha B. Bryans, Clerk  
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Attachments:

- A Brief History of the Editions of *Faith and Practice* Since 1955
- Organization of Faith and Practice – July 2014

## A Brief History of the Editions of *Faith and Practice* Since 1955

The edition of *Faith and Practice* (PYM) which appeared in 1955 was prepared by a committee made up of representatives from the Hicksite and Orthodox branches of the Religious Society of Friends. As such, it was a reasonable and effective compromise that was approved by both Yearly Meetings and by the General Meeting (initiated in 1946 as an opportunity for members of both branches to meet for worship, fellowship and business) as one aspect of the reunification process.

Since 1955 there have been two major revisions, plus two minor adjustments.

- 1963 – This edition made two changes to the Supplementary Queries included in the 1955 edition: namely, to delete the questions regarding the identification of members as elders or ministers respectively.
- 1972 – This edition was a major reworking of many of the sections of *Faith and Practice*, though perhaps surprisingly the ‘historical introduction’ concluded with the reunification of 1955.
- 1997 – Again, this was a major reworking of the text, including a shift to neutral language in the section on the marriage procedure (though the traditional language was used for the sample marriage certificate), and the addition of quotations from more contemporary Friends.
- 2002 – This edition made two changes to the section on the Yearly Meeting involving its structure and a shift from the quota to the covenant system for financing the activities and services of our Yearly Meeting.

A small group of Friends has been working for the past several years on a proposed new edition of our *Faith and Practice* that again involves major changes to previous editions. Not least, we have made a concerted effort to be faithful to the Minutes adopted by Yearly Meeting regarding our concern for the integrity of the earth; we have paid particular attention to the ways in which our experience of Spirit and the expression of this experience in our witness to the world are articulated; and we have undertaken a fundamental reorganization of the text in order, we hope, to make it more accessible and useful to members and attenders of our meetings.

We have brought drafts of different sections to the past two Annual Sessions for consideration: “The Light Within” and the “Monthly Meeting Checklist.” The former seeks to articulate what is most fundamental in our religious experience, while the latter provides monthly meetings with an opportunity to engage in a self-assessment of a range of practical matters – the functioning of meeting committees, management of meeting finances, record keeping, property and the like.

Copies of editions of our *Faith and Practice* both before and since 1955 are available during Annual Sessions on our display table.

## Organization of *Faith and Practice* – July 2014

Foreword

Preface

### I. Experience and Faith

- A. The Light Within
- B. Worship and the Meeting for Worship
  - 1. Preparing for Worship
  - 2. Vocal Ministry
- C. Prayer
- D. Friends and Scripture
- E. Friends and Sacraments

### II. Faith Reflected in Practice and Daily Life

- A. Community Life
  - 1. Concerns, Leadings, and Testimonies
  - 2. Discernment, Clearness, and Decision Making
    - a. When Friends Participate
    - b. When Friends Disagree
  - 3. Friends and Education
    - a. Friends and Public Education
    - b. Friends Schools and Colleges
  - 4. Friends Witness in the World
    - a. Friends and Peace
    - b. Responsibilities of Citizenship
    - c. Stewardship of the Earth and Resources
    - d. Friends and Equality
    - e. Friends and Criminal Justice
- B. Personal Life
  - 1. Life Passages
    - a. Marriage
    - b. Family Formation
    - c. Death and Bereavement
      - 1) Responsibilities of the Meeting
      - 2) Memorial Meetings for Worship
  - 2. Personal Relationships
    - a. Family Life and the Home
    - b. Sexuality
    - c. Addictive Behaviors

### III. Faith Reflected in Our Organization

#### A. Monthly Meetings

1. The Individual and the Meeting
2. Nurture of the Meeting Community
3. Committees of the Monthly Meeting
  - a. Care for the Quality of Worship and Ministry
  - b. Care of the Meeting Community and its Members
  - c. Religious Education
  - d. Outreach
  - e. Witness in the World
  - f. Care of Real Property
  - g. Care of Burial Grounds
  - h. Stewardship of Financial Resources
    - 1) Meetings and Economic Resources
    - 2) Financing Monthly Meeting Activities
  - i. Care of Records
  - j. Nominations to Service as a Meeting Officer or Committee Member
4. Guidance of Meeting Affairs
5. Membership
  - a. The Meaning of Membership
  - b. Attenders
  - c. Children
  - d. Sojourning Members
  - e. Joining other Religious Bodies

#### B. Quarterly (Regional) Meetings

1. Function and Organization
2. Guidance and Assistance

#### C. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

[To be completed after Annual Sessions 2014]

#### D. Communication, Intervisitation, and Changes in Formal Relationships

1. Communication
2. Intervisitation
3. Changes in Formal Relationships

### IV. Historical Background

- A. Beginnings: 1625 – 1689
- B. Consolidation and Withdrawal: 1689 – Circa 1800
- C. Schism and Reform: Circa 1800 – 1900
- D. Reconciliation: Circa 1900 – 1955
- E. Unity with Diversity: 1955 – 1995
- F. The Present

V. Wider Religious Fellowship and Action

- A. Friends and Related Groups
- B. Interfaith Groups

VI. Extracts: Quotations, Advices

VII. Resources for Monthly Meetings and Tools for Discernment

- A. General Queries
- B. Monthly Meeting Checklist
- C. Membership Process
- D. Marriage Procedure
- E. Record Keeping
- F. Guidelines for Clearness Committees
- G. [Other resources as suggested by Friends]

Glossary

Sources of Extracts from the Writings of Friends

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Websites: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Quarterly and Monthly Meetings