

Coversheet

Faith and Practice

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
A Book of Christian Discipline

Presented at Annual Sessions 2015 for the First Reading

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Description of Process

The Faith and Practice Revision Working Group was appointed in 2009. Brief reports have been made each year to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. In 2012, 2013 and 2014, monthly meetings and yearly meeting in session provided substantive assistance with sections I, II, III, and parts of VII.

The proposed complete revision dated July 9, 2015 has been posted on the website and included with advance electronic materials for annual sessions in 2015. As indicated last year, this review constitutes a first reading of the book. A year must elapse before the second reading and acceptance of the new edition.

Section VI Extracts from the Writings of Friends is still in process. Friends are invited to identify favorite passages from the 2002 edition and to suggest new passages for possible inclusion. See the PYM website for additional information on how this information is being compiled. Section VI will be posted prior to 2016 annual sessions and will not receive a separate first reading.

The Faith and Practice Revision Working Group will consider all feedback during 2015 annual sessions and the next twelve months and incorporate revisions to the draft as thought appropriate. The revision will be brought to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in sessions in 2016 for the second reading and acceptance. Prior to publication, the full text will be edited for consistency, punctuation, and spelling.

We are extremely grateful for the thoughtful participation of our yearly meeting community.

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141 Foreword

142

143 As Friends use this Faith and Practice, remember the admonition from the Meeting of Elders
144 held at Balby, England in 1656:

145

146 *Dearly beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by,*
147 *but that all with the measure of the light which is pure and holy may be guided, and so in*
148 *the light walking and abiding, these may be fulfilled in the Spirit, - not from the letter, for*
149 *the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.*

150

151 This edition of *Faith and Practice* of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of
152 Friends is intended to be a guide for our members, attenders and all those who seek to understand
153 in greater detail the ways we endeavor to express our fundamental affirmations in our lives,
154 communities and organizations.

155

156 Like early Friends, we proclaim that every person has been endowed with the capacity to enter
157 directly, without mediator or mediation, into an empowering holy communion with God. Like
158 our predecessors, we reject the assumption that this communion, essential to spiritual health,
159 occurs primarily in the presence of designated persons in an established religious institution
160 using sacred language and rituals. Rather, we gather in expectant silence with other seekers,
161 open to the movement of the Spirit in ourselves and in our worshipping community. Friends,
162 both in individual worship and in meetings for worship and for business, experience the presence
163 of the living God as awe and healing and also as guidance for conduct. Out of this experience,
164 we proclaim the intimate connection between religious faith and social justice and seek to
165 express this understanding in our daily lives and actions.

166

167 The Religious Society of Friends and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting affirm that transformation
168 comes when we, in daily life and in our meeting communities, trust in the Light that gives life
169 and empowers everyone who comes into the world.

170

171 Preface

172

173 What is presented herein represents the labor and insight of a working group of Philadelphia
174 Yearly Meeting. Throughout the editing process, many members of monthly meetings have
175 improved the drafts considerably through their close attention to both individual sections and to
176 the whole. We are grateful for the time and attention that Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in session
177 and monthly meetings through a variety of processes have devoted to this work.

178

179 The text reflects our commitment to recognize the diversity that exists within our yearly meeting
180 and honor this rich variety through the use of evocative language. Members of monthly
181 meetings within Philadelphia Yearly Meeting have come to Friends by following a great many
182 paths. We each bring distinct religious vocabularies, images and metaphors to express our
183 spiritual experience. The working group has endeavored to accommodate this rich diversity
184 through the use of biblical, Christ-centered, ecumenical, humanistic and non-theistic
185 vocabularies in the text. We encourage readers to engage the book with an open mind and heart
186 and translate the text into language that speaks to them. We encourage readers to recognize that
187 those sitting next to them on meetinghouse benches may have a different way of expressing their
188 understanding and experience and that great openings can occur as we speak with and listen to
189 one another.

190

191 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting is also diverse in the size and composition of its constituent
192 monthly meetings. We trust that the suggestions contained herein will be tailored to meet the
193 needs of all meetings whether they are large or small, with members who are quite familiar with
194 the procedures outlined or with those new to Quakerism who are eager to understand the ways of
195 Friends. Throughout the text, we have attempted to describe current practice and to avoid
196 prescription.

197

198 In 2009 when appointed, the charge to the working group was to describe the structure and
199 organization of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and to bring *Faith and Practice* up to date. We
200 have substantially reorganized the book for greater clarity and usefulness. We hope we have
201 brought fresh and simple language to the text. We have attempted to incorporate commitments
202 that Philadelphia Yearly Meeting has made since the last edition of *Faith and Practice* was
203 published. We have been influenced by the yearly meeting's current concerns for the integrity of
204 the earth and to address racism within and beyond Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

205

206 During the drafting process, the yearly meeting undertook a long range planning process, "Re-
207 Kindling our Fire: A 5-Year Plan for Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 2015-2020." The resulting
208 structure of the yearly meeting, approved in 2014, is referenced in this edition of *Faith and*
209 *Practice*. We invite readers to visit the yearly meeting website (<http://www.pym.org/>) for up-to-
210 date descriptions of the groups and individuals serving the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
211 community. We also reference the websites of other Friends organizations for complementary
212 information and materials. This edition of *Faith and Practice* will be available online as well as
213 in print.

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I. Experience and Faith

The following Advice, paraphrased from material in the Epistles of the Yearly Meeting of Pennsylvania and the Jerseys, 1694 and 1695, expresses the challenge and promise of the spiritual journey of Friends.

Friends are advised to place God, not ourselves, in the center of the universe and, in all aspects of inward life and outward activity, to keep themselves open to the healing power of the Spirit of Christ.

Advices, I

The centrality of God, the experience of the power of the Spirit of Christ, and the integration of inward life and outward activity together define the essential aspects of Quakerism. For many Friends, following this advice is a lifelong pursuit marked by faithful searching, creative and energizing doubt, new awareness and transformation. Active engagement in this process begins with a deeply felt understanding of the Light Within.

A. The Light Within

The central experience of Friends is the reality of a direct, unmediated relationship with the Divine. Through this relationship, each person encounters within a Spirit that is active in the world and provides guidance for everyday living. The reality of this spiritual relationship within each worshipper brings the Friends meeting together as a community of faith.

Friends have used many terms or phrases to designate this source and inner certainty of our faith: the Light Within, the Inner Light, the Christ Within, the Inward Teacher, the Divine, the Divine Presence, Spirit, the Great Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, that of God in every person and the Seed. *The Journal of George Fox* refers to “that Inward Light, Spirit, and Grace by which all might know their salvation” and to “that Divine Spirit which would lead them into all truth.”

Friends understand that this faithfulness to Spirit brings the power that arises from life in community, from supporting each other within that community, and most of all, from living in harmony with the Divine. Faithfulness to Spirit yields the gifts of inspiration, intuition, creativity and other fruits of reflection. George Fox often refers to the experience of power and its relationship to the Light Within. For instance, he declares that “the power of God sprang through me” and admonishes us to “hearken to the Light, that ye may feel the power of God in every one of you.”

Continuing awareness of the Light Within increases our gratitude for divine gifts, including an appreciation of enduring values, the joys of life, comfort and solace, and the ability to resolve

253 problems in accord with divine leading. Under the guidance of Spirit in shared, corporate
254 worship, individuals grow in their capacity for discernment and sensitivity to their own true
255 needs, the needs of the meeting, and those of the wider community and world. This experience
256 of discernment helps the Friends meeting make decisions and face undertakings in a process as
257 detached from prejudice and self-interest as possible. Basic Quaker testimonies such as peace,
258 equality, simplicity, nonviolence, integrity and community arise from a deep sense of individual
259 and shared corporate responsibility, as guided by the Inward Teacher.

260 For Friends, the Light Within is not the same as the conscience or moral faculty. This human
261 element is unavoidably conditioned by one’s education, personal experience and cultural and
262 social environment. Only when the conscience has been illuminated by the Light of Christ can
263 it serve as a dependable guide to a Spirit-led life. Friends are encouraged to return often to the
264 Light Within to seek clearness through direct communion with the Divine in prayer and in
265 meeting for worship. Friends also seek clearness and test leadings by reading the Bible and
266 other sources of wisdom, by responding to open-ended questions, known as “queries,” based on
267 Friends practices and testimonies, and through other, more structured clearness processes. Such
268 testing enables greater awareness of and faithfulness to the Light Within. (See Section VII for
269 Guidelines for Clearness Committees.)

270 Recognition that God’s Light is in every person helps us to overcome our apparent separation
271 and differences from others; it leads to a sympathetic awareness of their needs and a
272 responsibility towards them. Friends believe that the more widely and clearly the Light is
273 recognized and followed, the more the human family will come into harmony and peace.
274 “Therefore,” writes George Fox, “in the Light wait, where unity is.”

275 B. Worship and Meeting for Worship

276
277 Meeting for worship is the fundamental experience of the Religious Society of Friends. Meeting
278 for worship draws us together in the enlightening and empowering presence of God and sends us
279 forth with inspired vision and commitment.

280
281 Early Friends took literally the recorded words of Jesus: “For where two or three are gathered in
282 my name, there I am in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20). Early Friends understood that this
283 “presence in the midst” could be experienced by all who seek it, unmediated by trained clergy.
284 Friends also understood that the experience of God continues to unfold and that the record of
285 God’s presence in human lives continues to be written. These understandings, coupled with the
286 foundational belief in the Light Within, create robust theological assumptions that support
287 Friends’ experience of worship.

288 Friends gather to experience the power of God, the giver and sustainer of all life, in our meetings
289 for worship. Friends worship manifests our deep desire for communion with God and the
290 offering of all of ourselves – body and soul – in service. During meeting for worship, we

291 experience awe in the gathered silence and grateful awareness of our profound connectedness to
292 one another and to the natural world. In worship we know repentance and forgiveness in the
293 acknowledgment of God as the ultimate source of our being and the serenity that comes from
294 receiving and accepting divine love and guidance.

295
296 In worship we discover direction for our lives and for the use of our resources. Leadings of the
297 Spirit are often made clearer by reference to the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth and other
298 spiritual leaders and by the transformational power of the Light Within. From worship come
299 fresh understandings of the two great commandments: To “love God with all your heart, and
300 with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as
301 yourself” (Luke 10:27).

302
303 Careful listening to the Inward Teacher can lead to an inpouring of love, insight and
304 interdependence. At times, true listening can bring the worshipper to a new experience of God’s
305 infinite love. At other times, such listening to the Inward Teacher may be troubling or
306 disrupting to one’s ordered life. Either way, Friends who are open to the Spirit experience the
307 power of Truth as it moves through the corporate body.

308
309 Friends understand that worship is continuous and each person who enters the meeting room
310 joins in quietly, settling into the deepening silence. Worship grows from expectant, patient
311 waiting in the Spirit. The meeting for worship clears space for God’s presence to be felt and
312 God’s voice to be heard. Vital worship depends on a deeply felt longing for God.

313
314 1. Preparing for Worship

315
316 The worship experience is enriched when individuals come to meeting with hearts and minds
317 prepared for worship through thoughtful reflection and listening to the Inward Teacher in the
318 course of daily life. Friends also develop a variety of personal spiritual practices in support of
319 their worship experience, such as daily prayer, meditation, Bible study, journaling and familiarity
320 with the spiritual journeys of others. Additional practices include mindfulness meditation;
321 breathing and/or walking meditation; contemplation of art, music, literature and nature; as well
322 as yoga and other forms of movement. These preparatory experiences, beneficial in their own
323 right, often lead to a deeper experience during meeting for worship itself.

324
325 *Such is the evident certainty of that divine strength that is communicated by thus meeting*
326 *together, and waiting in silence upon God, that sometimes when one hath come in that*
327 *hath been unwatchful and wandering in his mind, or suddenly out of the hurry of outward*
328 *business, and so not inwardly gathered with the rest, so soon as he retires himself*
329 *inwardly, this power being in a good measure raised in the whole meeting, will suddenly*
330 *lay hold upon his spirit, and wonderfully help to raise up the good in him, and beget him*

331 *into the sense of the same power, to the melting and warming of his heart; even as the*
332 *warmth would take hold upon a man that is cold coming in to a stove, or as a flame will*
333 *lay hold upon some little combustible matter being near unto it.*

334 *Robert Barclay, An Apology for the True Christian Divinity, 1906 edition.*
335

336 Each experience of worship is unique and each worshipper approaches worship in a personal
337 way. Together with other Friends present, individuals seek to center themselves in relaxed,
338 focused attention and open themselves to the movement of the Spirit. Worshipping together
339 strengthens the members of the community and deepens the act of worship itself. Communal
340 worship within a Friends meeting is akin to the luminous unity and fulfillment – the mystical
341 Oneness – that arises when musicians, responding to the music before them, offer up their
342 separate gifts in concert. Even in times of spiritual emptiness when unity and fulfillment seem
343 distant, Friends find it useful to be present with others in worship.

344 Friends know from experience the transforming presence of God that comes to the worshipping
345 community through silent prayer and vocal ministry. Hearts and minds are renewed when we
346 turn away from distractions and toward inward serenity. When we experience this profound and
347 evident Oneness with God and with one another, we speak of a “gathered” or “covered” meeting
348 for worship.

349 2. Vocal Ministry

350
351 Direct communion with God constitutes the essential experience of meeting for worship. Fresh
352 insights may come to any worshipper out of the living stillness. Some insights are purely
353 personal, providing guidance and inspiration to that individual. Other insights seem meant for
354 the meeting as a whole. In this case, the worshipper feels a compelling inward call to vocal
355 ministry. Friends may experience physical manifestations as diverse as a quickening within or a
356 profound stillness that impels them to rise and share the message received from Spirit. (See
357 Section VII for guidance in testing a leading to speak in meeting for worship.)
358

359 Vocal ministry may take many forms, such as prayer, song, story or testimonial. Non-verbal
360 ministry such as dance may also be in response to the movement of the Spirit. The content of
361 the message itself might be a life lesson, praise of God, gratitude, supplication, warning or
362 invocation. Individual messages may converge toward a single, vital theme during the meeting;
363 at other times, apparently unrelated messages are later discovered to have an underlying unity.
364 Such ministry and prayer may resonate with the unrecognized or unvoiced needs of other seekers
365 and may carry over into subsequent meetings for worship.
366

367 When someone accepts the call of the Spirit to share a message aloud in meeting, other
368 worshippers are called to receive the message with open hearts and minds. Friends recognize
369 that not all messages immediately speak to everyone; a message that seems discordant to one

370 may be deeply moving to another. Diffident and hesitant Friends should feel the meeting
371 community's loving encouragement to give voice, even if haltingly, to the message that arises
372 within them. Friends who are frequent speakers in meeting for worship serve the meeting best
373 when they, like all others, wait patiently for the prompting of the Inward Teacher. Friends need
374 time to absorb each message, so it is important to allow space between messages.

375
376 Friends are encouraged to be open to the movement of the Spirit in ministry. Deciding in
377 advance to speak or not to speak; feeling a duty to provide balance between silence and spoken
378 word; or crafting a message to appeal to guests, children or some other audience interrupt the
379 movement of the Spirit. We are reminded to trust the Spirit: even if not a single word is spoken,
380 meetings for worship can be profoundly moving experiences for all present.

381
382 There can be many obstructions to the movement of the Spirit during worship. Periodically,
383 each Friends meeting is encouraged to examine its condition through self-assessments to reveal
384 obstructions to which the meeting is prone. Some common obstructions include individuals
385 unprepared to enter worship, vocal ministry given in a debate or lecture style, repeated
386 promotion of a strongly held view or cause, voicing an announcement best shared before or after
387 meeting for worship, or individuals habitually reading or otherwise distracted. While one
388 meeting may tolerate behavior that seems odd to another, the healthy meeting ensures that the
389 Spirit is able to move freely among the gathered community through the sensitive intervention
390 and counsel of the worship and ministry committee or others appointed for this service. (See
391 Section VII for General Queries, Spiritual Self-Assessment, and Monthly Meeting Check-list.)

392
393 Friends gather for worship in quiet waiting upon God. We come together out of our care for one
394 another and out of our shared hunger to know and follow the leadings of the Spirit, to feel with
395 clarity our shortcomings and loving forgiveness, to give voice to our anguish, faith, praise, joy
396 and thanksgiving. At the close of the meeting for worship, we shake hands in acknowledgment
397 of our commitment to one another and to the Light Within and go forth with renewed trust in the
398 power and reality of God's grace and love.

399 400 C. Prayer

401
402 Friends know from experience that prayer is essential both for deepening worship and for living
403 rightly ordered lives. Since Friends have no prescribed form of prayer, we are free to choose
404 those practices and words that meet our individual and communal needs.

405
406 Prayer becomes central to our lives through regular practice. Indeed, through such practice our
407 lives flourish in unanticipated ways. In the assurance that our Creator hears and cares, prayer
408 can be a time of humble confession and yearning for forgiveness, a time when we seek to return

409 to the order of God’s world. In prayer we can pour forth our sorrow, our anger, our love, our
410 joy, our thanksgiving.

411
412 While prayer is often intensely private, it also can be a powerful ministry in meetings for
413 worship and for business. In prayer we open ourselves to God’s love, teaching and healing;
414 through prayer we are transformed so that we worship in Spirit and in Truth and do God’s work
415 with joy.

416
417 There are many ways to pray. Prayer can be sung, thought, spoken or expressed through the
418 work of our hands or the movements of our bodies. We may use formal prayers, such as The
419 Lord’s Prayer, or our own heartfelt words. Prayer can be as simple as gratitude for each new
420 day, the outpouring of the desire of the heart, or being in the Presence where words are
421 unnecessary. Prayer also can be full of struggle as we search ourselves to remove obstacles to
422 Spirit’s action in our lives or to delve deeply into the doubt and despair that afflict all of us from
423 time to time.

424
425 Even as prayer can grow out of a desire for a closer relationship with God, Friends have
426 discovered that God reaches for us. To center and be close to God can be a difficult exercise.
427 Sometimes we may feel far removed from God and from all that is good. At such times prayer
428 can help us wait for the guidance of the Inward Teacher. There also may be times, with no
429 apparent effort on our own part, when one feels “prayed through” as an instrument of the Holy
430 Spirit. Our prayers and lives of service are a response to Infinite Love.

431
432 Prayer in solitude or in the attentive listening during meeting for worship often becomes the
433 impetus to dedicate oneself in service. When action proceeds out of a life of prayer, it may fulfill
434 our desire to be faithful to the leadings of the Light.

435
436 For many, asking God for healing for ourselves and for others is an integral part of prayer. By
437 focusing with love on a person experiencing difficulty, God’s presence can be felt. In this form
438 of prayer, a specific outcome is not the intention, though comfort and a sense of spiritual well-
439 being often result. Friends know from experience that heart and mind, even though wounded at
440 the deepest levels, can be healed through prayer and thus become whole. Listening to the Inward
441 Teacher enables us to meet others with love and acceptance. Through prayer Friends can enter
442 into deep unity with those of other faiths instead of being put off by unfamiliar words or forms of
443 worship.

444
445 Friends are aware that the Light, and “holding in the Light,” can be healing for those who suffer.
446 From the earliest days of the Society, Friends recognized that the Light can also illuminate one’s
447 own flaws and blind spots and be a source of spiritual growth and transformation.

448

449 *Now, Friends, deal plainly with yourselves, and let the eternal Light search you, and try*
450 *you, for the good of your souls. For this will deal plainly with you. It will rip you up,*
451 *and lay you open, and make all manifest which lodges in you; the secret subtlety of the*
452 *enemy of your souls, this eternal searcher and trier will make manifest. Therefore all to*
453 *this come, and by this be searched, and judged, and led and guided.*

454 *Margaret Fell 1656*

455

456 D. Friends and Scripture

457

458 Friends appreciation of the Bible and other scripture springs from our faith that everyone can
459 respond to the experience of the Divine. The possibility of that experience has been present
460 whenever and wherever people have earnestly sought communion with God and an
461 understanding of God’s blessed community.

462

463 Friends bring insight from other sources to their reading of all scripture. Historical, literary and
464 cultural studies, as well as lived experience, enrich our reading. As a group, we have been
465 generally freed from the conflict between science and faith, instead finding illumination through
466 both.

467

468 The Bible nurtures Friends in various ways. Knowledge of the Bible can open us to the spiritual
469 power of art, music and literature. Friends know from experience that knowledge of the Bible
470 widely shared in a meeting deepens both spoken ministry and inward listening. Maturing insight
471 and experience often lead us to discover that passages once thought irrelevant and lifeless have
472 power and meaning. Given its importance in shaping the ways Friends have expressed their
473 experience of the Presence and leading of God from the earliest days of our history, and its
474 power to illumine our worship and our vocal ministry, Friends are encouraged to study and know
475 the Bible well.

476

477 The Bible also cautions us about the violence that can spring from our individual self-
478 righteousness, and of hard-heartedness rooted in our alienation from God. It offers enduring
479 words to guide our response to the Light Within, as in Amos’ call that we “let justice roll down
480 like waters, and righteousness like an overflowing stream” (Amos 5:24); in Jesus’ citing the two
481 great commandments to love God and our neighbors (Matthew 22:37-39); and in Paul’s
482 injunction that we speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). Most important, the Bible offers us
483 hope in Jesus’ assurance that “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock,
484 and it shall be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7).

485

486 The influence on the Religious Society of Friends of the Bible as a book when “opened by
487 Spirit” has been profound. George Fox knew the Bible intimately prior to the great “openings”
488 that dealt radically with both religious and social issues. He insisted that his openings came first

489 by God’s “immediate spirit and power” but were later found to be “agreeable to Holy
490 Scriptures.” Like Fox, Friends have often found the Bible to be a record of direct experiences of
491 the Holy Spirit, serving as an important touchstone against which to test our leadings.

492
493 Friends do not consider any scriptures, including the Bible, to be the final Word of God. Rather,
494 Friends believe in “continuing revelation” arising from ongoing communion with the Living
495 God. This results in our expanding sensitivity in our relationships with one another and our
496 growing knowledge of the universe.

497
498 E. Friends and Sacraments

499
500 Friends seek to experience the power of a true, inward baptism of the Holy Spirit. The absence
501 from Friends practice of the outward observance of water baptism, the Lord’s Supper and other
502 sacraments emphasizes the reality of the inward experience of the Light Within. In meeting for
503 worship at its best, direct communion with God and spiritual fellowship with one another make
504 outward rites superfluous. What is important is that Friends and Friends meetings be open to the
505 leadings of the Living Spirit.

506
507 Friends affirm the sacramental nature of the whole of life when it is conducted by the leading of
508 the Spirit. Any moment, any relationship, any object when so infused can be sacramental.
509 When we are faithful to the Light Within as it expresses itself through us, our very lives serve as
510 outward and visible evidence of inward and invisible communion with the Divine.

511
512 F. Friends and the Sciences

513
514 From their earliest days, Friends saw no barrier between scientific discovery and religious
515 experience. Friends have never limited God’s message to Biblical narratives but believe it
516 continues to be revealed to those who seek it. Direct experience and scientific inquiry enrich
517 understanding of the physical world. Honoring curiosity, making connections and asking “what
518 if” questions have enabled Quakers to make discoveries in all branches of science. For many,
519 scientific understanding clarifies more constructive connections to the physical world, the place
520 of humans in it, and the development of a more humane society.

521
522 G. Friends and the Arts

523
524 Though keenly attentive to the beauty of the natural world, early Friends became skeptical of the
525 distraction that the arts might bring to a rightly ordered life. Music and the visual arts seemed
526 vain and frivolous diversions from Friends central purpose of establishing God’s kingdom on
527 earth. Friends today are also sensitive to the dangers of distractions from a life dedicated to
528 deepening their spiritual experience. However, many Friends find that their creation and

529 appreciation of art actually deepens spiritual experience. They also find that creative impulses
530 arise from deep within them much as vocal ministry does in worship. Other Friends have
531 discovered profound union when playing or singing with other musicians, which some
532 experience as a powerful awareness of God's presence. While vocal ministry is likely to
533 continue as the dominant expression in meeting for worship, music, song and visual art forms
534 can become a larger part of shared community life as we acknowledge the deep spiritual source
535 of these creative expressions.
536

537 II. Faith Reflected in Practice and Daily Life

538 *Bring the whole of your life under the healing and ordering of the Holy Spirit,*
539 *remembering that there is no time but this present. Friends are reminded that we are*
540 *called, as followers of Christ, to help establish the Kingdom of God on earth.*

541 Advices, IV

542
543 Friends understand that our lives are nurtured and enriched as we move into a deeper relationship
544 with our Friends meeting community. The meeting community can help us meet challenges that
545 we inevitably must face. Being active in the meeting—participating in meetings for worship and
546 business, First Day School, worship sharing, retreats, workshops, study groups, reading groups,
547 as well as social and recreational gatherings, contributes to our sense of belonging to a caring
548 and supportive spiritual community.

549 It is not easy to live as Friends in today’s world, to remain true to our heritage and principles
550 while trying to live fully in that world and to be sensitive to unfamiliar situations. But it has
551 always been so. Each generation of Friends has been led to a way of life that created challenges
552 for individuals: challenges to use of time and resources, education, work, marriage and family
553 life, educating and raising children; as well as mindfully living out personal relationships, civic
554 engagements, and social commitments.

555 A. Community Life

556 From the beginning, Friends have valued their lives lived in community. As Friends stretched to
557 meet the challenges of living according to their understanding of God’s call, the community
558 reached out to support individual and corporate discernment and to provide care for families of
559 Friends imprisoned, as well as to support the ministry of every day. Today, as Friends continue
560 to seek to be faithful, the community serves similar roles in discernment and care.

561 Though Friends meetings vary in the range and nature of their activities, all meetings strive to
562 offer a sympathetic and welcoming community in which people can share the joys and
563 challenges of daily life. Friends meetings have also developed procedures to offer discreet,
564 confidential and loving support when needed, and to advise when additional support beyond the
565 resources of the Friends meeting might be beneficial. Likewise, when Friends feel a call to
566 service or a transition, they may look to the meeting for guidance as they sort out what to do.

567 1. Concerns, Leadings and Testimonies

568 An impetus for service in an individual or group may arise from what is felt to be a direct
569 intimation of God’s will. It also arises out of our belief that the Kingdom of God can be realized
570 in the present, in the here and now.

571

572 Initially, such a “concern” may not be linked to any specific action, but may simply be a troubled
573 sense that something is awry. When the concern gains clarity and focus, Friends refer to it as a
574 “leading,” a sense of being drawn or called by God in a particular direction or course of action.
575 The leading may be short-term or it may involve an ongoing transformation of someone’s life
576 and even of the meeting itself.

577
578 When a leading to act in a public way arises, Friends value the discernment and testing of such a
579 leading within the Friends meeting. This testing process is a form of spiritual discipline for both
580 the Friend with a leading and the meeting community. The meeting may respond in several
581 ways:

- 582
583 • The meeting may approve the leading and the proposed course of action it entails, and
584 “release” the Friend to follow the leading.
- 585
586 • The meeting may appoint a clearness committee to help the Friend gain greater clarity
587 about the leading. The committee may also provide longer-term support, including
588 further testing and evaluation.
- 589
590 • If the meeting sees value in the proposed action, it may provide financial assistance and
591 family support, and continue to give oversight until the leading is fulfilled.
- 592
593 • The meeting may prepare a “minute of concern” that describes and endorses the Friend’s
594 leading, and may direct that it be brought to the quarterly and yearly meetings. This
595 process is under review by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to ensure that minutes of
596 concern brought to a meeting are not simply endorsed and forgotten.
- 597
598 • If the meeting cannot unite with the Friend’s leading, either the individual and the
599 meeting agree that it is inadvisable to pursue the leading further, or the Friend decides to
600 continue to pursue the leading without explicit meeting support.
- 601
602 • If the Friend continues to feel led, the meeting may form a small group, including Friends
603 who have expressed a diversity of perspectives, to continue the discernment process.
604 This may result in bringing a modified proposal for the meeting’s consideration, a
605 process that may continue until unity is reached either to support the leading or not to do
606 so.

607
608 Throughout our history Friends have understood that we are not meant to conform to the ways of
609 the world, but to live in obedience to the Light Within and through this witness to transform the
610 world.

611

612 For more than three hundred fifty years, Friends have adopted practices that reflect deeply held,
613 historically rooted attitudes and modes of living in the world. Friends refer to these practices as
614 “testimonies.” The testimonies are expressions of lives turned toward the Light, outward
615 expressions that reflect the inward experience of transformation through divine leading. In the
616 past, the testimonies referenced the specific acts of Friends to respond to truth as they understood
617 it. For instance, the testimony against taking oaths was because Friends always spoke truth and
618 had no need to swear on the Bible. Today, even as we refer to generally named testimonies, we
619 know that it is the transformed way we live our lives – our testimony – that demonstrates our
620 faith and how God moves within us.

621

622 2. Discernment, Clearness and Decision-Making

623 Friends use discernment processes to seek unity about meeting matters, to find a way forward for
624 personal leadings, and to test a corporate leading to act as a community. As Friends understand
625 it, discernment is the act of finding a way forward in a search for truth, open to the Light beyond
626 the self. Friends have faith that, for those who question and seek, there is always a way forward.
627 The act of seeking God’s guidance is assisted by the meeting to assure that what is sensed by one
628 is tested and affirmed by the worshipping community.

629 As Friends practice discernment in their individual lives, they may also need to seek clearness
630 when considering a proposed action or a change in life direction. The clearness process can be
631 initiated by the individual or entrusted to the meeting, often to its pastoral care committee.
632 Within the context of worship, the clearness committee members listen deeply to the person
633 seeking clearness and offer queries, not advice, to assist the person to explore the issues and to
634 discover a way forward. (See Section VII for Guidelines for the Clearness Process.)

635 When an individual requests membership in the meeting or marriage under the care of the
636 meeting, the meeting then must discern whether to approve the request. Specifically, it assumes
637 the dual responsibilities to learn if there are other commitments or possible difficulties involved
638 for the individual making the request and to discern whether it can fulfill the request. Such
639 clearness is specific to the needs of a marriage or membership. (See Section VII for Guidelines
640 for the Marriage Procedure and for Membership Application.)

641 Just as it is paramount for Friends to have clearness in their personal lives, so it is important for
642 Friends to have clearness in meeting decisions. The goal of Friends decision-making is a sense
643 of the meeting, reached through a Spirit-led process in which the group reaches clarity on the
644 topic under consideration and on how to address it. Friends differentiate between sense of the
645 meeting and consensus. Consensus is a widely used and valuable secular process characterized
646 by a search for general agreement largely through rational discussion and compromise. A sense
647 of the meeting is the outcome of a spiritual process characterized by deep listening to each other
648 and trusting in God’s guidance. While ideally both processes result in a course of action to
649 which all participants can agree, the sense of the meeting relies consciously on the Spirit.
650 Although reasoned argument and lively debate may play a role in Friends decision-making, they
651 are secondary to spiritual insight and leading. When all members submit to God’s empowering
652 love and are gathered into unity, they can reach a sense of the meeting even in the face of strong
653 differences of opinion. Friends decision-making is rooted in the shared understanding that God

654 is present and accessible in considering all matters, so that a decision can be reached with divine
655 assistance.

656 While seeking the sense of the meeting is democratic in that all Friends present are encouraged
657 to participate, it goes beyond democracy in its expectation that participants set aside their
658 personal convictions in order to be led by a Guide beyond the self. It can be deeply satisfying
659 for those participating in Friends decision-making when the needs and aspirations of the meeting
660 take precedence over individual preferences. The decisions that result are then in harmony with
661 the Spirit.

662 Meetings for business are conducted in the same openness to the leading of the Spirit as meetings
663 for worship. Our religious communities thrive when we nurture our love for one another, work
664 to achieve spiritual unity, and live in harmony with the Spirit. As we wrestle with outward
665 issues, the Light Within gives us new perspectives and creative responses. On all matters, even
666 the mundane, the presence of the Light Within promises a fresh revelation of truth and a clearer
667 understanding of God's Kingdom.

668 A discipline of deep listening supports the unfolding of this sense of unity as facts and feelings
669 are sorted through. Being attentive to the Light Within grounds discernment beyond those facts
670 and feelings so that members grow in unity of spirit. As we hold all participants in a spirit of
671 love, we can nurture a sense of humility and openness in which the Divine Spirit grows. In
672 addressing issues, Friends seek Divine assistance to guide discernment, with prayerful attention
673 to what is under consideration, knowing that new openings to truth and new insight can come
674 through anyone present.

675
676 Our search is for unity, not unanimity. We consider ourselves to be in unity when our search for
677 Truth is shared, when our listening for God is faithful, when our wills are submitted to the Spirit,
678 and when our love for one another is constant. A united meeting is may not be all of one mind,
679 but may still be all of one heart. When the sense of the meeting has been rightly discerned, those
680 present will know that they have faithfully followed their Guide and will feel continued affection
681 for each other.

682
683 The meeting records the sense of the meeting – the decision – in a minute that is read back to and
684 approved by the body. Once approved, the clerk works with the recording clerk and others as
685 needed to assure the next steps for implementation. Friends value approving implementation
686 steps at the same session in which the decision is reached. No action is taken on an issue on the
687 meeting's behalf in anticipation of the minute's approval.

688 a. When Friends Participate

689 Among Friends, group decisions are enriched when all members commit themselves to attend
690 meetings both for worship and for business. By maintaining a spirit of worship, participants
691 nurture their openness to the leadings of the Spirit that inspires trust, humility, compassion and
692 courage. Any absence means that some wisdom is not available. Thus, all Friends are
693 encouraged to attend meetings for business.

694 Although an individual Friend has the designated role of clerk, all share the responsibility for the
695 maintenance of a Spirit-led gathering, for the wise use of time, and for a steadfast search for
696 Truth. All are expected to be attentive and to offer insights that arise from reflective worship
697 even if they differ from the perceived direction of the consideration.

698
699 A spirit of worship during meetings for business contributes to careful speaking and listening.
700 Worship helps participants become more attentive to what and how they speak. Worship also
701 enhances the respect for others that comes with attentive listening, as participants seek the Light
702 revealed through others. An openness of spirit enables Friends to hear and incorporate differing,
703 even contradictory, views.

704
705 Friends generally welcome the participation in meeting for business of serious and consistent
706 attenders. At times, meetings may advise non-members to show sensitive restraint when
707 addressing meeting affairs. In rare circumstances it may be necessary that a decision be
708 reached by the members only. In this case, non-members may be asked to hold the meeting in
709 the Light during that time.

710 Thoughtful preparation enables the meeting for business to follow the leadings of the Spirit,
711 preventing frustration arising from poor preparation, incomplete information or unclear
712 procedures. Meetings may find it helpful to consider the following suggestions.

- 713 • The clerks or other designated persons prepare and distribute the agenda and other
714 essential information in advance. Those expected to bring matters before the meeting
715 prepare and share the material in advance whenever possible.
- 716 • It is helpful for issues to be well seasoned before bringing them to the meeting. Items of
717 business benefit from research, background information, and review by a committee
718 within the meeting.
- 719 • An individual presenting an issue for consideration may find it useful to meet first with
720 an appropriate meeting committee or clearness committee to explore and test both the
721 concern and a proposed course of action.
- 722 • Friends prepare themselves by reading the advance material and preparing their hearts
723 and minds for Spirit-led decision-making. Friends can help deepen the meeting for
724 business by holding the session itself in worship.
- 725 • Arrangements are made for the time and place of gathering, child care, meals, hospitality
726 and other organizational matters to permit as many as possible to attend and to provide
727 ample opportunity for the unhurried conduct of business.
- 728 • Members who are prompt in arrival and disciplined in settling into worship contribute
729 much to the depth and power of the meeting. It is important that this time of settling and
730 focusing not become a brief formality.

731 • Where a presiding or recording clerk has not already been appointed or is unable to serve,
732 the meeting agrees how to proceed, often by naming someone to lead the meeting for
733 business.

734 • Decision-making by sense of the meeting applies to easy issues as well as to difficult
735 ones. In creating the agenda, care should be taken to assess where the most attention is
736 needed, and, if necessary, what items might be held over to a future session.

737 • The promptings of the Inward Teacher may come with power to anyone present, without
738 respect to age or experience. Friends know the importance of those whose experience
739 and advice in similar matters have been helpful in the past; Friends also understand that
740 sensitive and powerful insights come through newer and younger participants as well.

741 b. When Friends Disagree

742 Friends often find themselves most challenged when matters before them call forth firmly held
743 but incompatible responses. When a member feels strongly about an issue and even seeks to
744 prevent the meeting from acting, it is important that the meeting take the time to test this
745 person's conviction in a loving spirit, and to examine responsibly the consequences if the action
746 is not taken.

747 In any meeting for business, a situation may arise that makes it appropriate that the clerk, or
748 another member, call for worship to settle Friends energy. A meeting that is concerned to
749 maintain loving unity will be ready to take the time to settle and reflect before considering the
750 divisive issue.

751 The search for the course of action to bring the meeting into unity rests with all in the meeting,
752 including those who opposed the course of action. When disagreement threatens to divide a
753 meeting, it may be helpful for all to consider the following questions:

754 • Have all Friends taken care to discern, in a loving and prayerful spirit, that of God in the
755 perspective of those with whom they disagree?
756 • Have all Friends tried to set aside their personal desires and preferences in order to be led
757 by the Spirit?
758 • Have Friends considered whether God's will for them as individuals may differ from
759 God's will for the meeting?
760 • Do those in conflict regularly reaffirm, in voice and attitude, the love they feel for one
761 another?

762 • If Friends have not yet done the work to listen to and affirm those with whom they
763 disagree, what will support them to do this?

764 In a meeting for business experiencing such conflicts, Friends have found several helpful ways to
765 move toward unity:

766 • The clerk may ask the meeting to settle into silence so as to deepen the spiritual search.

- 767 • The clerk may ask Friends to examine each position in the Light to discern which arises
768 from the Spirit or to allow another possibility to emerge.
- 769 • The meeting may reschedule the matter, encouraging members to continue their search
770 for right action, in solitary prayer and meditation.
- 771 • At times the clerk may ask a small group to withdraw and draft a minute with the hope
772 and expectation that the resulting minute will lead to unity. The rest of the meeting may
773 proceed with other business or wait in worship.
- 774 • After patient searching over a considerable period, the meeting may conclude that the
775 sense of the meeting is clear and unity in the Spirit can continue if it is translated into
776 action, acknowledging that some Friends continue to have reservations about the
777 decision.
- 778 • At other times, the clerk may indicate that the sense of the meeting is not clear and that
779 no decision can be made nor action taken until unity in the Spirit is reached.

780 Friends who have objected may feel led to withdraw their objections, unwilling to stand in the
781 way of the meeting. Or those Friends may feel released from the burden of their concern, having
782 laid it on the conscience of the meeting. They may stand aside, maintaining their objections and
783 asking that their names and the grounds of their objections be recorded in the minutes as the
784 decision goes forward.

785 Friends who stand aside are affirming their spiritual unity with the meeting. That unity requires
786 those Friends to accept with good grace the consequences of the decision for the meeting and for
787 them. That spiritual unity requires the rest of the meeting to keep the objections in mind as they
788 proceed and to treat tenderly and lovingly those who had disagreed. These options express trust
789 in divine guidance and commitment to reach unity in the Spirit.

790 Occasionally, a meeting may need to labor over a protracted period with someone who continues
791 to oppose the proposed action. When the meeting finally senses that the person is unwilling to
792 find a way to unite with the community, the meeting may move forward notwithstanding.

793 3. Community Witness and Support

794 a. Friends and Education

795 Since its beginnings, the Religious Society of Friends has emphasized the importance of
796 education both for its own members and for society generally. Friends believe that education is
797 especially beneficial if it instills a concern for others and strengthens a commitment to live
798 faithfully to such Light as one has.

799 For guidance in word and deed, we look first to the Spirit, recognizing that formal education in
800 itself may not lead to a deeper spiritual sensitivity. Many who contribute significantly to the life
801 and ministry of the meeting may lack extensive formal education. But we also know from
802 experience that a sound education helps us to identify what is faithful to the Light in our own
803 leadings, to interpret and communicate those leadings, and to weigh the leadings of others.

804 Friends regard continual spiritual growth as essential. Such growth is nurtured by receptivity to
805 the Inward Teacher, by participation in meeting for worship, by studying the Bible, other sacred
806 texts and other literature, and by attending to the inspiration of exemplary lives. Although
807 Friends emphasize spiritual formation, we do not neglect the acquisition of intellectual, aesthetic
808 and practical skills and understanding. Within the family, the Friends meeting, and the various
809 levels of formal education, Friends are committed to balancing heart, mind and hand in spiritual
810 wholeness.

811 Friends who are called to careers in education of every kind and at every level, public and
812 private, see this service as a form of faithfulness.

813 1). Friends and Public Education

814 Friends have a responsibility, as do all citizens, to be informed, concerned and active supporters
815 of public education. As parents, teachers, administrators, school board members, consultants and
816 taxpayers, Friends can be important advocates for the quality of life and public engagement in
817 our communities.

818 Friends are also expected to give informed, active support to Quaker children who attend public
819 schools and to those Friends who devote themselves as teachers and administrators in the public
820 educational system at any level. Such support is of particular importance to those children and
821 adults who, through their commitment to Truth and the quality of their relationships, seek to
822 maintain a Quaker witness in situations where others might not share our testimonies.

823 2). Friends Educational Institutions

824 Friends meetings have founded a substantial number of educational institutions in the
825 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting area. These include several colleges, a study/retreat center and
826 more than 40 nursery, elementary and secondary schools. Today, the colleges are independent
827 and the schools have a variety of governance arrangements. The schools now serve substantially
828 more non-Friends than Friends and are an important way that people learn about the Religious
829 Society of Friends. The schools continue to seek to provide a community life and experience
830 guided by Friends principles.

831
832 A meeting may be asked to assist individuals who seek financial and other practical support in
833 order to attend a Friends school. It may be asked to help special needs children attend a Friends
834 school established to serve those with learning differences. Occasionally, it may be asked to
835 provide oversight for families that choose to instruct their children at home. A meeting may
836 consider the challenge of forming and sustaining its own Friends school, especially when the
837 children of its members and attenders do not have access to an existing Friends school.

838
839 Ideally, Friends educational institutions seek to create an intentional community and prepare its
840 participants for engagement in the work of the world. A Friends educational institution is more

841 likely to fulfill its mission of incorporating spiritual values throughout its programs if it has a
842 solid core of students, parents and graduates who understand and actively support Quaker
843 principles and practices. The effectiveness of a Quaker witness in our schools and colleges also
844 depends upon the spiritual depth and commitment of the members of the governing body, the
845 administrators and the staff. That commitment requires careful attention to all aspects of the
846 school with primary focus on the student's welfare and proper education. Also important are the
847 processes and structures of governance and the prevention of any form of discrimination or
848 disempowerment based on age, gender, race, sexual orientation, economic status or religion.

849 Those who have experienced Friends concern for simplicity, equality, justice and compassion in
850 our educational institutions often have a significant positive influence in their wider
851 communities. Because these institutions embody our ways of worship, our social testimonies
852 and our commitment to service, they are an important form of outreach to the wider world.
853 Consequently Friends, as individuals and as meetings, frequently take a special responsibility to
854 support Friends educational institutions.

855 Friends schools and colleges today seek to include students and staff from widely varied
856 economic and ethnic backgrounds. Such increasing diversity in our educational communities
857 can both challenge and strengthen them. Bringing together various traditions, experiences and
858 perspectives together in a common search for truth requires time, thought and genuine
859 willingness to change, and offers the rewards of deeper understanding and a vital and inclusive
860 community.

861

862 b. Friends Witness in the World

863 1). Friends and Peace

864 Since all human beings are children of God, Friends are called to love and respect all persons and
865 to overcome evil with good. Our words and lives need to stand as a positive witness in a world
866 torn by strife and violence.

867 The Religious Society of Friends has consistently held that war is contrary to the Spirit of Christ,
868 as stated in our Declaration to Charles II in 1661:

869 *We utterly deny all outward wars and strife, and fightings (sic) with outward weapons,*
870 *for any end, or under any pretense whatsoever; this is our testimony to the whole*
871 *world...The Spirit of Christ, by which we are guided, is not changeable, so as once to*
872 *command us from a thing as evil, and again to move us unto it; and we certainly know,*
873 *and testify to the world, that the Spirit of Christ, which leads us into all truth, will never*
874 *move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the*

875 *Kingdom of Christ nor for the Kingdoms of this world...Therefore, we cannot learn war*
876 *any more.*

877 Friends know that this historic testimony has become a living testimony as we work to give
878 concrete expression to our ideals that often are in opposition to prevailing opinion. The peace
879 testimony is closely linked to the basic Friends commitment to honor that of God in every
880 person, so as to avoid not only physical violence but also more subtle forms of coercion
881 including psychological, economic or systemic. At the same time, we acknowledge that conflict
882 can be an opportunity to lovingly engage those with whom we disagree and that love can often
883 be expressed to resolve disagreement in creative, nonviolent ways. When we encounter people
884 whose views profoundly differ from our own, we can also manifest that love by affirming the
885 sincerity with which they hold those views, while forthrightly expressing our own convictions.

886 As we reflect further on the sources of violence and war, we may be led to consider seriously our
887 employment, our investments, our purchases, our payment of taxes and our manner of living.
888 These choices may be a source of harm to others, whether overtly or in the covert forms inherent
889 to some of our long-established social practices and institutions.

890 Friends support those who refuse to cooperate with military conscription as well as those who
891 perform alternative service as conscientious objectors. While counseling against military
892 service, we hold in love our members who feel they must undertake it.

893 We work as we are able to alleviate the suffering caused by war. While military responses in
894 some situations seem to offer relief of suffering, we are convinced that the real answer lies in the
895 increased capacity to meet human needs and address conflicts before war begins, through
896 diplomacy and humanitarian missions.

897 We strive to refrain from participating in all forms of violence, oppression and environmental
898 degradation while supporting efforts to secure international agreements for the reduction and
899 elimination of armaments and to remove the domination of militarism in our society. We work
900 with others, in our individual lives and in our institutions, to apply proven techniques for the
901 nonviolent resolution and transformation of conflict. We support programs that convert facilities
902 built for war to peaceful uses. We apply our gifts—of spirit, of intellect, of time and energy—to
903 work for an international order that cares for human needs and the earth's resources rather than
904 militarism.

905 2). Responsibilities of Citizenship

906 Friends recognize that the state is a necessary instrument for meeting human needs and for
907 maintaining an orderly society with justice under law for all.

908 Thus Friends are not opposed to all forms of physical constraint. For instance, it is sometimes
909 necessary and proper for peace officers to use minimal forms of physical constraints in dealing

910 with persons who do injury to others or who will not cooperate with just law. But Friends
911 oppose the use of either physical or psychological violence in maintaining public order.

912 As members of society and part of our witness to what society may become, Friends are called to
913 participate actively in public life. As citizens, Friends bear witness by demonstrating respect for
914 others while faithfully pursuing our leadings. From our earliest days Friends have counseled
915 obedience to the state except when the law or ruling involved has appeared contrary to divine
916 leading. In that case, Friends take prayerful counsel before responding. This counsel includes
917 testing a proposed action by seeking clearness and support from the meeting. When the decision
918 is to refuse obedience to the law in accordance with the dictates of conscience, it is proper for
919 Friends to act openly and to make clear to the authorities the grounds of their action.

920 If the decision involves incurring legal penalties, Friends generally have suffered willingly for
921 the sake of our convictions. Friends not personally involved in such actions can strengthen the
922 meeting community by supporting fellow members with spiritual encouragement and, when
923 necessary, with material aid. In public office, Friends have an opportunity to bear witness to the
924 power which integrity, courage, respect for others, and careful attention to different points of
925 view, can exert in creating a just community. But if a Friend encounters a conflict between
926 faithfulness to God and an apparent duty as a public official, a prayerful search for divine
927 guidance may lead either to a suitable resolution of the conflict or to a decision to resign.

928 3. Sustainable Stewardship of the Earth and Resources

929 All that we have in ourselves and our possessions are gifts from God entrusted to us for our
930 responsible use. Jesus reminds us that we must not lay up earthly treasures for ourselves, for
931 where our treasures are, there will our hearts be also. We cannot serve both God and Mammon.
932 To be good stewards in God's world calls on us to examine and consider the ways in which our
933 testimonies for peace, equality and simplicity interact to guide our relationships with all life.

934 *O that we who declare against wars, and acknowledge our trust to be in God only, may*
935 *walk in the light, and thereby examine our foundation and motives in holding great*
936 *estates! May we look upon our treasures, the furniture of our houses, and our garments,*
937 *and try whether the seeds of war have nourishment in these our possessions.*

938 John Woolman, c. 1770

939 In today's world of economic interactions that are far more complex than when John Woolman
940 lived, Friends are challenged to examine their decisions about money and other resources to see
941 whether they contain the seeds, not only of war, but also of self-indulgence, injustice and
942 ecological disaster. Good stewardship of economic resources consists both in avoiding these
943 evils and acting to advance peace, simple living, justice and a healthy ecosystem. Good
944 stewardship also requires attention to the needs of organizations that advance Friends values,
945 including our own meetings.

946 a. Right Sharing

947 A life that testifies to the value of economic equality depends on a commitment to share the
948 world's resources. Friends in comfortable circumstances are encouraged to find practical
949 expressions of the testimony of simplicity in their earning and their spending, as they consider
950 for their own lives the meaning of economic equality and simplicity. As they ask what level of
951 income is sufficient for their needs, they might also ask what portion of their income could be
952 shared beyond the immediate family. That decision requires balancing the social value of self-
953 sufficiency with the social value of providing help for those in need. It also requires decisions
954 about which expenditures are essential and which are discretionary, and about the values that
955 underlie discretionary spending.

956 b. Walking Gently on the Earth

957 The well-being of the earth is a fundamental spiritual concern. Many have linked the wonders of
958 nature with the divine. How we treat the earth and its creatures is a basic part of our relationship
959 with God. Our planet as a whole requires our responsible attention.

960 As Friends have become aware of the interconnectedness of all life on this planet and the
961 devastation caused by neglect or destruction of any part of it, we have become more willing to
962 extend our sense of community to encompass all living things. Today, we see that instead of
963 acting as good stewards of the natural world, we have been a major threat to the ecosystem.

964 Friends feel deeply the call to walk gently on the earth. Living in right relationship with the
965 natural world requires continuing attention to wasteful and extravagant consumption as a major
966 cause of environmental destruction. The right sharing of the world's finite resources requires all
967 nations to reduce their present levels of consumption in order that the needs of people in
968 underdeveloped nations be met and the earth's life-sustaining systems restored. The world
969 cannot tolerate the present rate of consumption.

970 As Friends pay attention to a Spirit-led, right relationship with the earth and its resources, we
971 seek to become models and patterns of simple living and concern for our earth. Though some
972 may find it difficult to change their way of life, others have made choices that strain the world's
973 resources of clean air, water, soil and energy as little as possible. We are called to challenge the
974 forces driving us toward environmental destruction with the same passion and commitment that
975 we challenge the forces of war.

976 Simple living inspires us to choose energy options and practices that reduce our use of energy
977 sources that damage our environment. Our lives can reflect our care for a right relationship
978 between our financial and our natural resources.

979 4). Friends and Equality

980 Friends believe there is that of God in every person, and that before God people are equal.
981 Friends pioneered in recognizing the gifts and rights of women. Women were ministers and
982 leaders of the early meetings. Friends came more slowly to recognize the evil of slavery and of
983 discrimination, and have often been guilty of sharing the prejudices of the broader society. In
984 recent years, Friends have taken stands against discrimination based on sexual orientation and
985 other forms of oppression to which they had earlier been insensitive. An element of that
986 insensitivity for some has been a failure to recognize the privileged status many American
987 Friends enjoy. As we continue to seek the Light, ingrained habits and attitudes have become
988 subject to searching reexamination.

989 Affirmation of the principle of human equality in the sight of God is important and necessary,
990 but not sufficient. Actual equality also involves personal independence and control of one's own
991 life. For these reasons, Friends aid nonviolent efforts of the exploited to attain self-determination
992 social, political and economic justice, and changing attitudes and practices that have been taken
993 for granted. Friends seek to identify structures, institutions, language and thought processes that
994 subtly support discrimination and exploitation. As Friends continue to examine their own
995 attitudes and practices about social, political and economic justice, they have increasingly
996 realized that the challenges of racial equality in the Religious Society of Friends demand a
997 commitment to overcome all remaining vestiges of inequality and injustice.

998 Friends have often worked with victimized and exploited groups. Too often this work has been
999 resisted by the prejudiced and by the exploitive, even within the Religious Society of Friends.
1000 The issue of prejudice is complicated by advantages that have come to some at the expense of
1001 others. But exploitation impairs the human quality of the exploiter as well as of the exploited.

1002 5). Friends and Criminal Justice

1003 Many early Friends were victims of an arbitrary and unreasonable criminal justice system. That
1004 history propelled Friends work in prisons, ministering to the spiritual and material needs of
1005 inmates, as well as actively seeking ways to bring attention to our system of criminal justice
1006 badly in need of reform. Believing that the penal system often reflects structural and systemic
1007 injustice in our society, Friends seek alternatives to incarceration and work to reduce the
1008 construction and use of prisons. Friends have acted out of the conviction that redemption and
1009 restorative justice, not punishment and retribution, will create a criminal justice system that can
1010 build better communities.

1011 Seeking to heal the wounds of harmful actions, Friends are called to many different kinds of
1012 service in the criminal justice system. Friends are active in prison visitation, in work to abolish
1013 capital punishment, and in programs that work with victims, offenders, and law enforcement
1014 officers in order to restore the victim, the offender, and the community as much as possible. The
1015 healing love and trust in divine leading that such disciplined service requires can greatly assist
1016 the rebuilding of broken lives and communities.

1017 B. Personal Life

1018 1. Life Passages

1019 a. Marriage

1020 From the beginning, Friends have emphasized the equality of marriage partners. George Fox
1021 admonished that Friends should be married “as though they were not, both husband and wife free
1022 to do God’s work and not possessive of one another.” Later, Lucretia Mott wrote that “in the
1023 marriage union, the independence of the husband and wife will be equal, their dependence
1024 mutual, and their obligations reciprocal.” Many Friends today see the roles of spouses as
1025 interchangeable and would view the couple as partners as opposed to delineating the individuals
1026 by gender.

1027 Formal declaration of commitment in the presence of God and Friends under the care of the
1028 meeting sets a foundation for a shared life of spiritual wholeness. Such a religious commitment
1029 liberates rather than constricts the couple’s natural impulses toward passion and spontaneity and
1030 becomes a source of joy, not only for the couple but also for the meeting and all others in the
1031 couple’s life. A meeting has a commitment to nurture a marriage whether or not that marriage
1032 began under its care. (See Section VII for Guidelines for Marriage Procedure.)

1033 Relationships which were formally entered into under the covering of the Spirit may nevertheless
1034 experience severe challenges. The meeting needs to recognize such situations early and be
1035 prepared to help with tender understanding and sensitivity. Offering the support of a clearness
1036 committee may be helpful. The meeting may also help the couple secure professional
1037 counseling such as that associated with the yearly meeting. The couple and those counseling
1038 with them may wish to consider together such questions as:

- 1039 • Have you sought divine guidance for the situation in which you now find yourselves?
1040 • Have you been able to acknowledge that of God in each other as you work through this
1041 difficulty?
1042 • Do commitments to such testimonies as equality, peace and integrity consistently guide
1043 your relationship?

1044 However, the meeting community may not be able to help a couple ameliorate their difficulties.
1045 The relationship may have deteriorated beyond the point of reconciliation. Though strong
1046 feelings may challenge the meeting community they need not impede prayerful, sensitive support
1047 to all concerned. Children may need substantial help to recognize that the separation of their
1048 parents will significantly change the family situation, but not the love and commitment that each
1049 parent has for them.

1050 In addition, the meeting could again offer a clearness committee to help the couple consider the
1051 questions just noted as well as the following:

- 1052 • Have you been able to make careful, loving, and appropriate efforts to help your children
1053 understand what brought about this situation?
1054 • How will you continue to relate to your children to show them that you love them?
1055 • Have you carefully considered equitable ways of handling property and financial
1056 matters?

1057 Divorce or the dissolution of any committed relationship is an intimate matter accompanied by
1058 strong feelings. Though the meeting's role is difficult, it need not become intrusive but to be
1059 caring and even-handed, keeping in contact will family members and other parties to the divorce.
1060 All concerned are to be encouraged to continue their lives as Friends even as the relationship
1061 dissolves. (See Section VII for Guidelines for Clearness Committees.)

1062 b. Family Formation

1063 The decision to create a family either by birth or adoption is momentous. As with the marriage,
1064 a commitment in the presence of God, the families and the worshipping community, so it is with
1065 the decision to have children. The meeting can support the couple or single parent by offering
1066 the services of a clearness committee. It can also provide support through pregnancy or adoption
1067 proceedings, and as the family adjusts to the demands and joys of caring for a child.

1068 Some Friends meetings have embraced the practice of inviting new parents to introduce their
1069 children to the meeting to be formally welcomed into the community. In this way, parents are
1070 supported as they involve their children in the life of the meeting, and develop practices to
1071 support and nurture each child's life of spiritual faithfulness, joy and service.

1072 c. Death and Bereavement

1073 Friends are advised to prepare for death as well as for the possibility of incompetence in their last
1074 days so as to simplify the tasks others will need to undertake and to spare them unnecessary pain
1075 and confusion. Such preparations would include:

- 1076 • Providing for the care of dependents;
1077 • Providing for the disposal of real property, financial assets, and personal and household
1078 goods;
1079 • Developing living wills, or their equivalents, and durable powers of attorney;
1080 • Recording wishes relating to the body after death, whether for burial or cremation or
1081 donation for medical or scientific purposes; and
1082 • Identifying the locations of any pertinent documents for the benefit of those persons who
1083 will be expected to act on the information in those documents after the death: for
1084 instance, an attorney and children or other members of the family.

1085 The meeting can help plan a memorial service under the care of the meeting so that it will be in
1086 accord with the simplicity appropriate to a meeting for worship.

1087 1) Responsibilities of the Meeting

1088 The Friends meeting will regularly remind its members of their responsibilities to make suitable
1089 preparations for death and for the possibility of incompetence as noted above, and will provide
1090 members with helpful sources of information and assistance that can guide them in fulfilling
1091 their responsibilities. It will also ask members to share their wishes relating to the body after
1092 death, their instructions for a memorial meeting, and anything else that could help the meeting
1093 fulfill these responsibilities.

1094 Upon the death of a member, of a person in a member's family, or of a person with a close ties to
1095 the meeting but not a member, either the meeting's care and counsel committee or another
1096 designated committee will arrange to visit the family so as to extend the meeting's sympathy for
1097 the bereaved, and gently to assist the family as it adjusts to its loss.

1098 It is expected that the meeting will be especially attentive to the needs of family members during
1099 what may be an extended period of mourning. The death of a loved one may leave a survivor
1100 alone and unable to cope with unfamiliar financial obligations and difficult decisions about
1101 property and arrangements for the future. Emotions surrounding the loss are likely to run very
1102 deep for a long time, even when death has come as release from suffering. When sudden death
1103 by illness, accident or suicide strikes younger people, the emotional and financial strain upon the
1104 survivors can be very heavy. In all these cases, not only the care and counsel committee but all
1105 members of a meeting are expected to provide active, sensitive support that extends well beyond
1106 the memorial meeting.

1107 The meeting may be able to help in many practical ways including hospitality for those family
1108 and friends who come from a distance, child care, meals and housework. The meeting will need
1109 to respond with sensitivity to the family's wishes and, if asked, assist in notifying relatives,
1110 friends and the public press.

1111 The meeting will offer to conduct a memorial meeting under its care and, if asked, to assist the
1112 family in arranging for private memorial gatherings. Members of the meeting are encouraged to
1113 support the family by attending the memorial meeting. Even if the family's plans do not include
1114 a memorial meeting, it may be rightly ordered for the meeting to hold one. In addition, the
1115 meeting may wish to prepare a memorial minute as an expression of its appreciation of the life
1116 and service of the deceased member.

1117 2) Memorial Meetings for Worship

1118 When Friends experience the death of a member, they also gather for a memorial meeting for
1119 worship. As the meeting begins, a designated person may describe the nature of the occasion
1120 and invite those present to speak if led to do so. While the worshippers remember the life and
1121 service of the deceased and mourn the passing, they also celebrate God's gift of life and the
1122 beauty of human character. Members of the family may request that passages of Scripture,
1123 poetry, prayer or music be shared during the meeting. Those present may be drawn to speak of

1124 their memories of the deceased, whether poignant, loving, grateful, instructive or even
1125 humorous. A memorial meeting is a time when the mystery of death is deeply felt, and when the
1126 presence of God and those gathered in worship can bring comfort, hope and consolation.

1127 Meetings may find it helpful to the bereaved family to hold a simple reception following the
1128 memorial meeting. Such an occasion gives an opportunity to express grief and love and
1129 thanksgiving, person to person. It can also serve as a helpful reentry into everyday life.

1130 If ashes are to be deposited or scattered in some cherished spot or if there is to be an interment,
1131 whether done privately or as part of the memorial meeting, the family may ask that someone
1132 prepare a brief message of farewell. This can be a particularly poignant moment, and the
1133 meeting needs to be sensitive to these emotions.

1134 2. Personal Relationships

1135 a. Family Life and the Home

1136 Home and family can be both a refuge from the pressures and demands of the world and a path
1137 to a better world. In a Quaker family, a child may first become aware of the presence of God in
1138 our lives when the family incorporates spiritual practices as a regular and essential part of its
1139 daily routine. Such practices can include shared worship and prayer, reading from the Bible and
1140 other scripture, and silent or spoken grace at meals.

1141 As with the Friends meeting itself, a Quaker home seeks to bring all its members into unity of
1142 spirit and practice. Not least, this entails cultivating an appropriate balance between the exercise
1143 of authority and the development of individual autonomy. Parents have an obligation to be
1144 guided by the Inward Teacher in the exercise of their authority, though there is value in the
1145 whole family seeking such guidance. Fair, loving and just expectations and behaviors practiced
1146 among all family members bring a sense of security to the children and a sense of order to the
1147 adults. The best gift parents can offer their children is to exemplify conscientious, consistent,
1148 loving conduct day in and day out.

1149 Open discussion contributes to a loving, patient atmosphere in the home, developing
1150 expectations for interpersonal relationship based on mutual respect and care. For both parent and
1151 child, it is helpful for the relationship between inward discipline and rules of behavior to be
1152 continually reviewed and adjusted. Rules are not for children alone; parents too are committed
1153 to a disciplined, Spirit-led life. If a family has continual problems with rules, a family meeting
1154 for clearness may help resolve difficulties. The meeting community can also help by offering
1155 such things as Friendly parenting discussion and support groups.

1156 Conflict in a family is natural; when lovingly and constructively dealt with, it is an opportunity
1157 for growth and sometimes an affirmation of individual leadings. Learning to handle
1158 disagreements in a calm and fair manner prepares the way for solving differences in school, the

1159 neighborhood and the larger society. Anger, too, can signal a problem requires attention.
1160 Anger and other expressions of discord are not conditions to be passively accepted or ignored.
1161 Friends families are not immune to abuse and domestic violence. The meeting has a
1162 responsibility to be aware of such situations and intervene in loving support.

1163 Family recreation promotes restoration, solidarity and spiritual well-being. The possibilities
1164 include reading aloud, singing or playing music, gardening, taking a walk, engaging in arts and
1165 crafts as well as games and sports. Both competitive and non-competitive games can teach
1166 lessons of fairness, sportsmanship and self-esteem and develop fellowship within the family.
1167 Simple family recreation can bring balance and wholeness into the family and each of its
1168 members. In the loving home and family, everyone learns about equality and its limitations,
1169 simple forms of stewardship, integrity in its many forms, simplicity in all its complexities, and
1170 how difficult and satisfying it is to be peaceable. Indeed, the family can be the most immediate
1171 and basic context in which individuals learn to live Friends testimonies.

1172 Two of our testimonies, simplicity and stewardship, may be especially important for family life.
1173 A family that strives to practice simplicity will exercise stewardship in the use of its social and
1174 material resources. This will include decisions about the family’s financial commitments to its
1175 monthly, quarterly and yearly meetings, as well as issues of family witness, service to others and
1176 the many ways our lives can testify to our faith. The participation of all family members in
1177 discussions and decisions about possessions and activities helps children develop their capacity
1178 to make sound judgments about the value of time and worth of different activities, as well as
1179 their understanding of Spirit-led decision-making in which ego and personal preferences are less
1180 significant than what is in the best interest of the family as a whole. Parents have an opportunity
1181 in such discussions and decisions to model a process that gives priority to listening, faithfulness
1182 and service.

1183 “Traditional” families once constituted the great majority of the Friends meeting community.
1184 Today’s membership reflects many varied forms of families: single parent households, same
1185 gender spouses, blended families and multi-generational households. Whatever their
1186 composition, families remain a vital ingredient of our meeting communities.

1187 b. Sexuality

1188 Friends seek to acknowledge and nurture sexuality as a gift of God that celebrates human love
1189 with joy and intimacy. In defining healthy sexuality, Friends are guided by our testimonies: that
1190 sexual relationships are equal, not exploitative; that sexual behavior be marked by integrity; and
1191 that sex is an act of love, not aggression. Sexuality is at once an integral and an intricate part of
1192 personality. Our understanding of our own sexuality is an essential aspect of our journey toward
1193 wholeness. Learning to incorporate sexuality into our lives responsibly, joyfully and with
1194 integrity is a lifelong process beginning in childhood.

1195 Friends are wary of a fixed moral code to govern sexual activity. The sacramental quality of the
1196 sexual relationship depends upon Spirit as well as on the motives of the persons concerned.
1197 With guidance from the Inward Teacher, we can examine relationships honestly, with the
1198 strength to reconcile often conflicting demands of body, heart and mind. Precisely because our
1199 sexuality is so powerful, seeking the Divine becomes essential. The self-discipline and
1200 obedience to Spirit thus called for is more personal, and perhaps more difficult, than adherence
1201 to an external code.

1202 Friends approve the concept of family planning, including adoption. We are in unity about the
1203 value of human life, but not about abortion. We are urged to seek the guidance of the Spirit
1204 when dealing with an unintended pregnancy and to support one another in avoiding situations
1205 that contribute to the need for abortion.

1206 A Quaker home establishes an atmosphere where openness and honesty prevail. It is within the
1207 intimate family circle that children establish their identities as persons; an atmosphere which
1208 supports their feelings of confidence encourages this development. Children at a very early age
1209 develop a sense of their own gender identity and are curious about gender and sexual differences.
1210 Within a loving and secure family, even young children are encouraged to ask questions about
1211 gender and sex, even as parents acquire the confidence to respond to those questions.

1212 Sex education can begin as early as seems appropriate with the use of terms that children
1213 understand. The level of understanding is not uniform, and wise parents will judge each child's
1214 capacity to absorb answers to questions. Simple, direct answers need be no threat to a child's
1215 innocence, and parents do the child no favors by surrounding the subject with fables and
1216 mystery. Undramatic introduction of the basic physiological facts of human sexuality is the best
1217 preparation for the more sophisticated education needed during the years of puberty and
1218 adolescence. As children mature and come of age sexually, parents can provide sex education
1219 with sympathy and patience, including clear, explicit information regarding sexually transmitted
1220 diseases. They may decide that the assistance of a doctor or educator in this task will be helpful.
1221 Whatever the sexual mores of the time may be, and whatever adolescent peers may do or say, it
1222 is important for parents to help their children look past peer pressure toward what contributes to
1223 loving, responsible relationships and to a secure sense of self-worth.

1224 Parents may remember their own reactions during this confusing and volatile age. In this, as in
1225 all facets of education, adults remain teachable. Sex education is not necessarily a one-way
1226 street. Parents may learn from their children about societal problems of which they have been
1227 unaware. Sensitive listening between parents and children will go a long way in establishing
1228 mutual understanding.

1229 c. Addictive Behaviors

1230 Early Friends tried to avoid behaviors that were unproductive or took time away from life in the
1231 Spirit. Friends today know that any addictive behavior separates the person from God and can
1232 harm personal relationships. Addictive behaviors and compulsive attachments, whether
1233 manifested in gambling, the use of drugs, tobacco, alcohol, or over-consumption of food are
1234 symptoms of conditions that frequently cannot be controlled by reason or an act of will. These
1235 behaviors are a continuing distraction from a meaningful life and can adversely affect the person
1236 and the whole family. Friends are not immune to these problems. The meeting has a
1237 responsibility to be aware of these conditions among members and attenders. The meeting can
1238 provide support in the struggle and encourage the persons involved to seek professional
1239 assistance.

1240 The entire meeting community can learn more about the relationship of addictive behavior to
1241 larger issues of social justice. Marketing of addictive substances, violence associated with the
1242 distribution of drugs and alcohol, bias in sentencing for illegal possession, root causes of some
1243 homelessness, the exploding prison populations, and the over-reliance on state-supported
1244 lotteries to support services for the young and the aged all are worthy of study and greater
1245 understanding.

1246

1247 III. Faith Reflected in our Organization

1248 *In all the affairs of the Meeting community, proceed in the peaceable spirit of Pure*
1249 *Wisdom, with forbearance and warm affection for each other.*

1250 Advices II

1251 The structure of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting resembles that of other yearly meetings of the
1252 Religious Society of Friends throughout the world. The primary group within this structure is
1253 the monthly meeting, gathering every month to conduct business; a number of monthly meetings
1254 are joined in a quarterly meeting, gathering every three months to conduct business; and a still
1255 larger number of monthly meetings constitute yearly meeting, which meets every year for several
1256 days of worship, business, workshops and friendship. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting also
1257 conducts some of its business, and provides activities and services, throughout the year.

1258 A. Monthly Meetings

1259
1260 Monthly meetings are spiritual communities of Friends who gather for worship, business and
1261 friendship. These meetings are the center of Friends spiritual life and also the foundation of the
1262 structure of the Religious Society of Friends. The monthly meeting holds meetings for worship
1263 weekly or more often and responds to the spiritual, social, educational and material needs of its
1264 members. Through active engagement in their monthly meeting, Friends find both a caring and
1265 safe environment and the challenge of spiritual growth. A Friends meeting offers a place to test
1266 leadings and convictions based on a shared appreciation of individual and corporate spiritual
1267 direction. Minutes of concern often rise out of meeting life, when Friends labor together to
1268 discern God’s way toward witness in the world.

1269 The monthly meeting may own and manage property, engage in significant social action, and
1270 operate schools or other institutions. It has sole authority to enroll or release members and to
1271 oversee marriages. The meeting may undertake any action or assume any function consistent
1272 with the practices and principles of the Religious Society of Friends.

1273 At monthly meetings for business, the meeting attends to its entire range of activities and
1274 committee work. On occasion, and with reasonable notice, the clerk may schedule a called
1275 meeting for business. Meetings for business provide opportunities for members to share
1276 information and worship together as well as make decisions. Such decisions could involve the
1277 conduct of worship, the care of members, religious education, the management of property and
1278 financial assets, membership applications, or issues of social justice. While day-to-day functions
1279 of the meeting may be delegated to committees or designated officers, the members of the
1280 monthly meeting as a body, acting through the meeting for business, is responsible for all
1281 activities undertaken by its decision or on its behalf. The meeting may authorize the clerk or a
1282 group of appointed Friends to implement a decision, in which case they would report back to the

1283 meeting for business. When good order requires, delegated responsibilities or functions may be
1284 recalled and exercised directly by the meeting.

1285 Every monthly meeting appoints a clerk, a treasurer, a recorder of members, and usually a
1286 recording clerk; assistant clerks may also be appointed, if needed. All other delegated tasks and
1287 roles are normally entrusted to committees rather than individuals.

1288 1. The Individual and the Meeting

1289
1290 The relationship of the individual and the meeting includes the expectation that everyone will be
1291 actively involved in the life of the meeting community. Active involvement typically includes
1292 regular attendance at meeting for worship and meeting for business, service on committees,
1293 financial support for the meeting, and other contributions to the ongoing work and life of the
1294 meeting. Active involvement ensures that one knows others and is known by them. Active
1295 involvement contributes to an individual's spiritual growth in community.

1296 The Religious Society of Friends accepts a variety of vocabularies for the expression of faith and
1297 encompasses a broad range of views on both the nature of faith and the ways faith can be carried
1298 into action. Some Friends embrace Christian language and belief; others prefer a variety of
1299 approaches to expressing their faith. Monthly meetings, with the guidance of this *Faith and*
1300 *Practice* and other sources, have the on-going task of interpreting Friends ways to prospective
1301 and experienced members. No one should hesitate to ask the meeting for explanation.

1302 A member under the weight of a spiritual or personal concern, or who feels a call to life-
1303 changing social action, may seek the assistance of the meeting in testing this leading. The
1304 member may ask for individual counsel or for a committee of clearness chosen by the member
1305 and/or by the meeting. Persons called to service on such a committee have a special
1306 responsibility to listen carefully, respond out of their own experience and understanding, and
1307 encourage individual and corporate faithfulness to spiritual leadings. (See Section VII for
1308 Guidelines for Clearness Committees.)

1309 Authority, however, lies with the meeting as a discerning body. The individual Friend benefits
1310 by testing his or her leading with the meeting. The person is advised and encouraged to accept
1311 the decision of the meeting and to be open to learning from the process of corporate discernment.
1312 The leading may be to undertake an individual journey, guided by the wisdom of the meeting, or
1313 the meeting itself may decide to support the leading in specific ways, including taking up the
1314 work collectively. Either way, the meeting can support the spiritual growth and personal
1315 transformation of both members and attenders.

1316 Members and regular attenders are expected to serve on committees of the monthly meeting.
1317 This service is essential for someone to be fully integrated into the life of the meeting. Since
1318 important work of the meeting is accomplished through its committees, an individual's

1319 willingness to serve when asked enables the meeting is to carry out its worthy goals. Acceptance
1320 of a committee appointment requires a commitment to loving diligence and response in carrying
1321 out the committee’s functions.

1322 2. Nurture of the Meeting Community

1323
1324 All members share the responsibility to care for one another. They support each other’s spiritual
1325 journeys. They participate in the intimate joys and sorrows of life and its transitions including
1326 birth, marriage, and death. Members facing important decisions may receive counseling, as in
1327 the case of those contemplating marriage or those facing decisions about military service.

1328 During times of a member’s personal distress, the meeting responds with appropriate support,
1329 and, if needed, makes referrals to professional care-givers. A meeting also assumes
1330 responsibility for helping members resolve their differences, meeting special needs of the young
1331 and the elderly, as well as the needs of new and prospective members and those at a distance.

1332 Every monthly meeting regularly evaluates how well it nurtures members. If a meeting finds
1333 that it needs improvements but is unable to make them, members may conclude that either they
1334 lack the resources or that its numbers have become so numerous as to endanger their sense of a
1335 loving community. At this point, the meeting might consider merging with a neighboring
1336 meeting or dividing into two meetings.

1337 3. Guidance of Meeting Affairs – Named Roles

1338
1339 Each monthly meeting appoints a clerk, a treasurer, a recorder of members, and usually a
1340 recording clerk. One or more assistant clerks may also be appointed, if needed. All other
1341 delegated functions are normally given to committees rather than individuals.

1342 Monthly meetings clearly express their expectations and define the scope of authority of those
1343 entrusted with guidance of meeting affairs. When this happens in a trusting atmosphere, the
1344 meeting’s officers and committees can accomplish their tasks with less duplication and
1345 frustration. In an atmosphere of trust committees have the authority to complete their tasks and
1346 the meeting can honor their work.

1347 Clerk: The clerk sees to the management in good order of the affairs of the meeting. The clerk
1348 prepares the agenda and conducts the meetings for business. The clerk provides background
1349 information, reminds the meeting of previous decisions, enlists relevant committees to prepare
1350 and present agenda topics, and ensures that the decisions of the meeting are carried out. In
1351 addition, the clerk may be in the best position to identify weaknesses or failings in the committee
1352 structure and function, and, working with the nominating committee, to initiate corrective action.
1353 The preparation of annual self-evaluations is supervised by the clerk and provides an occasion
1354 for assessment and correction as needed. Some meetings also appoint an assistant clerk or

1355 meeting secretary to assist in the work of the clerk. (See Section VII for the Meeting Spiritual
1356 Self-Assessment and the Monthly Meeting Checklist).

1357 The clerk is both servant and leader. The clerk ensures that meetings for business are extensions
1358 of meetings for worship and that spiritual unity is maintained. The clerk encourages those who
1359 are reluctant to speak, and in like manner gently discourages those who tend to speak at undue
1360 length or to speak too often. The clerk, often working with the recording clerk, is responsible
1361 for discerning the sense of the meeting. When the sense of the meeting seems to be clear, the
1362 clerk tests it with the meeting. If there are reservations, the clerk opens the way for further
1363 seeking and refinement. When there is agreement, the clerk directs that the sense of the meeting
1364 be so recorded. When the sense of the meeting seems elusive, the clerk might suggest deferring
1365 the matter to a later time or referring it to a different forum, such as a threshing session or ad hoc
1366 group, for further consideration and preparation.

1367 The clerk is sensitive to the need to refrain from opinionated participation in the discussion, and
1368 is alert to those situations when it would be best to ask the meeting to recognize someone else to
1369 clerk a portion of the meeting for business because of the clerk's strongly held personal views.

1370 Recording Clerk: The recording clerk prepares the written minutes of the meeting. Meetings
1371 are held for different purposes and the recording clerk's minutes reflect the essential work of the
1372 meeting, whether it be to record inspiration, discussion or decisions. The recording clerk seeks
1373 to prepare minutes that are clear and accurate so that future confusion is avoided as much as
1374 possible. The recording clerk is aided by working closely with the clerk in advance of the
1375 meeting so that names, dates and proposals are already familiar. The recording clerk may
1376 request help from the clerk or the meeting in formulating a minute and may request a time of
1377 silence and supportive prayer until the task is complete.

1378 Meetings follow a variety of practices when it comes to approval of the minutes. Some
1379 meetings approve the minutes in full or in sections during the meeting itself. Others approve the
1380 minutes at the next meeting for business. Others approve minutes of decision during the session
1381 when the decision is made and review the complete minutes at a future time. At times, the
1382 meeting may approve a minute in principle and not require the final refined version to come back
1383 to the meeting. Once approved, minutes retain their authority until amended by a subsequent
1384 minute. All minutes are preserved in ways that will ensure their availability and permanence.

1385 Treasurer: The treasurer receives, holds, invests and disburses the meeting's funds in accordance
1386 with that meeting's instructions. The treasurer maintains accurate accounts of the financial
1387 transactions of the meeting and reports regularly to the monthly meeting. The meeting treasurer
1388 works closely with the finance committee to prepare and monitor annual budgets and to assist in
1389 longer term financial planning for the meeting. The meeting appoints a committee, made up of
1390 those not involved in the preparation of the records, to review the treasurer's accounts, submit a

1391 written report to the meeting, and guide the treasurer in good accounting practices as needed.
1392 This process generally occurs annually.

1393 Recorder: The recorder maintains the records of births, adoptions, deaths, marriages, divorces
1394 and changes in membership. The recorder, or another person or committee specially designated,
1395 periodically publishes a directory of members and other persons associated with the meeting.
1396 The recorder regularly reports the membership statistics to the yearly meeting as requested.

1397

1398 4. Committees of the Monthly Meeting

1399

1400 Meetings have found it useful to identify specific needs and assign them to committees.
1401 Committee responsibilities, as described below, arise from the needs of the meeting to care for
1402 its members, its meeting for worship, the spiritual development of its members, its property and
1403 other resources, and its religious education, outreach and social action. The meeting's
1404 committees often have significant connections as they fulfill their various responsibilities.
1405 Meeting committees, or their clerks, may occasionally meet together to assess the meeting's
1406 programs and activities, identify tasks that have not been completed or done well, and to
1407 recognize what has been well done.

1408 In addition to fulfilling designated functions, committees also serve the meeting by preparing for
1409 decisions to be made at the monthly meeting for business. They identify the issues, gather useful
1410 information, and make seasoned recommendations for meeting. When this preliminary work is
1411 done well, the monthly meeting for business can focus on the issue at hand and discern the next
1412 steps.

1413 Committees form the structure of the meeting and do the meeting's work. The committees most
1414 commonly established by monthly meetings are identified according to the work they do. Larger
1415 meetings may further divide these tasks and add more committees, while smaller meetings may
1416 combine tasks and assign them to fewer committees, or to a committee "of the whole." In any
1417 case, these roles are offered as illustrative rather than prescriptive.

1418 a. Care for the Quality of Worship and Ministry. A committee on worship and ministry has
1419 responsibility to nurture the spiritual life of the meeting. Committee members attend meeting
1420 for worship regularly and are comfortable with a variety of religious orientations. They are
1421 seasoned in Friends practice of worship and are good listeners, able "to hear beyond words."
1422 The committee has a special responsibility to nurture the spiritual gifts of members and
1423 attenders, with appreciation for the diversity of such gifts and also the diversity of prior
1424 religious traditions and experience often represented in a meeting's membership. It also has
1425 a role in encouraging those who bring depth to vocal ministry or those who are hesitant to
1426 speak.

1427

1428 The committee members encourage Friends to take time for study, meditation, prayer and
1429 other preparations for worship, as these practices provide fertile ground for and openness to
1430 the leadings of the Spirit. Some meetings have supported members' participation in spiritual
1431 formation programs or the School of the Spirit so as to enhance the quality of ministry in the
1432 meeting for worship. The committee can also provide loving guidance to those whose
1433 ministry does not appear to come from deep centeredness in the Spirit.

1434 It also has the responsibility to recognize and address repeated behavior that disrupts shared
1435 worship. The committee—not an individual—makes the decision to speak for the meeting
1436 with a person whose vocal ministry is not helpful. Such intervention requires sensitivity and
1437 care, understanding how difficult it is to receive an admonition. But the committee cannot
1438 avoid such confrontation for the sake of the well-being of the meeting as a whole.

1439
1440 The committee may also welcome the contributions of children and young people in meeting
1441 for worship and it may have a special role in recognizing their spiritual contributions. The
1442 murmurings of the very young and the bustle of children can enrich the meeting community.

1443
1444 The specific responsibilities of a committee on worship and ministry typically include:

- 1445 • Giving counsel—those asked to give counsel need to remember that often the best
1446 service is to be a good listener. Advice is offered in love and grounded in the Light.
- 1447 • Teaching by example—Members of the committee teach by example as much as by
1448 precept and are often chosen for the way in which Friends testimonies are reflected in
1449 their lives. As they feel the call to be true to the testimonies, they also help others to
1450 grow in faithfulness to the testimonies. They encourage members and attenders to be
1451 ready and obedient should the leading come to enter into vocal ministry or prayer.
1452 They help members and attenders understand that all who attend a meeting for
1453 worship share responsibility for drawing the meeting together in expectant waiting
1454 and prayer.
- 1455 • Attending to the needs of the young—the committee makes a special effort to
1456 understand the needs of the young and to encourage their spiritual development.
1457 Interest in remaining within the Religious Society of Friends in later years may well
1458 be strengthened by the memory that, as children, they felt well prepared for meeting
1459 for worship and were welcome there.
- 1460 • Nurturing vocal ministry and the ministry of stillness—the committee nurtures
1461 meeting for worship by giving appropriate attention to the quality of the vocal
1462 ministry and of the ministry of stillness that springs from centered silence. At times
1463 the committee may need to address those who speak frequently in meeting for
1464 worship to help them keep sensitive to divine promptings, not human habits.

- 1465 • Addressing inappropriate conduct—the committee helps the meeting both to rise
1466 above occasional inappropriate conduct by a member or attender and to intervene
1467 firmly with repeated behavior that is disruptive of meetings for worship or business.
1468 • Representing the meeting on interfaith councils—the committee is often assigned the
1469 responsibility of representing the meeting on interfaith councils and encouraging
1470 active involvement by the meeting in ecumenical activities.
1471 • Recognizing those in the meeting who have exhibited gifts of the Spirit or who are
1472 engaged in public ministry—some meetings provide nurturing support for those with
1473 a particular gift in vocal ministry or those who have engaged in a form of public
1474 ministry such as serving as a chaplain for persons incarcerated in the criminal justice
1475 system. A monthly meeting may choose to formally recognize individuals with
1476 notable gifts of vocal ministry (“ministers”) or those with sensitive care for the
1477 spiritual life of the meeting community (“elders”). If ministers and elders are thus
1478 recognized and recorded, the committee on worship and ministry nurtures this
1479 relationship. The recognition is not one of status or privilege but is an affirmation
1480 based upon loving trust. The meeting’s trust is that the individual so recorded will, in
1481 all humility, nurture and exercise the gift of ministry in order to nourish the meeting
1482 as a whole. Those so recorded trust that the meeting will encourage and sustain them,
1483 clarify the springs of their ministry, and lovingly and faithfully counsel them.
1484 Periodically the meeting reviews this recognition and may withdraw it when the
1485 leading no longer serves the individual or the meeting.
1486 • Reporting to monthly meeting—the committee reports periodically to the monthly
1487 meeting for business.
1488 • Reporting to other meetings—the committee may occasionally be invited to share its
1489 work with similar committees in the quarter or yearly meeting.
1490
1491 b. Care of the Meeting Community and its Members. Every monthly meeting attends to the
1492 health and vitality of its community as a whole and the individuals that join together to create
1493 the congregation. To facilitate this process, monthly meetings generally appoint a group of
1494 people to meet regularly and take responsibility to know the individuals and families in the
1495 meeting and to be aware of particular need, family situations and other challenges. In the
1496 past, those committees were often named the committee of oversight or overseers. More
1497 recently, Friends have chosen other names for the responsibilities of the committee, such as
1498 care and counsel, care and concern, or pastoral care.
1499
1500 Members appointed to such a committee generally represent diverse ages, interests,
1501 professions and styles of communication. The committee often considers sensitive matters,
1502 expecting members to embrace confidentiality, discretion and tact as part of their charge.

1503 The care and counsel committee develops ways to support all members and attenders in the
1504 meeting community. Committees find that a variety of approaches help them attend to the
1505 needs of those new to the meeting, families with young children, teens and young adults,
1506 older Friends, those facing changes in family structure or financial security, substance abuse
1507 or mental illness, and chronic or serious illness and death. When conflicts arise between
1508 individuals within the meeting, the intervention and support of the care and counsel
1509 committee can be a valuable service to the meeting as well as to the persons involved. In
1510 some situations, the committee may determine that needed care can be carried out more
1511 effectively by Friends not named to the committee and it may invite their help. This could
1512 include professional help such as that available through the Friends Counseling Service (See
1513 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting website www.pym.org.)

1514 Some meetings create subcommittees of care and counsel to attend to special circumstances.
1515 Subcommittees might focus on marriage, membership, youth, loss and bereavement as well
1516 as other needs. In these situations, the care and counsel committee ensures that the
1517 subcommittee accomplishes this work and then integrates that work into its functions.

1518 Intimately involved with membership in the monthly meeting, the committee establishes a
1519 process for individuals requesting membership. The committee meets with applicants to
1520 explore their interest, understanding and spiritual journey. Transfers of membership are
1521 facilitated by the committee, which also encourages members who live at a distance or have
1522 become inactive to re-evaluate their membership status. The committee maintains a list of
1523 members and active attenders together with their contact information, and regularly checks
1524 this list with that of the meeting recorder. (See Section VII for Procedures for Membership
1525 Application.)

1526 While the care and counsel committee has specific responsibility for the health and vitality of
1527 the meeting community as a whole, another important task is regularly to invite all members
1528 of the community to join in loving care for each other. Some meetings have established
1529 circles of care. Each person is valued and important to the community as a whole, and
1530 contributes unique and welcome Light.

1531 c. Religious Education. Religious education is a lifelong endeavor. It begins in the family
1532 when parents take responsibility for the religious development of their children. Monthly
1533 meetings have a responsibility to bring children under their care into full participation in the
1534 life of the meeting and an understanding of the faith and practices of Friends.

1535
1536 Meetings are also expected to offer religious education programs for teens and adult
1537 members and attenders, drawing on the many resources available through the yearly meeting,
1538 Friends General Conference and other Quaker and religious organizations. A thriving First
1539 Day School contributes to the life of the meeting and is a source of outreach to young
1540 families seeking to establish a spiritual anchor. Religious education programs can include

1541 study groups, worship sharing opportunities, conferences, retreats and service projects, as
1542 well as regular classes before or after meeting for worship. An accessible meeting library is
1543 useful for the entire religious education program. These efforts require the nurture and
1544 participation of meeting members, including those with years of experience among Friends.
1545

1546 Meetings actively welcome opportunities to nurture the spiritual growth of their members
1547 and attenders, whether within the meeting or elsewhere. Meetings may be led in various
1548 ways to offer support for such opportunities within the limitations of their spiritual, personal
1549 and financial resources. For instance, a meeting may be asked to support individuals
1550 engaged in continuing education, whether at a weekend conference or for a term at a Quaker
1551 study center.

1552 d. Outreach. By welcoming people in the community and expressing our faith to them, we
1553 practice a traditional form of Quaker ministry. In larger meetings, an outreach committee
1554 can address the needs of seekers, attenders and new members, helping to include them in the
1555 life of the meeting and encouraging them to join in membership. Some meetings make
1556 special efforts to welcome the participation of young adult Friends and those with diverse
1557 religious backgrounds and experience. As with any other committee, the establishment of a
1558 committee of outreach does not relieve others from active participation in this role. Meetings
1559 benefit from a periodic review of their practices, ideally seen through the eyes of those new
1560 to them meeting, to ensure that they are indeed welcoming. The use of nametags, clear
1561 invitations to join in activities, adequate descriptions of logistics, and a buddy system all can
1562 contribute to a hospitable environment.
1563

1564 e. Witness in the World. Meetings regularly create committees to enable their members to
1565 address a variety of issues in their community, state, nation, or world. Meetings call these
1566 groups by a variety of names, including peace committee, social witness, racial justice,
1567 environmental concerns, and many others. Common ways of giving life to these leadings
1568 include:
1569

- 1570 • Planning and carrying out service projects as corporate activities of the meeting.
- 1571 • Maintaining a committee to address peace and social justice issues. This committee
1572 may recommend particular actions to individuals and to the meeting itself as a
1573 corporate body.
- 1574 • Encouraging members to participate in the work for social change through established
1575 Quaker organizations such as the American Friends Service Committee and the
1576 Friends Committee on National Legislation, or to pursue their own leadings to engage
1577 in social actions consistent with Friends' testimonies. Members who appear to be
1578 moved by a genuine prompting of the Spirit may be supported in leadings that not all
1579 share.

- 1580 • Supporting a member or members in seeking broader awareness of a particular
- 1581 concern by bringing it to their quarterly meeting or the yearly meeting.
- 1582 • Contributing services or financial support to help free a member to pursue a social
- 1583 concern as a “released Friend.”
- 1584 • Initiating consciousness-raising and skill-building activities that build a culture of
- 1585 anti-bias, peace and justice in new ways.
- 1586 • Engaging in new activities and processes of social change that reflect Quaker
- 1587 testimonies, such as nonviolent action training and other initiatives built on
- 1588 nonviolence theories.

1589

1590 f. Care of Real Property. Meetings that own property are encouraged to use the power of that

1591 ownership to enrich the spiritual life of the meeting, to enhance the integrity of the natural

1592 world, and to contribute to the welfare of the surrounding community. Meetings are also

1593 encouraged to carry adequate insurance to cover loss, replacement and liability. Meetings

1594 generally establish a committee of trustees, property committee, or buildings and grounds to

1595 oversee this work.

1596

1597 An important aspect of owning real property is holding title to the land. Four options are

1598 available for formal ownership of the meeting’s real property. Legal counsel should be

1599 consulted before making a choice. Property may be:

1600

- 1601 1) Held in the name of an unincorporated meeting.
- 1602 2) Held in the name of an unincorporated body of trustees appointed by the meeting. The
- 1603 meeting must take care that the roster of trustees is kept in existence by the timely
- 1604 replacement of trustees lost through resignation, disability, or death.
- 1605 3) Held in the name of an incorporated meeting.
- 1606 4) Held in the name of an incorporated body of trustees appointed by the meeting.

1607

1608 Options 3) and 4) require at a minimum the adoption of bylaws and the holding of annual

1609 meetings of the corporation. Those activities should follow Friends procedures to the extent

1610 possible under state law. If there are directors of the corporation, they need to be sensitive to

1611 the desires of the meeting as they carry out their statutory responsibilities. The Friends

1612 Fiduciary Corporation of Philadelphia no longer undertakes the role of formal holder of

1613 record of properties of active monthly or quarterly meetings.

1614

1615 g. Care of Burial Grounds. Monthly meetings and their successors have a responsibility in

1616 perpetuity to maintain burial grounds and memorial gardens in good order and to devote to

1617 their upkeep any income from perpetual care endowments in the charge of the meeting. A

1618 committee of the meeting may be empowered to authorize interments of bodies or ashes or

1619 scatterings of ashes, keep accurate records of the location of the interred, and maintain the

1620 grounds. It is expected that the procedure for recording interment or scatterings of ashes will
1621 be consistent with that for recording burials.

1622
1623 Friends have traditionally expressed their commitments to simplicity and the equality of all
1624 persons by discouraging the use of elaborate grave markers. Graves are ordinarily marked by
1625 plain stones that bear only the name of the deceased and dates of birth and death. When
1626 opening a new section of a burial ground, meetings may wish to require that stones be flush
1627 with the ground to facilitate maintenance.

1628
1629 h. Stewardship of Financial Resources.

1630
1631 1) Meetings and Economic Resources: The guidance offered Friends in the disposition of
1632 their own economic resources (See Section II) applies equally to the exercise of
1633 economic power by meetings. Meetings as well as individuals can act, in the words of
1634 John Woolman, “to turn all the treasures we possess into the channel of Universal Love
1635 becomes the business of our lives.” Meetings are encouraged to review regularly their
1636 policies and practices to ensure the socially responsible investment of endowments and
1637 working capital, ecologically responsible management of real property, caring
1638 management and equitable compensation of employees, and socially responsible use of
1639 the power to purchase and consume. Meetings are advised to seek expert advice, when
1640 needed, in the areas of finance and accounting, labor and employment practices, property
1641 and real estate.

1642
1643 2) Financing Monthly Meeting Activities: Monthly meetings have broad discretion in the
1644 raising, custody and spending of money. They are encouraged to conduct their affairs so
1645 that money for routine operating budgets is raised from the current generation, without
1646 undue reliance on the generosity of past members. Meetings are also encouraged to take
1647 care that fund-raising activities spread the burden of financial support among members
1648 and regular attenders in accordance with their respective abilities to contribute.

1649
1650 Broad decisions about the raising, custody and spending of money are policy matters
1651 affecting the entire meeting community. Such broad decisions could include the
1652 development of a long-term financial plan that attends not only to the physical needs of
1653 the meeting’s property, but also to the programs of the meeting, financial support for
1654 members who are in need, and support of Friends testimonies. It is expected that
1655 recommendations regarding the meeting’s budget and finances will be seasoned by a
1656 finance committee or other appropriate body within the meeting and that decisions will
1657 be made at the monthly meeting for business rather than by a less representative body.

1658

1659 Good order includes the keeping of careful financial records. This includes a system of
1660 financial controls to ensure the integrity of receipts and disbursements; a regular review
1661 of meeting accounts, including those of all committees and programs, by a committee
1662 appointed for that purpose. It is important that the committee report to the meeting for
1663 business and the substance of the financial review be recorded in the minutes. Monthly
1664 meetings may encourage institutions under their care to employ professional auditors and
1665 to ask that the audit report be a part of the institution’s periodic reporting to the meeting.
1666

1667 Monthly meetings are also encouraged to use the investment management services of the
1668 Friends Fiduciary Corporation for endowment funds. Meetings are expected to review
1669 and monitor their investment principles and performance on a regular basis and to
1670 establish their own “social responsibility” criteria for the investment of endowment funds
1671 not managed by the Friends Fiduciary Corporation.
1672

1673 Monthly meetings holding endowment funds established by gift or bequest are
1674 responsible to ensure that the corpus and the income are applied to the uses the donor has
1675 specified.
1676

1677 i. Care of Meeting Records. A recorder maintains the records of births, adoptions, deaths,
1678 marriages, divorces and changes in membership. The recorder, or another person or
1679 committee specially designated, periodically publishes a directory of members and persons
1680 associated with the meeting.
1681

1682 Minutes of monthly meetings for business, when approved, are preserved on acid-free paper,
1683 appropriately bound, held in safekeeping, and, when no longer required for current reference,
1684 archived in one of the Friends historical libraries at Swarthmore and Haverford Colleges.
1685 Records of other meeting bodies and the meeting’s financial records may be treated similarly.
1686 Some monthly meetings now use digital technology to record and retain their minutes and
1687 other documents. Meetings are encouraged to establish clear, straightforward policies for the
1688 retention of all documents.
1689

1690 j. Nominations to Involve Meeting Members and Regular Attenders in the Life of the Meeting.
1691 The nominating committee bears the responsibility to discern the gifts of meeting members
1692 and regular attenders; recommend individuals to serve as officers and committee members;
1693 and see to their replacements at appropriate intervals by other well qualified Friends.
1694 Monthly meetings give officers and committee members substantial autonomy in their areas
1695 of responsibility so their wise selection is essential to the meeting’s welfare. To provide for
1696 a broad sharing of nominating tasks, meetings would do well to specify short terms for
1697 nominating committee members, and to choose an ad hoc naming committee to nominate
1698 people to serve on that committee. The tasks of the nominating committee include:

- 1699 • A procedure to identify, recruit, train and rotate meeting clerks. The office of
1700 assistant or recording clerk is often used as a training ground for the meeting clerk.
- 1701 • A roster of officer positions and standing committees of the meeting with job
1702 descriptions and the numbers of members needed in each committee.
- 1703 • Where warranted, a plan for staggering of terms and regularly rotating members
1704 serving in offices and committees.
- 1705 • A reporting procedure that allows the meeting to weigh nominations thoughtfully
1706 before final approval.

1707
1708 The meeting may explore various strategies for increasing the participation of members and
1709 regular attenders, including those with diverse backgrounds and experience. Some meetings
1710 identify some of its committees as open to all interested members and attenders rather than
1711 expecting that the members of these committees will be selected only through the appointment
1712 process. Likewise, meetings may determine which committees must be filled with members and
1713 which may include regular attenders.

1714 Friends have been reluctant to deviate from the tradition of volunteer service that has marked the
1715 Religious Society of Friends from its beginnings. As they work together for the meeting,
1716 volunteers often find their religious lives mutually strengthened, their sense of community
1717 deepened, and their commitment affirmed. These dividends of participation diminish when they
1718 find themselves overcommitted. Some meetings have found themselves strengthened spiritually
1719 when they have employed staff to perform a few essential functions, such as child care,
1720 coordination of First Day School programs, secretarial work and maintenance of buildings and
1721 grounds. But Friends do not ordinarily receive compensation for their service or contributions to
1722 the meeting without express authorization by the meeting in advance. Compensated service
1723 remains a limited exception to the presumption of volunteer participation and service.

1724
1725 5. Membership
1726

- 1727 a. The Meaning of Membership: The monthly meeting is the final authority in all matters
1728 concerning membership, and all membership occurs in the monthly meeting. A person
1729 joining a monthly meeting becomes thereby a member of a quarterly meeting, the yearly
1730 meeting, and the Religious Society of Friends.

1731
1732 Membership establishes a mutual commitment between members and their monthly meeting.
1733 On the one hand, membership commits the monthly meeting to provide a spiritual home for
1734 its members and corporate support for their efforts to live in harmony with the faith and
1735 practices of Friends. Many meetings establish scholarship funds for members to attend
1736 workshops, retreats and other opportunities for spiritual nourishment, as well as scholarships
1737 for members' children to attend Friends schools. Meetings also support members faced with

1738 difficult, potentially life-changing decisions by forming clearness committees to assist
1739 members in their discernment process. Meeting support may also extend to elements of a
1740 member's life that could interfere with full and active participation in the meeting such as
1741 economic insecurity. Most important, the meeting provides regular opportunities for
1742 corporate worship, spiritual growth and other activities that enable the meeting to be a
1743 genuine community of faith for its members.

1744
1745 On the other hand, membership commits members of the meeting to live in spiritual unity
1746 with each other and to engage as fully as possible in the life of the meeting. Specifically, this
1747 means regular participation in meeting for worship, meeting for business, financial support of
1748 the budget, and the work of the meeting and of its committees. It also entails giving time,
1749 skills and material support to the meeting and its activities such as religious education,
1750 pastoral care and witness to the broader community. In Philadelphia Yearly Meeting,
1751 responsibility for the full range of monthly, quarterly and yearly meeting activities rests with
1752 the membership.

1753
1754 b. Attenders: People from other religious backgrounds or with no religious ties often visit
1755 Friends meetings. Meetings welcome all visitors, giving continuing attention to those who
1756 return frequently. Meetings may provide these regular attenders with spiritual support and
1757 guidance as they seek to learn more about Friends faith and practice. Regular attenders may
1758 be encouraged to attend business meetings and, at the discretion of the meeting, to serve on
1759 committees. These individuals can then witness Friends particular approach to worship and
1760 the conduct of meeting business, as well as the structure, finances and witness of the monthly
1761 meeting. Regular attenders are invited to attend sessions of quarterly and yearly meeting and
1762 the annual summer gatherings of Friends General Conference. Meetings provide regular
1763 attenders with a copy of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's current *Faith and Practice*, and with
1764 information about the major spiritual writings of Friends, the history of Friends, as well as
1765 such organizations as the American Friends Service Committee, Friends Committee on
1766 National Legislation, Quaker Voluntary Service and Friends World Committee for
1767 Consultation.

1768
1769 Those attenders who participate regularly in meeting activities, especially meeting for
1770 worship, and who demonstrate a growing understanding and appreciation of Friends faith and
1771 practices, and of the responsibilities of membership, are encouraged to apply for
1772 membership. (See Section VII for Guidelines for Membership.)

1773
1774 Membership is a major commitment to participate in a particular community of Friends, and
1775 full participation in two religious bodies at once (including two monthly meetings) is usually
1776 impractical. Except in unusual circumstances, applicants who are members of another
1777 religious body are expected to relinquish that membership, formally advising the other

1778 organization of their intent to join the Religious Society of Friends as they prepare to join the
1779 meeting, and endeavoring to obtain a letter of release from any found ties to their previous
1780 religious affiliation.

1781

1782 c. Children: Friends consider children from birth to maturity to be full participants in the
1783 fellowship of the meeting, to be nurtured in their spiritual development and understanding of
1784 the faith and practice of Friends and to be guided and encouraged into Quaker adulthood.
1785 The meeting can help children prepare for the decisions they must make about friendships,
1786 peer pressure, recreation, education, career and military service. As they mature, those who
1787 have received this care from their meeting will become increasingly conscious of the full
1788 meaning of membership in the Religious Society of Friends so as to make their own decision
1789 regarding membership. Growing up in a meeting offers children an extended religious
1790 family as the meeting provides an atmosphere of inclusion, care, love and recognition—in
1791 short, a spiritual home—for all young people in the meeting, regardless of their membership
1792 status or that of their parents.

1793

1794 However, meetings are encouraged to respect parents' sense of what is best for their children
1795 regarding membership. Some Friends believe the nurture of the young toward mature
1796 conviction is aided by a child's sense of belonging fully to a meeting that comes only in
1797 the process of applying for membership. Others believe the process is aided by associate
1798 membership after which a child claims mature conviction when ready to do so. Some
1799 believe that any form of involuntary membership limits a child's freedom to choose. Parents
1800 will need to decide which option they wish to encourage regarding the membership status of
1801 their children, from birth to age 21.

1802

1803 A person of any age may apply for membership in a meeting. Some people are spiritually
1804 ready for membership early in their lives; others are ready only as adults.

1805

1806 Parents who are members may, at the time of their child's birth or adoption or later:

1807

- 1808 1) Request membership for their child;
- 1809 2) Request associate membership for their child (see below);
- 1810 3) Not request any enrollment for the child.

1811

1812 Parents who are members of different meetings must decide which meeting records the
1813 child. When only one parent is a member, children may be recorded upon the request of that
1814 parent and with the permission of the other or, under unusual circumstances, upon the
1815 request of only one parent. Where there is only one legal parent, that member may request
1816 membership or associate membership for the child. Meetings are urged to recognize the
1817 diversity of family patterns, with sensitivity to the concerns of all involved.

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Parents requesting membership for their child are expected to raise the child as a Friend in a meeting community. The parents and the meeting can then help the child to grow gradually into the responsibilities of membership and encourage the child when ready to take on specific responsibilities—such as service on a meeting committee—when ready. The meeting has an obligation to those recorded as members at a young age to ensure that as they reach adulthood they will thoughtfully consider their own commitment to membership.

Many meetings offer associate membership for children, with the full responsibilities and privileges of membership up to their adulthood, that age to be determined by the meeting. For yearly meeting statistical purposes associate members will not be recorded after their 21st birthday. Associate members may request full membership when they are so led, and the monthly meeting's role is one of active encouragement. As in all matters regarding membership, monthly meetings establish their own policies regarding the membership of children.

- d. **Transfer of Membership:** There is a long history of transfer of membership when a Friend moves to a new area or is drawn to worship with another monthly meeting. A member of one monthly meeting who wishes to join another is normally accepted as a member of the Religious Society of Friends and welcomed into membership. When this occurs, the sending and the receiving monthly meetings each have specific responsibilities. When the transfer process is complete, the receiving monthly meeting appoints one or more Friends to welcome the new member, including an invitation to attend meetings for worship and business, serve on committees, and share in the financial support of the meetings. (See Section VII for a complete description of the responsibilities involved.)

- e. **Sojourning Members:** Friends may attend a monthly meeting because they have moved temporarily into its vicinity, but may not wish to give up membership in their home meeting to which they expect to return eventually. In such a case, Friends may ask their home meeting to send a letter requesting acceptance as sojourning members of that meeting. Sojourning Friends may accept all roles that the host meeting sees fit to assign to them. However, they are not counted in the statistical reports of the host meeting and their sojourning membership ends when they leave that area. That clerk should then notify their home meeting. Those who continue as sojourning Friends for an extended period may be asked to examine their reasons for continuing that status and to consider a transfer of membership instead.

- f. **Joining other Religious Bodies:** If members wish to leave the Religious Society of Friends to join another religious body, they are expected to notify their monthly meeting. The monthly

1858 meeting may give them a letter stating their good standing in the Religious Society of
1859 Friends. When that meeting has been advised that they have been received in membership by
1860 another religious group, their membership with Friends shall cease.

1861

1862 g. Membership Records: In Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, it is the practice for monthly
1863 meetings to maintain records of their members, including transfers of membership to and
1864 from the meeting, resignations, and new members. The recorder of each monthly meeting
1865 keeps accurate information on the membership status of each active member and shares it
1866 with the quarterly meeting and yearly meeting as requested. In the past, monthly meetings
1867 automatically recorded as members (called “birthright” Friends) all newborn children whose
1868 parents were members, but this practice has been largely abandoned as inconsistent with the
1869 goal of a Religious Society of Friends made up of members by mature conviction.

1870

1871 Some may wish to retain membership in the Religious Society of Friends even though they
1872 have not been active in any monthly meeting for many years. At its discretion, a monthly
1873 meeting may carry inactive persons on its membership rolls. Long-term nominal
1874 membership is generally discouraged, however, except when active meeting participation is
1875 not possible because of poor health, when residence is so far from any meeting (so that
1876 transfer of membership or sojourning membership is not feasible), or for some other
1877 compelling factor.

1878

1879 B. Quarterly Meetings

1880

1881 George Fox established monthly meetings in 1666 and also encouraged Friends to gather in
1882 regional meetings. He realized that a more stable and lasting structure was needed than could
1883 be provided by the leadership of a few traveling ministers. Groups of neighboring monthly
1884 meetings within Philadelphia Yearly Meeting have likewise felt strengthened by joining
1885 together in quarterly meetings. These bodies traditionally have met several times a year (or
1886 “quarterly”) as occasions for Friends to support one another through worship and fellowship,
1887 and to consider matters of regional or common concern. A quarterly meeting is composed of
1888 all the members of its constituent monthly meetings. A quarterly meeting may be established
1889 upon the initiative of monthly meetings in the same geographic area, when the yearly
1890 meeting approves a request from one or more monthly meetings, or when a quarterly meeting
1891 wishes to divide. With the consent of their constituent monthly meetings, quarterly meetings
1892 may combine. The meetings involved in such cases may request that the yearly meeting
1893 appoint a committee to assist in the organization of a new quarterly meeting.

1894

1895 1. Functions and Organization of Quarterly Meetings. Thoughtfully planned sessions of a
1896 quarterly meeting can provide religious fellowship, spiritual enrichment, and a forum for
1897 cooperation and exchange of information and ideas among members of the constituent

1898 monthly meetings. Those gathered may develop plans to deal regionally with broader
1899 issues and special concerns, as well as review and respond to concerns that a monthly
1900 meeting wishes to bring before the yearly meeting. Those named as monthly meeting
1901 representatives should be faithful in reporting the proceedings of such gatherings to the
1902 members of their monthly meeting.

1903
1904 Some quarterly meetings may be custodians of property, may employ paid staff, and may
1905 have active programs in matters of ministry and worship, peace and social concerns and
1906 youth, as well as substantial institutions under their care.

1907 Quarterly meetings maintain a structure of administrative officers and committees. These
1908 generally include at a minimum a clerk, a recording clerk and a treasurer. There may be
1909 committees to assist the clerk, to plan gatherings, to conduct routine business between
1910 sessions, to prepare the annual budget, and to provide sensitive oversight of programs and
1911 staff.

- 1912
- 1913 Another committee nominates quarterly meeting officers as well as its appointees to
1914 the yearly meeting's nominating committee. It monitors the process by which the
1915 quarterly meeting committee members are selected.
 - 1916 The treasurer receives, holds, invests and disburses the quarterly meeting's funds in
1917 accordance with that meeting's instructions. The treasurer may receive the covenants
1918 from its constituent monthly meetings for the quarterly and yearly meetings'
1919 expenses. The quarterly meeting eases the yearly meeting's task to collect funds from
1920 monthly meetings; the quarterly meeting may cover a shortfall by a constituent
1921 monthly meeting. A committee is appointed annually to examine the treasurer's
1922 accounts, submit a written report to the quarterly meeting and guide the treasurer in
1923 sound accounting practices.
 - 1924 A committee on worship and ministry can support the work of monthly meetings
1925 seeking to enrich their worship and thereby enhance the spiritual lives of the members
1926 of the monthly and quarterly meetings. It may also respond sensitively when a
1927 monthly meeting is in need of special nurture.
 - 1928 Another committee focusing on peace and social concerns can enable members of
1929 different monthly meetings to coordinate more effectively their public witness or
1930 service.
 - 1931 A committee charged principally with activities may provide programs such as
1932 retreats, service projects and workshops for adults and youth.
 - 1933 A quarterly meeting that has a school, senior living facility or other institution under
1934 its care appoints to the governing body members with dependable commitment and
1935 proven qualifications. The quarterly meeting entrusts operating responsibility to
1936 those appointed and seeks through legal means to limit the liability for their actions.
It has the obligation to offer encouragement and spiritual nurture to the governing

1937 body and to intervene if the viability of the institution is in question. It maintains a
1938 regular reporting process from the institution to the quarterly meeting that will
1939 promote diligence in management, good stewardship and regular attention to
1940 maintaining the Quaker character of the institution in all aspects of its policies and
1941 operation.

- 1942 • A property committee or trustees can assume responsibility for property such as
1943 meetinghouses or burial grounds under the care of the quarterly meeting.

1944
1945 2. Guidance and Assistance. When a monthly meeting faces difficult problems, needs
1946 encouragement, or wishes guidance in making decisions concerning membership, it may
1947 ask for the quarterly meeting’s assistance. To assure such support, the quarterly meeting
1948 may encourage its constituent monthly meetings to provide it with regular reports based
1949 on constructive self-assessment (See Section VII for a variety of self-assessments).

1950
1951 When a quarterly meeting for whatever reason cannot fulfill its functions of oversight or
1952 assistance, or is unable to receive and forward meeting reports and funds, the condition is
1953 reported to the yearly meeting for its advice and assistance. Should a monthly meeting be
1954 laid down, the quarterly meeting assumes responsibility for its assets, including property
1955 and burial grounds.

1956 C. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

1957
1958 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting was founded in 1681 to provide assistance and oversight for
1959 established and prospective monthly meetings. In its early years it was called the “General
1960 Yearly Meeting for Friends of Pennsylvania, East and West Jersey and of the Adjacent
1961 Provinces.” Its geographical boundaries today are more limited but no more precise. They are
1962 the unplanned result of a series of affiliation decisions by monthly meetings that border other
1963 yearly meetings. From 1827, when the yearly meeting split, until 1955, when the two branches
1964 reunited, two yearly meetings functioned in the same general geographic area and each called
1965 itself the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

1966 Today Philadelphia Yearly Meeting includes meetings and Friends in parts of Pennsylvania,
1967 New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland.

1968 1. Annual Sessions: All members of its constituent monthly meetings are also members of the
1969 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. They are encouraged to attend
1970 the annual and other sessions of yearly meeting and participate in worship and fellowship, as
1971 well as deliberations and decision-making with other members of our yearly meeting. Yearly
1972 meeting is enhanced when as many members as possible attend annual sessions, since this
1973 assures a larger pool of wisdom and insight; such participation is also beneficial for the members
1974 and their monthly meetings.

1975 Annual sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting may change in format but always include
1976 worship, business sessions, and fellowship. It also offers opportunities to share information and
1977 concerns from individual members, constituent meetings, yearly meeting committees, and other
1978 Friends' organizations such as the American Friends Service Committee, Friends Committee on
1979 National Legislation, and Friends World Committee for Consultation. Epistles (public letters)
1980 from other yearly meetings are read and a small group of those attending sessions is charged with
1981 preparing an epistle from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting that is approved before the close of the
1982 sessions.

1983 Friends receive information, insights, and concerns in a worshipful spirit that often evoke deeply
1984 felt responses. The yearly meeting may be led to unite in support of a minute of concern or in a
1985 decision to undertake a specific action. Since such expressions or actions speak for the entire
1986 membership, a responsible body—for instance, a working group or standing committee—
1987 carefully reviews the minute of concern or proposal for action that are to come before the annual
1988 sessions. Some materials, including the yearly meeting budget, are provided well in advance of
1989 annual sessions to those planning to attend. Discussion of the budget is most valuable when it
1990 explores the spiritual and testimonial implications of budgetary decisions and elicits and weighs
1991 ideas that will influence future budgets. Annual sessions can also play a role in providing
1992 assessment and oversight through consideration of reports from committees of yearly meeting.

1993 The yearly meeting in annual sessions appoints its officers, the at-large members of the
1994 nominating committee, the elders, and the clerks and members of its governance committees, and
1995 the general secretary. It also approves the annual budget and may make changes to its
1996 administrative structure. Current information regarding the roles, responsibilities, and terms of
1997 office for the yearly meeting officers is in the Nominating Committee Handbook, which is
1998 available at the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting website (www.pym.org).

1999 When need arises, yearly meeting members may ask the clerk of yearly meeting to call special
2000 sessions of the yearly meeting.

2001 Yearly meeting annual and continuing sessions are supported by a variety of committees
2002 working with the clerk of yearly meeting and the general secretary in order to provide continuity
2003 across all sessions during the year. Planning includes developing the agenda for consideration
2004 by the meeting for business, threshing sessions, workshops, the children's programs, and
2005 arrangements regarding the site, technology, transportation, and the many details that contribute
2006 to the care of those in attendance. Every effort is made to provide financial assistance so that no
2007 one feels unable to participate because of limited means.

2008 2. Continuing Sessions In addition to annual sessions, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting meets in at
2009 least two one-day sessions during the year for worship, business, mutual learning, and
2010 fellowship.

2011 3. Administrative Structure of the Yearly Meeting In addition to the yearly meeting in session,
2012 the structure of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting includes the nominating committee, and two
2013 councils that oversee and support the administrative and program work of the yearly meeting.
2014 Details regarding this structure may be found at the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting website
2015 (www.pym.org).

2016
2017 D. Communication, Intervisitation and Changes in Formal Relationships

2018
2019 1. Sharing Information about Our Monthly Meeting with Other Meetings. The Religious
2020 Society of Friends has always mistrusted church hierarchies, believing that the path to the
2021 Divine is inward for each individual and worshipping group. Friends have kept the power of
2022 decision-making in religious matters as close to the primary worship group as possible. The
2023 monthly meeting, accordingly, has a freedom of action and responsibility not given to either
2024 the quarterly or yearly meeting. On the other hand, there are some matters on which a degree
2025 of uniformity among neighboring monthly meetings is essential to the good order of the
2026 Society, and likewise there are some matters that invite attention and support at the quarterly
2027 or yearly meeting level.

2028 By virtue of membership in a monthly meeting, Friends also become members of the
2029 quarterly and yearly meeting. All members have the privilege and responsibility to
2030 participate in decision-making, fellowship and worship within each body. Monthly meetings
2031 may designate certain members to attend quarterly or yearly meeting sessions as
2032 representatives, although all members are welcome and encouraged to attend. Appointed
2033 representatives serve as a vital communications link between the yearly and quarterly
2034 meeting and the monthly meeting.

2035 Within its own area of responsibility, each body is autonomous. Friends do not attend
2036 quarterly or yearly meeting as instructed delegates of their monthly meeting, but join others
2037 in worship and decision-making that respond to the moving of the Spirit in that time and
2038 place. Monthly meetings may adopt and forward minutes expressing unity on issues they
2039 wish to bring before quarterly or yearly meeting for consideration, but such minutes do not
2040 limit the freedom of the body assembled to adopt alternate courses. When presented with an
2041 urgent concern or proposal, whether by an individual under a strong leading or by a group
2042 with a powerful sense of mission, the quarterly or yearly meeting may be tempted to act
2043 precipitately. It is helpful for the quarterly and yearly meetings to have in place a procedure
2044 for broad prior consideration in monthly meetings of such concerns or proposals.

2045 Monthly meetings, quarterly meetings and the yearly meeting share the common task of
2046 encouraging and sustaining members in their obedience to the Truth. This makes members'
2047 lives both harder, because of the challenge to a higher level of commitment to a religious

2048 calling, and easier, because of the presence of a supportive structure within which that calling
2049 can be answered.

2050 Monthly meetings, quarterly meetings and the yearly meeting prepare and disseminate
2051 various written reports. Annual budgets, as well as reports from committees responsible for
2052 various shared programs and concerns, are presented orally and often also in written form at
2053 a meeting for business. These bodies also report informally to members through newsletters
2054 at more frequent intervals. And there is a strong tradition of oral reporting to monthly
2055 meetings of the deliberations and decisions of the quarterly and yearly meeting.

2056 Formerly, monthly meetings would send to quarterly meetings two separate forms of annual
2057 report: an overall state of the meeting and a report of the committee on worship and ministry.
2058 Quarterly meetings in turn would submit annual reports on the same two subjects to yearly
2059 meeting, drawing on the reports of monthly meetings. Some quarterly meetings have
2060 restored the practice of asking their constituent monthly meetings to prepare a state of the
2061 meeting report. Such reports could help the quarterly and yearly meeting identify situations
2062 in monthly meetings where assistance from others might be helpful. (See Section VII for a
2063 variety of self-assessments.)

2064 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting still asks monthly meetings to provide an annual report of
2065 membership statistics; and it asks both monthly and quarterly meetings to submit a list of
2066 current officers.

2067 Such sharing of information among monthly meetings, as well as with the quarterly and
2068 yearly meeting, can be beneficial for all involved and is a practice that might well be revived
2069 or enhanced in the future.

2070

2071 2. Intervisitation. From the beginning Quakers have both experienced and identified
2072 themselves as a community that transcends geographical and cultural boundaries. This
2073 practice has encouraged the offer of hospitality to traveling Friends, on the one hand, and the
2074 confidence of welcome, on the other. Friendly inter-visitation, whether formal or informal,
2075 has for more than three hundred and fifty years provided an important opening for
2076 understanding and cooperation in the affairs of Friends and for mutual ministry and spiritual
2077 growth. Friends are encouraged, therefore, as they travel on business or otherwise, to allow
2078 time for visits with meetings or with individual Friends and families in the regions they pass
2079 through.

2080 a. Letters of Introduction: Friendly visitors benefit from obtaining a letter of introduction
2081 from their home meetings. Such letters usually state the fact of membership, give some
2082 account of participation and witness in the affairs of our Religious Society, and express
2083 such greetings as are deemed appropriate. Letters are signed by the clerk and duly noted
2084 in the minutes. Since Friends travel for a wide variety of purposes, letters of introduction
2085 do not suggest specific obligations either on the visitor or on those visited and may be
2086 issued by the clerk without formal consideration by the meeting. Such letters are often
2087 endorsed by those visited and used to send greetings back to the visitor's home meeting.

2088 b. Minutes of Travel for Religious Service: As in the past, Friends today can find
2089 themselves under a sense of divine leading to travel in support of an important public
2090 witness or to nurture the religious life of Friends families and meetings. In carrying out
2091 such leadings, they find it useful to take with them a formal minute for religious service
2092 from their monthly meeting.

2093 A monthly meeting should issue such a minute only after the concern has been laid
2094 before its committee on worship and ministry, a clearness committee, or such other group
2095 as the meeting may suggest and has been favorably recommended to the monthly meeting
2096 for approval. A minute of religious service, signed by the clerk, states clearly the nature,
2097 scope and duration of the proposed service and affirms the meeting's support of the
2098 Friend(s) concerned. The monthly meeting issuing such a minute should consider
2099 whether it is under an obligation to ensure, insofar as possible, that the proposed service
2100 is not hampered by a lack of funds or other support.

2101 A Friend who proposes to travel under religious concern may find, as have Friends in the
2102 past, that it is a source of strength and comfort to be joined by another Friend sympathetic
2103 to the concern and able to share counsel and encouragement.

2104 A minute of travel religious service, especially one to be used beyond the bounds of the
2105 yearly meeting, after adoption by a monthly meeting, is usually submitted for approval,
2106 endorsement and support by the quarterly and yearly meetings.

2107 Friends traveling with such minutes are customarily welcomed by those among whom
2108 they visit and invited to lay their leadings before appropriate gatherings. It is also
2109 customary for minutes of travel for religious service to be endorsed at the conclusion of
2110 the gatherings by the person(s) presiding.

2111 Upon the completion of the service proposed, a minute for religious service should be
2112 returned promptly with a verbal or written report to those meetings who had earlier
2113 reviewed the concern and minuted their support.

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2115 3. Growth and Changes in Meetings:

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- a. Worship Groups: When a group of people have been drawn to Friends worship and testimonies but find no organized meeting nearby with whom to worship, they may form a Friends worship group. This gathering can be as formal or informal and can assume as little or as much structure as is rightly ordered.

A facilitator or correspondent may help by maintaining contact among the worshippers, arranging and publishing the time and place for worship sessions, and attending to other needs of the group. Such leadership is especially useful when a group draws its members from scattered communities, experiences a lull in its activities, or decides to broaden its activities or relationships.

Some Friends worship groups fulfill their purposes by remaining in a temporary state, meeting seasonally or only briefly. Those that have achieved some permanence may decide whether to remain informal or to seek a formal relationship with the Religious Society of Friends. The latter choice will require those who are not already members of the Religious Society of Friends to decide whether to apply for membership in the new meeting, or, for those who are already members of another meeting, to apply for a transfer of membership. For the group, the issue, decided in consultation with the quarterly meeting within which they reside and with neighboring monthly meetings as appropriate, is whether to apply to the quarterly meeting for status as a preparative meeting or as a monthly meeting.

- b. Preparative Meetings: Status as a preparative meeting serves as an intermediate step between a worship group and an established monthly meeting. It also serves the needs of a group wishing to have membership in the Religious Society of Friends but not ready to assume the full responsibilities of a monthly meeting.

A preparative meeting is under the care of a monthly meeting, reporting regularly to it, yet holding its own meetings for worship and having its own officers and meetings for business. Insofar as it is able, it may have its own committees and financial structure and its own programs and activities, including the establishment of a First Day School and the holding of memorial meetings. It may own property and trust funds. A preparative meeting may not admit members or conduct marriages under its care or in other ways act as an established monthly meeting; nor does it have a direct relationship with the quarterly and yearly meetings.

When a monthly meeting, with quarterly meeting approval, accepts the request of a worship group for status as a preparative meeting, it enrolls as its members those individuals in the group who apply and are accepted. Thereby the monthly meeting affirms its role as nurturer of these additional members and of this new meeting and

2155 appoints a committee of oversight composed of Friends experienced in worship and
2156 business after the manner of Friends. The monthly meeting should promptly inform the
2157 yearly meeting of this change in status and of the names of the members involved.

2158 Given that there may well be experienced Friends and different but valid customs in the
2159 new preparative meeting, an established meeting has much to learn as well as to offer
2160 when called upon to assist a worship group. A tender and sensitive spirit must prevail in
2161 this process and consultations should be grounded in worship.

2162

2163 c. Changes in Established Meetings

2164

2165 1) Monthly Meetings: When members of a worship group or of a preparative meeting
2166 wish to form a monthly meeting, they should first consult with the monthly meeting
2167 under whose care they have been preparing (if a preparative meeting) and the
2168 quarterly meeting. If it is evident that the group is fully aware of the responsibilities
2169 of an established monthly meeting, a formal minute should be prepared and
2170 forwarded to the parent monthly meeting. If the monthly meeting approves this
2171 minute, it is forwarded to the quarterly meeting. When the quarterly meeting gives
2172 approval, it may appoint a committee of oversight to assist in matters of membership
2173 and responsibility for finance and property. The quarterly meeting should also inform
2174 the yearly meeting of such a change in status along with the names of the members
2175 involved.

2176

2177 A large established monthly meeting, in order better to meet members' needs, may
2178 wish to divide; or a meeting, feeling itself to be too small to fulfill its various
2179 obligations of property, finance and spiritual nurture, may wish to become a
2180 preparative meeting of another meeting, or to combine with it. The meetings
2181 involved should minute their intentions and seek the approval of the quarterly
2182 meeting. If the proposal is approved, the yearly meeting should receive prompt
2183 notice of the change and of the names of the members involved.

2184

2185 2) Quarterly Meetings: For reasons such as convenience of attendance, a monthly
2186 meeting may request transfer of affiliation from one quarterly meeting to another.
2187 The parties who are then involved should consult carefully and, if they approve the
2188 change, report the matter to the yearly meeting for its approval.

2189

2190 Similar consultation and discernment is essential when two or more monthly
2191 meetings wish to form a new quarterly meeting, when a large quarterly meeting feels
2192 it right to divide, or when smaller quarterly meetings wish to join into one. In such

2193 cases, a committee from the yearly meeting should be party to the discussions and
2194 assist as needed. Final approval rests with the yearly meeting.

2195
2196 3) Whenever Meetings Combine, all property both real and fiscal of the bodies involved
2197 becomes the property of the newly established body. Special care may be required if
2198 some or all of the combining meetings have been previously incorporated. Meetings
2199 are cautioned to prepare proper minutes to take care of all legal matters involved in
2200 the merger.

2201
2202 4) Whenever Meetings are Discontinued: If the members of a meeting believe it
2203 desirable either to lay it down or to unite with another meeting, they should make
2204 their request to the quarterly meeting to which they regularly report. If approval is
2205 granted, the quarterly meeting should appoint a committee to assist in making the
2206 necessary arrangements. In the case of the closing of a monthly meeting, this
2207 committee should arrange for the transfer of individual memberships to another
2208 meeting. Notification of such action should be forwarded promptly to the yearly
2209 meeting.

2210
2211 In laying down a preparative, monthly, or quarterly meeting, all rights and
2212 responsibilities of property vested in it and all responsibility for records shall be
2213 transferred to the larger meeting of which it has been a part.

2214
2215

2216 IV. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2217

2218 *Friends are reminded that our Religious Society took form in times of disturbance, and*
2219 *that its continuing testimony has been the power of God to lead men and women out of*
2220 *the confusions of outward violence, inward sickness, and all other forms of self-will,*
2221 *however upheld by social convention.*

2222

Advices, I

2223

2224 The Religious Society of Friends is committed to a life of obedience to God’s Spirit both as
2225 individuals and as meetings. This commitment leads Friends to support much that is creative in
2226 public life, education and business. It also leads Friends to oppose practices and institutions that
2227 result in violence, oppression and exploitation in the world around us. History, however,
2228 demonstrates that Friends have not always been united in perceptions of what obedience to Spirit
2229 requires, and the Society has been beset from time to time by conflict and misunderstandings.
2230 Yet out of such conflicts, painful as they have been, the Religious Society of Friends has
2231 continued to strive for clarity in commitment and unity in witness.

2232 A. Beginnings: 1652-1689

2233 The Religious Society of Friends arose in England in the middle of the seventeenth century, a
2234 time of turbulence and change in both religion and politics. In the established Church of
2235 England, and even in dissenting churches, great emphasis was placed upon outward ceremony,
2236 the authority of the Bible and the acceptance of a formal creed. Many individuals, however,
2237 became dissatisfied with ceremonies and creeds and broke away from these churches. Singly or
2238 in small groups, they turned inward in search of a religion of personal experience and direct
2239 communion with God.

2240 George Fox (1624-1691) was one of these seekers. As a child, he was serious and thoughtful,
2241 often pondering the Scriptures and engaging in solitary reflection. At age nineteen he decided to
2242 leave home in order to seek spiritual direction. For four years he wandered through the English
2243 midlands and as far south as London. Though he consulted others, none could give rest to his
2244 troubled soul. Finally, Fox writes,

2245 *...when all my hopes in [Christian ministers and professors] and in all men was gone, so*
2246 *that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could tell what to do, then, Oh! Then, I*
2247 *heard a voice which said, “There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy*
2248 *condition,” and when I heard it, my heart did leap for joy...My desires after the Lord*
2249 *grew stronger, and zeal in the pure knowledge of God and of Christ alone, without the*
2250 *help of any man, book, or writing.*

2251 And so, in 1647, at the age of twenty-three, George Fox began to preach a simple message: first,
2252 that his own dramatic and life-changing experience of a direct, unmediated revelation from God
2253 confirmed the possibility of a religion of personal experience and continuing revelation; and
2254 second, that this same possibility is available to every person. From the very beginning, the
2255 distinctive Quaker beliefs and practices on ministry and worship came from an attempt to
2256 provide a setting to experience firsthand the Inward Light of Christ.

2257 Fox’s message, combined with his charismatic personality, soon attracted a group of women and
2258 men who joined him in spreading the “good news” that “Christ had come to teach His people
2259 himself.” These first “publishers of Truth” believed the good news to be a revival of primitive
2260 Christianity rather than a new gospel. Gradually, Fox and his associates began to enlist others in
2261 this revival; and in 1652, Fox persuaded many of the Westmorland Seekers, a numerous and
2262 already well-established religious movement, to become Children of Light or Friends of the
2263 Light, as his followers called themselves, or Quakers, as they were called in scorn by others.
2264 Also in 1652, with tacit support from Judge Fell, George Fox and Margaret Fell turned
2265 Swarthmoor Hall, the Fells’ home, into the headquarters for the infant Religious Society of
2266 Friends. Although the movement began as early as 1647, these two events—the absorption of
2267 the Westmorland Seekers into the Quaker movement and the establishment of a home base—
2268 warrant the choice of 1652 as the birth-time of the Religious Society of Friends.

2269 While many religious dissenters welcomed Fox’s message of the Inward Light, direct
2270 communion and continuing revelation became Friends, there were others, committed to other
2271 movements, who regarded his message as unwelcome, heretical and perhaps treasonable. It was
2272 unwelcome, since Fox and some of his followers often invaded and disrupted the church services
2273 of others. It was heretical, since the idea of continuing revelation displaced the church and even
2274 the Scriptures as the final authority. It was treasonable, since those who embraced this idea also
2275 refused to acknowledge the authority of the state (with its established church) as taking
2276 precedence over the authority of individual conscience, and consequently refused to take any
2277 oath of allegiance to the state or to pay tithes to support the established state church.
2278 Accordingly, the meetings of Quakers were frequently disrupted by angry mobs, their
2279 meetinghouses were vandalized and burned, and they were themselves subjected to
2280 imprisonment, fines and cruel treatment by officials of the state. Such persecution continued
2281 sporadically until 1689 and the so-called Glorious Revolution, when a Toleration Act was
2282 adopted that temporarily sanctioned freedom of worship for Trinitarian Protestants. (Some
2283 restrictions on rights continued, however, into the 19th century.) Yet, like the early Christian
2284 church, the Quaker movement gained more adherents despite—or because of—the persecution.
2285 While a vital and influential movement at the time, modern Quaker historians estimate that
2286 Quakers constituted less than ten percent of the British population by the end of the seventeenth
2287 century.

2288 This combination of persecution and expansion yielded several important consequences. The
2289 Quakers' sense of themselves as a distinct people with a divine mission became stronger. Their
2290 refusal to take oaths under any circumstances, to serve in the army, to take off their hats or use
2291 the formal "you" in deference to persons in authority, and to dress like the "world's people" all
2292 date from this period. Unlike other dissenters, they insisted on holding their meetings publicly in
2293 spite of the threat of persecution, and thus became known for scrupulous honesty. The fact that
2294 Quaker merchants adopted a fixed price system significantly enhanced this reputation.

2295 Second, though unwilling to formulate any explicit creed or profession of faith as a condition of
2296 membership, early Friends were more than willing to engage in public debate and expound their
2297 basic beliefs. Thus began the publication of numerous books and tracts intended to explain and
2298 justify Quaker principles. Robert Barclay's *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* (published
2299 first in Latin in 1676 and then in English in 1678) was theologically sophisticated and
2300 comprehensive that it became the standard account of Quaker beliefs until the middle of the 19th
2301 century. Both Margaret Fell and George Fox asserted a woman's right to preach, publish tracts,
2302 hold separate meetings and travel in the ministry, all controversial ideas at that time.

2303 Third, early Friends realized that their movement required institutional structure to provide
2304 material assistance and spiritual support for those being persecuted and to nurture and discipline
2305 the individual and group life of its adherents. The system of monthly, quarterly and yearly
2306 meetings was initiated at Fox's urging to unify practice among Quakers. If Friends were to take
2307 a particular position on oaths or on the slave trade, for example, the ultimate policy was done at
2308 the yearly meeting level and thereafter it was the position of all Quakers within the yearly
2309 meeting. This system, involving both hierarchical and collective aspects, has given stability and
2310 continuity to our Religious Society. Separate men's and women's meetings for business were
2311 established. While the primary purpose of the women's meetings was to care for the poor and
2312 interview couples before marriage (along with the men's meetings), in the process women
2313 developed and exercised administrative and decision-making skills in public forums. In English
2314 common law, and in general practice, women were not granted any voice other than that of their
2315 husband.

2316 During this pre-1660 period of Quakerism, Friends were not only engaged in sharing their "good
2317 news" with others in England, Scotland and Ireland; they also successfully spread their faith by
2318 creating meetings on the continent of Europe, the West Indies and North America.

2319 Friends first came to America as early as 1656. In Massachusetts, the Quaker missionaries were
2320 imprisoned, tortured and expelled; four of them were put to death between 1659 and 1661,
2321 including Mary Dyer from Rhode Island, whose statue is near the entrance to Friends Center at
2322 1515 Cherry Street in Philadelphia. In the more tolerant Rhode Island, however, they (along
2323 with Baptists and other dissidents) were not only permitted to proselytize but also to settle and
2324 govern for a time.

2325 In the mid-Atlantic region, Quakers settled near the present city of Burlington, New (then West)
2326 Jersey in 1675. Six years later, William Penn (1644-1718) arrived in the land west of the
2327 Delaware River, which Charles II had granted to Penn in payment for a sizable debt to the estate
2328 of Penn’s father and which the King named “Pennsylvania” in honor of Admiral Penn. William
2329 Penn intended Pennsylvania to be a “holy experiment”—an enlightened proprietorship based on
2330 New Testament principles and liberty of conscience where people did the will of God. Though
2331 Penn’s political practice was not always consistent with his theory, the underlying principles of
2332 his utopian vision are as pertinent as ever: participatory decision making, religious liberty, justice
2333 as fair dealing with one’s neighbors, opposition to war and the abolition of oaths.

2334

2335 B. Consolidation and Withdrawal: 1689-Circa 1800

2336 After the adoption of the Toleration Act by the English Parliament in 1689, conditions for
2337 Quakers changed. Though occasionally persecuted, they were mostly left alone. Perhaps
2338 ironically, their missionary zeal diminished almost as soon as they won toleration. What had
2339 once been an outward looking energetic movement now took on the characteristics of a closed
2340 sect.

2341 In Pennsylvania, the Quakers had become a minority of the population by 1720, but they retained
2342 political control of the colony until the beginning of the French and Indian Wars in 1755. At that
2343 point, a few Friends gave up their seats in the Assembly so that they would not have a majority
2344 during war time. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting opposed service in the Assembly after the 1750s.

2345 While most Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Friends opposed the American Revolution, responses
2346 to the war varied. Some adopted neutrality as their position, refused to affirm loyalty to the new
2347 government, withdrew from politics, and refused to use paper money issued either by the state or
2348 Congress. Some supported the revolution, a few Quaker leaders were exiled to Virginia, and
2349 some supporters of the British moved to Canada. In eighteenth century America as in England,
2350 Quakers increasingly withdrew from active public life to focus on their religious community and
2351 their distinctive way of life based on spiritual understandings.

2352 During this period yearly meetings established requirements for membership and adopted books
2353 of discipline to define more precisely the expectations for Quaker conduct and to prescribe the
2354 means of enforcing these expectations. For instance, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting’s 1704 Book
2355 of Discipline discouraged the marriage of Friends to non-Friends (“marriage out of unity”); its
2356 1712 Discipline recommended disownment of members who married “out of meeting”; and its
2357 1722 Discipline required disownment for this conduct. Disownments were preceded by
2358 meetings between errant Friends and committees of the monthly meeting in an attempt to reclaim
2359 the Friends to right behavior. The hope was that the person now disowned would come to
2360 understand the error and be reunited with Friends. Such policies increased the exclusivity of the

2361 Religious Society of Friends, as did the Queries and Advices formulated in order to increase
2362 Friends' mindfulness of their distinctive expectations for conduct.

2363 This period of consolidation and conformity came to be known as the Quietist Period. During
2364 the 1750s, Friends actively debated war taxes, Indian rights and slavery. Even as Friends turned
2365 their energies from political matters, they advanced their public witness. Friends in 1755 and
2366 1758 essentially began the movement for abolition and during the American Revolution required
2367 all Friends to free their slaves. They also expressed concern for the humane treatment of
2368 prisoners; established a number of philanthropies benefitting Native Americans; and opposed the
2369 payment of taxes for war.

2370 A number of reforming ministers traveled widely seeking to improve the discipline of members,
2371 to set up new meetings, to preach against slavery and other social evils and to hold public
2372 meetings. One such minister was John Woolman (1720-1770), who exemplified what a Quaker
2373 life could be when obedient to Spirit. He led efforts to eliminate the enslavement of people, to
2374 improve the treatment of Native Americans, to end economic exploitation and to warn against
2375 wealth and its abuses. These efforts reflect his choice of a way of life "free from the
2376 Entanglement and the Desire of outward Greatness." After Woolman's death, his work and his
2377 public writings increasingly influenced the practice of the larger society. Another active Quaker,
2378 Anthony Benezet, was a leader in the wider anti-slavery movement, in education for African
2379 Americans, and in relief efforts to aid those affected by war.

2380

2381 C. Schism and Reform: Circa 1800-1900

2382 Even before the nineteenth century, American Friends exhibited two divergent tendencies: on the
2383 one hand, emphasizing the primary authority of the Inward Light; and on the other, emphasizing
2384 orthodox Christian tenets—such as atonement and bodily resurrection—and the authority of the
2385 Bible. For instance, George Keith (1638-1716), one of the earliest Quaker leaders in England,
2386 formed a separatist movement in Pennsylvania in the 1690s called the Christian Quakers which
2387 strongly emphasized the life and teachings of the historical Jesus and attempted to change the
2388 structure of governance within monthly meetings by requiring an affirmation of faith and
2389 establishing deacons and elders as guardians of the theological views of those who spoke in
2390 meetings for worship. After being rebuffed by both Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and London
2391 Yearly Meeting, his movement disappeared, Keith himself returned to England and joined the
2392 Anglican Church, and then came back to New Jersey as an "Anglican" Missionary. His effort
2393 clearly anticipates one of the tendencies in nineteenth century American Quakerism.

2394 The other tendency emphasized the Inward Light, as the primary basis for religious faith and
2395 practice. Elias Hicks (1748-1830), a Quaker farmer from Long Island, became the focal point
2396 for criticism by those supporting orthodox protestant tenets. He was a strong abolitionist and

2397 criticized wealthy Friends and the use of any products of slave labor. Hicks emphasized the
2398 primacy of the Inward Guide and deplored creedal statements. He urged Friends to live apart
2399 from the world and opposed public education. He also opposed the construction of the Erie
2400 Canal and a system of railroads, arguing they usurped the divine prerogative. Elias Hicks was
2401 not leading a movement but rather represented traditional Quaker values and commitments and
2402 was attempting to recall Friends to their roots. His opposition to the wealth and power of Friends
2403 in such cities as Philadelphia drew support from many, though some leading Philadelphia
2404 Quakers believed that his intent was to undermine their power and authority.

2405 Hicks' ministry led, in 1827, to a schism. Each group claimed to represent authentic Quaker
2406 faith and practice, but identified the other as "Orthodox" and "Hicksite" respectively. Economic,
2407 geographic, kinship and governance differences were involved in this conflict, in addition to the
2408 theological issues.

2409 Orthodox Friends in Philadelphia continued to hold their yearly meetings at the 4th and Arch
2410 Street meetinghouse (now known as Arch Street Meeting House), while Philadelphia Hicksite
2411 Friends built a meetinghouse at 15th and Race Streets. This schism was soon followed by similar
2412 splits in Baltimore, New York, Ohio and Indiana Yearly Meetings; and the situation was soon
2413 complicated by other strong personalities, such as Joseph John Gurney (1788-1847) and John
2414 Wilbur (1774-1856). The schism was further reinforced by London Yearly Meeting's attempt to
2415 establish itself as an orthodox protestant denomination and its rejection of non-orthodox yearly
2416 meetings in North America.

2417 Despite these differences, American Quakers made notable contributions during the nineteenth
2418 century. Friends were among those who participated in the settling of the western frontier before
2419 and after the Civil War. As holiness revivals began to occur there, many meetings hired a pastor
2420 and introduced an order of worship, including music. Primary and secondary education, always
2421 a major Quaker concern, was promoted by the establishment of a number of Quaker schools and,
2422 overcoming a long distrust of higher education, several colleges. Friends also worked for the
2423 abolition of slavery and war, for the welfare of African-Americans and Native Americans, for
2424 prison reform, for temperance, for the mentally ill and for the rights of women. Some Quakers
2425 played a prominent role in the formation of the "underground railroad," giving aid and shelter to
2426 escaping slaves on their way to northern states or Canada. And it is noteworthy that most of the
2427 organizers and officers of the first women's rights convention at Seneca Falls in 1848 were
2428 Quakers or former Quakers—Lucretia Mott, especially. Such activities placed members of the
2429 Religious Society of Friends in conflict with many in the larger society.

2430 Near the end of the nineteenth century, Friends from the two branches met to explore approaches
2431 to education, peace and other issues. Hicksite Friends formed the Friends General Conference to
2432 nurture and unify that branch of American Quakerism.

2433 D. Reconciliation: Circa 1900-1955

2434 Appropriately enough, it was the continuing commitment of both Orthodox and Hicksite Friends
2435 to the peace testimony that paved the way for their gradual reconciliation and reunification. In
2436 1901 they jointly organized a conference for world peace to which all American Quakers were
2437 invited.

2438 Other developments in the early 1900s contributed to the reconciliation. In 1913, a group of
2439 Philadelphia young adult Friends from each branch began to meet regularly to study the
2440 separation and issued a report the next year stating that it was not a matter of doctrine but of
2441 authority which had caused the separation. The group continued to meet and to develop social
2442 occasions for young Friends of both branches to get together; this even resulted in a few cross-
2443 branch marriages.

2444 In the early 20th century, revisions to both the Orthodox and Hicksite books of discipline
2445 included significant changes: disownment essentially ends; “marriage out of unity” is no longer
2446 an issue; and, for the most part, there is no emphasis on plain style of dress. In 1916 a prominent
2447 Orthodox Friend in Philadelphia conveyed a letter of friendship from his own yearly meeting to
2448 the Hicksite Yearly Meeting. In 1917, members of both branches united with members of Five
2449 Years Meeting to organize the American Friends Service Committee to provide service
2450 opportunities for conscientious objectors in the First World War. AFSC sponsored a number of
2451 Civilian Public Service Camps during World War II which enabled COs, including Friends from
2452 all yearly meetings, to pursue alternatives to military service. Quaker scholars on the faculties of
2453 Haverford and Swarthmore colleges and other universities achieved prominence beyond the
2454 Quaker domain and influenced the spread of modernism and activism. Establishment of Pendle
2455 Hill in 1930, Friends Council on Education in 1932, the Friends Committee on National
2456 Legislation in 1943, and, at least in the immediate Philadelphia area, the Friends Neighborhood
2457 Guild also helped to form a bridge between Orthodox and Hicksite Friends. These
2458 organizations, particularly the AFSC, served to unify Friends and to develop a large cadre of
2459 Quaker leaders, including Douglas and Dorothy Steere, Howard and Anna Brinton, Rufus Jones
2460 and William Cadbury, who influenced Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Friends for decades to come.

2461 In the 1930s and 1940s a number of committees of the two Philadelphia Yearly Meetings
2462 merged, such as a unified Peace Committee and a Religious Life Committee. The latter met for
2463 spiritual nourishment and also to prepare for visiting monthly meetings in both yearly meetings.
2464 At the same time, the Disciplines of the two yearly meetings were revised in the direction of
2465 commonalities rather than differences and allowed for the formation of monthly meetings with
2466 membership in both Orthodox and Hicksite Yearly Meetings. Women from both yearly
2467 meetings also worked together on issues of suffrage and peace; Alice Paul, a member of
2468 Moorestown Friends Meeting, was a leader in the campaign to pass and ratify the 19th
2469 Amendment. An even more decisive step towards reconciliation was taken in 1946, when the
2470 two Philadelphia Yearly Meetings agreed to establish the Philadelphia General Meeting which
2471 would be held in the autumn and be attended by both Orthodox and Hicksite Friends, though

2472 separate sessions would continue to be held in the spring. Finally, in 1950, a committee was
2473 formed with representatives from both yearly meetings to prepare a common book of discipline.
2474 This committee submitted its work, entitled *Faith and Practice*, to both yearly meetings and to
2475 the General Meeting in 1954. The following year, a schism that had lasted for 128 years was
2476 amicably brought to an end, and a single, reunified Philadelphia Yearly Meeting convened—with
2477 standing room only—at Arch Street Meetinghouse. The unification brought together 5,537
2478 Orthodox and 11,633 Hicksites Friends, essentially the same number of Quakers in the
2479 Philadelphia area as at the turn of the century.

2480

2481 E. Unity amidst Diversity: 1955-2000

2482 As with Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in 1955, Friends in Canada and in other parts of the United
2483 States were reconciled and reunited. Friends throughout North America developed a growing
2484 interest in dialogue and cooperation. The Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC),
2485 founded in 1937 following the Friends World Conference at Swarthmore College, encouraged
2486 this development. On the other hand, there were important differences that continued to divide
2487 Friends, both within and between the various yearly meetings, including how to respond to the
2488 Vietnam War and the civil rights movement.

2489 For instance, in 1965 members of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM) were encouraged to
2490 attend a vigil at the Pentagon sponsored by the Interreligious Committee on Vietnam, of which
2491 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting was a member. Then, at the 1967 yearly meeting sessions, the
2492 decision was reached to support the Phoenix project to send medical supplies to North Vietnam
2493 despite the illegality of such action. The clerk of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting resigned soon
2494 thereafter, because as a sitting federal judge he was personally and officially committed to
2495 uphold the law; other Friends likewise wrestled with the question of whether civil disobedience
2496 was an appropriate method of registering opposition to the Vietnam War.

2497 Following its 1964 sessions Philadelphia Yearly Meeting issued a Quaker Call to Action in Race
2498 Relations. In that call, Friends acknowledged failure to carry out the implications of the Quaker
2499 testimony of human equality and advocated various steps to promote fair housing and fair
2500 employment. During the summer of 1964, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting sponsored a project in
2501 Mississippi to rebuild churches and construct a local community center. Many Friends, however,
2502 felt that their efforts should be focused on the needs of disadvantaged minorities in their own
2503 geographic area; and in 1966, Friends in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting initiated a community
2504 action project in Chester, Pennsylvania. Philadelphia Friends were thus already attempting to
2505 respond to the urban crisis when they were presented with the Black Manifesto.

2506 In the summer of 1969, the Black Economic Development Conference confronted various
2507 religious groups, including Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, with the demand that they pay

2508 reparations, given their alleged complicity in the institutional arrangements that had
2509 disadvantaged African-Americans over the years. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting scheduled three
2510 called sessions in order to consider how it should respond to the Black Manifesto; members of
2511 the local Black Economic Development Conference attended the third session. Though the
2512 yearly meeting decided to reject the demand for payment of reparations, it did establish a
2513 Minorities Economic Development Fund to support various community action projects in the
2514 Philadelphia area, including some sponsored by the Black Economic Development Conference.

2515 Subsequently, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting wrestled with other manifestations of the ongoing
2516 problems of race relations and war. In the spring of 1978, it attempted to establish a “Friendly
2517 Presence” in West Philadelphia to encourage nonviolent resolution of the growing conflict
2518 between MOVE, a local commune, and the city of Philadelphia. Beginning in 1984, the yearly
2519 meeting became the object of IRS suits resulting from its refusal to levy the salary of its
2520 employees who did not pay the military portion of federal taxes. And in the 1990s it supported
2521 the renovation of the Friends Meeting in Ramallah and the development of a peace center there
2522 to address the Israel-Palestine conflict.

2523 Members of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting have confronted other social concerns in more recent
2524 years. Among these have been gender roles within monthly meetings and the general society,
2525 the rights of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender individuals, the divestment of yearly meeting
2526 funds in companies with business interests in South Africa under apartheid, the Sanctuary
2527 movement for refugees in the US without credentials and the AIDS crisis.

2528 In addition to public witness regarding social issues, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting gave
2529 considerable attention in the period after reunification “to putting its own house in order.”
2530 Nearly once every generation, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting has asked itself variations on the
2531 fundamental questions of how our religious society should be organized so that it serves its
2532 members well and how the finances of the yearly meeting should be handled in order to use our
2533 resources most effectively. The first question was answered with decisions to change the
2534 committee structure of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in the mid-1970s, in the mid-1990s, and
2535 again in the 2010s. Likewise, the second question was answered with the adoption of different
2536 approaches to fund raising and budgeting, including replacing the “quota” (an assessment from
2537 the yearly meeting on monthly meetings based on the number of adult members) with a
2538 voluntary “covenant” contribution determined by the monthly meetings. During these periods
2539 of restructuring, the yearly meeting staff changed its basic role from committee support to
2540 general provision of services largely focused on core administrative functions and support of
2541 monthly meetings.

2542 Since reunification in 1955, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting experienced significant growth in its
2543 associated institutions. The number of Friends schools increased, including the establishment of
2544 schools whose mission is for children who learn differently. Several life care communities were
2545 formed with symbolically important grants from the yearly meeting, beginning with Foulkeways

2546 in 1964, followed by Medford Leas and Kendal in the early 1970s. Friends retirement
2547 communities have become leaders in the senior living field. The Burlington Meetinghouse was
2548 renovated and expanded as a conference center for the increasing number of younger Friends and
2549 families. Other recent initiatives undertaken by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting include a Spiritual
2550 Formation Program; Meeting Enrichment Services that enable monthly meetings to deepen and
2551 strengthen the quality of their corporate worship and witness; and, since the mid-1990s, a
2552 residential annual sessions that are held on a college campus for several days in the summer to
2553 provide opportunities for shared worship, fellowship and business. These efforts have helped to
2554 build a greater sense of community in the yearly meeting and in many of its constituent monthly
2555 meetings.

2556 But notwithstanding continuing efforts to improve the ‘out-reach and in-reach’ to and of monthly
2557 meetings, the membership of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting has steadily declined over the years.
2558 It had some 30,000 members in 1775, but about half that number by 1925, unevenly divided
2559 between the two yearly meetings. In 1994, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting recorded 12,100
2560 members. Since then, the membership has remained relatively stable with some monthly
2561 meetings experiencing an influx of active attenders while other monthly meetings with few and
2562 aged members declined.

2563 F. 2000 – The Present

2564 Our monthly meetings, yearly meeting and institutions continue to offer a vital experience and
2565 active service to members, attenders and the community at large. In 2015, Philadelphia Yearly
2566 Meeting recorded xx,xxx members, including xxx minor members. There are xxx monthly
2567 meetings and xx worship or other affiliated groups. [Data supplied when available.]

2568 Like other denominations, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting faces challenges in the 21st century.
2569 The pace of life that most individuals and families experience appears antithetical to reflective
2570 practices and to regular, continuous participation in the life of the meeting. Increased mobility
2571 and evolving ideas about membership seem to create a decreased emphasis on establishing a
2572 formal and lifelong membership arrangement with a particular meeting. For some, the
2573 restrained and at times overly intellectual nature of many meetings does not provide fulfillment.
2574 For others, the Quaker culture itself, perhaps unrecognized by those formed within it, appears
2575 unwelcoming and uncongenial. In addition, members of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting struggle
2576 with nurturing new leadership, articulating our faith, undoing racism within the yearly meeting
2577 and the larger society and responding to other social concerns. We recognize these and other
2578 challenges and seek to address them in ways that support a vital and growing community.

2579 During the first decade of the 21st century, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting focused particular
2580 attention on issues relating to the environment, adopting a minute in support of ecojustice and
2581 contributing significantly to the renovation of Friends Center so that it became recognized as a
2582 model green building.

2583 We value the continuity in worship practice that has been our hallmark from the 1680s and
2584 continues to offer a radical simplicity today. We are strengthened by the sense of a gathered
2585 community as we seek and experience the Inward Light. As Friends, we remain committed to a
2586 life of obedience to the Spirit and seek to be faithful witnesses to Truth.

2587

2588 V. Opportunities for Wider Religious Fellowship, Service and Action

2589
2590 Over the decades, Friends have engaged in efforts that carry values from the Quaker community
2591 into the world. These efforts have enabled Friends from different parts of Quakerism to come
2592 together in shared purpose for service, worship, and friendship. Such initiatives also have
2593 enabled Friends to work closely with those of other faith traditions or of no particular faith but
2594 who are united in their concern for an issue. Many organizations have developed out of these
2595 impulses to address problems in the community and the world. In some instances, Philadelphia
2596 Yearly Meeting has a direct connection to the organization through financial commitments or by
2597 appointments to governing boards. In other instances, Friends throughout the yearly meeting
2598 provide leadership, expertise and volunteer service through their active participation in the
2599 organizations.

2600
2601 Friends have a rich history of addressing concerns for world peace, secular and religious
2602 education, justice, poverty, equal rights, and care for the environment. In the process,
2603 gatherings of Friends from various traditions of Quakerism have been able to overcome
2604 theological or doctrinal differences in their shared work. By following their leadings to address
2605 inequities and to carry out deeply felt commitments, Friends have created organizations,
2606 proclaimed important principles, and connected, and in some cases, united the various branches
2607 of Quakerism.

2608
2609 A. Quaker Denominational Organizations

2610
2611 Within Quakerism are strands of faith and experience with different traditions, all tracing their
2612 lineage from earliest Friends. They provide means of affiliations for Friends meetings and
2613 churches. In addition, there are intersections of these organizations in mission and in service
2614 work. These organizations can be referenced on the website of **Quaker Information Center**,
2615 and on the separate websites of the organizations.

2616
2617 **Evangelical Friends International** The churches of EFCI North America (EFCI-NA) include
2618 local churches within general geographical areas of North America which gather for common
2619 business once each year. In North America, six yearly meetings/regions join for ministries that
2620 can better be accomplished together than could be done alone. They are drawn together through
2621 a clear commitment to Jesus Christ and a common desire to change our local and international
2622 worlds for Christ. <http://www.evangelicalfriends.org/north-america>

2623
2624 **Friends United Meeting** is a cooperative program of thirty Friends Yearly Meetings in Canada,
2625 Cuba, Jamaica, Kenya, and the United States. Friends United Meeting's purpose is to energize
2626 and equip Friends through the power of the Holy Spirit to gather people into fellowships where
2627 Jesus Christ is known, loved and obeyed as Teacher and Lord. Their priorities are evangelism,
2628 leadership training, global partnership, and communication. <http://fum.org/>

2629
2630 **Friends General Conference** is an association of regional Quaker organizations primarily in the
2631 United States and Canada. Founded in 1900, FGC has grown from a voluntary organization of
2632 seven yearly meetings, created to hold a "general conference" every other year, to an association
2633 of fourteen yearly meetings, supplemented with regional groups and individual meetings. FGC

2634 continues to sponsor an annual Gathering of Friends. Friends emphasize the authority of the
2635 Inward Light, and their membership contains both those who identify themselves as Christians
2636 and those who do not. www.fgcquaker.org

2637
2638 **“Conservative” Yearly Meetings** Conservative Friends are Quakers who have continued the
2639 Christian beliefs and the original practice of waiting worship introduced by the founders of the
2640 Society in the 17th century. They adhere to unprogrammed worship and some members
2641 continue to practice traditional "plainness" of dress and speech.

2642
2643 While Philadelphia Yearly Meeting is formally affiliated with Friends General Conference, from
2644 time to time it sends representatives or delegations to the other yearly meetings in session.
2645 Epistles from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting are sent to all Friends everywhere.

2646
2647 For a list of meetings and their affiliations, see the website for FWCC, Section of the Americas.
2648 FGC also maintains a list of the meetings that affiliate with it.

2649
2650 B. Extending Service and Fellowship

2651
2652 Friends organization have often grown from an idea that attracts a support system and
2653 individuals who share a commitment to the concern. The idea may be sparked by an event or by
2654 the inspiration of a single person or small group of people. Whatever the beginning, such
2655 organizations are sustained by a structure that may be informal or may evolve into a highly
2656 developed institution. Over time, Friends are drawn both to the intrinsic nature of the service
2657 and also to the community of dedicated people that the organization fosters.

2658
2659 Some of these Friends organizations have depended on yearly meeting processes to name
2660 members to the organization's committee with administrative responsibility. Others have a more
2661 traditional not-for-profit structure and rely on a network of people to suggest members for the
2662 board. Significant Friends organizations have been formed involving the broad spectrum of
2663 Friends across many yearly meetings. An important aspect of Friends organizations is seeking
2664 to be led by divine guidance in discerning the work of the group; this allows all present, whether
2665 named by a yearly meeting or through another process, to be a full part of the discernment with
2666 no obligation to represent the views or interests of the yearly meeting.

2667
2668 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting has a direct relationship with some external organizations by
2669 providing funding and naming members to the governing committee.

2670
2671 C. Organizations with Formal Relationship to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

2672
2673 When Friends are named by yearly meeting to serve with a particular organization, they bring
2674 their skills and grounding as Friends, and their awareness of the work of the organization.
2675 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting names members of the yearly meeting to be part of the governance
2676 structure of the following organizations:

2677
2678 1. Friends Organizations to which Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Appoints Representatives

2679

2680 **Friends General Conference** (FGC) was originally formed in 1900 following a series of
2681 meetings among yearly meetings whose members worship in what has been called the
2682 “unprogrammed tradition” of Friends. FGC provides services and resources for individual
2683 Friends, meetings, and people interested in the “Quaker Way.” FGC is an association of regional
2684 Quaker communities in the U.S. and Canada working together to nurture a vital Quaker faith. It
2685 seeks to strengthen bonds of faith and community through gatherings and publications.
2686 <http://www.fgcquaker.org/>

2687
2688 **American Friends Service Committee** (AFSC) was founded in 1917 with the mission of
2689 relieving suffering during and after the First World War. Friends in Philadelphia Yearly
2690 Meeting were among the founders of the organization. Post-war relief work continued after
2691 World War II. Since then, AFSC develops and supports programs in the United States and
2692 around the world intending, among other things, to encourage improved understanding among
2693 national and ethnic groups, to enable indigenous populations to improve their living conditions,
2694 and to relieve suffering caused by economic and social dislocation as well as by war.
2695 <http://afsc.org/>

2696
2697 **Friends World Committee for Consultation** (FWCC) originated in 1937, at the Second World
2698 Conference of Friends, “to act in a consultative capacity to promote better understanding among
2699 Friends the world over.” Four cooperating offices throughout the world cover Africa, the
2700 Americas, Asia & the West Pacific, and Europe & the Middle East. FWCC's World Office is in
2701 London. Section of the Americas has staff and an office at Friends Center in Philadelphia.
2702 Through visitation and periodic gatherings, FWCC offers opportunity for religious fellowship
2703 among Friends throughout the world. It also sponsors a program of ‘international membership’.
2704 *The Wider Quaker Fellowship* has served many years to correspond with isolated Friends to
2705 help people understand Quakerism continues on line through publications. In addition are
2706 programs that support youth pilgrimage and scouting.
2707 <http://www.fwccamericas.org/index.shtml>

2708
2709 **The Friends Committee on National Legislation** (FCNL) was formed in 1943 by members of
2710 the Religious Society of Friends at Quaker Hill in Richmond, Indiana, and is the oldest registered
2711 ecumenical lobby in Washington, DC. Its founding was preceded by a committee of Friends in
2712 Philadelphia concerned with the problems of war and the protection of conscientious objection.
2713 Working in collaboration with other organizations, it coordinates and enhances the efforts of
2714 Friends to convey their concerns with the executive and legislative branches of national
2715 government. Members of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting are encouraged to participate in the
2716 direct lobbying of their legislators through visits and communication, and can receive support
2717 from FCNL to plan their efforts. <http://fcnl.org/about/history/chronology/>

2718
2719 **Quaker Earthcare Witness** (QEW) is a network of the Religious Society of Friends in North
2720 America and other like-minded people who are taking Spirit-led action to address ecological and
2721 social crises from a spiritual perspective, emphasizing Quaker process and testimonies, including
2722 continuing revelation and a deepening sense of spiritual connection with the natural world. Out
2723 of this has come an urgency to work on climate and related issues.
2724 <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/>

2725

2726 **Friends Peace Teams** (FPT) work around the world to develop long term relationships with
2727 communities in conflict, and to create programs for peacebuilding, healing, and reconciliation.
2728 Programs build on extensive Quaker experience, combining practical and spiritual aspects of
2729 conflict resolution and reconciliation. <http://friendspeaceteams.org/>
2730

2731 2. Supporting Conscientious Objection

2732

2733 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting has had an historic connection with groups that support
2734 conscientious objection. There is a history of named representation to these organizations.
2735

2736 **National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund** has a single purpose that is to pass a bill which
2737 would support non-payment of the portion of their federal taxes that go to war, and redirect the
2738 funds to cover non-war related federal budget items. Friends in PYM were instrumental in
2739 forming this organization. After some recent setbacks, the work continues.
2740 www.peacetaxfund.org/.

2741
2742 **Center on Conscience and War** continues the work begun in 1940, as the draft was set in
2743 motion, to offer alternative service for conscientious objectors to war. Founded as the National
2744 Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors, it continues to work to extend and
2745 defend the rights of conscientious objectors, including those members of the US military who,
2746 following a crisis of conscience, seek discharge as conscientious objectors; male students
2747 required to register with Selective Service for a future draft; and all who are troubled by the
2748 preparation for and participation in wars. Along with American Friends Service Committee and
2749 Quaker House, Fayetteville, North Carolina, and others, the Center on Conscience and War
2750 maintains a 'GI Rights' hotline to assist those in the military and provides training for counselors.
2751 www.centeronconscience.org/.

2752

2753 D. Friends Serve the Community and the World

2754

2755 **Right Sharing of World Resources** (RSWR) is a Quaker micro-credit organization that
2756 supports grassroots income-generating projects led by women, in developing countries. In 1999,
2757 RSWR became independent of FWCC, to begin its organization as a nonprofit.
2758 <http://www.rswr.org/>
2759

2760 **Quaker United Nations Office** (QUNO) and *Quaker House* maintains houses in Geneva and
2761 New York to serve as QUNO offices and meeting places close to the United Nations where UN
2762 diplomats, staff, and nongovernmental partners can work on difficult issues in a quiet, off-the-
2763 record atmosphere out of the public eye. Quaker House hosts seminars, workshops, committee
2764 meetings with Quaker hospitality. Friends and Friends organizations make use of Quaker House
2765 facilities as they learn about and participate in UN activities. Members are appointed to an
2766 executive committee by Quaker Peace and Social Witness, Britain Yearly Meeting, Central
2767 Committee (QPSW CC), and five individuals nominated by Friends World Committee for
2768 Consultation (FWCC) Executive Committee and Sections. This committee sets the priorities for
2769 the work, evaluates and monitors the work, and reports to the two parent bodies once a year.
2770 Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee (QPSW CC) meets twice a year, once in
2771 Geneva, once virtually. <http://www.quno.org/>

2772

2773 **Quaker Voluntary Service (QVS)** was formed in 2012 to support young adults as they develop
2774 leadership for the present and future of Friends through engagement in service and social justice.
2775 Quaker Voluntary Service, in partnership with a Friends meeting or church, equips the work and
2776 witness of Friends by providing support to a network of Quaker service communities. Support
2777 includes centralized access to information about projects, and creation and distribution of
2778 resources for program development and vocational discernment. In addition, there is support for
2779 recruitment of potential volunteers, partner Friends meetings and churches, and outreach to
2780 service partners, help with fundraising and organizational development, and support for the
2781 creation of new service houses and other service opportunities.
2782 <http://www.quakervoluntaryservice.org/>

2783

2784 **Friends Bible Association (FBA)** supplies and distributes bibles and hosts an annual event in
2785 the Philadelphia area. (No website)

2786

2787 **Friends Historical Association (FHA)** is an association since 1873 devoted to the study,
2788 preservation and publication of material relating to the history of the Religious Society of
2789 Friends. It is international in membership and interests and is open to all, Friend or not. FHA
2790 hosts an annual meeting in the fall and conducts an historical pilgrimage in the spring to an area
2791 associated with the history of Quakerism. FHA publishes a semi-annual journal, *Quaker*
2792 *History*, with articles on Quaker contributions to issues such as social justice, education and
2793 literature. The journal also includes book and article reviews.
2794 <http://www.haverford.edu/library/fha/>

2795

2796 **The Friends Council on Education (FCE)** provides leadership for Friends schools through
2797 cooperative endeavors, and helps Friends schools maintain their Quaker identity and ethos, and
2798 their relationship with the Religious Society of Friends. Founded in 1931, the Council supports
2799 the Quaker life of schools, strengthens the network of support across schools, promotes Friends
2800 education through consultations, programs, and publications, and assists in the establishment of
2801 new Friends schools. The Council promotes professional growth for trustees, heads,
2802 administrators, and faculty to further the goals of Quaker education, and serves as a voice for
2803 Friends schools in the national dialogue on education.
2804 <http://friendscouncil.org/>

2805

2806 **Friends Association for Higher Education (FAHE)** Friends Historical Association (FHA) is an
2807 association that since 1873 has been devoted to the study, preservation and publication of
2808 material relating to the history of the Religious Society of Friends. It is international in
2809 membership and interests and is open to all. FHA hosts an annual meeting in the fall and
2810 conducts an historical pilgrimage in the spring to an area associated with the history of
2811 Quakerism. FHA publishes a semi-annual journal, *Quaker History*, that consists of articles on
2812 Quaker contributions to issues such as social justice, education and literature. The journal also
2813 includes book and article reviews. <http://www.haverford.edu/library/fha/>

2814

2815 **School of the Spirit (SoS)** offers a ministry of prayer and learning devoted to strengthening
2816 participants as they listen and respond more faithfully to the inward work of Christ. Its
2817 programs are rooted in the Quaker contemplative tradition of the living silence. With its origins

2818 in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, the connection continues with oversight provided by an
2819 independent board with Friends from across the United States invited to serve.
2820 <http://schoolofthespirit.org/>

2821
2822 **Quaker Information Center (QIC)** offers a website gateway to Quaker heritage and modern
2823 Quakerism. It serves both the Quaker community and the general public in its quest to increase
2824 awareness about Friends and Quaker institutions. QIC began in Philadelphia, and was relocated
2825 to Earlham School of Religion in 2010. <http://www.quakerinfo.org/index>

2826
2827 **Quaker Religious Education Collaborative** Quaker Religious Education Collaborative
2828 (QREC) is a grassroots network of Friends holding a sense of stewardship for life-long Quaker
2829 faith formation through religious education. The network includes Friends from all branches of
2830 the international Quaker family brings together those who have been involved long term in
2831 religious education and invites them to think anew about how to sustain religious education
2832 among Friends. <http://www.quakers4re.org/>

2833
2834 **Earth Quaker Action Team (EQAT)** Earth Quaker Action Team (EQAT) is a grassroots,
2835 nonviolent direct action group founded by Quakers and inclusive of people of all faiths or no
2836 faith, who join with millions of people around the world fighting for our threatened planet.
2837 Earth Quaker Action Team seeks integrity and right relationship with ourselves, the Religious
2838 Society of Friends, and within our global community. EQAT is governed by an independent
2839 board. <http://www.eqat.org/>

2840
2841 **Quaker House, Fayetteville, NC**, Quaker House, Fayetteville, NC, located near Fort Bragg, is a
2842 manifestation of the Friends Peace Testimony and provides counseling and support to service
2843 members who are questioning their role in the military; educates them, their families, and the
2844 public about military issues. While its work provides the Fort Bragg community a place to
2845 address some of the challenges military service families face, its service extends beyond the local
2846 area, partnering with other organizations that provide conscientious objection support to military
2847 personnel. <http://quakerhouse.org/>

2848
2849 E. Friends Support Fellowship and Retreat

2850
2851 **Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns (FLGBTQC)** is a
2852 North American Quaker faith community within the Religious Society of Friends. Formerly
2853 called FLGC, it was founded in the 1970s to provide support and nurture to the lesbian and gay
2854 community. Honoring that of God in all people members seek to express God's truth, offering
2855 support and nurture within the lesbian/gay/bisexual/transsexual/transgender communities, and in
2856 a faith based context. <http://flgbtqc.quaker.org/>

2857
2858 **Fellowship of Friends of African Descent (FoFAD)** was founded in 1990 to provide for the
2859 nurture of Friends of African descent, their families and friends. Currently a presence on social
2860 media, its face to face gatherings have reflected family reunion and spiritual renewal, in the
2861 fellowship, nurture and support the gatherings provide.
2862 <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Fellowship-of-Friends-of-African-Descent/177537062247>

2863

2864 **Fellowship of Quakers in the Arts (FQA)** is a membership organization "to nurture and
2865 showcase the literary, visual, musical, and performing arts within the Religious Society of
2866 Friends, for purposes of Quaker expression, ministry, witness, and outreach."
2867 <http://fqa.quaker.org/>

2868

2869 **New Foundation Fellowship (NFF)** exists to preach the Christian Message that was proclaimed
2870 by the Early Friends: "Christ has come to teach his People himself." Beginning with important
2871 scholarship by Lewis Benson, the work of these Friends continues, as Friends share from study,
2872 worship and inter-visitation. <http://nffquaker.org/>

2873

2874 **Quaker Universalist Fellowship (QUF)** is a gathering of Friends who work to foster
2875 understanding among Quakers, and people from the diverse spiritual cultures which flourish in
2876 our globalized human community. It publishes a blog, pamphlets and other material. It is
2877 governed by a steering committee and is open to all interested people.
2878 <http://universalistfriends.org/>

2879

2880 **Pendle Hill (PH)** has been a center for spiritual retreat and engagement since 1930. Located
2881 within the perimeter of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, it offers both hospitality and engagement
2882 through study, worship and other interaction to all. Not affiliated with any branch of Friends, it
2883 is a place for the broad spectrum of Friends, as well as people of other religious affiliations, to
2884 come together. <http://www.pendlehill.org/>

2885

2886 F. Publishers of Quaker Periodicals

2887

2888 **Quakers Uniting in Publications (QUIP)** is a network that supports Quaker publications and
2889 authors through annual meetings, cooperative marketing, publishing, and assistance to Friends
2890 outside the U.S. <http://www.quakerquip.org/>

2891

2892 In addition to the publications of many Friends organizations, there are Quaker publishers who
2893 have been putting out magazines and journals, many affiliated with QUIP (above). The
2894 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting library has copies of many of the publications printed over the
2895 years. Here are some major journal publications and a more complete list can be found at
2896 <http://www.quakerquip.org/?q=journals>

2897

2898 **Quaker Religious Thought** is a journal of Quaker theology spanning the differences in
2899 theology, with Friends from all theological traditions represented. <https://qtdg.wordpress.com/>

2900

2901 **Friends Journal** has its origin in PYM and FGC, and is now a national journal. **Friends**
2902 **Journal** is published by Friends Publishing Corporation. Its goal is to serve the Quaker
2903 community and the wider community of spiritual seekers through the publication of articles,
2904 poetry, letters, art, and news that convey the contemporary experience of Friends.
2905 <http://www.friendsjournal.org/>

2906

2907 **Quaker Life** is the magazine published by Friends United Meeting. Its purpose is to inspire
2908 through devotional articles, photos, essays and spiritual journeys of Friends; inform through

2909 news of Friends around the world, book reviews, classifieds, Passages and a Meeting Directory,
2910 and teach through regular columns and numerous other articles. <http://fum.org/quaker-life/>

2911

2912 **Western Friend** is the official publication of Quakers in Pacific, North Pacific, and
2913 Intermountain Yearly Meetings. Its mission is to build practical and spiritual connections
2914 among Western Friends in print, online and face-to-face. <https://westernfriend.org/>

2915

2916 **Quaker Theology** is a progressive journal and forum for discussion and study, also on line:
2917 <http://quest.quaker.org/>

2918

2919 **What canst thou say?** (WCTS) is an independent publication cooperatively produced
2920 by Friends who have felt the movement of the Spirit and wish to deepen their understanding of it
2921 by interacting with others who also have had experiences of the Divine. Issues contain stories
2922 of mystical experience and the growth that comes through contemplative practice. WCTS has
2923 been produced since 1994 and is published quarterly. There are occasional retreats offered as
2924 well. <http://www.whatcanstthousay.org/>

2925

2926 **QuakerQuaker** - This website has had a solid history of Quaker social media, and was
2927 developed by a member in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. The content often lifts up some of the
2928 many individual blogs Friends maintain on the web. <http://www.quakerquaker.org/>

2929

2930

2931 G. Ecumenism & Interfaith Work

2932 Friends also participate in ecumenical bodies. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting is represented in the
2933 **World Council of Churches** through the *Christian and Interfaith Relations Committee of*
2934 *Friends General Conference*. In addition, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and its quarterly and
2935 monthly meetings maintain formal and informal relationships with the **National Council of**
2936 **Churches** and with ecumenical bodies of Christian and Jewish leaders in our communities.
2937 These affiliations enable the yearly, quarterly, and monthly meetings to engage in ecumenical
2938 projects and programs with various Christian denominations and to be reminded of our historic
2939 roots in the Christian tradition. PYM names representatives to state Councils of Churches in Pa.
2940 and in NJ, and is open to assist in other states where such interest arises.

2941 Friends also seek opportunities for spiritual fellowship with neighbors from the Muslim,
2942 Buddhist, and other religious traditions. Continuing dialogue with such groups and with the
2943 various Christian denominations is especially important if Friends are to balance our distinctive
2944 witness with a willingness to learn from others.

2945 Increasingly, there are Friends affiliating with others concerned, upholding older traditions that
2946 are finding new favor, such as green burials, and involvement in movements like *Transition*
2947 *Town* - a movement to focus on strengthening the resilience and sustainability of the local
2948 community.

2949 As Friends seek to live lives that speak in the world, work with others in faith is a powerful
2950 means to engage to bring about understanding and reconciliation.

2951 VI. Extracts from the Writings of Friends

2952

2953 Section VI is now being developed.

2954

2955 All Friends are invited to share with the working group:

2956

2957 1. Favorite passages from the 2002 edition of *Faith and Practice*.

2958

2959 And

2960

2961 2. Suggestions of new quotations to be considered for inclusion in the revised
2962 edition. Please include the passage, the author, and the original citation including
2963 year of publication. We seek contemporary and diverse sources for additions to
2964 *Faith and Practice*, including the voices of young people. Authors must be
2965 members of the Religious Society of Friends although not necessarily within
2966 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Publications may include blog posts, passages from
2967 audio or video recordings, etc.

2968

2969

2970 Please see the Faith and Practice section of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's website for
2971 guidelines for submitting passages.

2972 VII. Guidelines and Procedures to Assist Monthly Meetings

2973 *Use your capabilities and your possessions not as ends in themselves but as God's gifts entrusted*
2974 *to you. Share them with others; use them with humility, courtesy and affection.*

2975 **Advices, II.**

2976 Included in this section are various guidelines and procedures that monthly meetings may find
2977 helpful as they seek to support their members and attenders, deepen their spiritual life, and attend
2978 to their business. Some of the procedures were formerly in sections of *Faith and Practice*
2979 devoted to marriage and membership, for instance, while the general queries were previously a
2980 section to themselves. Other procedures have been provided here for the first time, such as the
2981 guidelines for state of the meeting reports and the guidelines for clearness committees.

2982 A. General Queries

2983 Friends have assessed the state of our religious society through the use of queries since the time
2984 of George Fox. Friends use queries as a guide to self-examination: not as an outward set of rules,
2985 but as a framework within which we periodically examine, clarify and consider prayerfully the
2986 direction of our lives and the life of the meeting community.

2987 Meetings consider the general queries in a variety of ways. Some meetings value the preparation
2988 of written answers—for example, as background for developing a state of the meeting report;
2989 some use them as an aid to inward reflection; some make them part of the meeting for worship or
2990 meeting for business—either by reading one of the sets of queries or by reading selections from
2991 that set. There may be times when a meeting will reword a query or contemplate a new one to
2992 meet its particular situation. Friends can benefit from a review of the full cycle of queries over a
2993 year or two. Whatever the approach, Friends' faithful attendance to the queries in openness to the
2994 Spirit can enrich the life of the meeting.

2995 Since the last edition of *Faith and Practice* was published in 2002, our yearly meeting has
2996 developed a deep commitment to respond to the challenge of climate change. As one expression
2997 of this commitment, the yearly meeting determined that concern for the environment should be
2998 addressed throughout the queries.

2999 The following general queries are topically arranged in groups. Each group includes queries for
3000 the meeting and for the individual, the latter printed in italics.

3001 **Deepening Our Faith**

3002 1. Meeting for Worship

- 3003 a. Are our meetings for worship held in stilled, expectant waiting upon God?
3004 b. As we worship in the living silence, are we drawn together by the power of God in
3005 our midst? Do we experience a deep reverence for the integrity of creation?
3006 c. How does our worship nurture all worshipers, creating a deeper sense of community?

- 3007 d. How does our meeting encourage vocal ministry that spiritually nurtures the
3008 worshipping community?
3009
- 3010 e. *Do I faithfully attend meeting with heart and mind prepared for worship, clear of any*
3011 *predetermination to speak or not to speak, expecting that worship will be a source of*
3012 *strength and guidance?*
- 3013 f. *Does worship deepen my relationship with God, increase my faithfulness and refresh*
3014 *and renew my daily life, both inwardly and in my relationships with other persons*
3015 *and with all of creation?*
- 3016 g. *Does worship enhance my capacity for attentive, non-judgmental listening to others?*
- 3017 h. *How does participation in meeting for worship contribute to my life-long spiritual*
3018 *journey?*
3019

3020 2. Meeting for Business

- 3021 a. Is our meeting for business held in worship in which we seek divine guidance?
- 3022 b. How do we sustain prayerful consideration of all aspects of an issue and address
3023 difficult problems with a search for truth that is unhurried by the pressures of time?
- 3024 c. Do we recognize that we speak through our inaction as well as our action?
3025
- 3026 d. *Do I regularly attend meeting for business? If unable to attend, how do I fulfill the*
3027 *responsibility to understand and embrace the decisions made?*
- 3028 e. *How do I affirm and support God's presence in the process of discernment and*
3029 *reaching a decision?*
- 3030 f. *Do I remain open to personal transformation as the community arrives at the sense of*
3031 *the meeting?*
3032

3033 3. Spiritual Nurture

- 3034 a. How does the meeting encourage the use of spiritual practices that deepen our faith,
3035 enhance the excitement of shared religious discovery, and increase the possibility of
3036 spiritual transformation?
- 3037 b. What is the nature of our shared experience of the divine and how do we nurture our
3038 collective spiritual growth and transformation?
- 3039 c. In what ways do we support each other in our spiritual journeys, in our search for
3040 God's will, and in our understanding of humanity's relationship to life on earth?
- 3041 d. How do we recognize, develop and nurture the spiritual gifts of all in our meeting?
3042
- 3043 e. *How do I incorporate into my personal and family life those daily practices that focus*
3044 *on continued spiritual growth, including worship, reflection and engagement with*
3045 *writings that nurture the soul?*

- 3046 f. *How does my spiritual life integrate an understanding of a well-ordered relationship*
3047 *with the earth and exhibit my reverence for the interconnectedness of all life?*
3048

3049 **Nurturing our Community**

3050 4. Care for the Meeting Community

- 3051 a. Do we help each other to live with integrity and contribute that integrity to the life of
3052 our meeting?
3053 b. How does our meeting learn of members' needs and offer its assistance?
3054 c. How does our meeting nurture members in all stages of life?
3055 d. How does our meeting welcome those new to Friends and integrate them into our
3056 community?
3057 e. When a member's conduct or manner of living gives cause for concern, how does the
3058 meeting respond?
3059
3060 f. *Am I ready both to offer and to accept meeting assistance when needed?*
3061 g. *Do I treat adults and children alike with respect and without condescension? Is my*
3062 *manner with visitors and attenders to my meeting one of welcome?*
3063 h. *What opportunities have I taken to know, work and worship with Friends in the*
3064 *larger spiritual community we share?*
3065

3066 5. Religious Education in the Home and Meeting

- 3067 a. How does our meeting prepare its members, attenders and children for worship, for
3068 the conduct of its business, and for a way of life consistent with the principles of the
3069 Religious Society of Friends?
3070 b. What opportunities do we provide for all in the meeting to learn about Friends'
3071 history, practices and testimonies, the Judeo-Christian tradition, the life and teachings
3072 of Jesus, and other religious traditions?
3073 c. How does our meeting's education program provide experiential learning that
3074 enhances the sense of belonging to our worshipping community?
3075
3076 d. *How do I help create a home where all members of the family receive affection and*
3077 *understanding and where visitors are welcome?*
3078 e. *How does my manner of living enrich body, mind and spirit; enable all to learn what*
3079 *it means to live a life of Spirit-led commitment; and demonstrate a high regard for*
3080 *family, community and the integrity of creation?*
3081 f. *How do I engage with my family and others who are dear to me regarding such*
3082 *sensitive topics as death, faith, money, sex and drugs?*
3083

3084 6. Stewardship of Resources

- 3085 a. How does our meeting accommodate ecological, economic and social justice in its
3086 uses of property and money?
3087 b. Does our meeting engage its members in the support of the meeting’s work, its
3088 ministry and the upkeep of its property?
3089 c. Does our meeting encourage its members to support with their time, energy and
3090 finances the quarterly and yearly meetings and other Quaker organizations?
3091 d. To what extent does our meeting rely on current members and attenders for financial
3092 support, and to what extent on other sources?
3093
3094 e. *How do I demonstrate in my own decision making a concern for ecological, economic*
3095 *and social justice?*
3096 f. *How do I simplify my needs, making choices that balance self-sufficiency and fair*
3097 *sharing of resources?*
3098 g. *Do I balance my work-life and other activities with the time and energy needed for*
3099 *my spiritual growth and service?*
3100 h. *Do I contribute to the work of Friends in my meeting, in the quarterly and yearly*
3101 *meetings and in the wider world of Friends?*
3102

3103 **Grounding for Transformed Lives**

3104 7. Peace and Alternatives to Violence

- 3105 a. How do we help each other face conflicts with patience, forbearance and openness to
3106 healing?
3107 b. To what extent does our meeting ignore differences in order to avoid possible
3108 conflicts?
3109 c. What are we doing as a meeting within our communities:
3110 d. To recognize and correct the causes of violence;
3111 e. To understand the impact of the global military-industrial complex on all aspects of
3112 life;
3113 f. To increase the understanding and use of alternatives to violence;
3114 g. To work toward overcoming separations and restoring wholeness;
3115 h. To support the constructive use of authority; and
3116 i. To promote the sustainability of the earth?
3117
3118 j. *Do I “live in the power of that Life and Spirit that takes away the occasion of all*
3119 *wars”?*
3120 k. *How do I maintain Friends’ testimony that participation in war and its preparation*
3121 *are inconsistent with the teaching of Jesus?*
3122 l. *Do I treat personal conflict as an opportunity for growth?*

3123 m. *How do I face my differences with others and reaffirm in action and attitude my love*
3124 *for those with whom I am in conflict?*

3125

3126 8. Integrity and Simplicity

3127 a. What is the interplay between integrity and simplicity in the life of our meeting?

3128 b. How does our meeting embody simplicity and integrity in its structures and practices?

3129 c. How has our meeting considered humanity's impact on the earth's ecological
3130 integrity and the ways in which violence and injustice exacerbate this impact?

3131

3132 d. *How do I strive to achieve harmony between my inner and outer commitments in my*
3133 *spiritual journey, my work, my family and other responsibilities?*

3134 e. *Am I temperate in all things?*

3135 f. *Am I open to counsel regarding addictive behavior?*

3136 g. *Am I involved only with organizations and activities whose purposes and methods*
3137 *complement my integrity?*

3138 h. *Am I careful to speak truth as I know it and am I open to truth spoken to me? Am I*
3139 *mindful that judicial oaths imply a double standard of truth?*

3140 i. *How am I faithful to seeking Truth in the face of widespread denial, distortion,*
3141 *indifference and cynicism?*

3142

3143 9. Equality and Justice

3144 a. How does our meeting benefit from established patterns of prejudice, exploitation and
3145 economic convenience? What are we doing to change this?

3146 b. How does our meeting engage in the self-examination of its attitudes and actions
3147 regarding race, ability, gender, sexual orientation, or class?

3148 c. What steps are we taking as a meeting to inform ourselves about social injustice and
3149 ecological violence embedded in our political and economic systems?

3150 d. What steps are we taking as a meeting to assure that our meeting and the committees
3151 and institutions under our care are respectful of the earth and its people?

3152

3153 e. *Do I regularly examine myself for attitudes and behavior that indicate any hidden*
3154 *prejudice regarding race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or class?*

3155 f. *How do my lifestyle choices affect—positively or negatively—the causes of justice*
3156 *and peace in our nation, the community of nations and the whole of creation?*

3157 g. *How do I demonstrate in my way of living, and in what I teach my children, that love*
3158 *of God entails acknowledging “that of God in every person”?*

3159

3160 **Witnessing in the World**

3161 10. Ministry of Outreach

- 3162 a. How does our meeting communicate Friends' presence and principles to the wider
3163 community?
- 3164 b. How does our meeting join with other faith communities in worship, in spiritual
3165 dialogue and in social action?
- 3166 c. What are we doing to invite persons to attend our meetings for worship, to welcome
3167 them when they come, to listen sensitively to their needs and hesitations, and to
3168 encourage their continued attendance?
- 3169
- 3170 d. *How do I share my spiritual life and experience with others?*
- 3171 e. *Does my life as a Friend attract others to our religious society?*
- 3172 f. *What opportunities have I taken to worship with people from other religious and
3173 cultural backgrounds and work with them on common concerns?*

3174 11. Education

- 3175 a. What does our meeting do to support and improve public education?
- 3176 b. What help do we provide for the children and adults in our meeting to pursue their
3177 educational goals?
- 3178 c. What is our meeting's role in support for Friends' education? If our meeting is
3179 connected to a Friends school or schools, does this relationship nurture spiritual life
3180 and the manifestation of Friends' principles?
- 3181 d. Do we enable children in our meeting to attend a Friends school? Does our meeting
3182 work with the family to consider all available means of support?
- 3183
- 3184 e. *How do I show my concern for the improvement of public education in my
3185 community?*
- 3186 f. *Do I demonstrate my encouragement and support for Friends education through
3187 awareness and service?*
- 3188

3189 12. Witness and Civic Responsibility

- 3190 a. What is our meeting doing:
- 3191 1) To become aware of systemic legal, economic and political injustices in our local
3192 community?
- 3193 2) To build relationships with other faith communities around common concerns?
- 3194 3) To reduce polarization within the larger community?
- 3195 4) To work together with others to address injustice?
- 3196
- 3197 b. How does our meeting assist in restoring public recognition that government fulfills
3198 legitimate functions?

- 3199
3200 c. *Am I mindful of how my lifestyle, work-life and investments affect others?*
3201 d. *Am I open to seeking clearness on matters of conscience? Am I open to assisting*
3202 *others in doing so?*
3203 e. *Do I fulfill my civic responsibilities when they do not conflict with divine leading?*
3204

3205

3206 B. Guidelines for a Spiritual Self-assessment of the Monthly Meeting

3207 When early Friends met one another, they would ask, “How does the Truth fare with thee?”
3208 rather than asking “How are you?” They wanted to know about each other’s spiritual condition
3209 and relationship with the Divine.

3210 Undertaking a prayerful assessment of the monthly meeting’s spiritual condition and needs and
3211 issuing a state of the meeting report on a regular basis can provide a deep and meaningful
3212 opportunity that draws the community together. The meeting’s self-examination process may
3213 involve several steps beginning with the consideration of queries about the spiritual strengths and
3214 weaknesses and efforts to foster growth in the spiritual life of members and the meeting as a
3215 whole. The meeting may use the queries suggested below, it may formulate its own queries, it
3216 may use selections from the general queries, or it may decide to use queries from some other
3217 source. With queries in hand, a monthly meeting committee, such as worship and ministry or a
3218 specially established ad-hoc group, may be charged to prepare a response themselves or to
3219 oversee gathering information more widely in the meeting from which to prepare a response. In
3220 the latter case, the committee may hold discussions with committee clerks, the meeting’s young
3221 Friends, and selected members of the meeting, or it could conduct worship sharing for the
3222 meeting as a whole. The committee will prepare a draft report in a format that it, or perhaps the
3223 meeting itself, believes will be most helpful (but it is unlikely that an overly detailed and lengthy
3224 spiritual state of the meeting report would be appropriate). The report is then submitted to the
3225 meeting for approval. When the final report is read and accepted by the monthly meeting,
3226 Friends may experience a stronger sense of community and a deeper appreciation of its spiritual
3227 life.

3228 The spiritual state of the meeting report is different from other reports the meeting may prepare.
3229 For instance, the meeting is expected to relay membership statistics and the names of its officers
3230 to quarterly and yearly meeting, and it may complete the monthly meeting checklist regarding its
3231 organization, and how it manages its finances, property or other affairs for its own use. (The
3232 checklist will be found later in Section VII.)

3233 After approval by the monthly meeting, the meeting may agree to share its spiritual self-
3234 assessment with other meetings.

3235

3236 Suggested Queries for a Spiritual Self-assessment of the Monthly Meeting:

- 3237 • What practices and strategies are employed by our meeting to help members and
3238 attenders of all ages prepare for worship – whether in meeting for worship or in meeting
3239 for business?
- 3240 • What are the challenges to and opportunities for enhancing the worship of our meeting,
3241 and what are we doing to address these?
- 3242 • What opportunities are provided to address topics important to deepening both the
3243 personal and the communal spiritual journeys?
- 3244 • What is most needed to strengthen the communal witness of the meeting to the local
3245 community and beyond?
- 3246 • What priorities does God call our meeting to and how do our annual budget, our
3247 meeting’s standing committees, and other aspects of the meeting’s life reflect those
3248 priorities?

3249

3250 C. Monthly Meeting Checklist

3251 Friends have a tradition of using queries to test or explore how the meeting community fulfills its
3252 responsibilities. The earliest queries formulated by London Yearly Meeting asked for specific
3253 facts and figures: which Friends had died while imprisoned, which Friends were imprisoned at
3254 that time, and what were their sufferings. Even in the more abstract question” How does Truth
3255 prosper among us?” there was an expectation of a quantifiable answer—in this case, the number
3256 of new Friends.

3257 More recently, queries that are looking for specific, factual answers have been considered
3258 supplementary to the general queries and their focus is the ‘right ordering’ of the affairs and
3259 organization of the monthly meeting. The checklist that follows derives from what were known
3260 as supplementary queries.

3261 State of the Meeting:

- 3262 1. Does the meeting engage in regular self-assessment and reflection? Does it prepare a
3263 state of the meeting report?
- 3264 2. Does the meeting have the spiritual, physical, financial and intellectual resources to fulfill
3265 its mission? If not, what steps are being taken to fill the gaps? Has it considered calling
3266 on the quarterly or yearly meeting for assistance?
- 3267 3. Does the meeting seek expert advice, when needed, regarding mental health or behavioral
3268 issues of its members and attenders, finance and accounting, labor and employment
3269 practices, and property and real estate?

- 3270 4. Are mechanisms for succession of leadership available and used? Do these mechanisms
3271 encourage the nurturing of new leaders? If the membership of the meeting is small, is
3272 there a plan for ensuring a succession of leadership?
- 3273 5. Does the meeting have clear and effective procedures for the replacement of the clerk, the
3274 treasurer or other officers of the meeting in case of need?
- 3275 6. Does the meeting consistently attempt to ensure that the work of the meeting is equitably
3276 and broadly shared?
- 3277 7. Does the meeting pay attention to outreach and care of visitors?
- 3278 8. Does the meeting provide religious education for all ages?

3279 The Work of the Meeting:

- 3280 1. Does the meeting enumerate specific goals for itself?
- 3281 2. Does the meeting regularly review and assess its current needs and develop procedures
3282 and committees to address those needs?
- 3283 3. Is the meeting's committee structure appropriate for the size of the meeting?
- 3284 4. Do the meeting's committees have clearly defined responsibilities?
- 3285 5. Do the committees function in ways that fulfill these responsibilities?
- 3286 6. Does each committee receive a budget adequate to enable it to fulfill its responsibilities?
- 3287 7. Do committees report regularly to the meeting?
- 3288 8. Are committees laid down that are no longer essential to the life of the meeting?
- 3289 9. Is there broad representation of the meeting members and attenders in the work of
3290 meeting committees? Does the meeting have a plan to increase participation in
3291 committee activities when active participation of members and attenders declines?

3292 Investments:

- 3293 1. Does the meeting have processes in place to help it plan for its short- and long-term
3294 financial needs?
- 3295 2. Does the meeting regularly review and monitor its investment principles and
3296 performance?
- 3297 3. Does the meeting have sufficient expertize among its own members to effectively
3298 manage its investments? If not, or when it needs additional expertize, does it employ the
3299 services of an investment group or firm such as Friends Fiduciary Corporation?

3300 4. Are endowments and working capital invested in a fiscally and socially responsible way?

3301 5. Is the income from restricted gifts and endowments put to the uses specified by the
3302 donor?

3303 Property and Employees:

3304 1. Is title to real property:

3305 • Held by the meeting as a permanent corporate body, as recommended by the yearly
3306 meeting?

3307 • Held by the Friends Fiduciary Corporation (and if so, is the meeting aware of the
3308 potential inconveniences of this arrangement)?

3309 • Held by individual trustees of an unincorporated body (and if so, are the trustees all
3310 living and competent to serve)?

3311 2. Does the meeting participate in the Friends Insurance Group's Master Policy or otherwise
3312 carry adequate insurance to cover loss, replacement and liability?

3313 3. Does the meeting provide adequate financial and other resources for appropriate
3314 maintenance of its property both now and in the future? Are funds regularly budgeted for
3315 repair and replacement of property?

3316 4. Is real property managed with care for the integrity of the natural world?

3317 5. Are the meeting's burial grounds simple in style and carefully maintained, with accurate
3318 records that are up-to-date and accessible?

3319 6. Does the meeting have policies for hiring, oversight and dismissal of employees? Are
3320 these policies consonant with Friends' principles? Do employees receive caring oversight
3321 and equitable compensation and benefits?

3322 Finance and Budget:

3323 1. Does the meeting have a long-term financial plan that incorporates a consideration of
3324 some or all of the following:

3325 • Increasing endowment through bequests and planned giving?

3326 • Increasing current support through fundraising and growth of membership?

3327 • Utilizing multi-year budgeting?

3328 • Developing multi-year schedules for the repair, maintenance and renovation of
3329 meeting buildings and grounds?

- 3330 2. Does the meeting approve a budget each year?
- 3331 3. Does the meeting approve during the year discretionary expenditures that deviate from
3332 the approved budget?
- 3333 4. Does the treasurer report to the meeting each year on the prior year's income and
3334 expenses and the meeting's balance sheet? Does the treasurer also report periodically to
3335 the meeting on its financial situation?
- 3336 5. Does the meeting have proper checks and balances in place in the disbursement of its
3337 funds?
- 3338 6. Are the meeting's accounts regularly reviewed by a committee appointed for this
3339 purpose, its trustees or an independent outside auditor, as appropriate?
- 3340 7. Do the meeting's treasurer and finance committee observe generally accepted accounting
3341 practices and standards in handling the meeting's finances?
- 3342 8. Does the meeting seek the financial support of all its members? Does it make clear the
3343 expectation that each member will contribute as able?
- 3344 9. Are routine operating funds financed by living members and attenders?
- 3345 10. Does the meeting have a process for extending financial support to members
3346 experiencing hard circumstances or suffering as a result of witness to Friends
3347 testimonies?
- 3348 11. Does the meeting's budget include resources to support and give witness to Friends
3349 testimonies in the local community and the world?
- 3350 12. Does the meeting's budget provide financial support for the quarterly and yearly
3351 meetings?
- 3352 13. Are the meeting's patterns of spending and consumption socially and environmentally
3353 responsible?
- 3354 Records:
- 3355 1. Are official membership records maintained? Is a member of the meeting assigned this
3356 responsibility? Are the membership statistics presented to the monthly and yearly
3357 meetings annually?
- 3358 2. Are informal records of members and attenders maintained in order to communicate with
3359 and build the meeting community?
- 3360 3. Does the meeting (and any institutions under its care) keep clear and accurate financial
3361 records? Are these and other meeting's records (deed, corporate by-laws, operating
3362 records, etc.) kept in a secure location?

3363 4. If the meeting is incorporated, are its records maintained and its corporate procedures
3364 conducted in accordance with good practice and legal requirements?

3365 5. Are minutes of the business of the monthly meeting and of significant meeting
3366 committees accurately and neatly kept on acid-free paper and taken in a timely manner to
3367 the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting archives at Haverford or Swarthmore College?

3368 6. Has the meeting established document retention guidelines to reduce the storage of
3369 unnecessary routine items such as vendor invoices?

3370 D. Procedures for Membership

3371 1. Application for Membership:

3372 When a sense of commitment between an attender and a meeting is strong, the attender may
3373 initiate an application for membership. In some cases, members of a family may apply together.
3374 The process is the same, though with particular attention to the decision of parents regarding the
3375 status of their children. There are several steps involved in the application process, some taken
3376 by the meeting and some by the attender.

3377 a. The attender sends a written request to the clerk of the monthly meeting, stating why
3378 he/she is moved to join the Religious Society of Friends, as well as a brief response to
3379 Friends' experience, faith and practices.

3380 b. Typically, the clerk reads the applicant's letter at the next meeting for business and then
3381 refers the application to the care and counsel or similar committee, which promptly
3382 appoints a clearness committee to visit the applicant.

3383 c. The clearness committee is expected to undertake this visit as soon as possible and as a
3384 serious responsibility both to the meeting and to the applicant. During the visit, the
3385 committee members and the applicant explore together, in a probing and candid manner,
3386 fundamental questions of religious faith and practice and the responsibilities involved in
3387 membership in the monthly meeting and the Religious Society of Friends. The clearness
3388 committee is expected to explain both the nature of the commitment that the meeting
3389 makes when it accepts an application for membership and the nature of the member's
3390 commitments to the meeting.

3391 The clearness committee needs to be prepared to respond faithfully to the wide range of
3392 questions that the applicant may ask. The applicant will also be encouraged to share expectations
3393 concerning the meeting and the significance of membership.

3394 Among the questions the committee might ask the applicant are:

3395 • What are some milestones in your spiritual journey? How do you expect
3396 membership in the meeting to help you in this journey?

3397 • How familiar are you with Friends' faith and practice? Which of these particularly
3398 attracted you to Friends? Which do you find puzzling or disturbing?

- 3399 • Do you welcome participation in a religious community whose unity of spirit
3400 coexists with a diversity of beliefs? Are you prepared to join a meeting
3401 community which includes people whose perspectives may differ considerably
3402 from yours?
- 3403 • Have you read and reflected on the Queries and Advices? Which of these do you
3404 find most helpful? Which do you find puzzling or disturbing?
- 3405 • How closely are you in harmony with Friends’ testimonies? With Friends’ work
3406 for peace and social justice?
- 3407 • Are you prepared to suffer (as Friends have done) if God calls you to take actions
3408 which are difficult, unpopular, or even contrary to the civil laws?
- 3409 • What gifts do you believe you might bring to the meeting community? In what
3410 ways would you like to share your time and talents with the meeting?
- 3411 • Are you willing to provide the monthly meeting with material/financial support,
3412 and with your time and energy, in order to help the meeting carry out its activities
3413 and fulfill its responsibilities?
- 3414 • Do you understand the relationship between the monthly, quarterly, and yearly
3415 meeting? Are you aware of and willing to meet our expectation of financial
3416 support for programs, services, and facilities associated with the quarterly and
3417 yearly meetings?
- 3418 a. The clearness committee will report to the care and counsel committee regarding the
3419 outcome of its visit with the applicant for membership.
- 3420 b. If there is a positive recommendation from the clearness committee to the care and
3421 counsel committee, and if that committee concurs, it will recommend at the next meeting
3422 for business that the monthly meeting accept the application for membership.
- 3423 Action by the monthly meeting may be postponed until a later session to give time for members
3424 to become better acquainted with the prospective member.
- 3425 a. If the monthly meeting approves the application for membership, it will minute its
3426 decision and appoint two or more Friends to welcome the new member.
- 3427 b. The name of the new member and other pertinent information will be given to the
3428 meeting recorder for the meeting’s records, and will be reported to the quarterly and
3429 yearly meetings.
- 3430 While the desire of an attender to become a member is generally a cause for rejoicing, the care
3431 and counsel committee may advise the meeting to postpone acceptance or even to reject an
3432 application if there is good reason to do so, such as an applicant’s inflexible disagreement with
3433 some significant aspect of Friends’ faith and practice. In cases where the care and counsel

3434 committee recommends postponement of a decision and the meeting agrees, the committee
3435 should maintain sympathetic communication with the applicant, clearly explaining the reason for
3436 the hesitancy and seeking to help remove it. If and when the committee judges the applicant to be
3437 ready for membership, it should then encourage the meeting to consider and accept the
3438 application for membership.

3439 If a person whose residence is remote from meetings of Friends wishes to become a member, the
3440 monthly meeting may consider carefully whether the applicant's needs, as well as those of the
3441 meeting, will be served by membership at a distance. Such an applicant might consider
3442 participating in the Wider Quaker Fellowship, a program sponsored by the Friends World
3443 Committee for Consultation/Section of the Americas.

3444 2. Transfer of Membership to another Monthly Meeting

3445 Friends who live at a distance from their own monthly meeting but near another will do well to
3446 transfer their membership to the nearer one unless there is some very special reason not to do so.
3447 Residence in the vicinity makes it possible to enjoy the benefits, and to carry out the
3448 responsibilities, of membership in a particular meeting. Inability to participate in the life of one's
3449 own meeting means a loss to both the individual and the meeting; it significantly undermines the
3450 meaning of membership.

3451 To initiate the process, a Friend who has moved away from his/her meeting requests a letter of
3452 transfer to a meeting near the new place of residence. The two meetings involved each have
3453 responsibilities regarding the transfer, including taking care to address the need for the safety of
3454 meetings and the integrity of the Religious Society of Friends. (A sample letter of transfer is
3455 included in Section VIII.)

3456 a. Duties of the monthly meeting from which the member is moving.

3457 1) When a monthly meeting receives such an application for transfer, the clerk of the
3458 care and counsel committee prepares a letter of transfer, recommending the Friend to
3459 the care of the meeting to which transfer is requested. (In rare cases, this
3460 recommendation may be qualified or the request for transfer may even be denied.)

3461 2) If the monthly meeting approves the application for transfer, the meeting clerk signs
3462 and forwards the letter to the receiving monthly meeting. A copy of the letter is also
3463 prepared for the records.

3464 3) When the meeting issuing the transfer receives acknowledgment that the new meeting
3465 has accepted the Friend into membership, it terminates the Friend's membership,
3466 noting its action in the minutes and the recorder's report.

3467 b. Duties of the monthly meeting to which the Friend is moving.

3468 1) The clerk of the monthly meeting to which a member is being transferred is expected
3469 to acknowledge receipt of the letter.

3470 2) Then the clerk refers it to the care and counsel committee who in turn recommend
3471 action to the monthly meeting. If there is ground for serious objection to the transfer,
3472 the letter is returned to the meeting which issued it. If there is no objection, the
3473 monthly meeting is expected to accept the transfer and record the Friend as a
3474 member, sending information to that effect to the issuing meeting, to which the
3475 Friend in the interim has continued to belong.

3476 3) Following a transfer, the monthly meeting will appoint one or more Friends to
3477 welcome the new member, including an invitation to attend meetings for worship and
3478 business, serve on committees, and share in the financial support of the meeting.

3479 c. Duties of the recorder concerning letters of transfer.

3480 The recorder should keep a list of all letters of transfer issued and accepted by the meeting. The
3481 accepting meeting's recorder should notify the yearly meeting of the new member.

3482 On occasion, Friends request a transfer of membership for reasons other than a change of
3483 residence. The procedure noted above applies in every case.

3484 3. Termination of Membership

3485 a. Resignation by the individual.

3486 Members may find that they are not in accord with the faith and practice of Friends or no longer
3487 wish to be actively involved in their monthly meeting. Such members may be encouraged to seek
3488 the assistance of the care and counsel committee or of others in the meeting in whom they have
3489 confidence and try with their help to examine their own beliefs and practices and the reasons for
3490 disagreement or lack of involvement with Friends. If no resolution results, they may resign from
3491 the Religious Society of Friends by submitting a letter of resignation to the clerk of their
3492 meeting.

3493 When a member resigns, the meeting is not absolved from further care. A committee appointed
3494 by the care and counsel committee or from the meeting at large is expected to visit the Friend,
3495 inquire in love and forbearance into the cause of the resignation and, if appropriate, endeavor to
3496 bring the member back into the fellowship of Friends. A resignation may be accepted without
3497 appointing a committee when the meeting is already well acquainted with the case and is
3498 satisfied that the member's decision will not be altered by further efforts.

3499 When the meeting accedes to a member's decision to resign, a minute is prepared stating that this
3500 Friend is released at his/her own request. The individual is informed of the action and is no
3501 longer a member of the Religious Society of Friends. The letter informing the former member
3502 that his/her decision to resign has been accepted is expected to manifest a considerate regard for
3503 the person leaving membership.

3504 b. Release by the monthly meeting.

3505 When a member disregards the obligations of membership and exhibits lack of interest or
3506 responsibility, fails to reply to communications from the care and counsel committee or others,

3507 or passes out of the knowledge of the meeting, it is clear that the member no longer values being
3508 part of the life of the meeting. In such cases it is normally the task of the care and counsel
3509 committee to attempt to restore interest and involvement. Under exceptional circumstances the
3510 monthly meeting may appoint a special committee for this purpose.

3511 If continued efforts prove unavailing, the monthly meeting prepares a minute noting the
3512 circumstances and recording removal of the individual from membership. The clerk of the
3513 meeting promptly sends notice of this action to the individual. Such notice is expected to inform
3514 the released individual that there may be yearly or quarterly meeting resources that could play a
3515 mediating role.

3516 In the case of a Friend whose actions seem out of harmony with the standard of conduct
3517 appropriate to the Religious Society of Friends, the meeting, primarily through the care and
3518 counsel committee, may seek to renew the commitment of the member to Friends' practice. If
3519 these efforts fail, and if the committee believes that it can accomplish nothing further, it should
3520 report this to the monthly meeting, which may appoint a special committee to make further
3521 attempts to reach a satisfactory solution.

3522 If all these efforts are to no avail, the monthly meeting is expected to take steps toward removal
3523 of the Friend from membership. The care and counsel committee or a special committee will
3524 prepare in writing a proposed minute of removal recommending such action. When the minute is
3525 received by the monthly meeting, a copy is given promptly to the person involved, and further
3526 action deferred to a future meeting. The member who is subject to removal is also advised that
3527 he/she may explain their position to the monthly meeting in person or in writing.

3528 If the monthly meeting still believes that the membership of the Friend in question should be
3529 terminated, it then approves the minute of removal and the individual is notified of the action. It
3530 is expected that all dealings involving removal from membership will be handled with the utmost
3531 patience, forbearance, and consideration, for the sake of both the individual and the meeting.

3532 A person whose membership has ended either by resignation or by action of the monthly
3533 meeting, and who subsequently desires to join either the same or a different monthly meeting,
3534 may do so by following the procedure outlined earlier for application for membership.

3535 E. Quaker Marriage Procedure

3536 Marriage is a sacred commitment of two people to love one another in faithful partnership with
3537 the expectation that the relationship will mature and be mutually enriching. Friends know that
3538 marriage depends on the inner experiences of the couple who marry and not on any external
3539 service or words. Thus, the ceremony in which the couple makes this commitment is performed
3540 by the couple alone, in the presence of God, the families, and the worshiping community. Both
3541 the solemnity and the joy of the occasion are enhanced by its simplicity.

3542

3543 The meeting extends its loving care through its oversight of clearness for the couple and, upon
3544 approval of the meeting, through careful attention to a meeting for worship for marriage. In
3545 addition, care is given to assure than any applicable legal requirements are addressed.

3546 1. Securing Meeting Approval

3547 The couple intending marriage writes to the meeting or meetings under whose care they would
3548 be married. Any date the couple is planning for the wedding should be far enough in the future to
3549 allow the meeting time to fulfill its responsibilities.

3550 When the clerk receives the request, the letter is customarily read at meeting for business, often
3551 after preliminary consideration by overseers. The meeting then appoints a committee of
3552 clearness. Some meetings have standing committees for this purpose, chosen from Friends of
3553 proven abilities.

3554 The method of securing approval varies with the circumstances.

3555 a. When only one meeting is being asked for the oversight, the couple simply forwards the
3556 request to the meeting, which then appoints the clearness committee.

3557 b. When the two belong to separate meetings, they must allow time for both meetings to
3558 consider the request. The meetings may each name committees for clearness, or they may
3559 decide to name a joint committee. If one meeting is at a distance, a correspondent may be
3560 assigned to confer with the clearness committee where the marriage will take place.
3561 Whatever the process, approval is granted by both meetings before the couple proceeds
3562 with the wedding. A meeting may offer assistance to Friends wishing to be married under
3563 its care, even though they live too far from their home meeting to be married there.

3564 c. When one of the couple is not a member of the Religious Society of Friends, the
3565 clearness committee endeavors through consultation with the couple and the family and
3566 friends of the non-member to discover whether obstacles exist.

3567 d. If the meeting agrees to consider a marriage under its care when neither party is a
3568 member of a meeting, the clearness committee takes the necessary steps to become
3569 familiar with the couple and their circumstances before recommending approval. It
3570 should encourage the couple to take ample time to attend meetings for worship and offer
3571 themselves and the members of the meeting the opportunity to come to know each other.
3572 Only so will non-members feel at home in the meeting, and only so will the meeting be
3573 able to grant clearness in good conscience. In the case of non-members, the meeting also
3574 assures that any additional applicable legal requirements are met. (See also Marriage not
3575 under the care of the meeting, p. 52.)

3576 2. Clearness: The Process

3577 The term clearness referred originally to clearness from other marriage commitments. Today,
3578 within a broader sense of clearness, the committee explores areas of understanding with the
3579 couple, considering what it takes to achieve the permanence and satisfaction of a committed,

3580 loving relationship, and the extent to which the couple is prepared for the dedication and
3581 constancy such a relationship requires. Knowledge of available resources for the couple and the
3582 committee is essential for any meeting, including Quaker literature on the subject.

3583 The purpose of clearness is well served when members of the committee ask thoughtful
3584 questions and listen attentively, leaving space for worship in the exchange. Potential
3585 difficulties—and the role of Divine assistance in this process as well as in the future
3586 development of the relationship—can be carefully and openly explored. A committee under the
3587 weight of the couple’s future success knows that failure to speak truth in kindness is to risk
3588 possible suffering. Such truth is best shared from the actual experience of Friends.

3589 The committee can be guided by these suggested queries for the couple:

3590 • How did the couple meet? What values and beliefs do they hold in common? On what
3591 matters do they differ? Can they meet differences with humor and respect? Are they
3592 open to considering outside help if such guidance seems warranted?

3593 • Do they both see marriage as sacred? Are they open to seeking divine assistance?
3594 What are their plans for nurturing the spiritual basis for their marriage?

3595 • Do they each see themselves and their partner as equal and trusted, sharing
3596 responsibilities and decisions? Do they communicate feelings, needs, dreams and
3597 fears?

3598 • Are they aware of the need for other friendships that contribute to both individual
3599 growth and the marriage relationship?

3600 • Have they thought about children, and the joys and the challenges families create,
3601 including consideration of how the work is shared?

3602 • If there are children in either relationship to consider, has the couple broached the
3603 subject of this change of relationship with them?

3604 • How do they view their relationships to their extended families? To their community?
3605 To society as a whole?

3606 • Are there prior obligations—legal or financial or both—that need to be met?

3607 • What are the views of the parents concerning this relationship? (Parents may send a
3608 letter.)

3609 • What other questions does the couple have?

3610 The clearness committee does its best to confirm that the intended partners follow a true leading
3611 in seeking marriage. Since occasionally obstructions do appear, it is considered wise to treat all
3612 applications with the same degree of care. The focus for the committee is the two people being
3613 married and attention to their responsibilities to each other and to their families. Particularly with

3614 young people, the meeting seeks from the parents of the couples their expressions of unity with
3615 this intention, usually in the form of a letter. When either of the couple brings children to this
3616 union, their well-being must be considered; but whether the children should be consulted
3617 regarding their feelings about their parent’s marriage is a question to which there is no generally
3618 accepted answer. If the clearness committee and the couple feel that it would be helpful, it is
3619 appropriate to include the children in the clearness process.

3620 While most Friends’ marriage ceremonies conform to civil law, couples, who do not want or are
3621 not eligible to contract a legal marriage occasionally ask for a ceremony of commitment or a
3622 wedding under the care of the meeting. The Religious Society of Friends has long asserted its
3623 freedom to conduct under divine leading marriage ceremonies not conforming to civil law.

3624 If the clearness committee is satisfied that there is no obstacle to the proposed marriage, it so
3625 reports to the monthly meeting at its next business session. If the meeting finds no objection with
3626 the proposed marriage, it will approve holding an appointed meeting for worship for marriage, in
3627 accordance with the couple’s wishes. Wedding invitations should be sent out only after the
3628 meeting’s approval is granted.

3629 3. Overseeing the Preparation

3630 When the meeting has given its approval for the wedding to take place under its care, it appoints
3631 an oversight committee from among its members, usually two men and two women, to oversee
3632 the arrangements. The parties to be married should be asked whether there is anyone they would
3633 like particularly to serve on this committee. Members of another meeting may be included if so
3634 desired.

3635 The oversight committee provides guidance to the couple as the marriage ceremony is arranged,
3636 including the obtaining of the applicable legal license and the Quaker marriage certificate.
3637 Oversight continues through the ceremony and afterwards, to assure that details are completed in
3638 right order. The oversight committee ordinarily assumes responsibility for the certificate and for
3639 the license until it is signed by the couple after the wedding. It keeps track of the process of
3640 obtaining and safeguarding the two documents through the completion of the signing, and the
3641 transferal to the appropriate parties. It also oversees the presentation of the certificate at the
3642 wedding.

3643 Because in some places the proper license form may not be immediately available, it is important
3644 to allow enough time for obtaining the license. The Quaker marriage certificate also requires
3645 preparation well ahead of time. The couple arranges for the certificate and may need assistance
3646 in the details necessary to accomplish this. In addition, any contemplated changes from the
3647 traditional text deserve thoughtful and careful consideration, in consultation with the oversight
3648 committee.

3649 4. Conducting a Quaker Wedding

3650 A Quaker wedding is a meeting for worship in which a marriage takes place. As the meeting for
3651 worship begins, some designated person may rise to explain, for the benefit of those new to

3652 Quaker worship, the absence of clergy, the role of the gathered, and the solemnity of the
3653 occasion. Printed information also has been found useful.

3654 Following a period of silence, as long or as short as the couple is led to observe, the two rise and,
3655 each taking the other by the hand, make their promises to each other, in the words from their
3656 marriage certificate, in tones clear enough to be heard throughout the meeting. When they are
3657 seated again, the marriage certificate is brought to them for their signatures. The certificate is
3658 then read to the meeting by a person asked in advance to do so. The meeting then continues and
3659 offers an opportunity to those present to share in the ceremony through prayer, meditation, and
3660 other spoken messages. The person chosen to close the meeting may, if desired, first allow the
3661 wedding party to withdraw. At the close of the meeting, all those who have been present are
3662 asked to sign the certificate as witnesses.

3663 Friends are urged to consider carefully the intrusion into the spirit of worship that recording of
3664 any kind can present. Photographing, visible audio taping, and videotaping during the ceremony
3665 are often discouraged.

3666 5. Following the Wedding

3667 Both sections of the marriage license obtained from the county or municipality are signed by the
3668 couple and by members of the oversight committee as witnesses. The proper section of the
3669 license thus signed is then returned within the legal time limit to the office from which it has
3670 been obtained.

3671 The marriage certificate is handed to the meeting's recorder to be entered in the records of the
3672 monthly meeting. When this has been done, the recorder sends the certificate to the newly
3673 married couple.

3674 At the next business meeting the oversight committee reports to the monthly meeting that the
3675 wedding has taken place in accordance with Friends' practice, and the requirements of the law
3676 have been properly observed.

3677 Ongoing care and nurture of Friends married under a meeting's care continues as long as the
3678 couple is in the community of the meeting. If the couple relocates, the meeting may maintain an
3679 informal relationship with them and stay open to requests for support or help, but the actual
3680 nurture is best carried out by meeting to which the couple transfers.

3681 6. Marriage Not Under the Care of the Meeting

3682 a. Marriage of members apart from the meeting community

3683 Members who marry outside the meeting should promptly inform the meeting of their marriage.
3684 It is then the task of the meeting to assign overseers to visit the newly married couple—or, if
3685 they live far away, to write to them—and to express the meeting's continuing interest and care.
3686 Non-member marriage partners should be made welcome and invited to attend meetings for
3687 worship and business if they live within reach of the monthly meeting.

3688 Meetings may offer a place of worship and other assistance at the request of Friends from a
3689 distance who wish to be married there but under the care of their home meeting. Communication
3690 between meetings assures the proper clearness process and helps in the oversight of the wedding.

3691 b. Marriage of non-members

3692 There are occasions when non-members request marriage with the help of a meeting, using the
3693 Friends marriage ceremony. Since Friends do hold marriage to be under divine guidance, the
3694 couple should be fully aware and agreeable to the context of marriage for Friends. Meetings are
3695 encouraged to consider in advance what services they can offer, and to look into the legal aspects
3696 of marriage of non-members, so that when such requests are made, they can be considered
3697 realistically and in a timely fashion.

3698 7. Review of responsibilities required for the good order of a Quaker marriage ceremony

3699 A review of the duties and responsibilities of those concerned: To promote clarity and
3700 understanding, the duties and responsibilities of the persons to be married, of the clerk, and of
3701 the committees of the monthly meeting are separately outlined here. These should be reviewed in
3702 conjunction with the previous text.

3703 a. Responsibilities of the persons to be married:

3704 1) To present to the monthly meeting under whose care they wish to be married the
3705 following written communications, usually directed to the clerk's attention:

3706 • A letter signed by both parties stating their intention of marriage and their desire that
3707 the monthly meeting have oversight of the wedding. Whenever possible or
3708 appropriate it should be accompanied by letters from parents or guardians assuring
3709 the meeting of their interest in, and approval of, the plans under consideration.

3710 • Upon approval for marriage, the request for permission to be married in a regular or,
3711 the usual practice, a specially appointed meeting for worship. The request should
3712 include the date of marriage and the time of day desired.

3713 • Suggested names of Friends whom the couple would like to have serve as an
3714 oversight committee for the wedding.

3715 2) To meet with a clearness committee to explore the leading to marry.

3716 3) To mail out invitations only after approval has been granted by the monthly meeting
3717 or meetings involved.

3718 4) To meet with the oversight committee named to oversee the wedding, at a time and
3719 place suggested by the committee, to discuss plans for the wedding, including the
3720 choice of persons to read the marriage certificate and to open and close the meeting
3721 for worship.

- 3722 5) To have the certificate prepared in ample time, using words that reflect the
3723 contemplated proceedings.
- 3724 6) To arrange for the appropriate license for use where there is not clergy.
- 3725 7) To inform themselves, with the help from the committee overseeing the wedding, of
3726 all the applicable legal requirements of the state in which the marriage is to take place
3727 and of the forms to be used.
- 3728 8) To be sure that the license is given to the committee overseeing the wedding before
3729 the wedding and that the marriage certificate is ready.
- 3730 9) To commit to memory the promises to be made vocally, which should be to the
3731 following effect:

3732 *In the presence of God and these our friends I ____[Name]____ take thee*
3733 *____[Name]____ to be my husband/wife/partner, promising with divine*
3734 *assistance to be unto thee a loving and faithful husband/wife/partner so long as*
3735 *we both shall live.*

- 3736 10) To sign the marriage certificate after the promises have been made.
- 3737 11) To sign both sections of the marriage license after the wedding and before their
3738 departure, one section being kept by them and the other returned by a member of the
3739 committee overseeing the wedding to the office from which the license was obtained.

3740 b. Responsibilities of the clerk of the Meeting:

- 3741 1) To present the letter of intention to marry—and other letters received supporting the
3742 request—to the appropriate meeting body at the earliest opportunity.
- 3743 2) To see that the request is considered and, if accepted, that a committee for clearness is
3744 appointed.
- 3745 3) To arrange for presentation of the committee’s report on clearness to a subsequent
3746 session of the monthly meeting.
- 3747 4) When the report has been accepted and the marriage allowed by the monthly meeting:
- 3748 a) To request the meeting to name an oversight committee for the wedding and to
3749 appoint a meeting for worship to be held at the time and place requested for the
3750 wedding, if at all possible; and
- 3751 b) To inform the parties that they are free to proceed with their plans.
- 3752 c) To present the report of the oversight committee at the session of monthly meeting
3753 following the marriage.

3754 c. Responsibilities of the committee seeking clearness:

3755 1) To make inquiry and conscientiously satisfy itself that there is nothing to interfere with
3756 the accomplishment of the marriage; and in interviews with the couple to explore their
3757 leading to marry.

3758 2) To report its findings and recommendations to the next session of the monthly meeting,
3759 including any specific plans the couple has as to date and time of day.

3760 3) To make available books and pamphlets on marriage; to have on hand information
3761 concerning resources within the yearly meeting, such as the library, as well as
3762 organizations within the community which may be helpful and appropriate.

3763 4) To review with the couple the promises they propose to exchange at the marriage and
3764 make sure that the words of the certificate are consistent with them.

3765 5) To be informed concerning the applicable legal requirements for obtaining a marriage
3766 license.

3767 6) To make sure that the welfare and rights of any children by a former marriage have been
3768 properly considered and legally secured.

3769 d. Responsibilities of the committee to oversee the marriage:

3770 1) To meet with the couple to discuss plans for the wedding, including the choice of a
3771 person to read the certificate and one to close the meeting, and to arrange for the
3772 rehearsal.

3773 2) To see in advance that all applicable legal requirements have been met and that the
3774 proper license has been obtained; also to see that both sections of the license are dated
3775 and signed by the couple following the wedding and by two members of the committee as
3776 witnesses and that the proper section of the license thus signed is returned to the office
3777 from which it was obtained within the time required by law.

3778 3) To see that the marriage and reception, if any, are accomplished with dignity, reverence,
3779 and simplicity.

3780 4) To arrange for the care of the certificate following the meeting for worship and to see that
3781 it is signed by those who were present as witnesses.

3782 5) To deliver the certificate to the recorder for copying or duplication for the records of the
3783 monthly meeting and to give the recorder an address to which the certificate may be
3784 returned.

3785 6) To report to the monthly meeting whether the marriage has been suitably accomplished;
3786 whether the applicable legal requirements have been satisfied; whether the certificate has
3787 been properly recorded; and to report any name changes that result from the marriage for

3788 the recording in the minutes of the monthly meeting, for the quarterly meeting and for the
3789 yearly meeting.

3790 8. The Marriage Certificate

3791 This form is the traditional wording of the marriage certificate. The couple reviews the wording
3792 of the certificate with the overseers of the marriage, including any desired word changes.

3793 *Whereas [name] of [address], son of [names of parents: use mother's maiden*
3794 *name], and [name] of [address], daughter of [names of parents: use mother's*
3795 *maiden name], having declared their intentions of marriage with each other to*
3796 *_____monthly meeting of the Religious Society of Friends held*
3797 *at _____, their proposed marriage was allowed by that Meeting.*

3798 *Now this is to certify to whom it may concern, that for the accomplishment of their*
3799 *intention, this _____day of the _____month, in the year of*
3800 *our Lord _____, they, [name] and [name], appeared in a meeting for*
3801 *worship of the Religious Society of Friends, held at _____, and*
3802 *[name], taking [name] by the hand, did on this solemn occasion, declare that he*
3803 *took her, [name], to be his wife, promising with Divine assistance to be unto her a*
3804 *loving and faithful husband so long as they both shall live; and then, in the same*
3805 *assembly [name] did in like manner declare that she took him, [name], to be her*
3806 *husband, promising with Divine assistance to be unto him a loving and faithful*
3807 *wife so long as they both shall live. And moreover, they, [name and name,] did as*
3808 *further confirmation thereof, then and there, to this certificate set their hands.*

3809

3810 *Name name*

3811 *And we having been present at the marriage have as witnesses hereunto set our*
3812 *hands.*

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3814 F. Guidelines for Care Committees

3815 [These guidelines utilize material to be found in *The Spiritual Care Committee*, a pamphlet
3816 prepared under the aegis of the School of the Spirit. The pamphlet is available online at
3817 www.schoolofthespirit.org.]

3818 There are three types of care committees currently used by Friends: clearness committees,
3819 pastoral care assistance committees, and spiritual care committees. Clearness committees assist
3820 those seeking to apply for membership or to be married under the care of the monthly meeting,
3821 or those seeking clarity about a personal or social concern. Pastoral care committees assist those
3822 members and attenders who have physical, emotional, financial or spiritual needs. Spiritual care
3823 committees (or spiritual nurturers) support those with spiritual gifts or who are pursuing a
3824 leading or engaged in the work of ministry.

3825 The members of care committees are usually selected by the care and counsel or worship and
3826 ministry committee of the meeting, though the individual being supported by a care committee
3827 may request that certain persons be included. The process of selecting members for a care
3828 committee will include consideration of those who can bring a diversity of skills, gifts,
3829 experience, and personality type to complement the leading, ministry, or need of the Friend for
3830 whom the committee is being formed. Those selected would be expected to:

- 3831 • Mirror to the Friend the ways God is acting/shining/serving through them.
- 3832 • Demonstrate a willingness to accompany the Friend lovingly into difficult spiritual
3833 places.
- 3834 • Indicate a capacity to challenge the Friend to live more deeply and fully the life of the
3835 Spirit, while also accepting the Friend without judgment in the present moment.
- 3836 • Demonstrate clear willingness to devote the time necessary to prepare for the work of the
3837 care committee and to attend the sessions of the committee with the Friend.

3838 It is important to remember that the work of care committees benefits the faith community from
3839 which they are formed as well as the individual who is being nurtured and supported.

3840 1. Guidelines for A Clearness Committee: Historically, clearness committees have been used
3841 by monthly meetings primarily as part of the membership and marriage procedures. But in
3842 recent years, individuals have requested the support of a clearness committee in order to
3843 discern how best to deal with an important personal decision, whether to make a change in
3844 the circumstances of their lives or to test a leading or for some other reason. In such cases,
3845 the Friend may approach the care and counsel or the worship and ministry committee of the
3846 meeting and request that a clearness committee be formed. This request may include the
3847 suggestion of one or more potential members of that committee.

3848 It is especially important for the members of the clearness committee to accept fully that their
3849 role in the session with the Friend is not to offer advice, nor to tell stories about their own
3850 possibly similar experiences, but to ask questions that enable the individual to discern whether
3851 there is sufficient clarity regarding the issue or leading to move forward and take action.

3852 In preparation for the initial meeting of the clearness committee, the Friend is advised to write a
3853 brief account of the issue or leading to be considered, including relevant background information
3854 and any possible steps that might be taken to address that issue or leading. The members of the
3855 clearness committee would then read and reflect on this short paper in advance of the meeting.

3856 The first meeting of the clearness committee usually includes the following elements:

- 3857 • Worship at the beginning, at the end, and perhaps at appropriate moments during the
3858 meeting.
- 3859 • Deep listening by the committee members to an initial statement by the Friend
3860 regarding the leading to be tested or the issue or potential decision to be clarified.

- 3861 • Carefully formulated, open-ended, probing questions from the committee members
3862 that are intended, not to give advice or counsel but to help the Friend understand more
3863 clearly the nature of the concern, issue or leading and the possible implications of
3864 making one decision or another for that Friend and for others—family members, the
3865 faith community, and perhaps the wider community.
- 3866 • An opportunity for the Friend to respond to these questions, and for the Friend and
3867 the members of the clearness committee to consider together whether there are now
3868 additional questions that need to be explored further.
- 3869 • Consideration of next steps, such as additional meetings of the individual with the
3870 clearness committee, or further exploration by the individual and/or members of the
3871 committee of particular aspects of the issue or leading that remain unclear or are not
3872 yet ready for a decision.

3873

3874 The information provided by the Friend prior to meeting with a clearness committee, and the
3875 information shared by that individual in the session with the committee, is confidential; and both
3876 the Friend and the members of the clearness committee are expected to respect the need to
3877 maintain confidentiality. Still, it is also expected that a report, absent details, will be given to the
3878 care and counsel or worship and ministry committee of the monthly meeting which formed the
3879 clearness committee.

3880 If the Friend with the assistance of the clearness committee has tested the leading and together
3881 they are in unity to seek the support of the monthly meeting for that leading, the matter is
3882 reported by the care and counsel or worship and ministry committee to the monthly meeting for
3883 business. If the meeting decides to support the leading, the clerk of the meeting will draft a
3884 minute of support. Such a minute acknowledges the role of the meeting in approving the
3885 implementation of the leading and the ministry it entails and may also recommend the formation
3886 of a committee to provide guidance, support, and accountability for the Friend and the ministry.

3887 2. Guidelines for A Pastoral Care Assistance Committee: Depending on the nature of an
3888 individual's concern or issue, either that individual may request or the care and counsel
3889 committee may decide that the formation of a pastoral care assistance committee could be
3890 helpful. The role of this committee is to assist the Friend with whatever stands in the way of
3891 living in the Spirit, such as temporary financial distress or job loss, the loss of a loved one
3892 through estrangement or death, the development of a physical incapacity, behavior problems
3893 associated with illness or trauma, or inappropriate behavior in meeting for worship or other
3894 meeting activities. It is important that the committee be able to recognize when the issue at
3895 hand lies outside the competence of its members, and in that case will support the individual
3896 in seeking professional help.

3897 The following queries may help those who serve on a pastoral care assistance committee:

- 3898 • Am I able to respect and be present to the person in need without imposing my own
3899 judgment?

3900 • Can I listen with compassion to the Friend’s account of the situation and the Friend’s
3901 deepest concerns? Douglas Steere suggests that, “To ‘listen’ another’s soul into a
3902 condition of disclosure and discovery may be almost the greatest service that any
3903 human being ever performs for another.”

3904 • Am I ready to help the person in need turn the situation over to Spirit without
3905 expectation but in the hope that ‘way will open’ for a solution to be found?

3906 • Am I prepared to assist the person in finding professional help, if this seems to be
3907 required?

3908 Those who have the experience of serving on a pastoral care assistance committee may discover
3909 that it has been an opportunity to deepen their own spiritual understanding as well as to become
3910 better acquainted with another member or attender of the meeting. They may also realize that
3911 providing assistance to others in the meeting benefits the life of the whole meeting and not just
3912 those to whom the assistance is rendered.

3913

3914 3. Guidelines for A Spiritual Care Committee: Spiritual care committees are charged to hold
3915 and encourage Friends who are spiritually gifted and/or called to a ministry that furthers the
3916 work of God’s continuing transformation. The committee seeks to provide a safe and
3917 worshipful space where the Friend can be more intentional about becoming faithful to life in
3918 the Spirit. It uses three basic tools to accomplish this purpose: deep listening; prayerful
3919 discernment; and faithful response. The following queries may help the committee members
3920 and the Friend with a spiritual leading or ministry to apply these tools:

3921 • What practices does the Friend use in order to increase the capacity to listen attentively to
3922 Spirit?

3923 • What assumptions does the Friend make about living in faithful obedience to Spirit?

3924 • Is there anything that is currently blocking or interfering with the Friend’s capacity to
3925 engage in the life of the Spirit?

3926 • In what ways is the Friend growing in the life of the Spirit and how is that growth being
3927 manifested?

3928 • How can the spiritual care committee help the Friend increase trust in divine guidance for
3929 the Friend’s leading or ministry?

3930 • What is the Friend’s relationship with the monthly meeting? What expectations does the
3931 Friend have of the faith community and are these expectations realistic?

3932 • Besides the spiritual care committee, what resources of guidance and support are
3933 available for the Friend to draw upon when needed?

3934 Through deep listening, prayerful discernment and faithful response, the spiritual care committee
3935 and the Friend whose leading or ministry is being nurtured may grow in relationship with God,
3936 the Friend may be anchored within the faith community, and the Friend may be held accountable
3937 to God, to the leading or ministry, and to the community. Indeed, spiritual care committees are
3938 sometimes called anchor or spiritual accountability groups.

3939 Though sessions of the Friend with the spiritual care committee may develop according to the
3940 needs expressed or perceived, they typically include the following elements:

- 3941 • The spiritual care committee and the Friend have an opportunity at the beginning and at the
3942 end of the session for worship and centering.
- 3943 • A brief “check in” near the beginning of the session enables those present to become more
3944 attuned with each other.
- 3945 • The Friend may wish to share experiences since the last session; topics and themes that have
3946 opened during prayer, reflection, reading and the work of ministry; and concerns about how
3947 to integrate more effectively the life of ministry with the demands of family, friends, and the
3948 faith community.
- 3949 • The spiritual care committee may wish to offer questions and concerns that might clarify
3950 what the Friend has shared; encourage the Friend to reflect upon queries that may assist in
3951 guiding spiritual life and growth; and consider with the Friend how the faith community
3952 might more fully support or utilize the Friend’s ministry.
- 3953 • The clerk of the spiritual care committee or the Friend may summarize main points or
3954 concerns raised in the session. This can clarify both the matters that have been covered, as
3955 well as those that have not been adequately covered

3956 In recent years, some Friends have expressed interest in the opportunities and challenges
3957 afforded by a relationship between an individual Friend and a spiritual nurturer. Many of the
3958 guidelines above that apply to a spiritual care committee could also be useful in supporting and
3959 guiding the relationship between a Friend and a spiritual nurturer. However, the worship and
3960 ministry committee of the meeting would have a particular responsibility in selecting and
3961 training spiritual nurturers, should members of the meeting prefer this kind of spiritual
3962 relationship and accountability to that provided by a spiritual care committee.

3963 VIII. Resources for Meetings

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3965 This section provides a selection of references to books, pamphlets and on-line documents
3966 which may be helpful to monthly meetings and their officers as they set about the tasks
3967 involved in conducting the business of the meeting. There are many such resources now
3968 available electronically and it would be pointless to reproduce those here. But it may still be
3969 useful to have a ready list of where to find such resources, when needed.

3970

3971 A. Managing Quaker Business Processes:

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- 3973 • Mathilda Navias, *Quaker Process for Friends on the Benches*. Quaker Publishing
3974 Corporation, 2012. [This is a comprehensive account of the most basic practices and
3975 procedures involved in the conduct of Quaker business. Available separately, as a
3976 pdf, is *Sample Forms, Letters, Minutes and Reports to Accompany Quaker Process
3977 for Friends on the Benches*. This includes: sample letters for such things as
3978 application for membership, transfer of membership, and a request to be married
3979 under the care of a monthly meeting; and forms to be used to simplify end-of-life
3980 planning.]
- 3981 • **Quakerbooks.org**. [An online bookstore with a listing of books and pamphlets
3982 available on such topics as: meeting for business, meeting roles (clerk, recording
3983 clerk, elders, archivists), meeting finances, meetinghouses and properties.]
- 3984 • Rosalie Bond, *Treasurer's Guide Manual*. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 2008. [This
3985 is available as a pdf from pym.org.]
- 3986 • Elizabeth Muench, *Friendly Audits: Guidance for those asked to review Quaker
3987 accounts and for those who keep them*. Quaker Press of FGC, 1990. [This is available
3988 as an eBook from quakerbooks.org.]

3989

3990 B. Nurturing the Spiritual Needs and Gifts of Members and Attenders: Between 1993 and
3991 2012, the Pastoral Care Working Group of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting published some 76
3992 editions of the *Pastoral Care Newsletter*. These are available as pdf from the Philadelphia
3993 Yearly Meeting website, pym.org. In addition, a collection of articles from the first 10 years
3994 of the *Pastoral Care Newsletter*, has been published under the title: ***Grounded in God: Care
3995 and Nurture in Friends Meetings***, edited by Patricia McBee and published by QuakerPress,
3996 2002. [This is available as an eBook from quakerbooks.org.]

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3998 C. Archiving monthly meeting records. The yearly meeting provides a link to detailed
3999 instructions for depositing meeting records in digital form at Friends Historical Library or
4000 the Haverford College Quaker Collection. [pym.org/records-services-group/]

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4002 D. Preparing Minutes.

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- Minutes of Religious Service: Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting has prepared detailed guidelines for a monthly meeting to consider in responding to a member who feels called to religious service. The three sections of this pamphlet deal with discernment of the call, oversight and support of the person who is called, and funding guidelines. One of the responsibilities assigned to the monthly meeting is to prepare a minute of religious service, or traveling minute, which would identify the nature of the proposed religious service, the kinds of support undertaking that service might entail, the formation of a support/oversight committee to work with the person involved, and a statement of the anticipated duration of the ministry.
<https://www.quakercloud.org/cloud/central-philadelphia-monthly-meeting/resources/responding-calls-ministry>.
- Minutes of Concern: Monthly meetings may be asked to consider minutes of concern relating to current issues regarding peace and social justice. Such minutes may come from an individual with a leading, or from a committee such as the peace and social concerns committee. It is helpful if a minute of concern includes a set of one or more action steps: for instance, that the minute, if approved at a meeting for business of the monthly meeting be submitted to the appropriate quarterly meeting and then, after seasoning and approval, submitted to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting for consideration and approval. But there should also be a clear statement of what each body—the monthly, quarterly and yearly meeting is being asked to do in order to support those seeking to address a concern. It is also expected that the minute will include a statement of the concern itself, the origin of the concern, and the person or committee which is seeking approval of the minute and support for whatever action steps are involved.
- Memorial Minutes: Some monthly meetings continue the practice of preparing a memorial minute on the death of a member or attender. Such minutes are focused on the contributions of that person to the life of the monthly meeting, and perhaps to the quarterly and yearly meeting and to other Quaker organizations. If the person offered vocal ministry during meetings for worship, the minute might indicate the nature of that ministry and its impact on the meeting. If the person served on committees of the monthly meeting, or as an officer, this would be noted. Though a memorial minute might indicate the surviving members of the person’s family, it is not an obituary and usually does not include statements relating to the person’s profession or activities outside the monthly meeting.

E. Answering Questions about Quaker Faith, Practice, and Witness: There are numerous websites that can be used to find answers to a wide range of questions that monthly meetings or their members and attenders may have about ‘all-things-Quaker.’ Many answers can be found at the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting website, pym.org, or the Friends General

4043 Conference website, fgcquaker.org. Other online sources for information about Quakers
4044 include:

- 4045 • [Quaker Information Center \(quakerinfo.org\)](http://quakerinfo.org)
- 4046 • [Quakerinfo.com](http://quakerinfo.com)
- 4047 • Quaker.org
- 4048 • Quakerquaker.org

4049 There is a list of current Quaker blogs available at Planet Quaker.

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4051 In addition, the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting library (located at 1515 Cherry St.,
4052 Philadelphia, 19101) is an important resource for books and other materials relating to
4053 Quakers in general and in the Philadelphia area in particular.

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