

2012 Annual Sessions

Table of Contents

1-3.....	Thursday Morning, July 26 th Session
4-6.....	Thursday Afternoon, July 26 th Session
7-8.....	Friday Morning, July 27 th Session
9-11.....	Friday Afternoon, July 27 th Session
12-13.....	Saturday Morning, July 28 th Session
14-15.....	Saturday Afternoon, July 28 th Session

332nd Annual Sessions
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Held at Arch Street Meeting House
Thursday, July 26, 2012 Morning Session

The 332nd Annual Sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends convened Thursday morning, July 26, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. at the Arch Street Meeting House in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The announced theme of our 2012 Sessions is "Living the Holy Experiment."

1. At about 10:10 the Clerk Thomas Swain (Middletown MM Concord Quarter) greeted us and told us that, as we are living the Holy Experiment, we don't know exactly what we are doing, but we are sure we know we will find our way in the Spirit. Thomas introduced himself. Others at the clerk's table introduced themselves, rising clerk Jada Jackson (Trenton MM and Burlington Meetinghouse Worship Group), alternate clerks Sallie Jones (Birmingham MM) and Steve Olshevski (Radnor MM); recording clerk Jim Herr (Lancaster MM), assisted by Jane Keller (Pennsdale MM), and General Secretary Arthur Larrabee (Central Philadelphia MM).
2. Clerk introduced a possible Epistle Committee, Richard Morse (Harrisburg MM), Deb Lyons, Paul Joyce Collins Williams (Swarthmore MM), Albertine Arora (Amsterdam MM, Netherlands YM). Meeting approved this Committee. Clerk proposed the written epistle be presented on Saturday evening, with time for changes before approval on Sunday.
3. Sallie Jones read an incoming epistle from Netherlands Yearly Meeting. They were rejoicing at the approval of a statement at the World Council of Churches that war is illegal, doing away with the concept of a "just war." The Meeting saw this as a demonstration that the still small voice of the traditional peace churches was being heard. They also called for their government to stop being pro-Israel or pro-Palestinian, but choose to be pro-justice. The Meeting heard a report from the FWCC Sixth World Gathering with great appreciation.
4. Visitors from other Yearly Meetings included Paul and Albertine Arora (Monthly Meeting of Amsterdam, Netherlands Yearly Meeting), Winifred Walker Mecherly (Milwaukee MM, Northern YM), Barry Crossno, General Secretary of FGC (Dallas MM, South Central YM), Terrence Williams, incoming Dean of Studies at Pendle Hill, Harvey Gillman (Brighton Meeting, Britain YM), Joyce Johnson Rouse (Nashville MM, Upper Appalachia YM), Tim Varner, Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), Loretta Holloway, director of advancement at Pendle Hill.
5. Clerk laid before us the following query for our consideration: "How does God call us to minister in the world?" We heard a response that called us to appreciate that as we recognize God *does* call us, we can best serve each other, the world, and God's Kingdom or the community of the Spirit. Another Friend suggested that the way we hear God's call is through that of God in each of us. Another Friend urged us to listen to our children and find inspiration through them. To give an example of the miracle of Quaker

business process, a Friend told us about Iowa Yearly Meeting's long-term struggle with consideration of a minute on same sex marriage which, over a period of two years, found acceptance. Another Friend said that the Call will transform—it is impossible to answer the call from God and remain the same. A Friend suggested the way to answer the Call is to share our divine gifts. And with this, the Clerk took up the business of Meeting.

6. The recording clerks proposed that, immediately after the meeting approves a decision, they should read back a brief statement of the decision for approval. Full minutes of the meeting will be read at the end of the business session. The gathered Friends will be asked to propose substantive changes, after which the minutes will be approved. Editorial changes and corrections will be presented to the recording clerk following the rise of meeting.

7. Paula Cell (Chestnut Hill MM), clerk of Nominating Committee, referred to the report of her committee (attached). She introduced and thanked members of her committee, some of whom were present. The committee will consider whether its charge shall include governance of Yearly Meeting, including whether the nominating committee might suggest recommending the Clerk for committees.

Meeting approved the proposed nominations for new appointment, reappointments, and resignation to Yearly Meeting Standing Committees and external organizations. **(Minute approved.)**

7. Paula then presented their recommendations for the service of Rising Clerk and Clerk, number of Alternate Clerks and Recording Clerks, and term limits. The primary change is in the selection of Rising Clerk for a one-year term and then a 3-year non-renewable term-limit for the Clerk. In response to a question to the Clerk, Thomas responded that it has taken him six years to learn to be Clerk. However, he did feel the Rising Clerk is well prepared after a year to be Clerk and that a three-year term will be quite adequate. In response to a question of the difference between a Rising Clerk and Alternate Clerk, Jada Jackson said as Rising Clerk she has been much more aware of structuring her life to take on the responsibility of being Clerk. When a Friend asked about an unexpected vacancy, Paula suggested the Nominating Committee could put forth one of the names of the Alternate Clerks to Interim Meeting for temporary appointment. A Friend urged us to recognize that the Committee has followed the Spirit in their proposal as presented. Clerk suggested that the body would still have the ability to change the rules here presented if needed. Gretchen Castle, previous Yearly Meeting Clerk, gave her full endorsement of a three year term.

The body approved the first five points of the Nominating Committee report, with the added statement that we have flexibility in extending term limits when necessary. Friends were able to approve the remainder of the points from the report, which included appointments. **(Minute approved.)**

All of the terms will be defined as beginning at the rise of these sessions of Yearly

Meeting. In our case, this is the first of August and ending on July 31. Clerk thanked Paula Cell and the Nominating Committee.

8. These minutes were read and approved.

9. We adjourned, intending to meet at 1:30 this afternoon.

Jim Herr, Recording Clerk

332th Annual Sessions
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Held at Arch Street Meeting House
Thursday July 26, 2012 Afternoon Session

The 332nd Annual Sessions of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends reconvened Thursday afternoon, July 26th, 2012 at the Arch Street Meeting House in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The announced theme of our 2012 Sessions is “Living the Holy Experiment”

1. At the appointed hour of 1:30 Friends gathered and those on the Clerk’s Table introduced themselves: Clerk Thomas Swain of Middletown Monthly Meeting (Concord Quarter), Alternate Clerks Steve Olshevski (Radnor MM) and Sallie Jones (Birmingham MM) Rising Clerk Jada Jackson (Trenton MM and Burlington Worship Group). Recording Clerks David Rose (Lehigh Valley MM) and Jane Keller (Pennsdale MM), and Arthur Larrabee (Central Philadelphia MM), General Secretary.
2. The Clerk announced the proposed agenda for this afternoon Session. There were no new visitors from other Yearly Meetings.
3. The Clerk then called us into a period of worship with the question presented before us, “How Does God Call Us to Minister in the World? What are the Challenges?” Messages responded to the challenges posed by distractions and peer pressure. We were encouraged to gather as a body and first say “yes” and also reminded that if we speak truth with love some part must die. How do we want others to see us?
4. Friends World Committee for Consultation’s Sixth World Conference of Friends Report (the first in 21 years). The Clerk reported on his own personal experiences in talking with friends from around the world who were invigorated by their attendance. George Ruben (Medford MM) introduced the Friends who were appointed by Yearly Meeting to represent us at the FWCC Annual Gathering this year in Kenya. We from PYM are only a small part of those assembled with over 100 yearly meetings represented and 900 attendees. Libby Counselman (Princeton MM) and Vanessa Julye (Central Philadelphia MM) gave a joint account of their experiences in Kenya accompanied by a video presentation. The experience was filled with fellowship, workshops, cultural exchanges and craft sales along with some high teas and flying termites. It was not free from controversy regarding issues of human rights. Libby shared what she learned about herself, Friends’ practices and projects around the world, and the effect the encounter with the poverty in the Third World had on her. Vanessa spoke of the experience of reconnecting with Friends from prior visits to Kenya and the ability to make new friends. She had the opportunity to engage with an encounter with other Friends on the issue of Gay rights, an issue that was a source of difference among those attending. Jeff Keith (Central Philadelphia MM) spoke of the unity he experienced with other Friends on the issue of non-violence even though there remained large doctrinal differences. Brenda Beadenkopf (Concord MM) spoke of the large number, and the large influence that Kenya Quakers are in that country. The controversy regarding homosexuality and the posting of a minute in support was

explained with the background of it being declared a criminal offense in Kenya and violence against its churches. George closed with the observation that Friends around the world are confronting the question “How do we live God’s Kingdom in a Broken World”.

The Clerk asked Gretchen Castle to rise and expressed the blessing, love and support from the Yearly Meeting as she will start as General Secretary of FWCC.

5. Long Range Planning Working Group Report: Clerk LRPG Thomas Hardy (Green Street MM) introduced the group that was involved with the report to be presented. (report attached) “Who is God calling us to be in the 21st Century” was the overriding question which led to the other questions: How can we be more flexible in creating our response? What is the core that must be passed on? The inter-relation of Faith, Practice, and Structure was described and explained with the assistance of a graphic presentation. Prior attempts to deal with change that were felt necessary to PYM were described as being done without taking into account that all pieces need to work together. What we have constantly said that we want are four priorities, Spiritual Growth and Renewal, Caring for our Community, Witnessing our Faith, Making Ourselves Known. He closed with describing the work that will now be undertaken by the committee to continue to listen and start to respond with short-term structural changes in response to discernment questions. The Clerk closed this portion by charging the committee, on behalf of the Yearly Meeting, to keep the body informed of the progress of the work that they are doing.

6. General Secretary Report: The Clerk expressed appreciation for all the work that Arthur Larrabee has done during the past year on behalf of the Yearly Meeting. Arthur Larrabee read from his report (report attached). Appreciation was first expressed for all the work that the staff has done on these current Annual Session. His report was divided up into two sections, one backward looking, and the other forward looking. The eighteen names of those staff members who had, or were about to be, leaving employment with PYM due to downsizing, were read for all to recognize and to acknowledge the work they did, along with two who are working at reduced hours. The report summarized the work that the staff was engage in to deal with the financial aspect of downsizing and reduced income. He described this past year as personally being the most challenging time in his entire professional career and is glad to be on the other side of what has been a difficult process. In looking forward, we are off to a good start by exceeding our annual appeal and meeting our goal for Meeting Covenants. We will be dealing with a smaller staff with the equivalent of 19 full time staff persons who will need to find new ways of dealing with areas of common concern around the Yearly Meeting. He introduced the concept of describing these areas as common “threads” with the threads being knit together through focused “e-newsletters” and “thread gathering”. As General Secretary, he is looking forward to a year in which he will be able to focus less on crisis of financial issues and more on other issues, some of which he described as continuing competing claims. He closed with the recognition that he needs to continue his work with the help of “Divine Guidance”, as he also sees the work of the entire Yearly Meeting.

7. All Ages Meeting for Business: At this time the children entered and gave a report to the work, and play, that they had been engaged in. Activities include a discussion of the gift giving of William Penn, city planning, and some insights utilizing Lenape words with more to follow tomorrow. The Clerk summarized the "Adult" business as a report to the Children's Meeting.
8. With clarification offered, the minutes were approved.
9. After announcements the meeting was adjourned at 3:50 pm.

332th Annual Sessions
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Held at Arch Street Meeting House
Friday, July 27, 2012 Morning Session

The 332nd Annual Sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends reconvened at 10:00 a.m., Friday, July 27, 2012 at the Arch Street Meeting House in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The announced theme of our 2012 Sessions is "Living the Holy Experiment."

1. Clerk Thomas Swain (Middletown MM, Concord Quarter) introduced himself and asked those at the clerk's table to introduce themselves. They included Jada Jackson (Trenton MM and Burlington Worship Group) Rising Clerk; Steve Olshevski (Radnor MM) and Sallie Jones (Birmingham MM) alternate clerks; Arthur Larrabee (Central Philadelphia MM) General Secretary of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting; Jane Keller (Pennsdale MM) recording clerk and Jim Herr (Lancaster MM) assistant recording clerk. The clerk introduced transcriber Lori Stefanowicz.

Visitors Paul and Albertine Arora of Amsterdam MM, Netherlands YM were welcomed.

2. The clerk announced a change in the agenda. This morning we will discuss the Faith and Practice Revision and the report from the Sessions Planning Group. In the afternoon, the agenda will include the Treasurer's report, the 2013 Budget and the Interim Meeting report (6.7.8)

3. Sallie Jones presented the epistle from the Religious Society of Friends in Norway. Their gathering was held May 25-28, 2012. The theme was Spiritual Gifts: Building Community. Thomas Swain attended and brought sympathy and greetings. The epistle is attached.

4. Friends then entered a period of silent worship with the focus on the query "How does God call us to minister in the World? What are the challenges?"

5. After worship, Friends returned to our business agenda. Martha Bryans (Uwchlan MM, Downingtown) clerk of the committee for the Revision of Faith and Practice addressed the body. Members of the committee were invited to the facing bench. The work of these members, Annette Benert (Lehigh Valley MM), Howard Cell (Germantown MM), Joan Broadfield (Chester MM), Ann Yasuhara (Princeton MM), and Gretchen Castle (Doylestown MM) and of former members was noted with gratitude. The work is still in the drafting and testing stage. It was noted that the committee will post on the web the versions in the present *Faith and Practice* alongside the revisions for Friends' comparison, but that will not be done until the drafts have been brought before the body.

Joan Broadfield read the one-page draft of "The Light Within" (Draft 5.31.12) to the body. The draft is attached.

Howard Cell called Friends' attention to specific queries for discussion of the draft. Friends picked partners to consider the queries. The written answers were collected by the committee. An e-mail address will be posted on the PYM website for other responses. A Friend expressed appreciation for this most important work.

6. The Clerk called attention to the report from the Sessions' Planning Group. Ken Park (Providence MM) clerk of the Sessions Planning Working Group, called the members of the committee to the facing bench. They include Lane Taylor (Plumstead MM); Paula Cell (Germantown MM); Howard Cell (Germantown MM); Hollister Knowlton (Evergreen Worship Group); Emma Leibman (Chestnut Hill MM); Triscia Coscia (Yardley MM); Christie Duncan-Tessmer (Chestnut Hill MM); and Jocelyn Park (Providence MM). Margaret Mansfield (Mt. Holly MM) and the clerk of the Young Friends Committee were thanked in absentia. Nancy Gibbs (Valley MM), Director of the Arch Street Meeting House and her staff were thanked for their help with this year's planning. The work of Clerk Thomas Swain and Alternate Clerk Sallie Jones were also noted.

We need to determine the location and the date for 2013. A short form will be sent out to gather Friends' input. We were asked to consider opening our Meetings and Quarters to traveling ministers.

Cost of Sessions came under discussion. The Sessions Planning Groups recommended to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting that the general cost of convening Annual Sessions, i.e. all costs other than accommodations and meals, be covered through the General Fund.

The costs this year were detailed. The cost of using First Reformed Church for the children's programs, the shuttle buses, the transcriber, rented chairs and space, technology and registration, financial assistance, and other items was approximately \$30,000. Children did attend for free thanks to a grant from the Education Funding Group. The price of being at DeSales is about the same. All the space and technology are already there making set up easier there.

Friends discussed the recommendation. Why pass these expenses on to all Friends? Sessions are important for in-reach and outreach and we should make it possible for as many people to come as possible. FGC tries to offer more scholarships and has a first-time attenders matching grant available. FGC matches what the individual's Meeting offers. A Friend pointed out that the first-time attenders and guests do have their fee paid here. Various costs were compared between holding Sessions in Philadelphia and at an institution like DeSales University. Many Friends felt that encouraging attendance at Annual Session is a priority.

Clerk tested the minute for approval; there was considerable support but not unity. The Clerk asked to hold over the minute. Friends approved beginning with this discussion at the meeting for business at 1:30 this afternoon.

7. The minutes were approved.

Respectfully submitted by Jane Keller, Recording Clerk
Jim Herr, assistant Recording Clerk

332nd Annual Sessions
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Held at Arch Street Meeting House
Friday, July 27, 2012 Afternoon Session

The 332nd Annual Sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends reconvened Friday afternoon, July 27, 2012 at about 1:34 at the Arch Street Meeting House in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The announced theme of our 2012 Sessions is “Living the Holy Experiment.”

1. The Clerk, Thomas Swain (Middletown MM Concord Quarter), greeted us and gave a brief rundown of our agenda for the afternoon.
2. Visitors from other Yearly Meetings included Barry Crossno of South Central Yearly Meeting, General Secretary of Friends General Conference (FGC) and Gabriel Ehri, North Pacific Yearly Meeting, currently attending Chestnut Hill MM.
3. Clerk laid before us the following query for our consideration: “How does God call us to minister in the world? What are the challenges?”

A Friend asked us to consider the *joys* of ministry in truth and love. Another Friend suggested there are unpredictable ways to minister, and she told us of the healing she experienced. We were urged by another Friend to search for the truth and speak it in love to each other. Telling us about a crisis in her family, a Friend told us that gladness and joy need to be found in the face of challenges in the world especially as we consider our great privilege. A Friend quoted Isaac Penington to remind us that we can work together to provide alternatives to the oppression and difficulties in the world around us with love and joy and strength. And with this, the Clerk invited us to take up the business of Meeting.

4. In our morning session we considered a minute from the PYM Sessions Working Group which addressed charging fees for attendance at PYM Sessions. Clerk had asked a small ad hoc committee of Arthur Larrabee, Jackie Bowers, and Gretchen Castle to prepare a new minute on this subject to reflect considerations from the morning.

In our discernment, there was a spirit of affirmation that Annual Sessions are a core purpose of our Yearly Meeting. In this light, we want to do all we can to make our Sessions as accessible and free of barriers as possible. We want to come, and to invite others to come with us, without concern for cost. We ask that General Services Standing Committees, Financial Stewardship and PYM Sessions Working Group come under the weight of this concern as they prepare future budgets.

We approved this minute. A Friend urged us to consider our carbon footprint when planning for Sessions. And another felt heartened to realize that, as we look to spend money for Annual Sessions, Friends are recognizing that the money must be taken from something else.

5. Ron Ploeg (Willistown MM), Treasurer, and Andrew Anderson (MM Friends of Philadelphia), clerk of Financial Stewardship Committee came forward to present and

discuss our budget.

Ron gave us an overview of the difficulty over the past year to resolve great financial challenges and to come up with a sustainable budget. He showed us the balance sheet as of May 31, 2012, and pointed out the fact that most of the money showing on the books is in restricted funds and is mostly unavailable for General Fund usage. When he showed us a statement of income and expense for FY 2012, he was able to tell us that we went from a projected loss of \$225,000 to a positive figure of \$35,000 in five months. Ron then reviewed activities that were accomplished to move toward financial wellness. These included creation of clear boundaries between unrestricted and restricted funds, establishment of approval procedures for moving money between reserve accounts and general fund and creation of an operating reserve to handle cash flow issues. Still in progress are creation and passage of a sustainable budget, inclusion of a contingency reserve to protect against income insecurity, the monitoring of actual financial performance throughout the year to make adjustments as needed, the improvement of financial reporting, and engagement in long range planning.

Clerk said the Financial Stewardship Committee has been extremely active—meeting at least twice a month, sometimes more—to create a budget. Andrew then gave great appreciation to Lola George, Jack Mahon, Jackie Bowers, the Clerk, and Arthur Larrabee. He also thanked all those here who have come through with our contributions to make this a positive year. Andrew told us that we are a spiritual people having a financial experience, not a financial people having a spiritual experience, and we reflect many theologies but just one budget. He then told us about some of the processes involved with creation of the budget. The numbers used have been as accurate as possible. To find the budget number for this year, the committee used the concept of a three-year projection. Recognizing we needed to make hard choices, the committee decided to make this year the one in which the pain is experienced rather than stretching it over several years. This meant we went from 40 full time employee equivalents 2 years ago to 19 now. Andrew led us in a moment of recognizing those real people who served us with their best and have had to be let go. There is also a need to remove from the PYM budget the portion devoted to the Burlington Meeting House. We are now in a transition year to find a better way to use Burlington.

Clerk recognized in meeting great appreciation for the work the Financial Stewardship Committee has done.

In response to a question about the use of Burlington for Young Friends, Linell McCurry said it is not being used as a rental facility at this time because there are too many expenses, including staff. During this transition year, the base cost of the building will be determined. A Friend explained that the committee to consider the future of Burlington is working to find a positive way forward. A Young Friend told us that many in her age group hope to again be able to meet there. Another Friend gave us a list of the many Quaker groups who have used the Conference Center. And another drew our attention to the Burlington Meeting House and Conference Center endowment that is close to \$900,000. A Friend who is a member of the Burlington Worship Group said the group would continue to meet, whether or not they have the meeting house available to them.

A Friend asked about the Quarterly Meeting staff. Arthur Larrabee explained that the

Financial Stewardship Committee decided the YM could no longer afford this portion of the budget.

A Friend urged us, and the Long Range Planning Committee, to develop a plan that considers some of the bigger questions. Andrew explained that creation of this budget, reducing expenses to “get the ship off the rocks,” used God’s reset button. It is now up to us to decide where to sail. Another Friend suggested that we might find many ways to grow.

Clerk urged us to consider that this budget is extremely realistic, sustainable, and a good basis for the future. **He then heard that meeting approved the budget.**

6. The young children joined us and we heard from Ben Camp and the three groups of young children. The youngest group made more gifts similar to those used as communication in both directions between William Penn and the Indians. The middle group continued on their project of making a city out of cardboard. And the oldest group traveled back in time to 1750. Tomorrow the group will go to Pennsbury Manor and will not join us after business meeting.

7. These minutes were read and approved.

8. We adjourned, intending to meet at 10:00 a.m. Saturday, July 28, 2012.

Jim Herr, Recording Clerk

Jane Keller, Assistant Recording Clerk

332th Annual Sessions
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Held at Arch Street Meeting House
Saturday, July 28, 2012 Morning Session

The 332nd Annual Sessions of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends reconvened Saturday morning, July 28th, 2012 at the Arch Street Meeting House in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The announced theme of our 2012 Sessions is “Living the Holy Experiment.”

1. A little past the appointed hour of 10:00 a.m. the Clerk rose and asked those at the Clerk’s Table to introduce themselves: Clerk Thomas Swain (Middletown MM, Concord Quarter); Alternate Clerks Steve Olshevski (Radnor MM) and Sallie Jones (Birmingham MM); Rising Clerk Jada Jackson (Trenton MM and Burlington Worship Group); Recording Clerks David Rose (Lehigh Valley MM) and Jane Keller (Pennsdale MM); and General Secretary Arthur Larrabee (Central Philadelphia MM).
2. Friends from other Yearly Meetings re-introduced themselves with the additions of Jay Marshall (New Castle MM, Indiana YM) and Scilla Wahrhafting (Pittsburg MM, Erie YM). The Clerk read a Traveling Minute for Scilla from Pittsburg MM. Endorsing her Minute was approved.
3. Sallie Jones read the Epistle from Pacific YM that is attached. PYM Friends resonated with many of the conflicts and tensions reported by Pacific YM.
4. Prior to settling into worship, the Clerk reviewed the agenda items to be discussed. He commented on the trust that he felt yesterday when trying to find clarity with an issue that the Session was dealing with and yet felt a fear of that trust. He asked the body to question whether they might also have a fear that arises when we experience the God in us. He then restated the query that has opened each session: “How Does God Call Us to Minister in the World? What are the Challenges?” Friends then settled into a period of worship with many messages that responded to the statement made by Clerk.
5. Interim Meeting (Report) The Clerk introduced the topic with some background regarding the establishment of the Elders. Allison Anderson (Central Philadelphia MM) read the report that is attached with some clarification on their role provided by Dana Houghton (Mullica Hill MM). She repeated the observation from yesterday that we are a spiritual body which has had a financial experience and reviewed the issues that have been addressed at Interim Meeting and the outcomes, both Spiritual and Financial, of having come through this experience. Much more Trust is present, both experienced at Interim Meeting and evident in the way we have addressed issues at these Sessions.
6. The Clerk said that this is the time for us in Session to consider topics that fall under the area of “Renewing”. The General Secretary has been under the weight of creating a presentation on “What We Hold in Common”. Arthur Larrabee read his presentation which is attached. He spoke of the difficulty that Friends have had in defining themselves in other than terms of what we are not and offered nine separate statements

of beliefs that he presented to the body for response and discernment. Following the presentation, the Clerk asked the body to consider the following questions: How might this be helpful to us? Should it be referred to a Standing Committee for further work and discernment? Can we say as a body how close these statements come to our own understanding? Numerous expressions of gratitude were given to Arthur for having written this as part of the following responses:

- *One other way forward if the body is so moved, can accept it with celebration.*
- *It would be helpful if it were available for discussion by Monthly Meetings.*
- *We are asked how we minister in the world, not to the world. Grateful to have words to describe what we feel so deeply.*
- *Appreciation expressed to Arthur for presenting to us clearly a personally held belief. On how it will help us: As a member of Outreach, concerned that it help us keep people out. This Friend did not feel that we should approve it as a body.*
- *Document has proven helpful in an outreach event where volunteers are asked often what Friends Believe.*
- *If we have nothing to say, we are lost. If all you can say is the Inner Light, you are not saying much.*
- *We need to speak our Truth so that others can recognize it.*
- *Posing a question about Quaker's beliefs limits the answers to those that have to do with belief. Others questions about belief come from an experience where that is what is most important.*
- *Great beginning stage. We need to limit this statement to Philadelphia Quakers. Gender neutral language is important. God as a term has cultural connotations of masculinity.*
- *Inner conflict is sometimes experienced, which is likely shared with other Friends. What we believe is a large part of the discernment of becoming a Friend. This has been asked when living abroad about what do Quakers believe and one Friend has formulated a response that is very similar to the ones presented. While such statements from the group can be helpful, another Friend has benefited from needing to find her own words.*
- *What brings us together is more than just a creed or belief.*

The Clerk acknowledged that he was interrupting a discussion that needs to be continuing. It will be continued in the afternoon session, and more immediately, over lunch.

7. Following Announcements, the Clerk adjourned the Session at 12:10 p.m., intending to reconvene at 1:30 p.m. this afternoon.

David Rose,
Recording Clerk

332nd Annual Sessions
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Held at Arch Street Meeting House
Saturday, July 28, 2012 Afternoon Session

The 332nd Annual Sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends reconvened Saturday afternoon, July 28, 2012 at about 1:35 at the Arch Street Meeting House in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The announced theme of our 2012 Sessions is "Living the Holy Experiment."

1. The Clerk, Thomas Swain (Middletown MM Concord Quarter), greeted us and expressed appreciation for our ability to follow directions. There was joy and laughter. And the Clerk laid before us the query for our consideration: "How does God call us to minister in the world? What are the challenges?"

In response to a Friend who asked us if there is anything for which we would go to jail, a Friend responded that she would go to jail for the belief that there is that of God in every person. Another Friend urged us to rely on our individual experience of God within and let it shine. A Friend said since she retired and asked God for direction, she has felt constantly guided, though at times she has felt the rug pulled out from under her when she has chosen her own direction. Another Friend said we are called to minister in the world with the added dimension of our Quaker ancestors and generations in the future. Several Friends spoke to the statement of Quaker belief from the morning, including one who said she prays for that of God in others, another who said this may be part of the *Faith and Practice* revision, and one who said the statement seemed to come as a leading from Arthur Larrabee. A Friend then urged us to smell the fragrance of the Holy Spirit in our midst.

Clerk asked us whether we needed to continue to consider the statement from this morning. A Friend said it is important to make it clear that this is not a theological or creedal statement. Another Friend said she cannot forget the large number of members of PYM who are not here and it seems unreasonable to send this document out as the beliefs of "Philadelphia Friends." Another said it might be better to speak of experience rather than belief. A Friend expressed hope that this document would stimulate everyone in YM over the next year to explore and recognize what we have in common and in difference, and to not use the document as an alternative to doing the daily work of finding our relationship to God within.

A Friend stood without being recognized. Jada Jackson urged us to hold him and each other in the light and truth.

Clerk proposed a minute to pass this statement of belief on to the Worship and Care Standing Committee. In response to a Friend who is concerned that this cannot be used without consideration of members not here, Clerk said he is not asking us to accept this document, but to send it to a committee for further seasoning. A Friend urged us to recognize that we are all ministers. Another Friend suggested that this not be released at this time, but be seasoned through Central Philadelphia MM and Philadelphia Quarter. Another Friend expressed concern that this seems to be on a path toward

approval. As clerk of Worship and Care Standing Committee, Ben Lloyd said the Committee may or may not consider this document, but it is in the world now for anyone and everyone to consider. His sense was that this needs to rest. Clerk agreed and expressed gratitude to Arthur for his work.

2. We settled into worship from which Tom Hardy (Green Street MM), clerk of the Long Range Planning Group, referred us to the Group's report distributed earlier and to its website. In order to do the work of planning, the group began with the question "Who is God calling us to be in the 21st Century?" Tom presented a diagram, an incomplete triangle with "faith," "practice," and "structure" at the corners. All the pieces work together, sometimes well, sometimes not so well. At times PYM is perceived as a faith community, at other times as an organizational structure. The Group is determined to consider both parts. Melanie Douty Snipes asked us "what do you need as an individual to support the practice of your faith?" We broke into small groups to discuss our replies. Those who were able to do so, texted their answers. At the end of about 10 minutes, Tom said this is just a beginning. Many more responses are requested on the PYM/Long Range Planning website or to PYMLRPG@gmail.com. Tom said Long Range Planning is not about changing the names of committees, it is a request for a prophetic voice from within our community to be heard. The question is "how bold can we be?" And with this we settled into a time of worship sharing. A Friend reminded us that prophets are not appreciated, but there is a power that comes to us, when we have given up hope and feel "all shut up," that speaks to us in love. Another Friend expressed great appreciation for the group's work and the fact that the diagram is similar to a musical triangle, which makes a beautiful tone because it is not complete. A Friend said the main thing that leapt out to him from the query was the need for community. Another urged us not to take ourselves too seriously—it is not about us, or even the Religious Society of Friends, but about trusting the deep, bottomless Spirit and trusting, in utter humility, that we can see God.

The clerk expressed gratitude for the work of the Long Range Planning Group.

3. These minutes were read and approved.

4. We adjourned, intending to meet at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, July 29, 2012.

Jim Herr, Recording Clerk

Jane Keller, Assistant Recording Clerk