

July 29 – evening

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
329th Annual Session
July 29th – August 2nd, 2009
DeSales University

Wednesday Evening, July 29, 2009

The 329th Annual Sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends convened on Fourth Day (Wednesday) evening, Seventh Month (July) 29, 2009, at DeSales University in Center Valley, PA. The announced theme of both our 2009 sessions is “Living Up to the Light.” The Meeting convened at the appointed hour and settled into open worship.

The Clerk was Thomas Swain, Middletown Monthly Meeting, Concord Quarterly Meeting. The Alternate Clerks were Patricia McBee (Central Philadelphia MM), Dana Kester-McCabe (Wicomico River MM) and Mark Myers (London Grove MM). The Alternate Clerk for the evening was Mark Myers. Recording clerks were Jane Keller (Pennsdale MM) and Jim Herr (Lancaster Meeting).

Also at the Clerk’s desk was Arthur Larrabee, General Secretary of PYM. The clerk opened with words of welcome and gratitude for the fellowship we shared. Several Friends spoke prepared words of welcome and the body responded with “Welcome.” Clerk asked us to join in thanks for our relationships that sustain us, our spirits and our families. Again, individual friends presented lists of people and gifts of life and creation we are thankful for. Friends told the persons next to them what they were thankful for.

A short video, an excerpt from the film called “Home,” was presented about the changes on our planet since the widespread use of fossil fuels over the last 50 years, huge increases in population and urban living, and the industrialization of agriculture.

Patricia McBee, sporting green hair, was joined by Anne Moore (Valley MM), John Lavin (Birmingham MM) and Jenna Lombardo (Uwchlan MM) to introduce our celebration of earthcare and to explain what Friends are doing to respond to the need for earthcare. It was titled the “Right Relationship Show”, subtitled the Oprah Show, Quaker style, and was multi-generational.

George Schaefer on guitar, Kathy Singer on accordion, Joan Broadfield and Amy Brimmer, vocalists (“the house band”) led the body in singing.

Pat asked the audience to respond to a number of interview questions. Query 1 was on Grounding and Clarification, what inspired Friends to take up the concern; the second was on Developing Models and Bearing Witness, how Friends have changed behaviors; the third was on Social Change and Non-Violent Reform. Again several Friends shared their stories of changes they have implemented in their communities and shared their understanding that individual

simplicity is not enough. Community action is needed. Each section was punctuated with a song led by the “house band” and sung by the body. Each of the Friends on the panel also offered answers and ideas.

Pat made a closing statement, highlighting the accomplishments of the “greening” of Friends Center. The EPA and NY Port Authority came to examine the building’s system. The EPA wants to use the roof as a test study.

Pat announced there would be two speakers: Melanie Douty-Snipes in the Dining Hall and Peter Brown in the plenary space.

Pat then led the group in “The Montreal Chant.” While all chanted, Melanie Douty-Snipes led a conga line of adults and children out of the room and the body settled into silent worship.

The clerk then introduced Michael Gagné (Central Philadelphia MM) who introduced Prof. Peter Brown of McGill University, Montreal Monthly Meeting and the Moral Economy Project. Michael’s hope was that Peter’s words would inspire our spirits as Peter is one who “lets his life speak.” Among other accomplishments, he is the coauthor of *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy*.

Peter presented a slide show entitled “Could This Be A Moment of Grace?” a time to find a new, or renewed, human-earth relationship. Peter explained how we are in a world-wide economic system that is laying waste to the earth. He first gave examples of wrong relationships, stating we are now in a situation that could be catastrophic for millions of people.

He asked how we can get into right relationship and suggested four ways: 1: To understand how we got on the wrong track; 2: To re-envision what it means to be human, 3: To rethink economics and government and 4: To take steps to develop a whole-earth economy.

He gave an historical overview discussing how humans came to believe the earth needed to be transformed to suit our needs.

To get on a more promising track, we need to rethink the economics of industrialized countries. We need to reimagine our relationship with life in the world. He reminded us that we participate in the creative process of the universe and outlined the features of this process. The universe is seeking equilibrium in temperature and moving in the direction of more complexity. The universe is constantly evolving but has no destination. We have a responsibility in the cosmos to live so the earth can flourish. But we have substituted the concept of citizenship with that of consumer. While science has developed exponentially, our assumptions about science have not changed for 200 years and we need to change those assumptions. The goals of our economy should not be for increased growth in wealth, but for flourishing human and natural communities, taking into account the earth’s living systems. We need an ethic of respect and reciprocity. We need to recognize that the basic unit of wealth is photosynthesis. We are undercutting the ability of the earth to support complex systems. Our present economy is overwhelming the earth’s capacity to support life.

We need to move some earth functions, such as the atmosphere of the climate and the oceans, to the control of a global group that has the world's well-being in mind, not that of individual nations. He suggested trusts for the protection and restoration of the earth and a strengthened World Court. In short, we need government and economics in right relationship with the Earth. He closed with a visual image of a new spruce growing out of the old spruce in the woodland as a moment of grace.

The Clerk thanked Peter Brown and the body settled into silent worship.

The minutes of the session were read. Then Recording Clerk Jim Herr returned with a summary of the presentation by Melanie Douty-Snipes. The summary of her presentation is below.

Tom Hoopes introduced Melanie Douty-Snipes, telling everyone that her brand of Faith and Practice mostly involves having fun through organizing and exciting people. Tom also mentioned her success at strengthening the largest farm in southern Bucks County.

Melanie told us she wanted to start off by making a web of life. With some volunteers, she handed out name cards to each of the many people in the group. The group then separated into plants, mammals, birds, reptiles, insects, fish, and the sun. Everyone could see that the sun was the center of everything, and the plants made the oxygen for beings that move. The young friend with the tag that said "sun" held a large ball of yarn. He passed it to a tomato plant. The tomato chose a human being to eat it, so the yarn ball went to the human. From there it went to a worm. And so on. Eventually nearly everyone in the group was connected either to something it eats, or something that eats it. When the wolf was connected, we all howled. When the red fox was connected, Melanie told us that the fox on the Snipes farm has been very busy eating the chickens; "everything has to eat" she said. Melanie showed that if something happens to one of the species, such as the mouse, everything is affected.

We sang "All God's Critters."

Melanie then showed us some slides from the Farm School at Snipes, a new endeavor on the farm that has been in the family for 200 years. There are many volunteers and young Friends who help. There have been challenges—1,700 tomato plants had to be destroyed because of a blight. But there have been wonderful successes—the cider barn and a tractor are solar powered. There were delightful pictures of all sorts of things, including the red fox and Melanie's father in law, Sam Snipes, at nearly 90 years old, continuing the tradition of driving a horse and carriage in lower Bucks County. She described the farm as a campus, and also said they take the farm to schools. She also invited everyone to come and visit and/or volunteer.

Corrections to the minutes were given and the minutes approved.

Announcements followed. Friends were invited to meet with Peter Brown in a question-and-answer period following the session. Friends then adjourned to meet again Fifth Day morning at 10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Jane Keller, Recording Clerk

July 30 – evening

The 329th Sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends reconvened on Fifth Day, Seventh Month 30, 2009, at 7 p.m. at DeSales University, Center Valley, PA. The Clerk was Thomas Swain of Middletown Monthly Meeting, Concord Quarterly Meeting. The Alternate Clerk was Mark Myers of London Grove Monthly Meeting. Recording Clerks were Jane Keller, Pennsdale Monthly Meeting, and Jim Herr, Lancaster Monthly Meeting.

Meeting began with a period of silent worship.

Visitors from other Yearly Meetings were recognized: Scilla Wahrhaftig, Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting, Lake Erie Yearly Meeting, AFSC Program Director for Pennsylvania and Carl Magruder from Grass Valley Monthly Meeting, CA, Pacific Yearly Meeting.

An epistle from North Pacific Yearly Meeting of Friends was read by Patricia McBee, of Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting. The theme of the Yearly Meeting was “Answering to That of God in Everyone.” We must answer to what our faith tells us is there. The Yearly Meeting is continuing with its efforts of restructuring to support and encourage Friends to deepen their spiritual centers and move into Spirit-led action. Friends approved a three-year experiment of adding one day to Annual Sessions. Two seasoned minutes were approved, one on the war on drugs and one on global climate change. The epistle noted that the young people developed a strong community and learned a strong lesson in conflict resolution and reconciliation. Friends were invited to join them in speaking truth and love to ourselves and to each other.

The Young Friends of North Pacific Yearly Meeting added their own epistle, noting that the Annual Session was an exciting and successful one for them. They recognized a need to strengthen their community and deepen connections with older Friends. They continued to explore the eternal questions of who they are, what they seek, and where they are going.

Carl Magruder of Grass Valley Monthly Meeting, Pacific Yearly Meeting, introduced the speaker, Keith Helmuth of the Quaker Institute for the Future, by singing the story of John Henry who stood for a principle, opposing what he perceived was wrong, even unto death. Keith has labored like John Henry to call attention to the issue of earthcare and has acted, like John Woolman, with radical love.

He entitled his talk “Behind the Budget: are we stuck with this monetary system?” His talk will be available on the PYM website. He began by stating that budgets are moral documents; they tell the tale of our commitments. He outlined three points: Money is a license to intervene in the earth’s ecological budget; from the standpoint of earth, the unlimited growth of money is a disaster. Second, our current system is entirely a human invention and can be changed; the design is an historical invention and can be altered to restore ecosystem integrity. Third, money and our system are a technology of social trust; access to money is essential for access to the means of life, and this system has disastrously failed.

The monetary system needs its platform of operation redesigned. New systems of adaptation will need to be worked out. There will have to be a system for the fair distribution of goods and services, but it must not rely on perpetual growth. Our high energy and consumer economy is larger than our earth can sustain. The negative consequences outweigh the positive consequences. Can Friends now help design a new monetary order that will help sustain the world? We need to love the world with renewed spiritual vitality. He encouraged Friends to undertake this task.

A brief period of worship followed his presentation.

The Clerk then affirmed that Keith is a “pile-driving” man. The Clerk then introduced our speech-to-text writer, Rebecca Tallarico.

The Clerk then called on TylaAnn Burger, PYM Treasurer, and a member of Green Street Monthly Meeting to give her report. Friends were urged to read the written report which had additional details. She thanked the staff members who helped her compile this report.

She noted major changes: a drop in invested funds and a marvelous gift, the Greenleaf Fund, a \$6.1 million fund restricted to those who are aging. Greenleaf was an assisted living residence in Moorestown that closed; the sale of the property and assets were given to PYM.

Over the last two fiscal years, we have lost \$14 million in valuation. There will be \$770,000 less in income for future budgets. The restricted funds were half of our funds in 2006. The number of unrestricted funds has improved since then, but the restricted funds have grown even further, a concern for the Treasurer.

She then explained major budget items: Annual Fund and Covenant run between 35% and 40% of our income. Annual Fund is \$108,000 below budget, still above what might have been expected. Our community did the best that it could this year. Covenant reached 99% of its goal. The end deficit of the Peace Gathering was only \$27,000. We had 98% of our income this year.

PYM expenses were then explained. There is a net deficit of \$14,309. However, our unrestricted funds deficit, our General Fund, is about \$247,000 or 8.7%. This is the second year we have run a six figure deficit; last year’s was larger. The deficit was made up by using reserves: the General Investment Fund and the Capital Reserve. Our average monthly spending is \$200,000 and our major financial reserve is less than that. At this point, both reserves are significantly depleted.

The reserves worked; our activities continue. But they are now at a level that is critical for PYM. There can be no unbudgeted expenditures this year.

The Treasurer saw no change coming that would require a new way of investing our money. The Clerk and body thanked her, and the body accepted the report with thanks.

The Clerk introduced Jack Mahon of Woodstown Monthly Meeting to present the PYM budget for FY2010. He called attention to news reports about the serious deficits facing non-profits whose demands are up and gifts are down.

He noted good work has been done in a difficult year. In considering personnel, some positions were eliminated and adjusted, but adjustments were conservative. In 2007, we began a policy of de-designating certain funds and charging a standard administration fee. This policy, while giving us more flexibility, did negatively impact our granting groups.

He pointed out some major items of interest. Our Annual Fund goal is \$35,000 below last year's. Our budgeted Covenant is \$14,000 below last year's. Both of these mean a \$50,000 drop in income. Capital Reserve Fund will not be funded. All sources of income are budgeted lower than last year. However, we have a very workable budget. He thanked Friends and Meetings again. He predicted a challenging but manageable 12 months.

Clerk reminded the body that it is our budget and is achievable if we know it in ourselves.

The Treasurer explained some differences between her report and the proposed budget that are caused by different methods of listing expenses.

Several Friends expressed concerns about the depletion of our reserves. One Friend urged that we take action early on if we see another budget deficit in the offing and expressed concern about the Friends Fiduciary. He was reassured that conservative numbers were used in compiling the budget, and the Treasurer expected numbers to come in that would be better than originally anticipated. Another Friend urged us to take our budget commitment back to our Meetings. Another Friend reminded us that the growth of money is not sustainable and asked us "where is our strength?"

Friends approved the budget for 2010 and the Clerk heard approval.

A Friend remarked we could return to the Monthly Meetings with optimism because we are not asking Friends to provide money to reduce the deficit and we have a budget that will not reduce services. Another Friend with expertise in non-profit organizations, called the work done by staff "an outstanding job." And he noted we need to trust them to manage future problems.

Another Friend noted that we are not ready yet to take a new approach to our economy but we will. Another Friend was troubled that we are still hoping for an upturn in the economy in spite of what such an upturn will mean to the earth. She noted Friends could be leading the world by listening to our Inner Guide. We need to set up a committee to look at how we can change how our investments are made and where our income comes from so we are not burdening the earth. The Clerk acknowledged that there is work for us to do and there are those who will not let this work get by.

Friends approved these minutes with thanks.

July 30 – morning

Friends assembled to participate in the 5th day morning session of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 7th month 30th, 2009. The Meeting settled into worship. Out of the worship we were asked to consider the benefits of Jubilee and the forgiveness of debt. Noting that he understands the earth and the larger creation to be the “body of God” a Friend asked us to come to the rescue of God, our spiritual center, our planet. Dear God, help us to see the connections between our different solutions and their connection to our one solution.

Clerks Table Recognized: The Clerk, Thomas Swain of Middletown Monthly Meeting/Concord Quarter, called us out of worship for a short break after which he introduced those at the Clerk’s table: the Alternate Clerks, Dana Kester-McCabe of Wicomico River Monthly Meeting and Patricia McBee of Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, Recording Clerks, Rich Ailes of Middletown Monthly Meeting/Concord Quarter and Jane Keller of Pennsdale Monthly Meeting, and Arthur Larrabee, PYM General Secretary, Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting.

The Clerk asked for visitors to introduce themselves. Keith Helmuth of New Brunswick Monthly Meeting/Canada Yearly Meeting, Eleanor Harris, Minneapolis Monthly Meeting/Northern Yearly Meeting, Carl Magruder, Grass Valley Monthly Meeting/Pacific Yearly Meeting, and Ron and Judith Inskeep of Purchase Monthly Meeting/New York Yearly Meeting are in attendance. The Clerk also introduced and thanked Florita Hobough who is providing the speech-to-text service on screen this morning.

Dana Kester-McCabe read to us the epistle from Iowa Yearly Meeting Conservative 131st Annual Session held at Scattergood Friends School in 2008. Friends there struggled throughout their sessions with their response to those in their area who had suffered from social and environmental disaster. They remembered the words of Jesus: “In as much as ye have done unto one of the least of my brethren, ye have done unto me” (Matthew 25:40).

The clerk asked for approval to prepare an epistle from these sessions to go out to Friends everywhere. This was approved. The following Friends came forward and were approved to serve on this committee: Dan Turner of Abington Monthly Meeting, Jonathan Snipes of Fallsington Monthly Meeting, and Anne Yasuhara of Princeton Monthly Meeting.

Clerk called on Sallie Jones of Birmingham Monthly Meeting to present the report from the Yearly Meeting Governance Implementation Committee. This committee was charged at Yearly Meeting sessions in 3rd month, 2009 with bringing recommendations to our summer sessions to implement the Governance proposals approved at 3rd Month sessions. The committee consisted of Jacqueline Bowers (Fallsington MM), Sallie Jones (Birmingham MM), Christopher Lucca (Yardley MM), Christopher Nicholson (Germantown MM), Thomas Swain (Middletown MM), Elizabeth Higginson (Wellsboro MM), Robert Greene (Princeton MM), and Arthur Larrabee (Central Philadelphia MM).

Sallie provided some history of the Governance review process which originally grew out of the recommendations of the Transition Group which had dealt with the transition from our last

General Secretary to our present one. The Governance review process lasted over a year and produced recommendations that were reviewed by Interim Meeting, our Standing Committees and many of our Monthly Meetings. Twelve carefully seasoned recommendations were presented to Yearly Meeting. Eleven were approved. One recommendation to rename Interim Meeting was withdrawn from consideration. The implementation proposals were presented. Some have been implemented already. Interim Meeting is now meeting on Saturdays and will continue to meet on Saturdays through 2010. We currently have one clerk presiding over both Annual Sessions and Interim Meeting. A communication plan for improving communications between Yearly Meeting constituencies has been initiated by the General Secretary.

Three new implementation proposals were also presented. A Faith and Practice Revision committee needs to be formed to deal with these changes. New job descriptions for Clerk and Alternate Clerk need to be entered into the Nominating Committee Handbook. The clerk should appoint a committee to develop job descriptions for elders which also need to be entered into the Nominating Committee handbook.

After the presentation the Clerk called us into worship to consider the recommendations. Concerns regarding the proposals were then raised:

The Agenda committee needs to be mindful of input from the Yearly Meeting Sessions Planning group regarding the annuals sessions agenda.

What is to be done with the three at-large Interim Meeting members named by Nominating Committee?

Elders are to be appointed by Nominating Committee in consultation with the clerk and approved by Interim Meeting or Yearly Meeting in session using the normal nominating process.

Meeting approved changing the term “named” to nominated in the proposal for selecting elders.

Will the Faith and Practice Revision committee be charged with making more changes than those necessitated by the proposals approved today? Yes, this committee will be able to make other necessary changes to Faith and Practice.

The proposal for selecting Alternate Clerks seems to allow the possibility of no Alternate Clerks being appointed. It also states the Alternate Clerks would be named, not nominated. The proposal should read that at least one Alternate Clerk will be nominated to serve, with the term “named” being changed to nominated.

A concern was raised that many of the assumed responsibilities which our clerks now take on are not in Faith and Practice and need to be clearly delineated there.

Are decisions at Interim Meeting to be made by named representatives only or made by all attending members? In rare circumstances the clerk may discern the need to have only named representatives make a decision, but it is common practice in our Yearly Meeting that all attending members at Interim Meeting are asked to approve decisions.

The clerk tested to see if the Meeting was ready to approve the proposals however the Meeting was still unsettled and the process of dealing with concerns continued.

We may be looking at the possibility of Interim Meeting having fewer meetings. Will this reduce our opportunities for spiritual experiences and decrease the vitality that Friends get from attending Interim Meeting?

Our smaller Meetings sometimes have difficulty providing a named representative to Interim Meeting. Is a named representative a requirement? The Yearly Meeting has found our common practice of having named representatives attend Interim Meeting to be very beneficial however a Monthly Meeting can choose to have a temporary Interim Meeting representative if needed, even for just one meeting.

There seemed to be some unease about the responsibility to involve both visiting and named representatives in all decisions of Interim Meeting. It was approved to refer this to Interim Meeting for further discernment. [recording Clerk's note: This issue was resolved later in this Meeting for Business, please see further along in these minutes].

It seems unnecessary to have the terminology "training of its representatives" in the training and orientation proposal for Interim Meeting. It would be more acceptable to change that to "Friends orientation and training". But some in attendance found this suggestion to vague. Friends approved to change "training of its representatives" to "training of representatives" in the proposal.

Part of the job description for Clerks and Alternate Clerks should include their tracking of time and travel.

One Friend settled us into worshipful silence with this: We need to be mindful of our quest for trust and discipline. We are called to trust one another and our clerks in this process. We are called to listen the the guidance of the Spirit as we listen carefully to one another.

After this silence the Clerk asked if the Meeting was ready to approve these Governance Implementation proposals as amended. The Meeting approved.

Suzanne Day rose to ask the Meeting to reconsider its referral to Interim Meeting the concern that some decisions at Interim Meeting may need to be made by named representatives only. We must be considerate of the workload which Interim Meeting is currently carrying. It is her understanding that the only time this has come up involved the legal responsibility of Interim Meeting to stand behind a statement regarding taxes and war tax refusal. She is asking us to trust the Clerk in those limited situations where he or she may be called upon to ask only named representatives to approve a statement or proposal. Chris Mahon, former Clerk of Interim Meeting, confirmed the only time this had ever occurred in her experience was when our lawyer, advising us on the issue of providing taxes to the government of an employee who was a war tax resister, instructed us that Interim Meeting needed to have its named membership approve its statement on the issue.

The Clerk then asked the Meeting, “Friends, are we willing to approve the recommendation that our Friend has laid before us? To follow the practice that Meeting decisions are open to all present, except in cases where the Clerk discerns the importance of having a representative body make that decision?” This was approved. The session then broke for a brief period of time.

Upon returning to the silence, the Clerk introduced Patricia Finley, Old Haverford Monthly Meeting and Clerk of the Peace and Concerns Standing Committee, and Therese Miller, of Lewisburg Monthly Meeting and one of the central organizers of this year’s Heeding God’s Call, a Gathering On Peace, to present a report on the work that has been happening as a result of that Gathering. Therese informed us that the purpose of the gathering was to: Inspire hope, Raise voices and Take action. All are meant to invigorate our ongoing commitment to our witness on Peace. Therese asked us to view the beautifully threaded tapestries which are on display in this sessions hallway created by her mother Terri Miller in response to the enthusiasm generated at the Gathering. Therese then led us in singing the invocation from the Gathering “Come by Here Oh Lord.”

Patricia Finley then reported on the Peace and Concerns Standing Committee work to support the continuing work of the Gathering. The Standing Committee is pursuing a permanent interaction with conference participants; establishing a Working Group to further these concerns, and promoting a new supporting Gathering website. The Standing Committee sponsored a Yearly Meeting-wide conference in May to discuss and support the Gathering’s work. Of the 21 action items to come out of the Gathering, the most critical one, the one that seems to touch all other action areas is number 2: “Building Community that supports Radical Christian Living and Prophetic Witness (What would Jesus Do).” The Primary focus to come out of the Gathering was ending gun violence. PYM is currently part of a multi-dimensional, interfaith organization that includes different classes and cultures whose purpose is to end hand gun violence. The group has successfully organized several events supporting this work since the end of the conference.

Therese Miller spoke about the new website to be turned on August 1st. The website will provide an interactive experience for all those interested in promoting the 21 action areas to come out of the Gathering. We were asked to participate in this experience even if only as a “lurker”. Even “lurkers” will eventually be enticed by the energy and activity that will be available on the site. There will be room for comments, documents, photos, audio files, YouTube videos, and chats. The web address is <http://www.peacegathering.org>.

A question was asked about the court case involving those arrested during the Gathering for their civil disobedience at Colisimo’s Gun Shop. On May 26th all the defendants were tried. Two cases were dismissed and all the other defendants were acquitted. The trial received excellent press coverage and many who participated or attended have stated that the event was highly inspirational. One Friend in our Meeting who had attended the trial attested to the power of the experience for him. Therese went on to explain that actions continue at Colismo’s Gun Shop. There have been credible reports that hand gun sales have declined there since the witness has been established.

At the close of the presentation Friends expressed their enthusiastic appreciation for the experience of the Gathering and the follow up provided by the Peace and Concerns Standing

Committee. As the Meeting was about to close, Frances Brown, Uwchlan Meeting and one of the initiators of the Gathering on Peace, rose to celebrate the Gathering experience and ask that the Yearly Meeting initiate a future Gathering. It was explained that the current organizers feel it is critical to have a future gathering initiated by an interfaith group rather than be initiated by PYM. It is certain tht PYM will be a central participant in the planning a a future gathering. Further details will come later.

July 31 – evening

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends reconvened at 7:00 p.m. at DeSales University, Center Valley, PA. The meeting settled into a period of expectant waiting which the clerk broke with a request for new visitors to rise. There were none present.

An epistle from Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting Young Adult Friends was read by Patrica McBee (Central Philadelphia MM). The epistle noted the disconnect that many felt with their home communities. It recognized the many influences that make maintaining the connections difficult. Suggestions for improving future developments in the direction of creating a Young Adult semi-program which would help bridge the gap. A method of developing connections with other wider Quaker groups would help young Friends to take a role in larger religious developments. It concluded with the hope that Young Adult Friends would continue to meet and build on the community that they had experiences.

Introduction of those at the Clerks Table; The Clerk is Thomas Swain (Middletown Monthly Meeting, Concord Quarter). The Alternate Clerk is Mark Myers (London Grove MM) The Recording Clerk is David Rose (Lehigh Valley MM) and the Alternate Recording Clerk is Rich Ailes (Middletown MM, Concord Quarter. Also on the platform were Patricia McBee (Central Philadelphia MM) and Dana Kester-McCabe (Wicomico River MM) (Alternate Clerks).

The Clerk made framing remarks to help the meeting settle into love and respect for one another, openness to the guidance of the Spirit as we seek the rightly ordered path for our Yearly Meeting.

General Secretary's Report: The Clerk calls on Arthur Larrabee: General Secretary (Central Phila. MM), to report. Arthur first asked the members of the PYM staff who were present to introduce themselves. An exception was made to the guidance suggested by the Clerk and applause was permitted. A photo presentation of the new office space at Friends Center was given with the benefits of the new "green technology" noted. Vitality and growth within PYM will be the theme for the report. Arthur stated that many stories of outreach and growth are present which need to be told to create the energy to draw others to us. Despite the tough financial year that has been reported, we can hold both the challenges and promises in mind at the same time; at least Arthur said that he was able to do so. What will we look like in five years? Four predictions were made as to what PYM would look like in five years.

First, we will be passionate about who we are. Quaker Quest is one of the ways that we can become passionate and provides many ways that we can explain ourselves to others.

Second, we will have given up our self inflicted negativity. A book which tells the stories of Monthly Meetings noted that our structure makes good stories difficult to disseminate. Complaints of Quaker Process can be changed into a realization that we have a unique community building process to determine God's will. The concept that we are experiencing a declining membership is not correct. Adult membership is not declining as is

noted in the membership report. Another misconception is that we are an aging bunch. PYM Median age is 49 which is older than the median age for US population, 37.

Third, we will be able to articulate our core beliefs at the center of our faith experience. We need to write down a statement of who we are and what we believe. The best corporate discernment could be used to create a guide of no more than one page. Many examples of the difficulty in explaining ourselves were provided. An image of the solar system with the sun at the center providing light and the planets orbiting at different distances was offered. Our solar system center is our Faith and Practice and each of us orbits at different distances. The sun serves us all and we can all describe it. Members of vital meetings are able to articulate a common experience and common purpose.

Fourth thing to be true in five years is that we will have fun making ourselves known to the world. Arthur concluded with the statement that we are a vibrant and growing faith community.

Report accepted with thanks.

Standing Committee Reports:

The five standing committees will provide a combined report. The Clerk called on the Clerks of the PYM Standing Committees to Report: Kimberly Haas-Diliberto (Uwchlan MM-Downingtown) Clerk, Education, Richard Morse (Harrisburg MM) Co Clerk, General Services, Patricia Finley (Old Haverford MM) Clerk, Peace and Concerns, Robin Meeke (Quakertown MM) Alternate Clerk, Support and Outreach, Ben Lloyd (Haverford MM) Clerk, Worship and Care. A power point presentation was provided. The presentation reviewed the guidelines that all Standing Committees must follow and the mission of the Standing committees.

Queries from Standing Committees were offered for consideration.

Education Standing Committee mission and projects which address a wide range of ages, including Adult Education and support for Friends in Education were described by Kimberly Haas-Diliberto. She noted that the epistle from Ohio Young Adult Friends addressed the same issues that young friends in PYM are dealing with.

General Services report was by Richard Morse and included the wide variety of issues that fall under the term Administrative services. Changes to the designation of restricted funds are continuing to be implemented. The work of the committee was summarized as Weaning, Cleaning and Greening. The report conclude with a request for volunteers with the specific skills that would help with finance and construction.

Peace and Concern is concerned with the prophetic vision for our world. Patricia Finley reported that the vision of the new work of the committee will deal with climate change, getting all levels of the Yearly Meeting aware of their relation with the environment, and a concern which arose out of the Conference "Heading God's Call" to reduce hand gun violence.

Robin Meeker was standing in for Susan White (Clerk) and gave the report for Support and Outreach. The words of George Fox, “to come to know the hidden unity in the eternal being” was taken by the committee as one of its charges. The great variety of ways that the message is conveyed by the committee was listed.

Benjamin Loyd described a rich year for the Worship and Care committee. The committee attempted to address the tension between their call and the busy life that each member leads. The tension remains. He described the work of the Working Groups of Worship and Care and how they inform each other. A new granting group, the Greenleaf Granting Group was noted. An excerpt from the 2009 committee epistle was read which lifted a concern about the difficulty in finding members to fill some of the working groups.

Richard Morse spoke of the financial oversight the Standing Committees have for 75% of the PYM budget. We then returned to the Queries that were previously noted. Friends were invited to respond to the Queries after a period of centering worship. The following responses were presented: Suggestion that we review structures that have been determined by those preceding us and to also note those that are supported by current members. Speaking to third point, Standing Committees provide the “launching pad”. Many years ago, under the third reorganization, Committees were urged to be open to new concerns. This emphasis was not noted in the current report. Response: Many Standing Committees go directly to monthly meetings to get their input. Other examples of personal input were offered which were acted on. The clerk noted that individuals may go directly to Standing Committees with concerns in addition to going through Quarterly Meeting before approaching Yearly Meeting. The “elephant in the room” is the difficulty in staffing some of the working groups. This is a reflection on the health of our spiritual lives. The role of committees to bring meetings together within a geographic location is important. The Quarterly Meetings need to be strengthened with additional Quarterly Meeting staff. Each individual Friend needs to ask themselves if this is the right time for them to serve, recognizing that the answer may be that they may be too busy. We need to remember that the most important word to simplify our life is “no”.

It was hoped that a set of priorities could be established that has “teeth”. This could help us determine what is not just essential, but also not essential for us to do right now. An underlying issue of committee work is how we build community. Sometimes fewer people can build a deeper sense of community. We need to structure our work so that we feel more connected. Another issue is the building up of leadership. The time is now for us to stand up. The nation and the world are more ready than ever for our message. The list of priorities for consideration need to be reviewed and prayerfully considered before tomorrow’s meeting. The tension created by our busy lives can be celebrated if it is the result of more happening in our monthly meetings. (Members of Standing Committees were asked to rise and be recognized.) We need to allow ourselves to become unmoored so that we can sink down to the seed to a the point where we become afraid, and the resurrection of Christ becomes a powerful metaphor for being transformed. The reports have brought us this invitation. We have experienced an opportunity through the queries to challenge each other, knowing that we will never be sure that we are going forward in the most effective way. A request was made to include the presentation, the minutes, and the transcription on the web. A Monthly Meeting in Boston has laid down a large number of its committees and sees this as an emerging, rather than letting go, and allowing a focus on the

spiritual. Where will our energy come from for us to be on fire? The clerk concluded this by sharing his experience of gratitude for the work of the Standing Committees.

At this time the Clerk asked the Minutes to be read. Minutes approved with corrections and clarifications noted.

After announcements, the meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m. to reconvene tomorrow morning with a period of worship.

July 31 – morning

The Sixth-day morning session of the 329th Annual Sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 7th Month 31, 2009, reconvened at DeSales University, Center Valley, PA.

After our morning worship and a brief break, the Meeting assembled at the appointed hour and settled back into open worship.

Clerks Table recognized: The Clerk, Thomas Swain (Middletown Monthly Meeting, Concord Quarterly Meeting), urged us to realize the strength of the spirit and to not fear our urgings to speak. He introduced Alternate Clerks Patricia McBee (Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting) and Dana Kester-McCabe (Wicomico River Monthly Meeting), and Recording Clerks Jim Herr (Lancaster Monthly Meeting) and David Rose (Lehigh Valley Monthly Meeting). The Clerk told us the General Secretary, Arthur Larrabee (Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting), would be joining the clerk's table later in the morning. Our speech to text was provided by Florita Hobough.

Visitors included Elizabeth Gates, a member of Lancaster Monthly Meeting, representing the world office of Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), and Brenda Beadenkopf, who introduced herself as a dual member of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and Indiana Yearly Meeting.

An epistle from Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association was read. Eight Friends shared their spiritual journeys as part of the theme of the gathering "Out of the Harbor: Our Voyages of Faith." They carefully considered a revision of their Faith and Practice. The meeting considered concerns of gay and lesbian individuals, and they approved a minute to stand against torture.

Report from Interim Meeting: Clerk introduced Jada Jackson (Trenton MM) faithful clerk of Interim Meeting for three years. She expressed thanks to Tom Armstrong, Alternate Clerk for two years. And she expressed deep appreciation that her tenure with Interim Meeting had allowed her to see parts of herself she never knew existed. Jada then presented the report of Interim Meeting's 2008-2009 term. She remembered that we are all held by God and are holding others in the spirit. This feeling of being held helped the Meeting to deal with challenges this year brought on by the nation's economic difficulties. Interim Meeting, charged by Yearly Meeting to conduct an evaluation of the General Secretary, Arthur Larrabee, found him a great benefit to the Yearly Meeting. The Meeting moved its meeting time to Saturdays. There were minutes of travel for Elizabeth Gates (Lancaster MM), and a minute of ministry for Viv Hawkins of Central Philadelphia MM. There was a minute of Concern from Princeton Monthly Meeting and Burlington Quarterly Meeting concerning Quaker Practice. Interim Meeting made moves to assist in a new way of doing business as brought on by the Governance Report. Carefully and prayerfully considering the situation of Priscilla Adams of Haddonfield MM, a war tax resister, the Meeting decided to reject the IRS request to cooperate with a levy on Priscilla's salary.

This report was accepted by Yearly Meeting.

Clerk Thomas Swain proposed a minute of appreciation for Jada Jackson's tenure as clerk of Interim Meeting. "We recognize the gifts Jada Jackson has shared with us in her role as clerk of Interim Meeting during these last three years. Her faithfulness has held us all and strengthened our ability to work together in carrying out the business of our Yearly Meeting. We are thankful for her years of service." Meeting approved.

There was short break at 10:20 AM, from which we returned with a brief period of open worship.

"Burning Concerns": Clerk introduced this next section of our meeting, to bring forth "burning concerns." Our tradition has been for members to bring their concerns to their Monthly Meetings where the concerns are seasoned. If considered, the issues are then brought to the Quarterly Meeting where they are further seasoned and then brought to Yearly Meeting. This method worked well for the Heeding God's Call Gathering for Peace. There were two Quarterly Meetings who brought concerns to Annual Sessions Planning group this year.

Southern Quarterly Meeting asked us to consider: work with local homeless shelters, the issue of immigration, and our planet's ecological challenges. They also wanted to express appreciation for the Center for Deepening and Strengthening and to Friends involved in Quaker Quest.

Bucks Quarter brought concerns about communications within the Yearly Meeting. The Quarter's Oversight Committee offered suggestions to improve the situation: clearly identify items requiring action, use all available resources to foster Monthly Meeting and Quarterly Meeting action, and develop a data base to better know how to reach the intended audience. This led to a question for all: "what would communication within a Yearly Meeting look like to you if it followed this model?"

A friend urged us to remember that not all members of Yearly Meeting are connected to the internet. Another friend recognized the lag time in communication with the Yearly Meeting. She said it can take 3 months for individuals to receive information and then 4 months for information to get back. The coordinator for Salem Quarterly Meeting said the main problem he feels is the distribution of too much information. He urged prioritization of requests. A new member of Interim Meeting urged Meeting to provide a bullet point summary. Another friend urged consideration of a category of communication that would indicate an emergency. A friend asked us to consider the spirited nature of our communications.

Our next question to consider was "if our Yearly Meeting is to do important business between our Yearly Meeting sessions, if we would like to inspire more friends to be involved, if we are to be a real community, a vital Quaker family, what kind of communications will we use or move toward?" Several friends asked us to remember the power of electronic communication, particularly its power to engage younger friends, and a consequent reduction of our carbon footprint. A friend urged us to remember the importance and vitality of our Monthly Meetings as teaching ministers. Feeling overwhelmed by the scope of the question, a friend focused on the importance of radical Quaker witness as communication. A friend, as clerk

of a Monthly Meeting, expressed that she felt communication from Yearly Meeting on three points at a time was too much. She would have preferred them to come one by one, prioritized. This friend also urged brief, attractive electronic communication from the Yearly Meeting. A friend urged us to open and broaden our communication, a relatively easy function of electronic messages. We were urged to consider the use of cell phones and text messaging, again to engage younger people. A friend reminded us of the importance and power of small groups meeting together.

The next query was “What do members of your Monthly Meeting respond to? What process or method has worked well in your Monthly Meeting to engage its members of important concerns.” A friend expressed her feeling that there are many methods of communication, but the true business of Yearly Meeting can be handled best in sessions such as this. We heard that a small Meeting codified members by the best way they can be reached. A friend proposed a data base to clarify the resources of individuals’ talents. A friend talked about the challenges of inviting new attenders to the life of the Yearly Meeting. Another friend asked us to consider mechanical changes, such as a Quarterly Meeting block of time, to make things run more smoothly. A friend asked “why aren’t we on fire? What is keeping us wet?” She pointed out that only two Quarterly Meetings responded with burning issues, and the query went to all. She wants us to consider why we are a community.

With this, the Clerk reminded us to use the spirit as our guide to speak. A friend recognized the concern of Yearly Meeting to question its methods of communication. However, there are many things that must be directed by the spirit. Neither “brainstorming” nor technology may call forth this highest level of communication. The friend asked us to consider several places in scripture and Quaker history where individuals thought, and then waited for God to communicate with them. He urged us not to forget the tremendous power that allowed George Fox to launch his words into the world, and he reminded us that silent remembrance of this power is time well used. Another friend said that we do not need more cleverness in our communication, but to be together more so we can love each other more. A friend asked us to use the model of discernment in worship as the model for our communications. A friend asked us to reconsider our mental image of our Yearly Meeting, not as a pyramid, but as a circle with many interconnected points. At this point, in a spirit of worship sharing, a friend said, as a member of the staff of a Quarterly Meeting, she has felt this matter of communication with the Cherry Street staff as a burning concern. Another friend expressed her feeling that God is always talking with us. To her, the burning concern for consideration was one of justice, our relationship with the homeless.

The clerk closed the session by posing a request that we consider this meeting during our meeting on Sunday morning— finding ways to take the richness of this gathering back to our homes. He then said as a summary that we do not have to be afraid to draw closer together and in that way intensify our communication.

We adjourned with intention to meet again at 7:00 this evening.

August 1 – morning

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends Annual Sessions reconvened at 9:35 a.m. at DeSales University, Center Valley, PA.

The meeting settled into a period of expectant waiting from which a message arose reminding us that we are seeking an encounter which will change our lives and that this encounter is the source of all our actions. The song “Wade in Water” provided us with the promise that “God’s Gonna Trouble the Water.” The burning heart on DeSales Dining hall wall is not destroyed by the fire, but illuminates the way for us, much as the Friends who have gone before us. Through song, we were reminded to listen to the heart song. The names given this morning in a Memorial Meeting for Worship are a reminder of the interconnectedness of life and part of the continuing revelation, a revelation that we cannot complete nor refrain from. We are called to speak out. The spirit which spoke to George Fox’s condition has not left us. It still speaks to our condition. Although conditions were different among different groups and during different times, the spirit is still the same, is still is with us and can guide us in the great work that we are called to do. The Clerk broke the period of worship with remarks to help the meeting settle into love and respect for one another, and encouraging us to go as deep as we are lead by our heart to discern the work before us as we consider our priorities.

Persons at the Clerks Table were introduced. They are Clerk: Thomas Swain (Middletown MM Concord Quarter), Alternate Clerk: Patricia McBee (Central Philadelphia MM), Arthur Larrabee, General Secretary (Central Philadelphia MM) Recording Clerks are David Rose (Lehigh Valley MM) and Jim Herr (Lancaster MM). Transcription service is provided by Rebecca A. Tallarico. The Clerk asked for approval for Mario Cavallini to take the minutes during the Nomination Committee report. Approved.

The Clerk asked for Visitors to rise and be recognized: Seth Henshaw from Keystone MM of Ohio YM Conservative and Carl Magruder, Grass Valley MM, Pacific YM.

Friends who have recently arrived at Annual Sessions were asked to rise and be recognized. Friends were asked to be faithful out of the collective sense of who we are and not just speaking from our “I.”

Arthur Larrabee read an Epistle from Baltimore Yearly Meeting. The epistle spoke of the efforts of Baltimore Yearly Meeting to see “What Love can do”, a quote from William Penn. They were strengthened by messages in their worship which helped them to deal with “thorny issues” with Friends United Meeting (FUM). They were not in unity to withdraw from FUM over these issues. The pains they are currently experiencing make it difficult for them to see where God is leading. They rejoiced in the experiences of intervisitation between different areas of FUM. God’s all inclusive love provides them with the promise of reward and gives them the strength for patience. They concluded with the request to be held in the light as they continue to “try what love can do.”

The Clerk calls on Pat McBee, Alternate Clerk, to preside for the Nomination Report. The persons on the slate left the room at this time. The Nominating Committee Report was presented by Suzanne Day, Co-Clerk of Nominating Committee (Westfield MM). Appointments presented for approval were:

Clerk of Yearly Meeting: Thomas Swain (Middletown MM, Concord QM).

Alternate Clerks of Yearly Meeting: Mark Myers (London Grove MM), Dana Kester-McCabe (Wicomico River MM), John Ellsworth (Gwynedd MM), Jada Jackson (Trenton MM).

Recording Clerks of Yearly Meeting: Rich Ailes (Middletown MM, Concord QM), David Rose (Lehigh Valley MM), Jim Herr (Lancaster MM), Jane Keller (Pennsdale MM) John Hope (Harrisburg MM), Alison Levie (Goshen MM), Rebecca Shapiro (Salem MM).

General Services Standing Committee: Ross Reese (Arch Street MM).

Peace and Concerns Standing Committee: Maria Cattell (Lancaster MM), Pamela Haines (Central Philadelphia MM). Worship and Care Standing Committee: Ann Dillard (Abington MM), Margery Rubin (Medford MM).

Friends General Conference (FGC) Standing Committee: Seth Barch (Schuylkill MM).

Friends Committee for National Legislation: Mary Lou Hatcher (Lehigh Valley MM).

Resignation for approval: Ginny Sutton (Westtown MM) from Worship and Care Standing Committee.

Several Friends expressed concern that asking nominees to leave the room contradicts our witness of integrity. However, we did not have unity on bringing nominees back into the session at this time. The question may be seasoned for later practice. The Nominating Committee was encouraged to be mindful of bringing forward Young Adult Friends and nurturing newer participants in the life of the Yearly Meeting. Toward this end, the idea was offered of developing a "Membership in Yearly Meeting" as a way to help Young Adult Friends who are not members of a Monthly Meeting ground themselves and establish themselves in our community. In confirming these Friends to serve us, we also commit to support and nurture them in their work. In approving the Recording Clerks, we ask that the Clerks and Recording Clerks develop guidance on just which matters should be entered into the minutes. This suggestion was approved by those assembled. A concern was raised regarding the nomination of Seth Barch to FGC as although he is a person whose official membership is with PYM, he lives outside of the area. A recommendation was expressed that those who represent PYM to other bodies be encouraged by their respective Standing Committees to take advantage of opportunities to report back on their work, thereby increasing accountability which would help ground the work of those representing PYM.

Appointments and Resignation approved as presented.

The Acting Clerk granted a short recess and the meeting resumed at 10:50 a.m.

Priorities Process Standing Committee Report: The Clerk began the presentation by describing the impetus which led to the creation of the priority process established and introduced Mark Myers (London Grove MM) Clerk of the Priorities Process Standing Committee to lead the discussion. Members of the committee were seated in front of the Clerks table. Mark began the report, which incorporated a power point presentation, by discussing the importance of the Edward Hicks painting “The Peaceable Kingdom” and how this painting informed the work of the committee. The printed list of PYM Priorities was reviewed which included Advices and Queries on PYM priorities for various groups within the Yearly Meeting. Priorities were grouped into four sections: 1. Spiritual Growth and Renewal; 2. Caring for our community; 3. Witnessing our Faith; and 4. Making ourselves Known. The discernment process involved was described and illustrated with a flow chart showing the work of the Priority Process Committee. Members of the committee were then invited to introduce themselves. The extent of the process for establishing priorities was noted, which included a review of priority establishing processes in similar organizations, regional listening sessions, minutes of previous Yearly Meeting sessions, and interviews with PYM staff. The discernment process included listening to “strong single signals” and listening to similar concerns around PYM. The first step taken was to establish what is meant by the term “priority”. The working definition settled on was that it is something above the ordinary that needed to be acted on by the entire Yearly Meeting. The sustaining work that is done by many of the committees was distinguished from current priorities.

The first priority presented was “Spiritual Growth and Renewal.” The interdependence of all the goals in this priority was emphasized by Mark. The second priority, “Caring for Our Community” was then reviewed. “Witnessing Our Faith” goals were then given and concluded with the goals given under “Making Ourselves Known.” An awareness of “spiritual innovation” was an outcome of creating the framework that is being presented.

After a period of silent reflection, the Clerk informed the meeting that the time that is remaining may not be enough for us to allow the process of discernment regarding priorities. The option of using time this afternoon was offered to the meeting. It was clarified that the approval of the priorities would not require establishing a ranking. A request to test whether the Meeting was ready to approve the priorities offered did not result in unity. The Clerk asked for assistance in finding a way forward. A strong division was experienced which led to a call for a period of silent worship. A message questioned how we can call priorities “priorities” if we do not treat them like a priority. Various solutions were offered. A “Threshing Session” between 2:30 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. with decision to be held Sunday was offered by the Clerk. A listening session with the committee was offered with input to be included at tomorrow’s session. A Threshing Session was approved for this afternoon with the impact on the present schedule noted. Friends were asked to come under the weight of the concern of addressing the needs of parents in the process.

At this time the Clerk ask for the minutes to be read. With corrections and improvement noted, Minutes were approved. Meeting entered into silent worship with the Clerk requesting that

Friends release any tension that they may be experiencing. Meeting adjourned with the intention to gather again at 2:30 p.m., Seventh Day (Saturday) August 1, 2009.

August 1 – evening

The Seventh-day evening session of the 329th Annual Sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, held 8th Month 1, 2009, at DeSales University, Center Valley, PA.

Meeting assembled at the appointed hour and settled into open worship.

The Clerk, Thomas Swain (Middletown Monthly Meeting, Concord Quarterly Meeting), asked others at the clerk's table to introduce themselves: Alternate Clerks Dana Kester-McCabe (Wicomico River Monthly Meeting) and Patricia McBee (Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting), General Secretary Arthur Larrabee (Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting), Recording Clerk Jim Herr (Lancaster Monthly Meeting) and Supporting Recording Clerk Jane Keller (Pennsdale Monthly Meeting). Our speech to text was provided by Rebecca Tallarico. Our sound people included George Schaefer and Wright Horne. Clerk encouraged all to make an effort to participate tomorrow in the First-Day morning sessions.

Visitors previously unrecognized included Joe Volk (Ann Arbor MM, Lake Erie Yearly Meeting), Executive Director of Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), Tim Barner, member of FCNL staff, and Nigel Buchanan-Wollaston of Baltimore Yearly Meeting.

Outgoing Epistle Committee: Jonathan Snipes (Fallsington MM), Ann Yasuhara (Princeton MM) and Daniel Turner (Abington MM) of the Outgoing Epistle Committee came forward. Jonathan Snipes read the first draft of this epistle. We were instructed to contact one of the members of the Epistle Committee for changes and corrections. There were two minor corrections suggested, but, on the whole, Meeting seemed to feel the Committee was on target.

Earthcare Panel presentation: Jada Jackson (Trenton MM), Clerk of Interim Meeting, and panel members Hollister Knowlton (Chestnut Hill MM), George Lakey (Central Philadelphia MM), and Carl Magruder (Grass Valley MM, Pacific Yearly Meeting) came to the Clerk's table. We settled into open worship to prepare our hearts to hear their messages. Jada provided us with information on the rich backgrounds of our Earthcare panel members.

George Lakey told us that practicality is one of our important legacies. He suggested that when faced with imminent disasters, we need to go beyond conventional methods to make fundamental institutional changes. Three more radical strategies for change include: words and gestures, armed struggle, and nonviolent struggle. After showing great drawbacks of the first two strategies, George focused on four phases of the design of nonviolent struggle. First, development of campaign as a unit of struggle. Second, there is an insider game and an outsider game to develop. Third, those in the struggle need to bring their lifestyles into alignment with the changes sought. And fourth, the tools exist and must be put into effect.

Hollister Knowlton told us that modifying personal lives is a way to model the changes needed. Love, community, and discerning what is ours to do, give us the strength to modify our lives. We must include a love for the earth with our love for our children. Our Quaker Community provides enormous strength. By becoming aware of things such as our carbon footprint,

through community we can discern what is ours to do. Hollister urged us to listen to the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Corinthians where he admonished us to give fully of ourselves.

Carl Magruder said when he went to Washington D.C. to work with the National Council of Churches in the field of environmental health, he had to go into “beginner’s mind.” This new understanding left him in despair and pain for the earth. With the new administration in place in the capital, Carl felt hope. However, he does not feel anyone is facing the “pachyderm in the parlor”—the world’s economy must stop growing at 3% per year. Carl accepts that radical faithfulness is possible, and it is inevitable that we will create another world, an earth re-vibrant, in a cosmic tune.

Keynote Talk: Margaret Mansfield (Mount Holly MM) and Clerk of the Friends Committee on National Legislation network within PYM came forward to introduce Joe Volk, Executive Secretary of FCNL. She told us that from her experience, Joe can simultaneously hold the big picture and the next small step in his mind. She also said he has an ability to find common ground. Margaret told us Joe has an enormous ability to be a skilled and compassionate leader of staff and volunteers, and an ability to be passionate and articulate about our faith and practice. From the beginning of his talk, Joe showed he has taken to heart an early encouragement to not take things too seriously, and he urged us to find humor in even the horrifying challenges we face in the world today. Joe brought to our attention the four consequences sought by FCNL, which are totally interrelated. This keeps the organization from picking a sole priority. He said there can be no elegant solution to a poorly defined problem. But he said we need to be careful to keep our words from being too apocalyptic. As an example of the way to develop a strategy to make a radical, global change, he offered the example of ending the slave trade. He said we are called to live in a now-and-not-yet world. Joe’s talk as transcribed will be attached to these minutes.

Response: Jorge Arauz stood to read a minute to take action, to urge us all to convey our concerns about earthcare to our Senators as they consider an energy bill. The Committee to Assist the Clerk will consider what to do with this minute. A Friend asked for the most radical thing we need to do now to move forward. Hollister suggested finding our carbon and ecological footprint. There were also suggestions about contacting our legislators. Carl said a paradox exists that action occurs primarily on the level of the personal but change requires group action.

A Friend told us the presentation tonight was enormously moving and motivational. However, tomorrow he will get in an oil powered vehicle and return to a life of great responsibility. He asked for guidance on how to act. Carl said this is a question to which we do not yet know the answer. This causes anguish. But as has been the case in the past, we must hold to the possibility that through faithfulness, together we will do something. Margaret Mansfield urged us to pick up a packet from the FCNL display.

We adjourned, agreeing to meet again at 8:30 First-day morning.

August 2 – morning (part 1)

Friends settled into worship for the first part of our final Meeting for Business at this 329th session of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, First Day, Eighth Month, 2, 2009, at DeSales University, Center Valley, PA. After a short period of worship the Clerk, Thomas Swain, invited Christie Duncan-Tessmer, Associate Secretary for Program & Religious Life to introduce the presentation of reports and epistles from the children's program. Before proceeding, Thomas advised us to be sensitive with our youngest Friends. Although their presentation may seem amusing sometimes, their intentions are serious and they should be treated as such.

The body of the Meeting then spent the next 30 minutes receiving these reports from the different children's groups.

Christie explained the first group represented the "clerks" of six Monthly Meetings who presided over a special called session of the Children's Yearly Meeting to discern what their priorities should be as a Yearly Meeting. After going through a process involving Monthly, Quarterly, and Yearly Meeting sessions their chosen priority was to share meals and teamless games with homeless children. Christie informed us that these sessions occurred during the Adult threshing session on Priorities yesterday.

Mary Lou Hatcher of Lehigh Valley Monthly Meeting introduced the 4th and 5th grade Friends who worked with a theme of EarthCare, participating in workshops on soil exploration, atmosphere and the breath of life, and the use of water in our lives. They worked to answer many questions: Where does soil come from? How does it rebuild itself? How does air protect us from too much sun? A discussion was held on how difficult it was to follow a leading when things are not clear.

Melinda Bradley of West Chester Monthly Meeting introduced the 2nd and 3rd grade Friends who read from their epistle. The epistle elaborated their understanding that we are all connected, and described activities, stories, games and worship, that demonstrated the interconnection of all things. These Friends made an emphatic request to us in their epistle, "Please Recycle."

Stacy Shannon of Springfield Monthly Meeting introduced the 1st thru Pre-K report. These Friends worked with themes of Earth Creation and Earth Love. They heard stories of God as the mother and father creator. They demonstrated their love of the earth by painting with carrots and bowling with water bottles. A special moment came when our 1st thru Pre-K Friends led us in a song called Dear Earth, sung to the tune of "Dear Friends let me tell you how I love you". We all joined hands and swayed and sang:

Dear Earth, dear earth,

Let me tell you how I love you,

You have given us such treasure

I love you so.

Elizabeth Walmsley, Yearly Meeting Middle School Friends Coordinator, introduced the middle school Friends. Tenaja Henson of Lewisburg Monthly Meeting and Abby Fox of Abington Monthly Meeting read the group's epistle. Their study of ecosystems and economics showed them how environmental justice issues affected their lives, through their study of the price of cocoa paid to cocoa farmers and how that price dropped sharply over time causing hardship for the farmers. These Friends also expressed their appreciation for the many games and activities that they shared together this week.

These youngest Friends then left the Meeting for Business leaving a sense of lightness and joy in their wake.

The Clerk called on Sam Collins of Fallsington Monthly Meeting to report on part of the program for Young Friends. On Friday morning, a number of Young Friends took their usual hike to Glen Onoko Falls. That evening, Friend Zan Lombardo introduced them to Andy Goldsworthy, a nature oriented artist who creates artscapes out of the natural environment. Andy taught them these natural techniques and demonstrated some of his work. On Saturday, they took Andy's lessons and created their own artscapes in an outdoors area which proved to be a deeply spiritual experience for them.

The Clerk then called on Jonathan Snipes of Fallsington Monthly Meeting and a members of the Sessions Epistle Committee to read our outgoing epistle to Friends everywhere. The epistle described accurately and passionately the energizing experiences we have been having as a community this week. From our wrestling with the contradictions that a busy life brings to Friends work, to how that work must turn to the burning concern of care for our Earth. The document seemed to resonate with those present. We find ourselves in a complicit relationship with a system that is killing our planet. This is an issue that may galvanize our community and touch us with the fire of the spirit. After the reading the entire body gathered into silent worship. There appeared to be a sense of approval and appreciation for the epistle. One Friend did ask that the quote from Joe Volk which included the words "now but not yet", be changed to his actual statement, "now and not yet." This was approved. Ann Yasuhara, a member of the Epistle Committee, did present one significant change. The clerk asked the body if the Epistle Committee could meet briefly to revise the epistle with Ann's suggestion and this was approved. Our outgoing epistle is attached to these minutes.

The Clerk then called upon Zachary Dutton of Wilmington Meeting to read the outgoing epistle of the Young Adult Friends. Zachary told us the Spirit that was at work during last night's session reverberated with Young Adult Friends. It empowered two of their members, Julian Brelsford and Mary Crauderueff to write an epistle that would bring a message to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and Friends everywhere. These Friends labored deep into the night to finish the draft and there is great appreciation amongst the group for their effort.

The epistle was a celebration of the work of the spirit which Young Adult Friends has felt within them this week. It was also a statement of yearning for Young Adult Friends to be connected fully to the body of Friends in the Yearly Meeting. Questions as to whether to call

themselves Young Adult Friends or Young Adult Quakers and what it means to serve God provoked deep discussion. There was frustration at ministry not received but also a willingness to name their gifts and use those gifts to do committee work, helping the Yearly Meeting do simple business as well as take on its responsibility to care for the earth. The moving messages which broke through to all of us at Saturday night's plenary seemed to be connected to the energy and intensity of this epistle. After the reading, Friends again gathered into silent worship.

A request was made that all of these epistles presented this morning be included with our outgoing epistle to Friends everywhere. This was approved. All epistles are attached to these minutes.

The clerk then called on Amy Ward Brimmer, Clerk of Annual Sessions Planning Group, to come forward to thank the many Friends who helped make these sessions a success. Amy asked for a special thanks for Susan Makler of Abington Meeting who will be going off the Sessions Planning Group at the end of these sessions. Sue has been the driving force of the organizing efforts of these sessions for many years, serving, up until this year, as Clerk of the Sessions Planning Group, and for the past 3 years, as Registrar of the sessions. Amy expressed the gratitude towards Sue's work which the whole Yearly Meeting has felt for years. Friends in attendance applauded their thanks.

Amy then thanked the members of the Annual Sessions Planning Group; Mario Cavallini and Sondra Ball, Mickleton MM, Fran Beer, Newark MM; Paula and Howard Cell, Yardley MM. Margaret Mansfield, Mount Holly MM, Dana Kester-McCabe, Wicomico River MM, Patricia McBee, Central Philadelphia MM, and Thomas Swain, Middletown MM/Concord Quarter. Another special thanks went to Regina Girton, Volunteer Coordinator, Millville MM, and Michael Gagné (Central Philadelphia MM) Coordinator for Sessions, and Arthur Larrabee and the PYM staff for their work during the sessions. Friends also expressed appreciation for the staff at DeSales University for their gracious and attentive support.

The clerk then asked those gathered to take a short break.

End of part 1 of First Day AM minutes

August 2 – morning (part 2)

The morning session reconvened at 9:55 a.m. at DeSales University, Center Valley, PA, to continue consideration of the recommendations of the Priorities Process Standing Committee. Alternate Clerk Patricia McBee (Central Phila. MM) called on the meeting to enter a period of silent gathering after which the Clerk framed the discussion by stating that what we were embarking on could be described as an adventure. He noted the healing and love that were present among us and quoted from Apostle Paul's letter to the Romans which noted that the spirit of God is arousing us from within and that we need to wait for God's plan to become apparent to us.

Those at the Clerks Table were recognized: Clerk: Thomas Swain: (Middletown MM) Alternate Clerk: Patricia McBee (Central Phila MM) General Secretary: Arthur Larrabee (Central Phila MM), Recording Clerks: Rich Ailes (Middletown MM) and David Rose (Lehigh Valley MM). Sam Collins (Fallsington MM) was approved as a Recording Clerk to replace his brother, Eli Collins, who could not be present.

Notes from yesterday afternoon's Threshing Session read by Richard Ailes. It was approved by the Meeting that these notes would not need approval. They would be included, however, with our minutes.

Consideration of Priorities Process Standing Committee proposed Priorities

Margaret Mansfield (Mount Holly MM) provided the response from the Committee to concerns raised yesterday. The Committee thought the body needed to hear what would be different if the recommendations in the report were approved.

Friends who were not present yesterday were invited to raise questions at this time in a spirit of worship. Questions and Comments: Idea for creating priorities was intended to help us use the funds that were being released from designation. Have we shifted our intent? Response: Two perceptions of the potential benefits heard: Friends involved with the budget wanted guidance, others thought that this process could be the thing that put us on fire by uniting us in the things that we value. Some of the implementation suggestions involve Adult Religious Education. This Committee has been very short of people to do the work. This is only a small symptom of the way our Society and Culture has changed. We need to find a way to bring those who are not here into the work that is being proposed. Committee response spoke of a Monthly Meeting which started a process of discernment around three years ago in response to a request from PYM for a 9% financial increase. This process resulted in a number of members becoming involved with Yearly Meeting with the intention to find out what was going on at PYM and if they even fit into PYM. The proposal that is being presented is a result of some members starting off by asking this basic question. Guidance has been provided by the divine, often working through the Yearly Meeting itself. We have a great work to do. The question is: How are we to move as a body? Hope was expressed that we would be able to approve the proposal, even with its imperfections. It can give us a sense of what God wants us, as a body, to do.

Clerk observed that we have approved the process and that we would now move to an approval of the priorities and their action guidelines. The following issues were raised: We need to keep the document as a whole and not break it apart. We need to approve the entire process, including the queries included, which provide an opening for the spirit to work. A number felt callings for inclusiveness throughout these sessions raised specific concerns which it was felt should be inserted. The Clerk stated that he felt that these concerns be directly given to the committee. The advice was offered that we need to be clear that what we feel we should be doing may not be the same as how the spirit is moving among us or leading us to. At this time the Clerk asked if there was approval of the committee proposed PYM Priorities: A Framework for Action.

There was unity in approval.

The suggestions to include suggested additional guidelines which have arisen from experiences in Annual Sessions were raised. The meeting approved the following additional guidelines:

The issue of getting persons involved remains. Response from the Committee is that this document should help us find persons to do the work. The meeting then reaffirmed its intention to improve the entire recommendation, the priorities, the process, and the queries.

Meeting then settled into a period of worship after remarks by the Clerk to help us to trust the spirit, wherever it extends. An exercise of reaching up, down, around and in, led by Patricia McBee, helped us to experience the extent of the reach of the spirit.

Out of the silence, messages arose. Bringing about a better world is much like the process of birth. We have experienced the prenatal care provided by the Committee work, and now need the midwives to bring about the birth. If we hope to become good parents we need to remember that children develop their own gifts and their own purpose if they are to grow and prosper. An earth not just restored, but resplendent, confronts us with the challenge of how we will adjust to a shrinking economy. As Friends, we are being called to lead the way in bringing about the changes that are necessary for us to survive. The thunder happening outside the building is a metaphor for both the danger and excitement that we may be experiencing. We can take back the excitement to our meetings, and use the community we have here, to help us confront the danger. The Yearly Meeting is changing in the direction of being more open because we are accepting each other in love. "If I have not love, I have nothing". Ben Lloyd (Haverford MM), Clerk of Worship and Care, made an offer to assemble a group of people to sit with the concern of community participation. Young Friends here at Session have been reaching out to engage others as whole persons, and can be an example to us to reach out to get other concerned and involved. We may be too selfish holding on to the gifts we have. We will never get the people we need if we do not walk the journey with anyone we can. We have a home, let us invite others in. Go where the Life is and then you can take it where it isn't. The image of a diving board to give us the energy to both lift and go deep has been helpful. Experiencing the unfolding of history is a seldom felt experience. "We have come a long way, but we have a long way to go" as spoken by Martin Luther King before many of his ministries were begun is one vision that we can share. The promise in the Bible "I am about to do a new thing" is contrasted with the experience of despair when confronting the enormity of the problem. We need to experience, as early Friends did, the "spirituality of desolation" and as then, provide a space for the workings of the spirit and

the inward experience of the “second coming.” We are called to address the “herd of elephants” in the room and clear the space so that we can dance with joy as a burning people. The Clerk, at the close of this period of worship, encouraged us to engage others as we leave here and to tell others of the new birth that we have experienced here and at the same time to remember what still remains to be done.

The session minutes were read to the meeting for approval. A Friend who has been traveling among Friends (and as one of its authors) noted that the adoption by the Annual Sessions the book Right Relationship and the Study Guide has been a great benefit to the work being done among the larger body of Friends. It was requested to consider the two minutes that were presented last evening and handed out to Friends this morning. The Clerk read the following proposed minute to the body:

Minute I

A minute of encouragement to Friends concerning our care for the Planet:

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Friends have been convicted of our responsibility for the ecological deterioration of our planet and the urgent need for bold action to ensure the survival of the community of life on Earth.

The United States faces a decisive opportunity to lead in the work to curb global warming, as an energy bill is being considered in the Senate at this very moment. As we feel called to change our own lives, we feel called also to reach out to our leaders, so that we can bring the healing the planet desperately needs.

We urge all PYM Friends to actively engage our Senators in the states of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland, to convey to them our deep concern for the integrity of creation and the urgent need to pass an energy bill that will authentically protect it. Let us share with our Senators our deeply felt desire for a bill that will set our country in a clear direction to abandon our dependency on fossil fuels, particularly coal and oil, and expand the availability of alternative, safe and sustainable energy sources.

We also invite Friends in our sister yearly meetings throughout the United States to diligently reach out to their respective senators in their home states, with the same message.

The effects of energy bill currently under consideration will be felt for the next several decades and beyond. As we discharge the responsibility placed on us, let's do our work prayerfully. Let's answer to that of God in our leaders with compassion for all, knowing that, as we act faithfully now, we will be given strength to continue in the path of a just and caring relationship with the whole of creation and with each other.

Minute approved.

Minute II

A minute authorizing the Clerk to investigate a possible delegation to the Obama Administration:

In response to this week's plenary presentations, some Friends have raised the possibility of asking the Obama Administration to meet with a delegation of Friends, or a group including Friends, about the intersection of economic policy and the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gases and to address other ecological damage caused by our current levels of consumption.

The Clerk was authorized to investigate the creation of a delegation and report back to Interim Meeting.

Minutes of Sunday morning session approved.

The meeting closed with deep appreciation expressed for the work of the Clerk, Thomas Swain. Annual Sessions adjourned at 12:30 p.m., August 2, 2009, with the intention to reconvene on March 26th, 2010, at the Arch Street Meeting House, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, God willing.

March 27 – afternoon

Draft version – please suggest changes by July 14, 2009 Email Wright Horne

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, held Third Month, 27 at the Arch Street Meeting House, convened around 3 o'clock in the afternoon and settled into worship.

Our opening worship was like a living stream preparing us to do the work before us.

The Clerk encouraged us to be present and faithful to the living leaven in all of our sessions this weekend.

Our minutes were read and approved.

We adjourned agreeing to meet again this evening at 7 PM.

Thomas Swain, Clerk

March 27 – evening

Draft version – please suggest changes by July 14, 2009 Email Wright Horne
(wriighth@pym.org)

329th Annual Sessions
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Sixth Day Evening, March 27, 2009
Arch Street Meeting House

The March 2009 Session of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends convened Sixth Day evening, Third Month 27, 2009 at the Arch Street Meeting House in Philadelphia. The announced theme of both our Third Month and Summer Sessions is “Living up to the Light.”

Friends arrived and settled into worship around 7:00 p.m. Worship was punctuated by the rustling arrival of Friends and a rendition of the gospel hymn “This is my Story, This is my song,” sung to an original melody.

At 7:20 the Clerk broke worship and welcomed everyone to these Yearly Meeting Sessions with the words “Peace and Grace.”

The Clerk introduced himself and others at the Clerks’ table: Clerk is Thomas Swain (Middletown Monthly Meeting, Concord Quarter). Alternate Clerk is Dana Kester-McCabe (Wicomico River MM). Recording Clerk is David Rose (Lehigh Valley MM). General Secretary: Arthur Larrabee (Central Philadelphia MM).

Visitors from other Yearly Meetings were recognized and welcomed. Cody Hersh (Miami MM, Southeast Yearly Meeting), Sychellus W. Njibwakale (Elgon Yearly Meeting, Kenya), and John Watts (traveling in the ministry from Chapel Hill MM, Piedmont Friends Fellowship).

Viv Hawkins of Central Philadelphia MM read the epistle from Canada Yearly Meeting. A number of concerns were mentioned in the epistle including a concern about maintaining a community of a geographically separated people and following a concern about conservation of the earth’s resources. A diversity of beliefs makes them especially aware of the importance of treating each other with dignity and respect. Concerns were lightened by the understanding that through all, love is at work. Our outgoing epistle from PYM will be written for the Summer Session.

Introduction of Dr. Amanda Kemp by Amy Kietzman of Central Philadelphia MM. Her journey to the creation of a Theater of Transformation was shared. Amanda Kemp (Lancaster MM) performed a multi-generational theatrical piece titled “Is This a Good Time to Talk: Creating a New Conversation about Race in America.”

She started with a guided meditation, which began with focus and which led to the experience of growing roots deep into the earth, roots which nurture and strengthen, and which lead back to the heart and from the heart to an ancestral family member. She honored hers and others' family members by pouring libation [water] on a plant.

“Two Funerals and a Wedding” was her first story. She was born in 1966 in Biloxi, Mississippi into a large family living in an African-American community. She moved at a young age to Cleveland, where she experienced a whole new family. Then they moved to New York City where “no one knew us.” Her parents were involved in drugs and at the age of 6 Amanda was placed in foster care. Twenty-one years later she met her mother again. For 3 years they danced around each other without getting close. Then her mother died. This was the first funeral. Relatives she had not seen for a long time came, but she left the funeral without expecting to keep in contact with any of them. Second funeral: Big Momma, her grandmother in Biloxi, died. An aunt left the message but she did not know how to get back in touch with the family. The song “His eye is on the Sparrow” gave her assurance and her aunt called again. She experienced a “pulling” to take her children with her to the funeral. At the funeral, she realized that she was there to represent her mother. The singing of “Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine” gave her the experience of Big Momma’s faith. Now she was being introduced as Geraldine’s daughter. Wedding: The next event was her cousin’s daughter, Kizzy, getting married. Her initial reluctance to attend was overcome by the insistence of family members. She needed to pray for the money to get there and her prayers were answered. This time she went with her sister who took some of the limelight. After the wedding, they went back to Big Momma’s house and the stories of her family history started being told. She concluded with the lesson that “If I had had not been willing to surrender the story that I was not loved, I would not have been able to accept the invitations to get my family back after growing up in foster care.”

Friends were invited to consider the Query: “What would you have to forgive in order to create a new possibility for race in America?” Friends were then asked to share with the persons next to them their response.

Second Story: “Hanna.” “What a Friend we have in Jesus.” Once upon a time, in a far-off land called New Jersey, Hanna kept house for family. She was seen mumbling, but was really praying. One day an apprentice came to the house and watched her. He told her that he knew that she was praying and asked her to pray for him. A few years later she was called in and found out that she was going to be sold. After her initial despair, she experienced her thirst quenched and a voice that told her to “trust in the Lord.” She had the vision of seeing the “grayness” creep up on the apprentice who was writing the bill of sale. She prayed for him and he developed a conviction about the evil of slavery that led him to work for the abolition of slavery in the Society of Friends. This Friend was John Woolman.

The Clerk invited Friends to speak out of the silence in response to the presentation.

The minutes were read, revised, and approved.

Announcements regarding tomorrow’s schedule were made.

Meeting settled into closing worship at 9:10 p.m.

After a brief period of open worship the Meeting adjourned, to reconvene at 9:00 a.m. Seventh Day morning, March 28.

March 28 – morning

Draft version – please suggest changes by July 14, 2009 Email Wright Horne (wriighth@pym.org)

The Meeting assembled at the appointed hour and settled into open worship.

At 9:45 a.m. the Clerk broke worship and children were excused.

The Clerk introduced himself and others at the Clerk's table: The Clerk is Thomas Swain (Middletown MM, Concord Quarter). Alternate Clerks are Patricia McBee (Central Philadelphia MM) and Dana Kester-McCabe (Wicomico River MM). Recording Clerk is David Rose (Lehigh Valley MM) and Alternate Recording Clerk is Jane Keller (Pennsdale MM). PYM General Secretary is Arthur Larrabee (Central Philadelphia MM).

There were no visitors from other Yearly Meetings.

The Meeting heard an epistle from New England Yearly Meeting read by Mario Cavallini (Mickletown MM). The epistle spoke of the need that was experienced at the 348th Yearly Meeting Session for reconciliation: reconciliation in the world, reconciliation within the Society, and also within the Yearly Meeting.

The Clerk made some framing remarks to the presentation of the Governance Report to help the Meeting to settle into love and respect toward one another, openness to the guidance of the Spirit as we seek the rightly ordered path for our Yearly Meeting.

Members of the ad-hoc Governance Group, representatives to Interim Meeting, and members of Monthly Meetings that had considered the Governance Report were asked to rise and be recognized.

Gretchen Castle (Doylestown MM) gave a multimedia presentation on the recommendations contained in the report, which gave the Meeting a sense of the trajectory of the report thus far. She prefaced her remarks by expressing the love that she experiences attending Yearly Meeting and provided a brief history of Governance Project Group. Fourteen Friends were appointed to review and take decisive action regarding Interim Meeting process and composition. Interim Meeting has considered it three times, Advisory Committee reviewed specific recommendations, and Monthly and Quarterly Meeting were asked to review it. All of these consultations have informed the report and the 12 recommendations. These recommendations are meant to work together. We will be looking at the process today and then appoint an Implementation Committee. The recommendations were:

1. Interim Meeting name to be changed to Yearly Meeting Continuing Sessions
2. Continuing Sessions meeting time changed to weekends to be more inclusive.
3. Consideration to change number of sessions to no more than six per year, including Annual Sessions.

4. One Clerk presides over both Annual Sessions and Continuing Sessions.
5. Clerk to be supported by Alternate Clerks with the expectation that they might be considered for Clerk succession.
6. Clerk and General Secretary work together in partnership.
7. Agenda Committee comprising Clerk, Alternate Clerks, and General Secretary.
8. Designated appointees to Interim Meeting serve a defined term that can be revisited.
9. Yearly Meeting will conduct training and orientation to provide clarity and unity of purpose to those serving.
10. A body of Elders to be available to provide correction and discipline.
11. A small committee to be created to evaluate the performance of the General Secretary on an annual basis.
12. Yearly review of process to improve communication.

The Clerk asked the Meeting to settle in and consider the recommendations as a whole.

Friends expressed strong support for the recommendation as a whole, with gratitude for the work of the committee. Some concerns were expressed with individual recommendations. The Clerk asked for a show of hands to see where individual concerns lay. The Clerk noted that we were unified on Recommendations 2, 9, and 12. In response to a comment, it was noted that only Yearly Meeting in Session can amend Faith and Practice.

Recommendations 5, 10 and 11 had some concerns and the Clerk opened them up for discussion.

Recommendation 5 regarding Alternate Clerks was laid open for concerns. A Friend noted that the group was led beyond original purpose and this may involve changes to Faith and Practice. A previous Yearly Meeting Clerk said that a job description for the Clerk is very essential and that this recommendation will not change the process much.

Clerk noted that the specific ingredients of the proposal may change once we start the process.

Recommendation 10 regarding Elders laid open for concerns. After discussion, the suggestion was accepted that term limits for the Elders be defined. Clerk felt that Meeting was united with the suggestion and recommendation.

Recommendation 11 regarding General Secretary performance evaluation laid open for concerns. The addition of the advice for the group to consult with others was accepted

After some concerns about the working together of the Clerk and the General Secretary, the Meeting arrived at unity regarding this recommendation.

Recommendation 6 regarding partnership of General Secretary and Clerk.

Recommendation offered suggesting an additional group for guidance for the General Secretary. His response is that there is a spiritual support group provided by his Monthly Meeting. Arthur Larrabee rose to speak to the issue. Partnership with his boss is the way that he perceives the relation between the General Secretary and the Clerk, and he requested that the Clerk be part of the evaluation group. A Friend asked if there been thought given to the issue if Clerk and

General Secretary do not get along. The Governance Report Group responded that this was the reason for the recommendation that the Clerk not serve on the Review Committee. It was pointed out that just because the partnership is recommended does not mean that it is occurring. The Meeting arrived at unity on this recommendation.

Recommendation 3 regarding the change in number of sessions laid open for concerns. Concern was expressed that there should be more than four meetings, plus two Annual Sessions.

Concern was expressed that reducing the number of meetings will result in decisions done by fewer people, centralizing authority. There will be a “smaller table” and a “ladder with fewer rungs.”

It was noted that this recommendation is just for Interim Meeting to consider reducing the number.

Recommendation 1 regarding the unification of the role of the Clerk. A Friend noted that we still need clarification on the functionality of Continuing Sessions: Are they a continuation of Annual Sessions with the same authority? A strong concern was expressed by a Friend that individual and Monthly Meetings’ concerns will not be brought to Annual Session with fewer sessions. The Clerk clarified that we are not to be in the spirit of deciding but in the spirit of moving. It was asked if this document changes the way decisions are made. The Governance Committee responded that it was the expectation that Friends appointed to Continuing Sessions would also be appointed to Annual Sessions, but that the full authority still would rest with the Yearly Meeting body at Annual Sessions.

A Friend noted that the Meeting experienced a lack of unity on the role of Continuing Sessions, the choosing of Elders, and the partnership of the General Secretary and Clerk. The Clerk said that we will be returning to Recommendations 1, 3, 4, and 8 after lunch. The Governance Committee was asked to meet with the Clerk after the session.

Minutes approved after corrections and with the observation that Recommendation 7 will need to be revisited.

After a period of worship, Meeting adjourned to reconvene at 1:50 p.m. today.

March 28 – evening

Draft version – please suggest changes by July 14, 2009 Email Wright Horne

The Seventh-day afternoon session of the 329th Annual Sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

The Meeting assembled at the appointed hour and settled into open worship during which we heard a relevant reading on worship by William Penn, written in 1677.

The Clerk Thomas Swain (Middletown MM, Concord Quarterly Meeting) introduced the Alternate Clerks Patricia McBee (Central Philadelphia MM), Dana Kester-McCabe (Wicomico River MM), and Mark Myers (London Grove MM), and General Secretary Arthur Larrabee (Central Philadelphia MM). Recording Clerks are Jim Herr (Lancaster MM) and Jane Keller (Pennsdale MM).

Visitors Ronald Inskip from New York Yearly Meeting and Jonathan Evans from Baltimore Yearly Meeting were recognized. Katharine Wilson's class of students from Villanova University was expected but not present at this time.

In our continuation of the consideration of the Governance Project Report, Gretchen Castle gave a summation of the morning session, and a review of considerations made over lunch by the Project Group. She urged us to recognize that the governance body of the Yearly Meeting will continue to be the Meeting in Sessions, and that many of the considerations from this morning will be settled by the Implementation Committee. She said the Governance Group decided to withdraw its suggestion to change the name of Interim Meeting, thus removing item 1 from the list.

Clerk asked us to consider item 3, changing it to “Consideration be given to how many sessions might be needed per year.” Meeting approved.

A Friend expressed concern that we seek procedural solutions to deep, spiritual challenges. He urged us to use this time as a true threshing session, to find spiritual solutions to the questions brought up by consideration of these recommendations from the Governance Group. Clerk also urged us to seek the deepest level in our further considerations.

A Friend asked us to remember that we must have the faith in the group, and that the Implementation Committee will go forth and tweak the governance project in faith. Another Friend told of seeing the group of Friends under the weight of Spirit doing this work over lunch. He was delighted to find that Gretchen Castle brought forth the very changes he was looking for.

A past Clerk of Yearly Meeting said she was concerned that, with only one Clerk, there would be too much for any one person to do unless that person is retired. Another Friend pointed out that it has been the case for some time that the Clerk of Interim Meeting and Yearly Meeting Clerk both attend all meetings.

A Friend expressed concern that, although at present we have spiritually grounded Clerks and staff, at other times that is not the case. When that happens, having one Clerk could be problematic. However, a Friend urged us to realize this choice is between having one Yearly Meeting or two. Another Friend urged us to better define the role of Alternate Clerks to include clerking of some sessions.

Nominating Committee will nominate an Implementation Committee to give us practical ways to bring the Governance Report into reality, also considering those concerns raised today. This committee will report back to us on its work at our Residential Sessions in July. The continuing roles of this Implementation Committee, Interim Meeting, and Yearly Meeting in sessions will also be considered in July.

After a moment of worship, the Meeting approved the Governance Report with the changes to our governance as presented in the revised document from the Governance Project Group. Clerk expressed deep appreciation for the Spirit-led efforts of this Meeting in session. We approved appointing an Implementation Committee to season these recommendations (especially numbers 3, 5, 10) and to bring its recommendations to summer sessions in July.

And with this, we took a brief break.

We then went to a report on Heeding God's Call: A Gathering on Peace. Clerk Thomas Swain stepped aside and allowed Alternate Clerk Mark Myers to preside. At this time, Mark introduced Katharine Wilson and her class from Villanova University: Ali Flukes, Kiku Huckle, and Meg Rego.

Thomas Swain brought us a report to allow us to glean some of the spiritually nourishing and enlivening flavor of Heeding God's Call and to begin to reflect on how each one of us is called. There was a four-page handout. Young Friends were delayed in their entrance.

To bring a bit of the flavor of the event, we heard brief presentations by four PYM attenders at the Gathering. Christine Smith (West Chester MM) told us she was somewhat disappointed that there were only going to be delegates to this gathering, but was delighted to be asked to be one. To express her experience, she gave us verbal snapshots of a few people who attended, saying there was a look of hope in nearly everyone's face. The fact that people were there from different faith communities, some of which were unfamiliar to Chris, gave her an extremely rich experience. She was most touched by someone who said, "We have been given permission to look at something new." Samuel Caldwell (Providence MM) told us about the impact of "but I say unto you" from Matthew 5. Jesus told his disciples to love their enemies. Even as one who is not a Biblical literalist, Sam said he feels these are clearly true teachings on the importance of peaceful activity. He came to the Gathering with an enormous concern about the way people of faith in this country have fallen away from Jesus's teaching, with respect to how it concerns handguns, implements that have no excuse other than injury and destruction of humans. Gilbert Ambler, a Young Friend from Germantown MM, said he was too busy with school responsibilities to attend more than one day. But from that one day, he received great encouragement to stand up to military recruiters and convince a friend to go to college instead of joining the military. He also feels more determined than ever to be a leader in the future. Patricia

McBee (Central Philadelphia MM) said the Gathering was truly Spirit-filled. She was hoping for it to “have muscle as well as heart,” to provide attendees with instructions for future activity. But it did not. This could have been disappointing, were it not for activities she has watched develop as time has passed.

Christie Duncan-Tessmer (Chestnut Hill MM), PYM Associate Secretary for Programming and Religious Life, told us we, as all faith communities involved in the gathering, are urged to consider implantation of the next step in the process of bringing peace. To do this, after the Young Friends joined us, we split into groups of two or three to consider the core issues raised by two Queries: “What does our Yearly Meeting look like when we are fully committed to the call to peacemaking? What is it that you are ready to commit to in our Yearly Meeting, to make this vision of fiery peacemaking a reality?” After a few minutes of great buzz in the room, Christie brought us back to focus. Everyone was asked to write down a commitment he or she was willing to make, and to turn this in to the Clerk. Those who felt they had seen a way for them to behave were asked to stand. A majority did so. Christie urged us to feel our roots together. Christie then told us to consider how these commitments met the suggestions in the One Book/One Yearly Meeting book *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy*. She asked to consider if our commitments showed grounding and clarification, developing program, developing models, witnessing the truth to others, and complete nonviolent reform. Again people stood to show their connection. After this we entered into a period of open worship.

Thomas Swain then told us a few of the byproducts of the work. Quakers worked together for peace. The National Council of Churches has asked us to help bring a message of the importance of peace to all their members. The Church of the Brethren, Mennonites, and Quakers worked together. This Meeting Room has a working sound system and quieter floors.

Meeting approved the establishment of a working group to coordinate a response to Heeding God’s Call.

On May 2, the Peace and Concerns Standing Committee will have their annual spring peace event, to which other faith communities are invited as well as everyone in the Yearly Meeting. Among other things, this event will review the effects and events surrounding the Gathering. There will also be a review of the outcomes referred to the Priorities Process Standing Committee.

Meeting agreed to support the ongoing interfaith witness opposing gun violence prevention in Philadelphia and the surrounding areas. We also agreed to communicate with Meetings in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, inviting them to become partners with other faith communities to collaborate on this concern.

We minuted our great appreciation for a very large group of Friends who made this gathering possible.

We then joyfully stood and sang “Yonder Come Day.”

Joan Broadfield (Chester MM) read the epistle from Intermountain Yearly Meeting.

Wright Horne, Associate Secretary for Advancement and Communications, introduced Jan Hatchard as Director of Development, who gave a short report on the Annual Fund. There has been \$150,000 contributed so far, with a goal of \$535,000. This is \$44,000 below where we were last year at this time.

The minutes were read, revised, and approved.

The Clerk invited Friends to stay after dinner for the evening session with Mary Ellen McNish of the American Friends Service Committee and musician Madi Diaz.

After a brief period of worship, the Meeting adjourned to meet again at 7 p.m. in the West Room.

March 29 – morning

Draft version – please suggest changes by July 14, 2009. Email Wright Horne

The First-day morning session of the 329th Annual Sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

The Meeting assembled at the appointed hour and settled into open worship.

Alternate Clerk Dana Kester-McCabe (Wicomico River MM) was our Clerk this morning for much of the meeting. She introduced others on the facing bench, Yearly Meeting Clerk Thomas Swain (Middletown MM, Concord Quarterly Meeting), General Secretary Arthur Larrabee (Central Philadelphia MM), and Recording Clerks Jim Herr (Lancaster MM) and Jane Keller (Pennsdale MM).

No visitors came forth to be recognized.

David Brimmer (Fallsington MM) read an epistle from Ohio Yearly Meeting.

Clerk introduced TylaAnn Burger, Treasurer for Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. She said this is not the report she's used to giving; she expects to give a more customary report at Residential Sessions. Today she promised to tell us about the effects of the economy on the Yearly Meeting budget, rather than provide a balance sheet. She said the fund balance, the result of liabilities subtracted from assets, is down by only 20%, instead of the 30%-40% reduction many individual portfolios have experienced. However, this means that \$49.7 million is now \$39.8 million. Our investment income, because it's based on a 3-year rolling average from Friends Fiduciary Corporation, has not reduced by much yet. The greatest effect on investment income will occur in about 18 months. However, our Annual Fund is affected immediately by the downturn in the economy. TylaAnn is projecting a shortfall of \$150,000 for this year's Annual Fund. When combined with a \$50,000 decrease in other revenue and a \$24,500 deficit for the Peace Gathering, this comes to approximately a \$225,000 deficit for this year. This is offset by savings in personnel costs that bring the projected deficit down to \$85,000. However, next year will be much more difficult. When the FYE 2010 budget was prepared, it appeared the total deficit, including reductions in income from the Fiduciary and Annual Fund, would be \$440,000. Standing Committees cut way back on their expectations, and there will be no staff salary increase. In addition, four staff positions were reduced and one was eliminated. Predictions for 2011 are also very challenging. If the downturn in the economy rebounds quickly, our rolling average will respond more quickly. TylaAnn urged us all to go back to our Monthly Meetings to talk about this situation, and to give as much as possible, first to our Monthly Meetings because they will be more severely hurt by the downturn of the economy, then to Yearly Meeting. A friend urged us to give a suggestion to Monthly Meetings that they should consider giving 15% more to Yearly Meeting, the amount of reduction in our investment income. TylaAnn suggested that this is also a time to help our young people understand the importance of giving. However, a Friend expressed the importance of care when talking to Young Adult Friends who may be experiencing more difficulty than others. TylaAnn offered to give us a list of pennies per dollar spent on programs, cost of General Fund budget per adult member, and reports on how Monthly

Meetings benefit from grants and other funds. It was pointed out that there are 9,500 adult members of Yearly Meeting with approximately 8,200 households, and of these only 1,600 gave to the Annual Fund. A Friend expressed concern for the human factor involved in reduction of personnel. Clerk said that, despite our transparency on these issues, there are many reasons to not open discussion about this at this time. TylaAnn said, because of our history of careful stewardship, the Yearly Meeting is not in dire straits. However, as a vibrant, growing Meeting, we have needs to consider. Great thanks was expressed to the Treasurer.

Mark Myers, Clerk of the Priorities Process Standing Committee, asked members of the committee to come to the facing bench. As a member of that committee, Dana turned the clerking over to Thomas Swain. Mark gave a brief explanation of the history of the committee, resulting from sessions last summer. He introduced members of the committee. There were five themes used to prime conversation as they went to eight Listening Sessions all over the geographic area of Yearly Meeting, listening to about 200 people for 2 hours each. The objective was to be a vessel to receive the priorities of the people of the Meeting. The committee now has about 100 pages of notes that need to be shaped into a useful form of two pages or so. And this needs to be prepared for the May Interim Meeting, which will decide if it is ready to be presented to Monthly Meetings, Quarterly Meetings, and our Summer Sessions. Mark said, when this process began, it was anticipated that we would have an excess of resources. As TylaAnn had just told us, this is not the case. Establishment of priorities will be very important as the Yearly Meeting comes to grip with its more restricted financial situation. There are areas of priorities that were not mentioned last summer, such as pastoral care and simplicity, which have come out in the listening sessions. Mark gave us a few of his personal reflections from his participation in the listening sessions. We are in a better mood than we were a few years ago—there is a wealth of good spirit among us. Some people love the term marketing, others find the term a cause for angst. He also found a great appreciation for the opportunity to express feelings and thoughts on these priorities. In closing, Mark said there have been further clarifications of our priorities and ministry that have grown out of the Gathering on Peace, to think globally and act locally. Patricia Finley said the Peace and Social Concerns Committee developed a list over 6 years of their priorities. She asked that the efforts of standing committees, not just thoughts, be considered. A Friend from Unami Meeting noted omission of consideration of a priority on same-gender marriage. Another Friend expressed his great appreciation for this process of finding priorities. A Friend asked us to be prayerful and loving about what others see as priority. Another Friend expressed disappointment that younger Friends were not involved in this discussion this morning. Tying in the urging given yesterday, a Friend reminded us to consider what our Yearly Meeting would look like if it was on fire. Clerk expressed appreciation for the time and energy given by this committee.

Minutes to this point were read, revised, and approved.

As we prepared for the children to join us, we were reminded to respect them and to listen with loving kindness, not laughter. Kathy Singer (Abbingdon MM), Children's Religious Life Coordinator, ushered in the children who introduced themselves. They then presented a report about their activities. There were 40 here during the weekend, from babies to 5th graders. Children then held up some of the wonderful pieces of artwork they created during their program, including signs on earth-care that will be displayed outside the Meeting House. Kathy

and the children then led us in singing a song they wrote, the lyrics of which are: “Earth is our sacred space / Earth is our living place / May we learn, with God’s Grace/ to walk gently here.”

As we settled into open worship, Clerk asked us to consider the Query, “Are all hearts clear?” After a brief break we met for Divine Worship under the care of the Monthly Meeting of Friends of Philadelphia.

At the rise of worship, Linley Gregory (Aotearoa Yearly Meeting, New Zealand) was introduced.

Clerk read his wonderful, tender minute of exercise, which is attached to these minutes.

General Secretary Arthur Larrabee reminded us that the average age of the members of our yearly meeting is 46, which is, as he pointed out, a good story, worth telling.

These last few paragraphs of minutes were read, revised, and approved.

Minutes of Exercise, March Sessions 2009

Draft version – please suggest changes by July 14, 2009. Email Wright Horne

The spiritual exercise of our life together was powerfully evident this weekend among Philadelphia Friends. Our opening worship settled quickly and was like a living stream that allowed us to be carried to a new place. Amanda Kemp's presentation that evening was called "Is This a Good Time to Talk? Creating a New Conversation About Race In America." Amanda shared stories from her own life that led us to remember important personal connections in our own. She showed us a source for healing within. She gently encouraged us to surrender our own stories to find a real connection with others.

Saturday was our big day with a full agenda that showed our yearning for new ways of relating to each other that nurtured our Spirit-led decision-making process. Mary Ellen McNish told us that we were living in a critical time in history. We too as members of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting are living at a critical time in life of our community. Several important changes have been initiated over the last two years. The Budget Process Review brought us a place where we can use "frozen" financial resources for new and current projects. The Priority Process Standing Committee is listening to us to hear the God-given desires we feel as live concerns within our community. Hopefully when it finishes its work this summer with a presentation in July, we should have a set of priorities that will shape our work and enliven our testimonies, enrich our spiritual lives, and challenge our ability to cooperate with each other for our limited resources.

The third aspect of our renewing energy is the Governance Report. We approved it yesterday authorizing an Implementation Committee to guide how we can grow in relationship to one another calling upon our growth in trust and love as we show that we are teachable in Quaker process. We spent spacious time responding, sharing, and seeking Truth that created a structure that can move us to be a body with passion, power, and revealing God's glory.

One of the lessons from the Gathering on Peace was that when the task was focused and simple, like providing a venue for listening to God's Call, the individual task groups, although discrete and individual in focus, worked together for the good of Heeding God's Call. That Gathering, as we heard, was powerful, even transformational, in its impact in the world. So too, the three measures we've initiated in the last several years will allow us to have a single focus and revive the inherent power of Spirit-led actions.

In a letter from Deborah Fisch, FGC Regional Staff, and Clerk of Iowa Yearly Meeting Conservative, she wrote:

"We are at an important time for Friends. There is much, much work to be done and to model for the rest of the world, but... we are like the tree that looked beautiful, but upon closer inspection had no fruit. The owner wanted to destroy it, but a hired hand begged for another year to fertilize the tree in hopes it would once again begin to bear fruit. God, the owner, said – okay one more year. We in the Religious Society of Friends are in that 'one more year' time in the existence of Friends. We can say yes or no...the choice is ours."

Last night we heard Mary Ellen McNish say that we were living in a critical time. At the last National Council of Churches General Assembly, we heard a similar lament that we are in a dangerous time because we have been set free (in the sense that a decent and faithful man is in the White House) AND we haven't reached the Promised Land.

Like our country, we are discovering that we, when we are in community like we have been this weekend, know we are free. AND we haven't reached the Promised Land – yet. We still have a ways to go and together we can get there in our faithfulness. But most of all, if we need to continue to learn that, we can love each other.

As I close, I recall writing from one of my favorite stories by Margery Williams, *The Velveteen Rabbit*:

The Skin Horse had lived longer in the nursery than any of the others. ... For nursery magic is very strange and wonderful, and only those playthings that are old and wise and experienced like the Skin Horse understand all about it.

“What is REAL?” asked the Rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender, before Nana came to tidy the room.... “Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?”

“Real isn't how you are made,” said the Skin Horse. “It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real.”

“Does it hurt?” asked the Rabbit.

“Sometimes,” said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. “When you are Real you don't mind being hurt.”

“Does it happen all at once, like being wound up,” he asked, “or bit by bit?”

“It doesn't happen all at once,” said the Skin Horse. “You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand.”

“I suppose you are real?” said the Rabbit. And then he wished he had not said it, for he thought the Skin Horse might be sensitive. But the Skin Horse only smiled.”

Our friend, Isaac Pennington, said it this way: “Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness, and bearing one with another and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand.”

If we are in a critical time frame, we need to love one another... for a long, long time, not just to play... but REALLY love, we will become Real. We need to pray for one another. If we can love and pray, we will reach the Promised Land together.

Thomas Swain, Clerk