

Southern Appalachian
Yearly Meeting and Association
of the Religious Society of Friends

Revisions approved through Yearly Meeting 2011;
the queries have not yet been revised.
The index is currently being prepared.

**A Guide to Our Faith and
Our Practice**

Third Edition
2011

Acknowledgements

This document was created by the labor and discernment of many Friends. The list of those who have served SAYMA on the committees to draft and to revise the Guide to Our Faith and Practice would overflow this page. Their willingness to travel repeatedly to meetings, their sensitivity in discerning the movement of Spirit within our yearly meeting, and their skill in crafting language have brought this Guide into being and kept it true to the spirit and reality of SAYMA. Countless others worked within their monthly meetings, helping revise the sequential drafts, gathering a sense of the meeting, and reporting back to the committee. At Yearly Meetings in the years when Faith and Practice appeared on the agenda, a substantial portion of meeting for worship for business was devoted to considering the committee's work and making further amendments. Many Friends offered thoughtful contributions at those meetings. This document is truly a corporate work - of faith, of practice, of love.

Explanatory Note A Guide to Our Faith and Our Practice and The SAYMA Handbook

These two documents describe and guide our Yearly Meeting and its work. Friends have committed themselves to remaining open to continuing revelation by new understandings of the Spirit. They recognize that guides like this one tend to freeze today's unique experience into tomorrow's rigid formula.

As a resource, the Guide to Our Faith and Practice naturally reflects the way SAYMA Friends have conducted their spiritual labors at the time of its original composition (1975-1990) and subsequent revisions. We recognize that to enable the Spirit to blow freely where it will, thus leading Friends and their meetings, is a more fundamental principle than any temporary guide. The Guide reflects our understanding of the spiritual basis for our practice as Quakers.

To encourage openings to divine revelations and to promote the corporate nature of Friends' decision making, the clerk of SAYMA shall

inquire each year at the beginning of the first yearly meeting session for business if concerns have arisen among Friends regarding this Guide. Specific minuted proposed alterations, seasoned in a monthly meeting, may then be presented and referred to an examining committee appointed by the yearly meeting; this committee will promptly consider such alterations, make any recommendation for changes and then be discharged.

As the Spirit leads or not less than 10 years after completion and approval by yearly meeting of the most recent revision, yearly meeting shall consider whether it will appoint a revision committee to:

- Review the entire Guide;
- Through prayerful consideration weigh whether continuing corporate revelation necessitates a change;
- Bring a recommendation to the next YM annual session;
- Gaining approval of yearly meeting, if a revision is needed, proceed to draft changes.

In order to assure continuity and preservation of past experience it is recommended that examining and revision committees consist of five or more members, at least two of whom have served on a previous examining or revision committee. The committees continue to serve until they have fulfilled their charge and yearly meeting has laid them down.

At least three (3) months prior to yearly meeting sessions, these committees shall distribute recommendations to monthly meetings to allow for a process of seasoning. In light of minuted responses from monthly meetings, the committees will present their reports for yearly meeting consideration (at Yearly Meeting). Any recommendations for changing the Guide that are approved at yearly meeting sessions will immediately become a part of the Guide, even before reprinting.

The SAYMA Handbook describes the procedures we use in order to carry out our work. Detailed descriptions of positions, committees and tasks are continually revised and refined as we move forward in seeking to be faithful in carrying out God's work. Whomever (person or committee) charged with keeping the Handbook current receives changes from individuals who have served in positions of responsibility, committees, such as the Yearly Meeting Planning Committee, and reports the changes to yearly meeting.

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Introduction

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

Letter from the Meeting of Elders at Balby, 1656

Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association, a community of local meetings of the Religious Society of Friends, continues to be inspired by the spirit of seventeenth-century English religious reformers who sought to revive primitive Christianity. Our name identifies the geographical center of our widespread monthly (local) meetings and, in traditional Quaker language, indicates that we meet annually to conduct our business. The yearly meeting, however, is a cooperative association and exercises no authority, other than moral and advisory, over any local meeting or individual Friend.

This Guide, in its procedures, makes no attempt to lay down final rules that can inhibit the Spirit's leadings. In our testimonies and queries we summarize the mainstream of Friends' traditions even while adapting that heritage for the very different world of the early twenty-first century in the southern United States.

In writing our own Guide to Our Faith and Our Practice – a process that began just a few years after we became a yearly meeting – we decided to work from our own experience rather than model too closely on the work of larger, more established yearly meetings. We have remained conscious of the need to write for a particular group of Friends in a particular time and place, a group whose members come from a wide variety of Quaker traditions or, indeed, from other backgrounds altogether. The Guide may thus serve to introduce new seekers to our own variety of Friends' practice.

A provisional guide, containing seven sections in a loose-leaf notebook, was printed in 1982. As other sections were approved by yearly meeting, they were added. The final sections were approved in 1990. We trust that those who have occasion to consult the Guide will themselves experience the sense of unity that came to characterize our labors. And, more broadly, this document will introduce us to the wider family of Friends who may find our struggle – to express in mere words our transcendent experiences with Truth – helpful also to them. We know that SAYMA has gained immensely from the effort.

I. CONTINUING QUAKER HISTORY

A. Historical Experiences

After many years of searching for answers to questions in his mind, George Fox in 1647 heard a voice speak to him out of the depth of his being: "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition." The roving shoemaker, son of a weaver in Leicestershire, England, experienced a sense of relief from his inner struggles, an awareness of being touched by the Divine. He came to recognize that people in every religious tradition can apprehend their own place in the ultimate scheme of things.

Experiences like Fox's were commonplace in a society marked by the kind of political and social upheaval that would, within two years, bring English radicals to behead their king. Reformers, itinerant preachers, and "seekers" roamed the countryside collecting a following among the many people whose needs were not being satisfied within the existing order of things.

Then twenty-three years old, Fox responded by embarking on a lifelong mission of proclaiming what he had experienced. Possessing a personality that gripped the attention and a message that spoke to other people's needs, he preached in established churches and at other gatherings and religious meetings to seekers, proclaiming a simple, yet radical message. Christ has come to teach his people himself, Christ is available to everyone who seeks him, Christ may be found by searching inwardly for that "Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." His followers, soon numbering into the thousands, called themselves Children of Light and Friends of the Truth. They saw themselves as reviving the faith of the original Christians.

This compelling faith led them to regard all people as equal before God, to worship in silence without the intervention of clergy, and to challenge any practice that violated their principles. They refused to pay tithes to the Church of England, they interrupted church services to witness to their beliefs and to challenge the dogma, they refused to swear oaths, maintaining that truth should be spoken at all times, and they challenged the authority of the King of England by refusing to swear an oath of allegiance, believing that God is the only Authority. In like manner, they challenged the authority of judges by refusing to remove their

hats in court as a gesture of obeisance to a worldly power. On one occasion, a judge reminded George Fox that for his lack of respect he should fear the consequences – possibly death. Fox replied that he only quaked for fear of the Lord's wrath – hence the term Quaker.

Fox and his co-laborers emphasized equality in a society of aristocrats, simplicity among ostentatious people, peace in a world accustomed to duels and wars, and the necessity to forsake old sins among churchmen who were content to confess them. After the restoration of Charles II in 1660, Parliament enacted laws to silence religious nonconformists and forbid religious gatherings other than those sanctioned by the state Church. Finding themselves at odds with the authorities, the Children of the Light and Friends of the Truth often were thrown into prison.

Largely to provide continuing care for these Friends and their families, groups of seekers began to meet regularly to respond to local concerns and sufferings. Very early in the movement, Friends across England began to congregate in large gatherings that eventually became known as the "yearly meeting;" smaller groups met quarterly, and the local meetings became known as monthly meetings. These basic organizational units are still in use.

In spite of their sufferings at the hands of the authorities and even at the hands of angry mobs, most refused to deny their faith. Friends continued to attract adherents like Margaret Fell, who organized relief for traveling and suffering Friends, and William Penn, son of an admiral, friend of royalty, and founder of Pennsylvania. Friends had begun emigrating to the New World in search of religious freedom. In Puritan New England, Dutch New Amsterdam, and Anglican southern colonies of Maryland and Virginia, "Publishers of Truth" confronted the same opposition the faithful had experienced in Old England. The strict "saints" of Massachusetts proved most vigorous in their prosecution, for Friends' espousal of freedom from outward regulations struck at the base of Puritan practice. Puritan magistrates ordered Quakers whipped, their tongues bored, their ears cropped, and, in the case of four, including Mary Dyer, their lives forfeited.

Through William Penn, however, a new start was possible. Although Rhode Island, New Jersey, Delaware, and North Carolina welcomed Quakers, and even permitted them to serve in high government positions, it was not until Pennsylvania was founded that a Quaker gov-

ernment was formed in the New World. This land was given to William Penn by Charles II to discharge a debt the king owed to Penn's father. Penn's holy experiment was built upon Quaker principles, and it became a haven for all peoples, regardless of their religious beliefs. All dealings with the Indians were by treaties that benefited both parties. While Quakers governed Pennsylvania, strife between the settlers and the Indians was settled by recourse to the terms of society. The colony prospered.

In a short time, however, Quakers were in the minority, and events leading up to the French and Indian War brought the holy experiment to an end in 1757. Although the Pennsylvanians were not affected by the early troubles, since they had good relations with the Indians, nearby states were in the throes of the war. The population of Pennsylvania wanted to side with other colonists against the French and their Indian allies. Quakers in government were put into an untenable position: they could not support war, and they could not deny the citizens representative government. Most resigned from the Assembly rather than assent to preparations for war.

This act of withdrawal from public life was followed by withdrawals in other areas as well. In the eighteenth century, Quakers became a separate and peculiar people whose life centered increasingly in their own communities. Wearing distinctive clothing, using the familiar "thee" and "thou," and adopting more rigid rules of behavior, Friends entered a "Quietist" period. Not only were fewer people convinced of the validity of the Quaker way, but some who were found themselves disowned if they violated the letter of the rules. Public witnessing of the Truth faltered as Friends withdrew into their communities.

The reformer, John Woolman, a tailor of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, vigorously carried on the search for truth by traveling widely among Friends and insisting that they consider slavery and war taxes in the Light. He slowly moved his fellow believers to adopt a testimony against slavery in 1774. Even so, these moves, principled and consistent as they were, only served to illustrate the separateness of Friends from their fellow citizens. By the end of the American Revolution, the number of Quakers in the United States had dropped from more than 50,000 to below 40,000.

The Revolution had a lasting impact on Friends. Some members who had been disowned during the war for joining the patriot cause or

pledging allegiance to the new government gradually drifted back, but a group of "Free Quakers" maintained a separate existence down to the 1830s. By this time, the revolutionary stress on equality produced tension between those who wanted to maintain a tight rein on the Society and those who stressed the liberty offered by the inward working of the Spirit; the former centered in urban areas, the latter in rural. The two trends surfaced with bitter fury at Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in 1827 when those called liberals or Hicksites, named after Elias Hicks, separated from the urban Orthodox party that emphasized the Scriptures and evangelical beliefs. Before long, most yearly meetings witnessed similar splits, some complicated by court battles and physical struggles over property. In the 1840s theological debates further rent the Orthodox when New England farmer John Wilbur insisted that the new group had de-emphasized the "Inward Christ;" these Wilburites became those known today as Conservative Friends.

Other divisions resulted from the westward movement after the Civil War. Some Friends found themselves caught up in the frontier revivals that obliterated denominational differences in the western territory. Most western meetings began to adopt practices characteristic of Protestant churches - paid pastors, programmed services, hymn singing, even creeds. Many Friends from this newer tradition joined to form Five Years meeting, now Friends United Meeting (FUM), centered in the Midwest. These heirs of the Orthodox began to divide in the 1920s in Western YMs where evangelicals predominated. From this influence Evangelical Friends International (EFI) emerged.

In 1900, Friends General Conference (FGC) grew out of an association of unprogrammed Yearly Meetings concerned with social and educational issues. Today FGC's mission is to nurture the spiritual life of approximately 35,000 Friends by means of an annual gathering, religious education, publications, and visitation. SAYMA is affiliated with it.

In spite of divisive tendencies, in 1917, at the time of World War I Friends joined together to create the American Friends Service Committee as an outlet for wartime service for Quaker conscientious objectors and as an instrument of relief to victims of the war. As time went on, the Service Committee won wide recognition and support for its relief work and its activities in the fields of race relations, public education, overseas economic development and advocacy for those who suffer from natural disaster, wars, famines, and oppression. It continues to seek

ways to strengthen the forces of peace and disarmament and endeavors to offer a moral and religious perspective on world affairs. In 1947, AFSC with its British counterpart, the Friends Service Council, received the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of Friends.

In the 1930s, representatives from meetings around the world organized the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) to address the concerns and needs of Friends throughout the world. FWCC now concentrates on bringing together Friends from different countries and varying traditions. Its Americas Section oversaw initial development of some of SAYMA's early meetings. It partially supports the Quaker United Nations Office. Cooperation has continued, demonstrated by the uniting of several Yearly Meetings that included both Hicksite and Orthodox elements.

Out of faithfulness to the Friends Peace Testimony, in the midst of World War II the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) opened its doors as the first religious lobbying group in Washington. FCNL seeks to bring the concerns, experiences, and testimonies of Friends to bear on policy decisions in the nation's capital. Cooperating with this effort is the William Penn House, a site for seminars and conferences in Washington, where Friends gather to address the many concerns they have for their society and the world.

The deepening awareness of the need for Friends to act corporately in the world has continued to spawn new organizations. Quaker House is a military counseling resource center. Right Sharing of World Resources (RSWR) addresses the interrelated problems of poverty and materialism. Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW) (formerly Friends Committee on Unity with Nature) works to integrate concern for God's Creation into the beliefs and practices of the Religious Society of Friends. Friends Peace Teams is an outreach of our peacemaking. Some organizations carry out our testimonies of community and equality such as Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns (FLGBTQC) and Friends of Color.

As Americans became more mobile in the mid-twentieth century, Friends from diverse backgrounds worshipped together, rediscovered their common heritage, and proceeded to form meetings where few Quakers had been before or in areas their spiritual ancestors had long since left behind. Of such were the Friends who formed the germ of the Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association, and they have

been joined by many others discovering Friends for the first time and finding in its tradition a spiritual life that speaks to their condition. Participation in such wider Quaker organizations is one way of nurturing SAYMA's ties to its heritage and expressing its faith, as well as maintaining relations with Friends and their concerns.

B. SAYMA History: Mountain Quakers and Beyond

In the usual course of nature, streams run out of the mountains and into the flat lands below, but for the Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association of the Religious Society of Friends, the streams have flowed toward the hills and converged to form a young and vibrant yearly meeting. In recent years our streams of influence have returned to the flatlands to pick up groups outside the mountains themselves.

The oldest regional source was the Quaker family discovered by visiting English Friends George Fox and William Edmundson in 1672 in eastern North Carolina. Over the next 120 years, branches of the Society spread out to South Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee. Their portion mostly waned as sectional and slavery controversies induced many to move to Indiana and Ohio where land was rich and people could work it profitably without exploiting the labor of black slaves. The few Friends who stayed behind in the fastnesses of hill country were isolated, and many drifted away to other denominations. Academies, like that founded at Friendsville, Tennessee, in 1857, carried on with meager support from local Quakers and with support from distant Friends who regarded such schools as valuable mission enterprises.

By the twentieth century the gradual shift from rural to urban in the region brought Friends from other parts of the nation to the struggling cities. In Nashville, some faculty members at Fisk University began worshipping as Friends as early as 1926, and in 1941, a regular meeting emerged. The wartime Civilian Public Service led the few Quakers already in the region to seek ways to link themselves and to serve the needs of young conscientious objectors doing alternative service in CPS camps. Atlanta Meeting was developing in the same period, but its impetus was as much a result of a concern for better race relations as an impact of the war; it did not organize formally until 1959. Berea and West Knoxville Meetings and the rural Celo Meeting were also nour-

ished by transplanted Friends, some of whom had become attached to the region while doing alternative service. In Pine Mountain, Kentucky, during the early 1940s one or more people could attend annual conferences of the South Central Conference of Friends, and one of these meetings was scheduled at Pine Mountain Settlement School in or around 1948. Stirrings elsewhere suggested by the 1950s that Friends across this region might organize formally to give each other spiritual help and support.

In 1956, Friends from five Tennessee communities assembled in Knoxville to share their experiences and hopes. Although nothing of a continuing nature resulted immediately, the small group committed itself to meet the following year in Crossville, Tennessee. At the fourth such gathering, on May 17, 1959, about 42 adults with as many children organized the Southern Appalachian Association of Friends (SAAF) and decided to continue monthly publication of a newsletter, the Southern Appalachian Friend, begun the year before by Knoxville Friends. There were seven worshipping groups: Atlanta, Berea, Celo, Chattanooga, Knoxville, Nashville, and Pine Mountain. The next year members of the Association returned to Crossville for an overnight camping experience, a practice that grew to include a full weekend of activities like those of yearly meetings throughout the turbulent '60s. These weekends became high points of the year and formed the basis for treasured recollections for those who participated. In 1970, culminating years of discussion and hesitation, those who came to Crossville decided to create the Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association. The word "Association" was retained to acknowledge isolated Friends in our region. By this time Friends in Asheville, Sewanee (Tennessee), and Columbia (S.C.) had begun to attend, and they were a part of these new developments.

From the beginning SAYMA Friends tried to maintain close contacts with Friends beyond the region and offer a home to those with widely divergent backgrounds who moved into the area. SAYMA sent delegates and representatives to conferences, discussion groups, vigils, and pilgrimages all over the country and occasionally across the world. Friends from beyond visited SAYMA as well as local meetings, to lend advice, encouragement, and nurture to the struggles that inevitably mark a new group's life. The Friendsville Quarterly Meeting (Wilmington Yearly Meeting, Friends United Meeting) has churches in the SAYMA region; little interaction between those churches and SAYMA meetings

has occurred, but the Knoxville Meeting used space in the Knoxville Friends Church for a time in its early days, and more recently these two groups of Friends have cooperated in sewing garments for AFSC.

By 1976 and 1977, serious discussions about the possibility of affiliation with Friends United Meeting or Friends General Conference took place in each monthly meeting. In 1977, SAYMA decided to unite with the latter. At this time, too, Birmingham and Charleston, West Virginia, won recognition as monthly meetings, while informal worship groups and preparative meetings were springing up in other places. Crossville, Huntsville and Memphis have since become monthly meetings. In the mid-1980s, four regional groupings of SAYMA meetings began closer contacts for mutual nurture. The Ministry and Nurture committee evolved from these informal associations.

Friends in the southern Appalachian region have tried to maintain historic Quaker testimonies and practices while adapting to new realities. With the South growing rapidly and with many native Southerners finding a spiritual home among us, SAYMA Friends seem poised on the edge of rapid expansion. More recently, Athens (GA), Boone (NC), Brevard (NC), Foxfire (Johnson City, TN), Greenville (SC), Oxford (MS), and Swannanoa Valley (Black Mountain, TN) Meetings have joined SAYMA. Worship groups continue to be formed. The birth and development of the youth program, Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF) further illustrates this expansion. From the beautiful green mountains that dwarf the original Pendle Hill, they have had an opportunity to envision, as George Fox did more than three and a half centuries ago, a great people waiting to be gathered in the service of the Truth that is Light and Love.

C. The Religious Tradition of Friends

Quakerism began as a part of the Puritan revolution that convulsed England in the seventeenth century. Like others of their day, the first Friends set out to rebuild the church and to recapture the spirit of primitive Christianity. But these Friends of the Truth were radical in insisting that true religion should be based not on forms, ceremony, ritual and creeds, but on a living experience of the Divine. The experience these early Friends affirmed was a shared experience of the living Seed of

God who was present and active in their midst and empowered them to lead lives of obedient discipleship. "The gospel," George Fox wrote, "is a living way, which is revealed within."

This emphasis on the primacy of inward experience led to widening differences between Friends and other Christians and ultimately even among Friends. Friends believed that Christ's embodiment in Jesus testified to a new beginning in humanity's relationship with God. The old order based on law and ceremonial observance was done away with, replaced by the direct rulership of God's spirit, the Light of Christ within. Friends believed that professing Christians had forsaken this fundamental reality and slipped back into an old order based on the "shadows" of form. Thus, for Friends, baptism and communion were inward, spiritual experiences unmediated by any person or ritual. These early Friends recognized God's coming among us manifested in the person of Jesus. They also enthusiastically claimed the universal nature of Christ and believed that each human being, regardless of when and where she or he lived, has been touched by the Christ Within. John Woolman called this a universal principle which is "pure and proceeds from God. It is deep and inward, confined to no forms of religion nor excluded from any..." ("Considerations on Keeping Negroes," Works).

Since Friends believe that the Spirit is actively present among them as teacher, they have always trusted in it to reveal the truth to individuals insofar as they are prepared to receive it. And while Friends do uphold certain principles and beliefs as a corporate body, they do not require adoption or adherence to these as a condition of membership. They do expect that each person be true to his or her own spiritual experience. Friends' beliefs, traditions, and teachings are meant to be testimonies to help individuals discern the leadings of the Inward Teacher in the midst of worldly voices that vie for allegiance.

Friends' expression of their encounters with God have traditionally been grounded in religious experience rather than in doctrine. These experiences have led Friends to use traditional Christian language in fresh ways: "Christ," then, may refer to the historical Jesus or to the Inward Teacher who enters their lives to lead them toward oneness with God; "the Holy Spirit" may become the loving activity of God within each person's life and the life of the meeting; "the Word of God" can be heard through the Bible and through the direct expression of the Spirit.

Friends strive to listen to "that which is eternal," seeking to come together "at a place deeper than words."

The same emphasis is evident in Quaker attitudes toward scripture, religious authority, and ministry. Early Friends confronted Christians of their day, charging that they replaced the direct rule of God's spirit with these human aids and institutions. For Friends, scripture is not the only Word of God but an essential testimony to the true Word of God which continues to be revealed. Scripture and other inspirational writings can be a help or hindrance, depending on whether or not they are read in the light of truth. Likewise, for Friends religious authority is not in outward uniformity of religious practice but is found individually and corporately through relationship to the Spirit, which some call the living Christ. Ministry is not meant to be a divinely instituted mediation between God and the individual, but a help in guiding people from worldly influences to the true spirit of God.

Friends speak often of the "Inner Light" and "that of God in every person" to identify the Spirit that leads them and is experienced directly by them. Their beliefs have attracted to Friends seekers from varying religious and cultural traditions, who have identified, in these universal teachings, parts of their own backgrounds. Friends from whatever tradition have found that they can travel together in similar spiritual paths.

Although Friends today vary widely in the language they use to express their religious experience, many still find deep meaning in traditional Christian terms. Other Friends find inspiration in a universal concept of God encompassing beliefs and values from other world religions. Recognizing times when, as individuals, they thought they could control their own destinies but found themselves feeling cut off from the power and healing of God's love, they may understand "salvation" as the gift which opens them to the Holy Spirit, so that they may act more and more in tune with its leading.

Seeking to live centered in the Spirit, Friends hold to ideals of simplicity and honesty in all their doings. To reduce excessive activity, use material things sparingly, and maintain a sense of stewardship toward the resources of this earth is to keep free of encumbering involvements that may hamper life and movement of the Spirit. Friends believe that direct and truthful discourse, tempered always by tenderness, facilitates full communication and understanding. Commitment to a single standard of truth has traditionally led Friends to refrain from judicial oaths.

The Religious Society of Friends recognizes that all are called to minister in obedience to the living Spirit, whether through service, preaching, teaching, hospitality, or administration. All ministries are seen as important for the well-ordered functioning of the spiritual body. All Friends have particular gifts and qualities to bring, and all are called to find their place of service.

Friends believe in the power of love to evoke the inherent worth of others. We are called to accept and love all persons in spite of transgressions, confrontations, or apparent differences. As members of the human community, we try to recognize that differences spring from varied experiences and that only through love, compassion, and understanding can these differences be reconciled. Violence stands as the ultimate denial of love; peace remains its cherished affirmation. Friends aim toward the transformation of a flawed world into one that would make possible equality, justice and peace for all peoples.

II. NURTURING THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

A. Meeting for Worship

Worship in the tradition of Friends involves silent waiting on the Spirit, listening for the Divine Voice, and being obedient to the demands of disciple-ship. Utterly and severely simple, a meeting for worship convenes in silent expectancy at a previously appointed time and place to await the advent of that spirit that has power to unite a diverse group of seekers. Such services are always marked by a sense of awe and mystery, for worshippers never know beforehand how the seed each shares will become manifest. Yet they remain confident that any who feels led to speak from experience of the word of God, the Inward Teacher, may express sentiments in response to the deep even unconscious needs of those gathered together.

During the early portion of a meeting for worship, the hurry and cumber of the world beyond may slowly become less and less important, and the seekers' attention turns inward in listening for the Divine Word. This period of centering down creates a deepening silence, a living quality, making distractions evident only on the surface of the unity that has been created. The meeting may proceed to its conclusion in this state of silent worship, but more commonly one or more worshippers will sense a leading to share a message with the others present; although it is usually coherent, this sharing represents much more than a product of the merely rational mind. The words uttered develop naturally out of the common experience of the meeting at that special time, yet reflect the experience, personality, and background of the one who gives them voice. Under a leading to speak, a Friend should remember that the most fertilizing messages are often brief, even incomplete; one should not necessarily hesitate from fear of an inadequate insight. One may speak from deep suffering as well as deep joy, from questioning as well as clarity. In whatever form, words from the silence may be profound and concrete evidence of the emerging Spirit of Christ in that moment.

Whether in silence or in speaking, the open awareness of worshippers may lead to what is called a "gathered" or "covered" meeting, when all feel the gathering unity of one Spirit moving through the meeting. What prevents the silent waiting of worship from being mere silence is

the living spiritual activity of those waiting in silence. The quality of worship is enhanced by the practice of God's presence in everyday life, the cultivation of the Spirit and actions taken in response to the Spirit. In this sense all life in the Spirit is preparation for worship, as worship is preparation for life.

The meeting for worship, so unadorned in its organization and procedure, remains the central corporate experience of Friends. The Society's existence would be impossible without the joining of the divine and human that occurs during a gathering of earnest seekers. Others may know of Quakers because of their activism; Friends know themselves because they have met in worship to encounter the Spirit that motivates. As George Fox announced, following the promise of Jesus and the tradition of early Christians, a meeting for worship marks the occasion when the Spirit called Christ is present to teach the people. The meeting is never complete until they respond.

B. Meeting for Business

Monthly meeting for business is a meeting for worship with a concern for business. Our business procedure expresses our faith that the light, if heeded, draws all into agreement. Friends make decisions not by vote nor by compromising a variety of positions, but by full and prayerful consideration discerning a corporate "sense of the meeting." Friends believe that decisions reached in this way carry with them an inward consent of the persons involved, rather than mere outward conformity. We seek the Truth that transcends individual differences. As we listen to and consider all views, we look for that place in our midst, beyond individual desires, where God's will is known.

Friends' business meetings begin in a period of worshipful silence out of which messages may come. Some meetings may find it helpful to open by reading a query. After the silence, the clerk of the meeting suggests an agenda for the session. If at all possible, the clerk should be informed of matters for the agenda beforehand, but the agenda may be modified by those present. Then the meeting proceeds to discuss each item. It is not necessary for everyone to speak on every issue; a worshipful atmosphere, free from trivial, unconsidered, or irrelevant comment, will create a sense of the meeting. The clerk should create openings for

all to speak. Intervals of silent attention between moments of speaking may lead to a deepening sense of unity.

When it appears to the clerk that unity has been attained, or agreement is such that those who differ are clear in withdrawing their objections, a tentative minute is formulated to express the sense of the meeting. After discussion, if Friends give their approval, the clerk or recording clerk writes a minute and reads it back to the meeting. Either has the authority to make minor editorial changes to the minute if such changes appear needed. The clerk should call attention to the changes at the next meeting, after the minutes of the previous meeting have been circulated. The corrected minute then becomes part of the meeting's permanent record, although the subject of the minute may be called up for reconsideration. On matters of the meeting's principles and policies, it is especially important that minutes be read back at the meeting during which action is taken. In other matters, or exercises not involving decisions, minutes may be noted for later wording and correction. When the meeting finds it difficult to unite in a decision, time should be taken to seek ways to avoid mere contention. Someone may call for a period of silent worship, during which a way may appear for the solution to a problem. If feasible, the decision may be postponed to a later meeting, or the matter may be referred to a committee for further consideration and recommendation. If an immediate decision is necessary, that committee may be given the power to act. The grace of humor may help relax tensions so that new insights may come into the meeting. Until the meeting can unite in the minute, the previous policy remains unchanged, or no decisions are made, as the case may be. Occasionally a member will stand aside, not concurring in the decision, but freeing the meeting to proceed. If even one Friend cannot consent and does not stand down from the decision, the meeting needs to continue its search for truth.

Mutual forbearance, concern for the meeting as a whole rather than for personal preference, helps bring Truth, spiritual nurture, fellowship, and a sense of community into the business meeting.

The meeting ends as it began, in worshipful silence.

C. Meeting for Threshing

Friends believe that the Light is accessible and within each of us. Thus, we make corporate decisions with faith that the Divine Spirit will guide us to unity. However, strains that develop over troublesome issues can prevent us from seeing the fullness of truth. In such situations, Friends' meetings often hold one or more "threshing sessions" to allow ample time and opportunity for differences to be aired and faced.

Meetings for Threshing are usually called by a decision of the business meeting but may also be called by the meeting clerk or Committee for Ministry and Nurture or the appropriate counterpart committee. They are not part of business meeting or any other meeting. In threshing meetings no decision is made, but through them the chaff can be separated from the grain. Such meetings can clear the way for later action on the issue.

It is essential that full notice of a threshing session be given and special efforts made to see that Friends of all shades of opinion can and will be present. To the extent that Friends of a given view are absent, the usefulness of such a meeting will be impaired. If factual material needs to be presented, persons knowledgeable about the topic should be asked to present it and be available to answer questions. It is essential that someone take notes for later reference. The clerk of the threshing session may make a report to the meeting for business.

Clerking a threshing meeting takes great sensitivity and care. The clerk of a threshing session makes it clear at the start that the meeting not only expects, but welcomes expressions of wide differences of opinion. Friends are urged not to hold back what troubles them about the issues at hand. Hesitancy to share a strong conviction because it may offend someone reflects a lack of trust. The clerk's job is to draw out the reticent, limit the time taken by too-ready talkers, and see that all have an opportunity to speak, rather than to listen for a sense of the meeting.

Threshing is an activity to nurture and strengthen the community. Friends must take care that expressions of strong opinions and feelings do not spill over into personal attacks. Periods of silence can help Friends hear each other more clearly. Friends need to remain mindful that a threshing session is not only an opportunity to speak but also an opportunity to listen carefully and deeply.

Guidelines for Threshing Meetings

1. Speak from your own personal experience or perspective.
2. Address remarks to the clerk; do not reply directly to or rebut others.
3. All ideas and thoughts on an issue are welcome for consideration.
4. Everyone should have a chance to speak.
5. Everyone with dissenting views has a responsibility to make them known.
6. A threshing session is not an opportunity to admonish others.
7. Passion is permitted!
8. Corporate decisions are not made during a threshing session.

D. Monthly Meeting

The monthly meeting is the fundamental unit of the Religious Society of Friends, a community taking thought for outward society and for one another. It receives and records members; it extends to them spiritual care and, if necessary, material aid. The authority to take action regarding membership lies only in the monthly meeting.

Members and regular attenders of all ages are encouraged to participate in every aspect of meeting life. Meeting life encompasses the care of the spiritual well being of the community through:

- Attendance at meetings for worship and attention to business;
- Participation in the preparation of the annual state of the meeting report responding to the query "How is the spirit faring amongst you?"
- Sharing their spiritual gifts and talents by service in positions of responsibility on committees, and through their financial contributions;
- Extending welcoming hospitality to visitors;
- Corporately discerning matters related to membership;
- Lifting up individual concerns for consideration and possible action;
- Providing for the oversight of marriages;
- Assisting bereaved members and attenders at the time of death or misfortune (see those sections of the Guide).

A monthly meeting may find it necessary to work in a spirit of restoring love with those whose actions are not in accordance with Friends' testimonies and ways as revealed through corporate discernment.

After corporate discernment, the monthly meeting is free to undertake action and to assume functions that are consistent with Quaker principles and not specifically the responsibility of some other meeting. The meeting collects funds required to carry on the work of the meeting. It provides for the holding of titles to property and for the administration of trust funds.

1. Positions of Responsibility

Following is a list of positions of responsibility and committees for typical meeting functions. All meetings will not need them all, and some meetings will have others for special purposes.

Friends who assume responsibility for meeting action or business are urged to perform their tasks with care and dispatch. Meetings may wish to specify that certain officers be members of the meeting. Responsibilities will be shared more equitably among Friends if terms of service in them are limited. Meetings may vary in how they set these limitations, but it is recommended that tenure for most officers be limited to two years.

Clerk – the Nominating Committee seeks out a person with the capacity for a spirit-led leadership, who has good organizational and communication skills. The clerk serves the meeting by:

- Presiding at regular and called meetings for Worship with Attention to Business;
- Discerning and stating the sense of the meeting;
- Assuring that the work of the meeting and decisions of the meeting for business are carried out;
- Supporting those in positions of responsibility and committees carrying out their task;
- Interacting with the outside community as a person of authority.

An assistant clerk acts in the absence of the clerk as mutually agreeable.

Trustees are usually appointed by meetings that own property. They may be authorized to carry out the intent of the meeting in the purchase and development of real property, and they should be responsible for advising the meeting about real property, designated gifts, and funds given by donors or testators. They should be knowledgeable about the legal requirements of the state in which the meeting is located.

Upon receiving gifts, trustees and the meeting will take special care to see that gifts which are accepted are applied to the purposes and uses designated by the donors or testators, and that the purposes and conditions of gifts are in harmony with Friends' testimonies. If such purposes become obsolete or difficult or impossible to fulfill, the trustees charged with them may ask the meeting for advice as to procedure.

Treasurer. It is recommended that this person is knowledgeable about accounting and Friends' fiduciary practices. The treasurer is responsible for:

- The custody and disbursement of the funds of the meeting, in accordance with its directions;
- Assisting the Finance Committee in preparing a yearly budget and presenting it to the meeting for action; where there is no finance committee the Treasurer prepares and submits the budget;
- Accepting donations (cash, checks, and other tangibles) and keeping necessary records;
- Presenting monthly or interim reports of income and expenses;
- Storing records and transactions of the meeting's financial business;
- Making disbursements as directed by the meeting.

The meeting's financial records should be audited at the close of each fiscal year.

The recording clerk and the recorder (in some meetings combined) are responsible for the official record of business and special meetings and of historical data such as births, deaths, marriages, divorces, changes in membership, and contact information.

Recording Clerk. It is recommended that this person is able to communicate effectively in writing and who understands the collaborative nature of preparing minutes that clearly and precisely reflect the

decisions reached by the meeting. This person is responsible for recording the proceedings of regular and called meetings for business.

The recorder is responsible for long-term record keeping. Responsibilities include:

- Keeping an updated data base of meeting members and attenders and circulating it to all members and regular attenders;
- Keeping current the meeting's Membership Book, with full record of births, deaths, marriages, divorces, and changes in membership;
- Preparing an annual census for Yearly Meeting;
- Seeing to the long-term safekeeping of meeting records.

2. Monthly Meeting Committees

The Committee on Ministry and Nurture (Care, Counsel, or Oversight) is responsible for the quality of the meeting for worship, for the religious development of members and attendees, and for the pastoral care and counseling of members and attendees. All who attend the meeting for worship share the responsibility for the settling into silence and the drawing together in expectant waiting and prayer.

The members of this committee seek to deepen their own preparation for religious service. They encourage others to be ready when the call comes for vocal ministry or prayer, remembering that humble gifts and hesitant offerings are often seeds that deepen worship. They also encourage those whose ministry frequently speaks to the spiritual needs of themselves and fellow worshippers, and they will gently remind those who need to be reminded that meeting for worship is a corporate seeking, in depth, not a discussion. Members of the committee keep in loving fellowship with those who are growing in living, experimental faith in God, and they are also available for individual consultation with members and with seekers facing religious problems.

The meeting is concerned with the mental and emotional well-being of each of its members, because its spiritual strength is dependent upon the unity and strength of all. Traditionally, Friends have recognized that some members have a special vocation for counseling, having special qualities of warmth, sympathy, the ability to listen without judging, the ability to keep confidences, spiritual insight without prejudice, and practical resourcefulness. Friends who recognize these gifts in themselves and others should nurture them so that the meeting will grow in sensitiv-

ity to the needs of others. One need not be perfect to minister to others and to foster a love that transcends human limitations.

Among the responsibilities of such a committee are

- **Care of young people.** The committee members seek awareness of and foster influences that develop the religious life of the children and young people of the meeting, whether members or nonmembers, and help them understand the principles and practices of Friends. They seek to strengthen the work of the First Day School committee or committee on Religious Education. Young people desire and need to have a creative part in the life of the meeting, and their contribution is important to older Friends.
- **Inquiries and new attenders.** The committee gives information to persons interested in learning about the Religious Society of Friends, loving attention to attendees at meeting for worship, and invitation to consider applying for membership when they become convinced of the principles of Friends.
- **Applications for or transfer of membership.** The committee receives from the clerk all letters of application for membership and all requests for transfer of membership to or from other meetings of the Religious Society of Friends. Both new applications and transfers receive careful consideration before being brought to the monthly meeting. At least one member of this committee shall serve on the committee to determine an applicant's readiness for membership.
- **Marriage.** Showing cordial interest in those considering marriage, the committee may help and advise in any appropriate way. They extend the affectionate care of the monthly meeting to any nonmembers who seek to be married under its care. When a member marries a nonmember, they welcome the nonmember at meetings for worship and at other meeting functions.
- **Delinquencies.** Members who neglect the responsibilities of membership will be counseled in a loving spirit and with a hope of restoring their interest in the meeting. If this effort proves unavailing, the committee will seek the advice of the monthly meeting.
- **Differences.** If differences arise between members of the monthly meeting, members of the committee seek to reconcile them. If such endeavors fail, and the dispute can be arbitrated, they try to persuade the parties to arbitrate rather than take the dispute to court.

- **Visiting.** The committee tells the meeting when Friends are in difficulties so that members may visit the sick or extend sympathy and assistance to families in times of serious illness or other troubles.
- **Material need.** This committee, or one especially appointed for the purpose, will try to provide for those in need of financial assistance. Meetings are advised to exercise tactful and watchful care in ascertaining and meeting these needs. Such care may involve aid in finding employment, in defraying the living expenses of individuals or of families, and in providing for the education of young people. When Friends are open-hearted and liberal in providing funds for these purposes, but also tactful, the meeting community is strengthened.
- **Outside help.** Members of this committee should not hesitate to seek professional help in caring for and counseling members of the meeting.
- **Queries.** The committee will consider the use of queries by the meeting on some regular basis as a means of communal and individual self-examination.
- **Clearness Committees.** If the Committee on Ministry and Nurture feels it would be helpful or if a member or attender requests, the committee may help call together a clearness committee for such purposes as personal counseling, marital difficulties or other difficulties between members, life choices, divorce, religious dilemmas, or any other matter pertaining to the lives of its members and affecting the life of the meeting. When a meeting counselor or committee for clearness meets with an individual, the quality of a meeting for worship is sought so that love may open a way to the hidden depths of personal problems or dilemmas. From this joint search for a strengthened vision of God's will can come new ways of looking at the problem and possible solutions.

It is helpful to have some combination of continuity and new membership on this committee from year to year.

The House and Grounds Committee

- Sees that the meetinghouse and surrounding grounds are kept neat and clean and that periodic maintenance is performed;
- Arranges meeting work days for major cleaning and maintenance projects;

- Purchases supplies for house maintenance;
- Projects major building or maintenance projects.

A committee for maintenance of the space used by the meeting may also be useful to meetings that rent or borrow their place to meet. Depending on its size and needs, a meeting may want to hire someone for routine care and maintenance.

The Nominating Committee recommends to the monthly meeting names of persons to serve in the various meeting capacities. Its recommendations are to be presented at the meeting for business the month before the changes take place. The committee will seek to match a person's gifts with meeting needs and discern with members and attenders their clearness in serving. Youth as well as adults can be considered for committee service.

The Religious Education Committee's work supplements and deepens the spirit of the meeting for worship and enhances spiritual growth for individuals and the meeting community. The First Day School or Religious Education program may plan and implement a religious education program for both the youth and adults of the meeting or may have a separate adult religious education committee. Adults' needs may be addressed through planning a variety of programs. Series for newcomers are an important way of integrating new attenders into the monthly meeting. Careful selection of literature and materials to carry out the plans is helpful. Selection of topics can be enhanced by good communication with other committees and officers.

Care of the children of the meeting may include a separate coordinator and basic child care. In smaller meetings the First Day School Committee may be composed of teachers, and adult education may be sponsored by Ministry and Nurture.

The Finance Committee, with the collaboration of the Treasurer, prepares the budget, reviews and audits financial records, and considers unbudgeted requests.

Other committees. Meetings may have a variety of other committees for specific purposes, for example library, music, peace education, or ecological and social concerns.

3. Opportunities for Service within SAYMA

Monthly meeting appointed SAYMA Representative. Representatives selected from their monthly meeting, preparative meeting, or worship group accept obligations both to their own meetings as well as to the yearly meeting. (Representatives do not necessarily have to perform these functions themselves but need to see that these responsibilities are carried out).

- Attending representative meeting of yearly meeting as well as yearly meeting.
- Reporting concerns seasoned by monthly meeting to SAYMA and reporting SAYMA business to monthly meeting, with specific attention to SAYMA items requiring awareness and/or action.

SAYMA Committees. Each monthly and preparative meeting is asked to discern what Friends in their meeting have gifts that would be appropriate for service on Ministry and Nurture and Nominating committees and appoint persons led to serve on each committee for at least a one year term. Worship Groups may choose to send someone. Other standing committee members are either self-selected or recommended by the yearly meeting Nominating Committee. (See YM section)

Youth Programs

Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM). Its voluntary staff, supervised by the JYM coordinator, provides a safe place and enriching program which allows adults to participate in Yearly Meeting activities. Existing for children through age twelve during yearly meeting, it seeks to explore aspects of the gathering's theme to nurture young Quakers. During yearly meeting, teaching and assisting these youth, under the supervision of a coordinator, is both rewarding and essential to the full functioning of the whole yearly meeting.

Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF). Adults, appointed by the yearly meeting, can serve on the SAYF Steering Committee. Youth, discerned by SAYF members, serve on the SAYF Nurturing Committee. Other opportunities for serving SAYF include: Friendly Adult Presence (FAP); Friendly Adult Driver (FAD); and FAP in training (FAPIT). FAPITs may serve two years after graduation from SAYF. For process of becoming a FAP or FAPIT see the Handbook.

E. The Yearly Meeting

The Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association is composed of its constituent monthly meetings, preparative meetings, and worship groups. All members and attenders of these bodies have both the privilege and responsibility to participate in keeping the affairs of the yearly meeting in good order.

The yearly meeting exists to support its constituents as they seek in the manner of Friends to live out their lives according to God's leadings. In order to do so, annual sessions are held where matters of business are considered in worship. Much of the work of the yearly meeting is conducted by a variety of committees, which are established and laid down as need arises. Monthly meetings may bring a concern or matter of business to the appropriate committee, which can season it and may bring forward a recommendation for corporate discernment at yearly meeting sessions. If there is not a committee that can address the concern, monthly meetings may convey their seasoned concerns directly to the clerk of the yearly meeting. Yearly meeting sessions also provide time for personal and corporate growth in the Spirit through a variety of activities.

1. Functions of Yearly Meeting

- Welcome and recognize constituent monthly meetings;
- Offer and provide on-going care and guidance to monthly meetings;
- Receive annual State of the Meeting reports from monthly meetings, preparative meetings and worship groups;
- Provide assistance and support to monthly meetings that have worship groups under their care;
- When necessary, lay down nonviable meetings, providing for the orderly transfer of memberships and disposition of real property;
- Set an annual budget for yearly meeting expenses and events. The funds for the budget are raised through yearly meeting assessments paid by monthly meetings.
- Hear reports and recommendations of yearly meeting committees and representatives to wider Quaker organizations;

- Participate in the policy making and ministry of wider Quaker organizations in which we hold membership and to which we appoint representatives;
- Approve and disseminate minutes of social concern;
- Maintain a yearly meeting newsletter and other mechanisms for communication within the yearly meeting;
- Correspond with the wider Quaker world through the annual epistle;
- Receive and hear the epistles sent from other Quaker yearly meetings and organizations.

2. Functions of Representative Meeting

Between yearly meeting sessions, representative meeting carries on the work of the yearly meeting. Each monthly meeting and preparative meeting is asked to appoint at least one representative to attend these meetings, participate in the business and report back to the home meeting. Worship groups may choose to send a representative. Friends serving in Yearly Meeting positions of responsibility serve in corresponding positions at representative meeting. All Friends are welcome and encourage to take part in the representative meeting business discernment.

3. Committees of Yearly and Representative Meeting

The nature and function of all committees established by the Yearly Meeting can change as time and experience reveal new opportunities for Friends. The Yearly Meeting usually constitutes such committees. They may occasionally be formed following action by the Representative Meeting. The functions of these committees are described in the Handbook. The Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee recommends names to the Yearly Meeting to fill the positions on these committees. Ad Hoc committees are formed as the need arises. The Yearly Meeting clerk appoints clerks and committee members. All committees make annual reports to the Yearly Meeting. They also report to the Representative Meeting as necessary. Current standing committees are:

Clerk's Advisory Committee was established in 1999 by the Yearly Meeting; this committee is comprised of the clerks of the standing committees of SAYMA. The clerk of SAYMA convenes this committee

as an advisory committee when need arises and as a means to improve communication within SAYMA.

The Ecological Concerns Network was established in 2001 by Yearly Meeting. This committee was formed to provide assistance, including spiritual and consultative support, to Friends in SAYMA who are following their leadings to work on environmental concerns. It also works toward raising the level of awareness among SAYMA Friends of earth care issues.

Finance Committee prepares the annual budget for SAYMA. It works with Personnel Committee in establishing compensation policies for SAYMA's employees.

Ministry & Nurture Committee, formed in 1990, supports and supplements the work of the monthly meetings' ministry and nurture groups and addresses spiritual issues that span the yearly meeting community. The committee is comprised of representatives of each monthly meeting. It nurtures meetings and worship groups by:

- Being mindful of the state of the spirit in meetings and worship groups. "...How the Truth has prospered amongst them...?" (Query 1682);
- Nurturing the Yearly Meeting by being a spiritual presence during meetings;
- Providing spiritual support for the Yearly Meeting clerks;
- Encouraging intervisitation and regional gatherings;
- Facilitating communication and information sharing;
- Providing resources and help regarding membership issues and Quaker faith and practice;
- Organizing educational workshops, often during Yearly and Representative Meeting sessions;
- Responding to requests from meetings and worship groups within the Yearly Meeting for involvement in sensitive situations, particularly in areas of spiritual life and Quaker process, that face meetings, are between meetings, or between meetings and worship groups. Possible responses include listening, consultation, and /or arranging clearness committees.

- Facilitating clearness and accountability for Friends seeking endorsement by the Yearly Meeting for ministry to which they are called;
- Providing a clearness process and holding accountable released Friends who receive financial assistance from SAYMA's Released Friend Fund;
- Administering the disbursement and accounting of the Spiritual Development Fund.

Nominating Committee discerns the gifts of SAYMA Friends whose names can be brought forward to fill the positions of responsibility of Yearly Meeting. A slate of nominees is presented for consideration at Yearly Meeting. If positions are unfilled at the close of Yearly Meeting, names are brought forward for consideration at Representative Meeting.

Peace and Social Concerns Committee was created in 2002. This committee is charged to:

- Nurture minutes in the area of peace and social concerns from monthly meetings, and facilitate their seasoning by the members of the Yearly Meeting;
- Actively solicit feedback from the monthly meetings;
- Assist in presentation of seasoned minutes to the Yearly Meeting;
- Foster communication and interaction among the Monthly Meetings in SAYMA about our concerns and actions;
- Operate as part of the whole by coordination with other committees working within SAYMA.

Personnel Committee was formed in 1999 as a replacement for the Administrative Assistant Oversight Committee. The committee develops policies and procedures that define the hiring and supervision of SAYMA employees and volunteers.

Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF) Steering Committee was established in 1994 to coordinate the activities of SAYF and to develop policies, procedures and guidelines for youth and adult volunteers. The clerk of this committee is responsible for supervising the work of the SAYF Administrative Assistant.

Yearly Meeting Planning Committee serves SAYMA by attending to the myriad details involved in planning and providing the program and worship opportunities for all those who attend yearly meeting sessions.

4. Positions of Responsibility

Through the discernment of the Nominating committee and the approval of yearly meeting the following positions are maintained. To encourage broad participation and growth of leadership Friends usually do not serve in these positions for more than two (2) consecutive terms. Term of office begins at the close of the yearly meeting session at which appointment is approved. Those completing terms of service assist in carrying out the immediate mandates of the Yearly Meeting. Full descriptions of the duties associated with these positions is found in the handbook.

Clerk

- Presides at yearly and representative meeting sessions;
- Carries out or delegates actions authorized by either of the above;
- Receives and responds to yearly meeting correspondence;
- Prepares and sees to the distribution of agendas of yearly and representative meeting sessions;
- Appoints ad hoc committees as necessary to perform functions not included in other committee or positions of responsibility;
- Supervises the administrative assistant.

Assistant Clerk

- Attends yearly and representative meeting sessions and fulfills the duties of the clerk in the absence of the latter;
- Assists the clerk as needed and assumes delegated duties.

Recording Clerk

- Attends yearly and representative meeting sessions;
- In collaboration with the clerk, prepares the minutes of the proceedings;
- Records Minutes "in the face of the meeting": creating and waiting for approval of the meeting as each piece of business is done or

reading the minutes back to the meeting for approval by the last session.

Treasurer

- Receives and deposits in appropriate accounts all yearly meeting funds including monthly meeting assessments, yearly meeting registrations, and contributions and gifts;
- Makes or supervises all disbursements as approved by the yearly and representative meetings or the clerk;
- Maintains records supporting all transactions;
- Presents annual financial reports to yearly meeting and interim reports to representative meeting;
- Collaborates with the Finance Committee in preparation of the annual budget.

Assistant Treasurer

- Assists treasurer as needed;
- Substitutes for the treasurer when needed.

Newsletter Editor

- May maintain a network of meeting correspondents;
- Prepares the quarterly issues of Southern Appalachian Friend;
- Sees to the distribution of the newsletter to meetings and those individuals who are isolated from a meeting.

Clerks of committees

- Convene the committees and conduct the business of the committees;
- Report the progress of the work and recommendations of the committee to yearly and representative meetings;
- For those committees with budget lines, account for expenditures of the committee.

Representatives to Wider Quaker Organizations. Contact with and experience of Quaker communities and organizations beyond our yearly meeting provides Friends with deeper understanding of how the Spirit is working throughout the breadth of Quakerdom and provides opportunities for service to these organizations by SAYMA Friends. SAYMA ap-

points representatives or contacts to the following wider Quaker organizations:

- American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
- American Friends Service Committee/Southeastern Regional Office (AFSC/SERO)
- Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)
- Friends General Conference (FGC)
- Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgendered and Queer Concerns (FLGBTQC)
- Friends Peace Teams
- Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) – Section of the Americas
- Quaker House
- Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW)
- Right Sharing of World Resources (RSWR)

Annual reports from the representative or contact are expected. Terms of service to these organizations are determined by the needs of the respective organizations.

5. Staff of SAYMA

As the complexity of maintaining good process and communication internally and externally has increased, the yearly meeting has seen fit to employ persons to fulfill specific duties. Full job descriptions are maintained by the Personnel committee, which also has responsibility for ensuring that our employees are fairly supervised and compensated.

Administrative Assistant

- Maintains an office and mailing address for the yearly meeting;
- Serves as initial contact for those outside the yearly meeting;
- Serves as an information resource for those in the yearly meeting;
- Retains all SAYMA documents (minutes, epistles, newsletters and correspondence);
- Distributes agendas and registration materials for representative meetings to appropriate persons;
- In collaboration with the clerk and recording clerk distributes minutes of Representative and Yearly Meeting sessions to monthly meeting clerks and representatives, committee clerks, other persons

in positions of responsibility and representatives to wider Quaker organizations;

- Gathers, compiles and reports annual membership statistics;
- Maintains a database of members of SAYMA and prepares, updates and distributes the Directory;
- Forwards copies of SAYMA documents and statistics to the appropriate Friends' historical libraries and organizations.

Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF) Administrative Assistant

- Maintains the records of the SAYF program;
- Coordinates the registration for SAYF retreats and activities;
- Maintains the financial records for the program and disburses and collects funds.

6. Programs of the Yearly Meeting

Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF) is a program, under the care of SAYMA, which has the express purpose of creating a loving, caring, joyful Quaker spiritual community for teens. SAYF seeks to foster a safe space for Young Friends to grow and explore Friends' testimonies, values, process and spirituality through teen-led retreats, worship, conferences, service projects, business meetings, and other teen-led activities. A lead FAP (Friendly Adult Presence) assists the planning committee with adequate onsite FAPs to provide supervision. A nurturing committee of Young Friends oversees the spiritual welfare of the community. (See committee section for description of the SAYF Steering Committee)

III. PROCEEDING IN THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

A. Establishing a New Friends Meeting

SAYMA Friends know experientially that all people moved to worship God in the manner of Friends and who hold to Friends' principles and testimonies are strengthened and enriched through worship with each other.

1. Forming a worship group

Friends, or those wishing to worship in the manner of Friends, are encouraged to hold meetings for worship whenever several like-minded people are gathered together.

A group that meets regularly for worship after the manner of Friends and desires to be affiliated with SAYMA as a worship group must establish an association with an existing monthly meeting within SAYMA. Worship and fellowship between the two groups promotes understanding of Friends faith and practice and contributes to deepening the life of the Spirit in both the new worship group and the associated monthly meeting. The monthly meeting assumes the functions of nurture and guidance and establishes appropriate mechanisms that address the needs of the worship group. Such a relationship can include shared worship, intervisitation, fiscal support, and attendance at meetings for the conduct of business of the monthly meeting. It is helpful to identify an individual or two in the existing meeting to whom the worship group can turn for advice.

Worship groups are encouraged to participate in all yearly meeting activities. The SAYMA Ministry & Nurture Committee is available as needed to help identify appropriate pairings and to provide spiritual support and nurture for these associations. M&N is also available to work with meetings and nearby worship groups especially where there are raw feelings or issues to be resolved to create communities in a spirit of love.

Should an individual in a worship group desire membership in the Religious Society of Friends, application is made to a monthly meeting for consideration.

Through recommendation from a monthly meeting, a worship group becomes part of the yearly meeting.

2. Becoming a preparative meeting

A worship group which has achieved a measure of stability in attendance and worship and which desires to organize and conduct its business in the manner of Friends may become a preparative meeting. A preparative meeting is organized in the manner of a monthly meeting, performing all functions of a monthly meeting except major procedures such as overseeing marriages or taking new members into the Religious Society of Friends. Attenders of the preparative meeting who wish to become members of the Religious Society of Friends must apply through a monthly meeting.

A preparative meeting places itself under the care of an existing SAYMA monthly meeting, usually the same one that cared for it as a worship group. The monthly meeting which has the care of a preparative meeting should have a committee whose responsibility is to see that organizational help, spiritual support, and material needs of the preparative meeting are met. Queries for prospective monthly meetings are in the query section of this Guide; it can be helpful for the preparative meeting and the overseeing meeting to consider these together. The preparative meeting should report regularly to the monthly meeting's meeting for business.

A preparative meeting may continue indefinitely in that status. Over the course of months or years, however, spiritual growth and development may lead a preparative meeting to become a monthly meeting.

3. Becoming a monthly meeting

When Friends attending a preparative meeting have a sense of their readiness to form a monthly meeting, they may apply by letter for certification from the monthly meeting overseeing them. The letter should include as fully as possible a sense of the spiritual readiness of the meeting, as well as an analysis of its organizational ability to fulfill the func-

tions of a monthly meeting and a sense of its purpose and place within its own geographical community.

Upon receipt of the letter, the oversight committee from the monthly meeting may meet with the preparative meeting for a period of one to three months to observe its meetings for business, to discuss any concerns arising from the letter or from other matters, and to share in the spiritual life of the meeting. Both groups have found it helpful at this stage to consider together the queries for prospective monthly meetings found in the query section of this Guide. When the oversight committee concurs in the preparative meeting's readiness for certification, it recommends to its own monthly meeting for business that the new meeting be certified. If that meeting approves, the preparative meeting will be notified by letter of its new status as a monthly meeting.

A new monthly meeting wanting to affiliate with SAYMA must request the sponsoring meeting to recommend to the Yearly Meeting annual session that formal recognition be granted. After approval, a date for a formal celebration of affiliation is set for a time when SAYMA representatives will be able to attend. Monthly Meetings, Preparative Meetings, and Worship Groups in SAYMA are then notified and invited to send representatives to share in the celebration.

B. Membership

1. Members and Attenders

Membership in the Religious Society of Friends identifies a person who seeks, in worship after the manner of Friends, the living reality, discipline, and guidance of the spirit of God. No prescribed or set formula of words and phrases distinguishes a member from a non-member; instead, the lives of Friends express their faith in accordance with their experiences with Truth and with the meeting community. As attenders encounter the love and concern within the meeting and come to feel in unity with its spirit, they may want to express that unity by joining the meeting. The meeting then determines that such a person shares with other seekers a willingness to follow faithfully the leadings that the Spirit opens. By this point, the prospective Friend will have become familiar with the history of the Society, its particular testimonies, and its

unique way of conducting business. Because the Religious Society of Friends depends upon each person's ministry, all members must understand their responsibility to attend both meetings for worship and meetings for business, and to contribute from their personal and financial resources to the life and fellowship of the Society as they feel called.

Sometimes seekers after Truth, despite long and active association with Friends, are reluctant to request membership because they believe they fail to reach some nearly impossible standard. They should at this point consult the meeting, a member of the Ministry and Nurture Committee, or a particularly close Friend; with objective help, such persons may find that they are overly conscious of their own faults and shortcomings.

Membership among Friends is valuable as a commitment to continued pilgrimage, but it has never meant that one's pilgrimage is done.

Such a life-long journey cannot be separated from participation in the meeting community, where an individual is not isolated but accompanied in seeking. Sometimes attenders, attracted to Friends because of the supportive fellowship experienced in the meeting, are not immediately able to adopt all of the historic testimonies of Friends, even while participating in the life and spirit of the meeting; such participation is valuable and even vital to continued renewal of the meeting and the Society. Meetings should feel comfortable with those who have considered membership but will be long-term attenders. Although ultimate responsibility for decisions will rest with members, demonstrated commitment to the meeting or to the Society does give special weight to an attender's contribution.

2. Application for membership

Those who wish to become members of the Society of Friends should make application to the Monthly Meeting by writing a letter to the clerk, indicating why the applicant feels drawn to the Society of Friends. The clerk may bring the letter of application before the next monthly meeting for business. The clearness of the applicant for membership shall be determined by the Ministry and Nurture Committee or a committee of members appointed for that purpose. The responsibilities of this committee are to determine the applicant's clearness in regard to other religious affiliations, and to discuss with the applicant considerations such as reasons for applying, meaning of membership, spiritual

and theological concerns, Friends' practices and testimonies, membership and personal problems, the spiritual growth of the applicant and his or her family, and the meeting's responsibility to its members.

If the committee and the applicant find no obstruction, this fact is reported to the Monthly Meeting within a reasonable length of time. Upon approval by the Monthly Meeting, a minute of acceptance into membership is recorded. The new member should be welcomed into meeting by visitation, social hour, pot luck dinner, or some other appropriate means. The meeting has a responsibility to nurture new members as they grow in spiritual seeking and in commitment to the Religious Society of Friends.

3. Types and changes of membership

Parents are given responsibility for stating how they wish their children to be listed on the meeting rolls, whether as full members or as **associate members**, a category reserved for children before they are mature enough to make a full membership decision. **Sojourning members** are members of distant meetings who are temporarily residing in the geographical area of the meeting.

A member of the Religious Society of Friends belongs to a particular monthly meeting. Friends are strongly encouraged to have their membership in the meeting in which they are active. Except in unusual circumstances, a member belongs to one meeting only and should not hold membership in another religious body. Full membership in two religious communities is therefore discouraged.

Letters of introduction: When a Friend intends to travel on business or vacation outside the meeting area, the meeting may approve a letter of introduction. This is simply a letter telling other meetings that the traveler is in good standing with the meeting. It may be signed by the meeting that the traveler visits and returned to the home meeting.

Traveling minute: When a Friend intends to travel outside the geographic area of the meeting to carry a concern to other meetings, the meeting may approve a traveling minute, a letter endorsing the concern. This minute should be signed by the clerks of meetings visited. It should eventually be returned to the home meeting to become a part of that meeting's permanent record.

Transfer: The Friend wishing to transfer from one monthly meeting to another should request a certificate of transfer to the receiving meeting, where it is then presented for approval.

Discontinuance of membership: If a member submits a resignation, the meeting is not absolved from further care. A committee may be appointed to visit this person in love, inquire into the cause of resignation, and, if fitting, encourage reconsideration of the action. If this purpose continues and the meeting accedes, a minute should be made stating that the member is released at his or her own request. The clerk will then inform the person of this action in a letter conveying the affectionate regard of the meeting. The meeting should be open to a renewed application from this person, handling it according to the usual procedure for new members. When a member exhibits lack of interest or responsibility in the Religious Society of Friends, that membership is no longer of value to that individual or to the Society. If its efforts to restore interest are ineffectual, the monthly meeting may record a minute giving the circumstances and removing the individual from membership.

All dealings involving discontinuance of membership should be handled with the utmost patience and consideration, both for the sake of the individual and for the sake of the meeting.

C. Marriage among Friends

Friends have long recognized that some couples are called into a loving, committed relationship: a ministry of caring. With Divine assistance, this commitment may open the way to deep and unreserved love, to forgiveness, to trust, to spiritual development and nurture of each other's gifts. Early Friends understood that the joining of two people in this covenant relationship "is the work of the Lord only, and not the priests', or magistrates'; for it is God's ordinance and not man's; and therefore Friends cannot consent that they should join them together: for we marry none; it is the Lord's work, and we are but witnesses." (George Fox, 1669) Likewise, SAYMA meetings follow the general Quaker practice that marriage is a matter between God and the couple, witnessed by the meeting.

In a Quaker marriage, two people commit themselves to a shared life, bringing into being a new family. During a meeting for worship,

usually one especially called for the purpose of the marriage, they stand in the presence of God and of friends gathered and declare their intention, with divine assistance, to remain loving and faithful for life.

In Friends tradition, marriage takes place in a community of faith. Quaker marriage involves not only two individuals, but also the entire community. The corporate signing of the marriage certificate testifies to this fact.

In the earliest days of Quakerism, legal marriage was possible only within the Church of England. The social services available were provided only by the established church and were not available to Quakers. In this situation, Friends took care of each other through their monthly and yearly meetings. Since development of the concept of civil marriage, many Friends have been able to rely more on the legal and social protections now provided to people with state-recognized marriages and have assumed less responsibility for their mutual economic support.

From time to time, Friends face the challenge of taking under their care marriages, such as same sex marriages, that are not recognized by the state. Any Monthly Meeting may receive a request to recognize and support a loving, committed relationship, state-recognized or not. Meetings are called to approach and respond to each request in the spirit of tenderness and openness to God's leading.

1. Clearness for marriage

When seeking meeting approval, the couple writes a letter to the meeting stating their intention to marry and their desire to marry under the care of the meeting. If only one, or neither, is a Friend, the meeting will want to take time to develop a communal bond with the couple before deciding to take the marriage under its care. If the couple maintains membership in different meetings, they will send letters to both meetings, requesting approval from each.

In some meetings this letter is brought to the monthly meeting for business, in others to the Ministry and Nurture/Counsel Committee or another designated committee. The appropriate body then appoints a committee for clearness to meet with the couple in a spirit of worship and concern for the proposed marriage. This committee helps the couple affirm their clearness for marriage by examining with them not only their clearness from prior conflicting obligations of any kind but many

other aspects of their relationship. These aspects might include potential strengths and weaknesses, hopes and dreams, expectations in roles and work, and relationships to money and children. Discussion about wills and other legal arrangements needed to secure the relationship the couple desires occurs at this stage. Individual meetings may prepare a list of queries for use by their clearness committees for marriage.

The process of clarification is the task of the entire group gathered together. It may deepen the couple's relationship and understanding of each other, or it may reveal problems that must be addressed before the marriage can proceed or that preclude the marriage at that time. The clearness process is complete only when the decision is clear to all. Once clearness is reached, either the clearness committee or the Ministry and Nurture Committee makes a recommendation to the next business meeting. If the meeting agrees to take the marriage under its care, it appoints a wedding planning committee. Proceeding in good Quaker order, and to avoid possible embarrassment and unnecessary expense, couples are advised to refrain from issuing invitations and making reservations until the meeting has agreed to take the marriage under its care.

2. Planning for the Wedding

The wedding planning committee, together with the couple, reviews the promises which the couple will exchange, plans to accomplish the wedding with simplicity and reverence, and may help plan the reception.

There is no required formula for the declaration of a Quaker marriage promise. The couple discerns the wording of the promises and reviews the wording with the committee. Similar words, translated from first person to third person, are also stated in the marriage certificate. The following is a traditional example: "In the presence of God and these our friends I take thee _____ to be my wife/husband/partner, promising with Divine assistance to be unto thee a loving and faithful wife/husband/partner so long as we both shall live." The couple may be led to alter or add to this wording. The wedding planning committee and the couple designate in advance persons to carry out the following responsibilities: greeting, explaining meeting for worship and Friends' wedding procedures; reading the certificate after the couple signs; closing the meeting; and inviting all those present to sign the certificate as

witnesses. If a reception will follow the meeting for worship for marriage, the wedding planning committee may help in arranging and providing for the reception. The wedding and the reception are separate events.

The couple will arrange for preparation of the marriage certificate, well in advance, in a form similar to the following. The wording incorporates the promises that the couple will speak during the wedding as agreed upon with the committee for clearness:

Whereas, A.B., of _____, child/son/daughter of C.B. and H.B., of _____, and D.E., of _____, child/son/daughter of F.E. and M.E., of _____, having declared their intentions of marriage with each other to _____ Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends held at _____, their proposed marriage was taken under the care of the meeting.

Now this is to certify to whom it may concern, that for the accomplishment of their intentions, this ____ day of the ____ month, in the year ____, they, A.B. and D.E., appeared in a meeting for worship of the Religious Society of Friends, held at _____, A.B. and D.E., taking each other by the hand, did on this solemn occasion declare that they promise with divine assistance to be unto each other loving and faithful wife/husband/ partners so long as they both shall live. And moreover they, A.B. and D.E.*, did, as further confirmation thereof, then and there, to this certificate set their hands.

A.B. _____

D.E. _____

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

Many choose to hand-letter their certificates on parchment or fine paper.

*A phrase may be added here when one or both individuals chooses to change names.

3. The Wedding Itself

At the time appointed, the meeting for worship for marriage gathers in silence. For the benefit of non-Friends, the person appointed explains the meaning of the worship and the procedure to follow. Out of the silence, as they are moved, the couple will rise and, taking each other by the hand, declare their promises to one another. The couple then signs the marriage certificate, and the appointed Friend reads it aloud. In the

period of worship to follow, guests may speak out of the silence as they are moved. After the rise of the meeting, all present are invited to sign the marriage certificate. When there will be a state-recognized marriage, those papers will be signed separately from the Quaker meeting for worship for marriage.

4. State-recognized Marriage

Meetings within SAYMA differ in their approach to state-recognized marriages under their care because we live in states that deny the secular institution of marriage to same-gender couples. From time to time, states change the laws affecting Quaker marriage. Quaker meetings need to stay informed about the current legal status of marriages for all couples within their jurisdictions.

Each meeting decides its own approach to the legal aspects of marriages under their care. Some meetings will help eligible couples complete state-approved forms that give legal status to marriage. In these cases, it is the couple's responsibility to secure the license. The wedding planning committee will arrange to have it signed after the meeting for worship for marriage, and the couple must then file it. Some meetings offer only a Quaker marriage since not all couples are eligible for state-recognized marriage. In these meetings, eligible couples desiring a state-recognized marriage must go before a state-approved official to obtain it. Some meetings may help couples complete state-approved forms even if they are not considered eligible and support those couples in seeking eligibility from the State.

5. Nurturing Marriage under the Care of the Meeting

The meeting's involvement with the couple begins with the application for marriage under the care of the meeting, and may continue indefinitely. A monthly meeting remains concerned for all the marriages within it and may offer various forms of support to married couples. Friends have found that marriage enrichment retreats and similar supports help foster strong and growing relationships. In some marriages, the couple and its committee for clearness may continue to meet on a mutually agreed timetable to allow airing of joys and concerns that manifest in the marriage.

People go through many changes and difficulties can arise in any relationship. Members of meetings should be sensitive to the health of marriages under their care and express their love and concern. If problems arise and help from the meeting might assist in their resolution, a member of the Ministry and Nurture Committee or the clearness committee for the marriage may initiate an effort to help the couple attain clearness. All couples, including those not married under its care, are encouraged to call on the meeting or a specially appointed clearness committee to help resolve difficulties.

We live in a time when, for some people, individual fulfillment and growth in marriage seem mutually exclusive. The experience and faith of Friends is that marriage can be both stable and creative as well as nurturing and fulfilling.

D. Divorce

Friends believe that two people faithfully holding their marriage in the Light may find loving ways to resolve many differences. The Meeting's affectionate advice and counsel may be helpful to the family, especially through the use of the clearness process. Friends do recognize, however, that marriages sometimes come to an end. In cases where Friends, after a deep spiritual search, feel their marriage is over, a clearness committee or professional assistance is recommended to help the couple separate the emotional issues from the practical ones, find solutions to the practical issues which are best for all concerned, and prepare to continue their lives within the meeting community.

Divorce is a traumatic experience – both for the family and for the meeting as a whole – which involves grieving for the death of a relationship. The meeting community can help the family through the grieving process and the painful adjustments demanded of all family members. The community also has the responsibility to support each individual involved by maintaining confidentiality and impartiality which is free from judgment of the individuals. Affectionate care and practical assistance from the meeting community can avert a bitter struggle and help make the divorce the basis for positive change and new growth.

Divorce does not eliminate the possibility of remarriage under the care of the Meeting. Those seeking remarriage need to understand and

anticipate the impact of the earlier relationship on the new marriage, particularly if there are children. The Meeting should be prepared to assist in this understanding, and the clearness committee should press rigorously to clarify the new commitment in relation to children, former spouses, and grandparents.

E. Death

1. Wills and Other Decisions

Friends find that preparation for death is in many ways a preparation for deeper living. It includes an awareness that our lives will end and a realization that our lives have an eternal dimension.

Out of a desire to provide for members of their families, for education of children, and for continuing their life-long concerns, Friends commonly make wills while they are free from unusual mental or physical pressures, under professional guidance, in order that there be no obstruction in carrying out their wishes. Some Friends complete Living Wills in order to inform medical personnel and family of their wishes regarding serious illness. In their wills, Friends with young children should appoint family members or friends to be guardians to them until they come of age. Simplicity is served by the choice of an executor who can carry out the delegated responsibilities with skill. Wills need to be updated from time to time as circumstances change, especially after marriage.

Meetings may wish to keep records of the preferences for arrangements at the time of death for their members and attendees. The following suggested form may serve as a guide:

Name, address, city, zip, phone

Membership in a Memorial Society?

Disposal of body: cremation
 regular coffin burial
 cemetery preference, if any
 donate body to medical school
 donate organs

Location of will:

Type of service desired: Memorial service (see below)

other (explain)

Expressions of caring: Flowers

Contributions to a cause for which you
have a particular concern (specify)

Whom should we notify in case of death (name, address, phone):

Comments:

2. Memorial meetings and the bereaved

Friends today often prefer a simple memorial meeting at some convenient time after burial or cremation, rather than a funeral. A memorial meeting is a meeting for worship called to remember and rejoice in a life that has moved on from time to eternity. It is usually held a week or more after burial or cremation. The emphasis is on thankfulness for the life that has been lived and on awareness of the continuing presence of the loved one and of God.

Members of the Committee on Ministry and Nurture (or Counsel) will help in arranging the memorial service and in giving support to the family in other ways. They may contact the mortician or memorial society, provide transportation, notify friends and members of the meeting, arrange for child care, provide food for a few days, and be present at the memorial meeting or funeral.

It is often appropriate for a designated Friend to open the memorial meeting by explaining the nature of the occasion and Friends' way of worship. The Friend will request anyone to speak who feels led to do so. A short leaflet for worshippers, explaining what can take place, is helpful. A selection from the Bible or other source may encourage thankfulness for the life that is remembered.

All members of the meeting community should remember that those bereaved need emotional and other support for some time after the death. The grieving process often lasts two years or more, and those in grief need sensitive listeners, visitors, and friends in the Spirit as they

3. Burial societies, burial grounds, and records

In a few areas Quaker groups have a burial committee whose members serve without pay to assist the family by having the death certificate

recorded, preparing coffins, providing transportation of the body, and planning a memorial meeting. In other areas, including several within SAYMA, memorial societies provide simple dignity and economy through preplanned funeral arrangements. Planning ahead through a memorial society can greatly reduce costs and contribute to peace of mind at the time of death.

Meetings which have burial grounds appoint a committee to see that they are well kept, to authorize burials, and to keep records of the locations of the graves. Friends in concern for simplicity use plain, small markers showing the name and dates.

Each meeting keeps records of the deaths of members.

For more information and guidance, Friends are encouraged to refer to SAYMA Friend Ernest Morgan's *Dealing Creatively with Death: A Manual of Death Education and Simple Burial*, available from Celo Press, 1901 Hannah Branch Road, Burnsville, N.C. 28714. It is filled with facts on burial law and procedure, thoughts on death education and preparation for dying, advice on disposition of the body and memorial services, names and addresses of memorial societies, medical schools, organ banks, hospice organizations and others, as well as sample forms for a living will and other documents. The facts are well documented and the opinions are based on long study and experience.

IV: TESTIFYING TO THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

Within the tradition of Friends, testimonies are revelations of God's will, outward expressions of the inner workings of the Spirit that have been collectively accepted across time. Although not creedal in nature, they still serve a teaching function and guide Friends in faithfulness to principles around which the Religious Society of Friends has united. Testimonies finally bind no Friend's conscience, but they inform the individual of what the Religious Society of Friends regards as important in one's relation to God and with all of creation. In this sense, testimonies help mold our conscience and outward behavior. They are not exhaustive, in that they do not include everything that is required of a Friend, but they lay down principles that guide those who choose to live among us. They evolve with changing circumstances, even as they remain rooted in Friends tradition of listening to the Divine. Testimonies and their associated queries, if revisited regularly, are a source of inward personal and corporate renewal.

A. Testimonies

1. Integrity

Swear not at all... let your 'yes' be 'yes' and your 'no' be 'no.' Matthew 5:34, 37

If our inward leading is to be "doers of the truth", then integrity needs to be at the center of our being, at the center of our consciousness, and at the center of our outward witness. Wilmer Cooper, "The Testimony of Integrity"; 1991

Integrity means wholeness. For Friends, this wholeness is rooted in Truth and available to those willing to open every aspect of life to that transforming influence. One of the original names of Quakers, "Friends of Truth," implies Friends' understanding that the light of Truth reaches into every corner of our lives. These private understandings through corporate discernment were and are later affirmed by the collective wisdom of the meeting community. Integrity remains central to the public

and personal witness of Friends and speaks of our willingness to seek and respond to divine guidance in all activities.

Integrity requires consistency of action and straightforward and honest speech. "Do all aspects of your life bear the same witness?" is a modern query, yet reflects an approach harkening back to the earliest years of the Religious Society of Friends. From the beginning, Friends have sought a unity in their private way of acting, their public stance and their relation to the natural world, seeking to live under divine guidance.

Integrity requires a willingness to live a life that testifies to the divine reality, even in harsh, threatening, and uncomfortable situations. Historically, Friends commitment to integrity led to imprisonment for refusal to swear oaths and to ostracism for refusing to say "sir" or "madam" or doff one's hat to those who thought themselves deserving of these honors, even parents. Currently, SAYMA Friends risk harsh criticism and loss of income for their activities for social and racial justice, marriage equality for all couples, and for their opposition to patriarchy, war, violence, and torture.

Integrity for Friends is grounded in relationship to Spirit as Ultimate Reality, which is larger than our egos. The testimony of integrity is not simply telling the truth; it is speaking and acting in and from the divine in each situation. It means awakening to God as the center of one's life rather than being dominated by one's desires, anxieties, vanities, possessions or the esteem of others. Never perfect, but learning from our mistakes, Friends assist each other to live with integrity through the power of example, through shared worship, and through loving conversation.

2. Peace

All bloody principles and practices, we ... do utterly deny, with all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons, for any end or under any pretense whatsoever. And this is our testimony to the whole world ... The spirit of Christ, by which we are guided, is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil and again to move unto it; and we do certainly know, and so testify to the world, that the spirit of Christ, which leads us into all Truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of this world.

Declaration from the Harmless and Innocent
People of God, called Quakers (1661)

Our peace testimony is grounded in our faith and understanding of God's way. Early Quakers believed they were led by the Christ within and by the teachings of the New Testament to love those people who considered themselves enemies and to refrain from all wars and fighting. Though individual Quakers have participated in wars since then, Friends still affirm that the best way to relate to people is to appeal to that of God within them. Trusting to the leadings of the Spirit and respecting the Inward Light in all others can avert violent conflict.

Denying the legitimacy of war, Friends support those led by the Spirit into conscientious objection to military service, resistance to conscription or a military draft, war tax resistance, or other acts of civil disobedience that witness against war-making. Friends do not recognize "just" wars, since war represents a refusal to pursue other ways of resolving conflict. We work to gain wider support for nonviolent solutions.

Friends aid victims of violence, whether from war, crime, community, or family strife out of the belief that each person is uniquely valuable. For the same reason, Friends also reach out to the perpetrators of violence. Support for prisoners, refugees, programs for economic justice, and similar efforts serve not only to remove the causes and aid those touched by violence and oppression, but also to encourage nonviolent means of solving problems, locally and globally.

We recognize that violence can manifest itself in words as well as deeds. As Friends, we endeavor to bring all aspects of our lives into harmony with this testimony. The peace we seek starts in the individual heart and its relation to God. It is expressed in all our relations. In our daily we struggle to find ways to follow God's commands above all demands and enticements of our society. In doing so, our aim is to live God's truth.

The challenge of the peace testimony is to find ways for all people to live nonviolently in a world where violence remains an ever-present threat. Friends' lives, grounded in simplicity, equality, integrity, justice, and harmony, contribute to a healed world. Friends as individuals and as a Society continue to struggle toward this goal.

3. Simplicity

Simplicity frees one of the clutter that interferes with communion with God.

Martin Cobin, The Value System of Friends, Southern Appalachian Association of Friends, Crossville, Tennessee (May 1-3, 1970)

To the earliest Friends, simplicity meant freeing oneself of all that was unnecessary and worldly. Just as all ritual, program, and clerical functions were seen as a hindrance to worship, so elaborate and insincere speech, as well as ornamentation of dress, were seen as distractions to the right ordering of life. Adding an economic reason for simplicity, William Penn said that "the very trimmings of the vain would clothe all the naked ones."

Simplicity leads us to be honest and straightforward in mind, tongue, and heart. It can assist Friends in focusing on the essentials of life, in being open spiritually, and in following the path of love. For some Friends, this commitment has led to a radical break with the conventional way of life in our materialistic age. For all of us, seeking the inner light calls for recognition and removal of distractions and an ordering of priorities in order to be more open to leadings of the Spirit.

Simplicity need not mean stark denial but can create joy and beauty in our lives. In use of time, habits of consumption, sharing of world resources, and indeed every aspect of daily life, simplicity is central for us because it both mirrors and deepens spiritual centeredness.

4. Equality

There is a principle which is pure, placed in the human mind, which in different places and ages hath had different names. It is, however, pure and proceeds from God. It is deep and inward, confined to no forms of religion nor excluded from any where the heart stands in perfect sincerity. In whomsoever this takes root and grows, of what nation soever, they become [brothers and sisters] in the best sense.

John Woolman, "Considerations on Keeping Negroes," Works (1774)

...one universal God hath given being to us all; and that God hath not only made us all of one flesh, but hath also, without partiality, afforded us all the same sensations, and endowed us all with the same faculties; and that however variable we may be in society or religion, however diversified in situation or color, we are all of the same family, and stand in the same relation to God.

Benjamin Banneker, Letter to Thomas Jefferson (1791)

Friends believe that all people have the capacity to bear and respond to the Light and that all forms of human relations should reflect this spiritual truth. As a beloved child of God, each of us has God-given gifts. Each of us can grow in tenderness. Our differences provide openings that allow God's grace to shine through us in unique ways.

A commitment to equality, the earliest of Friends social testimonies, was partly an assault on pride. In keeping with the teaching of the New Testament, early Friends held the radical belief that God could speak to every person, regardless of gender, race, class, age, or formal education. This led Friends to eliminate behaviors that granted superiority based on social status or wealth. They rejected the use of honorific titles, provided expanded leadership roles for women in their communities, and eschewed "hat honor," removing one's hat as a sign of deference. Friends retained the traditional "thee" and "thou" to avoid the emerging seventeenth century usage of granting an undue distinction to an upper-class individual with a plural "you." For these beliefs, they sometimes paid with their property, and sometimes with their lives.

Our ability to both bear and respond to the Light can be affected by social prejudices that dim awareness of God's leadings. Friends believe that we are called to work to end prejudice and oppression. Modern Friends have wrestled with our awareness of what equality demands in its continued application in our daily lives. In order for individuals to follow their leadings, and exercise their God-given gifts, social and physical barriers often must be broken down. In the last two centuries, many Friends have worked and are working toward honoring and expanding the rights of women and people of color.

More recently, Friends are beginning our work to expand equal rights regardless of sexual orientation. Friends reject stereotyping, discrimination, and artificial barriers that separate people from one another. Equality has been the foundation of Friends' approach to each other and the world. Friends recognize that much work still needs to be done within ourselves, within the society at large, and within our meetings, where privileges of educational attainment and social status too often prevail.

We believe all can be empowered by God and encourage all to speak for themselves, expressing their own experiences and understandings of God's leadings. We must lovingly speak the truth to others as it

is revealed to us, and we must listen for truth that is in them, lest we miss it. Others' perspectives can change us and help our meetings discern the actions we take to work toward equality. In our continuing spiritual search, we are open to revising our approach to social change as new insights arise.

We are blessed by the myriad differences that are found among us, and are grateful for the efforts Friends and others have made in uncounted ways that bring forth that of God in all.

5. Community

“As many candles, lighted and put in one place, do greatly augment the light, and make it more to shine forth, so when many are gathered together in the same life there is more of the glory of God.” Robert Barclay (1678)

“When we focus on our oneness and unity in the Love that is God, it's tempting to believe that we will all live happily ever after together, with never an unkind word or misunderstanding, much less legitimate complaints, anger or real nastiness. The challenge of course is to hold up and live out the vision while acknowledging and accepting the reality of our own flawed humanity and that of those we live with.” Patricia Loring, *Listening Spirituality: Corporate Practice Among Friends*, page 37

Community is one of the important foundations of Quakerism. This testimony arises from our experience that a group worshipping together encounters God. Since the first generation, Friends have had a practice of discernment where unity is the focus, looking not only to individual inspirations but also to the movement of the Spirit in their midst. Friends followed this practice in meetings for worship with a concern for business. It was not the person with the most money, age, or length of history with Friends who made the decisions; it was the group as a whole that discerned the will of God. That sense of the meeting, that Spirit which the worshippers recognized in unity, was the authority.

All Friends are bound together in community by our shared seeking of the Light. Our life together is grounded in the practice of listening deeply to each other and looking truthfully at how we live in the world. It is the task of the meeting community to affirm, inspire, and hold each of us accountable in our faithfulness to God's leadings.

Ministering to each other's spiritual and material needs builds and nurtures community. Both requesting and giving assistance are essential

aspects of Friends' life together; taking a warm, personal interest in one another's welfare strengthens the meeting and the individuals alike. Such assistance may take the form of a clearness committee, financial or other material aid, or other appropriate help. Friends also provide spiritual and emotional support by holding in the Light those experiencing special hardship or joy. When we join in service and support, whether in our home communities, in the wider community or in the world, we express our love for God and one another.

Every community experiences difficulties and it is important to avoid the temptation to "sweep them under the rug." Open recognition of and respect for differences, forthright sharing, and sincere corporate reflection strengthen meetings and provide ways to resolve conflicts in a direct and loving manner. Conflicts affecting entire meetings may be addressed through threshing sessions or worship sharing. SAYMA's Ministry and Nurture Committee may be called upon for help. For conflicts between individual Friends, a clearness committee may be helpful. It is Quaker practice to prefer mediation or negotiation to resolve disputes without litigation. Harmony emerges not merely from coming to understanding and resolution but also from the mutual search for the truth conducted in a spirit of tender listening and care. The unity we seek is not sameness of belief, but the oneness of people drawn together in love and concern for each other, grounded in the Spirit.

We want our meetings to be affirming and nurturing, but if we expect that we will always feel safe and comfortable there, we risk becoming unwilling to welcome Friends different from ourselves. The practice of inclusivity challenges each of us in different ways to reach past our limiting assumptions and fears to find the Light in others. When we do so, we find aspects of the Light we did not expect: the diversity of our community may be greater than we can easily accept. It is valuable, even if painful, to admit that we often fail to live up to our aspirations. Our meetings are often homogeneous – socially, politically, racially, spiritually, intellectually, culturally, and in other respects. The process of inclusion, though it requires adjustments from each of us, gives us all a deeper experience of the Spirit.

Quaker community extends beyond the monthly and yearly meetings. Yearly meeting sessions and committee work, inter-meeting visitations, regional gatherings, visiting other monthly and yearly meetings, and participation in Wider Quaker Organizations are all opportunities

for Friends to find nurture, spiritual growth and fellowship. The interconnectedness of all life continues to call Friends to be full participants in the universal community. Our understanding of God's love does not stop at the meetinghouse door. Everywhere we go, Friends strive to build the blessed community, which historically has been called the peaceable kingdom. Our testimonies of peace, equality, integrity, simplicity and community mean little unless they are practiced in relation to all.

B. Areas of Witness

1. Children

But Jesus called them to him, saying, "Let the children come unto me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God." Luke 18:16 (RSV)

Our children are given to us for a time to cherish, to protect, to nurture, and then to salute as they go their separate ways. They too have the light of God within, and a family should be a learning community in which children not only learn skills and values from parents, but in which adults learn new ways of experiencing things and seeing things through young eyes.

Elizabeth Watson, 1980 Parents and Children in the Quaker Home⁴

The foundation of a child's spiritual life is laid in the family. As family members share their lives in the Spirit, children's innate sense of the presence of God is nourished and strengthened. This helps children develop the assurance and security to order their relationships with God, with themselves, with others, and with the world around them. By consistently practicing Quaker principles of simplicity, honesty, non-violence, creative response to conflict, service and love, parents model these values for their children and foster the essential attitudes of self-worth, self-confidence, and self-discipline.

A Quaker family, whatever its composition, is rooted in the wider community of Friends. Grounded in love, Friends seek to nurture every member through full acceptance, respect for each other's choices, and common experiences characterized by caring, compassion, open and supportive communication, understanding, and a sense of humor. Friends seek to strengthen and learn from the child's sense of whole-

ness. Through family and meeting we learn that the source of human love is God's love for us.

Children are nourished by their family's and meeting's love and care, both of which provide an environment in which children develop a sense of morality. Parents have the responsibility to establish limits through communication, teaching by example how to speak and to listen with love. Friends often have the task of clarifying our values in relation to societal influences and pressures. We often express the peace testimony, for example, by refusing to buy war toys and refraining from corporal punishment. It is essential that Quakers educate their children about creative responses to conflict, the consequences of violent behavior, discernment in sexual activities, and the dangers of addiction. We see loving and teaching, rather than punishing, as the focus of discipline.

Within the meeting, we share corporate and individual responsibility for children, who learn from all their experiences with Friends. When the activities of children conflict with the need of Friends for silence in meeting for worship, we seek solutions that foster growth in the Spirit for all. In recognition of each member's equality in the Light, Quaker children and adults regard each other with respect, calling each other by first names or full names and avoiding titles.

A monthly meeting alive with the Spirit provides support for children, parents, families, caregivers, and teachers, all of whom need loving care. We often fall short of our ideals. However, in nurturing our children and youth, we provide for them a more hopeful life, and together we shape the Religious Society of Friends and witness to the wider world. It is a responsibility we do not take lightly. Children are a gift from God and our care of them as they grow to adulthood is our gift to the future.

2. Education

To Friends, education is an intensely religious thing; it means the training and development of the spiritual life, the liberating of the Divine that is within us.
Gerald K. Hibbert (1930)

When it is faithful to its foundations, Quaker education is neither student-centered, nor discipline-centered; it is inward-centered. Quaker education operates from the conviction that there is always one other in the classroom—the Inward Teacher, who waits to be found in every human being.

Paul Lacey, *Growing into Goodness: Essays on Quaker Education*, 1988

Early Friends, including George Fox, were described as Seekers. Seeking knowledge of God, they discovered that God could speak to and teach them directly, the central lesson of what became Quakerism. Today, Friends continue to seek truth in spiritual and secular matters and to see our seeking and finding as a life-long practice and part of our spiritual journey. This attitude underlies Friends' approach to education.

The root meaning of education is "to draw out." For Quakers, education involves drawing out each person's self-awareness and nurturing individual gifts. Knowledge of the world around us provides us with tools that enhance our understanding. The Inner Teacher, essential in our efforts, leads us to use our gifts in the service of others.

Friends endeavor to share our understandings and listen to each other. We are open to learning from nature and from the Spirit, from people with authority and from those without a voice. Friends sponsor First Day Schools, along with a variety of study groups, retreats, and workshops at all levels of Quakerism. We welcome critical exploration of all topics, recognizing that truth does not lie in one religion, group, text, or point of view.

Friends are deeply involved in education at all levels, as teachers and administrators and as advocates for schooling that reflects Friends values. We have been supportive of a wide range of educational settings, including, for example, Friends' schools, public schools, home schools, vocational schools, colleges, and universities. We continue to work toward equal educational opportunities for all people as a means toward full participation in the Religious Society of Friends and in the wider world. God's gifts come in many forms, and different institutional arrangements may be needed to draw out and develop different gifts.

The Inner Light is present in the very young and can be greatly affected by adults with whom children have relationships. We recognize that values are taught both consciously through instruction and unconsciously through the examples of our lives. All children are schooled at home and in their communities, no matter where they attend "school." Our testimonies describe the environments we would like to provide for our children: peaceful, simple, equitable, infused with the spirits of community and integrity. We reject violence, physical or verbal, as a means of control, instead believing we can all learn from our mistakes if they are viewed creatively and with compassion. We encourage coopera-

tion rather than competition and attempt to cultivate sensitivity to social problems and injustices along with a concern to do something about them. We try to foster in ourselves and our children a steady growth in self-discipline, respect for the rights and needs of each individual, and celebration of differences.

Guiding all these efforts is a desire to foster in all people an inward sense of Spirit-guided values. Quaker faith in continuing revelation tells us that truth is not static and that gaining knowledge ultimately brings us closer to God.

3. Government

The power and dominion of the conscience are the province of God, [who] alone can properly instruct and govern it. No one whatsoever may lawfully force the conscience of others regardless of the authority or office he [or she] bears in the government of this world.

Robert Barclay, Apology (1676)

American government, endorsing the principles of equality, freedom, and justice, emerged from an intellectual and political climate influenced significantly by Friends. Today, though governmental policies and decisions often pose difficult problems for Friends, we affirm our corporate and individual commitment to influence governmental actions through thoughtful witness or considered resistance.

Some Friends are led to withhold their assent or resist harmful governmental policies and many work to change them through individual or meeting action or support for Wider Quaker Organizations. Individual Friends often communicate with governmental representatives to encourage positive legislation and support candidates who uphold the values expressed in Quaker testimonies.

Recognizing that the responsibilities of authority sometimes create spiritual dilemmas for those in government, we seek unity in Truth with those we want to influence and believe that this unity may be reached if we remain faithful in our witness. We therefore seek to encourage government officials to listen actively to a diversity of voices and negotiate to find mutually helpful solutions. As human beings, all of us sometimes find compromise expedient, even necessary; but the decisions of government officials affect far more lives than their own. We therefore seek to encourage them and call them to the standard of Truth in their actions.

When Friends discern discordance between conscience and governmental action, we are called to act on behalf of justice and peace, even when that means questioning or disobeying worldly government. Historically, when conscience has demanded it, Friends have often opposed governmental authority. From refusing to swear an oath in a court of law to hiding people escaped from slavery in our homes to providing sanctuary to undocumented immigrants, Friends have a long tradition of civil disobedience.

We encourage mediation and negotiation to resolve disputes. Friends support conscientious objection to military service. Individual Friends under the leadings of the Spirit have challenged the corporate body of Friends to consider witnesses such as war tax resistance and opposition to patriarchy, as well as support for marriage equality and fair immigration policies. Friends also support the making of decisions on reproduction and family planning by individuals, based on accepted medical practice and unhindered by legal proscriptions. To be true to our experience of the Spirit, Friends do not hold any human institution to be higher than corporately discerned Truth.

Friends' steadfast and faithful efforts often have an influence that transcends initial expectations. While we work to see our principles reflected in governmental decisions and actions, we realize that government at its best can only provide a framework to foster justice, peace, and respect for human differences. These ideals become reality only when individuals, under the conviction of love, live daily the life of the peaceable community.

4. Sexuality

The mystery of sex continues to be greater than our capacity to comprehend it, no matter how much we learn about it. We engage in it, in often too frantic efforts to enjoy it but, more subtly, also to try to fathom its ever recurring power over us. Surely this power and its mystery relate to the mystery of God's relationship to us.

Mary Calderone, *Human Sexuality and the Quaker Conscience* (1973)

Friends regard life as a whole, to be lived in the Spirit. At all stages of life, sexuality is an important part of that whole; it is capable of tapping an individual's deepest feelings, often yielding a sense of dimension transcending the individual.

Recognizing the power of sexual feelings, we as Friends seek to know our-selves and to express our own sexuality in loving ways, calling and answering to that of God in others. We recognize that responsible sexuality varies, and we hold that that which is of God is not to be condemned by the children of God. Accordingly, Friends seek to deal with sexuality as an expression of the love of God within humankind. We refrain from offering judgment upon any given manifestation of sexuality unless it is harmful in its personal or societal results.

Exploitation and manipulation of others for selfish ends have no place in the lives of Friends, nor does casual disregard for one's own feelings or those of others. When violence or abuse erupts in sexual relationships, the wound may be deep and lasting. Although we live in a society where sex is heavily exploited in the marketplace and where many countenance infidelities and casual encounters, we hold to the principle that sexuality is not a commodity but a powerful force that can transform life in ways we cannot predict. Realizing that both sadness and joy may be attendant upon human sexuality, Friends stand ready to provide comfort and support.

We encourage education about all aspects of sexuality at the earliest appropriate ages. We encourage openness, honesty, and mutual respect, which promote healthy personal growth and prevent mistakes with long-term individual and social consequences.

Families, whatever their configuration, deserve the meeting's love and care. Although Friends regard the creation of life as sacred, we also feel that every child has a right to be wanted and loved. As a yearly meeting, we have not reached full clarity on the elective termination of pregnancy. Those facing this choice may find help through trusted Friends or a clearness committee. Further reflection and insight opened by the Spirit may lead the way for growth and maturation for the meeting as well as individuals.

In the context of the Light, we are called to examine whether all aspects of our lives bear consistent witness. Friends seek to love and understand, not to condemn. We trust that each other's sexuality will be expressed in loving and responsible ways.

5. Harmony With Nature

Friends' concern for the earth is a spirit-led extension of established Quaker testimonies in response to our persistent, and now global, overuse and disruption of Earth's ecological systems. This concern is rooted in a profound awareness of and love for the Divine indwelling within the material world.

Friends have long recognized that there is a relationship between human misery and habits of consumption and production. Through the work of early visionaries such as John Woolman and Elias Hicks, Friends came to understand that the way they lived had an impact on the lives of others, even if those who suffered were far away and unknown to them.

Today, more than ever, we are challenged to expand our understanding of the interconnection of all living things and the delicate balance required to sustain the community of life. Human aspirations for peace and justice depend upon earth's ecological integrity. When Friends are patterns and examples of sustainability we promote these aspirations. We thus support those engaged in transforming our treatment of the earth. All generations deserve to experience a sense of wonder, an intimate connection with the grand diversity of life and an appreciation of their interrelationship with all life processes.

SAYMA Friends respond in a variety of ways to the challenges of sustainable living. Many of us know we must reduce and work to eliminate the harmful consequences of our activities: use of energy, housing choices, modes and distances of travel, diet and other consumption habits. We are called to have courage and find more effective ways to live harmoniously as a part of the natural world.

V: QUERIES

A. Queries for Meetings

Queries are understood to have three distinct values: the personal value, as we find the answers in ourselves; the interpretive value, by which the progressive application of our religious principles to life is disclosed; and the corporate value, by which the state or the Society can be appraised. At the reading of them, let us search our own hearts in the Light of the Holy Spirit and carefully ponder these questions for our personal answer.

Faith and Practice, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (1935)

In using these queries for self and group examination, Friends are urged to re-call that rather than following rules, we are following our leading to hold all things in the Light. Prayerful consideration of queries is directed toward exploring and enlivening the meeting's growth in faith and practice. They help Friends attend to the Light and consider the extent to which current practice gives witness to faith. Queries may be read at meetings for worship or business, used in worship sharing, included in newsletters, and studied by individual Friends for their private devotions. At regular times, a query or set of queries may be read aloud before worship or business meeting, followed by a short period of silence; alternatively, they may be read at the end of worship, again followed by silence. The clerk's sensitivity to the present needs and concerns of the meeting may determine which queries are used at a particular time.

1. Friends in the meeting

a. Meeting for worship

- i. Is meeting for worship regularly held, in expectant waiting for divine guidance? Are both silent and vocal ministry rooted in a shared experience of the Light?
- ii. Are you regular and punctual in attending meeting for worship?

b. Meeting for business

- i. Are your meetings for business held in a spirit of worship? Are you considerate of differing views, coming to a decision only when the meeting has found a sense of unity?

ii. Do you individually assume your rightful share of responsibility for the work and financial support of the monthly meeting? Do you participate regularly in meetings for business and do you complete committee responsibilities faithfully?

iii. Do you hold to the Light the need to share your views even though you are in the minority? Can you allow the meeting, if it is so led, to go forward even though you are not in full agreement?

c. Meeting community: unity amid diversity

i. Are peace and unity maintained among you?

ii. Do you welcome diversity in an understanding and reconciling spirit, and make use of it for the enrichment of the meeting?

iii. Do you seek to explore the roots of your unspoken assumptions about individuals or groups of people that may be the source of hurt and pain to others?

iv. Do you seek out yearly meeting and monthly meeting responsibilities? Do you take opportunities available through monthly and yearly meeting for fellowship, service, and educational experiences?

d. Care of your membership

i. Are you sensitive to the spiritual and temporal needs of those making up the meeting community? Do you respond to needs of older, distant, or lonely members and attenders with love and mutual care?

ii. Do you as a meeting offer clearness committees as a way of dealing with members who have personal needs or problems?

iii. When members or attenders engage in actions or words which seem inconsistent with the testimonies of the Religious Society of Friends, do you examine your reaction to be sure it does not come from lack of understanding or unrecognized prejudice? Do you accept your responsibility to encourage their growth in the Light? In this eldering, do you share your own understanding of Friends' practices and testimonies?

e. Lifestyle

i. Do all aspects of your life bear the same witness? Do you center your life in the awareness of the presence of God so that all things take their rightful place?

ii. Do you practice simplicity in speech, dress, and manner of living, avoiding ostentation? Do you bear in mind that your standard of living is a material reflection of your spiritual convictions? Do you exercise stewardship of your possessions, sharing them with others? Are you careful in your choice of ways to use money, time, and energy?

iii. Do you try to find work that provides constructive and beneficial service? Do you conduct your business and financial affairs in a manner consistent with Friends' testimonies on honesty and simplicity?

iv. Do you strive to tell the truth at all times?

v. Do you strive to develop your physical, emotional, and intellectual capacities? Do you care for your body as the vessel of the Spirit? Do you choose recreations that will renew your emotional, physical, and intellectual abilities?

vi. Do you accept the gift of human sexuality in a mutually caring and committed relationship as evidence of God's providence for the enrichment of life?

f. Nurture, education, and growth of the individual

i. Does the meeting provide for the continuing religious education of its members and attenders, both older and younger Friends?

ii. Do you live in a growing love and understanding with your children and with all young people under your care? Are you an example to them in applying Friends' principles to your life? Do you seek out their insights and concerns?

iii. Do you offer your young people opportunities for fellowship and service? Do you help them to assume their rightful responsibilities in the home, the meeting, and the community?

iv. Are you involved in the schools of the community and concerned about establishing practices in them consistent with the values we cherish as Friends?

v. Do you make use of the Bible, the writings of Friends, and other inspirational literature, being open to new light from wherever it may come? Do you seek to understand and appreciate those of other faiths?

vi. Do you find time for meditation, prayer, and worship? Do you seek spiritual guidance in making decisions and in times of stress?

g. Home and family

i. Is your home a place where the presence of the Light is felt, where there is renewal of Spirit and inward peace? Are you careful to balance the need for privacy and intimacy in your family life with your desire to make your home a center of hospitality?

ii. Do you recognize marriage as a loving and sacred relationship, requiring mutual consideration and continuing adjustments?

iii. Do you practice the art of listening to one another in your families, even beyond words? Do you show respect and understanding for one another? Do you plan activities that will give the family time to grow together? Do you share your deepest beliefs and skills with all members of the family?

iv. Do you as parents prepare your children to meet their responsibilities in a constantly changing world? Does the meeting support and provide resources for families who have members with special needs?

2. Friends in the wider community

a. Social witness and justice

i. What are you doing to make your meeting a participant in community affairs? Do you maintain integrity in your relationship with the public, remembering that worthy ends do not justify unworthy means?

ii. Are you a dutiful citizen - informing yourself of current issues, voting, expressing your views to those in authority, and discharging jury duty - in all things keeping foremost the leading of the Spirit? Do you work for penal reform and abolition of the death penalty?

iii. Are you alert to the subtle as well as obvious injustices which may exist in your social and economic life? Do you bear witness to the wise and equal use of resources?

iv. Do you foster reverence for life, finding ways to understand and remove the causes of misery and suffering? Do you in loving concern, stand with the abused and persecuted without fanning the flames of hatred and division? Do you offer support, refuge and comfort to the oppressed and ostracized while extending a loving hand to those who engage in oppression, calling them into loving unity?

v. Do you seek to minister to both sides in a conflict?

b. Peace

i. Do you live in the virtue of that life and power which takes away the occasion for all war? In your work for peace, are you nourished by peace within yourself?

ii. Do you attempt to develop and apply nonviolent practices in all relationships? Do you maintain Friends' testimony against military preparations and all participation in war? In what ways do you support young people faced with the possibility of being drafted for military service?

iii. Do you strive to transmit to others an understanding of the basis of the peace testimony? Where there is hatred, division, and strife, do you seek to be tools of reconciliation?

c. Stewardship of the earth

i. In the consumption of materials and energy in daily living, do you observe the principles of conservation and recycling?

ii. In your use of chemicals, are you considerate of the health of living things and of the earth itself?

iii. Are you involved on a community level in efforts to stop practices that may be harmful to the environment of our home, the earth?

d. Equality

i. Do you acknowledge the unity of the human family and foster a loving spirit to people regardless of gender or sexual orientation and members of all races, religions, and nations? Do you speak to and answer that of God in all persons?

ii. How have you sought, under the claims of divine love and grace, to recognize the uniqueness of every individual regardless of differences? Have you sought to understand and overcome the discomfort that often accompanies the perception of differences? Do you seek in others their God-given gifts?

iii. Do you work to extend and equalize human rights? What are you doing to bring about equal opportunities for those who suffer discrimination because of conditions over which they have no control?

B. Special Queries for Young Friends

1. Do you often think about what it means to be a Friend, and try to understand how you can grow spiritually?

2. Do you work and play with others without arguing or fighting? Do you forgive others who hurt or insult you? Do you speak kindly of others, and avoid talking behind people's backs? Do you help others work and play together harmoniously?

3. Are you honest in what you say and do? Do you stand firmly against cheating and unfairness?

4. Do you consider Friends' beliefs in choosing what to do for fun? In your education and personal life goals?

5. Do you take care of your body so that it will be strong and healthy? Do you treat others' bodies with respect?

6. Are you mindful of the living conditions of people all over the world and in your community, and are you aware of how your actions affect the well-being of all peoples?

7. Are you aware of threats to our natural environment, and careful to preserve its resources?

8. Do you search for guidance of the Light during meeting for worship?

9. Do you share your concerns and insights with other Friends in meeting? Do you seek guidance from meeting members and others who share Friends' beliefs?

10. Do you accept responsibilities, especially responsibility for your own actions?

C. Special Queries for Prospective Monthly Meetings

1. Does the meeting have an understanding of Quaker roots? Does the meeting look to past experience and testimony of Friends as well as seeking guidance through meeting for worship in making decisions?

2. Does the meeting study Friends' literature and guides to faith and practice? Do Friends feel easy with basic Friends' testimonies?

3. Is the meeting able to carry out usual organizational functions such as appointing a clerk, maintaining a treasury, and recording meetings?

4. Are there sufficient Friends and regular attenders to support a meeting? Does the meeting encourage visitors and reach out to regular attenders?

5. Does the meeting face its problems, seeking assistance through divine guidance and, when appropriate, through the yearly meeting?

6. Does the meeting have programs of religious study for all ages?

7. Does the meeting keep contact with the meeting community through letter, telephone, newsletter, and visitation? Does the meeting communicate with other Friends groups, through conferences and other means?

8. Does the meeting support the yearly meeting through financial contributions and attendance at yearly and representatives' meetings? This is not mandatory for becoming a monthly meeting, but strongly encouraged.

9. Does the meeting feel easy with Friends' practice of service through obedience to the Spirit?

10. How does the meeting propose to admit new members? Are there enough Quaker members to do clearness with new members?

11. If two or three now attending were to drop out, what would happen to the meeting?

12. If the meeting does not yet have preparative meeting status, is it ready to place itself in the care of the closest appropriate established monthly meeting as it grows toward full monthly meeting status?

VI: BASIC READING LIST

Annotations by H. Larry Ingle, member of Chattanooga Friends meeting.

These works make up a basic library on Quakerism for the mature seeker. Most Friends' libraries would also include books of faith and practice from other yearly meetings and one or more translations of the Bible. Good choices might be the New International Study Version Study Bible, a modern translation with excellent footnotes and study aids, such as maps and charts; the New Revised Standard Version, which includes fresh wording and abandons most male-centered language in referring to people; and the Revised English Bible (a revision of the New English Bible), which also takes considerable care to use inclusive language.

Specialized publications of Friends World Committee (notably *Finding Friends Around the World* from Progressive Publishers), Friends General Conference, and American Friends Service Committee are also available. Pendle Hill, a Quaker study center in Wallingford, Pa., publishes, in addition to books, six essay-pamphlets a year on a wide variety of topics. An international trade association of Quaker publishers and distributors, Quakers Uniting in Publications (QUIP), publishes a catalog listing selected publications currently in print from many publishing enterprises representing all branches of Quakerism. The catalog is available free from Pendle Hill Bookstore, 338 Plush Mill Road, Wallingford, PA 19086. It is expected that individuals and meetings will have their own favorite titles to add to this list. Extra pages will allow readers to note these here.

Writings of Friends

American Friends Service Committee, *Speak Truth to Power*. Philadelphia: AFSC, 1967. (First published in 1955, still the most important brief on a "Quaker

American Friends Service Committee: Simple Living Collective, *Taking Charge*. New York: Bantam Books, 1977. (Subtitled "Personal and Political Change through Simple Living")

Hugh Barbour and Arthur Roberts, eds., *Early Quaker Writings*. Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 2002. (Selections from the 17th century)

Britain Yearly Meeting, *Quaker Faith and Practice: the Book of Christian Discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain*. London: Britain Yearly Meeting, 1994. (The latest edition of an excellent anthology stretching to the 17th century, with a conscious effort to include more modern and diverse Friends.)

George Fox, *Journal of George Fox*. John Nickalls, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952; paperback ed., 1985. (More an autobiographical memoir than a journal yet indispensable for understanding Fox's role in the rise of Quakerism)

Rufus Jones, *Rufus Jones Speaks to our Time. An Anthology*. Harry E. Fosdick, ed. New York: Macmillan Co., 1958. (A broad collection of the writings and thought of an important 20th-century Friend)

Thomas Kelly, *A Testament of Devotion*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941. (A classic of 20th-century devotional literature)

William Penn, *Fruits of Solitude*. Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1985. (An excellent introduction to the devotional writings of Penn)

Jessamyn West, ed., *The Quaker Reader*. New York: Viking Press, 1962. (Selection of Quaker writings, with one of the best brief introductions to Quaker history)

John Woolman, *Journal and Major Essays of John Woolman*, Phillips Moulton, ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971. (Standard collection of perhaps the most important 18th-century Friend)

Introduction to Quakers

George H. Gorman, *The Amazing Fact of Quaker Worship*. London: Quaker Home Service, 1973. (By an English Friend, down-to-earth, well-written introduction)

Thomas D. Hamm, *The Quakers in America*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003. (Well-written introduction to American Quakers of all stripes; strongest on the 19th century)

Geoffrey Hubbard, *Quaker by Convincement*. London: Penguin Books, 1976. (Probably the most readable introduction to Quakerism, its history, forms, and practices)

Ben Pink Dandelion, *The Quakers: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. (A very brief introduction [142 pp] written from a British perspective and quite critical of “Liberal” Quakerism)

John Punshon, *Encounter with Silence*. Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1987. (Somewhat broader than its title implies, a relatively brief but fine exploration)

Michael J. Sheeran, *Beyond Majority Rule*. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1983. (By a Jesuit political scientist, a path-breaking study of the way Friends make decisions, with potentials and problems)

History Margaret Bacon, *Mothers of Feminism: A Study of Quaker Women in America*. New York: Harper and Row, 1986. (Popular and somewhat disappointing history but the only examination of the topic)

Thomas Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988 (Prize winning work, focuses on Orthodox and midwestern Friends during the 19th century)

Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*. London: Temple Smith, 1972; paperback ed., 1975. (Indispensable for the background of Quakerism by the premier British historian of the period)

H. Larry Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict: The Hicksite Reformation*. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1986; paperback ed.: Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1998. (Explores the background and describes the struggles in the most important single set of events in American Quaker history)

Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences: the Early Quakers in Britain, 1646-1666*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000) The most recent, readable, well-researched, and insightful history of earliest Friends)

Daisy Newman, *A Procession of Friends*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1972; paperback ed., 1990. (Anecdotal and popular account of Friends' history)

John Punshon, *Portraits in Gray*. London: Quaker Home Service, 1984. (From an English Quaker perspective, best overview of Friends' history)

Hans A. Schmitt, *Quakers and Nazis: Inner Light in Outer Darkness*. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1997. (Demonstrates that the small band of German Quakers responded to Nazism in creative and expected ways)

Biographies

Edwin Cady, *John Woolman*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1965. (As much a literary analysis as a biography but still a good introduction)

Bliss Forbush, *Elias Hicks, Quaker Liberal*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1956. (Well-written work but rather old-fashioned and outdated point of view)

H. Larry Ingle, *First Among Friends: George Fox and the Creation of Quakerism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994; paperback ed., 1996. (The first full biography of Fox, set in the context of his time, demonstrating how he responded to internal and external challenges.)

Bonnelyn Young Kunze, *Margaret Fell and the Rise of Quakerism*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994. (Primarily a collection of essays, remains the closest we have to a full biography)

Elton Trueblood, *Robert Barclay*. New York: Harper & Row, 1968. (Quite SAYMA-pathetic but generally well done biography of the "Apologist")

Elizabeth Vining, *Friend of Life: A Biography of Rufus Jones*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1958; paperback ed., 1981. (Readable study of one some have claimed is the most influential Friend of the 20th century)

Theological Studies

Robert Barclay, *Barclay's Apology in Modern English*, Dean Freiday, ed. Newberg, OR: Barclay Press, 1967. (A modernized version of this Quaker classic.)

Lewis Benson, *Catholic Quakerism*. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1973. (Excellent analysis of contemporary Quakerism by one seeking to return the Society to its 17th- century roots)

Howard Brinton, *Friends for 300 Years*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952; paperback ed., 1965. (Quite readable combination of history and theological analysis; a near classic)

Douglas Gwyn, *Apocalypse of the World: The Life and Message of George Fox*. Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1986. (Important but one-sided)

Douglas Gwyn, *Seekers Found: Atonement in Early Quaker Experience*. Wallingford, PA, Pendle Hill Publications, 2000, paperback. (Combined history and theology, focuses first on continental mystics, narrowing to those who became Quakers in England)

Carole D. Spencer, *Holiness: the Soul of Quakerism, an Historical Analysis of the Theology of Holiness in the Quaker Tradition*. Colorado Springs, CO: Paternoster, 2007. A provocative thesis that challenges all segments of Quakerism.

Novels

Jan de Hartog, *The Peaceable Kingdom*. Boston: Atheneum, 1971.
The Lamb's War. New York: Harper & Row, 1980; paperback ed. (Two of a planned trilogy about the history of Quakerism; acute insights)

David Morse, *The Iron Bridge*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1998. (A provocative historical science fiction that looks at Quakers at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution)

Daisy Newman, *I Take Thee, Serenity*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1975; paperback ed. (Describes the struggles of a modern woman of Quaker background as she comes to grip with her heritage)

Jessamyn West, *The Friendly Persuasion*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1945; paperback eds. (Recounts the efforts of a midwestern Quaker family to confront their dilemmas and trials during the Civil War; basis for the famous movie)

Periodicals

Friends Journal, 1216 Arch Street, Suite 2A, Philadelphia, PA 19107. (Monthly magazine of Friends General Conference, explores modern Quaker life and thought)

Quaker Life, 101 Quaker Hill Drive, Richmond, IN 47374. (Published nine times a year by Friends United Meeting)

For children, Friends publishers and bookstores carry a number of titles on worship, Friends' history, and fiction. Brinton Turkle's series on a colonial Nantucket boy and his Quaker family (Thy Friend, Obadiah, Obadiah the Bold, The Adventures of Obadiah, and Rachel and Obadiah) are particularly popular for children 3-7.