

[There was no original text for the Integrity testimony.]

[Proposed new text] **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, 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, diversity in marriage and their opposition to war, violence, patriarchy and other degrading practices.

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 depend upon one another as we discern together the meaning of integrity.

[Original text] **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 required a radical break with the conventional way of life in our materialistic age. For all of us, seeking the inner light leads to a removal of distractions and an ordering of priorities so that we may 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.

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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.

[Original text] **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)

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. Deeply concerned that every individual, as a beloved child of God, be respected and afforded equal access to social opportunities, Friends believe that we are called to work toward an end to prejudice and oppression.

Each of us has God-given gifts that express themselves in different ways. Friends believe that the way in which God's gifts are realized may be shaped by the world in which we live. Our ability to both bear and respond to the Light can be affected by social prejudices that dim awareness of God's leadings.

A commitment to equality, the first of Friends social testimonies, led early Friends to affirm that no person is superior to another because of birth, wealth, or formal

education. 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. They retained the traditional "thee" and "thou" to avoid the emerging seventeenth century usage of granting an undue distinction to an individual with a plural "you". Modern Friends have expanded our awareness of what equality demands, in its continued application in our daily lives.

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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. 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. They

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 to 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.

In seeking to apply this testimony, Friends have often been in the forefront of social change. Recognition of inherent worth in all people despite individual or group differences has often caused Friends to live and act contrary to accepted societal norms, rejecting 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.

[Proposed revision] **EQUALITY** continued

We believe all are equally empowered by God and encourage all to speak for themselves, expressing their own experiences and goals. We must 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. Understanding other's perspectives can change us and inform 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 seek a world free of oppression, where laws and customs foster human dignity. We encourage all people to realize their full potential as human beings bearing the light of God.

[Original text] **The Meeting 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)

Friends are bound together in community by a continual process of common seeking and experience of the Light within. The community provides spiritual and emotional nurture. It also stimulates our thinking and challenges us to put into practice our convictions. In the meeting, we share fundamental ideals and values, and the meeting affirms and inspires us.

Within this fellowship, divergent leadings are often present. Friends seek a balance between the needs of the individual and those of the group. Open recognition of and respect for differences, forthright sharing, and sincere reflection can lead individuals to new insight and strengthen the meeting as a whole. It is possible to resolve differences either directly by the individuals involved or with the meeting's assistance. Unity emerges not only from agreement but also from a common search for the truth conducted in a spirit of loving concern.

Friends strive to be sensitive to others' spiritual and material needs. Both requesting and giving assistance are essential aspects of Friends' life together, and taking a

warm, personal interest in one another's welfare strengthens the meeting and the individuals alike. Friends also provide spiritual support by holding in the Light those experiencing special hardship or joy. In mutual service and support, we express our love for God and reflect God's gifts to us.

[Proposed Revision] **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, p. 37

Friends of all ages are bound together in community by our shared seeking of the Light. Our life together provides an opportunity to listen more deeply and to look more truthfully at how we live in the world. The meeting community affirms, inspires, and holds us accountable in our faithfulness to God's leadings.

Open recognition of and respect for differences, forthright sharing, and sincere corporate reflection, can lead to new insights and strengthen the meeting as a whole. Unresolved conflicts damage community. Friends should be encouraged to resolve conflicts in a direct loving manner. Help may be sought from or offered by the meeting or other resources. 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. Unity is not sameness of belief, but the oneness of people drawn together in love and concern for each other, grounded in the Spirit.

Ministering to each other's spiritual and material needs builds and strengthens community. Both requesting and giving assistance are essential aspects of Friends' life together, and taking a warm, personal

[Original text] **The Meeting Community** continued

All forms of sharing - spiritual, economic, domestic, co-operative service - enhance meeting unity. These experiences within the meeting enable Friends to envision new possibilities for community living and suggest practical ways to build community beyond the meeting.

Yearly meetings and other gatherings are opportunities for Friends from different areas to nurture spiritual growth and fellowship. The scattered company of SAYMA seeks to build the living community of the Spirit.

[Proposed Revision] **COMMUNITY** continued

interest in one another's welfare strengthens the meeting and the individuals alike. Friends also provide spiritual support by holding in the Light those experiencing special hardship or joy. When we join in service and support, whether in our home communities, the wider community or the world, we are expressing our love for God and one another.

Friends seek to ground and learn to practice their testimony on community first in their Monthly Meeting and then in wider Quaker connections. Yearly Meeting sessions and committee work, inter-meeting visitation, regional gatherings and visiting other monthly and yearly meetings are opportunities for Friends to find nurture, spiritual growth and fellowship. The widely scattered SAYMA family seeks to build a living community of the Spirit.

The interconnectedness of all life has called and continues to call Friends to serve the broader community. Understanding of God's love does not stop at the meetinghouse door. Friends strive to build the blessed community everywhere they go. Peace, equality, integrity, simplicity and community mean little unless they are practiced in relation to all others.

[Original text] **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.

Conscientious Friends take this commitment in various directions: some work within government, some work to influence public officials or actions, some withdraw from participation, some resist or oppose government claims.

Recognizing that the exercise of authority intensifies the spiritual struggle for those who work within government, we seek unity in the Truth with those we want to influence and believe that this unity may be reached if we remain faithful in our witness. 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 and call them to the standard of Truth in their actions.

Friends often are led to withhold their assent from harmful governmental policies and to work to change them through individual action, meeting action, and support for the Friends Committee on

[Proposed revision] **GOVERNMENT**

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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

[Original text] **Government** continued

National Legislation. Many Friends communicate frequently with governmental representatives to encourage their support for positive legislation, and many work to elect candidates who hold positions acceptable to Friends.

As a body, the Religious Society of Friends has never recognized the claims of government as absolutes, for we seek to live the truth beyond human institutions. Friends traditionally have refrained from swearing oaths - instead, we affirm the truth. We encourage mediation and negotiation rather than litigation to resolve disputes. Friends have supported conscientious objection to military service. Individual Friends have felt it right, under the leadings of the Spirit, to develop these positions and have challenged the corporate body of Friends to consider new testimonies, such as resisting war taxation and noncooperation with certain governmental policies. In such cases, Friends' steadfast and faithful witness has an influence that often transcends its initial effect.

While we work to see our principles reflected in governmental decisions and actions, we realize that government even 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, daily live the life of the peaceable kingdom.

[Proposed revision] **GOVERNMENT** continued

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.

[Original text]

SECTION 3: PROCEEDING IN THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

Planning for the wedding

The oversight committee, together with the couple, arranges to meet legal requirements and to accomplish the marriage with simplicity and reverence. The reception, if any, is also part of their responsibility.

The oversight committee must know the legal requirements where the marriage will occur. It is the couple's responsibility to secure the marriage license or other legal form to be filed, by the committee, with the county clerk or similar officer after the marriage has taken place. Some localities have a special form for the Religious Society of Friends, but if not the committee can usually change the standard wording to comply with Friends' procedures. An approved meeting member must sign to represent the meeting, and others to fill the required number of witnesses.

The marriage certificate shall be prepared, well in advance, in a form similar to the following but carefully worded to incorporate the particular declarations that will be spoken by the couple and have been previously agreed upon with the committee for clearness:

Whereas, A. B., of _____, son of C. B. and H.B., of _____, and D. E., of _____, 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 allowed by the meeting.

Now this is to certify to whom it may concern, that for the

[Proposed revision]

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The marriage certificate shall be prepared, well in advance, in a form similar to the following but carefully worded to incorporate the particular declarations that will be spoken by the couple and have been previously 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 allowed by the meeting.

[Original text] **Wedding** continued

accomplishment of their intentions, this _____ day of the _____ month, in the year of our Lord _____, they, A. B. and D. E., appeared in a meeting for worship of the Religious Society of Friends, held at _____, and A. B. taking D. E. by the hand did on this solemn occasion declare that he took her, D. E., to be his wife, promising with divine assistance to be unto her a loving and faithful husband so long as they both shall live; and then in the same assembly D. E. did in like manner declare that she took him, A. B., to be her husband, promising with Divine assistance to be unto him a loving and faithful wife so long as they both shall live. And moreover they, A. B. and D.E. *, [she, according to the custom of marriage, assuming the surname of her husband*] did, as further confirmation thereof, then and there, to this certificate set their hands.

A.B. _____

D.E.B. _____

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

*This phrase is omitted when the woman does not assume her husband's surname.

Many choose to hand-letter their certificates on parchment or fine paper. Certificates also may be purchased from Friends Yearly Meeting Office, 1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA.

The oversight committee and the couple to be married should designate in advance persons to carry out the following responsibilities: explaining meeting for worship and Friends' wedding procedures; reading the certificate after the couple signs;

[Proposed revision] **Wedding** continued

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.

*A phrase may be added when one or both of a couple chooses to change his and/or her name.

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

The oversight committee and the couple to be married should designate in advance persons to carry out the

following responsibilities: explaining meeting for worship and Friends' wedding procedures; reading the certificate after the couple signs; closing the meeting; inviting those present to sign the certificate as witnesses.

[Original text] **Wedding** continued

closing the meeting; inviting those present to sign the certificate as witnesses.

The wedding itself

At the time appointed, the meeting for worship on the occasion of marriage gathers in silence. For the benefit of non-Friends, the person appointed explains the meaning of the worship and the procedure to follow, unless the invitations have already done so.

After a suitable time, as they are moved, the couple will rise and, taking each other by the hand, declare in words to this effect:

In the presence of God and these our friends I take thee _____ to be my wife [husband], promising with Divine assistance to be unto thee a loving and faithful husband [wife] so long as we both shall live.

The couple will then sign the marriage certificate, and the appointed Friend will read it aloud.

In the period of worship to follow, any may speak as they are moved. After the rise of the meeting, everyone present is invited to sign the marriage certificate.

[Proposed revision] **Wedding** continued

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After a suitable time, as they are moved, the couple will rise and, taking each other by the hand, declare in words to this effect:

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 will then sign the marriage certificate, and the appointed Friend will read it aloud.

In the period of worship to follow, any may speak as they are moved. After the rise of the meeting, everyone present is invited to sign the marriage certificate.

SECTION 3: PROCEEDING IN THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

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.

A preparative meeting places itself under the care of the closest monthly meeting, which is able to give it the spiritual support and the organizational help it needs. The monthly meeting oversees the procedural functions of the preparative meeting and gives it the same spiritual support and material encouragement it has given the worship group. The monthly meeting which has the care of a preparative meeting should have a committee whose responsibility is to see that needs of the preparative meeting are met and to oversee the progress of the meeting. The preparative meeting should report regularly to the monthly meeting. In the absence of a monthly meeting able to oversee a preparative meeting, the preparative meeting may be placed under the care of SAYMA, which may appoint an

oversight committee to proceed in place of the corresponding monthly meeting committee.

A preparative meeting may continue indefinitely in that status; however, it will probably look forward to growth and development which will lead it to become a monthly meeting.

Attenders of the preparative meeting who wish to become members

[Proposed revision]

SECTION 3: PROCEEDING IN THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

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.

3. 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.

[Original text] **Preparative & Monthly Meetings**
continued

of the Religious Society of Friends must apply through a monthly meeting.

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 functions 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 appointed by 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. When the oversight committee concurs in the preparative meeting's readiness for certification, it will recommend to its own monthly meeting that the meeting be certified. If the meeting concurs, the preparative meeting will be notified by letter.

A new monthly meeting wanting to be affiliated with SAYMA must request the sponsoring meeting to recommend to the Yearly Meeting business session that formal recognition be granted. A date for the formal certification will then be set, and all monthly meetings, preparative meetings, and worship groups in SAYMA will be notified and invited to send representatives to share in the certification proceedings. If the preparative meeting has been under

[Proposed revision] **Preparative & Monthly Meetings**
continued

Becoming a monthly meeting

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the functions 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.

[Original text] **Preparative & Monthly Meetings**
continued

the care of the yearly meeting, the yearly meeting oversight committee may recommend certification for the

approval of the representative meeting for the yearly meeting.

Queries for a preparative meeting wishing to become a monthly meeting may be found in the query section of this **Guide**.