

PFF Yearly Meeting Formation Committee

Minutes

May 19, 2013
Raleigh Friends Meeting

Present were: Charlotte: Julie Stafford Highberg, Marian Beane, Raleigh: Tom Kagan, Martin King, Carol Morris, Salem Creek: Dee Edelman, Dick Connell, Christina Connell; Durham: John Hunter; New Garden: Dot Mason, Debbie Parvin

The minutes from the previous meeting were accepted as “quite thorough and accurate.” The committee accepted Jenni’s offer to continue as recorder. (Note: Notes for this meeting were taken by Carol Morris; Jenni was unable to attend due to her grandmother’s passing).

Committee members reported for their respective Meetings regarding desired key elements for a new yearly meeting and any concerns or questions. Carol Morris recorded on the white board 27 desired elements suggested by 5 meetings. Also listed were a total of 12 “concerns” brought by the meetings and an additional 10 questions that came up in the discussion.

The committee then considered “core elements” of a working vision statement for the yearly meeting & related objectives based on the input from the meetings. Following are the major points resulting from this consideration.

1. To be fully Inclusive:

- Modes of Quaker worship
- Social (LGBT, Gender, Ethnic, etc.)
- Quaker theologies (beliefs are less important than practices - how do we behave as Quakers, conduct ourselves, and treat each other?)

2. Use of good Quaker practice(s):

- Worship process/practice
- Business process/practice (support good clerking and “sense of the Meeting”)
- Use of Queries (at all levels as appropriate) and committees

3. “Building a loving community” – within and without

- Within: support for Monthly Meetings
- Without: Local, i.e. Quaker House, national (Quaker and non-Quaker organizations), International
- Social action (larger “voice”, witness/testimonies)

4. Focused on “Spirit”

- Be always open to being spirit-led (light within)
- Being open to testing for discernment (listening, waiting, seeking clarity from others)
- Being careful about making assumptions as how we name or identify “spirit.”
(Universal; sense of love or connectedness; our understanding will evolve over time.)

5. “Structure” considerations

- “We are us” (How to help each other and use resources outside of us. Minimal structure.)
- Focus on addressing the needs of Monthly Meetings
- Provide grounding (experience base, corporate discernment for monthly meetings)
- Keep open the possibility of quarterly and half-yearly meetings or other appropriate structures and relationships
- Commitment to Openness and Transparency (communicate fully, being as inclusive as possible in our decision making, and being careful with “Quakerese”)

Next steps: Dee Edelman and Christina Connell agreed to take these ideas for core elements of a yearly meeting vision and craft statements of these core elements to be distributed via email to the committee for seasoning and to then be considered again at the next meeting in July. We agreed defer communication to our respective meetings on these priorities until they have been more seasoned by the committee.

We minuted our thanks to Raleigh Friends for their warm welcome and the lovely lunch that was provided for us.

Notes prepared by Carol Morris

7/14/13 Addendum: These minutes were originally recorded by Carol Morris as part of a 5-page outline of the material brought up at the committee's meeting on 5/19/13. On 7/14/13 the committee directed John Hunter to condense the outline in more prose form, the result of which is represented by this 2-page document to be submitted to the committee for final approval at its next meeting in September. The original 5-page document was distributed to all committee members.

John Hunter
7/14/13