

6/28/10

TO: Monthly Meeting Clerks, Monthly Meeting Representatives, and Friends

FROM: The Future of the Yearly Meeting Sub-Committee of PYM Ministry & Oversight

With great appreciation for the responses from Monthly Meetings and individuals, this Committee brings forth in this packet a compilation of some of your deepest thoughts and concerns about our Yearly Meeting. We ask that you read the materials thoughtfully and come to our Annual Meeting in July prepared to discuss and aid in furthering this work that we have undertaken together.

There will be an Open Committee Meeting of our Committee on Wednesday evening, July 28<sup>th</sup>, during the Annual Gathering when we will discuss the enclosed documents. We hope that Monthly Meeting Representatives will find a way to discuss the materials with their Meeting members and bring their input to the discussion.

Because the depth of your responses went beyond the scope of our earlier Draft Proposal, we have added two documents: Observations on the Purpose of the Yearly Meeting, and an Addendum. These two documents are for information only, and will require no action. The revised "Proposal for Change" is the only document on which we will be asking for action. There is also a Suggested Job Description for Monthly Meeting Representatives. It is offered to Monthly Meetings in an effort to help Meetings select individuals who are prepared to do the work that will be asked of them as Representatives.

The following documents are enclosed in this packet:

- I. Observations on the Purpose of Yearly Meeting
- II. Proposal for Change in how the Representative Committee Functions to Support PYM
- III. Addendum: Discussion of views shared with us that did not become a part of the proposal, plus information regarding some other Yearly Meetings
- IV. Suggested Job Description for Monthly Meeting Representatives to Pacific Yearly Meeting

## Observations on the Purpose of Yearly Meeting

These descriptions speak to the meaning of the Yearly Meeting as felt by many and represent what we heard from those who gave us feedback. We note when the reference is to the Yearly Meeting as an organization (PYM), or when the reference is to the Annual Gathering (AG).

PYM as a year-round organization is:

- A resource regarding Quaker process, practice, beliefs, and history for Monthly Meetings, Preparative Meetings, Worship Groups and individual Friends;
- A vehicle to maintain the structure and practices of the Yearly Meeting, Quarterly Meetings, and Monthly Meetings as part of the Religious Society of Friends; and
- The source of *Faith and Practice*.

The Annual Gathering provides an opportunity for:

- Deeper connections with other F/friends through Worship, Worship Sharing, Bible Study, socializing and more;
- Practicing corporate discernment of God's will on issues of conscience;
- Demonstrating the sensing of Worship on the occasion of Business; and
- Spiritual nourishment through daily worship, Bible study, shared ministry and daily interactions.

Through year-round activities and the Annual Gathering PYM is a source for child and youth enrichment, especially for those youth who are in Meetings with very few young people, providing:

- A connection with other youth of like-mindedness;
- An opportunity to make friends among Friends;
- Religious Education and practice models, including conducting business meetings, selecting leadership, practicing discernment, writing epistles, and more.

# **Proposal for revitalizing Pacific Yearly Meeting Representative Committee and strengthening the voice of Monthly Meetings through their representatives (June 27, 2010)**

## ***I. The PURPOSE of these proposed changes is to:***

- A. Strengthen and nurture the life of Monthly Meeting (MM) by:
  - 1. encouraging greater involvement in the larger body of Friends
  - 2. providing an opportunity for a more active role in the life of the Yearly Meeting, thus expanding the experience of local Friends
  - 3. increasing opportunities for individual spiritual growth at PYM
  - 4. giving PYM a more effective way to address the needs and concerns of the MM
- B. Increase and strengthen the involvement and influence of MM in the work of the Yearly Meeting (YM)
- C. Increase the time available at the Annual Gathering (AG) for spiritual experiences and fellowship
- D. Open more time for in-depth discernment on issues of conscience and concern to the YM
- E. Reduce the amount of time and energy spent in Plenary Sessions on routine Business at the AG
- F. Create a structure that will assure that MMs have an opportunity to give input on issues before the YM and to convey concerns of the MMs to the YM

## ***II. The PROPOSAL:***

It is proposed that the Representative Committee of PYM assume responsibility for acting on more of the business of the Yearly Meeting, including:

- A. Acting on any items prior to AG that do not change well established practice, including action on:
  - 1. the annual budget of the YM
  - 2. the budget for the AG
  - 3. interim (midyear) nominations, to be confirmed at the AG
  - 4. the laying down of standing or ad hoc committees
  - 5. the decision to call for a revision of Faith and Practice
  - 6. reports from officers, standing committees, and Monthly Meetings to assure that appropriate responses or referrals are made as called for
  - 7. referrals of appropriate matters to officers, committees, and to the YM, with any recommendations reached by RepCom
  - 8. the selection of an ad hoc committee to name the Nominating Committee, consisting of 3 members, one of whom will serve as clerk, plus one alternate

- B. It is further proposed that the AG of PYM remain responsible for action on:
  - 1. any Minute changing well established practice of the YM
  - 2. nominations of Officers, Committee Clerks and members, and Representatives to Quaker organizations, and confirmation of any interim appointments made at RepCom
  - 3. any changes in affiliation with or representation to other organizations
  - 4. revisions, additions or deletions to *Faith and Practice*
  - 5. allowing sufficient time in AG schedule for discernment sessions that allow in-depth consideration of issues of conscience
- C. To assure that all attenders of the AG are well informed, reports from Committee Clerks shall be:
  - 1. submitted to the Assistant to the Clerk by June 30<sup>th</sup> preceding the AG, to be prepared as Documents in Advance; and
  - 2. distributed as part of the registration process at the AG.

**III. The proposed *STRUCTURE* to accomplish the changes includes:**

- A. Changes in the way Representative Committee Meets
  - 1. The current meeting of RepCom in March will be lengthened to 1 ½ days to assure sufficient time to consider the expanded agenda.
  - 2. Representative Committee shall be held the weekend of the first Sunday in March for all members of Representative Committee, as defined below.
  - 3. A Representative Committee Meeting will be scheduled mid-week at AG.
- B. Membership of the Representative committee (per *Faith & Practice* 2001)
  - 1. The composition of the committee will continue to include: (65)
    - a. One Representative from each MM and Preparative Meeting (a possible 37 persons)
    - b. Eleven Officers of the Yearly Meeting
    - c. Thirteen Standing Committee Clerks of the YM
    - d. One Clerk from each Quarter
    - e. The Registrar
    - f. The convener of FWCC
    - g. The immediate past clerk of the YM
  - 2. All members of Representative Committee are expected to attend all meetings and their travel to Representative Committee Meetings will be reimbursed by the Yearly Meeting.
- C. Terms Of Office:
  - 1. All Officers and Committee Clerks will be Members of Representative Committee as long as they hold their positions.
  - 2. Representatives of Monthly Meetings shall serve 3-year renewable terms. Observers may also serve 3-year renewable terms, and may be selected as Representatives following their time as observers.
  - 3. The Statistical Clerk of the Monthly Meeting shall report appointments of Representative and Observers to the Statistical Clerk of PYM following their selection and provide an updated list of Representatives and Observers at the AG.

D. Recommended Schedule of Responsibilities for the Representative and Observer/ Alternate:

1. The Representative (and Obs.) to PYM shall hold a Meeting with the Clerk of the Monthly Meeting early in the year (prior to RepCom) to prepare for RepCom and to be prepared to notify the clerk of PYM of any concerns or Minutes the Monthly Meeting wishes to bring forward. Information that the Representative should have knowledge about includes:
  - a. significant activities of the MM
  - b. issues related to Meeting functioning (e.g. spiritual life, ministry), concerns (e.g. P & SO, UWN, other)
  - c. Minutes of concern, which have been seasoned and approved by the Monthly Meeting
  - d. local responses to any PYM identified issues
2. At Representative Committee Meeting in March and at the Annual Meeting the Representative should be prepared to participate actively in seasoning items that come up, assuring that they are assigned appropriately and effectively.
3. As a member of the Representative Committee, the Representative should be prepared to sit on planning, ad hoc, or other committees that carry responsibilities of the Representative Committee. The Representative should be knowledgeable about the larger body of Friends, meetings, written materials, conferences, resources, etc.
4. Following RepCom the Representative and Observer will report to their Meeting on what took place at RepCom, and discuss any issues on which PYM wants to have input from the MM. In addition any reports pertaining to specific committees should be given to MM Clerks of those Committees. The Representative should prepare to report information from the MM to Representative Committee Meeting at the annual session.
5. Prior to the AG the Representative should inform members of the MM about the upcoming AG, encouraging attendance and providing information to facilitate attendance, such as application for scholarships. Ways of minimizing travel costs should also be discussed, such as car-pooling, vans, public transport, etc. The Representative should be prepared to work with the Quarterly Meeting regarding arrangements for transportation to the AG.
6. Following the midsummer Session of PYM, the Representative is responsible for carrying information back to the MM, and preparing a report for the MM Business Meeting and/or the Newsletter of the significant items coming from the AG and from RepCom deliberations.
7. Representatives will encourage activities, or participate in activities in their Monthly Meetings that will give them a good understanding of the Meeting's response to any issues to be discussed at RepCom. Although they bring the thoughts, feelings and convictions of their Meeting to matters under consideration, they should not adhere to a predetermined point of view, but join with other members of the Representative Committee in seeking Divine Guidance for the corporate sense of the Meeting (*Faith & Practice* 2001).

## ADDENDUM

The following items were mentioned in the responses to the original draft proposal, but did not result in changes in the revised version. They were noted, and some explanation is offered here for their exclusion in the revision.

- Concern was expressed about the splitting of business and spiritual issues, the appropriateness of grappling with social issues as a corporate body of PYM and the importance of everyone participating in essential business decisions.
  - The AG (or the whole body) remains responsible for acting on issues that would change established practice of the YM. Representative Committee could act on only those business items that fall within established practice, and that are routine matters maintaining the structure and activity of the YM. It is the practice of Yearly Meetings to take action on social issues as called for by our Testimonies. This proposal endeavors to allow time for in-depth discernment to determine our corporate position on such issues.
- Equal representation from large and small Meetings seems not to equally represent the Members of PYM. Some Meetings are so small they are unable to have a Representative at the AG. Consideration should be given to requiring that Representatives be members of the Religious Society of Friends.
  - At the present time the make-up of the Representative Committee follows the guidance of the current *Faith and Practice*. These concerns shall be referred to the Discipline Committee for study and possible revision with the next Revision of the *Faith and Practice*.
- How do other Yearly Meetings conduct their business?
  - Intermountain Yearly Meeting has the equivalent of a Representative Committee which is responsible for a broader scope of business than our YM. They call their body a “Continuing Committee.”
  - North East Yearly Meeting begins on Saturday and consists of a conference and a business session. The weekend part stands alone as a “conference.” Business is conducted from Monday to Thursday.
  - North Pacific Yearly Meeting (formerly) had a steering Committee, which did a portion of YM business, including budgeting, between annual sessions. Now, after an extended period of visioning and restructuring they have established a “Coordinating Committee” which meets at the annual session and two other times during the year to give year-round emphasis to monthly meeting and committee support, involvement and nurture, and to give attention to “emerging issues.” In some ways they have taken business away from their version of “Rep Com” in order for it to focus primarily on Monthly Meeting support and exploring “emerging issues,” shifting a bit more business to the annual gathering. We, on the other hand, are hoping that by giving our Rep Com responsibility for business, we might have a similar effect in getting our Monthly Meetings more involved.

## Suggested Job Description

### REPRESENTATIVE TO THE YEARLY MEETING

#### Qualifications:

The Representative should be an active participant of the Monthly Meeting, able to participate in the Annual Gathering of the Yearly Meeting and the Representative Committee Meeting in March of each year. Familiarity with, or prior attendance at the Annual Gathering is helpful. Access to e-mail is useful.

#### Job Description:

Representation of the Monthly Meeting at Representative Committee Meetings and at the Annual Gathering of the Yearly Meeting by bringing to the Yearly Meeting concerns from the Monthly Meeting and by reporting back on actions and concerns of the Yearly Meeting, so that the Monthly Meeting is informed and included in the life of the Yearly Meeting. The Representative and Observer appointed by the Monthly Meeting should be provided with a copy of the Proposal for Revitalizing the Yearly Meeting (June 2010). Each Monthly Meeting shall appoint one Representative and one Observer for a three year renewable term.

Tasks: The Representative is expected to:

- Represent the experience, concerns and needs of the Monthly Meeting in the gatherings of Pacific Yearly Meeting's Representative Committee Meetings and the Annual Gathering
- Participate in seasoning and decision-making of the Representative Committee and the Annual Gathering
- Carry the business and communications of PYM back to the Monthly Meeting for its consideration, involvement and action
- Educate the Monthly Meeting on the workings and the purposes of the Yearly Meeting
- Encourage participation of Monthly Meeting members and attenders in the Yearly Meeting and help facilitate their attendance by assisting with transportation and scholarship needs
- Remain informed about and engaged in the life of both the Monthly Meeting and the Yearly Meeting

#### Expectations and Timelines:

Representatives and Observers are responsible for attending the two-day Representative Committee gathering in March, and Representative Committee Meeting(s) at the Annual Gathering (5 days) during the summer. Time during the year must be scheduled to meet with members of the Monthly Meeting to carry out the information gathering and sharing activities described above. Travel Costs to the Representative for attending Representative Committee Meetings is reimbursed by the YM.