

Pacific Yearly Meeting
Ministry and Oversight Committee
Report for Representative Committee 2014

Overview

The Ministry and Oversight Committee meets three times between Annual Sessions. Our Fall meeting was held in September 2013 in Berkeley, California and our Winter meeting was held in January 2014 in Mexico City. The Spring meeting will be held the last weekend of May 2014, location to be determined. The committee meets daily during the Annual Session.

At our Fall meeting, we reviewed the 2013 Annual Session noting, among other points, that the cost of attending the Annual Session was a major concern and also our narrow demographic spectrum. We looked at the manner in which business is conducted at the Annual Session, identifying the importance of receiving and considering materials in advance. This discussion continued into our Winter meeting, noting our inability to function as a body if we don't have community. We asked, "How can we bring all Friends into the process?" "How do we invite fresh voices, perspectives, and energy into our process?" "How do we live from a deeper place?"

Minutes of Concern

On consideration of recent experiences related to Minutes of Concern (also referred to as Minutes of Action, Minutes of Position, and Statements of Concern), Ministry and Oversight began discernment on this issue with the query, "Why do we approve Minutes of Concern and how do such Minutes serve our Pacific Yearly Meeting community?"

We explored how recent experiences associated with such Minutes made us feel personally, and how we felt these experiences had affected the Yearly Meeting. How do we answer the Spirit in some Friends and help direct that Light in a way that is helpful to other Friends? A comment received from outside Ministry and Oversight Committee, that "given the current climate within the Yearly Meeting, even the Peace Testimony would not be approved if it was brought to Yearly Meeting today", led us to look past the matter of Minutes of Concern to deeper issues stirring among our community.

Consideration was given to purpose and to process, emphasizing the need for seasoning. We were moved to consider how we may live from a deeper place. How can we nurture each other in living out our faith? Where is our joy in finding unity?

The Committee concluded that its discernment is starting to bring form to the question at hand, laying over the issue to be continued at our Spring meeting. Time will be allotted at the Annual Session to open this discussion to the Yearly Meeting community.

Affiliation with Friends General Conference

Because this is a recurrent issue within our Yearly Meeting, Ministry and Oversight gave consideration to the potential benefits and drawbacks of Pacific Yearly Meeting formally affiliating with Friends General Conference. Ministry and Oversight does not bring a recommendation to the Yearly Meeting at this time, however we ask representatives to take the following question to their Monthly Meetings: Are there stirrings in your Meeting to join Friends General Conference (FGC)?

Ministry and Oversight Committee Winter Meeting 2014

The Committee's Winter meeting was held in Mexico City. Prior to arriving at this decision, the committee engaged in much discernment, considering costs, advantages, disadvantages, etc. The endeavor of holding this committee meeting outside of California was embarked upon with hesitant expectation, with careful attention to the factors that had originally been considered.

Many of the committee's members felt led to extend their visit to Mexico City which offered a unique opportunity for the Yearly Meeting to foster both relationships and friendships with members of the local Quaker community. The committee worshipped with Mexico City Meeting, two of the committee's members visited the Oaxaca

Worship Group, one participated in various Monthly Meeting committee meetings, and all enjoyed fellowship with Mexican Friends.

Because of the many apparent benefits of this experience, Ministry and Oversight Committee hopes that other Monthly Meetings will invite the committee to hold its meetings in their area. The experience of listening to some of the quieter voices in our community has enriched both the members of the Ministry and Oversight Committee and its service to the Yearly Meeting.

Committee Subgroups

Members of Ministry and Oversight Committee are assigned to either the Ministry and Worship Subgroup or the Oversight Subgroup. The activities of the former focus mainly on preparations for the Annual Session, while the latter is responsible for the attendance assistance fund and is more active during the Annual Session itself.

Worship and Ministry

This Subgroup has reviewed our policy for the inclusion of names at Meeting for Memorials held during the Annual Session. In addition to the names of Members who have passed away since Annual Session, Monthly Meetings will be invited to consider including the names of Attenders who have given significant service to the Monthly, Quarterly, and/or Pacific Yearly Meeting. A letter will be sent to the Monthly Meetings in April outlining the new policy, approved by the Committee.

Looking ahead to the 2014 Annual Session, this Subgroup will prepare the queries for the Worship Sharing sessions to reflect and carry the theme for the Annual Session through the week, considering also the queries given to us in Faith and Practice.

Oversight

This Subgroup has been working on making the Annual Session Attendance Assistance more user friendly, revising the form and clarifying the process.

This Subgroup will be responsible for the Buddy Program that was trialed at the 2013 Annual Session, which will again be offered at the 2014 Annual Session.

Ministry and Oversight Subcommittees

Membership of the subcommittees is appended

Electronic Communications: has been working on the Cloud project, in addition to maintaining the Pacific Yearly Meeting website.

Experimentation and Implementation: is charged with analyzing the Annual Session and the structure of the Yearly Meeting to make recommendations to Ministry and Oversight. Recent work of the subcommittee has focused on a survey of other Yearly Meetings both in the US and internationally. Concerns have been raised as to the business and the busyness of Annual Session. Taking time to build community is important. This subcommittee will look at different models for structuring the Annual Session and may bring a recommendation to the 2014 Annual Session looking ahead to 2015.

Ministry and Leadings: is developing a workshop that will be offered to Monthly Meetings. The workshop will explore the role of Meetings in naming, nurturing, supporting and providing accountability for ministry and leadings, among other themes. Ministry and Oversight will review the subcommittee's proposal and hopes to offer a recommendation at Annual Session.

Racial Justice: has been asked to consider and examine the diversity of our Yearly Meeting and to make suggestions as to how we may enrich the mix of attenders at the Annual Session.

Representative Support: facilitates communication between the Monthly Meeting and the Yearly Meeting, and vice versa. This subcommittee meets with the Monthly Meeting representatives at Annual Session and also serves as a point of contact for questions and concerns from the representatives.

Support for Distant Meetings: has been dormant since May 2013 while the subcommittee is undergoing changes and revisions.

Visiting Friend: is preparing the job description and application process for the Visiting Friend and also the subsequent process for Monthly Meetings to invite the Visiting Friend. It has been suggested that the subcommittee consider a Young Friend as the Visiting Friend.

Liaisons to the Standing Committees and Officers of the Yearly Meeting

While our Faith and Practice instructs Ministry and Oversight Committee to appoint liaisons to various of the standing committees and officers of the Yearly Meeting, it is felt that such appointments have been somewhat ineffective. Ministry and Oversight Committee will assign liaisons to the Children's Program Committee, Junior Yearly Meeting, and Young Adult Friends prior to the Annual Session, as appropriate.

Interest Groups at the 2014 Annual Session

Ministry and Oversight Committee has requested four interest groups during the 2014 Annual Session. One will address the theme for the Annual Session in greater depth, while the other three will be led by Ministry and Oversight Subcommittees. Consideration is also being given to offering a workshop at the Annual Session on process.

Annual Session: Schedule

On consideration of suggestions and comments received, the draft schedule for the 2014 Annual Session 2014 includes a threshing session prior to plenaries for business to support the conducting of business. The proposed schedule offers another change to previous years, Family Fellowship Friday. We'll spend Friday afternoon together selecting from a variety of intergenerational activity options.

Annual Session: Discount for First-Time Attenders

Ministry and Oversight Committee will use a portion of the Attendance Assistance Fund to offer a discount of \$40.00 (approximately 10%) off the registration fee to first-time attenders at the Annual Session to encourage newcomers to participate and enjoy the wider Pacific Yearly Meeting community.

Invitations and Recommendations

- 1.- Just as our Monthly Meetings suffer when we do not actively participate in them, so does the Yearly Meeting when we don't attend the Annual Session. Ministry and Oversight Committee strongly encourages Members and Attenders of our member Monthly Meetings to aid in strengthening our Yearly Meeting by attending and actively participating in the 2014 Annual Session.
- 2.- Ministry and Oversight Committee invites Members and Attenders to use the new streamlined Annual Session Attendance Assistance process and we invite feedback and suggestions on how to further improve this process.
- 3.- We ask, are there stirrings in our Monthly Meetings to join Friends General Conference (FGC)? Is this something that Monthly Meetings would like Ministry and Oversight to give further consideration to and possibly bring a recommendation to the Yearly Meeting at the 2014 Annual Session?
- 4.- Ministry and Oversight Committee invites Monthly Meetings to consider hosting meetings of this committee to foster relationships and offer opportunities to listen to our Friends.

Respectfully submitted,
Bronwen Hillman
Ministry and Oversight Committee, clerk

(2 pages attached)

Comments from Mexican Friends regarding the recent visit from Pacific Yearly Meeting Ministry and Oversight Committee:

"The visit gave us an opportunity to show others how happy we are as a Meeting, to show how we're growing."

"We, collectively, don't often have the chance to spend time with California Friends and the visit made us feel closer to Pacific Yearly Meeting."

"I liked being able to speak one-on-one with the visitors, they were really interested in what I had to say. I felt like I was a part of something larger than our Meeting."

"The visit gave us an opportunity to find out more about what's going on in the PYM community and how we can participate."

"When I heard that M&O was going to hold its meeting here in Mexico City, I was thrilled at the opportunity to collaborate in making their visit as pleasant as possible."

"I hope our visitors will take this experience home with them to share with their Meetings and encourage Friends to visit Mexico City."

**Ministry and Oversight Subcommittees
2013-2014**

Electronic Communication

Don Bean, Conejo Valley, convener
Kerwin Flowers, La Jolla
Eric Moon, Berkeley

Brylie Oxley, Grass Valley
Tom Yamaguchi, Strawberry Creek

Experimentation and Implementation

Barbara Babin, Redwood Forest, convener & M&O liaison
Elisa Harkness, Santa Monica
Paul Harris, Redwood Forest

Bronwen Hillman, Mexico City
Valerie Nuttman, Santa Cruz
Sherri Sisson, Orange County

Ministry and Leadings

Sue Torrey, Central Coast, convener
Elaine Emily, Strawberry Creek

Judith Favor, Claremont
Kylín Navarro, Strawberry Creek

Racial Justice

Laura Magnani, co-clerk, Berkeley
Diego Navarro, co-clerk, Santa Cruz
Alvaro Alvarado, Sacramento
Marilee Eusebio, Davis

Sandy Kewman, Grass Valley
Jennifer Mahal, Santa Cruz
Deborah Marks, Strawberry Creek
Steve Smith, *ex-officio*

Representative Support

Sandy Kewman, Grass Valley, convener
Liz Baker, Sacramento

Tom Yamaguchi, Strawberry Creek

Support for Distant Meetings (not affiliated with a Quarterly)

Paty Constantino, Mexico City

Fred & Sandra Gey, Berkeley

Visiting Friend

Julie Harlow, Davis, convener
Paty Constantino, Mexico City

Eva Miller, Inland Valley
Eric Moon, Berkeley