

Pacific Yearly Meeting
Ministry and Oversight Committee
Report 2013-2014

The Committee

Ministry and Oversight Committee is comprised of 9 members, representing both Northern and Southern California Meetings and also, with its current membership, Distant Meetings. The committee meets in person three times between Annual Sessions and also communicates by email and conference call as necessary. Our Fall meeting was held in September 2013 in Berkeley, California, our Winter meeting in January 2014 was in Mexico City, and for our Spring meeting, we were hosted by Santa Monica Meeting at the end of May 2014. During the Annual Session, the committee meets daily and is available to listen to and speak with gathering participants.

2013-2014 Overview

Our Fall meeting focused on reviewing 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. Our Spring meeting focused on preparations for the Annual Session, reviewing the State of the Meeting reports, and addressing concerns arising from our subcommittees.

Minutes of Concern

This year, Ministry and Oversight began discernment on the issue of Minutes of Concern 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. We were led 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 will continue its discernment on Minutes of Concern.

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 would like to hear from Monthly Meetings: Are there stirrings for Pacific Yearly Meeting to join Friends General Conference (FGC)?

Ministry and Oversight Committee Meetings

The Committee's Winter meeting was held in Mexico City. After making the decision on careful consideration, the endeavor of holding this committee meeting outside of California was embarked upon with hesitant expectation. 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 visit to Mexico City led the Committee to consider a change in its meeting structure. Until then, the Committee had gathered to meet and conduct its business on a Friday and Saturday, following which most Committee members would return home. Under the new structure, the Committee holds its meetings as

before, but extends its visit to the host Meeting to include Meeting for Worship and spending time with local Friends.

Our Spring meeting was hosted by Santa Monica Meeting. Several Committee members were able to worship with Santa Monica Friends on the Sunday following, which we were invited to lead an adult education session on the Yearly Meeting, the Committee, and the Annual Session. The Committee enjoyed the open discussion that ensued and appreciated the opportunity to listen to the community.

Ministry and Oversight Committee invites Monthly Meetings to consider hosting the Committee's meetings. The experience of listening to some of the quieter voices in our community has enriched both the members of Ministry and Oversight Committee and our service to the Yearly Meeting.

Ministry and Oversight Subcommittees

At an upcoming meeting, the Committee will examine its subcommittees and consider changes.

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. Queries were sent to the Monthly Meetings and the subcommittee will host an interest group this year to look at suggestions for different Annual Session models.

Ministry and Leadings: is developing a workshop for 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 may bring 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: serves Monthly Meetings that are not formally affiliated with a Quarterly Meeting.

Visiting Friend: is developing a support committee for the program. We encourage anyone interested in this work to speak with Ministry & Oversight Committee during the Annual Session.

Respectfully submitted,
Bronwen Hillman
Ministry and Oversight Committee, clerk