

**Pacific Yearly Meeting  
Ministry and Oversight Committee  
June, 2013**

Ministry and Oversight Committee has labored during this past year with a concern for our Annual Sessions and how they serve our Yearly Meeting as a whole. Friends have indicated that they attend Annual Session for three primary reasons: to deepen their spiritual lives, to engage in fellowship with a wider body of Friends, and to engage in the spirit-led search for unity.

Two interrelated issues continue to be raised up—those of privilege and fair representation. As the cost of attending Annual Session increases, it becomes more difficult for those of lesser financial means to attend and becomes more difficult for monthly meetings to support financial assistance for their members. Consequently, we are seeing lower overall attendance as well as a less diverse attendance, including reduced attendance from some of our smaller monthly meetings. This is troubling to us as many of our Yearly Meeting's major decisions are made during Annual Session. How do we reconcile our testimony of equality with the fact that our Annual Sessions are becoming more and more privileged?

As we have worked together and with our subcommittees over the past year to support the spiritual life of our Yearly Meeting, our work falls into three main categories: outreach and support to monthly meetings, support to the Yearly Meeting infrastructure, and preparing for the Annual Session.

**Outreach and Support**

The outreach to our monthly meetings includes improving communication between the Yearly Meeting and the monthly meetings and reaching out to our more outlying and distant meetings. The Representative Support Subcommittee continues to hold phone calls with monthly meeting representatives to disseminate PYM news and to encourage monthly meetings to make their concerns known to the Yearly Meeting. The Support for Distant Meetings Subcommittee has visited Guatemala and Mexico City this past year and is making plans to visit Honolulu and Big Island in 2014. A Visiting Friend Support Subcommittee has been formed and now has enough members to function effectively. They hope to bring an announcement to Annual Session informing us when that program will begin, how Friends can apply to be the Visiting Friend, and how monthly meetings can get on the schedule. The Ministry and Leadings Subcommittee has explored how to assist monthly meetings in identifying, supporting, and providing accountability for Friends' leadings.

**Infrastructure**

Through the work of the Experimentation and Implementation Subcommittee (and the former Futures Committee) we have recognized that the Yearly Meeting includes both the Annual Session and the workings of the organization year-round. We are committed to supporting both aspects of our Yearly Meeting. The Experimentation and Implementation Subcommittee brought us schedule changes in 2012 which were very positively received, but are not possible to maintain at the site where we will meet in 2013. We hope to bring back these schedule changes in 2014, along with some modifications that we learned as a result of that experiment. One thing that we are able to maintain is the concept of introducing an item of business early in the week, allowing time for seasoning, and taking up the decision at a later plenary session.

We continue to receive suggestions for ways of scheduling our Annual Sessions and undertaking our business that would involve less expense, less travel, and more opportunity for building community, but none of the ideas brought forward so far seem fully workable. We expect to keep listening, both at the Annual Session and afterward, and are looking forward to conducting a survey of PYM members and attenders in the fall, including those who do not attend the Annual Session.

The Electronic Communications Subcommittee is a hidden strength of our Yearly Meeting. Working behind the scenes, they maintain our Yearly Meeting website, giving us access to prior Yearly Meeting and Representative Committee minutes as well as current committee reports so that we can participate in our Yearly Meeting in a more informed manner. This year, we are putting the State of the Meeting reports on the Pacific Yearly Meeting website, and you will find them in two batches: Southern California Quarterly Meeting and College Park Quarterly Meeting. In addition the subcommittee has been of assistance to the registrars in supporting the online registration.

### **The Annual Session**

We have been preparing for the Ministry and Oversight Plenary where you will hear excerpts from the State of the Meeting reports, listen to some brief statements from a few Friends describing how they are being “reached by the life”, and where you will have the opportunity to respond out of the silence.

Worship-sharing groups and the Meeting for Memorials are being organized. Several interest groups are being sponsored by Ministry and Oversight and its subcommittees:

- ▲ Electronic Communication Subcommittee: *PYM in the Cloud—What it is and why we need it.*
- ▲ Racial Justice Subcommittee: *When we work together: Allies across racial lines*
- ▲ Ministry and Oversight, Steve Smith: *Finding our Center, Changing the World*
- ▲ Ministry and Leadings Subcommittee: *What is the Meeting's role in naming, nurturing, supporting and providing accountability for Ministry and Leadings?*

Submitted on behalf of the Ministry and Oversight Committee,  
Barbara Babin, clerk