

Pacific Yearly Meeting
Ministry and Oversight Committee
Report for Representative Committee 2016

The role of Ministry and Oversight Committee is to help foster the spiritual life and good order of the Yearly Meeting, by offering assistance and counsel and endeavoring to make the annual session a fulfilling experience for all participants. Upon request, Ministry and Oversight committee may assist any PYM committee, Meeting or individual of the Yearly Meeting. The committee also considers and reports on any other matters brought to it by the Yearly Meeting, Representative Committee, Quarterly or outlying Meetings.

Annual Session 2016

Annual Session 2016 is Friday, June 17 to Wednesday, June 22. Meeting for Memorials will be held on Sunday, June 19. Ministry and Oversight Committee will need the names of Friends to be remembered prior to the start of Annual Session as it will be difficult to add additional names on site.

The sign-up for worship sharing will once again be managed on site. More details on this will be provided with the registration materials.

The first time attenders discount will not be offered this year. Ministry and Oversight Committee believes the limited funds available will be better used to make it possible for Friends of limited resources to attend Annual Session.

We are exploring inviting the local First Nations People, the Miwok, to speak at the Opening Plenary at Annual Session in recognition and appreciation for the original keepers of the land on which we meet.

We look forward to receiving and reviewing the State of the Meeting reports from all PYM Monthly Meetings by early May in order to prepare and share the state of the society report at Annual Session this summer.

Ministry and Oversight Committee is consulting with Junior Yearly Meeting and Young Adult Friends to prepare a set of Community Expectations for Annual Session so that together we will create a safe and healthy container for the Beloved Community.

Attendance Assistance Fund

Ministry and Oversight Committee administers the Attendance Assistance Fund, which offers financial assistance on a case-by-case basis to Friends wanting to attend Annual Session who may require a little additional financial help in order to do so.

The application process has changed this year. Applicants are asked to submit their forms to their Monthly Meetings preferably by April 1 to allow time for the Meetings to process requests and consider their contributions. Applicants will then receive their forms back from their Meetings and send these to the Attendance Assistance Fund Committee by conventional mail or email, postmarked by May 16. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered. The Attendance Assistance application form will be available on the Pacific Yearly Meeting, Annual Session website.

M&O Sponsored Interest Groups at Annual Session

Ministry and Oversight committee sponsors the following interest groups at Annual Session this year: a) Feeding the Presence in Meeting for Business; b) Visiting Friend program; c) an interest group hosted by the Racial Justice Subcommittee, and d) Continuing the discussion on the theme “Lifting the Veil”.

Structure of the Pacific Yearly Meeting Organization

Ministry and Oversight Committee is examining the structure of our Yearly Meeting organization. We struggle as a body to fill positions and recognize some efforts are duplicated or even triplicated with the Monthly Meetings and Quarterly Meetings. There are approximately 165 positions within the Yearly Meeting, serving a membership of 1,285 Friends. Does the number of positions translate into a high degree of participation or involvement? Is the Yearly Meeting a tree with branches that exceed the support of its roots? Does our tree need pruning to make it more vital and grow stronger?

Our discernment on this issue is ongoing and Ministry and Oversight Committee will be talking with Friends and Meetings before bringing proposals for change to the Yearly Meeting body.

Abuse Prevention Policy

A draft of a new Abuse Prevention Policy was presented at Annual Session 2015. Ministry and Oversight Committee appreciates the comments received and is currently talking with the Children's Program Committee, Junior Yearly Meeting, Young Adult Friends, and the Youth Programs Coordinator to incorporate their inputs into the policy, which will be brought to Annual Session 2016 for comment. We hope to bring the final draft of the policy to the 2017 meeting of Representative Committee for acceptance by the Yearly Meeting.

Minutes of Concern

Ministry and Oversight Committee continues to discern the role of Minutes of Concern based on the queries: Why are Minutes of Concern brought to the Yearly Meeting? Why do we approve them? How do they serve our PYM community? Minutes of Concern should reflect and inspire action and not merely state a position for or against something. They should lead Friends to examine our own values and how we live them. Ministry and Oversight Committee continues to explore this issue.

Monthly Meeting Representatives to Pacific Yearly Meeting

Ministry and Oversight Committee is examining the role of the Monthly Meeting representative to Pacific Yearly Meeting and how our constituent Meetings are represented in the Yearly Meeting's decision making process. We are also looking at how these representatives are selected and potential development for these positions. We are consulting with the Monthly Meeting representatives, asking "What would help you to better represent your Meeting?"

Other Ministry and Oversight Concerns this Year

We are laboring with a concern about communication with the Yearly Meeting and its community. How do we communicate with each other and what should we be communicating about? We would also like to build relationships with and between the Quarterly Meetings.

The committee supports the multiple committee proposal to examine the role, number, and cost of Pacific Yearly Meeting's delegates to outside Quaker organizations. How is representation to Quaker bodies part of our function? Not only do we share the concern of financial responsibility, but also being responsible for our time and energy. Is our energy being spent in ways that most support us as a spiritual community?

Several of Pacific Yearly Meeting's constituent Meetings either have explored or are exploring affiliation with Friends General Conference. As a result, we are considering whether to recommend that Pacific Yearly Meeting formally affiliate with Friends General Conference.

Visiting Friend Program

Roena Oesting (La Jolla) is serving as Visiting Friend for Pacific Yearly Meeting this year. She is visiting Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups, offering discussions on a variety of topics and presenting her Elizabeth Fry program. Friends are encouraged to follow Roena on her travels via her Facebook page "The Visiting Quaker". Since Annual Session 2015, Roena has visited: Friends House Worship Group, Humboldt Meeting, Las Vegas Worship Group, Santa Barbara Meeting and Ojai Worship Group, San Diego Meeting, Big Island Meeting, Kauai Worship Group, and other Hawaiian groups and Friends.

Subcommittees

Electronic Communications: The subcommittee is exploring the Yearly Meeting's online presence with particular attention to making our website both accessible and informative. The subcommittee is also looking at our Yearly Meeting's communication systems and privacy policies.

Racial Justice: The subcommittee is working on promoting the use of Shakti Butler's *Breaking the Codes: the System of Racial Inequities* film and workbook among Monthly Meetings to raise awareness of racial justice issues. The film is available on the Pacific Yearly Meeting website under the Gallery tab (sign-in required). The subcommittee also recommends attendance at the White Privilege Conference, which will be held this year in Philadelphia, April 14-17.

Representative Support: The subcommittee serves as a resource for Meeting representatives. Request is made for Meetings to provide the names and contact information for their representatives, along with the dates of service, in order to help the Yearly Meeting maintain a current, complete, and accurate directory of Meeting representatives.

Visiting Friend: The subcommittee stewards the Visiting Friend program. The subcommittee will soon be evaluating the first year of this program and its continuation.

Ministry and Oversight Committee has laid down the Experimentation and Implementation Subcommittee. The committee as a whole has taken up the work of examining the organization of the Yearly Meeting.

Ministry and Oversight Committee Meetings

The committee meets in person three times a year and daily during Annual Session. Each committee meeting is hosted by a different Monthly Meeting so that we might better understand the needs and concerns of local Meetings and so that Friends might better understand the Yearly Meeting. This allows us to share Meeting for Worship, adult education, and social gatherings with many Friends. This past fall we met with Grass Valley Meeting at Sierra Friends Center and offered a discussion on the Yearly Meeting and Annual Session. Our winter meeting was hosted by Orange County Meeting, where we talked about how the Yearly Meeting can help nurture the spiritual life of the Monthly Meeting. Listening with these Friends has enriched both the members of Ministry and Oversight Committee and our service to the Yearly Meeting. We invite other Meetings to consider hosting a meeting of Ministry and Oversight Committee.

Respectfully submitted,
Bronwen Hillman
on behalf of PYM Ministry & Oversight Committee