

Pacific Yearly Meeting
Ministry & Oversight Committee
Annual Report 2015-2016

The role of Ministry & 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. Ministry & Oversight serves as support for the Presiding Clerk and upon request, may assist any committee, Meeting or individual of the Yearly Meeting. The committee also takes into discernment other matters as identified by the Yearly Meeting, Representative Committee, and/or the committee itself.

Much of the work of Ministry & Oversight Committee this year has been related to reviewing last year's Annual Session and preparing for the 2016 Annual Session. We have labored with individual Friends and Monthly Meetings on different issues. In addition, Ministry & Oversight is working on other projects and discernment currently before the committee, which are described in this report.

Structure of the Pacific Yearly Meeting Organization

Ministry & Oversight Committee is examining the structure of our Yearly Meeting organization. We struggle as a body to fill positions. We recognize that some Yearly Meeting activities are duplicated or even triplicated with the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings. There are approximately 165 positions within the Yearly Meeting, serving a membership of approximately 1,300 Friends. 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? In addition to service to the Yearly Meeting, Friends are also serving their Monthly and Quarterly Meetings. Are Friends over-committed to service?

Our discernment on this issue is ongoing and Ministry & 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 & Oversight Committee continues to labor with Children's Program Committee, Junior Yearly Meeting, Young Adult Friends, and the Youth Programs Coordinator to incorporate their concerns and insights into the policy. Friends are invited to submit additional comments and/or concerns to Ministry & Oversight. The current draft of the policy is attached. 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 & 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? Ministry & Oversight is laboring with defining Minutes of Concern and will invite the collaboration of other committees of the Yearly Meeting to review and refine the current draft guidelines for bringing Minutes of Concern to the Yearly Meeting to then bring these guidelines to the body for approval and adoption.

Monthly Meeting Representatives to Pacific Yearly Meeting

Ministry & 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 considering how these representatives are selected and building a process of two-way communication between the Monthly Meeting and the Yearly Meeting.

Friends General Conference

Ministry & Oversight is working on a process to bring forward a proposal for Pacific Yearly Meeting to formally affiliate with Friends General Conference. Affiliation would represent positive care for the spiritual life of Pacific Yearly Meeting and would acknowledge the fact that we are already benefiting from and contributing to Friends General Conference and its programs and services. We heard concerns at the meeting of Representative Committee and will be preparing an information packet to be distributed to the Monthly Meetings that will include details of what affiliation would mean for Pacific Yearly Meeting. Friends carrying concerns about Pacific Yearly Meeting formally affiliating with Friends General Conference are invited to approach Ministry & Oversight to have their concerns heard. We hope to bring the formal proposal of affiliation to the 2017 meeting of Representative Committee for approval and action.

Other Ministry & Oversight Concerns this Year

Communication within the Yearly Meeting and its community has been a common theme this year. Ministry & Oversight participated in the Coordination Team conference calls in the fall and in the spring, sharing with and supporting others.

The committee supports the three-committee proposal on reducing the number of Pacific Yearly Meeting delegates to outside Quaker organizations. Ministry & Oversight will continue to explore which organizations Pacific Yearly Meeting should or could send delegates to and how this representation is part of our function. Is our energy being spent in ways that most support us as a spiritual community? The committee will also be looking at setting expectations on these delegates in terms of reporting back to the Pacific Yearly Meeting community.

Attendance Assistance Fund

Ministry & 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 \$9,000.00 Attendance Assistance fund is helping about 33 people to attend Annual Session this year.

Visiting Friend Program

Roena Oesting (La Jolla) served as Visiting Friend for Pacific Yearly Meeting this year. She made 16 visits during the year, spending time with Friends from 17 Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups, plus visits to the “Golden Rule” and participation in Southern California Quarterly Meeting and the meeting of Representative Committee. Roena offered discussions on a variety of topics and presented her Elizabeth Fry program. Details and photos of her visits can be found on the Facebook page “The Visiting Quaker”. Copies of the endorsements of Roena’s Travel Minute can be found in the Quiet Room at Annual Session. We thank Roena for her service.

Ministry & Oversight is discerning the continuation of the Visiting Friend Program, considering aspects such as building a strong Visiting Friend Support subcommittee and asking Monthly Meetings and Friends to contribute to the Visiting Friend Fund, among others. Friends interested in supporting the Visiting Friend Program are encouraged to approach Ministry & Oversight.

Subcommittees

Electronic Communications: The subcommittee believes it would be able to supervise and advise, but not execute a plan for the PYM website. The subcommittee is also looking at our Yearly Meeting’s communication systems and privacy policies. Ministry & Oversight has asked the subcommittee to develop a proposal for contracting the services of a professional web designer.

Racial Justice: The subcommittee has spent much of the year working on its *39 Questions for White People* interest group presented at College Park Quarterly Meeting and again at Annual Session, and also 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). Ministry & Oversight asks the subcommittee, what is the inward work we are doing within our Monthly Meetings and the Yearly Meeting?

Representative Support: The subcommittee serves as a resource for Meeting representatives. Ministry & Oversight encourages Friends to consider serving on this subcommittee.

Visiting Friend: The subcommittee stewards the Visiting Friend program. (*see Visiting Friend Program above*)

Ministry & Oversight 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 & 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. In the spring, we met at Santa Cruz Meeting and enjoyed sharing with local Friends over a potluck lunch. Listening with these Friends has enriched both the members of Ministry & Oversight Committee and our service to the Yearly Meeting. We invite other Meetings to consider hosting a meeting of Ministry & Oversight Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Bronwen Hillman

on behalf of PYM Ministry & Oversight Committee