

**Report of PYM Faith and Practice Revision Committee**  
**(aka The Discipline Committee)**

**July 2017**

The Faith and Practice Revision Committee was reactivated through a minute in 2014 declaring that the time had come for a new Faith and Practice and that the Discipline Committee would undertake this. Since that time a number of drafts have been generated and methods of hearing from Friends throughout the Yearly Meeting have begun. So far we have expanded the section on Leadings, added a section on the Youth Programs Coordinating Committee, and updated the description of the PYM Corporation. We will be holding two interest groups at the 2017 gathering to deepen our understandings on “A Friendly Death” and “Moving Toward a Testimony on Caring for Creation.”

We have met twice this year in-person, and several more times by the miracle of Zoom and Google Docs.

Perhaps our biggest leading in the course of this work is the realization that we should no longer be thinking of Faith and Practice as a book that is published every twenty years or so and languishing in stacks in the basement of San Francisco Friends Meeting. Those books are still available for purchase for \$5.00 and Earthlight Books has taken over their distribution. Contact them when you need to re-stock.

However we believe it is time to revise this cherished document in sections as we are led by Spirit. Our primary reason for this is *Continuing Revelation*. This, as you know, is the belief that there is a paradox wherein we experience some aspect of the Divine as timeless and unchanging, and yet, more and more Truth is revealed over time. For example, early in American history, Friends owned slaves. Then, they resolved to treat their slaves well. Then, some began to set their slaves free when the owners died. It was a series of steps to come to see that the institution of slavery was damaging to slave and slaveholder alike, and should be abolished in its entirety. That’s continuing revelation.

So, we know that our understanding of both our faith and our practice will undergo deepening and change. Our wider society, technology, ethics, and science change at a very rapid rate now. A system as cumbersome to revise as a printed book can never hope to keep up to Friends’ revelations about how to live faithful lives as individuals and as community.

At the same time that we hold continuing revelation as key, Friends have shown that we can use careful and wise judgement in accepting New Truth, and not “outrunning our Guide.” Electronic updates that have oversight from the Faith and Practice Revision Committee can both quickly be revised, and can be sufficiently seasoned so that “notional” revisions would not be prematurely published. This will take careful development of systems for sharing drafts, seasoning in put that is received, and finalizing drafts.

To that end we are asking Nominating Committee to add two additional members to our committee with particular expertise in the latest technologies including establishing privacy safeguards. This will be an adjustment for all of us because drafts will be available for review for specific periods of time, other opportunities will be created at Annual Session for in-person input, and then the Committee must be trusted to finalize sections (just as they would for a published version), and post them on the web for use by all.

**Our hope is that Friends will take these ideas back to their Monthly Meetings for seasoning between now and Representative Committee.** Friends are not always easy with change, so we expect to live into this gently. And we are convinced that over time we will have a more robust and alive Faith and Practice, and will be able to be more responsive to needs that arise as new understandings become manifest. We invite you to correspond with us in the coming months, once our new committee clerk is identified, so that we can put a new process in place that truly serves the yearly meeting.

With love,

The Faith and Practice Revision Committee.