

Faith and Practice Revision Committee

Report to Annual Session 2022

Pacific Yearly Meeting

As reported at Representative Committee this year, we are developing a two-part Faith and Practice, described in our RepCom report as follows:

We plan to create a new Faith and Practice that will be available in two sections, the first a “generational” document representing the heart of our faith and practice, and a second consisting of a collection of organizational and supplementary materials that are more directly linked to changing conditions and structures or that serve as resource material. Both “books” will be posted digitally, downloadable, and available for print-on-demand, but the first is designed to exist with little or no change for a decade or more, and the second to be subject to periodic additions or changes. Our present Faith and Practice we feel is in many ways richly useful and will remain as a basis for our work. The “generational” text will reflect in the main the first half of the present text, and the resource text mainly the second half.

Since March the committee has carefully reviewed and discussed the present Faith and Practice text and has organized the past work of the committee more efficiently for our future use. We have made some tentative decisions regarding which material would best be included in the first book of our Faith and Practice, and which would best appear in the “handbook” of organizational and supplementary material that will undergo more frequent revision. The advances in technology make this more frequent revision of material describing such things as program development and new patterns of meeting gatherings more possible and useful. More fundamental and abiding elements of our faith and practice—descriptions of worship life and our discernment practice, for example—will appear in the first book, which would likely be referred to simply as our Faith and Practice.

Our preliminary work suggests to us that most of the present text requires only minor revision and will remain useful to us. Some sections can benefit from more substantial revision, however. Our work in the coming years will be in dialogue with the larger community—as has been the revision practice in past years--and we offer here a few areas we presently feel are in need of significant revision:

---Part I of our present book is titled “PYM in context.” This historical introduction, with its account of our relationship to Christianity, contains elements useful to our book but which we believe are better placed later in the volume. We imagine creating a new initial section, opening our book with an account of the Quaker way of life, of what lies at the heart of our faith and practice.

--- Part II of our present text contains a lengthy section titled “Living our Faith,” containing accounts of our testimonies, advices and queries, and concerns and leadings. We feel that a new approach to the testimonies, a careful review of advices and queries, and a rewrite of concerns and leadings descriptions, lies ahead for us in this section.

---Parts IV and VI of the present text describe the organization of monthly, quarterly and yearly meetings. There have been changes in how we organize ourselves since the time of our last revision; examples of new developments include clerking circles and other approaches to clerking meetings, the impact of digital technology on how we meet, and the evolution of the youth program in the yearly meeting. While brief accounts of basic organizational elements will be useful in the first book, much of the detail can be included to the “handbook”, where we can update more frequently the evolving adaptations that serve the work of our meetings at each level of our Society.

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In the concluding section of our presentation of this report at plenary we plan to form small groups for Friends to respond to our work. The following queries will be offered for consideration, and those participating will be invited to continue the discussion at the interest group to be held later that day.

- What arises in you in response to what we've shared?
- What excites you or rings true? What concerns do you sense?
- What recommendations do you have for our work?

Sue Scott, Inland Valley, Jim Anderson, Chico, Co-clerks, Faith and Practice Revision Committee

Ray Rischpater, Palo Alto; Patricia Portillo, Sacramento; Margaret Mossman, Berkeley; Diego Navarro, Santa Cruz; Jan Tappan, Orange Grove [ex officio: Historian Archivist], Sarah Tyrrell, Berkeley [IT Specialist]