

To: Monthly Meeting Elders

From: WYM Board on Christian Ministries and Evangelism

Date: 19 November 2016

Enclosed here is a set of 10 study lessons intended to be used in your meetings of your Minstry and Oversight or Ministry and Evangelism. Each one takes about 20 minutes, including time for discussing the queries. Your feedback is welcome and could be very helpful in the development of next year's series on "How to Care for the People in Your Meeting."

Please remember this is a work in progress. The reason these were given to you last year in a loose leaf binder is so you could add items of reference and so when better ideas come to us, we can adjust these studies to be more helpful.

Your responses can be sent to the Yearly Meeting office in care of the Board on CM&E.

Thank you and we pray for God's blessing as you engage in these topics on "Let Your Light Shine."

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## B-1 Let Your Light Shine

**Scripture References – Matthew 5:14-16:** You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

**I John 1: 5-7:** This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you; God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

**I John 2:9-11:** Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in darkness. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded him.

**I Peter 2:9:** But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belong to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

**Quaker Quote –** *We Friends have devised a religious society that is simply a point of entry, not the destination. The Light we seek, The Presence we experience and trust, transcends any religion or intellectual construct. The immanent Divine that simply is, the Divine we discover and rediscover in the stillness of worship. Right here. Right now. Forever. Unchangeable. Humanity has been given the gift, the blessing and the grace to perceive it. Will we Friends be motivated once again to proclaim it and open our hearts, our mouths and our doors to share it?"* --From the plenary message of Don Badgley to NYYM Summer Session 2015

**Narrative –** That is the question isn't it? Do the people in our meeting have the motivation (or know-how) to proclaim the divine Light of God and open our mouths and doors to share it? Has there ever been a time when Friends felt so ineffective in reaching out to the people in our communities to invite them to join us? Does your meeting long for strategies that motivate absent members to show up and visitors to give you a try? And what will they find in your meeting that will motivate them to come back? What will they find that is different (uniquely part of our Quaker message) than other churches in your neighborhood?

This year's study topics are meant to offer suggestions on steps you can take to let our meeting's light shine in our communities. We will explore ideas about publicity, visibility, community service, how to make members and visitors feel welcome, communicating our purpose, and how to make our facilities accommodating. You may already have something (a brochure for visitors, a tag line, a community project, etc.) that has had good results and we invite you to share that with others by sending it to the WYM office where it can be made available on-line as a download.

But first, to begin the year's study, brainstorm the best features of your meeting/fellowship. A good beginning to an invitation is defining a clear reason to come. What is a clear reason to come to your church? Hopefully, you can agree on more than one. You might review your State of Society report to remind you. You might ask your congregation next Sunday to put their reason(s) for coming on a 3x5 card for the offering plate. Use these and other ideas to find your strengths that can be promoted in whatever media that will tell your story and provide the basis for inviting others to join you. Here are some examples of things people might say:

*Excellent Christian Education      Loving, Caring Fellowship      Creative & Relevant Sermons*  
*Music opportunities for all ages      Community Ministries      Peace Building Activities*

**Queries for Discussion** - What are the strengths of your meeting revealed when you let your meeting's light shine? What are some realities about your meeting that bring you sadness?

**Prayer** - Gracious God, we are so grateful for the love we experience within this Christian fellowship. We thank you that people in this church look out for each other. We thank you that people notice others in need and do what they can to help. We thank you for the example of Jesus as he went about doing deeds to heal body and spirit. Help us to be more like Him.

And now as we begin this study of how to let your Light shine so that others may see your good deeds, may your divine Light also reveal truth about us that we need to see. Give us the courage to face things honestly. Grant us the wisdom to know your will and the commitment to follow your will for us. For we know that your Light grows in the obedient. In the name of Jesus, Amen

## B-2 Our Public Image

**Scriptures – Colossians 1:24-29:** Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I will fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

**Hebrews 1:1-3:** In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

**Quaker Quotes –** *"The gift we receive on the inner journey is the knowledge that ours is not the only act in town. Not only are there other acts out there, but some of them are even better than ours, at least occasionally! We learn that we need not carry the whole load but can share it with others, liberating us and empowering them. We learn that sometimes we are free to lay the load down altogether. The great community asks us to do only what we are able and trust the rest to other hands."* Parker Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak*, p. 89.

*"Sometimes we fail to speak when we might, and sometimes when we speak our words are without power. They fail to communicate what we have tested in experience... We do not deserve a hearing until we have tried to understand the ground of our own faith and its relevance to life in the world today; which does not mean that we should expect to claim that we know all the answers..."*

*We complicate the service of communication if we imagine that we have to unload on any enquirer all that we have learned about the ways of God through, perhaps, many years of Christian experience. ...As we seek to serve people and their condition and the circumstances become known to us, we shall find straightforward openings for us to share a very little of what has been given to us. If we can offer simply a single hint which can now be used, this may open the way to further unforced communication. Is not this the way in which Jesus drew men towards their true life?"* Friends World Conference, 1952 (*Christian Faith and Practice*, London Yearly Meeting 1960, #383)

**Narrative –** One dilemma for Friends through the centuries has been how to promote our Quaker meetings in ways that communicate who we are, our purpose, our mission, our identity. For some, we resist the modern pressure to conform to the business or institutional world to do mission statements and logos. For some, it seems to go against the humility we claim as part of our faith. But for most, we just haven't spent the time to come up with the tagline or logo that nails our identity. We may resist the pressure of doing websites, newsletters, Facebook pages, and other forms of media in this modern world, not because we disagree with letting the community know what we have to offer, but because we don't have someone in the meeting who knows how to do that stuff. But if we did have someone, how would we represent who we are and what we offer? How can our meeting community "be the

radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being?" (Hebrews 1:3) How can we "find the straightforward opening for us to share" who we are? What single phrase or brand can we use as the opening to the more abundant message God calls us to share?

In an article by Steve Fogg, "The Ultimate Guide to Branding: 10 Common Branding Mistakes That Churches Make" (Nov, 2012) he begins with the following:

*Effective branding for churches has never been more important. We live in a media-driven age where first impressions last and a church's brand presence can literally be the difference between someone coming to visit a church or not. A church "brand" is so much more than just the logo. It's also the language that is used, the visual look and feel around the logo, the kinds of photos used. Ultimately a successful church brand can be defined by the power and focus of the story you tell.*

Here is a summary of the advice Steve shares.

1. Your "brand" should say just one thing that is at the core of what your church is about and not be complicated with two or three concepts. *(Your 'brand' could be your logo, your tagline, or both – to be used for your website, publications, letterhead, sign, etc.)*
2. The design doesn't have to be done by a crowd, just a few of the right people.
3. Keep it all simple –the name of your church, the design, the concept.
4. Visitors want to know your story, about your community, what you stand for; Not a picture of your building or your pastor.
5. Keep acronyms and trendy names out of it.
6. Be accurate in your identity.
7. It's not just what your church is about, it's about how your church can help.

Especially if yours is a small church, we are reminded in the reading from the Friends World Conference that our meetings can't be and do everything the church is expected to be and do. So, in the process of defining your identity or your "brand," name your strength, the gift that you can be to others in your community.

**Queries for Discussion** – What do people in your community know or think about your church? What do YOU think is the strength of your meeting? In 1 to 5 words, how would you describe your meeting? *(If you write these responses down, they could be used in the development of a logo or tagline.)*

**Prayer** – Our loving and gracious God, we thank you for the steadfast and faithful people who have provided strength to this meeting in the past. We thank you for their years of care and sincere efforts to do your will in this fellowship. Today, we are faced with a new world that expects things of us we may not know how to do. Teach us how to tell your story. Please help us to welcome the people who need you. Open our hearts and minds to new ways of being relevant, for we desire to make known the glorious riches of living in the Light and Love of your son, Jesus Christ. Amen

### B-3 Ecumenical and Community Relationships

**Scripture References – Ephesians 4:3-7:** Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one spirit –just as you were called to one hope when you were called –one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

**John 17:20-23:** My prayer is not for them (the disciples) alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

**Quaker Quote(s)** *“Friends have a unique view of the sacraments, which needs to be understood by other Christians. At the same time, Friends should reaffirm to the Christian churches of the world their belief that unity will not be achieved through common belief and practice about the sacraments. Rather, Christian unity will be achieved through a common loyalty to Christ and the Holy Spirit, expressed through the visible sign of Christ’s church, the fellowship of believers, made manifest through their love for one another.”* Wilmer A. Cooper *A Living Faith*, p. 96. On the same page, Wilmer also shares the following statement approved by the FUM General Board in March of 1980.

*“The Church consists of those gathered by and in the power and presence of Christ and is a spiritual union with Christ and with one another in the covenant life in Christ. This visible unity of the Church is found in the fellowship of those who love Christ and who love each other. “A new commandment I give to you; that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another “ (John 13:34-35 RSV) In relation to the Church, Christ is Lord, Savior, Priest, Prophet, Teacher and Comforter. Wherever these ministries of Christ are experienced in the presence of one another we have a true Christian fellowship. With or without sacramental rites, such experience is the heart of Christian worship.*

*Friends have come to see the importance of a common witness with others arising from a common Christian faith rather than because they happen to agree in some one application of such faith. Responsibility for maintaining our special testimonies remains; but these should be seen not in isolation, but as expressions of our Christian faith.”* From # 220, 1960 *Faith and Practice*, London Yearly Meeting.

**Narrative** - You may have heard the story of the man who moved into a small town and a couple of months later, when the pastors met for breakfast, they discovered that the man had asked to join each of their churches. When the man was confronted by a couple of the pastors, he explained, “Well, I don’t want to go to hell on a technicality.” Wow! Do you think God cares what denomination we join?

After all, we read the same book. The way we interpret the Bible and the way we emphasize different scriptures is likely what separates us into Christian denominations, but it **IS** the same book and coming together with others who read it, strengthens everyone and can strengthen the voice of Christians in your neighborhood.

Great things can happen in a community when churches collaborate. One example is the way the churches in Decatur Township (Marion County, Indiana) cooperated for fifty years to produce an Easter Sunrise Service which evolved from the first even when each participating church contributed voices for a combined choir to sharing in the elaborate production of an Easter Passion Play. Doing that production together was such a powerful resurrection message delivered in a unified voice—one that was an unforgettably meaningful spiritual experience to the individuals who participated as well as for those who sat on the benches to watch.

Another example of effective collaboration is how the pastors in a suburban community met regularly for breakfast with the public school administrators to discuss such common issues as drug testing, teen pregnancies, and suicides. The school needed the pastors to understand and be part of the efforts to help youngsters. The pastors wanted to help the schools help kids. In the same school system, a program was established where pastors, on a weekly basis, sat at the cafeteria tables and ate lunch with middle and high school students to establish relationships so kids would know someone they could go to in times of need or simply know a familiar face if they wanted to try out a church. And, the school agreed to include a list of churches in the packets for new students.

Many of your meetings have collaborated with other neighborhood churches in Vacation Bible School programs, Good Friday services, or Christmas cantatas. Building networks strengthens the voice of faith-based people and shows respect for the contributions of the churches in the life of a community. It's also an opportunity to welcome people of other churches into your unique fellowship, let them see how we Friends live out our faith and may open the door to those who just might want to join us.

**Queries for discussion** – How would you describe the degree of cooperation or even collaboration among the churches in your community? What are the ways your meeting collaborates with other churches in your community? What do you **wish** could happen?

**Prayer** – Dear God, for the many people in our community who seek to be faithful, we thank you. For those who can see opportunities to serve beyond our own walls to grow your Kingdom of Light and Love, we thank you. Help us to open our doors, our minds and our hearts to the ways we can strengthen your message to our neighbors and especially the youth of this community. We ask for your guiding hand, your wisdom and your determination to keep the unity of your Spirit through the bond of peace. Amen.



## B-4 How is Your Hospitality?

**Scripture References – Isaiah 58:6-9:** Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter –when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? The your light will break forth like dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the lord will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say; Here am I.

**Hebrews 13:1-3:** Keep on loving each other as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

**Quaker Quote(s)** *The following is from the doctoral thesis of Warren H. Wilson, published in 1907. Wilson was not a Quaker but lived and worked at Quaker Hill (a community in New York). He studied at Union Theological Seminary and later received his doctorate from Columbia University.*

*“The hospitality of the Quakers is worthy of a treatise, not of the critical order, but poetic and imaginative. It cannot be described in mere social analysis. It has grown out of their whole order of life, and expressed their religious view as well as their economic habits. I showed in Chapter VII, part 1, that the hospitality of the Friends acquired religious importance from their belief that in every man is the Spirit of God. With the simplicity, and direct adherence to a few truths, which characterized the early Friends this belief was practiced, and became one of the religious customs of the Society. They entertained travelers, “especially such as were the household of faith. They made it a religious tenet to house and welcome Friends traveling on Truth’s account.*

*With equal directness they proceeded further to welcome every traveler, and to endure often the intrusions of those who would not be desired as guests, because they believed that such might be acting by the divine impulse. The hospitality, therefore, of such a community is very beautiful. For they have their ways of asserting themselves in spite of non-resistance. They open their doors; they set their table with a religious spirit. A thoroughness characterizes all their household arrangements; a grace is given to all their housekeeping, which infuses an indescribably content into the experiences of a guest in these homes. Their hospitality to one another has been therefore a powerful enginery for continuing and for extending the domains of Quakerism.”*

**Narrative** - Warren Wilson’s observation that hospitality is a religious tenet for Quakers is quite a compliment. To insinuate that Friends welcome people into our facility as a way of answering that of God in everyone compels us to take a look at our current practices of hospitality. Here is an account of a man following his visit to a Friends meeting for the first time. It is written by Gabriel Ehri and can be found in *Friends Journal*, November of 2012.

*"A handwritten card arrived two days later, in which an elder in the meeting described what she thought made this particular meeting special and boasted of the delicious breakfasts and lunches regularly scheduled, inviting us back and thanking us for coming. And the next Sunday morning, for the first time in a long time, I was eager to go back to meeting. That feeling hasn't gone away.*

*At this meeting, hospitality is a state of mind that seems to be shared by everyone. Friends realize that to welcome newcomers requires a generosity of energy, love, and care that eschews any immediate need of repayment. It means letting no one who darkens their door go unacknowledged. It wasn't a hard decision to say that this is where I want to be, and I am overjoyed to be able to welcome newcomers now to our meeting. To invite, to welcome with open arms, to give of ourselves, to listen patiently and with tolerance and willingness to be changed...let us do this for others as we, in the Quaker tradition, do for the Inward Light."*

Some things we understand and do if we are a welcoming church include:

1. We greet **all** people with smiles and kind words. At least one person is responsible for looking for new people and takes time to learn their names so they can introduce them in worship and not expect them to introduce themselves. People may need training on how to welcome guests without pouncing on them. If a guest is sitting in "your pew," graciously greet her and then sit elsewhere and be glad for your visitor.
2. We communicate clearly. We make sure that information is accessible, such as signs that point to the restrooms and nursery. The sign in your yard states the times of your worship, Sunday School, and events during the week. Your bulletin lists names and contact information of your pastor and/or clerk. Your website and/or Facebook pages are up-to-date.
3. Whether your facility is ancient or just old, there is evidence of good care and cleanliness. Spending money on your facility is often a dilemma, especially when resources are scarce. Some folks have convictions about "not spending money on ourselves" when there are so many needy people out there. But if your meetinghouse smells musty, is difficult to get into, has poor lighting, or is drafty, your guests may not be back, no matter how friendly you are.
4. Prepare and offer a "welcome" packet or folder that tells about Friends, what guests can expect during worship and about your meeting's ministries.

There are numerous resources to help. Besides our own WYM Board on Nurture & Development that offers grants, the Indianapolis Center for Congregations is a great resource that offers workshops, consultants and grants to encourage you to strengthen your hospitality and grow your meeting: [info@centerforcongregations.org](mailto:info@centerforcongregations.org)

**Prayer** – Dear Lord, we thank you for Jesus who taught us Hospitality. Help us to follow His example. Help us to welcome all who come here, not only with smiles and courtesy, but with open hearts and minds. May our fellowship be the dwelling place of your Holy Spirit, not only within these walls, but outside them into our neighborhoods and across the globe. Loving God, we give you the glory. Amen.

## B-5 Have You Invited Them?

**Scripture References:** **Matthew 4:18-22** As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fisherman. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him. Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. There were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

**Acts 2: 42-47:** They *(people forming the first church)* devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

**Quaker Quote** - Jay Marshall, *A Great People to Be Gathered?* - address to North Carolina Yearly Meeting, September 2000.

*"A good invitation requires discernment and it requires risk. If (George) Fox's vision of a great people to be gathered is to be an accurate description of our local meeting or yearly meeting, I would insist that discernment and risk en route to inviting people to be gathered is at the heart of the matter for any group. With the invitation come questions of discernment:*

*Question one: 'What type of gathering is this?' That is to say, 'What is its focus and what is its purpose?' I believe this is an important question because of a trend I witness in many meetings who wrestle with how to gather people. A question meetings frequently ask is 'How do we get others to where we are?' rather than 'How do we meet others where they are?'*

*Question two: 'Who are the people we hope to gather?' The impulse answer to the question is 'Everyone.' In my opinion that is the right answer, but it is a hard answer to give with integrity....Sometimes we leave people off the invitation list because of personal prejudices or biases. We occasionally exclude them for reasons that have to do with values and morals....categories that we place on people that exclude them from hearing the same gospel message that has taken roots in our own hearts."*

**Narrative** -The church of Jesus Christ started with him inviting 12 people to join him. Many of our meetings can identify with that small of a group, but find ourselves discouraged about how to gather in more people. In a book titled *The Inviting Church: A Study of New Member*

*Assimilation* by **Roy M. Oswald** and **Speed B. Leas** in 1987 (p. 44), the following statistics indicate what motivates new people to visit a church. They demonstrate that by far the most effective way to increase the size of your congregation is through current members personally inviting their family and friends to attend.

- 2% by Advertisement
- 6% by the Pastoral Invitation
- 6% by organized evangelism campaign
- 86% by friends or relatives

These statistics may have been 30 years ago, and the percentages may differ somewhat now, especially because of social media, but it's still true that personal invitations to church have the best chance of getting people to actually show up. People seem to trust an invitation from a friend more than all other efforts put together. Yet, somehow we hesitate to, face to face, speak those words. Maybe we don't know the answers to the questions Jay Marshall asked, "What is the focus of the gathering and what is its purpose?" and "Who are the people we hope to gather?" Maybe we talk ourselves out of inviting people because we think they won't understand our language, or we hesitate for them to see us in a different environment than usual. What we may really fear is that the person will turn down the invitation. Whatever the reason for our hesitation, we will be more effective if we devote serious thought, planning, and prayer about whom we will invite, how and when we will talk to them, and what we will say.

One idea is to have an answer ready when the person we invite says, "Why, what do you think I'd get out of it?" We all should take the time to write out a one-minute response that some people call your "elevator speech." In just a few sentences, tell what is the most meaningful element of your church to you? How does it help you in your spiritual growth? Is it the fellowship with other seekers? Is it the common purpose you share? Is it the way you are spiritually nourished by the sermon or the music? Is it the opportunities you have to serve others? Chances are, if you say that it's a special Sunday when everyone is supposed to invite someone, that won't entice your friend to come. But if you authentically share what it means to you to be part of this special group, it just might sound like something your friend might want to experience for her/himself.

**Queries for discussion** - What person do you know that you would like to invite to our meeting? What is holding you back? Can you share an example of an opportunity in which your "elevator speech" would be helpful?

**Prayer** - Dear God, we are grateful for what this church fellowship means to us. Teach us to share this treasure with someone who needs it. We ask for your help to answer the questions and then when we do, encourage us to be bold in our invitations. Help us to find the right words and the right time to speak up. Help us most of all to remember that you call us to bring others into relationship with you. We pray that you will find us faithful, hopeful, and loving no matter what results we see. In the name of the one who invited the disciples, Amen.

## B-6 Expanding Your Potential with Western Yearly Meeting

**Scripture Reference - Ephesians 2:21, 22:** Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

**2 Corinthians 6:16:** For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God and they will be my people."

**1 Thessalonians 2:10-12:** You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

**Colossians 3:12-14:** Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

**Quaker Quote(s)** - *To, summarize, it is the spiritual things that take place in the individual heart that are the life of Christianity. These are what make a person a Christian. And a number of Christians – alive and joined together in the life of Christianity—make a Church of Christ.....Nothing except the gathering of several true Christians into one body makes a church.* --Robert Barclay, *Barclay's Apology In Modern English*, edited by Dean Freiday.

*"We are thankful that so often in our common worship, and in our experience of joint responsibility for the service of God's kingdom, as well as in times of private retirement, new impulses are felt towards wider service. It is our earnest hope that Friends will always cherish these impulses, and be willing to share their concerns with others in our meetings, seeking united guidance as to the manner in which the tasks that are laid upon them may be accomplished. It is the privilege of the fellowship to foster the growth of right concerns, and to encourage and provide for the development of the service in question."*  
#364 *Christian Faith and Practice*, London Yearly Meeting, published 1960.

**Narrative** – Even though the Quaker movement began with the desire to revive "primitive" Christianity and separate from the authority of the established Church of England, it wasn't long before George Fox and his contemporaries saw the need for some structure which they termed Gospel Order. Their commitment to individual leadings directly from God had resulted in some excessive expressions, one of which was when James Naylor rode a horse through the streets of Bristol to re-enact Christ's

entry into Jerusalem. Because some early Friends were over-enthusiastic in their conduct, serious questions were raised about the proper exercise of religious authority. So, as they realized the strength and value of corporate discernment, they began to establish organizational structure that could address concerns on matters of conduct, membership, evangelism and the efforts to be "Publishers of Truth." First, there were monthly meetings for doing business such as caring for members who were prisoners or traveling in ministry. Then Quarterly Meetings were organized so that Friends could gather for worship and business in support of each other. There was a lot of activity during the first 50 years and it is thought that as many as 60,000 people joined the movement. George Fox even traveled to America where the first Yearly Meeting in the world was established in Rhode Island (New England Yearly Meeting) in 1661, seven years before London Yearly Meeting was established.

Nearly two hundred years later, Western Yearly Meeting was set off from Indiana Yearly Meeting in 1858. If you want more details to fill in the gap, you can find a brief history of Friends compiled by Brent Bill in the book published by the Sesquicentennial Book Committee for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary (In 2008) of Western Yearly meeting. Hopefully, there's one in your meeting library, but you can request one from the WYM office.

So, why do we still use what may seem like an antiquated structure? Here are some reasons:

- To provide support for monthly meetings: networking of ideas, fellowship, learning events, corporate discernment for decision making, assistance in identifying pastoral leadership, shared resources.
- To organize for service and provide programs and resources that Monthly Meetings cannot manage on their own: Youth camps at Quaker Haven, training opportunities for leadership, outreach and social concerns initiatives, global mission work.
- To encourage, affirm and train pastors and other ministers for service.
- To appoint representatives to affiliated organizations.

**Queries for Discussion** - In what ways has your meeting benefitted from association with Western Yearly Meeting? If you believe you have not benefitted, what would you like the Yearly Meeting to do for or with you? What changes would you like to see in the Yearly Meeting structure or function that would be more encouraging to you? (It will help if you share your response with the WYM office.)

**Prayer** – Holy and Gracious God, as fellow citizens of your household, we thank you for the gifts you offer us through Friends in Western Yearly Meeting. We are glad for capable leadership. We rejoice in opportunities to share resources, faith and friendship. We appreciate the strength we feel when we put our hearts and hands together to do your work. Help us do our part to build the dwelling where your Spirit can thrive. We ask for your special blessings of wisdom, strength, and faith. In the name of the Chief Cornerstone, Amen.

## B-7 The Great Commission

**Scriptural Reference(s) - Matthew 28:16-20:** Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

**Mark 16:15-19:** He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation."

**Luke 24: 45-49:** Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written; The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised, but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

**Quaker Quote(s)** - Barnabas C. Hobbs of Western Yearly Meeting, in 1870, as quoted in the *Autobiography of Allen Jay* regarding the proposal to organize what was to be (32 years later) Five Years Meeting and later to become Friends United Meeting in 1966. *"This (Western Yearly) meeting has been introduced into a desire for a more perfect union among the different yearly meetings of Europe and America. There are many departments of Christian labor of common interest that call for united counsel. We apprehend that a general council, composed of representatives appointed by the several yearly meetings would have a harmonizing and unifying effect upon our common Society and render the whole and its parts more truly supportive of each other; whose conclusions and recommendations shall only be advisory in nature."*

**Narrative** - If you have the chance, what will be your **last** instructions before you leave this life? Whatever they are, they will be really important to you and to the person(s) who hear them. Jesus' last words to his disciples in all four gospels were important to him and to us as his followers. Second only to his great commandment to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself," Jesus' instructions to take his message to all nations must have been the most important instructions he wanted us to hear. Most of us don't have the resources or expertise to follow that commission without help, so we Christians organized churches so we could work in communities and count on the gifts and resources of others to get the job done.

In the second half of the 1800's, Allen Jay and a few others did much traveling to try to get individuals, meetings and yearly meetings to see the need for an organization that could unite and absorb some of the common concerns and doctrines of Friends. In his *History of Quakerism* Elbert Russell notes that in

the years following the Richmond Conference of 1887, 11 yearly meetings in the U.S. and Canada adopted a uniform discipline (comparable to our Faith & Practice) and agreed to meet every five years beginning in 1902. At their first gathering, they created these committees or boards: Evangelistic and Church Extension, Education, Legislation, Condition and Welfare of Negroes. They also adopted the inter-yearly meeting organizations that were operating: American Friends Board of Foreign Missions, the Associated Committee on Indian Affairs, and the Peace Association of Friends in America. A decade later, a Board of Publications was established.

Today Friends United Meeting still exists to help individuals, monthly Meetings and yearly Meetings respond to the Great Commission, but with a much different response to the needs for global outreach. What began as an effort on the part of Quakers in North America to take the gospel message to areas of "darkness" in the world is evolving into partnerships to grow enthusiasm for Christ in the USA as well as across the seas. FUM attempts to meet needs through programs and projects which are most effective at changing lives for the better in each culture.

Even before the original gathering of Five Years Meeting in 1902, Friends in Western Yearly Meeting had the mindset that in order to follow Jesus' instructions and fulfill our responsibility and purpose as monthly meetings, we would channel our support for global evangelism through what is now Friends United Meeting. Because we respond obediently as followers of Christ, because we are responsible as FUM members, it's just part of the ministry we do.

**Queries for Discussion** - To what extent does your meeting participate in the ministries of Friends United Meeting? Do you know how your contributions to Friends United Meeting are used? Are you open to having someone knowledgeable about FUM come tell the stories that are results of your support? If not, why not?

**Prayer** - Dear God of all people in all nations, we sometimes don't know why we are fed and housed, and given so many opportunities for learning and growing. We don't understand why you would provide so much for us while others are so needy. Help us to know how best to share our abundant and undeserved blessings. We thank you for those who have gone before us to construct a channel through which we can participate in taking your message to all nations. Thank you for the people who serve on our behalf, sometimes in dangerous and unhealthy conditions, to build relationships, oversee the work, tell the stories, and assure the right use of our support. Lord, open our eyes to the ways we can engage in your work, give us courage to sacrifice our resources, and help us to think more like Jesus. In His name, Amen.



## B-8 Affiliated Friendship or Frenzy?

**Scriptural Reference(s) - Luke 10:30-37:** In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, he passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

(Jesus continued) "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

**Romans 12:13-21:** Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath.....If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

**Quaker Quote(s)** - *He who desires thus to become the servant of good, the worker in the harvest field of God, will know the need of self-denial. He has seen the vision of the highest, and all lesser goods will take a lower place. For him the call may be for the sacrifice of many legitimate pursuits, many lines of happy activity, in devotion to some imperative service. Principle speaks, and comfort and culture and reputation must be laid aside. The summons comes to give himself to a great cause, to bring liberty to the captive, or light to those that sit in darkness; and the true life, even the abundant life, will be found in obedience to the uttermost.* **#592 Christian Faith and Practice, London Yearly Meeting 1960.**

**Narrative** - Most of us are so overwhelmed with the needs of the world we don't know where to start when it comes to responding. But we have many organizations of Friends that try to address those needs on our behalf. The Quaker "alphabet soup" may be mind boggling, especially to those new to Friends. ACFIA, FWCC, FCNL, AFSC, RSWR, ESR, and others are all organizations that try to fulfill a specific responsibility in helping Friends express our social and religious conscience. These are called affiliate bodies because we don't necessarily have membership responsibility to them. It would not be possible for most of us to keep up with the work activities and needs of all these organizations. Yet, it is hoped that people in monthly Meetings are given the opportunity to learn about them and support

those that answer a leading toward service in them. Usually, these organizations do presentations at the annual sessions of Western Yearly Meeting. Here is a list that very briefly summarizes the purpose of each organization. Most of them have websites and newsletters to keep you informed.

**ACFIA – Associated Committee of Friends on Indiana Affairs** no longer functions to oversee all the Native American centers where Friends have worked for over a century, but our donations can help the yearly meetings who have taken up the current work with Kickapoo, Mowa Choctaw and Mesquakie Indians. ACFIA was formed to seek justice and opportunities for Native Americans. The centers in each of these tribal communities still do that.

**AFSC – American Friends Service Committee** works throughout the world to provide relief, rebuilding and reconciliation in areas affected by natural disasters and in oppressed communities to address the root causes of war and violence.

**ESR – Earlham School of Religion** is the Quaker Seminary in Richmond, Indiana that was started in 1960 to help prepare ministers, scholars and other leaders among Friends. ESR offers Biblical Studies, Christian Theology, Quaker Studies, and Peace and Justice Studies.

**FCNL- Friends Committee on National Legislation** offices are located very close to the Capitol Building in Washington D. C. where it serves to build relationships with senators and representatives and find opportunities to express Quaker interest about government policy and actions. Monthly meetings are asked regularly to give FCNL feedback about our priorities for their work.

**FWCC – Friends World Committee on Consultaion** seeks to bring together Friends of various traditions and cultures in worship, communications and consultation to express our common heritage and message to the world. FWCC holds gatherings in sections of the world and regular world conferences.

**RSWR – Right Sharing of World Resources** channels donations in the form of grants to small groups of women in Kenya, Sierra Leone, and India to empower them to start a business, thus enabling them to better care for their families. RSWR has staff in each country to train women in business skills and oversee the implementation of the grants.

**Queries for Discussion** - What person(s) in your meeting has historic ties to the above mentioned organizations or their work? Which organization best expresses your own call to reach out in the world to help? Have you invited someone from any of these organizations to speak to your meeting?

**Prayer** - Dear Gracious God, for all the good work being done to bring justice, mercy and peace in this world, we thank you. For those who lead these organizations, we ask for your blessings of wisdom and strength. For the gifts that are sent to enable these ministries, no matter how small, we thank you. For the sacrificial hearts that motivate all participation, we are grateful. Please help us discern your will for our resources. Remind us often that you call us to give from our abundance. In the name of Jesus, the one who said “whatever you do for one of the least of these, you do for me.” Amen.

## B-9 Reaching Out to Your Neighbors

**Scripture Reference(s):** James 2:14-17: What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed;" but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

**I John 3:16-19:** This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence.

**Quaker Quote(s)** - These quotes are from Leonard S. Kenworthy's *Quaker Quotations on Faith & Practice*, published in 1983.

*"Part of the discipline of daily life is to organize one's activities so as to be able to devote a good share of one's time and energy to public service in the community. That service cannot begin too early or be carried on too consistently....Many services that are now performing inadequately either because the budget does not provide for them or because they are in the hands of a remote officialdom, should be performed mainly on a volunteer basis by the people of a local community."* --Lewis Mumford in *The Conduct of Life*.

*"No Quaker life is complete, nor does it attain its proper ends if it does not reach out to share in the problems and to help bear the burdens of society."* -- William Wistar Comfort in *Quakers in the Modern World*.

*"It is better to do the little that we can do than to wear ourselves out in frustrated efforts which have no conceivable chance of effectiveness."* --D. Elton Trueblood in *The Common Ventures of Life*.

*"But let us not forget the thousands whose names have slipped from sight --the ordinary men and women who lived out their Quaker testimonies in the fields and their kitchens, on roadsides and vessels, in town meetings and country schoolhouses, in federal penitentiaries and Civilian Public Service Camps --wherever it was the Inner Light impelled them to state their beliefs."* -- Daisy Newman in *A Procession of Friends*.

**Narrative** — Few of us need any more nudging to do more in the community, but most of us could use some advice about how to be the most helpful when faced with so many opportunities. We may face the challenges in our communities with mixed feelings. Here are some real examples:

- A lady in her early 30's who has three children from three different dad's and has been in and out of jail and rehab programs to deal with her drug addictions. She is under the care of a

doctor and comes to your church asking for \$300 for her prescription meds to keep her on her path to rehabilitation.

- A man stops by your church on Sunday morning, saying he needs help to rent a motel room for the night –just to clean up, after his wife left him and took all the money from their bank account leaving him homeless. “I used to be a Quaker,” he adds.
- A family who is referred to your church by the school counselor to receive help with groceries and you shop for and deliver \$200 worth only to find out there’s no room in the cabinets or on the counter tops, because they already have plenty of food.

You have your own stories to tell, in which you want to do the right thing. All of these beg for certain questions such as: “Does this person deserve my help?” “Am I just enabling bad choices by subsidizing irresponsibility or recklessness?” So what do we do? In the book *When Helping Hurts*, by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, (Moody Publishers, 2009) the authors present three levels of helping. The first is RELIEF –“urgent and temporary provisions of emergency aid to relieve suffering.” The second level is REHABILITATION –“seeks to restore people and their communities to the positive elements of their pre-crisis conditions.” And third is DEVELOPMENT –“the process of ongoing change that moves people closer to being in right relationship with God, self, others and the rest of creation.”

You are encouraged to consider these questions when helping people in your community:

1. Is what we are doing for immediate relief?
2. Will what we do help these people can get back to normal?
3. What needs to be changed in our social welfare or legal system so this doesn’t continue to happen to our neighbors?

Since the first publication of *When Helping Hurts*, there has been made available a study guide with videos that can be used in a Sunday School class or other study group to give your meeting a better handle on how to reach out to your neighbors. However, there is no substitute for just doing the neighborly things we do, like preparing and serving a funeral dinner when a neighbor dies, or collecting used clothing for the local second-hand store, or taking an elderly man to the doctor, donating furniture to a family whose house burned. And, well you know....and we know you do it. May God bless you for those acts of kindness.

**Queries for discussion** - Does your meeting have an organized care program or do your people do this on your own? How’s that working for you? How do you engage your younger people in such caring ministries?

**Prayer** - Kind and Gracious Lord, thank you for every act of kindness that has been done to help others this week. Open our eyes to the needs around us and move our hearts to be generous. Teach us how to respond to the many needs in our community in such a way that lives are better and that because of our obedience, more people are empowered to honor you and serve you. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

## B-10 Your Story, Your Budget

**Scripture Reference(s)** | **Peter 5:1-4:** To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed; Be shepherds of God's flock that is under our care, serving as overseers –not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

**Matthew 6:19-21 & 24:** Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ...No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

**Quaker Quote** - *"How is it that many of our churches/meetings struggle so much with money and discussing it, when in earlier parts of our movement Quakers were well-known and trusted as business savvy people (Cadbury, Lloyd, Rowntree, Barclay, Frys, etc.)? How do we think about the bible's teaching around tithing, the rich young man (Mk 10), Zacchaeus, the widow and her two mites, Acts 2, and other teachings about money in the bible? Some of these questions mean that we need to look back to our tradition and find what resources are there for us and how they help us make sense of these questions."* C. Wess Daniels, from his blog *Gathering in Light*, "Thinking Quakers, Money and Stewardship."

**Narrative** - Several of our pastors in Western Yearly Meeting and some of those who have attended the annual retreat in recent years have heard a presentation about "Narrative Budgets." The topic was presented by a representative from Everence Financial (formerly Mennonite Mutual). Among many of their services, the company offers assistance to churches in helping them approach the topic of stewardship in a way that relates a line item budget to the church's ministries. On their website, this is the description:

*"A line item budget is an effective tool for the committee on finance to manage financial resources. It is not an effective means for interpreting those ministries or their impact. On the other hand, the narrative budget helps members of the congregation understand what the church is doing in ministry, evangelism, discipleship training, benevolences and missions. It is a connecting link between the contributor and the church's ministries. A well-composed narrative budget will educate and inspire everyone."*

In order to begin such a budget, a meeting or church needs to define **three or four main goals of their ministries**. Using your mission or purpose statement would also be a good starting place. This is an example, which also can be found on the Everence website:

- A. To Provide meaningful, life changing worship every week of the year.
- B. To Nurture persons in the faith journey
- C. To witness to our faith in service beyond ourselves.

For each goal listed, the meeting/church would write the “story” of their progress toward achieving it during past year and include any plans to change or adjust any of the initiatives they have to reach the goal. You probably would include the entire amount of your pastor’s salary and other expenses under Goal A. You might also include such items as music, children’s ministry, office expenses, and utilities that are related to the cost of having worship each Sunday. Under Goal B, you would tell the stories of how your people are nurtured in the faith journey; through Bible Studies, camps scholarships, Christian education programs, etc. And under Goal C, you would consider how much you spend in outreach. In the case of WYM, how much do you send to the general yearly meeting budget, to assist FUM and related ministries, and any community ministries outside of your own meeting expenses? You might describe how you select your priorities?

Even though your meeting’s vision for ministry is bigger than your pocketbooks, telling the story of how you use your resources, and how lives are changed because of the way you use them, may open the hearts and minds of people in a new way. It might even help us connect those who contribute to those who receive ministry benefits. Then when people see the next year’s proposed budget, they are more likely to understand and be inspired to participate. Sometimes, financial-minded people understand numbers more than words, so if this idea is proposed to them, they might resist it. But if you, the elders, or a similar seasoned group is willing to try it, it just might make you feel more fulfilled in the way you spend your church’s money.

**Queries for Discussion** - Are you be willing to write stories of how lives are changed, how faith is deepened, and what signs of growth you see in your meeting and can you relate those stories to your budget? If not, why not?

**Prayer** - Dear God, Too often we forget to thank you for the ways you provide for us financially. Instead, we grumble about not having enough. Please forgive us and open our eyes to see how we are blessed. Lord, as we look for balance between caring for our own spiritual needs and the physical and spiritual needs of others, keep us vigilant and sensitive to what you would call us to do with the resources we have. For we wish to store up treasures for eternity with you. In the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.