

THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE  
- of –  
Ohio Yearly Meeting  
- of the –  
Religious Society of Friends

Printed by direction of the YEARLY MEETING HELD AT  
STILLWATER in Barnesville, Ohio, in Eighth Month, 2022.

“Dearly beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by, but that all, with a measure of light which is pure and holy, may be guided: and so in the light walking and abiding, these things may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not in the letter; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.”

Letter from Meeting of Elders at Balby, in Yorkshire,  
England, 1656

Mailing address: Ohio Yearly Meeting of  
Friends c/o Olney Friends School

61830 Sandy Ridge Road  
Barnesville, OH 43713

# Contents

|                                                |           |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>HISTORICAL NOTE.....</b>                    | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>                       | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>THE MEETING FOR WORSHIP.....</b>            | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>BUSINESS MEETINGS.....</b>                  | <b>10</b> |
| <b>NEW MEETINGS.....</b>                       | <b>11</b> |
| <b>MEMBERSHIP.....</b>                         | <b>11</b> |
| <b>Birthright or Associate Membership.....</b> | <b>11</b> |
| <b>Forms of Adult Membership.....</b>          | <b>12</b> |
| Waiting Membership.....                        | 12        |
| Affiliate Membership.....                      | 12        |
| Full and Active Membership.....                | 14        |
| <b>Application for Membership.....</b>         | <b>14</b> |
| <b>Recording of Membership.....</b>            | <b>15</b> |
| <b>Certificates.....</b>                       | <b>15</b> |
| Sojourning.....                                | 16        |
| Removal.....                                   | 16        |
| Statement of Membership.....                   | 16        |
| <b>Termination of Membership.....</b>          | <b>16</b> |
| <b>Maintaining Contacts.....</b>               | <b>18</b> |
| <b>ROUTINE ADMINISTRATION.....</b>             | <b>18</b> |
| <b>The Monthly Meeting.....</b>                | <b>18</b> |
| <b>The Quarterly Meeting.....</b>              | <b>19</b> |
| <b>Procedures For Business Meetings.....</b>   | <b>20</b> |
| <b>Representation.....</b>                     | <b>22</b> |
| <b>The Yearly Meeting.....</b>                 | <b>22</b> |
| Procedure.....                                 | 23        |
| The Administrative Queries.....                | 24        |

|                                                             |           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>The Representative Meeting.....</b>                      | <b>25</b> |
| <b><i>GUIDANCE AND COUNSEL.....</i></b>                     | <b>26</b> |
| <b>The General Queries and Advices.....</b>                 | <b>27</b> |
| Queries .....                                               | 27        |
| Advices .....                                               | 29        |
| <b><i>MINISTRY AND OVERSIGHT .....</i></b>                  | <b>34</b> |
| <b>Overseers .....</b>                                      | <b>34</b> |
| Appointment and Renewal of Overseers .....                  | 35        |
| Duties of Overseers .....                                   | 35        |
| Meetings of the Overseers.....                              | 36        |
| Special Counsel for the Consideration of Overseers .....    | 37        |
| <b>Elders and Eldership .....</b>                           | <b>37</b> |
| Function and Qualifications of Elders .....                 | 37        |
| Appointment and Renewal of Elders .....                     | 38        |
| <b>The Ministry of the Gospel .....</b>                     | <b>39</b> |
| <b>Acknowledged Ministers .....</b>                         | <b>40</b> |
| Recognition and Recording of Ministers .....                | 40        |
| Procedures for Travel on Religious Concerns .....           | 40        |
| <b>The Meeting for Ministry and Oversight.....</b>          | <b>42</b> |
| Queries for the Meetings for Ministry and Oversight.....    | 43        |
| Advices for the Meetings for Ministry and Oversight .....   | 44        |
| <b><i>MARRIAGE .....</i></b>                                | <b>45</b> |
| <b>Marriage Procedure .....</b>                             | <b>47</b> |
| <b>Marriage Outside the Care of the Meeting .....</b>       | <b>50</b> |
| <b>Additional Counsel .....</b>                             | <b>50</b> |
| <b><i>MEMBERS IN NEED.....</i></b>                          | <b>51</b> |
| <b><i>FUNERALS AND BURIAL GROUNDS .....</i></b>             | <b>51</b> |
| <b><i>MEMORIALS.....</i></b>                                | <b>52</b> |
| <b><i>MEETING HOUSES AND GROUNDS: TRUSTEESHIP .....</i></b> | <b>52</b> |
| <b><i>FIDUCIARY TRUSTEES.....</i></b>                       | <b>53</b> |

|                                        |           |
|----------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b><i>CAPITAL PUNISHMENT</i></b> ..... | <b>54</b> |
| <b><i>EDUCATION</i></b> .....          | <b>54</b> |
| <b><i>OATHS</i></b> .....              | <b>55</b> |
| <b><i>PEACE AND WAR</i></b> .....      | <b>56</b> |
| <b><i>RACIAL EQUALITY</i></b> .....    | <b>57</b> |
| <b><i>RECREATION</i></b> .....         | <b>58</b> |
| <b><i>SIMPLICITY</i></b> .....         | <b>58</b> |
| <b><i>TEMPERANCE</i></b> .....         | <b>59</b> |
| <b><i>WILLS</i></b> .....              | <b>59</b> |
| <b><i>LOG OF CHANGES</i></b> .....     | <b>61</b> |
| <b><i>INDEX</i></b> .....              | <b>63</b> |
| <b><i>ENDNOTES</i></b> .....           | <b>68</b> |

## **HISTORICAL NOTE**

Ohio Yearly Meeting was set off from Baltimore Yearly Meeting, and was originally composed of most Friends west of the Allegheny Mountains. The first Yearly Meeting in Ohio was held at Short Creek, beginning the 14th of Eighth Month, 1813. In 1816 a new house was completed at Mount Pleasant, where the Yearly Meeting convened that year. The Conservative Yearly Meeting continued to meet at Mt. Pleasant until 1878. Beginning with that year it has been held at Stillwater, east of Barnesville.

In the year 1819, a Book of Discipline was completed and published, and with a very few minor changes made from time to time, this has formed the written code for this branch of the Society of Friends in Ohio for more than one hundred years.

In 1921, the last edition of the Discipline being almost exhausted, the subject of reprinting was brought before the Yearly Meeting, and was referred to the Meeting for Sufferings (now the Representative Meeting) to consider whether some minor changes might be made before having another edition printed.

A committee was appointed in that body to take the subject under consideration, and its report was adopted by the Yearly Meeting in the Ninth Month, 1922.

As an outgrowth of a concern of many members of the Yearly Meeting that our Book of Discipline should be phrased and arranged in such a way that it might more fully meet the needs of the Church for our time and still be founded in Truth, the Yearly Meeting in 1959 authorized the Representative Meeting to initiate a study of the existing Discipline through the direct action of the various Monthly Meetings. Accordingly, a committee was appointed to encourage and assist, and a series of discussion and study groups was set up, which have devoted much earnest consideration and prayerful dedication to this important concern.

We hope that this handbook will serve to guide and assist our working together as we seek to serve our Divine Master. This 2022 printing of our Book of Discipline reflects a number of small changes in wording and some additions as approved by the regular sessions of Ohio Yearly Meeting between 1976 and the present. A log of changes starting from 2006 is available at the end of this book. Changes are also identified by endnotes. We refer anyone wishing further historical information to *A Brief History of Ohio Yearly Meeting*, by Charles P. Morlan (1959) *Eye of Faith*, by William Taber (1985) *A Short History of Conservative Friends*, by John Brady (1992), *Historic Atlas of Ohio Yearly Meeting* by Seth Hinshaw (2014).

## **INTRODUCTION**

In the morning of the Gospel Day, the apostles and disciples believed it was not only desirable but necessary to meet together for the consolation and strength one of another; and from the nature and design of the gospel, it brought them peace and goodwill. A care then arose for the edification of the church, and that all, being of one family, might be of one mind.

With great yearning and anguish of spirit, George Fox sought the Light and found occasional openings which brought him a degree of peace and comfort, until at last he heard that voice which spoke to his inmost soul: "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition." In speaking of the voice, George Fox said, "When I heard it, my heart did leap for joy."

He found the way to communion with God without aid of ritual or clergy, and henceforth his distinctive message to his generation was that Christ speaks directly to each human soul who seeks Him. Spiritual life depends upon direct communion with Him, and all men may find salvation and life in Him.

The founders of the Religious Society of Friends were inspired with a degree of the love and goodwill which introduced the dispensation of the gospel of Christ. We are engaged, therefore, not only to meet together for the worship of God, but also for the exercise of a Christian care over each other, for the preservation of all in unity of faith and practice, answerable to the description which He, the ever blessed Shepherd, gave of His flock. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

This belief in the immediate presence of the Light of Christ within the soul, and in His power to transform men into sons of God has always been the vital message of Friends. It is a faith that does not stand on ritual or creed, but on the experience of the presence of God in the individual heart. It is universal in its scope, and speaks to the spiritual needs of all men.

We believe that true baptism is the experience of being filled with Divine love which cleanses from all unrighteousness. John said, "I indeed have baptized you with water: but He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost" (Mark 1:8). It is the change and purification within, the spiritual fact rather than the outward symbol, which is indeed the true baptism.

Friends place special emphasis on the ever present Holy Spirit in the hearts of men. This power we call the Light Within or the Light of Christ. We believe that a seed of this spirit is in every man. The basis of faith is thus the belief that God endows each human being with a measure of His own Divine Spirit. He leaves no one without witness, but gives the light of His truth and presence to men of all races and walks of life. Love, the outworking of this Divine Spirit, is the most potent influence that can be applied to the affairs of men. The Society of Friends believes this application of love to the whole of life to be the core of the Christian doctrine. As within ourselves we become conscious of the Inner Light or

the Christ within and submit ourselves to His leadings, we are enabled to live in conformity to the will of our Heavenly Father.

Growing directly out of this belief in the Inward Light of Christ is our ideal of worship. In our assemblies the Holy Spirit speaks directly to the human soul, and worship is a personal communion with God and a yielding of our wills to the Divine will, for which no form or aid of clergy is necessary. This communion may be realized in a true and vital way though there be no vocal service. A living silence may be so filled with the Divine Presence that all who worship become conscious of it and are drawn together in unity under the power of His love. We concur with George Fox where he states, "The least member in the church hath an office, and is serviceable; and every member hath need one of another."

As all unite before the true Head of the Church, a spiritual democracy becomes a reality. Vocal service in such a meeting, whether prayer or exhortation or teaching, should be uttered under the direct guidance and authority of the Holy Spirit. We fully recognize the importance of intellectual and spiritual training of each member in preparation for any service which may be laid upon him, so that when the commission is given he may serve with his fullest ability as well as with a ready and glad heart.

We would conclude this introduction by desiring, in an especial manner, that our youth may be early and fully instructed in our religious principles, and in the nature and design of our Christian testimonies, and through Divine assistance be enabled to maintain our holy calling by conversation and conduct consistent with godliness and honesty. Each person must humbly and prayerfully seek individual guidance and follow his understanding of God's leading. He will be helped by reading the Bible, and especially by pondering the marvelous life and teachings of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

## **THE MEETING FOR WORSHIP**

The Yearly Meeting has a heartfelt concern that our meetings offer a form of worship which is simple, pure, and spiritual.

We meet together in silence and strive to free our minds and hearts for the purpose of spiritual worship. We must then wait in humble reverence for the spiritual ability to worship the Lord of Heaven and Earth in a manner acceptable to Him.

As each soul feels a spirit of supplication answered by the quickening influence of the Holy Spirit, we approach the Throne of Grace; that is to say, we are enabled to enter into an attitude of true worship, in gratitude and praise.

Though the nearness to God may result in spoken ministry or vocal prayer, the distinctive excellence of heavenly favor consists in the direct communication with the Heavenly Father by the inward revelation of the Spirit of Christ.

It is urged that Friends encourage their children and others under their care in the habit of regular and orderly attendance at both First-day and other meetings. Such should be taught, in proportion to their understanding, how to wait in stillness upon the Lord, that they, too, may receive their portion of His spiritual favor through the tendering influence of His Holy Spirit.

Drowsiness and habitual tardiness are not necessarily evidence of a negligent attitude toward the living purpose of our meetings for worship, but because they might appear so, both should be avoided as far as possible, lest they become hindrances to others present.

In preparation for meeting, the individual may find that he becomes quiet in expectation, or he may desire to read Scripture or other devotional material as a quieting discipline. Sometimes Firstday school, a discussion group, a family meeting or reading is found helpful in this preparation process.

We appoint an hour to meet for worship. The meeting begins in silence, according to the injunction, "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalms 46:10). Friends thus allow themselves to become quiet by putting aside words, thoughts of business, cares, and topics of the day.

Not all Friends can become truly quiet instantly or at every meeting. It cannot be done at will; indeed, "will" too often proves an obstacle. After a time, however, a number of worshippers do seem to be sharing the Presence of a guiding Spirit. Vocal ministry or prayer may or may not occur, springing from the heart of one or more worshippers. Any who feel called by an inward urging of the Holy Spirit to speak are advised to do so, simply and clearly.

As the meeting continues, there comes a time when a Friend, chosen beforehand, feels the appropriate time has come to close the meeting, and shakes hands with his nearest neighbor.

## **BUSINESS MEETINGS**

The Society of Friends endeavors in all its business meetings to conserve and nurture the spiritual worship already described. The following method of conducting business has been found equally effective in large or small groups. A business meeting begins, and should also end, in worship. As business is brought before them, Friends try to continue in a spirit of search for divine guidance. It naturally follows that there can be no rightful or satisfactory decision of a matter until there is a large measure of unity in it. Thus our business is decided by the corporate "sense of the meeting," and not by a majority vote.

As business proceeds Friends speak to it, each according to his best insight. Often the insights of several Friends contribute to a decision more serviceable than any single suggestion. As Friends approach agreement, the Clerk composes a minute declaring what the meeting's will appears to be. When a minute is finally approved, it becomes part of

the permanent record. If the meeting fails to reach agreement on an issue, or declines to deal with it, a brief minute is prepared either dismissing it or postponing the decision to a future time.

## **NEW MEETINGS**

Since all of the Society's business should proceed from worship, each worship group is also a potential business group. A group which has met regularly for weekly worship, and has grown to include several families, may organize and function as a business meeting. The Monthly Meeting, historically, is the basic business unit of the Society. A new group, ready for organization as a Monthly Meeting, should seek help, advice, and recognition from an established Yearly Meeting through one of its subordinate meetings. When such a meeting is satisfied as to the stability of a new meeting, it may formally organize as a Monthly or Preparative Meeting.

Existing Monthly Meetings should correspond with, visit, and encourage worship groups which have not yet organized. Such informal groups should name a person to serve as correspondent.

When the meeting is organized, the Clerk will take on this duty.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Just as for the earliest Christian church, so for the Society of Friends, the membership constitutes the body of the church, under Christ, our Head. "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Romans 12:5). Consequently, membership is considered a privilege entailing a corresponding responsibility, first of all toward Christ, and secondly toward one another.

### **Birthright or Associate Membership**

Parents may request Associate or Birthright membership for their children. Birthright and Associate

members are eligible to take full part in meeting affairs. Birthright or Associate membership will end at age 25. If a person has not requested alternate membership by that time, the Overseers should meet with that person to determine whether continued membership in the meeting is appropriate, and what form that might take.

### **Forms of Adult Membership**

Although we realize that there are many different stages in an individual's spiritual journey and many levels of understanding, we believe that to be an effective participant in a covered meeting for business an individual must be open to the experience of the Divinity of Christ and must have an understanding of the necessity to surrender oneself to the Will of God as shown to us by the Power of Christ within us.

#### *Waiting Membership*

Those considering adult membership who do not yet feel comfortable with this surrender, feeling the Tender Guide and wishing to maintain established ties with Ohio Yearly Meeting, are encouraged to apply for Waiting Membership. Such members would continue to be nurtured by the Meeting through newsletters, phone calls, and visitation. Waiting Members would not be eligible as participants in meetings for business, although they would be welcomed as observers and worshippers with us. At the discretion of the Monthly Meetings, Waiting Members may be appointed to serve on committees, except Nominating Committee or as a committee convener. It is to be hoped that in this way members might not be cut off from our Meeting, but that over time the tender leadings of Christ might bring them to Full Membership with us.

#### *Affiliate Membership*

This form of membership provides one way for persons living at a distance from established meetings of Ohio

Yearly Meeting to be formally affiliated with us. Affiliate membership is intended to provide spiritual support from and connection to Ohio Yearly Meeting for Friends who lie outside our normal geographic area and who feel a sense of spiritual isolation. This is not meant to discourage those who, living at a distance, wish to participate as full members in the business of our meetings. Monthly Meetings may accept such persons as full members.

A person who wishes to become an Affiliate member should make application to a specific Monthly meeting. The process outlined below under “Application for Membership” is to be followed.

Applicants for Affiliate membership who are not already members of another Friends Meeting may be directly accepted as Affiliate members. When applicants are already members of another meeting, they may be accepted concurrently as Affiliate members in OYM. In that case applicants are asked to consider whether they can live in harmony with their Christian faith and at the same time remain members of their present meeting. As long as the Lord's truth is being served, such Friends are encouraged to remain members of the meeting where they reside, seeking to live faithfully where God has placed them.

Affiliate members are considered valued members of our Christian fellowship. They are encouraged to attend our business meetings when they can do so, as observers rather than as full participants in the decision-making process. At the discretion of the Monthly Meetings, Affiliate Members may be appointed to serve on committees, except Nominating Committees or as a committee convener. Affiliate Members are not eligible for appointment as officers (for example, clerk) in our meetings.

The meeting which has accepted Affiliate members should see that regular spiritual support, encouragement, and fellowship is maintained at frequent intervals by such means as letters, exchange of helpful literature, phone calls, and

visits back and forth. All members when travelling for any reason are encouraged to visit Affiliate members and other isolated Friends.

### *Full and Active Membership*

Full and Active Membership in Ohio Yearly Meeting requires a commitment to be an active part of the meeting community. Full and Active Membership should not be viewed as a right or a privilege but as a covenant/commitment to this particular expression of Christ's body. This commitment entails a character of servanthood, as exemplified by Jesus' washing his disciples' feet. It includes responsibility for the continued spiritual growth of oneself and other members of the community.

Those individuals seeking Full and Active Membership who are not able to join with the meeting on a regular basis should work with the Overseers to develop an action plan for their fullest participation. This might include a commitment to attend a given number of meetings during the year, and a plan for close two-way communication with the meeting. If such a plan seems unworkable, such members might be encouraged to seek Affiliate Membership until such time as their circumstances permit fuller participation.

### **Application for Membership**

An application for membership is made in writing to the Overseers, who, if satisfied, are to lay it before the Monthly Meeting.

This meeting appoints a committee to meet with the applicant. When satisfied of the sincerity of his belief of the truths which we hold and his desire to let this faith govern his life, the committee reports to the Monthly Meeting, which, if satisfied with the report, makes a minute recording the applicant's acceptance into membership. The Meeting then appoints a Friend or two to notify the new member and welcome him into our midst.

Parents or Guardians may apply for membership for minor children. Such request should be made to the Overseers, who, if satisfied, shall present it to the Monthly Meeting, and unless a good reason for denying the request is apparent, Monthly Meetings are directed to receive such children into membership.

One whose membership has been discontinued and who desires to be reinstated may be received back into membership in the same or another Monthly Meeting by our usual procedure of application.

### **Recording of Membership**

Each Monthly Meeting is directed to appoint a recorder, whose duty it is to keep in a bound book provided for the purpose, a chronological record of each change in the membership. The record book must show all births, deaths, marriages, admissions to and removals from membership in order of occurrence. In addition to this, a loose-leaf record of each individual member and sojourning member shall be kept, arranged in alphabetical order, in a binder.

Monthly Meetings are further directed to appoint committees annually to examine and report upon these records, and to give such assistance as may be necessary to keep the books in order.

It is also recommended that Monthly Meetings, possibly through their Overseers, review their membership lists periodically, contact inactive members and release from membership those who are no longer interested or who cannot be reached.

### **Certificates**

We admonish Friends to be sure of their leadings before changing their residence, weighing carefully the values to be gained against those of greater stability in the lives of themselves and particularly of their children.

### *Sojourning*

It is recommended that all members moving beyond the limits of their Monthly Meeting request their membership be transferred to a meeting nearer their new residence at the time of their removal or soon after. Friends moving for a limited period of time are encouraged to take with them temporary, or Sojourning Certificates of Membership, which retain full membership in their home meeting. If a Friend removes outside the limits of the meeting in which he has Sojourning membership, such Sojourning membership shall cease unless he and the meeting agree to continue his Sojourning membership for special reasons.

### *Removal*

When request for a certificate of removal is made, the Monthly Meeting is to appoint a committee of two or more Friends to prepare a suitable certificate, if nothing appears to prevent, and present it to the meeting for its approval.

When a Monthly Meeting receives certificates of removal for persons from other meetings, the persons shall be considered members as from the dating of the certificate. These certificates should be promptly recorded, as should all certificates of removal given out by a Monthly Meeting.

### *Statement of Membership*

Isolated members who desire a statement (certificate) of their membership-standing should inform their Monthly Meeting of the nature of their request, and Monthly Meetings should use their discretion in the matter.

### **Termination of Membership**

If a member offers his resignation, either the Overseers or a committee appointed by the Monthly Meeting should visit the individual in love, inquire into the cause of his resignation and, if appropriate, endeavor to bring him back into fellowship with Friends. If his purpose continues unchanged, and the

meeting accedes, a minute may be made stating that he is released at his own request. The individual should be notified at once, in writing, of this action.

Letters written in acceptance of a resignation should always manifest an affectionate regard for the person thus severing connections with our Society.

If a member disregards the obligations of membership, or fails to show interest in the meeting, thus indicating that he does not value his membership with Friends, the Overseers or a committee appointed by the Monthly Meeting may make loving contact with him and try to bring back his interest in the meeting. If he fails to respond to such friendly concern, or if he cannot be contacted over an extended period of time, the Monthly Meeting may make a minute of the case stating that his name is removed from the membership list.

Any member who has taken actions which put him out of unity with his meeting and who is inclined to make an acknowledgment, may present a written and signed statement to the Monthly Meeting. He should retire from the meeting after the acknowledgment is read.

The acknowledgment should be considered on the basis of the offender's sincerity and contrition. After the Monthly Meeting makes its decision, the person should be notified. The same procedure applies to members under the care of Overseers or a committee for any offence.

If any member feels disunity with Friends or behaves in a manner that gives the Overseers grave concern, he may be dealt with in a similar manner. This should always be done in a loving spirit with the hope that he will again join in Christian unity with Friends.

In any situation when a person is released from membership other than by his own request, he should be promptly notified of the action and told that he has the right to appeal to the Quarterly Meeting.

## **Maintaining Contacts**

Isolated Friends should not be neglected by their fellow members. Meetings are urged to contact absent members at least once a year, giving them help and encouragement whenever possible.

## **ROUTINE ADMINISTRATION**

In order to handle the routine business of the Society and carry out the concerns of Friends, the following organization of our worship groups into meetings for business is customary, a plan which was originally developed by George Fox. The basic unit is the "Monthly Meeting" which usually consists of one local meeting for worship. Where for some reason, such as fewness of numbers or newness of one congregation, it is desirable for two or more meetings to comprise a Monthly Meeting, the local groups are known as Preparative Meetings. They are responsible for preparing business for the Monthly Meeting, as well as handling what has to do specifically with their own individual group.

"Quarterly Meetings," which meet four times in the year for spiritual fellowship, for handling any business or concerns pertaining to the whole group, and for forwarding business to the Yearly Meeting, usually consist of two or more Monthly Meetings. The "Yearly Meeting" is the annual gathering for worship and business of several Quarterly Meetings. In this structure, the decisions of each larger meeting take precedence over those of the smaller meetings comprising it.

## **The Monthly Meeting**

The Monthly Meeting alone has the responsibility for admission, recording and transferring of membership. It records the names and addresses of members, and is responsible for extending to them both spiritual care and such material aid as may sometimes be needed. It provides for the

oversight of meetings for worship, of marriages and of funerals.

Each Monthly Meeting is expected to report to and to send representatives to its Quarterly Meeting, and to extend care to and receive reports from its constituent Preparative Meetings, if any.

The Monthly Meeting is responsible for the collection of funds needed for the work of its own and superior meetings. It may hold title to real estate or other properties, and may undertake the administration of trust funds. (If the members prefer, such funds may be placed in charge of the Yearly Meeting Fiduciary Trustees.) It recognizes Ministers of the Gospel. It appoints Overseers, Clerks, a Treasurer, Trustees, Elders. It may appoint committees for leadership, counsel, ministry, or other purposes, all for stated periods of time. The concern of any member for extension of Friends' work into new fields, or for taking up of specific tasks, may be introduced for the consideration or support of the Monthly Meeting. In short, the Monthly Meeting is free to undertake any work, or to assume any function consistent with our principles, which is not specifically assigned to some other meeting.

The Monthly Meeting may undertake, usually with the cooperation of the Quarterly Meeting, the oversight of newly started meetings; helping, advising, and encouraging all such forms of outreach.

On due notice given to the membership and clerks, the Monthly Meeting may be called into special session by its body of overseers.

### **The Quarterly Meeting**

The Quarterly Meeting, covering a larger area and representing the insights of a larger number of Friends, occupies a valuable intermediary place among the Monthly Meetings.

Its functions are mainly of two kinds. First, for coordinating or confirming concerns referred to it by a constituent meeting for its guidance or broader outlook and larger wisdom; or, on occasion, for its additional weight in upholding a decision made under particularly difficult circumstances. A second and more perfunctory role is the carrying forward of routine reports or real concerns from the constituent meetings to the Yearly Meeting. It also has the duty of appointing its own representatives to the Yearly Meeting.

Normally, its most useful function would seem to be that of helpful counselor to its Monthly Meetings, stimulating them to greater activity or outreach, and confirming their efforts to encourage throughout the membership a greater realization of the ever-growing revelations of the Truth.

Like the Monthly Meeting, the Quarterly Meeting may appoint for definite periods committees for various services, as well as its own officers.

### **Procedures For Business Meetings**

The right conduct of our business meetings, even in matters of routine, is important to our spiritual life, for in so far as Friends are concerned in promoting the Kingdom of God, we should rightly feel that its business is a service for Him.

When we meet together, therefore, to transact the business of the Society, the same spiritual fellowship realized in our times of worship together should continue through our meetings for business. The practice of beginning and concluding our meetings for business affairs with a time of worship is of the greatest significance.

It is important for purposes of clarity that all minutes regarding actions to be taken by the meeting, and those relevant to issues of Faith, be read in final form and approved by the meeting before the close of that meeting. Friends are

reminded that inspired clerkship requires the continued prayerful support of the gathered body.

All members are encouraged to attend all business meetings, realizing that the spiritual nurture and fellowship and the sense of community which our membership confers upon us must be maintained by our common efforts, and that the loving concern which we feel for our Friends must be shown in our actions.

A committee should be appointed annually in each Quarterly, Monthly, and Preparative Meeting, to nominate a clerk or clerks to serve for the following year. The clerks are to preside at all business meetings, keep accurate records of proceedings in a book provided for the purpose, and handle all correspondence of the meeting. Monthly Meetings, particularly, are advised to attend to and finish all business with care and dispatch, that nothing may suffer through delay.

It is the decision of the Yearly Meeting, as a general rule for all cases, that where any Monthly or Quarterly Meeting has occasion for, and requests, copies of any papers, minutes, or records of another Monthly or Quarterly Meeting, the same should be granted. When serious differences occur among Friends and are recorded in the Monthly or Quarterly Meeting minutes, all parties shall be furnished copies of the minutes so they can understand each other better.

Monthly and Quarterly Meetings are to record all minutes or letters of introduction given to Friends traveling in the ministry. When the concern of a Friend has been carried out, he is to return his minute to the meeting which issued it, where its return is also to be recorded.

When any new Monthly Meeting is set up, this is to be done under the care of a Quarterly Meeting. Similarly, new Quarterly meetings are set up with the advice and approval of their Yearly Meeting. Preparative Meetings are set up under the care of a Monthly Meeting. (The same procedures are followed if meetings are being laid down.) When any new meeting is officially opened, it should be attended by a group

of Friends appointed by the meeting which is supervising its setting-up. However, new meetings for worship are always to be welcomed and encouraged and promptly offered any direct help from such Friends as feel drawn to meet with them.

All appointments of officers or committees should be made under conditions clearly defined as to limitation or renewal.

In the session of the Monthly Meeting preceding each Quarterly Meeting, a few Friends are to be appointed representatives to attend that Meeting. Similarly, in the session of a Quarterly Meeting immediately preceding Yearly Meeting, at least four representatives shall be appointed to attend Yearly Meeting. (See Yearly Meeting Procedure, below).

### **Representation**

Representatives to whatever meeting are advised to be punctual in their attendance. Those appointed to the Yearly Meeting, in particular, are further advised to send timely notice if likely to be prevented from attending; also, not to withdraw early without obtaining consent of the Meeting.

It should not be overlooked that an essential part of the duty of any representative is to report back to the meeting which he represents some adequate account of the proceedings or concerns discussed in the meeting so attended.

### **The Yearly Meeting**

Our Yearly Meeting is designed to have general oversight of our Society, and to transact its business. It is both a sober and a joyous opportunity for its members to meet together in unity of purpose. As a consequence of the united spiritual concern felt by the attenders, and the deep searching for the Divine Will pervading the whole assembly, its business meetings, as well as those for worship, become times of spiritual refreshing.

## *Procedure*<sup>i</sup>

Clerks for the Yearly Meeting are appointed annually by the Quarterly Meeting representatives. They preside at the meetings for business, read reports, record minutes and answer routine correspondence. Names of Quarterly Meeting representatives, and all written reports, are to be given to the Clerks well in advance of the session at which they are to be read.

Representatives, if unable to attend all sessions, should advise the Yearly Meeting Clerk.

The Nominating Committee, to be a representative body, should consist of two members appointed by each Monthly Meeting, with alternating two-year terms. Each year's appointment should be reported to the Quarterly Meeting immediately preceding that year's Yearly Meeting sessions, and will be included in the Quarterly Meeting reports given at the opening session of Yearly Meeting. The terms of Friends thus named will begin after the close of that year's Yearly Meeting, and continue through the next two Yearly Meeting sessions.<sup>ii</sup>

A Treasurer is to be appointed annually to have charge of funds, to pay bills, and distribute appropriations, at the direction of the Yearly Meeting or the Representative Meeting. His accounts are to be examined yearly by an Auditing and Budget Committee which is also to draw up a budget for the needs of the coming year. The Treasurer should notify the Monthly Meetings of their quotas. The subject of apportionment of funds and distribution of documents should be occasionally reviewed by the Quarterly Meeting representatives to Yearly Meeting.

Yearly Meeting Committees\* are encouraged to complete their work and submit written reports to the Clerk before Yearly Meeting sessions.

---

\* A list of Yearly Meeting committees and details of their functions is published each year in the back of the minute book (previously published as *The Handbook of Ohio Yearly Meeting Committees*).

Around Second Month of each year, each committee should go through a self-examination process. These queries should be answered by the committee as a whole: Do we feel the power of Christ leading us in the work of our Committee? Are there changes to Committee size that might make us more effective? Answers to these queries will be incorporated into the Committee's report to Yearly Meeting. The answers can be brief or in-depth, but they should be directed by the Spirit. Individual committee members should consider if they continue to feel led in service to the committee. This is particularly important for those whose term is up. Close communication with Nominating Committee during this process will benefit all parties. <sup>iii</sup>

The minutes and proceedings of the Yearly Meeting are to be printed each year and distributed to all members through the Monthly Meetings as soon as possible after the close of the sessions.

Friends should give serious, prayerful consideration before agreeing to be on committees or hold an office (such as Clerk, treasurer, etc.). It is recommended that such service be limited to three positions. More than this may weaken the ability to serve effectively when needed. <sup>iv</sup>

### *The Administrative Queries*

In order that we may remind ourselves of the importance of conducting our affairs in an orderly manner, and so that the Yearly Meeting may be informed of the state of the Society, it is directed that the following administrative queries be read and answered once in the year by each Monthly and Quarterly Meeting, and a written report forwarded to the Yearly Meeting. (The General Queries will be found in the section on Guidance and Counsel).

In making summaries, the Quarterly and Yearly meetings should address matters that apply to them, specifically the 4th and 6th queries. <sup>v</sup>

1<sup>st</sup> Adm. Query: What new meetings have been established?

Have any meetings been discontinued?

2<sup>nd</sup> Adm. Query: Do parents take an active interest in the administration and quality of teaching of the schools which their children attend? Is each Meeting making effective efforts to aid parents in the suitable religious instruction of their children?<sup>vi</sup>

3<sup>rd</sup> Adm. Query: Have the General Queries been read and deliberately pondered and answered in all our meetings? Have the Advices been regularly read? Is the best possible time chosen for their reading, suitable for deliberate consideration of them by all Friends and attenders for their individual, spiritual refreshment?

4<sup>th</sup> Adm. Query: Are former minute books, all interment charts and all records of similar importance, stored in a suitable fireproof safe or vault?

5<sup>th</sup> Adm. Query: Are our meetings for business regularly held; fully, and promptly attended? Are they conducted in a loving and solemn concern to make concerted effort toward unity of spirit?

6<sup>th</sup> Adm. Query: Are our meetings prepared to continue their work if any Friend in a position of responsibility (such as meeting clerks, treasurers, and recorders) is unable to serve?<sup>vii</sup>

## **The Representative Meeting**

Between annual sessions, urgent business of the Yearly Meeting is to be conducted by a Representative Meeting consisting of twenty-one persons, seven of whom are appointed annually by the Yearly Meeting for three year terms. At least one member and no more than five<sup>viii</sup> shall be named from each Monthly Meeting. The Representative Meeting is to meet regularly at least two times in a year. Special meetings may be called by the clerk at the request of four or more of its members. One third of the total appointed

membership, rounded up in case of a fraction, is required to conduct business, including representatives from at least one half, rounded up, of the monthly meetings in the yearly meeting. The Representative Meeting is to keep written minutes of its proceedings and present them to the Yearly Meeting annually for its approval. Members of the Representative Meeting are urged to give a brief report of the business of the Representative Meeting at their next monthly meeting for business.<sup>ix</sup>

The duties of the Representative Meeting are as follows:

1. In general, to act for the Yearly Meeting when it is not in session.
2. To represent the Yearly Meeting, and to appear on its behalf, whenever the interest or reputation of the Society of Friends may call for it.
3. To authorize any material to be published and distributed under the name of the Yearly Meeting, including any memorials of deceased Friends.
4. To extend to individuals under suffering for testimonies, such advice and assistance as their cases may require and, if necessary, to apply to persons in authority, or to the government, on their behalf.
5. To assist in the care of the Yearly Meeting House.

The Representative Meeting may draw on the Treasurer of the Yearly Meeting to cover its expenses.

The Representative Meeting is not to adopt any article of faith or discipline which has not been authorized by the Yearly Meeting.

## **GUIDANCE AND COUNSEL**

The Society of Friends is a brotherhood in search of Christ's guidance from day to day. In a religious society such as ours, the responsibility of one for another is a continuing challenge to all. To meet this challenge adequately, the

Society has sought continuously to face its responsibilities toward its individual members.

Two main methods of guidance are used. First, the Yearly Meeting directs that a series of General Queries be regularly read and answered in all our meetings; also, that a series of Advices be read aloud regularly, and opportunity given for their serious consideration.

The second form of guidance used by the Yearly Meeting is through the Ministers, Elders and Overseers, all of whom meet together in a Meeting for Ministry and Oversight.

### **The General Queries and Advices**

When these were first instituted, it was the design of the Yearly Meetings to provide a means for maintaining a general oversight of the membership pertaining to our Christian life and conduct. It remains this Yearly Meeting's heartfelt desire that good order and unity may be maintained among us.

To further this purpose, the Yearly Meeting feels that the attention of each member of the Society should be drawn at regular intervals to individual self-examination. To aid the members in this exercise, a series of both Queries and Advices is provided to impress upon the minds of us all various principles and testimonies which should guide our daily lives.

#### *Queries*

The following Queries are directed to be read, pondered, and answered once in the year in each Monthly and Quarterly Meeting, in a deliberate and unhurried manner. Answers to two of the queries (three in Second Month) are to be forwarded to each Quarterly Meeting, where these queries and answers from each Monthly Meeting are to be read, and a summary report approved. The Quarterly Meeting clerk then collects these summary reports throughout the year, and forwards the entire group to the Yearly Meeting. The Yearly Meeting Clerk summarizes the Quarterly Meeting answers for

final approval by the Body of the Yearly Meeting. When practical, the Quarterly Meeting and proposed Yearly Meeting summaries should be made available before Yearly Meeting starts. They can be posted on the website and/or printed and offered to those registering at Yearly Meeting. <sup>x</sup>

1st Query: Are meetings for worship well and punctually attended? Is our behavior therein conducive to meditation and communion with God? Do we maintain a waiting spiritual worship and a free gospel ministry? Do we welcome others to share this fellowship with us?

2nd Query: Do we cherish a forgiving spirit, and strive to “walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us”? Is each one of us careful for the reputation of others? Are we ever mindful to love our neighbor as ourselves? If differences threaten to disrupt the Christian harmony between the members, is prompt action taken?

3rd Query: Are our homes places of peace, joy, and contentment? Are they an influence for good in the neighborhood, community, and country? Do we set a good Christian example for our children to follow? Are Friends careful that their children realize that our loving Savior will faithfully guide them through life, as they are willing to accept and obey Him? Do we help our children to read and appreciate the Bible?

4th Query: Believing our bodies to be the temple of God, are we concerned to attain a high level of physical and mental health? To this end are our lives examples of temperance in all things? Do we avoid and discourage the use and handling of intoxicants, tobacco, and improper use of drugs?

5th Query: Are we sensitive to the needs of those around us who may be in less fortunate circumstances? Do we prayerfully consider how we can share one another's burdens when the need arises? Do we counsel lovingly and prayerfully with those members whose actions in any phase of life give us grounds for concern?

6th Query: Do we live in the Life and Power which takes away the occasion of all wars? Do we, on Christian principles, refuse to participate in or to cooperate with the military effort? Do we work actively for peace and the removal of the causes of war? Do we endeavor to cultivate good will, mutual understanding, and equal opportunities for all people?

7th Query: Do we observe simplicity in our manner of living, sincerity in speech, and modesty in apparel? Do we guard against involving ourselves in temporal affairs to the hindrance of spiritual growth? Are we just in our dealings and careful to fulfill our promises? Do we seek to make our Christian faith a part of our daily work?

8th Query: Are we faithful to Christ's command to avoid swearing oaths? Are we watchful for and faithful to Christ's promptings to share with others our testimony against the use of oaths?<sup>xi</sup> Do we avoid gambling and speculation based on the principles of chance?

9th Query: Are we sensitive to the problems of family living? Do we offer counseling to couples both before and after marriage? How are we helping individuals, married couples and family units to strengthen and enrich their lives?

### *Advices*

We believe the custom of regularly reading aloud well-chosen advices has been of value to our members in stimulating their spiritual life.

It is directed that each of the following Advices be read in our meetings, at least once in the year, according to a regular plan, and that the time for reading them be chosen to benefit as many of the members as possible.

A suggested plan follows: Arrange for someone to read aloud one portion weekly at the close of First-day Meeting for Worship, followed by some minutes of silence in which to consider it. This would allow for the reading of each advice twice in the year.

1. Use vigilant care, dear Friends, not to overlook those promptings of love and truth which you may feel in your hearts; for these are the tender leadings of the Spirit of God. Nor should any of us resist God's workings within us, for it is His redemptive love which strives to show us our darkness, and to lead us to true repentance, and to His marvelous light. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20).

2. Be faithful in maintaining your testimony against all war as inconsistent with the Spirit and teaching of Christ. Live in the Life and Power that takes away the occasions of all wars and strife. Seek to take your part in the ministry of reconciliation between individuals, groups, and nations. Let the law of kindness know no limits. Show a loving consideration for all people.

3. Regard the taking of oaths as contrary to the teachings of Christ, and setting up a double standard of truthfulness; whereas sincerity and truth should be practiced in all walks of life.

4. In your meetings for worship be earnestly concerned to enter reverently into communion with God. Come with minds and hearts prepared. Yield yourselves up to the influence of the Divine Presence so that you may find the evil in you weakening and the good raised up. God calls each one to the service of the meeting. Be obedient and faithful, whether by word or silent prayerful waiting; and be ready to receive the message of others in a tender spirit.

5. Be on your guard, dear Friends, lest the love of pleasure take too strong a hold upon you. Choose such recreations as are pure and healthful. Let them be in harmony with your service to God and man; and in that service be ready at any time to lay them aside when called upon.

6. Endeavor to make your home an abiding place of joy and peace where the Presence of God is known and felt. Seek to know an inward retirement, even amid the activities

of daily life. Make a quiet place in your daily life, wherein you may learn the full meaning of prayer, and the gladness of communion with your Heavenly Father.

7. Avoid and discourage any kind of betting or gambling, as well as commercial speculation of a gambling character. Remember how widespread are the temptations to grow rich at the expense of others, and how apparently harmless indulgence leads often by degrees to ruin and crime.

8. Watch with Christian tenderness over the opening minds of your children. Help them to understand the teachings of Jesus. Seek to awaken in them the love of Christ, and through example and training in self-control, to bring them to obedience to the law of God in their own hearts, that they may be joyful and willing in his service.

9. In consideration of marriage, remember that happiness depends on a deep and understanding love. Seek to be joined in a common discipleship of Jesus Christ. Ask guidance of God, desiring above all temporal considerations, that your union may be owned and blest of Him. Consider the precious responsibilities of parenthood, and do not forget the help you may draw from the loving counsel of your own parents.

10. Carefully maintain truthfulness and sincerity in your conduct, and encourage the same in your families. In your style of living, in your dress, and in the furniture of your houses, choose what is simple, useful, and good.

11. In view of the evils arising from the use of tobacco and intoxicating drinks, we urge all to abstain from using them, from offering them to others, and from having any part in their production, manufacture, or sale. Do not let the claims of "good fellowship" or the fear of seeming peculiar prevent you from standing by principles which you have conscientiously adopted.

12. Members are affectionately reminded of the importance of keeping correct and clear accounts pertaining to all outward affairs. It is important to make wills, or

revisions of them, while still in health of mind and body, and free from any feeling of resentment. Delay, or neglect to secure competent legal advice, may cause some unexpected hindrance in the proper execution of one's bequests.

13. Make it your aim to promote the cause of truth and righteousness, and to spread the Kingdom of God at home and abroad. Be ready to take your part fearlessly in declaring His message and in witnessing to His power.

14. Live in love, as Christian brethren, ready to be helpful one to another. Rejoice together in the blessings of life; sympathize with each other in its trials. Know one another as fellow-workers in the things that endure. Watch over one another for good, praying that each may be a living member of the Church of Christ, and may grow in the knowledge of the love of God.

15. Remember the special opportunities for refreshment of spirit and for service which the first day of the week affords; use them faithfully, as befits the Friends of the Master.

16. Be diligent in the reading of the Bible and other spiritually helpful writings. Gather daily in your families for worship. Such times have a special value in bringing little children especially into the experience of united worship, and so preparing them for the larger meeting for worship, as they learn in the silence to bow to the power of God.

17. Be mindful for yourselves and for your children that you value the beauty and power of good friendships. Also, by example and precept, encourage your children to appreciate the best in literature and the arts, which is consistent with our Christian faith. By this, all your lives may be enriched and the youth with tastes thus early formed may henceforth instinctively choose the beautiful and good.

18. Seek for your children that full development of God's gifts which true education can bring about. Remember that the service to which we are called needs healthy bodies, trained minds, high ideals, and an understanding of the laws

and purposes of God. Give of your best to the study of the Bible, and the understanding of the Christian faith. Be open-minded, ready constantly to receive new light.

19. Be zealous that education shall be continued throughout life. Willingness to be used in mind as well as in body, and to be equipped in both, is a needful part of Christian character. Our service to God is incomplete without the contribution of the intellect.

20. Follow steadfastly after all that is pure and lovely and of good report. Be prayerful. Be watchful. Be humble. Let no failure discourage you. When temptation comes, make it an opportunity to gain new strength by standing fast, that you may enter into that life of gladness and victory to which all are called.

21. A punctual attendance at the hour appointed for Meeting for Worship is a matter of no small importance. If we hurry from outward occupation, we are in danger of two things: our thoughts may still be with that in which we have been engaged, and our late arrival may interrupt that holy silence which should prevail; however, let us welcome with open hearts all who join us no matter when they arrive.

22. We would urge Friends, when away from home, to attend a Meeting for Worship if such is within reach. Such attendance may well strengthen the meeting, and may bring Friends who were hitherto strangers into fellowship with one another.

23. Those who visit our meetings for worship should be given a friendly welcome and be encouraged to continue to join us in worship. Particular assistance and loving attention should be accorded new members.

24. When we gather together in worship, let us remember that there is committed to us, as disciples of Christ, a share in the priesthood. We should help one another, whether in silence, or through spoken word, or prayer. Let none of us assume that vocal ministry is never to be our part. If the call comes, there should be no quenching of the Spirit.

The sense of our own unworthiness must not exempt us from this service, nor must the fear of being unable to find the right words, “for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak” (Matt. 10:19).

25. We should recognize the importance of finding occasion for some united worship during the week, either at the meetinghouse, or in a private home. Such may be of great assistance, not only to the individual, but also to the life of the whole group.

26. Let your whole conduct and conversation be worthy of disciples of Christ. “Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

27. Remember that our spiritual life will not be complete unless we have experienced an inward baptism and transformation. Growth in inward purity and outward Christian effectiveness should follow this experience; but such growth can come only if we persist in seeking to know and follow the commands of Christ.

28. In their senior years, and before debilitating infirmities prevail, Friends are affectionately admonished prayerfully to seek Divine Guidance and counsel from their families and friends regarding plans to continue to live in their own homes, enter a retirement home, or to make other living arrangements appropriate for their financial capabilities in their last years.

## **MINISTRY AND OVERSIGHT**

### **Overseers**

The Friends Meeting being a community of believers, its members are responsible for one another in both their human and spiritual needs. The pastoral care of the members in their personal and temporal lives is the responsibility of the Overseers; the oversight of the spiritual life of the meeting and

particularly, the meeting for worship, is chiefly the concern of the Meeting for Ministry and Oversight.

### *Appointment and Renewal of Overseers*

Monthly Meetings are advised to appoint, on nomination by a committee, at least two Friends of each sex from each preparative or particular meeting, to serve as Overseers.

Since the duties of Overseers may be various, and always vital to the life of the Meetings they serve, the Monthly Meeting should be careful to select Friends of different ages, gifts, and experience, if possible, and all of these should be active and well concerned members, imbued with a deep sense of responsibility toward the vitality and well-being of the Society.

It is recommended that at least once in three years these appointments should be reviewed by a committee appointed to consider the propriety of changing the Overseers. Other Friends, equally concerned for the well-being of the membership and the meeting, may be appointed, to the improvement of their gifts. By this means, opportunity also will be afforded for a relief from labors for those who have faithfully fulfilled their turn of stewardship.

### *Duties of Overseers*

Overseers take responsibility for the Meeting's care over the welfare of Friends. They must, when needful, attempt to adjust complaints, or any estrangements from harmony, which might impair the happy participation of individuals in the worship or the business of their meetings.

Overseers should take time and effort to become closely acquainted with all Friends. In proportion as they succeed in this, so will individuals the more readily come to them for confidential counsel. Any personal advice should be given privately in a spirit of meekness and love, with the intention to counsel patiently without offense to feelings.

Complaints from nonmembers shall be listened to, and as much care extended in their case as for members with us. Only thus may our belief be evinced in the equal and impartial administration of justice, without respect of persons.

On behalf of the Monthly Meeting, the Overseers shall make routine inquiry into all applications for and resignations from the membership. They shall also make an annual review of the membership status of all birthright<sup>xiii</sup> and associate members. They shall be responsible for preparing answers to the Administrative Queries for the consideration of the Monthly Meeting.

The Overseers should at all times be sensitive to the desires of the Monthly Meeting.

While the Yearly Meeting and our Monthly Meetings place special responsibility upon the Overseers, this is not intended to relieve other members from the duty and privilege of shepherding the flock. Rather it should be felt of mutual advantage to all, that the Overseers give encouragement and prompting, as leaders in this respect, acknowledging that other members may be even more gifted than they for certain offices. This may be particularly true concerning the community beyond the meeting itself.

### *Meetings of the Overseers*

The Overseers appointed in each Monthly Meeting should meet together regularly for their mutual encouragement, and to counsel together on how best to carry out their work in a spirit of love and consecration.

They should be prepared as a group to keep the peace, appease want, discourage tale bearing; also to consider the Christian influence of their own daily lives and to be concerned for the influences likely to arise from the social life of their fellow members. They should have a sense of the community beyond the meeting itself, of how the meeting relates to the community, and what it is doing for it. Any person so desiring, whether a member with us or not, may

bring business before the Overseers, by prior arrangement with one of them.

### *Special Counsel for the Consideration of Overseers*

The Yearly Meeting feels that proper oversight not only is essential in our meetings, but that the office of Overseer, when rightly fulfilled, can be of great value to the individual. The service is one bringing its own rich rewards, for it cannot properly be undertaken in one's own strength.

We would encourage those who are appointed to these positions of trust and influence to cherish an interest in and show an affectionate sympathy with our younger members, attempting to find good leadership for them, and suggesting ways in which they can be of service to the meeting.

Overseers should endeavor early to become personally known to all who attend the meetings, visiting in their homes and showing an affectionate interest in them.

## **Elders and Eldership**

### *Function and Qualifications of Elders*

In every meeting for worship there is a vital and a continuing need for a nucleus of Friends who feel exceptional concern for the deeper spiritual life of the meeting. They will also feel a concern for the encouragement and guidance of the vocal ministry.

These, however, are but the primary qualifications to be looked for in Elders. Ideally, they need, in addition, a considerable insight into character, an alert spiritual discernment, exceptionally good judgment, and a fund of ready tact and open friendliness. All these qualifications should be humbly dedicated to a deeply felt zeal for the spiritual growth of the Society, and upheld and purified by the power of constant watchful prayer.

Elders should feel a particular duty to give encouragement and oversight to those who appear in the vocal ministry or public prayer.

### *Appointment and Renewal of Elders*

Wherever possible, the Monthly Meeting shall appoint at least two Friends of each sex, preferably not Overseers, to serve as Elders in each particular Meeting. It shall name a committee of judicious and experienced Friends to consider carefully the persons best suited for such special service. When the committee agrees upon nominations it shall present the names to the Monthly Meeting, which in turn shall consider them separately and weightily. The nominations shall not be accepted or rejected in the same session in which they are presented. The following month, if the persons named are acceptable, the Monthly Meeting shall appoint them Elders, and so inform the Meeting for Ministry and Oversight. The Preparative Meeting of Ministry and Oversight or the Quarterly Meeting of Ministry and Oversight may also nominate elders to the Monthly Meeting at any time they feel so led. It should be recognized by all that true eldership is a Divine gift and function, which may occur whether an individual is an official elder or not.

The appointments shall be for terms not longer than six years, and alternated in such a way that half the number shall be eligible for renewal or change every third year or sooner, at the discretion of the Monthly Meeting.

The office of Elder being vested in his own Monthly Meeting for business cannot be conveyed with him to another Monthly Meeting. An Elder who loses fitness for his office should promptly have such care by the Preparative and Quarterly Meetings for Ministry and Oversight as may be needed, before the matter be referred by minute to the Monthly Meeting.

## **The Ministry of the Gospel**

As the inward experience of communion with God is central to our life and worship, so are spoken testimonies of invaluable service to the meeting. Such sharing is but the beginning of our duty to the whole of society. This is a distinctive, yet not exclusive, service of Gospel Ministry. As Friends, we are persuaded that true Gospel Ministry comes not of man, but through him by direct revelation from Jesus Christ by the prompting and guidance of the Holy Spirit. None the less, some meetings, entirely silent, give ample evidence of deep spiritual life.

The essential qualification for the ministry is the direct preparation by God himself in those individuals who are called to the service. As the gift is Divine, so the service should be freely and faithfully discharged without any view of reward from man. The express command of Christ, our head and high priest, was “Freely ye have received, freely give.”

One evidence that such messages are truly God-given is found in the peace experienced by those who deliver them, which seems to come as a rewarding sense of reassurance for humbly obeying an apparent “call.” We think we see further proof of Divine leading in the fact that the briefest heartfelt expression, voiced by the least experienced speaker, quite often is an inspiration to all who hear it.

From the beginning of our Society, Friends have held that men and women are equally qualified for vocal ministry, whether in our meetings or elsewhere. Friends also believe that every member should feel some responsibility for the quality of the meeting for worship, and that if all are but faithful and attentive to Divine leadings vocal messages may come through any worshipper.

Vocal expression needs watchful, sustained, and tender care under experienced guidance. Friends are thus advised to help each other to this end. This care is the distinctive service of the Eldership.

## **Acknowledged Ministers**

### *Recognition and Recording of Ministers*

When a member of the Society has frequently and serviceably spoken to the spiritual needs of himself and his fellow-worshippers, Friends should encourage him in this invaluable form of service. If his gift for ministry continues to grow, the Preparative Meeting for Ministry and Oversight should take particular notice thereof. If that Meeting, after careful and prayerful consideration of the matter, feels that a true gift for ministry has been bestowed, it should inform the Quarterly Meeting for Ministry and Oversight. If that body approves, it should encourage the Preparative Meeting for Ministry and Oversight to present the matter to the Monthly Meeting for its consideration.

If after due and proper consideration, the Monthly Meeting likewise feels convinced that such a member ought to be recorded as an acknowledged minister of the gospel, he may be so recorded by the clerk.

### *Procedures for Travel on Religious Concerns*

When a Minister or other concerned Friend feels called to religious service beyond his own Monthly Meeting, or to visit in Gospel love the families therein, he should first lay the matter before his Monthly Meeting, stating so far as he can foresee, the whole nature of the proposed service. If the Monthly Meeting feels free to unite with the concern, it shall make a minute to that effect, and furnish the minister with a copy thereof.

When the service is directed outside the minister's own Quarterly Meeting, the Quarterly Meeting should be informed of the concern. If this meeting approves, it should endorse the Monthly Meeting's minute, or issue a minute signed by its own clerks, thereby indicating its approval.

In the performance of such visits, in all cases where a minister travels in Gospel service, it is recommended that an

Elder or other suitable Friend should, if possible, accompany him. This person may also be furnished with a minute of approval by his own Monthly Meeting. All such minutes should bear the signatures of the clerks of said meetings.

If it should appear that the holding of any appointed meetings might be interfered with by awaiting the sanction of the Quarterly Meeting, liberty for such appointment may be granted under the united sense of the Elders and Overseers of the Monthly Meeting and/or those of the meetings where the visit is being made.

The Yearly Meeting earnestly desires that, in laying a concern before his Monthly Meeting, a minister shall take the greatest care to avoid any misunderstanding as to the nature and scope of his concern.

After the accomplishment of such services, the meetings which have granted minutes or certificates should be promptly notified and their documents returned to them without delay. Friends, returning minutes, are encouraged to report on their visits as fully as they feel easy to do, for the information and encouragement of the meetings which have supported them in their concerns.

Any meeting which grants minutes for travel should take care that the service is not hindered for lack of sufficient funds. The meeting issuing a minute shall appoint a committee to render any needed assistance to Friends during the religious service. These recommendations are not intended to restrict friendly visitations, nor to hamper Ministers, Elders, or other well concerned Friends, but to enable meetings to participate in, and foster, all calls to religious service in Gospel love.

A minute of introduction and greeting may be granted to a member who anticipates visiting other Friends during travel. Granting such a minute should be handled in manner similar to that of a travelling minute.

## **The Meeting for Ministry and Oversight**

The chief responsibility of the Meeting for Ministry and Oversight is to foster the spiritual life of the Meeting. The members should seek together for sensitivity and discernment that will enable them to encourage or caution as needed those who appear in vocal ministry and to draw forth those who may be neglecting their gifts.

The members of this group should always be open to new leadings and willing to take action in any new direction which may stimulate the spiritual life and development of our members.

They should also feel a deep concern to promote the reading of literature both ancient and modern which will strengthen and deepen the spiritual life. The Yearly Meeting feels an especial concern that our young members may find real Truth in science, in religion, and in every department of life.

The Meeting for Ministry and Oversight is composed of the recorded Ministers, the Elders, and the Overseers. They are grouped into Preparative, Quarterly, and Yearly Meeting bodies on the basis of the territories from which they come and which they are to serve. The Ministers, Elders, and Overseers of each Monthly Meeting will meet together in a Preparative Meeting for Ministry and Oversight. It is required that they meet at least once in three months and oftener as the opportunity to serve may appear. Each of these Meetings shall appoint one of its members to serve as Clerk.

Members of Ministry and Oversight should have the care of any appointed meetings in their Monthly Meeting area and should be responsible for the proper and regular reading aloud of the Advices.

A Meeting for Ministry and Oversight shall not interfere with the affairs of any meeting for business, but it may present any subject which it feels should be considered therein.

The Queries and Advices addressed to this body are to be regularly read and considered.

Representatives from the Preparative Meeting should be appointed to attend the Quarterly Meeting, and also members should be named as Yearly Meeting representatives from the Quarterly Meeting.

*Queries for the Meetings for Ministry and Oversight*

The following four Queries<sup>xiii</sup> are recommended to be read aloud in each of the Preparative Meetings. They are to be soberly considered, and suitable answers prepared to be sent to the Quarterly Meeting. The clerk of the Quarterly Meeting is to prepare summaries of these answers for its records, and the summaries prepared in the Quarterly Meeting for Ministry and Oversight just preceding the Yearly Meeting shall be forwarded to the Yearly Meeting for Ministry and Oversight.

1. M&O Queries Concerning the personal Spiritual conditions of M&O members
  - a) Over the past year, what spiritual joys and challenges have we had personally? What is each of us doing to deepen our spiritual lives as Friends? Who and what have helped us grow in personal obedience to divine promptings?
2. Concerning the functioning of the meeting for M&O
  - a) What were the primary joys and challenges experienced by our meeting for M&O last year?
  - b) What evidence do we see that our recorded ministers, elders, and overseers are faithful to their respective callings? Have all M&O members regularly attended meetings for worship and business? What have we done to support M&O members in the use of our gifts for God's work?
  - c) Have we sensed a developing spiritual gift in any of our monthly meetings' members? What have we done to encourage those gifts? What more are we called to do, individually and as M&O collectively?

3. Concerning our monthly meetings and their members
  - a) In the last year, how have we kept Friends' beliefs and the reasons for our practices clearly before our members? What evidence do we see of growing spiritual life among our members, including our youth?
  - b) What visits have we each paid in the past year to Friends active in our meetings? To Friends who are sick, shut-ins, or residents of retirement homes? How do we make ourselves available to members, attenders, and young people who wish to talk with us? How do we protect the confidentiality of private discussions?
  - c) How have we offered spiritual and practical support to new members and encouraged their acceptance into the fabric of the meeting? What have we done in the past year for members who do not regularly attend our meetings? What responses have we had?
4. Concerning spiritual outreach beyond our meetings
  - a) What have we each done to encourage people outside our membership to know that God loves them, and to join us in worship? How do we incorporate spiritual witness when we are offering temporal help?
  - b) In what ways have we followed up with inquirers about and visitors to our meetings? What more would God have us do in outreach?

### *Advices for the Meetings for Ministry and Oversight*

It is also desired that the following Advices be read and pondered in each of our Meetings for Ministry and Oversight at least once during the year. While the purpose of each Advice is primarily intended as a personal and private reminder for each individual, occasionally a way may open for some helpful comments in a spirit of brotherly love.

1. Let all ministers abide in a simple and patient submission to the will of God for that Divine ability by which alone they may faithfully and effectively preach the Word. Remember that all acceptable worship and Gospel ministry is performed under the immediate teaching and influence of the Holy Spirit.
2. Let all, in their spoken testimonies, be cautious of using unnecessary preambles, and of asserting too positively a Divine

impulse—the baptizing power of Truth accompanying their words being the true evidence.

3. Let all read the Holy Scriptures frequently and be careful to seek for Divine guidance in interpreting their meaning.
4. Since all Friends are bound to feel weightily concerned over many controversial issues of the day, our Ministers are reminded to be careful how they enter upon such disputed points when giving testimony. Let us remember that “True courage dwelleth closer to gentleness than to denunciation,” and that judgment belongs to the Lord. Let there be constant self-restraint from any tendency, either to give cause for or to be drawn into disputation of any kind during our meetings for worship.
5. Let all be cautious of interrupting the solemnity of the meeting by too frequent speaking or by unnecessary additions toward the conclusion of their addresses.
6. Be mindful of the importance of Ministry and Oversight members' expressing the love we have for each other. May we work together for mutual support, encouragement, and discernment. Let each of us continue to search the Scriptures, open our hearts to early Friends' writings, and pray fervently for each other. <sup>xiv</sup>
7. Lastly, dear Friends, let all dwell in that Spirit which alone can give ability to those who labor in the Church of Christ.

## **MARRIAGE**

We earnestly advise and exhort Friends to wait upon the Lord for counsel and guidance before starting any procedure for marriage. The union of a man and woman is not to be undertaken lightly.

Friends regard marriage as a continuing religious sacrament, not merely a civil contract. We believe that marriage is an ordinance of God, appointed for the help and blessing of both partners and for the right upbringing of the next generation. We believe that human sexual intercourse is only appropriate within a marriage relationship, and that all adultery is wrong. Divorce and broken homes are a blight to

our country, and great care needs to be exercised that the union be on the right foundation. Even when the marriage relationship fails to achieve its highest possibilities and unhappiness develops, we believe that by patient and prayerful determination these obstacles may be overcome. Overseers should be aware of sources of outside counseling that are available, have the meeting's permission to recommend the use of Christian counselors, and be sensitive to the time to make these recommendations to married couples who may need help.

A well-founded marriage is a source of strength, security, and joy, not only to the couple and their family, but to the community and to all whom their lives touch.

True happiness and joy in marriage depends first on the presence of devoted love, a love which is not the outcome merely of a passing attraction, but which includes a real respect for the personality of the other.

Every such union should be undertaken in the fear of the Lord and with a reverent attention to His counsel and guidance. It will be owned and blessed by Him if the love that draws two souls together is sanctified by the larger love of Christ. Of utmost importance is a common faith in God, and a mutual desire to open heart and home to the spirit of Christ.

The Friends' marriage ceremony reflects our belief that the marriage contract is made by the couple themselves, completed and blessed by God. The simple Friendly wedding where the two concerned say their vows within the framework of a meeting for worship, without the help of a third person, is the natural expression of a way of life in which we believe. In the presence of God and with the support and prayers of their friends, they take each other as life partners, asking His blessing on their union and dedicating their new life to His service.

## **Marriage Procedure**

In order to do all that it can to assure the stability and happiness of couples who are married under its care, the Yearly Meeting outlines the following procedure preliminary to the wedding.

The couple presents a letter, signed by both of them, to the Monthly Meeting under whose care they wish to be married, stating that they intend marriage with each other.

This letter is minuted by the Clerk, and a “clearness committee” is appointed. It is customary for the bride's meeting to have charge of the wedding. In this case, the committee on clearness, which this meeting appoints, will be for her.

The groom writes to his own meeting, asking for a statement of his membership to be forwarded to the bride's meeting. Before preparing the statement, his meeting appoints a committee on clearness.

The original purpose of these committees, from which their name is derived, was to ascertain whether the applicants were free of conflicting marriage engagements. Today, in addition to this requirement, such committees should be concerned to do what they can to help the couple achieve a stable and happy marriage. They should endeavor to give any assistance or counsel which the couple may need. Acceptance of Christian counsel should be a prerequisite for marriage under the care of the meeting. It is recommended that a small collection of books and pamphlets on marriage be made available and kept up to date for the use of couples contemplating marriage.

The month following their initial letter of intention, the couple presents a second letter to the meeting, stating that they continue their intentions of marriage, and suggesting a time for the wedding. At this time the bride's committee on clearness should report, and the groom's statement from his meeting should be presented, also consent of parents. A

Monthly Meeting may permit a marriage to take place without parents' consent if it feels that their objection is unreasonable.

If everything is in order, the Monthly Meeting selects a committee to have oversight of the wedding and appoints the meeting in which the marriage is to take place, preferably on a weekday. This committee should meet with the couple to discuss plans for the wedding and reception, which should be carried out with dignity, reverence, and simplicity.

The Oversight Committee, in conjunction with the Monthly Meeting Clerk, also has the responsibility of informing itself as to the legal requirements for marriage, and of seeing to it that the couple is aware of them and that they are carried out in adequate time. (See Note under "Additional Counsel.")

After the wedding, the Oversight Committee has the marriage certificate recorded by the Monthly Meeting Recorder, sees that the legal report is sent to the county, and reports to the Monthly Meeting on carrying out its duties.

If either the bride or groom has children by a previous marriage, the Committee should see that their legal rights are secured.

If the bride and groom are members of the same meeting, the procedure is, of course, somewhat simplified. If one is not a member of Friends, the marriage may be under the care of the meeting to which the member belongs, in which case this meeting should appoint committees on clearness both for the member and the nonmember. If for good reason the couple wish to be married in the groom's meeting, or in a meeting to which neither belongs, the committee on clearness should always be appointed by the bride's and groom's own home meetings, which then forward their certificates to the clerk of the meeting which is to have charge of the wedding, and which appoints the Oversight Committee.

The marriage itself, as stated before, takes place in a meeting for worship, in which the bride and groom rise, usually toward the close of the meeting, take each other by the

hand, and repeat the following promise, the groom first: “In the presence of the Lord, and before these our Friends, I take thee, \_\_\_\_\_ to be my wife (husband), promising, with Divine assistance, to be unto thee a loving and faithful husband (wife) so long as we both shall live” (or words to that effect).

The marriage certificate is then signed, by the groom first, then by the bride with her married name, and is read aloud by a person selected beforehand. At the close of the meeting all persons present are invited to sign the certificate as witnesses.

The form of the certificate in essence is as follows: Whereas, A. B. of \_\_\_\_\_, in the County of \_\_\_\_\_, in \_\_\_\_\_, son of C. B., of \_\_\_\_\_, and H., his wife; and D. E., daughter of F. E., of \_\_\_\_\_, and N., his wife, having declared their intentions of marriage with each other to \_\_\_\_\_ Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends held at \_\_\_\_\_, according to the good order used among them, and having the consent of parents (or guardians), their proposed marriage was allowed by that meeting. These are to certify to whom it may concern, that for the accomplishment of their intention, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of the \_\_\_\_\_ Month, in the year of our Lord \_\_\_\_\_, they, A. B. and D. E., appearing in a Public Meeting for worship of the Religious Society of Friends, held at \_\_\_\_\_, and A. B., taking D. E. by the hand, did on this solemn occasion declare that he took her, D. E., to be his wife, promising, with Divine assistance, to be unto her a loving and faithful husband so long as they both shall live (or words to that effect). And then in the same assembly, D. E. did in like manner declare that she took him, A. B., to be her husband, promising with Divine assistance, to be unto him a loving and faithful wife so long as they both shall live (or words to that effect). And moreover, they, A. B. and D. E., she according to the custom of marriage adopting the surname of her husband, did, as a further

confirmation thereof, then and there to these presents, set their hands. A. B. D. B. And we, having been present at the marriage, have as witnesses set our hands the day and year above written. Signed:

---

---

### **Marriage Outside the Care of the Meeting**

If a member is married outside the care of the meeting, the Overseers should either visit or correspond with the newly married couple, expressing the interest of the meeting in their new life. It is our desire and hope that the member will continue his relationship with the Society and that the nonmember should be made welcome and invited to attend meeting.

### **Additional Counsel**

We feel it wise that a member should not remarry sooner than a year after the death of a former husband or wife. An interval of time is necessary for a person to readjust his life and to seek guidance for its direction.

It is also the judgment of the Yearly Meeting that, as our state laws provide, marriages between first cousins, or the children of half-brothers and half-sisters, should not be permitted.

Since all prior wills are automatically and profoundly affected by marriage and/or parenthood, we have thought it well to call attention here to some important advice on wills, given at the end of this book.

Note: Committees of oversight of marriages are urged to contact local (county) officials well ahead of the time of the wedding in order to assure that both the county officials and the Friends involved are familiar with the relevant statutes and are prepared to work within them. Friends should be aware that allowance is made in the statutes of some states, including

Ohio, for marriages under the care of Friends without the officiation of a person legally registered to perform marriages.

### **MEMBERS IN NEED**

It is the desire of the Yearly Meeting that cases of our members in financial need may be tactfully inspected by local meetings. They should extend care as seems prudent, such as finding suitable employment, or where work is not available, defraying living expenses and providing for the education of the children. Friends are urged to be compassionate and charitable in providing funds for these purposes but to guard against exposing names and conditions of fellow members.

### **FUNERALS AND BURIAL GROUNDS**

Two or more suitable Friends of each particular meeting should be appointed by Monthly Meetings to extend their sympathy in case of death, to offer assistance in regard to funeral or memorial arrangements and to be in attendance at services.

Friends are urged to conform to true simplicity in all funeral arrangements, avoiding elaborate and expensive caskets, and floral decorations. The simplicity of a meeting for worship is desired in the conduct of funerals. They should be occasions when things temporal are secondary, when the reality of life immortal is deeply felt, and when the presence of our Lord brings hope, comfort, and consolation to the bereaved.

The Funeral Committee, or a special graveyard committee, is to have care of the burial grounds belonging to the meeting. They will see that the graveyard is kept in good order and the records of interment accurately kept. They shall see that the exact place of each interment is accurately marked upon an interment chart or plan, one copy of which, at least, is kept safeguarded from loss by fire or other causes, in a suitable vault, under the care of the custodian of records. A

duplicate copy is to be used for the convenience of such committee, but also safeguarded from fire or other hazard.

Graves should be marked by plain low stones, giving only the name of the deceased and appropriate dates.

Nonmembers may not be interred in Friends' grounds without the consent of the funeral or graveyard committee.

## **MEMORIALS**

“Lives of great men all remind us,  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And departing, leave behind us,  
Footprints on the sands of time.”

Thus wrote the poet Longfellow, and we believe that suitable accounts of our members who have lived exemplary spiritual lives may be an inspiration to those who follow after. If, therefore, any Meeting should feel that it would be profitable to prepare a memorial concerning a deceased member, such memorial is to be sent to the Representative Meeting for approval and referral to the Memorial Committee, then returned to the Representative Meeting for final approval and printing instructions.

## **MEETING HOUSES AND GROUNDS: TRUSTEESHIP**

Meetings should make due examinations as to the titles of all meeting houses, burial grounds, and other estates which have been vested in Trustees, and held by them for the use and benefit of the Society at large or any of the Meetings. Whenever it appears needful, the Meeting shall promptly appoint new members to such Trusteeships. It is further directed that Meetings shall keep exact records of all business transactions, all trusts and conveyances, and indicate where all their minutes, papers, and records have been deposited. Both Meetings and individuals are encouraged to utilize the services of the Fiduciary Trustees of the Yearly Meeting (see Fiduciary Trustees ).

If a Preparative Meeting ceases to exist, all its property shall be transferred and conveyed to its Monthly Meeting. If a Monthly Meeting ceases to exist, without merging or consolidating with another Monthly Meeting, all its property shall be transferred and conveyed to its Quarterly Meeting. If a Quarterly Meeting ceases to exist, without merging or consolidating with another Quarterly Meeting, all its property shall be transferred to the Yearly Meeting. If two Monthly Meetings or if two Quarterly Meetings merge or consolidate, all the property of both shall be held by the merged Meeting. Such transfer and conveyance shall be authorized by an appropriate minute, duly recorded, and the assignment transfer and deed of conveyance shall be executed and delivered by such Meetings before they are formally laid down or disbanded, or in the case of merged or consolidated Meetings, at the time of merger. In the event that such action is not taken by the Meetings before they are laid down, merged, or consolidated, the Monthly Meeting, the Quarterly Meeting, or the Yearly Meeting entitled to receive any such property shall become the equitable owner and shall be entitled forthwith to require the assignment or conveyance of the legal title, to be held by such Monthly, Quarterly, or Yearly Meeting under and upon the same trusts as the property has been theretofore held, if it is practicable that such trusts be carried out; otherwise, upon trusts similar thereto as the successor Meeting may determine.

No Meeting property shall be distributed or partitioned among the individual members of a Meeting.

## **FIDUCIARY TRUSTEES**

The Fiduciary Trustees of Ohio Yearly Meeting of Friends, Barnesville, Ohio, is “a corporation not for profit.” It developed to its present legal form and standing from a suggestion of the Meeting for Sufferings (now the Representative Meeting) in 1924. The duties and functions of this body are: To receive and hold all titles to property and all

trust funds, securities, bequests, legacies, gifts, or endowments that are in the nature of permanent funds, now held by the Yearly Meeting or any of its committees or which in the future may come to them; to invest, care for, and collect the income therefrom and disburse the same, as required by the wills of the donors or the direction of the Yearly Meeting; and to report annually to the Yearly Meeting.

In case of sale of any tract of land belonging to the Yearly Meeting, the Fiduciary Trustees are legally qualified upon instruction from either the Yearly Meeting or the Representative Meeting to give a marketable title to any such tract without having to secure an order from the Court of Common Pleas.

Constituent Meetings of the Yearly Meeting are at liberty to place titles to properties in the hands of Fiduciary Trustees. They may also invest their trust funds with these Trustees.

## **CAPITAL PUNISHMENT**

Our opposition to capital punishment is based on the command of Christ to love and not to kill, and on the belief that there is that of God in every man. We believe in the value of every human life, and that even the most unfortunate sinner may be reclaimed and brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

We feel that a considerate and Christian treatment of all offenders is always possible. We urge Friends to work for the complete abolition of the death penalty.

## **EDUCATION**

The very important subject of education of our youth in piety and virtue, as well as in intellectual pursuits, has engaged the attention of the Yearly Meeting throughout its history. Friends believe in the sacramental quality of the whole of life. All life should be an education; all education

should have religious significance. The deepest aim of Quaker education should be to cultivate an attentive ear and a habit of quick response to the Divine leading within each individual.

We are concerned to encourage the schools which our children attend to maintain a high standard of moral character and Christian principles as well as academic excellence.

Schools under the care of the Yearly Meeting have an opportunity to include in their curricula some instruction in Quaker beliefs and principles, as well as to create a wholesome and Christian atmosphere in which our youth may grow. Teachers should be employed who are concerned not only to follow Christian ideals, but who can also instill in the pupils a desire to be guided by the Light of Christ in all phases of life.

Many of our Meetings will want to foster First-day Schools with teachers and leaders who serve voluntarily. The basic aim of these classes is to give each individual spiritual nourishment, and to lead him in a growing knowledge of the Bible. Although we must be watchful to provide religious training in our homes, schools and First-day Schools, we must ever keep in mind that attendance at Meetings where Friends come close to God and to each other is an essential part of religious training.

Conditions all over the world are changing constantly and create problems which need our prayerful consideration. Conferences, forums, and discussion groups are sometimes helpful in appraising these problems. It is important that we understand them in their relation to the will of God for us.

## **OATHS**

Our testimony against the use of oaths is founded upon the following positive command of Jesus: "But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is His footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy

head because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communications be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.” Matthew 5:34-37.

Many Friends suffered for keeping this commandment. While we should continue to be prepared to suffer for faithfulness, most civil authorities routinely allow a nonceremonial affirmation or written statement of one's intention to be truthful even though one declines to swear. These provide legal alternatives to swearing and still subject one to civil punishment for intentional untruthfulness (that is, “perjury”). These legal alternatives should not be used as a way of avoiding suffering for faithfulness to Christ's command, but as an opening to be an even greater witness for Christ. Friends should understand and be prepared to share the scriptural basis of this testimony. But, most importantly, Friends need never be anxious when brought before the civil authorities, but rather mindful of Christ's promise for such situations that, “the Holy Ghost will teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.” Luke 12:12. <sup>xv</sup>

## **PEACE AND WAR**

It has been the belief of the Society of Friends from its rise that all war is contrary to the teachings of our blessed Redeemer, Jesus Christ. In His Sermon on the Mount, He admonished us to love our enemies, to bless those who curse us, and to do good to those who hate us. Likewise, when Peter smote the servant of the high priest with his sword, our Lord said to him, “Put up thy sword again into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword” (Matt. 26:52).

In a statement presented to the King of England in 1660, Friends declared: “The Spirit of Christ by which we are guided is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil, and again to move unto it; and we certainly do know, and testify to the world that the Spirit of Christ, which leads us into all truth, will never move us to fight and war

against any man with outward weapons, neither for the Kingdom of Christ nor for the kingdoms of this world.”

As we believe that all war is wrong, so we believe that all preparation or training for war is wrong. Military conscription is inconsistent with the teaching and practices of Christianity.

We not only feel abhorrence for the evils of war and the suffering and misery connected with it, but we desire to work actively for peace, endeavoring to remove the economic and political causes of war. We wish to emphasize the brotherhood of all men, and that unity and peace can only be achieved by the Spirit of Christ working in the hearts of men.

It is our profound belief that the peoples of the world desire peace, but we do not believe that it can be achieved through a policy of military strength. Peace can only be built when men seek to solve their common problems in a spirit of reconciliation and national humility. We must act with love, forbearance and forgiveness; trusting in God and in His Spirit working in all men.

Today when talk about defending ourselves against an enemy is very prevalent, we would encourage our members to keep in mind that the only true shelter is peace.

As members of a Society which has always been opposed to war, we must work unflinchingly for peace as a Yearly Meeting as well as in our local communities, ever keeping in mind that peace must begin with ourselves in each individual heart. Jesus Christ called His disciples, and still calls us to a deep personal commitment to the way of love. It is only by the working of this Spirit through us that the problems of war, hate and strife can be solved and peace brought to a troubled world.

## **RACIAL EQUALITY**

We believe that all races are equal in God's sight. Friends feel the burden of racial discrimination, social

injustices and intolerances, and should do what we can, under Divine leading, to alleviate such wrongs.

## **RECREATION**

Recreation is important for a full creative life. It should be a time of both physical and mental refreshment. However, we must be careful to choose what is wholesome and uplifting, and avoid things that are wasteful of time and money and that tend to draw us away from the true aim and purpose in life. If we are wholly dedicated to a God-filled life, we will endeavor to please Him both in our work and in our recreation.

## **SIMPLICITY**

Even in times when life was less complex than it is today, Friends emphasized the importance of simplicity. The heart of Christian simplicity lies in the singleness of purpose which is required by the injunction to seek first the Kingdom of God. As men seek to express the spirit of God in their daily lives, they realize the necessity of putting first things first.

Simplicity does not mean that all conform to uniform standards. Each must determine in the light that is given him what promotes and what hinders his compelling search for the Kingdom. The call to each is to abandon those things that clutter his life and to press toward the goal unhampered. This is true simplicity.

Early Friends refrained from using the customary names of the months and days of the week since some of these were unquestionably derived from names of heathen gods.

Pertaining to dress, our principle is to let decency, simplicity, and utility be our guide. When one is truly trying to seek first the Kingdom of God he will not be a slave to fashion. Since we believe our bodies are the temples of the living God, we should dress simply and modestly. As in dress, so in all our phases of living, we should each one of us strive to follow the dictates of the Light of Christ within.

Another basic belief of Friends is in the equal worth of all men in the sight of God. Early Friends avoided titles of respect, tipping of the hat, and the use of the plural word “you” when addressing one person, because these customs originated from the practice of showing undue respect to those in authority and wealth.

## **TEMPERANCE**

It is well known that the use of alcoholic drinks affects the mind and body harmfully and is a factor in a great number of crimes. We urge total abstinence from the use or handling of any intoxicants, not only on the ground that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, but also on the principle set forth by the Apostle, “If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend” (1 Cor. 8:13).

We wish to stress also that this applies not only to the use of alcoholic beverages but to narcotics, tobacco, or anything that is harmful to the individual.

## **WILLS**

It is recommended that Friends make wills in order to prevent the inconvenience, loss and trouble to their beneficiaries of dying intestate; that they make their wills under professional advice in time of health and sound judgment, and dispose of their estates as a proper stewardship dictates. We counsel that none postpone this duty to a time of illness or emergency. Making his will in due time can shorten no man's days, but omission and delay have proved very injurious to many.

Friends are reminded that marriage revokes a will previously made, and that after marriage a new will should be made without delay. Also it should be noted that in some states, all real estate becomes subject to the law of entail upon the birth of the first child; thus Friends are urged to keep in

mind the need for revising their wills from time to time as circumstances change.

Friends are admonished to regard the possession of property as a stewardship, valuable for proper use, but liable to abuse; remembering that all possessory rights are constantly subject to change through law. Property and its possession involve power. Modern ideals of social responsibility require that such power be administered under a sense of social concern. Even modest wealth requires watchfulness in its proper application.

## ***LOG OF CHANGES***

In 2022 the Yearly Meeting directed the Printing Committee “to research our minutes and produce an authoritative version” of the Discipline and stressed the importance of maintaining a log of changes (see 2022 minutes page 101).

To comply with these directives, the Printing Committee reviewed the Yearly Meeting Minutes back to 2006, cross-referencing with versions of the Discipline back to 2008. Only one instance was found where the Yearly Meeting made a change that was not reflected in the Discipline. This was when the Document and Epistle Committees were merged in 2019 but a reference to the Document committee was not removed from the Discipline.

Thus, the following log identifies changes back to the 2008 Discipline. It is the intent of the Printing Committee to update this log as subsequent changes are made.

| <b>Year Change Authorized</b> | <b>Description</b>                                                                    | <b>Section Changed</b>               | <b>Minute Book Reference</b> | <b>Endnote</b> |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| 2006                          | Inserting the word “birthright” into sentence describing review of membership status. | Duties of Overseers. Page 36.        | Page 23.                     | xii            |
| 2009                          | Revision to 8 <sup>th</sup> Query.                                                    | Queries. Page 29.                    | Pages 38 and 39.             | xi             |
| 2009                          | Replacing parts of the description of the concern for oaths.                          | OATHS. Page 56.                      | Pages 38 and 39.             | xv             |
| 2013                          | Expansion and clarification of the duties of the Representative Meeting.              | The Representative Meeting. Page 26. | Pages 62 and 63.             | ix             |

| <b>Year Change Authorized</b> | <b>Description</b>                                                 | <b>Section Changed</b>                                                | <b>Minute Book Reference</b> | <b>Endnote</b> |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| 2014                          | Increase in the maximum number of representatives.                 | The Representative Meeting. Page 25.                                  | Pages 8 and 9.               | viii           |
| 2015                          | Substantial modification of M&O Queries.                           | Queries for the Meetings for Ministry and Oversight. Pages 43 and 44. | Pages 7, 82 and 83           | xiii           |
| 2017                          | Portion of Administrative Query on schools removed.                | The Administrative Queries. Page 25.                                  | Page 10.                     | vi             |
| 2018                          | Revision of Nominating Committee Description                       | The Yearly Meeting <i>Procedure</i> . Page 23.                        | Pages 54 and 82              | ii             |
| 2019                          | M&O Query 1b Dropped.                                              | Queries for the Meetings for Ministry and Oversight. Page 43.         | Page 59                      | xiii           |
| 2019                          | M&O Advice added.                                                  | Advices for the Meetings for Ministry and Oversight. Page 45.         | Page 59                      | xiv            |
| 2019                          | Document Committee merged into Epistle Committee.                  | The Yearly Meeting <i>Procedure</i> . Page 23.                        | Page 11                      | i              |
| 2022                          | Quarterly and Yearly Meeting to answer some Administrative Queries | The Administrative Queries. Page 24.                                  | Page 16                      | v              |

| Year Change Authorized | Description                              | Section Changed                                        | Minute Book Reference | Endnote       |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 2022                   | Sixth Administrative Query added.        | The Administrative Queries. Page 25.                   | Page 16               | vii           |
| 2022                   | Prayer & Listening Comm. recommendations | The Yearly Meeting <i>Procedure</i> . Pages 24 and 28. | Page 88               | iii, iv and x |

## *INDEX*

- Administrative Queries 24  
responsibility for 24, 36  
Adminstration..... 18  
Advices  
    General ..... 29  
    Ministry and  
    Oversight ..... 44  
Aging ..... 34  
Alcohol..... 28, 31, 59  
Approval of minutes..... 20  
Baptism ..... 7, 34  
Bible  
    Also see ..... Scripture  
    Children reading..... 28  
    Reading and study ... 32,  
    33, 45, 55  
    Understanding a  
    leading ..... 8  
Burial Grounds ..... **51**  
Business Meeting ... 10, 20  
Clearness committee .... 47  
Cemeteries.....*See* Burial  
    Grounds  
Certificate of  
    Membership ..... 16  
Certificates ..... 15  
Changes.....6, 61, 68  
Children.....32  
    Attendance .....9  
    Bible reading .....28  
    Changing residence...15  
    Examples for .....28  
    Membership .....11, 15  
    Teaching.25, 31, 32, 51,  
    55  
Christian doctrine.....7  
Clerk  
    Continuity .....25  
    Correspondence.....11  
    Eligibility .....13  
    Minutes, composing..10  
    Who Appoints .....19, 21  
Clerk of Yearly Meeting  
    Reports to .....23  
    Who appoints .....23  
Discipleship...7, 31, 33, 34

|                          |                         |                          |                |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Disunity .....           | 17                      | Maintaining Contacts ... | 18, 37         |
| Divine Guidance.....     | 34                      | Marriage .....           | 45             |
| Education.....           | 54                      | Advice .....             | 31             |
| for Children ..          | 32, 51, 54              | Between close            |                |
| Throughout life...       | 33, 54                  | relations.....           | 50             |
| Elders.....              | 37                      | Certificate.....         | 49             |
| Appointment of .....     | 38                      | Counseling .....         | 29, 46         |
| Function of .....        | 37                      | Procedure .....          | 47             |
| Meetings for visiting    |                         | Remarriage after         |                |
| Ministers.....           | 41                      | widowhood.....           | 50             |
| Qualifications for ..... | 37                      | Wills.....               | 59             |
| Terms.....               | 38                      | Meeting for Business ... | 10, 20         |
| Who Appoints .....       | 19                      | Meeting for Worship..... | 9              |
| Fiduciary Trustees.....  | <b>53</b>               | Advice for .....         | 30             |
| Forgiveness .....        | 28, 57                  | Attendance .....         | 28             |
| Funeral Committee.....   | <b>51</b>               | Away from home .....     | 33             |
| Funerals .....           | 51                      | Children, preparation    | 32             |
| Gambling.....            | 29                      | Marriage.....            | 46, 48         |
| Gender equality .....    | 39                      | Punctuality .....        | 33             |
| General Queries and      |                         | Responsibility for       | 35, 39         |
| Advices.....             | 27                      | Visitors.....            | 33             |
| George Fox.....          | 6                       | Meeting houses .....     | <b>52</b>      |
| Gambling.....            | 31                      | Membership .....         | 11             |
| Graveyard committee ...  | <b>51</b>               | Active.....              | 14             |
| Gravestones .....        | <b>52</b>               | Adult .....              | 12             |
| Graveyards .....         | <i>See</i> Burial       | Affiliate .....          | 12             |
| Grounds                  |                         | Application for .....    | 14             |
| Guidance and Counsel..   | 26                      | Associate .....          | 11             |
| Home life.....           | 28, 29, 30              | Birthright.....          | 11             |
| Marriage .....           | 45                      | Children.....            | 11, 15         |
| Religious training.....  | 55                      | Distance, at a           | 12, 14, 16, 18 |
| Senior years.....        | 34                      | Full .....               | 14             |
| Intoxicants .....        | 28, 31, 59              | Recording.....           | 15             |
| Lateness.....            | 33                      | Reinstating .....        | 15             |
| M&O .....                | <i>See</i> Ministry and |                          |                |
| Oversight                |                         |                          |                |

|                          |           |                         |            |
|--------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|------------|
| Release .....            | 16        | Property .....          | 19         |
| Removal                  |           | Setting up .....        | 21         |
| (transferring) .....     | 16        | Trustees .....          | 52         |
| Resigning .....          | 17        | Monthly Meeting         |            |
| Responsibility for ..... | 18        | Property .....          | 53         |
| Sojourning .....         | 16        | Needs of Others.....    | 28, 51     |
| Statement of .....       | 16        | New Meetings ...        | 11, 19, 21 |
| Termination              |           | Nominating Committee of |            |
| appealing .....          | 17        | Yearly Meeting .....    | 23         |
| Termination of.....      | 16        | Oaths .....             | 29, 30, 55 |
| Transferring             |           | Outreach .....          | 19, 20, 44 |
| (removal) .....          | 16        | Sharing our             |            |
| Waiting .....            | 12        | fellowship.....         | 28         |
| Memorials .....          | <b>52</b> | Sharing our             |            |
| Midweek Worship.....     | 34        | testimonies .....       | 29, 56     |
| Minister                 |           | Spreading the           |            |
| Traveling .....          | 40        | Kingdom .....           | 32         |
| Ministers.....           | 40        | Overseers.....          | 34, 36     |
| Recording .....          | 40        | Appointing .....        | 35         |
| Vocal Ministry .....     | 44        | Associate Members...    | 12         |
| Who recognizes .....     | 19        | Counsel for.....        | 37         |
| Ministry and Oversight   | 34,       | Disunity.....           | 17         |
| 42                       |           | Duties .....            | 35         |
| Advices.....             | 44        | Encouraging Meeting     |            |
| Appointment of           |           | participation .....     | 14         |
| Elders.....              | 38        | Marriage counseling.    | 46,        |
| Appointment of           |           | 50                      |            |
| Overseers.....           | 36        | Meetings for visiting   |            |
| Composition .....        | 27, 42    | Ministers .....         | 41         |
| Monthly Meeting          |           | Meetings of .....       | 36         |
| independance from        | 42        | Membership              |            |
| Queries .....            | 43        | application.....        | 14         |
| Responsibilities of....  | 42        | Membership lists.....   | 15         |
| Ministry of the Gospel . | 39        | Membership              |            |
| Minutes of Yearly        |           | termination .....       | 16         |
| Meeting .....            | 24        | Special business        |            |
| Monthly Meeting....      | 11, 18    | sessions .....          | 19         |

|                         |            |                            |            |
|-------------------------|------------|----------------------------|------------|
| Terms.....              | 35         | Duties .....               | 26         |
| Who Appoints .....      | 19         | Representatives for        |            |
| Oversight Committee ... | 48         | Representative             |            |
| Oversight Committee     |            | Meeting .....              | 25         |
| responsibilities ...    | 48, 50     | Representatives to         |            |
| Peace                   |            | Quarterly Meeting .....    | 22         |
| Absence of war..        | 29, 30,    | Representatives to Yearly  |            |
| 56                      |            | Meeting .....              | 20, 22, 23 |
| Contentment ..          | 6, 28, 30, | Representatives to         |            |
| 39                      |            | Quarterly Meeting .....    | 19         |
| Preparative Meeting     |            | Scripture                  |            |
| Definition of .....     | 18         | Also see.....              | Bible      |
| New .....               | 11         | Preparation for            |            |
| Property .....          | 53         | meeting.....               | 9          |
| Reports .....           | 19         | Reading and study .....    | 45         |
| Setting up .....        | 21         | Simplicity .....           | 31, 58     |
| Preparative Meeting for |            | Sojourning Certificate ... | 16         |
| Ministry and Oversight  |            | Spiritual growth           |            |
| Appointment of          |            | Elders .....               | 37         |
| Elders.....             | 38         | Membership .....           | 14         |
| Definition of .....     | 42         | Simplicity .....           | 29         |
| Recording Ministers .   | 40         | Spiritual life             |            |
| Punctuality .....       | 33         | Advices .....              | 29         |
| Quarterly Meeting ..    | 18, 19     | Baptism .....              | 34         |
| Quarterly Meeting       |            | Business .....             | 20         |
| Property .....          | 53         | Communion with             |            |
| Queries                 |            | Christ.....                | 6          |
| Administrative.....     | 24         | Elders .....               | 37         |
| Adminstrative,          |            | Growth .....               | 44         |
| responsibility for .    | 24,        | Literature.....            | 42         |
| 36                      |            | Meeting, of.....           | 42         |
| General .....           | 27         | Overseers.....             | 34         |
| Ministry and            |            | Silence.....               | 39         |
| Oversight .....         | 43         | Simplicity .....           | 29         |
| Removal (transferring   |            | Tardiness .....            | 33         |
| membership).....        | 16         | Temperance.....            | 28, 59     |
| Representative Meeting  | 25         | Temptation .....           | 31, 33     |

|                        |            |                       |                     |
|------------------------|------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Tobacco .....          | 28, 31, 59 | Waiting Members.....  | 12                  |
| Traveling in the       |            | Worship Groups .....  | 11                  |
| Ministry .....         | 21, 40     | Vocal Ministry .....  | 10, 33              |
| Treasurer of Yearly    |            | Cautions .....        | 44, 45              |
| Meeting .....          | 23         | Divisive .....        | 45                  |
| Trustees               |            | Elders .....          | 37                  |
| Monthly Meeting.....   | <b>52</b>  | Gender equality ..... | 39                  |
| Yearly Meeting.....    | <i>See</i> | Ministers .....       | 44                  |
| Fiduciary Trustees     |            | Ministry and          |                     |
| Transformation .....   | 34         | Oversight.....        | 42                  |
| Visitation             |            | War.....              | 29, 30, 56          |
| Affiliate Members .... | 14         | Weddings ....         | <i>See</i> Marriage |
| Maintaining Contacts   | 37         | Wills.....            | 59                  |
| Members.....           | 44         | Advice .....          | 31                  |
| Minute of              |            | Marriage .....        | 50                  |
| introduction .....     | 41         | Yearly Meeting        |                     |
| Resigning members..    | 16         | Composition of.....   | 18                  |
| Travel, during.....    | 41         | Definition of.....    | 22                  |
| Traveling in the       |            | History of .....      | 5                   |
| Ministry .....         | 40         | Minutes .....         | 24                  |

## ENDNOTES

Endnotes provide details of changes made to this Discipline.

---

<sup>i</sup> In 2019 the Yearly Meeting approved merging the Epistle and Document committees, the resulting Epistle Committee membership managed by the Nominating Committee as most other Yearly Meeting Committees. See 2019 minutes pages 11 and 42. In 2022 references to the Document Committee were removed from the section on Yearly Meeting Procedures.

<sup>ii</sup> In 2018 the Yearly Meeting approved a substantial revision of the description of the Nominating Committee. See pages 54 and 82 of 2018 minutes.

<sup>iii</sup> In 2021 the Yearly Meeting approved recommendations by an ad hoc *Prayer and Listening Committee* to implement changes in our procedures. These changes were intended to lessen the risk of burnout by Friends serving the Body and were to be followed for a trial period of one year. In 2023 the Yearly Meeting approved making the changes permanent. See pages 98, 99 and 104 of 2021 minutes and page 88 of 2022 minutes.

<sup>iv</sup> See iii.

<sup>v</sup> In 2022 the Yearly Meeting approved adding a sentence to the Administrative Queries description to direct the Yearly and Quarterly Meetings to answer certain queries. See 2022 minutes page 16.

<sup>vi</sup> In 2017 the Yearly Meeting approved the removal of two sentences from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Administrative Query. See 2017 minutes page 10.

<sup>vii</sup> In 2022 the Yearly Meeting approved adding the 6<sup>th</sup> Administrative Query. See 2022 minutes page 16.

<sup>viii</sup> In 2014 the maximum number of representatives from each meeting was increased from three to five. See page 8 of 2014 minutes.

<sup>ix</sup> In 2013 the Yearly Meeting approved a revision of this paragraph to clarify the duties of the Representative Meeting. See pages 62 and 63 in the 2013 minutes.

<sup>x</sup> Recommendations made by an ad hoc *Prayer and Listening Committee* approved in 2021 and 2022 included making query summaries available before Yearly Meeting. See iii.

<sup>xi</sup> In 2009 the Yearly Meeting approved a revision of the 8<sup>th</sup> Query that added this sentence. See pages 38 and 39 of 2009 minutes.

<sup>xii</sup> In 2006 the Yearly Meeting approved the insertion of the word “birthright”. See page 23 of 2006 minutes under *Duties of Overseers*.

<sup>xiii</sup> The Ministry and Oversight Queries have undergone a number of changes over the years. In 2006 substantial changes were made by M&O but they did not request that these changes be reflected in the Discipline. See M&O Report to Yearly Meeting, page 53 of 2006

---

minutes. In 2015 the M&O Queries underwent a substantial revision. See pages 7, 82 and 83 of 2015 minutes. In 2019 M&O query 1b was dropped from the online version of the Discipline. Friends were alerted to this change on page 59 of 2019 minutes.

<sup>xiv</sup> In 2019 a new M&O Advice was added to the online version of the Discipline. It was inserted as number six, and renumbering the existing Advice six as Advice seven. Friends were alerted to this change on page 59 of 2019 minutes.

<sup>xv</sup> In 2009 the Yearly Meeting approved a revision of the section on oaths which replaced two paragraphs with this one. See pages 38 and 39 of 2009 minutes.