## **Chapter II**

#### THE MONTHLY MEETING

# **Organization and Function**

### **Duties and Responsibilities**

A Monthly Meeting is a regular organization of one or more congregations and consists of all persons who are recorded upon its list of members. It is charged with the administration of the Meeting and has authority to receive, transfer and dismiss members; to deal with offenders; to grant appeals; to consider and act upon all questions affecting the membership; to hold and administer real estate and other property for the use of the Meeting; and to carry out programs for the improvement of the spiritual interest of the Meeting. Each member has a responsibility to participate in the business and service of the Meeting. The Monthly Meeting should convene at a regularly appointed time preferably monthly, for the transaction of business. A regular session may be adjourned, to be reconvened at an appointed time to consider matters not attended to at the regular session.

# **Special Sessions**

Special meetings of the Monthly Meeting may be called by either the Clerk or the assistant Clerk upon the request of three members. Notice shall be given at a regular meeting of the congregation at least seven days prior to the date of holding the special meeting; it shall name the business to be considered and the persons calling for the special meeting. No business may be considered at a special meeting other than the business for which it was called.

## **Organization**

A Monthly Meeting is duly organized for the transaction of business when it has been established by a superior Meeting and has appointed a Clerk or Clerks to present its business and record its action.

## **Appointment of Officers**

It is recommended that persons appointed as officers or to standing boards/committees be duly recorded members of the Meeting. A Monthly Meeting shall appoint Clerks as needed, such as: Presiding, Recording, etc.

It shall be the duty of the Presiding Clerks to see that the business is properly presented to the Meeting for its consideration, to announce decisions when made, to make certain that all actions are properly recorded and to sign documents on behalf of the Monthly Meeting. The Recording Clerk shall keep an accurate set of minutes showing all matters brought to the attention of the Meeting and the action taken. These minutes shall be kept in permanent form in a Minute Book. They will become the permanent record of the Meeting when they have been approved and signed by the Clerks and properly dated.

The Recording Clerk may serve as the Statistical Secretary and correspondent for the Meeting if the size of the Meeting does not warrant separate appointments for these services.

The Statistical Secretary shall keep an accurate record of all matters pertaining to the membership, such as births, marriages and deaths; members received by application, by transfer from junior membership to membership; and transfers of membership to or from other Meetings or denominations.

### **Treasurer**

The Monthly Meeting shall appoint a Treasurer, who shall receive and disburse funds as directed by the Meeting, keep a regular account of money so received and disbursed, and submit a complete report of the state of the treasury at the end of the fiscal year; he/she should be ready to report each month to the Monthly Meeting, if requested.

#### **Auditors**

The Monthly Meeting shall appoint Auditors who shall audit the accounts of the Treasurer at least once a year.

### **Trustees**

Unless the laws of the state pertaining to the appointment and service of trustees provide otherwise, the Monthly Meeting shall appoint three or more Trustees for the period of three years; it shall appoint one-third of the number each year. Where the financial responsibility of the Meeting is involved, and in other matters, the Trustees should, except in emergencies, act only in accordance with the expressed will of the Meeting.

#### **Tenure in Office**

All officers of the Monthly Meeting shall be appointed annually, unless otherwise stated. All appointees hold their positions until their successors are appointed. Where numbers permit, committee members may be appointed to a two-year or a three-year cycle.

#### Records

Monthly Meeting minute books and valuable papers shall be carefully preserved and, wherever conditions permit, shall be placed in a fireproof safe or vault. The Yearly Meeting urges the Monthly Meeting to send all record books and valuable papers to the vault of the Quaker Room at Wilmington College, when there is no longer an immediate need for them. This would include the deeds and abstracts to property, as well as membership records and minutes.

#### **Committees**

#### **Committee Structure**

Each Monthly Meeting should appoint Committees to carry forward the activities of the Meeting, as well as relate to the Boards and Committees of the Yearly Meeting. In Monthly Meetings, at least one person should be appointed to represent each department. This will provide a means of communication between the local Meeting and the Yearly Meeting Boards. In the experience of various Yearly Meetings several departments of work have proven their worth, such as Ministry and Counsel, Outreach, Education, Peace and Society, Finance, and Youth. The Monthly Meeting may appoint such other committees as may be needed to accomplish its work. It is to be understood that any Committee is at liberty to appoint to a task force such persons as may be qualified and willing to serve with approval of the Monthly Meeting. Such appointments shall be for a specific purpose and a definite period of time and the task force shall be responsible to the committee appointing the same.

### Reports

Each committee shall submit a complete report to Monthly Meeting at the end of each fiscal year or at more frequent intervals on matters of special importance or interest.

# **Ministry and Counsel**

### **Organization**

Ministers, elders, and pastors can accomplish their work with greater efficiency through close cooperation and frequent consultation. For this purpose Meetings on Ministry and Counsel shall be established for Monthly Meetings. Those appointed to Ministry and Counsel shall be considered Elders of the Meeting. The position of Elder is not transferable by removal of membership to another meeting. Where two or more congregations constitute a Monthly Meeting, the members of the Meeting on Ministry and Counsel shall constitute congregational committees in their own congregations respectively.

## **Membership**

The Monthly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel shall be composed of all the elders and those resident ministers appointed to this body by the Monthly Meeting. Resident ministers shall be subject to appointment to this body on the same basis as other members. Pastors or those serving the Meeting in a similar capacity shall be members of this body by virtue of their position in the Meeting. The Meeting on Ministry and Counsel shall appoint one or more members of this body to serve as clerks who shall keep a written record of proceedings.

Each Meeting shall have at least six elders so that an interchange of counsel will give weight to their conclusions. Without sacrificing efficiency, attention should be given to providing rotation in office as a means by which other Friends with gifts may be introduced to the responsibility of membership on Ministry and Counsel, one-third of the members to be appointed each year. Length of service should be limited to 2-three year terms with reappointment possible after a period of time off of the committee.

#### **Additional Counsel**

To coordinate and strengthen the work of the Monthly Meeting, the Meeting on Ministry and Counsel may call in for consultation the leaders of religious education, the chairmen of the standing committees of the Monthly Meeting, and other persons as needed.

## **Time of Meetings**

The Monthly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel shall hold regular sessions, preferably each month, but not less frequently than once in three months. Special meetings may be called by the clerk on request of three members.

#### Duties

It shall be the duty of this body to have general care of the spiritual welfare of the congregation. Therefore it has the responsibility for the meetings for worship, the quality of the vocal ministry, the pastoral leadership and the development of ministry on the part of all the members.

It shall be aware of the entire membership and all non-member attenders and seek to nurture their spiritual lives by every means suitable. Non-resident members should be urged, where appropriate, and helped to affiliate with a Meeting or church in their geographical location.

The Ministry and Counsel shall see that classes of instruction for membership in Friends will be offered regularly. Elders should encourage any who render vocal service in Meetings for Worship and who give evidence of having spiritual gifts. The development and use of these gifts shall be a concern of elders. They should be alert to find and suggest avenues of service to members of the Meeting.

It is the responsibility of Ministry and Counsel to initiate the process of recording for any who, in their judgment, have the gift of ministry. The entire process of recording is described in the Yearly Meeting section below.

# **Pastors or Meeting Secretaries**

Meetings desiring the help of Pastors or Meeting Secretaries shall make such arrangements through the recommendation of Ministry and Counsel to the Monthly Meeting. These arrangements should be made only after consultation with the Yearly Meeting Executive Secretary, or other persons made responsible by the Yearly Meeting for such service. If and when a Meeting calls a pastor or Meeting Secretary to serve in its behalf, the Meeting should see that the salary and other considerations are sufficient to free the worker for such service to enable him or her to work effectively; the amount shall be recommended by the Meeting on Ministry and Counsel in conjunction with the Finance Committee to Monthly Meeting. The Meeting shall provide a job description of expectations and reach an agreement on duties. Employee relationships shall be reviewed on behalf of the Meeting and counseling with the employee shall be an accepted responsibility of Ministry and Counsel. It is helpful to have an annual

review. The time of employment shall be July 1 to June 30. Meetings are encouraged to make two or three year or indefinite calls for service with provision for adequate advance notification by either party when change is desired.

Ministry and Counsel shall have responsibility to evaluate the needs of the Meeting when an employment change is before the Meeting. It shall give prayerful and thoughtful consideration to spiritual maturity, educational qualifications, knowledge and experience of Friends' principles and history of a person who may be available for pastoral and/or administrative service. Ministry and Counsel shall bring its recommendations to Monthly Meeting for decision. Employees shall not be engaged or dismissed without the action of the Monthly Meeting.

#### **Memorials**

Memorials for deceased members may be prepared by Ministry and Counsel and forward to Monthly Meeting. If approved by that body, such memorial shall be entered on its minutes and may also be forward to the Meeting on Ministry and Counsel of the Quarterly Meeting. This body may transmit the same, with or without revision, to the Yearly Meeting Ministry and Counsel to be read. Names of all deceased members should be forwarded in like manner.

# **State of Society**

The Monthly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel shall annually appoint one or more members to prepare and present to its sessions a report on the spiritual condition of the Monthly Meeting (State of Society). The report when approved shall be forwarded to the Monthly Meeting for its approval and by that body to the Clerk of Ministry and Counsel of the Quarterly Meeting. These reports shall be presented to the Quarterly Meeting session preceding Yearly Meeting. The Clerk of Ministry and Counsel of Quarterly Meeting shall forward reports to the State of Society Committee of the Yearly Meeting Ministry and Counsel which shall summarize the same and report. The report shall cover such activities as give evidence of spiritual vitality of the members, their social concern, special Christian work in which members may be engaged outside the limits of the Meeting, the character of the ministry in the meetings for worship, and significant accomplishments which may give incentive to others.

### **Finance Committee**

The Monthly Meeting shall annually appoint a Finance Committee which shall have charge of raising of funds and the preparation of a budget for the consideration of the Monthly Meeting and its congregations. There may be a separate committee for each congregation if desirable. Careful attention should be given to wise methods for interesting the members and attenders in the service of the Meeting and for raising funds for the support of its work. The Meeting should encourage voluntary giving and extend to every member an opportunity to make regular and systematic contributions.

#### **Nominating Committee**

The Monthly Meeting shall appoint a Nominating Committee which shall function throughout the year. Care should be taken that this committee shall represent all of the interests of the Monthly Meeting. It shall make nominations for all officers, committees, and representatives as directed by the Monthly Meeting. It should consult with the proposed nominees before presenting their names to the Monthly Meeting for appointment. The functioning of a Nominating Committee shall not abridge the right of any member to suggest additional nominations in the sessions of the Monthly Meeting.

## **Auxiliary Groups**

Meetings are encouraged to form auxiliary groups of Quaker Men, United Society of Friends Women, and Young Friends and cooperate with Yearly Meeting and National Organizations of these groups.

#### **Oueries**

The Queries should be read in Monthly Meeting or in series during Meeting for Worship at regular intervals, allowing due time for thoughtful consideration.

# **Special Responsibilities for Ministry**

## **Pastors and Meeting Secretaries**

### **Pastors and Worship**

It is recommended that pastors be recorded ministers of the Society of Friends. Non-recorded ministers, called to serve as a pastor, may be issued a temporary certificate of service at the discretion of the Committee on Evangelism, Church Extension and Pastoral Care. Pastors are called by meetings to fulfill certain special lines of service and to assume a measure of guidance and direction in the conduct of the affairs of the Meeting. They are expected to serve the Meeting in the field of the public ministry, although they should always have due regard for other ministers in the Meeting and for visiting Friends who may come with a message. Consideration should be given by pastors to the value of silent worship and to the need of preserving in every Meeting that freedom of expression which is vital to the membership in group worship. Pastors are considered as co-workers with the members of the Meeting. They should endeavor to bring all the members of the Meeting to a sense of their responsibility for ministry.

### **Meeting Secretaries**

Some Meetings employ Meeting Secretaries instead of pastors. They are not necessarily recorded ministers. Their relation to the Boards/Committees of the Monthly Meeting is the same as that of pastors.

### The Pastor or Meeting Secretary and the Community

In the development of a sense of responsibility on the part of the Meeting toward the community, pastors or meeting secretaries should maintain an interest in public affairs and should cooperate with other churches and associations in fostering the welfare of the community.

#### Relationship of Pastor or Meeting Secretary and Ministry and Counsel

The Pastor or Meeting Secretary shall be a member, but not an officer, of the Monthly Meeting Ministry and Counsel. He/she should present concerns for the consideration of this body but possesses no more authority over its decisions than other members. All matters of policy affecting the Meeting for Worship, the undertaking of special evangelistic efforts, and programs of work shall be submitted to the Ministry and Counsel for discussion and decision.

### Relationship of Pastor or Meeting Secretary and Committees

Pastors or Meeting Secretaries will sustain a cooperative relationship with all committees of the Meeting, assisting in their programs and policies when called upon.

## **Counseling Relationships**

Information received in counseling shall be considered a privileged communication by the pastor and others serving the Meeting in a counseling capacity.

#### **Minutes For Service**

When any Friend feels called of God to service beyond the limits of the Yearly Meeting, he/she shall present the concern to the Monthly Meeting of which he/she is a member. If this Meeting concurs, it shall transmit a minute of the proposed service, together with an expression of its unity and concurrence therein, to the Clerk of the Quarterly Meeting who shall, in turn, if the Meeting approves, transmit the same to the Yearly Meeting. If that body approves it shall express the unity and concurrence of the Yearly Meeting in the Minute for Service to be borne by the traveling Friend.

All minutes shall, after the performance of the labor, be seasonably returned to the Meeting that granted them. The same procedure shall be followed in the case of requests for Traveling Minutes.

### **Marriage**

# With the Minister Participating

## **Meeting's Concern**

Friends of Friends United Meeting, influenced by the general acceptance of pastoral leadership, recognize the fact that many young people are looking to pastors and other Friends' ministers for guidance in relation to marriage. The Meeting should share with the pastor a concern for the happiness and spiritual welfare of those who request pastoral participation in the solemnization of their marriage. It should cooperate in every possible way with the pastor in keeping the marriage procedure harmonious with the ideals of Friends.

#### **Advice to Ministers**

Since Friends' ministers are recognized by the state as qualified to perform the functions of clergy in the solemnization of marriage, they have equality in performing this service along with the ministers of other churches. They are advised, therefore, to exercise due care to observe all legal requirements as set by the several states, and also to endeavor to make the exchange of marriage vows a matter of the deepest religious import to the contracting parties and to all who are present.

### **Counseling**

Pastors are encouraged to conduct classes in which helpful counsel may be given to those contemplating marriage, and to all youth in the matter of choosing their life companions. Personal counsel with individuals and couples is also advised. Pastors are urged to be sure that all legal and moral obligations have been met. Pastors should endeavor to help the couple to consider carefully the sacredness of the obligations they are assuming and to assure themselves they are prepared to enter into such a covenant.

# **Marriage Service**

A ceremony is provided (see appendix) for the help it may give to those who feel the need for suggestions or guidance. Pastors, in consultation with the couple, are encouraged to work out a ceremony in keeping with the highest aspirations of the couple and the ideals of Friends.

## When Arranged by the Meeting

# **Significance**

As a traditional practice, Friends have provided a form of ceremony in keeping with their idea of the deep religious significance of marriage. The avoidance of undue haste, the emphasis upon the equality of the sexes, the responsibility assumed by the Monthly Meeting, the thoughtful attention given to the religious, moral, and physical qualifications, and the impressive statement of the marriage vows by the contracting parties are all important features of the Friends' marriage practice. Persons desiring to unite in marriage through the Meeting shall proceed as follows. . .

# **Report Intentions**

The parties shall report their intentions to the Monthly Meeting of which both are members, or to the Monthly Meeting of which the woman is a member if they belong to different Meetings.

## **Committee Appointment**

The Meeting or Meetings shall appoint a committee or committees of two men and two women, who shall make inquiry as to the qualifications of the parties for marriage, such as their clearness from other engagements, the consent of parents or guardians in the case of minors, and suitable provisions for the rights of children by a previous marriage, if there are such. If the parties belong to different Meetings, committees shall be appointed in each Meeting. Reports may be made to the next regular sessions of the respective Monthly Meetings or to special sessions and, if the reports are found to be satisfactory, the other Monthly Meeting shall send its findings to the one in which the marriage is to be consummated, and the parties will be at liberty to proceed accordingly.

#### One Not a Member

If one party is not a member of Friends, a committee may be appointed by said Meeting which may proceed as in the above paragraph.

#### **Non Members**

A Monthly Meeting may allow a marriage to be solemnized with the Meeting when both parties are non members. In such a case the Meeting shall appoint a committee to proceed as in paragraph 3 [above]. If the findings of the committee are satisfactory, the proceedings in relation to the proposed marriage shall be in the same manner as if the contracting parties were members of Friends.

#### **Oversight of Marriage**

After a couple has been liberated to proceed with arrangements for their marriage, a committee of not less than two women and two men shall be appointed by the Monthly Meeting to attend the marriage and report to the following session of the Monthly Meeting as to whether it has been properly solemnized.

# Marriage in Meeting

The marriage shall be solemnized in regular meeting of the congregation or in a special meeting arranged by the Monthly Meeting at a time convenient to the contracting parties.

#### Certificate

Following the exchange of vows, the marriage certificate shall be signed by both parties; it shall then be audibly read by a designated person. At the conclusion of the meeting, it shall be signed by others as witnesses.

#### **Assistant**

The pastor or other minister may assist in the solemnization of a marriage within the Meeting, if the couple so desires.

# **Relations to Superior Meetings**

### Representatives

Two or more representatives shall be appointed by each Monthly Meeting to attend the Quarterly Meeting.

### **Reports**

Once in three months the Monthly Meeting shall report in an abstract to its minutes, such business as should be laid before the Quarterly Meeting of which it is a part. Annual reports shall be made to the Quarterly Meeting of such information as the Yearly Meeting may direct.

#### **Permanent Board**

Each Monthly Meeting shall appoint representatives to the Permanent Board according to its membership. (See Yearly Meeting section on Permanent Board).

# **Right of Petition**

Monthly Meetings, through their Quarterly Meetings, have the right to petition Yearly Meetings to establish, discontinue, or divide a Quarterly Meeting, to unite two or more Quarterly Meetings, and to promote other religious interests for which there is a concern.

#### **Independent Meetings**

Independent Meetings are composed of Friends from various branches who unite to form a meeting for worship. Such Meetings should be encouraged to affiliate with established Quarterly and Yearly Meetings. Friends' methods are more effective when a fellowship of service and a wholesome example are brought to bear upon the life of the members by contact with others in established Meetings with their historic backgrounds and their inclusive variety of organized activities.

### **Outreach and New Meetings**

#### **Growth and Outreach**

Friends should be encouraged to be on the alert for opportunities to extend their efforts into new fields of service. New work which gives promise of permanence should be placed under the care of the Monthly Meeting, and new meetings for worship should be established when desirable.

# **Indulged Meetings**

An Indulged Meeting is a congregation of Friends who gather regularly for worship, mutual spiritual help, the Christian education of children and testimony to the gospel as held by Friends, but which meets at a time and place different from a recognized Monthly Meeting. Its members are members of the Monthly Meeting (or Quarterly Meeting) whose meeting on Ministry and Counsel has care and oversight for the members of the Indulged Meeting, and are granted membership by the Monthly Meeting (or Quarterly Meeting) of which the Indulged Meeting is a part.

A Monthly Meeting may organize or recognize an Indulged Meeting after determining that it is meeting regularly and that its testimony is consistent with the gospel as held by Friends. A parent

Monthly Meeting shall inform the Quarterly Meeting (QM) and Yearly Meeting (YM) of its action in organizing and recognizing an Indulged Meeting.

The parent Monthly (Quarterly) Meeting is responsible for the YM and QM assessments of the members of its Indulged Meetings. Members of the Indulged Meetings are expected to contribute to the Monthly Meeting financially and to participate on Monthly Meeting committees as other members of the Monthly Meeting do.

If a Monthly Meeting determines that one of its subordinate meetings no longer meets regularly for worship, then it shall make diligent attempts to see that regular meetings for worship are held. If such attempts fail, it shall discontinue the Indulged Meeting and inform the QM and YM of its action.

## **Preparative Meetings**

When an Indulged Meeting is of sufficient numerical and financial strength to own and maintain property, it may petition its parent meeting to be recognized as a Preparative Meeting. If the parent meeting determines that the Indulged Meeting can meet the legal requirements to own property, it shall grant permission for the Indulged Meeting to incorporate for the purpose of owning property with provision that the corporation name the Wilmington Yearly Meeting Fiduciary Corporation as receiver, if the Preparative Meeting should be discontinued.

A Preparative Meeting shall organize itself as a committee of the Monthly Meeting of which it is a part, and shall appoint:

- 1. A Clerk who shall preside over meetings for the business of the Preparative Meeting and shall report on the status of the Preparative Meeting to each session of the parent Monthly Meeting;
- 2. A Recording Clerk who shall keep the records of the Preparative Meeting and convey the same to the Recording Clerk of the Monthly Meeting annually;
  - 3. A Treasurer who shall receive and disburse funds on behalf of the Preparative Meeting and;
- 4. Such number of Trustees as the state in which the parent Monthly Meeting resides may require, who shall hold deed to the property of the Preparative Meeting and see that the property is cared for.

When a Monthly Meeting sees that one of its Preparative Meetings is unable to meet the requirements for holding property, or is unable to care for its property, the Monthly Meeting shall inform the Quarterly Meeting, of which it is a part, of the condition of the Preparative Meeting and recommend that it be discontinued.

# **New Monthly Meetings**

Upon recommendation of one of its Monthly Meetings or when the Quarterly Meeting shall deem it advisable for a new Monthly Meeting to be established, it shall appoint a committee to consider the subject and to make a report. A committee shall see that a suitable meeting place can be arranged, that the prospective membership is able to meet the requirements of a Monthly Meeting as set forth in Faith and Practice, and that any other considerations that may affect the establishment of the Meeting can be accomplished in good order.

When the Meeting, which is to be established, will be composed of members of existing Monthly Meetings, the consent of each Meeting shall be obtained.

If the supervisory committee is satisfied, the arrangements shall be laid before the Quarterly Meeting for its approval. Once approval is given, and as soon as is practical, the Clerk of Quarterly Meeting shall convene the first session of the new Monthly Meeting at which the officers and committees of the new Monthly Meeting shall officially be appointed. The Monthly Meeting shall then be considered to have been established and shall proceed with its duties as a regular Monthly Meeting. These actions shall be reported to the YM.