

SAYMA Committee to Revise the Guide to Our Faith and Practice.
Draft of Revised Queries
As of September 30, 2017

30.6

Dear SAYMA Monthly Meeting Clerks and Yearly Meeting Representatives,

The Committee to Revise the Guide to our Faith and Practice has completed our draft revision of the queries section of the SAYMA Guide except for the "Queries for Young Friends". The committee is awaiting guidance from the Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF) before discerning way forward on those queries and will forward those when way opens.

Note that a major revision was made to the queries section. Some were added, some were deleted, some were combined and some were split up. There are also new groupings for the revised queries.

We know that additional seasoning is required for this *Guide* to best reflect who we are as a faith community - and that's where **your help is needed!** Please present these proposals to your monthly meeting at a time when serious attention can be given them. Remember that the committee can only consider **minuted** responses from a Meeting for Business (Guide page 5)

The schedule for considering the revisions is:

October 6, 2017 - Draft mailed to Monthly Meeting Clerks and YM Representatives.

February 1, 2018 - All responses must be received by the F&P committee clerk by this date, so that the revision committee can consider them at our **February 16-17 2018 meeting**.

April 7, 2018 - The revised queries are sent to the Monthly Meeting Clerks and Representatives to the YM; SAYMA YM Clerk and YM Asst. Clerk and Recording Clerk and posted on SAYMA.org . A paper copy will also be mailed to your MM/PM and to all Worship Groups.

June 14, 2018 – The Committee will ask for approval by SAYMA's Meeting for Business

Email your meeting's response to: freepolazzo@gmail.com

If email is not possible then send your typed responses to:

SAYMA Faith and Practice Revision Committee
c/o Free Polazzo
5525 Dorsett Shoals Lane
Douglasville, GA 30135-4072

In the Light,

Thais, Carr, Nashville Friends Meeting
Missy Ivie, West Knoxville Friends Meeting
Beth Meyers, Lexington (OVYM); (Sojourning at Burea Friends Meeting)
Edie Patrick, Asheville Friends Meeting
Free Polazzo, Clerk, Atlanta Friends Meeting

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(The following pages replace the Queries Section of the Guide)

Quakers use queries for personal reflection, self-examination, or spirited discussion.

American Friends Service Committee "An Introduction to Quaker Testimonies" (2011)

A: Queries for Monthly & Yearly Meeting:

1. In our Meeting for Worship, in what ways is both silent and vocal ministry rooted in a shared experience of the Light?
2. How can we build community through our thoughts and actions regarding being on time to Meeting for Worship?
3. How does our meeting remain in a spirit of worship when conducting business? How can we in Meeting for Business open ourselves to searching for a sense of the meeting, to being guided toward perfect resolution in the Light?
4. How can I use my individual gifts in the work of maintaining my meeting? In what ways can we honor the wide range of contributions from individual Friends to the meeting?
5. How do you build community through monthly and yearly meeting for fellowship, service, and learning?
6. Are you sensitive to the spiritual and physical needs of those making up the meeting community? How do you lovingly respond to the needs of homebound, distant, or lonely members and attenders?
7. Do members and attenders and their meetings use clearness committees as a way of gaining clarity in personal and corporate matters?
8. How does your meeting provide for the continuing religious education of its members and attenders of all ages?
9. How does the meeting support and provide resources for those with special needs?
10. How does your meeting assist those who are struggling with addiction? How does your meeting address the systemic causes of addiction?
11. How do you help Friends to recognize their gifts?

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12. During meeting for worship, do you search for guidance from the Light? How do you begin silent worship and stay centered despite distractions?
13. Are you open to insights from other Friends in the meeting? Do you seek guidance from meeting members and others who share Friends' beliefs?
14. How does technology enhance, detract, or distract from the spiritual life of the meeting?
15. How can you speak so that Friends can better hear your message? How can the Meeting improve the spiritual experience for Friends who have difficulty hearing?
16. How do we show that we value the older Friends among us?
17. How do we support Friends who require extra care? How do we support those giving the extra care?
18. How does the meeting use the Meeting for Threshing?
19. What is your understanding of eldering? Do Friends elder to encourage others to share their gifts as well as to provide guidance? Before eldering do you test your leading with respected members of the meeting?
20. How do we individually identify and reach out to absent and present Friends that we find difficult, unlikeable, or challenging? Does our whole meeting take responsibility for those vulnerable in our community, instead of solely relying on our care and nurture committee?
21. How do we interact with those we know who have been hurt by the meeting community? Do we contact Friends who have left the meeting in painful circumstances in order to offer support and to learn from their experience?

B: Queries for Personal Discernment

1. How can I minimize distractions or being distracted in Meeting for Worship?
2. Do you hold in the Light the responsibility to share your views even though you perceive you may be a minority of one? Can you stand aside to allow the meeting to go forward even though you are not in full agreement?
3. How have your unspoken assumptions about individuals or groups of people caused them pain? How has this awareness changed your behavior?
4. What yearly meeting or monthly meeting responsibilities are yours to do?
5. When Friends engage in actions or words which seem inconsistent with the testimonies of the Religious Society of Friends, how do you season your reaction to be sure it does not come from lack of understanding or unrecognized prejudice? How do you respond?
6. What are some of the distractions that keep you from the right ordering of your life?
7. How do you develop your physical, emotional and intellectual abilities? Do you care for your body as a gift from the Spirit?
8. Do you take part in activities that are restorative? How is fun a part of your life?
9. How does your expression of sexuality reflect love and respect for your partner?
10. How do you make use of the Bible, the writings of Friends, and other inspirational literature? Are you open to new Light from wherever it may come? Do you seek to understand and appreciate those of other faiths?
11. Do you make time daily for meditation, prayer, or worship? Do you seek spiritual guidance in making decisions, especially in difficult times?
12. Have you sought to understand the discomfort that often accompanies the perception of feeling "other?"
13. What does it mean to look for that of God in every person?
14. How has continuing revelation informed your spiritual journey?

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C: Queries for Testimonies

1. How do you decide how much is enough? How do you distinguish between needs and wants?
2. How do you address conflict? How are you led to work toward unity and harmony in your personal life and in your meeting? What kind of risks are you willing to take to resolve conflict?
3. How does the way you live your life help eliminate the causes for all wars?
4. How do you practice the Friends' testimony against military preparations and all participation in war?
5. Do all aspects of your life bear the same witness? How do you center your life in the awareness of the presence of God or Spirit so that all things take their rightful place?
6. Do you attempt to tell the truth at all times? Under what circumstances is it difficult to tell the truth?
7. Are you honest in all areas of your life? How do you discern right action when the truth is unclear?
8. How do you bring nonviolent practices to all your relationships? Where there is hatred, division, and conflict, do you seek to be an agent of reconciliation?
9. Do you treat others with respect? How do you treat people you perceive as different, i.e. "other"?
10. How do you address inequality in all forms? What are you doing to bring about equal opportunities for those who suffer discrimination?
11. How do you recognize & celebrate the diversity that exists in your meeting?
12. Do you search for that of God within all persons regardless of their differences?
13. Do you consider Friends' beliefs and testimonies in your life's choices? What are your priorities with respect to how you use your time and treasure?
14. How do your Quaker values inform your choice of work? How do you conduct your business and financial affairs so they are consistent with Friends' testimonies?

D: Queries for Families

1. How do you grow in love and understanding with your own children and with all other young people? In what ways are you an example for them? Do you seek out and learn from their insights and concerns?
2. How do you make the presence of the Light felt in your home? Do you balance the need for privacy and intimacy in your family life with your desire to make your home welcoming?
3. How does your family use Quaker process to build community and grow in the Spirit? How does your family address difficult topics in a way that encourages honest and respectful communication?
4. How do you as parents prepare your children to be responsible in an ever-changing world?

E: Queries for the Wider Community:

1. How does the meeting offer young people opportunities for fellowship and service? In what ways do you help them to assume responsibilities in the home, the meeting, and the larger community?
2. Are you involved in the schools in your community, and are you concerned about establishing practices in the schools consistent with Friends' values?
3. How does your meeting assist those who are struggling with addiction? Why is addiction so pervasive in our culture? How do our laws make it worse?
4. How does your meeting participate in the wider community while maintaining its integrity?
5. In what ways does your understanding of current issues inform your participation in the wider community?

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6. How do you affirm your commitment to influencing governmental actions through informed witness or considered resistance?
7. In what ways do you discern that your actions result from leadings of the Spirit?
8. When Friends are led to participate in civil disobedience, does your meeting encourage them to seek support committees?
9. Are you alert to the subtle as well as obvious injustices which may exist in your social and economic life?
10. How do you support fair and equitable use of resources?
11. How can you seek to understand and remove the systemic causes of misery and suffering? How do you offer refuge and support to those who are oppressed and/or ostracized and yet seek that of God in their oppressor?
12. In what ways do you and your meeting support young people faced with the possibility of being recruited for military service?
13. How does being known as a Friend help you on your spiritual journey?
14. How does awareness of the living conditions of people in your local and global communities affect your purchasing choices? In turn, how do these choices affect the well-being of others? Do you by turning, turning, come down right?
15. How can Quakers model right use of electronic devices so that their personal lives and the life of Meeting are enhanced?
16. Do electronic devices interfere with your relationships with others and with your participation in the face to face activities of your community?

Section F: Queries for Care of the Earth

1. How do I express my gratitude for Creation?
2. How do I honor all living things, including myself? Do I seek God in all the living world?
3. How mindful am I that actions for peace and justice are interwoven with right sharing of Earth's resources? How much is enough?
4. How do we hold in the Light the impact of climate change on the "least of these" – the vulnerable members of the human, animal and plant communities?
5. As you integrate care for the Earth into your life, how can you seek ways to share with your Meeting and others the values of ecological concerns?

Section G: Queries for Young Friends:

This section has been send to the Southern Appalachian Young Friends to be reviewed. The Revision committee will discern how way opens for them to be revised and then forward them to the Monthly Meetings for review.

Section H: Queries for a Prospective Monthly Meeting and its Sponsoring Meeting:

1. Does the Meeting have an understanding of Quaker roots?
2. Does the meeting study Friends' literature and SAYMA's Guide to our Faith and Practice? Does the meeting feel comfortable with the Quaker testimonies?
3. Is the meeting able to carry out usual organizational functions such as appointing a clerk, maintaining a treasury, and recording business meetings? Does the meeting seek and listen to Spirit-led guidance in making decisions?
4. Are there enough Friends and regular attenders to support a monthly meeting? If two or three of these were to stop attending, what would happen to the meeting?
5. Does the meeting face its challenges, seeking assistance from Spirit, the sponsoring meeting, and yearly meeting?
6. Does the meeting have programs of religious education for all ages?
7. How does the meeting build community other than in Meeting for Worship?
8. How does the meeting encourage visitors and reach out to regular attenders?
9. Does the meeting interact with wider Quaker organizations (WQO) through conferences and other means? Does the meeting support the yearly meeting through financial contributions and attendance at yearly and representatives' meetings?
10. Does the meeting follow Friends' practice of service through faithfulness to the Spirit?
11. Is the preparative meeting receiving adequate spiritual and practical support from the sponsoring meeting?