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**SAYMA Committee to Revise the Guide to Our Faith and Practice  
Revised Queries (Draft B)  
As of the end of September 22, 2018**

*“Queries are understood to have three distinct values: the personal value, as we find the answers in ourselves; the interpretive value, by which the progressive application of our religious principles to life is disclosed; and the corporate value, by which the state or the Society can be appraised. At the reading of them, let us search our own hearts in the Light of the Holy Spirit and carefully ponder these questions for our personal answer.”*  
Faith and Practice, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (1935)

“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 and Yearly Meetings:**

1. \* In our Meeting for Worship, in what ways are both silent and vocal ministry rooted in a shared experience of the Light? *During meeting for worship, do we search for guidance from the Light? Do we begin silent worship and stay centered despite distractions?*
2. \*How can *I* build community through *my* 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 *differing views*, search for a sense of the meeting, *and* be guided toward resolution in the Light?
4. \*How can *we each* use *our* individual gifts in the work of maintaining our meeting? In what ways can we honor the wide range of contributions from individual Friends to the meeting? *How do we help Friends recognize their own gifts?*
5. \*How do we build community through monthly and yearly meetings for fellowship, service, and learning? Are peace and unity maintained among *us*?
6. Are we sensitive to the spiritual and physical needs of those making up the meeting community? How do we lovingly respond to the needs of homebound, distant, or lonely members and attenders?
- 7.\* *How are* members and attenders and their meetings *using* clearness committees as a way of gaining clarity in personal and corporate matters?
8. \*How does *our* meeting provide for continuing religious education *in the manner of Friends?*
9. *Do we individually assume our rightful share of responsibility for the work and the financial support of the monthly meeting?* How does the meeting support and provide resources for those with special needs?

10. \*How does our meeting *support* those who are struggling with addiction? In *what ways* does our meeting address the systemic causes of *those addictions*?
11. (Added to number A. 4)
12. (Added to number A. 1)
  
13. \*Am I open to insights from other Friends in the meeting? Do I seek guidance from meeting members and others who share Friends' beliefs?
14. \*How do we use technology to enhance, detract, or distract from the spiritual life of the meeting?
15. \* How can I speak so that Friends can better hear *messages*? How can the Meeting improve the meeting?
16. \* How do we show that we value 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? Do you test your leading to elder with other members of the meeting?
20. \*How do we individually identify and reach out to absent and present Friends *whom* we find difficult, unlikeable, or challenging? Does our whole meeting take responsibility for the vulnerable in our community instead of solely relying on our care and nurture committee?
21. How do we interact with those *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 the learn from their experience?
22. \*How does our meeting attract new members? When new people attend how does our meeting help them feel welcome? How does our meeting respond when members stop attend meeting?

## **B: Queries for Personal Discernment**

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

## **C: Queries for Testimonies**

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

## **D: Queries for Families**

1. \* How do I grow in love and understanding with my children and with all other young people? In what ways am I an example for them? Do I seek out and learn from their insights and concerns?
2. \* How do I make the presence of the Light felt in my home?
3. \* How does my family use Quaker process to build community and grow in the Spirit? How does my family address difficult topics in a way that encourages honest and respectful communication?
4. \* How do I as a parent prepare my children to be responsible in an ever-changing world?
5. \* How do I recognize marriage as a loving and sacred relationship requiring mutual consideration and continuing adjustments?
6. \* How do I practice the art of listening in my family, even beyond words? How do I show respect and understanding for everyone? How do I plan activities that will all members of my family?
7. \*How do I balance the need for privacy and intimacy in my family life with my desire to make my home a center of hospitality?

## E: \* Queries for *Living in the Wider Community*:

- 1.\* How does the meeting offer young people opportunities for fellowship and service?  
In what ways do I help them assume responsibilities in the home, the meeting, and the larger community?
2. \* Deleted query about Schools after considering Columbia's minute.
3. \* Why is addiction so pervasive in our culture? How do our laws affect issues of addiction?
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?
- 6.\*Do I affirm my commitment to influencing governmental actions through informed witness and/or considered resistance?
- 7.\*In what ways do I discern that my actions result from leadings of the Spirit?
- 8.\*When Friends are led to participate in civil disobedience, *are they encouraged by their meeting to seek clearness about their action? Does the meeting then decide whether or not to support that action?*
- 9.\**Am I alert to the subtle as well as obvious injustices which may exist in my social and economic life?*
- 10.\* How do I support fair and equitable use of resources?
- 11.\* How can I seek to further understand and remove systemic causes of misery and suffering? How do I 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 I and my meeting support young people faced with the possibility of being recruited for military service?
- 13.\* How does being known as a Friend help me on my spiritual journey?
- 14.\* How does awareness of the living conditions of people in my local and global communities affect my purchasing choices? In turn, how do these choices affect the well-being of others?
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 contribute to or interfere with my relationships with others and with my participation in the face to face activities of my 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 the entire world?
3. How mindful am I that actions for peace and justice are interwoven with the 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 we integrate care for the Earth into our lives, how can we seek ways to share with our Meeting and others the values of ecological concerns?

**Section G: Queries for Young Friends** (This is the committee's reworked version. It is being looked over by SAYF. Note that it has not been edited yet.)

1. How can we create peace in a hostile world?
2. How do you stand firmly against inequality? How do you peacefully challenge [problematic social norms] discriminatory social institutional practices?
3. How do you create and nurture community?
4. How do you practice good social work while nurturing your well-being? What avenues exist between those?
5. What do you do that harms/affects the Environment? How can you lessen your impact?
6. In what ways do you use your voices and express your opinions? \*When do you reevaluate your perspective? (SAYF: Please consider changing "opinions" to "views" as the original word "perspectives" can include facts and not just "opinions")
7. How can we be supportive of each other's identity and growth?
8. (Moved to be the 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence in number 6.)
9. How do you remain grounded in a materialistic society?
10. How do you reconcile simplicity and self-expression?
11. How do you apply Quaker values to your social media presence?
12. How does your energy change as you enter adulthood?
13. What is the Light? Where do you find that in your life?
14. How do you identify as Quaker, and how do you explain that to your peers?
15. To whom do you extend your compassion?

## **Section H:\* Queries for a Preparative Monthly Meeting**

1. \* Does the meeting have an understanding of Quaker history and practice? How does this understanding contribute to the life the meeting?
2. Does the meeting study Friends' literature and SAYMA's Guide to our Faith and Practice?
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/or regular attenders to support a monthly meeting? If two or three of these were to stop attending, what would happen to the meeting? Is there ongoing outreach for new attenders?
5. How does the meeting face its challenges, seeking assistance from Spirit, the sponsoring meeting, and yearly meeting?
6. How 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 regular attenders to increase their involvement with Friends?
9. Does the meeting interact with Wider Quaker Organizations (Friends General Conference, American Friends Service Committee, Friends Committee on National Legislation, Quaker Earthcare Witness, etc.) 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?

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### Young Friend Queries

1. How can we create peace in a hostile world?
2. How do you stand firmly against inequality? How do you peacefully challenge problematic social norms?
3. How do you create and nurture community?
4. How do you practice good social work while nurturing your well being and what avenues exist between those?
5. What do you do that harms/affects the environment and how can you better such impact?
6. In what ways do you use your voices and express your perspectives?
7. How do we support people's identity and growth?
8. when do you reevaluate your perspective?
9. How do you remain grounded in a materialistic world?
10. How do you reconcile simplicity and self-expression?
11. How do you apply Quaker values to your social media presence?
12. How does your energy change as you enter adulthood?
13. What is the Light? Where do you find that in your life?
14. How do you identify as Quaker and how do you explain that to your peers?
15. To whom do you extend your compassion?