

CONSULTATION & RENEWAL WORKING GROUP (C'nR)
SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS OF YEARLY MEETING CLERKS
and
REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES

Introduction	1
A. INTERVIEWS WITH COMMITTEE CLERKS, OFFICERS & OTHERS	2
1. Committee Structure	2
2. Costs	3
3. Regionalization	3
4. Position of General Secretary	4
5. Electronic Communication	6
a) Use of email	6
b) Use of teleconference	7
c) Use of the website	8
d) General comments	8
6. Representative Meeting	9
7. Reporting and Communicating	11
8. Committee Collapse	12
9. Yearly Meeting "Officers"	12
10. Young Friends	13
11. Continuing Meeting of Ministry & Counsel	14
a) Relationship with Monthly Meetings	15
b) Relationship with Representative Meeting	16
c) Relationship with Yearly Meeting in session	16
B. SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS OF REPRESENTATIVES	17
	TO OTHER BODIES
1. Number of representatives serving	18
2. Benefits	18
3. Costs	19
4. Position of General Secretary	19
5. Use of electronic media	20
6. Reporting	20
7. Visions of the future & other suggestions	21
8. Personal experience and support of Monthly Meeting	21
C. OTHER COMMENTS	22
a) Comments re specific committees	22
b) General comments from the clerks	23
c) Clerk's comments re CYM sessions	23
d) Comments from representatives to other bodies	24
D. APPENDIX	25
Questions for Committee Clerks	25
Questions for Representatives to other bodies	27

INTRODUCTION

“If individuals in their own spiritual journey come to see that a strong spiritual MM is essential for their spiritual growth and support, and further that MM is supported by a strong YM, then the movement to rationalize our governance will be successful.”

Lynne Phillips

We interviewed 25 clerks of “committees,” 10 representatives to other bodies, 5 “officers” of Yearly Meeting and 4 “others.” The five “officers” are Yearly Meeting clerks, Representative Meeting clerk, and the Treasurer. The “others” include the interviews with the Young Friends, a clerk of the Quaker Ecology Action Network (QEAN), and the statistical secretary. There are three sections to this report: the summary of interviews with committee clerks, officers and others, and the summary of interviews with representatives to other bodies, and a section combining “other comments” from both groups.

The interviews were carried out by members of the Consultation and Renewal Working Group (C’nR) between March and August 2005. We used two interview guides, one for clerks and one for representatives to other bodies. (These guides are appended). Most interviews were done by phone. A few were done face to face when circumstances allowed. It is important to understand that the interview guide that we used was not a properly constructed questionnaire from a research point of view. We can draw no clear conclusions from the results. Rather it is a partial look at what some experienced Yearly Meeting volunteers think about a variety of topics. As such it is still extremely helpful.

The interviews were analysed topically. For example, all the responses of the clerks to the “structure” questions were done before moving on to the next topic. The “officers” were looked at separately and some of their responses were blended with the others where it made sense and others were discussed in a section that focussed only on their responses. Some of the responses are quantified, but the numbers will not add up to the total numbers interviewed because some did not respond to all the questions.

None of the responses from the “other” group are melded in with the responses of the clerks. The responses of young Friends are summarized in a section devoted to their circumstances; the interview with the Statistical Secretary, which is an entirely administrative position is included in the section discussing responses to questions regarding need for a General secretary; and responses related to QEAN, which is an electronic discussion group, were included in the discussion of use of electronic media. There is also a special section on CMM&C. It should be noted that two committees are not represented at all: Canadian Friends Foreign Missionary Board and Camp NeeKauNis. (One of our members did eventually interview a member of the Camp Committee, but this was not available when this summary was written).

A. INTERVIEWS WITH COMMITTEE CLERKS, OFFICERS AND OTHERS

1. Committee Structure

The count: 17 were happy with the size of their committee
 5 were not happy with the size
 1 was ambivalent

 16 felt representation from across Canada was important
 5 either were already regional or saw it as acceptable
 3 were in a not applicable category

 15 were content with the system regarding terms of office
 2 were not
 3 were in a not applicable category

On the question of committee size, most were content with their current numbers. An exception to this may be HMAC whose numbers have fallen in recent years from 20 to 9 members. Quaker International Affairs Project could use more but are balancing this with the need for having face to face meetings. Size for CMM&C was seen as depending on its mandate, which at present is ambiguous at best (see elsewhere for further discussion of this).

The need for representation on the committee from the different regions of Canada is important for those committees that now have this. It seems to be quite dependent on the nature of the work that the committee carries out. Regional viewpoints are important for such committees as Nominating, CFSC, and Programme. In general, the committees that are currently “regionalized” by drawing all their membership from one region are content with this. One major exception to all of this is the Ecumenical Committee, where the current structure of regional sub-groups and a meeting of reps from each of these at Yearly Meeting is seen as not working well. Like CMM&C this may be intertwined with lack of a clear mandate.

There is widespread support for the need for flexibility in the current practice of naming individuals to no more than two three year terms when difficulties around continuity, completion of tasks, or training of clerks arise. At the same time there is equally broad support for the system of limiting an individual’s term of service. Another exception may be for jobs that require a high degree of skill, especially the Treasurer. It should be noted that the Trustees do not operate with this system. Their work requires a high degree of specialized knowledge and continuity.

CYM committees are at present quite varied in how they are structured. There is no one size fits all, nor is there any indication that this should change, based on the proviso that CYM itself does not change substantially. This is not to suggest that we should be content with the status quo. Consideration needs to be given to possible changes, in particular, HMAC, CMM&C, Religious Education and the Ecumenical Committee.

2. Costs

The count: 21 feel the cost of travel is consistent with mandate
 1 does not
 4 limit themselves to one meeting/year to save expense
 3 are in the not applicable category

There is a virtually even split between those committee clerks who claim expense for administrative costs such as photocopying as well as between those clerks who participate in the process of budget development. The former probably depends on individual circumstances, the latter may depend on familiarity with budget development in a general sense. Those who understand the budget process find that it works well for them.

Most feel that the costs they incur are justifiable given the work that is accomplished. This of course is a judgement call and the respondents clearly have a bias. Offsetting this is first of all the practice of Friends to be scrupulous about saying the truth, and the fact that the respondents are among the few who are familiar with the work of their committee and understand its purpose. There is some evidence that a desire to limit expenses may be resulting in practices contrary to the best use of committee resources. Those that only meet face to face once a year, primarily because of costs, feel strongly that the one meeting is critically important. It seems reasonable to wonder what this would mean for the individual committee member who misses a meeting. One of the clerks noted that he refrained from attending Representative Meeting for reasons of cost when it would have been preferable for him to be there.

There was some indication the use of “Required Persons Funding” should be reviewed. The practice itself was not questioned, but there was some need for more flexibility and control. In other words a one size fits all could result in some persons having their expenses covered to attend yearly meeting where they do not necessarily “pull their weight,” and other committees could use funds to ensure all their members are present. There was also mention of need for a contingency fund to meet costs when Yearly Meeting approves a task being assigned to a committee without consideration of the cost implications.

3. Regionalization

The word “regionalization” is used throughout, but it is important to note that this encompassed several quite different possibilities. The questionnaire named three: naming all members of a group from one region; placing the committee under the care of a MM; or devolving responsibilities to a Half-yearly or Regional Meeting.

The responses were divided between those groups who are currently regionalized in one way or another, and those who are not. It is not surprising that generally, the status quo is preferred, especially where a committee is not now regionalized and needs wide input. For example, Nominating committee could not reach out to name new people unless it has committee members

familiar with various parts of the country. This is especially true in light of the fact that Monthly Meetings are not participating well in the process. Similarly, Programme Committee could only be regionalized if YM ceased to meet in various locations across the country.

What does come across in the responses is a recognition that regionalization beyond what already has been established would only be feasible if Yearly Meeting itself undergoes significant change. One of the Yearly Meeting clerks responding to this interview did so with quite an elaborate model of a radically regionalized Yearly Meeting in mind. This would bear much closer examination if such a model became one of the alternatives to be considered. What it highlighted however was the close association between regionalization and radical re-structuring of the whole of Yearly Meeting.

Concern was expressed by one Western Friend that any attempt to devolve responsibility to regional bodies such as Western Half-yearly Meeting would result in some tasks being dropped and others being simply left to Friends in the central region by those on the periphery (so to speak!) This raises an interesting question about whether there are differences regionally in what Friends consider to be the necessary functions of a Yearly Meeting. Would Western Friends for example, simply drop the work that is carried out to maintain a relationship with wider Quaker bodies and ecumenical groups? Perhaps related to this was the view of another that Monthly Meetings have a tendency to be “idiosyncratic” and the work of a Yearly Meeting benefits from the “cross-fertilization” with other meetings for effective work to be accomplished.

Religious Education was the only committee where there was some support for regionalization. This however was exclusive of the children’s programme for Yearly Meeting in session. This leads to the idea that the latter be attached to the Yearly Meeting programme committee, although the respondent did not suggest this. There were sufficient questions about some of the functions and responsibilities of RE, HMAc and CMM&C to warrant a recommendation that a detailed analysis be done of all of the work of these three bodies. They were originally all part of HMAc’s mandate and developed into the current three committees presumably because of the workload involved.

We were also cautioned that regionalization may not save either money or wear on the environment. The distances in the west, which are not recognized by many easterners, require much travel and duplicating work in several regions could cost more.

4. Position of General Secretary

Although there was virtual agreement that some administrative staff support is needed and necessary, opinions were divided on the question of whether we would benefit from having a general secretary again. Many (perhaps most) of the current clerks have never served when there was a general secretary and therefore had nothing with which to compare. Where there had been experience, several expressed concern that the role of a general secretary could become controversial when perceived as carrying authority or providing some form of “religious

leadership.” Continuity and historical memory were the two areas where respondents felt a general secretary could provide needed help, although one felt that this was not a good enough reason to go back to having someone in the position.

While the above was generally true, Nominating Committee, Finance Committee and Ecumenical Committee have particularly felt the loss of having a general secretary. From the perspective of Nominating Committee there is also concern for the added load we are placing on volunteers. This is especially so for Yearly Meeting clerks whose workload has increased dramatically and for the treasurer. The latter position was created when the position of general secretary and treasurer, previously combined, was set aside. The positions of clerk and treasurer now carry a substantial administrative load necessary to the right functioning of Yearly Meeting as a whole. The roles of both the clerk and treasurer of Trustees have also expanded significantly.

Programme Committee is also now taking more responsibility. It should be noted however, that this is seen in a positive light, as “empowering” the committee. At the same time, Programme Committee notes that administrative support is crucial and indeed could be increased from its present base. The view that volunteers can find ways to do the work in the absence of a general secretary was shared by others. One of our past Yearly Meeting clerks felt that when we have a general secretary it becomes too easy to leave work to an experienced staff and that it is better if we do the work ourselves. Another felt that we need to define the work specifically before asking for staff help and learn to prioritize and lay aside work which we cannot do.

There was general praise for the staff support being provided by the administrative assistant in the YM office. Alongside this, and not to be critical in any way of current staff work, is the caution that the office works as well as it does because of the quiet, behind the scenes support given the staff by a well seasoned Ottawa Friend. Should this not be available and in the event of staff turn-over we might well be faced with serious problems in supervision and support for any staff who are not experienced Friends themselves.

Mention of the usefulness of a field secretary position came from CMM&C. This relates to the nominal responsibility for nurture of Meetings carried by this body whose workload has preempted work being done in this part of their mandate. One clerk of CMM&C commented that there are virtually no resources allocated by YM for the spiritual nurture of Meetings. To this one could probably add nurture of Isolated Friends. The potential need for a visiting ministry, either on the part of a general secretary or Friends travelling was mentioned by another of our respondents. This person also suggested the possibility of visiting ministry being tied to fund raising. One of the individuals who has served on Finance Committee also saw the need for a support role in fund raising that could come from a general secretary.

We interviewed the past statistical secretary who served for a full term of six years. This task was a spin off from one previously done by the general secretary. Our respondent found the work satisfying and something that one person with the right interest and skills could carry out as a volunteer, thus taking the load off staff. Her observations of the possible result should this work

not continue reveals a risk of inability to keep our records intact and in good order.

5. Electronic Communication

The count: 21 use email
 3 limited use of email
 0 make no use of email

 7 use the website
 3 limited use of web
 10 no use of the web

 13 use teleconference
 1 limited use of teleconference
 7 no use of teleconference

 8 see more use in future
 2 are not sure (maybe)
 8 see no greater use in future

Friends have a fundamental belief that decisions made by a Meeting or any other group of Friends working together is best done in worship and that in turn is assumed to be meeting together face to face. The use of electronic media to make decisions is in a general sense therefore, the antithesis of our belief in corporate spiritual discernment. Yet, it is safe to say that there is nearly universal use of email and substantial use of teleconferencing for carrying out the business of Yearly Meeting. The faith of Friends and the reality of our practice in this regard in itself requires deep discernment if use of electronic media is to continue or grow, as it almost inevitably will.

The prospect of greater use of media as a means of avoiding the impact of travel on the environment adds yet another dimension to our need to resolve this dilemma.

a) Use of Email

Email has become the principle medium of communication for Yearly Meeting committees and for Yearly Meeting clerks. As one respondent observed, it is almost impossible to serve as a committee member, let alone as clerk unless one is “on email.” In the absence of a general secretary, it seems that clerking yearly meeting or acting as treasurer would undoubtedly be impossible without email. Although it is still possible to act as recording clerk by taking minutes manually, the time taken to have hand written notes transcribed for posting and eventually circulation is lengthy and potentially burdensome.

The flip side of this universal use is the concern over excluding those Friends who are not using

computers for this form of communicating. Committee clerks generally make every effort to include their non-email members through the use of regular mail and through phone conversations. This has worked for some, but the majority find it insufficient. There have been instances of Friends resigning from committees because of unwillingness or inability to use email.

Noone has tried to use email as a means of discernment, but as an administrative tool, most are enthusiastic. Nevertheless most of those interviewed identified serious limitations in its use even as a purely administrative tool. Uncomplicated administrative matters can sometimes be decided through exchange of messages, for example, setting a place and time of meeting, but there is unanimity that difficult decisions cannot and should not be attempted this way.

Lack of experience with computers or with email itself, and the use by many Friends of older versions of both hardware and software have led to other problems. For example, some committee members extend their habits of silence to email communication and fail to respond to suggestions or requests. Others are unable to open file attachments or are unfamiliar with the use of a listserv. Then there are problems of overload. Twenty emails a day (not counting spam) all of which require attention is not uncommon for yearly meeting clerks.

Friends have historically been attentive to careful record keeping. Now it appears that much of our history could be lost if greater use of electronic media results in a lack of record keeping. Researching the means available for archiving electronic records is an emerging concern.

It has been pointed out by several, that the widespread use of email has raised expectations regarding the speed with which responses are required. A concern related to this is the failure of email to convey emotion and the ease with which it can be misinterpreted, especially if a response is sent in haste. Use of a "24 hour" rule was suggested as one way around this, however it does not address the rapid and recent change in what is expected of clerks in particular.

QEAN is one group within Yearly Meeting that is entirely on email. We interviewed a past clerk who was in this position for two years, and has three years of participation. QEAN is not a committee and its mandate requires a search in Yearly Meeting minutes. Most of our questions did not apply. What stands out in this interview is the lack of a clear relationship with Yearly Meeting and the frustration that comes with lack of support. It seems to be a free standing network of individuals who are familiar with email networking and who seek and share information and ideas with each other.

Guidelines for the use of email are being developed by some committees and have been developed by the Trustees. In general, there has been a strongly voiced desire that such guidelines be developed and provided for general use throughout Yearly Meeting. As noted above, this is a task requiring corporate spiritual discernment. It will also require us to draw on the expertise of those individuals who are familiar with the technology and its probable future developments.

b) Use of teleconference

In general, when decisions are required that cannot be made by email and where face to face meeting is not possible, clerks have turned to the use of teleconference. Most who use it with some regularity see it as a workable solution, but one that needs careful preparation and good clerking. Some refer all decisions made in this manner to a future face to face meeting for confirmation. Some see it as working well because of previous work done in face to face meetings. In other words, it should not be seen as a method of decision making separate from, or in place of, face to face meeting.

The advantage of teleconference calls over individual phone calls was noted, citing the strength of “interactive conversation and common understanding” on the part of participants. In addition, there are at least two groups who depend on this medium, the Office Review Committee and QIAP. It is also used necessarily by Yearly Meeting clerks when a difficult decision is required of them. The disadvantage is lack of non-verbal communication (body language), the limited time frame possible when a group is spread across several time zones, the size of some groups which makes it logistically very difficult, and the anxiety experienced by those unfamiliar with its use. Concerns have also been raised regarding how we may include persons who are hearing impaired. The technology is probably available to offset this, but its availability and cost needs to be researched.

Teleconferencing is a helpful tool, but costly and somewhat risky. However, in the face of needing to make decisions before a matter can be dealt with in face to face worship, it is actually less costly and preferable to other media such as email or individual phone calls. Matters pertaining to personnel, the trust funds, relationships with wider quaker bodies or other faith communities easily fall into this category. There have also been unexpected emergencies for committees such as Programme Committee where this was the only way out of a difficult situation.

c) Use of the website

The “Web” remains somewhat mysterious for many Friends. Yearly Meeting has had a website for several years, but its use seems to be very limited. Only about half of the clerks use it, and when they do it is primarily to find information on matters such as Meeting addresses, links to other Quaker bodies, dates of meetings and minutes. CFSC and QIAP are major exceptions, each having their own website. (It should be noted that some Monthly Meetings also have websites).

Over half of those interviewed did not see, or were unsure of, greater use of electronic media including the use of the web. Others, perhaps more familiar with the medium, simply stated that increase use is “inevitable.” The speed with which this form of communication and knowledge dissemination is developing is phenomenal and there is a real danger that Friends will be left way behind. If for no other reason, the coming generations will be reached primarily through the medium of the internet and the world wide web. Young Friends, and indeed young people

everywhere are using it as second nature.

d) General Comments

Virtually everyone we interviewed was conscious of both strengths and limitations in the use of electronic media. The need for developing guidelines came up frequently, usually with reference to email, but we might also consider guidelines for the use of teleconferencing. Helpful too would be a variety of resources that can help the uninitiated make more comfortable use of the various media. An example of this is hearing devices that can help the hard of hearing participate in a teleconference call, or free software that allows the user to open commonly used text files.

It is important to also acknowledge and address the implications of the other reality with respect to electronic media. While its use is almost universal and appears necessary for administrative work, some among us do not use these media on principle or are uncomfortable with its use. Our responses show that there have been difficulties that arose because of this and that no good solution has been found. There is urgent need for broad discussion of this among Friends.

6. Representative Meeting

Opinions, both positive and negative, about Representative Meeting are strong. It seems that you either love it or not. It is therefore somewhat surprising that a clear majority are on the positive side, given the controversial background that surrounds this part of our Yearly Meeting.

Those who find Representative Meeting “useful” cite several aspects:

- it provides a “big picture” of what is going on in YM
- a good size, serious, and could handle more business
- opportunity to meet Friends from across Canada
- opportunity to observe good clerking,
- plays a role in communication and in de-fusing [potential conflicts]
- spiritually grounded and personally very enriching
- provides continuity for YM especially in the face of rotating sessions
- Representatives’ reports help Monthly Meetings feel connected
- beginning to understand YM
- essential for CFSC, Treasurer, Finance Committee
- helpful to explain difficulties face to face
- only place where every Monthly Meeting is intentionally represented
- has an important and different role than YM sessions
- “things come up” making it important to be there
- is educational, broadens experience
- is important and deserves support

Those who are critical of Representative Meeting are mostly critical of the long agendas:

- is “deadly” with meetings too long and sometimes ineffective

- tiring, especially for those from the west
- does not need representatives from every meeting
- not doing a good job, too much work, not well coordinated
- 25-30 tired people trying to make decisions in 2 days
- is very large and difficult to move through long agendas
- sometimes drags on unnecessarily
- Friends are not “representational,” speaking primarily for themselves

There are some obvious contradictions here that may account for why it has been so difficult for Friends to come to terms about the role of Representative Meeting. Yet comparing these “pros and cons” does lead to some equally obvious suggestions, primarily related to agenda control.

The size of Representative Meeting has been a cause of much thought and some experimentation. It draws the largest amount out of the travel budget and thus reducing it in size and/or confining it to one meeting per year have been discussed. The question of whether Friends “double up” by sending reps with two or even three hats is the current focus. It is in fact being exercised in a surprising number of Meetings and is seen by perhaps a majority as workable. However when asked about this practice, it becomes clear that it can only work one way, that is a committee person can represent his or her Monthly Meeting, but a Monthly Meeting representative cannot do the work of a committee representative. Also, it erodes the benefits mentioned by many of opportunity for Friends, especially those who are isolated or from small meetings or worship groups to meet others, to experience deep worship and good clerking. This raises the question of whether there are benefits beyond the practical business aspects of Representative Meeting. It is also important to note that under present circumstances, the practice of doubling roles to save money only applies to Friends and Monthly Meetings outside of Ontario. Not only is there perhaps an undue burden here, it is difficult because the widely scattered meetings in the West and in the East make it especially difficult for one person to represent the whole Monthly Meeting.

A few suggestions were made:

- rotate the location of Meetings (but continuity may be a problem)
- vest confidence in a small discerning Meeting
- combine YM and Rep Meeting nominating committees (workload issue cited here)
- clerks could send written reports, report on floor only for decision-making
- CYM clerks report only to CYM in session, not Representative Meeting
- should not have an “executive function”

Here too there are contradictions, both within the suggestions and with the positive aspects cited above.

One of the other current suggestions is that committee clerks, or their representatives, only attend when they have business on the agenda. Some see this as a workable alternative, but there are several clerks who feel it is important to be there because much of what is discussed has an effect on their committee’s work. This is particularly true for Finance, CFSC, and the Treasurer. There

are also some clerks who find wearing more than one hat demanding, others who state simply that all should attend regardless of the agenda. In short, there is no agreement on this matter. The only conclusion one can draw from reading through all of the various viewpoints about Representative Meeting is that it will be a very difficult and contentious factor in any attempt to re-structure YM. Its cost both financially and environmentally makes it central to the concerns of us all, but as one of the clerks pointed out, there is little awareness among Friends of the work of Representative Meeting. The solution will only come through much sharing of information and considerable prayer!

7. Reporting and Communicating

The count: 15 felt that current reporting is adequate
 5 felt that it is not

all but 3 make use of the Canadian Friend

11 did not see a reporting problem if YM did not meet every year
6 did see a problem

Presently, the primary media for committees to let Friends know of their work are written reports, reporting and clearness sessions at Yearly Meeting every five years, displays and interest groups at Yearly Meeting and verbal reports at Representative Meeting. Most found this satisfactory, but HMAc and CMM&C were an exception. In the latter case, this was connected with the ambiguity of their mandate. Neither group felt they had sufficient time at YM in session to convey all that they would like Friends to know.

While the majority seem satisfied with current reporting methods, some have added additional ways to communicate. The point was made by several that the only reliable way to get a message across to Friends is to phone directly if a response is needed (such as nominations) and at least one committee (Faith & Practice Development) has a contact in each meeting. Others find opportunities to speak directly with Friends by visiting Monthly Meetings or Regional Gatherings. It is interesting that use of the web did not surface here, even regarding CFSC which has an excellent website of its own. Nor was there any discussion of use of email lists, although this may be because we did not elicit that information.

There was a surprising openness to finding different ways to report if Yearly Meeting sessions become less frequent, although there was an undercurrent of concern that related to the loss of fellowship, having not much to do with administration. Other than this discomfort, reporting through Representative Meeting was seen as acceptable. We must note here that Finance and Personnel already report through Representative Meeting and QIAP reports through CFSC, at least in theory. One of the representatives of the financial side of things commented that focussing all financial matters in Representative Meeting has “worked.” Most feel that if Yearly Meeting does not meet every year there would need to be an enhanced role for Representative

Meeting and for Half-yearly Meetings or Regional Gatherings.

The Canadian Friend is heavily used by most committees, although the editorial time lines do not work for Nominating Committee, and the Ecumenical Committee complained of losing its “corner” when the format was altered. The Canadian Friend is of course the primary medium for Programme Committee. One person commented on the loss of *Happening Now*, the newsletter that was put together by Yearly Meeting staff on a more or less monthly basis. Its origins lay in the need to get very current news out to Friends that could not be handled by the timing and deadlines of Canadian Friend. In today’s world any revival of this newsletter would probably be via the internet, either email or on the web.

Despite the varied media available to Friends, one of the clerks complained of difficulties clerking sessions at Yearly Meeting because Friends present were not informed of the issues and a past clerk of nominating committee commented that “little is known about Yearly Meeting committees.” Here is some direct evidence that all efforts to communicate are for the most part in vain. Also, it appears from the above that the most effective means of reaching Friends is through direct contact and face to face conversations. This has implications for one of the major questions facing Canadian Friends: would a Yearly Meeting that is smaller in size and geography make communications more effective?

8. Committee Collapse

The replies to the question about what would result if the “committee” ceased to exist fell into one of three categories: chaos and disorderly dissolution; we would need to re-invent a committee to do the work; we would lose much by way of historical memory and links to other faith organizations (including other quaker bodies). In addition, some of our groups deal with matters required by law or that have potential legal consequences. This includes the Trustees (including the Cemetery Board), Finance and Personnel Committees and CFSC.

9. Yearly Meeting “Officers”

This section deals with comments and suggestions made by the Yearly Meeting “officers” that did not fit into any of the categories elsewhere in this summary. It may be significant to point out here that service as clerk of Yearly Meeting (or Representative Meeting) provides a window on the business of Yearly Meeting that few others are in a position to see or understand.

Historical memory and continuity were seen as a problem. One clerk observed that longevity in the post of administrative assistant is important and is one way of providing historical and institutional memory. There seems to be enthusiasm for the current practice of having three Yearly Meeting clerks. This too was seen as helping with the problem of historical memory and continuity. With respect to administrative support, one clerk pointed out that management problems arise during a time of staff turn-over. In general, administrative support is clearly needed by the clerks and treasurer.

One long time clerk at several “levels” spoke of burn out which was recognized in retrospect only. A slower pace might have helped. This person felt his life was “out of balance” after several years of heavy work with no break. This is the first evidence of existence of burn out that we have had and it is noteworthy to mention that it is often only in retrospect that this is recognized.

Another clerk mentioned that although support is available from his Monthly Meeting, in general, the work of a clerk is “taken for granted.” This comment underlines the opening comment above that few see or understand the work of our YM clerks. While he felt that YM clerks should report only to YM, he placed importance on travel by the clerk to Monthly Meetings and Regional Gatherings, a practice not presently funded or encouraged to any degree. This led logically into his suggestion that there be a review of the role of Yearly Meeting clerks.

Another observation related to management concerns is that there is no mechanism in place for making organizational changes in Yearly Meeting. Nor is there any way to coordinate or follow up on committee work. Matters of concern surface when they arrive on the agenda of Yearly Meeting where they present problems for clerks whose task is best supported by advance information. The highly decentralized nature of the Quaker polity does not lend itself to the normal processes of organizational development and change, but without some procedure in place, we leave ourselves open to simply drifting into change that may be contrary to our needs and preferences.

10. Young Friends

We carried out two interviews with former clerks of Young Friends Yearly Meeting. This body is not by any means a “committee” of Yearly Meeting and the way in which Young Friends organize and carry out their work differs significantly from committee work. We also need to pay particular attention to the needs of Young Friends. For these reasons it seemed important to place a summary of these interviews in a separate category.

Here we find a litany of problems and perhaps despair. We, meaning Canadian Yearly Meeting as a whole, have apparently left our young Friends in a kind of limbo, giving very little support and little attention.

The purpose of Young Friends Yearly Meeting is ambiguous. Its primary task seems to be allocation of the annual \$600 grant and naming of representatives to Yearly Meeting committees.

The problems cited by these two young Friends are daunting:

- Difficulties in naming of clerks and reps to YM committees
- No process for reporting back by representatives to YM committees
- Inexperience and inadequate preparation or guidance for doing business
- Long term commitment is not possible because of the mobility of youth - 2years max.

Meet only once a year, rapid turnover, lack of continuity, minutes not always available
No effective way of keeping in touch between sessions
Individuals agreeing to a job and no follow through
Lack of historical memory

Assistance with their work is at present mostly from our Administrative Assistant in the Yearly Meeting office. Attendance at Representative Meeting is also very helpful and one respondent had attended a clerking workshop at Pendle Hill. Both have also received some support from their Monthly Meeting. One who attends an established Meeting found it to be a good model, but this raises questions about those Young Friends who attend Worship Groups or small struggling Meetings. Some financial support in addition to the travel grants for attending Yearly Meeting and Representative Meeting has also been made available by a Monthly Meeting.

Communication with Yearly Meeting in session is one bright spot. Both respondents expressed appreciation for the openness of Yearly Meeting to place any concerns Young Friends have on the agenda, and one suggested that it would be good if communication between Yearly Meeting and Canadian Young Friends Yearly Meeting was strengthened even more. Otherwise, the only forms of communication open to Young Friends are electronic. E-mail is the sole means of trying to stay in touch and get any work done between annual sessions. Young Friends who are not online are virtually excluded. One respondent has made use of the web page and both feel that this has the potential for increased use.

The question about the implications for Young Friends if YM decides to meet less often was mixed. One felt it might not be a problem although it would clearly be a problem for individuals who were isolated or where there were not enough Young Friends to allow for a regional gathering. One respondent who is from the west did not see such regional grouping anywhere except in Ontario. She pointed out that the crucial years for Young Friends involvement was between 13 and 18 and if there was no annual gathering any continuity would be lost along with opportunity to form a Quaker identity. Attending regularly once out of high school is difficult.

There were three suggestions, one that experienced Friends provide advice and mentoring with respect to managing business. Another suggestion was that ways be found for Young Friends to meet more often. There also was a suggestion that there be a review of the structure and processes used by Young Friends Yearly Meeting.

Both respondents gave an equivocal response to the question "Was your experience positive?"
The reasons seem obvious!

11. Continuing Meeting of Ministry and Counsel

This part of the report is based on the details of interviews with three past clerks and long time members of Continuing Meeting of Ministry and Counsel (CMM&C). There are two cautions that must be raised having to do with the temptation to reach conclusions based on this. First, it

should be noted that it is the opinion of three individuals, filtered through our perceptions, and only that. Second, because of the nature of our questions, the responses tend heavily toward the problematic. This means that the report appears to be heavily critical and negative. It overlooks the very good and soulful work that has been carried out by the many Friends who have served on CMM&C over the years. Therefore, let us acknowledge that good work and remember that our “findings” draw our attention to concerns and problems that surround this body only as a beginning to our understanding.

CMM&C’s mandate is spelled out in Organization & Procedure. It focusses very clearly on support for the spiritual health of Monthly Meetings and their constituent worship groups as well as on a nurturing role for Yearly Meeting in session. This is a very broad and serious mandate to lay upon six Friends spread across the breadth of our country. Two of our respondents tell us, either directly or indirectly, that if the mandate was to be adequately fulfilled, more people and more resources would be needed.

Individuals who serve on CMM&C face a steep learning curve when first named. One respondent notes that it can take two years simply to grasp the nature of the responsibilities. Nominations are problematic, taking place during the sessions of Yearly Meeting of Ministry and Counsel (YMM&C) using a quickly named ad hoc committee. This affords little time to pay attention to balance and recruitment. In addition there has been very high turn-over, which exacerbates the problem of need for longevity on the group for its work to be effective. We learned of the frustration experienced when hard work on a “difficult item” is shunted aside by YM, possibly accounting for at least some of this turn-over. High turn over also heightens the perennial problem of continuity and historical memory which was also cited as a problem. All of this is in addition to the lack of support for the work from the individual’s own Meeting as discussed below. It is not surprising that we were given lukewarm responses to our question on whether the respondent’s experience on this body was positive.

a) Relationship with Monthly Meetings

It seems clear that the first part of CMM&C’s mandate, providing nurture to local meetings, is not happening to any great degree. The reasons for this are several, but perhaps most important is the reality that Yearly Meeting has, in an almost automatic fashion, delegated “thorny issues” to this body. The result has been to bog it down with a volume of contentious work, such as sexual ethics and same sex marriage, leaving little or no time for anything else. Another reason appears to be a sense of remoteness and lack of support from the Monthly Meetings themselves. In theory, CMM&C keeps in touch with Monthly Meeting M&Cs, but in practice this is difficult. There is a perception of resentment of Continuing Meeting, and in the Meetings where a member is serving on CMM&C, a lack of support for that person in their work. Also, some smaller Meetings do not name a local M&C.

The supportive work of Meetings is complex and we are told that it is difficult to discern what kind of help would be needed. This is one area where we are told that more time would help,

allowing members to focus on this part of the mandate. Furthermore, CMM&C is either out of touch with a Meeting needing help or feels it must be invited before offering any assistance. Meetings forward their annual State of Society reports to CMM&C which in turn does a draft summary for YMM&C, but a reading of these reports from the last three years tells us that difficulties at the Monthly Meeting level are rarely mentioned, much less described in any detail. One respondent suggests that the process of developing State of Society Reports in itself needs help.

The solutions suggested for dealing with this particular set of problems seemed to focus on the desirability of “regionalizing” CMM&C at the level of a Half-yearly Meeting. This is seen as bringing it closer to the local Meetings, making it easier to have a “sense of what is happening” and making travel in support of Meetings more workable. There was also a suggestion that the work of a field secretary or of travelling ministers under the care of CMM&C would be a way of addressing this part of the mandate. Noteworthy here is the observation by one that this would make delegation of matters from Yearly Meeting more of a problem.

One respondent in making this suggestion felt that the first step would be to look at the work of Religious Education Committee (RE), Home Mission and Advancement Committee (HMAC), and CMM&C with respect to potential overlap or interaction of the mandates of these three groups. Both CMM&C and RE are offshoots of HMAC and the relative responsibilities of each to the other has been a long standing concern. It does emphasize the probability that changes in one could affect the others and that all three might be studied at the same time. All three have had their share of difficulties in recent years.

b) Relationship with Representative Meeting

There was a common desire expressed that CMM&C continue to participate in Representative Meeting (RM). All three of the past clerks we interviewed shared the experience of finding attendance at RM an opportunity to get a sense of Yearly Meeting as a whole. And having this overview was seen as necessary for carrying out the tasks asked of CMM&C.

In light of CMM&C’s role in spiritual nurture of Yearly Meeting, and given Representative Meeting’s mandate to attend to the affairs of YM between sessions, there may be an added argument for the presence of someone from CMM&C at all gatherings of Representative Meeting. Two of the three raised a question as to whether CMM&C could have a role in nurturing the spiritual health of Representative Meeting. One envisioned gathering a small group together who would uphold the Meetings in prayer.

c) Relationship with Yearly Meeting in Session

CMM&C does not have a formal relationship with Yearly Meeting. It has a relationship to Yearly Meeting Ministry & Counsel, which is a parallel meeting to Yearly Meeting, that is similar to the relationship of Representative Meeting to Yearly Meeting. As the ongoing arm of

YMM&C, CMM&C does not report to Yearly Meeting; rather it brings viewpoints and news and sometimes advice. This is the historic relationship of the Meeting of Elders to the Yearly Meeting. It is parallel but separate, with differing responsibilities that are in an oversimplified sense, spiritual nurture on one hand and church affairs on the other. While these two in the long run cannot be separated, structurally they are, perhaps because the different nature of the work requires a different kind of relationship with the Monthly Meetings. The difference in these relationships is confusing for many Friends.

This is the book description. The practice however has been, as noted above, for Yearly Meeting to refer difficult matters to CMM&C, treating it as though it is a committee reporting to Yearly Meeting. It seems rather obvious when one looks at the complexity and contention surrounding the matters that have been referred, that this has pre-empted the letter and the intent of CMM&C's mandate. As one person put it, the parallel structure is established but how matters pass between the two is not defined. In this regard, the mandate is ambiguous at best or just downright unclear. In reflection, one wonders why no one has stood up and pointed this out until last year when Wolfville Monthly Meeting brought it to the attention of all.

We have now reached the stage where one of our respondents suggested that perhaps CMM&C should be a standing committee of Yearly Meeting. Two responses to our question about what would happen if Continuing Meeting ceased to exist pointed out that the only part that would probably fall away completely is the nurture of Monthly Meetings. The substantive work was seen as being handed to ad hoc committees, the spiritual part disappearing in ways that might not be noticed overtly but would have a disintegrating effect over the long term.

Perhaps the most revealing comment of all was the observation made by one respondent that there is very little funding for spiritual support of Yearly Meeting as a whole. Our money goes to more tangible things. The same person gave us a general comment that we need a better understanding of the "Spirit of Quakerism." How we might do this and who would bear responsibility for its growth is an open question. CMM&C could be the logical place to guide such work. So too could RE or perhaps HMAc. But right now, there is no central body within our Yearly Meeting equipped to deal with such a task. It seems that our assumptions rest on the strength of the Monthly Meetings to pay attention to such matters, yet the concern that seemed to fuel the establishment of the Consultation and Renewal Group was a concern for the spiritual health of our small meetings and worship groups. We need to break the circular arguments about such matters that lead us only into troubled waters.

B. SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES

We interviewed 10 individuals who represent Canadian Friends on eight wider Quaker bodies and ecumenical organizations.¹ We missed hearing from three ecumenical organizations, the

¹ Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), Friends General Conference

Canadian Council of Churches, Project Ploughshares and the Women's Inter-church Council of Canada.. All ten brought many years of experience into the interview – the least being four years.

As with the interviews of clerks, the material was analysed by topic. What differs from the clerk's interviews is the fact that the work in these various organizations differs greatly. We need to be careful in trying to summarize the experiences related by these individuals that we not lose the unique characteristics of work in each of the organizations discussed. For now, we need to find the common themes. In future, we (or our successors) should be fleshing out what we have learned with more basic information about the organizations themselves. It is a fine line, but it is important here to stick to the experience of the Friends we interviewed and stay away from any description or assessment of the organizations themselves.

1. Number of representatives serving

Representation to all of the wider Quaker bodies (WQBs) has been reduced with the exception of Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW) which has gone from one to two. Again, with the exception of QEW where the person interviewed feels that one rep is sufficient, the number of current reps is seen as presenting difficulties.

A common theme here is the importance of having more than one representative for mutual support, for providing a “balanced view” from Canadian Friends and for facilitating communication with regional gatherings and local Meetings. There is discussion of support below, but the need for two or three reps to a Quaker body rests in part on the lack of support available elsewhere. The complexity of the work was also seen as needing to be addressed by more than one person. FWCC, Section of the Americas has a regional structure, East, Central and West that provides one further reason for needing three representatives from CYM.

Our representation on ecumenical bodies is limited to one, with the major exception of Kairos where we have a potential of seven serving, with one vacancy. No concerns here.

2. Benefits

Personal learning, spiritual growth and transformation for the reps themselves are universally cited as a primary benefit. This in turn is seen as having the potential to enrich the understanding and knowledge of Friends in the local meeting and elsewhere where the reps have opportunity to share their experience.

A common concern is the isolating effect it would have on Canadian Friends if we withdrew or

(FGC), Friends United Meeting (FUM), World Council of Churches (WCC), Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW), Kairos, Interfaith Committee on Chaplaincy, Church Council on Justice and Corrections (CCJC),

did not participate in the various organizations. For the wider Quaker bodies, we would lose a global or continental perspective on Quakerism and on the ways in which Friends worship and testify throughout the world. The global perspective is true especially for FWCC. Services such as youth events and visitation are also available through these organizations.

The ecumenical organizations also provide a broader perspective than we would find among ourselves. But here there is also the great potential for expanding Friends' work for social justice and peace far beyond what we could hope to accomplish on our own.

There is one theme that crosses over the two categories of WQBs and Ecumenical Organizations – the desire on the part of the other organization to have Friends involved and in the case of WQBs to have Canadians in particular present to provide a wider perspective to that of the dominant American Yearly Meetings. One has to ask the question: is it sufficient in itself to warrant our membership and participation? Perhaps so, but let us not fly past the question too quickly.

Only one person saw a withdrawal from formal representation as having no impact on Yearly Meeting and that was our rep to QEW. Indeed he felt that there are no benefits for CYM in belonging to QEW and that Friends can participate without formal representation.

3. Costs

There is a strong feeling that Yearly Meeting gets more from our participation in these bodies than we give. Nor do Friends see the appropriateness of trying to put a dollar figure on our benefits. In some cases, our financial support is supplemented by financial support from the organization. In one case, the Interfaith Committee on Chaplaincy, the Canadian Government pays the cost. In the case of Kairos, CFSC bears much of the cost. (Here it must be remembered that about 75% of CFSC's funds come from outside the Society of Friends.) There have also been times when Monthly Meetings have provided help with costs.

Nevertheless, there is a consciousness of cost and attempts to minimize involvement in order to save. In two instances, the rep does not attend meetings when they are held too far from home base.

The budget cuts of recent years that have affected the WQBs have weighed heavily on our reps. Rightly or wrongly, it seems to them to signal a general lack of interest on the part of Yearly Meeting. It has also affected the load that each must carry. On a small scale, but perhaps also difficult to accept is the fact that costs such as photocopying and telephone calls have been born personally, even at times when our grants and support for individuals has fallen off.

4. Position of General Secretary

With two exceptions, there was a sense that the work would proceed with or without the support of a general secretary. The advantage could be historical memory and assistance at the

beginning of a person's tenure, but both of these were seen as better carried by volunteers.

One Friend had experienced frustration trying to get timely information from the Yearly Meeting clerks. She also noted that the current custom of redirecting mail to the reps when it is related to their organization adds to the workload.

Again, Kairos is an exception drawing on the staff resources of CFSC.

5. Use of Electronic Media

As with the clerks, there is evidence of the absolute necessity of email to be able to carry out the work. This is especially so for organizations that are far flung such as the WCC and FWCC. In fact, FWCC no longer issues paper copies of reports and agenda material to their volunteers. In one case, part of our rep's contribution to the organization is to edit an online newsletter.

There is extensive use of teleconferencing within these organizations.

The limitations of electronic media when cited were similar to those we heard from the clerks.

6. Reporting

We heard here an almost universal groan. There is a serious lack of opportunity to communicate with Friends at YM in session, and apparent disinterest on the part of most Friends present in hearing about the work and concerns of our reps. Nor do we adequately recognize visitors from the WQBs during our sessions. Where other organizations apparently give visitors time on the floor of YM, this is not our practice.

Full use is made of all the regular channels of reporting including the Annual Reports, but as one interviewee noted, "Friends don't read." At least not their reports. And even if read, there is rarely if ever, any feedback. The Reporting and Clearness sessions with their opportunity for questions (however limited) are seen as essential.

What stood out was the apparent success of communicating with Friends at Half-yearly Meetings and regional gatherings and in some cases, with Monthly Meetings. In general, face to face encounter with Friends on local ground is seen as the most effective way to get the message across.

Kairos once again has an exceptional circumstance with the availability of CFSC's media, Quaker Concern, their online newsletter and their website all contributing to broadcasting the work of Kairos. CFSC also makes use of local contacts and visits to regional gatherings to spread the word.

The use of the Canadian Friend is widespread but probably limited. One Friend noted that our understanding of the potential of using the Canadian Friend is lacking.

It is not surprising given the difficulties with communicating during YM in session and the greater effectiveness of local visitation that there was little concern about the possibility of YM no longer meeting on an annual basis. The only caveat here was a concern that we have a way of dealing with global issues that might arise and the need for by-passing the inevitable filter that exists when information must be passed to Friends in their home meetings through the representatives present.

7. Visions of the Future and other suggestions

On the whole the responses to these questions gave us even more reasons why Friends participation in WQBs and Ecumenical organizations would strengthen us both in the practice of our faith and in our witness in the wider world. These Friends are deeply committed to their work in these organizations primarily out of a spiritually led concern. They seek confirmation of their work and support from Friends in Canada – which largely they are not receiving.

In light of this, it is significant that there is some support for the idea of placing all of our eggs in one basket, that of FWCC, when thinking about our affiliation with wider Quaker bodies. This included our rep to the WCC in part because FWCC is also present at the WCC and our voice could be heard through that channel. There is no doubt that the primary hope is that we can continue on our present path and indeed strengthen our commitment and financial support to all of these organizations. But in light of the knowledge these Friends have about our current condition, there is a sense that we might be better off to do one task fully and let the others go.

The ecumenical work is primarily related to Friends concerns for social justice and peace (not that this is not the case with WQBs – it is just that it is a more direct action opportunity). Here there is little sense that things could or should change.

The accountability lines for Kairos were raised as needing attention and possibly clarification although there was no suggestion that the ultimate accountability would not be to YM. Because of the close ties between the CYM reps on Kairos and CFSC, one option might be to have the reps report through CFSC. The original intent of support for and flow of information from our reps to the social justice bodies in Canada being through the Ecumenical Committee was seen as having dropped away. The relationship of our reps to this latter committee may be problematic.

8. Personal Experience & Support of MM

There was almost no equivocation on the positive affect that this work and ministry has for those who serve. Where there was any hesitation it seemed to relate to the mixed reaction and lack of support received from Friends. The general feeling about this was to recommend the work to others but with the caveat that they be advised of the “difficulties.”

Support for the individual from the Monthly Meetings is decidedly mixed. Some receive good support spiritually, emotionally and financially and some receive none from the Meeting itself and perhaps some from individuals within their Meeting. There is no way of understanding why this is so without going back and asking some direct questions. We can speculate that this may depend on the health of the Monthly Meeting, and maybe this is part of a chicken or egg situation. Again, Kairos is the exception. Support comes from CFSC rather than the Monthly Meetings.

C. OTHER COMMENTS

This section contains brief comments about specific committees or areas of work that should not be lost, but which do not fit into the categories above. It is important to note that these comments are of necessity taken out of context and that in some cases they reflect inaccuracies regarding Yearly Meeting and how it functions. They are important because they are the opinions of the individuals who made them and we include them because they do represent ideas and feelings among us.

a) Comments re specific committees

Trustees: if YM separates, we would need a legal opinion re the trust funds. Most are inflexible and there would be a vacuum where HMAC currently makes decisions. It would be best to ask Trustees for recommendations and alternatives. The recruitment process has changed. Trustees need people with interest and skills.

Nominating: there is a general lack of support by MMs for the nominating process. Their focus is mostly local. How can Nominating Committee get names of Isolated Friends? The naming of Nominating Committee is not good. Names now come from the floor of delegates meeting and the result can be a committee out of balance. Suggestions could be passed on to the delegates [first]. People are not comfortable commenting from the floor. The work of the ad hoc committee on the nominating process was helpful.

Religious Education: Are services other than the youth program useful or cost effective? Have services been appreciated? How much support is really offered? This committee needs people willing to work. A paid coordinator similar to what the unitarians have would be wonderful. Quakers are too tight with money.

Home Mission & Advancement Committee: has struggled to get work done because of finances and inability to fulfill work demands between meetings. We have a different culture now than in the 50s. Now there is a range of uses of people's time and a lower priority given to "church work." HMAC had to limit its tasks to accommodate a decreased budget. There has been 10 years of serious disagreement regarding restructuring this committee. Currently there is agreement to stick with the status quo and work on completing tasks.

Finances: We need a general secretary combined with the treasurer plus a bookkeeper. [We could then lay down having a volunteer treasurer]. Communication between the treasurer, bookkeeper and clerk of Finance committee is essential and central. The treasurer should live in Ottawa or the same city as the bookkeeper. There is a long period of orientation. Budget work is done and communicated through Finance Committee. YM gives final approval but if it is not meeting every year, we might have to return to using RM.

Records: We need more people to work in the archives. Have "Friends of the Archives"

Discipline Review Committee: The proposal from Halifax [to have an operations manual and minimize the content of O&P] is good.

Relationships with Wider Bodies (Quaker and others) The combination of Canadian and Quaker is special and strong internationally. Need for emphasis on our relationship with other churches and faiths. Ecumenical committee was a waste because it spent so much time on figuring out its mandate. No general secretary has affected the whole area of relationships with other bodies.

b) General Comments from the Clerks

There is a wide gap between YM Friends and MM Friends. We need better and more communication

Be aware of a certain resistance to restructuring from MMs

We deal badly with incompetence

Underlying changes and problems point to need to change

There is not much appetite for change in WHYM. It would need a separate body to deal with business.

Need to know boundaries in order to not duplicate

Vitality depends on good communication, preferably face to face. At the same time, this Friend agreed that air travel should be avoided.

We are living beyond our means

Need light ecological footprint

We need some changes, but go slow so we can assess the impact

Change is inevitable and our project is timely. We need to keep the “conversation” open to all ideas and not be fearful

Face to face gatherings are important because of the way we make decisions

Find out why people are reluctant to become involved

Greater regionalization of committees is good

c) Clerk's Comments re CYM sessions

Attending session keeps one “in the loop” and preserves historical memory

When can we be flexible?

Our questionnaire does not deal with fellowship and awareness, the sense of spiritual community that accompanies our meetings. How does this emanate out to the MMs?

There is little interest in YM or in business meetings

There are interesting statistics available that show Canadian Friends have a much higher percentage of participation in national church affairs compared to others

Meeting less often would dramatically weaken Quakerism in Canada. YM & RM connect us to larger circles, connections with Friends from East and West are invaluable

YMs are very important for parents and children. Less frequent would destroy continuity and community building in youth program. YM is welcoming to parents and children, there

is too little elsewhere

People want a national structure. This could be maintained without a full national meeting every year.

Develop a model for a yearly meeting based on greater importance given to MMs and worship groups and regional meetings. A system of four clerks, one in each region and one from the region where YM would gather in alternate years could unite the whole YM through the work of the clerks

d) Comments from Representatives to other bodies

We seem to have a short memory. The left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing

We have no resources to employ a General secretary but at the same time, employ a field secretary and fully fund "required positions" to attend YM

Do something to release some of our trust funds

We are no longer leaders, but part of the band wagon

What is our unique purpose? How do we discern Truth? What is our call? We need to answer these questions before we make decisions on who does what

A national organization needs a minimum of structure. We have too many committees.

Ecological concerns are important. Face to face meetings are necessary

Worship Groups are isolated, don't understand Quaker process, and don't contribute much

If Half-yearly Meetings function well and have their own M&C, there would be no need for a Canadian Yearly Meeting M&C

There is something correct about being isolated – finding community and re-uniting with the *one* is a life-long process. Breaking Yearly Meeting into pieces may not make a YM more vital to Friends. It is good to find a relationship with Friends closer and not wait for bigger structures to come closer

It is healthy to keep re-evaluating. Change should be careful and not too sudden

D. APPENDIX

QUESTIONS FOR COMMITTEE CLERKS

INTERVIEW NOTES

Name: _____ Date: _____

Begin with open ended question: (Use separate page for notes if necessary)

1. *How long have you served on this committee? How long have you been clerk?*

2. *Structure questions:*

a) *Is the size of your committee adequate? Too big? Too small?*

b) *Does it require representation from across Canada?*

c) *Does the custom of setting two three year terms for individuals serving on your committee meet the committee's needs? Are there times when exceptions to this should be considered?*

3. *Cost questions:*

a) *Do you think the travel costs incurred by your committee are in right order related to the work your committee does?*

b) *Do you ask for reimbursement of expenses that you (or others on the committee) have incurred for such things as photocopying and postage?*

c) *Does your committee participate in the budgeting process? If not, why not? If yes, does it work well for you?*

4. *There have been many suggestions made in the past that committee work be "regionalized." Some ideas have been that the committee would be located in one geographic region, another that it be taken under the care of a MM, and another that the work become the responsibility of a Regional Meeting (or Half-yearly Meeting).*

a) *Do you think regionalization is feasible for the work carried out by your committee?*

If not, why not?

If yes (or maybe):

b) *Has your committee discussed some of these options?*

c) *Can you be specific as to which of the above ideas would work?*

d) *Are there any other ideas you can suggest that might work for regionalizing your committee.*

5. *The position of general secretary remains on our books but has not been filled. Would more staff support make your committee's work more effective?*

If yes, in what areas would you need this support:

- a) *Administrative such as mailings and provision of reports and minutes?*
- b) *consultative such as might be given by an experienced Friend in a staff position.*
- c) *retaining historical memory of past practices in your committee?*
- d) *other?*

If your answer to any of the above is yes, please explain how you see such assistance being provided.

6. We believe that all our committees are now making use of electronic communication. If your committee does not make use of electronic media, please explain.

- a) *What use do you make of e-mail? To what purposes do you use email? How do you include members who do not have access?*
- b) *Have you made use of CYM's website? If yes, in what way has this been helpful?*
- c) *Have you used teleconferencing? What do you see as its strength and weaknesses?*
- d) *Do you see making more use of electronic media in future? If yes, how?*

If no, why not?

7. Committee clerks are members of Representative Meeting. There has been considerable attention given to the cost and function of this larger body.

- a) *Is your experience serving on this body useful?*

In past, suggestions have been made that you only attend when your committee has business on the agenda. Other suggestions have been made that only one person attend from any one MM, so that a committee clerk might have to serve in two capacities.

- b) *Would arrangements such as those suggested above work for you?*

If not, why not?

- c) *Do you have any other suggestions regarding the relationship between your committee and Rep. Meeting?*

8. Yearly Meeting no longer accepts general reports from committees on the floor of YM in session. The alternatives have been committee booths, and rotating accountability sessions as well as the annual written reports.

- a) *Do you feel that the work of your committee is adequately communicated to Friends when needed?*

- b) *How do you go about generating ideas or support for your work from Friends generally?*

- c) *Have you ever used the Canadian Friend to communicate with Friends across Canada?*

Suggestions have been made that YM in session only be held every two or three years.

- d) *Would it be a problem for your committee if your formal reporting was only to an interim body such as Rep. Meeting and rarely or not at all to Yearly Meeting in session?*

9. Do you have any suggestions for restructuring your committee or redefining its function?

10. Are there any other areas of committee work that you would like to discuss with the C'nR Group? Please elaborate. (Use separate sheet if necessary)

11. What do you think the result would be for Yearly Meeting if your committee did not exist?

12. Is your experience serving CYM on this committee a positive one? If not, why?

13. Has your Monthly Meeting or Worship Group provided any support for you?

a) Does your Monthly Meeting receive any benefits from your serving on this committee?

b) Would you recommend to another Friend that they serve on this committee?

QUESTIONS FOR REPS TO OTHER BODIES

INTERVIEW NOTES

Name: _____ Date: _____

Begin with open ended question: (Use separate page for notes if necessary)

1. How long have you served as our representative to _____?

2. Are you the only rep to this body? If not how many serve?

a) Do the number of persons serving meet the needs of YM?

b) If more than one person is named, what would you see happening if this number were reduced?

3. a) What benefit do Canadian Friends receive from this wider body?

b) Have your ideas of the benefit changed since you became involved?

4. Cost questions:

a) Do you think the travel costs incurred by your attendance at meetings or gatherings are in right order related to the benefit YM receives from its relationship with the body on which you serve?

b) Do you ask for reimbursement of expenses that you have incurred for such things as photocopying and postage?

c) Does you participate in the budgeting process? If not, why not? If yes, does it work well for you?

5. *The position of general secretary remains on our books but has not been filled. Would more staff support make your work more effective?*

If yes, in what areas would you need this support:

a) Administrative

b) consultative such as might be given by an experienced Friend in a staff position.

c) retaining historical memory of past practices in the organization on which you serve?

d) other?

If your answer to any of the above is yes, please explain how you see such assistance being provided.

6. *We believe that much of our ongoing work is being carried out through electronic media. Do you use email or other electronic media such as teleconferencing in your work?*

a) If yes, in what way?

b) Have you made use of CYM's website? If yes, in what way has this been helpful?

c) Do you see making more use of electronic media in future? If yes, how?

If no, why not?

7. *Yearly Meeting no longer accepts general reports from committees or representatives on the floor of YM in session. The alternatives have been committee booths, and rotating accountability sessions as well as the annual written reports.*

a) Do you feel that your work is adequately communicated to Friends when needed?

b) How do you go about generating ideas or support for your work from Friends generally?

c) Have you ever used the Canadian Friend to communicate with Friends across Canada?

Suggestions have been made that YM in session only be held every two or three years.

d) Would it be a problem for you if your formal reporting was only to an interim body such as Rep. Meeting and rarely or not at all to Yearly Meeting in session?

8. *Do you have any suggestions for the future relationship between CYM and the body on which you serve?*

9. *Are there any other areas of your work that you would like to discuss with the C'nR Group? Please elaborate.*

10 What do you think the result would be for Canadian Friends if we were no longer in relationship with the body on which you now serve?

11. Is your experience representing CYM on this body a positive one? If yes, why? If not, why?

12. Has your Monthly Meeting or Worship Group provided any support for you?

a) Does your Monthly Meeting receive any benefits from your serving on this body?

b) Would you recommend to another Friend that they serve on this body?