

CHAPTER 5

THE HALF-YEARLY MEETING

The Half-Yearly Meetings of Canadian Yearly Meeting are composed of the members of the constituent Monthly Meetings, Worship Groups and individual Friends in a geographic area. They are designed to bring together Friends from a wider area in a bond of fellowship for inspiration and counsel, and to provide an opportunity for united consideration of matters that concern the Society. Their purpose is to strengthen the life and work of Meetings and Friends' groups in the area and to facilitate communication between Friends in that area and the Yearly Meeting. In a country as large as Canada, the Half-Yearly Meetings perform a valuable function of creating and sustaining the bonds of fellowship. The foregoing does not preclude the possibility of regional gatherings.

5.1 Gatherings of the Half-Yearly Meeting

Generally meeting in the spring and autumn, the Half-Yearly Meetings will be presided over by a Clerk appointed by the Meeting for a fixed term. Other officers and committees may be appointed to perform particular tasks. Meetings will be conducted in the same manner as other Business Meetings of Friends (see Chapter 2). Business concerns will arise from the constituent Meetings, individual Friends, and the Yearly Meeting and its Committees. In all cases, however, matters to be considered should be

forwarded to the Clerk well in advance of the Meeting so that business may be rightly ordered. Half-Yearly Meetings may undertake concerns and programmes at their discretion. In some cases, the concerns may be forwarded to the Yearly Meeting; in other cases they may be sent back to the Monthly Meetings or Worship Groups for their consideration and action. Opportunities for spiritual nurture, sharing of concerns, recreation, and particularly worship may be part of the gatherings of Half-Yearly Meetings.

5.2 Ministry and oversight functions

A Half-Yearly Meeting is concerned for the condition of its constituent Meetings, strengthening and supporting them. It is also responsible for the nurture of new gatherings of Friends and of isolated Friends. It may assist in the establishment of new Meetings and the laying down of a Meeting. The annual State of Society Reports prepared by the Monthly Meetings should be considered by the Half-Yearly Meeting. Difficulties arising from State of Society Reports not dealt with by the Half-Yearly Meeting may be forwarded to the Continuing Meeting of Ministry and Counsel. Epistles sent from the Half-Yearly Meeting to its constituent Meetings and members will help to forge a growth of members in the spirit and in truth. Yearly Meeting Clerks and Standing Committees of Yearly Meeting will do well to consider the opportunity of attending gatherings of Half-Yearly Meetings.

5.3 Formation and laying down of Half-Yearly Meetings

Half-Yearly Meetings are established on the initiative of

the Yearly Meeting acting in accordance with the request from two or more Monthly Meetings, or when a larger unit wishes to divide. In all such cases the Yearly Meeting will appoint a committee to be present to assist in the organization. The dissolution will similarly be arranged with the approval of the Yearly Meeting and any rights and property vested in the Half-Yearly Meeting shall be transferred to the Yearly Meeting (see Section 6.6).

CHAPTER 6

THE YEARLY MEETING

6.1 Introduction

The Yearly Meeting consists of the members of the Monthly and Half-Yearly Meetings. It meets annually for the purpose of generally co-ordinating the affairs of the component Meetings and the maintenance and promotion of Christian faith, love, unity, life and practice of Friends throughout the component Meetings. All members have the privilege and responsibility of attendance and participation in its sessions. Visiting Friends from other Yearly Meetings whose minutes or other credentials have been acknowledged by the Clerk are welcome to attend the general sessions and participate in the discussions. Other visitors may also participate on invitation of the Clerk.

The Yearly Meeting has authority to decide questions of administration and to inaugurate and carry on departments of religious and philanthropic work.

The Yearly Meeting receives annual reports from its standing committees. It also receives annual reports on the state of the Society from the Half-Yearly Meetings, either directly or through the Meetings of Ministry and Counsel, to which it should give prayerful consideration, and it should extend such counsel and advice in relation thereto as it may deem necessary. The Yearly Meeting should annually receive abstracts from the minutes of the Half-Yearly Meetings containing business for its consideration and action, and should give advice or instruction to the Half-

Yearly Meetings when requested by them or when it is considered by Yearly Meeting to be necessary. Business may also be introduced to the Yearly Meeting from Representative Meeting, from the standing committees of Yearly Meeting, from the Friends United Meeting Boards, or from Friends General Conference, or from Friends World Committee for Consultation, or from other sources at the discretion of the Clerk. Business may also be laid before the Yearly Meeting by any of its members.

All documents to be presented to Yearly Meeting shall, so far as possible, be printed and circulated beforehand.

6.2 Clerks of Yearly Meeting

The Yearly Meeting shall be opened at the appointed time and place by the Clerk. In the absence of the Clerk, an assistant Clerk shall perform this service. If neither is present, the Meeting shall appoint a Temporary Clerk.

The duties of the Clerk of Yearly Meeting should be as for Clerks of other Meetings for Business (see Section 2.14).

The Clerk shall see that the business is properly prepared for presentation to the Meeting for its consideration, announce decisions when made, sign all documents and epistles and other communications on behalf of the Meeting, countersign certificates of ministers and others liberated for service in other lands and sign such documents and transcripts of records as may require certification.

6.3 General Secretary

The Yearly Meeting may appoint a suitable person to serve in the capacity of General Secretary. Under the general supervision of the Representative Meeting, the Yearly

Meeting General Secretary carries out certain of the policies of the Yearly Meeting as directed by the Yearly Meeting in session or Representative Meeting, with specific responsibilities for the Yearly Meeting office and for any clerical or administrative employees working there.

6.4 Representative Meeting

Representative Meeting is the body that is entrusted with the general care of those matters which affect the life of Canadian Yearly Meeting (Religious Society of Friends) between the full sessions of Yearly Meeting.

Representative Meeting is entrusted to take action and to make public statements on behalf of Canadian Yearly Meeting in light of the faith and practice of Yearly Meeting as determined by testimonies and procedures of Friends. It is not authorized to make changes to the Yearly Meeting Discipline or to extend statements of faith. These matters are the responsibility of Yearly Meeting in session.

Representative Meeting extends advice and assistance to those Friends suffering on account of their witness to Friends' testimonies.

Representative Meeting has responsibility for care and administration of financial and personnel matters within Canadian Yearly Meeting. It meets on such dates as Yearly Meeting or Representative Meeting may designate. It reports annually on its proceedings to Yearly Meeting and may ask Yearly Meeting to consider some matters in full session for specific action. The expenses incurred by Representative Meeting are paid from Yearly Meeting funds.

Each Monthly Meeting appoints a representative to Representative Meeting for a term of five years, so that approximately a fifth of these representatives are named each

year at the rise of Yearly Meeting. Monthly Meetings may appoint an alternate if their representative is unable to attend.

Representative Meeting consists of: (a) a representative from each Monthly Meeting of Canadian Yearly Meeting; (b) the Clerk of Yearly Meeting; (c) the clerks of Yearly Meeting Standing Committees; (d) the clerks of other Yearly Meeting bodies (Trustees, Continuing Meeting of Ministry and Counsel, Canadian Young Friends Yearly Meeting); (e) the Clerk of Representative Meeting and the clerks of Finance and Personnel Committees; (f) the General Secretary and Treasurer of Yearly Meeting. A quorum consists of ten members.

6.5 Meeting of Delegates

The Meeting of Delegates consists of the delegates appointed annually by Monthly Meetings to attend Yearly Meeting sessions. It has two responsibilities. Together with members of the Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee, the delegates review the proposed nominations for Yearly Meeting appointments which will then be presented to Yearly Meeting. In addition, the delegates appoint Friends to serve as members of the Nominating Committee; these appointments include new members appointed for a three year term and replacements required to fill vacancies that may have occurred.

The Meeting of Delegates is convened by the Clerk of Yearly Meeting and clerked by a Friend chosen from among the delegates present.

6.6 Trustees

The status and duties of Trustees are detailed in Section

2.17. Trustees of Yearly Meeting may have the additional function of inspecting and perfecting, where necessary and if permitted by the Provincial statute, the titles to lands and other estates belonging to constituent Meetings of the Yearly Meeting, including the properties of Meetings that have been discontinued.

6.7 Finance Committee

The Finance Committee is appointed by Representative Meeting and shall annually estimate the amounts of grants made by the Yearly Meeting to meet the financial obligations of Yearly Meeting to the various branches of the work of Yearly Meeting and towards the work of Friends General Conference, Friends United Meeting, Friends World Committee for Consultation, and towards interdenominational and other activities. These amounts will be approved by the Yearly Meeting general session. The Financial Committee shall recommend the amount of money required for the use of Yearly Meeting, and shall allocate it by quota among the constituent Meetings.

Auditors will be appointed annually by Representative Meeting, to whom will be submitted the books of account as required.

6.8 Personnel Advisory Committee

Personnel Policy Committee is a committee of representative meeting. Its membership is described in section 5 of the Canadian Yearly Meeting Personnel Policy.

The role of the committee is:

To review the Canadian Yearly Meeting Personnel Policy and to recommend changes to Representative

Meeting.

To bring the policy to the attention of CYM and Monthly Meeting committees that employ, hire, or supervise employees and to the attention of all the employees of Yearly and Monthly Meetings.

To maintain updated resource materials on employment issues and to make them available.

To provide a forum for employees and the employing committees to share information about employment issues.

To provide advice on employment issues when asked.

6.9 Epistle Summarizing Committee

This committee annually summarizes the Epistles received by Canadian Yearly Meeting from other Yearly Meetings around the world and presents the summary to the Yearly Meeting session.

STANDING COMMITTEES OF YEARLY MEETING

The functions of the standing committees of Yearly Meeting are laid out below as shown in their terms of reference, but it will be expected that some committees may undertake other functions from time to time or be asked to do so by the Yearly Meeting. As for the other Friends' Meetings and Committees, Chapter 2 will be a guide to general procedures in the transaction of business by these committees.

6.10 Camp NeeKauNis Committee

The terms of reference of the Camp NeeKauNis Committee are:

- To nurture the spiritual life of all attenders through its programme and the various activities undertaken.
- To arrange needed programmes, throughout the summer months, as are felt advisable and desirable. This includes finding the necessary personnel to make these programmes effective and influential.
- To cooperate with other Yearly Meeting committees where the NeeKauNis facilities are needed in carrying out the mutual endeavours of the Society of Friends.
- To be conscious of its interpretative influence as it meets those who are not members of the Society of Friends in the various programmes offered.
- To keep the physical facilities in a state of good repair and to develop facilities as the need arises.

6.11 Canadian Friends Foreign Missionary Board

The Canadian Friends Foreign Missionary Board was originally set up to take care of missionary efforts of Canada Yearly Meeting (Five Years Meeting). After the amalgamation of the three Yearly Meetings in 1955, it became one of the standing committees of Canadian Yearly Meeting. In recent years the concept of missionary work has changed and with it the emphasis of the Board. The Board maintains interest and support of the work of Friends in foreign lands insofar as these projects minister to the whole person, both the physical and spiritual condition.

Income of the Board consists of the income from several bequests made to the Board in the past, and more recently from capital from the sale of the Botsford Street Meetinghouse in Newmarket, Ontario, and contributions from Friends. Projects under the care of wider Friends'

bodies and other overseas projects are supported by the Board at its discretion. At the present time the Board does not initiate projects.

6.12 Canadian Friends Service Committee

The Canadian Friends Service Committee exists to unify and expand the concerns of Friends in Canada for peace witness and peace education, international services, and social concerns in Canada. It cooperates with such bodies as the American Friends Service Committee and Quaker Peace and Social Witness of London Yearly Meeting to work abroad in relief and medical aid work and services to persons in need in many nations.

6.13 Discipline Review Committee

The Discipline Review Committee is responsible for reviewing *Organization and Procedure* and any amendments proposed to it. While revisions will only be undertaken at the direction of Yearly Meeting, the committee will be sensitive to current practices, to changes in them and needs for guidance, and may encourage Monthly Meetings to present their questions in writing to the Yearly Meeting.

Proposals to change or add to *Organization and Procedure* may be presented in writing by a Monthly Meeting or standing committee of the Yearly Meeting to either the Yearly Meeting or to Representative Meeting. If such a proposal is approved, it shall be referred to the Discipline Review Committee for comment or drafting as required. The Discipline Review Committee, after such consultation as it deems necessary, then brings forward to the Yearly Meeting a proposal to amend *Organization and Procedure*, stating the exact change in wording proposed. If

this proposal is approved by the Yearly Meeting without amendment, then the next following Yearly Meeting shall be asked to give final approval to the proposal, and if this is similarly forthcoming then the proposal takes effect (see also the Preface).

If Yearly Meeting amends the proposal first presented by the Discipline Review Committee, it shall be referred back to the Discipline Review Committee for comment—and may be put forward for final approval the next year if Discipline Review Committee has no objection. If a proposal for final approval is not approved, the matter shall be returned to Discipline Review Committee for further consideration.

6.14 Ecumenical Committee

Canadian Yearly Meeting maintains relations with a number of other religious organizations, including Friends bodies, Christian church councils and committees and interfaith groups. Ecumenical Committee has the responsibility of supporting our representatives to these bodies and assisting Yearly Meeting to respond to ecumenical and inter-faith concerns.

Ecumenical Committee operates with three sections, in Western, Central and Atlantic Canada. Each section arranges its meetings as convenient. There is one meeting a year of one representative from each of the three sections. Travel expenses are paid only for these representatives to the annual meeting of the committee and not for the sectional meetings. The General Secretary is an ex-officio member of the committee.

The committee's terms of reference are:

- To provide mutual spiritual and practical support and sharing for Canadian Yearly Meeting representatives

to other Quaker and ecumenical/inter-faith bodies. This would include those Friends serving the Yearly Meeting on national ecumenical committees, the World Council of Churches, and other Friends bodies, such as Friends World Committee for Consultation, Friends General Conference and Friends United Meeting.

- To provide information about ecumenical matters to all Canadian Yearly Meeting Friends.
- To serve as a resource to Canadian Yearly Meeting, its Clerks and General Secretary on ecumenical/inter-faith matters and relationships. This would include responding to concerns coming to the Yearly Meeting from these bodies and from our Monthly Meetings.
- To facilitate a correspondence network among Friends who work ecumenically across Canada and to encourage local participation in wider Quaker gatherings and ecumenical/inter-faith activities.
- To provide information on financial costs of ecumenical and inter-faith activities, including the costs incurred by the representatives. Also, to work with Canadian Yearly Meeting Finance Committee on both long and short range planning for these activities.
- To assist Nominating Committee in seeking Friends to serve Canadian Yearly Meeting as representatives on other bodies and as occasional delegates to special assemblies and meetings that arise from Canadian Yearly Meeting's participation.

6.15 Home Mission and Advancement Committee

Its terms of reference are:

- To encourage the formation of worship groups and

their development either directly as Allowed Meetings under the care of the Committee (see Chapter 4) or as Allowed or Preparative Meetings of a Monthly Meeting.

- To nurture both developing Meetings and older Meetings.
- To encourage and facilitate visitation.
- To maintain contact with isolated Friends and those interested in the Society of Friends.
- To make our Society known to other Seekers. To answer enquiries, maintaining a supply of materials suitable for the purpose, and arranging contact, on request, with local Meetings.
- To assume responsibility for suitable publications including *The Canadian Friend*.
- To see to the selection and distribution, and to encourage the use of Quaker books and other materials.
- To observe present legal obligations with respect to trust funds. (Details of these are available in the Yearly Meeting Office.)
- To assist, in cooperation with local Meetings, the attendance of Friends at conferences and other educational events.
- To appoint sub-committees or ad hoc committees from time to time to study relevant issues, and to report.
- To be responsible for the acceptance and holding of membership in the Society of Friends in Canada where it is deemed desirable (see Chapter 3 on membership).

Home Mission and Advancement Committee is authorized to assume the functions and responsibilities of a Monthly Meeting relating to membership for an enquirer when there is no Monthly Meeting near enough to give effective oversight. The Committee may receive

and consider an application for membership from an enquirer in these circumstances and appoint Friends from the Committee or other Meetings to visit the applicant on its behalf and report to it. If Home Mission and Advancement Committee agrees that the application should be accepted, then membership shall be recorded as in the care of that committee until it appears geographically possible to transfer it to the oversight and regular membership of a Monthly Meeting. While these members are not regarded as forming a constituent Meeting of Canadian Yearly Meeting, it is open to Home Mission and Advancement Committee to recommend a Friend on its list for appointment to a committee of Yearly Meeting. (Canadian Yearly Meeting 1979 Minute #87)

6.16 Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee, which is named by the Monthly Meetings' delegates to Yearly Meeting, has the responsibility of bringing forward names for the positions in Yearly Meeting listed below. It shall consult during the year between sessions of the Yearly Meeting. After approval of its proposals by the delegates to Yearly Meeting, it shall recommend to the Yearly Meeting in session the names of Friends for the following positions:

- Clerk and Assistant Clerk.
- Members of Yearly Meeting standing committees as may be required.
- Representatives of Yearly Meeting on other Quaker bodies and on interdenominational boards, committees and bodies.
- Other nominations for other positions as directed by Yearly Meeting.

Nominating Committee does not consider names for ad hoc committees and other task groups. These are directly appointed by Yearly Meeting or Representative Meeting. Yearly Meeting might request that Nominating Committee provide names in special instances.

It should be noted that Monthly Meetings appoint Friends to serve on their behalf on Representative Meeting.

The clerk of Nominating Committee initiates the consultation process by sending to all clerks of Monthly Meetings, Preparative Meetings, Half-Yearly Meetings, Home Mission and Advancement Committee and standing committees of Yearly Meeting, a list of positions to be filled at Yearly Meeting, requesting that names of suitable Friends be sent forward to fill these positions. Monthly Meetings are requested to consider names of members in Worship Groups and Allowed Meetings under their care, and Home Mission and Advancement Committee may send forward names of Friends whose membership it holds.

Nominating Committee is not required to accept all the names put forward, and it may put forward other names it deems appropriate.

Although it is desirable that Nominating Committee receive a supporting minute from the Meeting where a nominee holds membership, this is not an absolute requirement if the committee is otherwise convinced of the person's qualification to serve. Nevertheless, consultation with that Friend's Meeting would be in right ordering.

Nominations may also be made by Yearly Meeting members when the Nominating Committee reports to Yearly Meeting. However, it is preferable that nominations by individuals be submitted in writing to the Nominating Committee prior to the committee's report to Yearly Meeting.

Representatives of Yearly Meeting to outside bodies must be members. Nominees for standing committees shall also be members, but in exceptional circumstances a Monthly Meeting may propose the name of an attender for service on a Yearly Meeting standing committee. A minute explaining these circumstances must accompany such a proposal. If Nominating Committee accepts the proposed name, the clerk of Nominating Committee shall forward the nomination, along with the explanatory minute, to the meeting of delegates and the Yearly Meeting.

Consent to serve must be obtained, or be forthcoming, from the nominee before Yearly Meeting approves any appointment. The appointment process is completed when Yearly Meeting approves the nominations.

6.17 Records Committee

Records Committee is responsible for the receiving, oversight, preservation, inventory and indexing of records and documents of Canadian Yearly Meeting, its constituent meetings, its standing committees and other related bodies which entrust their records to its care. These include records and documents from the three Yearly Meetings which united in 1955 to become Canadian Yearly Meeting. These Archives are currently located at Pickering College, Newmarket, Ontario (see Section 6.22).

Records Committee acts as a resource for Canadian Yearly Meeting. It guides and assists the Yearly Meeting and its constituent bodies in the creation, care and preservation of their records, encouraging them to deposit their records, or duplicates of them, in the Archives.

Records Committee also develops and maintains the Arthur Garratt Dorland Friends Historical Collection which is a comprehensive reference library of Quaker publications

and the Rendell Rhoades Collection of Quaker Disciplines. Both of these collections are presently located in the Dorland Room of Pickering College Library.

The Archivist is appointed by and accountable to the Records Committee. The Archivist is responsible for the general operation of and access to the Archives and the Collections. The position may be either volunteer or paid. When the Archivist is a paid position the Canadian Yearly Meeting guidelines on Personnel Policy shall apply.

Records Committee in cooperation with the Canadian Friends Historical Association works to foster interest in and knowledge of the heritage of Canadian Friends. Where relevant it works with other Quaker-related and regional archival and historical associations.

6.18 Religious Education Committee

Its terms of reference are:

- To encourage and facilitate religious education, which we see as the ongoing process of nurturing the response of the whole person to God's Spirit in every aspect of life.
- To select, distribute, produce, and encourage the use of materials pertaining to all areas of Friends' Religious Education—First Day Schools, young Friends, adult education, intergenerational groups, family settings, isolated Friends, and for outreach.
- To be a resource for programming at Friends' gatherings.
- To oversee the youth programme conducted during Yearly Meeting sessions. This includes recruiting personnel to coordinate and carry out the activities. In fulfilling this responsibility Religious Education Committee works closely with Programme

Committee.

- To provide opportunities for teacher training.
- To work with other Canadian Yearly Meeting committees in areas of mutual concern.

YEARLY MEETING SESSIONAL COMMITTEES

6.19 Agenda Committee

Agenda Committee assists the Clerk(s) of Yearly Meeting to ensure that agenda items are well prepared and presented in an orderly manner to the sessions of Yearly Meeting, so that informed and prayerful discernment may take place in a spirit of worship.

Prior to the Yearly Meeting sessions, the Clerks of Yearly Meeting and Representative Meeting and the General Secretary will have reviewed the previous minutes of Yearly Meeting and Representative Meeting, as well as the *Reports for Canadian Yearly Meeting*, in order to present a proposed agenda to Yearly Meeting for approval. The Agenda Committee then organizes the agenda, seeking to discern the right timing and ordering of the matters to be considered by Yearly Meeting. Early in the week of Yearly Meeting it posts the proposed agenda, and continues to post a daily updated agenda.

All requests to present items for consideration by Yearly Meeting are to be referred to the Agenda Committee, preferably in writing. The committee will be open to providing an opportunity for Yearly Meeting to hear and consider a spiritual leading that arises as Friends meet and worship together during the week of Yearly Meeting

Agenda Committee commences its work at the start of each Yearly Meeting session and functions during the week of that Yearly Meeting. The committee consists of the Clerk(s) and Recording Clerk(s) of Yearly Meeting, the Clerk of Representative Meeting, the General Secretary, and one member named by Representative Meeting. In addition, up to two members will be named by the Yearly Meeting in session. The Clerk of Agenda Committee may invite other Friends to participate in meetings of the committee.

6.20 Naming Committee

Many Friends contribute to the richness and orderly procedure of Yearly Meeting while it is in session by performing a wide variety of necessary tasks. Arranging individuals to be responsible for most of these tasks is done in advance by Programme Committee or by other designated groups. However, certain appointments are more appropriately made by those present at Yearly Meeting, after prior consideration by a Naming Committee. Such appointments include serving as Reading Clerks or working on committees responsible for drafting the Epistle, reviewing the Minutes of each session, doorkeeping, compiling the Gleanings, organizing the correspondence, reporting to Friends' periodicals, preparing the Meeting Room and arranging refreshments. Descriptions of the work of these committees have been compiled and are kept up to date in the Yearly Meeting office.

So that the work of Yearly Meeting may proceed without delay, the Naming Committee is appointed in advance by Representative Meeting. The committee descriptions will be supplied by the Yearly Meeting office to this Naming Committee in order that they may propose suitable appointments. The Naming Committee consults with Programme Committee to gain an understanding of the plans

that have already been made. In seeking individuals prepared to serve, it strives to include Young Friends and Friends new to Yearly Meeting. The committee presents its report to the earliest feasible session of Yearly Meeting, and Friends may add other names at the time.

At Yearly Meeting the first-named in each committee will be supplied by the Naming Committee with the relevant description of its task. This person will arrange a meeting as soon as possible at which the group can become familiar with its responsibilities and lay plans for carrying them out. Each committee's first task is to appoint a Friend to coordinate the committee's work.

Insofar as possible, the names of those responsible for other tasks during Yearly Meeting are also presented, for information, soon after the beginning of Yearly Meeting.

6.21 Programme Committee

Programme Committee has two major functions: to serve as a planning and oversight Committee for the annual sessions of Canadian Yearly Meeting; and to act as a coordinating body for the different groups who have responsibility for the various aspects of the Yearly Meeting sessions. The committee responds to direction from Yearly Meeting and Representative Meeting.

The planning and oversight responsibilities include site selection, liaison with the site's administrators, local arrangements, publicity, scheduling of daily events, arrangements for the Sunderland P. Gardner lecture, and Bible and Quaker study, taking into account evaluations of previous Yearly Meeting programmes. Advanced planning is required for tasks such as selection of the site (with consideration of the needs of campers and the food coop) and arrangements for the Sunderland P. Gardner lecture. A

reference manual containing essential details relating to Programme Committee's tasks is kept up to date in the Yearly Meeting office.

Programme Committee collaborates with the Religious Education Committee (responsible for the children's and youth programme), Continuing Meeting of Ministry and Counsel (responsible for worship and the spiritual nurture of the Yearly Meeting), Agenda Committee (responsible for planning business sessions) and the Yearly Meeting office.

Members of Programme Committee are appointed with regard for appropriate geographical representation in order to facilitate liaison with the local arrangements committees in the sites chosen for the Yearly Meeting gatherings. Programme Committee includes the Clerk(s) of Yearly Meeting and the General Secretary. The following groups each appoint a representative to ensure effective collaboration: Religious Education Committee, Continuing Meeting of Ministry and Counsel and Canadian Young Friends Yearly Meeting.

YEARLY MEETING ARCHIVES

6.22 Archives

The Archives of Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Canadian Quaker Archives) is located at Pickering College, Newmarket, Ontario, by agreement with the Corporation of the College. It is under the care of the Canadian Yearly Meeting Records Committee with the oversight of the Yearly Meeting Archivist. The Archives holds, in the vault, the records of the three Yearly Meetings which united in 1955. The Archives receives and

cares for minutes, records and related materials of the Yearly Meeting and its committees, and the constituent Monthly Meetings. The Canadian Quaker Archives also includes the Arthur Garrett Dorland Friends Historical Research Library with the Rendell Rhoades Quaker Discipline Collection as its core. The Archivist is appointed by and accountable to the Records Committee. The position may be either volunteer or paid. When the Archivist is a paid position, the Canadian Yearly Meeting Guidelines on Personnel Policy apply.

Other acquisitions to be held in the Archives include the Canadian Quaker Biography file, a photograph file, oral history tapes and transcripts, and other media items deposited by Meetings and individuals.

The Archives is available for Yearly Meeting, academic, genealogical, and other research use by appointment. Materials are accessible under the Freedom of Information Act, the "30 year rule", the 'lifetime of the individuals involved rule', or restrictions made at the request of the donors as applicable. Monthly Meetings and the Yearly Meeting, (which includes its various committees) own their records; the Archives is their custodian. The Archivist will provide researchers with more current records under special circumstances, but only with the permission of the originating committee or body.

Original archival records will only be used when no other form is available. The care and use of archival holdings will follow accepted archival principles. It is the obligation of the researcher to document the CYM Archives as the holder of items referenced.

The Archives provides safe keeping and backup for original minutes, records and other documents. Acid-free paper copies of current records, now usually computerized, should be forwarded to the Archives when a clerk changes, or at timely intervals, with the understanding that copies may

be requested at any time, a protection should records be lost or destroyed. All Meetings are responsible for the records of their constituent Meetings, and should forward these records to the Archives should such a member Meeting be laid down.

CHAPTER 7

MEETING OF MINISTRY AND COUNSEL

Each Monthly Meeting should appoint suitable Friends to form its Meeting of Ministry and Counsel. Members of Monthly Meetings of Ministry and Counsel automatically compose the respective Half-Yearly and Yearly Meetings of Ministry and Counsel.

Where a Meeting has no Meeting of Ministry and Counsel, or finds that none of its Ministry and Counsel are able to attend Yearly Meeting, it may, if it wishes, appoint a suitable Friend (see Section 7.10) who is able to attend Yearly Meeting, to attend Yearly Meeting Ministry and Counsel sessions on its behalf and should notify the Clerk of Yearly Meeting of Ministry and Counsel of the appointment.

7.1 Appointment of members

Appointments to the Meetings of Ministry and Counsel should be given prayerful consideration, since it means the acceptance of greater responsibility. It should be an encouragement to humility of spirit and consecration of life and effort. Realizing that the individual may not feel qualified in this sense, nevertheless, the judgment of the Monthly Meeting should have influence.

Appointments may be made by the Monthly Meeting on recommendation from the Nominating Committee or a

special committee named by the Monthly Meeting for that purpose. It is suggested that appointments be made on a temporary basis for a definite period of time, probably three years, with one-third of the number being appointed each year. It is not to be considered a permanent appointment, and neither does the position transfer with membership. Meetings are advised to continue in this office only those persons who endeavour to strengthen the spiritual life of the Meeting.

A number of Meetings continue to use the terms Elder or Overseer for those who are appointed to their Meetings of Ministry and Counsel. It is optional whether this practice be maintained, but in any event, the responsibilities of those who are appointed to this Meeting will be the same.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Valuable advice concerning the duties of the members of Meetings of Ministry and Counsel will be found in *Christian Faith and Practice*, particularly under the headings of *Elders* and *Pastoral Care*. It is recommended that members of Meetings of Ministry and Counsel, both individually and occasionally together, might review these sections; and this would be a good practice for Nominating Committees charged with recommending persons for appointment to the Meeting of Ministry and Counsel.

7.2 Spiritual care and counselling

It is advisable for clerks of Meetings of Ministry and Counsel to bear in mind that the Monthly Meeting for Business is organized to attend to temporal affairs. It is the responsibility of the Meeting of Ministry and Counsel to nurture the spiritual life of the Society, to care for Meetings

for Worship, to encourage a way of life consistent with Christian Scriptures and the ancient testimonies of Friends, and to counsel with persons in time of need.

7.3 Vocal ministry

This Meeting is also charged with the encouragement of suitable vocal ministry as well as silent communion. There may be times when it is necessary by loving counsel to restrain unacceptable speaking, as well as to encourage participation. Differences in ability should be carefully considered, and care taken not to give offence in counselling.

7.4 Visitation

Members of Ministry and Counsel should be concerned to visit the sick, the aged, the troubled, the sorrowing, and others in time of need. It is both a privilege and a responsibility to share the joys and sorrows of life. This Meeting is also responsible for communication with members living beyond the bounds of the local Meeting.

7.5 Weddings and funerals

The responsibility for the care of weddings and of funerals and for the counselling of Friends at such times rests in large measure on members of Ministry and Counsel.

7.6 Care of the young

Meetings of Ministry and Counsel should exercise loving care over attenders and over the young and particular

attention should be given to regular oversight of First Day School and similar activities which are of such importance both to the individuals concerned and to the future welfare of the Society.

7.7 Frequency of meetings

Meetings of Ministry and Counsel should meet as often as may be thought necessary, but it is recommended practice to meet at least monthly.

7.8 Report on the state of the society

Once each year the Monthly Meeting of Ministry and Counsel shall prepare a report on the State of Society. This report should include reports from any Worship Group or Meeting under the care of the Monthly Meeting. The report, after approval of the Monthly Meeting, shall be forwarded to Yearly Meeting for inclusion in *Reports for Canadian Yearly Meeting*. Where applicable, it should also be sent to the Half Yearly Meeting for reading and consideration.

The report should be a searching self-examination by the Meeting and its members of their spiritual strengths and weaknesses and of the efforts made to foster growth in the spiritual life. Reports may cover the full range of interest and concerns, but should emphasize those indicative of the spiritual health of the Meeting. Meetings may wish to consider one or more of the following:

- Quality of worship and ministry.
- Efforts to foster spiritual growth.
- Stand taken on Friends' principles.
- Personal and family relations.
- Relations with community and other religious groups.

- Participation in general activities of Friends.
- Significant activities or concerns of the local Meeting.
- Regard for familiarity with the scriptures and other relevant writings.

7.9 Recording gifts in the ministry

Historically, Friends have had the practice of officially recognizing a gift in the ministry whenever a member has spoken to the edification and spiritual help of the Meeting and has rendered service to such extent as to afford a basis for judgment of the nature of this gift and calling. Although in recent years it has been uncommon for Canadian Meetings to record ministers, it is optional for Monthly Meetings to do so, and all Meetings seek to encourage such gifts when they appear. Meetings wishing to record gifts in the ministry should use the following traditional procedure. (It should be noted that a Recorded Minister in this sense is to be differentiated from ministers or other persons who may be registered by a Meeting under the statutes of a Province for recording vital statistics, etc.)

When the Monthly Meeting of Ministry and Counsel is satisfied that a member has a sustained gift in the ministry, this may be reported to the Monthly Meeting. If the Monthly Meeting approves, the Monthly Meeting of Ministry and Counsel should prepare a minute for consideration of the Half-Yearly Meeting of Ministry and Counsel, which will appoint a committee to appraise the general fitness of the individual under consideration, and to report at a subsequent session of the Half-Yearly Meeting of Ministry and Counsel. If the committee reports favourably, the matter should be brought before the Half-Yearly Meeting by an extract from the minutes of the Half-Yearly Meeting of Ministry and Counsel.

When the Half-Yearly Meeting has acted favourably upon the matter, the recording is thereby completed and the Clerk should furnish a copy of the minute to the Monthly Meeting of which the individual is a member. The latter should enter this minute in its book of record. The action should also be reported to the Yearly Meeting of Ministry and Counsel.

In case a member who has been recorded as a minister appears to have lost the gift or usefulness in the ministry, a proposal to rescind the action recording the name as a minister may originate in the Meeting of Ministry and Counsel of either the Monthly Meeting or Half-Yearly Meeting of which he or she is a member. In every case the final action should rest with the Half-Yearly Meeting. The individual concerned and the Monthly Meeting to which he or she belongs should be notified before final action is taken.

YEARLY MEETING OF MINISTRY AND COUNSEL

7.10 The body

The Yearly Meeting of Ministry and Counsel is composed of all members of Monthly Meeting of Ministry and Counsel who are present at the Yearly Meeting, or those asked to serve their Monthly Meetings in this capacity at Yearly Meeting. The role of Yearly Meeting of Ministry and Counsel is to offer assistance, nurture and support to the Yearly Meeting and to those in attendance. Neither the Yearly Meeting Ministry and Counsel nor its Continuing Meeting is a decision-making body for the Yearly Meeting. Both the Meeting and the Continuing Meeting should be in close communication with local Meetings of Ministry and

Counsel. Worship, prayerful seeking and loving care help the Meeting of Ministry and Counsel to grow in its ability to be useful and to make the body of Friends more supportive of one another. An awareness of needs in one Meeting may help Friends in addressing similar concerns in another Meeting. It is also helpful for members of Ministry and Counsel to be aware of the overall needs and concerns within the Society and to strive to meet these as stated in Sections 7.2-7.9, as we seek right and effective patterns for growth and outreach.

7.11 Responsibilities

Yearly Meeting of Ministry and Counsel through its Continuing Meeting provides care and support for all Meetings for Worship across Canada, and for the worship which underlies all business sessions of the Yearly Meeting and for all Meetings for Worship held during Yearly Meeting. It receives the State of Society Reports from the constituent Meetings. It also receives the draft statement from the Continuing Meeting of Ministry and Counsel on the state of the spiritual life of the whole Yearly Meeting based on the Monthly Meetings' State of Society Reports. It receives and considers concerns arising from Meetings or individuals in matters relating to worship or the living out of our faith and testimonies as Friends. When appropriate, these concerns may be channeled to other bodies of the Yearly Meeting. It appoints listening committees and committees of care as requested during Yearly Meeting. Yearly Meeting of Ministry and Counsel appoints a nominating committee to bring forward names of Friends to serve on the Continuing Meeting of Ministry and Counsel. The Yearly Meeting of Ministry and Counsel appoints a Clerk to serve for three years, and this Clerk also serves as Clerk of the Continuing Meeting.

CHAPTER 8

CLEARNESS COMMITTEES, COMMITTEES OF CARE AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEES

8.1 Introduction

Faced with difficult decisions, or imperative concerns, Friends have often asked others to help them to discern the will of God and the leading of the Spirit in their lives. Friends in difficult situations have also asked others for help and encouragement to enable them to carry out their tasks rightly. Sometimes these arrangements are informal; sometimes the Meeting itself takes the initiative. Friends are then found who will meet those in need and offer their presence, prayers, love and support.

There are three types of committees on which Friends may draw. These are: Clearness Committees, Committees of Care, and Oversight Committees. In the work of all of these committees, the qualities of clearness and discernment are paramount.

Historically, Friends came to Meeting for help in discerning whether their concerns were spiritually based leadings, or based on their own will. The following paragraphs stem from such a background. They are relevant to the work of today's committees, which often must struggle through the more profane world of day-to-day life, and its

personal problems, which Friends still seek to illumine with a spark of the Divine.

Douglas Steere writes that:

“Concerns and the process of discernment require further scrutiny to understand their central place in Quaker practice. The Book of Acts in the New Testament sparkles with vivid concerns and the following of divine guidance, no matter at what cost. Believing that we are still in the Apostolic age and that we do not work alone, Quakers have experienced in their corporate Meetings for Worship and in their private devotions leadings to which they have sought to be attentive. The small inner nudges...may be swiftly cared for, but concerns that may involve changes of career or that involve others in their unfolding call for more deliberate care. How such guidance is to be regarded and how it is to be followed raises the whole question of discernment. In what ways may individual Friends be helped to test the authenticity of a concern and how may they be assisted in what this may demand of them? Here again the strong corporate side of Quakerism has been able to furnish spiritual assistance.... The traditional procedure is to call together a small committee of clearness.”
[Douglas Steere, *Introduction to Quaker Spirituality*, pp.42-43. Paulist Press, 1984.]

8.2 Discernment and clearness

Some individuals are blessed with a gift for discernment—

they seem to know what to do. Others must come by this skill with more effort. The key to this in the religious area is prayer. In doing this we bring ourselves into the Light; we also bring our understandings and our confusions; we bring our hopes and fears, our ambitions and desires. With divine help we may lay them all down, and be left with clarity and thanksgiving. Getting from here to there requires testing our thoughts and our feelings by the Light. We may be granted a vision of clarity directly; but more often we must look for examples of discernment reflected in the lives and decisions of others. The Bible being a record of the work of the Spirit through history is a most valuable source for such vicarious experiences. Friends may also make use of the Journals kept by the great ministers of our Society—George Fox, John Woolman, Elizabeth Fry, Stephen Grellet, Elias Hicks, et al. We may also look to more recent records and the experience of those we know, and should not neglect our own journals. It is all too easy to forget an experience of divine guidance that we may have been blessed with in the past when we are overwhelmed with a dilemma in the present. The practice of thanksgiving helps to banish forgetfulness and allows us to grow throughout our lives. Prayer and study usefully undergird the work of committees as well as individuals if they are to discern way forward. Where individuals feel too inexperienced to feel that they can rightly discern God's will alone in prayer, they may consult more experienced Friends—not to make their decision for them but to help them with the process of discerning it. The most commonly used consultative process, and often the best, is for the perplexed individual to go to a number of people informally and hear what they have to say on the matter—to personal friends, colleagues, professionals and members of the Meeting and then to meditate over what they have learned and then act as the way opens.

Clearness is a deep inner certainty based on spiritual

discernment. Clearness takes time. It cannot be achieved for a Meeting or an individual while there is an impediment or stop in the mind. Friends' testimony is that with Divine assistance and others' help, the liberation and assurance of true clearness will come.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR COMMITTEES

8.3 Formation

These committees are under the care of Monthly, Half-Yearly, or Yearly Meetings, or their Meetings of Ministry and Counsel. Their initiation, however, differs:

- Clearness Committees are initiated by the individual, who approaches the relevant Meeting with a concern or problem that necessitates a decision. When the decision is reached, the work of the Committee ceases.
- Committees of Oversight are initiated by Meetings, which feel that right ordering in carrying out something must be safeguarded.
- Committees of Care may be initiated by either the individual or the Meeting to give continuing support to the person in an undertaking, or because the person needs help.

The latter two kinds of committees last much longer than a Clearness Committee.

8.4 Function

Committees of Care and Clearness Committees are

concerned primarily with people; Committees of Oversight are concerned primarily with tasks. Thus, those Friends serving Meetings may have both an Oversight Committee to which they are accountable and a Committee of Care which supports them personally.

Committees should not change their functions without reference to the authorizing body. For example, Committees of Clearness should not allow themselves to become ongoing Committees of Care, and Oversight Committees should not allow themselves to become Committees of Care while still functioning as Oversight Committees.

8.5 Membership

A membership of two to four persons is recommended. In the case of Clearness Committees, and Committees of Care, the person concerned is consulted about the choice of members. In the case of Committees of Oversight, the person is not consulted.

Service on these committees can be very demanding, and Meetings should be mindful that they cannot always supply the right members for such committees. If that is so, they should be prepared to reach out to other Meetings, or refer to appropriate resources in the community. It is essential that members work as a team, and do not work as individuals with the Friend concerned, without the knowledge and approval of the other members.

8.6 Clerk

The first choice for Clerk would be a Committee member who is also a member of the Meeting's Ministry and

Counsel. The Clerk is responsible to see that all members are clear as to their duties, their terms of reference, and the length of service expected of them. The Clerk should oversee the sharing of expectations of one another on the part of all participants, including the Friend(s) asking assistance.

The Clerk either is, or appoints, a recorder. It is the Clerk's responsibility to see that any notes are disposed of properly, according to the type of Committee. This is particularly important because documents may, on occasion, be subpoenaed by a court of law.

The Clerk should consult with the Friend concerned as to how the Committee can best work with the Friend. For example, does the Friend function best in a structured, or informal situation?

8.7 Resources

Committee members will find it useful to know of helpful agencies and support services, groups and individuals outside the Meeting community.

Time given to reading and prayerful preparation in advance will help to generate an atmosphere of trust and care. Only rarely will a committee have only one meeting. A reasonable interval between meetings allows for reflection, prayer, and growth for all concerned.

8.8 Conduct of meetings

The location of meetings is important; there needs to be an atmosphere of privacy, comfort, and concern for the

reputations of others. Meetings should be conducted in the manner of Friends. In all cases, the committees will maintain careful sensitivity to the privacy of the Friend(s) concerned.

In an atmosphere of support and caring, the person(s) will be free to say what they think and feel. To listen creatively involves faith in Friends' patience, a desire to understand, and help to clarify problems and needs. During meetings, the committee will raise questions, suggest options and share experiences where appropriate. Time should be allowed for prayer.

An immediate solution is not always possible in the situations which come before us, and the seeking for Divine guidance may bear fruit much later in the lives of all concerned. These committees are one way of providing friendship and assistance within the Meeting family. In all exchanges based on love we are both givers and receivers of Divine blessings. The use/operation of these committees helps not only the Friends involved, but greatly strengthens the Meeting as a whole.

8.9 Records

The recorder may make notes of the discussion and decisions. These confidential notes should be read back and copies given to the concerned Friend(s) and Clerk of the committee. Because notes could be evidence in a court of law, when the committee is laid down, all notes and minutes should be handed over to the concerned Friend(s), to be kept or destroyed as desired. No copies should be retained by the Meeting. The committee should report to the Meeting that it has met, and, if appropriate, its decisions.

SPECIAL GUIDELINES

8.10 Clearness Committees

Purpose and function

- To help Friend(s) discern the will of God as well as her or himself in making a difficult decision.
- To help Friend(s) test the genuineness and ramifications of a concern that involves the Meeting.

The Friends with whom they consult will not make their decisions for them, but will help them in the process of discerning God's will.

Clearness Committees are set up for a limited time only, until the purpose is completed. They report to their appointing Meeting at least the dates of their meetings, and when their task is completed, so that the committee can be laid down.

Clearness Committees for marriage are discussed in Section 10.4.

Appointment

Suitability of committee members should be considered with care by the Meeting concerned, as often sensitive issues are being considered. The acceptability of suggested members should first be cleared with the Friend(s) concerned, before final appointment.

8.11 Committees of Care

Purpose and function

- To provide help, both practical and spiritual, during times of stress in the lives of members of the Meeting, e.g. bereavement, separation, illness, career changes, etc.
- To sustain Friend(s) engaged in demanding Meeting work over a long period.

Care must be taken not to create a dependency, but to enable Friends to be independent, and to make their own choices.

Appointment

A wider choice of people is needed for Committees of Care than for Clearness Committees, as the life of the Committee is so much longer, and the people may need to be rotated. The choice of members should be approved by the Friend(s) in need. The need for the Committee should be reviewed periodically by the appointing Meeting, and the Committee should be laid down when its job is done.

8.12 Oversight Committees

Purpose and function

An Oversight Committee is accountable to its appointing Meeting for the execution of the responsibilities of the Friend being overseen; the oversight is of the proper fulfilment of the task, and not of the person concerned. Care for the person, if necessary, is the responsibility of a

Committee of Care. Membership in the two, if needed, should not overlap.

The Oversight Committee and the designated Friend(s) should meet with the Clerk of the appointing Meeting to clarify expectations, including terms of reference, responsibilities, and a clear job description, at the outset. The terms of reference should be reviewed periodically, as well as the need for the programme, task, or office itself.

It is essential that an Oversight Committee function as a whole, and that its members not work independently. The Oversight Committee serves the Meeting as a two way channel for messages and comments on the programme, task, or office being supervised. This procedure avoids the creation of tensions in the Meeting. Otherwise, a hardworking Friend serves too many masters.

Appointment

The person overseen need not be consulted on membership of the Committee. The members should have skills appropriate to what is overseen. Membership may be changed periodically by the appointing Meeting, because this committee's duration tends to be long.