

From

Page 1 of 2

### Spring Friends Meeting

#### Response to New Business Committee Questionnaire

1. In the last three years, has your monthly meeting ever failed to pay all of its "askings" to the yearly meeting? If yes, please explain why?

Yes. Our meeting strives to pay the amount of the askings requested by the Yearly Meeting, which is consistent with our degree of use of the services derived from the Yearly Meeting. Over the past several years, approximately 30%-40% of the Yearly Meeting budget has been devoted to the funding of "Pastors' Benefits". Spring Friends Meeting employs no pastor and has not done so for over a decade, choosing to adopt a tradition of Friends' worship that more closely resembles the historical manner of Friends. Our meeting has faithfully and consistently paid the 60%-70% portion of the Yearly Meeting "askings" that are not associated with the pastoral system, and applies the remaining balance to needs within the Yearly Meeting (such as Quaker Lake) and the greater Religious Society of Friends (such as the American Friends Service Committee, Quaker House, Friends Committee on National Legislation, etc.), and other needy causes. There have been expressions of concern by other individuals and congregations within our yearly meeting that funds are diverted to other organizations, such as Piedmont Friends Fellowship or Friends General Conference. These other organizations have no dues, no financial requirements for association, no "askings." Funds are not diverted from the Yearly Meeting to them.

2. Are the spiritual beliefs and operating practices of your monthly meeting in conformance with the NCYM Faith and Practice? If not, please explain why?

No. We believe this question may have been inadvertently worded incorrectly. Spiritual beliefs are individual beliefs. We as a meeting can't profess to know each member's and attendee's spiritual beliefs, as we do not enforce a creed or have any "litmus test" that we impose for entering our meetinghouse door. However, it seems at least statistically unlikely, that every member's and regular attendee's spiritual beliefs are in "conformance" with the NCYM-FUM Faith and Practice. Further, we believe very few meetings could truthfully say this. We do believe our operating practices as a meeting are in conformance with the NCYM-FUM Faith and Practice to the extent practical given our size.

3. If asked, would your meeting agree that the NCYM Faith and Practice, including the Richmond Declaration of Faith and the Essential Truths ([link to document](#)), does an adequate job in defining the core spiritual beliefs of the meeting? If not, please explain why?

No. The Yearly Meeting was first organized in the late 17th century, with the first formal gathering deemed a yearly meeting being held in 1697. The Religious Society of Friends and NCYM were founded during that century on the principles that each and every person could have a direct and personal relationship with God, that there was no need for what Fox and other early Friends termed "hireling priests", our charge being to "walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone". Emphasis on Biblical supremacy as compared to the leading of the Holy Spirit was not a founding principle of the Society of Friends or the Yearly Meeting. It is our hope that NCYM-FUM will return to its founding beliefs and seek a more comprehensive understanding and appreciation of the whole history of the Religious Society of Friends than can be garnered from the Faith and Practice or the Richmond Declaration, which is a

fairly recent document (1887), and was produced by one faction within the Society with the intent to enforce conformity by that faction, the result being the creation of more disunity within the Society that continues to this day.

4. Does your monthly meeting participate with any yearly meeting other than NCYM? If yes, please explain to what extent and why?

Yes. We follow the example of the Yearly Meeting itself and participate with other Yearly Meetings through many Quaker organizations such as FUM, FCNL, FWCC, AFSC, Quaker House, and the like. We are not members of any other yearly meeting, and believe that, to fully cooperate with FWCC procedures for Quaker census, a monthly meeting should only be a formal member of a single yearly meeting. We are members of Piedmont Friends Fellowship, which includes Monthly Meetings from multiple yearly meetings (as do many of the organizations listed above). And we have chosen to remain a member of the fellowship, and not to join the yearly meeting that is being formed. Our meeting does not consider PFF to be a competitor or rival to NCYM-FUM. We seek to bridge the chasm that unnecessarily exists between the two branches of the Society of Friends, each of which lacks a beneficial aspect of the other. While some members of each organization, particularly within NCYM-FUM, seek to widen this chasm and hold no association with the other, we seek a meaningful unity among all Friends.

5. For what purpose(s) should a monthly meeting contribute money to NCYM?

Money should be donated to the Yearly Meeting for maintenance of shared facilities, to offset the costs of gatherings for fellowship, and to support causes consistent with the testimonies of the Society of Friends. We believe the NCYM-FUM should return to its fundamental roots, follow the simplicity testimony, and minimize its use bureaucracy and paid staff.