

Ministry and Oversight Consultation Call

State of the Meeting, February 4, 2018

This was the second of three planned consultation calls offered by NPYM Ministry and Oversight Committee. Approximately 10-12 people participated. Betsey Kenworthy facilitated; Judith Clarke recorded.

Betsey introduced the topic and the suggested queries. She stated that names would not be recorded, but that the notes that come out of this call would be archived on the NPYM website for perusal by anyone interested. The purpose of the call is to provide support and guidance for those who will be writing the State of the Society (Meeting) reports.

The most important aspect of completing a State of the Meeting report is to help meetings in a "self-examination of their spiritual strengths and weaknesses, and of efforts to foster growth in their spiritual life. Reports may cover the full range of interest and concerns but emphasize those that indicate the spiritual health of the meeting." (This quote is from the 2017 Faith and Practice, Chapter 5.) It should be an internal and intentional process. It provides the opportunity to discover what is important in the life of each meeting, and ensures honesty and integrity within the search. This can occur within the format of worship sharing, queries, or a discussion session. Meetings may also consider the function of their meeting for business, key events in the life of the meeting, and ongoing connections. After revision and acceptance by the meeting, it is sent to the Quarterly Meeting Ministry and Oversight to be shared throughout Quarterly and Yearly Meetings.

Following are the ideas that were considered during this phone consultation:

- Meetings are encouraged to keep their State of Society reports short, preferably to one page. It was acknowledged that it can be quite challenging to create such a document, but the exercise also provides the opportunity to choose just what IS IMPORTANT to your Meeting.
- In many meetings, there can be divergent views of how that meeting is doing. These differences should be acknowledged, even if they are ongoing and have not been resolved. We realize and accept that it is OK to have differing opinions. It may be an appropriate time to have each individual

examine their own spiritual journey over the past year. How might that illumine other aspects of the Meeting?

- Does your Meeting have a life that is creative, nurturing, and sustaining? Is it meeting the needs of spirit for those attending?
- We agreed that it is not important or necessary to use names in State of the Meeting reports. Rather, births, deaths, and other life-changing events can be considered in terms of what they have meant for the life of your community. How have you been affected by such changes?
- In being reminded that our reports are now posted on the NPYM website, we asked how this may affect what we say and how it is said. We affirmed that we stand for truth, and our State of Society reports should reflect how honest we are with ourselves and our introspections. If we are faithful in writing our reports, this should not affect what we say.
- How do we determine which activities or experiences are included within the reports? We agreed that the answer may be how/whether it affected the entire meeting? Was the experience perhaps an impetus for a new beginning or trying out a new process? How was the Meeting impacted?
- We were reminded that the State of Society/Meeting reports should not be considered an opportunity for "bragging" about our accomplishments, but an honest examination of how "truth and Spirit fare within us".

We concluded with a period of silence at 7:30 pm.