Report and Proposal from Ad Hoc Committee to Evaluate NPYM Structure for consideration at North Pacific Yearly Meeting Annual Session, 2014

Background

The Ad Hoc Committee to Evaluate the NPYM Structure was charged at the 2013 Annual Session with coming back with a proposal about the Coordinating Committee. In October 2013, the committee reported to Coordinating Committee, and projected three possible options:

1. Participation in CC has not improved and so there does not seem to be adequate progress or interest among Meetings to continue CC in its present form.
2. Participation in CC has improved enough that it should continue as it is for another year to see if improvement continues.
3. CC improved substantially and should continue as is.

After the October CC meeting, Ad Hoc Committee members contacted by phone Meetings which had not been sending a member to CC and had conversations about why not and how and if they connected to NPYM. We also e-mailed those who did attend the October meeting for their impressions and got only a handful of responses. Our general sense was that there was not energy or interest among many Meetings in sending someone to CC. Most Meetings are very busy with their own activities; many are far away and the time and effort to attend a meeting in Seattle or Portland makes it difficult and not adequately worthwhile. Some feel the committee is too big to be effective. It has taken a while for people to understand the difference between Steering Committee (it will have been 7 years this summer) and the Coordinating Committee, where the job is coordination rather than decision-making.

We found the best connections to MMs were made when a Yearly Meeting Committee took the initiative and offered something rather than asked something of MMs. Particularly noted were the outreach made by M&O, P&SC, Youth, Outreach and Visitation and Ad Hoc Communications Committees. The Committee on the Discipline has also reached out to Meetings over many years. When these committees reach out, connections are made and people in MMs are made aware of NPYM. Person to person is still the most effective means of communication, particularly to build community. Care needs to be taken that the different committees are aware of one another and take care to avoid duplication (or contradiction) and coordinate so that they are mutually supportive. (The need for coordination!)

Our conclusion at that time was that a primary job of Coordinating Committee was to support and hold accountable the standing committees and to coordinate what is going on in the YM. It is those committees that make the connections with and possibly services to the MMs. This is the group that can coordinate and prioritize what concerns go to MMs and when. MMs were very tired of being consulted on internal NPYM matters and/or having a plethora of requests for feedback come at once in late spring.
The Ad Hoc Committee reported its findings to CC at its April 5, 2014 meeting. In the October meeting, 10 MMs and 1 PM had no one attending; at the April meeting, that number dropped to 4 MMs and 1 PM. CC divided into 5 small groups to discuss the report and its conclusions. Three of the five felt CC should be left roughly as is; one group could see the advantage of a smaller group, but felt the loss of sharing among Meetings would be significant; the other group suggested a dual system, with Standing Committee clerks and officers meeting a few times a year and have MM members added in one meeting. There was considerable energy in the committee meeting and valuable connections were made. Participants were willing and active.

The Ad Hoc Committee realized its earlier consultation had been primarily with Friends who were not familiar with or interested in CC. The April 5 consultation was with CC itself and was therefore primarily with those who value CC. Both views inform our proposal. We are particularly grateful for the thoughtful participation of CC at its April meeting.

Ad Hoc Committee to Evaluate NPYM Structure
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June 2, 2014
Proposal to Annual Session in July 2014 by Ad Hoc Committee to Evaluate NPYM Structure

Coordinating Committee (CC) is providing a useful place where Friends from Meetings and Standing Committees can share information, make connections and be sure that the parts of the YM are functioning. It is the place where Standing Committees can receive feedback and be held accountable. However some Meetings cannot find people to serve on CC and do not see a value in connecting with the Yearly Meeting. Some people are not feeling it is worth their time; distance and cost are problems for many. We concluded that it is primarily the responsibility of the Yearly Meeting, through its committees and officers, to take the initiative to reach out to local Meetings and Worship Groups to fulfill the charge “to serve as an ongoing resource to its Meetings, Worship Groups and Isolated Friends. (Part of” (Mission/Vision approved July 19, 2008). It seems like CC is essentially fulfilling its responsibilities. We propose some modest changes.

Membership:
Clerks of the 10 Standing Committees and CC Clerk, CC Recording Clerk, CC Associate Clerk, NPYM Presiding Clerk and Treasurer.

Each year the clerk of CC will invite Jr. Friends and Young Adult Friends to name 2 members of CC. The clerk will also invite each Meeting to name a member to CC. If a Meeting is unable to do that, a member of CC will be named as a partner for that Meeting. The partner would be in touch with the Meeting after each CC meeting, not only to report on what happened, but also to ask what is going on with the Meeting, perhaps sharing a resource in the YM, perhaps learning of an MM resource or activity that deserves the attention of the YM. The CC member might also ask the MM if there is anything the MM would like from the YM (with no promises). The aim is to create a personal sense of connection.

Purpose:
1. Provide a place for Meetings and Standing Committees to learn from and support one another, share information and make connections.
2. Identify and encourage action on emerging and converging concerns.
3. Coordinate and collaborate with one another; season ideas.
4. Provide a collective sense of where the Spirit is moving within NPYM.
5. Support clerks of standing and ad hoc committees in doing their jobs, especially taking initiative to reach out to Meetings and Worship Groups.
6. Hold standing committees accountable for good order and functioning.
7. Be sure Meetings are not inundated with requests.

The current Executive Committee would continue to make necessary decisions between Annual Sessions.