

How to Change or Make Additions to the Faith and Practice

Need for Change

The need for change in the Faith and Practice may arise from various sources in the Yearly Meeting: the Faith and Practice Committee, the Executive Committee, another committee in Yearly Meeting, a Monthly Meeting, or an individual. When the request for the change is communicated to the Faith and Practice Committee, the committee may begin work on the change or may thresh out with the source of the request whether change is needed.

Process of Change

In brief, the process is as follows. The Faith and Practice Committee writes the change or addition in draft, sends it out to the Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups, takes the replies from these Meetings and Groups, and writes a second draft. Then there is a threshing session on this second draft at Yearly Meeting Sessions. The second draft is revised to include the information from the threshing session, making a third draft. The third draft is presented at Yearly Meeting Sessions for approval.

Here is a more detailed picture of the process. One of the members of the Faith and Practice committee writes the first draft of the new or to-be-changed section. The author and the Committee work on the section until it is ready to be sent to the Monthly Meetings.

The Clerk of Faith and Practice sends one copy of each section to the clerk of each Monthly Meeting, the Correspondent of each Worship Group, and the clerk of each Unaffiliated Meeting in the region. Typically, the section is sent out about September 1 with the request that the replies be returned to the Clerk of Faith and Practice by the following January Representative Meeting. The Clerks and Correspondents are asked to arrange for the Meeting to read the section and go over it as a group. One member of the group takes notes on the comments and corrections made by the Meeting. If an individual makes a comment that others do not agree with, the disagreement is noted or the comment is dropped. All the comments are discerned by the Meeting before being sent to the Committee.

The Faith and Practice Committee meets soon after January Representative Meeting, and, with the comments sent in, revises the section, to make a second draft.

The second draft is included in the Documents in Advance for the Yearly Meeting Sessions and thus is available for all to become familiar with it before the next Yearly Meeting Sessions. During the Sessions, there is a threshing session on the section. The Clerk of the Faith and Practice Committee presides over the session and one or more members of the Faith and Practice Committee take notes. It is important that the note-takers write down the sense of the threshing session, not just everything that is said. If it seems important, the sense of the meeting (threshing session) is read back to those

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assembled, but often this is not necessary and can take up quite a bit of time. If it is necessary, it should be done.

The results of the threshing session are incorporated into a third draft by the Faith and Practice Committee. The third draft is included in the Documents in Advance for the next Yearly Meeting Sessions and presented for approval in an early Session so that if changes are called for, the changes can be worked out outside the business sessions and the revised third draft brought back to a later business session of the same Yearly Meeting sessions for approval.

If at some point in the above procedure there is considerable disagreement, the Faith and Practice Committee can repeat making a new draft and sending it out to the Meetings and Groups for comment and then making another draft for approval. Or the Committee can be creative and find a way to listen to and labor with the concerned parties before going on with or stopping the process of writing the section.

After approval, the new section is included in the Faith and Practice at the next printing. If agreement on a section can not be reached, the proposed addition or change is laid down for the present.