

# Yearly Meeting 2018

Introduction: Saturday 5 May – Session 2

## **YMAC introduction Clare Scott Booth**

Agenda Committee felt it would be helpful to begin our consideration by sharing the thinking behind the Yearly Meeting sessions we have offered you on this matter. We have worked very closely with the Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group, which has been of great value.

Firstly, we wanted to allow this decision plenty of space and time. Space to hear stories of the journey that the Revision Preparation Group have taken in coming to their recommendation. Space for deep worshipful listening to one another and to the Spirit. Space to journey ourselves, through the different aspects of a possible revision, from profound theological issues to the particular issues of Church Government - how we organise ourselves. Space to hear concerns and worries, and space to be joyful and get excited about our faith, and our practice.

Next, we hoped Yearly Meeting would set the tone of the conversation. If we decide to revise Quaker Faith and Practice, or if we decide not to revise Quaker Faith and Practice, there are many other conversations we will need to be having. Deep listening is among the skills that are at the core of our spiritual practice and that we can place at the centre of our YM sessions. Some of what we do will hope to model respectful deep listening and conversation between Friends of diverging views.

Next, to put any possible revision into context of the other issues in our Yearly Meeting and in the world. When Agenda Committee met with representatives of committees and other bodies, we explored together themes around radical change, around who we are, belonging, privilege, and enabling full participation whilst also passing on the treasures in our tradition. We invite these issues to permeate our consideration this weekend. Within this framework, the process of a possible revision, addressing the deep issues of our faith and our practice, not just a book, can become exciting, dynamic, and radical.

We wanted to include in our planning lots of different ways of working: together we will be learning, responding, threshing, discerning and decision making. So some of our sessions include prepared ministry with plenty of information, others keep this to a minimum so that we can settle into worship together. In particular, after lunch today there are a number of parallel sessions which will enable us to respond in very different ways to different aspects. The options are listed in Agenda and Notes and there is also the option of picking up some conversation questions that you can use with other Friends around you. We are not planning to take formal reports back from these parallel sessions, but they will in diverse ways prepare our hearts and minds for what follows. The feedback is you, Friends, in what you each bring to the silence from what you have experienced or learnt.

We also worked closely with Junior Yearly Meeting, who sent representatives to all of our meetings, and who are considering the theme Quaker Faith in practice: What are our beliefs and how can we express them. The young people's programme are considering the theme: Young Quakers then and now, within a diverse and changing world. Their programmes contain similar themes to ours, they will join us this afternoon, and we expect to receive minutes of their consideration tomorrow. We have warmly welcomed the tremendous enthusiasm of Young Friends and Young Adult Friends to be fully engaged in this decision making process.

Friends, we begin this journey with an introduction that sets the scene for us. {I will ask Lesley Richards, clerk to the Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group, to come to the table when she is ready...}