

**Southeastern Yearly Meeting  
of  
The Religious Society of Friends**

**FAITH  
AND  
PRACTICE**

4th Edition 2013

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## FOREWORD

### **Southeastern Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends**

## **FAITH AND PRACTICE**

### **Fourth Edition 2013**

*We are not searching for a perfect book, but rather a serviceable book for our time. It is for our comfort and discomfort, a book which affirms the unities which we have found. We recognise and welcome diversity within Yearly Meeting. Still we feel the pain that has been caused by past and continuing failures to accept and value the experience of us all.*

**London Yearly Meeting, 2 August 1994**

Southeastern Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends was established in 1962 and first met April 12, 1963 and comprised those Friends Meetings previously recognized by Friends World Committee for Consultation and loosely organized in 1950 as Southeastern Friends Conference. Southeastern Yearly Meeting is affiliated with Friends General Conference and Friends World Committee for Consultation.

*Faith and Practice* is an evolving record and guide, reflecting the growing experience of Friends in Southeastern Yearly Meeting as we seek to know and follow the Inner Light. This 2013 fourth edition reflects changes in the way Southeastern Yearly Meeting Friends have conducted their affairs over these years since the last revision, the third edition in 1987, which succeeded a second edition in 1979 of the original document created in 1963.

The Faith and Practice Committee has labored to create a clear and readable revision that Friends can also use as a text to teach basic Quakerism for adult religious education within our meetings. Members and attenders are urged to study, use, and evaluate this book in the Spirit of the Inner Light. The committee solicits your feedback as you study this book.

As you read through the *Faith and Practice* you will notice that each chapter contains several quotations from Friends, both early and contemporary. These quotations were chosen to add the voice of Friends' experience to each chapter's discussion. The Faith and Practice Committee asks Friends to read all of the text including the quotations as the whole of the guidance of the *Faith and Practice*.

Suggested changes which arise from individuals or committees are to be forwarded to the Faith and Practice Committee. After consideration, they are seasoned through the actions of monthly meetings, interim meetings and the Yearly Meeting. When Friends unite in the need to change practice, then the next revision of *Faith and Practice* will occur.

The Faith and Practice Committee is deeply indebted to all of the yearly meetings for the help of their published *Faith & Practice* in creating the text of SEYM's *Faith and Practice*. When we struggled for words to define and explain our faith, we found reading many of these "*books of discipline*" to be inspirational as well as instructive. In particular we are grateful to Baltimore YM Draft 2011; Britain (London) YM 1960, 1995; Canadian YM 1991; New England YM 1985; New York YM 2001; North Pacific YM 1993; Pacific YM 1985; and Philadelphia YM 1997.

For those Friends wishing to understand in full the detailed responsibilities of the yearly meeting clerks, officers, standing committees, and representatives to SEYM-affiliated organizations, in addition to the *Faith and Practice*, please consult the *SEYM Operational Handbook, Procedures, and Job Descriptions* available from SEYM Publications and [QuakerBooks.org](http://QuakerBooks.org).

## History of the Faith and Practice Committee

The Faith and Practice Committee was re-convened in 1996 and tasked with preparing the fourth edition of Faith and Practice. The committee has been made up of several Friends who have since served one or more terms on the committee: Phoebe Andersen, Carol Bechtel, Harold Branam, Vicki Carlie, Lyn Cope, Jan Dahm, Doris Emerson, Cathy Gaskill, Gay Howard, Gerry O'Sullivan, Connie Ray, and Neil Andersen (adopted member). Additionally, we remember the service of those Friends who have had their service on the committee truncated due to death: Ed Bertsche (clerk of the third revision), Beverly Bird, Heather Moir, Christine O'Brien, and James Weston.

The Southeastern Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice was first adopted in 1963, revised in 1979, 1987, and revised section by section from 1998 through 2011, comprising the fourth edition.

## Advices

In 1656 the elders of the Meeting at Balby, near Doncaster, in Yorkshire, England, drafted the earliest known letter of advices on Christian practice issued by any general body of Friends. The most remembered of those advices is the following postscript:

*Dearly beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by, but that all, with the measure of light which is pure and holy, may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not from the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.*

**Balby Postscript, 1656**

Modern Friends still aspire to use *Faith and Practice* with this attitude in mind. In 1954 Jan Palen Rushmore spoke similarly, but in a different metaphor:

*The teachings of our Quaker forefathers were intended to be landmarks, not campsites.*

**Jan Palen Rushmore, 1954**