

## REPLACEMENT MINUTE FOR 98YM07

# REVISING *FAITH AND PRACTICE*

### Need for Change

The need for change in *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, preparative 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 annual gathering. The second draft is revised to include the information from the threshing session, making a third draft which is circulated again for comments. The revised third draft (or fourth draft if the changes are numerous) 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 preliminary 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, preparative meetings, and worship groups.

The clerk of the faith and practice committee sends draft one of each section to be considered to the clerk of each monthly meeting and preparative meeting, the contact/correspondent of

each worship group, and the clerk of each unaffiliated meeting in the region. Typically, the section is sent out about September 1st with the request that the replies be returned to the clerk of the faith and practice committee by the following winter interim business meeting. The clerks and contacts/correspondents are asked to arrange for their 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 back to the committee. This process allows the meetings approximately four months to read and season the first draft.

The faith and practice committee meets soon after winter interim business meeting, and, using the comments sent in by the meetings, revises the section to make a second draft.

During the next yearly meeting annual gathering, a threshing session is held to review the second draft. The clerk of the faith and practice committee presides over the threshing session, and two 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 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 annual gathering and circulated again to the meetings and executive committee. Sometimes, new light is found and it is necessary to prepare a fourth draft. At yearly meeting annual gathering the latest draft is brought forward in an early business session so that, if changes are called for, the changes can be worked out outside the business sessions and the revised third (or new fourth) draft brought back to a later business session of the same yearly meeting sessions asking for approval.

If at some point in the above procedure, there is considerable disagreement, the faith and practice committee can lay over the draft, repeat the above process for making a new draft, and send it out to the meetings and groups for comment. 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. All the time needed to find unity on the section in question is taken.

If agreement on a section can not be reached, the proposed addition or change is set aside for the present, to allow for all necessary seasoning.

If unity is found and the section is approved, the new section is posted on the seym.org website for immediate use by the meetings and worship groups, and included in the *Faith and Practice* at the next printing.

The committee found in practice that meetings and worship groups were able to comfortably process two chapters or sections at a time in the revision process outlined above. Thus greatly condensing the time required for the overall revision. The process for each section/chapter takes about three years from starting draft to approval.

The process detailed above can on appearance seem endless, however, when the faith and practice committee is open to the guidance of the Spirit, the work is often blessed and uplifting. The gifts of Love and patience flow like a balm. All necessary time passes and the yearly meeting is gifted with a new *Faith and Practice*.

