

CHAPTER 4

Yearly Meeting

Organization and Functions

Functions

1. The yearly meeting, as a fellowship in the Society of Friends, creates and directs the organization and procedures through which Friends seek to translate their faith to the larger society. Historically North Carolina Yearly Meeting in annual session has been the principal legislative and administrative body entrusted with the care and responsibility for monthly and quarterly meetings and for the direction of the whole widespread mission of the Society. In the interim between sessions of the yearly meeting the Permanent Board (until 1969–1970) has had the responsibility to act for the yearly meeting in cases that seemed to demand action before the next session of the yearly meeting. Changes in the manner of living and in the character and complexity of the responsibilities of the yearly meeting have made it impossible for Friends, in the short period of their annual sessions, to take deliberate action on numerous matters of business and at the same time give Friends in the monthly meetings the clear expressions of the ideals, purposes, and testimonies essential to the support of their faith. Later, many of the functions formerly delegated to the yearly meeting and quarterly meetings were transferred to Representative Body.

Membership

2. North Carolina Yearly Meeting consists of all the members of its monthly meetings and preparative meetings under the care of monthly meetings, quarterly meetings or the yearly meeting Church Extension Committee.

The Annual Assembly

3. All members have the privilege and responsibility to attend and participate in the sessions of the yearly meeting when it is possible for them to do so. In order to insure adequate attendance of capable and concerned Friends, provision is made for the designation of a number of representatives

who are expected to faithfully attend and conscientiously fulfill their responsibilities through all the sessions. In addition to its Representative Body appointee, every active monthly meeting in its June session may appoint one representative for each one hundred of its membership, or major portion thereof. Every monthly meeting shall appoint at least one representative to yearly meeting to attend the sessions of yearly meeting and report to the monthly meeting.

The appointment of representatives to the annual assembly of the yearly meeting shall be made each year. The monthly meeting should not give any one person the task of serving simultaneously as its representative to the annual assembly of the yearly meeting and as its member of the Representative Body.

The yearly meeting shall be opened at the appointed time and place by the presiding clerk. In the absence of the presiding clerk, the assistant presiding clerk shall perform this service. If neither shall be present, the recording clerk shall open the meeting.

***Time of Holding
Yearly Meeting*** 4. The date of convening North Carolina Yearly Meeting shall be set by yearly meeting in session. The date may be changed by Representative Body.

***Appointment
of Clerks*** 5. Members of the yearly meeting in annual session shall consider the report of the Committee on Clerks, recommending a presiding clerk, assistant presiding clerk, recording clerks, appointees to the Nominating Committee, and others as may be deemed necessary for the efficient transaction of business and meeting other purposes of the sessions of the yearly meeting.

The yearly meeting presiding clerk, the assistant presiding clerk, and the recording clerks shall also serve in like positions for the Representative Body.

Each of the quarterly meetings in their January or February session shall appoint one person to serve on the yearly meeting Committee on Clerks. They shall also appoint an alternate to serve in the absence of the appointee. These appointments shall be made annually.

Quarterly meeting clerks shall notify the yearly meeting superintendent of these appointments. It shall be the responsibility of the

yearly meeting superintendent to notify the convener selected on quarterly meeting alphabetical rotation basis. The convener will call a meeting. No business can be transacted with less than five members present. An alternate can serve in place of the appointed member. The Committee on Clerks shall make its recommendation to the first business session of the yearly meeting in annual session. The report of this committee shall not preclude the consideration of other persons for any of the positions.

When approved by the yearly meeting, clerks shall take office at the close of yearly meeting sessions. It is recommended that they not be appointed for more than five consecutive one-year terms.

Purposes 6. Friends assemble in their annual sessions that they may “come to know one another in that which is eternal,” promote Christian faith, love and unity, and seek through worship and deliberation the light and vision for creative Christian service. The yearly meeting may receive, for its deliberations and disposition, recommendations from the representatives to yearly meeting and from the Representative Body. When recommendations come to it from either subordinate meetings, committees, individual members, the Friends United Meeting, or any related Friends organization, the clerk shall refer them to the representatives for their consideration and disposition. When considered advisable a recommendation may be referred back to the yearly meeting for action.

The major responsibilities of North Carolina Friends in their yearly meeting sessions are to be met in the role and character of a general meeting. In their annual sessions Friends are called to seek, by the most effective conference methods possible, a clear understanding of the relation of their faith to forces which they can see shaping the destiny of humanity to the dangers and needs which cause people to be gripped by fear or despair. In the spirit of worship the minds and hearts of Friends must be given fully to the search for the nature and direction of their united witness. Here they should seek together to know God’s will for them in the face of the great forces which plague and menace mankind: poverty, hunger, greed, hate, war, and man’s indifference to human ills.

The following matters are reserved for decision to yearly meeting in annual session and cannot be delegated: the recommendation of the

Committee on Clerks, any change in *Faith and Practice*, the recording of a minister, and any statement of faith or pronouncement given in the name of North Carolina Yearly Meeting which is not clearly stated in this *Faith and Practice*.

Junior Yearly Meeting and Young Friends Yearly Meeting

Junior Yearly Meeting 1. Junior Yearly Meeting is conducted for children of nursery through junior high age and runs concurrently with the adult sessions of yearly meeting. The program is similar in pattern to the adult body except that recreation and activities are added to give a threefold program of worship, work, and play. Junior Yearly Meeting is set up and conducted by persons appointed by the Christian Education Committee.

Young Friends Yearly Meeting 2. Young Friends Yearly Meeting is organized and conducted by the Young Friends Activities Committee in cooperation with the yearly meeting Program Committee. It may run concurrently with the adult session or be set for another time. The program shall include worship, study, recreation, and business. Clerks and officers shall be approved to serve for one year and epistles and messages sent to other Young Friends groups.

The Representative Body

Oversight 1. A major responsibility of the Representative Body in its oversight of the work carried on by the yearly meeting organization is the coordination of the work program of the various departments. As an aid to the achievement of this purpose the Representative Body may delegate specific responsibilities to either the Executive Committee or to any other appropriate committee. A description of any such delegated powers should be incorporated in the yearly meeting administrative handbook.

Decision-making 2. The Representative Body is the decision-making body of the North Carolina Yearly Meeting when yearly meeting is not in session. It shall act upon matters referred to it by the yearly meeting in session and conduct other business of North Carolina Yearly Meeting between sessions of the yearly meeting, except matters reserved for decision by the yearly meeting in session.

- Membership*** 3. The Representative Body shall consist of:
- a. One representative from each monthly meeting, preparative meeting, or fellowship.
 - b. Evangelism and Outreach
 - c. The following officials by position:
 - Executive Committee chairperson
 - Friends Homes Board chairperson
 - Ministers Association president
 - Meeting on Ministry and Counsel presiding clerk
 - Meeting on Ministry and Counsel assistant presiding clerk
 - Quaker Lake Board of Directors chairperson
 - Quaker Men president
 - Yearly meeting superintendent
 - Stewardship–Finance chairperson
 - Treasurer
 - Trustees chairperson
 - Trustees of the Trust Funds chairperson
 - USFW president
 - Yearly meeting presiding clerk
 - Yearly meeting assistant presiding clerk
 - Yearly meeting Program Committee chairperson
 - Yearly meeting recording clerks
 - d. A Young Friend from each quarterly meeting.
 - e. Fifteen members may be chosen at large upon the recommendation of the yearly meeting Nominating Committee.
 - f. In addition to the foregoing representatives, all yearly meeting members may and are encouraged to attend and participate in the decisions of the Representative Body.
- Appointed representatives serve a term of one year.

- Other Responsibilities*** 4. Any issue not resolved by the yearly meeting in session may be referred by the presiding clerk to the Representative Body for consideration and recommendation to a later session of the yearly meeting. Matters of new business brought to the yearly meeting may be referred to the Representative Body for review and recommendation.

The following responsibilities are delegated to Representative Body, subject to the directions of yearly meeting in session to increase or diminish these responsibilities:

- a. General care and oversight of all matters which call for the united concern and interests of Friends in North Carolina Yearly Meeting, except as otherwise provided in this Book of Discipline, *Faith and Practice*.
- b. Appointment of committees, boards, and commissions upon recommendation of the Nominating Committee.
- c. Determination of the size of committees and fields of work.
- d. Appointment of the superintendent and other staff personnel upon recommendation of the Executive Committee as shown in the yearly meeting administrative handbook.
- e. Transaction of all business of the yearly meeting not specifically reserved for yearly meeting in session.
- f. General oversight of all lands, properties, estates and charitable donations in cooperation with the yearly meeting trustees and/or the trustees of the trust funds.
- g. Giving direction to the trustees of the yearly meeting relative to signing deeds, mortgages and other legal documents.
- h. Preparation and maintenance of an administrative handbook of supplementary provisions, including:
 - (1) A description of organization purposes and duties not defined in *Faith and Practice*.
 - (2) A list of duties and rules of procedure for committees and commissions as directed by the yearly meeting in session.

Time of Meeting

5. The Representative Body shall meet at least three (3) times each year. The clerks of yearly meeting serve as clerks of Representative Body. The minutes of Representative Body and the reports of the committees, boards, and commissions of the yearly meeting shall be published with the *Yearly Meeting Minutes*.

Special Meetings

6. Special meetings shall be called by the presiding clerk at the direction of the Executive Committee. Two weeks prior to a called meeting, each member

of Representative Body shall be supplied with an agenda which gives the time and place of the meeting and lists all items of business to be considered.

Agenda Committee 7. The presiding clerk and assistant clerk of the Representative Body and the superintendent of the yearly meeting shall prepare an agenda for each session of the Representative Body. The clerk of the Representative Body shall serve as chairperson of this committee. Included in the agenda shall be matters of importance relative to the orderly process of the work program for which the various departments of the yearly meeting are responsible. It shall be the responsibility of the Agenda Committee to supply members of Representative Body information about important matters of business which may require action on their part not less than one week before action is to be taken.

Committees, Boards, and Commissions

Membership Any member of the yearly meeting with the competence and will to work on a particular committee, board, or commission may be appointed to the position by the Representative Body, unless otherwise provided by this *Faith and Practice*.

The Executive Committee

Membership 1. The yearly meeting Nominating Committee shall recommend to the Representative Body nine persons to serve on the Executive Committee. Friends chosen as members of this committee should be persons known for their valued service to the yearly meeting, administrative competence, broad view of the testimonies of Friends, and ability to see the work of this committee as it relates to the whole program of the yearly meeting.

The presiding clerk of the yearly meeting, the assistant presiding clerk of the yearly meeting, the treasurer of the yearly meeting, the superintendent of the yearly meeting, the chairperson of the yearly meeting Program Committee, chairperson of the Stewardship–Finance Committee, and the chairperson of the yearly meeting trustees, and the presiding clerk of the Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel shall be ex officio members of the Executive Committee.

Those appointed to this committee shall be named for a three–

year term and should not be asked to serve for more than two terms in succession. Appointments should be made so that the term of not more than three would be ending in any one year.

If a member of this committee is not able to render active service in the work of the committee, the Nominating Committee shall recommend a replacement without waiting for the end of the term for which the member in question was appointed.

On the recommendation of the Nominating Committee, the Representative Body shall choose as chairperson of the Executive Committee a member of that committee who is recognized for administrative competence and knowledge of the affairs of the yearly meeting. The Executive Committee shall appoint a member to serve on the Stewardship–Finance Committee.

Duties and

Responsibilities

2. The Executive Committee is subordinate to the Representative Body and is subject to its care and guidance. When circumstances seem to warrant, the Executive Committee may direct the clerk of the Representative Body to call a special session of that body. The deliberations in the special session shall be restricted to the matter or matters for which it was called.

At any appropriate time the Executive Committee shall recommend for the consideration of the Representative Body the name of a suitable Friend to serve as superintendent of the yearly meeting. In like manner other employees may be appointed as needed.

The duties of the yearly meeting staff shall be clearly defined by the Executive Committee and included in the administrative handbook. These become effective when approved by the Representative Body. The salary and benefits administration is under the oversight of the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee will be responsible for the maintenance and care of all yearly meeting property, except those specifically assigned to other bodies.

The Executive Committee shall share jointly with the Stewardship–Finance Committee the preparation of a draft of the annual budget of the yearly meeting and the determination of the monthly meeting

askings to be presented at the appropriate time to the Representative Body. Special fund-raising activities must be approved by the Executive Committee.

In the normal course of events numerous administrative functions not specifically listed in this discipline, *Faith and Practice*, may be found to belong among the duties of the Executive Committee. As they emerge, they should be brought to the attention of the Representative Body and on its approval included in the administrative handbook.

The Nominating Committee

Membership 1. The Nominating Committee of the yearly meeting shall be composed of twenty persons, judiciously chosen in the following manner: one by each quarterly meeting and twelve by the Representative Body of the yearly meeting. Persons appointed to this committee are expected to have adequate knowledge of the organization, the work program, and of the leadership of the yearly meeting.

The superintendent of the yearly meeting shall convene the committee for its first meeting and preside until the committee approves a chairperson. Thereafter the committee shall maintain its own organization from year to year.

One person may not serve on more than one of the following committees simultaneously: Committee on Clerks, Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee, and Yearly Meeting Ministry and Counsel Nominating Committee.

Tenure 2. The quarterly meeting appointments are made annually. Those appointed by the yearly meeting shall be named for a three-year term with arrangements made for the terms of four to terminate each year. The recommendations for these appointments shall be made by the Committee on Clerks.

Duties 3. The Nominating Committee shall recommend to the Representative Body the names of persons to serve on each yearly meeting committee, board, and commission and affiliated organization except as may be otherwise provided in *Faith and Practice*.

It shall be the duty of the Nominating Committee to suggest to the yearly meeting the names of persons to serve on committees that may be established to facilitate the purposes of the annual assembly of the yearly meeting.

The Program Committee

Membership 1. Upon recommendation of the Nominating Committee, the Representative Body shall approve the Program Committee chairperson and nine Friends to serve for three-year terms. The terms shall be arranged so that three appointments are made each year. Persons serving on the Program Committee should be Friends who have a broad knowledge of Quakerism as it has moved through history and a deep appreciation of the relevancy of Quaker testimonies to contemporary human affairs. The yearly meeting presiding clerk, assistant presiding clerk, and the chairperson of the Executive Committee shall serve as members *ex-officio*.

Duties 2. The Program Committee should plan the program for the annual sessions of the yearly meeting to carry out in full measure the purposes of these sessions as defined in *Faith and Practice*. With the advice and consent of the Representative Body, the Program Committee may project plans for yearly meeting sessions through more than one year into the future.

With the consent of the quarterly meetings, plans may be made to carry the emphases of the yearly meeting to the sessions of the quarterly meetings. Plans for the emphases and their presentation in the sessions of the quarterly meeting should be made by the Program Committee in consultation with the clerks of the respective quarterly meetings.

Trustees

Membership 1. Trustees shall be approved by the Representative Body upon recommendation of the Nominating Committee including the appointment of a chairperson to serve a two-year term. There shall be not less than three nor more than six trustees at any one time. Trustees shall serve terms of six years. Terms shall be designated so that at least one and not more than two terms shall expire each year. The Representative Body shall appoint successors to fill unexpired terms in cases of death, resignation, and removal.

Trustees may be removed by the Representative Body for good cause, including without limitation, physical or mental disability, separation from the Society of Friends, or any misfeasance or malfeasance in the performance of duties as trustee, upon giving reasonable notice and opportunity to be heard.

Duties 2. Title to real and personal property (except its trust funds) of the yearly meeting shall be held by the trustees. At the direction of the Representative Body, the trustees shall execute deeds, notes, deeds of trust, security agreements, contracts, and other instruments requiring execution by the yearly meeting. The trustees shall perform all such other duties as may be delegated to them by the Representative Body.

Property of Discontinued Meetings 3. When a meeting is discontinued, the physical property and investments belonging to said meeting shall be vested in the yearly meeting, except when otherwise determined by deed or other legal restriction. Such property is to be held for some specific purpose, or used for the advancement of the general work of the yearly meeting, as that body may determine. All funds held from such discontinued meetings shall be administered as far as possible in accordance with the directions of the original donors. A meeting is not to be considered as discontinued if it unites as an organized group with another Friends meeting.

Trustees of Trust Funds

Membership 1. Trustees of the trust funds shall be approved by the Representative Body. There shall be seven trustees of trust funds. Trustees of the trust funds shall serve terms of seven years each. One term shall expire each year. The Representative Body shall approve successors to fill unexpired terms in cases of death, resignation or removal. Trustees may be removed by the Representative Body for good cause, including, without limitation, physical or mental disability, separation from the Society of Friends or any misfeasance or malfeasance in the performance of duties as trustee, upon giving reasonable notice and opportunity to be heard. Because experience and continuity of trustees of the trust funds are essential, trustees should not be limited to one term. Trustees of trust funds shall approve their own officers for terms of one year or until their successors are approved.

Duties 2. Trust assets of the yearly meeting shall be held by the trustees of the trust funds. It shall be the duty of the trustees of the trust funds to hold, manage, invest, and reinvest the trust funds in such manner as to realize optimum income consistent with the safety of the investments, utilizing due diligence, skill, and prudence in keeping with the generally accepted fiduciary standards. They are encouraged to observe socially responsible principles as set forth in the *Faith and Practice* when selecting investments. In carrying out their duties, the trustees of the trust funds shall observe and comply with any limitations or restrictions imposed by the donors of specific funds or by the Representative Body of the North Carolina Yearly Meeting.

Governance 3. The trustees of the trust funds shall adopt by-laws, approve their officers, and adopt appropriate operating procedures.

Stewardship–Finance Committee

Membership 1. The committee shall be composed of one member designated by each of the quarterly meetings and nine members approved by the Representative Body.

The chairperson of the Stewardship–Finance Committee shall serve as an *ex-officio* member of the Executive Committee of the yearly meeting.

A member appointed by the Executive Committee of the yearly meeting shall serve as an *ex-officio* member of the Stewardship–Finance Committee. Members of the committee approved by the yearly meeting shall serve a three–year term and shall be eligible to serve a second term. Quarterly meeting representatives are approved for one–year terms.

Duties 2. The duties of the Stewardship–Finance Committee are as follows:

- a. Prepare and recommend in cooperation with the Executive Committee to the Representative Body for adoption an annual budget for the yearly meeting and determine the askings for each monthly meeting.

- b. Prepare, select, and promote the use of stewardship program materials, literature, and audiovisual aids.
- c. Arrange for conferences and seminars on the local and yearly meeting levels.
- d. Promote effective methods for meeting the financial needs of the yearly meeting.
- e. Conduct a continuous program of education relative to:
 - (1) The needs which exist in the world and our channels of ministering to them.
 - (2) The Christian use of time and abilities as well as financial resources.
- f. Nominate a treasurer and an assistant treasurer for the yearly meeting to be approved by the Representative Body.

Treasurer of the Yearly Meeting

Appointment 1. The treasurer and assistant treasurer of the yearly meeting shall be approved by the Representative Body for terms of three years each. The terms of treasurer and assistant treasurer shall not coincide. The Stewardship–Finance Committee shall nominate and the Representative Body shall approve a successor to complete an unexpired term. The Representative Body is authorized to remove the treasurer or assistant treasurer for cause, including, but not limited to, physical or mental incapacity and misfeasance or malfeasance in office, after due notice and opportunity to be heard.

Duties 2. The treasurer shall be responsible for disbursing the funds of the yearly meeting as directed by the Representative Body. The assistant treasurer shall act in the absence of the treasurer and shall perform such other duties as the Representative Body may assign.

Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel

Membership 1. The Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel is composed of the members of the Monthly Meetings on Ministry and Counsel within its limits.

Clerks, Reports 2. The Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel shall: appoint clerks, receive reports from the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings on Ministry and Counsel, and report annually to the yearly meeting the conditions and work of the ministry and of the membership; it may address epistles of advice and instruction to its subordinate meetings, and appoint committees to visit them.

Duties 3. The Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel shall carefully consider subjects which have reference to spiritual needs and may report its judgment to the yearly meeting for action.

Term of Service 4. Representatives appointed to Yearly Meeting Ministry and Counsel serve from yearly meeting session to the following yearly meeting session.

Time of Meeting 5. The Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel shall meet at such time as the yearly meeting shall direct and, thereafter, at the call of the clerks, but in no case shall its sessions be held so as to conflict with the sessions of the yearly meeting.

Called Meeting 6. There may be called sessions of Ministry and Counsel throughout the year as deemed necessary by the Executive Committee of the Ministry and Counsel with notification mailed three weeks in advance to pastors and representatives.

Executive Committee 7. An Executive Committee for Ministry and Counsel shall be composed of clerks and chairpersons of subcommittees of the Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel.

Committee on Training and Recording 8. The Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel shall appoint a Standing Committee on the Training and Recording of Ministers, composed of twelve members, at least one-half of whom shall be other than recorded ministers. Appointments shall be made for three years, the term of four members expiring each year. Those members of the yearly meeting who are recommended by the Yearly Meeting on Min-

istry and Counsel as having a gift in the ministry shall be under the care of this committee as to educational and other requirements. (See “Procedures for Recording of Ministers.”)

Amending and Revising *Faith and Practice*

Representative Body Role 1. From time to time, Friends may sense a need to amend or revise *Faith and Practice*. Such changes should be made cautiously and with an ample opportunity for prayerful deliberation.

Any proposal for amending or revising *Faith and Practice* shall be referred to the Representative Body for consideration. Upon preliminary approval by the Representative Body, the proposal shall be referred to the Standing Committee on *Faith and Practice* which shall study the proposal and make such recommendations as it deems necessary to the next session of Representative Body. Any amendment or revision approved by the Representative Body shall be submitted in such a manner as to indicate clearly what the proposed amendment or revision will accomplish. If approved, the proposal shall then be submitted to the clerk of each monthly meeting of North Carolina Yearly Meeting no later than two months preceding the beginning of the next session of the yearly meeting. The clerk of each monthly meeting shall present the proposal, together with the full explanation for the change to the monthly meeting for careful consideration so that its representative to yearly meeting may reflect the monthly meeting’s judgment on the proposal. Final consideration and action on the proposal shall take place at the annual session of the yearly meeting. The yearly meeting shall determine the conditions under which the new amendment or revision shall become operative.

Standing Committee 2. The yearly meeting Standing Committee on *Faith and Practice* shall consist of six members who shall be nominated by the yearly meeting Nominating Committee and approved by the Representative Body. Members serve three-year terms with one-third of the members being newly appointed each year. The committee shall, with the cooperation and guidance of the clerks and superintendent of the yearly meeting, monitor the business sessions of the yearly meeting for the purpose of ascertaining and presenting to the Representative Body the proposed amendments

and revisions to *Faith and Practice* as may be necessary and prudent. A chairperson shall be selected by the committee who shall maintain a current compilation of all approved amendments and revisions to *Faith and Practice*, a copy of which shall be available for reference in the yearly meeting office.