

Report from Ministry and Advancement Committee to Continuing  
Committee  
March 3, 2012

**A. M & A has an action item for Continuing Committee today, to approve the new job description for our Field Secretary, so that it can be provided to the Handbook Committee before annual session. (See the attachment for the job description.)**

**B. There are some successes, and some big challenges, for M & A to report this spring. First the successes:**

**1) Today, Friends, you can not only receive your free advance copy of Janet Means' "Book of Hope and Comfort," but have it personally autographed by Janet. Furthermore, you can carry away with you as many as ten copies, also free, to share with your meeting. If you think you can use more than ten, tell David Finke during the autographing party!** Janet has had a leading to create this booklet for more than a decade. Paul Buckley has done a beautiful layout; David Finke has shepherded it through the printing, collating and binding process. **London Yearly Meeting has already expressed strong interest in possibly distributing the book.** Janet's vision is that her work will be helpful to lots of people undergoing severe illnesses, big life-transitions, or other challenges. **Please take these booklets back to your meetings and also share them with hospice workers, pastoral counselors -- anyone who serves others in times of crisis.** Help Janet's "Book of Hope and Comfort" go viral!

**2. M & A is pleased to report that our new Field Secretary, Judy Wolicki, has focused this fall and winter on visiting our northern meetings, six so far -- this despite the additional demands of her full-time chaplaincy internship. She is heartened and encouraged by growth both in numbers and in spirituality in some of the meetings she has visited.** She has been invited to come back and give workshops; more Friends are learning her gifts firsthand. Thanks to Judy for her indomitable spirit and energy, to undertake two new ministries at once when most of us feel challenged to do one. We have encouraged Judy to focus on getting to know our different meetings during this first year, and she certainly is fulfilling that mission.

3) **Our innovation this year of appointing adjunct members of M&A, to help visit some of our more far-flung and isolated meetings, has made a promising beginning.** Ministry and Advancement has had too few members to reasonably serve all the ILYM meetings -- for far too many years. Urbana-Champaign, Rolla, St. Louis Meeting and Big Muddy Worship Group, and Columbia Friends have received visits, thanks to adjunct members Maurine Pyle and David Finke. Our yearly meeting clerk Janice Domanik has visited Oshkosh Friends, as well. All have been nourished -- both visitors and visit-ees -- as well as inspiring the rest of us on M & A.

4) M & A members were asked to share what they enjoy most about their travels in the ministry. Six members responded; uniformly, how enriching it is to see how other meetings worship, have fun, support each other, provide hospitality...eat.... **As Joan Pine wrote, "It is a joy and a privilege to visit, work with, and talk informally with Friends." She senses that members in leadership roles feel comfortable asking her questions and raising issues of concern. "It is rewarding to learn some of my suggestions have been helpful."**

5) **Fernando Freire is presenting our first regional workshop of this year, on conflict in meetings and difficult people in meetings, in the home of Chip and Bridget Rorem in Kankakee. It will be held on March 24, from noon to 3:30.** We hope that because Kankakee is accessible by bus and train as well as by car, that not only Metro Chicago Friends but northern Indiana and central Illinois Friends (who tend to go deer in the headlights when they think of Chicago traffic) can attend. M & A is providing free lunch and childcare for this three-hour workshop. Attendance is limited to 15. First come, first served! Some of us experienced Fernando's workshop style at Blue River Quarterly last spring. You are in for a real treat.

6) Ministry and Advancement Committee member **Joan Pine is one of four Friends leading an effort to bring Quaker Quest to Evanston Meeting, and indeed to the whole Metro Chicago area.** She reports that their first session was very inspiring -- several visitors, two new attenders, and about 30 Evanston Friends attended. Friends are looking forward to hearing all these spiritual journeys and hopefully meeting new folks as the weeks go on. This may appear to be an effort that helps only Evanston, but it provides the rest of the meetings in ILYM with the experience of Evanston Friends, to

help us all grow our meetings as well. Stay tuned for more information from Joan!

7) **Another ministry by a member of M & A promises not only to help victims of abuse, but also help promote the Quaker approach to spirituality and healing from chronic trauma. Mariellen Gilpin helped edit an issue on Shame for *What Canst Thou Say* (a worship-sharing group in print for Quakers and others who have mystical experiences).** The praises keep trickling in, along with requests for reprints. Friends call this issue "daring and powerful." They have shared this issue with their therapists, who promise to advocate to other members of their practices for making the issue readily available. The editorial team of WCTS unanimously agreed to put the issue on the website with an invitation to print multiple copies for free and share it widely. It won't be on the website until June, but ILYM Friends can receive it sooner by emailing Mariellen for the electronic copy.

Now for some of the challenges M &A faces:

1) Paul Buckley spearheaded our innovations last year and helped shape our Vision of providing more regional gatherings to encourage intervisitation and cross-fertilization for our little spiritual communities. Paul's circumstances changed and he had to lay down his role as Field Secretary. We are very pleased to have Judy Wolicki's gifts as Field Secretary, but it takes a year or two for her to get to know all the meetings, and for all the meetings to get to know her. We know and celebrate that **the Vision Statement may be slower in coming to fulfillment, but will be the richer for this period of transition.**

2) We have lost three very dear members of M &A this winter. Beth Burbank, Jeannie Marvin, and Dave Moorman have all had to lay down their service on Ministry and Advancement Committee, because of work demands, illnesses, family needs, and lack of energy, plain and simple. We miss these dear Friends, whose ideas and wisdom have all helped advance our work for the yearly meeting. In addition, Bridget Rorem and Mariellen Gilpin have needed recovery time after surgeries; Chip Rorem also has had surgery. As a result, only 13 of our 20 meetings and worship groups have been visited this year; two more visits have been scheduled. Serving on M & A is a big energy commitment; not only do we have two committee meetings in addition to annual sessions -- not only are we very committed to serving our

home meetings-- but also we provide ministry in other meetings and worship groups. Whether you're driving in Chicago traffic or on a two-lane road behind three harvesting machines to visit a meeting, the travel itself is a commitment of time and energy, in addition to the service to the meeting. No matter how rewarding our service once we arrive at our destinations, our ability to be available more often or more deeply is sharply limited. **There are too few of us on M & A to minister effectively to the yearly meeting using our current model.**

Because of our sharply curtailed membership on M & A, **we will be discerning at our spring meeting if we might better minister to the yearly meeting in a different way, hopefully a way that nourishes and energizes both us and the yearly meeting. We need to find different ways to use our gifts; we need to try new things and see if they show promise. We note that perhaps the new model of adjunct ministry may provide new opportunities: how might we re-imagine how we grow the yearly meeting? Please include M & A's challenge in your prayers; if your prayers inspire you to offer any suggestions, please share them with any M & A member.**