

## **Report of Ad Hoc Discernment of Gifts Committee to IYM Ministry and Advancement Committee, June 3, 2008**

We talked about sharing the responsibility for the Winter Retreat among Standing Committees of IYM, and have created a Winter Retreat Procedures Manual, so as to ease the responsibility for those other committees. Mariellen Gilpin and Brad Laird are available to advise, and we are consulting with Peace Resources Committee about presenting Winter Retreat 09, and hope to have an answer by annual session.

We ask M& A:

1) To recommend at annual session an annual Winter Retreat at Menno Haven, as practice for when we have our own retreat center. We want to be ready when the retreat center is built. Retreats can serve both monthly meetings and the yearly meeting. We feel great joy and appreciation for the Young Adult Friends participation in Winter Retreat 08.

2) To take on oversight of which IYM Standing Committee plans and coordinates the Winter Retreat each year. We are not seeing ourselves as the Winter Retreat Committee in the long run.

3) To recommend a structure for this oversight.

We are creating a survey instrument for Nominating Committees of IYM and also of our monthly meetings, in order to assess the felt needs of Nominating Committees for training in their important work of discerning, nurturing, and utilizing gifts among Friends. Copies of the survey are available for M&A to season. We request M&A:

4) Recommend to the annual session that Discernment of Gifts Committee send the survey to all the monthly meetings and IYM nominating committees shortly after annual session, so that we can collate and report the results to fall Continuing Committee. Our intent would be to use the results to prepare a workshop for nominating committee members, in order to assist them with their felt needs.

We thought about an appropriate relationship between Discernment of Gifts Committee and Ministry and Advancement committee. In addition to our present policy of having one member of Ministry and Advancement who is a liaison between our two committees, we suggest that we provide a written report about two weeks before each gathering of M&A: spring and fall retreats, and annual session.

We brainstormed about the future of the ad hoc committee on Discerning Gifts, particularly the work of Nurturing the Nurturers.

- We want to nurture Ministry and Advancement committee members. How do we feed those who feed others? Not only M&A, but also clerks of meetings might appreciate a nurturing retreat, not a working retreat, just for them. We talked of queries in these retreats to help nurture our nurturers.
- We might offer to elder M&A retreats and the annual session; also M&A trips to monthly meetings. We thought of asking at annual session for Friends who will pray for M&A, then creating an elist for M&A members to ask for nurturers when traveling or otherwise doing The Work.
- We wanted to encourage M&A members to get spiritual companions, to create opportunities for spiritual companionship when they travel in the ministry. This would develop IYM spiritually— both the ministers and the companions. We suggest they take companions who are both strong already and also nascent spiritual leaders. Take three or four on the journey, not just one. This would be great for the meeting visited, and also for the ministers. We want to encourage elders by teaching tools for eldering.

- We want to encourage the M&A visitors to monthly meetings to look for those individuals who have ministry potential. We could hold workshops and invite those individuals, creating an opportunity to love them into spiritual growth.
- We talked of preparing the space – praying for the quality of worship and providing examples of how to nurture a meeting. Bill Taber’s *Prophetic Stream* was mentioned in this regard, and holding a meeting in prayer between meetings for worship and expecting to be guided.
- We talked of conference call-facilitated spiritual formation groups for widely separated Friends. Spiritual friendships make opportunities for widely separated Friends to pray at the same time. Elders can nurture each other in these conference calls. We need to nurture the eldering function, the tradition of the spiritual companion who helps bring forth the ministry by being a spiritual teacher and enabler of the minister.
- We spoke of resources – money for travel and conference calls – for ministry among our widely separated and isolated meetings.
- We talked about getting several individuals to write short reports for *Among Friends*: Ruth Raffensperger and Casey Kashnig might write about their experience of the Winter Retreat, as well as other individuals. Mariellen Gilpin has drafted some thoughts about her experiences eldering her meeting. We could ask Peggy Boyer Long to draft some thoughts about her experience as someone new to a leadership role. We want to use these reports to help nurture the growth of the spiritual life of the yearly meeting and its constituent meetings and worship groups.

One of the things suggested this year was the planning of an annotated list of possible readings for meetings to provide for helping people along their spiritual journeys, which upon completion we will forward to Ministry and Advancement for seasoning. We plan to share the list with the monthly meetings of IYM.

Three members of the current Discernment of Gifts committee of five will not continue to serve on the committee next year. We recommend that Friends moved to help with the work of the committee let David Shiner know of their interest, so that Ministry and Advancement committee may discern who should serve.