

Ministry and Advancement Committee's Vision for FY 2011-2012

Nurturing Our Nurturers. Day of Spiritual Sustenance retreats were conducted in spring of 2011 in four different locations by Field Secretary Paul Buckley, with M&A members actively supporting the initiative. Our goal was to help our nurturers recharge their spiritual batteries, while providing some Quaker education. They give us so much! In 2011-12 we will follow up on the Day of Spiritual Sustenance retreats. We expect to present two more such programs in various locations in 2011-12. See the timeline (appendix) for the summary of our activities. The Day of Spiritual Sustenance initiative will pay off for the yearly meeting in many ways, some of which are discussed below.

These two Day of Spiritual Sustenance programs will be presented in four different locations each, somewhere in western Blue River Quarter (BRQ), eastern BRQ, the northern part of the Chicago area and southern Chicago area. We will make it easier for Friends who have young families, demanding jobs, and/or limited means to attend by offering travel and childcare reimbursement, and providing a free simple lunch. The focus will be on taking care—for once!—of those who do so much, week after week, to take care of us.

Improving Pastoral Care in Our Meetings. M&A has united behind supporting our meeting nurturers in dealing with the challenges in the life of the meeting—if they're alive, they need pastoral care! One of the two Day of Spiritual Sustenance programs in the coming fiscal year will focus primarily on providing education and resources on one aspect of pastoral care: dealing with conflict in meetings. Consistency and follow-through are necessary on M&A's part to see that our meeting nurturers have the tools for pastoral care they need. This is the beginning of what M&A hopes will be a decades-long commitment to improving pastoral care. We will provide opportunities for participants to get to know one another more deeply, so that a fellow worker from a nearby meeting might be a natural candidate for a neutral third party helper.

A Retreat for M&A with Brent Bill. M&A needs nurturing, too! Our M&A representatives travel long distances, after an active week of building up the spiritual lives of their own meetings, in order to visit two or three other meetings—each twice during the year—in order to build up the life of those other meetings. They travel again in order to attend/participate/nurture the Friends at the regional Day of Spiritual Sustenance retreats. Then they travel long distances again in order to meet for M&A business twice between annual sessions—at annual sessions they again meet for M&A business. They understand the business is essential, and they give their all. They are spiritually tired. They want to grow in the life of the Spirit, too. They need revitalization, so they can help revitalize our monthly meetings. We have invited Brent Bill, who directs a Center for Congregations (funded by Lilly Foundation in Indiana), to meet with us this fall. Every one of the members of M&A wants to grow in this work so much that they have committed still another weekend in the next year for their own nurturing as a committee.

Field Secretary Recruitment. Paul Buckley is laying down his work as Field Secretary. He has been immensely committed to this work, and we are sorry he must leave. M&A is reviewing and updating a job description and planning a recruitment strategy. We expect the costs of recruiting, interviewing and training a new Field Secretary to be minimal, and we are including in our budget a small amount to cover these costs.

Drawing Upon the Wisdom of Our Elders

The following initiatives of M&A will not impact our budget request:

Steering Committee for Day of Spiritual Sustenance Programs. Former Field Secretaries Paul Buckley, Roxy Jacobs, and Maurine Pyle will help the new Field Secretary plan, coordinate and carry out the programs. The co-clerks of Ministry and Advancement Committee, plus two other members of M&A, will also serve. With these experienced elders in regular consultation, the blood of the ILYM spiritual body will pulse more strongly in our meetings. Our Field Secretaries are already serving in this capacity; creating the Steering Committee simply acknowledges their continued dedication to the work of the yearly meeting.

Grieving, Death, and Dying Initiative. In FY 2010-11, M&A sponsored the following activities:

- Jeannie Marvin, Nan George, and Mariellen Gilpin have been reviewing books on death and dying for *Among Friends* and the ILYM website;
- Mariellen Gilpin presented a workshop to Springfield Worship Group, encouraging them to support one another as they make those difficult decisions about advance directives and planning memorials;
- Mariellen Gilpin has also collected some stories from Friends present at the death of a loved one for *Among Friends* and the ILYM website.
- Supporting Janet Means Underhill's leading to write a pamphlet on how meetings can help Friends, and their friends and families, grieve. Margaret Katranides, Paul Buckley, and Mariellen Gilpin are supporting her effort. Our hope is that Pendle Hill will publish Janet's labor of love.
- Margaret Katranides and Mariellen Gilpin will publish in *Among Friends* and on the ILYM website a series of email conversations on various aspects of the journey from illness to death. Some possible topics they might pursue would include helpful insights on getting more information when a doctor's prognostications seem too rosy; considering care options for a failing loved one; preparing oneself spiritually for an invasive medical test that may take as much recovery time as the proposed surgery to follow.

M&A is also sponsoring a workshop series during annual session of 2011:

- Dave and Dorothy Moorman on Support for the Journey: An Aging and Saging Group at Downers Grove;
- Peg Kruger on Getting our Final Wishes on Paper;
- Janet Means Underhill on Grief and Grieving;
- David Garman on How Do We Be A Loving Presence?

We intend to converse with Publications Committee whether ILYM might follow the FGC model, in which ILYM Standing Committees might approve a document for Publications Committee to bring to publication. While this discernment process will proceed in God's time, we feel the wisdom of our elders needs to be saved for posterity—now. We have already lost the wisdom of too many elders.

Results of the New M&A Program

Much of the new sense of life in the yearly meeting has been the result of the expansion of M&A's program, particularly through the Day of Spiritual Sustenance initiative during the last year. As with any new effort, one can't often say, "We fixed X problem at Y event." We were

pleased that this first effort to nurture our nurturers attracted 36 Friends from 9 meetings, some of them driving in fog on icy roads to reach the gathering place. Other subtler signs of growth and change are there:

Fostering Regional Interconnections. We hope to create more opportunities for deeper connections between nurturers in meetings close to each other geographically. We hope to build their mutual trust and knowledge of one another's gifts, so they will begin to draw upon one another for help and support. When a meeting has a problem, it's a lot easier to ask for help if you already know and trust the potential helper.

Improving Pastoral Care. Nurturers who attended different regional meetings discovered that their meeting's pastoral care concerns were widely experienced, and were pleased to share insights and strategies.

M&A Traveling Ministry. For several years, M&A has had eight or fewer members; there are twenty meetings in ILYM scattered over four states. Our efforts are spread thin. Some committee members have been unable to travel in ministry due to their health, family members' health, the spiritual health of their home meeting, unwillingness to admit they need financial help to travel in ministry, or being overburdened at work—and often several of these at once. In the last year, however, M&A members have visited more meetings than in any recent year—with even fewer M&A members for this vitally important work.

Fostering Intervisitation. Renewing the ancient Friends practice of traveling ministry needs to begin small—with a small outlay of traveling time, time away from family, and fossil fuel. We want to help Friends re-discover the joy of ministry—near home. Our long-term hope is that Friends who discover how much they benefit from visiting and being visited by Friends from other meetings will begin to look (with greater favor than they have in recent years) upon the time and effort required for many of our far-flung Friends to attend annual sessions. If these nearby gatherings feed their spirits, they are more likely to expect to be rewarded spiritually for attending more distant gatherings. We will create opportunities at the regional Day of Spiritual Sustenance retreats for Friends to make plans to call and visit one another.

Discerning and Fostering Gifts. M&A sees the graying of our meetings; the dying of beloved elders without new elders to take their place. M&A members will make a concerted effort to attend these regional Day of Spiritual Sustenance retreats in order to notice Friends' gifts and begin to nurture them actively. Since the “mountain” (meeting nurturers) has not been coming to “Mohammed” – that is to say, ILYM M&A – Mohammed is finding new and better ways to come to the mountain.

Other ILYM Budget Lines That Impact M&A's Work

Field Secretary: A Situation in Flux. M&A is deeply appreciative of Paul Buckley's vision and gifts of coordination, Quaker education, and just plain energetic devotion to planning, coordinating, and carrying out the Day of Spiritual Sustenance innovation in the last year. His family situation is in flux, but he has offered to continue to function as our Field Secretary in some capacities, at least, until a new Field Secretary can be recruited, interviewed, hired, and trained. Paul's timeline, and God's timeline in bringing forward a new Field Secretary, are unclear as we try to envision next year. We request your guidance how we might plan for a time of transition.

M&A Committee Members' Traveling Ministry. Rufus Jones once described traveling ministers among Friends as being like the blood circulating through the body of the spiritual community. They refresh and revivify the meetings they visit. They improve communications and morale in our scattered meetings. Travel is essential to carry out the expanded M&A program we have undertaken. Travel R Us! Our travel among Friends falls into the following categories:

- Travel in order to attend to business in the yearly meeting: M&A business meetings, Continuing Committee meetings, annual sessions, etc.
- Travel to serve the monthly meetings that each M&A member visits – each meeting at least twice during the year;
- Travel to other monthly meetings or regional gatherings in order to serve the yearly meeting's spiritual needs: facilitation of meetings for reconciliation, presentation of programs, discerning and nurturing gifts, etc.

Ministry and Advancement recognizes that not every inclination to travel is a genuine leading, and that M&A and Finance Committee share responsibility for prayerful stewardship of the resources of the yearly meeting. We also are aware of the need for balance in our own lives. Therefore, during the coming program year, we are committed to developing a process of seasoning and discernment, to ensure that our requests for travel support are truly Spirit-led.

M&A members take seriously Finance Committee's challenge for the standing committees to become more cognizant of their committee's expenditures. To that end, all M&A members agree to track their travel expenditures and keep Dave Moorman (the M&A Budget Tracker) informed. Dave will keep M&A and Finance Committee informed on a periodic basis about the true costs of traveling ministry in the yearly meeting. While some members of M&A will continue to donate their travel just as they have in the past, some members can only serve the yearly meeting with time and talent, because they don't have treasure. By keeping track of all M&A expenditures (donated and reimbursed) in service to the yearly meeting, we can help the yearly meeting know the true costs of our committee's traveling ministry.

Meeting More Often Via Conference Calls and Other Phone Usage. We are a much more active committee than in the past, and we use the phone much more, as well. We have conducted many meetings via conference call. There are also more one-on-one phone conversations. Some committee members' phone services allow for unlimited long distance calls; others rely on long distance phone cards.

These initiatives, and this vision, are only the beginning. Getting the blood moving within the spiritual body requires regular massage, regular opportunities for exercise of gifts, continued discerning of gifts, gentle repeated encouragement. Building the spiritual vitality of the yearly meeting takes persistent, creative effort over several years—if not forever! M&A members are committed for the long haul.