



## **Advices & Queries**

**Lake Erie Yearly Meeting**

**Lake Erie Yearly Meeting of the  
Religious Society of Friends**

**Advices  
&  
Queries**

for use by individual Friends,  
Meetings, and Worship Groups

**Lake Erie Yearly Meeting  
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**Cover: Oak tree at Friends Lake, Chelsea, MI  
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## Historical Background

### Advices:

Arising from the experience of Friends, advices and queries have served to help Friends carry their faith into all aspects of life. The earliest surviving collection of advices was sent as an epistle from a General Meeting of elders convened in Balby (England) in 1656. It dealt with a range of church and community affairs as well as personal conduct. Richly based on biblical quotations, these advices gave witness to the Spirit of Truth in the hearts of Friends in that young and vital community. The concluding statement is quoted at the end of this preface. Since that time, advices have been developed as statements of shared truth around which Friends could unite. Advices are not creedal statements.

Friends find their essential unity in their profound and exhilarating belief in the pervasive presence of God and in the continuing responsibility of each person and worshipping group to seek the leading of the Spirit in all things. Obedience to the leading of that Spirit rather than to any written statement of belief or conduct is the obligation of their faith.

*Faith & Practice of New England Yearly Meeting*, 1986, p. 205.

### Queries:

In 1682, London Yearly Meeting asked representatives from each quarterly meeting to reply to three questions so as to learn, from local experience, about the progress of the Society throughout the country. The first two questions requested important data: a record of deaths of Friends in the ministry and the number of Friends in prison. The third question concerned the spiritual and community life of each meeting. It wanted to

know “how the Truth has prospered amongst them since the last yearly meeting, and how Friends are in peace and unity?” (Britain YM, *Quaker Faith & Practice*, 1995, 1.04)

The tradition of Friends’ groups asking such questions of themselves has continued to the present day as a vital process in nearly every yearly meeting around the world. Since about 1723, the term “query” has been preferred to the more prosaic “question.” Advices and queries have been revised from time to time, reflecting changing priorities and views. For instance, with decreasing membership and a sense of falling moral standards in the 1760s, Friends were concerned about “the promotion and revival of wholesome discipline,” so queries were read and answered more frequently as a means of testing how people measured up to the standards approved and stated in the advices. This took on an evangelical tone in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. By the 1860s and 70s, Friends found that queries served well as an aid to self-examination; but by the 1920s, Friends felt the disciplinary advices and queries to be too negative and “preachy,” so revisions were adopted that dropped the evangelical language and placed a greater emphasis on matters of the spirit, social responsibilities, and the testimonies (see Resource 5 on p. 23.)

Many Friends have found it more helpful to respond to questions than to have standards of behavior laid upon them. For this reason, the advices have been given less importance in a number of meetings. Philadelphia YM preserves a set of historic advices separate from the queries in its 1997 *Faith & Practice*, while New Zealand and Pacific YMs link advices and queries together under the same subject headings, with the advices providing the spiritual foundation for the queries that follow. In the 1995 edition of the *Britain YM Faith & Practice*, advices and queries are interwoven organically. A similar arrangement was tried in the first draft of this volume, which led to some confusion and discomfort for Friends as they worked with the mixture. In this draft, advices are followed by queries, forming a more predictable pattern.



## Purpose and Uses of Advices & Queries

The purpose of collections of Advices & Queries is to help both meetings and individual Friends, through prayerful thought, reach a clearer vision of our conditions and needs. In some yearly meetings, local meetings were expected to respond annually to each of the queries orally or in writing. Nowadays it is more usual for meetings to arrange for an advice and/or query to be read out monthly in meetings for worship or for business, which can lead to fruitful inner reflection and perhaps deepen vocal ministry. A number of yearly meetings group their queries under twelve main topic headings with the suggestion that one of these topics be covered each month so that all the queries will be read aloud in meeting at least once a year. Two of the monthly meetings in LEYM, Ann Arbor and Pittsburgh, have written their own queries with this annual practice in mind. These two sets are quite different from each other and have proven a rich source of material for this booklet. As the ad hoc committee was gathering suggestions, we heard a strong request that we not necessarily bunch our queries under twelve topic headings, but that each query should have its own integrity and not be loaded with too many disparate ideas. Thus, as the committee's work progressed, advices and queries were written under several topic headings, their number and placement unfolding as seemed right. The topics start within the interior spiritual life of the individual and work outward through the meeting for worship, the various communities we are part of, and the testimonies concerning our actions, climaxing in the whole of creation. Since these topics are all part of the intricate web of our lives, they are not numbered, and thus imply neither rank nor status. (See "Advices & Queries in LEYM" on p. 20.)

This leads to the question of how a meeting might use these advices and queries. A meeting may wish to read all the queries under one topic heading at once, or perhaps read only a query or two at a time and spread the reading of all the queries over several years. Rather than going straight through the queries in order, meetings – or individual Friends asked to read the query – could choose one or more queries that seem pertinent to the life of the meeting or has particular meaning to them.

Someone on Ministry & Nurture might take on the responsibility of keeping a record of the advices and queries that have been read so that eventually all of them will be covered.

Although some of the queries might be answered with a simple “yes” or “no,” they are intended for introspection; adding your own questions such as “how,” “why,” or “when” can prove fruitful. Some Friends keep a book of queries by their bedside, and some like to select or create a personal query for the day (or week), which can lead to a rich prayer-life. Some of the queries and advices are addressed to individuals, others to the community. You (I, we) are encouraged to use whatever pronoun seems the most appropriate or provocative.

It is for the comfort and discomfort of Friends that we offer these advices and queries. In reflecting on them, the following words from that earliest collection of advices “given forth at a General Meeting of Friends in the Truth at Balby [England], in 1656” continue to be as relevant now as they were then:

*Dearly beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by, but that all with the measure of light which is pure and holy may be guided, and so in the light walking and abiding these may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not from the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.*

[qhpress.org/texts/balby](http://qhpress.org/texts/balby)

# Advices and Queries

## Spiritual Life

*Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. Trust them as the leadings of God whose Light shows us our darkness and brings us to new life.*

Britain YM, *QF&P*, 1.02.

1. There is a way into silence which allows us to deepen our awareness of the Light and to find the inward source of our strength. How do I integrate this inward stillness into the activities of daily life, nourishing a habit of openness to and dependence on the guidance of the Light for each day? Do I set aside times of quiet openness to the Spirit, of spiritual refreshment?
2. Are we open to new Light, from whatever source it may come? What steps are we taking to become better acquainted with the Bible, the teachings of Jesus, the history, writings, and principles of Friends, and the contributions of other religions and philosophies to our spiritual heritage? How do we apply these to our lives today and to our own spiritual journeys?
3. Do I live in thankful awareness of God's constant presence in my life? How often do I pray, giving thanks for all the blessings I have received? Do I hold others in the Light? Am I open to continuing revelation and the possibility of change and religious transformation?
4. Does our Meeting encourage us to share our spiritual journeys with one another so that we may learn from each other? In what ways do we support one another in order to seek God's will and to act upon our understanding of truth? How does our Meeting recognize, develop, and nurture the spiritual gifts of our members and attenders of all ages?

## Meeting for Worship

*Breathe through the heats of our desire  
Thy coolness and thy balm;  
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;  
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,  
O still, small voice of calm!*

John Greenleaf Whittier, “*Brewing of Soma*”.

*The most powerful ministry is a wordless radiation of the love of God.*

William Taber, “What canst thou say?”,  
*Deepening Worship & Ministry*, Feb, 1998.

5. Meeting for worship is the heart of the Religious Society of Friends. Worship is our response to the awareness of God’s presence. Go regularly to meeting for worship, including those times when feeling tired, angry, or spiritually low. Bring to worship joys, hurts, hopes and fears, and awareness of the needs of other people. Come to meeting with hearts and minds prepared. How do we prepare for worship?

6. Are our meetings for worship held in expectant waiting for Divine guidance? Is there a living silence in which we feel drawn together by the power of God in our midst? What has helped us to find the quiet center and to hear the promptings of the Spirit? Am I troubled by distractions? Can I let them drop away so I might sink into the holy stillness in unity with my fellow worshippers?

7. Prayer springs from a deep place in the heart. Vocal prayer, though it may be expressed in imperfect words, can draw those present into communion with God and with one another. What helps me find that inner place of prayer?

8. Do I attend worship clear of any predetermination to speak or not to speak, and expecting that worship will be a source of strength and guidance? Do I allow a sense of unworthiness or fear of not finding the right words turn me away from a true leading to speak? Am I apt to speak

too often, too predictably, or too soon after someone else has spoken? Do I receive the spoken ministry of others in a tender and understanding spirit, recognizing that what may not be helpful to one listener may speak to the condition of another? Do I listen for the deep meaning in the spoken ministry of others?

9. Is the ministry of silence, words, and witness in our Meeting exercised under divine leading, and in the simplicity and sincerity of truth?

10. Do we respond to the children's needs during meeting for worship? When they are involved in separate activities, do we uphold them and those who are with them?

## Meeting for Business

*The act of listening to God's will in Meeting for Business is a way for the Meeting to give back the expression of unconditional love. It requires faith and obedience – faith that God will lead us and that we will obey His leading.*

Cleveland Meeting, Eighth Month 15, 2010.

11. Be faithful in attending and participating in meeting for worship with attention to business. Are our meetings for business held in a spirit of worship? Do we depend on the guidance of God in love and humility? Do we seek the leadings of the Spirit and admit the possibility of error? Do we help one another in our search for unity by listening well and speaking briefly without repetition?

12. Be tender and considerate of differing views. As difficult problems arise, are we careful to meet them with open hearts, with minds receptive to creative solutions? A “third way” may be needed for Truth to emerge and a “sense of the meeting” to be reached. Can we allow our personal wishes and insights to take their places alongside those of others or even to be set aside as the Meeting seeks the right way forward? Do we

recognize that the search for unity may require that we accept with grace a decision of the Meeting with which we are not entirely in agreement?

13. Do we avoid feeling pressed by time, neither unnecessarily prolonging nor curtailing discussion? Do we maintain prayerful support for the clerk that he/she may be sensitive to the movement of the Spirit among us? Do we hold each other and the whole Meeting in the Light as we conduct our business?

## Participation in Meeting

*Do you give sufficient time to sharing with others in the meeting, both newcomers and long-time members, your understanding of worship, of service, and of commitment to the Society's witness?*

Britain YM. *QF&P*, 1.02, 20.

14. What are we doing to recognize and nurture the skills and spiritual gifts of adults and children in our Meeting? Do we encourage attenders to take part in committees, attend business meeting, and participate in the activities of the Meeting? Do we encourage them to pursue membership when they are ready?

15. Do we accept our share of responsibility for carrying out the Meeting's work? Do we support the Meeting financially and in other ways, according to our resources and abilities? How do we share our gifts and what do we hold back from offering?

16. When faced with personal or corporate decisions, do we join with others in seeking clearness, in asking for God's guidance, and in offering appropriate counsel to one another?

17. How do we celebrate the presence of children and young people in the Meeting, nurturing and learning from the gifts they bring? Are we involved in the support, care, and religious education of our Meeting's children? How do we learn from them and accept our responsibilities toward them?

## Meeting Community

*Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations against another; but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand.”*

Isaac Penington, 1667, **Letters**, ed. John Barclay.

18. How do we weave our Meeting into a community? Do all adults and children in our Meeting receive our loving care and encouragement to share in the life of our Meeting and to live as Friends? Do we truly welcome newcomers and include them in our faith community?

19. As we enter with tender sympathy into the joys and sorrows of each other's lives, are we ready to both give and receive help? How does our Meeting keep in contact with all of its members and attenders?

20. Are love and unity maintained among us? Do we foster knowing one another in “that which is eternal”? How do we come to clearness in dealing with troublesome differences between us, living our faith and acting in love? Do we listen to the Spirit which can draw us together in humility and mutual trust?

21. Do we uphold Friends in their efforts to develop stable and loving relationships? In what ways does the Meeting assist couples and families to communicate, grow together, and rear children in a loving and spiritually nurturing environment?

22. Do we support Friends as they meet life's challenges such as birth, illness, marriage, divorce, old age, and death? Are we able to ask for support during difficult periods? Can we approach old age with acceptance and anticipation, discerning the right time to relinquish long-term responsibilities? Do we arrange the practical matters (regarding possessions, location of documents, burial, etc.) that will arise when we die so that our families and Meeting are not unduly burdened? Are we comfortable with the relationships we will leave behind when we depart?

## Outreach

*Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come; that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people and to them.* George Fox, **Journal**, p. 263.

23. How welcoming is our Meeting to newcomers? In what ways do we orient and include new attenders? Is our place of worship physically accessible to all? What resources about Quakerism and about the Meeting do we share?

24. Do we reach out to the wider circle of Friends? Do we support and participate in Friends General Conference and Friends World Committee for Consultation, whose missions are to nurture the entire Religious Society of Friends?

25. Do we work with other religious and social groups in the pursuit of common goals? While remaining faithful to Quaker insights, do we enter openly into the life and witness of other communities of faith, creating together the bonds of friendship?

26. Are we open to becoming a Meeting of people from different ethnicities, cultures, and backgrounds who value and appreciate one another? Do we give sufficient time and effort to a mutual sharing with others about the experience and understanding of Quaker worship, service, and witness? How do we discern the balance between not proselytizing and not hiding our Light under a bushel?



## Home & Family

*It is in the home that Friends' principles first become practices. The home is founded upon love, which reaches farther than words and is understood long before words have meaning.*

*Living with Oneself and Others*, NEYM, 2001.

27. How do we make our homes places of love, hospitality, and spiritual growth? Is our home a place where all members of the family receive affection and understanding and where visitors are welcome?

28. Do we choose recreation and a manner of living that enriches the body, mind, and spirit and shows a high regard for family, community, and creation?

29. Do we take care that commitments outside the home do not encroach upon the time and loving attention our family needs? Do we respect the needs for intimacy and separateness of those with whom we live?

## Self-Discipline

*That no-one speak evil of another, neither judge one against another; but rather judge this, that none put a stumbling block or occasion to fall in his brother's way.*

*Epistle from the Elders at Balby*, 1656.

*Friends, whatever ye are addicted to, the tempter will come in that thing; and when he can trouble you, then he gets advantage over you, and then you are gone. Stand still in that which is pure.*

George Fox, *Epistle 10*, 1652.

30. In our daily lives, do we endeavor to express the spirit and teachings of Jesus? When speaking about other people, do our words reflect respect? Do we express our opinions with courage, yet with love and humility, mindful of the Divine spirit in everyone and open to the

opportunity to learn from others? Are we willing to admit that we may be wrong?

31. Do we seek to attain the highest standards of personal conduct? Do we refrain from habits, activities, and words likely to cause harm? Do I avoid undue attachment to substances and possessions? How am I dealing with addictions in myself and others? Do I refrain from membership in organizations whose purposes and methods compromise our testimonies? How does the Meeting support Friends struggling with these issues?

32. How do I maintain simplicity, moderation, and honesty in my speech, my manner of living, and my daily work? In following my vocation, what are my contributions to the well-being of the larger community? Do I have respect for all honest work, paid or unpaid, whether at home or in the community? Do I keep a right balance between my work and other aspects of my life such as worship, play, and other healthy activities?

## Simplicity

*Simplicity, beauty, and happiness go together if they are a by-product of a concern for something more important than ourselves.*

Elise Boulding, *My Part in the Quaker Adventure*, p. 21.

33. Do we center our lives in the awareness of the presence of God so that all things take their rightful place? What most distracts us from God? What are we ready to release so that we can give our attention to what matters most?

34. Do we regard our possessions as given to us in trust? How freely do we part with them to meet the needs of others? How do we manage our commitments so that over-commitment, worry, and stress do not diminish our integrity?

35. Do we keep to moderation and simplicity in our daily lives? To what extent do we allow prevailing culture and media to pressure us into buying what we do not need, more than we need, or more than we can afford? How do we recognize when we have enough? Are we mindful to encourage our children toward these values?

## **Integrity**

*All you need say is “Yes” if you mean yes, “No” if you mean no; anything more than this comes from the evil one.*

Matthew 5:37, **Jerusalem Bible.**

*There is no safe dallying with the Truth.*

Isaac Penington, **Letter 47**, 1650.

36. How does Truth prosper in our community? Do we strive to maintain the integrity of our inner and outer lives – in our spiritual journeys, our work, and our family responsibilities? Do we seek the Truth and tell it with compassion?

37. Are we honest and truthful in all that we say and do? Are we mindful in making promises and punctual in keeping them? Do we maintain strict integrity in business transactions and in our dealings with individuals and organizations? Do we use money and information entrusted to us with discretion and responsibility?

38. Are we honest with ourselves? What unpalatable truths might we be evading? Do we become unduly discouraged when facing our shortcomings? Do we seek the assurance and strength of Divine love through prayer and corporate worship?

39. Taking oaths implies a double standard of truth; in choosing to affirm instead of swearing, are we aware of the claim of integrity that we are making?

40. Our responsibilities to God, our neighbors, and all of life may lead us to take unpopular stands; if pressure is brought on us to lower our standard of integrity, are we prepared to resist it? Do we act on our principles even when this entails difficult consequences?

## Peace

*The first step to peace is to stand still in the Light.*

George Fox, in *“To all that would ...,”* 1653.

*I lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars.* George Fox, in Britain YM, *QF&P*, 24.01.

41. Consider how our way of life relies on and benefits from violence of many kinds. In what ways do we lend our influence to all that strengthens the growth of friendship, understanding, and care for all of life?

42. If confronted with violence, do we respond in peace? What am I doing to build a more peaceable world within my family, my community, and my workplace?

43. How do we communicate to others the basis of our peace testimony? Do we join with them in working for peace? What are we doing to encourage consideration of alternatives to military service? How do we reconcile our peace testimony with the payment of taxes that support war?

44. Have we considered whether the seeds of war may be nourished by the way we treasure our possessions? Have we thought about the structural violence imbedded in our economic, political, and legal systems? Is our manner of participation in these systems consistent with obedience to the living spirit?

45. To oppose war is not enough; how are we responding to the injustices and inequalities that often lead to violence? Are we mindful that simply refraining from using or supporting violent means may not be an

adequate response to war and atrocities? Do we provide refuge and assistance, including advocacy, for spouses, children, or elderly persons who are victims of violence or neglect?

46. How do we support institutions and organizations such as the American Friends Service Committee, Friends Committee on National Legislation, and Quaker Earthcare Witness that are actively engaged in peace building and the prevention of violence in all its forms?

## Education

*Our children are given to us for a time to cherish, to protect, to nurture, and then to salute as they go their separate ways. They too have the Light of God within, and a family should be a learning community in which children not only learn skills and values from parents, but in which adults learn new ways of experiencing things and seeing things through young eyes.*

Elizabeth Watson, 1980, in Britain YM, *F&P*,  
22.63.

47. Seek the full development of God's gifts, which is true education. Remember that the Meeting as a whole shares a responsibility to cherish every child in its care. Realize that education should continue throughout life, and that all should share its opportunities and privileges. Make time for regular personal prayer and worship, and for reading the Bible, Friends' literature, *Faith & Practice, Advices & Queries*, and other sources of spiritual value. Seek truth together in shared worship and discussion. Teach by being teachable.

48. Does the Meeting give the children loving care and promote their spiritual life through religious education and other activities? Do we share our deepest beliefs and values with one another and with our children, while leaving them free to develop as the Spirit may lead them? Do we encourage in children a sense of hopefulness, imagination, and confidence? Do we honor the needs of children to have quiet times and solitude?

49. How do we encourage our children's participation in the Meeting's work? How do we cultivate their desire for service to others? Do we foster their enjoyment of plants, animals, and the beauty of nature? How do we educate our members and attenders about the Bible (especially the teachings of Jesus), other spiritual literature, and the history, principles, and practices of Friends?

50. How do we show our concern for the improvement of education in our community and the world? Are we informed and active contributors to the public education system? Do we give proper consideration to supporting Friends' schools? Are we concerned that all children receive a sound education in a nurturing and respectful environment?

## Social Justice

*For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me.* Matthew 25: 35-36, **Jerusalem Bible.**

*The pioneering quality of Quaker social work is largely due to the character of the meeting for worship. Silent waiting worship permits a fresh and direct facing of facts under conditions in which the conscience becomes sensitized. ... The worshiper is seeking God's guidance for his actions. ... A concern develops and with it a sense of uneasiness over a situation about which something needs to be done.* Howard Brinton, **Friends for 350 Years**, 2002, p. 177.

51. Be not content to accept things as they are, but keep an alert, sensitive, and questioning mind. Understand and maintain Friends' witness for truth, simplicity, and non-violence, holding up your personal life to these testimonies. Encourage inclusiveness and discourage discrimination. Cherish diversity.

52. Do we seek to transform the world with our actions in the spirit of love? How can we balance our desire for independence with our need for interdependence with all creation? Are we reaching out to others, providing hope and aid to the homeless and the hungry?

53. Have we objectively considered the causes of discrimination and are we ready to abandon old prejudices and think anew? Do we, as individuals and as a Meeting, do all in our power to end governmental, social, economic, environmental, and educational injustices in our community, acting to alleviate suffering and pain?

54. What can we do to address the excessive rates of incarceration of certain segments of our society? How are we acting to improve the conditions in our correctional institutions and to promote the health and well-being of those confined there?

55. What tools and practices do we use to foster awareness of our personal and corporate biases? In what ways do we oppose prejudice and injustice based on outward condition or belief? How do we deepen our sense of empathy for others?

## Economics

*May we look upon our treasures and the furniture of our houses and the garments in which we array ourselves and try whether the seeds of war have any nourishment in these our possessions.*

John Woolman, *Plea for the Poor*, p. 255.

56. Are we careful that our use of financial resources is in accordance with our values of peace, honesty, simplicity, and concern for all of creation? Do we resist the desire to acquire possessions or income through unethical investment?

57. Does our stewardship of personal and Friends meeting financial resources promote active support of those forced to live with less?

58. Are we actively educating ourselves about the wide disparities in economic and social conditions that exist among groups in our society and among nations of the world? Are we using what we know to promote economic and environmental justice at home and around the world?

59. Do we take care not to judge others, or ourselves, by the world's criteria of wealth and status? How do we answer that of God in those who have fewer possessions than we do? ... in those who have more?

## Civic Engagement

*Because Friends believe there is that of God in all people, we strive for a world of freedom, justice, and equality for everyone. ... It is important that Friends speak truth to those in power. We recognize that, in our world, power in government and private sectors lies disproportionately with those of economic means. Speaking out ... may be difficult, even dangerous, yet by doing so we may encourage others to work for justice.*

Iowa YM Cons. **Book of Discipline**, 1974.

*We must literally not take too much thought for the morrow but throw ourselves whole-heartedly into the present. That is the beauty of the way of love; it cannot be planned and its end cannot be foretold. ... In your zeal for the cause, are you tempted to confuse self-righteousness with the righteousness of God?*

Wolfe Mendl, **Prophets and Reconcilers**, London YM, pp. 99-102.

60. Our first allegiance is to the Holy Spirit. In general, Friends support the laws of the State; but if those laws directly violate our religious convictions, we may be led to oppose them. When contemplating civil disobedience or unpopular personal testimony, do we carefully consider the spiritual basis for our actions and honestly face the consequences?



61. What conflicts do we perceive between the laws of the State and our consciences? How do we resolve those conflicts in our lives? In what ways do we assume responsibility for the government of our community, state, nation, and world? What role might we as Friends play in facilitating essential governmental action?

62. How do we order our lives so that we seek and become open to Divine leadings in framing our attitudes and actions? Do we really respect and help those we seek to serve? How do we maintain our integrity when we find ourselves in a position of power? How do we respond when we ourselves feel powerless?

## Earthcare

*If we better studied and understood God's creation, this would do a great deal to caution and direct us in our use of it. For how could we find the impudence to abuse the world if we were seeing the great Creator stare us in the face through each and every part of it?*

William Penn, *Some Fruits of Solitude*, paraphrased.

*When we walk upon Mother Earth, we always plant our feet carefully because we know the faces of our future generations are looking at us from beneath the ground. We never forget them.*

Oren Lyons, Chief of the Onondaga Nation  
of the Iroquois Federation.

*The life of the earth, because it is now vulnerable to our power, is part of our life. Our life therefore can be realized and fulfilled only if we commit ourselves to the care of the earth. Making peace with the earth is now, or should be, part of our spirituality.*

Rex Ambler, "Befriending the Earth," *Earthlight*, 2007, p. 168.

*We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace. Towards this end, it is imperative*

*that we, the people of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.*

Preamble to the ***Earth Charter***, Earth Summit, 1992, endorsed by LEYM in 2009.

63. Seek reverence for life and a sense of the splendor of God's continuing Creation. How might we develop and express a deep sense of belonging, a sacred kinship with all of nature? In what ways are we promoting a social order that can be sustained in harmony with the rest of the world?

64. Do we inform ourselves about the effects of our style of living on the world around us? What are we doing about our disproportionate use of the world's resources and the attendant impacts on global climate change? What do we choose to ignore or not to know?

65. How might we honor the Earth's resources by using them sparingly and humbly? Are we careful to spend and invest our time and money in ways that avoid depleting the Earth, but rather sustain and restore it?

66. Are we aware of the accelerating loss of species that are part of our family of life on Earth? What is God calling us to do in faith, vitality, and joy to cherish and protect the endangered intricate web of life? Do we walk gently over the Earth, answering that of God in all that surrounds us?

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## Advices and Queries in Lake Erie Yearly Meeting

**LEYM** began life in 1939 as an informal Association of Friends Meetings, many of which used the Philadelphia YM *Faith & Practice*, including its advices and queries. In 1985, this resource was used by the LEYM Committee on Ministry & Oversight (now Ministry & Nurture) as a means of building one common spiritual experience of queries among the affiliated meetings of the Yearly Meeting. From 1986 to 1988, a different query was selected and sent to all the meetings with the suggestion that it be used for reflection and sharing. The M&N Committee invited a corporate written response, to be returned to the committee clerk, and a summary of meeting responses was printed in the *LEYM Bulletin* early in the following year.

Starting in 1989, as a response to common concerns within LEYM, M&N was led to create new queries on Pastoral Care and Difficult Ministry (1990). Since that time, most of the LEYM queries have been freshly written to bring wider discernment to bear on particular needs expressed within one or more of our own meetings. With the letter to meetings inviting responses to the query, M&N has included a collection of quotations selected from the Bible and the wide experience of Friends as advices intended to provide a spiritual foundation to Friends' consideration of the queries. Multiple years of the queries have been collected in a small, informal pamphlet and distributed for the use of Friends (see Resource 10 on p. 23.)

By the early 2000s the ongoing LEYM concern about the environment was becoming more effectively expressed. An "Earthcare Committee of Concern" became active in 2004, and joined with the Committee on Ministry & Nurture to develop the following query to send to meetings for their prayerful consideration.

“How long, O God, how long must we remain complacent in our spiritual and physical relationships with earth and sun which sustain us? How may we alter these relationships in a restorative way?”

This sense of urgency and the need for education and action in the area of care for the environment is not only reflected in the final section in this set of *Advices & Queries* on Earthcare but is also woven into several of the other topics when appropriate.

Most meetings and groups in LEYM have joined in the conversation that produced this little volume. The Friends who were named by two successive YM clerks to guide the work and to produce drafts for wider testing are as follows: Carol Meyer-Niedzwiecki (Kalamazoo), David Snyder (Oberlin), Don Nagler (Pine River), Ellen Barnes (Birmingham), Josephine Posti (Pittsburgh), Paula Deming (North Columbus), Phil Clampitt (Birmingham), Raelyn Joyce (Kalamazoo), and Thomas Taylor (Ann Arbor, clerk). Jeff Cooper assisted with copyediting and formatting.

The Yearly Meeting minuted its acceptance of this current draft of the *Advices & Queries* at its Annual Sessions on 28 July 2012. During the discussion, concern was expressed that in some sections of the booklet, there may not be sufficient reflection of our dependence on the guidance of God in our daily lives. The clerk agreed to establish a method for gathering suggestions, concerns, and new insights regarding the *Advices & Queries* in the future.

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## Resources

The committee's first step in undertaking this project on queries was to learn as much as it could about the use Friends make of queries by collecting and absorbing the advices and queries from a wide variety of Friends sources. A number of these are listed below. As a draft set of LEYM queries unfolded, many a phrase from these was found to ring true or was offered by Friends in their responses, so several have been incorporated here. It seemed cumbersome and unnecessary to footnote each and every borrowed phrase, so we give a collective thanks to all the Friends and committees that originally wrote many of those phrases.

1. Brigitte Alexander, "Living Near the End of Life: Queries for the Elderly," *Friends Journal*, October 2009, p. 28.
2. Ann Arbor MM, *Handbook of AA Friends Meeting*, 2007, p. 51ff.
3. Australia YM, *Faith & Practice*. (Section 12 is London YM *Advices & Queries* of 1964. AYM also uses Britain YM *Advices & Queries* of 1995.)
4. Baltimore YM, *Faith & Practice*.
5. Britain YM, *Quaker Faith & Practice: The Book of Christian Discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain*, 1995. (A good source for other advices & queries and their history.)
6. Sean Compagnucci, *Advices & Queries for Friends School Community Life*, Friends Council on Education, n.d.
7. **The Epistle from the Elders at Balby, 1656**. As in the copy in the Lancashire Records Office at Preston. (Marsden MM) [qhpress.org](http://qhpress.org).

8. Intermountain YM, *Faith & Practice of Intermountain YM*, 2008.
9. Iowa YM (Conservative), *Discipline of Iowa YM of Friends (Conservative)*, 1973, reprinted, 2003.
10. Lake Erie YM, *Twenty Years of LEYM Queries*, 2004 (Thomas Taylor, Ed.)
11. New England YM, *Faith and Practice*, 1985.
12. New England YM, *Living with Oneself and Others*, 2001. (Queries on family life.)
13. New Zealand YM *Faith & Practice*, 1991. (Section 12 is called “Questions & Counsel.”)
14. Ohio YM (Conservative), *The Book of Discipline of Ohio YM of the RSF*, 1968.
15. Ohio Valley YM, *Book of Discipline, a Guide to Christian Faith and Practice*, 1978.
16. Pacific YM, *Faith & Practice*, 2002.
17. Philadelphia YM, *Faith & Practice*, 1997.
18. Pittsburgh MM, *Queries*, n.d.
19. Southeastern YM, *Queries and Advices*.
20. Carole Edgerton Treadway, “The Queries of North Carolina YM (Conservative), 1809-1983,” *Journal of NCYM(C)*, 1983.

