

Morningside Monthly Meeting

Comments, advices, and queries for seasoning a proposal from the NYQM Ad Hoc Committee on Witness Concerns.

Discerned by Morningside Monthly Meeting in September and October 2022; approved at Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business on 2 October 2022

Morningside's specific comments....

1. In general, there was agreement that the proposed changes in the membership and duties outlined for the handbook were a good idea. It was suggested that perhaps fundraising might be added to the description. Having a representative from each of the Meetings was a good idea.
2. Friends generally expressed comfort with the proposal's emphasis on encouraging NYQM to shift its approach to funding Witness to a "first fruits" model.
3. There were some concerns raised on starting this new venture with a figure as large as \$200,000 while there was not disagreement on the concept as a long run goal.
 - a. It is difficult to make a decision about such a large figure without the context of the whole budget and having some sense of the tradeoffs that would need to be made with regard to needed repairs, salaries and benefits of employees, etc.
 - b. Starting with a smaller sum might give us time to gain proof of concept. Processes and procedures will need to be developed and assessed in an ongoing manner. It is better to begin with a smaller sum to develop these
4. Among the processes that need to be developed are the criteria for prioritizing contributions to organizations. Do we donate to support individuals? One suggestion was to give to activities with which the Meetings are already involved:
 - a. Africa Education Committee
 - b. The Devanga School
 - c. The AFSC Academy & Liberation Summer Program
 - d. The Gay Pride Parade participation
 - e. The shelter at 15th Street
 - f. Community dinner in Brooklyn

At the same time, we ask the Quarter to discern how we can ensure that our giving comes from leadings of the Spirit, whether new or continuing, and not from the ease of "giving where we've always given."

5. It was also suggested, separate from this idea, that the NYQM might want to create a contingency fund for repairs and emergency needs.

From these specific comments, we offer the following advices and a query to the Quarterly Meeting as it continues to discern both principle and practice for our witness as a community:

- The Quarter's Witness work should proceed always from the abundance of the Spirit, not the scarcity of worldly resources.

- Friends should commit to offering our Witness with the “first fruits” of our annual budgets.
- We encourage the Quarterly Meeting to “start small” in funding our Witness in this way, and to grow from there. At the same time, we encourage the Quarter to be as generous as possible and make witness a priority. We see this as a project of practice, not “managing scarcity.”
- What constitutes “Witness” by (and for) our community? Is it only work that is external to the NYC Quaker community, or can it include strengthening our own community members and assets?