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Faith and Organizations Project

Strategies for Peace Churches to Maintain Connections

Between Faith Communities and Their Nonprofits:

Findings from the Faith and Organizations Project

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Quakers are one of several sects that developed in the 17th century in response to the new Protestant state religions. Unprogrammed Quakers in this study have no formal creed, but share central testimonies of simplicity, equality, integrity, nonviolence, and *seeking that of God in everyone* which guide both worship and work in the world such as the development of nonprofits involved in social services, education, health and senior services. Decisions are made by waiting on the lord in silence in community, there are no votes. Quaker practice is largely learned by socialization, which leads to wide variation in interpretation of what makes an organization Quaker and appropriate forms of governance for organizations. Quakers share the following attributes with the other historic peace churches such as Mennonites and Brethren:

- ❖ **An emphasis on experiential religion**

- ❖ **Belief that all members - not just ordained clergy - are vital members of the religious community called to live out their faith.** Quaker administrative leader and nonprofits scholar Thomas Jeavons comments that Quakers did not abolish the clergy, they abolished the laity.

- ❖ **Communal and non-hierarchical decision making systems and organizational structures**

- ❖ **Commitment to equality and respecting the beliefs, values and lifeways of everyone, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, gender, or disability**

- ❖ **Central value placed on living in peace and creating a peaceful world**. While Peace Churches are best known for their anti-war stance, commitment to peace includes non-violence in all aspects of life and is closely linked to the commitment to equality and respect for all peoples.

History of the Religious Society of Friends and its Organizations

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) started around 1652 in England. A small sect of followers of George Fox, Friends base their worship and practice on "waiting upon the Lord" in silence. The label "Quakers" was applied by outsiders based on the fact that some people would shake as they delivered messages. The early religion was heavily inspired by the Bible, but Friends believed that true religion came from direct reinterpretation by the individual rather than the teachings of "hireling ministers." As a religious institution, Friends have a bottom up structure, with the Monthly Meetings (congregations) as the central organizational entity. Friends practice an experiential religion, based on evolving faith through every day activity. Central tenets of early Quaker faith include abjuring all outward signs of traditional religion such as baptism, holidays and even a formally structured worship service. There was no formal hierarchy nor were there paid ministers. These beliefs and practices are continued in "unprogrammed" Meetings today. Instead, faith and practice are based on "continuing revelation" of the word of God through the experience of believers.

By the end of the 17th century, Friends had also developed larger structures which played a role in maintaining the religion. The structure partially reflected boundaries created by horse and buggy modes of transportation. In the northeastern United States, "Quarterly Meetings" consisted of several Meetings in close proximity to each other which met on a quarterly basis to carry out business in common for those Meetings. Quarterly meetings are grouped together into Yearly Meetings. Both Quarterly Meetings and Yearly Meetings are creatures of the Monthly Meetings, not the other way around. While Yearly Meetings have more voice and formal

functions than the Quarters, they also exist to serve the members of individual Meetings, not determine policy for the local level. As larger administrative bodies, the two Yearly Meetings in this study have educational and administrative resources used by the Monthly Meetings and the social service projects under the care of those meetings.

Baltimore and Philadelphia Yearly Meetings are the two of the oldest and institutionally complete Yearly Meetings in the country. Today, both have campuses that share the Yearly Meeting offices with Quaker institutions and multiple paid staff. Both evolved in the 18th century as Meetings established in both the Quaker colony of Pennsylvania and the extended area from Virginia to Maryland formed into larger conferences. Both Meetings also split into two in the 19th century as Hicksite Quakers that reflected a strong belief in continuing revelation split from the Orthodox, which had evolved into a more rule led form. Both Hicksite and Orthodox Meetings and Yearly Meetings met independently into the 20th century, gradually merging again by the second half of the 20th century. Both Yearly Meetings include a wide range of Monthly Meetings as constituent members.

Despite these similar histories, the tone of the two yearly meetings and the largest Meetings that contribute much of the leadership is somewhat different. In Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting (CPMM), the largest original Hicksite Meeting and several other formerly Hicksite Meetings in Philadelphia and elsewhere dominate the Yearly Meeting. These Meetings also include many members who are national staff for AFSC (American Friends Service Committee), FGC (Friends General Conference), and people involved in a large array of nonprofit social justice initiatives. FGC functions as a resource organization to Monthly and Yearly meetings throughout the United States that have chosen to join this conference, with no joint decision making functions. The Yearly Meeting is located in the same structure as CPMM, AFSC, and a national umbrella group for Friends Schools, and has significant staff that support the social justice ministries and other work in the world of constituent Meeting members.

In Baltimore Yearly Meeting, Hicksites comprised 4/5 of the membership, but Orthodox continued to have significant influence. The Yearly Meeting rejoined, but did not reunite; this process took many more years than in other Yearly Meetings. The Yearly Meeting campus is located on ground adjacent to the large, historic Meeting at Sandy Spring along with a Friends School and a retirement community under the care of the Yearly Meeting. While several of the Monthly Meetings include a large number of activist members engaged in social causes, Yearly Meeting has limited staff and none devoted to their support. Instead, the Yearly Meeting nominating committee identifies individuals to serve on the boards of one school and one retirement community. The retirement community, located near the Sandy Spring campus serves the largest percentage of Quaker elderly of all of the Quaker retirement communities nationwide, in large part because it has low to moderate income housing options.

As Friends spread across the United States, adapting to the local culture and responding to variation within society, the religious community split into several factions. "Unprogrammed" Meetings continue the practice of silent worship with no formal structure. Many of these meetings belong to the larger umbrella group FGC. In some other parts of the country, particularly the Midwest and parts of the Pacific coast, Quakers adopted the belief systems and worship practices of the other Christian sects in their communities. "Programmed" meetings often resemble Methodist or Evangelical churches with paid ministers, a formal worship structure, and more Christocentric belief systems than the most liberal unprogrammed Friends. However, programmed Quakers share core beliefs and communal decision making structures with unprogrammed Meetings. Friends United Meeting (FUM) and Evangelical Friends International are the two largest Friends conferences for programmed Meetings in the United

States. Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) attempts to draw together these various strands of the Quaker community in joint meetings and through providing some general resources.

"Work in the world" has long been important in the Religious Society of Friends. As with other promptings of the Spirit, individual Friends are led to work on social issues. Most Quaker social service stems from the concept that there is that of God in everyone. As with Friends like John Woolman and Lucretia Mott who sought to end injustice toward native Americans, slaves, women and the poor, this sense that everyone is equal in the sight of God leads to work to foster equality and justice for those excluded from social goods. In many cases, Friends work is characterized by one on one contact which seeks to expand boundaries in the best sense of sharing social capital.

Most established Quaker organizations came out of leadings by one or two Friends who garner the support either from their Meeting or like minded Friends to develop ideas into institutions. These leadings have included innovative approaches to mental health, prison reform, and a variety of social justice issues such as anti-slavery initiatives, peace work and civil rights activities. Some of these organizations have evolved into large formal structures such as hospitals. Others include settlement houses, schools, mediation clinics, organizations to discourage military enlistment, and an array of projects among marginalized populations like low income people, immigrants, and people of color. These organizations continue to develop on a regular basis and Friends are led to develop new projects. This study included several of the older established organizations as well as recently formed entities.

Other Quaker organizations initially develop to employ and serve Friends, but evolve into institutions largely serving others, with few Quakers as employees. The largest and best known of these is the American Friends Service Committee. This study included the Middle Atlantic Regional Office for the Service Committee as well as discussion with older Quakers and national office staff familiar with the earlier years of the organization. One regional board member recalled:

> Essentially it was Friends that were led to try to provide some services back in World War I actually, particularly for children is one aspect. But the other one was more conscientious objection to try to find a route through people who for spiritual reasons did not want to engage in combat. As I understand it initially the notion was that they were trying to find a way that they could serve in other ways. So a number of people became medics and other things and helped save people as opposed to kill them.

AFSC remained a largely Quaker organization with strong ties to Friends through World War II, gradually developing into both a national and international social service and development organization with the mission as *a practical expression of the faith of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Committed to the principles of non-violence and justice, it seeks in its work and witness to draw on the transforming power of love, human and divine.* During the Vietnam war many non-Friends were drawn to the AFSC as a place to perform alternative service, and many of these people, in turn joined the Society of Friends. Coming from diverse religious backgrounds and reflecting the range of strategies of the antiwar movement, these newcomers gradually changed both the organization and Society of Friends. In 1978, the AFSC passed a historic diversity policy that greatly broadened the staff sources, voices and approaches in the organization. As the number of non-Quaker staff rapidly outnumbered Friends and the organization moved away from significant volunteer involvement of Quaker youth and adults in the organization, it became attenuated from Friends.

As noted in earlier research (Schneider 1999), Friends values of equality and answering that of God in everyone often leads to rapidly including the people served by the organization in decision making structures, regardless of their class, race and religious backgrounds. Our pilot study revealed that organizations that make efforts to orient staff and people served into Quaker culture and process retain a Quaker ethos, organizations that have been less careful to socialize outsiders into Quaker process can eventually come to resemble secular organizations dominated by people from the various groups that staff the organization or use its services (Schneider 1999, Jeavons 1994). As relationships between the Religious Society of Friends and organizations created by Quakers but largely dominated by non-Friends become attenuated, the various religious entities among Friends have questioned those connections (Schneider 1999, Fager 1988). As with the AFSC office studied here, organizations sometimes make an effort to re-engage with Quaker practice. In other cases, the relationship between the religious community and nonprofits remains conflicted with both organization staff and the wider community of Friends expressing frustration with each other due to mismatched expectations and cultural misunderstandings. We saw similar problems in one smaller institution in the current study.

The same issues appear with Quaker schools, but often with different results. Friends initially started schools to serve their own members, with entirely Quaker staff. However, by the mid-19th century, these schools were serving anyone who could afford to pay, with some making consistent efforts to include youth from diverse backgrounds through scholarships. Like with AFSC, most of the schools evolved into institutions where both Quaker staff and students were a minority. Most of the schools provided Quaker style education to upper middle class students, with Meetings and schools providing scholarships for Quakers and targeted others who could not afford increasing tuition. However, unlike the AFSC, most of the schools retained strong connections to one or several founding Meetings, incorporating Quaker values and practice in all aspects of the organization. As a result, the schools appear less likely to draw criticism from Friends that they "are not Quaker enough." Instead, the schools have served as a mechanism to draw people to the Society of Friends or develop adults who share Friends values while practicing other religions.

The retirement communities also share the same trajectory. Initially founded to serve Quakers, many now have majority residents who are well to do seniors from other religions. Most of the retirement communities share Quaker organizational practice that includes shared decision making with residents, through listening to residents' point of view. In retirement communities with a strong Quaker ethos embedded in their processes, resident involvement extends Quaker values throughout the organization. However, in retirement communities where upper class, non-Quaker resident voices dominate decision making, Quaker values can be undercut in favor of developing a consensus that includes the values of residents. Our study included retirement communities that reflected both ends of this spectrum.

Organizations and Faith Communities Participating in the Study

The project deliberately chose to include a mix of organizations that represent the range of types of Quaker nonprofits, both large established organizations and smaller or newer ones, and those with different relationships to their founding faith community. Large established organizations included the regional AFSC office, one school that is over 200 years old, and two of the established retirement communities, all located in Baltimore Yearly Meeting. Newer and smaller organizations included a senior services organization and newer school located in Baltimore Yearly Meeting as well as a crime victim's services organization in Philadelphia.

We also sought institutions with different relationships to their founding faith communities. One of the schools is a separate 501(c)(3), but with strong relationships with its founding faith community. The other, also a 501(c)(3), is under the care of a small worship group involved in its founding. However, during the project this school unsuccessfully sought support from the Quarterly Meeting in order to draw stronger board participation and financial support from Friends. As the project ended, the Baltimore Yearly Meeting agreed to take it under its care and provide similar supports.

The two retirement communities enjoy positive relations with their faith communities, but one is under the care of a Monthly Meeting and the other the Yearly Meeting. The third senior services organization has a long history of conflicted relations with its founding Meeting, which came to a head during the study period. The crime victim's services organization originally received strong support from its founding Meeting, but about 10 years ago spun off as a separate organization and now has little contact with the Meeting outside of spiritual support for the executive director. The AFSC regional office has strong support from Baltimore area Friends and some Quaker staff.

The faith community entities supporting these institutions also varied. We included two large, city meetings, one in Philadelphia and another in Baltimore. The Baltimore Meeting had connections to three of the organizations in the study. We also included the Yearly Meeting's relationship to the retirement community and both the connections between the small preparative meeting currently supporting the second school and its subsequent search for Quaker support.

Practical Theology

Friends believe that each individual - regardless of membership in the Religious Society of Friends or any other religion - contains the light of God within themselves. Participants in Friends worship wait in silence for divine messages. Occasionally prompted to speak by the Spirit, any participant can rise to give a message. Worship thus consists of the voice of the spirit flowing through people engaged in the community of worship. In present day Meetings, anyone can come to worship and everyone technically has equal right to speak.

This practice of encouraging participation of everyone involved is a hallmark of Quaker organizations. All of the organizations in the study involved staff and program participants in committees involved in decision making for the organization. For example, one school involved students, parents and staff in decisions related to a new diversity policy for the school. The retirement communities had committees of residents who were active in supporting the institution, developing activities, and recommending policy. Likewise, all of the board meetings used Quaker practice which included allowing all involved to participate. Organizations' use of Quaker worship in their activities varied significantly. The schools and retirement communities regularly sponsored Quaker worship. In the schools, attending Meeting was part of school practice. Quaker practice in staff or participant activities was less common in the social service agencies and the retirement community with non-Quaker executive director and dominated by non-Quaker residents, however is present to some degree at the schools.

While Friends practice allows participation by everyone in attendance at a given meeting for worship or business, the community has always controlled membership and patterns of speech and behavior. Authority in the Religious Society of Friends resides in the "Monthly Meeting": a small group equivalent to a congregation. Individuals join a particular Meeting; one cannot

declare oneself a "Quaker" without first joining a Monthly Meeting. The entire community agrees to admit a new person to membership after a committee has determined that they are "clear" about their calling to membership and understand the basic beliefs and practices of this particular meeting. As a result, Quaker communities consist of known people who participate in shared decision making processes. People who have been part of the community longer or who are known for culturally appropriate behavior and wise council are given more "weight" in the decision making process.

Quaker business practice in both Meetings and organizations that follow Friends practices rely on the theological patterns of waiting on the Lord for decisions and group discernment processes similar to worship services. A "meeting for worship for the purpose of business" involves Friends gathering together to discern the will of God regarding a particular point of community business. Quaker process calls for the group of people gathered to conduct business to develop a shared sense of Meeting on any given issue. There are no votes and all must agree or "stand aside" before the Meeting can proceed with a decision.

While all of the boards used Quaker practices in board meetings, whether these board meetings more closely resembled a Meeting for Worship or a secular consensus process varied enormously depending on the understanding of these processes by Quaker and non-Quaker board members alike. As a non-creedal religion where faith is learned by socialization, the tone of any Meeting for Business can vary widely. Established Friends note that one recognizes good Quaker process when one sees it, but its elements are hard to define. We witnessed cases of extraordinarily rich discernment in some Quaker business meetings while others started with a very brief "moment of silence" and quickly devolved into debate.

As discussed under the stewardship section next, organizations where Quaker business practice was less strong generally had fewer established Friends as board leaders and limited processes to explain Friends practice. For example, in one instance, we witnessed two board members - one a fairly new Friend and the other a Quaker with years of experience - providing contradictory information on Quaker practice to a new board member. The executive director, also not a Friend, watched from the side perplexed.

Members that feel called to develop a ministry bring their project to their Monthly meeting for discernment and support. Many Quaker organizations evolved out of either individual "leadings" or Meeting wide discernment that the community should engage in a particular service. For example, the crime victim's services organization started out when a state agency approached this organization to offer crime victim's services and a Meeting member decided that this opportunity was a leading to allow her to put a concern for restorative justice into practice. These "social concerns" are tested by Quaker Meetings and supported by the individual Meeting and sometimes larger structures like Quarterly or Yearly Meetings. While this practice of discernment is described in a number of Quaker documents on leadings, in practice the role of a Meeting in discernment varies widely. One Meeting former clerk in an activist Meeting that had generated many ministries commented:

> I think I would say to some innocent bystander that I don't think there is any consistent pattern. I do think that ministries arise largely from an individual's leading. Sometimes they are quite quirky. I am guessing that the patterns about that among Quakers broadly are quite uneven.

What happens after a leading is either approved by a Monthly Meeting or gathers support from a group of like minded Friends varies enormously. In some cases, organizations followed the

trajectory of first becoming a project of the Meeting, then spinning off as a separate organization. These nonprofits generally were under the care of one or more individual Meetings, but sometimes large projects or those that sought to involve a wider audience among Friends, came under the care of a Quarterly or Yearly Meeting. In some cases, like the AFSC, initially started independent of any single Meeting, organizations develop structures where Monthly, Quarterly, or Yearly Meetings appoint board members. In other cases, as with the crime victim's services organization, the project remained a Meeting project for many years, then spun off as a separate entity with no Quaker connection. In this case, as with others, developing an ultimately separate organization with the philosophy of Friends was the initial intent.

The other key testimonies that make up practical theology of Quakers: simplicity, non-violence, equality, integrity, and seeking that of God in the individual have many different interpretations. For example, non-violence may play out as efforts toward conflict resolution in agency processes or governance. Sometimes, non-violence translates into fear of conflict, which can lead a board to come to stalemates over difficult decisions or allow more assertive members to control. Seeking God in the individual can lead to an emphasis in finding the good in everyone or an emphasis on providing for each individual.

Quaker Meetings are intentional communities with members developing trust with each other through face to face contact. In the best cases, this means that Friends go out of their way to get to know each other and support each other. But Quaker communities can also devolve into cliques, backbiting and accusations of favoritism. For example, one well respected Quaker leader noted:

> I think when you brought to bear on their work what I believe what would be good Quaker practices and principles, they didn't necessarily understand. They wouldn't call it that, but they came to like this thing. It seems to me in some ways being a good Friend is a higher order of functioning. It is easy for people to throw stones at someone. It is more difficult to go and sit with them and break bread with them and talk through things to try to bring them to where you want them to be. I didn't let somebody play by one set of rules and have everybody else play by another because I believe in equality and believe that you should be consistent in your practices. So out of that invariably people will say things like, "I know so and so is not one of your favorite people." You know. The fact that I try to insure that someone does the right thing - there is no favoritism here but people struggle with those kinds of things and want to make attributions in terms of their own personal struggle. So my point is I think when we can reach a point when our actions are not guided by personal feelings that they are guided by God and everyone that is a higher order functioning. I think folk who try to practice that are in a much better position, who believe in that and try to affect that in their personal lives are in a much better position to do that professionally.

This importance of the quality of interpersonal interaction and trust of known individuals plays out in organizations in diverse ways. In the most positive sense, organizations run with a philosophy like this leader's promote egalitarian, creative decision making with a strong sense of communal experience. People return to these organizations, for example, the history of one of the Friends schools reported that a number of teachers were hired from among former students who may not have been Quaker. However, a tendency to hire known individuals from within the organization can lead to bad hiring decisions as people lacking gifts of administration can be placed in positions not appropriate for their skill set. Or a well respected former employee who is not a Friend may support agency practices less in keeping with Quaker process. We saw all of these tendencies in the organizations in this study.

Stewardship and Strategies for Maintaining Connections

The primary way that Quakers maintained connections to their organizations was board appointments. Most organizations had by-laws stipulating that a majority of board members should be Quaker. The percentage of board members required to be Quaker varied from a simple majority (51 percent) to 100 percent, although one school changed its bylaws during the study to permit fewer than a majority of Friends. Mechanisms for appointing board varied from the sponsoring Meetings or higher level judicatories appointing members, to appointments through various regional bodies, to independent nominating committees. The crime victim's services organization that maintained no formal relationship with its founding Meeting had no such stipulation. A few years after it was launched as a separate organization, it had no board members with any connections to Friends.

While these board appointments provided an important link between organization and founding faith community, the Meetings and Yearly Meetings often provided no guidance on how those board members should either report back to the sponsoring religious body or their responsibilities on boards. In general, we found that strong organizations tended to have little trouble receiving appropriate board appointments, and most of the people asked to serve on these boards had previous board experience. However, organizations with less stellar reputations had more trouble, and reports of meddling or inappropriate board members occurred. In addition, Meetings overseeing several organizations or communities with a limited number of Friends reported continuing problems, as one organization leader commented: "there isn't the volume of Quakers to easily fill all of the Quaker board positions in Quaker organizations." One comment illustrates the challenges regarding Quaker board members:

> And I know with some other Friends' organizations that are struggling with governance because there is confusion over different things. I think that ours has been fairly straightforward. You get on the corporate board, this is your role. ...the only thing that Friends struggle with sometimes is where governance ends and implementation begins. You have to constantly remind.

Two highly respected umbrella organizations, Friends Council for Education and Friends Services for the Aging offered board trainings and materials. We found that use of these resources was uneven, unfortunately with board members at the better governed organizations more likely to take advantage of workshops or other materials than those that were struggling, although one new school was very active in using these resources.

Beyond board appointments, organization by-laws sometimes stipulated Quaker practice and mission statements often stressed the Quaker roots of organizations. Here again, board leaders had a strong role in implementing Quaker practice at the board level. For example, one experienced Friend introduced Quaker queries related to board governance at the beginning of every board meeting. Queries are questions that ask people to think about how they approach a particular issue in worship and are useful in an organization without a creed.

While board appointments were the primary formal mechanism for stewardship, informal networks and interactions with the organization proved the most effective way that organizations maintained ties with their founding faith. This was easiest in organizations that served Friends such as the schools and retirement committees. Active boards and volunteers played a similar significant role in all organizations, particularly in the social service entities. Where this social capital was attenuated or missing, organizations frequently lost touch with their founding

organizations.

Boards hire organization executive directors, and the care that they took to select directors that reflected their beliefs powerfully impacted on the ability of Quaker organizations to maintain their religious ethos throughout the organization. The most effective directors were not always Quaker themselves, but they understood the values and process behind a Quaker organization. Effective directors also maintained close ties with members of the Society of Friends, particularly the Meetings or other Quaker communities with oversight for the organization. They also maintained strong ties with leaders in other Quaker organizations providing similar services, often through umbrella organizations where they existed. This social capital provided a mechanism to draw resources and more important informal supports for organizations.

Some organizations made formal reports to their sponsoring Meetings or had information sessions at Yearly Meeting and FGC meetings. AFSC, in particular, managed its relationship with Friends through a combination of media heavy, scripted presentations at Yearly Meeting and FGC gatherings combined with informal conversations with Friends. Quaker organizations also sent out newsletters and flyers for events to Quaker networks, sometimes using mailing lists garnered partially through their sponsoring faith communities.

Fundraising for Quaker organizations was usually initiated through the organizations, with annual donation letters or events like barn sales and low cost social events with speakers or music. Sometimes organizations directly asked for donations from sponsoring Meetings or other Quaker religious institutions. Organizations with strong support from their religious bodies sometimes received small annual donations to their budgets, but fundraising from Quakers was a minor source of income for these organizations. Instead, donations for a wide array of individuals, grants, fees, government funding and bequests provided major funding sources. Most Quaker organizations, however, do not seek government funding.

Quaker organizations were more likely to receive in-kind support from Friends in the form of land or facilities located on Quaker property. Most organizations started in Quaker sponsored facilities and many remain today. Others were able to obtain land at favorable rates through Quaker networks or bequests from older Quaker families. Earlier properties like Meetings, boarding homes and schools sold by previous generations of Quakers also provided endowments that offered significant initial donations for organizations or capital for specific projects.

Opportunities and Concerns

We saw two patterns among Quaker organizations. The stronger organizations had significant support from both Quakers and the wider community, with smooth transitions and ability to address current economic conditions without eliminating key services. Most of those with weak boards, which often led to weaker leadership and limited ties to Friends or the wider community, appeared in continual crisis.

Part of the problem involved the fact that Quakers often fear conflict, and would rather complain among themselves then directly face an executive director or board that is not performing to Quaker standards. Concerns generally rested on several factors. Often, financial statements that were not transparent drew concerns because of a strong Quaker value of plain dealing and clear financial records. Organizations that violated principles of equality and non-violence also drew concerns. Preferential treatment of some groups over others would also raise comment. Finally, organizations that did not create an inclusive process so that Friends could get involved

and comment on organization activities caused concern. This was typically true of the AFSC, where an organization leader commented that "some Friends expect them to pursue any idea that a Quaker has." Organizations addressed these issues through public comment and ongoing communications, not always with success.

Implications for Practice

The wide range in the success of Quaker organizations to incorporate Quaker process and ethos in the organizations over time and the variable ability of Quaker faith communities to maintain strong ties with their organizations suggests several strategies for practice:

❖ **Sponsoring Quaker Communities need to clarify their role in overseeing their organizations and providing governance**. Since board appointments are the primary mechanism for stewardship, perhaps material for Meetings on nominations, board roles and the interface between organizations and faith communities would be particularly useful.

❖ **Strengthening and clarifying feedback systems between nonprofits and their sponsoring Meetings would help both nonprofits and faith communities understand how best to support their organizations and address concerns.** Most Meetings relied on a combination of annual formal reports from the organizations combined with informal gossip about the organization, both positive and negative, as sources for information on agency activities. When Friends perceived problems in the organizations they often lacked formal mechanisms to address their concerns. While appropriate feedback mechanisms will vary depending on the nature of both the formal and informal relationship between sponsoring Meeting(s) and nonprofit, both would benefit by creating systems to address concerns from Friends about the organization.

❖ **Informal social networks and communications are often key mechanisms to ensure connections between organizations and faith community.**

❖ **Leadership choices often prove crucial in maintaining the Quaker ethos in organizations.** Careful discernment of potential leaders for their ability to both carry out organization core functions and to maintain the Quaker ethos and connections to the founding body are particularly important. The practice of hiring from within organizations to reward staff for long service regardless of their ability to achieve these goals should be re-examined. Board training on their role in hiring and managing organization leaders to ensure faith community goals would also facilitate the ability of Quaker organizations to successfully provide guidance to their organizations.

Information about the Faith & Organizations Project
Since the late 1990s, practitioners and researchers from different faiths have been working collaboratively to understand the connection between faith communities and the non-profits they have created, sponsored or supported. The *Faith and Organizations Project* also has explored ways that faith traditions play out in organizational structure and practice, the role of faith based organizations in their service sectors, and faith based organizations' interactions with the people they serve.

This publication is based on findings from the Project's second study, *Maintaining Vital Connections Between Faith Communities and their Organizations.* The project was funded by the Lilly Endowment Inc., with research activities beginning in March 2008. It examines the relationship between faith communities and organizations founded by Mainline Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Evangelicals, Quakers, and African American churches in the Mid-Atlantic (Philadelphia and the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan areas), Midwest (Ohio and Chicago) and South (South Carolina). This report provides details on strategies to maintain connections for Peace Churches, outlines unique relationship challenges, and suggests practical ways that faith communities and their organizations could strengthen their relationship and ensure that faith based organizations receive appropriate support and guidance.

Our first report, *Overview Report on Project Findings*, offers a general summary of key project findings and contrasts religious strategies while our second report, *Comparing Strategies to Maintain Connections Between Faith Communities and Organizations Across Religions,* includes findings for all of the religious traditions in the study as well as an introductory overview of key concepts and a conclusion with comparative findings. A series of best practices documents on topics covered in both reports is in development. These products, along with publications from our pilot study and other information on the project, are available on the project website at http://www.faithandorganizations.umd.edu/.

Suggested Reading

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