

College Park Quarterly Meeting

“Well Meeting Clinic” proposal

At the 2026 Winter business session we discussed the possibility of reinstituting “well meeting clinics.” These clinics have been described as “a counseling session for meetings that want to identify areas of need and explore how to grow as a meeting.” An early description of the process by Marie Schutz is appended. Although not minuted at the time, we would like to create an ad hoc committee to: (1) review the history and success of the Well Meeting Clinic program in CPQM, (2) study whether our constituent Meetings need this service again, and if so, (3) take on formation of team(s) to analyze questionnaire results from Meetings and lead the workshops.

You are asked to consider whether you would like to serve on the new committee or recommend another Friend whom you think would be a good participant. (The same process as we use for staffing the Naming Committee.) Please submit your comments and proposed names to CPQMclerk@gmail.com to be considered at the Spring 2026 business session.

-Eric Sabelman, CPQM presiding clerk

Introduction to State of the Meeting Clinic
July 1996 (for presentation to PYM-August 1996)

The College Park Quarterly Meeting (Pacific YM) Ministry and Oversight Committee is sponsoring an experimental project to help monthly meetings stay healthy. The experiment arose from a recognition that the Ministry and Oversight Committee needed to go beyond passively waiting for monthly meetings in crisis to ask for help. We are a three-member team who have been working on the project for several years. We have held three State of the Meeting workshops, for one small worship group and two good-sized meetings. Originally called "Well-Meeting Clinics," the workshops focus on helping meetings to "take their own temperatures", to assess their own strengths and possible areas of concern, and to take conscious action to stay healthy and become healthier. The workshops are not intended, nor are they appropriate, for seriously troubled meetings.

The State of the Meeting workshop format has evolved during the experimental period. Two of us conduct each workshop. The process begins with a questionnaire, which is distributed to a sampling of meeting members, including clerks and key committees, and some new members and attenders. The 23 questions are grouped into three subject areas: the meeting business, spiritual life and growth, and the meeting community. From our experiences so far, we believe the time for returning the questionnaires should be short (on the order of two to three weeks) and that the Saturday workshop should take place about a month after the questionnaires are returned to us. This gives us, the facilitators, time to read and summarize the responses, while providing assurance that the responses are still reflective of the current state of the meeting and at the same time retaining a certain level of energy in the process.

The workshop itself begins at 9 a.m. with worship, followed by a brief explanation of our objectives and of the workshop format. We then invite the meeting participants to share with us and with one another their own expectations of, and their fears about, the process. We may, at that time, offer further clarification of what we expect to happen. We then present to the meeting workshop participants our summaries of their responses to the questionnaires. We present these as what we think we have heard them say about their meeting, and invite the meeting to do a reality check on our summaries. This process takes up the entire morning.

The afternoon session begins with worship sharing. We invite the participants to envision the meeting they wish to be, and to share that vision out of the silence. This is obviously not going to produce a "vision statement" for the meeting with which all are in unity, but can result in a sort of composite vision. We follow up this vision with a period of looking at the meeting's resources for achieving various elements of the

composite vision. From this process there may appear one or more particular strengths the participants wish to build on and one or more particular areas they wish the meeting to grow in. We emphasize that this process is not a Quaker business meeting and that no decisions are being taken on behalf of the meeting. We end with a brief evaluation period, asking the participants to share their feelings about the process and its usefulness for their meeting and to suggest how we might improve it. We close with a period of worship together, ending around 4 p.m.

One of our presentations began on Friday evening, included showing of the video "Who Are Quakers" and also included presentation of a small display of currently-available books and pamphlets as well as a copy of the FGC catalog from which these and other materials might be ordered. That seemed not to be appropriate for meetings with well-established libraries.

We are now (Summer 1996) evaluating the experiment and exploring how to go forward. Some revisions are clearly in order. The questionnaire is quite long and some of the questions need rewriting. The workshop is a day of fairly cerebral activity, and even though there are breaks, we are pondering how we might incorporate more movement or activity into the process. We had some difficulty communicating with the meetings about the forthcoming workshop through meeting representatives. As a result we have decided that one of us will actually visit the meeting prior to distributing questionnaires, although this could involve an additional trip of several hundred miles.

The three workshops we have held were all different to some degree, as the State of the Meeting clinic concept evolved and as each meeting brought its own dynamic to the process. All were judged by the participants to be a positive, valuable experience for the individual meeting and each meeting has followed up actively. We are also now receiving requests from other meetings - even outside the country. An added benefit, which occurred to us early in the experiment, is that we may be able to some degree to facilitate the sharing of strengths and resources among monthly meetings.

We are very clear about one key ingredient in the success of these workshops. That is the fact that it is Friends from outside the Meeting who come to facilitate the workshop and witness to the participants' exploring together as a meeting community. For those of us on the visiting team, this is a leading and a new form of Traveling Ministry.

This is a work in process. For further information, please contact Marie Schutz, 684 Benicia Dr., #70 Santa Rosa, CA 95409