



# Inreach-Outreach Review

## *Ideas & Queries*

What can a Friends meeting do to become stronger, more visible, more open and more welcoming to those hungry for what Quakerism has to offer? This question has as much to do with “inreach”—deepening the spiritual life of the meeting community—as it does with “outreach”—our message and witness to the world. If visitors to our meetings find spiritual nourishment and a loving community they will surely want to come again.

The following list of questions is intended to help your meeting explore these issues and begin to develop your own “advancement” plan. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions and no need to answer them all. Hold a workshop or meeting retreat and use this “review” as a starting point or guideline. You may want to divide into small groups and assign each group a category to discuss. Choose the questions that speak most directly to the condition of your meeting. Try to identify small steps that would be easy for you to take. We have found that the simple act of thinking about welcoming visitors and getting ready to receive them may give new life to a meeting.

Please let us know if you have comments or suggestions, or would like to share your experiences with us.

## Communication

- Do you have a greeter each First Day?
- Do you welcome all visitors equally whatever their age, status or ethnicity?
- Do you make introductions in a way that does not put newcomers on the spot?
- Do you clearly identify people whom visitors can approach with questions after meeting?
- Does your announcement period enrich the meeting?
- Do you welcome visitors to meeting as you would welcome guests in your home?
- Do you use Quaker jargon that may confuse newcomers?
- Do you use name tags, or display meeting photos, to help match names and faces?
- Do you have a meeting brochure or statement of welcome that you can hand to visitors?
- Do you have a guest book?
  - ∞ Do you have a way of follow-up on those who sign it?
- Do you offer visitors a chance to receive the meeting newsletter?
  - ∞ Does every member and attender receive a copy promptly?
- Do you have a supply of simple literature on Quakerism to offer to visitors?
- Do you use bulletin boards to communicate the vitality and diversity of Quakerism?

## Vitality

- Does your meeting practice spiritual hospitality?
- Do you offer programs which nurture the spiritual growth of the meeting?
- Do you have regular worship sharing?
- Is the atmosphere of the meeting open and accepting to members and attenders?
- Is the meeting open to diversity and different-ness?
- Do you give new attenders a chance to share their spiritual search?
- Do you have programs to help new attenders explore Quaker beliefs and practices?
- Are you aware how small group activities can enrich the life of a meeting?
  - ∞ Do you make a special effort to include new or sporadic attenders in these activities?
- Do you take time to name and affirm each other's gifts and ministry?
- Do you attend to your own spiritual growth?
- Are you knowledgeable about Quaker beliefs, practices and testimonies?
- Do you take part in the gatherings and offerings of the wider Quaker community?
- Do you practice outreach as a ministry?

## Community

- Do you have a program for children during meeting for worship?
  - ∞ Is it provided by someone other than parents and new attenders?
  - ∞ Do you provide childcare for infants and toddlers?
- Do you provide opportunities for Friends to mingle after worship?
- Do you have regular meeting potlucks, sings or other get-togethers?
  - ∞ Do you make a special effort to invite new or sporadic attenders to such events?
- Do you find ways to include newcomers in the life and work of the meeting?
- Do you have a system of pastoral care for members and attenders?
- Do you get in touch with those who have been absent from meeting?
- Do you extend invitations to former attenders?

## Visibility

- Does your meetinghouse have a sign?
  - ∞ Is it easily visible from the road?
  - ∞ Does it give the time of meeting for worship and a phone number?
  - ∞ Does it say that visitors are welcome?
- Is your meeting listed in the telephone book?
  - ∞ Is it listed in the white pages under “Quaker Meeting” followed by the name?
  - ∞ Is it listed in the yellow pages under “Churches—Quaker”?
- Does the answering machine message give the time of meeting for worship?
  - ∞ Does it give a phone number to call to talk to a live person?
  - ∞ Does someone regularly check for messages and respond promptly?
- Is your meeting listed in the “Churches” section of the local newspaper?
- Is your meeting listed in the directories of local colleges and universities?
- Is your meeting listed on the houses of worship page of local hotels, inns and motels?
- Do you keep the meetinghouse well maintained and attractive?
- Is it clear where to enter the building for meeting for worship?
- Is your meetinghouse physically accessible?
- Does your meeting have a web site?
  - ∞ Does it post information that would attract visitors?
- Does your meeting have an up-to-date listing on **www.QuakerFinder.org**?

## **Outreach**

- Does your meeting have special events to which you invite the community?
- Does your meeting join activities organized by diverse groups of people in your area?
- Does your meeting carry out service or social justice projects?
  - ∞ Are meeting members and attenders active in such projects?
- Do you make an effort to publicize Quaker activities and meeting events?
  - ∞ Do you publicize in media geared to diverse audiences?
- Do you tell other people that you are a Quaker?
- Do you personally invite others to meeting for worship or meeting activities?
- Do you make your meetinghouse available for the use of other groups?