

The Iowa Friend

Iowa Yearly Meeting of Friends

February 2018

New Focus

By: Tom Showalter, General Superintendent

"The kingdom is not about chatter. It is about action...It's time to design and implement a simple process that moves people toward spiritual transformation...The alternative is to continue leading dying churches filled with spiritually anemic people. Change or die. Those are the choices" (Thom Rainer, Simple Church, pp.228-229).

Much has been written about the decline of the American Church. Statistics are showing repeatedly that although the American population continues to increase, overall attendance numbers for a morning worship experience continue to decrease. Many variables contribute to this unfortunate reality which are too numerous for this article. I would love to offer my assistance to help evaluate your current situation and discuss possible ideas for refocusing. Some of the resources that I have found helpful and effective are Natural Church Development and 4-Chair Discipling (just to name two).

Jesus called some of His first disciples by saying, "Come follow me and I will make you fishers of men." In my adult years, I have heard many share that people are not coming to church like they used to. The reality is that the "fish" are not going to jump into the boat...we must find new methods for "fishing" in today's culture. If your church is effective and fruitful in the pursuit of fishing for men (and women and children, too) then feel free to ignore the challenges stated here. However, if stagnancy has overtaken your meeting, it's time to consider a new focus.

I have shared in several writings, reports, messages, and conversations about my belief that we need a new focus in our local meetings and one that recaptures the mission of the church--to make disciples of all nations! We need to model a Christianity that is pervasively loving, authentic in our encounters, compassionate to those we encounter, and exhibiting the "fruits" that are shown in Galatians 5. We are the "salt of the earth." Do we make people thirsty for what we have? My relationship with God should be attractive.

I get excited when I hear stories of life in our meetings. In a conversation with Nancy Bontempo (pastor at Sturgeon Bay Friends), she shared with me that the church welcomed seven new members in January. Center Friends (Pastor Dallas Gilreath) shared of adding a new member to their meeting, as well. Trinity Friends (Pastor Tim Hadley) referred to numerical growth in the church and new people who have decided to follow Jesus in their community. I visited Fairfield Friends (Pastor Len Maselli) for their early service and found a full sanctuary and a challenge for 2018 of "The Year of the Word" as people are being challenged to read God's Word. Often I am hesitant to give such specific examples because I do not want to forget others who may be seeing life in their setting, as well. The other reason I do not like to cite examples is for the concern that others who are working hard may feel guilty if they are seeing little or no fruit in their setting. As I heard recently (at Trinity Friends), "If you are having financial problems, do not seek advice from someone in bankruptcy (unless they are sharing lessons they have learned from the experience)." Seek out those who are seeing life!

Let me close with a challenge found in the book of Exodus. Chapter 32 is the familiar passage where the Israelites rebel during the desert journey and make golden calves. God told Moses that He was going to wipe the people out (32:10). Moses was angry too, but he interceded for the people and God's anger was deterred. However in chapter 33, God tells Moses to lead the people to the Promised Land, but "I will not go with you" (33:3). The goal was to get to the Promised Land and end the forty-year desert pilgrimage and now God said, "Go." However, Moses responded, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here" (33:15). Would you want your goals accomplished if God's presence was not with you? Ruth Haley Barton stated, "Pivotal moments like this help us get in touch with what we really want. Times of crisis are when the true worth of our Promised Land is revealed."

We have plans and goals as local meetings, as individuals, as fathers/parents, etc. and we want to see "success." But what if that "Promised Land" is reached without the presence of God? Do you still want it without Him?

It's time we evaluate our pursuits to determine if they are worth pursuing. It's time we evaluated if God's presence is present in our efforts to serve Him. Are we seeing fruit from our efforts? May we pray that we would have the courage to ask the necessary, hard questions and to have the willingness to pursue the mission of the Church, to make disciples. May we pray for our leaders (pastors, IAYM staff, elders, teachers, etc.). I want Moses' prayer to be my prayer in 2018, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here."

Deeper in the Spirit Workshops

March 24	2 pm	Surrender, Sanctification and the Friends Baptism
April 14	9:30 am	Hearing God
June 16	9:30 am	Open Worship & Friends Communion
September 8	9:30 am	Spiritual Gifts
October 6	9:30 am	Praying with Others for Healing
November 10	9:30 am	Roadblocks to Hearing God
January 12, 2019	9:30 am	Marketplace Ministry
February 9, 2019	9:30 am	Equipping Ministry & Leadership Gifts

Save the Date! February 24, 2018

Unprogrammed Worship

Sponsored by IAYM Ministry and Counsel Board

Friends across Iowa Yearly Meeting are invited to Grinnell Friends Church at 1:00 p.m. for a gathered time of Unprogrammed Worship. This is a follow-up to the 50 Days of Prayer experienced earlier in 2017.

To make this most meaningful, prepare your hearts to experience the presence of the Holy Spirit as we spend time listening to the Spirit and sharing messages He gives that will benefit the body of Christ. How can you prepare? Even now pray that there will be an outpouring of the Spirit at this gathering. In prayer, open your heart to God asking Him to cleanse your heart from sin so you can experience more of Him. Read the Scriptures anticipating God to reveal fresh guidance and understanding and then expect God to bless you when you participate in our day of Unprogrammed Worship.

If you are being nudged that there is more to being a follower of Christ than you are experiencing, consider participating in the scheduled Deeper with the Spirit workshops that are being offered March 2018-February, 2019. The workshops will occur monthly omitting May, July, August and December.

A commitment to attend all of the workshops is appreciated as they build on one another. There will be a book to read prior to each workshop which will prepare you for that workshop. The first workshop will be on Surrender, Sanctification and Friends Baptism. The second will be Hearing God. Be prepared to sign up for the workshops by February 24 so we will know how to plan.

Why Open Worship? –by Pastor Kathi Berry

Iowa Yearly Meeting will be holding a special Open Worship time to kick this year off. The consensus after our Revival Meeting in March, 2017 left many of us “wanting more”. The vision for the February 2018 Open Worship Meeting is for our Yearly Meeting to gather together and hear from our Lord. There is a flame being ignited in our souls that will increase our passion for doing big things for God right here in Iowa. We are in need of being revived as a Yearly Meeting, we can all agree on that. The problem has been how? How do we usher in Revival? How do we know what God wants us to do? How can we grow and become a viable part of the larger movement of Friends. The logical answer is to turn to the Lord for guidance and so here we are, poised and ready to hear from Him. Many of you are wondering how this can be possible when we have so many who do not know how to properly participate in Open Worship, and may question the means. There was no question in the past that the listening to the Spirit of God moved people forward. This can be true today, also. The Spirit of the Living God will teach all of us exactly what He wants to teach us, and it is He that leads us. A guide to the Open Worship process will be distributed in early February so everyone can have access to it. Read it over carefully and maybe even try an open worship service at your own meeting with the guide. Come prepared in your heart on February 24th, to allow the Spirit to ignite the flame. There will be childcare so that all can participate, please email stangelandchar@gmail.com or the Yearly Meeting office if you are in need of childcare.

There will be follow up workshops during the year that will deepen our understanding of many of our own beliefs and faith. We will have workshops available on Sanctification, Friends Baptism, Hearing God, Open Worship and Communion of Friends, Spiritual Gifts, Healing Prayer, Marketplace Ministry, Roadblocks to hearing from God, and Leadership Gifts. Let’s make 2018 the year we commit to a better relationship with our Lord, that fosters wonderful, enriching Open Worship Communion times in our Meetings. But more importantly, let’s encourage an ongoing conversation with a living God, who is the ONLY one that goes before us.

Open Worship will be held Feb. 24 at 1:00 at Grinnell Friends Church. Questions may be directed to the Yearly Meeting Office, Charlotte Stangeland, or MaryGlenn Hadley.

30 SECONDS

During a discussion time, I mentioned writing a letter to a cousin. I was a bit surprised by the comments that followed. "I love getting letters from others" "emails are great, I love hearing from someone" "My friends like to keep in touch and I am glad"

People love to hear from other people. "Missionary care is not a job that we undertake, it is a relationship that we maintain." You will see that quote in a packet of material that we, the missions board, will send to your church. If your missions chair or pastor do not share it, ask them about it!

Do you respond to missionary newsletters? It is a tiny, less than thirty second thing to do, and yet it makes a world of difference. How easy is it to respond to a missionary's electronic newsletter? Hit the reply button! In thirty seconds you can say a lot. I knew a missionary a few years ago who just wanted a few football scores. Boy was that easy, even with paper and pen. It should be easier with the computers we have today. What do you do for your missionaries?

"Well I pray for them! Isn't that enough?"

My answer is NO! What do you pray for? What kind of ministry are they involved in? Can you name their kids? Do you pray for their native leaders? A while back I had to sit down and learn the names of some people that are going to be a part of my family because of a marriage. Can you be that supportive of your missionaries? You read their newsletter, so why not let them know?

It might take you 30 SECONDS!

For the Missions Board, Kenneth Smith

WINTER FAMILY BANQUET

Saturday, February 17



RJ Sumrall

Tom Palmer

Speaker: RJ Sumrall

Chaplain, ISU Cyclone Football Team



Free Early Bird Session @ 10:00 AM

RJ & Tom Palmer will share insights about their experiences as Chaplains for University Football Teams & their FCA work

Banquet @ 11:30 AM

Pie Auction to follow

Music provided by Jamie & Missi Bogaard of Lynnville Friends

\$17 if registered by February 8.

\$20 if registered after February 8.

Register by emailing rcnichols4210@gmail.com

Or text/call 515-729-1072

**Location: Wm. Penn University MTC Atrium
Oskaloosa, Iowa**

MISSION BOARD'S ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP

The Iowa Yearly Meeting Mission's Board is offering a college scholarship of up to \$1000 for the 2018-19 academic school year. **People within Iowa Yearly Meeting who want to pursue an education at a Christian college or an accredited college or seminary to prepare for full time mission's work with a Friend's organization** may contact the Mission's Board to receive an application. For the scholarship, please contact the Yearly Meeting office for more information. **The deadline is March 1, 2018**



Belize City Friends Center

The IAYM Friends Response Team of twelve just returned from a week in Belize City working on the Belize City Friends Center. The center is surrounded by dogs and semi-trucks that LOVE the nighttime. The city has 63,000 people with half of the population being under 15 years of age. There are two stoplights in the city, however one is not working. The Mennonites have a large presence in agriculture and furniture building in Belize.

The center consists of two large buildings. The Director's home is above the entrance to the school and Miss Candi's office, school principal. The large room outside her office is used for Chapel on Fridays and church on Sundays. The building in back consists of 3 school rooms on the first and second level. Oscar Mmbali's apartment and the dorm room are on the third level with the laundry. Iron steps were installed on the back building to connect all three floors as well as the top deck where there is a nice breeze for eating and hanging laundry. They are trying to grow onions and watermelon in buckets there.

The team worked mainly in the Director's apartment. It has a kitchen and living room area, 4 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms. The couples of the team stayed here. New mattresses were on the floor in three rooms. Bed frames were purchased while we were there. The slats and unfinished surface had to be painted with a termite solution. The team laid tiles, which were then grouted and sealed. Many walls had to be patched (some very large holes) and sanded before the painting began. One bathroom hallway and two bedrooms and ceiling were painted. Two toilets were placed and a new vanity. A hot water heater was installed and plumbing was repaired. New lights and fans were installed. When you didn't have a job, there was always cooking, cleaning, and laundry to do.

There are seventeen students in the school of which two are girls. They were involved in Chapel along with Oscar Mmbali, the pastor. They shared praises and concerns. Safety and passing tests were the big ones. The team bought 28 books for the school mainly lower elementary books. Reading is very hard for all ages. The students arrive at different times in the morning and are given bananas on arrival. At morning break, they are given Johnnycakes which are provided by USFWI money. Their lunch is provided by the government in Tupperware containers and brought in a large cooler. At breaks they play soccer or volleyball in the adjoining lot. There were two older sisters in another classroom working on conversational English. We had several people from the community see the bus and comment on the good work being done for the kids in the community.

The last day we gathered to review the week with Dale Graves, Belize Project Manager. There were funny stories of different situations fixing plumbing and electric. But the highlight was the getting to know each other; how we could work, laugh, and share our lives and faith with each other. There is more work left for future work groups. The team encourages others to go, work and see the integrity of this ministry.

Glorifying God in the Midst of Conflict—Peace and Social Concerns Board ~ James Tower

When we think about peace, unfortunately, what comes to mind is the opposite of war rather than the rich imagery of human wellbeing and harmony that is the Hebrew understanding of shalom. And yet, before we could ever begin to approach the implications of a biblical model of peace when it comes to something like war, perhaps we might take a deeper look at what tools God has given us to address conflict among ourselves. Many of the leaders of College Avenue have recently done a study through Ken Sande's book, *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*, and I can say our group has had a truly transformational experience. Sande's interest in biblical conflict resolution draws from a wealth of experience serving as a Christian lawyer.

Ken and some others founded Peacemaker Ministries to better serve and assist God's people to work through conflict in a way that gives glory to God and strengthens the credibility of our Christian witness. Our hope as the IAYM Board of Christian Social Concerns, is to challenge our Yearly Meeting churches to consider making their way through this 8 week study. To do this, what is needed is a pair of facilitators with the time and passion, and a book and study guide for everyone in the class. There are also wonderful video resources designed to augment the study with teachings by Ken, and many illustrative short skits or "parables" that go with each lesson that truly bring these principles to heart. While not required, these video resources are recommended, and could perhaps be a shared resource among our various quarterly meetings. Peacemaker Ministries also has youth and family books and resources you may be interested in taking a look at, to make God's best for us accessible to all.

If your church has a pair of co-leaders who are passionate about being peacemakers, you would be well on your way to facilitating a study on your own, as we did. But if your church is close enough to drive to College Avenue, and you are willing to make the trip, we are planning on starting two fresh courses: one on Mondays at 6:00pm (beginning Feb 26th) that will be taught by Mike Fogle and Bill Blake, and a second Wednesdays at 6:30pm (beginning February 28th) taught by Mike and Deb Moyer. The second will even have soup a half hour prior! We also have two additional pairs of co-leaders lined up to offer additional courses this year, with one potentially being in the summer. We as Christians have such a foundation to draw on when it comes to living by God's principles. Our hope as a committee, and my hope as a pastor, is to equip Christ's church for faithful service and witness in the world. This study is not political, and not primarily about addressing the violence of our broken world. What it is, however, is a starting place to come together and earnestly seek God's will when it comes to the things that so often divide us.



This is an event for Adult leaders and High School students from each church to attend an event designed for you in Des Moines at Grace church on Friday and Saturday and then a continuation with our Friends Church leaders gathering at the hotel on the Saturday evening and Sunday morning to connect and debrief from the larger retreat.

Info on Ignite: <http://www.ignite-youth.org>

Scott is going to register as a big group to Ignite for the early bird price of \$39 out of the Yearly Meeting Office. He will need both your number of people attending and money in his hand to register you by Jan 28th. Please be thinking about the number of hotel rooms you will need as well to make sure we have enough reserved. We will be staying at AmericInn in Ankeny Friday-Sunday @ \$245/room(both nights)

Contact Scott @ 641.673.9717
 or by email Scott@IAYM.org.

EXTENDED
 March 9-11
IGNITE

Visit our website at iaym.org
 and click on the links for
 Young Adult Ministries
 or Youth Ministries
 To see details of these events!



THE IOWA FRIEND

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February

- **February 17: Quaker Men's Winter Banquet**
- **February 9-10: Blizzard Blast**
- **February 24:** Unprogrammed Worship/revival @ Grinnell Friends
(please look in the newsletter for more details & schedule!)

March

- **March 3: Board on Coordination (BOC) Meeting**
- **March 17: Spring Body Meeting @ College Avenue**

April

- **April 3-4** Pastor's Short Course @ William Penn University
Guest Speaker Mary Kate Morse
- **April 21st** Camp Quaker Heights Spring Workday
- **April 28** USFW Spring Fling @ Bangor-Liberty Friends

June

Summer Camps for Youth and Young Adults (dates on back of this sheet)

July

- **July 13-19** Youth and Young Adult Board sponsored
trip to Chicago
- **July 25-28th Yearly Meeting Conference**

September

- **September 14-16** Family Camp at Camp Quaker Heights

October

- **October 5-7** Man Camp at Camp Quaker Heights



**UPCOMING
EVENTS**