

Westport Monthly Meeting's Ministry and Counsel asked the Meeting to try a new method for writing the 2010 State of Society. We decided that instead of Worship or Worship Sharing we would "just talk" about the four themes offered from the 2010 annual sessions: the call to forgiveness; the call to strengthen our ability to love and to build our community; the call to name cultivate and exercise gifts of ministry, eldership, and leadership; the call to undertake clear leadings for witness;

1. The call to forgiveness;

We found that forgiveness is hard, takes a long time, and almost always includes a form of judgment. It comes more easily to some than to others. One member asked if there were things that couldn't be forgiven. Most of us wish that things were different or that we had progressed further than we actually have. We were reminded that "forgiveness means giving up all hope for a better past". We can try to have any negative energy be redirected into something positive.

2. The call to strengthen our ability to love and to build our community;

We all feel that although our numbers are small, our worship is sustaining and we have strong committees. You can see and feel the love and affection we have for one another. Some of us spend more time than might be productive remembering those who are not in meeting. What we need to do is to focus on those who are here, or might join us. We need to be careful that our central concern remains to be about our shared worship, not our numbers. We are clear that our current worship times provide renewal and nourishment. We also feel the depth of our silent manner of worship. For the sake of discussion, could we envision different possibilities, more music, sermons, Bible reading? What else might enhance our worship? Might this be a way to bring in new attenders/members? Would a formal program like Quaker Quest be useful? Would a facilitated workshop on membership give us tools for outreach? Does anyone have the time to commit to exploring new ways of bringing in new members?

3. The call to name cultivate and exercise gifts of ministry, eldership, and leadership;

What Westport does well is to recognize that we have in our meeting members with gifts in leadership, ministry and eldership. We are seen within NEYM as a model of how a meeting can provide support and oversight to our public Friends. We recognize that we are not perfect at it, but the way we are going about it is generating a lot of interest. Public ministry often involves traveling. Although we miss the