

MFM Care of the Future of the Meeting, Spring 2015

RISKS - Consolidated List

The original list of risks was generated at the April 19 forum. That list was consolidated into this shorter list by combining items that were very similar, then grouping them into categories. This list was presented at the May 17 forum.

A "risk" as used here is a problem not specific to our meeting, but an issue in the larger community or world that we anticipate could affect us in the future. Some of the items on this list were later deemed to be specific to our meeting and in some cases already affecting us, and so were merged into the "Challenges" list.

Environmental Crisis

- Our planet is so severely threatened that human life on planet Earth may no longer be sustainable. Will future persons have time to come to Meeting if they are putting out real and metaphoric fires?
- grief about environmental losses
- climate change
- energy issues
- food shortages
- water shortages
- heavy rains
- droughts
- tornadoes
- blizzards
- epidemics
- building can deteriorate - neglect of it
- difficulty to get here - gas prices; sometimes driver or co-passenger is out of town
- elders have trouble coming
- road closures for bike and other events - hard to get to meeting
- winter parking restrictions
- the destruction of the environment

Our Relative Privilege in Comparison to Earth Communities

- grief about human losses
- white guilt - white fragility
- neighborhood attitude towards us; possibly negative if we become more diverse
- blindness because of privilege
- handling our privileges in a right manner
- food and water inequity
- health and resources inequity

Difficult Faith Community Trends

- potential for religious backlash in US (backlash against all religions because of some extremisms)
- attitude that Quakers do not believe in anything
- general attitude that Quakers have to be perfect puts Quakers on a pedestal
- infrastructure break-down

- "competition" by churches having more children and thus offering more vibrant church opportunities for young families
- instantaneous culture at our finger-tips providing some inspiration through YouTube, for example, but does not ultimately satisfy our yearning for Divine connection
- We believe the Ocean of Light has more staying power than the Ocean of Darkness; our culture's addiction to violence, power, and other "deadly sins" challenges this core Quaker belief.

Difficult Cultural Trends

- busy-ness - burn-out related to many opportunities
- divisiveness growing
- media apathy towards real problem
- misinformation
- stress of assimilating growing numbers of immigrants
- anti-immigrant stance
- racism - white issues
- segregation on Sunday morning
- people work all week - too busy - want to stay home Sunday mornings
- young people are not going to faith communities until they have children
- fire hydrant-volume of information coming at us 24 / 7
- Americans narrowly focused - insular
- we are part of an imperial, nation in denial therefore hated globally
- declining church membership overall
- young people are choosing to leave MN
- interpersonal gathering giving way to online community
- general economic insecurity
- general social isolation
- general direction of country:
 - extremism politically
 - war-making
 - slash social programs
 - organized religion going out of style
 - lower involvement in religious community by generations following the boomers
- identity politics
- mass incarceration of black men
- increase in opiate use
- individualism
- unfamiliarity with strong or primary commitment to something larger
- shrinking of the middle class
- the rise of poverty