

## **Appendix B: State of the Meeting Reports**

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(Pagination may differ from printed copy.)

Asheville Friends Meeting State of the Meeting Report (1 of 2 pages)

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Asheville Friends Meeting State of the Meeting Report (2 of 2 pages)

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## **ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT**

“In the humble as well as the more conspicuous tasks, we confidently believe that strength will be given to each one of us, as we place ourselves at the disposal of God and respond to the promptings of the Spirit.” 1925. Christian Faith and Practice in the experience of the Society of Friends.

This year has been one of deep and tender searching on the issue of racism and inclusivity in our meeting. Based on a concern brought forward by the members of our discussion group, ORAIARH we embarked upon a process of personal and corporate reflection. Our process has been imperfect, courageous, Spirit-led, enlightening, liberating, sometimes giving rise to feelings of hurt, discomfort and tension. Yet we will continue this journey of blessed discovery because we are called by the Spirit to justice, and personal as well as corporate unity. As we move forward we grow spiritually stronger.

In this report on the spiritual state of Atlanta Friends Meeting, we record our work, achievements, seeking and leadings. They reflect this blessed community in action. We continue to welcome new members and attenders who find our worship and community a place to begin or continue their spiritual search. During 2000 Bill Jenkins, Brooke Hopkins, Leni Johnson, Marlene Johnson, and Nina Gooch were welcomed into membership. Angie Love, Loretta Lucy Miller, and Dale Chapman transferred their membership into our meeting. Rick Martinson and Beth Miller, as well as Dale Chapman and Will Wakeman were married under the care of the Meeting. Memorial services were held for John Ball and Pat Mullins. They will be greatly missed as will those Friends who have moved away. Elizabeth Enloe, Alex Horsley, and George and Neva Fisk transferred their memberships to other meetings. We currently have approximately 130 adult members and 29 associate members. There are about 171 attenders, 30 of whom are participants in First Day School. We list over 300 members and active attenders in our Directory, and welcome over 150 to Meeting for Worship on most First days.

### Ministry and Worship Committee

Ministry and Worship Committee continues to work to define and refine ideas about the core essence of Quakerism and we seek to nurture a religious community, which provides a safe place to discuss differing and deeply held beliefs. We are delighted that the Meeting is growing and will continue to seek ways to make our large meeting an easy place to get to know people, that has a sense of unity and common purpose.

An important emphasis this year was the initiative to make the Meeting a more inclusive and welcoming to all those who desire to worship in the manner of Friends. Another concern was the Meeting's children, whether they were spending enough time in Meeting for Worship and learning enough about the core beliefs and practices of Friends.

Atlanta Friends were well represented at wider Quaker gatherings such as SAYMA and the FGC Gathering. Mary Ann Downey and Perry Treadwell continue their work in the Travelling Ministries Program of FGC.

### Care and Counsel Committee

In 2000, the Care and Counsel Committee saw the Care Quilt give comfort to members/attenders. It was used by those who were ill, had surgery, or lost loved ones and was, most recently, with Pat Mullins when she died. To record the quilt's journeys, the committee has decided to purchase a journal. So that those who have had the quilt may write entries in the journal.

This last year saw an upsurge in requests for Clearness Committees, and we set up six or more of them. We also have engaged Ron Nuse as the Meeting Photographer, and he has begun to create and maintain a photographic record of the Meeting. Perhaps one day we will have a Meeting directory with member/attender photographs, which would make it much easier to connect names and faces.

Routine Care & Counsel Committee activities include having Rich Klima and others at the Greeting Table to provide information, giving candles to departing members/attenders, training First Day greeters, and writing articles about new members in the newsletter. In an attempt to make the community more aware of our availability to provide assistance with personal concerns, members of our committee began wearing purple name tags, and we were mentioned in the verbal and written announcements each First Day.

We have provided meals, transportation and written expressions of support in times of crisis, sadness or joy. Despite our efforts to meet the needs of the Meeting community, we have faced some challenges this year, including the fact that we had a limited number of volunteers while the need for meals and transportation increased. We, therefore, had to triage our requests based on the level of need.

A recent leading has been to give recognition to the many volunteers who help at Meeting in many ways. We plan to note volunteer contributions in the newsletter every month and give volunteers an annual dessert party. Finally, we have had a number of long-time members rotate off the committee and would love to have some new members join us.

#### Religious Education

Religious Education Committee has as usual spent a busy year overseeing the First Day School program for children and young people, arranging seasonal events, and trying to keep the Meeting as a whole informed and involved in the program. The main work of the committee is hands-on and various, from rocking babies to listening to the concerns of Young Friends in high school.

Beyond the immediacy of teaching, there were two main foci for the year: first, a continuing effort to provide lines of connection and support between RE and the rest of the Meeting; and second, to make the programs we oversee reflect and support ethnic and racial diversity.

Progress was made on a commitment to have volunteers in every classroom in order to ease the burden on teachers and to give those Friends who may not have many encounters with our young people, the chance to forge friendships across age lines. We operate with the assumption that the famous "it takes a village" maxim is true: it takes a Meeting to raise a child into spiritual maturity. It also takes children for a Meeting to have spiritual health. In May, the second annual Celebration of Children and Youth was held.

"Little Meeting," a small more-or-less silent worship welcoming to children, continued to grow in popularity. The Meeting as a whole also considered a proposal that originated in RE to have two regular Meetings for Worship on First Days to give families and teachers more options for attending Meeting for Worship as well as First Day School.

With regard to the effort to promote diversity, the committee spent several workdays in the summer clearing out old, often offensively white-only, materials. An Orientation Day was held in the fall, for families to get to know one another. Some new materials were purchased. A workshop on teaching and on

how to interrupt racism was planned. The committee members struggle with the effects of racism and white privilege on our program.

#### Young Friends Oversight Committee

The Young Friends Oversight Committee has had a very exciting year. With the departure of the previous Clerk of the Committee, Jennifer Dickey, who is greatly missed the Committee was faced with a vacuum in of adult leadership.

It became apparent that to continue having Young Friends events scheduled outside of First Day School, the Committee needed more adult participation. We began by addressing the issue of adult leadership and support at events that would insure the safety of our youth. As a result, we are now requiring that interested adults go through a screening process. Upon completion they become Friendly Adult Presences (FAP's). We now have eight (8) FAP's and several more are in process.

Our second challenge was to begin to schedule events. As we began this, we became aware of the overwhelming time that is required for the organization of such events. The result of our realization was the Meeting's approval of the appointment of a Youth Coordinator in Tenth Month, 2000. The Coordinator will be responsible for organizing a program for our young people. The Committee is now compiling a specific job description for the position.

Finally, we would like to express our appreciation to Katie Smilie, a Committee member, who has enthusiastically taken on responsibility of planning and implementing a successful service project program for our youth.

#### Finance Committee

The Finance Committee has identified two (2) major issues from a financial standpoint that are affecting the Meeting. Namely, the need for wider volunteer participation and the effect of an ever-larger Meeting. When volunteers are not available for certain duties within the meeting, we are forced to purchase more services.

Our wonderfully growing Meeting for Worship, First Day School, and Young Friends' programs reveal that we are running out of space. The Finance Committee has started to look seriously at long-range plans and the retirement of our mortgage this year provides a financial window of opportunity. We see the effect of a growing meeting in our budget with growth for 2001 projected at 20%. Our meeting facility is widely used by the community around us for which we are grateful. The price of this is an increased cost for management, cleaning, and repair of the Meeting House

#### Oversight Committee

The Oversight Committee has had the opportunity to deal with its usual tasks over the last year, including alarm systems, insurance, employee reviews and the renewal of leases. We have also overseen projects, which should not need our attention again for a few years, including the revision of the Resident Manager and Secretary job descriptions. In doing its work the Committee has had to face some of the effects of the growth of the Meeting, including the space needs of Religious Education. In response to this we have begun the process of long range planning.

Our most challenging and potentially rewarding work has been even less tangible. We have examined how racism affects the mission of our committee and the Meeting. We have explored our relations with

tenants and employees, and the Decatur Police Department. Most importantly, we have looked into our own hearts and actions to seek ways of eliminating our personal and corporate racism.

#### Meeting House Committee

The Meeting House Committee carried out permanent improvements and regular upkeep of the building and grounds, including the establishment of a new cleaning contract and completing the security/fire alarm system. A project to improve the acoustics in the greeting room has been initiated. The larger issue of expansion of the Meeting House has also been discussed particularly in relation to the needs of Religious Education for more classroom space.

#### Social Concerns Committee

During 2000, the Social Concerns Committee sought opportunities for the Meeting to serve the wider community through volunteer efforts, financial support of projects, and through support of the work of Quaker service organizations.

'Our Role As Individuals In America's Racial History' (ORAIARH) continued under the sponsorship of this committee for its third year. The Meeting approved a minute this year based on ORAIARH's recommendations relating to "becoming a safer and more welcoming spiritual home for all regardless of color and ethnicity." The minute called upon committees and groups in the meeting to use a set of queries to examine themselves and report their findings to the Monthly Meeting. The group also helped sponsor a workshop on personal racism for clerks of committees and other members and attenders. Another group, 'Overcoming Racism,' continued to discuss personal racism.

Green Friends, another group sponsored by Social Concerns Committee, held several workshops and presentations on simplicity, population and consumption issues. Our FCNL (Friends Committee for National Legislation) subcommittee sponsored a forum on priorities for lobbying and identified environmental concerns as a lead priority.

This year Social Concerns Committee brought minutes to the Monthly Meeting concerning environmental issues, the death penalty, and the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Despite all these activities, the Social Concerns Committee itself remains very small, with an average of no more than four members.

#### Central America Committee

The Central America Committee's main efforts have been directed toward events that will happen in 2001. Three adults from the Meeting will join us at the 10th anniversary celebration of our sister community, El Sitio, El Salvador, in Second Month, 2001. Some 10 young Friends are planning to visit the community during Christmas 2001. They have organized themselves into subcommittees to pursue fundraising, travel planning and education for the visit.

During our visit to El Sitio, we will discuss several planned projects that have been sponsored by the Meeting with local community leaders. Since the committee co-clerks will be moving to El Salvador in early spring, there is a need for additional leadership to help maintain our sister city relationship.

The committee has also cosponsored visiting speakers from Central America.

#### Fall Retreat Planning Committee

The 2000 Fall Retreat was held at Camp Daniel Morgan, Hard Labor Creek State Park over the weekend of Ninth Month 22 – 24, 2000. Thirty-four members, attenders and guests participated. Kim Carlyle of

Asheville Friends Meeting led a workshop entitled, "Peace, Social Concerns and Climate Change". Our own, Judith Streit led a workshop on the Bible, and Nicole Rennie facilitated a crafts activity. Other activities included boating, swimming, games, conversation, eating and a campfire.

Every year the financial goal of the committee is to balance our income primarily through participants' registration fees. In recent years there has been some concern about our ability to cover our expenses. However, often shortly before the retreat, enough registrations arrive to meet our goal, and we see this as an example of the Spirit working among us.

#### Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee has achieved three significant goals this year. We have used a process of prayerful discernment to identify those friends that we will ask to serve, and this process has opened us to guidance from the Spirit. For the first time in our history, the Atlanta Friends Meeting has a Handbook that provides descriptions of responsibilities approved by the Meeting for all officers, staff, committees and representatives to other organizations. We realized the need to keep this information current and have accepted this on-going responsibility. We organized a committee fair to recognize those who serve the meeting, and to educate and involve those who are not yet serving. As the Meeting continues to grow in both the number of attenders and jobs to be filled; we are challenged to help those who are new to find the right place to be involved and to serve. Members of the committee need to represent the diversity of the meeting and work at learning the gifts newcomers bring.

#### Gathered Meeting Retreat Planning Committee

Twenty-four members and attenders participated in the 13th annual Gathered Meeting Retreat designed to nurture and deepen the spiritual life of our Meeting. The retreat, held over the weekend of Fourth Month 17 - 19, 2000 at the Calvin Conference Center, focused on The Fullness of Quaker Community and was facilitated by Margery Larrabee.

We are proud of having completed the guidelines for planning future retreats, and this achievement has been nothing less than energizing. We allowed ourselves to be led by the Spirit to select Marcelle Martin as our facilitator for the 2001 Retreat. This decision is a testament to our faith and cohesion as a group. With joy we embrace the challenges of identifying an elder for Marcelle, branching out in search of potential facilitators, responding to the ORAIARH queries, and our transition to a new committee co-clerk. With enthusiasm, we look forward to next year's retreat, having unlimited attendance, reaching out to first time attenders, and to providing a Religious Education series prior to the retreat. In all this we continue to realize that we are truly blessed.

#### Advancement Committee

The Meeting continued to support worship groups in North Georgia, Northwest Georgia, and in Macon. Several visits to these worship groups were made by members of the meeting, and a group from Macon attended Meeting for Worship and Meeting for Business here.

"In our Meetings, as members one of another, we must be alert to the changing situations that come to each of us. Responsibility for this ministry of love and service, rests with each one of us by action and in prayer." London Yearly Meeting, 1956. Christian Faith and Practice in the experience of the Society of Friends.



**Athens Religious Society of Friends  
Annual Report for June 2000 – June 2001**

Available in hard copy only.

Berea Friends Meeting  
**Annual State of the Meeting Report**  
**May 2001**

How has the Light fared within Berea Friends this year? We continue to be a community strong in caring for each other, growing in our spiritual understanding, challenged to find our place as a Meeting in a world that sometimes overwhelms us with opportunities and obligations. Many of Berea Friends' areas of development this year grew from concerns that arose the previous year.

New attenders and even some long-time attenders and members felt their background in Quakerism was shallow. In recent years, scheduling "Quakerism 101" sessions in our second-hour First Day adult discussion sessions had not succeeded in responding to this need. Other Friends wished for more Bible study. This year we undertook four series of Wednesday night discussions that were well-organized, well-attended and much-appreciated. Each series lasted six or seven weeks. The first series in the fall was an introduction to Quakerism, using Wilmer Cooper's *A Living Faith*. Next came an Old Testament series, then a New Testament series focusing on I Corinthians. The last series drew on Quaker spiritual writings. With enthusiasm, we expect to continue a similar program in the coming year.

The previous year we had also identified concerns about our Meetings for Business, which Friends recognized were not as spiritually based as we knew they were meant to be. We invited Mary Ann Downey of Atlanta Friends Meeting to help us. On a snowy January Saturday, we spent half the day in our annual membership review, as Mary Ann led us in reflecting on our individual relationships with the Meeting. The other half of the day focused on improving our Meetings for Business. We find it a challenge to change our habits to make Meetings for Business more worshipful, with the attention to listening and waiting that worship requires. We are actively considering the adoption of guidelines for Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. Our committees have been more effective this year, in part because we have set aside several second hours on First Days for committee work. These sessions have made it easier for committees to meet, have facilitated the involvement of non-committee members in committee discussions, and have provided a ready opportunity for ad hoc threshing sessions on topics that need preparation for Meeting for Business. Taking Mary Ann's advice that committees should not just spell out options but should make definite proposals has also helped. Slowly, we are feeling the benefits in Monthly Meeting.

Our teen group lost another member to Quaker boarding school, leaving us with two active teens in Berea and much joy when vacations release the others to us. Our teens continue to be part of the Meeting's life, sustained by the dedicated presence of adult leaders, connections to the wider Quaker youth community (including Southern Appalachian Young Friends) and their own commitment, for all of which we are grateful.

Our concerns for meeting space intensified this year. We were reminded that the space we use is not our own when our children, who had had to move last spring from one space to another, had to move again this fall. We received a further jolt when we learned of our landlord's plans, which eventually fell through, to rent the space we use on Sundays to a youth program for the rest of the week. With visions of pool tables and foosball games in our meeting space, we found the energy to explore alternate space possibilities and, more importantly, the time to talk with each other in greater depth about the values that underlie choices about meeting space. Whether we move or stay put, we know that our community has to be grounded not by our physical location but in our relationships with each other and with the Spirit.

Birmingham Friends Meeting  
State of the Meeting Report  
May, 2001

This has been an active year for Birmingham Friends Meeting. Friends were involved in a number of social concerns and community activities. At the same time we struggle with the physical, financial and spiritual resources needed by our meetinghouse.

Some of the specific social concerns of the meeting have been focused on the abolition of the death penalty and improving prison conditions. The meeting held several Second Hour discussions on the death penalty. Through these sessions, we were led to create a banner that is hung in front of the Meetinghouse on days when there is an execution anywhere in the United States. The banner reads: "Today we mourn the execution of a fellow human being." The Birmingham News published our letter which included a statement against the death penalty and a request to other religious groups to join in this witness. Friends were visited by a former prisoner who was later found innocent of his crime. He described prison conditions and asked the meeting to work to improve these conditions.

In addition to these topics, Birmingham Friends have heard from Sis Levin whose husband, Jerry, was an Iranian hostage about their current peacemaking work. We have also held two Sunday afternoon anti-poverty workshops led by Jo Dohoney, head of the Alabama Poverty Project. Other Second Hours have focused on British Quaker Jim Pym's book Listening to the Light, a visit from Atlanta Friends Bill Holland and Mary Ann Downey that included Bill's pictures of British Quaker historical sites, and Amnesty International letter writing sessions.

Being owners of a meetinghouse has created challenges and blessings for the meeting. We struggle to rehab an older home in the city of Birmingham and have requested a mortgage from the Friends Meeting House Fund. Charles Hough from FMHF visited us this spring to talk with the meeting about this request. Our resident, Bill O'Connell, has come to know our neighbors including some of the young boys who help him in the garden. Friends have been involved in painting, house repairs, yardwork and other matters concerning the house and grounds. We have recently acquired air conditioning, an important step in preparing for Alabama summers. This attention to property maintenance has shifted the attention of the meeting. We hope that as we become more comfortable with this role we will return to a more spiritual focus.

The meeting has found that it is not immune from the violence in our culture. We experienced two break-ins and thefts of the resident's property. In another incident, a bullet was fired into an upstairs window. We pray for those involved in these incidents and for our resident who has been more directly affected by them.

The meetinghouse has allowed us to host community groups, such as the Humanistic Jewish Group, a dance group, and a group of girls from Girl's Inc. who used our children's room as a setting for a film they made. The meetinghouse and our large backyard were the site of our neighborhood carnival for children, which was organized by students from New Garden Friends School in Greensboro, NC. These students visited Birmingham as part of a civil rights tour of the Southeast during their spring break.

Birmingham Friends Meeting is blessed by attenders of all ages. Members of the meeting have formed a care team for Peg Hiles, one of our older Friends and the mother of another member. Care team members visit Peg regularly and have met with her hospice nurse. At the same time, the meeting finds that both of

their young Friends have turned two. Their presence brings a special energy to our gatherings and gives us all a reason to sing songs, create with play dough, become reacquainted with children's books and color.

Many Friends are involved in activities outside the meeting. Some meet with Pax Christi and visited their Passover Seder. Others attend a regular protest of sanctions against Iraq. Individual Friends are involved in work with quality end of life care, homelessness, literacy and other issues. While this work is outside the meeting, it continues to enrich our time together. The meeting tries to connect its members to issues within the community through regular social concerns e-mails.

At the same time, these activities often keep us from participating fully in the meeting. Monthly simple suppers have not been as well attended as in the past. Also, Ministry and Nurture has expressed concern that the quality of worship on Sundays has not been as deep as at times during the past; we have fewer spoken messages and fewer attenders. We will be working on these issues over the coming year through our Second Hours and by being more intentional about nurturing our community.

BOONE FRIENDS MEETING  
STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT  
JUNE 2001

Boone Friends have continued to meet at 305 Green Street. This is a private home, which we rent for our First Day services and every other Third day evening. We are now in the process of finding a new home. This house has been sold. One of our attenders has volunteered the use of a space in their home until a new meeting space is found.

The theme of this year's "Yearly Meeting" especially speaks to our meeting. This has been a year of gathering together, healing, and striving to become whole. After some of the issues we had to deal with the previous year, this has been a welcome experience. We have grown to know each other better and to love each other more.

Our attendance has remained consistent. We are most usually 10 to 15 attenders each week. We still get the occasional visitor.

The meeting came together and we have united on a minute opposing the death penalty. It has been sent to our representatives and local papers. We also created a brochure for our meeting. It gives a brief history of Quakers and about our style of worship. It is available for visitors and also as a hand out for various functions we have.

Our monthly Quaker forums continued to educate and enlighten us. We have had discussions on issues ranging from our Testimonies to Edgar Cayce. One of the events was viewing "Friendly Persuasion" which was very enjoyable and a different experience when viewed with a group of Friends.

Our "Meeting for Reading" group has continued to meet. This year we have read "The Powers that Be" by Walter Wink. By sharing our own experiences and histories, we deepen our understanding of each other, and our individual understandings of the Light within. We also have read Marty Grundy's "Tall Poppies" and the autobiographical journal "The Conversion of Margaret Lucas" by M. Lucas. In this we were reminded of where Friends have come from, and that we still have similarities today.

Boone Friends remain active in community service. We had a "Sale for Service" of home made items, made by our first day school class and attenders. Money raised was sent to our local Food Pantries. We were also active in our local Unity Festival. A coming together of the different faith communities in our area to share in a day of fun, entertainment and education.

Our membership has increased. One of our attenders joined our meeting. We have some attenders who hold membership in different friends meetings, some in SAYMA and some within other yearly meetings. Boone Friends still maintains affiliations with both SAYMA and with Piedmont Friends Fellowship.

Michael Harless  
Clerk  
Boone Friends Meeting

Brevard Friends Meeting State of the Meeting Report (1 page)

Available in hard copy only.

Celo Friends Meeting State of the Meeting Report (2 pages)

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## **2001 State of Meeting Report Charleston, WV**

Charleston Friends Meeting has had a year of transitions, with new attenders, visitors, and members, as well as departure of Friends for careers in other communities. Meeting was enriched by the presence of exchange students, who enlivened intergenerational activities. We celebrated the graduation of one young Friend from college and the engagement of another.

Meetings for worship are generally small and quiet. We meet in rented offices of a community development organization in the middle of bustling, multicultural area of the city. Ministry commonly follows scriptural themes or responds to the writing of early Friends.

As in previous years, Charleston meeting has organized a breakfast in a local women's and children's shelter, and a dinner at a men's shelter. The meeting community is grateful for the opportunity for direct service to persons in need. Our Peace and Social Concerns Committee has continued to share Friends principles vigorously and effectively with state legislators. Charleston Friends Meeting's support of the American Friends Service Committee's West Virginia Economic Justice Project is ongoing, as is our participation in interfaith organizations at the city and statewide level.

We have periodic adult discussions on topics as diverse as AIDS in Africa, Cuban policy, and Friends history. Meeting also sponsors an ongoing Bible study group, gathering twice monthly in Friends homes.

Charleston Friends organized the September 2000 West Virginia Friends Gathering. In February, we hosted a meeting of the Friends General Conference Traveling Ministry Oversight Committee. In both events, Charleston Friends enjoyed seeing Friends from afar and appreciated the spiritual and practical insights of visiting Friends.

We have struggled with loss of active families and had difficulty maintaining key functions of the Meeting. Such difficulties are not unusual in small, isolated meetings. Like Friends everywhere, Charleston Friends seek to live in the life of the Spirit, carrying Friends testimonies into daily work. Meeting serves as the base from which we gain refreshment, encouragement, and inspiration.

## Chattanooga Monthly Meeting

Chattanooga Monthly Meeting completed a happy and smooth year, with many successes, blessings and additions to our ranks.

Members and regular attenders at meeting continued to average 15 -20 every First Day, including several new children. Our solid core of four girls for First Day School led the Meeting to acquire new First Day teaching literature, which it began using in early 2001. Teachers and students were pleased with the lesson plans, which concentrated on the Old Testament, and they are very excited about continuing the lessons throughout the year. Three babies soon will increase Chattanooga Meeting's First Day School rolls to seven children.

The Meeting also continues to have a solid core of members and regular attenders who contribute to the Meeting's health, spiritually, physically and financially. The Meeting continued expressing opposition to the death penalty, and also tried a regular discussion group to combat racism, that was laid down. It also began trying, in a small way, to ease the plight of the homeless, by affiliating with the Chattanooga Interfaith hospitality Network. The Meeting decided to continue that affiliation.

Members and attenders continued seeking the Spirit, as several of our number struggled with understanding the role God plays in our everyday lives, wondering why God allows the innocent to suffer from harm and pain. Other Friends were steadfast in supporting those who struggled, and all benefited from the quest. The Meeting also benefited, both individually and as a group, from a clerking workshop held at the Chattanooga Meeting House in the fall, which was attended by members and attenders of several other monthly meetings throughout the area.

Members and attenders participated in two workdays at the Meetinghouse, which resulted in the building of a new entrance into the Meetinghouse and a clean basement. The new entrance makes it much easier to walk into the Meetinghouse. The unfinished basement, and its debris, has been on the meeting's to-do list for a long time, and it was a great relief to have it clean.

The meeting's Community Garden was a success its first year, reaping community awareness and a city grant of \$1,200. As the year closed and planning for spring planting began, the Community Garden welcomed several new community gardeners, who have their own plots and who use organic gardening methods only.

Financially, Chattanooga Monthly meeting ended 2000 in a comfortable state, with a savings account for any Meetinghouse emergencies and without any outstanding debts.

Chattanooga Monthly Meeting is grateful for a full and abundantly blessed year, and we will continue to seek the leading of the Spirit, both inside the meeting house walls and outside, in our homes, jobs, schools and communities.

Cleveland Worship Group State of the Meeting Report (1 page)

Available in hard copy only.

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**State of the Meeting Report  
June 1, 2000 - May 31, 2001**

Columbia Monthly Meeting continues to be a vibrant, changing Meeting. This year has proven to be particularly exciting—with new people, more children and an ever-deepening desire for spiritual quest and connection.

The most important theme in Meeting life this year was our focus on First Day School and the way we relate to the **children** in our Meeting. We had 8-10 regularly attending children for First Day School ranging in age from 5-13. We restructured the format so that there is consistency in thematic material as well as in adult participation, particularly emphasizing the participation of members without children. This led to increased participation as well as a broadened sense of fellowship among the entire Meeting community. One wonderful experience was sending the Clerk of First Day School Committee to Pendle Hill for a conference on children's education. Challenges included working with the spread of ages, maturity levels, interests and focus; the persistent difficulty of keeping older children involved in Meeting; and, the balance of 'structure' and 'fun' in the First Day School curriculum. Events outside of First Day included a visit to the Animal Protection League, an older girls' pizza night, participating in the Souper Bowl of Caring national phone-bank, and hosting a Southern Appalachian Young Friends weekend retreat.

We continued to be very active in **social justice** issues. We wrote minutes addressing Video Poker Gambling and proposed state Lottery (with an accompanying Opinion piece in the *State* newspaper). We discussed the SAYMA minutes on population and global climate change (as well as being active in the South Carolina Interfaith Climate Change Campaign). We co-hosted a visit from the AFSC Middle East Peace Project and hosted/led two Help Increase the Peace (HIPP) trainings—both at schools which employ Meeting attenders. We continued to oppose the Death Penalty and Capital Punishment. Because of participation by our members/attenders, the Community Mediation Center in Columbia began using a Friends training manual with its volunteer mediators. The Meeting co-hosted a retreat of state-wide religious leaders discussing our responsibilities as people of faith addressing the issue of Race in South Carolina. We were involved in the Jubilee Justice movement to secure debt relief to struggling countries in the "Two-Thirds World." We continued to call for an abolition to nuclear weapons and hosted a prayer vigil in remembrance of the bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We held our annual "Alternative" 4<sup>th</sup> of July and New Year's Eve parties. One of our members was named the Volunteer of the Year by the Alston Wilkes Society for her work in mediation. The Prison Visitation Program increased and now has 5 people going monthly to visit, listen and care for 18 inmates in a Federal Prison in Edgefield. The more vocally-gifted among us sing monthly for residents in a local Mental Illness facility.

We conducted **Meetings for Clearness/Concern/Support**: for two Friends married under the care of Meeting who discerned the need to separate; for a Friend who questioned his involvement and place in our Meeting; for one of our Members who serves as Clerk of Palmetto Friends Gathering.

Members and Attenders organized many **gatherings** outside of First Day. We hosted two sessions of an Inquirer's class for new members/attenders. We had a book discussion group which will soon begin its second book (Patricia Loring's "Listening Spirituality" volume 2). A Mid-Week Worship Sharing group began and is thriving. We held the first of (what will be many) women's out nights (or, colloquially, "Chicks' Night Out). Four Friends hosted "Friendly Eights" on the same night in April at which each group addressed the concept of community. We were honored to host the Palmetto Friends Gathering in March.

This idea of **Community** permeated the entire year of Meeting life. We discussed what we think community is; there was a Community Group which met regularly for many months and contributed to the Meeting's discussions. This discussion of community informed our other discussions of spiritual depth and the meaning of the Friends community to each of us as individuals and to the sense of our identity as a religious community—as a "congregation." We instituted a regular forum (2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> First Days for adults, 1<sup>st</sup> First Days for children) for Friends to describe their individual spiritual journeys and/or how they experience worship. This helped us understand one another as individual Seekers and also as part of the larger whole of the Friends Meeting. We found ourselves using more Queries for our discussions and our tools for centering. Increasingly, we attempted to bring to light (Light) our underlying assumptions about Meeting, our community, raising children, worship and Quaker practice. We expanded our website (and Communications Committee) to address new methods of feeling connected—while at the same time searching for more ways to connect without computers. We grieved the loss of several Friends from our Meeting who moved/transferred membership; stopped attending; or, found other Quaker Meetings which spoke more perfectly to their conditions. A great loss to our community was the death of long-time attender, Ruth Kemp, member of Goose Creek (Virginia) Meeting. And, a great gain for our community was the increased attendance of her husband, Walter Kemp. Two wonderful Friends continued their ministry of bringing flowers for our Meetings for Worship.

Our **on-going discussions** included building/buying a Meeting House that would more perfectly serve our needs and through which we could be more active in the larger community. We continued to pursue the merits of aligning with North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) in addition to SAYMA. We still struggled with our "joyful tension" of our understanding of Friends as "Christ centered and as "Universalist," although we do not limit ourselves to these terms.

We continue to enjoy one another, to strive together toward a more perfect community, to work for peace, to pray for justice. We continue to love our fellowship, to seek our strength in our unique individual selves, to commit ourselves to each other in love. We look for a deeper sense of ourselves and of the Meeting in the coming year. We give thanks for our wider Quaker associations and for the joy of our contribution to the larger Religious Society of Friends.

Cookeville Worship Group State of the Meeting Report (1 page)

Available in hard copy only.

## State of the Meeting Report - Crossville Monthly Meeting

1. Margaret Purchase was welcomed into the Society of Friends as a member of the Crossville Monthly Meeting.
2. During the past year, the meeting has undertaken the study of "Quakerism 101" using the curriculum and suggested materials developed by Shirley Dodson of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.
3. The Obed Headwaters School, under the leadership of Dennis Gregg, officially opened in January 2001. It is using the facilities of the Meetinghouse and grounds. It has six students in grades 8 and 9 and is organized to provide an alternative for students to the public schools. It will be open for 8-10th graders for the 2001-2002 school year.
4. The Meeting was greatly saddened by a number of deaths in the past year. Jane Mandel passed away on August 16, 2000. A memorial service was held under the care of the Meeting on October 21, 2000 in Pleasant Hill, TN. Her husband Bob continues to be confined in the Wharton Nursing Home there. Edward Rogers, who had only recently become a member of the Religious Society of Friends through our Meeting, passed away on August 26, 2000. A memorial service was held for him on August 29, 2000. During this past year, Dennis Gregg, one of our members lost both of his parents, his father Harry in August, 2000 and his mother Rosemary on June 1, 2001.
5. Elizabeth Gregg has been selected for a year's internship with FCNL in Washington, D.C. beginning in August. She graduated from Macalester College in St. Paul, MN in May.
6. The Meeting continues to be involved with the Youth Farm in Nicaragua. It purchased another quilt for the Meetinghouse wall and member Toby Rogers is again preparing to take a school bus during the summer of 2001 for their use filled with additional supplies. Other churches from Knoxville are providing the majority of funding for this trip.
7. Several statements by the Meeting have been released to local newspapers seeking an end to the US bombing and blockage in Iraq and urging a peaceful solution to the conflict in Israel and Palestine and for leadership by the United States towards this end as well as statements opposing the death penalty in the US.
8. The Meeting again celebrated the life of Mary Rhodes at an annual Easter weekend at the Cumberland Mountain State Park.
9. The Cookeville Worship Group is in the process of seeking its transfer from the oversight of the Crossville Monthly Meeting to the Nashville Monthly Meeting where several of the Cookeville members have recently relocated.
10. The Cumberland Countians for Peace and Justice of which the Meeting is a founding member continues to provide a forum for supporting peace and justice issues both locally and nationwide.

State of the Meeting Report  
Foxfire Friends Meeting of the Holston Valley  
Approved May 6, 2001

We held a series of Ministry and Nurture Meetings, including "Foxfire Day," to consider the state of the Meeting in a larger sense -- it was a clearness process for the whole meeting on its own viability in the face of individual needs and Meeting priorities. As a result, Foxfire Friends Meeting has moved to the Catholic Student Center in Johnson City, a block from the campus of East Tennessee State University. A small permanent wooden sign has brought us new attendees, including two wonderful children. We ask the Yearly Meeting to hold Foxfire in the light as we continue to encounter difficulties trying to build a new Meeting place and establish a comfortable time for our geographically dispersed group.

Three pairs of adults now take turns providing religious education and childcare. A monthly query provides the theme for the children's religious education. Our adult religious education has centered around Quaker heritage. We continue to work on the procedures section of our Statement of Practice (our "orthopraxis" in reference to SAYMA's Yearly Meeting printed program, June 2000).



## **State of the Meeting Memphis Friends Meeting**

June 2001

This year, many of us have faced losses. As individuals and as a group, we've asked ourselves if we are succeeding in supporting each other in times of pain. We have not always known how to take support from the meeting nor how to give it. During one Business Meeting, a new Young Friend Bethany Harrison reminded us that despite our missteps and our misgivings, Quaker worship has led her to a new understanding of herself and given her a new model for what this world can be.

Many of us who attended the meeting's annual spring retreat found ourselves echoing Bethany's words. The theme of the retreat was the Meeting's connection to the larger community. When we reflected on the organizations to which we individually lend our energies, again and again we mentioned the meeting as our primary organization, the organization to which we give the most energy and from which we take an understanding that sheds Light on our daily interactions.

Unexpectedly, during the retreat we began to formulate a vision statement for our meeting. Through our newsletter, we are reflecting on this vision and revising it. In its current incarnation, the vision reads something like this:

- To provide a worship experience marked by silence and meditation
- To be a sanctuary for the acceptance of differences where Friends grow in love
- To live actively and intentionally together in the Light
- To work together to realize a society reflecting our shared values of peace, equality, simplicity, and integrity

In the spirit of this evolving vision, we offer a few highlights of our year:

Worship. This year the teens and preteens of the meeting - Jamal Fulton, David Bowman, Cate Bowman, Bethany Harrison, Ashleigh Phelps, and Jesse McDonald - helped plan our third Celebration of Children. With the guidance of potter Nancy White, the youth made a large bowl. Around the edges of the room, they taped the names of the children who've passed through our meeting. They asked each of us to bring something personal to place in the bowl at the center of the room during Meeting for Worship. The name of Sam Jordan was placed first in the bowl. Sam, the son of Carolyne and Larry Jordan, died unexpectedly August 8 of this year.

Sanctuary for the acceptance of differences. Susan Penn recalls the Celebration of Children as a gathered meeting. And she recalls another gathered meeting this year that did not take place in the meeting house. Rather, it took place during the Memphis visit of Matthew Shepard's mother. With little coordination on the part of the meeting, Friends converged to hear Judy Shepard speak. Our presence bore witness to our support of those among us and those in Memphis who are gay or lesbian. It was also a testimony to the quiet leadership which Kristi Estes has provided to our meeting as a reconciling congregation.

Living together in the Light. As in previous years, we have sought a more permanent home for our meeting house. This year we considered several locations. Each offered new opportunities. However, we did not reach consensus for any of the locations. When we accepted this, we felt a sense of peace. Now the way appears to be opening for us to remain in our current location but expand the area which we use. We look forward to providing a larger space for our young children who sometimes number as many as 10.

Working together to realize a society reflecting our shared values. Sometimes we work best when we are teaching our children. This year, under the leadership of Ron McDonald, the youth group held two events - the annual hiking trip in the Arkansas mountains and a discussion night about the movie

*Ordinary People.* Youth within the meeting were active in many more ways, though - marching with Friends in the MLK Day March, attending SAYF retreats in September and May, and participating in AFSC's Angola project. The meeting was able to send 53 hygiene kits to the AFSC. The youngest Friends are now completing a curriculum designed by Kristi Estes on the "escalator of conflict." Friends were also inspired by the visits of Parker Palmer and Nelson Mandela to Memphis.

Below are notes of some departures and arrivals to our meeting as well as notes on those we are holding in the Light. This year Mina Johnson transferred her membership to Albuquerque Meeting. Geoffrey Pratt transferred his membership to Nashville Meeting. Raj Ramanathapillai returned to Vancouver. The Kaiser-Pruitt family relocated to Baltimore where they now attend Baltimore Meeting. Janne Flisrand graduated with a master's in Anthropology from the University of Memphis and has returned to Minneapolis. Laura Bowman and her family will be moving soon to Atlanta.

Sam Jordan's death in August at the age of 31 has touched three meetings - Memphis, Pasadena, and Cambridge. A trust fund administered by the Boston Foundation has been established to continue the vision on which Sam had embarked in his life. Sam was an actor, a playwright, and member of the Screen Actors Guild. He also worked in support of the homeless and the hungry.

It seems we have had an unusual number of visitors this year including a number of Rhodes College students. We are pleased to welcome new member Debra Johnson, and regular new attenders, Neena Ledbetter and David Dawson.

As we reflect on this year, we hold Joanne Rhodes in the Light. This year Joanne suffered two blows - the discovery that she has MS and the kidnapping of her cat. We also hold in the Light Ruth Boaz, who is battling cancer.

We know that many in our midst are struggling with unspoken pain. We hope that in this coming year we will find ways to be of solace and strength to each other.

--Blake Burr-McNeal

## **Nashville Friends Meeting State of the Meeting 2000 – 2001**

“In what ways are we gathered, healed, and led as a spiritual community” both queried and advised our Nashville Friends community. We are counseled not only to seek that inward Light but also to live that truth as Friends in the world. Much of our searching and listening this past year has gathered and strengthened our inward community. We have supported each other in individual and family health crises; cared for each other in memorial services and clearness committees; established a hardship fund for Nashville Meeting individuals in financial distress; supported through our outreach four middle Tennessee worship groups. The testimonies of peace and equality have led us to endorse both the Tennesseans for a Moratorium on Executions and a local living wage ordinance and to educate ourselves through national and local speakers (Peace Brigades International/Columbia and local tax reform). We have joined Tying Nashville Together (TNT), a broad-based citizens organization where people of faith and power come together to improve our community. Based on perceived needs, Friends have led and participated in a career life-planning workshop. We have enhanced our attendance at both worship and forums by altering our meeting times. We begin with singing at 9:30 AM, settle into worship at 10:00 and at the rise of meeting we break for a brief social time before convening our educational sessions on second and fourth First Days. We are experimenting with our young Friends joining our half hour Family Worship on the day we hold Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business. We continue to relish our potlucks held after worship on first Sundays and intergenerational activities on fifth Sundays. Finally, the Meeting House recently got a new gray metal roof. We are now advised by our query to be led by this spiritual energy to gather and heal our world. May Nashville Friends receive what has been abundantly given and share these gifts.

Our census calculation for 2000-2001 is:

Members: 46	Attenders: 40
Celebrations of Commitments before the Meeting:	Muriel Anderson and Matt Donovan
Marriage under the care of the Meeting:	Drew Foster and Connie Robertson
Babies born:	Oscar Travis and McAfee James Madding
New members:	Phil Fratesi
Transferred members:	Geoffrey Pratt from Memphis to Nashville Dorian Hastings from Nashville to New Orleans
Returned Friend:	Bonnie Favrot from Sandy Springs
Memorials:	Helen Koivula (Maaret Houghton’s mother) Patricia Nuckles (foster daughter of Hector and Susie Black)

Approved at Meeting for Business 20 May 2001

### **New Moon Friends Worship Group**

The New Moon Friends Worship Group meets monthly at the Barnardsville United Methodist Church at 5 pm. Our meeting date is the First Day that is closest to the new moon. We have met twice so far with an average attendance of 9 people and are drawing people from Barnardsville, Weaverville and Mars Hill (all within 10 miles). The contact person for more information is Susan Carlyle at 828-626-2572 and [scarlyle@juno.com](mailto:scarlyle@juno.com) .

### **Northwest Georgia Mountains Worship Group**

The Northwest Georgia Mountains Worship Group follows the academic year and so we have suspended "Open House for Quaker Worship" until the last First Day in August. With the exception of Penny and myself, most of the few who worship with us are students from local colleges.

I believe you have all of the information with the exception of the 'burning' issues. We are trying very hard at this point in time not to burn anything, or get burnt by anything for that matter. If there are any issues it might be a few more routine attenders. We may end-up, however, being a wayfarers meeting, and that would be fine too.

Tom Baugh

## SWANNANOVA VALLEY FRIENDS MEETING STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT, 2001

This has been a year of rejuvenation for Swannanoa Valley Friends. The depth and quality of our worship has buoyed us up. We have rejoiced at the increased number of children and young adults in our midst. We have also found a new physical home.

Having a highly visible and beautiful meeting place has renewed our corporate spirit. In September we began meeting at the Black Mountain Arts Center. The center is designed to promote art and community-building, and is located on the main street of Black Mountain. Our second-floor meeting room is airy and light, with a view of the nearby hills. First Day School meets downstairs. A closet off the room in which we worship currently houses our library collection. In December we invited meetings in the region to celebrate our new location. Ice and snow unfortunately kept all but two guests away. Nonetheless, we worshipped, sang, ate, and enjoyed ourselves immensely. We hope to repeat our invitation to area Friends when the weather is less threatening.

Our sandwich board sign on the sidewalk has drawn in numerous visitors, including three families with children. Many of the visitors have become regular participants in the meeting's life. Attendance has nearly doubled, and has reached more than 40 several times. Seven of these newer attenders participated in a Quakerism 101 course this spring. The curiosity and enthusiasm of our newcomers serves to re-energize our own spiritual and communal commitment.

If it is possible for an entire community to be head over heels, we have corporately fallen in love with our children. We are also smitten with their parents. In our new communal parenthood, we are convinced that our children are especially gifted and unique. This winter the First Day School class made pinecone birdfeeders for our yards. At Easter, they sponsored an egg hunt for the adults. And for Valentine's Day the children handed out homemade hearts to everyone in the meeting. Their true gifts to us, however, are their spontaneity and openness, which consistently teach us important lessons about generosity, wisdom and love.

Nurturing each other individually outside of worship remains a priority for many of us. As we grow, we seek new ways to connect with one another on a deeper basis. We continue small-group sharing after worship twice a month, and monthly potlucks in members' homes. On a pleasant January day, 18 of us took a picnic lunch and hiked up Lookout Trail in Montreat. We've enjoyed two other hikes since then. We are currently establishing a network of "Friendly Eats" to encourage monthly gatherings of smaller sizes. This past year we have accompanied attenders through professional difficulties, moves, divorce, illness, and the death of loved ones. We have also rejoiced in births, retirements, and new jobs. We look forward to the first wedding under the care of our meeting this fall.

A number of our members continue to tutor and facilitate programs at the local women's correctional center, and at the youth detention facility nearby. Not long ago, a 16-foot inward-arched prison fence was erected around the detention facility. Even more recently, its name was changed from the Juvenile Evaluation Center to the Swannanoa Valley Youth Academy. Our involvement bears witness to our concern about this apparent inconsistency, and to the increased frustration and disillusionment of both the youth and the staff. In November, our meeting also approved endorsing a resolution for a moratorium on the death penalty.

Donations have already exceeded this year's budget expectations, so we have set up a new scholarship fund for members and attenders to participate in Quaker-related conferences and study. We have also increased contributions to our building fund. Although we feel content and stable in our present location, many of our members remain committed to finding suitable land for a potential meeting house in the future. Adequate library and kitchen facilities, storage space, and space for committee meetings at times other than Sunday morning, are still lacking.

After worship not long ago, one of our youngsters demonstrated a Meeting Dance. She began running in a large circle on the golden wood floor. As she got faster, she moved in ever closer spirals until she was twirling about in the center of the room. Her little spinning figure cast out rays of light and joy. We, as a meeting, are twirling ever closer to our center. We trust that our presence in each other's lives and the lives of our broader community will radiate out the joyful light of our faith and love.

West Knoxville Friends Meeting State of the Meeting Report (1 page)

Available in hard copy only.