

Appendix G: State of the Meeting Reports

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Athens Friends Meeting

Athens Friends held a discussion about the state of our meeting and our hopes for the meeting's future. Because many of our members and attenders are associated with the University of Georgia, attenders and attendance fluctuates from year to year. We have accustomed ourselves to welcoming new friends, and saying good-bye to others. We feel our Meeting provides new attenders and sojourning F/friends a ready meeting-home. The Meeting enjoys the gifts of both short-term and long-term attenders. We currently have a diverse and enriching mix of age, experience, and interests.

Also arising from our discussion about the state of the meeting was the feeling that, based on our welcoming nature, social activism and silent worship, that the meeting has developed the potentiality for a dynamic worship and action next year. This potentiality could manifest between the spiritual awareness (based on readings, discussions, and messages) and social activism as a meeting.

We prepared and distributed several Sunday Sack Suppers at Our Daily Bread, the soup kitchen at the adjacent Methodist Church. We have conducted several neighborhood clean-ups. Athens Friends had a table stocked with literature, bracelets and bumper stickers at the annual Human Rights Festival. We support several local non-profits which provide financial assistance or services for local families in need. We have also supported our own members through times of illness and accidents. We organized and participated in anti-war/peace rallies, marches and vigils throughout the year, including a multi-congregational petitioning & crane folding event. Several members are constant witnesses for peace, vigiling weekly with Women in Black. Two members traveled to Washington D.C. this spring to protest the war with Iraq.

Concern for undocumented immigrants has arisen throughout the year, as Georgia struggles with raids and deportations, and the U.S. considers legislative reform. Several members joined with AFSC for a march in Atlanta. Our discussions resulted in a letter to the editor of the Athens Banner-Herald. Middle-east peace has also been a topic of discussion, again with support from AFSC resources. We post FCNL action alerts on our listserv.

Our First-day school is attended by several pre-schoolers. Our one active teen participates in SAYF. We are grateful that this yearly meeting program is available to teens in our small meeting. We held a candlelight Christmas Eve worship and an Easter worship and potluck at a member's lakeside home. Due to low summer attendance, we did not conduct meeting for business during the summer months of 2006, and plan a similar schedule for 2007. We resume regular monthly meetings for business in August.

This year, we welcomed Jennifer Rhode into membership. Jennifer has served as our newsletter publisher/minute-taker. She plans to remain a member of Athens MM, but is moving to Asheville, NC this summer. This season also brings the loss of long-

term member and treasurer, Judy Meyer, who has retired, and, with husband Gene Helfman, is moving to Washington State. We will deeply miss all three F/friends, but look forward to their visits and correspondence.

Atlanta Friends Meeting

Atlanta Friends Meeting is a large, diverse meeting with 139 active local members and 17 members who do not live locally any more. In 2006, the Meeting welcomed twelve new members into the community, Anne Stansell, Muireann Brennan, Nan O'Connor, Steve Collins, Steve McLaughlin, Karen Head, Judith Greenberg and Heather Jeziorowski. Linda Hoopes, John McCutcheon, Carolyn Coburn-Allen and Richard Allen transferred memberships from other meetings. David Dault resigned as part of his leading to enter the ministry. Six babies and toddlers were welcomed at a First Day School program. Anne Boswell and David Foley were joined under the care of the Meeting. We held meetings for memorial for two friends, Carol Cummings and Anita McCain.

As a large meeting, our attention is spread among a variety of issues and how to balance them. While some Friends are most concerned with social action, others stress personal spiritual growth. While some are more Christocentric in the belief system which makes them Quakers, others are more universalist. We work constantly to maintain respect for everyone in the community and to provide support and outlet for the many Friendly gifts among us. We know that we need to appreciate the diversity within our own meeting and realize that there are individuals and groups within the meeting who have not felt fully supported. We also need greater awareness of ministry in the wider community of Friends beyond our meeting while we work to ensure that our outreach and community service hold to Quaker standards and are led by our beliefs.

Atlanta Friends continue to nurture vocal ministry that is grounded on a deep spiritual foundation and that is not politically motivated or polarizing. Ministry and Worship is addressing the spiritual growth and maturation of the meeting by supporting a well-attended Adult First Day class each week before meeting for worship, regular forums after meeting on topics such as worship, beliefs, membership, a Spiritual Nurture Group and, a monthly welcome dinner. In 2006, the annual Gathered Meeting Retreat was guided by Rubye Howard Braye from the Wilmington Monthly Meeting of the North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative). The retreat sought answers to war as an individual and faith issue, asking how to take away the occasion for war.

The Meeting is delighted to support the growth of Gwinnett Preparatory Meeting as it moves towards becoming a monthly meeting. A committee of Atlanta Friends works with Gwinnett, and our Advancement Committee also supports the Anneewakee Creek Friends and the Canton Friends Worship Groups.

War and other sorts of violence toward human beings and the environment weighed much upon our hearts this year. Social Concerns Committee sponsored three well attended educational meetings along with discussing several topics both in committee and on the AFM on-line discussion list. The Meeting also approved minutes opposed to war and funding for war. Funds were provided to encourage eight Friends in their individual leadings and to support several non-Quaker organizations. Attention was also given to concerns about local poverty and the environment, including public films, information and discussion. One special project is our work with our sister community in El Salvador.

Nominating Committee recognizes that its work has become year-round. One of its most important goals is to clarify the Meeting's committee structure, especially to newcomers so that they can become more involved in the community.

With new co-clerks of First Day School, the meeting is taking an inventory of its curriculum, looking especially at how to develop a curriculum that increases young Friends' understanding of their Quaker heritage. Numbers of children have dwindled somewhat, but we continue to be blessed in the richness that young people bring. With the hiring of a new program director, our middle and senior high school students remain active in Southern Appalachian Young Friends retreats and activities, while a loyal group of students participates in discussion during their First Day School class. Our young adult friends have formed an active social and spiritual community with those from other meetings, and we seek as a meeting to include them in our committees and other work. We are aware that we sometimes forget the years after high school are a time when spiritual support is important and we should be more intentional in finding ways to find those in need and stay in touch with them.

We are aware of racism and classism within our community and remain committed to being more welcoming to people of color or of lower economic status. A set of queries developed by Our Roles as Individuals in Our Racial History is considered by each committee each year. The Committee on Undoing Racism in Atlanta Friends Meeting continues to offer a variety of activities, including a Listening Ear available for individuals after meeting and a number of forums. CURAFM also surveyed attendees concerning how welcoming our community is and reported the results to Meeting for Business.

Considerable energy was also put into our first major renovation of our building, which was built in 1991. Priorities included making the building more energy efficient and a welcoming space for outside groups to rent. The Administration Committee and the Resident Manager shepherded this work and also spent time on a variety of tasks aimed at making the building and grounds useful and caring for our daily operations through a Living Wage policy and attention to good practice with employees. To better enhance the quality of worship for the hearing-impaired, we installed a sound system in the Meeting Room.

Financially, the meeting remains secure. Funds for the building are close to being raised. Each year seems to find it more difficult to get annual donations to match budgeted revenues on a month-to-month basis, and various remedies have been presented to get people to give to the operating budget. Finance Committee worked especially hard to streamline the books and reduce expenditures. While we seek to increase income in a variety of ways, we cannot but be pleased with the love and support, financial and spiritual, that our members and attendees offer the Meeting, the community and the wider world.

Berea Friends Meeting

Berea Friends Meeting is currently experiencing perhaps the most dynamic period in the recent life of the meeting. Ownership of our own meetinghouse continues to create new positions, new challenges, and new opportunities. We have had the opportunity to welcome many individuals to our meeting this past year, and our average attendance has continued to swell. Berea Friends continue to discuss how to balance our administrative needs with our concern for spiritual life.

Our landscaping committee has been busy this past year, keeping in mind the testimony of simplicity so the upkeep will take minimal time. The major project has been a Peace Garden, designed by one of our members, with a variety of trees, plantings, and benches. The meeting purchased a Peace Pole, which will be placed in the front of our Meetinghouse this spring.

Last summer a Quakers family moved from Massachusetts to Berea. In December of last year we were glad to welcome Tracy Hodge and Charlie Wilton as new members. Their three children, including two daughters adopted from India, have been a wonderful addition to our children's program. This fall we also welcomed Hank Fay, who now is in the process of transferring his membership from his Florida meeting. In the next few months we will bid farewell to long-time member Dee Nelson when she moves to a Quaker retirement community outside Philadelphia.

We have appreciated the richness and diversity many new attenders have brought to our meetings for worship. First Day worship is often blessed with spoken messages, much sharing happens in the circle that follows worship, and activities like our Friday Soup Suppers continue to flourish.

We have recently added an outreach committee and a grounds coordinator. The concern that we have too many positions and committees for our small meeting comes up often, and we spent some time during our annual Membership Review in February contemplating queries about balance in our individual and meeting life.

Berea College student attenders started a mid-week Quaker worship group on campus last fall. They recently received approval as a campus group, and our meeting continues to offer support to them. Friends are hopeful that that attendance at this meeting by students and members of the meeting will increase in time.

This year Berea Friends acquired a new website, BereaFriendsMeeting.org, and a new sound system to assist Friends with hearing difficulties. We enjoyed the opportunity to host a SAYMA representative meeting in September. Later in the fall, our meetinghouse was the venue for a film festival on Oil Use and Energy Alternatives using films from Friends General Conference.

Ownership of our meetinghouse gave Berea Friends a new issue to address: whether we should pay property tax. After some discussion Friends decided to apply for property tax exemption and to use the amount that we would have paid to support local services. Each fiscal year, one-third of the total will be donated to the county for general expenses; one-third will be contributed to a specific local governmental program (for example, this year for children's programming at the public library), and one-third will be allocated for improvements that will make our meetinghouse a useful resource to the community.

Berea Friends Meeting currently has 58 members, and our average attendance on First Days is around 25 people. We have 13 children in our midst, ranging in age from 16 months to 12 years. Three Berea teens are active in the SAYF program.

Birmingham Friends Meeting

Birmingham Friends felt the Spirit move among us this year, drawing us closer together as a community as we celebrated our children, explored our group commitments, and reached out into the wider Birmingham and national community.

We especially delight in the intellectual, physical and spiritual growth of our children. We often have visitors whom we welcome and we have our regular attenders. Emma and Henry, two of our 'birthright' children, Will, a new Friend from Alaska, and Emma's friend, Lincoln, are now bright young seekers who challenge us to learn and listen more profoundly than ever. They help us care for Margaret, our introspective young artist, and Joe, her extrovert brother who is enthusiastic about games, the outdoors and snacks. Emma's friends and neighbors attended a special blessing for her brother Aubrey, now a year old and a happy, loving toddler learning new skills by the hour. The children have created a peace box for the meeting, which encourages us to remember our concerns for peace, the environment, animals and children around the

world. Older Friends are re-painting the children's room and Margaret and Joe's mother will draw a mural on the wall. (She is also designing BFM t-shirts.) We held our annual Easter egg hunt, which demands lots of creativity in dyeing, hiding and finding the real eggs. Recognizing that children are not only our joy, but our responsibility, we commit ourselves to rotating childcare primarily, but not totally, among the non-parents of our children, so that they become more integrated into the meeting and so that their parents may have at least an hour of silence a week. A challenge is that with our rotation of teachers, it is difficult to keep up with a consistent children's curriculum. Also, traditionally children have sometimes come into the adult worship hour and sometimes not. We are now bringing them in at the beginning of the worship hour.

We have also committed ourselves to developing that of God within ourselves and our meeting. We have shared insights and responses, bringing us closer together, as we've discussed our way through Catherine Whitmire's *Plain Living* during our second hours. Sharing our insights leads us to know each other in "that which is eternal," though some of us admit that it's easier for us to discuss ideas than deeply felt experiential insights. Some of our interesting intellectual discussions focused on creeds, using a Pendle Hill pamphlet and other Friends' writings. Several of us shared the joyful trip to Cookeville's celebration of its monthly meeting certification, we went down memory lane with one Friend, who became a member of BFM this year and put together a scrapbook for the meeting, our monthly simple suppers give us a chance to just plain socialize, and we value the coffee time between meeting for worship and second hour. We have explored our own racism in a series of evening meetings; we had our first front porch sale, which did not yield much money, but did allow us to give away a lot of stuff. The women's group is becoming a deeply supportive community as we've watched videos that encourage us to recall our experiences of childhood, family, growing older and other life challenges. We also have a section on our website with individual Friends' statements of "Why I became a Quaker." We are challenged by Friends loss of family members and other concerns in our personal lives, by our Friends with special needs, and our recognition that sometimes we lack time or energy to do "enough" and have to forgive ourselves and each other. We were energized in a major way by Jane Berger's "Inreach/Outreach" workshop, which was something of a spiritual revival for us. Jane and her traveling companion, Zach, provided a format for energetic discussions on who we are as a Friends meeting and what we have to share with others. We not only gained spiritual insight and a special communion with each other, but we now have practical means of sharing more of ourselves with visitors to our community and with potential attenders from the Birmingham community. Our spiritual challenge is to build on this energy and these insights.

Finally, we feel the Spirit move as we reach outside our small meeting to share the Light with and to find it within others. BFM has become very active in the community, working with interfaith groups, peace groups, and individuals. One way we introduce ourselves is through the use of our meeting house by likeminded groups. We have worked hard as part of our commitment to peace and justice with other groups in our area. We have recently joined Greater Birmingham Ministries, which works with the poor and with civil rights groups to foster community and understanding. We are founding members of the Alabama Faith Council, a group made up of Christians, Jews, and Muslims (as well as Unitarians and Universalist Quakers) to work together for social justice concerns such as fair taxation, universal kindergarten for four-year-olds, and other issues fostering justice. We also support Alabama Arise, a group that focuses on state legislation affecting the poor, and state constitution reform. We not only support these organizations, but have invited representatives to speak to us and attend worship, so that we become part of each others' community. We received a moving lesson on

forgiveness and peace when we were visited and shown a film by the founder of the My Lai Peace Project. We have also been inspired by the reciprocal visits with the Muslim community, who have joined us in an Interfaith Peace Film Project. Friends helped organize and participated in the Katrina Listening Project, which allowed families to share their stories and know they were heard. The Project enriched the listeners and allowed some of the stories to reach a wide audience through media coverage. Friends continue to aid one family who still suffers from the effects of the uprooting and trauma of Katrina. We continue to develop our relationship with Avondale, an inner-city grammar school in our neighborhood. Friends helped build a playground and we donate our "property tax" to the P.T.A. each year. Some Friends are building a relationship with other Birmingham Peace groups at various rallies concerning, peace, torture and military violence and we participate in various "walks" that raise community consciousness of peace, hunger and social justice concerns. We are embarking on sponsorship of the AFSC's Eyes Wide Open Project.

We feel the Spirit moving as our small meeting manages to attend to so much—we need the joy and simplicity of the children and our meeting's inward times to carry us as we truly do seek to walk cheerfully over the earth answering that of God in everyone. Our challenge is to be mindful of that Spirit and to remain centered upon it as we go through our busy days.

Brevard Friends Meeting

Members: 17 Regular Attenders: 14 Average attendance at Worship: 17

SAYMA's Ministry and Nurture Committee suggests this report include a response to the query, "How does the Spirit fare in our Meeting?" Based on the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 7:16), "By their fruits you shall know them", and the Apostle Paul's assertion (Galatians 5:22,23) that "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control", then we are bold to say, "The Spirit fares well in our Meeting! There is an atmosphere of affirmation of one another as fellow seekers, a tolerance of different points of view, and an energy of support that emanates from each person to all others who participate in the life of the Meeting. This is evident in Meeting for Worship, Adult Forum, Friendly-Eights, committee work, potluck dinners, and in the numerous ways care and nurture are given from one to one another.

Ministry beyond the Meeting is carried out by members and attenders individually, or in small groups, and not by the Meeting as a whole in terms of an identifiable Quaker project. This ministry takes the form of volunteer work, vigils, participation at public meetings, letters to the editor, and the giving of financial resources as reflected in our budget. Locally we specifically support the work of Sharing House, Center for Dialogue, The Children's Center, and the Bread of Life. Beyond the community we support these Quaker organizations: AFSC, FCNL, FGC, FWCC, Quaker House at Ft. Bragg, NC, and SAYMA.

We regret that our members/attenders are mostly in the "above 65" age-group, with only several middle-aged adults, and no children attending regularly. This reduces both our diversity, and diminishes our energy, but we are still able to maintain a positive and joyful sense of Meeting.

With mixed feelings, we have ended our relationship with the Boys and Girls Club, precipitated by its need for us to carry liability insurance. We have begun meeting at the College Walk retirement center which, for some, reinforces our image of being "an old folks Meeting", so we are committed to seek a meeting place which might prove to

be more welcoming to a wider group of seekers. We do have a sense of gratitude, however, that we are not burdened with the demands of owning property!

Our Meeting rejoiced in celebrating the marriage under the care of the Meeting of members Wendell Holland and Barbara Chamides. We are in the preparatory stages of caring for the marriage of member Lee Scott to Bud Ackerman.

We are pleased that Richard Zelman and Wendell Holland transferred their memberships to us from Flagstaff, AZ, and Charlotte, NC Monthly Meetings.

We have been saddened, and diminished, by the deaths of member Jesse Mock and attender John Freeman. Jesse was one of our founding members, served as Clerk several years, and edited our newsletter. John was a regular attender for many years. Although we deeply miss their physical presence, their spiritual presence is always with us.

In closing, we affirm that “ Faith, Hope, and Love abide, but the greatest of these is Love.”

Celo Monthly Meeting

Celo Friends Meeting continues as a vibrant spiritual heart of our community. Our time together in worship is deeply meditative and largely quiet. Spoken ministry is often around concerns Friends bring that are on their hearts. In the past year recurring concern has been expressed for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and for the issue of climate change and environmental degradation due to human misuse of the planet.

There is a core group of 40 -45 members and attenders who constitute the strength of our Meeting. Of that number 20-25 are usually in attendance on any given First Day. With the addition of visitors and others we often crowd our small converted goat barn. Changes in the past year include two new members, one death and one birth. Going through the exercise of taking the census of the Meeting was revealing. Many people who seldom attend, and hadn't joined us for worship in months or years, when asked if they were ready to be dropped from our list, really wanted to be kept in touch, even if this only means they get an occasional email announcement. Though most of these folks join us to worship rarely, if there is something to celebrate in our community such as birth, death or marriage, the Meeting often provides the structure for that event.

A tangible sign of the importance of the Meeting to our wider community has been the support for construction of our new worship space. This support has been both financial and as volunteer labor. We hope to be in the final year of construction of our new meeting house. This has been a multi-phase process that really began 11 years ago with the replacement of our caretaker residence with a new residence and fellowship space. The work on this final phase has been a combination of hired and volunteer labor that has included harvesting timber and stone from our surrounding land. We have also received volunteer help from other Friends in SAYMA as well as contributions from other Meetings, individual Friends, and a grant from FGC New Meetinghouse Fund. As Friends we know the spirit resides in our hearts and not in our buildings, yet we are gratified to see our new meeting house rise as a direct result of our community working together.

The adult education committee has maintained an ongoing Tuesday night worship sharing group. These gatherings have focused on different readings. Friends who participate have found this important to deepening their spiritual life .

Our Peace and Social Concerns Committee largely remains a committee in waiting. Noting that many of our members are integrating peace and social concerns work into their personal lives or through other organizational efforts, the committee has

not felt it important to organize any new activities until a member or members come with a concern.

Our Meeting is blessed with many families with young children. We have an active and engaging First Day School program. A significant part of this has been a children's Meeting for Worship. One or more elders join children and some parents from the Meeting, leaving regular worship when the children do. They engage in a silent worship specifically with and for the children. This has developed into a very meaningful part of the first day experience both for the children and for the adults who join them

Charleston Friends Meeting

The seasons of another year have come and gone, and the seasons of many of our lives are changing. Charleston Friends grow slowly but steadily in the Light that is granted to them. Our worship is sometimes centered and Spirit-filled, sometimes more contemplative and quiet. Perhaps a few, perhaps a roomful, we wait in silence on the Lord, as Friends have done for almost 400 years. Vocal ministry may be grounded in scripture, or may represent a response to a Friend's prayers or concerns, even when that prayer has yet to be uttered.

Although our number has changed little, we have continued to welcome new attenders and Friends, even as others have moved away or found other faith communities. Our small size means we have to be junior partners in most peace and social justice activities, and we can't do everything we might wish to do. One example this year involved SAYMA's Ministry and Nurture Committee, which we very much wanted to host, but we were unable to assure that enough Friends would be in town to offer hospitality on the selected weekends.

In addition to First Day worship, Charleston Friends conduct Worship Sharing sessions, usually on the 5th weekend of a month. We have been considering queries from SAYMA on witness, and will soon begin working on queries from Friends General Conference. We have also an adult religious education program that is studying Margaret Snyder's Bringing Religious Education Home. This excellent short publication is subtitled Welcome to the Religious Society of Friends, but we have found it stimulating for newcomers and long time members. We also have mid week Bible study twice each month. Occasionally, we worship outdoors in a local forest park, sharing breakfast beforehand and conversation afterward.

Meeting supported two Friends' participation in Pendle Hill programs this year. One attender joined other white people working to end racism, and a second learned about the skills of clerking. Both have become resources to our meeting, enriching our community with the insights of the wider community of Friends.

Charleston Friends continue a small program of social ministry. We host a breakfast for women and children at a local shelter before Christmas, and adopt a family for Christmas. We also have a dinner in midwinter for residents of the local men's shelter. Friends enthusiastically cook and serve, and are enriched by the fellowship in the communities we serve. We also act as a support group for the West Virginia Economic Justice Project, a program operated by the American Friends Service Committee. We are amazed by the staff's resilience, resourcefulness, and good humor in the face of constant challenges. The Project hosted a meeting on Seasoning, Implementing, and Networking with West Virginia community program staff, Mid Atlantic Region Staff, and staff of other projects. Project staff help organize peace activities through the Patriots for Peace organization, educate the public on social welfare and health services issues through op-ed writing and a thought-provoking web log (www.goatrobe.blogspot.com), help individuals navigate the social services bureaucracy

and sound the alarm when they run into illogical barriers, and build coalitions of progressive thinkers within the state. They are an information resource on social policy. We are pleased that a meeting member, who has been part of the project's support network for about ten years, now serves on the AFSC board.

Loss and grief have shadowed Charleston Friends this year, with illness and death of parents, personal struggles, and health issues that are predictable as we continue to season. We are saddened by separation from children, who go from college to work to graduate studies, most often in other states, like many other West Virginia sons and daughters who leave because of the state's limited economy.

It is a delight when young Friends return, even briefly. We rejoice that Meeting has been asked to take the wedding of the daughter of two members under its care later in the summer, and we feel blessed that others of the Meeting's children are finding life partners and vocations.

Thanks to a technologically experienced Friend, Charleston now has a website (charlestonwv.quaker.org). Our visibility has increased, resulting in several visitors. We are linked to SAYMA. A further outreach effort may come to fruition later this year; Meeting is compiling a list of important Quaker literature, which we plan to donate to the local library.

West Virginia area Friends plan a fall gathering September 15-16. Because of our unique location, we expect Friends from at least 3 yearly meetings. We would be honored to introduce SAYMA Friends to this small but vital link in the Quaker chain.

Chattanooga Friends Meeting

Chattanooga Friends Meeting has had an amazing influx of new attenders for its size since a year ago. In only about the last six months of 2006, eleven! new people started attending regularly. That is an amazing number for Chattanooga Meeting because those eleven now make up about half of the total number of our current regular attenders. We have put in a lot of effort at trying to make every new attender feel warmly welcomed. We have also done a lot at trying to help them become oriented to and integrated into the meeting's faith community and practices. We feel so far we have done a fairly credible job in that but realize we have not been perfect. We are committed to continuing efforts at nurturing the sense of a "well knit" community among people who are, as a group, at fairly widely different places on their journey with the Religious Society of Friends. We continue to give inquiring new attenders packets of introductory pamphlets on Quaker topics. In addition, A Guide to Our Faith and Practice is provided to all who choose to take one. Currently, we are re-evaluating our small library collection to determine which volumes are needed to offer a broader choice of Quaker writings. Also copies of the Friends Journal are available to all interested persons. Use of these resources is not restricted only to new attenders; long-time attenders and members also have the opportunity to learn from them. Early in 2007 we joyfully welcomed into formal membership one who has attended regularly for a few years. Meeting has been served by co-clerks for a year now. It seems to be working well for the Meeting as well as for the two co-clerks themselves.

First Day Meetings for Worship continue to be the core and bedrock of the life of Chattanooga Meeting. Several are faithful in regular attendance while many others attend when they are not detained by other demands on their First Day mornings or by out of town travels. The quality of silent worship continues consistently strong and spiritually strengthening for the worshippers. We continue to work on self discipline and discernment of Spirit-led messages in Meetings for Worship. This effort is bearing

rewarding fruit. We have also nurtured improved quality of discourse and process in meetings with attention to business. Good fruit is coming from this effort also.

The number of children attending First Day school has increased two-fold this year from approximately 5 to 11, due to the attendance of three new young families. First Day school students range in age from preschool to eighth grade. We grew from one class to two classes in order to meet the different needs of the older and younger children and recruited additional teachers. Now many more members of our community are involved in First Day School leadership and teaching. Although attendance by the children is somewhat sporadic, Meeting has undertaken fulfillment of its sense of responsibility to provide a First Day School program for the children every single First Day. Each First Day during the announcement period following Meeting for Worship, the young people of the First Day school tell the adults about their activities and learning in their classes while the adults were in worship. The major focuses of study in First Day School over the past year included our responsibility for the environment and the study of other religions. First Day School exchanged visits with the youth at the Unitarian Church. We developed and presented a puppet show about Quakers. We also decorated tiles with symbols from different religions and placed them in our flower garden. Fairly often the children have created art and crafts items that they give to all of the adults in attendance. These small tokens have a wonderfully large impact on drawing the generations together. One of our long-term attenders took on baking fresh cookies before Meetings for Worship and serves them after worship. His intention is to foster warm memories of First Days at the Meeting.

Education and spiritual nurturing continue to be an important focus in the life of the Meeting. Adult education, as well as First Day school, has flourished with broad support by many of the Meeting. Adult education and spiritual nurturing have taken a variety of forms at Chattanooga Friends Meeting. At the center of our efforts is the Second Hour program each First Day. First and fifth First Days of a month are routinely reserved for discussion, study, and worship sharing on a broad variety of topics relevant to the religious Society of Friends' faith and practices. We have an ongoing Bible study/discussion nearly every fourth First Day. In the last year we inaugurated a Quaker "Then and Now" program. During months with five First Days, we offer a Second Hour lecture/ discussion on the historical perspective of a Quaker topic, the "Then." This is followed on the fifth First Day that month with worship sharing or discussion on the current practices relating to that topic, the "Now." We have studied the Quaker testimonies of Peace and Simplicity and Quaker unprogrammed worship using that format. Other topics we have discussed in other Second Hour formats include violence and Quakerly responses to violence, outreach to the greater Chattanooga community, membership in the Religious Society of Friends, Quakerly responses to the Bush administration's actions in Iraq, proposed revisions to SAYMA's A Guide to Our Faith and Our Practice.

Recently, a Second Hour focused on the topics of Meeting membership and attendership. One goal addressed there was to reinforce commitment to the testimony of community. We have renewed our practice of contacting those whom we have not seen or heard from for some length of time, letting them know we are thinking about them and miss them.

Of special interest and focus to our community this year has been the peace testimony. We created our first standing "Peace Committee" to nurture Meeting's expressed desire to strengthen our understanding and practice of the peace testimony. The process nurtured both individual spiritual growth and growth for the Meeting as a community. Chattanooga Friends drew closer together in their exploration of this topic. Two second Hour discussions dedicated to the discussion of the documentary movie

Bowling for Columbine and violence in America drew the greatest participation this year. In addition, the testimony of peace was the topic in focus for two other Second Hour meetings, one on the cultivation of peace within and the second on questions about possible Quakerly responses to the Bush administration. The Meeting also drew together in making a special event held on a Saturday night. We had Hector and Susie Black at the Meetinghouse with Hector giving a very inspiring talk on his and Susie's testimony of dedication to trying to live a life of peacemaking. This was an event of powerful spiritual nurturing for the Meeting (and for the visitors from the wider Chattanooga community.)

We affirm that well seasoned members are our most valuable resource for Quaker education and spiritual guidance. A good number of experienced and weighty Friends among us are living models of Quaker principles and faith. In addition to the strength of our "elders," less experienced members and attenders have been encouraged and called upon to participate fully in all aspects of the Meeting's life, including positions of Meeting responsibility. We have been largely successful in providing opportunities, guidance, and support for growth in all aspects of Meeting life to all who have been coming regularly.

Our Ministry & Oversight committee has coordinated clearness committees to provide spiritual support to those struggling with issues ranging from divorce to radical life changes to parenting under extremely difficult circumstances. A healthy cross-section of our members and attenders have served on clearness committees this year. Both those who served and those who were seeking have experienced spiritual nurturance and growth by participation in the clearness committees.

As a whole, our meeting is more inwardly focused than outwardly involved. We have gathered often for social activities and celebrations in addition to worship: monthly "potluck" lunches after Meeting for Worship, visited in homes for viewing Bowling for Columbine, quarterly women's potluck suppers in each other's homes, a retirement party, some birthdays, a send-off for the Ingles on their departure to a three-month sojourn as Resident Friends at Pendle Hill outside of Philadelphia, PA. This is not to say that many individuals do not pursue issues of peace and social justice. Activities supported by members and attenders include the Interfaith Hospitality Network for homeless families, the annual Thanksgiving Day morning walk to raise funds for services to homeless families and individuals of greater Chattanooga and the annual Peace March in support of ending the war in Iraq. In response to FCNL's call for a "Nationwide 9/11 Call for Freedom from Fear" by having a "Virtual Lobby Day" on 9-11-06, we sent a small delegation to meet with our Congressional Representative's staff in Chattanooga that day. We also sent letters to other local faith communities encouraging them to do the same. At the same time, a Letter to the Editor of our local paper in protest of the war was published on behalf of the Meeting. And we started using Fair Trade coffee exclusively at the Meetinghouse.

We went through a fairly thorough threshing on the question of "outreach" for making the Meeting's presence known in the greater Chattanooga community. We now have a few self-made bumperstickers with our contact information on a few of our bumpers. We had a letter to the editor in the local newspaper signed "for Chattanooga Friends Meeting." We advertised and personally invited others to our special event with Hector and Susie Black. In some small measure we have promoted extending invitations to people that we know to join us in worship on First Day mornings. Perhaps during the next year we will be able to raise the level of our outreach efforts. Approved at regular monthly meeting for worship with attention to business, Thirteenth Day, Fifth Month 2007

Columbia Friends Meeting

One of the strengths of Columbia Friends Meeting rests in a small, but close knit group of young friends who, with the encouragement of their parents, are an integral part of the Meeting and add spiritual depth as well as fun. With them we visited Charlotte (NC) Friends Meeting, have fed the homeless through the Food Not Bombs program, studied the environment, learned new hymns, and sold crafts to support different AFSC projects.

The latest project was a giant board game in which each team goes forward or backward a designated number of steps depending on whether a game card reflected a Quaker value or not. We shared in writing the cards. The winning team reaches the Inner Light. This game is funny and fun, and we laughed at our failings and our strengths as evidenced in the game cards.

For the last several years a young friend has been a member of the Ministry and Nurture Committee. The one new member of our Meeting in the past year is a young Friend who started college in the fall.

We have had several new attenders at Meeting. Some of them live a distance from Columbia, and come only occasionally. Others have been coming regularly and are active in the life of the Meeting.

It was our turn to host Palmetto Friends Gathering in Columbia this year. 41 Quakers from South Carolina Gathered at the YMCA Camp. We invited the archivist from Guilford to speak to us about the history of Quakers in the Carolina's. This was fascinating. Members of Five Rivers Meeting from Horry County prepared a lunch made from locally grown food products. It was a delicious meal, and reminded us that locally grown food is available, delicious and using it protects the environment.

One of the members has created a web site for Palmetto Friends (palmettofriends.org) and each Meeting has a link. There are pod casts of recent presentations of Palmetto Friends Gathering and Columbia Friends Meeting as well as interviews with young Friends.

Three members of the Meeting continue to do prison visitation at the federal prison in Edgefield County. Another attender has created libraries for children in small towns in Central America and has involved the Meeting in this activity.

The Meeting is exploring again the desire for a Meeting House. Two committees have been set up, one to look at possible locations and the other to look at the financial issues connected with having a more identifiable home. The desire for a Meeting House seems to be stronger this time and although concerns still remain it feels as if we are being led towards revealing who we are in a place that allows us to blossom.

Our discussions after Meeting for worship are usually excellent and well planned. We have had a series of Bible Studies that are fascinating and well attended. We have had programs about social issues and about wider Quaker organizations (AFSC, FCNL, FWCC, etc). We have had programs on health care.

There are several members of the Columbia Friends Meeting who are active in Wider Quaker Organizations: AFSC, FGC, Quaker House, SAYMA, and FWCC.

Our Meeting is challenged because its size and its resources are smaller than its vision. We dream of doing many things but we haven't found a way to do them yet. We continue to struggle with the budget trying to balance our need to nurture ourselves and to share with the world. We fear that we would not be able to afford a Meeting House when we often do not end the year with enough money to cover our expenditures. Because we are so small, it is a challenge to care for individuals with illness or other crisis's. We do our best to meet the needs.

We usually have about 20-25 people at Meeting for Worship on First Day including 5 -6 young Friends. The Silence is very deep. Vocal ministry in our discussion groups is Spirit led. We wonder how we can encourage and nurture this ministry in Meeting for Worship. Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business is very sparsely attended. Often there are only 5-6 individuals who participate. The active committees are Ministry and Nurture, First Day School and the Meeting House Committees. Peace and Social Concerns Committee is not active.

Cookeville Monthly Meeting

The Cookeville Friends Meeting, after many years of being a Worship Group and two years of being a Preparative Meeting, has become a monthly meeting, which was celebrated March 10, 2007. We were blessed by attenders at that celebration from Birmingham, Crossville, Chattanooga, Huntsville, Knoxville, Memphis, Murfreesboro, and Nashville. A big thanks to Crossville and Nashville Meetings for their years of care and guidance. We welcomed out first members, Hector and Susie Black, who wrote to transfer their membership from the Crossville meeting, and look forward to many more members.

We find the hour of silent worship to be a very important part of our week; we are drawn to attend this worship. This hour of silence is more than being silent and allowing room for God to speak to us; some of us feel there are invisible spiritual beings in attendance, which deepen the sense of the mystery of the silence.

We are beginning to experiment with our format for Meeting with a Concern for Business in order to deepen our worship and make better use of our time. We recently tried 45 minutes of worship followed immediately by the meeting for business, with refreshments and socializing put off to afterwards.

We enjoyed our annual retreat last fall (October, 2006). Our theme was fun and fellowship. As usual it was a spiritual and centering time of reflection and community strengthening. We hosted our third Quakerism 101 six-week session last winter (January and February, 2007), using Michael Birkel's book, Silence and Witness, as a text.

We have restarted, as of February, 2007, a weekly (First Day, 1-2 p.m.) Peace Vigil at the Putnam County Courthouse. Veterans for Peace and others have joined us. We appear to have much more support with the public now than we did during the build up to the Iraq war.

The monthly witness at Putnam County high schools to inform students of alternatives to military service continues. At the invitation of a teacher, a Friend spoke to four classes at McGavock High School in Nashville recently. We have found that personal stories about experiences in the military mean the most to the students.

We have begun visiting the Cookeville Dismas House, a local re-entry program for recently released prisoners. We provide evening dinners once a month. Our visits are intended to encourage the residents in trying to improve their lives, and to deepen our understanding of people whose lives are different from ours. A few of us are continuing meeting with others to witness against capital punishment.

The Meeting has grown substantially in numbers during the past year. We have had occasion to implement our First Day school; a family with three boys has been attending this year.

A Friend presented a session in our second hour discussion recently on “Envisioning a Well World.” We have had a couple additional second hours on this topic, and have decided to eventually hold meetings open to the public on how to deal with global warming, sustainability, appropriate technology, and similar issues.

A Friend spoke in the silent worship recently about how important is Jesus’ teaching (Matthew, 25:34-40) about helping the hungry, sick, imprisoned and so forth, ending with “Verily, verily I say unto you, inasmuch as you have done it to the least of these your brethren, so you have done it to Me.” There can be no better Biblical support for a central Friends’ belief that there is that of God in every human being.

Crossville Friends Meeting

We are deeply concerned about the future of the Crossville Monthly Meeting. While it continues to provide a critical spiritual experience for its members, the number of members and attenders continues to decline. Age and infirmity has reduced the attendance and the participation of most of our older members and despite many efforts, new members and attenders are not coming forth. Our one new member from 2006 moved away. Most First days, there are only four or five of us in attendance.

Despite our diminished numbers, there were some definite high points in the year. A worship-sharing group was established in the fall and continues on Wednesday evenings with six participants, only one of whom is a member of our Monthly Meeting. While it is not strictly a Quaker worship group, it has provided much spiritual support and insights.

The Meeting again sponsored a Central America trip, with member Toby Rogers bringing another school bus to Nicaragua. The majority of the financial support for the trip came from a Presbyterian church in Knoxville, but we consider ourselves blessed to be able to participate in this long-term project of support and service.

Greenville Friends Meeting

We have continued to grow in the life of the Spirit during the past year. We celebrated the life of one of our members who died in January, but also found comfort in the fact that we have had three new attenders during the past year. We have also made a number of changes that have maintained the good order of our Meeting.

GMM’s Activities: The Clemson Preparatory Meeting remains under our care, and we are encouraged by its perseverance in the face of challenges. The Clemson group remains quite small, and two of its six regular attenders have faced ongoing health problems. The Clemson group recently changed its worship time to Sunday afternoons in order to better accommodate its members/attenders’ schedules. One of our attenders has been attending the Clemson meetings every Sunday, and has provided First Day

instruction for its two children. We had the opportunity to have a joint Christmas Eve Meeting for Worship at Clemson, which nurtured both groups.

We have continued our mid-week Worship Group at Furman University, gathering each Wednesday from 12:00-12:30 in the Chapel of the university. A few visiting students have been welcomed to the Furman Worship Group since September. We anticipate spending the summer in an attempt to discern whether to lay down this worship group, given the sparse attendance over the past year.

Five of our members/attenders visited the Brevard Friends Meeting in October, and we enjoyed potluck fellowship afterward. We hope to strengthen this bond with our local Friends by having more joint gatherings.

One of our members continues to be engaged in exciting overseas activities. He teaches English in a school in Mexico, and also performs volunteer work for the Vineyard Mission. We hope that he will be able to attend Meeting for Worship during his summer vacation here in the U.S., providing us with additional information about opportunities to assist those who face hardship and poverty in the region where he teaches.

GMM representatives also continue to attend programs organized by the Palmetto Friends Group (PFG) and SAYMA. We coordinated the book exhibit at this year's meeting of the former, and enjoyed both the fellowship and intellectual stimulation that resulted from this undertaking. We recognize that we would benefit by more involvement in PFG and SAYMA committees and programs.

In September, we reached consensus on changing our meeting place and time. We now meet on Sunday mornings at 11:00 on the bottom floor of the Daniel Chapel at Furman University. Our members/attenders feel that this has been a beneficial change; we believe that two Furman students have become regular attenders due to this change in time and venue.

We are grateful for the gracious support and hospitality that continues to be provided to us by the Chaplin's Office at Furman University; the Chaplain, Vaughn Crowe-Tipton, has made the Chapel's facilities available to us for mid-week Meeting, as well as for the trial run of our Meetings for Worship on Sunday mornings in August and September. We were also able to hold a Worship Sharing to commemorate the fifth anniversary of 9/11 and a Memorial Meeting for Worship for Norman Goerlich on April 28 in the Chapel.

GMM's Giving Opportunities: We continue to have a representative on the Board of Directors of the Greenville Area Interfaith Hospitality Network (a local group that focuses on the needs of homeless families); he has also been recently appointed to the board of the area's Interfaith Forum. We continue to support Quaker House (located in Fayetteville, NC) and its witness of the peace testimony of the Religious Society of Friends. We also provided assistance in the form of a contribution to the fund established in memory of the children who perished during the Amish school shooting in the fall. We are currently investigating how we might become involved in Childspring International, an Atlanta-based organization that arranges health-care in the U.S. for children from other countries.

GMM's Fellowship: GMM continues to rejoice in mutual fellowship. We enjoy socializing after meeting with refreshments and conversation. We were especially heartened to be able to hold one of our Meetings for Worship at the home of an attender during the Christmas holidays.

As we noted in last year's report, we possess much talent and potential for spiritual growth and leadership. We pray for opportunities to serve God and our community, and to continue to find joy in the Light and among ourselves.

Memphis Friends Meeting

There is an orchid in our meeting room given by a founding member and well-tended by a quiet, steady Friend. It surprises us each year with new shoots which bloom beautifully in variations on a pattern. How similarly the Spirit lives in our meeting community. As we tend more intentionally to the nurturing of new leadings and leadership, though we falter at times, things bloom!

Smaller groups within our meeting blossomed this year—a prayer study group who also do tai chi together, and a monthly midweek worship group (in its second year) which have nourished our spirits and deepened our relationships. In addition, the meeting has been able to give substantial support to one friend with serious legal problems, perhaps, in part, due to more trust and commitment among us.

Our preschoolers to teens are exuberant and growing. A welcome quilt which one young Friend suggested making hangs in our meeting room. Young Friends planned a meeting for worship for the celebration of children which included silent worship, walking the labyrinth, bubbles, balloons and musical instruments. For Earth Day, they suggested we dress as animals and plants and have a parade. Their enthusiastic fundraising for Heifer Project culminated in a visit by duck, chickens and Nan Johnson of Oxford Meeting who has lots of experience with Heifer Project. One young Friend who is a Boy Scout is exploring his Quaker roots and faith by working on the Spirit of Truth religious emblem. We have a small group of dedicated adults who keep First Day school going, but how does a meeting help develop youth leaders? Four high school students no longer attend regularly, but we have maintained some connections with them. Now we have a new crop of preteens moving into the teen years, and so we begin again.

Business Meeting where we weed and prune the garden is attended by a regular core with occasional attendance of more people. The meeting has spent time on outreach to area colleges and homebound friends, on hospitality and a pamphlet on membership, on gender equality issues in the state of TN with one member led to participate in lobbying our representatives, on energy issues resulting in a meeting project to reduce energy consumption, and on planning for a celebration of 50 years of Quaker presence in Memphis next September. Friends endorsed the Campaign to Repeal the Torture Law and provided scholarship money for this year's QUIT conference. We have labored, at times painfully, and will continue to labor to reach unity on two issues: --the hiring guidelines of FUM and our relationship to Ramallah Friends School through FUM, and --a request to have one Friend's gifts of ministry recorded. Happily, we were able to make some decisions on how to spend a budget surplus.

One Friend who published a book on the spirituality of community life this year comments that the deepening of community strengthens individuals to take the Spirit of that community outside itself. We are experiencing this as individuals follow their leadings and plant seeds in various ways. Friends give service to SAYMA in major roles; others serve on boards such as the MidSouth Peace and Justice Center and Friends Journal. Two Friends published articles in the 'Money' issue of Friends Journal; one taught Quaker Spirituality for the

School of Servant Leadership here; one taught an undergraduate course in ecological economics. Friends also have been involved in QUIT, FLGBTQC, Initiative:Fairness, TN Equality Day, School of the Americas protest, our local interfaith social service agency MIFA, Emmanuel House, Sisters of Charity Shelter and the MidSouth Interfaith Network for Economic Justice. One Friend has kept the weekly statistics of casualties of the Iraq war in the meeting house window for four years.

Our meetings for learning are rich and draw on many talents and interests. We are doing well using our newsletter and listserv to communicate with each other. We nurture connections with Oxford, Starkville, Mountain View and Little Rock Friends in formal and informal ways, including our annual retreat which was a joint effort of Oxford, Starkville and Memphis this time. We host traveling Friends. Our numbers stay fairly steady as people continue to move into and away from Memphis. This year we said goodbye to Larry and Carolyn Jordan after many years. They transferred their residence to Washington, DC and their membership to Falmouth, MA Meeting (Sandwich Monthly Meeting) and we look forward to a report from them on their trip to South Africa and Zimbabwe where they were hosted by various f/Friends. Their departure may have led to somewhat fewer spoken messages; however, worship remains at our center and grounds us, ebbing and flowing with silence and spoken ministry. Long time attendee Marjean Liggett became a member this year. Shari Snively of California serving as a Navy counselor and Bill Metz of Oregon caring for his mother each sojourned with us for several months. We welcome Jim and Janet Felty and their children Jeremy and John. We value new leadership offered by Pat Jessup and Andre Spies.

One of our first State of the Meeting reports used the image of the meeting trying to lift a delicate vase up onto a mantle. Now we have a plant on the mantle which surprises us each year, and continues to deepen its roots.

Nashville Friends Meeting

Third Month query: "Are you sensitive to the spiritual and temporal needs of those making up the meeting community? Do you respond to needs of older, distant, or lonely members and attenders with love and mutual care?" *SAYMA Guide to Our Faith and Our Practice, 1998*

Our Ministry and Counsel Committee recommended that our in-coming clerk attend a clerking workshop held at Pendle Hill. Dick Houghton joined forty-one Friends from FGC meetings/ worship groups and enjoyed the leadership and enthusiasm of Arthur Larrabee sharing with them his collected materials entitled "Clerking: Serving the Community with Joy and Confidence." Dick returned with several possible new directions for the Meeting. Beginning with Eighth Month's monthly meeting for worship with attention to business, we approved, for a six-months trial basis, changing our format so that we blend business into worship. As modified after our trial period, each third First Day we begin centering worship at 10:00. At 10:30, we consider the query for the month for 20 minutes with the younger F/friends present. After that the children go to their First Day classes and we move into business agenda for approximately 60-80 minutes, or until the Spirit releases us. Most Friends and attenders have responded

positively to the changes. Committee clerks are gratified that attendance of at least three times more of our community means deeper participation in this aspect of the life of our meeting.

High school Young Friends, whose numbers have increased up to twenty this year, have become more active in the life of the meeting too. Some attend meeting for worship with attention to business and several actively participate on committees. As part of their curriculum on social issues, they led the meeting in gathering together a truck load of furnishing for a refugee family. Ten or more Young Friends find deep support and joy by traveling to SAYF retreats during the year. We were honored to have one of our Young Friends appointed to represent SAYMA at a Friends General Conference sponsored consultation on advancement and outreach.

Adult Second Hour planning and leadership has provided us with many rich and well attended offerings that help us know each other more deeply. Ministry and Counsel Committee continues to sponsor two Quakerism classes each year, nourishing and nurturing new and long time Friends alike.

In living the query printed at the top of this page, we support multiple clearness and support committees for individuals of our community. Clearness for membership, marriage and life decisions are among the issues heard. Dealing with long term illness, oversight of ministry and general life situations occupy those serving on support committees.

Ministry and Counsel continues to faithfully endeavor to nurture the spiritual life of the meeting. It has taken on responsibility for closing worship. At the rise of worship a committee member serves as "Quaker in the Corner"- available to hear questions and concerns of members and attenders. Additionally, we completed a new brochure that addresses how to become more active in the life of the meeting. After a two year process, meeting approved "Guidelines to Becoming a Member".

Our Peace and Social Concerns Committee has been very active in helping Friends live into our commitment to peace and social justice. Our annual Fall Retreat focused on Friends' concern to end government use of torture. Kristi Estes of Memphis Meeting shared her work with QUIT, Quaker Initiative to End Torture. Consequently some Nashville Friends will be at the second QUIT Conference in June at Guilford College. Continuing their work of last year, Peace and Social Concerns has held more workshops for training leaders for Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP). Our meeting now has four qualified leaders who provided our sixth Regional Gathering an opportunity to experience AVP exercises. In Twelfth Month, the committee sponsored a workshop on "What we can do for peace," with Chuck Fager. It was well attended and we were challenged to think, 'outside the box'. The meeting approved a request for a minute stating that "Nashville Friends Meeting opposes the increase in troop strength and spending for the war in Iraq" This minute was given to participants in the Occupation Project so they could present it to our representative and senators as an expression of our concerns.

Penelope Wright has grown to be a treasured Spirit-led Friend in our meeting. In Fifth Month 2006, she completed the two year, School of the Spirit for Spiritual Nurturers program (under the care of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting). As Spirit leads Penelope and Peter to return to roots in Vermont, we are aware that we will need to grow in several ways as a Meeting in order to fill many of the ways she has served among us.

A great event for Nashville Meeting resulted from M&C's nurture of a worship group that came of age. The Cookeville Preparative Meeting put on a celebration of becoming a monthly meeting Eleventh Day of Third Month. We had a wonderful gathering as 50 Friends from near and far joined together to record the creation of the

newest monthly meeting in SAYMA. Sadly we also approved the request of Clarksville Worship Group to be laid down.

Last fiscal year, our Finance Committee was challenged and worked hard. Donations came in lower than projected to meet the budget, causing us to forfeit our non-Quaker contributions. Although we are managing to meet our loan obligations, we are being very careful about our spending and seek ways to meet our deficit. We have had one fund raising event that raised \$2,000 to help alleviate the financial situation.

Hibbard Thatcher's passing was memorialized by F/friends and family with outstanding messages, singing and dancing, 9th day of Ninth Month 2006. Hibbard was a founder and a foundation spirit of Nashville Meeting. While his presence is missed, his contributions and wisdom remain with us.

Nashville census for 2006-2007:		
Members: 59	Attenders: 42	Attenders Under 18 years old: 34
Babies born:		Opal, daughter of Cher and Eric Smith
New members:		Bill Wolfe, Deanna Nipp-Kientz, Mary McKinney
Transferred members Out:		Willard Vaughan and Diane Coleman
Death of a member:		Hibbard Thatcher 8/5/06

Oxford Friends Meeting

As we sat together with the query, "How has the Spirit fared among us?" it was not long before each person's response echoed the one before: "Massive changes" and "Great losses." We have felt assaulted by the challenges to our individual and collective spirits,

Our greatest loss was that of one of our founding members, Win Jordan, at whose home we have been worshipping since the very beginning in 2000. Though physically diminished and absent for long stretches of time due to a series of debilitating illnesses, Win was always present for us spiritually, and active in our Ministry and Nurture committee until just a few weeks before his death. His death in March was marked by the opportunity to celebrate his life with the whole University of Mississippi at which he had taught for decades. According to his wishes, and that of his wife, Cora, also a member, we were able to have an unprogrammed meeting for worship on campus, attended by faculty, staff, current and former students and everyone from our meeting. This was the first Quaker meeting for the huge majority of people attending, yet the silence and the words were just what Win would have appreciated and valued.

Prior to Win's death, we needed to find a new place to meet. We had met at the Jordan's since the very beginning (2000) as a worship group so it was difficult to leave. A long-term location was not readily available. Part of the time we met at a local university's student union; our most spiritually fulfilling times were those occasions when we met in the home of one of our families.

We have finally settled on a new meeting home in the building of a social service agency serving women and children at risk of domestic violence and teen mothers. We are pleased to have a fine space for children's meeting (though we only have one 3 year old on a regular basis) and a great kitchen for our much beloved (and sorely missed over the past few months) "meeting for cookies" after

worship. The agency does not ask for rent, but we have made material donations and plan to do more for them in lieu of cash. They have been extraordinarily accommodating!

In the past year, we have also lost a great number of long time adult members/attenders and children for many different reasons including: divorce and moving to a new state, life-threatening illnesses; increased job pressures; and to dissatisfaction with lack of a teen program (though we struggled mightily to meet the needs of older children there were too few to create a program). One person noted that she had never seen such a large percentage of seriously ill people in such a small group over such a long period of time. Another person characterized us as down to “a saving remnant.”

We also lost our clerk, who over a period of six months was more and more absent due to various concerns. Ministry and Nurture committee stepped in to serve as collective clerk, since there was no one who felt called to fill this position. In the process, however, we saw, in hindsight, that the Spirit sometimes got shoved aside as we struggled to get through agenda items in meeting for worship with attention to business.

As our numbers diminished, our participation in the community of Oxford also suffered. In both time and money, we had to pull back our offerings to two significant programs. However, we did establish a Quaker group on the University of Mississippi campus, holding open lunch meetings every Wednesday. Various members and attenders would stop by, but we did not attract any newcomers or inquirers. This option offered those who for whatever reason could not attend on Sundays to stay in touch with meeting. We plan to continue this, even though numbers are small.

One member has faithfully attended the Starkville, MS Quaker group. We want to nurture a deeper spiritual connection.

We have appreciated the support of our original caring meeting in Memphis, especially from those who planned our joint retreat this past year at a state park, and from Kristi Estes, who attended the service to celebrate the life of Win Jordan. One of our members was able to worship with them and present a special children’s program on Heifer International. These things have nurtured our spirit/Spirit, as has a small study group based on the book, “Listening Spirituality” by Patricia Loring. When a couple with two young children, long-time attenders, chose this unsettling and sad season in our meeting to become members, we were very blessed. It was Win’s last act, just before his death, to serve on their clearness committee, so these new Friends mark a significant turning point in our life together, even as they celebrated the birth of their second child.

As we pondered the query, “How has the Spirit fare?” the sense of the meeting was that it is still far from clear what will emerge from all these losses and changes. We don’t know yet how we will grow – we do want our meetings for worship to be more centered than they have been, and want more communication among the folks who are now attending (usually between 5 and 8 adults, some of whom are still dealing with major personal losses unrelated to meeting). Nothing has come clear yet, though we are taking the opportunity to

get to know one another better in informal ways (potlucks, trips). We are looking to deepening our worship as the key way to discern how next the Spirit will move among us!

Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting

The State of Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting is vibrant. We now our own Meetinghouse, having purchasing it from Common Light, with whose programming we will continue to have a cooperative relationship .The vitality of the Meeting flourishes with new members, transfers and attenders enriching our sense of community and making us very optimistic about our future.

We have increased our sense of being a spiritual community through new care circles, monthly potluck suppers, and participation in Forums that take place almost weekly. These forums are often led by our own members and have opened up for us new areas of spiritual awareness and community service for all of us. This sense of community has made our well-attended Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business function smoothly, bringing us more closely together as we attempt to adhere to proper Quaker procedure in managing the life of the Meeting.

A sign of our harmony has been the ease with which we agreed upon a statement regarding Equality in Marriage. We have released to the press and to other Quaker organizations a statement that Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting will no longer act as an agent of the state in the matter of marriages, so long as there continues to be legal inequality regarding same gender marriage. SVFM hopes other Meetings will join us in this witness.

In other areas of Peace and Social Concerns, our members and attenders continue to be active on a variety of fronts and to share their activities and concerns with the Meeting. From efforts to assist the poor in our own community, to organized opposition to the death penalty, to phone calls to our representatives and senators on FCNL concerns, to efforts to address injustice and poverty in Guatemala, Palestine and the African Great Lakes, to participation in local and regional efforts to reduce energy use and increase recycling and conservation of our natural resources. This has been a productive and hopeful year for our Meeting.

Our First Day School has grown during the year from two regulars to five. In our forty-five minute First Day school period we are developing three areas of emphasis during the coming year - stories from Quaker history, with applications to what Meeting members area doing currently, stories from the Old Testament, and insights into ways of understanding and worshiping God.

We have enjoyed the participation of a core group of Warren Wilson College students, who have also begun a mid-week meeting on their own campus. Sensing a need to introduce new persons to the history of Quakerism, we completed a six week session on Quakerism 101, which proved beneficial to both new attenders and long time members.

While continuing to be discouraged about the state of our nation and world, we are thankful for the oasis of peace our beloved Meeting for Worship provides for us.

West Knoxville Friends Meeting

Over the last year we have seen a number of changes to our meeting. Several of our members or attenders have been involved in hurtful or difficult personal situations. We have tried to respond in supportive ways but have struggled to find the best

responses. We worry that we might be a better source of help and support if our community could be more close-knit. We also worry about interfering too much. Nevertheless, many of us do feel a strong sense of connection and turn to each other as we look for ways to work together and reach out to each other as need arises.

We see our spiritual life in these outward manifestations of individual struggles and in our community response. We also see our spiritual life in the way we make connections from the big ideas of our testimonies and beliefs to moments of daily living and details of meeting life. The practical aspects of caring for our burial grounds, maintaining our building and grounds, caring for our youngest Friends and reaching out to newcomers are all a reflection of our spiritual life together.

We were saddened by the loss of several individuals from our meeting this year due to moves, changes in individual lives and some personal difficulties. We are finding joy in welcoming a new member, getting to know newer attenders including a student from Afghanistan, planning a wedding under the care of the meeting, and working together on committees and in meeting for worship with attention to business.

The core of our life together continues to be meeting for worship where we gather in that place beyond words and cherish our time together.