



Third Haven Friends Meeting

405 South Washington Street
Easton, Maryland 21601
(410) 822-0293

WHAT'S NEW?

At our annual "**Moving Up**" day at Third Haven, we honored those young Friends moving from grades 8th to High School and those finishing High School and moving on. Also, following this event we had a family picnic at Third Haven. It was a picnic potluck.

Submitted by Susan Claggett



On June 6 the Meeting honored two young people "moving up" from 8th grade to high school, and two graduating from high school.



AUGUST NEWSLETTER

8th grade:

Ian Harrington Moore, son of Steve Moore and Lisa Harrington, graduated from the Country School and will attend high school in Bethesda. Becca Patterson, daughter of Robin Davenport and Scott Patterson, graduated from Country School and will attend Gunston Day School, Centreville.

High School:

Sarah Claggett, daughter of Larny and Lorraine Claggett, graduated from Easton High School and will attend St Mary's College of MD. Laura Small, daughter of Leigh Anne Dodge, graduated from Easton High School. After working in the fall, she plans to enter Frostburg State spring 2005.

We wish them well as they continue...*By Candace Shattuck*

Carriage Sale

Thanks to a dedicated and enthusiastic group of volunteers the Carriage Shed

Sale raised over \$6500.00 A portion of the proceeds (\$5000) will be sent to

Heifer International to purchase an ark of animals that will provide the promise of self-reliance and a better life for as many as 30 struggling families around the world.

A big thank you to all who participated. *Submitted by Beth Mufson*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

September 12 (first day) meeting for worship, meeting for business: committee reports due are Communications and First Day School

The Third Haven Web Site has been updated including the latest directory and committee listings.

Add our website <http://www.thirdhaven.org/> to your favorite list and visit us early and often. Left click on [enter site](#) and you find the home page. The sections entitled Committees, Finding Us, History, Links and Spirit Led Messages are open for anyone to look at. The remaining sections entitled Bulletin Board, Directory, Newsletter, Online Forum, Reports and Quaker Network are restricted to members and attenders of Third Haven. When you left click on the restricted sections you need to type in the user name and password. Type in the user name 3rdhaven then type in the password friends (all lower case). You will find some material that needs to be updated, but we intend to do this shortly.

To enrich this conglomeration of announcements please send notices to hawkjm@goeaston.net

There is in reserve to be allocated about \$1000 from the Carriage Shed Sale in May, 2004: please let the clerk of meeting know your priorities for allocation of this reserve. Suggestions are:
Benches outside on the grounds
Bookcases for First Day School
Local Charities which help children
AFSC – projects with children
New VCR & TV in Common Room
Travel Fund for workshops for First Day School families (PYM, Southern Quarter, Pendle Hill, Youth Camps, FGC) separate from Testimonies & Concerns budget

YOUR VOTE COUNTS Less than 52 % of eligible voters cast ballots in the 2000 presidential election - for information about elections visit the Friends Committee on National Legislation's website www.FCNL.ORG

Pete and Carey Curtis and their family have moved to Maine. New address is:
108 Upper A Street, Peaks Island, ME 04108,(207) 766-5788

Friends were saddened by the passing of *Helen Goldsborough* who as a birthright friend had been an important contributor to the Third Haven community. Her skills as school teacher, silversmith, weaver, traveler, golfer and person of wisdom enriched us all. Wayne Flanagan read the following at her memorial service:

"Do Not Stand At My Grave And Weep" By Mary E. Frye

Do not stand at my grave and weep.
I am not there, I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the gentle autumn rain.
When you awaken in the morning's hush,
I am the swift, uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry.
I am not there. I did not die.

The First Day School Committee is looking for a few people to care for children during Meeting for Worship, so that at least one parent can attend Meeting at the same time children will be supervised. The teepees, labyrinth and rope-swing set up during camp this week will still be available as an outdoor play area, so this should not be hard duty! Contact Candace Shattuck 410-226-5787
shattuck@dmv.com

First day school is still collecting food for the Neighborhood Service Center. We would like to keep non-perishable foods available to the center. We plan a continual response to an ongoing need.

Condolences are extended to Sally Vermilye and Vicky Webster on the loss of their fathers. Our thought are with you.

Remember to make a special effort to converse with visitors and unknown friends so we may enrich their lives as well as our own!

THIRD HAVEN MEETING MINUTES of the 6th Month 13th, 2004 Meeting for Business

Attending – Leonard Baynham, Larny Claggett, Lorraine B. Claggett, Susan Claggett, Tom Corl, Joe Davis, Doreen Getsinger, Marsie Hawkinson, Ginger Howell, Sumner Parker, Cathy Robert, John Schreiner, Meredith Watters, Ann, Williams, Irene Williams, Frank Zeigler and Joyce Zeigler, Carol Woodson and Elaine Upton.

Marsie Hawkinson, Clerk of the Meeting, clerked the meeting for business. The meeting opened with a period of silent worship.

6th Query – During the meeting for worship, Tom Corl read the 6th Query on Equality. An afterthought at the rise of meeting for worship noted the importance of treating others with dignity and respect. A Friend noted that the Query spoke of prejudice; equality may be the opposite of prejudice.

Minutes of the 5th month 9th meeting for business – The minutes of the 5th month 9th meeting for business were approved, as published in the newsletter, without change.

Clerk's correspondence – Marsie Hawkinson has 2 copies of a directory of funding sources from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting; one will be in the library; the other will be in the Meeting office in the brick meetinghouse. Betsy and Bryant Harrell have moved to Friends House, 684 Benicia Drive #32, Santa Rosa, CA 95409.

Treasurer's report – Treasurer Joe Davis reported that in 5th month, the Meeting received income of \$519 and had expenses of \$3,030 for net monthly income of negative \$2510. For the 11 months' year to date through 5th month 2004, the Meeting had income of \$42,369 and expenses of \$38,417 for a net income of \$3,952. The total current equity (fund balance plus net income minus liabilities) of Third Haven is \$66,422. The 4th quarter payment to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting will be made later in 6th month. The Meeting will have considerable expenses in the last few weeks of the fiscal year (this month), so Friends are strongly encouraged to make additional financial contributions to the Meeting, before this month is out. The Meeting APPROVED the Treasurer's report with thanks to the Treasurer.

Budget and Finance -- Larny Claggett, Clerk of the Budget and Finance Committee, presented and proposed the Meeting budget for fiscal year 2005

(FY2005, 7.1.04-6.30.05). The total budget proposed was for \$52,940, an increase of 3.3% over last year. The proposed budget includes a 10% increase in the payments to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. There was some discussion on the proposed amounts for the Property and Grounds, Worship and Ministry, and conferences. The Meeting agreed to adjust the expected income from the cashbox to \$1500 and interest to \$1200, and adjust financial contribution amount down correspondingly. This year the Meeting had 75 financial contributors (families or individuals). To achieve the proposed budget for the coming year, each contributor would need to contribute an average amount of \$685. Larny Claggett explained that the distribution of expenses across budget categories is much like 30 years ago, when the Meeting had 57 members, though the amounts have increased more than 5 fold. After some further discussion, the Meeting APPROVED the proposed the budget for fiscal year 2005 for \$52,940, and thanked Larny Claggett and the Budget and Finance Committee for their work. Friends are reminded to make financial contributions to the Meeting to achieve this budget.

First Day School – The annual report of the First Day School has been deferred to 9th month. Valerie Mazur reported on the moving up day recognition on the previous First Day. Ian Moore, son of Lisa Harrington and Steve Moore, will go on to high school in Bethesda; Becca Patterson, daughter of Robin Davenport and Scott Patterson, will go on to Gunston Day School; Laura Small, daughter of Leigh Anne Dodge and Joe Small, graduated from Easton High School and plans to enter Frostburg State University in the spring; Sarah Claggett, daughter of Lorraine and Larny Claggett, will go on to St Mary's College.

Thanks to the effort of the First Day School, the carriage shed sale earned well over \$6000. The First Day School decided to send \$5000 to Heifer International. There followed some discussion of the use of the remaining net proceeds, perhaps around \$1500. After some discussion the Meeting AGREED that Friends should make recommendations on the use of the remaining net proceeds to the Clerk, who will present proposals to the 9th month meeting for business.

Overseers – Clerk Marsie Hawkinson proposed that the DiPiazza family be permitted to use the

meetinghouse for a wedding, not under the care of the Meeting, on 10th month 2nd. Peggy Paul will represent the Meeting at this occasion. The Meeting APPROVED this. On 8th month 13th the Meeting will permit the Marika Cutler [??] family, from Friends Meeting of Washington, to use the old meetinghouse for a meeting for worship; a wedding will follow the next day at another location. Paige Bethke will resume her clerkship of Overseers.

Worship and Ministry – Tom Corl reported for the Worship and Ministry Committee; Bob Marshall's father has been ill. Following on the discussion at the 5th month meeting for business, the Worship and Ministry Committee proposed to add Norval Thompson, Irene Williams and Ralph Young to the Committee. The Meeting APPROVED these nominations. The Worship and Ministry Committee wants to arrange a joint meeting with Overseers.

The Worship and Ministry Committee proposed to sponsor an adult religious education session at the rise of meeting for worship on 7th month 11th. The topic will be clearness and unity in decision-making in the manner of Friends. The Meeting APPROVED this. Tom Corl will facilitate this discussion; he will provide additional information and recommend readings.

Southern Quarterly Meeting – Southern Quarterly Meeting needs \$700 from its 4 monthly meetings (\$175 each) to help survey, secure title, clean up and restore the Millington Quaker burial ground. Much of the work will be done by a Southern Quarter Friend. There was some discussion about the equity of this division of payment across the 4 meetings in Southern Quarter, with Third Haven having more than half of the members and a large share of the resources in Southern Quarter. Some Friends felt Third Haven should do more. The Meeting APPROVED paying this amount for this project from this year's contingency fund.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting is asking quarterly meetings to share some of the financial responsibility for the quarterly coordinating staff in the coming year. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting has asked for \$1000 from Southern Quarterly Meeting for its coordinating staff. After more discussion about equity, the Meeting APPROVED paying \$500 toward coordinating staff for the next year from the contingency and funds budgeted for Southern Quarter in this fiscal year. Third Haven representatives to Southern Quarter will take up

these equity concerns at the next Southern Quarterly Meeting.

Library and Outreach – Frank Zeigler, Clerk of Library and Outreach reported for the Committee. The circulating section of the library is running out of space. Frank indicated that the Committee is working on determining the disposition of the oldest books in the library. A Friend suggested that some of these old books could be given to the Maryland Room of the Talbot County Library, where they can be stored and their condition maintained more properly. Friends encouraged the Committee to acquire more copies of Faith and Practice from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Anne Rouse will become the Clerk of the Library and Outreach Committee and Frank will become Assistant Clerk.

Testimonies and Concerns -- Lorraine B. Claggett, Clerk of the Testimonies and Concerns Committee, presented a proposed list of organizations for Third Haven Meeting contributions in the amount of \$50 each from this year's donation fund of \$1200.

Since last year's list, some organizations have been deleted and some added. The proposed \$50 donations will go to:

Friends Committee on National Legislation

American Friends Service Committee

American Friends Service Committee, Middle Atlantic Region

National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund

Friends Peace Teams, African Great Lakes Initiative

Friends Peace Teams, Peacebuilding in Colombia Project

Quaker United Nations Office

Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors

Nonviolent Peaceforce

Quaker Earthcare Witness

Friends Journal

Friends General Conference

Friends World Committee for Consultation

Talbot and local

P.E.A.C.E.

Talbot Association of Clergy and Laity (TACL)

TACL Good Samaritan Fund

Partnership for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Prevention

Talbot Mentors

Maryland Food Bank

Caroline County Habitat for Humanity

Talbot County Habitat for Humanity

Talbot County Humane Society
Channel Marker, Inc.

The Meeting APPROVED the proposed list of donations.

The Testimonies and Concerns Committee will sponsor an Earth Stewardship Camp for Third Haven children the last week of 7th month. The Committee asked Friends to send their children to the camp, volunteer to work in the camp or make a financial contribution to the camp.

Other business – Frank Zeigler reported on his participation on the board of the Interfaith Housing Development Corporation of the Eastern Shore. Since 1991, this corporation has constructed 314 units of housing worth over \$22.8 million. It is working on a project in Snow Hill with 30 units valued at \$3.4 million. Bob Sharp and Frank Zeigler have on the board as a “Quaker representatives” from Third Haven. Frank explained that he is seeking a successor for his

position on this board. After some discussion, the Meeting AGREED that a recommendation or appointment to the Interfaith Housing Development Corporation of the Eastern Shore should be made by Southern Quarterly Meeting nominating committee, which is more representative of Delmarva Quakers rather than by Third Haven.

There were no reports from the Property and Grounds Committee, the Communications Committee, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Interim Meeting or Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Annual Fund.

The next Third Haven meeting for business will be 9th month 12th.

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Corl
Recording Clerk
Third Haven Friends Meeting

PLEASE REMEMBER TO - Fund your Third Haven annual Budget.

- note the changes to www.thirdhaven.org
- Contact your committee clerk re; committee work.
- Sign up for Hospitality
- Visit a Friend
- Send us your Bio.

PHILADELPHIA YEARLY MEETING

Interim Meeting

**24 June 2004 - Arch Street Meetinghouse,
Philadelphia**

Summary of Minutes

(Full Minutes are available from Monthly Meeting clerks and Interim representatives and on PYM website at www.pym.org Interim Meeting.)

Minute # 1. Worship and Opening Exercises The meeting settled into worship at 6:00 pm. The clerk welcomed 2 new alternates, 1 substitute, and 14 guests.

Minute # 2. Continuing Business

(2.A) Tax Case Decided A mixed decision was reached this week in the IRS case against PYM. We must pay the levy but not the fine. But the judge found that we were not unreasonable to stand on our religious principles.

(2.B) An Additional Priority for Philadelphia Yearly Meeting was not approved by Interim Meeting.

(2.C) Proposed Statement of Purpose for Philadelphia Yearly Meeting was likewise not approved.

Minute # 3. Financial Stewardship Committee. Jackie Bowers (Falls), clerk warned of a projected

\$110,000 shortfall projected for the fiscal year July 2005 - June 2006.

Minute # 4. Business of the Standing Committees

(4.A) Education Standing Committee Debbie Lyons, clerk, reported that the request from Greenwood Friends School has been referred to a new Committee on Friends Education for further seasoning.

(4.B) General Services Standing Committee John Cope (Westfield), a member of General Services, reported.

(4.B.1) Friends Pension Fund. Friends approved a change in the definition of compensation of participants.

(4.B.2) Annual Fund. Elizabeth Foley reported \$433,973 of \$435,000 goal, and 2125 donors making 2971 gifts.

(4.B.3) Friends Center Renovation. \$5,900,000 is the cost to be divided among three equity partners.

(4.B.4) Arch Street Future Group reported a plan to turn the Arch Street Meetinghouse over to Pendle Hill to focus on a ministry of hospitality for tourists and others.

(4.B.5) Volunteer Guides for Arch Street Meetinghouse are needed for the next six months.

(4.B.6) Financial Matters. TylaAnn Burger, Treasurer of the Yearly Meeting, reported.

(4.B.6.a) Report on Designated and Restricted Funds. assigned to individual Standing Committees.

(4.B.6.b) Recommendations for Changes in Designated Funds

(4.B.6.b.1) Combining a small designated reserve fund from the Workcamp was approved.

(4.B.6.b.2) Combining the Mary Trimble fund with the Indian General Fund was approved.

(4.B.6.b.3) Adding the \$39,000 gain on 348 High Street to the Capital Reserve Fund was approved.

(4.B.6.b.4) Change the use of income from the Troemner Fund for 2 year from Bequests to the General Fund was considered at length, but was not approved.

(4.B.6.b5) No change in funds designated for Education recommendation was approved.

(4.B.7) Woolman bequest was clarified and the part of use which was clear was approved.

(4.C) Worship and Care Standing Committee. Jim Morrissey (Reading), co-clerk, reported.

(4.C.1) Walker Bequest of \$15,000 has been received.

(4.C.2) Adult Religious Education. Christine Greenland, reported on "Young Adults Among Friends

(4.D) Peace and Concerns Standing Committee. Howard Cell (Falls), clerk, reported.

(4.D.1) Global Wellness Fund Treaty is being promoted by the UN Working Group.

(4.D.2) Minute of Appreciation for Libby Marsh was jointed by Friends of Interim Meeting.

(4.D.3) Conscience Objector Status is endangered in both Pennsylvania and U.S. legislation. Suzanne Day reported for the Conscience, Militarism and War Tax Concerns Working Group.

(4.D.4) Kummer bequest received of \$5,000 has been received.

Minute # 5. Nominating Committee. Susan Makler, clerk, reported 6 appointments and 2 resignations.

Minute # 7. Clerk's Correspondence

(7.A). Travel Minute for Mickey Edgerton was approved.

(7.B). Travel of Osborn Cresson to the United Kingdom and Spain was reported .

Minute # 8 . General Secretary's Report highlighted staff accomplishments and Divine grace.

Minute # 9. Minutes of 27 May 2004 were revised and approved.

Minute # 10. Announcements and Adjournment.

Friends settled into worship and adjourned at 10:10 p.m..

Chris Mahon, clerk

Susan White, recording clerk

PYM ANNOUNCEMENTS: PYM notices: Complete text is available PYM website www.pym.org/ Click link [Calendar of Events](#)

Earlham and PYM to observe International Day of Peace September 20 and 21

Contacts: Jay Marshall at (800) 432-1377 or Janelle Williams at (317) 816-9760.

October 1-3 The Northeast Regional Gathering of Friends World Committee for

Consultation, Section of the Americas, will be at the Burlington Meeting House Conference Center (NJ).

Contact jeffthelinguist@juno.com or call 610-388-6725.

Friends Institute is offering a competitive grant of \$5,000 in a business plan competition for Young Adult Friends (age 18-40) contact: Kareem Brantley at k_brantley@yahoo.com

October 9 Conference on "Risk Management in your Meeting Community" Contacts: Helen Fields (helenfields@pym.org or 215-241-7008*) or

Barbara Hayes (barbarah@pym.org or 609-387-3875)

Inquirers' Weekend on Basic Quakerism, October 8-10 at Pendle Hill in Wallingford, PA.

Contact: (800) 742-3150, or email registrar@pendlehill.org or www.pendlehill.org

Quaker Earthcare Meetings in Burlington, NJ October 7 to 11. www.QuakerEarthcare.org

PYM Spiritual Formation Program – registrar: Wade Wright, 177 Kiles Road, Stillwater PA 17878.

570-925-5262, e-mail w9a8d7e6w@epix.net

New Jersey's Tri-Quarter Gathering October 15-17,2004, at Camp Ockanickon near Medford, NJ

Contact: Cindy Cox Crispin at 856-478-4093 or georgeacrispin@aol.com

March 10-27 -2005 17 day Adult Listening Pilgrimage to Israel and Palestine

Apply by Dec. 1 Cost \$2,600. includes air fare. Leave voicemail message Chip Poston 215-579-6673 Contact chip_poston@georgeschool.org

To request a sample mailing of Mailings Featuring Quaker Writings Contact Vicki Hain 215-241-7293 or e-mail Americas@fwccamericas.org

GETTING TO KNOW A FRIEND Susan Claggett has been a life long member of Third Haven Friends



Meeting. Although she has attended other Friends Meetings in Richmond, VA; Tucson, AZ ; Bozeman, MT and Seattle and Portland she has always considered Third Haven her spiritual home. Susan loves traveling to Yellowstone Nat'l Park, where she met her husband, Craig, sixteen years ago. Craig and Susan own 2 dogs, four cats, and one pony. Susan loves tennis, but the joy of her life is her two children, Evan and Kati.

THANK YOU FRIENDS!

-*Susan Claggett* and *Candace Shattuck* for the work they do with First Day School

-*Valerie Mazur* for all the

Testimony and Concerns work and community service

- *Tom Bartlett and Larny Claggett* for painting the old care takers house, it looks great!.

- *Bob Marshall and Meredith Watters* for the good work they do for Worship and Ministry Committee.

- *Frank Zeigler* for you work with our library, and interesting messages on First Day.



FGC or Friends General Conference is a world wide gathering of Quakers held annually in the U.S. My family and I attended the week long gathering, this year held on the hilly campus of UMass, Amherst. Check in goes fairly smoothly and a large envelope is given to you with all the week long events typed on different colored paper for each day of the week. This beginning list was in no way conclusive, in fact every morning at breakfast I would look for the updated color version of the day's events. Just shy of 2,000 souls were shuffling around campus, scurrying to their workshops, or waiting in line for lunch. I could distinguish at least three distinct groups: Families, high schoolers and the over 60's crowd.

The set up at FGC is that all adults and high schoolers attend their pre-chosen workshop each morning for the entire week. Children attend the Junior gathering held during the same hours at the elementary school located within walking distance to the family dorm. Afternoons are free to choose from a variety, and I do mean variety, of events. Some examples include Conversations with Friends, Couple Enrichment, Quaker EarthCare Witness, Meeting for Worship for Healing, People of Color Center, Hatha Yoga, Shape Note Singing, Friends Services for the Aging. There were daily activities such as Noon Sing, Art Gallery, Swimming, Family Place and field trips. And most Quaker organizations, like Pendle Hill, FWCC, PYM had info tables set up all week long in the Student Union as well as scheduling an hour or so discussion on their group some time during the week. It is an exhausting but spiritual and energizing week. Lots and lots of opportunities to meet and mingle and query fellow Quakers. There were many periods of offered worship time throughout the day. Also chances to sing, move, get off campus on a sponsored field trip, attend a film or visit the healing center for comfort. The space for the gathering store--like an expanded FCG bookstore--was tripled from last year and a great resource to find the latest "Hot off the press" book or your old Quaker favorite. They had everything. In the evenings, while children attended their Junior gathering, adults were free to attend the all gathering plenary sessions or special interest groups. My overall sense of a large scale Friends gathering like FGC is togetherness, even a feeling of oneness. Often our Quaker experience is limited to our monthly Meetings and gatherings like FGC are an excellent opportunity to see and experience what other believers are up to, even if they are just up the road. Next year's FGC Gathering will be held in Blacksburg, VA on the Va Tech campus. A great chance to meet your Quaker neighbor's--just up the road.

by Susan Claggett

WORSHIP AND MINISTRY COMMITTEE

Adult Religious Education

Clearness and Unity:

Notes on Decision-Making in the Manner of

Friends

June 30, 2004

Introduction

Decision-making in the manner of Friends is the practical application of our Quaker principles, Faith and Practice in the meeting for business and in resolution of issues and questions by the Meeting.

Decision-making in the manner of Friends -- seeking clearness, sense of the meeting and unity -- has a venerable history and honored practice in the Religious Society of Friends. For Friends in Quaker meetings for business, decision making in the manner of Friends is fundamentally a process of collective spiritual discernment. Friends seek to be open to and led by the Spirit. Arthur Larrabee writes:

The sense of the meeting is a spiritual method, involving a spiritual process, expecting a Spirit-led decision. The authority is the Spirit, as discerned by the group in a spirit of worship.

The "Quaker process," as it is often called, and its practice are not always well understood among Friends. Decision-making in the manner of Friends may not be clearly and commonly understood, occasionally even confusing and controversial. Successful decision-making in the manner of Friends depends on the common understanding of and continuing commitment to Quaker practices among all participants. At Third Haven Friends Meeting decision-making in the manner of Friends is appropriate for collective (corporate) discernment, seeking collective insight, wisdom and sense of the meeting.

Clearness, sense of the meeting and unity are all terms of art in Quaker practice and process. In seeking the sense of the meeting each present should seek and speak the Truth as she or he understands it. The Quaker process works well when each speaker releases his or view, observation, position or message (Truth) to the collective will of the Meeting. Redfern writes:

The sense of the meeting is better arrived at when each person present relinquishes control.

Quaker process is not well served by argumentation, repetition or willfulness.

In decision-making in the manner of Friends, we seek not rational agreement or consensus. Rather, we seek to receive, understand and accept the will of God for the Meeting, with respect to the question at hand. This may be easy with many routine matters like annual reports, many financial decisions, actions on the property and membership. When matters are more controversial or the members and attenders of the Meeting more divided, the process can be, as we all have learned at Third Haven, much more challenging.

Sense of the Meeting

Our own Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice, 1997 (p 23), states that

Sense of the meeting is a religious process characterized by listening for and trusting in God. Barry Morley, who has written very thoughtfully on decision-making in the manner of Friends, writes:

Sense of the Meeting is a gift. It came to Quakers through their commitment to continuing revelation. They discovered that the Light which had come to teach people could lead them to revealed corporate decisions.

Seeking and finding the sense of the meeting is a process of spiritual discernment, not a rational process of argument designed to reach agreement or consensus. Faith and Practice (p 23) states:

Although reasoned argument and lively debate may often play a role in decision-making in the manner of Friends, they are useful only to the extent that they are expressions of Spiritual leadings.

In this connection, many Quaker thinkers do not favor the use of consensus to describe decision-making in the manner of Friends. In this view consensus is a more secular concept. Sense of the meeting is a distinctly Quaker practice.

Discerning and determining the sense of the meeting can be difficult even with excellent clerking. Finding the sense of the meeting is not only the clerk's responsibility; each participant shares the responsibility for discerning the sense of the meeting. Such successful discernment depends on the understanding of and commitment to decision-making in the manner of Friends among all participants.

Clearness

While much is written on sense of the meeting and unity, there is rather less written on clearness in decision-making in the manner of Friends. Yet clearness is essential. Consist with Quaker spiritual discernment practices in the meeting for worship, and as with Quaker clearness with respect to membership and marriage, Quakers seek to be clear in their understandings, interpretations and intentions. Without clearness, the Meeting and individuals can reach a false agreement based on varying interpretations, confusion and even underlying disagreements. Most of us are familiar with the consequences of the lack of clearness in our everyday lives. Misunderstandings occur, even abound, among many with enduring relationships and good communications. We have all heard others say – “That is not what I meant.” “You didn’t hear me.” “You just don’t understand.” All too often agreements and decisions, even among Friends, can come unraveled when participants say “That’s not what I agreed to.” Clearness takes careful, open and attentive listening. Clearness can take a good deal of time.

Unity

The Meeting and the meeting for business come into unity in the Light, with the Spirit, following the will of God. Barry Morley writes:

...consensus is achieved through a process of reasoning in which reasonable people search for a satisfactory decision. But in seeking the sense of the meeting we open our selves to being guided to the perfect resolution by the Light, to a place where we sit in unity in the collective inward Presence. In Sense of the meeting God gets a voice.

In seeking unity in decision-making in the manner of Friends, we try to ensure that God is heard, understood and obeyed. Faith and Practice provides that:

Friends must therefore be rigorous in discerning the ultimate source of their leadings, always looking beyond the self, and never letting their own wills become a substitute for God.

When the Meeting achieves clearness and unity, the power of the Spirit binds us together and to the resolution. Clearness and unity in decision-making in the manner of Friends are transformative to the individuals and the will of the Meeting. Those who have experienced this can attest to the binding power of the Spirit in decision-making in the manner of Friends. Howard Brinton writes:

The members of the group discover experimentally that as they become united with God, so they also become united with one another. Unity is always possible because the same Light of Truth shines in some measure in every human heart tending toward the same goal.

However, unity is not unanimity. Faith and Practice (p 22) indicates that the Meeting is in unity :

when our search for truth is shared; when our listening for God is faithful; when our wills are caught up in the presence of Christ; and when our love for one another is constant. A united meeting is not necessarily of one mind, but is all of one heart.

Suggested Reading

- Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Faith and Practice, 1997, pp 21-28.

Additional References

- Howard Brinton, Guide to Quaker Practice, Pendle Hill Pamphlet 20, 1943, pp 27-43.
- Decisions, Decisions: A Quaker View on the Process, compiled by the Committee on Truth and integrity in Public Affairs, London (?): Religious Society of Friends, June, 1998.
- Barry Morley, Beyond Consensus: Salvaging the Sense of the Meeting, Pendle Hill Pamphlet 307, 1993.
- Keith Redfern, Before the Meeting: A Handbook for Clerks, London: Quaker Home Service, 1993.

Michael J. Sheerhan, Beyond Majority Rule: Voteless Decision-Making in the Religious Society of Friends, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1983.

by Tom Corl

Court Decides on Quakers' Stand for Religious Freedom

In July of last year the U.S. Justice Department brought suit against Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends to force the Quaker organization to act as a collection agent on the government's behalf against one of PYM's own members. At issue were the back taxes of a member and employee who, as a matter of deeply held religious convictions, refuses to pay taxes that support war and preparations for war. This past Monday (June 21), Judge Stewart Dalzell of the United States District Court for Eastern Pennsylvania ruled in the case of the United States of America v. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting [PYM]. He offered a mixed decision.

On the one hand, Judge Dalzell found against PYM in determining that we must honor the levy on Priscilla Adams's wages and pay over to the IRS the amount they seek. On the other hand, he found in favor of PYM in determining that as Quakers we were not unreasonable – as the IRS had claimed – to stand on religious principles and to contest the appropriateness of the levy as a means of collection in these circumstances. The judge thus ruled that the 50% penalty the IRS sought to impose on PYM for refusing to honor the levy is unwarranted and disallowed.

From the beginning this has been a case as much or more about religious freedom and freedom of conscience than taxes. As an historic peace church well known for our long standing, principled opposition to war and violence, Quakers have sought to develop and refine non-violent means of conflict resolution, and we have helped others do so as well. Some members have long felt that, in addition to refusing to participate in the military themselves, they must also refuse to support the military financially. As a Quaker organization, PYM has a carefully crafted policy in regard to the withholding and payment of taxes for and by its employees through which we attempt both to honor the responsible demands of citizenship and to

support those of our employees who cannot in good conscience pay taxes for war.

In one of the most important points in this ruling, Judge Dalzell affirms that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act [RFRA] is applicable in this case – as we have long argued – even though the government claims otherwise. Having so found, the judge goes on to state plainly, “The Yearly Meeting has established that the IRS's conduct substantially pressured it to abandon core Quaker beliefs;” and, therefore “The burden shifts to the Government to show that enforcement of the levy furthers a compelling interest [of the state] by the least restrictive means.”

Judge Dalzell concludes that he “agrees with the Yearly Meeting that the levy substantially burdens its exercise of religion.” Despite this, he ruled that in this case PYM must honor the levy and pay over the amount in question. We believe this is an unfortunate ruling that finally fails to give full and proper weight to the meaning of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, legislation designed to ensure the religious freedom guaranteed to both individuals and churches under the Constitution.

We continue to believe that the government can certainly find “less restrictive means” to collect the taxes it is owed. Forcing an established church to violate its fundamental, historic principles for the convenience of the government cannot be acceptable. As it stands, this ruling says that the value of religious freedom – an essential social and moral value of our society – is less important than the government's desire to have the easiest possible tool for collecting back taxes.

At the meeting of our governing body last night (on June 24), PYM agreed to pay the funds ordered by the court. As individuals of faith who also wish to be good citizens, the members felt we had to take this course. However, we were also clear that we will continue to stand for religious freedom – not only for ourselves but for all people – and that we will continue to support our members who feel called to take stands of conscience in witness to their faith.

contributed by Thomas H. Jeavon

SOUTHERN QUARTERLY MEETING Upcoming Lectures On Peace

On September 10 at Wicomico River Friends Meeting in Salisbury, Maryland, Gene Hillman, the coordinator for Adult Religious Education of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting will speak on the topic of the Biblical basis for the Quaker Peace Testimony. Hear about the spiritual history of Quaker peace activism. Please join us at 6PM for a pot luck dinner with our talk to begin at 7PM. All are welcome. For more information please contact Dana Kester-McCabe at 410-352-5827 or sqm@friendsmedia.org

Jerry Frost will give at a lecture Chester River Friends Meeting in Chestertown, Maryland on September 19 12:30PM, following brown bag lunch. "Why Religions Foster War" will be the Inner Quest Fellowship Fall Lecture. Jerry will discuss parts of his new book titled: "A History of Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist Perspectives on War and Peace." All are welcome. For more information please contact David Wakeley 410-810-0562 dwakeley64@hotmail.com