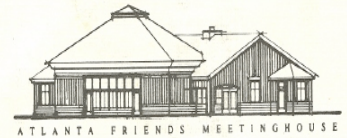


Atlanta Friends Meeting Newsletter



Meeting for Worship
Each First Day (Sunday)
10:00 - 11:00 a.m.
701 W. Howard Ave.
Decatur, GA 30030

OCTOBER 2010

Query: Do you find time for meditation, prayer, and worship? Do you seek spiritual guidance in making decisions and in times of stress?

Intelligent Disobedience” contributed by Betsy Eggers

First Day School Lesson One... Inspired by a 4-Legged Friend

I watched in amazement, as the term “Intelligent Disobedience” was demonstrated in flesh and blood by a blind woman and her dog.

During my first meeting of the Southeastern Guide Dog Georgia puppy raisers group, a blind woman told her dog to “Find the steps, Ralph.” The large, white, standard poodle quickly led the owner to the church auditorium stage steps. “Forward up.” Then “Left, left, Ralph.” Up the seven steps they climbed and to the middle of the stage they walked.

“Right about, Ralph.” They faced us, their audience, below.

She commanded her dog, “Forward, Ralph.” The dog took a few steps forward, then stopped dead in its tracks.

“Forward, Ralph,” she commanded again, with an impatient, stronger tone.

Ralph sat down five feet from the edge of the elevated stage. To follow its owner’s order would have been easy for the dog--- a quick jump. But it would have caused the blind woman to fall off the edge. The Guide Dog overrode the “Forward” command with a greater, “inner” command to protect its unsighted human.

Right before my eyes, I saw why intelligent disobedience makes Guide Dogs top-of-the-line in trained canines. I was stunned, and sold on becoming a volunteer puppy raiser!

Our own version of Intelligent Disobedience in human-form come in George Fox’s famous “What canst thou say?”. We look to the Inner Light for guidance. Our hearts and minds work together in Spirit to help direct our Leadings. The Friends who ran the Underground Railroad, who were Suffragettes, who were Civil Rights workers and war resisters disobeyed --- intelligently--- the mores, customs, and laws to follow their Leadings to a better society of social justice and human rights.

Two months later, I picked up my very own future Intelligent Disobeyer from Southeastern Guide Dogs in Palmetto, Florida . Calypso, an 11-week old, black goldador, joined my First Day School class of kindergartners, first- and second-graders. There were many lessons to be learned around Guide Dogs. Service, good manners, and being respectful all of God’s creatures were among such themes. But teaching a class on “Intelligent Disobedience” seemed too Quakerly, too First-Day-Schooly, to pass up.

The youngsters sat quietly in their circle while I told the story with paper dolls of the visually impaired woman and her poodle. They, like me, were amazed the dog knew not to listen! He saved her from harm! How could a dog be so smart?

“ This is called ‘Intelligent Disobedience.’ What is ‘intelligent’?”

A second grader answered, “Smart.”

Yes!

“What is ‘disobedience’?”

The answer took longer to bubble up. “Obey” they understood. Then “disobey”.

“ Did the dog disobey?” “Have you ever disobeyed?” (Some of our children have NEVER disobeyed! An amazing group of youths, indeed!)

And then the thorniest of questions, “Is it ever smart to disobey?”

NOOOoooo!! Thinking of mom or dad or teacher... right-o.

“Did the dog disobey?”

Well... yes...but still.... those wheels were turning in those bright little minds!

“What if a stranger said, ‘Come into my car.’ “ Wheels turning, turning,

turning. “Would you ever get into a car with someone you didn’t know? By yourself?”

“NO!” quickly, emphatically, by one, then by all!

A classmate at school may ask you to cheat. You may want to lie about something that you know is wrong. The older you get, there will be more and more times you’ll have to decide what to do. How will you know? What will you do?

Aha! Your own smart brain! A small still Voice in your heart! The more you listen to that Voice, to that God Within, the more you will learn what is the right thing to do.

You need to practice listening to your small, still voice. Calypso needs to practice, too, so he will know what to do.

You children and our friend, Calypso, the Guide Dog, will learn to make the right decisions. He will learn Intelligent Disobedience. You will, too!

Announcements

Two events on preventing violence in Africa: Oct. 21 and Oct 24

Come hear David Zarembka, the coordinator of the African Great Lakes Initiative of Friends Peace Teams, speak about reconciling warring ethnicities in Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya and preventing violence during elections in Kenya and Burundi. On Thursday evening, Oct. 21, Dave will speak on the topic, “Peacemaking after Deadly Conflict: Healing and Reconciliation in Rwanda, Burundi, and Kenya.” This talk will describe how the Alternatives to Violence project brings together all sides of a conflict and how Rwandans and Burundians have developed programs to deal with personal and community trauma. On First Day, Oct. 24, Dave will speak at a forum at 11:45 on “Possible Solutions to the Sham of Elections in Kenya and Burundi.” Elections in the Great Lakes region of Africa are a time of fear as violence, intimidation, conflict, and even civil war frequently occur. What are some of the solutions? Friends are organizing violence prevention programs. We hope that you can join us for one or both

of these events. In addition to learning about innovative peacemaking projects after genocide and armed conflict, you will have the opportunity to learn more about the home country of Burundi Friends who attend AFM and about Kenya, which has the largest number of Friends in the world. Dave and his wife, Gladys Komonya, live in Kenya, and Gladys is Kenyan. AFM will be hosting Dave and Gladys from Oct. 20 through Oct. 25, and they are interested in meeting F/friends and other speaking opportunities in the Atlanta area. For more information, contact Julia Ewen, 404-534-304 or jewen@bellsouth.net .

Adult First Day School October 3, Winn Martin will offer his spiritual journey. For the rest of the month we will continue to discuss the book (chapters 9-12), *An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith* by Barbara Brown Taylor. This is a book on practice-centered spirituality and each chapter explores a different practice. Class meets each Sunday in the library from 9:00-9:50. All are welcome.

Clerk of the Meeting Georgia Lord	Finance Paul Mangelsdorf 770-677-4280	Religious Education Mary Jahntz 404-627-7699	Office Coordinator Jonah McDonald
Assistant Clerk of the Mtg Bill Holland 404-692-2358	Care & Counsel Dwight Harriman 404-226-1232	Newsletter Editor Perry Treadwell	Friend in Residence John Roberts 917-902-3719
Recording Clerk Caroline Noyes 770-452-0736	Ministry & Worship Suzan Kenworthy 770-493-6878	Social Concerns Julia Parker Ewen 404-534-3043 John Adams 404-755-6481	Web Master Aaron Ruscotta arxaaron@gmail.com
Treasurer Meredith Reynolds			

Atlanta Friends Meeting will be marching in the Atlanta Pride Parade,

which is October 10 this year. We want to be a voice of love and hope for the many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and queer people who have been hurt by religious organizations and fear that they can not both be loved by God and be who they are. Everyone is welcome to join us after meeting for worship; the larger and more diverse our group, the stronger our message of love and inclusion will be. We will be carrying the meeting's banner and signs with individual messages (example from last year: God loves YOU) are welcome.

Practical details: The beginning of the parade will leave from the Civic Center MARTA Station promptly at 1:00 pm and follow Peachtree and then 10th Street to the Charles Allen entrance into Piedmont Park to join the Pride Festival. Parking is very limited at both ends of the parade, so MARTA is recommended. Wear layers and comfortable shoes and bring water and sunscreen. More info at www.atlantapride.org/parade or contact Nina Gooch at [ninagooch AT gmail DOT com](mailto:ninagooch@gmail.com).

A Service for Women

I ran into a group of women at Carpe Diem the other evening enjoying their comradery. They belong to the "social arm" of the Atlanta Lesbian Health Initiative called the Fourth Tuesday. Interested? www.thehealthinitiative.org. Their web site says it all. Ed.

AT YOUR SERVICE A group of us who have had some experience with lobbying is available to offer tips to others. If you are eager to express your perspective about a bill coming up here in Georgia or in Washington, consider talking with us. We could share information, discuss strategy, and tell stories of both our successes and our mistakes! Contact Sue May, sdmay@mindspring.com, or Lissa Place, Mark Smith, Robyn Coward, Kathy Johnson, or John Roberts.

Faithful Friend

Carol Gray is another Friend who works behind the scenes to help the Meeting run. You can see her often seeing that the potlucks run smoothly, that those who request hospitality get served, and that badges are scripted. So next time you see Carol ministering to the Meeting say thanks. Ed.

Jay Marshall's Visit (Quakerism 201)

The workshop led by Jay Marshall, Dean of the Earlham School of Religion began on Saturday, September 11. In the morning, he led the attendees through a brain-storm on words for God. First, came adjectives, then verbs. It was noted by at least one person that the words were our expectations of God; not what God expected of us (unless it was love).

During the afternoon session, Marshall asked the religious practice that you may have given up and what are our expectations of community: Engagement, Contribution (such as service and support) and Culture. He challenged us with expectations that order the community: Discipleship, Obedience, Authority, Worship, Stewardship and Giftedness.

Meeting for Worship is conducted in silent expectancy with awe and mystery. His list of Basics open for discussion were challenging: 1, Christ has come to teach his people himself; 2, The importance of the Inner Sanctuary; 3, The work of the spirit is transformational; 4, Discernment within the context of spiritual community; 5, Authority sources need to be read and interpreted; 6, Contemporary relevance of testimonies; 7, Universal ministry [your ministry, calling]. Food for much discernment if the Meeting continued to consider the challenge further.

On First Day he spent most of his time describing his personal spiritual journey in but the Adult First Day school and the forum after Meeting. On a lighter note, the Meeting relished large cakes celebrating Earlham School of Religion's 50 years. Ed.

Atlanta Friends Meeting
Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
9th Month 15, 2010
Recorded Pending Approval

Georgia Lord presented the Query: “When we gather together in Quaker communities to do the work of our community...do we lay aside differences and planned scripts, and give ourselves to goodwill, Divine guidance and love? Do we see the matters before the committee merely as tasks to be completed as efficiently as possible—or do we see them as opportunities to seek deeper unity.” (Steve Smith, Claremont Friends Meeting)

In attendance were: Steve Collins, Mary Ann Downey, Betsy Eggers, Julia Ewen, Eric Glenn, Judith Greenberg, Bill Holland, Kathy Johnson, Lynn Leuszler, Sally MacEwen, Beth Martinson, Rick Martinson, Alison Mawle, Susan May, Steve McLaughlin, Ronald Nuse, Marguerite Rece, John Roberts, Bert Skellie, Perry Treadwell, Isabel Werber, Caroline Noyes (Recording Clerk), Georgia Lord (Clerk) (23 Friends)

Nominating Committee: On behalf of Nominating, Steve Collins brought forth Rick Martinson for final approval as a member-at-large on Administration Committee and Julia Ewen as an upper-elementary teacher in First Day School. Steve Collins also brought forth Kirsten Smith for initial consideration as a preschool teacher in First Day School, and final approval will be sought in Tenth Month.

Minute 10-09-01: Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Rick Martinson as a member on the Administration Committee.

Minute 10-09-02: Atlanta Friends Meeting approves Julia Ewen as an upper elementary teacher in First Day School.

Bill Holland Report on **Mary Ann Downey’s Anchoring Committee:** On behalf of Mary Ann Downey’s anchoring committee, Bill Holland reported on Mary Ann’s upcoming travels. In the coming weeks, Mary Ann will travel to the Earlham School of Religion where she serves on the Board of Advisors, and to Wichita, Kansas where she will lead a retreat. She will also lead a retreat with SAYMA committees, and will lead a retreat in Cincinnati on committee process. The requests for Mary Ann’s presence have come through both the FGC Traveling Ministry program, and as an outgrowth from workshops that she has led at SAYMA and FGC.

Clerk’s Item: In light of the query, there was considerable reflection and discussion regarding ways to enhance Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. Several Friends expressed that Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business should be at the heart of the Meeting and would be enhanced if committees making reports provided the Meeting with a sense of their thought processes and brought to the Meeting some of the questions they have been working with or concerns that have arisen.

Approval of Minutes of Eighth Month Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business:

Minute 10-09-03: Atlanta Friends Meeting Approves the minutes of Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business of Eighth Month with no corrections.

Meeting closed with silent worship.
Respectfully Submitted,

Georgia Lord, Clerk

Caroline Noyes, Recording Clerk

The clerk brought forward for the Meeting's comment the following document.

The Joy of Quaker Committees

Reprinted from *Western Friend*, issue of June 2nd, 2009 by Steve Smith

When we gather together in Quaker committees to do the work of our community, where do we put our attention? With no more than a moment of quiet, do we dive immediately into the tasks and problems before us—or do we settle deeply into worship, centering our hearts and minds upon the Source of all Light and Truth?

Anticipating a committee meeting, do we calculate how to secure an outcome we have chosen in advance? As we settle into the meeting, are we mistrustful and querulous with one another? Or do we lay aside differences and planned scripts, and give ourselves to goodwill, Divine guidance and love?

Do we see the matters before the committee merely as tasks to be completed as efficiently as possible—or do we see them as opportunities to seek deeper unity? Which do we pursue more urgently: our private ease, or the joyfulness of doing God's work?

Acquired over many years of working on various Quaker committees, my own experience encompasses all of these patterns and more. I have sat on committees that degenerated into lengthy, heated arguments between two members, while others sat in embarrassed and awkward silence. I have participated in (and sometimes clerked) committees in which it was obvious that some who were present viscerally disliked and mistrusted others: as one opened her mouth to speak, another was poised to disagree. And I have frequently experienced committee meetings in which members impulsively digressed from the agenda item before the committee onto this or that irrelevant tangent, like kangaroos scattering in all directions.

Yet I have also been blessed by Quaker committees in which members happily looked forward to meeting with each other, and when gathered, brought all of themselves into the room, ready to share intimately from their lives. I have known committees that were as deeply centered and gathered as any Meeting for Worship can be. I have been delighted by committees in which everyone eagerly came together to address the shared work and, when additional tasks arose, vied to take responsibility for those tasks in order to spare others from undue burdens. I have spent full days and even weekends immersed in extended committee meetings, and left those meetings exalted not only by what we had accomplished, but even more by the spiritual power of our fellowship.

Perhaps no other faith tradition relies so heavily as does Quakerism upon small groups that labor together to conduct necessary business. Our testimony of equality and our relative lack of formal hierarchy mean that most Quaker decisions are jointly made. Committees exist not only to accomplish tasks, however, but also to build community. We may see this truth more clearly in other settings. For example, veterans of Friends' work camps and other joint service activities know that while such laudable efforts are initiated to meet an external need—to house the homeless, to reach out to those in conflict, to listen to those who have no voice, and a thousand other worthy causes—the external outcomes of those efforts may appear modest in comparison to the bonds of fellowship that are fostered through laboring together in laughter and love.

At their best, Quaker committees are small catalysts for community, cells of centering and faith that strengthen our bonds and deepen our spiritual lives. Committee meetings are typically overshadowed by our larger gatherings. But the best measure of a Meeting's spiritual health may lie not in the more public events of meeting for worship or business (where public posturing may simulate good order), but in the small gatherings of Friends who are charged with the ongoing tasks of the Meeting.

How can we tell whether these gatherings reveal a healthy spiritual community—or one that is drifting into decay? We recognize that a committee is going badly if:

- *Committee meetings are poorly attended;
- * The loudest or quickest voices dominate, shunting quieter persons aside;
- * Impulsive reactions and self-indulgent digressions dissipate energy;
- * A few members of the committee are overburdened with most of the tasks;
- * Some members of the committee mistrust or even disdain one another;
- * Committee work is divorced from the personal lives of its members.

Seasoned Friends can doubtless describe many other symptoms of dysfunction.

Shortcomings of Quaker process often arise from an absence of trust and love. If an undercurrent of suspicion pervades a committee, our prejudices override our patience. Focusing upon the faults and foibles of others, we dig in our heels. At such times we are prone to proclaim abstract principles that are divorced from an open heart.

When we extend ourselves in good will and kindness to one another, however, everything goes better. Resting in God,

loving one another as we are loved, we find clarity and strength to do our work. Forgiving others' weaknesses, we are glad to be together.

As Friend Deborah Haines writes,

Whenever we remember that we are in the presence of God, everything seems to be illuminated from within by divine radiance. Every task, no matter how mundane, becomes an act of worship, a word of praise offered to God.

Thus worship should not be merely a pro forma silence before we "get down to business," but the cradle and source for all that we do. The many patterns that disrupt good order—a hurried pace, interrupting one another, hurt feelings and argument, diffuse and digressive chatter, and so on—naturally drop away.

The manner in which we do our business is at least important as the outcome. Again, Deborah Haines expresses the point well:

When we focus on the product, we are tempted to paper over unresolved differences in the name of consensus, often generating a lowest-common-denominator solution that will not stand the test of time. When we focus on the process—opening ourselves to the Inward Light and truly attending to each other—the sense of the meeting that emerges is strong and deeply rooted, knitting the group together in a shared experience of the divine.

While no formula captures the essence of good Quaker committee work, these guidelines reflect Friends historic understanding of Gospel Order:

Unite in silent worship. George Fox asked Friends to "meet together and know one another in that which is eternal." (Epistle #149) Begin and end meetings with settled silent worship. If difficulties arise, a period of silent reflection may restore perspective and open way for wisdom to emerge.

Build the blessed community. We work best together when we are trusting, loving and joyful with one another. Good group process creates and sustains a loving community.

Know one another as whole persons. While most committees do not function as support groups for their members, a tender sensitivity to each other's emotional and spiritual state (perhaps aided by brief personal "check-ins" at the beginning of the meeting) can deepen the shared life of the group.

Be deliberate. Haste makes waste. Good committee work is unhurried, even (or especially) when the agenda is lengthy.

Wait to be recognized by the clerk. Speaking out of turn is like "cutting in line," implying that one's own words are more important than anything others might say. The clerk's role is to invite orderly attention to the matter at hand and ensure that all may speak. Seek a balance between rigid formality, and a chaotic "free-for-all" in which the quickest voice dominates.

Stay focused and on track. Impulsive reactions and "pop-up" digressions drain time and energy from the group. While all are charged with maintaining good order, the Clerk bears primary responsibility for overseeing process and bringing the group back when it has strayed.

Invite all voices. Most groups include some who talk easily, and others who are shy, diffident or reserved. When talkers drown out listeners, group process suffers. Make space for the quietest members to speak, if they wish. Then listen!

Avoid lengthy speeches. "Let your words be few," advised early Friends. Speak as much as necessary—and no more. The traditional "This Friend speaks my mind" is preferable to restating a point that has already been made.

Be flexible. Dearly beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by, but that all, with the measure of light which is pure and holy, may be guided: and so in the light walking and abiding, these may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not from the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. —Advices, Elders at Balby, 1656

Good process properly governs all that we do and are as Friends. When committee meetings are infused by Light and Truth, our hearts open and our difficulties ease. In the words of George Fox, we awaken to "the hidden unity in the Eternal Being," and delight in its life-transforming gladness and joy.

Steve Smith is a member of Claremont Friends Meeting in Southern California, and has been active in numerous Quaker committees for some twenty years.

Steve Smith is going to be leading a Pendle Hill Workshop Feb. 25th - 27th, 2011, on The Joy of Working with Quaker Committees: Clerking and Working with Spirit.

Calender for 10th Month 2010

Area Meetings for Worship

Every First Day, 10:00 a.m. – In the Meeting Room and a small meeting in the Library

Every First Day, 10:00 a.m.— In the Meeting Room and a small meeting in the Library.

Every First Day, 12:30 p.m. — Carrollton Friends Worship Group, St. Andrew United Methodist Youth Center, 1106 Maple St, Carrollton, lessell.bray@gmail.com or 770-830-8705.

Every 2nd and 4th First Day, 10:00 a.m. — Canton Friends Worship Group, 360 E. Marietta St, Canton, 12:00 p.m. Contact Marty Bray for more information: 770-830-8705 or lessell.bray@ gmail.com

Every Fifth Day, 12:10 p.m.— First Thursdays at AFSC office, 60 Walton ST. NW, Atlanta, 10303

Every other Thursday at East Lake Commons, 404-378-5883 or bertskellie@gmail.com.

Every Sixth Day, 8:45 a.m.— Friends School of Atlanta, 862 Columbia Drive, Decatur, GA 30030, 404-373-8746. Beginning again August 13.

Mon-Fri Morning Worship, 8:30 – 9:00: In the library at Atlanta Friends Meetinghouse. Contact Jonah McDonald, 404-377-2474, afmquakers@hotmail.com

Weekly Events

Every First Day (Sunday)

9:00 Adult Religious Education

9:15 Singing, Classroom A/B

10:00 Meetings for Worship

Every Week Day (Monday – Friday)

8:30-9:00 Morning Silent Worship, Library

Every Second-Fifth Day (Monday-Thursday)

8:30-12:30 Smart Toddlers, Nursery playground

Every Third Day (Tuesday)

7:30pm Silent Meditation, Meeting Room

7:30pm Bible Study, Library

Every Fourth Day (Wednesday)

7:00-8:30 Mid-Week Semi-Programmed Worship Mt. Rm

10/14, Fifth Day (Thursday)

6:45-9:00 Social Concerns, library

10/17, First Day (Sunday)

11:45 Meeting for Worship with attention to business

10/18, Deadline for 11th Month newsletter

10/18, Newcomers Dinner, place to be announced

10/21 Fifth Day (Thursday)

6:00-9:00 David Zarembka Public Event

10/24 First Day, (Sunday)

11:45-1:15 CUR-AFM jr High Rm

11:45-12:45 David Zarembka Forum

Please confirm unique events by checking the announcements sheets and or contacting the

Other Events

10/3, First Day, (Sunday) Potluck

8:30-10:00 Gathered Meeting Retreat

Committee, Jr High Rm

11:30-2:00 Green Friends, A&B

10/6, Fourth Day, (Wednesday)

6:45-9:45 Administration Library

10/7, Fifth Day, (Thursday)

7:30-9:00 Meeting for Peace Jr High Rm

10/10, First Day, (Sunday)

11:45-2:00 Finance, Library

11:30-2:00 Care and Counsel, Jr. Teen Rm.

11:45-2:00 Ministry & Worship, A&B

11:45-2:00 Religious Ed, Nursery

10/13, Fourth Day (Wednesday)

7:30-9:30 ORAIARH, library

The sense of the Meeting is that the quality of our worship is noticeably strengthened when Friends arrive on time. We appreciate that this is sometimes difficult to do and recognize any extra efforts Friends make to adhere to this discipline on behalf of our community.

Atlanta Friends Meeting
701 West Howard Avenue
Decatur, GA 30030-2902
Phone: 404-377-2474

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING

701 West Howard Avenue, Decatur, GA 30030

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NAMETAGS: If you would like to have a permanent nametag made, leave a request in one of the baskets on the front table. Indicate whether you prefer one that hangs around the neck or that pins. When Carol Gray has made one for you, it will be placed in the black file box on the greeting table.

If you would like to be included in the AFM database and receive the Newsletter by mail and/or appear in future AFM Directories, please send your name, address phone, e-mail address, etc to Nina Gooch by e-mail at ninagooch@gmail.com or by phone 404-371-9873. Please indicate if you want to be in the directory, receive the newsletter by mail, or both. This also applies to any change in existing database information, e.g. change of address.

To receive AFM newsletter notices via e-mail, simply send a blank e-mail to afmnewsletter-subscribe@yahoogroups.com from the address where you want to receive the newsletter. You will receive a note back from Yahoo asking you to confirm your subscription; simply hit reply and you will be added to the list. There is no subscription fee for the newsletter.

To receive general announcements and participate in discussion, follow the same instructions only address the note to afmdiscussion-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. To receive announcements relating directly to the life of the meeting, send the same note to afmannouncements-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Contributions to the Atlanta Friends Meeting can be placed in the slot marked "Contributions" in the greeting area of the Meetinghouse, or mailed to the Treasurer at the above address. Thank you!

DEADLINE FOR 10TH Month newsletter: 9th Month 17

Readers are encouraged to submit letters, articles, poetry, calendar notices and anything else of interest to Friends. Items should be sent directly to: Perry Treadwell perryt@bellsouth.net 404-325-1504 preferably in plain text in the body of the email.

This newsletter is a publication of the Atlanta Friends Meeting. Views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Atlanta Friends Meeting