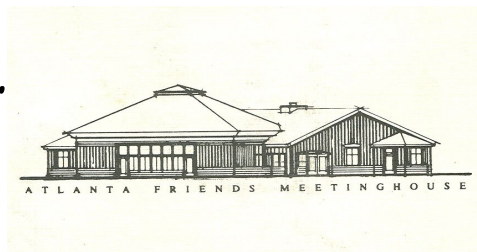


Atlanta Friends Meeting Newsletter

Atlanta Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). All are welcome.



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

November 2012

Query: Do you "live in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars?" Do you conscientiously seek to maintain our testimony against military preparations and direct participation in war and violence as inconsistent with the teaching and spirit of Jesus?

Christianity: The First 250 Years

Hanging in the Atlanta Friends Meeting Library is the famous Quaker Tree depicting the convoluted, interlocking history of the various branches of the Religious Society of Friends in the United States. As the Society progressed across the American continent schisms of interpretation, dogma and practice tore the structure apart. Yes, there were significant challenges to George Fox's vision in Britain, the best known being James Naylor's side trip to prison. But the correspondence by Margaret Fell Fox kept most of the new cult in line.

But British Quakers could not exert their influence on the American exuberance to test some of the basic discipline. Confronted with the evangelism and the second enlightenment as the frontier pushed west, meetings took up preaching, singing and many other protestant additions. Examining the Quaker Tree, it appears that every Quaker Meeting had its own vision of the proper discipline.

Reading the *History of Christianity by Paul Johnson*, it struck me that the first 250 years of the cult that would eventually be called Christian had even worse gestation pains than Quakers. After the death of Jesus, a conflict of authorities over the accepted practices of the Jesus sect arose: Paul versus Jerusalem and other cities. The destruction of Jerusalem and the slow appearance of the synoptic gospels, written from the perspective of the authors' constituents, present a confusing picture of the first century. Did the authority reside in Antioch, Alexandria, Ephesus, Corinth or Rome? What influence did the Essenes, Gnostics and other mystery cults have? Some Christian cults denied that Jesus had ever been a man. The present New Testament had not been agreed upon. A plethora of writings attributed to authors already dead, such as Paul and Peter, circulated. Some documents attributed to the nominal synoptic authors appeared in the second and third centuries. It would appear that even the synoptic gospels were edited by later scribes trying to mitigate some of the confusion.

It is impossible to construct a chronology for the development of a standard dogma until Constantine bludgeoned the diverse bishops into agreeing upon a creed at Nicaea. The early communal structure of the diverse churches was slowly destroyed by the creation of authoritarian, hierarchical branches to the exclusion of women's contributions.

As Johnson observes, "Christianity began in confusion, controversy and schism and so it continued. A dominant orthodox Church, with a recognizable ecclesiastical structure emerged only very gradually and represented a process of natural selection - a spiritual survival of the fittest." Valentinus, Marcion, Tertullian or Montanus, and Origen were among many contributors and opponents.

It may be that Quakers have survived because they decided to have a nonhierarchical structure and not to have a central dogma, at least not one written and agreed upon. Circumstances led some Friends to encompass a more evangelical outreach. Others felt more comfortable with participation in singing, praying and preaching in worship. Some stayed in a more traditional order of worship. But all perspectives must continue to ask how the spirit prospers among them in the 21st century as George Fox queried in the 17th.

Early Evolution of the Peace Testimony

For at least 200 years it was assumed by Friends and historians alike that the Peace Testimony began with the 1660 “Declaration from the harmless and innocent people of God, called Quakers . . .” The declaration signed by George Fox and eleven other Friends, was a response to the fear that Quakers would be linked to revolutionaries attempting to overthrow the new King Charles II. A recent book by **Meredith Baldwin Weddle**, *Walking in the Way of Peace: Quaker Pacifism in the Seventeenth Century*, effectively questions that assumption. Her contribution to Quaker history supports the perspective that the Peace Testimony was, and still is, a confused, contentious and ambiguous position.

Weddle begins with instances of refusal to bear arms by individuals in England before 1660, including George Fox. Although his memory might have been shaky while dictating his Journal, his letter to Oliver Cromwell in 1654 made it clear that Fox lived “to bring [the people] from the occasion of the war and from the occasion of the magistrate’s sword.” Other documents indicate that during Cromwell’s protectorate many soldiers, when convinced, refused arms and left the military.

The first test of the Peace Testimony came in New England and particularly in the Quaker colony of Rhode Island. The colony of separate villages had just become governed by Quakers when danger arose from the Dutch and the Indians. Plymouth Colony, Massachusetts Colony, and Connecticut Colony were joined by a reluctant Rhode Island in King Phillip’s War, the first in American history.

The separate villages were left to form their own committees for defense while the government in Newport was called on to assist the Plymouth soldiers. Since it was believed that the magistrates were appointed by God, they were required to take defensive measures of gun and powder and sword. Some Quakers took part in the Nipsackuck battle with the Wampanoags as well as the Great Swamp massacre of the Narragansetts, which took place quite near where the 2012 Gathering was held.

At the same time a group of unnamed Quakers wrote an epistle similar to the sentiments of the 1660 statement: “A Testimony From Us (in Scorn Called Quakers But Are) the Children of the Light.” While some Quakers were clear that they left their lives “in the hands of God,” others rushed to garrison houses. The Quaker assembly passed an ordinance essentially granting Conscientious Objection to those who feared for their afterlife if taking up arms. The CO status remained with modifications until a nonQuaker government was elected.

Historians have mythologized Rhode Island’s pacifist stand over the years. Weddle disputes this: Rhode Island exiled Indians, supplied boats to the Plymouth and Massachusetts armies, blockaded Philip, provisioned and protected colonial troops, raised, dispatched and transported soldiers, manned an official garrison, assisted in the final search for Philip himself, “and at last, tried and executed prisoners of war.” After the war, the other colonies disparaged Rhode Island’s contributions and individual Quakers throughout the colonies were persecuted.

Weddle observes: “The conclusion of this study points to the gulf separating secular and religious pacifists, a gulf that when unrecognized leaves them uncertain as to why they cohere so imperfectly and so temporarily. Pacifists of different perspectives may find common ground in policy, strategy, or even tactics, but when they fail to understand the grounding of pacifism in all its variety, their effort may fragment and they drift apart.” As she ably puts it, “The obvious difficulty for secular pacifism, compared to pacifism based on religious obedience, for example, is how to motivate people to choose nonviolence when the method fails to accomplish the goal. A pacifist animated by spiritual belief does not necessarily anticipate a just outcome.”

Not a Quaker herself, Weddle performs a service in reviewing the assumptions surrounding Quaker pacifism and debunking some of the bunkum (as Chuck Fager put it in his review) of Rhode Island pacifism. She has much more to reveal about Quakers than included in this review and I recommend the book for serious Friends. At the very end of the book she wonders if humans aren’t inherently violent. I would say that they have inherited traits from their simian cousins: violence from the chimpanzees who war on their own kind and pacifism from the bonobo who “make love not war.”

-- both reviews contributed by Perry Treadwell

Quaker Quest Public Sessions Continue

The Meeting welcomes the public to a continuing series of programs this fall. All sessions are on Sunday afternoon. The topics are "Quakers and Worship" on Nov. 4, "Quakers and Equality" on Nov. 11, and "Quakers and Jesus" on Nov. 18. Each gathering will involve several Quakers sharing their experiences on the day's theme. It will also include sharing by all participants, discussion and 30 minutes of Quaker worship.

We look forward to sharing with the Atlanta community our views on some of the underlying values of Quakerism. We offer this series with open doors and open hearts. Refreshments will be served at 1 p.m. followed by the program from 1:30 p.m. until 3:30 p.m. Children are welcome. Childcare will be offered.

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Thanks from the Friends School of Atlanta

Dear David and all of the Meeting,

The Friends School of Atlanta extends a heartfelt thank you for the Meeting's continued generous support and encouragement as expressed most recently in the participation in our annual Pancake Brunch and family visiting day on Sunday, Sept 23. We raised over \$400 for the tuition assistance fund the school maintains for children of members and attenders. We are most appreciative of the evolving relationship of the Meeting and the School from its early founding, the energy and wisdom of Quaker members of the Board of Trustees, and financial support for tuition assistance so that Quaker education can be made available to families who seek it in the Atlanta area.

Our enrollment as we open this fall is at 170 students from the entire metro area representing a range of ethnic, racial, religious, socio-economic and family-structure backgrounds. As we enter our third decade, we look to continue the supportive relationship with the Meeting we have enjoyed for the last 22 years, as we carry out the school's mission, providing challenging academics in a diverse environment, drawing on the Quaker values of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality and stewardship to empower our students to go out into the world with conscience, conviction and compassion.

In peace,

Karen Morris, Elementary Head and member of the Quaker Life Committee
Waman French, Head of School

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My Call to Sabbatical and a Request for Your Help

Mary Ann Downey

I need your help to answer a call. The call came as a query in meeting for worship: "Do you come expecting to be transformed?" and I realized that the truthful answer was, "No". The setting was Sunday morning worship at the Friends General Conference Gathering this year on the University of Rhode Island campus. I was there early to lead a Saturday preconference workshop with Adult Young Friends on the clearness process. It was a special honor and gift for me to facilitate the workshop for them and on Sunday I realized how hard it was to let go of that time so that I could prepare for the week with another workshop.

I came to Gathering this year, as I have for many years, with the intention to teach Friends to use the clearness process, a need we all have throughout life. My preparation and focus is to help others with the challenge of change, of discerning the transformation or calling for them now. Defining my work this way, however, keeps me from thinking about how I can be transformed. I've translated the Bible verse, "It is better to give than to receive", to mean that I shouldn't receive while I'm giving. With deeper reflection, I saw how the power and intense presence of the Adult Young Friends opened me to transformation. I was blown open by their light, their energy, the searching questions and the willingness to change.

The challenge for the week became how to hold on to this experience, this opening. I began in worship sharing on Monday by offering the query to the workshop group and my hope to expect transformation along with them. That was a good first step in the process: how to be open to transformation while also facilitating this work for others.

Since that week in July, the query stayed with me, calling me to question what I'm doing and why. I'm grateful that the meeting supports my work through an anchoring committee, Dave Thurman, Nan O'Connor, Lewis Fuller and Bill Holland. They meet with me monthly to help me discern how I'm called to serve, and, with their help, I am now clear that this query is a call to sabbatical. They help me say "no". You can help me by not asking me to take on new responsibilities for the meeting, and I hope you will understand if I say no to being on a clearness committee or to other tasks. I will not be planning or facilitating the adult religious education class and invite you to consider if you can help. I also need to be held in the light, to know I have the support of your prayerful presence on this journey.

A sabbatical for me will be a time to not only let go of leading workshops, retreats and other responsibilities in meeting, but also to create space for spiritual renewal, learning, growth and change. I'll attend four retreats at Pendle Hill on the "**Journey Toward an Undivided Life**" which use the circle of trust process that I've been facilitating. It will be a chance to step back from my work long enough to reflect, to write, to consider new directions for my ministry and to find new spiritual companions on this journey.

A sign on the labyrinth at Ben Lomond Retreat Center describes the process of walking a labyrinth as **Retreat, Renew, Return** and that is how I think of the journey I'm making now. It is also one of the advices in **Faith and Practice** for Britain Yearly Meeting: "Every stage of our lives offers fresh opportunities. Responding to divine guidance, try to discern the right time to undertake or relinquish responsibilities without undue pride or guilt. Attend to what love requires of you, which may not be great busyness."

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Public Service Commission Election Information

Tara Hands has forwarded information on the Georgia Public Service Commission candidates David Staples and Steve Oppenheimer at:

www.votestaples.com
www.steveforgeorgia.com

You can find more information on the incumbents and their records of campaign contributions at <http://media.ethics.ga.gov/Reports/Campaign>.

Atlanta Friends Meeting
Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
October 21, 2012
Recorded Pending Approval

Clerk's Reading and Reflection: Michael Wajda, "Expectant Listening: Finding God's Thread of Guidance"(Pendle Hill pamphlet 388).

Query: Georgia Lord presented the query, "How do you express caring for those who suffer illness, loss, or other stress? Do you let others know when you become aware of these situations of special need, so they may have opportunity to unite in your concern? Do you let others know when you have special needs of your own? As a Meeting, how do we provide support for individuals in need?"

Attendance: Mike Aland, Micheal Allison, Mark Bryans, David Bundrick, Steve Collins, Mary Ann Downey, Betsy Eggers, Julia Ewen, Sally Ferguson, Jenny Foster, Clive Gordon, Bill Holland, Jack Honderd, Martha Hutchins, Kathy Johnson, Elizabeth Lamb, Georgia Lord, Alison Mawle, Caroline Morris, Margie Rece, John Roberts, Aaron Ruscetta, Erica Schoon, Peter Sederberg, Bert Skellie, Karen Skellie, Myrna Trapp, Sarah Walton, Pat Williams, David Foster (Clerk), Caroline Noyes (Recording Clerk), (31 Friends).

Ministry & Worship: On behalf of the Ministry and Worship Committee, Bill Holland reported that the marriage of Christina Repoley and Dean Leeper under the care of Atlanta Friends Meeting took place October 6, 2012 near Asheville, North Carolina.

Mary Ann Downey has carried a letter of our support for her ministry among Friends. She works closely with an anchoring committee that meets with her monthly. Mary Ann has discerned that she is led to take a period of reflection and sabbatical. Her anchoring committee will be assisting her as she enters this period of reflection and discernment. She asks the meeting to hold her in the light and help her create the space for the Spirit.

On behalf of the ad hoc committee responsible for planning the Meeting for Worship with Attention to Children, Georgia Lord reported on the committee's reflections of the Meeting. The committee has received positive feedback about the Meeting, and is convinced that this should be an annual event. The committee feels that a meaningful commitment was being made to the children, and hopes that the certificates will serve as a reminder to the children of their connection to the Meeting. The committee is grateful to Burundian Friends who initiated this process and to Hannah MacDermott who surprised children and adults alike with a special rainbow cake. The planning committee is actively seeking feedback and suggestions about the structure of the Meeting and on the appropriate time for the Meeting (a specially called Meeting, during regularly scheduled Meeting on a fifth Sunday, etc.). Please share your suggestions with the members of the committee Jenny Foster, Laura Norlin, Mary Jahntz, and Georgia Lord.

Care and Counsel: On behalf of the Care and Counsel Committee, David Foster read the memorial minute for Sally MacEwen that was presented in September.

Finance: On behalf of the Finance Committee, Peter Sederberg reported that three-quarters of the way through the year we are running a deficit of nearly \$24,000, which is greater than at this point in FY 2011. Currently, income is running at 58.7% of the budget, with contributions represented 52.1% of the amount budgeted, while expenses are running at 74.6% of the budget. Rental income is about 5,000 above budget projections, while contributions are running about \$2,000 below what contributions were at this date last year. In order to fund the new, grounds project, we need to have an income surplus.

Administration: On behalf of the Administration Committee, Jack Honderd reported that the landscape architect has completed the plans, and the next step is to cost out the project. Four trees will have to be removed, including a pecan tree. The committee is committed to reincorporating things that are taken down on the site. The planning of the playground will begin in three to four weeks, and will be done in consultation with Religious Education and Smart Toddlers.

Quaker Quest: On behalf of the ad hoc Quaker Quest Committee, Bert Skellie reported that the at least 25 people have attended each of the first four public sessions. Approximately 20 relatively new attenders have come, with some attending two or more sessions. The advertising appears to be making us better known in the wider community, although direct personal invitations appear to be the most effective methods of attracting newcomers. The committee encourages Friends to hand out flyers and invite acquaintances to attend. The committee also encourages Friends to attend the sessions themselves, as we deepen our connections by hearing the profound sharing from Friends at the public sessions.

Ferguson Cabin: On behalf of the Ferguson Cabin Committee, Mark Bryans reported that the new bathroom is now working, the ceiling now has sheetrock, and the second bathroom is being worked on. The cabin should be completed in the spring of 2013, although additional funds will have to be raised. The account has \$4,092, which is not sufficient to complete the build-out. The recent silent auction brought in \$450, and commemorative plaque contributions of \$100 or more are still being sought. The next meeting of the committee is October 28th.

Clerk's Items: David Foster reported that the State of the Meeting report will begin as the month progresses. Caroline Noyes, representing Ministry and Worship and Paul Baker, representing Care and Counsel, have agreed to join David as the workgroup and will be meeting with various committees to complete the report.

In order to prevent the November Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business from overlapping with a public session of Quaker Quest, Meeting for Business will consider matters of discernment and reports from the Naming, Nominating, and Finance Committee, and those other matters that need our timely attention.

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

Minute 12-10-01: Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the Minutes of Ninth Month meeting for Worship with Attention to Business without corrections.

Meeting closed with silent worship.

Respectfully Submitted,
Caroline Noyes, Recording Clerk
David Foster, Clerk

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Adult Education Continues

Jenny Foster will offer her spiritual journey on Nov. 4 and we will continue reading and discussing the book *Jesus and the Disinherited* by Howard Thurman. First published in 1949, this book is described as "a brilliant and compassionate look at God's work in our lives." It also carries a message that "helped shape the civil rights movement" and "reaches past anger and distrust toward a vision of unity." Books are available from Bill Holland and the class meets from 9:00-9:50 each Sunday in the meeting library. All are welcome.

Calendar for Eleventh Month (November) 2012

Area Meetings for Worship

- Every First Day (Sunday), 10:00 a.m. – Meetinghouse, with a smaller group in the Library.
Every First Day, 12:30 p.m. – Carrollton Friends Worship Group.
St. Andrew's UMC Youth Center, 1106 Maple St.; Margaret Bray, 770-830-8705.
Every 2d and 4th First Day, 10:00 a.m. – Canton Friends Worship Group.
360 E. Marietta St.; 779-720-4669 or wrldpeas@mindspring.com.
Every 2d First Day, 10:30 a.m. -- Macon Friends Worship Group.
Contact Diana Day, 478-227-8892; maconquakers.org.
Every 4th Morning (Wednesday) Worship, 8:30 a.m. – Library.
Contact Jonah McDonald, 404-377-2474; afmquakers@hotmail.com.
Every 4th Evening (Wednesday), 7:00 p.m. – Meeting Room.
Contact Christina Repoley, 404-840-3005; christinarepoley@gmail.com.
First 5th Morning (Thursday) – AFSC office, 60 Walton St. NW, Atlanta.
5th Day (Thursday) (except 1st of the month), 12:10 p.m. – East Lake Commons, Decatur.
Contact Bert Skellie, 404-378-5883, bertskellie@gmail.com.
6th Day (Friday) (2nd week of August through May), 8:45 a.m. – Friends School of Atlanta.
Community Meeting Room, 862 Columbia Dr., Decatur, 404-373-8746.

Weekly Events at the Meetinghouse

- Every First Day (Sunday)
9:00 a.m. Adult Religious Education
9:15 a.m. Singing, Classroom A/B
10:00 a.m. Meeting for Worship
Every Second-Fifth Day (Monday-Thursday)
8:30 a.m. -12:30 p.m. Smart Toddlers, Nursery playground
Every Fourth Day (Wednesday)
8:30 - 9:00 a.m. Morning Silent Worship, Library
Every Third Day (Tuesday)
7:30 p.m. Silent Meditation, Meeting Room
7:30 p.m. Bible Study, Library

Clerk of the Meeting: David Foster, 404-941-7337

Recording Clerk: Caroline Noyes

Office Coordinator: Jonah McDonald, 404-377-2474

Treasurer: Peter Sederberg, 404-968-9309 Ministry & Worship: Bill Holland, 404-692-2358

Finance: Paul Mangelsdorf, 770-677-4280 Religious Ed.: Alison Mawle, 404-944-9142

Social Concerns: Michael Allison, 770-832-3539; Bert Skellie, 404-378-5883

Care & Counsel: Laura Norlin, afm.care.counsel@gmail.com

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Newsletter Editor: David Payne, atlquakerltr@gmail.com

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 and contact information to Nina Gooch at ninagooch@gmail.com or 404-371-9873. Please indicate if you want to be in the directory, receive the newsletter by mail, or both.

Contributions to the Atlanta Friends Meeting may 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!

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

To receive the Newsletter via e-mail, 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; hit reply and you will be added to the list at no charge. To receive general announcements and to participate in discussion, follow the same instructions, but 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.

**DEADLINE FOR 12TH MONTH NEWSLETTER:
NOVEMBER 24**

Readers are encouraged to submit letters, articles, notices and anything else of interest to Friends. Items should be sent directly to atlquakerltr@gmail.com **in plain text in the body of the email. Texts may be edited for length and format. Pictures should be in .jpg format.**