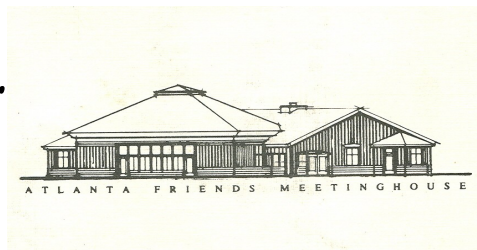


Atlanta Friends Meeting Newsletter

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

December 2013

Query: Do we seek to transform the world with our loving spirit? What are we doing as individuals and as a Meeting to promote equal opportunities in social and economic life for those who experience discrimination for any reason whatsoever? Are we ready to abandon old prejudices and think anew?

William James on Mysticism (from *Varieties of Religious Experience*)

... I have now sketched with extreme brevity and insufficiency, but as fairly as I am able in the time allowed, the general traits of the mystic range of consciousness. It is on the whole pantheistic and optimistic, or at least the opposite of pessimistic. It is anti-naturalistic, and harmonizes best with twice-bornness and so-called other-worldly states mind. My next task is to inquire whether we can invoke it as authoritative. Does it furnish any warrant for the truth of the twice-bornness and supernaturalism and pantheism which it favors? I must give my answer to this question as concisely as I can.

In brief my answer is this -- and I will divide it into three parts: --

(1) Mystical states, when well developed, usually are, and have the right to be, absolutely authoritative over the individuals to whom they come.

(2) No authority emanates from them which should make it a duty for those who stand outside of them to accept their revelations uncritically.

(3) They break down the authority of the non-mystical or rationalistic consciousness, based upon the understanding and the senses alone. They show it to be only one kind of consciousness. They open out the possibility of other orders of truth, in which, so far as anything in us vitally responds to them, we may freely continue to have faith. I will take up these points one by one.

1. As a matter of psychological fact, mystical states of a well-pronounced and emphatic sort are usually authoritative over those who have them. They have been "there," and know. It is vain for rationalism to grumble about this. If the mystical truth that comes to a man proves to be a force that he can live by, what mandate have we of the majority to order him to live in another way? We can throw him into a prison or a madhouse, but we cannot change his mind -- we commonly attach it only the more stubbornly to its beliefs. It mocks our utmost efforts, as a matter of fact, and in point of logic it absolutely escapes our jurisdiction. Our own more "rational" beliefs are based on evidence exactly similar in nature to that which mystics quote for theirs. Our senses, namely, have assured us of certain states of fact; but mystical experiences are as direct perceptions of fact for those who have them as any sensations ever were for us. The records show that even though the five senses be in abeyance in them, they are absolutely sensational in their epistemological quality, if I may be pardoned the barbarous expression -- that is, they are face to face presentations of what seems immediately to exist.

I abstract from weaker states, and from those cases of which the books are full, where the director (but usually not the subject) remains in doubt whether the experience may not have proceeded from the demon. Example: Mr. John Nelson writes of his imprisonment for preaching Methodism: "My soul was as a watered garden, and I could sing praises to God all day long; for he turned my captivity into joy, and gave me to rest as well on the boards, as if I had been on a bed of down. Now could I say, 'God's service is perfect freedom,' and I was carried out much in prayer that my enemies might drink of the same river of peace which my God gave so largely to me." Journal, London, no date, p. 172.

The mystic is, in short, invulnerable, and must be left, whether we relish it or not, in undisturbed enjoyment of his creed. Faith, says Tolstoy, is that by which men live. And faith-state and mystic state are practically convertible terms.

2. But I now proceed to add that mystics have no right to claim that we ought to accept the deliverance of their peculiar experiences, if we are ourselves outsiders and feel no private call thereto. The utmost they can ever ask of us in this life is to admit that they establish a presumption. They form a consensus and have an unequivocal outcome; and it would be odd, mystics might say, if such a unanimous type of experience should prove to be altogether wrong. At bottom, however, this would only be an appeal to numbers, like the appeal of rationalism the other way; and the appeal to numbers has no logical force. If we acknowledge it, it is for "suggestive," not for logical reasons: we follow the majority because to do so suits our life.

But even this presumption from the unanimity of mystics is far from being strong. In characterizing mystic states as pantheistic, optimistic, etc., I am afraid I over-simplified the truth. I did so for expository reasons, and to keep the closer to the classic mystical tradition. The classic religious mysticism, it now must be confessed, is only a "privileged case." It is an extract, kept true to type by the selection of the fittest specimens and their preservation in "schools." It is carved out from a much larger mass; and if we take the larger mass as seriously as religious mysticism has historically taken itself, we find that the supposed unanimity largely disappears. To begin with, even religious mysticism itself, the kind that accumulates traditions and makes schools, is much less unanimous than I have allowed. It has been both ascetic and antinomianly self-indulgent within the Christian church. It is dualistic in Sankhya, and monistic in Vedanta philosophy. I called it pantheistic; but the great Spanish mystics are anything but pantheists. They are with few exceptions non-metaphysical minds, for whom "the category of personality" is absolute. The "union" of man with God is for them much more like an occasional miracle than like an original identity. How different again, apart from the happiness common to all, is the mysticism of Walt Whitman, Edward Carpenter, Richard Jefferies, and other naturalistic pantheists, from the more distinctively Christian sort. The fact is that the mystical feeling of enlargement, union, and emancipation has no specific intellectual content whatever of its own. It is capable of forming matrimonial alliances with material furnished by the most diverse philosophies and theologies, provided only they can find a place in their framework for its peculiar emotional mood. We have no right, therefore, to invoke its prestige as distinctively in favor of any special belief, such as that in absolute idealism, or in the absolute monistic identity, or in the absolute goodness, of the world. It is only relatively in favor of all these things -- it passes out of common human consciousness in the direction in which they lie.

So much for religious mysticism proper. But more remains to be told, for religious mysticism is only one half of mysticism. The other half has no accumulated traditions except those which the text-books on insanity supply. Open any one of these, and you will find abundant cases in which "mystical ideas" are cited as characteristic symptoms of enfeebled or deluded states of mind. In delusional insanity, paranoia, as they sometimes call it, we may have a diabolical mysticism, a sort of religious mysticism turned upside down. The same sense of ineffable importance in the smallest events, the same texts and words coming with new meanings, the same voices and visions and leadings and missions, the same controlling by extraneous powers; only this time the emotion is pessimistic: instead of consolations we have desolations; the meanings are dreadful; and the powers are enemies to life. It is evident that from the point of view of their psychological mechanism, the classic mysticism and these lower mysticisms spring from the same mental level, from that great subliminal or transmarginal region of which science is beginning to admit the existence, but of which so little is really known. That region contains every kind of matter: "seraph and snake" abide there side by side. To come from thence is no infallible credential. What comes must be sifted and tested, and run the gauntlet of confrontation with the total context of experience, just like what comes from the outer world of sense. Its value must be ascertained by empirical methods, so long as we are not mystics ourselves.

Once more, then, I repeat that non-mystics are under no obligation to acknowledge in mystical states a superior authority conferred on them by their intrinsic nature.

3. Yet, I repeat once more, the existence of mystical states absolutely overthrows the pretension of non-mystical states to be the sole and ultimate dictators of what we may believe. As a rule, mystical states merely add a supersensuous meaning to the ordinary outward data of consciousness. They are excitements like the emotions of love or ambition, gifts to our spirit by means of which facts already objectively before us fall into a new expressiveness and make a new connection with our active life. They do not contradict these facts as such, or deny anything that our senses have immediately seized. It is the rationalistic critic rather who plays the part of denier in the controversy, and his denials have no strength, for there never can be a state of facts to which new meaning may not truthfully be added, provided the mind ascend to a more enveloping point of view. It must always remain an open question whether mystical states may not possibly be such superior points of view, windows through which the mind looks out upon a more extensive and inclusive world. The difference of the views seen from the different mystical windows need not prevent us from entertaining this supposition. The wider world would in that case prove to have a mixed constitution like that of this world, that is all. It would have its celestial and its infernal regions, its tempting and its saving moments, its valid experiences and its counterfeit ones, just as our world has them; but it would be a wider world all the same. We should have to use its experiences by selecting and subordinating and substituting just as is our custom in this ordinary naturalistic world; we should be liable to error just as we are now; yet the counting in of that wider world of meanings, and the serious dealing with it, might, in spite of all the perplexity, be indispensable stages in our approach to the final fullness of the truth.

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Atlanta Friends Meeting
Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
November 17, 2013

Recorded Pending Approval

Attendance: Paul Baker, Katie Braun, Steve Collins, Linnis Cook, Cade Curtis, Mary Ann Downey, Julia Ewen, Clive Gordon, Judith Greenberg, Bill Holland, Kathy Johnson, Suzan Kenworthy, Tom Kenworthy, Chris Lahowitch, Justin Leverett, Georgia Lord, Becky Lough, Beth Martinson, Rick Martinson, Paul Mangledorf, Alison Mawle, Caroline Morris, Karen terHorst Morris, Caroline Noyes, Nan O'Connor, Beth Ruddiman, Erin Schroder, Peter Sederberg, Rebecca Sullivan, Fahd Syed, Jim Tolmach, Perry Treadwell, Sarah Walton, Austin Wattles, Pat Williams, David Foster (Clerk), Elizabeth Lamb (Recording Clerk) (37 Friends).

Clerk's Readings and Reflections: As a reflection on distinguishing "my work" from "my hands, thy work" the clerk read a passage from Replenish by Julie Hliboki.

Query: Bill Holland presented the query: "How do we foster the use and growth of the spiritual gifts of those in the Meeting? Do you express appreciation for the helpful messages given? How do you respond to the needs expressed in Meeting?"

Ministry and Worship Committee: On behalf of the Ministry and Worship Committee Bill Holland reported that Ashley Wilcox has asked to be a sojourning member of Atlanta Friends Meeting and that a letter of introduction from Freedom Friends Church was read several months ago. Our membership guidelines provide for this form of membership and require a minute accepting/welcoming the sojourning member. Ministry and Worship recommends that Ashley Wilcox be approved as a sojourning member. Atlanta Friends Meeting approved.

Minute 11-17-13-01: On the recommendation of the Ministry and Worship Committee, we accept Ashley Wilcox, a member of Freedom Friends Church in Salem, Oregon, as a sojourning member of Atlanta Friends Meeting during the period she is staying in Atlanta as a student of Candler School of Theology at Emory University. We welcome Ashley and look forward to our faith journey together.

Nominating Committee: On behalf of the Nominating Committee Beth Ruddiman brought forward the following names for final approval for the positions indicated.

Minute 11-17-13-02: On the recommendation of the Nominating Committee, Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the following:

SAYMA Ministry and Nurture Committee representative: Caroline Noyes

Landscape Committee clerk: Myrna Trapp; Library Committee clerk: Cal Gough

Religious Education: High School lead teacher: Jonah McDonald

High School teachers: Aaron Ruschetta, Dana Goldman, Maggie Hasbrouck

Middle School lead teacher: Jennifer Dickie

Middle School teachers: Maggie Hasbrouck, Folami Adams

Upper Elementary teachers: Mary Jahnz, Gwen Davies

Lower Elementary teachers: Alison Mawle, Betsy Eggers, Beth Martinson, Sue May,

Laura MacNorlin

Preschool teachers: Kacy Brubaker, Angie Love

Administration/Playground/landscaping: On behalf of the Administration Committee and the Playground/Landscaping Committee, Peter Sederberg reported that we have obtained the permit required to begin work. The Committee is currently meeting with the school to choose playground equipment and expects to have cost and scheduling information in the near future. Members of the committee are Jack Honderd, Peter Sederberg and John Roberts. Anyone interested in joining the Committee is asked to contact one of the members. The committee hopes to begin work on the renovation by January 2014.

Finance Committee: On behalf of the Finance Committee Paul Mangledorf presented the proposed budget for 2014 (see attached). The proposed budget is \$5000 higher than the 2013 budget, mainly due to the salary of the new position of bookkeeper and the insurance for the new Ferguson cabin. Anyone with questions or suggestions is asked to contact the Finance Committee before their next meeting the second Sunday in December.

Administration Committee: On behalf of the Administration Committee, Rick Martinson reported that interviews have been held for the new position of bookkeeper and that selection will be completed Wednesday, November 20, 2013. The scheduled start date will be on or about December 1, 2013.

Because of the bookkeeper search and hiring, the committee has taken a closer look at the duties of the Administration Committee and membership on it as set forth in the Operations Manual. It is noted that the manual assumes that the Clerk of the Administration Committee will also serve as the Assistant Clerk of the Meeting. This has, however, not been our practice. The Committee will address this at its next meeting. Adjustment is also needed to clarify the responsibilities of the Committee for AFM employment issues. It was noted that the Personnel Liaison position is not included on the Administration Committee, but has been acting as a de facto member. The Administration Committee, in collaboration with Nominating Committee, will bring forward proposed changes to the manual at a future Meeting for Business. They recommend that other committees also review the Operations Manual to be sure that it reflects accurately the present duties and functions of each committee.

Rick Martinson reported that Camille Jackson has accepted the position of Nursery Caregiver.

The landscape project report was given earlier in this meeting. Future projects include: replacing the Meeting Room carpet, re-routing the back patio downspouts, evaluating the windows in the resident's apartment for replacement, cleaning the walls in the greeting room,, painting the exterior of the Meeting House, landscape project planning, hardware for hanging the exhibitions in the greeting room, and replacing the sofas in the Library. Anyone knowing of other concerns or needs is asked to contact Rick or another member of the Administration Committee.

Nominating Committee: On behalf of the Nominating Committee Beth Ruddiman brought forward the following names:

Atlanta Friends Meeting clerk: Nan O'Connor; Archivist: Karen Skellie (re-nomination)

Assistant Treasurer: Judith Greenberg (re-nomination); Care and Counsel clerk: Clive Gordon

Undoing Racism at AFM / Quakers for Racial Equality clerk: Susan Firestone (re-nomination)

Ferguson Cabin Committee (all re-nominations): Mike Aland, John Carpentier, Sallie Mykel Carpentier, Emmitt Fuller, Melanie Fuller, Kathy Johnson, Caroline Morris, Fred Stevens, Joan Thompson

Ministry and Worship Committee: Bill Holland (re-nomination as member and clerk), Steve Collins (re-nomination), Sally Ferguson, Jenny Foster (re-nomination), Myrna Trapp

Newsletter editor: Kate Shropshire Swett; Webmaster: Aaron Ruschetta (re-nomination)

SAYMA Ministry and Nurture Committee Representative: Caroline Noyes shared the following report about the SAYMA Ministry and Nurture Committee held at AFM on October 12, 2013.

The committee discussed how ministry & nurture supports monthly meetings' care of worship groups. It was decided that members of SAYMA ministry and nurture would visit those worship groups affiliated with their monthly meetings and to report back to SAYMA M&N meetings. There was discussion about having monthly meetings report the number of children in the meeting in different age ranges. There is interest in having SAYF provide a brief "state of the meeting" type of report that includes a sense of their spiritual condition. The state of the meeting report is due to SAYMA by March 15, 2014. The theme of Yearly Meeting is "Leadings of Spirit: A Revolution of Practice."

Social Concerns Committee: On behalf of the Social Concerns Committee Pat Williams reported that during the November 10 Social Concerns meeting the Swannanoa Valley, NC Meeting's "Minute on the Israel-Palestine Conflict" (as edited by AFM Friends) was discussed. The ad hoc working group of Micheal Allison, Kathy Johnson, Karen Morris, Free Palazzo, and Pat Williams met several times over the summer to discuss the Minute which calls for boycotting products made illegally on Palestinian lands. The Ad Hoc committee was in agreement with the Minute. A Forum was planned for further information and discussion with additional AFM Friends. The forum attended by some AFM attendees was held October 6 with Maia Carter Hallward of our own Meeting as our speaker. After her presentation Friends spoke out of silence in a process of discernment as to the worth of boycotting the products produced by Israel within the industrial parks established by Israeli corporations on Palestinian lands. A diversity of opinion was expressed as to the worth of boycott as a method to deter Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands. Some people believed it congruent with Quaker values to boycott. Others felt that as Quakers we do not do things against people. Still others found any possible boycotting a moot point since the products under discussion are probably never or rarely used by members of our Meeting. These products consist of cosmetics under the brand name of Ahava, a hummus under the brand name of Savra and a mechanical device called Soda Stream that puts bubbles in water, juices and other liquids. Unity was not reached and the Minute was not approved. However, a query came from several friends who had discussed the Israeli-Palestine conflict as follows: "Once we are made aware that these products are illegally produced on the West Bank, do we have responsibility to not be complicit in continuing injustice in purchasing the products?"

This question was raised by Social Concerns: Does anyone in our Meeting have a leading for furthering information and discussion and a possible Minute? Anyone having such a leading would have a great deal of support. It should be noted that the Charlottesville Meeting has written its own Minute on the Israeli-Palestine conflict. Several members of the ad hoc group had agreed to get in touch with other Meetings in SAYMA. The Macon Worship Group did not come to unity on the Minute. The Greenville Friends Meeting approved the Minute. The Columbia Meeting in South Carolina was also sent a copy of the Swannanoa Valley Minute but the results from any deliberation have not yet been reported. Justin Leverett expressed interest in continuing discussion on this issue. Others are encouraged to contact a member of Social Concerns to express their interest.

Minutes of October 2013

Minute 11-17-13-03: The Minutes of the October 20, 2013 Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business were approved as submitted.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Lamb, Recording Clerk; David Foster, Clerk

Atlanta Friends Meeting Budget

	2013 Budget	2013 Projected	2014 Budget	% of Budget	Notes
Revenues					
Contributions	116,135	105,000	117,135	76.2%	1
Interest & Misc	500	244	500	0.3%	2
Rental Income	32,000	40,550	36,000	23.4%	3
Total Revenues	148,635	145,794	153,635	100.0%	
Expense					
Administrative Costs					
Archives	50	0	50	0.0%	4
Fundraising	250	0	250	0.2%	5
Gain/Loss on Investments	0	0	0	0.0%	6
General	400	851	400	0.3%	7
Postage	400	218	400	0.3%	8
Printing and Copying	800	471	800	0.5%	9
Telephone	1,800	1,934	1,800	1.2%	10
Total Admin	3,700	3,474	3,700	2.4%	
Occupancy Costs					
Maintenance - Building	8,000	6,465	8,000	5.2%	11
Maintenance - Custodial Service	12,060	12,060	12,060	7.8%	12
Maintenance - Grounds	3,000	2,640	3,000	2.0%	13
Employees	33,000	32,905	39,300	25.6%	14
Liability & Property Insurance	7,600	8,214	8,500	5.5%	15
To Permanent Improvement Fund	12,600	12,600	12,600	8.2%	16
Utilities	14,000	9,739	12,000	7.8%	17
Total Occupancy	90,260	84,623	95,460	62.1%	
Program Costs					
Advancement Committee	0	0	0	0.0%	18
Advertising	75	75	75	0.0%	19
Cabin Committee	500	529	500	0.3%	20
Care and Counsel	200	0	200	0.1%	21
Child Care	1,600	1,404	1,600	1.0%	22
Gathered Meeting Retreat	1,500	1,432	1,800	1.2%	23
Hospitality	1,000	801	1,000	0.7%	24
Library Committee	300	300	300	0.2%	25
Literature	200	200	200	0.1%	26
Ministry and Worship	2,600	2,600	2,600	1.7%	27
Newsletter	3,000	2,276	2,500	1.6%	28
Religious Education Committee	1,800	1,000	1,200	0.8%	29
Social Concerns Committee	10,500	10,500	10,500	6.8%	30
To Gifts & Affiliations Fund	19,350	19,350	19,450	12.7%	31
Cte on Undoing Racism in AFM	50	32	50	0.0%	32
Young Friends Support Cte	12,000	12,300	12,500	8.1%	33
Total Program	54,675	52,799	54,475	35.5%	
Total Expense	\$148,635	\$140,896	\$153,635	100.0%	

Calendar for Twelfth Month (December) 2013

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 Second and Fourth First Day, 10:00 a.m. – Canton Friends Worship Group.

360 E. Marietta St.; 779-720-4669 or wrldpeas@mindspring.com.

Every Second First Day, 10:30 a.m. -- Macon Friends Worship Group.

Contact Diana Day, 478-227-8892; maconquakers.org.

First Fifth Day (Thursday), 12:10 p.m. -- AFSC office, 60 Walton St. NW, Atlanta.

Every Fifth Day (Thursday), 12:10 p.m. – East Lake Commons, Decatur.

For directions, contact Bert Skellie at bertskellie@gmail.com or 404-680-4799.

Sixth 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, Library

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 Third Day (Tuesday)

7:00 p.m. Silent Meditation, Library

Every Fourth Day (Wednesday)

7:00 p.m. Mid-Week Worship, Library

Every Fifth Day (Thursday)

7:30 p.m. Bible Study, Library

Clerk of the Meeting: David Foster, afmclerk1@gmail.com
Office Coordinator: Jonah McDonald, atlantaquakers@gmail.com

Treasurer: Peter Sederberg, afmtreasurer1@gmail.com

Ministry & Worship: Bill Holland, 404-692-2358

Finance: Paul Mangelsdorf, 770-677-4280

Social Concerns: Michael Allison, 770-832-3539

Care & Counsel: Don Bender, afm.care.counsel@gmail.com

Religious Education: Alison Mawle, 404-944-9142

Newsletter Editor: David Payne, atlquakerltr@gmail.com

Webmaster: Aaron Ruschetta, arxaaron@gmail.com

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ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING
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Office: MWF 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.; atlantaquakers@gmail.com
Clerk: David Foster, afmclerk1@gmail.com
Treasurer: Peter Sederberg, afmtreasurer1@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 afmannouncementssubscribe@yahoogroups.com.

**DEADLINE FOR 1ST MONTH NEWSLETTER:
DECEMBER 21**

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.**

