

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING NEWSLETTER



February 2014

Reflection on William James *Varieties of Religious Experience* From Perry Treadwell

In the selection in the December Atlanta Friends Meeting Newsletter, James seems to explain seeking for the truth. Friends would capitalize the word as Truth and explain that this Truth would be the guidance of the Spirit, or the Guide as some early Quakers used it.

He points out that when a person experiences the Guide personally, it should not be denied by others. It is individual and not necessarily corporate. He explains that, “[T]here never can be a state of facts to which a new meaning may not truthfully be added provided the mind ascend to a more enveloping point of view.”

Thus in Meeting for Worship, one message may lead to another’s insight either spoken or kept personal. As James points out, we experience “stages in our approach to the final fullness of the truth.” There is a sense of being “Covered by the Spirit” or a Covered Meeting.

Being guided is a mystical experience. It requires preparation and opportunity. I share one of my experiences as an example. Preparation consisted of exposure to the Religious Society of Friends and extensive exploration of Quaker literature during my early attendance. And having mentors and examples in Meeting. Then came a solitary, early morning session alone with Robert Frost’s poems. One shouted to me that my life was not congruent. It was an emotional experience in which I decided to “let go and let God.”

That was a challenge that has been hard to live up to with many failures. However, I do know that the Guide is still there when I am quiet enough to listen. This religious experience has kept me a Seeker of the Truth.

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

QUERY

Are your meetings for church affairs held in a spirit of worship and in dependence on the guidance of God? Remember that we do not seek a majority decision nor even consensus. As we wait patiently for divine guidance our experience is that the right way will open and we shall be led into unity.

- Britain Yearly Meeting

Titles Recently Added to the Meetinghouse Library

From Cal Gough, Library Committee Clerk

Several replacements of long-missing copies of introductory or classic Quaker titles and a couple of new books written especially for newcomers to Quakerism were recently added to the Meetinghouse Library. Among the most recently-added titles are:

- *Being a Quaker* by Geoffrey Durham (British Yearly Meeting, 2nd ed., 2013). British friend Geoffrey Durham looks at modern Quakerism and explains what can be said (how a Quaker meeting for Business operates), and looks at what cannot be said (what Quakers think happens after death) and why. He talks of the testimonies, being led by the spirit, the gathered meeting, and what being an experiential religion means.
- *Fostering Vital Friends Meetings: A Handbook For Working With Quaker Meetings* by Jane Greene and Marty Walton (Friends General Conference, 1999). Growing from the common purpose of nurturing and encouraging meetings, this handbook provides carefully seasoned guidelines, tools and exercises that meetings can use to strengthen Quaker practice in a concise and user-friendly manual. Sections detail who, what, how and why people can be about the work of fostering vitality in Friends meetings everywhere.
- *If the Church Were Christian: Rediscovering the Values of Jesus* by Philip Gulley (HarperOne, 2011) A noted and eloquent Quaker, this is Gulley's latest theological volume in his "If" series.
- *Introduction from 'Quaker Spirituality'* by Douglas Steere (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1988). This is the 56-page introduction from a longer book (which the library also owns) entitled *Quaker Spirituality: Selected Writings* (1984), edited by Steere. It thoroughly and thoughtfully describes the many aspects of Quakerism as they were and are lived.
- *Living the Quaker Way: Timeless Wisdom For A Better Life Today* by Philip Gulley (Convergence, 2013). Written by a Quaker pastor from Indiana, well known to Friends for his sometimes controversial but refreshing books on Christianity, as well as his Harmony novels sequence. Gulley's light and humorous touch is evident here as he explains Quakers their beliefs and testimonies by using examples from his own life and local community. An easy-to-read book that deals with difficult and challenging topics.
- *Quaker Meeting and Me: A Guide for Children...* by Rebecca Price (Quaker Life, 2010). This 20-page booklet from British Friends introduces children to the experience of worship. Full color illustrations with simple words show children how to settle into worship and appreciate what they find there. Most pictures show children interacting with the beauties of nature, while the words talk about discovery, learning to listen, and appreciating. The back flap includes images of Friends testimonies that are details from the illustrations, inviting children to look back to find where the images are embedded. For children 3-7. ed., 2013)
- *Quakers* by Peter Furtado (Shire Publications, 2013). A slim (only 64-pages) new book from Britain, with well-presented information ideal for both adults and older children. Includes many striking images illustrating Quaker history and practice, the book is part history, part Quaker theology and part examples of the Quaker testimonies in action, all well written by a sympathetic and knowledgeable historian.
- *The Quakers: A Very Short Introduction* by Ben Pink Dandelion (Oxford University Press, 2008). Pink Dandelion is a Quaker Studies teacher at England's Woodbrooke College; this text is an overview of Quaker identity, history, worship, theology, belief and ecumenism. Dandelion also offers a concluding chapter on the future of Quakerism and presents a chart on three branches that he identifies: evangelical, conservative and liberal. Dandelion's approach offers a welcome addition to introductory texts, though not all will agree with his conclusions or characterizations.
- *The Quakers in America* by Thomas Hamm (Columbia University Press, 2006). A concise history of the Religious Society of Friends, an introduction to Quaker beliefs and practices and a vivid picture of the culture and controversies of the Friends today. The book opens with lively vignettes of Conservative, Evangelical, Friends General Conference, and Friends United Meetings, reflecting Friends' diversity in the wake of the sectarian splintering of the nineteenth century.

- *The Quiet Rebels: The Story Of The Quakers In America* by Margaret Hope Bacon (Pendle Hill, 1999). Chapter titles: Who are the Quakers? British Beginnings. The Quakers Come to the New World. The Holy Experiment. The Middle Years of American Quakerism: 1775-1875. The Abolition of Slavery. Pioneers in Social Change. The Quaker Contribution to the Cultural Life of America. Quakers and the World. American Quakers Today. Includes the introductory essay, "The Quaker Contribution to Nonviolent Action."

The annotations above are adapted from the Quaker Books catalog. You can find the "shelf address" of these books by consulting the author-title-subject card catalog on top of the desk in the library. Most of the titles listed above are shelved at 289.6. Instructions for borrowing books from the library are posted on the desk near the window in the library. If you borrowed a book from the Meetinghouse library in 2013 (or earlier) and haven't yet returned it, do so to the basket on the desk in the library so it can be re-shelved for other Meetinghouse attendees to discover. Thanks!

Announcements

Donations still needed for Atlanta Friends Meeting-Suchitoto Education Fund

The University scholarship-loan fund for youth from the Meeting's sister community, El Sitio Cenicero, and surrounding rural communities is coming to a close. One student graduated this year in chemistry-pharmacy, with a thesis analyzing the functioning of Suchitoto's waste-water treatment plant. Of the three remaining students, two young women will finish in 2014 in law and public accounting. The law student will continue her work with the collective of women's organizations in Suchitoto. The fourth student has experienced emotional problems, but hopefully will be able to finish in 2015. They are fully funded and no further funds are needed.

The Meeting agreed to continue receiving donations for two formal university scholarship programs in Suchitoto, one of the Palo Alto Friends Meeting with 15 students and one partially supported by the local Catholic parish and Frank Cummings with 28 students. Funds received will be used for further scholarships and toward the rental of student housing in the capital for scholarship students. Living in a student house with computers and internet access is a savings of some \$500 per student. The current house has 18 students and we hope to open a second.

Note: Frank Cummings, a long-time member of the Meeting Community, lives in Suchitoto, El Salvador. For more information on the scholarship program contact him at cfcummings2001@yahoo.com or Bert Skellie at bertskellie@gmail.com.

Gathered Meeting Retreat with Nancy Bieber March 7-9

At the retreat on March 7-9 2014, Nancy Bieber, author of the book *Decision Making and Spiritual Discernment*, will lead a workshop on how to listen to spirit, and how to act on what you hear. She has been a retreat leader at Pendle Hill for 18 years, and is an active member at the Lancaster PA Meeting. We will catch her before she moves to England this summer! Registration deadlines are February 2 for Families and Scholarships, and February 23 for Adult registrations. Register early, as we will likely fill up before the deadline this year! The retreat is a great way to get to know people at Meeting better, so we hope you'll join us! Registration forms are on the Greeting Table, or on the AFM website. Contact the Retreat committee with questions: Lissa Place, Steve Collins, Folami Prescott Adams, Mina Rhee, or Nancy Condon.

2014 Directory: Your Help Needed

In February and March, the draft of the 2014 directory will be available in the greeting room so we can make sure all the information is correct and complete. Please check your information and make any changes needed or write OK if nothing needs to be changed. Please do this even if no information has changed, since

errors sometimes creep into the computer. If you'd like to add a new or updated picture, please email a picture to ninagooch@gmail.com or see Nina after meeting to have a picture taken.

Special Leading Fund Donations

The Meeting has approved disbursement to Sarah Walton of up to \$5,000 to support her leading to work against mass incarceration (see minutes of 1/19/14). Please donate to the special leadings fund as you are led. At present the Fund has less than \$3,000, so donations are needed to reach \$5,000 as well as to replenish the fund. Write checks to "Atlanta Friends Meeting" with memo "Special Leadings Fund." For more information contact Bert Skellie at bertskellie@gmail.com or [404-378-5883](tel:404-378-5883).

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business - January 19, 2014

Attendance: Juan Allende, Micheal Allison, Paul Baker, Katie Braun, Cade Curtis, Mary Ann Downey, Alice Erickson, Julia Ewen, Sally Ferguson, David Foster, Jenny Foster, Eric Glenn, Dana Goldman, Clive Gordon, Carol Gray, Joe Gray, Judith Greenberg, Roland Heath, Bill Holland, Jack Honderd, Patti Lee, Lynn Leuszler, Justin Leverett, Rick Martinson, Paul Mangelsdorf, Alison Mawle, Sue May, Jonah McDonald, A. J. Mendoza, Karen Morris, Caroline Noyes, Ronald Nuse, Erin Schroder, Barbara Seal, Peter Sederberg, Bert Skellie, Karen Skellie, Joan Thompson, Jim Tolmach, Myrna Trapp, Perry Treadwell, Sarah Walton, Lara Wik, Ashley Wilcox, Nan O'Connor (Clerk), Elizabeth Lamb (Recording Clerk) (46 Friends).

Clerk's Readings and Reflections: The clerk shared her reflections on being called to serve as clerk of the Meeting, noting the need to take time for discernment rather than making hasty decisions.

Query: Bill Holland presented the query: "Do you try to set aside times of quiet for openness to the Holy Spirit, seeking to know an inward stillness, even amid the activities of daily life? Do you encourage in yourself and in others a habit of dependence on God's guidance for each day? Do you hold yourself and others in the Light, knowing that all are cherished by God?"

Social Concerns Committee: On behalf of the Social Concerns Committee Bert Skellie reported that the committee supports Sarah Walton's leading to work toward changing the mass incarceration system. Sarah has been following her leading for about 18 months, with initial support of Friends in New England. The committee approved \$400 to be paid to her this month from their 2014 budget. Earlier this month a clearness committee agreed that short-term financial support would allow Sarah to continue uninterrupted while she seeks regular employment related to her ministry. She will be reporting at least monthly to a support committee about her activities. Bert explained that the Special Leadings Fund is a way in which members of the Atlanta Friends Meeting can financially support an individual's leading with a tax deductible donation.

- **Minute 1-19-14-01:** Atlanta Friends Meeting supports Sarah Walton's leading to work to end mass incarceration. The Meeting approves disbursement of up to a total of \$5000 to Sarah through June 2014, as recommended by the Social Concerns Committee. Disbursement may begin as soon as possible, and will be from the Special Leadings Fund.

Ministry and Worship Committee: A clearness committee has met with Richard Allen to discern the rightness of his calling to engage in a period of ministry related to the performance of his original compositions to a variety of groups. The clearness committee and Ministry and Worship have united with Richard's leading and support his ministry.

- **Minute 1-19-14-02:** Richard Allen has brought to the meeting a leading to deepen the spiritual life through faithful playing of original musical compositions. The meeting has tested his leading through a clearness process and finds Richard clear and faithful to follow the guidance of the spirit.

Atlanta Friends Meeting recognizes and has witnessed the transformative power of Richard's piano playing that brings together diverse groups to experience the movement of the spirit. We have witnessed

Richard's growth in his ministry and his faithfulness. Richard has shared his gifts and his musical compositions with the meeting and with Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting (SAYMA). He has conducted workshops at our yearly meeting that have been well attended and provided a source of deep spiritual refreshment to those attending. Richard's music has provided a particularly rich opportunity for young people to listen for the living water of the Spirit. Richard is clear that he serves as a channel for the divine Light in this service.

- **Minute 1-19-14-03:** On the recommendation of the Ministry and Worship Committee Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the formation of a Support/Care Committee to meet with Richard Allen regularly to support his faithfulness in his ministry. We ask the following Friends to serve on this committee: Ron Nuse, Susan Firestone and Bert Skellie. We ask the committee to report back to the Ministry and Worship Committee by January of 2015 to report on Richard's ministry.

Bill reported that Ashley Wilcox is a recorded minister of Freedom Friends Meeting and is a sojourning member of Atlanta Meeting while she continues her theological studies at Chandler School of Theology.

- **Minute 1-19-14-04:** On the recommendation of the Ministry and Worship Committee Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the formation of a Care/Support Committee to support Ashley Wilcox's faithfulness in Ministry. A.J.Mendoza, Alex Zinnes and Paul Baker will serve as this committee. We ask the committee to report to the Ministry and Worship Committee by January of 2015 on Ashley's progress in the ministry.

Finance Committee: On behalf of the Finance Committee Peter Sederberg presented the Income & Expense report and the Balance Sheet for 2013. He noted that while the reports currently show a modest surplus, it will be more substantial once the final entries are made for 2013. Paul Mangelsdorf reported that the Finance Committee expects the Meeting to run a surplus of approximately \$14,500 for 2013. The Committee recommends that these funds be transferred to the Permanent Improvement Fund, increasing its balance to approximately \$91,688. The committee thinks this is prudent in light of the existing commitment to spend another \$20,000 on the Grounds project and the likely near-term need for additional funds for the Grounds project as well as other likely capital improvement needs.

- **Minute 1-19-14-05:** On the recommendation of the Finance Committee Atlanta Friends Meeting approves the transfer of the 2013 surplus to the Permanent Improvement Fund.

Grounds/Playground/Landscaping: On behalf of the Grounds/Playground/Landscaping Committee Peter Sederberg and Jack Honderd asked approval for \$40,000 in additional funds to complete Phases 1 and 2 of the project. They reminded the Meeting that most of the initial figures were estimates which have required revision as permits were acquired and plans were modified to comply with current needs. The Meeting, which initially funded only part of Phase 2, also now sees the need to complete the fence and the play yard.

- **Minute 1-19-14-06:** The Atlanta Friends Meeting approves that \$40,000.00 from the Permanent Improvement Fund be used for the Grounds Improvement Project.

Ministry and Worship Committee: Bill Holland reported that a well-attended memorial meeting for worship was held on November 16, 2013 at the meetinghouse to celebrate the life of Don DeBra (June 2, 1940-October 18, 2013). Mary Ann Downey, Suzan and Tom Kenworthy, Sally Ferguson and Georgia Lord served on the memorial Committee and worked with Dee DeBra and Liz DeBra to plan for the service.

Don William DeBra, Jr. was born in Dayton, Ohio and moved to Atlanta with his family (parents and sister, Susan) when he was young. Growing up in Atlanta, he took an interest in American history in general and Civil War history in particular. After graduating from North Fulton High School in 1958, he was educated at Harvard College and Case Western Reserve School of Medicine, receiving his MD in 1966. In 1963 he married Dee (Agnes Dawson) of Washington, DC.

After further medical training at UNC Chapel Hill, where his son, Ted, was born in 1967, he was drafted into the Air Force, then loaned to the Army for two years, one of which he served as a battalion surgeon in Vietnam.

When in Vietnam, in 1969, his daughter, Elizabeth, was born. Following a Fellowship at the University of Rochester, New York, he moved his family to Atlanta (looking for sunnier climes), where he started a practice of endocrinology at DeKalb General Hospital. Don very much enjoyed his 25 years of practice, his patients, and his colleagues. As time permitted, he also enjoyed hiking and camping, travel, fly-fishing, and photography.

When Parkinson's Disease forced Don to leave his practice in 2000, he was still able to do some traveling. He was grateful to have time to get reacquainted with his cousins and other relatives and friends in Michigan, Florida, and Canada. Most of all, he enjoyed his close family, particularly his grandchildren: Ursula (9) and Bishop (7). It was a great source of happiness and comfort to him and his family when Don's sister and her husband, Bill, moved to North Georgia from Michigan. He was grateful, too, for his many friends who came to spend time with him and brighten his days. In June 2013, Don and Dee celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary, quietly in his room at Budd Terrace.

Kind, funny, learned, affectionate, Don will be lovingly remembered as a wonderful husband, brother, father, grandfather, uncle, cousin and friend.

Nominating Committee: On behalf of the Nominating Committee Carol Gray presented the following names for the Meeting's discernment:

- Martha Jane Robinson as member of the Ministry and Worship Committee (3-year term). This would be a re-appointment.
- Barbara Seal as Assistant Clerk of the Atlanta Friends Meeting (2-year term).

Finance Committee, Grounds project: Peter Sederberg and Paul Mangeldorf reported that now that the permits are in place and the contractor is working on our project they feel that it would be prudent to complete the entire project at this time. To help bring this about, Peter Sederberg, Paul Mangeldorf and Perry Treadwell have each committed up to \$5,000 in matching funds, at 50 cents on the dollar, for any contributions made toward the project. Contributions should be marked to the Permanent Improvement Funds, for grounds. A contribution total of \$10,000 would mean \$15,000 in matching funds and would move the project forward substantially.

Administration Committee: Jim Tolmach reported that on the coldest day there was a leak in the sprinkler system, which caused major damage, especially in the nursery and the foyer. The committee thinks a contractor is now available to begin repairs, which will be paid for by insurance. The committee will ask the insurance company to help us perform an assessment of the Sprinkler System since this is not the first problem we have had with it. The Meeting expressed appreciation to Jim Tolmach for his quick response in dealing with the problem.

Clerk's items: The clerk is compiling a minute of recognition and appreciation of service for all members whose term of service ended in 2013. She asks for help in completing the dates of service for the names she has and for names of any other volunteers she might have missed. The list will be published on the ListServe for those who were not able to attend the January Meeting for Business.

Minutes of December 2013:

- **Minute 1-19-14-07:** The Minutes of the December 2013 Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business were approved as submitted.

Meeting closed with Silent Worship.

Respectfully submitted by:

Elizabeth Lamb, Recording Clerk; and Nan O'Connor, Clerk

Calendar for Second Month (February) 2014

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 wrlldpeas@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)	(Mid-August through May), 9:00 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

Atlanta Friends Meeting Contacts

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ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING
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ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING

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Clerk: Nan O'Connor, 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.

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DEADLINE FOR 3rd MONTH NEWSLETTER:

February 20

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 (Word, not PDF). Pictures should be in .jpg format. Submissions may be edited for length and format.