

## **STATE OF THE MEETING REPORTS 2012**

Ministry and Oversight Committee has received State of the Meeting Reports from nearly all of the Monthly Meetings throughout our Pacific Yearly Meeting and has identified some of the themes and highlights that these Meetings have in common. It has been a delight to read these reports to get a sense of our Yearly Meeting as a whole.

There is much joy in deep, centered Meetings for Worship. Whether a Meeting is large or small, it is clear that it is part of our human condition both to love one another deeply and to be challenged by our differences of opinion. With divine assistance we are able to return to the source of love and to experience healing. Though some Meetings are growing, most of our memberships are growing older, and have fewer members with the energy to take on the responsibilities of clerking and committee work. It is cause to celebrate where there are vibrant children and teen programs as well as active outreach.

Below are some of the themes and highlights that we have found. The State of the Meeting Reports will be available to be read in their entirety in the Quiet Room at the Annual Session.

### **COLLEGE PARK QUARTERLY MEETING THEMES AND HIGHLIGHTS**

#### **Worship:**

There has definitely been a growth in the spiritual health of the meeting. This last year saw the increase of small groups outside of Meeting for worship, such as study groups, worship groups and support groups. The retreat on spoken ministry last fall was well attended. Since that time there has definitely been an increase in the quality and quantity of ministry in meeting. Central Coast

Silent worship is a foundation in our lives. We benefit from the calm healing of this practice even on Sundays when we feel resistant to coming to meeting. Redding

Worshiping together means that we don't have to face the spiritual journey as isolated individuals. We can (and must!) offer one another clarity and caution from the source that guides us all. Quaker spirituality is a process. It arises from the presence of the Divine within. It proceeds with the added clarity of a community. And it leads to outward expression in all aspects of our life. Sacramento

The depth of our corporate spiritual life was reflected not only in our weekly worship, but also by individuals in our Meeting who have particular calls to ministry in the wider world. Several of these Friends have spoken of the support of individuals and the Meeting at large, through anchoring committees, as being central to their call to ministry.

Strawberry Creek

**Outreach & growth:**

Redwood Forest Friends Meeting became a more active witness in the local community by joining a grass roots community-organizing project. After a thorough search for and finding unity, this action has created much enthusiasm, brought members back into regular attendance and instilled a sense of accomplishment we could not have had alone as a Quaker Meeting.

Redwood Forest

We are a greying community, the youngest of our members in their mid-50s. We have come to the realization that if we are to continue into the future as a viable Monthly Meeting we must address issues of future growth, which includes greater visibility.

Apple Seed

Our meeting has been enjoying a growth spurt, in relative terms, as there are several regular attenders who've just started with us in the last twelve months. At times our meeting room is barely large enough to hold us, but we like the space in the COPE (Child Or Parent Emergency) Family Center building in the heart of Napa. We will continue to accommodate our expanding numbers, considering creative seating before thinking about moving to another site.

Napa Sonoma

As a community, we are looking to find the appropriate relation between individual leadings and corporate action. What is our corporate leading to better the world? How can we give individuals support to fulfill their own sense of mission in the world without imposing that same mission on everyone in Meeting? We have had trouble recognizing "love and unity among us" to the extent that we think it means that everyone must be united on the same course of action.

Palo Alto

In regards to our involvement in the community around us, this year marked the 10th anniversary in December of our witnessing for peace in a weekly vigils held here in Davis and in neighboring Woodland. Davis Meeting continued its participation in the Davis Interfaith Rotating Winter Shelter for a fifth year, providing space and volunteers for the shelter's daily intake activities. Several of us participated in Davis' annual interfaith Celebration of Abraham gathering with our Christian, Jewish, and Muslim brethren. Davis

Pacifism and tolerance are our reference points when examining issues from our spiritual community to global concerns. Mendocino

**Caring for each other:**

Specifically to promote community and spiritual growth within our meeting we had both fall and spring meeting retreats, Friendly Eights dinner and sharing groups, 4th Sunday lunches. There is also a weekly mindfulness meditation group. There have been several ongoing reading and study series including one on early Quaker writings, a caregivers support group, a Spiritual Formation reading group, a discussion/sharing series on "Salt and Light" (in preparation for

2012 FWCC gathering), and in early 2012 an offering of Quakerism 101. We are currently beginning to explore engagement with the Quaker Quest program. Palo Alto

Although Friends are deeply concerned about the difficulties posed by fewer active members and attenders, we also recognize that smallness has a positive side. It is easier for a small Meeting to encourage Friends to become friends – to become closer to one another as individuals and to pull visitors into the welcoming circle. The pleasure and optimism that comes from fulfilling personal relationships can enable us to bear Meeting responsibilities more cheerfully and effectively and produce an atmosphere that will attract new members and attenders. Humboldt

On the other hand, there are areas where Spirit is needed. Redwood Forest Friends Meeting sometimes exhibits a sort of collective “amnesia”, where we forget about agreements and minutes approved, including some of the good order found in Faith & Practice. While we try to be more patient with one another, listen more deeply, and labor together, there have been some tender Meetings for Business in which people have felt criticized. Trust is fragile, and there are those who say they would not want to open themselves to a clearness process and/or avoid the discomfort of speaking plainly, and these can create a false sense of unity. Redwood Forest

We’ve seen strong community-building through our monthly intergenerational potlucks (with attenders from 5 to 90 years old); the well-attended, deep annual retreat at Quaker Center; the active community care coordinator role; the strong men’s group; the weekly worship-sharing and study group; our monthly life-story telling gathering; and the informal care-giver support group. All these activities have fed our souls. Santa Cruz

### **Property & Resources:**

Our Meetinghouse and Grounds committee has worked on many projects to make our meetinghouse safer and more welcoming, including adding clearer signage inside and out, updating landscaping and irrigation, and organizing several well-attended workdays. A special gift of the workdays was the presence of many individuals who volunteered alongside us from the other groups who use our meetinghouse, offering their skills and good cheer. Davis

There are a number of groups who rent our Meetinghouse for their activities including two Buddhist meditation groups, two spiritual dance groups, the Sacramento Records Society, East Sacramento Writers, Rug Hookers, Shape Note singers, and Clinical Social Workers. Sacramento

Our Finance committee has worked diligently to put our financial house in order, increasing the transparency and integrity of our financial reports, creating a stewardship plan to cover ongoing maintenance costs for our Meetinghouse, and starting the process to move our mortgage from a private lender to FGC. We have slowly come to grips with the reduced energy and time that people have to devote to Meeting concerns. We have adjusted

some of our committee structures and Meetings these days. Santa Cruz

Many expressed a sense of transition. Our decision processes have been severely tested over the issue of a potential land gift. Some expressed stress about the large responsibility resting on such a small Meeting. Many see this as a challenge and others as potential growth and learning. The uncertainty associated with a sense of transition has led some to a greater leaning towards the Light. The parallels between transition in the Meeting and transition in society were recognized. It was asked, “When are we *not* in transition?” Visalia

## **SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA QUARTERLY MEETING THEMES AND HIGHLIGHTS**

### **Worship & Vocal Ministry:**

Members and attenders hold a spectrum of views on the meaning of extended silence during Meeting for Worship. For some, the infrequent vocal ministry this year signifies dryness. Others appreciate bountiful silence as a sign that we are uniting at the spiritual level. CMM

Most of the time, ours is a very silent meeting. Some of us miss hearing vocal ministry. MLBMM

The amount and quality of vocal ministry has improved. Ministry in Meeting for Worship has brought insights that improved family relationships and personal peace. OCMM

A number of individuals spoke about the sense of the sacred they felt when in the Meeting House, and how in Meeting for Worship there was often a deep sense of the presence of the Spirit. . . . Some present felt that the Meeting would benefit from more vocal ministry during Meeting for Worship in order to enhance spiritual growth. SBMM

For some, Meeting for Worship remains a source of sustenance, joy and pleasure in learning to accept others. Other members felt a lack of eldering of messages, in particular for brevity and focus. A lack of knowledge of Quaker practice was noted as a concern. SMMM

### **Outreach and Growth:**

The Meeting joined in unity on an important decision in the Spring of 2011 to take a more active role in the Reunión General de los Amigos en México. Although we’ve participated in gatherings held in the north of Mexico, it’s been 20 years since Mexico City has hosted the Gathering of Friends in Mexico. This coming June we will bring together pastoral and unprogrammed Friends from around the country to draw on our similarities and share our differences as we explore the theme of “Revelando la Luz Interior” (Revealing the Inner Light). MCMM

Although we don't move en masse in any one direction, members and attenders of LJMM actively pursue our own Leadings, and support the Leadings of others. For the first time, we joined the San Diego Pride Parade. We hosted the local International Rescue Committee at our La Jolla and San Diego Annual Retreat. The Occupy movement has energized many Friends. Our outreach has included extending lines of friendship to the local Muslim community as well as to others affected by our wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. We continued our individual and collective support for many other organizations and efforts locally and around the world. LJMM

Desiring to express social concern for the broader community, our Meeting has undertaken a project with Human Options, a domestic violence shelter, which permits us to help in different ways – collecting, transporting, storing, and organizing food for the pantry and other activities. OCMM

Successful community outreach programs continued, including the breakfast program for our neighbors who are homeless, and the 5th First Day evening meals prepared by Meeting committees at the Union Station Homeless Services in Pasadena. Supporting the Afghan Girls School in Pakistan and Casa de Los Amigos in Mexico continue as projects of the meeting. Friends Western School (a parent co-op) is thriving on our campus with increasing numbers of students, and meets regularly with our consultation committee. Meeting began providing rent-free space this year to the Centro de Educacion del Pueblo, a local organization that provides tuition-free ESL and Spanish literacy classes. The Wisdom Arts Laboratory, now in its fifth year, offers children's classes and inter-generational programming that connect the arts, nature, and community awareness. Our space is also used by Planned Parenthood and six Alcoholic Anonymous groups. Whether they are projects of the meeting, or they simply share our space, Friends support these programs, and plan to continue such outreach this year. OGMM

The teens joined the adults for opening worship, made introductions among one another and then arranged transportation to the service project site. This service project was to help clear the area for the future Inland Valley Friends Meeting. Seven teens from five Meetings, six adults from Inland Valley, two adults skipping out on plenary, one new FAP and one Youth Program Coordinator cleared old tires, a door and a mountain of weeds, tumbleweeds, tree branches, trash and drank a few gallons of strawberry lemonade. While working each teen asked a person they had not met about each other's "heart's desire." SCYPC

### **Looking forward:**

Having settled in to our new location, our goals for this next year are to strengthen our fellowship, grow spiritually and continue to explore ways to invite and engage new people to our worship group. CVWG

We are concerned about the diminishing size of our community, and see that we want to reach out to newcomers, as well as to those who may have drawn away. Filling committee positions was a struggle, and some committees, including Ministry and Worship, were under that handicap all year. SMMM

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**Recovering:**

Claremont Monthly Meeting is healing from a difficult period. This year we endeavored to practice simplicity, integrity and equality while seeking (and finding) healthier ways of expressing our differences of opinion. “Conflict is like breathing,” states one member. Another adds, “When we see the possibilities of goodness in one another, even our ongoing conflicts can be addressed in ways that build up the community rather than tearing it down.” To reduce misunderstandings and mistrust, we focused on basics during 2011, exploring “What happens for each of us in silent worship?” and “What do we do when asked to hold someone in the Light?” CMM

Our community continues to heal from the tears in our own fabric, even as we are aware of our need to be a presence for healing in our world. We are struggling – both with the personal needs of individuals, and with the need to rebuild our community. We now have a greater sense of turning to spiritual guidance for our healing, seeking help from the Source. LJMM

Meeting for Worship on the Occasion of Business is at the heart of Quakerism, but we don't seem to project that; many don't attend and there is often tension between process and goal. OCMM

**Connections with worship groups:**

We were delighted to receive news of a budding Worship Group in Oaxaca and feel honored that both this new group and a more established Worship Group in San Miguel de Allende would like to be held in our care. MCMM

We enjoyed a May visit from Friends of Orange Grove and Santa Barbara Meetings for a Meeting for Worship and a potluck at one Friend's home. After the meal we had a Meeting for Worship on the occasion of business where we explored how to grow our meeting. Many ideas were suggested but the consensus was that the Spirit is still present with a small number of Friends.

We joined Santa Barbara Meeting and Ojai Worship Group at a day retreat at Channel Islands Harbor in September. We found this rewarding and fun. We appreciated the invitation to take part in this mini cluster. CVWG

Some members and attenders have begun to regularly visit the Ojai Worship Group to maintain a closer bond, and others have reported on their travels to other places or events to the benefit of the whole. SBMM

**Highlights:**

We are reminded that the core of all we do is in worship.

Seeking that of God in each of us will continue to build a family that cares both about each other and about the family of the world. Life is fragile, and sometimes it seems we can do little to meet the many needs of others. IVMM

Our meeting has settled into rental space over the past several years, however, with a generous grant from PYM and a gift of additional funds we now find ourselves owners of a 2.1 acre lot with the intent to design and build a permanent Meeting Home. We face many unknowns as we go forward; adherence to Quaker Process in Meetings for Business helps to insure that all voices can be heard. IVMM

We are delighted to have a teenage attender who comes fairly frequently with his step-grandpa. He has expressed a desire to join Friends. His youth has been a shot in the arm for us. His younger brother also attended for a time last year. MLBMM

During the teen program at Southern California Quarterly Meeting (SCQM) Spring 2012, we came to unity to change the name from Quaker Adventures to Southern California Youth Planning Committee. This committee will now serve two purposes: the first to plan the teen program at Southern California Quarterly Meeting, and the second to plan other events for all ages throughout the year. We are asking for the Southern California Retreat Committee, the College Park Quarterly Meeting Teen Planning Committee and the Youth Program Coordinator and Supervisory Committee to be resources to us. We appreciate Nominating Committee for selecting youth and adults for The Southern California Youth Planning Committee and ask them to continue doing so. SCYPC