

Annual Reflections on the State of Our Meeting

How among Friends did Truth prosper since last Yearly Meeting, and how do Friends fare in relation to peace and unity? c.1682

Friends consider the implications of our faith and practice as a Meeting each month and once a year, opening ourselves to broader insights and an honest appraisal of where we stand in relation to the light of the Spirit, our ideals, and the lives and writings of earlier members of the Society. We study the one of the Advices and Queries found in *Faith and Practice* each month and once a year we examine the life of our Meeting. The written results are submitted to our Monthly Meeting, Quarterly Meeting and Pacific Yearly Meeting.

We consider matters like the following:

--what are our reflections on the nature of our worship and enhancement of the life of the Spirit;;

--in what ways does our meeting, particularly our Meeting for Worship, strengthen and guide us;

--how do we nurture spiritual growth in our Meeting for those of different ages and phases of life;

--how do we welcome and educate new attenders and invite them to move deeply into the life of the Meeting;

--how have we borne witness to the testimonies of Friends;

--how have we reached out to others in our Meeting, within the community of Friends; and in the larger community in which we live;

--how has our spiritual life led us to an awareness of our stewardship of the natural world.

Letter to Monthly Meetings Re State of the Meeting

February, 1999

To: Monthly Meeting Friends within College Park Quarterly Meeting,
From: College Park Quarterly M&O
Re: State of the Meeting Reports

Dear Friends,

As we seek the Light, we have come to understand, as a religious society, the helpfulness of good order so that all things take their rightful place. One of the events we share as meetings is to write a state of the meeting report. The most important point of the writing is for us to look at our own meeting with the idea of seeing "how truth has prospered" among us - to express our identity and growth.

A second point of the exercise is to help CPQM and PYM know what is happening in our meetings to get a broad view of our experiences. With this knowledge, the larger group can respond in a variety of ways: putting meetings in touch with one another over issues in common, providing interest groups on common themes and, more generally, seeking ways to deepen our knowledge and awareness of God.

CPQ M&O has a few suggestions that would facilitate the process of the actual writing and getting reports to Quarterly and Yearly Meetings in a timely fashion. There are three points we would like to share: style for a report, ways of getting the job done and a change in the due date.

STYLE

While there is no one right style for a report, there are some that seem to show a depth of the meeting's work. A couple of meetings use the testimonies as a guide, using them to evaluate their progress.

One meeting wrote two reports. The first was long and detailed, though without using people's names, for their own records. The second one was a summary of the first so that reading the report either at Quarterly or Yearly would not be beyond the listening strength of the worshippers.

The people in a third meeting described their use of "dreamtime" to clarify the future direction for their meeting and the plans that they had already realized from the visions of the future.

Whatever form helps each meeting consider the ways in which we live together in the spirit is the best form for that meeting.

METHOD

The methods of writing the report span the continuum from the clerk writing the entire report alone to writing it as a meeting of the whole. One meeting successfully used the clerks of each standing committee who spent a few hours together responding to some prepared queries. Another meeting formed an an hoc committee to write the report. The size of your meeting and the particular gifts of your members and attenders will help you determine the method best for you. In any event, meeting approves the report before it is sent to Quarterly.

DATE

~~Although meetings have traditionally sent their report to Quarterly Meeting by its spring meeting in May, we find that an earlier date would really help Quarterly AND Yearly M&O committees. Here's a probable time table: Announce in March, or sooner, if need be, that the State of the Meeting Report will be read at monthly meeting in April and will need to be mailed off soon after that meeting.~~

Recorder (Leslie) will do this Two copies should be sent to the Quarterly M&O clerk. This year the lucky winner to receive the reports is Jim Anderson, 25 Gideon Lane, Chico, CA 95973.

We trust that this experience will be beneficial and rewarding.

Yours in the Light,

CPQM M&O

The State of the Society report:
Our annual report on the condition of our Meeting

We Friends explore both monthly and yearly the implications of our faith and practices as a Meeting, hopefully opening ourselves to wider insights and honest appraisals of where we stand in relation to our ideals, to the vision revealed to us through the lives of earlier generations in the Society, and in the light of the Spirit. We read regularly the written Advices and Queries and often find some helpful inquiries into our personal and corporate lives.

One of the earliest questions, asked yearly in the Society beginning in the late 1600's, was, "How among Friends did Truth advance since last Yearly Meeting, and how do Friends fare in relation to peace and unity?" With this in mind we examine our own Meeting each year and issue a written report to our Monthly, Quarterly and Yearly meetings. We reflect together on the condition of Strawberry Creek Meeting, posing such questions as these:

- in what ways do our meetings, particularly our meetings for worship, strengthen or guide us?
- what are our reflections on the nature of our worship?
- in what ways do we welcome and educate new attenders, and invite them to move more deeply into the life of the Meeting?
- in what ways do we nurture spiritual growth? How are we attending to this for various ages and phases of life?
- what is the nature of our community, and whom do we serve?

All who are part of the Strawberry community are invited to join in the discussion and formulation of the report; the writing is delegated to two or three people by the Business Meeting. They will bring a first draft back to the Meeting for any revising, and the final report, when approved, will be forwarded to Quarterly Meeting.

Regarding the State of Society Report

...The report should be a searching self-examination by the meeting and its members of their spiritual strengths and weaknesses and of the efforts made to foster growth in the spiritual life. Reports may cover the full range of interest and concerns but should emphasize those indicative of the spiritual health of the meeting. Meetings may wish to consider one or more of the following:

- quality of worship and spiritual ministry;
- efforts to foster spiritual growth;
- stand taken on Friends' principles;
- personal and family relations;
- relations with community and other religious groups;
- participation in general activities of Friends;
- significant activities, outreach, or concerns of the local meeting;
- youth of the meeting;
- meeting community

from Faith and Practice of New England Yearly Meeting, 1985
p 244

From: "Ellie Huffman" <elehuf@earthlink.net>

Date: Sun Jan 26, 2003 8:13:30 PM US/Pacific

To: mfloroth@aol.com, occiwood@sonic.net, Imagnani@juno.com, laughingplanet@hotmail.com, schubaba@hotmail.com, marilee@juno.com, itsmee@cdepot.net, gvk@jps.net, mphilley@well.com, connie@mcn.org, ardenhram@aol.com, avboone@sonic.net, lupine@gbis.com, lfairman@pacbell.net, kbarnard@readingprograms.org, akoshin@prodigy.net, nca@cruzio.com, edgar@cruzio.com, mglines@uci.edu, englwhit@earthlink.net, DianaAraujo@NDS.GOV, options4@gte.net, kay@maikai.net

Subject: State of the Meeting Reports

January 16, 2003

Dear Ministry and Oversight Clerks,

Your PYM M&O committee is preparing for our next Yearly Meeting. We are looking forward to reading the State of the Meeting reports to gain valuable insights regarding our Monthly Meetings, both individually and collectively. We are especially seeking word of your Meetings' spiritual strengths and weaknesses, and of efforts to foster spiritual growth in both corporate and individual lives.

We suggest that your Meetings use pg. 218 in our current Faith and Practice as a guide, and that the preparations themselves be held as experiences in spiritual growth.

May 1, 2003 is the latest date for your reports to be in the hands of Jim Anderson, Clerk, PYM M&O Committee: janderson@csus Chico.edu and Vashek Cervinka, Clerk CPQM M&C: cervinka@dcn.davis.ca.us

Copies by email are preferred.

In joyful anticipation of reading the reports,

Sally Davis, for PYM M&O Committee

P.S. A few weighty elders have offered these queries to help guide this process:

In what ways has the meeting nurtured the spiritual development of its members and attenders?

How have you used the Advices and Queries of PYM's Faith and Practice?

How is attention being paid to the spiritual development of the children and youth in the meeting?

Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting

State of the Meeting Report for 2005

As we reflect on the state of Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting, we focus our attention on the needs and challenges of a growing meeting community. We continue to cherish the depth of the silence in our meetings for worship. We share our spoken ministry with the measure of the Light each of us has been given. We conduct our business with respect for all individuals and points of view. In a violent and damaged world, we discern how we can be instruments of healing and reconciliation. We ask ourselves where we are going as a meeting and where we are on our spiritual journey.

A Maturing Meeting Community

We continue to be blessed with new requests for membership. They challenge us to consider what it means to be a member and how we as a meeting take members under our care. It is especially challenging when these Friends must relocate far away from our community.

7 new memberships and 3 associate memberships were approved in the last year. 3 memberships were transferred to other meetings. Strawberry Creek currently has 97 members.

About 100 to 120 of us gather to worship each week. As we rise to meet the challenges of a growing meeting, we see signs of maturity. Some of our seasoned members have been able to reach out to help new members take on more responsibility. Our participation in other Quaker organizations such as Sierra Friends Center and Quaker Center continues to be strong. Strawberry Creek is well represented at yearly and quarterly meetings.

To increase our visibility in our South Berkeley neighborhood, we have raised our newly sewn banner with the message: "Plant Nurture Harvest Seeds of Peace." We display our new banner in front of the school where we worship on First Day.

Monthly sessions facilitated by our new Adult Education Committee provide an exploration of issues that deepen our knowledge and appreciation of Quakerism.

The increased size of our meeting has resulted in the increased size and work of our committees. With more and larger committees, our Nominating Committee must work harder to fill vacancies and find clerks. Workshops and adult education sessions have been held to train Friends for the job of clerking.

Overseers is in the process of creating neighborhood clusters that can be used to stay in contact during times of emergency or natural disaster. The clusters are encouraged to engage with each other socially, as Friends have expressed desire for more opportunities to meet socially during the rest of the week. A regular, morning, midweek meeting continues on the UC Berkeley campus. Some Friends have hosted mid-week, evening meetings in the past year. While participation in Friendly 7's has decreased this year, a mid-week worship sharing group has started to meet and one neighborhood cluster is engaging in weekly Bible study.

The meeting is responding to requests for clearness committees by individuals who carry ministries, some for pastoral care and teaching, and some for peace and environmental protection. We are challenged as we seek appropriate responses to these requests. We are interested in the practices of other meetings to see whether their thoughts, writings, and actions may help us.

In the summer, we celebrated the marriage taken under our care of Dharma Yamaguchi and Manuel Galang with a tender meeting for worship. A joyous reception that followed blossomed with the miracle of a roomful of dancing Quakers.

We comfort each other in time of loss. Last spring, we worshiped in a memorial of Tim Saunders. A vision was shared of Tim in his wheelchair, speeding down the street, and then taking off and flying across the Golden Gate. That vision was translated into a lovely painting.

Another memorial meeting was held this past winter for Strawberry Creek Friends who lost loved ones outside of our meeting community. The grieving Friends brought pictures and other mementos of those who have passed on.

Nurturing the young people among us

Our First Day School is warmly appreciated with parents remarking how much their children love to attend. Approximately 35 young people regularly participate in the First Day School program. For volunteers, it is an opportunity to connect with our young people, and, as a result, form a stronger bond to Strawberry Creek Meeting.

Our First Day School Program has expanded from three classes to four. Our teenage group attends the first fifteen minutes of the meeting for worship and the full hour once a month. They have facilitated two religious education sessions in the past year. We rejoice that a number of our young Friends will be attending the World Gathering in London this summer.

Still, many of our young Friends find it difficult to stay connected to our meeting community. Some have left to attend school in other states. Young Friends are finding it difficult to afford to live in the Bay Area, one of the most expensive places to live in the country.

Challenges to our Community

Chronic lateness of a significant percentage of our worshipers impedes our ability to enjoy a truly gathered meeting. The issue of lateness may be a manifestation of our hurried lives and our failure to make our spiritual lives and community a priority.

The ringing of cell phones and beepers continue to be a disruption to our silence. The acoustics of our meeting room present a challenge to Friends with hearing difficulties, as we are frequently asked to speak up in order to be heard.

A number of Friends are the only members of their family that attend and feel a loss that they are unable to share this aspect of their spiritual lives with their family members. For these Friends, it is particularly difficult to schedule meeting activities around other family obligations.

We are still learning how to use the new medium of the Internet in ways consistent with Quaker values. Our web group on Yahoo has over 100 participants. Some Friends have privacy concerns over the registration process. Conflicts have arisen over the appropriateness of postings. The Electronic Communication and Resources Subcommittee of Overseers Committee was created "to facilitate Friends' use of computer technologies to deepen our spiritual and community life." The subcommittee is working to resolve these issues.

Money issues affect our community in a number of ways. Our sharing fund has received an increased number of requests for assistance. Some of us are experiencing long periods of unemployment. We seek clarity on money issues as we debate the appropriateness of buying our own meeting house.

Addressing challenges in the world

Moral values in government was identified as a major issue in the last election. We reaffirm our commitment to the moral values of love, charity, and compassion which we hold in common with the followers of many faiths. Our commitment to the Peace Testimony has led Strawberry Creek Friends to the gates of Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, to the nuclear testing grounds of the Nevada desert, and to demonstrations against the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. We were a co-sponsor of the AFSC's Eyes Wide Open exhibit, showing the human cost of war, during its display in San Francisco. We donated clothing to AFSC's Emergency Material Assistance Program.

A dozen of us traveled to other states during the last presidential election. We registered voters and assisted citizens to exercise their right to vote, free of fear and intimidation.

Friends have spoken out on the editorial pages of our newspapers. We have campaigned for affordable health care for all. We are concerned that our country's budget priorities have increased inequality between the rich and the poor. We are disturbed when political leaders attempt to increase their power by using hatred and fear to divide us as a country and devalue our families.

Though as individuals we are very active in the wider community, we have not yet discerned a corporate witness for our meeting. Recognizing that the last election brought people together across many differences, we do not want to lose the opportunity to work with others to forward our vision of a just and loving world.

That corporate witness may be found in our concern for the environment. We continue to consider our impact on the Earth and our relationship with Nature. At the close of the last year, Nature again showed us her awesome power and reminded us of how our lives are bound together on this fragile planet. Again, we reach out to victims of disaster, both natural and manmade.

We continue to charge ourselves one dime for each gallon of petroleum we burn to remind us of how our use of these resources may sow the seeds of war. So far, our fund has purchased compact fluorescent light bulbs to replace the conventional bulbs in our homes. We seek other ways to use this fund to decrease our dependence on oil. We have considered how we use fuel for travel, both in our personal lives and on Quaker business. Individual Strawberry Creek Friends have shared information on energy conservation, installed solar panels on our roofs, and purchased vehicles that use little or no gasoline. A new subcommittee of Peace and Social Witness is the Ecology Subcommittee, reflecting our increased awareness and commitment to these issues.

As we come terms with our size as a large meeting, we work to retain what we value: the warmth, the connectedness, and those precious moments when we experience the divine among us.

STRAWBERRY CREEK MONTHLY MEETING

STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT May 2003- May 2004

Worship and the Life of the Spirit

Strawberry Creek Meeting has experienced growth and deepening of the life of the spirit over the past year. A sense of unity infuses diverse approaches to the life of the spirit. Meetings for Worship draw the Strawberry Creek community into a deep silence within which the spirit moves and guides. The silence has been rich and profound as the Meeting endeavors to enhance the spiritual growth of all members and attenders. From this silence, vocal ministry has been thoughtful and spirit-led. Some Friends gather in silence before the beginning of Meeting for Worship which draws those arriving into a living silence. Most Friends arrive before the hour set for Meeting for Worship. The number of late arrivals at Meeting for Worship continues to be a problem which Worship and Ministry is addressing.

Members are aware that the Meeting has become larger and an effort is made to retain the warmth and intimacy of worship in smaller groups. There is a mid-week Meeting for Worship held before work on the U.C. Berkeley campus for those who wish to meet for worship more frequently. At times small numbers of Friends have met for worship at the home of house-bound Friends or for a Meeting for Healing. Meetings for Worship end with people saying their names and making brief announcements of events of interest. This practice makes the members and attenders known to each other in a pragmatic yet spiritual way.

The Meeting, a Guide and Source of Strength

Strawberry Creek Meeting seeks to nurture the spiritual growth of all members and attenders in several ways. Friends gathered in Meeting for Worship are frequently asked to "hold someone in the Light" during a time of difficulty. Those receiving the loving attention of the Meeting in this way often remark how they have felt lifted and enveloped by the Spirit. Spiritual growth is also nurtured by a consideration of the Queries. A different Query is read each month at the beginning of Meeting for Worship when the children are present. Additionally, before rise of meeting for worship, those new to Quaker beliefs and practice are invited to ask questions of members of Worship and Ministry over coffee. Adult education programs include "Quakerism 101", which covers topics in Quaker faith and practice, and study of selected books of the Bible. A committee independent of Worship and Ministry will oversee the adult education program beginning next year. Worship and Ministry also sponsors topical programs after rise of Meeting. In an effort to better use our library resources, a new Library Committee has been set up to consider how to address the problems facing the library. Strawberry Creek Meeting held a weekend retreat at Quaker Center in the spring and a one-day retreat in the fall. The longer retreat provided an opportunity for prayer, worship, Quaker dialogue, and participation in interest groups and creative activities. The day-long retreat presented an opportunity to consider the Meeting as a spiritual home. Friends came away from both retreats with their spirits refreshed. Friends from Strawberry Creek Meeting also participated in worship

and other activities at Quarterly Meeting and Pacific Yearly Meeting. The young adult friends at Strawberry Creek Meeting join with others from Berkeley Meeting and Friends Church to meet for fellowship at regular pot-luck meals and other activities. Some Friends are concerned that several members and attenders have been forced to leave the Bay Area because of the high cost of living.

Nurturing Growth in the Meeting for Those of Different Ages

The spirits of the children are nurtured by limited participation in Meeting for Worship and through the program of the First Day School. There were 41 children regularly attending First Day School: 11 in the Teen group; 20 in the Primary group; and 10 in the Nursery group. Primary age children join the first fifteen minutes of Meeting for Worship on First Day once a month. The Teens regularly attend Meeting for Worship for the first quarter hour and some stay for the entire hour. Some primary students and teens rejoin the meeting at the end of worship for introductions and announcements. Even the tiniest are named. This practice is a way of recognizing the young people as part of the Meeting community and making them at home in it. The First Day School depends on the efforts of many dedicated volunteers. The Teen group continues to nurture its members and engage their interest. The primary age children are following a three-year curriculum. A program beyond child care for the pre-primary group has begun, while infants and toddlers will continue to receive child care appropriate to their age.

Welcoming and Educating Newcomers

The Meeting continues to work on better ways to reach out to new attenders. Worship and Ministry has prepared a brochure for the information of those unfamiliar with Quaker beliefs and practice. A special effort is made to include interested attenders in Friendly 7's and retreats, where they can get to know older members and learn more about the faith and practice of Friends. Overseers hold a New Attenders Brunch twice a year. There is a growing diversity in the make-up of the meeting community which members feel is in keeping with the spirit of Friends. Contact is maintained within the Meeting community the old-fashioned way through the newsletter, the meeting directory, and the photograph register—which is posted on the bulletin board during meeting so that Friends can put names and faces together. The Meeting's website and Yahoo/group provide a means of agile communication during the week.

Bearing Witness to the Testimonies of Friends

Strawberry Creek Meeting continues to bear witness to the testimonies of Friends. A number of Friends have participated in peace activities: protests against war in Iraq and Afghanistan, demonstrations at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, and in lobbying on legislation through the Friends Committee on National Legislation. Others continue to work quietly through local institutions for those less fortunate. The Meeting was enriched this past year by the witness of a sojourning Friend who had provided medical care for peace communities in Colombia. The Meeting continues to search for and discern a form of corporate witness. There are different points of view between those who feel that corporate witness must arise without formal thought or preparation and those who feel it deserves nurture and encouragement through reading, listening meetings, and small group Quaker dialogue to open hearts to the possibility. The recent civil marriages of several same-sex

couples are a cause for rejoicing in the Meeting. They reflect Strawberry Creek's witness to the testimony on equality and the Meeting's minute on same-sex marriage.

Relations with the Natural World

Quaker concern for a right relationship with the environment has been brought to the Meeting by Peace and Social Witness Committee, two interest groups known as the Ecoberries and Fireflies, and by individuals. A new program to limit wasteful use of natural resources is just getting under way. The Meeting has approved a minute encouraging members and attenders to donate the equivalent of ten cents per gallon of gasoline used and equivalent donations for direct use of other types of fossil fuels. The donations will be collected in a special fund as a testimony for peace and the advice on harmony with creation. The Peace and Social Witness committee is coordinating a process for deciding how to spend the fund.

Changes in Membership

Strawberry Creek Meeting had 90 members in 2003, a net increase of five members. Attendance at Meeting for Worship is between 90 and 112. Sadly, several valued, long-term members have moved out of the area. More happily, a number of long-time attenders have become members, a reflection of the spiritual growth of the Meeting. Several young adult Friends moved away and three new babies and a toddler were welcomed into the Meeting.

Facing Problems and Discerning a Way

Strawberry Creek Meeting has actively sought to address the issues of growth and increasing complexity, as well as the challenges of the meeting environment. One is an effort to discern the nature of the meeting and its present and future needs. Several listening meetings have been held to assist in this process. The Meeting community is coming to recognize the loving care extended to each member and its extension in various ways toward the larger community. Unity has not yet been found but the Meeting community has come to appreciate members' different points of view. Friends who have had difficulties hearing spoken ministry have found sitting closer to the center of the Meeting room to be helpful. With the increased number of committees, Nominating Committee has found it more difficult to find people willing to serve as clerks. The Meeting has responded by holding workshops on clerking.

Space and Responsibility

Another area which the Meeting is attempting to discern is its relationship with the space it occupies. After several Listening Meetings, a special Site Analysis Committee was set up to bring to the Meeting a review of its needs and options. The Meeting must still discern whether and how different kinds of space or a permanent site might enhance the life of the meeting. The members of the Meeting community are listening to each other and seeking a positive conclusion of this process for the Meeting, whatever that conclusion may be.

Patricia Netherly
Mary White
Tom Yamaguchi
April 11, 2004

Strawberry Creek Meeting
State of the Meeting Report: May 2002 – May 2003

About 40 of the 90 or more people who typically fill our meetings for worship met for a listening meeting to contribute to this report. In addition, the writing committee has spoken with committee clerks and others, and reviewed minutes, newsletters, and special reports of the past year.

As we approach the end of our second year at Berkeley Alternative High School, we come to Meeting under the ominous shadow of our country's wars and threats of war. To us, the *roots* of these wars are only too easily identified. Fears and apprehensions have been intensified by our national Administration's war-making posture. Friends have said they sometimes experienced the turmoil of the outside world reflected within the Meeting. During the fall, some Friends experienced some Meetings for Worship as disruptive or lacking in spiritual depth. Worship and Ministry Committee prepared and distributed a guide to the Meeting for Worship; thereafter, worship became more centered, with more time between spoken ministry. Following a suggestion by Worship and Ministry, many Friends have been sitting in worship beginning 10 to 20 minutes early, so that Meeting has been well gathered by 10 am. And so we have turned again to quiet worship, the wellspring from which we are restored and led, each of us, toward a longing for life based in harmony with all that takes away the occasion for war.

We have been prompted in numerous ways to seek and to ask each other how we can work toward peace. Our spring weekend at Quaker Center and our fall day retreat – times of joyous community – moved us to envision what actions can come from our *faith*, and how we can better practice our convictions. At times we have queried each other, "What *are* our convictions? What are the roots of our religion? What are we ready to do, and how can we support each other in living this out?"

Evidence of such questions and movements of the Spirit has drawn many seekers into the meeting's fellowship this year. We regularly worship in company with nearly 100 members and attenders. The Meeting now has 87 members (though about 35 are inactive or live elsewhere), and 40-50 active attenders. We welcomed three new members and mourned the loss of one long-time Strawberry. Many new attenders speak of being warmly welcomed, and Friends express appreciation for the strong fellowship and caring community of Strawberry Creek Meeting. We are glad for a new surge of energy, talent and curiosity about Quakers. Friends who have experienced smaller Meetings sometimes miss their more intimate dynamics. We started a photo directory to recognize one another better. We search for ways to belong and to be known.

Small groups have been evolving naturally, and these groups are helping us to share interests and time together. Often they meet independently of Strawberry Creek's formal committees but contribute their insights and open their activities to the wider Meeting. A social action group, a parenting group, and an ecology group are now in their 2nd, 3rd and 4th years, respectively, and continue to attract new participants. A biweekly social action calendar is published by e-mail, the dedicated effort of one or two people. A meeting for worship through singing continues monthly. A film series has just started. An on-line web group serves Strawberries both in town and "Scattered." These developments have helped us address our desire for intimacy in the larger Meeting.

Education for our growing Meeting has been an important consideration over the year. A series of adult education meetings on selected topics in *Faith and Practice* (Pacific Yearly Meeting, 2001) offered time to think more deeply about worship, spoken ministry, and pastoral care during life transitions. This spring a round of Quakerism 101 was held and a reading group is getting underway. Each will provide opportunities for new attenders and seasoned Friends alike to explore Quaker faith and practice, both roots and contemporary significance.

Participation in Quarterly and Yearly Meetings has increased, too. Strawberries hold positions in each. We are increasingly conscious of our connections with Quakers across the country, and observe that 8-10 Strawberries regularly attend Friends General Conference. Several young people are attending Quaker schools.

Young adults comprise a large and valued population in the Meeting. Young Adult Friends have been drawing their community from Strawberry Creek, Berkeley Friends Meeting, Berkeley Friends Church, Davis Meeting, and San Francisco Meeting for potlucks and conversation. Other adults in Strawberry Creek are frequently participants in clearness efforts to consider life changes that come especially in younger adult years - job choices, resuming or completing education, clearness about personal leadings and marriage. All of us have grown, or have been given opportunities for growth, in practices of prayer, clearness, Quaker decision-making and true fellowship.

Friendly 7's, arranged by Hospitality Committee, have met three times this year at Friends' homes in four or five groups of six to nine Strawberries for simple supper and dialog on questions

provided by Worship and Ministry committee. A yearning for more worship time resulted in midweek evening meeting for several months during the fall, borrowing space from Berkeley Friends Meeting. A new experiment with early morning worship has begun weekly on the Cal campus, arranged by several Strawberries.

First Day School is the largest ongoing activity conducted by the Meeting, apart from meeting for worship itself. We see 40-50 children and young people coming, with over 30 attending regularly. We anticipate several new-baby welcomings soon. Nearly 30 adults from Meeting serve on First Day School committee or as teachers and workers in our classes. Under gifted guidance our children grow in community with the Meeting, practice quiet together, and join worship monthly for the first 15 minutes when the Advices and Queries are read. The larger size of the meeting, together with dedicated adult energy, has made a thriving First Day School program viable. Teens often stay the full hour of worship, and are carrying on discussion of the experience of worship and of how testimonies are formed. Teens also provided our Christmas play this year, involving many younger children in the drama. Our children have made the Heifer Project an integral part of their craft work and have raised many hundreds of dollars. They have met in Quaker fashion to decide how to contribute these funds to the Heifer Project's provision of farm animals and trees to families in need around the world. A genuine sense of their own community has developed among the children as well as the teens.

As renters of the Alternative High School for only 4-5 hours on Sunday mornings, we have looked for some meaningful connection with the school, and have formed an interest in supporting programs and awards, guided by advice from the very dedicated school principal. We financed the purchase of T-shirts, with student-created graphic design, that were given as awards at a recognition ceremony last June. This year we have provided funds to support a tutoring program. Several Strawberries have been trained and have taken part as tutors in the school district.

The field of peace activities has been broad. We have written personal letters, visited elected officials, and given greater attention to FCNL's (Friends Committee on National Legislation) reports and recommended actions. Peace and Social Concerns committee has been promoting an active letter-writing campaign at Meeting. The committee held a thoughtful Peace Forum, which identified how we value small affinity groups for personal discernment and connection with each other. Collectively many have joined in large peace marches in San Francisco and Oakland, carrying our banner, "Let us try what love can do – Quakers." We experimented: one of us has helped plan worship and civil disobedience at Livermore Lab; others have joined in public witness

there and in numerous other places. One member traveled among peace communities in Colombia with the support of Quarterly Meeting. Another held several house meetings in which individuals were invited to share their personal understandings of the Peace Testimony. A forum in March extended this discussion among the local Quaker communities. Our active web group has allowed us to circulate articles and announcements pertinent to peace interests as well.

Strawberry Creek gave major attention over the year to questions about a stable, long-term location for the Meeting. Last spring's four listening meetings convened by Overseers Committee led to their report recommending exploration of practicalities and factual information necessary to any future decision. The report also encouraged the Meeting "to continue discussing, dreaming, and visioning the future of our community, what it is, and what it might become." An Ad hoc committee arranged several more listening meetings, resulting in a proposal approved by the Meeting to establish a Site Analysis committee this year. Friends have indicated a strong interest in thoughtful examination of our future community, especially to see how our long-range plans affect considerations of site. For the time being, we have referred these longer-range aspects to Worship and Ministry and to Overseers.

Week after week, now in our twenty-fourth year as a Meeting, worshiping together gathers our lives into vital centering, where we become willing to hear the Spirit through spoken and unspoken ministry. We know the fruits of this Spirit through our bonds of care, provision when we are in need, strength of friendships, challenges to one another, and the flow of personal practices that teach us how we may live in spiritual community. Knowing a little, we desire more. Acknowledging our insufficiencies and mistakes in a spirit of humility, we also cherish an enduring hope to make our contribution toward a world of justice and equality.

Our listening and speaking with a sense that the Divine Spirit moves in our midst has been renewed. Once again in the writing of this report we give thanks for the many-faceted experiences of living in our Strawberry Creek community.

Charlie Blanchard
Andrea English
Barbara Graves
4-13-03

SCFM STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT 2001

In reflecting on this past year, we are filled with gratitude for the vitality of Strawberry Creek Meeting. We cherish our worship, with its ample and fertile silence and tender messages. The enriching presence of many new Friends in our meeting brings us much joy. Friends report a warm satisfaction in being a part of the meeting community and participating in its committees and informal groups.

In the course of this review, we have become sensitive to the question of who we are beyond a mutually caring faith community. How well do we teach and hold our living tradition? How do we communicate our experience to the larger world? How deeply do we challenge ourselves to maintain our Quaker integrity? In regard to this last, we note especially the need to strengthen our corporate witness as a faith community, a need that is easily overlooked when so many of our members are personally active in work for social change.

Three specific areas call us this year to reflect, and eventually, to act:

Size. Our membership has grown. In 2001, we welcomed 8 people into membership. We now have a strong group of young Friends 18-39, though there is a decline in the numbers of young children moving up through First Day School. Generally, between 80 and 90 people attend meeting for worship. We are developing new leadership and spreading the work among more Friends. We are conscious of the need to maintain community as we grow in numbers.

Space. We have begun a process of discernment on the future of our meeting site prompted in part by the increased size of our meeting, but also by our chronic insecurity as tenants. We have moved several times in recent years and, although we have adapted to each new location, each move has taken time and energy from the meeting. We desire stability but also wonder whether there are benefits to being an itinerant meeting. A decision about the next site will be a major test for us. We are sensitive to the importance of maintaining unity as we face the challenges of growth and change, and of the need for careful discernment about who we are as a Meeting. *How should these concerns define the space we choose as we move into the future?*

Faith in Action. Although we have a sense of ourselves as a faith community, we feel unsure of how to put our faith into action in the world, and we acknowledge our commitment to be Spirit-led. Britain Yearly Meeting's document, *Faith in Action*, invites us to reflect on the query, *What do the testimonies ask of us at this time?* Answering this could be painful, and reveal things we do not understand. We seek to address the challenge of our testimonies, to become clearer on the nature of our witness to the world, and to take our leadings to the wider community of Friends. The strength of any collective social witness must spring from the bond of our spiritual community.

Now we turn to our worship together this past year, the nurturing of our children in First Day School, and the building of our faith community:

Worship. The quality of our meeting for worship has matured and deepened. The quickness of our many newcomers to grasp the timbre of our worship has astonished us. But we acknowledge our hunger for challenging ministry.

Some Friends regularly arrive several minutes before 10 a.m. to start the process of gathering the Meeting for Worship. It is our hope that the more closely gathered worship will better accommodate the disturbance of Friends who continue to arrive after 10 o'clock. In good Quaker fashion, we encourage community responsibility for the conditions that best nourish deep worship, and also warmly welcome all Friends, whenever they arrive.

The new Faith and Practice is the focus of a monthly series of discussions designed to focus our corporate reflection and ground us in our living tradition. After each program, a smaller follow-up gathering meets midweek in one another's homes.

First Day School. Our annual FDS Christmas play, written this year by the teen group and performed by all of the children, linked the story of the birth of the Christ child with the issue of homelessness. This very moving program showed a high degree of caring and attention, and talented creativity, from a number of Friends.

The teen group finds that a series of worship-sharing nights with pizza in one another's homes provide an opportunity for both spiritual growth and comfortable socializing. Some of our young Friends have recently felt led to speak in the larger community about the peace testimony in public meetings in the Bay Area and on NPR. There is an active group of college students and older teens who eagerly return to meeting when they are in town. The young adult Friends group is also strong.

A high proportion of the meeting community contributes to maintaining our flourishing First Day School, including a few Friends who are not parents themselves who have taken the initiative to become involved with First Day School. More would be welcome. First Day School teachers are reflecting on ways in which even greater meeting-wide attention to the spiritual growth of the children in our meeting might be encouraged.

Building Our Faith Community. The health and high functioning of the meeting showed in the quick and healing response made to 9/11 by the First Day School, and then also by the meeting as a whole. The First Day School curriculum was set aside for two weeks while the children's concerns were listened to. We held two gathered meetings for worship with the other two Friends' Meetings in Berkeley, the first on September 12th, the second about 6 weeks later. Adults also shared in weekly listening meetings, as we pondered the meaning of what had happened, and our need for community insight and support. Although there was little silence in the meetings for worship immediately following 9/11, verbal ministry remained consistently inspiring. After the fall retreat, where the topic of the peace testimony provided an opportunity for much-needed reflection, our meeting's usual reverence for the power of silence returned.

Our community has become more vibrant with the many interest groups that have sprung up in our meeting; they provide a leavening and are significant in our lives. Concerns are as diverse as the environment and parenting. Some have emerged spontaneously, and some grew from our

spring retreat. One group came to know each other while cycling to PYM. "Friendly Sevens" continues to be an important activity. Our meeting now has a website, a list-serve discussion group, and an electronic bulletin board that connect us even when we are separated by distance. Friends report that these tools have helped them feel attached to our meeting community.

Although we sometimes complain about the length of the announcement period after meeting for worship, we recognize that announcements provide opportunities for us to put our faith into action. Announcements provide glimpses of the work of individual Friends and help us connect with one another.

Business meetings are reasonably well attended, although some Friends leave before the meetings conclude. A strong Strawberry presence has been noted at both Quarterly Meeting and PYM.

Friends in our meeting are attentive and caring toward one another and to the needs of the meeting, creating a thread of continuity that is firm and long. While our care for Friends with acute physical illness and those who ask for a clearness committee is good, we feel the need to be sensitive to the needs of those who are unemployed, those who have chronic illnesses, and those who do not ask for help. Now that we are a large meeting, we are more challenged to respond consistently with appropriate caring and sharing.

The query *How does truth fare among us?* offers a special challenge for us today. We sense, both as a meeting and as a Society, that we should be powerful witnesses to much that needs to change. While we have yet to become truly purposive about this in our meeting, we feel that it could be about to happen.

State of the Meeting Report

Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

5/7/01

After a lengthy process of discerning *whether* to move and *where* to move, we Strawberries were smoothly “transplanted” on October 1, 2000. There had been a feeling that we had outgrown our old location because the worship room, which was used as a kindergarten during the week and had a very active primary school spirit, was visually distracting and could no longer comfortably hold our growing numbers. Furthermore, the bathrooms and some of the First Day School rooms were not wheelchair-accessible, and conversion of the room from kindergarten to meetinghouse and back again was a minor miracle, accomplished weekly by our hard-working Facilities Committee. Our Site Committee did an extensive search and considered a number of sites before presenting its recommendation of Crowden School. After careful planning, a trial Meeting for Worship was held at Crowden in March, 2000. At our Meeting for Business on September 10th we approved a minute to relocate to Crowden School. We held our first meetings for worship and business on October 1st. After several weeks of experimenting with using various rooms for our purposes we seemed to settle in comfortably.

There seems to be an overall good feeling about the move. Crowden generally satisfies our desire for a quieter, more spacious location. Also, all of the spaces we use are wheelchair-accessible, with the exception of a room in which the teens sometimes meet. On the other hand, our rent has doubled, and we are paying attention to the effects on our individual and Meeting budgets. And because our current rental agreement will expire in October of 2001, one of our strongest concerns as a Meeting continues to be about ourselves—about our location.

One similarity between our old and new locations is that both buildings are located on major thoroughfares, but that our Meeting room itself is a bit tricky to find, because it is tucked away behind a gate, marked by a sign that is only displayed on First Days. This is a literal problem, and perhaps also a metaphor for our relationship as a Meeting to the world outside our gates. Overall, we are a vital, harmonious community, full of love and concern for each other and creation. Yet too often newcomers feel unwelcomed and questions go unasked or unanswered. And while many individuals and small groups among us are active on peace and social concerns, we do not currently find ourselves called to significant and sustained witness as a Meeting.

Our committees do offer semi-regular service opportunities to which all Strawberries are very much invited. For example, Peace and Social Concerns organizes Games Night with low-income residents of the UA Homes transitional housing facility, and First Day School arranges for Strawberries of various ages to help with a Community Meal at Temple Beth-El. In another expression of concern, we approved a minute regarding Environmental Priorities, which we sent to Friends Committee on National Legislation. Many Strawberries participated in a recent environmental service project at Crissey Field in San Francisco that brought together Friends from several Meetings.

Committees also organize events from time to time which convey our message of welcome more clearly than our day-to-day, Friend-to-Friend encounters sometimes do. In

cooperation with the Hospitality Committee, Overseers organized a new member welcoming in May, 2000, and is planning another one for April, 2001. Overseers also hosted a brunch for about two dozen new attenders in February, 2001. Hospitality organized "Friendly 7s" evenings in April, 2001, and assisted with our Christmas gathering and several farewells to Strawberries heading off on adventures. Ministry and Worship has recently begun to make a few Friends available just after rise of Meeting for "fireside chats" about Quakerism. Loaves and Fishes provided increasingly substantial after-Meeting refreshment. Both our retreats this year had an intergenerational focus. There has also been increasing interest in several small groups which are not sponsored by the Meeting, but which meet in Strawberries' homes to address issues or situations in a Quaker setting.

Friends feel that worship has deepened in our new location. There is no scarcity of either silence or spoken ministry, both of which feel full and spirit-led. Our attendance has grown since the move as well. We are grateful to have the space for so many newcomers. It seems that the surface amenities of the new location have made it possible for more seekers to respond to the pull of our primary activity: worship.

Some Friends feel that the number of late-arriving Friends distracts them and prevents the meeting from becoming gathered. Latecomers, who are between a third and a quarter of the meeting, continue to wait in a separate room to be seated all at once about 15 minutes into meeting.

Adult religious education has been well attended, and there appears to be a great hunger for spirit in our Meeting, and a desire for a better understanding of Friends' tradition. The meeting sold over 80 copies of the revised Faith and Practice. There were five different groups organized to read and study the Faith and Practice revision. We approved and submitted to the Revision Committee a minute regarding the scope and tone of the Advices and Queries on Home and Personal Relationships, and another one deepening the attention paid to Unity with Nature.

Our First Day School program continues to provide religious education and a sense of community to children and their families, and the adults involved with the program. Four classes exist, defined by flexible age-bands: Nursery, Pre-Primary, Upper Primary and Teens. 34 children and teens participated in our First Day School program, 19 of them on a regular basis.

An array of options has opened up for teen involvement in worship, fellowship and service. This has the effect of keeping more teens in touch with Strawberry Creek, even during the periods where school activities, travel and other commitments pull them away from First Day School. Three teens participated regularly in the life of the meeting as childcare providers and teaching assistants. Two teens attended meeting for worship regularly. Four Strawberry teens are involved in preparations for the 2001 Junior Yearly Meeting.

Classes are taught by First Day School Committee members and other adults. Teens serve as the primary childcare providers for the Nursery, with rotating adult assistants. On several occasions, the younger children made crafts and sold them to benefit the Heifer Project which assists hungry families around the world. The Pre-Primary, Upper Primary

and Teen groups participate in silent worship on a regular basis, either in Meeting for Worship or in their First Day School classrooms.

Many of the 20- and 30-somethings among us are involved in the young adult friends group which holds regular potlucks and other activities for people from Strawberry Creek, Berkeley Friends Meeting, Berkeley Friends Church and elsewhere.

During the year we welcomed four new members, and approved one transfer of membership out of the meeting. Our total membership now is 79 and average attendance at meeting is 70-80 members and attenders. At this writing, four applications for new membership and one application for transfer of membership into Strawberry Creek are in process.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Burr, Clerk

Since April 1999, membership increased from 72 to 76 with the addition of three new members and one transfer of membership. We welcomed the presence of many new attenders throughout the year. Our meetings for worship often number between seventy and eighty people now. In February 2000, Overseers hosted the largest annual Newcomers Brunch in recent memory.

We mourned the unexpected death of one long-time attender at the end of March. A very moving memorial service was attended by many Friends and neighbors, who spoke deeply of her service as a neighborhood and community activist.

We continue to seek ways to make the larger community aware of our Friends Meeting and to share our faith. Many new attenders have found us through our continuing advertisement in a local free newspaper. A request for outreach in the form of an e-mail newsletter to an attender now living far away has developed into providing that resource to any in the Meeting who want it. As part of our outreach, we also seek ways to share Quaker witness as a meeting. The Peace and Social Concerns Committee has guided Meeting in a process through which we decided to volunteer in groups with a local non-profit organization providing support to homeless people to become self-sufficient.

A generally high quality of worship has been sustained since our last report. Despite the visual distractions of the schoolroom in which we meet, and the noise of the BART trains rolling by, our worship has frequently been deep and encouraging to growth in our spiritual lives, both individually and collectively. Many people feel an openness to prayer and a sense of a dependable network within meeting where we can expose our struggles and be met with love, compassion and deep listening. Occasionally we have been challenged to respond to worship where silence did not occur between messages, or when individuals who were troubled were reaching out. We are seeking new ways to reach out to those individuals as well as new ways of deepening worship at the same time. Despite these challenges, our worship has retained a depth and source of unity that has carried over to Meetings for Business. Our Meetings have led many to feel that we are "maturing" in the Light.

We have continued to read Advices and Queries monthly at the beginning of Meeting for Worship. Each month one committee prepares a response to the Advices and Queries, which is read out of the opening silence at Business Meeting. This practice grounds the Meeting for Business in worship. We have been able to maintain prayerful listening during Meeting for Business and to think of what is best for the Meeting as a whole.

We remain challenged to welcome those who are new and to strengthen our sense of community.

Many people feel closely connected with Meeting and we continue to care for those who are ill or unable to attend Meeting. We nonetheless are aware that some others have expressed the pain of feeling unwelcomed and unheard. We continue to ask how we make and then deepen connections with those new to Meeting.

The First Day School Program has continued to flourish. In June, certificates of attendance were awarded to 25 children or teens and 3 infants or toddlers. Substantial increases in participation have occurred since fall in the ages 4-7 and teen groups. Some adults feel that the more visible presence of our teens, who had met off site during the past two years, has fostered deeper connections between teens and adults in Meeting this year. A real sense of community has developed among the young people, and for many, participation in the Meeting has become an important part of their lives. Many Friends feel that this participation reflects the significant efforts of the First Day School Committee as it has developed and taught its own curriculum through two complete three-year cycles of lessons.

For over three years, we have been fortunate to rent a large space at the Shelton Primary Education Center, which has been available to us all day every First Day. During this year, two listening meetings were held on the suitability of our present site and a site committee continued to carefully explore options for either relocating or expanding our space at the present site. Many Friends expressed the desire for a plainer meeting room, visually more spacious and quiet, while at the same time Friends appreciated our location and the large space that is currently available for First Day School, adult education, meetings for business, and our social hour after meetings for worship. The site committee's year-long preparatory work was cited by Friends as a good example of the meeting's loving care of one another in seeking unity. Because our meeting rents space but changes location only at long intervals, our moves can be demanding. However, changing locations keeps us aware that we as individuals in our relationship to God and to each other are what make Strawberry Creek Meeting.

Members and attenders share many and varied talents and plain hard work to sustain our community. A member new to nominating committee was "startled and refreshed" to find that people were "waiting to be asked" to participate in committees. Some fruits of committees' work provided us with retreats, adult religious education programs, friendly sevens worship-sharing, and a work and spirituality group. Several Friends have expressed appreciation for prayers and caring support from the meeting during the last year. Hospitality committee reminded us with grace and humor to have fun; we were lifted by activities designed to include children, teens, and adults. There is a cresting of love and concern for each other that develops in Meeting for Worship, which we are attempting to extend after Meeting through the times for announcements, refreshments, and beyond. We seek to relate to each other in that which is Eternal beyond Meeting for Worship and to support each other's spiritual journeys.

State of the Meeting Report- Strawberry Creek Meeting 1999

As we approach our twentieth anniversary as a monthly meeting there is a sense that we have matured. Indeed, when our members and attenders are asked which word best describes our Meeting, the word most often heard is "healthy". Strawberry Creek Monthly meeting now has 72 members with two people released from membership and three people joining. One baby was born this year.

We note a deepening of our understanding and practice of Quaker process. We feel both supported and challenged to grow individually, and to grow together as a community. We continue to seek ways to develop community outside of First day. We have been nurtured and strengthened by our retreat themes, adult education, Friendly Sevens, our annual Posada, and the various events of our hospitality committee. We have added a midweek evening worship meeting. We also celebrated the first same-gender marriage under the care of the Meeting. We realize our successes are not due solely to our own efforts and give thanks for the graces and leadings we have received from the light in whose presence we worship each first day.

At Shelton School we enjoy having our own space on First day and the opportunity for a greater variety of activities after meeting, but some continue to find the meeting space and the noise of BART trains distracting. A site committee is exploring alternatives to our present space.

We meet for worship together at 10 AM on First Days with about 70 members and attenders. Worship has been centered and is drawing new seekers into our quiet gathering. We are nourished by ministry that arises out of silence, comes from different voices in our community, and leaves large spaces of quiet in which we feel the Spirit at work among us. The sense of deep worship has been carrying over into our Meetings for Business.

We seek ways to instill spiritual values in the lives of children, to live out Quaker values in our daily lives, and share these in service to a wider group. Our First-Day School attendance is growing, with a total of 34 children attending fairly regularly. Enhancing the program has brought in more children. The children have met and grown to appreciate adults in our Meeting, beyond their regular teachers, and they have formed a caring peer group with youngsters their own age as they learn about the Quaker traditions of mutual care, peace and witness.

Our Peace and Social Concerns Committee has challenged us to volunteer together. After considering various possibilities, we chose to support BOSS (Building Opportunities for Self Sufficiency) a local organization serving the homeless which has volunteer opportunities for a variety of ages and time commitments. Many in Strawberry Creek continue to contribute their time to PYM and other Quaker organizations.

Another way in which our meeting showed its volunteer spirit was with our children's summer program. When no Friend stepped forward to serve as summer coordinator, Friends were asked to volunteer to serve each week. Enough Friends volunteered to fill out the summer program. We also found a group of volunteers to help fill out the needs of the meeting's Facilities Committee, and to put together our Christmas Posada. This showed us that we were able to respond to our needs beyond strict reliance on our committee structure.

In our maturity we notice ourselves physically aging. We continue to be aware of the need for easier access to our events for both the sensorily and mobility impaired. We also had positive experiences of being asked for help and the gift of being able to help in the support of terminal illness and surgery.

We were further challenged when our presiding clerk had to withdraw from clerkship to care for her terminally-ill husband. Our Nominating Committee could not reach unity on her replacement; the Overseers assumed the responsibility and brought forth the name of our present presiding clerk.

Our past twenty years have helped us lay a foundation for the future. We are not only more tolerant of diversity, but often grateful for it, now that we have developed the ability to translate between one another's styles and perspectives. The ways in which Friends have been tender with one another this past year in addressing and resolving difficult situations as they have arisen show that Truth has advanced among us, and give us confidence our Meeting's foundation of health and maturity shall carry us forward in the next twenty years as Divine Light opens the way.

State of the Meeting Report—Strawberry Creek Meeting 1998

Over the last year, we have seen our Meeting settle and deepen in a way we might not have anticipated in our last report. Although there has been some dissatisfaction with our new Meeting site, we continue to have a committed core of people attending Meeting for Worship. New attenders and long-time members alike note our settled Meetings, including the “improved and deepened” vocal ministry. One member reports that she is “not experiencing contact [with the divine] but [is] somehow satisfied by the seeking.” We have been experimenting with an early Sunday worship group, which has been lightly attended but greatly appreciated by those who gather then. There has been some worry that the two worship times split the community, and we are still waiting to see where the Spirit will lead us on this matter. Fewer conflicts seem to underlie our week-to-week interactions than at this time last year. Meetings for Business have also been improving, with better attendance and more silences to wait on the Light. Complex decisions have been made in a spirit of goodwill and seeking.

We continue to struggle with creating and maintaining our community. Although a successful ad in a local paper brings in many inquiries and visitors, newcomers report that our greeting is not consistent, and people do not feel as welcome as they might. Our committees continue to find new ways to make as many people as possible feel included in the life of the Meeting. Our retreat committee organized two spirit-filled retreats. Hospitality committee holds quarterly “Friendly Sevens” gatherings to give community members a chance to get to know one another in smaller groups. Overseers have been working on ways to introduce new attenders to Quaker traditions, as well as to give prospective members the preparation they need to become part of the community.

The challenges posed by the sickness and death of two dear members of our meeting showed us at our best and brought us close together. We have been admonished by a Friend not to wait until someone is dying to be a caring and loving community. The bedrock of Quaker Community is Love among us, which leads us to notice the condition of those among us and act. Regular attenders have reported feeling lost or neglected in our large Meeting. How ready are we to reach out to meet less urgent or apparent needs?

We have had 3 births, joyous occurrences for us. Our new site has provided increased space and freedom for our First-Day School Program. There are fewer children in the Meeting than formerly; the largest group is now of high-school age. These young attenders have joined with Berkeley Friends’ Meeting for a very successful teen program. We have struggled with questions of what should be included in our curriculum, and our First Day School Committee and Meeting community have risen to the occasion by calling Meetings for Listening for parents and the broader community. We continue to wait and watch for leadings in this area. Our adult education program, by contrast, has gotten livelier and more consistent, with good community attendance and people requesting more opportunities for study and worship.

Sadly, our outreach to the community around us has been disappointing to many who wanted to create bridges to our multicultural neighborhood and community. We are worried that racism is an issue, and we continue to struggle to know how gracefully and purposefully to show our neighbors that we want to include them. At the same time, our Peace and Social Order committee has been addressing issues relevant to the wider community, such as the Berkeley Police Department's use of pepper spray on residents. They have also been exploring welfare reform issues. Addressing national and worldwide concerns, our members continue to serve on FCL, AFSC, and other organizations promoting social action.

Our experiences with difficult decisions such as Meeting times and curriculum have required careful attention to many points of view. Our Meetings for Listening have been of great service, and Way has opened for us, above all, through a willingness to experiment and watch where the Light leads us. We have rejoiced in the coalescing of our Meeting community through all the changes, losses, and Love gracing us. We have welcomed 6 new members this year, giving us pause to reflect that, though we are often critical of our own performance, our attenders continue to seek membership and deeper commitment to the community.

Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting is composed of 71 members and about 30 regular attenders. We released one member this year. Other relevant statistics are included in the body of this report.

STRAWBERRY CREEK MEETING
STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT
APRIL, 1997

As we prepare this report we are reminded that it is an occasion for us to ask ourselves how well we are living the faith that we profess, how conscientiously we are guided by our Advices and Queries.

The major event of our year was the move from Berkeley Friends Church to Shelton's Primary Education Center. This had us engrossed in the process of making a decision to move, the actual move, settling in to the new place and beginning to become neighbors in our new neighborhood. Each of these aspects of the move provided occasion for challenge and growth.

MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE

Strawberry Creek Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends has seventy-one adult members. At the time of writing, six requests for admission into membership are in the process of clearness or seasoning.

Attendance at Meeting for Worship is about sixty on Sunday mornings, with twelve to twenty adults attending worship at nine o'clock and thirty-five to forty adults attending at 10.30 (including First Day School teachers).

WORSHIP AND MINISTRY — THE SPIRITUAL HEALTH OF THE MEETING

The spiritual health of the meeting is reflected in the way its members center their lives in the meeting for worship and from that center undertake the business of the meeting, maintain their living tradition, care for one another and express their ministry in the wider world. From these several perspectives the meeting is robust and healthy though we see areas where there is need for attention and continued learning.

The move to Shelton's School allowed us to structure our time together in a new way. Worship and Ministry assumed the task of exploring content and form for our First Days and recommended that, for a trial period, Meeting for Worship be held at 10:30 a.m. With the building available, this allowed for earlier activities including a, now regular, additional earlier meeting at 9:00 a.m. Combined attendance seems to have been sustained though we are carefully watching the effects on our community of having two First Day meetings and we will review this in due course.

Although the quality of spoken ministry has been uneven, there is an overall quality of sincerity and, on occasion, ministry has been received as extraordinarily penetrating and spirited. We commonly experience long periods of gathered silent worship. Not long after our move the quality of spoken ministry contributed to our feeling that we had finally settled.

While there were concerns that the preschool classroom environment, not to speak of the recurrent passing of BART trains, might detract from our worship experience, in general, people have found our new home conducive to a gathered meeting. Indeed, some members have found the new site — the light, the caring environment -- inspiring. Even the noise of the BART trains has been received as a call to deeper centering.

We continue to exhort ourselves to come to meeting with heart and mind prepared. There are still latecomers but this is now managed routinely and their arrival is less disturbing than in our former meeting place. Friends seem also to be both more focused in worship and more accepting towards

latecomers than before. However, we continue to ask to what extent the number of latecomers is a sign that we have not all internalized our understanding of the nature of our silent meetings and the demands it makes of us.

THE LIFE OF THE MEETING

While we have had satisfying experiences observing Quaker process and good order, we have also cause for concern that we have not been able consistently to achieve this. Without question, the need to move to a new place of worship made demands on us as a community and tested our ability to hold together in love and unity. Overall, however, we seem to have risen to the test and to have emerged stronger as a result. The fact that three of our community stood aside in our decision to move is seen as evidence of our process working rather than of its breaking down. Certainly, much care was given to the concerns of those who felt burdened by the move and, in the end, unity was maintained.

We have cause for satisfaction over the process by which we redesigned our program of First Day activities. Our Committee on Worship and Ministry invited everybody's views and prepared recommendations which seemed best to meet members' different needs. Members accepted the Committee's judgment without the need for reworking its decisions or for detailed explanations of how these were made, a major achievement reflecting Worship and Ministry's preparation and the meeting's careful response.

Such has not been the case with all the meeting's decision processes. We aspire to greater openness, clear speech and personal responsibility in our meeting, as well as the ability of each of us to balance our personal needs and our concern for the good of the meeting as a whole. We also value appropriate confidentiality and we especially aspire to the greater trust that this requires. Some Friends see the contemporary demand for public transparency to have increased sensitivities to these issues. We have been reminded that we each bring imperfections to the meeting, that we need to be tender with one another, that we need to remain open to the light, and that what we are about is working together to discern God's will.

While mindful of things that should concern us, we can report a high level of effective activity. The work of the meeting is getting done and none of the committees is seriously troubled. The Committee on Peace and Social Order has been notably active and it is testimony to the depth of leadership in the meeting that this has been in spite of the loss of its co-clerk.

Strawberries have been active in the wider Quaker community. More than twenty of us participated in Pacific Yearly Meeting. We sent a copy of our 1992 minute on same gender marriage to PYM, which was posted as part of PYM's discussion and adoption of a minute on equality of marriage rights. We were also well represented at Quarterly Meeting, and we sent representatives to a training session on sexual harassment as an issue within Quaker meetings.

In various ways we maintain our living tradition. Continuing reflection on our process, a review of committee functions, meetings on clerking – both for clerks and for members generally – are helpful in grounding us in our tradition. There is an openness to learning and the meeting has engaged in the Yearly Meeting reviews of Advices and Queries. The preparation of this State of the Meeting Report has been, and is now regularly, the occasion for drawing upon our collective reflection as well as upon inputs from committee clerks and individuals and Meeting records.

Our Committee on Oversight has prepared Advices and Queries on pastoral care for overseers. These are intended to make clear to all members the pastoral role of overseers and to set the standard to which overseers are to be held accountable.

A committee on re-structuring recommended that Nominating Committee review the working needs of committees and that individuals be given job descriptions and clear understanding of the nature of the

commitment they undertake when accepting nomination to a committee. As a result of these recommendations, the meeting is now reviewing the functions and work loads of all committees.

In the course of these reviews, we are being led to consider whether we are doing more than needs to be done or more than we as a body, as committees and as individuals can accomplish. We are reminded of the need to season our sense of what needs to be done in the wisdom of the light within us.

Adult Education

We completed "Quakerism 102", an introduction -- or re-introduction -- to the basics of Quakerism, in the spring of 1996.

While Worship and Ministry was occupied with the move and structuring the program of activities for First Day, the Committee on Peace and Social Order assumed the task of continuing education. In the Fall, addressing racial intolerance, they presented a screening and discussion of the film "Skin Deep." Current plans include presenting the 5-week course "Overcoming the Dominator Model in Building Peaceful Relationships" developed and taught by Friend Bill Moyer of San Francisco.

In January, being no longer preoccupied with the move and with First Day arrangements, the Committee on Worship and Ministry was able to turn its attention again to the subject of Adult Education. A program was developed featuring topics chosen in response to concerns brought by individuals to the committee. To date, these have covered: "Speaking Out of the Silence" led by Eric Moon and "Quaker Ritual and Personal Ritual" led by Paul Mackinney from Berkeley Friends Meeting. Attendance ranged between twenty to twenty-five people and the classes were well received. Future monthly sessions are planned which will address, among other things, Christocentric and universalist interpretations of our heritage.

Retreats

We held a weekend retreat at Ben Lomond in May of 1996, attended by thirty-four adults and fifteen children. A one-day fall retreat was held in November of 1996, attended by twenty-four adults and ten children. Sharing of spiritual lives took place in the small group sessions at these retreats. At the fall retreat, we were posed some beautiful queries that continue to challenge us. One in particular asked us to reflect on what early Quakers can teach us as we approach a new century and what issues now call forth from us the courageous actions of early Friends.

First Day School

First Day School continues to pose many challenges to us as a meeting. We wish to sustain our living tradition and to provide for a continuing informed Quaker presence in the world. In practice, however, this desire is easily overcome by our own personal needs for shared worship and competing cultural influences. Our children have many commitments and parents seem reluctant to press children into attendance. We need to reflect on the place of First Day School for our children and for our meeting and on its implications for what we each should bring to it. We need to ask how our attendance at Strawberry Creek Meeting satisfies our personal needs for community and how it connects us to the deeper legacy of Quaker truth. And we need to ask what this means for our support for our First Day School.

Over sixty-five children are listed in our Meeting Directory. Attendance records indicate an active children's community of twenty-four¹. Contrary to our hope and expectation, we have not seen an increase in First Day School attendance in the weeks since the shift to a later meeting time. During the months that there were two meetings each First Day, two children used child care during the 9 a.m. meeting. One child stopped attending First Day School when her parents switched to the 9 a.m. meeting.

All classes but the Teens meet at Shelton's School, where the educational environment and spacious rooms suitably meet First Day School needs. The Teens now conduct a combined meeting with the Teens from Berkeley Meeting at their meeting house. They are carpooled to Vine Street and returned to Shelton's School. This has worked well.

The Meeting's 1994 Curriculum Committee produced a three-year curriculum cycle of nine themes. Each quarter of the school year has its focus: on our meeting community, on our world and on individuals. The 1994-95 cycle theme was Community, Spirituality and Unity with Nature. The 1995-96 cycle theme was Mutual Care, Peace and Witness. The 1996-97 cycle, covered by this Report, includes themes of Worship (worshipping together; silence), Equality (and civic responsibility) and Simplicity (lifestyle and speech; honesty).

The current First Day School Committee met in May to assess last year's experience and to plan the current year. In July, most of the teachers met to familiarize themselves with the meeting's extensive curriculum materials, facilitated by a continuing member of the Curriculum Committee. Teachers for the 3-5 and 6-9 age groups designed a curriculum for the first quarter topic of Worship. There was no insufficiency of curriculum activities for these age groups. However, sporadic attendance by the children meant that many ideas were not used. Completion of any single project took much longer than anticipated because of irregular attendance.

Designing activities for the Middlers and Teens presented challenges unique to those age groups. Such challenges were met by enlisting the input of the young people themselves. For the Middlers, cooking and art projects were the preferred activities. There was no desire to engage in anything remotely resembling school or involving Quaker history. Teen activities focused on different themes each month, such as "parents", "music" or "capital punishment". Resulting discussions are peer led rather than teacher led and are relevant to their personal lives. In addition, the Teens organized an Oxfam dinner which was well supported.

All children meeting at Shelton's School have the option of attending the first fifteen minutes of meeting for worship with their parents. Two families consistently choose this option. There was a recognizable increase in the young children's ability to settle into the silence as the year progressed. The meeting, too, has become more comfortable with the presence of young children in meeting for worship.

First Day School was a direct beneficiary of the creativity generated by the move to Shelton's School. Though the precise goals of the Curriculum Committee were not met, what was achieved was the creation of a friendly, trusting environment and warm connections with adult teachers. This allowed the children of Strawberry Creek Meeting to feel good about coming to First Day School, to connect with other Quakers of their age group and to identify themselves as Quaker children.

There is concern about the relationship of the larger meeting to First Day School. Years ago, the Meeting began with a large number of families with young children. The current "trough" can be attributed to many factors: many of the original children have grown up and moved on; the meeting has attracted fewer young married couples of child-bearing age, and, as a country, we do not live under the threat of a draft. Absence of the threat of the draft may have the most bearing not only on the small number of children in the meeting but also on the infrequency of their attendance. When parents have a greater commitment to making sure their children attend First Day School and absorb its teaching, there is a stronger engagement by parents and meeting as a whole in its responsibility and involvement in teaching about Quakerism. That the content of the classes is now driven by a concern to maintain the interest of the children, and that we engage so few of our children, should give us cause to reflect.

But it may be inappropriate to see our First Day school as failing because it attracts only a small number of children. Any child who arrives at First Day School receives 100% quality attention from the teachers. Rather than seeing our First Day School as "half empty", we might see it as full of cared for and interested children whose presence reflects their parents' commitment and values. The meeting has built a sound

structure for First Day School and can look forward to growth. Moreover, the children's presence enriches the lives of the adults and not only of those who participate as teachers. This is good and deserves support.

Facilities

The move to Shelton's School required a period of special effort by the Facilities Committee to become accustomed to the more complicated procedures for setting up and taking down for the meeting and taking care of the property. It takes a team of two people two hours a week to set up and take down for meeting for worship. Their efforts are appreciated. This is a task that needs to be more widely shared.

The Newsletter

We publish a newsletter eleven times a year which contains a calendar of events, minutes of Meeting for Business, various registration forms, reports from committees, profiles of new members, discussions about testimonies and concerns for the larger world. It is mailed to 160 individuals and 10 other meetings. There is concern that we need to review the newsletter to ask how well it reflects our testimonies on simplicity and stewardship.

Community growth and change

Some of our members and attenders maintain a living connection with Strawberry Creek Meeting even though distance or disability prevents their regular attendance at Meeting for Worship. Others may have a connection that is more historical than current. The Committee on Oversight works to discern when it is appropriate to recognize that the connection has lapsed by removing names from the mailing list or releasing members from membership.

Strawberry Creek Meeting members and attenders come from a considerable diversity of religious backgrounds. The meeting has become a welcoming place where lesbians and gays evidently feel at home. We celebrate this diversity.

As we grow and change, we ask whether we are living the tradition of Quakerism. Do our new members see themselves as members of the larger stream of the Religious Society of Friends, or just as members of Strawberry Creek? How do we transmit Quaker traditions of worship, community life, testimonies, and meetings for business?

When meeting with prospective members, membership committees ensure that the new members are familiar with our traditions, sometimes recommending additional reading. A library of tapes of Quaker writings is being prepared for the sight impaired.

We are reminded that our behavior in business meetings and in meeting for worship may be taken by others as a model of Friendly behavior. We are grateful for those among us who are able to pass on traditions through personal experience and behavior as well as through more formal teaching. We trust that we are led today by the same divine light that has guided earlier generations of Quakers.

We rely on our members and attenders for financial support and voluntary labor. Seeking divine guidance, we are responsible to one another for the wise use of our time and money. We recognize that there will be cycles in the availability of resources, and that we will need to adjust our activities accordingly. To date, members have been responsive in meeting our financial needs.

Our life cycle as a meeting means that we continually lose some of our leadership, through relocation, shifts in available energies, or death. There is a continuing need to bring on new leadership while using the wisdom of our experienced leaders. Leadership -- including that which provides our less visible technical competence -- needs to be rotated to those who have been given opportunities for experience so

that we do not become dependent upon processes known only to a few people. New leaders are emerging as need arises. We seek to offer experience to rising leaders appropriate to their gifts.

- MUTUAL CARE

There is a deep and active caring for one another in the meeting much of which is not readily evident. Notable are the sustained weekly meetings for worship with sick Friends. Friends enjoy fellowship over refreshments following Meeting for Worship and pot-luck lunches are becoming a common feature of our First Day activities. "Friendly Sevens" meet in one another's houses for deepening mutual acquaintance and worship sharing. Babies and new members are welcomed. Members take hikes together. The work of our Loaves and Fishes and Hospitality Committees is much appreciated.

There is no doubt that our members value their community. Less clear is that what they value is its specifically Quaker character.

WITNESS AND STEWARDSHIP

The Meeting continues to support efforts for peace and social justice through funding support and/or representation in the East Bay Sanctuary Covenant (EBSC -- which assists refugees in our area), Religious Witness for the Homeless in San Francisco, Berkeley Ecumenical Committee on the Homeless, AFSC, FCL, FNCL, Friends Committee on Unity with Nature and Habitat for Humanity. Members are active in SHARE (a food-buying club that makes affordable food available to households without regard to financial need). In response to the bombings of houses of worship that occurred last spring and summer, the Committee on Peace and Social Order gathered funds that were donated to assist in rebuilding efforts.

The changing balance towards individual rather than collective witness reflects the times in which we live. Within our meeting, a great number of individuals are employed or voluntarily engaged in working for peace and social justice. They work -- locally, nationally and internationally -- in many areas including: the environment, poverty, aging and destitution, housing, racial tension, immigration, armaments, gender issues, rural development and governance reform. Individuals so involved draw great strength from, and bring strengths and richness to, our meeting.

Having settled ourselves in our new location at Shelton's School, we are now turning our attention to how we can be good neighbors in our new community. At a recent Meeting for Business, four committees came forward to reveal that they had been working independently on proposals for neighborhood outreach. These initiatives will be coordinated by Overseers together with Peace and Social Order.

The meeting is eagerly set to address the challenges it faces and to cherish and nurture the tradition it has so gratefully inherited.

ⁱ The numbers are:

Nursery	2 (one attends two or more times a month)
3-5's	3 (two attend two or more times a month)
6-9's	7 (three attend two or more times a month)
Middlers	6 (three attend two or more times a month)
Teens	6 (two attend two or more times per month)
Total	24 (eleven attend two or more times per month)

During the months when two meetings took place, two children used Child Care during the 9 a.m. meeting.

Strawberry Creek Meeting State of the Meeting Report

May 14, 1996

A sizeable number of us - about 30 of our usual 70 "regulars" at Sunday Meetings - attended and contributed freely to a special session to review the state of our Meeting for this report. We readily recognized that the past year has been a painful and difficult one, but one that has contributed to our growth as a caring Quaker community. Here are our findings:

Six Friends became members of Strawberry Creek Meeting during 1995 and four were released from membership, following Overseer's process of carefully reviewing long-time nonattending members, bringing the membership to sixty-nine Friends. Four associate members were added and four babies were born. We are grateful that many young adults are attending Meeting and we welcome the growth in the number of gay, lesbian, and bisexual members and attenders.

This year we created many opportunities to gather together to share food, ideas, concerns and to get to know each other better. We had summer picnics, potluck gatherings to welcome the new babies, children, and new members, newcomer's brunches, the annual Christmas Posada, an Easter Potluck, and farewell gatherings for several members who moved away or went to college. We hosted a fund-raising brunch for FCL, which gave us a chance to meet and ask questions of a State legislator and legislative staff. The young Strawberries hosted a Haitian Benefit Dinner, raising money and school supplies for children in Haiti. Our retreats nourished us spiritually and strengthened us as a community. Forums on clerking, affirmative action, PYM draft advices and queries, the single life, and parenting were organized, the latter two in conjunction with Berkeley Friends Meeting. In November and March we met as "Friendly Sevens" for simple meals and Quaker Dialogue in about seven homes. About 40 people signed up for a six week "Quakerism 102" course, which is being offered this spring.

First Day School has been an important priority for our Meeting. We have benefitted from the careful and thoughtful efforts of the First Day School Committee to develop and follow a coordinated curriculum, though much work still remains to be done in this regard. In working with the children and teenagers, numerous adults have also experienced opportunities for growth and learning. One particularly successful First Day School activity has been to make cards for people who are away from Meeting due to illness or other circumstances; there is an opportunity for everyone to add messages at the end of Meeting, and recipients have been very appreciative. Our First Day School is divided into Nursery care plus four age groups: "3-5", "6-9", "Middlers", and High School. Over thirty children have attended at some time during the past year. Weekly attendance for any given group varies from zero to six, with the total in all groups averaging from ten to fifteen. Since our children come from various geographic areas and many different schools, we are still struggling with how to make our Meeting a meaningful community for our children. Some children and teachers have been more consistent than others in their attendance, which is a further challenge to community-building. We are particularly concerned that attendance becomes more infrequent as children grow older, so that the upper age groups often fall below critical mass for fun and learning.

Our individual lives and the life of the Meeting have been enriched through connections to other Friends and Friends organizations. Several Strawberries are on the AFSC staff and administrative committees, on FCL, and on the Friends House board, giving us a strong connection with these Quaker organizations. The Meeting is helping support an associate member who is attending Earlham College; it has been gratifying to hear of her involvement in that Quaker community. Two other associate members are also attending Quaker colleges. A number of Strawberries enjoyed participating in the John Woolman School work camp last summer. We feel a strong connection with PYM and appreciate our PYM representative's efforts in facilitating communication with PYM. Strawberries who attended PYM have shared their

experiences with others in the Meeting in various ways, including a "Review of PYM" session. Several Strawberries have been active in the Sexual Minority Subcommittee of PYM. Participation in programs at Ben Lomond Quaker Center, including our own Spring Retreat, has been stimulating to many of us. Connections with the wider Quaker community also included hosting evening gatherings for the Brinton Visitor and Pendle Hill on the Road.

Many members and attenders are involved in working for and witnessing for peace, justice and social change, both locally and around the world. Activities of Strawberries this past year have included building Walls for Peace in the Bay Area and Japan, travelling to Germany in recognition of the AFSC work there after WWII, and participating in the Women's conference in China. The Meeting as a whole has benefitted through participation in these activities and from after-meeting or evening sessions in which participants have shared their experiences. Some Friends have followed their leadings to live and work for social justice in other countries, including Nigeria, Costa Rica, India, and Fiji, while many Friends have pursued their concerns locally. We appreciate the work being done by many individuals from the Meeting community to help improve the lives of others. We value our connections with them and the bonds they help us make with people and communities in the Bay Area and around the world.

Two major Meeting issues claimed ungainly amounts of time and energy during the past year. The first was how to structure the entrance of those arriving after Meeting for Worship has begun so as both to protect the silence of the opening group and to facilitate the inclusion of all. Worship and Ministry labored conscientiously with various experiments, but not without arousing strong reactions from many in the Meeting, including those who felt negatively judged by the process. Through threshing sessions and long Meetings for Business we have now achieved the development described in the current minute:

Since the time of beginning our current plan for entering meeting, a new and marked deepening of the meeting for worship during the first fifteen minutes has been widely felt among us. This uninterrupted period has encouraged our centering and readiness for God's Spirit among us, in the reverent listening we so want to practice. And when the time has come for those downstairs to enter, they have done so with quiet purpose. This fall the arrival of teachers and beginning of children's classes at 9:15 have also contributed to our gathering and settling in by our appointed time.

Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting now adopts as its practice: to begin worship at 9:30 and to designate a quiet waiting room for any who arrive up to 9:45, who will then, at the greeter's signal, enter the meeting room to join, as the Advices and Queries invite, "in expectant waiting for the promptings of the Divine Spirit." Friends who arrive after 9:45 will be encouraged to join the meeting for worship, being mindful of the gathered meeting.

While recognizing the greater depth of our less interrupted worship and the shared respect shown by all in cooperating to achieve this mutual goal, we also know that the healing process will be ongoing. Oversight reminded us that resolution of the lateness issue was made more difficult by our having fallen away from good process. In their Statement on Process and Caring, read after Meeting and published in our newsletter, Oversight identified for us:

... some of the features of good order among members of the Religious Society of Friends. First, the committees on Oversight and Worship and Ministry are responsible for our community and our worship together. Concerns that affect our communal life together should be brought to one of these two committees. If certain individuals are doing something that hurts our worship or life together, these committees have the sole responsibility for speaking to them -- what is sometimes quaintly called "eldering." Although individual Friends should certainly attend directly and personally to small things that are hindering their good relations with other individual Friends, they should never speak on behalf of the Meeting community -- that is the function of the Meeting and its committees. Second, it is best if we avoid anonymous communications in the Meeting. It is much harder "to hear where the words come from" when we don't know who wrote them, and we therefore are much more likely to be offended by them. ... Anonymity isn't conducive to what should be the nurturing nature of our community.

The second issue involves our exploration of moving to a different site. For ten years, we have enjoyed the privilege of renting space from the Berkeley Friends

Church. But as their own needs for space have changed from time to time, we have begun to feel that our consequent adjustments of meeting time, and especially of First Day School arrangements, have not been in our best interest as a Meeting. After friendly conversations with Friends Church, we have addressed the issue through called and strenuous threshing sessions and have reviewed the explorations of a site committee. The reporting and consequent airing of discomforts have continued, but are greatly diminished due to our open, time-consuming, but faithful process for listening to one another and reminding ourselves of the primary necessity for achieving a resolution that will enhance the life of the whole Meeting. We are now at the point of experimenting by holding two Meetings for Worship at the one suitable option of the many carefully researched by the site committee and will thereafter consider what next.

Simultaneous with our process struggles (and perhaps not unrelated), there is a general sense that our Meetings for Worship have deepened. One hears appreciation for the quality of worship, and it is noticeable that the ministering is more broadly shared. Possibly we may lack seasoned, traditional ministry as our hallmark, but we are blessed by the reverent, fresh, spiritual insights of young and old, long-time and newly initiated ministers. Worship and Ministry is currently launching "Quakerism 102" to remind us that our ministry is not limited to our Meeting only, but is by historical tradition and our own understanding a way of life through which we translate our testimonies. Our group worship enables us to let our individual lives speak.

Spoken ministry is but one form of our religious service, and the hard work of our eleven committees is carried on by over one hundred members and attenders, taking responsible stewardship for all of our community needs. The Hospitality Committee has been especially vigorous in organizing welcomings, farewell gatherings, and other events, and their work has contributed greatly to our sense of ourselves as a community. As we have wrestled with issues of concern to us this year, our processes have sometimes left individual discomforts unresolved, which the Meeting agreed to refer to Oversight for healing. By lovingly attending to these concerns, Overseers have

provided Meeting with a pathway for moving beyond hurt feelings. Their efforts to move Meeting back to good process where it has fallen short have been instrumental in bringing the community back to wholeness. Oversight has also expressed a great deal of caring and concern through their availability for guidance and support, both spiritual and financial; most of this work has gone on, appropriately, without public attention.

Many individual Friends have also been engaged in the work of caring for and nurturing each other. A number of new members and attenders have movingly described their experiences of love, a reservoir of trust, and a sense of belonging in Meeting. Others, while experiencing a strong sense of spiritual community, have expressed a desire to find a comparable sense of social community. All in all, most members and attenders have tended to express an appreciation of the Meeting as a caring community, both nurturing and dynamic.

Strawberry Creek Meeting State of the Society Report
May 1995

And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves...

1 Peter 4:8, King James Bible

Above all hold unfailing your love for one another...

1 Peter 4:8, Revised Standard Bible

Our Meeting celebrated its fifteenth birthday on October 15, 1994. This is the tenth year that we have shared space with Berkeley Friends Church. We note with wonder that Ravahn Samati, the baby Jesus of our first Christmas play in the Fellowship Hall, is now a ten-year-old member of First Day School. Friends Church celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1994.

Our First Day School serves around sixty children. A Curriculum Committee has brought structure to the content of our First Day School program. The school year has been divided into three sections, each with an overall theme and materials and activities appropriate to each age group. The themes are community, spirituality, and unity with nature. We continue to incorporate silent worship as well as attendance at adult Meeting for Worship into this program. The high-school class organized a fund-raiser for Oxfam the weekend before Thanksgiving, serving a "hunger dinner" to sixty people. The event raised not only money but consciousness. While everyone paid the same to attend, only a few were served a full meal; others received rice and beans or bread and water.

Our adult education program has flowered. We have gathered for spiritual growth, in a series on the book Jesus, a New Vision by Martin Borg. We have focussed on care for those nearest to us, in a session on wills and simplifying paperwork for our survivors. We have learned to serve the Meeting more effectively, in a workshop on clerking. We have considered together the dilemma of living as Friends among the world's people, in a discussion on gift giving and the ways in which we celebrate Christmas. We have striven to learn how to make the world a better place, receiving together the gift of a presentation by Victor Lewis of the Oakland Men's Project on understanding and deflecting violence.

Our newsletter is an important part of the life of the Meeting. A new feature, "Dear Strawberries," provides an opportunity for Friends to share questions and concerns with the Meeting at large.

Our Winter and Spring Meeting retreats provided further opportunities to know one another and to enrich our spiritual lives. The theme of the January retreat was "Roots and Fruits of Our Faith." That of the Spring Retreat at Ben Lomond was "Light shines in the Darkness." Retreat Committee felt an increased sense of connection to the Meeting as they devised themes and programs for these events.

Transitions: Andrea English and Tom Whiteman were married under the care of the Meeting. We celebrated with joy, with love, with parades, and with banners. We were also gladdened by the marriage of Kenneth Leonard and Joan Lynch. Ken and Joan are now in Tanzania. Melinda Glines is serving with the Peace Corps in Fiji. James Hamm, a faithful attender, has made a challenging transition to independent living. Rick Herbert, another attender, has adopted a two-

year-old girl from Puerto Rico. We rejoiced in a visit from Brian Erickson. He and Patti Mojeski Erickson continue to flourish, spiritually and professionally, in Costa Rica.

Our committees have grown in size and number until Nominating committee found itself with more vacancies to fill than there were members and attenders to fill them. Mindful of simplicity, we are at work on a restructuring ; reducing the size of some committees and merging others. Inability to find a convenient time has prevented some committees from meeting at all. Many Sundays were difficult because of special events scheduled after Meeting for Worship. To ease this situation, the second Sunday of each month has been designated "Committee Sunday," and the third Sunday is reserved for after-meeting events.

A plan for seating late arrivals to Meeting for Worship was one which, somewhat to our surprise, called on our deepest reserves of charity for one another. Until recently, there was no formal arrangement; which is to say that each person entered as he or she arrived. As our Meeting for Worship has grown--it now averages around sixty attenders--the stream of arrivals had become, for some Friends, a real impediment to gathered worship. Worship and Ministry Committee, after trying various approaches to the problem, proposed a plan similar to that prevailing in many other Monthly Meetings: a greeter meets the late-comers outside the entrance to Meeting and worships with them until fifteen minutes after the start of Meeting, when all enter together. Some Friends felt that this plan would exclude, judge, and even punish those who were late, often for reasons beyond their control. Others expressed a conviction that any possibility of increasing the depth of Meeting for Worship should be given serious consideration. A heartfelt discussion brought out many of our feelings about the relationship of the individual to the Meeting for Worship. Even with this preparation, a lively exchange of views took place in Meeting for Business before the minute was approved, with one member standing aside. The procedure will be reviewed in September. This opportunity to express our commitment to corporate worship and the need to examine the place this hour a week holds in our lives have helped the worshipful silence to deepen and our ministry to become more spirit-centered, even as the Meeting grows larger.

We have reached out to the world, as individuals and through other groups. We have taken advantage of opportunities offered by the Meeting, of which participation in the SHARE Food Program, work in the Food Pantry with Friends Church, and buying scrip to support the East Bay Sanctuary Covenant are only a few.

The "fervent charity" which Peter urged on the first Christians has been shown by individuals in the Meeting in many ways, extending practical help and loving support to other members and attenders faced with problems ranging from moving furniture to life-threatening illness.

But perhaps we need to give more thought to Peter's message. As a worsening economic climate takes its toll on some of our members, Overseers have noted with concern the probability that scholarship and other funds are not being applied for by Friends who might have use for them to attend gatherings and for other special needs. It is probable that, as Friends, we have for some time been more comfortable with the idea of offering help than of asking for it, particularly in the form of money. Should they continue, these hard times may teach us to grow in that unflinching love for each other that Peter speaks of, teaching us to receive, as well as give, in the Light.

Strawberry Creek Friends Meeting State of the Meeting April 1994

During the past year our meeting has continued to grow; we added 3 new members, bringing our total to 66. First-day attendance is usually eighty or ninety. This includes visitors, children, members, and attenders. With this growth has come both new blessings and challenges. While we welcome new participants, we are challenged to get to know them and to assimilate them into our meeting.

We feel a need to strengthen our understanding of ourselves as Quakers. This is reflected in many facets of our meeting life:

- . In both adult education and in our high-school group we struggled with the application of the Peace Testimony to our everyday challenges: "how do we respond to the violence we see around us?"

- . There have been a series of intense discussions about the quality of our meetings for worship, which is deep and strengthening and gives sustenance to the lives of those attending. Some Friends are disturbed by latecomers. Since each person's presence contributes to the meeting, it is important that all worshippers be present at the whole meeting, whenever possible.

- . The Curriculum subcommittee of the Religious Education committee has been gathering information from many sources on possible programs. They are also meeting with parents to discern their expectations regarding their children's Quaker education.

- . There have been several, well-attended adult education classes on the meaning of meeting membership. There is a continuing need for adult education for both new and long-time attenders and a concern as to how to meet this need.

In these and other sessions, we see our growing community struggling for self definition. We seek to include new participants and enrich our corporate worship while at the same time increasing our service to the community.

We continue to serve the needs of our individual members with support groups and clearness committees. There is a small mid-week meeting for worship with a Friend who has a serious illness. We helped sponsor a member's child, with special learning needs, to attend Delaware Valley Friends School. Some of our members are active in the larger Society of Friends; such as quarterly and yearly meeting, Friends General Conference, American Friends Service Committee, Friends Committee on Legislation, and Friends in Unity with Nature. We would like to encourage more members and attenders to participate in these active arms of the Society of Friends. We share the sense that there is something of substance about being committed to a Friends Meeting, and we have a need to articulate this and apply it to our lives.

This past year saw an increase in our response to the plight of the poor in our community. We responded with increased energy in (our) food distribution programs, SHARE and the food pantry, which we supported and staffed along with the Friends Church, and members of the community. Some members worked with Habitat for Humanity on a regular basis. Individual Friends worked with focused programs such as jobs for the homeless.

There has been an increase in participation of attenders on committees, and also the largest number of first-time clerks. This emphasizes our responsibility to nourish this new leadership. While we have done some training in Quaker process, we recognize that we must do more.

Strawberry Creek continues to glory in the number of children in our meeting. There were an average of 23 children in the children's program during most of the year, led by a devoted group of teachers. The high school group meets every other week, with a high degree of success.

Our Spring and Winter retreats continue to provide a powerful forum for both community building and individual enrichment. This year we moved our Winter retreat from November to January with the happy result that attendance was the highest ever.

Hospitality for both newcomers and regular attenders is offered by the Loaves and Fishes committee after meeting, by the Hospitality committee at the Christmas Posada and other special occasions, and by Overseers at Newcomer's Brunches.

We have a new appreciation for the fact that Berkeley has three Friends meetings (Berkeley Friends Meeting, Berkeley Friends Church, and Strawberry Creek Friends Meeting). We published a joint meeting directory and are working together to prepare a booklet, "Planning Ahead - Meeting Our Responsibilities When Death Occurs". We shared special activities, such as a Christmas service and Posada (arranged by our meeting) and Quaker Heritage Day (arranged by the Friends Church). The Young Adult Friends are meeting regularly with members from all three meetings.

In June we celebrated one Friend's 80th birthday by staging a dinner as a benefit for the AFSC. All three local Quaker groups were involved as were Friends from throughout California and the US.

As we enter the coming year, we feel exhilarated by the diversity of our meeting and challenged to renew our commitment to corporate worship as the center of our lives.

STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT
STRAWBERRY CREEK FRIENDS MEETING
April 4, 1993

(final version)

We are generally pleased with the quality of our meetings for worship. Visitors often remark on their reverential atmosphere. The size of the meeting continues to grow. Perhaps there is a direct correlation. However, lateness of worshippers continues to be a problem, exacerbated by adjustment to an earlier starting time (9:30 am) since September 1992. Along with the earlier meeting time, our children now regularly join us for the last quarter hour. To some, the resulting commotion is distracting; to others the children's participation is well worth the distraction. In any event, worshippers also are beset with other noise distractions such as street traffic and the settling of tardy adults.

At the close of meeting we continue to each introduce ourselves and make announcements. As our meeting grows, this process takes longer and not everyone appears to fully grasp the meaning of the concept BRIEF. Yet, we intend to continue the practice because, on balance, we find it more beneficial than burdensome. We remind ourselves of the need for and joy of reaching out to newcomers who attend our meetings for worship. A suggestion was made that after the rise of meeting, each of us personally greet someone whom we do NOT know before turning toward old friends.

Our community ^{here long} of worshipers has grown. We wonder if we may find ourselves with an embarrassment of riches. Some Friends express concern that the meeting may grow too large to meet the needs of the individuals who comprise it. Our community has become increasingly aware that the world at large is fragile and fraught with increased distrust and violence. Friends note that we offer a space where respect and concern for all of God's creation and creatures is shared. The increased participation over the years has been essentially wonderful, enriching our lives and our worship. Yet we ask ourselves why so few people of color and so few university students attend our worship. Is it because we do not reach out? Because we do not truly welcome them? Because they simply prefer other forms or places of worship? We feel a need to be especially mindful of the subtlety of racism as well as a need to respect the genuine free choices of others. On the positive side, a Young Adult Friends Group, begun in August 1992 by young Friends from Strawberry Creek and Vine Street Meetings and Berkeley Friends Church, has grown to 30 regular attenders, offering a special opportunity for spiritual seeking and community among young adults.

We have welcomed visiting Friends in our meetings for worship from many places and individuals among us have had the pleasure of sharing in worship in Friends Meetings in many other parts of this country and beyond. We have also grown closer to our immediate spiritual neighbors, Berkeley Friends Church, as we have worked through the thorny problems of sharing finite

building space by adjusting the times when we use it, as well as sharing in the simple joy of maintaining the building. We have also shared in educational endeavors and in worship, e.g, shared Thanksgiving day worship.

During the summer months, in addition to our regular indoor First Day morning gatherings, we also celebrate our communion with the creator with simultaneous outdoor meetings for worship in Tilden Park, followed by potluck picnics. We also continue to gather informally at mid-week meetings for worship and continue our practice of holding semi-annual retreats at which we have an opportunity to strengthen our spiritual bonds with one another and deepen our awareness and appreciation for the light within each one of us.

This year, our meeting held three threshing sessions in which our concerns, fears and divergent views about the Meeting's role in providing clearness and support for same sex partners seeking marriage under the care of the meeting were aired. As a result, we resolved to do so with the same care and concern as for opposite sex partners. Although unity on the resulting minute was achieved without unanimity, Friends who did not approve saw their way clear to standing aside. As a meeting, we feel we have grown individually and collectively in the process, including acquiring an increased sensitivity to the value of the meeting's nurturance of all marriages. Many who attended these sessions praised the quality of the process and the tender manner in which our gifted facilitator guided us in our quest for truth.

This year approximately fifty members and attenders were involved in a comprehensive seven-week course of study called "Quakerism 101", which included weekly readings, lectures and small discussion groups. It was a stimulating experience for both those new and not so new to the history, philosophy and practices of the Society of Friends.

In the tradition of Friends, our spiritual leadings continue to manifest themselves in community care as well as worship - in the immediate Strawberry community, in the neighborhood and in the world beyond. This care has expressed itself in the context of the traditional rites of passage of individual Strawberries as we have rejoiced in births and marriages, suffered through illnesses, mourned the passage of life and rallied to assist each other in times of crisis. Overseers have discretely addressed numerous specific personal and corporate concerns by organizing clearness committees and the logistics of caring for each other from scheduling visits to those who are sick to forming a telephone tree for use in the event of another community-wide emergency, such as the Oakland Hills fire.

We have participated in local community outreach through the Food Pantry, project SHARE, Habitat for Humanity, CRECE, East Bay Sanctuary Covenant as well as in our own organizations such as AFSC, FCL, and FGC, Young Friends, and our regional Quarterly and

Yearly Meetings. Several of our members spent time in reflection at Pendle Hill, others participated in the exhilarating Western Gathering of Friends.

We have followed our individual leadings and persuaded others to join our cause with regard to advocacy of civil liberties in our own and other countries such as central America and Haiti; and voiced our concerns on behalf of the treatment of other members of God's community in the natural world as we sought to become more aware of our just place in that community. Yet we must continually ask ourselves if there is more that we can do to assure respect for each member of our human community as well as other living communities.

In the material realm, our housing continues in the Friends Church social hall, a simple and pleasant room which converts readily to Silent Meetings, exuberant coffee hours and pot lucks, serious studies and holiday programs. Our library has outgrown its bookcart and we now have sturdy and modest but lovely bookshelves, built by volunteers. Our burgeoning archives are tolerated in their many locations, but have no centrally located permanent home.

Donations keep pace with need in an amazing way, since none are personally solicited. We continue to support our own meeting activities as well as numerous Quaker and other organizations of good will as well as lending support to our children in Friends Schools and to Friends following their light in other lands.

Business meetings are plentifully attended and give ample evidence of the daily and weekly ministrations by our group to keep the meeting in the light by attending to hospitality, education, peace and social order, oversight, retreats, ministry and worship, newsletter, mailing, records and the myriad maintenance tasks associated with use of the building in which we meet and worship. However, some concern was expressed at the manner in which our business meetings are conducted in that there is often too much coming and going so that "busy-ness" impedes the process by which we hope to discern the movement of God among us as a gathered whole while we make business decisions.

Postive vital statistics record an increase of six members, three new babies, who have been warmly welcomed, and one joyous wedding celebrated under the care of the meeting. The number of children in First Day School has increased to 55. We have recently begun, each spring, to recognize all children who attend First Day School with associate member certificates if they and their parents wish them.

State of the Society 1992

Report for Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting

Our Shoebox runneth over. Strawberry Creek Meeting has one new member this year, three memberships pending, and a wealth of new attenders, though others have scattered, and Wesley Eastman, an elderly attender, passed on. Our library has outgrown its shelves, and we puzzle what to do with our archives, now tenuously scattered in members' closets. We fear to imagine the size of the heap if all were brought together. Our very own phone message, new last year, regularly attracts callers. A new committee focuses only on facilities. We found ourselves reexamining the meaning and purpose of our now-grown meeting's nominal contributions to organizations. Whither simplicity?

Membership stands at 58, with two brunches during last year for new attenders. Only two infants were born into Meeting, but informal record checking suggests that childhood is still a more popular vocation within Strawberry Creek than any other PYM meeting. We have 37 associate members but almost twice that number are on the First-Day school rolls. We miss our youth, though: in a town of twenty thousand university undergraduates we attract almost no attenders of that age, and few from high school. We begin to ponder our social fabric: are there gaps to mend?

The need for that fabric came into clear focus with the October fire. One adult and an unrelated associate member of Strawberry Creek each lost a home to the Oakland Hills Fire, which touched Berkeley Friends Meeting and Berkeley Friends Church as well. Many more of us were threatened. Since that time we have defined contact procedures for emergencies that may affect us.

Friends in Berkeley have shared more than the loss of homes, however. The three meetings' peace committees continued to work together after the Gulf war, producing a musical benefit for the AFSC Gulf Fund, and a three-meeting directory will soon be published. Strawberry Creek and Berkeley Friends Meeting jointly hosted a colloquium on Quaker Process last summer and PYM Representatives Meeting this spring. Events of common interest to Strawberry Creek and Friends Church are too numerous to mention, and our new Facilities Committee has become very helpful in fostering our increased contribution to caring for the shared physical plant. A four-meeting picnic included Hayward Worship Group as well.

Within Strawberry Creek, events have ranged from a book and record swap, a group sing, a group trip to an A's game and monthly summer picnics and other potlucks, through an art exhibit, sharings of travels and studies, some supported by meeting, to more purely spiritual or social-order concerns. Letter-writing efforts and witnesses including the annual gathering at the Nevada Test Site; community-building events like "Friendly Sixes", an affinity group, women's group activities and midweek worship; adult education events including a long and active series on liberation theology leading into the role of Friends in today's world; Meeting retreats and holiday events: the litany is enough to challenge any chronicler or listener, but the aggregate is vital.

The aggregate is the rhythm and splash of waves on the surface of our water, bending our Meeting's light into shifting patterns new to us, that we may learn, that we may find again that we are more together than alone. Our worship surprises us often, and we are pleased. Oh, we are late and we snuffle and we're sometimes effervescent and sometimes personal, but we are blessed for all of that, and pleased. Many who come to us fall easily into our silence and our spirit, to feel themselves kindred when we break and to find us welcoming and easy. Such is our spirit, and though we foster it in some ways perhaps, it goes beyond what we singly or in concert might claim credit for.

We look ahead, towards what needs our youth might have that we fail to serve, or others. We want to make our Quaker heritage and context more accessible among us. We have begun the slow and careful process of examining marriage and same-sex relationships. We grapple with our growth and our space, with our need for simplicity and our need to do and be many things, with our energy and depth, and with our failings. We go on.

Strawberry Creek Meeting State of the Society Report, 5th month 1991

We are grateful for the ways that worship has prospered this year, seemingly challenged at times by a leaning towards the personal in ministry, yet surprising ourselves repeatedly at whither a seemingly humble beginning will lead us in the course of our worship. We are blessed in the depth of our gatherings, and the power found within. The road into and through the Persian Gulf war wrenched us. We brought a newly sharpened anguish into worship. Our meetings swelled, in part with new faces, and even more perhaps, with Friends returning in a time of need. We found in our worship a touchstone of life and peace, a drinking of deep waters in a time of desert struggles. As we continue to ponder the sources of our contributions in ministry, we ask whether we can express our own depths, and whether we can hear each other's, as they are offered into the Light of the Spirit in worship. This year Worship and Ministry Committee composed a pamphlet to give a basis for our understandings of vocal ministry.

This is our sixth year of renting space for our meeting for worship and other Meeting activities from Berkeley Friends Church. Enough people have reported that it was difficult to find our Meeting that we obtained a Meeting phone and listed ourselves in the Yellow Pages to improve our accessibility. We also note that in a university town we have only occasional undergraduate visitors. These concerns lead some Friends to wonder if we might be guilty of hiding our light under a bushel.

Once found, we believe we are an especially warm meeting. New attenders regularly report feeling welcomed and at home. They say others reach out to get to know them but are not overly pushy. Many friends point to our practice of saying names at the rise of meeting as being especially helpful in this regard; even long-timers appreciate this practice. This year Overseers held two after-meeting lunch sessions to get to know new attenders. A special three meeting "workshop" was held in the fall to explore issues of Quakerism and to help new attenders move more deeply into the life of the Meeting.

There continues to be felt a strong sense of personal need for educational broadening in matters of religion and conscience. In part this reflects the eagerness of convinced Friends to nourish their deepening Quaker roots; in part also, it reflects the perception among many of us in this modern age that our upbringing left us less literate in matters religious than in many other areas.

As Strawberry Creek Meeting continues to grow, we find it is also in such small gatherings as educational events that we forge the bonds of community. It is there that we feel most free to speak, and there that we may listen at sufficient leisure to begin to feel we know one another. We held a series discussing the writings of John Punshon; a small mid-week worship continues; half a dozen small groups meet regularly to share thought and fellowship; Overseers arranged a series of meetings for sharing such challenges as our workplace, personal loss and addictions; we organized a pre-war colloquium on events in Iran. We found times for experiencing the dimensions of introspection and joy in our community through our fall and spring retreats, and a gathering for shared pizza.

Strawberry Creek Meeting welcomed seven attenders into membership this year, including several long-term attenders. Two members transferred to other Meetings and one membership was laid down, and we now stand at 57 members. Four new babies were born into Meeting this year! We held a welcoming for them, as well as for new adult members. We encourage associate membership for Meeting children.

With the Friends Church we share the teaching of several of our First Day school classes — the nursery and the 5th-7th grade group — and have conferred together about these programs with increased mutual understanding. Each Meeting often extends an invitation to the other to attend special events — Easter sunrise meeting, Quaker Heritage day, presentations by visiting speakers — and we formed a joint marriage clearness committee for the wedding of a member of Strawberry Creek to an attender of both Meetings. On the other hand, workdays for upkeep of the building are underattended by Strawberries. Recent world events have prompted the three Friends Meetings in Berkeley to gather to explore our capacity to witness jointly to the Quaker peace testimony. Together we have sponsored two gatherings: a forum on the hoped-for "peace dividend" and an all-day draft counseling training, staffed by members of each group. Our Peace and Social Order committees continue meeting together to search for paths of witness for nonviolence in our culture. We are glad for these expressions of friendship and cooperative seeking.

The outreach we undertake has been especially visible during the war. For several ^{months} ~~weeks~~ before the war and during its course a group of Strawberries leafletted for peace at a nearby BART stop during Wednesday afternoon rush hour. We received many thanks from passers-by for this activity. The Meeting was involved in draft counseling through counseling by individual members, placement of ads for military counseling in area high school and college newspapers, and the joint draft counselor's training. There were at least twenty of us marching behind our Quaker banner at the January 26 peace march in San Francisco. An affinity group was formed during the war which is continuing to meet and take action together.

Ongoing projects include coordination of a SHARE food program distribution center and help with the Food Pantry. We contribute financially both to Quaker groups and to others, including the East Bay Sanctuary Covenant and the work of sojourners from our Meeting who are living in Central America. Our budget this year is \$11,500. We share our costs by estimating a per-member amount of \$210. Some can give more, some less; many attenders as well as members contribute.

Religious education involves 40-45 young people regularly. Imaginative and committed First Day school teachers have shared life stories, occupations, Biblical and Quaker writings, and monthly serving in a soup kitchen as forms of our learning to love. We have found that the practice of teachers reporting at the rise of Meeting on what their classes did that day helps us to include the children and value what each person in our community has done that morning. Many adults have participated in teaching, though we continue to look for ways to increase that number and improve access to curriculum materials.

Children wrote and performed two plays this year, and joined wholeheartedly in the posada at Christmas. We are pleased to have a strong group of younger children who share readily with us. We want to respond with respect to their endeavors and questions and to challenge ourselves to see the ways they may move into the life of the Meeting as they grow. We note that no one younger than college-age currently attends a Friends school, and that older teenagers and those in their early twenties find scarce company in our Meeting. Several have left to become part of larger church youth groups. How may we better nurture community among those who would choose to be Friends?

Business in our Meeting is generally conducted with 20-30 Friends in attendance, about half of our membership. We continue to question ourselves about our manner of seeking light for our actions. We aim to come prepared for the discipline of meeting for business while also learning ways to open matters that challenge us. Is unity that comes easily a well-rooted unity? What ways can we learn to examine our deepest concerns together, or to share our leadings as they evolve? Reading monthly the Advices and Queries and asking a committee to offer its reflections on them at business meeting has been a valued way to consider how these may guide us now, or point out new questions that stir us.

We have felt the vitality of our Meeting committees this year. They have shown us the commitment of individuals to the community life, and many of us have found that the everyday work of the Meeting contributes to nurturing our spiritual growth. Our wider associations with Friends — the institutional realities of Quarterly and Yearly meetings and other related organizations — have perhaps less substance to them. Currently fewer than a dozen of us regularly attend the larger gatherings that could strengthen our sense of the body of Friends in the world and our fellowship with them. We are challenged to carry forward the living experience of the Quaker community and not just Strawberry Creek.

How can we more effectively contribute to the unfolding of a Quaker vision? We as a Meeting reflect many characteristics of the society we live in; yet we are called by our heritage and inward conviction to foster change. We recognize that we maintain a less "peculiar" lifestyle than was characteristic of earlier Friends, yet we wish to be no less radical in our faith. We see this as a challenge calling us to dynamic, prophetic witness in the midst of the contradictions of our times. We find, in our sharings together, that the choices are many for those who care. We pray for the Spirit and courage of love to infuse our common life and our movements into the world we care for.

STRAWBERRY CREEK FRIENDS MEETING

State of the Meeting Report: 1989-1990

13th Day, Fifth Month, 1990

Strawberry Creek continues as a lively, dynamic and evolving Meeting that reflects our corporate convictions as Friends and individual seekers of truth. We are thankful for the deepening quality of ministry in our meetings for worship, our starting place for learning to become trusted companions. We have listened beyond words, and found a truthfulness in both ministry and silence that continues to nourish our strength as a community. We have sought ways to encourage those who are new in ministering, thanking those who share meaningfully, and realizing our need for teaching about Quaker ministry and practice in a Meeting which is still young (10 years now). We are reminded of the importance of nurturing new Friends as they begin to take their part in the Meeting, staying with them as they grow.

We have considered how we minister to one another, in our community and beyond. Phone calls and informal lunches, visiting, mid-week meeting, clearness committees, and experiments with forming small groups help us to create expressions of care, nurturing our ability to love and work in the varying ways we are called. Our Peace and Social Order committee's concern about addictions has led us to personal sharing and understanding of addictive behavior and its roots in our society. Over the past year a men's group, a women's group and several small gatherings of spiritual seekers have begun meeting. We trust that the effects of all these explorations enrich the Meeting's life and lead us back to worship with an enlarged comprehension of the Spirit in ministry.

Lately we have ~~we have~~ noticed a decrease of persons attending meeting for worship, while at the same time there has been an increase in attendance at business meeting, so that more than half of our members are regularly present. New Strawberries appear in our midst, grow in closeness and commitment, and are led to join in the deepest workings of the Meeting. We number 55 members and 47 regular attenders this year, with about 50 of our 80 children attending First Day School. Six people became members, two by conviction and four by transfer. Oversight Committee has created a report on our membership expectations and procedures. There were three marriages in our wider Meeting community, one held under our care. One baby was born during the year, and we held welcomings for her and our new members.

Recognizing the blessing of new light on our corporate spirit, we seek to cultivate the blossoming of participation in the life of the Meeting by welcoming and holding brunches for new attenders and promoting fellowship. We want to turn our attention to those new or less familiar to the "Strawberry Family", recognizing our need for more hospitable welcoming of guests and newcomers, and avoiding creating a sense that we are "hard to get to know".

We have paused in retreat together in the fall to reflect for a day on "Moments of Grace: The Many Ways of Experiencing and Practicing the Presence of God", and this spring, a weekend at Ben Lomond to share experiences of the joy that can emerge from times of grief as well as from ecstasy, as we are "Surprised by Joy". We celebrated together this year at our Christmas potluck and play written and performed by the junior high and high schoolers; at Thanksgiving worship in a member's home, and in the many small occasions of sharing coffee and conversation, week by week.

As we have sought God's leading this year, one of our main foci has been religious education. About 50 youngsters regularly participate in six First Day classes. We are now in our fifth year of renting space for the Meeting from Berkeley Friends Church, with whom we have held a joint children's program. Their decision to have a separate program this year led us to thoroughly reevaluate the purpose of our religious education and challenged us to deepen our relationships and communication with Berkeley Friends Church. This has been an opportunity for struggle and growth. Our long-standing mindfulness of right order in our Quaker process stood us in good stead as we faced and began to work through some difficult questions. We grow in trust for one another and for God's guidance in our lives together. Our common interest in nurturing spiritual awakening in our children has led to the participation of many adults in our First Day school programs, and we have held a well-attended workshop to enliven our awareness of teaching and sharing in the love of our children.

We feel a growing need for adult education also, especially on aspects of Quaker practice. We read the Advices and Queries in the first meeting for worship each month, and have this year divided them among Meeting committees for reflection. Committees share their discussions at Meeting for Business, giving all of us the opportunity to examine our individual and common lives in light of these long-held testimonies. Our librarian has organized a growing collection of texts for children and adults, which continues to be well-browsed and read. In order to know one another on a deeper plane, we have begun to hold meetings for sharing, an old Quaker practice. One meeting has centered on the grieving process, another on Quaker "theology", and a third on addictive behaviors.

Our participation in the wider concerns of the Quaker family seems healthy. A large number of Strawberries completed the Quaker Spiritual Quest course last year; several in our Meeting are members of College Park Friends Educational Association, Friends House and Earlham School of Religion boards and committees, and many are active attenders at Quarterly Meeting and Pacific Yearly Meeting. One Friend resided at Pendle Hill for a term, and another attended Friends Bible Conference in Philadelphia. We maintain a strong interest in the activities of the AFSC, and a small group of us coordinates a SHARE food program site, now in its third year. Still others assist the Food Pantry Project that Berkeley Friends Church has sponsored for so long.

As part of our continuing witness against violence and refugee suffering, we filed a supporting brief for the AFSC suit against the Immigration Reform and Control Act. Several in our community are active with the East Bay Sanctuary Covenant and help us to focus our concerns; many have joined in demonstrations and some have been arrested. A Salvadoran refugee lived amongst us for a time while awaiting Canadian immigration clearance. We have kept close contact with our members in Nicaragua (now in Costa Rica) and secured support from PYM for their peace-building lives there. Some of us traveled to the Lenten gathering at the Nevada nuclear test site joining other Friends, Mennonites and Brethren in witness. We remind ourselves that God calls us to actively make peace, not only oppose war; we need to examine our hearts and relationships to find the ways of peace.

As we gathered to talk about the state of Strawberry Creek Meeting, we found ourselves moved to express our hopes for the Meeting over the next few years: that Strawberry Creek will continue to nurture the search for spiritual understanding as it emerges in ourselves, our young people, and the wider community; that we show young people how to enter the life of the Meeting; that we continue to hold dear our wealth of differences in serving and following the light of the Spirit; that our relationship with Berkeley Friends Church will be pursued with care and discernment; and that we may be where God leads us, putting our trust in this most compassionate Source of all of our hopes.

Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting
of the Religious Society of Friends
State of the Meeting Report, 1988-89

Strawberry Creek continues to grow in breadth and depth as a Meeting, exhibiting a vitality which is reflected in virtually all our activities as Friends, both individually and collectively. At a recent forum, we heard new attenders and seasoned Friends alike agree that this spiritual energy is a product of the extraordinary quality of our Meetings for Worship. Friends spoke with deep appreciation and awe of the Meeting's respect for both the power of the silence and the spoken message, of our being strengthened by the wide range of spiritual paths among us, and of the centrality of the worship service in our individual lives. Increased attendance at our Meetings for Worship testifies to the power of this Center: we are averaging at least a dozen more attenders per week than a year ago.

Our worship is enriched by our adult education and other spiritual activities. This year we held two forums on the role of "self" in ministry, as well as one each on the history of Meetings for Business and on the practice of Simplicity. Our annual Ben Lomond Spring Retreat, entitled *Gifts I Have Received*, focused on the topic of sharing our spiritual gifts with one another. The theme of our one-day Fall Retreat, *The Journey is its own Reward*, inspired us to consider how our outer lives reflect our commitment to the Spirit. Nine Strawberries are attending the third regional Quaker Spiritual Quest series.

Our Meetings for Worship are also enhanced by our joy in each others' fellowship. Although our rapid growth in attendance has often strained our resources, newcomers assure us that they have felt most welcome in Strawberry Creek. An enlarged hospitality committee has continued the after-Meeting social hour. Welcomings for new members and babies also are important opportunities for social contact and joint celebration of important passages in our individual lives. Friendly Sixes/Eights encourage us to share our spiritual experiences and insights with one another at a more intimate level. Overseers sponsored a forum on relationships as a follow-up to an earlier discussion on same-sex marriage. We also maintain frequent contacts with our far-flung members, in particular Brian and Patty Erickson, who are living in Nicaragua.

Our worship is both strengthened by, and releases a dynamic energy into, our social and political witness. We remain active in Central American issues, including our ongoing concern for refugees through our membership in the East Bay Sanctuary Covenant and our active opposition to the shipment of weapons from the Concord Naval Weapons Station. For several of us the high point of the year was a moving Easter Sunrise Service in the midst of weapons bunkers at the Naval Station. A number of us are active in the Quaker Affinity Group at the Nevada Test Site. This year also saw an increased awareness among our young people of the military; two forums were held on issues involving draft registration and sanctuary, and we have placed an ad in local high school newspapers encouraging young people with concerns about the draft to contact us. We continue to participate in the SHARE food project, which is successfully reaching more individuals in our area. The AFSC has informed us of their Homeless Organizing Project in the East Bay (HOPE). Meeting recently agreed to join in presenting a Friend-of-the-Court brief on behalf of the AFSC in their suit to employ without regard to documentation.

While retaining its youthful vigor, Strawberry Creek is also maturing as a Meeting: our wider Quaker contacts are stronger than ever before. We have always attended Quarterly and Yearly Meetings in relatively large numbers, but we are now more active in AFSC and FCL/FCNL concerns and of course having our very "own" Brinton visitor reminded us of our cultural and spiritual bonds to Friends everywhere. Ties with Ben Lomond Quaker Center were further developed with two representatives on the Board. Our relationship with the Friends' Church, whose building we use, remains strong, although we share fewer First-Day School classes with them. Some of our attenders also worship regularly with the Church. As we share in many of the same social witness activities, we have learned to appreciate the special insights they bring to Quaker and Christian traditions.

A great source of strength for everyone in our Meeting is our large and active children's program. With a weekly attendance of 40-45 children in the First Day School, many of us in the Meeting have had an opportunity to lead one of the six classes, and all of us appreciate the after-Meeting reports from teachers on their activities. We are often amazed at the depth of the children's understanding and wisdom. Our Christmas posada and potluck is an annual opportunity for children and adults to entertain and enjoy one other. Young Strawberries are reaching out to the Meeting and beyond: in addition to bringing to the Meeting their interest in the draft, the high school group ended a study session on hunger by spending a day preparing sandwiches for the homeless in San Francisco. The lower primary group communicate on such issues as simplicity with their "Nicaraguan pen pals," Brian and Patty Erickson. Many of our children and young adults have established important relationships with non-parental adults in the Meeting.

We have 51 adult members in Strawberry Creek. During the year, two Friends joined us by conviction; three additional membership applications are in process. One member has transferred to another Meeting, and a further transfer out is in progress. Five babies were born into the Meeting in 1988-89.

Even as we celebrate the life and power of our Meeting, we are reminded of our shortcomings. We are too slow to integrate new attenders and our own young adults into the business of the Meeting. Although the Nominating Committee found the majority of members and attenders willing to serve on Meeting committees, our attendance at Meeting for Business is decreasing slightly. Our increase in regular, engaged attenders at Meeting for Worship is not reflected in our membership statistics. We recognize the delicate nature of membership and wrestle with the need to balance trust in an attender's personal sense of readiness with the awareness that individual encouragement may be valuable. There is a clear and articulated need for more opportunity for adult education generally, and in particular, on our historical Quaker and Judeo/Christian heritages. The First Day School Committee continues to struggle with issues of curriculum. While many of us feel a part of all our social outreach activities by virtue of our involvement in the Meeting, one Friend reminds us that the Incarnation is not complete until *each* of us is called to action.

These are challenges which we are eager to address during the coming year.

Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends State of the Meeting Report, 1987-88

Strawberry Creek continues to evolve and mature as a meeting, acquiring depth of member and attendership and weight of tradition, while sadly losing some of its early pioneering, home-centered spirit; in the past year some long-time participants have begun to meet in homes. Yet members, new attenders and visitors alike comment on the remarkably warm, almost familial sense of fellowship and welcome they feel, truly a hallmark of the meeting, as cherished as it is undesigned. Growth brings its own concerns as well, especially that visitors and tentative new friends may not always be met with personal and caring attention.

We strive to broaden and renew our sense of corporate community, finding this a challenge in a modern urban environment, with a variety of planned activities. Our weekend spring retreat at Ben Lomond, led by Doug Gwyn on the theme of *"Sharing our Gifts"*, explored the relationship of our Quaker history to today's challenges. Our one-day fall retreat addressed how we encourage our open sharing of personal Light, through the theme *"Take Heed to the Promptings Within..."*. We have had a baby welcoming, our annual posada and potluck at Christmas, a newcomers' brunch to welcome and acknowledge new attenders, we've sponsored our annual open Friends' picnic, and we continue our round-robin "Friendly Sixes" to provide more intimate social contexts.

This past year the meeting has acted on a perceived need for *adult* education as a means not so much to strengthen our Quakerliness as to strengthen our corporate confidence in our knowledge of and skills in Quaker process and communication. We have surprised ourselves with the richness experienced through our own programs and with our thirst for them. Beyond the retreat themes above, we have held special sessions on aspects of Quaker history (three: one on membership, one on use of Christian language, and one on George Fox's ministry), on vocal ministry (three), and on Quaker church government. We have produced a pamphlet on meeting for business and have met in dialog on same-sex marriage and on the state of the meeting (and note the reluctance of committees and members to volunteer to write the state of the meeting report). The month's query is read in Meeting for Worship each first First-Day.

Concerns of peace and social order continue to provide a vital focus to Strawberry Creek's activities. Two of our fold now live in Nicaragua; others have traveled through New Zealand, Africa,

the USSR, Iran, China and Central America, sharing their insights on their returns. Strawberry Creek Meeting is one of the financial supporters of Sanctuary House, and two of us participate actively in East Bay Sanctuary Covenant board meetings. Strawberries have taken part in marches; in vigils at Livermore, Concord (one regularly), and the Nevada Test Site; and in organized letter-writing events. Recently we have launched "Friends Share" from the Meeting as a project of the AFSC's Self-Help and Resource Exchange (SHARE) program, distributing food at cost in return for social service; all three Berkeley groups of Friends are involved.

Strawberry Creek Meeting continues to attract families with children, so much so that singles have wondered if they were an untended minority (they are not). The challenge of religious education is very real, and is shared in part with Berkeley Friends' Church. First-Day School this year includes seven classes with total attendance varying from forty to fifty, requiring broad participation from both meetings (about 36 adults have taken part). We continue to grapple as Friends with the ways best to meet the needs of children, of adults, and of our religion in our modern context, and we find no simple answers. A move to redefine First-Day School as a *Meeting for Learning*, begun a year ago in an attempt to address the knotty conundrum of Quaker religious instruction, perhaps deserves further attention: some aspects, such as a query-based curriculum, continue, while more difficult issues of instructional means and intent remain unresolved. A special children's program during spring retreat, coordinated with the overall theme and program, worked very well.

Strawberry Creek Meeting currently has 50 adult members. During the year we gained one new adult member by conviction and one by transfer from another meeting, while two members withdrew. Two children were born or adopted into meeting. Meeting for Worship averages about 50-60 adults, 30-40 children and 8-10 young friends, and Meeting for Business 20-25. Physically, we find the space we occupy in the Berkeley Friends Church has become our home, and our relationship with the Church continues to grow, as we share in each others' social events, some joint First-Day School classes, and some discussion groups and activities.

Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
State of the Meeting Report, 1986/87

The past year has been another one of growth and maturation for our Meeting, now in its 8th year as a Monthly Meeting. There are currently 52 members, with 2 new members added since last year, 1 by transfer from another Meeting. One marriage was held under the care of the Meeting. Meeting for Worship attendance averages about 60 adults. Monthly Meeting for Business attendance averaged 19 in the past year, and committees have been fully staffed and active. The First Day School is done jointly with the Berkeley Friends Church children and teachers, and this helps achieve a successful and happy blending of the two groups and the two strands of Quakerism. There are 60 children listed on the roster, and 30-35 attend classes each week. The large number of children and their activities are a dominant and distinguishing, and particularly rewarding, feature of Strawberry Creek Meeting -- a constant reminder of the vigor and hope for the future of the Society of Friends and its ideals.

A mutually satisfactory relationship with the Berkeley Friends Church, in addition to the First Day School, has continued with shared, rented space for our Meetings for Worship and for Business, special educational and social events. The Church's hospitality and joint involvement in our activities are much appreciated. Some physical improvements have been welcome, such as new closet space, an expanded library, door repair, and new chair cushions.

A listing of Meeting events during the year reflects the importance of our corporate life: "Friendly Sixes" was a series of monthly gatherings for worship, discussion and a meal, with 5-6 groups regularly gathering in participants' homes; after-Meeting refreshments were a regular event; adult discussion groups after Meeting or in evening gatherings covered a variety of topics; several brunches for getting acquainted with attenders new to our Meeting of the Society of Friends; an Easter breakfast; the annual picnic with other East Bay Meetings at Lake Temescal; and our annual First Day School potluck picnic and the annual Christmas program. Many members also took part, as usual, in activities of the wider Quaker community; events at Ben Lomond Quaker Center; Quaker Spiritual Quest; Quarterly and Yearly Meetings; the Harvest Festival to benefit Friends Committee on Legislation; and "Day-on-the-Green" to benefit Friends House in Santa Rosa. Our monthly newsletter, with a mailing list of about 150 persons or families, is a much-appreciated instrument for keeping us in touch and more involved with each other.

Projects and social outreach activities which grew out of our corporate concerns or individuals' interests included: The East Bay Sanctuary Covenant and other assistance to Central American refugees; Berkeley Food Pantry; Friends In Unity With Nature; peacemaking witness at Livermore Laboratory; Bay Area Construction Brigade to Nicaragua; a Central American Travel Fund to help people with special leadings to assist there; letter-writing on social and political issues; and Friends Association for Services to the Elderly, Ben Lomond Quaker Center, and John Woolman School support. In the midst of these activities we still sense the need for even more sharing and group unity, along with individual efforts.

Although outward activities are important to us, our Meetings for Worship continue to be the central and most important part of our corporate life. Attendance continues to grow, and the depth and focus of our meditation and vocal ministry have been encouraging.

Approved by Monthly Meeting 4/5/87

The course of Strawberry Creek has run quietly this year. In January 1986 we completed our first year of renting space from Berkeley Local Friends Meeting of California Yearly Meeting, often referred to as Berkeley Friends Church. As with any new relationship, there have been growing pains. But with friendly accommodations on both sides, we have begun our second year with a new rental contract, and a feeling of finding ourselves at home.

With our increased visibility has come an increase in attenders and visitors at meeting for worship. Some have become active participants in committees as well. Attendance at meeting for worship on the occasion of business has not proportionately increased. Worship & Ministry Committee, under whose care is Monthly Meeting is considering both the content and physical arrangements of business. There is extensive support in the meeting community for our spiritual health and the recognition that actions & concerns are directly the result of the presence of God in our lives. The quantity and quality of spoken ministry is variable; Openness in sharing and exploration of the spoken ministry is encouraged, however worship is often lacking in prophetic utterance. We commonly have the experience of a gathered Meeting and know that Friends are keeping Faith, whether there is silent or spoken ministry. We taste the spiritual water, but are thirsty for more. Worship & Ministry Committee has encouraged the continuation of small sharing & study groups. And ~~it~~ has sponsored discussions on Quaker education such as Jesus' parables, George Fox's ministry, Friends' views on the use of power and economics as an outgrowth of our testimonies.

The corporate life of our meeting continues to grow & change. We are not a small meeting any more. We are concerned to see many attenders come to our meeting for a time and then leave. Hospitality Committee and the Newsletter Editors are most acutely aware of newcomers who attend or 3-6 months and then fade away. We are not able to provide a spiritual home for all seekers, or even for all Quakers.

We cannot get to know all of the meeting community simply by attending Meeting for Worship, Monthly Meeting, and participating in a Meeting committee's work. In addition to these standard means of fellowship, there exist several overlapping networks of friends & acquaintances in the meeting which provide care and support. To supplement these networks, we have continued several activities to help us know each other better. Many of us have met once a month during the fall and spring in groups of six for dinner and worship sharing. This year the groups used Faith & Practice. We have found that our spiritual lives continue to seek Truth, no matter how it's worded, and there has been no call for the Faith & Practice to be revised again. Our meeting has continued to have a day-long retreat in the Fall and a weekend retreat in the Spring. Newcomers to the meeting are invited to attend the annual brunch, sponsored by Overseers, where questions about Quakers and the Meeting are discussed. We now have refreshments after Meeting for worship to encourage fellowship.

Although love and unity appear to be maintained among us, and we have no divisions or serious disagreements among the community, perhaps this merely reflects the unwillingness to bring to the meeting community the questions in our lives which are the most troublesome.

Our venture at combining the Strawberry Creek First Day School with that of Berkeley Friends Church has met with mixed success. We began by acknowledging the potential for disagreement in an area as emotional as the question of what -- and how -- we should be teaching our children, given the wide range of theologies and styles among individuals in the two groups. Currently, preschool and the junior high/high school groups

are for the most part held jointly with Friends Church, while the lower and upper elementary classes are separate. Teachers from the Church have taught nearly all the preschool classes & about half the youth group classes. Our agreement with the Church is that whenever a particular class is not meeting our mutual needs, it can be held separately. Both groups are thereby assured that our presence in the Church is not dependent upon how well we are able to combine our First Day Schools.

Individuals continue to act on their leadings: Asian & Central American refugees; U.S. intervention in Central America; Palestine; Berkeley Food Pantry; Livermore Labs; Friends House in Santa Rosa; Apartheid; environmental issues; The Catholic Bishops' pastoral letter. Since 1983, nine of our members and attenders have traveled to Mexico and Central America under concerns for the wars in Central America and damage to bodies, minds and homes caused by war. As a Meeting, we continue membership in the East Bay Sanctuary Covenant, send representatives to their meetings & provide financial support. With individuals having such diversity in the area of social concerns, Central America remains the work of many individuals, rather than having universal meeting participation.

How to unite the Meeting in a common outreach activity has been a concern of the Peace and Social Order Committee. For the second year we have organized a turkey dinner at the Berkeley Emergency Food Project for 150 street people and others in need. We recommend similar dinners to other meetings for three reasons: first, the need exists; second, a dinner is a practical project; and third, it brings us together as a Meeting. This last point derives from broad participation from our Meeting in raising money, buying food, preparation and clean-up.

In addition to active participation by some on the Quarterly & Yearly Meeting level, four individuals represented Pacific Yearly Meeting: at the FWCC Triennial in Mexico, at the International Youth Festival in Moscow, and at the World Gathering of Young Friends in North Carolina. In turn, Strawberry Creek welcomed Quakers from the German Democratic Republic, who were delegates to the World Gathering of Young Friends. We also hosted Friends from Australia & New Zealand, and Peace & Social Order Committee members were instrumental in organizing their speaking to Quaker & community groups, as well as Quarterly Meeting.

With three Meetings in Berkeley, there are new challenges for care and cooperation. Over 75 friends attended the 2nd annual picnic. Robert Barclay's life and ministry were explored at the 4th annual Quaker Heritage Day. Last year Friends Church invited us to join their Easter breakfast, and Strawberry Creek invited the Church to our fall pancake breakfast. This year for Easter we held a breakfast jointly sponsored by the two Hospitality Committees. Sometimes the care of individuals can fall between the cracks when we falsely assume that someone we no longer see attending our Meeting has decided to attend one of the other Meetings. Even though communication about individuals needs improvement, there exists good communication among the Meetings on areas of concern in the wider community before the University of California and the Berkeley City Council.

Almost all committees indicated an imbalance in the work load among committee members, yet no committee has found this to be an insurmountable problem. Several have added members formally or have informally called upon others in Meeting with specific skills to assist in the work, much in the same way as First Day School Committee calls on individuals to teach for one month. All committees are functioning, and carry forth the work of the Meeting. Together we maintain the Tradition.

STRAWBERRY CREEK MONTHLY MEETING
OF THE
RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

State of the Society Report, 1983-1984

Our Meetings for Worship continue to grow in depth as we find both living silence and living words entering into our daily lives and our committee undertakings. Vocal ministry has been enhanced by those exploring more deeply the Christian historical basis of Friends' ways, those who are engaged in active witness to our beliefs and those searching for new revelations.

Meetings for Business have been well attended, productive and conducted in a manner consistent with our search for the Light. Instances in which we were faced with difficult issues were handled with sensitivity and openness.

The physical growth of our Meeting has strengthened us by giving us greater diversity. It has also caused some discomfort to some at times by making more difficult the achievement of intimacy. This has resulted in our meeting more frequently in small groups both on an informal and an organized basis. The Overseers, Hospitality, Retreat and Worship and Ministry committees have actively promoted these meetings around issues and on a social basis.

Witness, on a personal and on a corporate basis, has been a major element in the life of our Meeting. Friends have worked and worshipped in war-torn countries. Others have carried forward witness in relation to nuclear arms, war taxes and draft registration. The Meeting has affiliated with the East Bay Sanctuary Coalition and the Peace and Social Order Committee has been very active in both educating members as to the issues and notifying them of opportunities to witness.

Strawberry Creek Friends have been very active in wider Quaker organizations. Meeting members and attenders are actively involved with both Quarterly and Yearly Meeting, the American Friends Service Committee, FASE and several other groups.

We have been impressed with the need for Mutual Care as we have come to know how much each of us needs the help of others. All of us are troubled by personal concerns that interfere with our living fully in the life of the Spirit, and we are comforted as we see how loving support has been given in times of distress.

The First-day School has been the center of our concern for Home and Children, not only through our classes and religious instruction for the children but through ways that teaching children has become an opening for growth for the teachers. Parents and teachers have met together to increase their mutual care for one another.

The new First-day School curriculum has been in place a second year and has been a springboard for improving communication

on the foundations of Friends' beliefs.

It has been noted that children now constitute a substantial proportion of our Meeting. Concern has been expressed by some that we have not allocated our resources in a manner that reflects this.

Adult Education has been important to our Meeting. Worship and Ministry Committee conducted a series of discussions on Witness and Friends' Values in the Fall and is now promoting the creation of new special topic groups. Numbers of Friends are meeting on an informal basis for purposes of education.

Although we have not spoken much of Simplicity, we have at least seen its fruits in the lives of some of our members and we have endeavored to keep our Meeting free of unnecessary clutter.

Meeting finances have been a cause for concern. Meeting needs have increased rapidly, driven by a combination of growth in size, new commitments and inflation. Contributions have not always kept pace and the general fund has at times been in deficit.

Our trials, as a Meeting and as individuals; our diversity and sometime sense of dispersion; our strength of witness, our caring, our developing ministry -- all have contributed to a sense of general unity in search of the Spirit and in the growth of our community.

Statistical Report

Meeting membership is currently 40 adults; 31 members are active. There are in addition nine members of other Meetings and 32 adult attenders who participate in the life of Strawberry Creek Meeting.

We have added four new members this past year: three by transfer from other Meetings and one junior member who sought membership. Two members transferred to other Meetings. Five infants were welcomed to Strawberry Creek families and we celebrated their arrival with a meeting for worship and a potluck. Total children now number 49, including 13 junior members. Several are away at Friends' schools.

Sadly we record the death of our beloved Ann Combs on May 4, at the age of 84. A member of San Francisco Friends Meeting since 1950, Ann took seriously the Discipline's statement to transfer one's membership to their local Meeting. After moving

State of the Society Report,
1983-1984

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to Oakland, Ann became a full participant in Strawberry Creek and later transferred her membership. At her request, no memorial meeting was held.

The above report was read in and approved by our monthly meeting for business held May 13, 1984.

Barbara Graves
Clerk
Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting

Report Committee:

Rachel Ann Elder
Betty Hall
Bob Maynard

STRAWBERRY CREEK MONTHLY MEETING
OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

State of the Meeting Report, 1982-1983

Meetings for Worship and Business

As a young Meeting, now in our fourth year, we look for and are encouraged by signs of growth and development. Among these signs is the faithful and involved participation in Meetings for Worship and Business. We have found many occasions in our worship together during which we have been nourished and challenged by both deep silence and rich vocal ministry. We are now reading the Queries in Meeting for Worship once each month. Also, we have recently begun having a Friend available after Meeting to answer questions about our Meeting and the Society of Friends; this has proved quite useful. We have found this year to be one of significant growth as a spiritual community.

Out of our spiritual experiences of worship together has come what seems to be a heightened sense of commitment to the work of the Meeting, perhaps symbolized most dramatically by consistently large attendance at Meetings for Business. We, of course, sometimes find the process of reaching unity on items of business to be more arduous than we would wish. Sometimes we have not come prepared, other times we have simply been confronted with difficult choices and issues which required significant time and attention. Yet, as the months go on and we recall the ground we have covered in Meetings for Business, we are encouraged by what we have learned and are challenged by opportunities to grow in both faith and practice.

We continue to meet for worship at the Graduate Theological Union; although we occasionally feel the difficulties of not occupying our own Meetinghouse, we find that the present arrangement suits our needs adequately and frees us to devote resources to other things. Our Meetings for Business are held in homes on the first Sunday evening of each month. A desire to study and reflect on Quaker thought has been met in part by a discussion series based on four Pendle Hill pamphlets. In addition to participating in the life of Strawberry Creek Meeting, several Friends are involved in a variety of worship groups in the area which have sprung up to meet varying needs of geography and scheduling.

Meeting Community

The opportunity to share worship and spiritual experiences has been expressed through the various activities of the Meeting. We have a monthly newsletter that keeps us informed of events, issues and concerns. Several committees, including Hospitality, Retreat,

Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting
State of the Meeting Report, 1982-1983
Page Two

and Religious Education, are organized to keep members in touch with one another, with the children and with the sick.

The First Day School has grown enormously. It meets in the nearby University Christian Church building. We have been led by an enthusiastic committee and, with the addition of a new curriculum, many Friends have shared in this important part of our Meeting's life. At Christmas time we enjoyed a First Day School program consisting of a nativity pageant and a performance of "Amahl and the Night Visitors."

The Retreat Committee has organized two retreats: a Fall Retreat at Hillside Church in El Cerrito, and a Spring Retreat at Alpine Lodge on Mount Tamalpais. In both these retreats, Friends have been able to nurture one another in fellowship and learn more about each other as individuals and as part of a spiritual community.

The Meeting has grown in membership. Currently we have 38 adult members and 14 junior members. Since last year we have added 11 new adult members, including four by transfer from other Meetings, and five junior members. Four children have been added to Meeting families. One member has resigned and nine members from other Meetings are active.

A loving Memorial Meeting was held October 17 for John Ullman, long-time Strawberry Creek Friend, who had given the Meeting strength, humor and spiritual insight.

Personal Living

The Meeting has benefited from two Worship-Sharing Group experiences this year. Discussions of Quaker traditions and practices, as well as individual beliefs, spiritual life, and personal worship have added strength and unity to the Meeting's growth.

The Meeting continues to seek ways to help individuals and families and to strengthen the Meeting community to meet both personal and spiritual needs. The Oversight Committee has set up an emergency assistance fund for individuals in the Meeting who are in need of such assistance. Opportunities for newcomers to gather in the home of a Friend for conversation about the Meeting and the Society of Friends have been beneficial and will be continued.

Social Justice

As faith flows into action, we find ourselves seeking ways to be witnesses and workers for social change. This often begins with individual choices about work, lifestyle, and personal responsibilities. More publicly, many have been drawn to

Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting
State of the Meeting Report, 1982-1983
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participation in various actions witnessing against the production and deployment of nuclear weapons and have also done canvassing and fund raising in support of the Nuclear Freeze Initiative. Many have felt burdened about the payment of war taxes and have struggled together with this issue in sharing ideas, resources and experiences. During this year, several members and attenders have traveled and worked in Third World countries and contributed to our awareness of poverty and injustice and of programs working to alleviate suffering. We also welcomed home the Peace Pedalers, who have been traveling throughout the United States as voices for peace. As a Meeting we have recently taken the step of forming a standing Peace and Social Order Committee. These actions and involvement reflect our ongoing belief and experience that concern with social order grows out of and is empowered by our life together as a spiritual community.

This report was read and approved in our Monthly Meeting for Business on Sunday, April 3, 1983.

On behalf of Strawberry
Creek Monthly Meeting,

Barbara Graves, Clerk

Report Committee:

Tom Head
Amy Block

State of the Meeting Report, 1981-82, Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting

Meetings for Worship and Business

Our Meetings for Worship are well-attended and fruitful -- the major focus of the life of our Meeting community. In April, 1981, we began meeting in rented space at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley. Attendance averages 40-50, with several visitors each time. At rise of Meeting, all present introduce themselves. We need and seek even better ways to get to know newcomers. There is usually good depth and intensity of silence and worship. Spoken messages are meaningful and often focussed on a common theme. We need to do better as regards punctuality. Visits to other Meetings are planned for 5th First Days of each month. Special Meetings for Worship are held, such as at Easter, Christmas, and Thanksgiving. Midweek worship groups are held periodically in homes. A worship group meets monthly in Alameda, and a new one has just been started to meet monthly in Contra Costa County.

Our Meetings for Business are held the first First Day evening of each month, in various homes. Attendance has varied from 13 to 27. We have made progress in staffing and using our committees, but are still searching and learning in this area. Many of us are active participants in the Quarterly and Yearly Meetings as well. We would welcome visits from Friends and from Committees from other Meetings, to help us continue to mature as a new Meeting.

Meeting Community

Many activities illustrate the importance of the Meeting in uniting and nurturing us. We celebrated our second anniversary with a party on October 25. A Spring retreat was held April 10-12 on Mt. Tamalpais, and a Fall retreat was held November 14 in Berkeley. We enjoyed a Christmas pageant by the First Day School. Evening potluck meetings in various homes, and adult education following Meeting for Worship, have helped us learn about Quaker history and issues, and about each other as well. A monthly newsletter helps keep us informed of events and concerns, and a "telephone tree" puts us rapidly in touch with each other when necessary. Visiting and helping bring our elder members to Meeting are important activities for us.

The First Day School program is well-organized and a significant part of the Meeting's life. It meets in the nearby University Christian Church building, with children of that church taking part in the classes. Our children then join Meeting for Worship during the last 10-15 minutes.

Meeting membership is currently 29. We have added 4 new adult members, 3 by transfer from other Meetings, since last year. We welcomed 1 older Junior member, and 2 children were born into Meeting families. We celebrate each newborn with a special Meeting for Worship. One member transferred to another Meeting, and several members have moved away but keep in touch. One marriage has been held under the care of the Meeting this year. Sadly, we record the death of our loved friend, Jackson Burgess. A moving memorial service was held October 25, 1981. Helping with his care and supporting his family drew us closer together as a Meeting.

Personal Living

In matters of individual discipline, family relationships, and personal witness to Friends' testimonies, the Meeting has been a source of help for many. This is an aspect of the life of our Meeting which could be further strengthened, however, and we continue to work on it.

Social Justice

As individuals, we are active in a wide variety of vocational and avocational efforts to improve the world's condition. As a Meeting, however, we have not yet felt able to establish a permanent committee on Peace and Social Order. Nevertheless, the Meeting has participated in several activities; completing a year of financial and personal support of an Argentinian political exile; sponsoring special Peace and Social Action seminars; providing financial support for various Friends' action groups; becoming a founding member of the proposed National Peace Academy; supporting the "Peace Pedalers" who are making a cross-country peace-witness bicycle tour; and others.

It has been a year of growth and development for Strawberry Creek Meeting -- of learning about both the difficulties and rewards of working together and helping each other face the challenges of life and of being Friends.

State of the Meeting Report
for Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting
of the Religious Society of Friends
Berkeley-Oakland Area
1981

1. Participation in the Meetings for Worship and Business

Vocal ministry has declined from previous periods. Messages have been less fervent. Most recently, however, the worship has become more alive.

Our attendance has continued to be stable at 35-50. Our first day school has expanded. These dimensions meant that we could no longer be adequately housed in the homes of our members. After thoughtful searching and deliberation, we began to experiment with renting sites for worship and first day school. A new location is expected to offer us extra time and space for an adult religious education period. We expect to evaluate these experiences with rental sites.

We experimented for three months with reading the queries at the close of Meeting for Worship. There was mixed response to this practice. We have resumed our former practice of reading the queries at the beginning of our Meeting for Business.

Membership has had a special significance for us. In recently becoming a Meeting, we have had an unusually large number of transfers, and new requests for membership. We have felt Divine Assistance through our personal prayer, patient exploration, and tender clerking.

Friends have joyfully noted that our conduct of business is more focused. Items are attended to with care and preparation, which results in less labored sessions. We see we have all become more seasoned. The maturing of our Meeting is perhaps most noticeable in the increased acceptance of the work of our committees. This has undergirded the whole life of our Meeting.

One additional worship opportunity has sprung from our Meeting. A small but consistent worship occurs on the fourth Sundays in Alameda.

Ongoing attention is being paid to the roles of the committees of Overseers and of Worship and Ministry. We feel our Meeting is strengthened by having these two separate committees. Worship and Ministry has changed from a committee of the whole to a named committee. The Overseers and the Worship and Ministry Committee have held one joint meeting so far this year.

2. Meeting Community

As in the past, gatherings and retreats played a very important part in the life of the Meeting and in the lives of individual participants. In addition to the spring retreat, many of us attended Young Friends gatherings, the Religion and Psychology Conference, the Theology Conference, the Berkeley Friends Church retreat, Quarterly Meetings, and Yearly Meeting.

We are gifted with two new lives, and we cherish the presence of our elderly Friends. Special provisions for the young and old are included in all our planning, especially for retreats. First day school flourishes, and from time to time the children share what they have learned with the rest of us.

Over the year, the Fun Committee has organized several successful outings, and the Ministry and Worship Committee has just initiated a new program of potluck suppers followed by forums in which Friends share their personal histories.

The Meeting community continues to delight in celebrations: for two births, a wedding, for monthly meeting status and for new members.

3. Personal Living

Friends concerns also extend into the personal lives of Meeting members and attenders. House-sharing provides an opportunity for some to enrich their living of Quaker faith and practice on a daily basis. Several ad hoc listening committees have been formed in response to requests from individual Friends, to meet with them about personal concerns which bear on their participation in the life of the Meeting.

4. Social Justice

Acting as a Meeting, Strawberry Creek participated significantly in the rescue of one individual from political imprisonment in Argentina to political exile in the United States, and offered support to a member participating in the Survival Summer Project.

Many individuals find expression for their concerns for social justice outside the Meeting.

What are we, as a Meeting, doing to fulfill our commitment to social justice, civic responsibility, and peace? This remains an open question and an area of concern. Our current solution is not a regularly nominated committee but rather we are exploring with open meetings, held separately from Meetings for Worship or Business.

We recognize that working as a body towards social justice should be an important part of the spiritual life of the Meeting, and are still seeking ways to accomplish this.

5. Statistics

We now have 25 members, 9 members of other meetings, about 40 attenders, and 30 children in our Meeting community.

STRAWBERRY CREEK MEETING
STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT

(MAY 1980)

I. STATISTICS:

Strawberry Creek Meeting has approximately 60 regular worshipers, including about 15 children. Approximately 40 Friends attend Meeting for Worship. Strawberry Creek has ~~17~~ 19 adult members and 8 children, with ~~4~~ 4 transfer requests pending. In the past year, 15 Friends transferred membership to Strawberry Creek, 3 new members were approved, and one child was born. One marriage was allowed and one marriage under the care of Cambridge Meeting was joyously celebrated by our meeting.

II. MEETINGS:

A. Worship

Our meetings continue to be centered and nurturing. They are characterized by little vocal ministry, but that vocal ministry that manifests itself is centered and to the point. We are looking into the possibility of renting space but we are still meeting in people's homes. Though our mid-week meetings were recently laid down, many in our meeting feel the need for extra meetings for worship. On months with five Sundays, numbers of us would visit with other meetings on that fifth Sunday.

B. Business

Our meetings for business are attended by 15 to 20 people. They are shorter than in years past, but remain a troubled spot, due primarily to inexperience. One area of particular concern to our meeting, with which we wrestle without clarity, is Friends' perceptions regarding membership and, specifically, the requirement that certain meeting offices be filled by members only. In our meeting, many non-members fill roles that require deep commitment and knowledge of the ways of Friends. We have made progress in resolving questions of finance, including making regular contributions to Friends' organizations and concerns.

III. COMMITTEES:

Since becoming a monthly meeting, we have developed a full complement of committees including a Fun Committee and a Visiting Committee. We have a standing Oversight Committee, but ministry and worship continues to be performed by the Committee of the Whole for Ministry and Worship. Though the meeting seems to feel the need for a standing committee for ministry and worship, the question of membership of that committee limited to members of the Society remains a concern.

The meeting is still determining structure, type and responsibilities to be given the committees. We are moving from doing all business in business meeting to doing more business by committee. We are slowly learning to trust our committees.

IV. RETREATS AND CELEBRATIONS:

We continue to be friends as well as Friends. We have celebrated Christmas, Thanksgiving, welcomed our new members when we became a monthly meeting, and received our newlyweds with exuberance and joy. Many members joined with Berkeley meeting in sunrise meeting on Easter. We have held two in-town retreats and one in Ben Lomond. Deep spiritual discussion and sharing have marked our retreats, punctuated by warm fellowship.

V. OTHER QUAKER ACTIVITIES:

Many in our meeting participate in Friends organizations and committees. Our meeting derives much satisfaction and sustenance from this participation.

VI. STATUS:

This year marked the end of one journey for our meeting and the beginning of another. After long thought and preparation, we were allowed to become a full monthly meeting by the Quarterly Meeting. Thus, the meeting is one in transition and in birthing. Much work remains to be done, but the meeting, with the help of God, will arise strengthened from the process.

STATE OF THE SOCIETY REPORT, Strawberry Creek Preparative Meeting May, 1979

Statistics

Strawberry Creek Preparative Meeting continues as a community of about 85 people, 60 adults and 25 children. We hold Meetings for Worship on First Days in individual homes, staying 1-2 months, with up to 40 adults and 10 children in regular attendance. Eighteen of our adults are members of Berkeley Monthly Meeting; eight are members of other Monthly Meetings. Attendance at Meetings for Business fluctuates but often begins with about 20 people present.

We have welcomed a new child born into the Meeting this year and celebrated the acceptance into membership through Berkeley Monthly Meeting of two of our attenders.

This last year has been one of growth and struggle for our Meeting as we faced many issues raised by our central concern: moving toward Monthly Meeting status. Whereas a year ago our only standing committee was that of First Day School, we have now added a Committee of the Whole on Worship and Ministry, an Oversight Committee, a Nominating Committee, a Finance Committee, and a Peace and Social Order Coordinator.

Ministry and Worship

While Meeting for Worship has continued to be the central, gathering focus for our community, a number of us have felt fluctuations in the depths of worship this past year. A small midweek Meeting for Worship has continued. Two special Meetings for Worship were held, one during the time of Peoples Temple and the deaths of Harvey Milk and George Moscone, a second on Easter at sunrise. Discussion continues about purchasing or renting a place for Meeting for Worship.

It was decided last spring to separate the function of ministry from that of oversight and to make the experimental Committee of the Whole on Ministry and Worship into a standing committee. An Oversight Committee was later formed. The separation of the committees reflects our inability to reach unity on the issue of membership.

We continue to seek ways to educate ourselves as Friends. Monthly conversations on the spiritual life, begun in the summer, dwindled in the fall. An adult reading group was laid down. This spring we begin three new forms" 1) a weekly spiritual sharing group 2) a once a month reading of Quaker literature after Meeting for Worship and 3) a once a month discussion on contemporary issues in Quakerism following Meeting for Worship. Meeting has also decided to hold visitations to other Meetings on the fifth Sundays of the month.

Business Meetings

The issue of becoming a Monthly Meeting has been a central one this year. Tension in our Business Meetings, particularly evolving around the responsibilities of membership, led to discussions of our acceptance of the guidelines in Faith and Practice. We welcomed visits from our Oversight Committee of Berkeley Monthly Meeting and an informal visit from the CPQM Subcommittee on New Meetings. We are grateful for their contributions to us. After a special threshing session, we were able to reach unity and to submit an application to Berkeley Monthly Meeting in March for Monthly Meeting status.

We began this year to move outward from worship to witness as a Meeting. We took several steps in opposing Proposition 6. We selected a Peace and Social Order Coordinator. We received visits from representatives of PYM, AFSC, and FWCC in an effort to clarify our relationships to these organizations.

We established a Nominating Committee and a Finance Committee, recognizing our readiness to conduct finances independent of Berkeley Monthly Meeting.

Community Life

The community of Strawberry Creek continues to explore various ways of sharing. A Fun Committee planned several excursions well attended by both adults and children. We had two weekend retreats, also well-attended, in which we shared worship, current business, and personal interests. A men's group is thriving and supportive for its members; a women's group was laid down in the fall. A monthly newsletter is a vital form of communicating. We recently enjoyed an issue prepared by the children. ~~Two~~ Several Strawberry Creek participants have formed sharing living arrangements.

Children

First Day School continues its format of two adults responsible for each month with a third person now caring for infants. Children join us for the last 15 minutes of Meeting. We continue to be concerned about how to provide a cohesive curriculum over the year's time. This year's program included visits to and from Sunday schools of other denominations.

* * *

This year our need to develop the structures for conducting the business of our communal life, while often leading to long and painful Meetings for Business, has provided a rich groundwork for knowing each other and seeking reconciliation of our diverse views. Some feel we "survived by the skin of our teeth," others that we have grown in loving through our "family fights." We turn now to new questions: how we can be a visible Christian community, how we can look for our collective vocation or calling to witness.

On Behalf of Strawberry Creek Preparative Meeting
Lynne Bird, Clerk
Berkeley, California

STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT
STRAWBERRY CREEK PREPARATIVE MEETING

MAY 1978

STATISTICS

The Strawberry Creek Preparative Meeting continues to hold Meetings for Worship every First Day in our homes, staying from one to three months in each home. The Meeting has increased to about 75 participants, including adults and children, with a good spread of ages. Of these, 20 are members of Berkeley Monthly Meeting, and five are members of other Meetings. Attendance at Meeting for Worship is usually about 40 adults and 5 children; there are usually about 22 people present at Meetings for Business.

During the year, two participants became members of the Society. We celebrated one marriage and the births of two children.

We held a series of Quaker Dialogues in order to better understand various concerns that arose in the Meeting for Business, such as membership, commitment to the Meeting, and the size of the Meeting. These dialogues were useful in clarifying Friends' positions and finding the common ground in the Meeting.

The growing size and enthusiasm of the Meeting have also led to the formation of several groups. These included: an adult study group, under the care of the Meeting; a women's group; and a men's group, continued from last year. A small midweek morning Meeting for Worship was held regularly. Two weekend retreats, one in the fall and one in the spring, were well attended. Other Meeting events included several potlucks and a Christmas Craft Sale, but the small number of these social events was a concern to some. A monthly newsletter has helped to keep us all in touch with these activities as well as those of individual members.

CHILDREN

Our only standing committee continues to be the First Day School Committee, which coordinates activities for approximately sixteen children. In order to provide continuity for the children, one core person conducts the First Day School for a month, helped each week by different assistants. First Day School consists of discussions of Quakerism, biblical stories, and crafts.

In response to a concern, we experimented with having the children attend the last fifteen minutes of Meeting for Worship instead of the first fifteen minutes. The Meeting decided to continue this arrangement after a trial period of several months.

MEETING STATUS

During the year we continued to explore the meaning of being a "Preparative Meeting under the care of Berkeley Monthly Meeting". Members of the Committee for Oversight of Strawberry Creek, appointed by Berkeley Meeting, have regularly attended our Meetings for Worship and Meetings for Business, providing us with valuable experience and support.

While some individuals have served on various committees at Berkeley Meeting during the year, Strawberry Creek as a Meeting has tended not to have joint Berkeley-Strawberry Creek activities. Strawberry Creek participants have begun to think about the implications of becoming a Monthly

Meeting. We have taken steps to conduct our finances independent of Berkeley Meeting.

MINISTRY AND OVERSIGHT

As our Meeting has grown, the need for a function like a traditional Committee on Ministry and Oversight has emerged. Several stumbling blocks have arisen in the process of setting one up. Some feared that such a committee represented a delegation of responsibility. After seasoning and discussion, this particular issue was partially resolved. When it came time to nominate a committee, there was a lack of unity on the issue of the importance of formal membership in the Society of Friends for Committee members.

This spring we agreed to separate the function of ministry from that of oversight, because it was felt that the former could be done by a committee of the whole, and that the latter could not. A Committee of the Whole for Worship and Ministry was set up on an experimental basis, and the area of oversight was laid over; thus the issue of formal membership for committee members was temporarily avoided.

As an alternative to approaching a Ministry and Oversight Committee, individuals requesting assistance have been able to ask anyone in the Meeting to form an ad hoc Helping Group. This group then works with the individual for as long as is necessary. This arrangement has been ~~seldom used~~ *used on occasion!*

MEMBERSHIP

Strawberry Creek Preparative Meeting originally grew out of a Worship Group of individuals from Berkeley Meeting. Now, however, the majority of our participants have little personal connection to Berkeley Meeting. Many of us have previous experience with the Society of Friends, but ~~are~~ ^{many} are relatively new to Friends' business practices. We continue to consider the difference in commitment and obligation between those who are formal members of the Society of Friends and those who are not.

QUALITY OF MEETING

While the quality of our Meetings for Business has varied considerably, we feel that it has improved as the year has progressed. The improvement has come with our increasing experience with and understanding of Quaker practices, and an ability to handle tensions.

There is a great deal of care and attention given to the life of the Meeting and the Meeting for Worship in particular. We believe that our Meeting for Worship and our other activities are growing in both quality and depth. There is some concern, however, that the Meeting as a whole has not undertaken any social action or witness.

Meeting for Worship continues to be deep and focussed, with an intensity and energy that sustains and renews us.

On behalf of Strawberry Creek Preparative Meeting
Barbara Perry, Presiding Clerk
Berkeley, California
May, 1978

STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT
STRAWBERRY CREEK PREPARATIVE MEETING

1977

After much discussion and prayerful consideration, South Berkeley Worship Group asked for preparative meeting status under the care of Berkeley Monthly Meeting. This request was approved at Berkeley's October 1976 meeting for business. We now meet as Strawberry Creek Preparative Meeting in the area of South Berkeley and North Oakland.

For the past year we have met in each others homes. We change homes every two months so that we will not burden any family by too long a stay, yet not change so frequently as to feel fragmented. We are not presently considering a meeting place outside our homes. We are content. Meeting in our own homes strengthens our sense of community and responsibility for nurturing the spiritual as well as physical well-being of our meeting.

We usually have 25 to 30 adults and 9 children at each meeting for worship. Twelve adult attenders are members of Berkeley Monthly Meeting and four are members of other Friends Meetings.

Since last May, four new families have begun attending meeting for worship. They account for the increase in children from 3 to 9. Consequently our first day school has changed. In the past, we have taken turns entertaining and instructing our children during the last 45 minutes of meeting. This month we began a series of more directed instruction using Friends General Conference materials. We have formed a First Day School committee -- our only standing committee. In addition to one committee, we have three clerks: presiding, recording, and transportation.

We are essentially an inward-turned gathering. We need and appreciate the spiritual strength and refreshment which comes to us through our deeply centered worship. The desire for centered worship brought us together two years ago. We are awed and delighted to find so often what we seek. Our thankfulness and care are expressed by the great regularity with which we attend worship, and the prayerful, patient endurance we bring to our business sessions. A further confirmation of our care for the life of the meeting is that we now meet regularly for business on the last Sunday of each month.

We continue to grow organically, in slow inches and sudden spurts. In all, we try to know the path God lays before us. When that path is undeniably clear, we do try to follow it.

On behalf of Strawberry Creek Preparative Meeting
Barbara Perry, Presiding Clerk
Berkeley, California
May 1977