

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

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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,

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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

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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.