2011 State of the Meeting Report

Midlothian Friends Meeting

This year, Religious Education was changed from being held every week to being held only on the second and fourth First Days of each month. This was intended to support the RE teachers.

Beginning in March 2012, Meeting initiated a pilot to hold Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business during the worship hour. So far, we have had two healthy business meetings manifest the spirit among us. Friends have had encouraging words following this new time for business meeting and participation has been increased.

Friends expressed the desire to keep the spirit alive in worship because it is the web, the interconnectedness, the synapse to each of us and what connects us. We all acknowledge the spirit in each of us. The spirit prospers with silence and our respect for silence. We are not afraid of the silence and waiting on the spirit. What supports the growth of the spirit is the desire to have it grow within us. Recognizing spirit within us and have it reflected back, is what our worship offers. Worship often doesn't have immediate results, but we notice over time that we are more loving and gentle. There is a sense of being open and vulnerable to hearing what God has to tell us.

Friends have shared about walking up to the Meeting House and feeling a presence of spirit and of the people who have come before us and are there now. When Friends come to Quaker meeting they feel as if they can acknowledge the spirit within and feel support for their spiritual journeys.

Friends were affected by the loss of members who left Meeting recently as well as in previous years. There was concern that the Meeting did not respond effectively to the needs of these individuals who were struggling. We acknowledge that the hurt is still present among us, but that we are working through it as a community by reaching out to absent members, by being honest and personal with each other, and by staying connected to the wider Quaker community.

Friends shared that during the past year some challenges were not addressed using Quaker process. Although we regret the resulting turmoil, we hope we have a deeper sense of spirit and resolve to bring ourselves back to silence and appreciating the Quaker Way by following the leadings of the spirit.

At the same time, Friends among us feel Meeting has been a tremendous blessing in their lives and encourage us to look to the future. Some Friends expressed that being a Quaker, and being part of this community, had made them better people, and provided a template for how to treat people. We are a community moving toward spiritual development and renewal.

The "busy-ness" of life and demands on our personal time may have affected

attendance. As expressed by one Friend, the silence of Worship provides an opportunity to slow down.

Submitted by MFM Spiritual Nurture
Committee June, 2012