

## **Minutes**

Adelphi Friends Meeting  
Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business  
Third Month 2005 (March 13, 2005)

### **Opening**

The meeting began at 11:20 with a brief time of silent worship among the 31 Friends present. Adelphi's Clerk, Ann Marie Moriarty, read the queries from Baltimore Yearly Meeting's Faith and Practice for the third month, which Friends considered in worshipful silence. The queries for the third month are focused on the topic of community:

*Are love and harmony within the Meeting community fostered by a spirit of open sharing? Do you endeavor to widen your circle of friendships within the Meeting, seeking to know persons of all ages and at all stages of the spiritual journey? Does the Meeting provide for the spiritual refreshment of all members and attenders? Do Friends provide spiritual and practical care for the elderly, the lonely, and others with special needs?*

### **Agenda, Minutes, and Updates on Prior Business**

The agenda for the meeting was approved. The minutes of the February meeting were approved as corrected. Updates on some business decided at the February meeting were given: Christine Ashley should have been given a first reading for Safe Haven Coordinator and not Strawberry Festival Coordinator and so her name will be brought forward for a second reading for Safe Haven Coordinator at this meeting. The Pendle Hill workshop that Harold Confer was going to attend was cancelled. Tom Blackburn's membership was successfully transferred to Tampa Friends Meeting.

### **Nominating Committee – Glenn Riley**

The following names were brought forward for a first reading for committees:

Angela Toda – Religious Education (05-07)

Sarah Wilton – Hospitality Committee (05-07)

Wendy Eck, Pud (Carol Ann) Baker, and Carole Hoage – Strawberry Festival Coordinators (05) (Pud and Carole volunteered at this meeting and were considered as having a first reading).

### **Report from Youth Safety Meeting – June Confer**

Baltimore Yearly Meeting is in the process of writing a policy on sexual conduct and is asking monthly meetings to do the same. BYM had received a mandate from its insurance company saying that guidelines needed to be set by December 1, 2004. By this date, however, not one monthly meeting or BYM had complied. People were working in good faith, but had not worked fast enough. The insurance company, Guide One, had agreed to meet with Friends on March 5, and cancelled the December 1 deadline. Representatives of BYM's monthly meetings attended this meeting. June reported that the meeting was very positive and successful, and that information was provided for monthly meeting's to use as they develop their own policies.

It was agreed that this task should be referred to multiple committees, including Religious Education, Trustees, Pastoral Care, Ministry and Worship, and Finance. June

noted that it is important that our monthly meeting not feel burdened, but rather blessed, by this work.

June reported that BYM's supervisory committee will present a draft of a policy at Interim Meeting on April 2, and will send information to monthly meetings after that time. A committee of our meeting should be formed and convene after the April 2 meeting. Ann Marie will send the information that June brought back to committee clerks and conveners this week, and will send more information as it is received.

#### **Memorial Garden Subcommittee – Ann Marie Moriarty**

There will be a second hour next Sunday on ethical wills. The subcommittee also plans to be part of spring clean-up/work day in May.

#### **House and Grounds Helen Leskovac**

There will be a spring clean-up/work day on Saturday, May 21, 2005.

#### **Report on Meeting's Records - Carol Beigel**

Carol presented a report on the current organization and care of Adelphi's records. *The report is attached.*

It was noted that the records are important to the meeting, even of minutes that are now quite old because they may contain some guidance or wisdom for us. A suggestion was made that friends could gather for a workday with the records, helping to transfer information from an old form onto a newer form of information collection and storage. A friend noted the need for a new directory.

**It was affirmed that the meeting's records would continue to be stored at Carol's home until another plan is made.** It was noted that a back-up plan for digital records should be made. **It was agreed that the House and Grounds Committee should be asked to make recommendations about how records might be safely stored on the meeting's property.**

**The meeting expressed great appreciation for Carol's careful work taking care of the meeting's records over such a long period of time.**

#### **Traveling Minute**

**The meeting approved a traveling minute for Tom and Linda Wolfe to take with them on their upcoming trip to Costa Rica.**

#### **Peace and Social Concerns Committee – Kathy Selvaggio and Mattie Lau**

Kathy gave a first reading of the names of the organizations to receive funds from our meeting this year. The donations will be made in two increments during the year, at mid-year and at the end of the year. The committee was asked to make information available to everyone about what the requests are for and how last year's funds were used. The organizations and the amounts proposed for them to receive are:

Mother Jones School Tutoring Project	\$ 600
Bread for the City	1,200
Ufufuo	900
Be Friendly Ministries	900
Jubilee Jobs	800

CASA of Maryland	1,450
Housing Initiative Partnership	4,000
PG County Peace and Justice	100
Maryland United for Peace and Justice (ann. dues)	<u>50</u>
 TOTAL	 \$10,000

Mattie presented a letter in support of the rights of Indians who are incarcerated to have access to sweat lodges, to be sent to Governor Ehrlich, written by the Indian Affairs Committees of the Baltimore Friends Meetings (Stony Run and Homewood). **The meeting agreed to endorse the letter.** *A copy of the letter is attached.*

### **Requests for Marriages and Memberships**

Judy Brown and David Ward asked to be married under the care of the meeting. They have set a date for June 25.

Jennifer Harris and Alexi Smith also asked to be married under the care of the meeting. They are planning to be married in 2006. Jen has been a member of our meeting since she was 16.

Pat Nutter asked to become a member of our meeting, and asked that her children, Robyn Anwlyd Nutter Jones and Galen Derwenllyd Nutter Jones become Associate Members.

The three requests were forwarded to the Pastoral Care Committee.

### **Ministry and Worship Committee – Jolee Robinson**

Jolee presented the Spiritual State of the Meeting Report for its second reading. The committee had not received any suggestions for changes since the last business meeting.

A friend asked that basic information about the minute on Iraq be included in the report.

Another friend said that there should be time for reflection and discussion at either the first or second reading of the spiritual state of the meeting report.

Friends then discussed the best way to include more information about the meeting's minute on Iraq. One suggestion was adding the information that 55 Friends meetings and worship groups had signed on to the minute, as well as the basic statement of the minute. Another friend suggested that the minute that other meetings approved was not exactly the same as the minute that our meeting had approved. Because there was not a copy of any version of that minute available at the meeting, questions of discrepancy could not be resolved.

**It was agreed that the Spiritual State of the Meeting Report be approved and that the minute on Iraq should be attached to the Report. It was further agreed that the Ministry and Worship Committee would consider the version of the minute sent to other meetings and make sure it matches the one approved by our meeting. If there is not a discrepancy, the minute will be brought to meeting next Sunday at the rise of meeting for worship for approval as an attachment to the Spiritual State of the Meeting Report. If there is a discrepancy, the committee will discern an alternative way to refer to the minute in the report.** *A copy of the Spiritual State of*

*the Meeting Report and the attached minute, as approved on March 20, are attached to these minutes.*

**Spiritual State of the Meeting Report – Takoma Park Friends Meeting – Preparative - Arthur David Olsen**

Arthur David introduced the report, copies of which were distributed at the beginning of the business meeting, and then described the process through which the meeting went to create this report. Arthur David noted that Baltimore Yearly Meeting might have reservations about accepting the report because it is not in the usual form. Ann Marie stated that she thought this was not a major concern. A friend expressed appreciation for the way the report was written, organized around specific queries. The report was received by the meeting and **the meeting agreed to send it on to Baltimore Yearly Meeting.**

**Search Committee**

**It was agreed that members of the Search Committee would serve for one year, and that this will be the calendar year.** It was noted that the process of appointing committee members should begin well before the beginning of the calendar year.

**Extension of Time** – At 1:28 pm, it was approved that the meeting should be extended for 10 more minutes.

**Nominating Committee – Glenn Riley –**

**The Second Reading of the following names were approved:**

Marcy Seitel – Recording Clerk (05; annual appointment)

Christine Ashley for Safe Haven Coordinator (05-06)

Ann Marlowe – Corresponding Clerk (05; annual appointment)

The meeting received the request from BYM's Nominating Committee to consider offering support for two Young Adult Friends who will be traveling to England to serve as BYM delegates to the World Gathering of Young Friends in August. The request for support was forwarded to the Finance Committee as well as to the newsletter and Silent Announcements.

**Request to change care for 9:00 Meeting for Worship**

Tom Wolfe announced that he wanted to lay down his three-year task of making sure that the doors have been open for the 9:00 meeting for worship. As no one stepped forward to take on this responsibility, the matter was turned over to the Ministry and Worship Committee.

**Announcements:**

Harold Confer conveyed an apology from the House and Grounds Committee for the heating problems during this morning's meeting for worship. The problem was simple and had been resolved, though not in time for morning worship.

Jade Eaton, on behalf of Friends Community School, announced that the March 31 deadline for pledges to help build a new school building has been extended for gifts

that are given from monthly meetings (as had been announced previously, a donor has offered to match 3-1 any pledges received by March 31). Friends were reminded to make pledges by the 31<sup>st</sup>.

John Calvi will be speaking at Frederick Friends Meeting on the issue of torture next Saturday at Frederick Meeting.

### **Closing**

At 2:00, 15 friends briefly worshiped in silence as the meeting closed. A friend rose to tell us about the reason behind the shaking of hands at the rise of meeting. When Friends first began to meet over three hundred years ago, people carried arms with them as a regular practice in daily life. A handshake at the rise of meeting signified that no one present intended harm towards anyone else, even if there had been disagreements expressed among those attending the meeting. After further worship, the meeting was closed.

Respectfully submitted by

Marcy Seitel  
Recording Clerk

Attachments: Report on Adelphi's Records from Carol Beigel  
Adelphi's Spiritual State of the Meeting Report  
Takoma Park's Spiritual State of the Meeting Report  
Letter to Governor Ehrlich

NOTE: At a special called Meeting for Business, 3-20-05, the changes made by the Ministry and Worship committee to the Spiritual State of the Meeting Report in order to include more information about Adelphi's minute on Iraq were approved. The rest of the Spiritual State of the Meeting report had been approved during the previous week's regular Meeting for Business, so the Ministry and Worship committee now has approval to send it on to Baltimore Yearly Meeting in a timely fashion.

*The final version of the report is attached.*

## **Report on the Records – March 13, 2005**

The records of Adelphi Friends Meeting are stored in my home at 6H Ridge Road, Greenbelt, Maryland. These include all the membership records, minute books since the 1950's through 2004, copies of all newsletters since that time and other items. Both the Trustees and the Treasures keep their own records. I do however have a copy of the incorporation documents, and old plans, blueprints, surveys, etc. that were used years ago to upgrade our house and grounds for the Friends Community school.

Among the other records are written histories of meeting activities, oral histories as recorded on audio tape by young friends interviewing older members of meeting, photographs of both individuals and groups shots of meeting folks, journals, newspaper articles, microfilm of records stored in the Maryland Hall of Records in Annapolis, and some older committee minutes.

As Recorder, I also have personal and family data on members, correspondence requesting membership in Adelphi Friends Meeting, and copies of marriage licenses. Membership information, both the comings and goings, is recorded in a File Marker Pro database. Since 1956, a total of 585 souls have requested membership in our meeting. Currently, we have 153 adults and 74 children listed as members. Subtracting those who live out of town, we have about 130 adult members and maybe 30 children, if you subtract those associate members who are older than the age of 25.

The records of the Washington Meeting on Irving Street were microfilmed and the originals are kept in the Hall of Records. The old membership book that was used from 1900 until the mid 1980's was also microfilmed and resides in that collection. No other Adelphi records have been stored on microfilm.

The records were removed by the records committee from the attic of the white house several years ago when the furnace malfunctioned and threatened a fire. Not having a suitable place on the grounds of the meeting house, they were stored in my home. Other Recorders have stored such precious records in their homes over the years, and that is why we still have them! However, they do take up a fair amount of space – about 50 cubic feet. The records are also stored in my home so they can be organized and digitized as time permits.

The Records Committee decided years ago that another physical copy of all the records was too expensive and not very useful. Microfilming was free until the late 1980;s and then a charge of 35 cents per page was charged by the state archives. We have thousands of pages of documents. It was decided that digital copies could be searchable, thereby making them more useful and taking up less space. Because of the texture of the paper, the chemical composition of the inks used, and the fonts used to print the original documents, scanning and digitizing them will be a very long process. Many will need to be retyped.

However, indexes to minutes have been uncovered, and they will have priority in line for digitizing. If anyone would like to read the original minutes, these indexes will point to where to find the document. Officially, minutes need only to include the final decision of a group, and not all the discussion that went into that decision. Being Quakers, although we have volumes of papers recording our discussions, the actual decisions would probably fit into a single notebook. We are also digitizing the Spiritual State of the Meeting Reports, Memorial Minutes and histories to make current members more aware of our history.

We have very little institutional memory here at Adelphi. Our congregation of members has changed and turned over since our current meeting was founded. The world and society has changed quite radically in the past 50 years. How relevant are the decisions made 40, 30, or 20 years ago relevant to the policies of meeting today?

Most churches have space on their grounds for an office or library and store their records in those spaces. Adelphi meeting has no such dedicated space. It is my intention that a copy of selected records, and a copy of all digitized records be stored in the Adelphi library. Is meeting comfortable knowing that all the original records are stored in my home? What is the attitude toward renting storage?

Carol Beigel

**Adelphi Monthly Meeting**  
**Spiritual State of the Meeting Report for 2004**  
**Second Reading, March 13, 2005**  
**Final Approval, March 20, 2005**

Adelphi Friends Meeting remains a strong and vital place where many come to worship, engage in “Adelphian” activities, enjoy the sense of community, and get energized for their own personal spiritual journey as well as their work in the wider world. We are a large and diverse Meeting, with a wide span of ages from infants to elders, enriched by those new to Quakerism and those with long experiences of it.

Yet we struggle with how to integrate newcomers into our Meeting life and how to help them on their spiritual journey. We value the personal relationships we’ve formed at Adelphi, but our large size and large number of newcomers makes creating new relationships and maintaining old ones a serious challenge. We also see the need to reaffirm our responsibility as Quakers to teach and pastor one to another. We seek to improve the quality of the silent worship and vocal ministry in Meeting for Worship — a special challenge in this very politically engaged year. We continue to struggle to be tender with each other in Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business. We also find it difficult to balance the desire for more Meeting activities in the wider world with our need for more depth as we nurture our spiritual life and our Meeting community. While these are perennial challenges at Adelphi, we continue to make efforts to address them.

The Ministry and Worship committee drafted this report based on questionnaires filled out by members and attenders, as well as by committees; discussion at a second hour; and input from Junior Meeting and Young Friends. Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business also provided input. We recognize that not everyone in Meeting contributed to this report, but Ministry and Worship feels it reflects the general sense of the Spiritual State of the Meeting. Takoma Park Preparative Meeting prepares its own Spiritual State of the Meeting report.

Meeting for Worship remains the center of the spiritual life of Adelphi Friends Meeting. While many found the worship and the vocal ministry deeply moving, concern was also expressed about the many messages that did not seem “spirit-led.” In addition, joys and concerns seemed to many to be too lengthy and without enough time between messages. We recognize that the hotly contested presidential election in 2004, the war in Iraq, the revelations of torture, and polarized and deep concerns about our country and the world, made it difficult to center our worship in the living Spirit. Many were uncomfortable with the assumption by some speakers that all others agreed with the speaker. Some messages expressed righteous indignation without deeper spiritual examination. Upon reflection, we needed another venue in which these opinions could be expressed. Concerns were raised that we have been unwelcoming to Christ-centered Friends, the military, and political conservatives. Some stopped attending Meeting for Worship because of these issues. While Ministry and Worship began to address these concerns during the year, this made us ask ourselves, do we embrace everyone who comes through our door and do we respect the nature of Meeting for Worship?

On a lighter note, we heard much appreciation for the babies and their noises in Meeting. Far from disturbing us, they remind us of the continuity of life and the need to nurture the next generation.

Meeting for Worship for the Conduct of Business has been a way for Friends to support Adelphi and to work in the wider world. Many were uplifted by the actions of Business Meeting, especially by the Minute on Iraq, which was signed by 55 Meetings and worship groups and published in two Arabic newspapers and is attached. Others expressed surprise at how untender Friends could be on this and other matters. We heard concerns that the work of committees is often not respected in Business Meeting. Common Quaker practice reminds us that Business Meeting is a Meeting for Worship, not a discussion; that vocal ministry is not personal, it is from that of God within us; that we rise and address the Clerk, not the presenter; and that the Clerk may need to call for a period of silence if emotions run ahead of discernment of God's leading.

We discovered again that Quaker process is deliberative and takes time. Trying to shorten it may lead to problems. For example, this year at Business Meeting a minute was approved that many felt passionately about, but someone who had not been present did not approve of it. While Meeting was trying to move ahead quickly, some felt that this issue was not given sufficient seasoning. We learned that the communication process within the Meeting was inadequate. We also recognize the need to explore the time-honored role of dissent within the Quaker community.

Wednesday night Meeting was laid down, due to poor attendance, but occasionally re-instituted; for example, when the torture situation in Iraq became known and for a post-election Wednesday night Meeting. The issue of the personnel policy of Friends United Meeting (FUM) and Adelphi's relationship with FUM was of great concern this year. Early Meeting on Sunday remains small, but also well appreciated by those who attend who find its small size and mostly quiet worship a blessing.

Both Junior Meeting and Young Friends felt nurtured by Adelphi. Junior Meeting found that their Meeting with its candles and clay to work with suited them better than "big" Meeting. While they like coming to Meeting because of what happens there, they especially liked doing things such as planning for and carrying out Games Day, and similar activities that raise money to share with others in need. They enjoyed helping with potluck, Strawberry Festival, and other community events.

Junior Meeting members expressed great affection for the old playground. They understood that safety problems required that it be dismantled, but they were upset that it was taken down without prior warning and were upset to arrive at Meeting to find it gone. They indicated they would have liked to be consulted about the new playground, as they have many ideas of what they would have liked.

Young Friends enjoy the community and think "Quakers are cool people." One tension with "big" Meeting is that while they like "hanging out" with their friends, they feel that

many adults at Adelphi don't know who the Young Friends are. While they would like to see more people in Meeting pitch in when there's hard work to be done, and more trips such as canoeing and rock climbing, they also found that Young Friends provided a welcoming community and comforting routine. Pomegranates were desired as snacks.

Adelphi's committees are where most of the "work" of the Meeting takes place and where Friends get to know each other in greater depth by working for common purposes. Although much was accomplished, committee work was especially stressful this year. A few examples: Finance Committee experienced much anguish when we made our budget in just the last few weeks of the year, but nevertheless instituted several new ways to improve the whole budgeting process; Nominating Committee had great difficulty finding people to serve on committees; and Adult Religious Education Committee was down to two members, but began to re-imagine itself and was re-invigorated toward the end of the year with a much appreciated "Introduction to Quakerism" series. Fellowship, in general, seemed down this year; even both Catoctin weekends were less well attended, although this decline continues a trend from previous years. What does this mean for stewardship and the quality of our community life?

Strawberry Festival, our annual community event to raise money, marked its 50<sup>th</sup> year in 2004 and was another successful opportunity to work together as a community. Adelphi's week to host Safe Haven, a countywide effort by local churches to help the homeless, was rescheduled from its more usual December time to February of 2005. The tutoring work at Mother Jones Elementary School continued growing. The series of Second Hours on death and dying was excellent and much appreciated by those who are beginning to understand that they have to "plan on dying." Adult Religious Education started a well-received series on Introduction to Quakerism, but more ways are needed for us to help each other learn about Quakerism, worship, committee service, outreach, etc. An increasing number of us are going to Yearly Meeting and serving on its committees.

Friends Community School (FCS) continues under the spiritual care of Adelphi Monthly Meeting, with strong ties between the two communities. Tensions remain, however, between those who support FCS and those who support public schools.

While the year did seem to be more of a challenge than some previous years, Adelphi began to acknowledge these issues quickly (for Quakers) and worked to address them during the year. Ministry and Worship heard many members and attenders express gratitude to Meeting for being there for them during this difficult political year, a year in which it was especially difficult to be a Quaker in the world and not get discouraged. We find that Adelphi Friends Meeting nourishes our spiritual needs, fosters our participation in community activities, and supports our efforts to "see what love can do" in the wider world.

**Takoma Park Friends Meeting**  
**State of the Meeting Report, 2004**  
**Final, 6 March, 2005**

This is an edited compilation of individual comments collected during a threshing session held to prepare this report. The queries were distributed prior to the session and precede the responses. At the Monthly Meeting we have a practice of an extended opportunity to respond to the queries, and this practice is reflected in the style of this report. We note that the responses describe personal relationships to Meeting and among its attenders, individual changes and growth, and that Friends are comfortable to express contradictory ideas.

What would you miss if Takoma Park Friends Meeting no longer existed?

The Takoma Park Friends Meeting fuels the spark of Quakerism in us because it is small, has afterthoughts (worship sharing after worship), is a gathered, grounded Meeting, and has a focus on experience. The process that we use to understand things is evocative of spirituality. Meeting exemplifies the tender concern with which we can address others and the respectful, deliberate reflectiveness we can practice. It centers us and focuses us during the worship gathering; we can come when something really sad and upsetting has happened and find comfort.

Meeting encourages diversity and different points of view; even cherishes them. We can speak freely despite the political ramifications of what we say. This is the one still place in the life of some and the stillness ministers.

It is accessible, not a huge group of people who already know one another. It is very welcoming without a hurdle to get through. If you show up you're already in, like in one big committee. It doesn't have a bureaucratic feeling, it is inclusive. Our small size gives us maneuverability that larger Meetings don't have.

If we had more minorities and younger-than-middle-age people, Meeting would go from a grade of A to an A+.

Why do we come together each Meeting day? Why do you come? What keeps you away?

We make an opportunity for a gathered Meeting to occur, where everyone is focused in silence on the same thing, where unity is accomplished. Meeting allows us to experience silence on Sunday with people right here in the neighborhood, gives us the opportunity to bring silence into our weekly life. Being around people who have a core of silence helps us feel less peculiar and isolated. It provides emotional support, a chance to be with like-minded people, an affirmation that we are basically good people.

A sense of freedom to be whom we are called to be is present in Meeting. In trying to change from a sense of obligation to doing what we are called to do, to slow down; we may stay away from Meeting but won't be looked down on. Some feel there's pressure to serve the Meeting—that since we're so small you almost have to serve on a committee. Some people just want to attend.

Attending Meeting helps anchor us and supports our doing a better job as teachers either as a vocation or in life.

What was your spiritual state last year at this time? Where are you now? What has changed?

Some anger about things around us and in our families has simply gone away. We are more able to deal with people. While we're sitting in the silence God gets out a big spoon and does some stirring.

Meeting gives the space to integrate reflectiveness more in our lives. To clarify thinking one of us volunteered to record Meetings and it seems to be working.

In the past ten years of Meeting one of us has had the experience of letting go of dreams without a lot of trauma, thinking of dreams as 25 books on one topic and 25 on another and able to let them go.

How has the Meeting led you to focus on the light within? How is Meeting a part of your spiritual life?

Meeting has convinced us that there's a value to communality in our spiritual journey; that we can't do it by ourselves. We wonder what to do next in life, and now find the Meeting may be part of that.

Meeting provides examples of how to look for that of God in others and speaking that intent to Meeting provides accountability that helps keep us to the task. It provides a pause and gives us courage by being part of something that's bigger than ourselves. It gives us the space to figure out what silence is and what prayer is, to get in touch with how our minds work and what our minds and bodies are trying to tell us.

We can approach every meeting and every comment as a sacred thing,—whether we are moved to tears or wondering “What was that all about?” Meeting helps shape what's in our brains, which shapes how we behave.

How has the Meeting led you to see the light within others?

We learn from what other people are saying in Meeting. Sometimes it's something completely new; sometimes we can relate it to another situation we are facing. We might hear things we liked and others we didn't like. Talking with people after Meeting we might hear from some who really liked what we didn't, and so learn that an idea can still have value even though we don't like it. Going after Meeting to eat with others we get to talk with people in depth and find openness where people are not playing roles.

How do you feel united with others in Meeting? How are others a gift to you in Meeting? How might you be a gift to others? How do we tend to the relationships among us?

For things to work, different people must make contributions. Transparency, plainness, and honesty help make things work. We must learn not to volunteer for things we want to do but won't do.

Some don't know yet what their gifts are or what they may be called to do. One way is by helping people outside of Meeting, not just helping people in Rwanda, but helping neighbors also.

We are doing something right in relationships; while part of the set of people who attend keeps changing, the supportive atmosphere remains.

Are we open to questions; our own as well as others? Are we open to the answers that might arise? Are we willing as individuals and as a Meeting to wait for answers about our Meeting and about our selves?

We are open to questions, and are open to answers. For example our question about our level of diversity was part of the decision to move our Meeting location to get wheelchair access. We also had people come from another Meeting to help us consider our racial diversity. We don't realize how much diversity we have. We come from different locations and cultural backgrounds, and that's diversity too.

A rich part of our monthly Meeting has been the reading of the BYM queries and the recording of the responses. There have been many deep responses. Perhaps we are more open to questions of others than from ourselves.

One of us has become closer to a friend who is Republican and has struggled with being open to everybody, being able to see that though we voted differently others are still good people. We find among us a narrow range of political opinion. There's not enough openness to the idea that other's positions do not stem from ignorance or evil.

We're able to wait for answers. We moved in to our current space after a multi-year search; we tried it a few times before moving in. That has served us well.

#### What is God's will for this Meeting?

In serving God's will, the real service is the way we meet. Having a Wednesday-night Meeting might enhance our experience and give other people a chance to experience it.

Our continued existence is an indication that we're doing what we're supposed to be doing. It's God's will that our Meeting remain small and quiet, with a powerful spirit. We make it possible for something to happen that would not happen otherwise—then there are ripples. That makes us either the quiet pond or the rock thrown in to it.

We're trying to have a place on the sign that will be put on the building where we worship which will increase the community's awareness of us. Even if more people come, we can still be small and quiet, although that may mean that like early Christians we must split in to small worshipping groups.

#### How does your life speak your faith?

One of us has recently had indications of a medical problem and has had lots of medical tests. This has been a test of spiritual centeredness; not knowing what will happen, and adopting the attitude that whatever happens was meant to happen. One holds the intent to look for that of God in everyone, to seek to find some golden kernel in what others say and do. A kindergarten teacher starts meals with "golden silence", and answers a child's inquiry saying it was a time to find the golden light within. One, involved with neighborhood boys and an accusation of theft, kept a concern for fairness and said she would divide the item under dispute evenly.

#### Conclusion

We have scheduled opportunities to reexamine this report during the year to keep it in our awareness.

April 15,2005

Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Governor State House

100 State Circle

Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor Ehrlich:

On behalf of Baltimore Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, Stony Run, and of the other Friends (Quaker) meetings in Maryland listed below, I am writing to request a meeting with you to seek resolution of a religious freedom issue. We have overseen the ministry of a number of our members to our Indian friends in confinement, and have a concern for their free exercise of religion within appropriate constraints necessary to the safe and secure operation of corrections facilities. We have been rebuffed in repeated attempts to initiate any meaningful dialogue with the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services or with the Division of Corrections regarding the accommodation for sweat lodge practice for Native American devotees in Maryland prisons. We have repeatedly requested an appointment with the Commissioner of the Division of Corrections, which was last denied 10/12/04, or with Secretary of Public Safety and Correctional Services, last denied 12/23/04.

We are frustrated by the invocation of safety and security concerns as a blanket dismissal to all of our applications without opportunity to discuss these concerns. We have produced documentation and supplemental information, including concrete proposals, for reference by the Division.

While we are united in holding that the state is obliged by an elevated standard found in recent federal law to lift its uniform ban on sweat lodge practice, we do not suppose that a desirable and satisfactory change in present policy can be wrought without conversation.

We have pursued this interest and concern for our Indian friends in custody by all administrative channels. When we held the condition of these inmates up before the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs, they concurred with us and made their own formal appeal to the Division (see attached letter from the Commission) and were similarly dismissed. We reflect that the intransigence of the Department and the Division is contrary to the letter and the spirit of your own Executive Order #01.01.2003.31; and, having exhausted all other administrative options that are known to us, we therefore are asking for your attention.

The burden now laid upon us by the Creator is to enlarge the opportunity for the free practice of traditional religion as an avenue of restorative justice. We cannot do this through closed doors; but if you will open the doors of your offices, we believe an accommodation

can be found to relieve the spirits of our Indian friends of a needless denial. Stony Run Meeting has asked the other Quaker meetings in Maryland to endorse this request for a meeting with you. Those Friends meetings which have responded as of the date of this letter are listed below my signature.

We expect that other Maryland Friends meetings will endorse this as well and will add their names when we meet with you. Anticipating your favorable response to our request, William O. Miles, on our behalf and representing the Joint Indian Affairs Committee of Stony Run and Homewood Friends Meetings, will be calling your office to arrange a meeting date convenient to your schedule.

Yours sincerely,

Arthur Meyer Boyd

Presiding Clerk

Baltimore Monthly Meeting of Friends, Stony Run