



FORT MYERS MONTHLY MEETING

OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Newsletter, Sixth Month, 2005

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- Potluck luncheons are once a month, the first First Day of the month. All are welcome.
- Deadline for inclusion in the next newsletter is Sixth Month 15, 2005
- If you want to save postage and get your newsletter by email, please email: ericalynne@earthlink.net

QUERIES FOR THE SIXTH MONTH

How do Friends Care for one another?
Oversight of members

- What is being done to draw members together in a spirit of fellowship?
- Does the meeting keep in contact, either by visits or personal letters, with all its members?
- Are Friends in need assisted as their circumstances require?
- Do you counsel with those whose conduct or manner of living gives grounds for concern?

Upcoming Events

What	Date	Time	Where	Topic
Potluck	June 18	Noon	Ann de Nevers 9840 Lake Fairways Blvd. Fort Myers 239-731-2645	TBA

Fort Myers Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Fifth Month 8, 2005

The Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business, attended by 18, opened in silence. The Clerk read the query for fifth month on Education. Friends spoke to the need to share our beliefs and our way of being with our children and grandchildren. One Friend spoke to the difficulty she has with the part of the query related to the Bible. Friends suggested readings about the Bible that may be useful.

The meeting discussed the issue of our responsibility to our child-member, Takeisha, who is old enough to begin First Day School now. The matter was referred to the Education Committee, in consultation with Erica Lynne. One Friend offered to help as a teacher.

Ministry and Counsel reported that an outline has been made to facilitate our discussion of the Faith and Practice section on the business meeting. The discussion is to take place next Seventh Day after a noon potluck at the Cummings' home. In addition, Ministry and Counsel will organize a schedule of people willing to visit Dan Stanley when Phyllis is away on vacation in August.

The Treasurer's report was given and accepted.

The Finance Committee reported that there are funds remaining from donations to Kyle Goff's Memorial Fund. The original intent of the gifts, to purchase a "brick" in Kyle's name for the Calusa Nature Center's butterfly garden, has been fulfilled and the remaining funds are in excess of that intent. It was suggested that, because of Kyle's deep delight in Takeisha, it would please him to have the money go toward her religious education.

09MM05. Friends approved transferring the remaining monies in the Kyle Goff Memorial Fund to the Education Committee.

The Finance Committee is researching Friends Fiduciary Fund as a possible reasonable investment strategy. Also, it is feared that our phone messages are not checked and responded to on a regular basis. The question of what to do about our phone was referred to Ministry and Counsel for further consideration.

The Education Committee announced that materials will be coming in the near future regarding Southeastern Yearly Meeting's affiliation with Friends United Meeting. We will need to review materials and discuss the issues involved. The Committee will keep us informed. Peace and Social Concerns has a list of possible topics for consideration for our First Day discussion groups.

Peace and Social Concerns Committee is researching training for draft counseling.

01MM05. Friends approve the recommendation of the Nominating Committee to appoint Barbara French as representative to Southeastern Yearly Meeting.

The Property Committee, in speaking of the Nature Center's need for volunteers, recommended that the meeting make a commitment to cover one day a week, with four people agreeing to serve one day a month. Bonnie Cummings has volunteered to work one of those days. Three other people are needed. A meeting with the new Director of the Calusa Nature Center, Sander Lewallen, is coming up soon.

The minutes were reviewed and approved.

Respectfully submitted, Nancy Fennell, Recording Clerk

Excerpt From:

Friends Peace Testimony in Times of Terrorism

by Robert Griswold

Only a spiritual conversion and discipline can make us fit to resist the violent forces within and without. And for spiritual discipline we need a spiritual community. Friends must come to understand that they stand in need of this discipline and this community as much as anyone else. Once we have experienced divine love we can begin the path, but we still have to practice to know more. As Friends, we must not hide from ourselves the extent to which the isolating forces of our culture have worked on our own monthly meeting communities. Are we, as Issac Pennington said, "...heaps of living coals warming each other"? We had better be if we mean to do peacemaking. We Friends cannot practice peace in the world until we have learned to practice peace in our meetings. And the "separate peace" indicated by the 20% attendance at our meetings for business will not serve for this crisis. Peacemaking needs the practice that comes from living in covenant with other Friends. If we cannot stand the stresses of threshing through meeting for business, we should question our preparedness for answering that of God in those who may be even more unpleasant than our fellow Quakers. We learn to serve others in the

world by serving other Friends in our meetings. To walk the peace testimony rather than just talk it takes practice. The discipline—the self-discipline—needed to practice the peace testimony is learned at home.

Peacemaking means developing a way of living that is outside the mainstream of the culture that supports violence and terror. Fox recognized this in his distinction between those who he said were "in the Life" and those who were not. Living a new way, based on loving and caring for those around us, is something we have to work at (even after we have been cleared for membership). Friends (and I include myself) need to develop ways of cutting loose from those distractions and dependencies that keep people isolated from each other and unaware of the needs of those around us. Peacemakers must develop models of living and relating to each other that can be an example to those still trapped in the delusional system.

One of the things I have noted about early Friends is that they did not march or demonstrate in loud protest. They were confrontational only in the sense that their lives manifested something different. Friends of today may need to take heed of this fact. Maybe the reason our society isn't upset with us is that our lives don't appear to manifest much that is different. If our lives manifest peace, I have no doubt that we will be a sufficient threat to those who have embraced violence. They will find us. We won't have to join protest marches. Our lives will demonstrate that we do not share the delusion of our leaders. There will be plenty of opportunity to demonstrate the nonviolent spiritual basis of resistance because those under the delusion will not easily admit the possibility of living from a different basis than their own ideology. They will use the methods of that ideology against us.

Peacemaking will, without a doubt, involve suffering. Suffering is not an argument either for or against peacemaking. Suffering is the consequence of a world lost in the delusion of violence. This delusion surrounds us so we are not given the choice of suffering or not suffering. Those who think to choose nonviolence in hope of escaping pain are certain to be disappointed. Faith in nonviolence does not protect from violence any more than faith in violence protects from violence (though those of those of the second faith believe violence does protect, as witnessed by Scott Simon). Our choice is either to accept the endless, meaningless and hopeless suffering brought on by the counter-terrorist delusion, or to find the meaningful, world-changing life that comes from living in the Light within. The faith of Friends protects us from becoming a contributor to the cycle of counter-terrorist violence by freeing us from the violence and fear we have inside.

The victorious power of nonviolent resistance lies in its knowledge that within the counter-terrorist is an awareness of the deeper truth embodied in the faith of the nonviolent resister. This is what Fox was talking about when he urged Friends to "answer that of God in everyone." In the heart of the counter-terrorist is something that is waiting to be answered. The peacemaker says hello to that. This inward awareness can be answered because it instinctively responds to the caring and love of the peacemaker. This is what gives spiritual nonviolence the strength to respond with love. The fact that the nonviolent resister's faith may be a faith unto death does not diminish its merits. The cure for the delusion of the counter-terrorist is found in the lived spiritual reality that we are all creatures capable of love and caring and deserving of respect. This is what the Light makes manifest to us if we hold ourselves in it. Love and caring are the reality of what human relations are about and Friends can overcome the counter-terrorist delusion by making that reality manifest in the world.

The balance of this article can be found at:

http://westernquaker.net/friends_peace_testimony_and_terrorism.htm

6/5/05	Meeting for Worship	10:30 am
	Potluck	After rise of Meeting
6/8/05	Naples Midweek Meeting for Worship	7:00 pm
6/12/05	Meeting for Worship	10:30 am
	Meeting for Business	After rise of Meeting
	Last Chance Book Club	After rise of Meeting
6/15/05	Naples Midweek Meeting for Worship	7:00 pm
6/19/05	Meeting for Worship	10:30 am
6/22/05	Naples Midweek Meeting for Worship	7:00 pm
6/26/05	Peace and Social Concerns	9:15 am
	Meeting for Worship	10:30 am
6/29/05	Naples Midweek Meeting for Worship	7:00 pm
5/29/05	Peace and Social Concerns	9:15 am
	Meeting for Worship	10:30 am

**Friends Meeting of Fort Myers
Religious Society of Friends
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Address Correction Requested

Sixth Month 2005