

ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS  
**STATE OF THE MEETING REPORT 2007**

[NOTE: LARGER FONT & MORE SPACING THAN IN VERSION SENT TO SAYMA]

The gifts of our community are many and varied. The spirit moves amongst Atlanta Friends Meeting to support the ministry of our members, their well-being, and the material stability of the Meeting.

**Ministry and Worship** committee focused on ways to deepen the worship experience. There was increased interest in membership and many requests for clearness committees to nurture seekers. Conversely, a couple of persons left the Meeting over issues of religious education and eldering. Committee-sponsored forums included topics like "Nurturing young Friends" and "What do you do in meeting for worship?" A call was put out for people whose vocal ministry should be nurtured. Mary Ann Downey received a traveling letter for her work in other meetings. Mark Wutka received a traveling minute to attend the Yearly Meeting of North Carolina Conservative. An ongoing "Stories of the Elders" series, where experienced Friends share their spiritual journeys, has been very well-attended.

An **ad hoc group on nurturing our young people** began work in the summer to evaluate our youth programs. Attention was given to **Religious Education** staffing curriculum and supervision, among other areas. Recommendations include a new process for recruiting and approving teachers, a new leadership structure, and a new RE committee. Young Friends in middle and high school continued participation in the Southern Appalachian Young Friends retreats.

The Meeting assisted **outlying worship groups**, including Gwinnett Preparative Meeting and Canton worship group. Gwinnett requested we appoint a special committee to oversee their intention to become a monthly meeting. However, eventually the group split, with one part arranging affiliation with Ohio Conservative Yearly Meeting and the other retaining affiliation with AFM. Also, at year end, the Anneewakee Creek Friends Worship Group was laid down, at the request of Free Polazzo and Janet Minshall, after it had been meeting in Douglas County. The Meeting thanked them for their faithful service in founding and nurturing the worship group for the past 9 years. A new worship group, meeting once a month, has formed in Sautee GA, led by Mike and Duane Kaiser, long-time members of AFM. Finally, with no contact yet initiated, a new worship group now meets at the Unitarian church in Dahlonega.

The **Committee on Undoing Racism** in Atlanta Friends Meeting (CURAFM) continued to raise awareness of racism through a Listening Ear for concerns about racism, a showing of the series, "Africans in America," and writing materials for the welcome packets, the AFM website, and the newsletter. In conjunction with **Our Roles As Individuals in America's Racial History**. CURAFM held a forum on becoming a multicultural, anti-racist institution, sponsored anti-racism workshops using the book, *White Awareness*, for Atlanta Friends Meeting and SAYMA, and wrote an article for the online version of the FGC Connections issue on "Friends, Race and Racism."

**ORAIARH** continued to meet weekly to support each other in our individual and collective witness against racism. They cosponsored work mentioned with CURAFM. They provide a literature table in the Greeting Room on first days.

**Care and Counsel** Committee continues to be a nurturing force in the Meeting. We have gone beyond the duties listed in the AFM handbook to include an inspiring Couple Enrichment Session, a six-week class for those who struggle with chronic illness, a new Guide for Sunday Volunteers, and a Volunteer Appreciation Pancake Breakfast. We care for our members and attenders with get well cards, hospital visits, our Quaker Care quilt, and meetings for worship for homebound members. We welcome newcomers with volunteer greeters, welcome packets, and monthly Newcomers Dinners. We also welcomed six of our youngest attenders into meeting with hugs and

a book. The annual **Gathered Meeting Retreat** was facilitated by Peter Crysdale and Linda Lyman with a focus on nurturing a healthy meeting as a sacred community and listening for the still voice within.

**Nominating** Committee worked to discern existing talents and leadings of individuals in our Meeting community, to find ways for individuals to serve the Meeting, and to help the Meeting foster individual and spiritual growth. We also worked on ways to make Friends more aware of service positions and to give them a specific person with whom to talk about a position that they might feel led to consider. Nominating ended 2007 with heavy turnover, partly to allow seasoned Friends who have been recently released from other responsibilities to lead this important work.

**Social Concerns** Committee held a forum featuring Chuck Fager of Quaker House on its support for soldiers desiring to leave military service early. They also held a forum on Women's Unwaged Work featuring Selma James and Andaiye. Both were attended by more than 50 people and provided opportunities to educate Friends and for Outreach on our testimonies of Peace and Equality. A minute was sent to Congress demanding an end to the invasion and occupation of Iraq.

The **Administration** Committee supported the Landscape committee in its work. The meeting approved its minute to pay our employees by Living Wage standards. It completed performance reviews on employees and continued work on the Employee Personnel Handbook. Sylvia Turner, **resident manager**, stepped down from her position after ten years. We affirmed our practice that AFM rents space to those compatible with our beliefs. The committee continued to preface each meeting with a discussion intended to combat personal racism. It began consideration of additional signage at the street to let people know the Meeting is inclusive, open and welcome to all.

The **Finance** Committee addressed several concerns in 2007. One was the lack of rental income, and by August, the unusually large deficit. The operating budget did end in the black. A **Fundraising Committee** was set up to increase rentals and design fundraisers when needed. Efforts continue to upgrade and refurbish an aging building. The Raise the Roof capital campaign also ended the year with a small positive balance. The **Cabin Committee** finances were brought into the Meeting budget. We cleared up a tax issue on that property so we are listed as a church that does not have to pay property taxes. The treasurer also created a comprehensive financial operations manual which can be used with confidence by future treasurers.

Atlanta Friends Meeting welcomed Pete McCaughan, Dwight Harriman, and Hannah MacDermott as **new members** in 2007. We also accepted the transfer of Barbara Seal's membership from Eastern Hill (Cincinnati, OH) Friends Meeting. Seven members moved away from Atlanta but remain members. The marriage of Julie Meadows and Jim Thompson took place under the care of the Meeting. Three **Memorial Services** (for William Squire, Lurline Squire and Sheila Degler) were held. With great sadness, we recorded the resignation from membership of Amy Pritchett and the transfer of Debra Johnson's membership to St. Bartholemew's Episcopal Church. We also recorded the transfer of Mariana Garrettson's membership to North Branch (Forty Fort, PA) Monthly Meeting. At the end of 2007, Atlanta Friends Meeting had 127 active members and 23 active (but away from the Atlanta Area) members for a total of 150. Each first day averages 120 or more attenders, and the reported number of active members and attenders is 170.