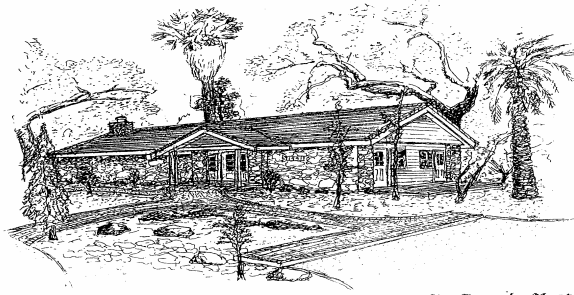


Visalia Friends Meeting
17208 Ave 296 Visalia, CA 93292

Newsletter

August, 2010



Visalia Friends Meetinghouse

Simplicity

Life is meant to be lived from a Center, a divine Center... a life of unhurried peace and power. It is simple. It is serene. It takes no time, but it occupies all our time.

Thomas R. Kelly, *Testament of Devotion*, 1941

A life centered in God will be directed toward keeping communication with God open and unencumbered. Simplicity is best achieved through a right ordering of priorities, maintaining humility of spirit, avoiding self-indulgence, resisting the accumulation of unnecessary possessions, and avoiding over-busy lives.

Elise Boulding writes in *My Part in the Quaker Adventure*,
“ *Simplicity, beauty, and happiness go together if they are a byproduct of a concern for something more important than ourselves.*”

Do I center my life in an awareness of God’s presence so that all things take their rightful place?

Do I live simply, and promote the right sharing of the world’s bounty?

Do I keep my life uncluttered with things and activities, avoiding commitments beyond my strength and light?

How do I maintain simplicity, moderation, and honesty in my speech, my manner of living, and my daily work?

Do I recognize when I have enough?

Is the life of our Meeting so ordered that it helps us to simplify our lives?

**Visalia Friends Meeting
Meeting for Business
August 14, 2010**

Members and Attenders present: Beth Lovett, Bill Lovett, Patti Howard, Heather Howard, Cayman Howard, Joanne Dudley, David Dudley, Joy Marshall, Bob Marshall, John Dackawich, Shirley Dackawich, David Chandler, Graciela Martinez, Melissa Alberti-Araujo, Jalene Vincent Welch, Andrew Glazier, David Roberts, Greg Seastrom

The meeting began in silence.

Clerk reviewed the mail received; all items are in the “Today” folder on back counter.

Reading of the Minutes from last month.

- **Naming Committee Report:** The Nominating Committee will be comprised of Bob Marshall, Jessi Snyder, Louis Araujo, Heather Howard, Beth Lovett. Their report is expected in October. New assignments will begin in January. The Nominating Committee is looking for people to serve. The strength of our meeting depends on the strength of our committees.
- **Letter from Gloria Figueroa:** The Meeting supports Gloria's schooling through the Palo Alto Friends El Salvador Project. She sends her gratitude for the support and requests a group picture. She is starting her 5th year of study in physio care therapy. She is now in her second set of clinicals in a psych hospital and has also worked with children in a daycare setting. Her parents are farmers and they, too, send their gratitude for our support of her schooling. Her letter closed with blessings and love.
- It was suggested that we take an annual group picture to use for these sorts of things. The matter was referred to the Outreach Committee, who will arrange for the picture.
- **Letter from Mike Watson:** Mike is a member of Skipton Local Quaker Meeting, North Yorkshire, UK. He and his family are volunteering in Uganda for two years working with Empowering Hands, a program supported by North Yorkshire that works with women and girls of Uganda who have been abused and traumatized. He has written a children's book, *Treasure, Trash, and Turtles*. He is asking that we purchase it to contribute to this foundation. **The Meeting agreed to purchase the book for our library.**
- **Conditions for Worship-** Having discussed concerns brought to it, the Ministry and Oversight Committee raised the issue of the quality of conditions at our worship. The Clerk, acting for Ministry and Oversight read a letter to the Meeting written by Ministry and Oversight some years ago which was reprinted in last month's newsletter. The letter suggests that the quality of worship is being affected by late comers, noise, etc The Clerk opened the subject for discussion. Heather reported that this subject came up quite a bit at PYM, indicating our conditions are not unique. Some good suggestions were made of how to avoid disturbances such as late entry and noise in the lobby at the beginning of worship. They will be referred to Ministry and Oversight for an ongoing discussion while the Meeting lets the concern season.
- **Testimony on Earthcare-**The Unity with Nature Committee requested that Visalia Friends Meeting adopt Strawberry Creek's Testimony on Earthcare as our own. Committee Clerk Joanne Dudley had shared the testimony previously and it was included with the newsletter of last month. Joanne reminded us that adoption of this testimony would make us more sensitive to the way we live as individuals and as a Meeting. Because the adoption of this ecologically aware

testimony would have little effect unless revisited often, Joanne suggested our Meeting revisit the testimony several times a year and renew our commitment. Its purpose is to remind us that in our "little" lives and "little" Meetings we can and do make decisions that have the potential to harm or help our Earth.

- **MINUTE: Visalia Friends Meeting adopts The Testimony on Earthcare of the Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting to be ours as well.**

It was also reported that the displays from the Unity with Nature Committee exhibited at PYM were beautiful!!!

- **Other Committee Reports:**

Children s Committee will meet with Building and Grounds Committee next Sunday after Meeting- during lunch. We will continue to make plans to complete the childcare area.

Outreach Committee: will be meeting during lunch after Meeting next week. Also, please, please view the videos on YouTube so that approval of the Meeting can be gained. After approval, then the video can be viewed by anyone.

Ministry and Oversight: The 2010 Phone Tree handout is available on the table in the lobby.

- **A continuation of the discussion about accepting the Lovett's property.** The Clerk summarized the status of the Meeting's acceptance of the gift of land from Bill and Beth Lovett. He reminded those in attendance that in a minute the Meeting accepted the gift with the stipulation that we would not take legal ownership (i.e. "sign the papers") until The Quaker Oaks Farm non-profit organization presented evidence of financial and operational stability. It is understood that Quaker Oaks Farm is working on that and will notify the Meeting when they feel ready. The Clerk asked that we be sensitive to the tension between enthusiasm for this wonderful and unique opportunity to create a Quaker presence in our area and the need for a stable foundation so Quaker Oak Farm will succeed and not be a drain on Visalia Friends Meeting.

The Meeting ended in silence.

Respectfully submitted,

Jalene Vincent Welch