

SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN FRIEND

Newsletter
of the
Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting & Association
of the
Religious Society of Friends

FALL, 2004



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www.SAYMA.org

Monthly Meetings & Worship Groups

Anneewakee Creek Worship Group

Douglasville, GA (770) 949-8079

Asheville (NC) Friends Meeting

(828) 258-0974

Athens (GA) Friends Meeting

(706) 546-0056

Atlanta (GA) Friends Meeting

(404) 377-2474

Auburn (AL) Worship Group

(334) 887-9688

Berea (KY) Friends Meeting

(859) 986-2193

Birmingham (AL) Friends Meeting

(205) 592-0570

Boone (NC) Friends Meeting

(828) 263-0001

Brevard (NC) Friends Meeting

(828) 891-7793

Celo (NC) Friends Meeting

(828) 675-4456

Charleston (WV) Friends Meeting

(304) 756-3033

Chattanooga (TN) Friends Meeting

(423) 629-2580

Clarksville (TN) Worship Group

(931) 647-9284

Clemson (SC) Worship Group

(864) 654-6680

Cleveland (TN) Worship Group

(423) 479-4877

Columbia (SC) Friends Meeting

(803) 254-0626

Cookeville (TN) Preparative Meeting

(931) 268-2592

Crossville (TN) Friends Meeting

(931) 277-5354

Foxfire Friends Meeting

Johnson City, TN (423) 283-4392

Greenville (SC) Friends Meeting

(864) 322-6208

Huntsville (AL) Area Friends Meeting

(256) 837-6327

Memphis (TN) Friends Meeting

(901) 762-8130

Murfreesboro (TN) Worship Group

(931) 389-6340

Nashville (TN) Friends Meeting

(615) 329-2640

New Moon Worship Group

Barnardsville/Weaverville, NC (828) 626-2572

Oxford (MS) Friends Meeting

(662) 473-3670

Royal Worship Group

Blountsville, AL (205) 429-3088

Sevier County Worship Group

Sevierville, TN (865) 429-1807

Sewanee (TN) Worship Group

(931) 598-5031

Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting

Black Mountain, NC (828) 669-5914

West Knoxville (TN) Friends Meeting

(865) 694-0036

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Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF) Administrative Assistant:	Therese Hildebrand (Berea), (859) 986-5418, thildebrand@acer-access.com

SAYF Calendar

October 22-24: Retreat at Penn Center, St. Helena Island, SC

Program planning: Maria Finch-Hammond & Althea Sumter

Lead FAP: Jeremiah Gold-Hopton

November 12-14: Retreat in Knoxville, TN

Program planning: West Knoxville YFs

Lead FAPs: Sig Christensen & Kathleen Mavournin

January 14-16, 2005: Retreat in Atlanta, GA

Program planning: Atlanta YFs

Lead FAP: Jeremiah Gold-Hopton

February 18-20: Nurturing/Steering/Oversight Committee Meetings at Kathleen Mavournin's house in Knoxville, TN

Program planning: SAYF SC Co-Clerks and NC Co-Clerks

Contact: Kathleen Mavournin

March 11-13: Retreat in Asheville, NC

Program planning: Asheville YFs

Lead FAP: TBA

April 15-17: Retreat at Hard Labor Creek State Park in Georgia

Program planning: Atlanta/Athens YFs or SAYF Nurturing Committee

Lead FAP: TBA

WORK EXCHANGE: 1-6 weeks, rural northern Alabama, room or tent & board. Solar, gardening, homebuilding. Intentional community, Friends Meeting, peace & justice, yoga, & riversaver groups. (205) 429-3088.

SAYMA 2004-5 Calendar

December 4, 2004: Winter Representative Meeting; Chattanooga, TN

December 01, 2004: SAF Submission Due Date

April 2, 2005: Spring Representative Meeting; West Knoxville, TN

June 9-12, 2005: SAYMA Yearly Gathering; Shorter College, Rome GA

Resident Wanted in Chattanooga

Chattanooga Meeting has a vacancy for a resident to occupy a large, second-floor room in the meeting house. Interested parties should contact Craig Davoulas, clerk of the Property-Oversight Committee, at (423) 629-5914 or at the meeting's address, 335 Crestway Drive, Chattanooga, TN, 37411.

The resident will be expected to bring in and sort the mail, answer the telephone, vacuum the meeting room weekly, and keep the public areas neat and tidy. All utilities, including telephone, are provided. A stove, refrigerator, and microwave are available for the resident's use. The house is not air-conditioned, but it is surrounded by trees and is seldom overly hot, even in the heat of summer. It is on a bus line.

The nominal rent, designed to cover utilities and insurance, is approximately \$200 per month and is negotiable depending on what other duties the resident is willing and able to do.

AVP at Royal WG

Royal Friends Worship Group is sponsoring a weekend training workshop for the ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE PROJECT, Friday, November 12th 7 PM through Sunday November 14th, ending at 5 PM. Rubye Braye from NC and Steven Angel from PA will co-lead. The \$50 fee covers the weekend, and meals and snacks from Saturday breakfast through Sunday lunch. Housing can be arranged for out-of-towners. Contact Sara Rose (205) 429-3088 or rivkahdara@urisp.net for more info.

SAF Submissions—Next Due

Date: 01/01/2005

Submit meeting or worship group news, original articles, opinions, poetry, announcements, humor, gripes, worries, and cookie recipes to SAFeditor@SAYMA.org or by mail to: SAF c/o Susan & Kim Carlyle, PO Box 439, Barnardsville, NC 28709 (828) 626-2572 (Please include your name and phone number.)

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For resource-saving, electronic delivery of the SAF, send your name, e-mail address and monthly meeting or worship group name to SAFeditor@SAYMA.org

From the Editors: VOTE! (And encourage others to do so, too!)

Listening to the Earth in Barcelona

by Bob McGahey (Celo)

I attended the Fourth Parliament of World Religions, "*Pathways to Peace: the Wisdom of Listening, the Power of Commitment*," in Barcelona July 7-13, 2004 with traveling minutes from and the support of Celo Monthly Meeting and SAYMA. In addition to my Friends identification, I went as a representative of the Forge Guild, a professional group of religious teachers, leaders, and writers from a wide variety of faith traditions who are trying to model "trans-traditional" ways of communicating across religious boundaries. Though we have several members from the interfaith movement, we are attempting a deeper, more authentic and honest exchange than is typically achieved through the interfaith experience. We are sometimes successful, and the Forge panel on which I served was very well received, in part because it was an interactive event in a sea of lectures.

My Forge friend Jeff Utter, a minister of the Church of Christ, says that this event was better organized than the last one in Cape Town (1999). This was my first Parliament, and I must say that organization was not one of its strong points. The help desk was often no help, and communication about important events was spotty. Several featured figures did not show up, including the Dalai Lama and Vandana Shiva. The first morning of programs had already passed before the massive program manual (which was the only way we could find out the locations of the multifarious programs) was made available to participants. Information on location of stations for the various languages for simultaneous translations of the final plenary on our headsets was not made available after these were changed, so most of us did not hear some of the final addresses.

Nevertheless, opportunities for contact, both within and without planned sessions, were numerous, and the inter-religious dialogue was invaluable. It was often hard to choose among the many alternatives, especially when "stars" were scheduled at overlapping times. The Sikh hospitality was noteworthy. They erected three circus tents, sanctified them as a *gurudwalla* (temple) and served free lunch to Parliament participants every day. (Estimates of participant numbers varied between 5,500 and 7,500.) Not only was the food plentiful, but our hosts were also exceptionally gracious.

There was a strong activist component at the conference, especially centered around developmental justice issues: water quality, debt relief, and religious violence, with two-day symposia on each. However, some of us felt that the religious imperative or spiritual quality of this work was not sufficiently emphasized. As my roommate said, "How are these sessions different from an international development conference?" Obviously having representatives of the world's religions look at the perennial issue of religious violence involves a religious imperative. The problem was that none of those espousing violence were present.

Every religion you can imagine, including New Age types, was represented. The Parliament is an excellent opportunity for tiny, poorly known groups to have exposure, and the planners took care to highlight one of these as part of each plenary. A Native American woman singer dressed in buckskin opened and closed the musical spectacle at the Sancta Familia Cathedral with a song bearing universalist sentiments. I was particularly touched by the tiny group of elderly Zarathustrians, their leader intoning one of the world's oldest chants invoking the divine in a rich baritone. The first plenary included an electrifying invocation of one of the principal Yoruba divinities (from about 240!). The "spokesperson" – I called him the High Priest -- was poised and charismatic, and it felt like the divine had entered the auditorium when he impersonated this divinity of "war, peace, and creativity," wearing a full white robe, arms raised to the heavens. Later, he walked with great dignity through the exhibit hall, greeting representatives of the various organizational booths. Seated at the Forge booth, I recognized him and asked him how the Yoruba managed to render homage to each of their 240 gods during the yearly religious calendar. He looked me straight in the eye and said, "God is one." This encounter epitomized for me what the Parliament was about.

I found Ramon Pannikar, a married Catalan Catholic priest who is steeped in Hinduism, to be a model of the interfaith movement for which this event is central. One of the co-convenors of the event, he is in his mid-eighties, an enlightened soul full of wit and wisdom. He was everywhere, from filling in for the absent Dalai Lama as keynote speaker the first night all the way through nineteen appearances during the week. I never saw him lose his equilibrium through this grueling performance. At various times, he spoke in Catalan, Spanish, and English, the three official languages of the gathering.

The Islamic presence was quite visible, and I learned a lot about Islam, especially its diversity (as opposed to the Western press cartoons of the two "types": bloodthirsty radicals and rational moderates). There were turbaned Shias from

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Iran, colorfully dressed black African women, the gentle Sufis, including Turks who offered haunting music and dervish dancing, Pakistanis in khadi caps, and American Muslims, including the Fellowship of Reconciliation's Ibrahim Ramey, a long-time friend of Friends. There was a strong attempt by all both to dialogue with other religious traditions and to talk to fellow Muslims, which is a continuing challenge. A Pakistani leader made a commitment for half their speakers to be women at the next parliament, calling up sisters from the audience to speak after glancing down the speakers' table at ten male panelists. The sisters responded with grace and eloquence in the few minutes he granted them.

But my main purpose for being at the Parliament is expressed in the minute from Celso:

The Parliament's themes of peacemaking and justice are integrally woven with the imperative to preserve a sustainable mode of human life on earth. The earth is our only home, and no work of the spirit or for peace and justice can prosper without biospheric preservation, which requires concerted action that radically challenges the way we live and think, especially those of us in the rich, developed world.

On the morning of the third day, I led a worship observance described in the program as a "Quaker worship service providing a ritual space to pray for the earth's healing. We read aloud Joanna Macy's poem "The Bestiary" as a way of reflecting on the state of the Ark, then enter into waiting worship in the manner of Friends, deepening our experience. The observance ended with the "Elm Dance," a simple circle dance in which we will enact a forest of prayers and solidarity for the healing of the earth." About thirty people attended, most of them Spanish nuns in their fifties, sixties, and seventies; only a handful of those present spoke English. Fortunately, I had multiple copies of the poem in Spanish which Joanna had sent me from the Spanish translation of her book, *Coming Back to Life*. Two staff were indispensable in translating my comments on waiting worship, which very few in the group had ever experienced. It was a powerful, deeply moving experience, for the nuns knew where to take us when the silence opened (about half an hour). Afterwards, a Norwegian Lutheran minister questioned me about the programmed nature of the worship which had bracketed the central mystery of waiting. I acknowledged that FGC Friends are normally unprogrammed. However, leading my first programmed worship felt right, and it clearly worked for this group (though I had a twinge of regret that I hadn't provided this earnest man the pure experience of waiting worship he was seeking).

Though the Parliament was not focused upon the necessary relation between religion and ecology that those of us in Quaker Earthcare Witness embrace, there were a smattering of panels and events devoted to this concern. Both a highlight and my biggest disappointment was the Forum on Religion and Ecology at the Casa Pedrera, the remarkable modernist architect Gaudi's most celebrated building in Barcelona. It was a highlight because it was so carefully planned, in a beautiful setting with a diverse array of panelists included Mary Evelyn Tucker, director of the Harvard Forum on Religion and Ecology which has done superb work over the last decade in sponsoring international symposia and making multilingual material available on their website. It was a disappointment because it was so poorly advertised. I learned of it only because of an e-mail the week before the Parliament. The result was a powerful, well-articulated, rich discussion attended by only forty people.

That ecological awareness and action is a spiritual task was articulated at the Casa Pedrera forum with great care. The very first speaker was a man from the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) who spoke of the behavioral change needed in these critical times: "renunciation and commitment, with joy." Jordi Pigem, a philosopher who writes for *Resurgence*, spoke of sustainability as an ethical imperative – the kind of language which relegated Jimmy Carter to political oblivion – and the environmental awakening of the seventies to which we are belatedly returning after losing a quarter century of opportunity. Arthur Lyon-Dahl, a Bahai marine biologist who has long worked with UNESCO, spoke of the coral reef as a model for twenty-first century urban civilization. The coral reef exists in close symbiosis within a narrow temperature range in a resource-poor environment. To survive, we need to mimic the reef with a highly integrated symbiosis among all species (and human communities). As the genetic code functions for this closely integrated ocean biome, so do sustainable values for humans.

Tashi Dorje, the abbot of a Mahayana Buddhist monastery adjacent to the Catalan national forest, the Parc Natural del Garraf, described a unique program the monastery is developing in partnership with the park. Working with a landscape designer, they have created a symbolic space in the forest representing the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism. Urban youth are invited (and subsidized) to come spend twenty-four hours in this setting, beginning with non-sectarian methods to quiet the mind, and encouraged to journal about their experience. The chief query is to compare their experience with any other twenty-four hour period of their lives, then weigh which of these life-styles they want to carry into old age.

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SERO Establishes Project Voice office in Charlotte

Dear Friends,

Greetings. I am writing to let you know that the Southeast Regional Office (SERO) of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) will be establishing a new office in Charlotte, NC. Project Voice, an AFSC immigrant rights initiative will be based in Charlotte from September 20, 2004. Antonio Vasquez, currently with SERO's Africa Peace Education Program, will be the Project Voice Regional Organizer.

Antonio has already made contact with many Friends and Friends Meetings and looks forward to continuing to develop relationships with Quakers. Antonio can be contacted at avasques@afsc.org or at 404-556-0767 (cell), please feel free to get in touch. We thank you for your ongoing support and prayers.

In Peace & Friendship,

Valerie L. Barlow
Regional Director
Southeast Regional Office
American Friends Service Committee

FGC Gathering Workshop Proposals

Dear Friends,

The deadline for submitting proposals to lead a workshop at the 2005 Gathering of Friends in Blacksburg, VA, is fast approaching. We hope we might have a proposal from you by November 1!

You can access the proposal form on the web at <http://www.fgcquaker.org/gathering/workshop-proposal.html> or email me if you would like an electronic or hard copy of the form.

Thanks!

(and feel free to inform others!)

Liz Perch
Conference Coordinator
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1216 Arch Street #2B
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<http://www.fgcquaker.org>

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Trying to live in harmony with our Southern Appalachian forest, I was impressed with the monk's practice of praying over two days, a two-hour ceremony each day, asking permission to cut even one tree before entering the forest.

I had the good fortune at this forum to meet Gary Gardner of Worldwatch, who was one of the panelists. Giving his talk in Spanish, Gary spoke of the imperative to stop talking about "development" in a materialistic way, rather seeing it as fulfillment of human potential. When I posed a question of the panelists about the necessity for a common cosmology to heal the ongoing lack of a common language between religious folk and environmental scientists, Gary's answer was the simplest and clearest: any such cosmology must be "rooted in the earth." The wise abbot added that such a unified cosmology may not be accessible to articulation, that we needed to go beyond reason, using deep listening to access intuitive channels leading to a unity deeper than words and thoughts.

After the forum, Gary and I co-sponsored an "open space" afternoon session on "Religion and Ecology: Continuing the Dialogue." Only three people attended, including my friend Jeff. A young Spanish man bemoaned the situation where European youth virtually ignored ecological issues and the consequences of their lifestyles. An Eastern Orthodox priest was eager to bring the biosphere into the liturgy in some way. I was disappointed

with the tiny turnout. Gary was pragmatic, saying you make connections wherever you can, and move forward.

Back at the forum, Mary Evelyn Tucker, my new hero, was steadily eloquent as she spoke of the need for recovering a language of the sacred in speaking of the earth, of humanity's awesome responsibility for the continuity of all life systems, and of reshaping a multiform planetary civilization, including the remnant indigenous traditions. And, if religious traditions can't speak within this new context, she added, then they themselves will become extinct.

The day before the Parliament ended, I attended a session entitled "Fundamentalism, the Final Frontier," which was enormously thought-provoking. The principal thesis advanced was that global fundamentalism is essentially a movement for religious renewal in the face of the ravages of modernity. We all needed to see where we agreed with this critique and find ways to engage in a dialogue, inviting these key players on the global stage to join us as at such conferences. Unfortunately, there were very few fundamentalists of any creed present.) As I have pondered this challenge, I have recognized both its difficulties and its possibilities -- for fundamentalist Christians, especially in the Western US, have become some of our most impassioned environmentalists in the last few years. As the Friend's bumper sticker read at a recent retreat, "Sustainability: the Final Frontier."

I Wish I Were You...

By Christy Bischoff (Asheville)

"I wish I were you." The South African man's dark eyes were filled with pain as he spoke these words to me. We were standing in front of the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron, Palestine. I was startled. This man, newly arrived, had come for three months work with the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Accompaniment Program. I was finishing my time with Christian Peacemaker Teams doing similar accompaniment -- violence reduction work. Why did he want to be me?

He continued, "If I were you I could leave sooner. It reminds me of the bad times in South Africa. It brings up too much pain for me. But here it is worse. The curfew and restrictions that Palestinians have is much greater than we ever saw at home. And we had a leader. We believed in freedom. I don't see that here."

"Why did you come?" I asked searching the pain in his eyes.

He paused and answered slowly, "People came and helped us. I couldn't *not* come."

That's it, he couldn't not come. I couldn't not come. We can't not come.

After spending two months in Israel/Palestine, my heart breaks again and again thinking of the many stories and images in my head -- the pain as well as the amazing will to live -- of both Palestinians and Israelis, those who continue to hold their heads high and seek to choose life amidst the surrounding death. As I resume life here in the United States, it is evident to me that we are intimately connected to these people, whether we know it or not. Not just because our government gives billions of dollars to Israel every year to buy weapons and build walls (although this is part of it), but because we are all humans and we share a spirit. "No one can be free while others are oppressed."

Shortly after my return, as I was driving across South Dakota through incredible prairies and mountains, a deep sadness came over me. The parks we stopped at were mostly visited only by white people, and the roadside souvenir shops were filled with American Indian items. This land, too, has history of oppression and injustice and a great need for healing. Rabbi Michael Lerner, founder of the Tikkun Community tells us that land all over the world has continually been conquered by one group of people, then another, over and over. We must learn from this history, and we must find ways for healing and ways for humans to live together. We have much work to do -- we can't not come.

So, as we journey through life, will we face the pain within ourselves and in the world around us -- the pain of our brothers and sisters in our neighborhoods, in our inner cities, in our suburbs, in Indian Reservations, in Israel, in Palestine, all over the world -- and work to heal it?

May you also decide that you can't not come.

Christy Bischoff recently spent two months with Christian Peacemaker Teams in Hebron, Palestine. CPT is an initiative of the historic peace churches (Mennonites, Church of the Brethren, and Quakers) with support and membership from a range of Catholic and Protestant denominations. Supporting violence-reduction efforts around the world is its mandate.

News Update and Action Item from Christy 10/14/2004

I wanted to get in contact with you all because of some specific events happening in the South Hebron District in the last two weeks. Christian Peacemaker Teams, an Italian group Operation Dove, and an Israeli group *Ta'yush* have decided to have a presence in the south Hebron district near the Palestinian village of Al'Tuwani and near the Israeli settlement of Ma'on. The three groups decided on being a presence there because of the continued attacks on the Palestinian village from the settlement (for an example, when we visited this village this summer the village's well had been poisoned -- a dead chicken had been thrown into it). The CPTers have been walking school children from the nearby Palestinian village of Tuba to Tuwani past the settlement of Ma'on where the children have been attacked and harassed. On Sept 29, two CPTers, Chris Brown and Kim Lamberty were beaten by Israeli settler youth with bats and chains as they walked the children to school. Today again two CPTers, two people from Amnesty International, and a man from Operation Dove were attacked after walking the children home from school.

I would ask that if you could please contact your Israeli embassy and US representatives via emails, faxes, phone calls to let them know that this is not acceptable. That the Israeli authorities must act to stop the violence and lawlessness of the attackers on the Palestinians and on their international guests. It is important to put pressure on the policymakers and authorities to let them know that others know what is happening and it is really not okay. (I wish I had some more poetic words at the moment, but they seem to fail me right now, just help!) For more information you can also check the CPT website at www.cpt.org

Integrity at the Electric Meter

By Bill Reynolds (Chattanooga)

Do you know about Green Electricity, commonly called "Green Power"? No, it isn't a different color electricity; it is electricity that is produced from "renewable fuels" that are ecologically friendly, hence "green." What are "renewable fuels" (also called "renewables")? Sunshine, wind, biomass, and naturally occurring methane. (Kinda like the opposite of fossil fuels.)

The really important and currently urgent question about Green Power: Can you buy it where you live right now? The answer may well be, "Yes." *ONEARTH* recently carried a listing of states where it is available. Here's what they said about the states where SAYMA has Meetings and Worship Groups:

- Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee are rated as having "widespread availability."
- Kentucky, Mississippi, and South Carolina are rated as "limited availability."
- Virginia has "Multiple Choice" availability. There you may be able to choose the company that supplies green power most likely as "green blocks" but sometimes as "blended electricity." (Sorry that West Virginia has none in the list.)

Introduction to purchasing green power

Most customers can sign up to purchase "green blocks." A green block refers to a set number of kilowatt hours (kWh), such as 100 kWh or 150 kWh, at a fixed price. Here in Chattanooga we get 150 kWh blocks at \$4.00/ month. (For example, my household and my meetinghouse each purchase two blocks for \$8.00 a month.) Purchase of one of these blocks means that 150kWh of green power is added to our utility's electricity pool, displacing 150 kWh of old-fashioned electricity. The premium fee we pay is in fact going to help pay for costs of construction and operations of the green power generation stations such as solar photovoltaic panel systems, windfarms, etc. Apparently, even the "green tag" purchase programs also funnel your fees to pay at least construction costs for green power generation. Paying the premium fee promotes the development of more Green Power!

When Chattanooga Meeting deliberated about whether to add the extra small fees to our budget, one member said this was an "opportunity to put our money where our mouth is." It's about integrity between our talk of walking lightly on the Earth and how we actually walk.

Are folks in your meeting or worship group aware if a green power option is available in your region? Please spread the word. You'll find an up-to-date, state-by-state list of green-pricing programs at the energy department's website www.eere.energy.gov/greenpower/summary.shtml.

Friends, Travel, and Testimonies

By Kim Carlyle (Swannanoa Valley)

(At our yearly meeting in June following the decision to meet next year at Shorter College in Rome, GA, one Friend suggested that, because of a nearby airport, Friends might consider traveling by air. Recognizing the YM's efforts to care for Creation, the Friend wondered aloud if air travel might be environmentally friendly. The short answer is "no." A longer answer is this article which originally appeared in the Swannanoa Valley meeting newsletter.)

Although Friends don't like to admit it, we are caught up in "the world." We are victims of our cultural programming. We ordinarily do not take time to consider the consequences of our daily decisions; we simply do what everyone else does – or what everyone else in our privileged social class does.

Many of our daily decisions involve our use of fossil fuels. Our travel choices are the most obvious of these. Each day the world consumes 80 million barrels of oil, with this country accounting for about a quarter of that consumption. About sixty percent of this country's oil use is for transportation. The most wasteful mode of transportation is air travel, followed by personal automobiles. The most efficient modes of long distance travel, after bicycles, are public surface transportation — trains and buses.

As a vivid illustration of the amount of fuel used in air travel, one writer compared a jetliner on takeoff to a gas station on fire. But that's just the *airplane's* use of fuel. Consider also the energy needs of the airport infrastructure, the support vehicles, the workers who drive to the airport. And add to that the fact that when you get off the plane, you are not even where you want to be — you still need fuel for ground transportation.

Driving a personal vehicle is not much better. Even the most fuel-efficient automobile is still another car on the road. We have often heard the question, "What would Jesus drive?" But perhaps that question has an extra word. We might ask, "Would Jesus drive?"

So maybe we use a lot of fuel. But how does the way we travel relate to our testimonies?

Peace, Education, and Integrity

Just about any conflict our country has been involved in during recent times has involved oil resources, from Columbia to Afghanistan to Iraq. For us as Friends not to be aware of the links between war and our use of energy is, by definition, ignorance and as such is contrary to our Testimony on Education. ("Those who read and study are better equipped to pursue corporate truth within the Religious Society of Friends and better able to act as individuals in the wider world." — *SAYMA Faith & Practice*) If we who profess peace *do have awareness of*
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the links but ignore the consequences of our individual actions, in my estimation, we are in conflict with our Testimony on Integrity.

Further, our government provides huge subsidies to the air travel industry. Much of this is to support those companies that also produce warplanes. Are we comfortable in knowing that our airfare also supports this industry? Should we not examine our modes of travel and “try whether the seeds of war have any nourishment” therein?

Equality and Simplicity

Only a small percentage of people are air travelers, perhaps fifteen percent. The poorest folks travel by train or by bus. John Woolman chose to travel in steerage rather than in a cabin when he traveled to England. He said, "I was now desirous to embrace every opportunity of being inwardly acquainted with the hardship and difficulties of my fellow creatures..." How are we to be compassionate toward the underprivileged if we avoid contact and interaction with them? Gandhi, after being asked why he traveled in Third Class, replied, “Because there is no Fourth Class!”

Other Considerations

Around the world, the extraction of oil has devastated the environment and destroyed cultures. Roads are slashed through rainforests. Drilling sites contaminate fresh water. Leaky pipelines spill millions of gallons of crude oil on pristine tundra. Indigenous people are pushed to the brink of extinction. Local economies are upset, governments are corrupted, and wealth becomes concentrated among a few. Oil refineries pollute the air, soil, and water of the impoverished communities that surround them.

When we degrade the natural world, we desecrate God’s Creation. Given that the first and greatest commandment is to love God, we commit a crime of the first order when we dishonor God by corrupting and polluting what we were entrusted by God to care for.

Conclusion

I am not asking Friends to sell their cars and travel only by bicycle. We all are, unfortunately, victims of our culture — a culture that relies heavily on fossil fuel energy. It is almost impossible for anyone, and impractical for most folks, to lead a life without some reliance on petroleum and its many products. But I would like to suggest that Friends take a moment of discernment, of mindfulness, before they hop on an airplane or turn an ignition key.

* * * * *

UNTITLED

I find it hard to believe
that those in power will ever leave
...regardless of who we elect.

-- Tom Baugh, White Oak Cottage

Minute from Canadian Yearly Meeting

[Minute #] 27 Endorsement of the Earth Charter: Carol Bradley, on behalf of Wolfville Monthly Meeting, asked Canadian Yearly Meeting to endorse the Earth Charter. Friends felt that although this document is not perfect, it is a document that deserves our support because it arises from many groups which have a deep concern for the protection of God's earth. We agree to endorse the principles of the Earth Charter, recognizing that this will require us to make changes and sacrifices in the way we live. We ask Friends in Canada to begin a discernment process with respect to this document and with how we might begin to implement these principles in our lives and in our Meetings. We ask our Quaker Ecology Action Network to help our Clerks develop a process for follow-up with Monthly Meetings, the Government of Canada, First Nations associations, and the United Nations.

Planning Committee News

Yearly Meeting at Shorter College, Rome, GA June 9-12, 2005

SAYMA’s Planning Committee, with clerk, Errol Hess convening, met at the Berea (KY) meetinghouse during the September Representative Meeting. After sharing visions of yearly meeting -- building community, education, conducting business, spiritual enrichment, and SAYF graduation and welcoming new members, Friends chose a theme: *Challenge of Change: Finding our Witness*.

After considering the many helpful comments and suggestions from last YM’s evaluations, the committee proposed ways to open time to allow all YM committees and WQO reps to share news at plenary sessions, to improve continuity and participation in worship sharing, to accommodate SAYF folks for workshops and worship sharing, and to provide for intergenerational worship time.

The committee’s work will continue with an on-site meeting at Shorter College in December.

First Call for Workshops: Send your ideas or questions to Workshop Coordinator Beth Ensign hensign@mindspring.com (Look for a workshop application form on these pages and at SAYMA.org in January.)

Urgent need: An opportunity for spiritually rewarding service exists on the YM Planning Committee: A co-registrar to work with the very capable Ceal Wutka. Contact Errol Hess errol@kitenet.net (864) 379-8061 for questions or submit your name to Nominating Committee clerk Sharon Annis sharonannis@comcast.net (865) 483-8783.

WWW.SAYMA.org

Web Manager Tim Lamm keeps our yearly meeting website up to date, maintaining it weekly. Recently he put back issues of SAF on the web. Check it out.