

SPIRITUAL STATE OF BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING

Meetings in Baltimore Yearly Meeting journeyed through the stages of shock, disbelief, fear, anger, and grief following the events of Ninth month 11. The sessions held to express feelings, along with workshops, speakers, visits to mosques, and letter writing helped to bring some Light to us. Some Meetings are still holding vigils. Attendance at meeting for worship increased for awhile. Meetings have been called to re-examine the Peace Testimony. This has emphasized the importance of Friends listening to each other with love and understanding.

Ninth month 11 and the subsequent events affected children in varying degrees according to age and inclination, so Meetings made adjustments to their programs. Some Monthly Meetings found the need to make more classroom space available because more children were attending First Day school. The results have brought alterations to some Meeting Houses, and a new Meeting House. At Yearly Meeting we expect to add another Monthly Meeting. Many Meetings are seeing an increase in attendance.

Our work with Friends in this country and overseas continues. Our relationship with the Torreon/Starlake Chapter of the Navajo Nation in New Mexico has involved exchange visits by young people.

Quakerism 101 has been used to meet the need for Quaker education for inquirers and less experienced Friends. Spiritual formation groups are alive and well. Workshops on a variety of subjects have been organized as Meetings saw the need. At Baltimore Yearly Meeting Seventh month, 2001 all Meetings were asked to examine how Friends—corporately and individually—are addressing and living the Peace Testimony. Little did we realize how important this would be in light of the events just two months later.

The dynamics of the world have changed since Ninth month 11, 2001. And yet the inspired words of early Friends, namely, to seek that of God in each person and to live in the virtue of that life and power which took away the occasion of all wars, have greater authenticity and authority than perhaps ever before. As Meetings and individuals the events of the last year have tested and challenged us. And yet, we have learned that our day-to-day activities and the example we create for others can and sometimes do make a difference. We have also found strength and support in worshipping together in our Meetings.