

State of Society Westport Friends Meeting 1996

While 1995 was a time of tranquility and gathering, 1996 has been a time of quiet change and deepening fellowship. As we consider our spiritual condition, Friends often speak of warm welcome and openness. We rejoice to find that there is room in our hearts for everyone who comes to us. Even our meeting dog has a place in worship. We are a meeting of smiles and laughter, which reflect our joy in communion together.

Over the past year we have been challenged to expand, reach out, and be more tender. We have trusted in our Quaker process and find that we can change and adapt while our love for each other remains strong. Our trust in the Spirit has borne the fruit of deepening fellowship. We have restructured our First Day school classes and Christmas celebrations. The new hymnal is renewing our interest in incorporating music into worship. Oversight of our Second Sunday discussions has shifted to the Religious Education Committee. We have confidence that our foundation is strong to face future changes together.

It is exciting to see that the meeting bond is strong enough to support spiritually each of us in our lives beyond the meeting. It's not always easy to be a Quaker. And yet, we find that from the meeting we gain more courage to lead "Quaker lives" whether on the school committee, in the soup kitchen, at a clinic for migrant workers, among peers in a first grade classroom, and in a number of other unheralded kindnesses. However, we remind ourselves that no matter how worthy our worldly busyness we need time for spiritual renewal and continuing ministry to each other.

Faith and Practice defines "society" as "a fellowship held together by spiritual forces operating through each individual". We feel that through the past year we've come to experience the power of ourselves as a spiritual society.