

SPIRITUAL STATE OF SOCIETY REPORT 1997
WESTPORT MONTHLY MEETING

Our Meeting body continues to grow. The core of our spiritual condition deepens as we meet the unexpected challenges this growth brings.

Our 1st Day School keeps expanding. Its attenders are enthusiastic and articulate and have taken adult worshippers to task for tardy arrival at Meeting for Worship. Among their other comments in response to the invitation to contribute to this report were, "It's fun and interesting to be a Quaker." And "Meeting is the one consistent place where(they) are loved and respected for who (they) are" A grandmother commented, "... the quality of care and concern the young people in this Meeting get is extraordinary."

This growing number of children requires more teachers. As our 1st Day School and Meeting for Worship are concurrent, this means that several adults are unable to stay through the whole worship service. So much vitality walks out of the door at 10:15 AM - vitality that is sorely missed in the gatheredness of Meeting and the quality of vocal ministry. This concern is being held up for prayerful consideration by the whole meeting body.

We are concerned that in our flush of enthusiasm for our young people we may neglect pastoral care for adult and mature members and attenders. Illness, the problems of aging, and the psycho social stresses of modern life are omnipresent and there is a danger that we may be missing opportunities or failing in our responsibilities to minister to those in need.

There is however an appreciation of the depth of our worship and community. The children recognize "a strong sense of fellowship". One adult member feels, "... blessed to be here ", another feels, "... enriched and nurtured here", a third says, "... in this Meeting I feel accepted and welcome".

There are many activities in which members and attenders participate. We have had a generous participation at Yearly Meeting. There were monthly "Seekers Sundays" in which lively discussions explored the relevance of Quakerism in our lives. We had our annual Christmas Pageant, a fund raising pot luck for the relocation of the North Dartmouth Meeting House at Woolman Hill and of course our 36th annual Book Fair - a community event and an exhausting exercise in mutual tolerance and fellowship which it would be hard to lay down.

In conclusion, a member's words, "... we really are a spiritual community. We never really go home from here. We carry this community with us wherever we go."

Baker - Smith