

Albuquerque Monthly Meeting
OF THE
Religious Society of Friends

November 27, 1984

PRESS RELEASE

For the last several years, members and attenders of the Albuquerque Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) have joined other concerned individuals and churches across the country in an effort to provide transportation and safe haven for persons fleeing danger in Central America, especially Guatemala and El Salvador.

Our role in this effort has centered primarily on providing transportation for what has been called the "underground railroad". Out of concern for the safety of the refugees, often families with young children, this transportation has usually been carried out as unobtrusively as possible. However, a recent caravan with a refugee family came through Albuquerque and the event was made public to dramatize the Central American issue and raise public awareness.

This nationwide effort has come to be known as the "Sanctuary Movement". It is an informal network of individuals and churches that helps transport and provide hospitality for refugees who we have reason to believe would face intolerable consequences if deported. We also help provide a forum from which this issue can be publicized.

In May 1983 our Meeting made public a statement, the Minute on Central American Refugees, offering spiritual and material support to those among us assisting Central American refugees. The text is enclosed.

The Meeting is now ready to offer shelter and hospitality in Albuquerque to a refugee or a refugee family, and is making public the enclosed statement, the Minute on Sanctuary.

**ALBUQUERQUE MONTHLY MEETING
OF THE
RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS**

**Minute on Central American Refugees
May, 1983**

. . .
We encourage Friends who are so moved to lovingly confront employees of agencies such as the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the State Department, and the Department of Justice:

We commend and offer our spiritual and material resources as a meeting to those among us who assist Central American refugees:

We are committed to redirecting U.S. policies that lead to the creation of refugees.

We invite others to join in these efforts and hold no malice toward persons who disagree.

Minute on Sanctuary

November 11, 1984

The Albuquerque Friends Meeting publicly offers the sanctuary of our religious fellowship to refugees fleeing violence in Central America. We do this by extending hospitality to people in danger far from their homeland and by giving refugees the opportunity to relate their experiences to U.S. citizens whose participation in our democracy demands such knowledge. We invite them to live among us until they can return home with safety. We also challenge our government to act more wisely in its policies towards Central America, to recognize human needs in that region, and to welcome those refugees within our borders.

We recognize that in Guatemala and El Salvador death is a common result of speaking up for justice, and we are thankful that challenging our own government's policies carries far lesser risks. We defy no authority, but in cooperation with other religious groups take this small step towards healing ourselves and our country. In walking closer to the refugees themselves, we walk closer to people who have helped them throughout Central America, Mexico, and the United States, closer to Immigration and Naturalization Service officials in their work with refugees, closer to U.S. policy makers whose actions we mistrust, and closer to all in Central America who are caught up in a war in which all must lose.