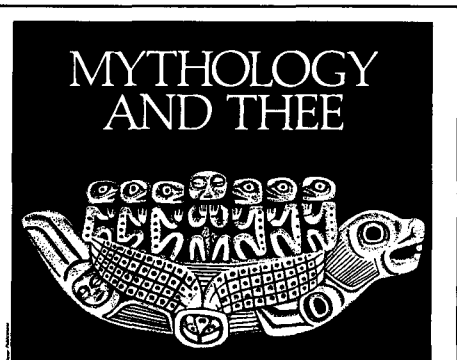


# FRIENDS JOURNAL

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by Greg Pahl

Bill Moyers' recent PBS television series *Joseph Campbell and The Power of Myth* is probably one of the most important programs ever shown on TV. The insights contained in this brilliant six-hour series are, I believe, vital for the world in general and for Quakers in particular. This distillation of the wisdom of the ages could be used to transform our traditional ways of thinking about ourselves, our community, our nation, and our world. The material in this series presents a real opportunity for Quakers to take a decisive step into the 21st century as a revitalized and renewed people.

The following week our enthusiasm turned to awe as the program developed into one of the most remarkable spiritual discussions we had ever heard. Not only were there unusual stories and lots of them, but the entire series spiraled with Campbell's clear spiritual insight. When the series ended we were sure we had to get the companion book, *Joseph Campbell and the Power of Myth* with Bill Moyers (edited by Betty Sue Flowers, Doubleday, 1988). The book, a transcription of the 24 hours of recorded conversation between Campbell and Moyers, contains everything from the PBS series—and much more! As we discussed the book and the series with Friends who had missed some or all of the original broadcast, it oc-

A number of illustrations by J. Alberto Campuzano. It is a part-time Quaker's career and a former wife who painted Campbell's ship.

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**ARE QUAKERS CONCERNED ABOUT POVERTY?**

A large proportion of the people on our planet today are ill-fed, ill-clad, ill-housed, illiterate, and ill.


by Leonard S. Kenworthy

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THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE



## HILLS

by Vasily Belev

The following story is among the routines to be published in *The Human Experience*, a book of short stories by U.S. and Soviet writers compiled by the Quaker U.S./USSR Committee and its Soviet counterpart.

—Ed.

He was awakened by a vague aching agitation. He looked at the bright, solid patch of sunshine at the end of the window and tried to penetrate to the origin of this tedium: he said in some way pleasant since he perhaps a dream? But all memories of nocturnal fantasy had gone and he was left befuddled.

The sun beamed through the clouds as well. Swallows darted through the window, pressed their tails to the rafters, returned and flew out again. The air was full of the scent of grass and drying dew. From the river came the pluck of children bathing, and on the field a horse-drawn mower rattled.

Nobody was at home. His mother, obedient to old habits, would probably have gone off with the light and grasses of age to the meadow, and his wife took the two children every morning to a pool nearby.

He went out into the green field vibrant with grasshoppers. His gaze slowed passing over the meadow and its surroundings. Last seen so many years ago. His own childhood of a strange feeling of being part of it all, a feeling both sad and glad, and mirrored at himself. Where had he come from and what was the meaning of it all? Where were the

some distance off to splash about and submerge. He recalled the previous day's meetings with an old friend, a contemporary from the village, and realized the cause of the vague depression.

Yesterday he had not paid attention to how much older this contemporary looked—elderly, in fact, though the man was actually only a little younger than himself. But during the night, asleep, that feeling had come of years irretrievably gone.

Up to that time he had thought of himself as young, but now, while sleeping, his unconscious had told him that he had already changed the second half of his life into the small cottage of everyday age. It was one way of feeling it.

The village was empty. Just as in his childhood, swallows and swifts flew over the roofs in the blue sky, and stood ready by the gates for travelers to be built round them, and the morning he wore the soft dust on the road.

He went out into the green field vibrant with grasshoppers. His gaze slowed passing over the meadow and its surroundings. Last seen so many years ago. His own childhood of a strange feeling of being part of it all, a feeling both sad and glad, and mirrored at himself. Where had he come from and what was the meaning of it all? Where were the

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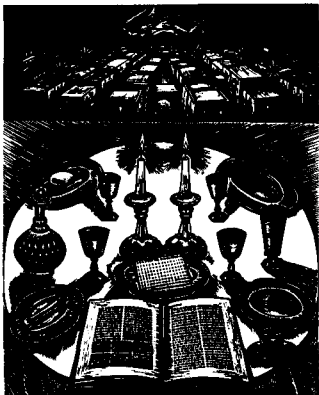
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The Passover observance has come when the spirit of peace, unity and brotherhood of all people is especially needed in the spirit of the Jews, opening them



## We Celebrated the Seder

by Anne Neufeld Rupp

Many of us Mennonites no longer live in denominational or ethnic pockets. One of the ways we can enrich ourselves is to refer to and learn from those who are not like us. Sometimes these experiences provide a new understanding of the Bible and the people who walk through its pages. That's what happened when my family and I celebrated the Seder.

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### SILENCE

IS A STRONG WAY OF  
LISTENING

**W**e call it a Quaker meeting, sometimes an unprogrammed meeting, sometimes just a silent meeting. When it's at its best, we call it a gathered meeting. At its worst, it's that senseless of worship, the poor-corn meeting.

But I remember one popcorn meeting with foodies. People were popping up to speak so frequently that one teenage stepped on the heels of another. I sat as still as possible, trying to my silence to compensate for all the words, arguing with to find some order, when low comports came to the rescue. Two people stood up at once, and began to talk at the same time. They stopped talking, and began simultaneously to yodel. They stopped yodeling and, in unison, sat down again. It was a bright moment of unattended grace, and everyone broke into laughter. It reminded me of the antics of those Indian clowns, who mimic the people in sacred dance and mock their misbehavior. It brought the back into harmony.

I think that such a popcorn meeting is made of illusions. Every thought we have exists in a network of allusions to other thoughts. By following the pathways within the network we find a lot to say. In a popcorn meeting we follow the pathways cooperatively, as if

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by Clifford Pfeil

**What are the qualities of silence in a gathered meeting for worship?**

A relay race, passing the speaking role from one to another. It's difficult to track down every allusion in the space of one meeting, but the flow of spontaneous speaking carries some promising possibilities.

Among the Hopi, the Navajo, and many other native American tribes, there exists a large repertoire of stories about the adventures of Old Man Coyote. They are told only during the winter, and no storyteller would think of telling one in another time of year. It's not just that they are seasonal stories, like those we tell at Christmas time. The telling of these stories in winter is considered to be strongly related to the forces that are found in the cycles of nature. The stories may be thought of as belonging to winter, and to these cycles, and as being in harmony with them. Hans Toelken, a folklorist who has spent much time learning about such things, writes in *Discovering the Word* that the imagery of these stories

is concerned with reality, and their episodes so reminiscent of myth, that even slight reference to them in a ritual can invoke all of their power. The stories belong to entertainment, by virtue of their humor, to instruction, by virtue of their lessons in harmony, and to ritual, by virtue of their power. Toelken, one of Toelken's Navajo informants, says that these stories are "a strong way of thinking."

I am thinking strongly about silence in meeting. Not the silence of a popcorn meeting. That silence is too thin to study. I'm thinking about the silence in what we call a gathered meeting. Such silence has three qualities: it is inward, it is shared, it is made of listening, and it is creative.

There is silence in the room, of course, but the silence of a gathered meeting exists fundamentally as a deep stillness inside each person in the room. It is inward.

The silence is within each person, but it is also between persons. If it is possible among us and brings us into communion with each other, it is shared.

It's not a silence that shuts out, like our plugs. It is made of listening. In one of the stories, Coyote stamps around until the ground comes into existence beneath his feet. Listening openly, inwardly, and together we ourselves bring into existence as spirit-filled people. It is creative.

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