

FRIENDS JOURNAL

QUAKER THOUGHT AND LIFE TODAY

09/2026



PACIFISM *and the*
QUAKER PEACE TESTIMONY
TODAY

Friends Publishing Corporation

Gabriel Ehri (*Executive Director*)

Editorial and Design Staff: Martin Kelley (*Senior Editor*), Gail Whiffen (*Associate Editor*), Sharlee DiMenichi (*Staff Writer*), Layla Cuthrell (*Video Producer*), Alla Podolsky (*Graphic and Digital Designer*), Patty Quinn (*Layout Assistant*), Renzo Mejia Carranza and Alfred Mbai (*Corresponding Editors*)

Business and Development Staff:

Sara Gada (*Director of Development*), Katie Hewko-Dykes (*Office Administrator*), Margaret Wood (*Ad Sales Representative*), Ron Hogan (*Audience Development Specialist*)

Editorial Volunteers: Eileen Redden (*Young Friends Book Review Editor*), Hartley Goldstone and Jennifer Thompson (*Milestones Editors*), Nancy Thomas (*Poetry Editor*)

Additional Editorial Services: Patricia Dallmann, Erica Schoon

Board of Trustees: Ed Abraham (*Clerk*), Patricia Barber, Max Carter, Olivia Chalkley, Yves Dusenje, Bill Fellows, James T. Fussell, Abe Kenmore (*Recording Clerk*), Patrick McGrail-Peasley (*Treasurer*), Carl Magruder, Peter Murchison, David Nagle, Deborah B. Ramsey, Jerry Williams

Friends Journal (ISSN 0016-1322, vol. 72, no. 8) was established in 1955 as the successor to *The Friend* (1827–1955) and *Friends Intelligencer* (1844–1955).

Friends Journal is published monthly with the exception of a combined June/July issue by Friends Publishing Corporation, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102. Telephone (215) 563-8629. Email info@friendsjournal.org. Land acknowledgment: Friendsjournal.org/land.

Periodicals postage paid at Philadelphia, Pa., and additional mailing offices.

Membership: *Friends Journal* is a resource free to the public online for the purpose of communicating Quaker experience in order to connect and deepen spiritual lives. Sustaining members who make a gift at any level may receive the print and/or digital editions as a benefit of membership. Learn more at friendsjournal.org/subscribe.

Advertising rates are available at friendsjournal.org/advertise or by contacting Margaret Wood at margaret@friendsjournal.org or (800) 471-6863. Appearance of any advertisement does not imply endorsement by *Friends Journal* or Friends Publishing Corporation.

Postmaster: send address changes to Friends Journal, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102.

Copyright © 2026 Friends Publishing Corporation. Permission should be received before reprinting excerpts longer than 200 words. Available on microfilm from Proquest.

AN INDEPENDENT MAGAZINE
SERVING THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY
OF FRIENDS

FRIENDS JOURNAL

Moving? Let us update your address.

Friends Journal, 1501 Cherry Street,
Philadelphia, PA 19102 • (215) 563-8629
(800) 471-6863 • Fax: (215) 568-1377
info@friendsjournal.org
Web: www.friendsjournal.org

Testing a Testimony

Peace has been a guiding principle for Quakers for a very long time. In 1660, just eight years after George Fox began to gather together what would become the Religious Society of Friends, a pamphlet now known as “The Declaration of 1660” was circulated. It is one of the earliest articulations of the Quaker peace testimony. The authors of this document were not shy about it: “And this is our Testimony to the whole World”:

The Spirit of Christ which leads us into all Truth will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the Kingdom of Christ nor for the kingdoms of this world.

Given the propensity of the world’s earthly powers toward domination and war, Quakers have had occasion to test this testimony many, many times in the 366 years since then. And with good reason! After all, a Quaker testimony that goes unexamined is not a testimony at all, but a creed by another name.

Guatemalan Friend Gustavo Recinos considers the difficulty—and necessity—of practicing peace within a Quaker community, so that Friends’ peaceful example can better influence the broader world. His call is threaded through with a lament that conflict within his Quaker church community has discouraged many of the faithful, over the course of a generation. I wonder how many readers will see their own communities’ conflicts mirrored in Gustavo’s descriptions.

Another first-time *Friends Journal* contributor, Andrew Gorby, shares his experience of being a modern-day Quaker conscientious objector, lifting up the urgency of peacefulness as well as the agony of feeling not peaceful enough, of having waited too long to express the truth of how he felt God calling him to act and witness.

A trio of Quaker Alternatives to Violence Project facilitators share their experience of leading workshops that blended AVP practice with trauma relief in Ukraine during Russia’s war of aggression. While the authors are clear that a workshop will not end the war, they testify to the real spiritual respite that focused peaceful practice can bring to the victims of war—a powerful and hope-filled example of nonviolent resistance.

I’m sure many Quakers have, at some time, been pressed by skeptics to defend pacifism with a trap question along the lines of: “Well, what about Hitler?” Welsh Friend Dewi Heald tackles this dilemma head-on in “It’s Not Just About War.” Reading it has prepared me well for the next time I’m asked about pacifism. Imagine two worlds, one where everyone chose peace, and another where everyone chose war. Which world would you want to live in? And if it’s the former, why are pacifists the ones who have to defend their stance?

We last examined the peace testimony with a special issue in 2008. If these articles have whet your appetite for more, you can find that issue archived here: fjlsj.nl/peace2008. You can also find six more articles by Friends around the world in the online edition of this issue.

Finally, I’d like to express gratitude to a treasured volunteer, Hartley Goldstone, who is concluding his service as *Friends Journal*’s milestones editor, a role he has been fulfilling for six years. Our readers have been fortunate to benefit from his careful work! We welcome Jennifer Thompson of Atlanta (Ga.) Meeting, who is taking the reins. As Jennifer begins her work, we remind our readers that our Milestones section isn’t just for death notices. If there is a birth, marriage, or transition in your Quaker community, we’d love to note it in the Milestones! Visit Friendsjournal.org/submit-milestones for more information.

Yours in peace,



Gabriel Ehri
Executive Director
ED@friendsjournal.org

CONTENTS

SEPTEMBER 2026 • VOL. 72, NO. 8
WWW.FRIENDSJOURNAL.ORG



PACIFISM *and the* PEACE TESTIMONY TODAY



Cover photo by FotografandoPorAí

FEATURES

- 6** **Welcome and Grace**
MICHELLE DOWNEY
How one meeting ministers to military personnel.
- 9** **Forging Peace and Disarming Hearts**
SCOTTY UTZ
Inside the Guns to Gardens movement.
- 13** **We Must Sing Our Laments Together**
ANDREW GORBY
On conscientious objection to a world of violence.
- 17** **It's Not Just About War**
DEWI HEALD
A British Quaker's view on pacifism today.
- 21** **Learning the Art of Presence**
CHRIS HUNTER, O.H. JACKSON NAPIER, AND
TANYA WILLIAMS
A workshop for justice and peace in Ukraine.
- 25** **The Renewal of Our Spiritual Schooling**
GUSTAVO ADOLFO RECINOS
Fostering a wisdom of peace in Guatemala.



No Clean Hands: Discerning a Personal Ethics of Economics

See page 30 for a personal essay by
cohost Peterson Toscano related to
the latest episode in our Quakers and
Money podcast series.

POETRY

- 12** **Hello, Sun**
JEANNE ALTHOUSE
- 20** **Consolation**
ANNE RICHEY
- 28** **Hospice Bed Tales**
BONNIE STOCKSLAGER

DEPARTMENTS

- | | | | |
|-----------|---------------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| 2 | Among Friends | 38 | News |
| 4 | Forum | 40 | Books |
| 30 | Quakers and Money | 52 | Milestones |
| 32 | Service | 54 | QuakerSpeak |
| 36 | Faith and Practice | | |

UPCOMING ISSUES

Write for FJ: [Friendsjournal.org/submissions](https://www.friendsjournal.org/submissions)

- **Nontheist Friends** (due September 21)
- **Quakers and Social Class** (due October 19)
- **Open Issue** (due November 23)

ONLINE FEATURES

*Friendsjournal.org/online***The Quaker Peace Testimony in Central America**

JASSON AREVALO

Central Americans' primary knowledge of the Quaker peace testimony relates to George Fox and the early Quakers; while they are aware of the global Quaker movement's social activism, it is not a topic taught in congregations.

Seeking the Light of Peace

BÁALAM SÁAS

Great deficiencies have come to Light—not only economic ones, but also ethical, health, educational, and ecological, to which the factor of migration is added, while almost divine and idolatrous powers are granted to autocrats in power.

Can Friends Confront ICE?

MINGA CLAGGETT-BORNE

How does one fight an evil system? I prayed to Quaker ancestors. The Quaker prophet Bayard Rustin says, "We need, in every community, a group of angelic troublemakers."

Is All Our Work the Peace Testimony?

JOAN BROADFIELD

When I read early Friends, I see their practice includes both the inward seeking and the outward practices—not only against war, but also working in prisons with families, and on the street bringing their truth.

Climate War in a Peaceful Africa

MERCY MIROYA

It is impossible to separate peace and the environment in Kenya's Kerio Valley. Water is scarce and the grazing land overstretched. When these resources shrink, the air is filled with tension.

The Unfinished Peace Testimony in East Africa

JOHN NDAVULA

In Kenya the peace testimony is largely viewed as a cherished historical identity rather than an active calling.

Maintaining Quaker testimonies and values?

I am very grateful for Sharlee DiMenichi's excellent article on Jacob Hoopes ("Hoopes Sentenced to More Than Two Years in Prison for Assaulting an ICE Agent," *FJ* June online; Aug. print). These are truly challenging times to maintain adherence to our testimonies and values as Quakers. I thank Jacob for his admirable statement of accountability. I hold him in the Light with hope that his faith is strengthened as he serves his time.

Carroll Ann Swanson
Marquette, Mich.

I would have hoped that Friends would refrain from violent protests in these difficult days. Friends convinced me years ago of the reality of the spiritual world. This would transcend petty political disputes and creaturely displays of emotion. In the past, Friends fed the starving in Ireland and Germany and rescued Jews from Hitler. This acting out is a failure of the communication of Friends' traditions and practices to the contemporary world.

Kevin Johnson
Long Island, N.Y.

When Jacob spoke at the sentencing, he was filled with both contrition and determination, wiping tears from his eyes when he sat down. I believe that although this experience will follow Jacob for the rest of his life, his testimony of nonviolent resistance will have an even larger impact. Multnomah Meeting in Portland,

Forum letters should be sent with the writer's name and address to forum@friendsjournal.org. Each letter is limited to 300 words and may be edited for length and clarity. Letters should be direct responses to published content; we do not accept letters on general topics or addressed to previous letters. We invite readers to engage in discussions in our online comment sections, located at the bottom of every published webpage; we frequently use online comments for our print Forum.

Ore., is committed to supporting him through his incarceration and beyond.

Ron Braithwaite
Portland, Ore.

Let me get this straight: Quaker-affiliated Jacob Hoopes has been sentenced to 30 months in prison and more than \$8,000 in restitution for throwing a rock at an ICE agent, who suffered an injury that required medical treatment? Meanwhile, since January, ICE agents have shot to death more than a dozen Americans and not one of them, to my knowledge, has paid any penalty. Did medical treatment help their victims? Did they pay restitution? Have they been held accountable for taking a human life? Where is the justice? What is justice? What is the Quaker response to this state of affairs? Do we seek an eye for an eye, or do we forgive? Is there a middle ground?

Neal Burdick
Shelburne, Vt.

Are we outsourcing our moral discernment to attorneys and insurance companies?

I know we take safeguarding very seriously ("Child Safeguarding in Quaker Spaces" by Sharlee DiMenichi, *FJ* Aug.). Because we are all good people, we want to make sure that our environment is safe for all.

I think we take it more seriously because we are all responsible. I think many churches assume the minister will handle it (wrong and mistaken, the minister might be the problem), but without such people, we all need to take our responsibilities seriously. I say this as safeguarding lead for trustees, so I know how seriously we take this.

Steve Clough
Via Facebook

As an advocate who has spent the last decade working with survivors of church-based sexual abuse, I read "Child Safeguarding in Quaker Settings" with concern. Safeguarding policies are important, but their primary function is protecting institutions from liability and decreasing the odds that sexual

abuse will happen in settings for which institutions are legally responsible. They have little preventive utility beyond that. The safeguarding industry is now mostly a product of insurance companies, which have incentive to maximize profits and minimize claims. In more ways than I could list here, this industry has betrayed the survivors whose courage led to its existence. We further the harm when we mistake these policies for comprehensive prevention.

For communities that care about healthier responses to sexual abuse, I offer the following:

When people under your care are abused, admit wrongdoing if you've done wrong. I've seen many enabling leaders defensively brandish their safeguarding policies to distract from how they've actually treated victims. As I read the article, it struck me that the only interviewed person who expressed regret, horror, and personal responsibility for the care of survivors was Mike Hanas, head of school at Carolina Friends School, who took exactly the steps that every survivor advocate I trust would have recommended that he take.

We must face our communal histories of abuse with courage and honesty, or they will haunt us forever. We won't break cycles of violence by outsourcing our moral discernment to attorneys and insurance companies, and we won't learn from survivors when we silence them through legal bullying and non-disclosure agreements.

Cultivate emotional and spiritual maturity; when it comes to prevention, nothing matters more. Immaturity looks like defensiveness and evasion. Maturity looks like adults taking genuine responsibility for their own choices and for the wellbeing of children.

Stephanie Krehbiel
Lawrence, Kans.

Talking openly about our failures to protect

Without a full accounting we have diminished our ancestors' testimony (book review by Addi Schwieterman of *The 18th Century Enslaving Industry: Lancaster Quakers Involvement*, FJ

June-July). If we don't learn from their missteps we will be doomed to make our own. Abomination is a real term that is over used, but American chattel slavery was a literal abomination.

Josiah Daniel Spiegel
Via Facebook

I come from a religious background where people are more likely to bury and whitewash the history, often backed by powerful institutions like the church. By contrast it's nice to see books like these get published and Friends actively tackling these issues in pursuit of justice and honesty.

Properly documenting history and talking about it openly (including coming to terms with our ancestors' involvement in atrocity) is the only way to move forward toward reconciliation and a more peaceful future.

Johnny Warren
Via Facebook

Nothing in, nothing out

Rufus Jones was once criticized for speaking prepared ministry in meeting ("Speaking with Spiritual Authority" by Peter Blood-Patterson, FJ June-July). He replied: of course I prepare. I read my Bible every day, as the advices say. I read the Bible and other books that reveal the works of God. I then spend many a time in quiet prayer finding communion with God.

It has often been observed that Quakers have not done away with ministers but with the laity. It is the responsibility of all members of a meeting to be open to the possibility that they may be called to speak during worship. Like a computer program, if nothing goes in, nothing will come out.

Clive Nicholls
Via Facebook

While I understand the reasons behind no longer acknowledging recorded ministers or elders—Blood-Patterson describes it as reluctance "to do anything that could be perceived as elevating some Friends . . . above others"—I agree with the author that we are also preventing certain Friends from fully exercising their spiritual gifts.

It might be difficult to restore recorded ministers and elders in certain meetings, but I agree with the author that it could deepen the worship experience and allow Friends to explore and use gifts that they might not have even known that they possessed.

Mabon Finch
Duluth, Minn.

Don't talk to strangers?

"Woman, Great Is Your Faith!" is a thoughtful rumination on this less discussed—at least at our meeting—Jesus story (*Look to the Light*, Quaker.org, Aug. 10 message by Ron Hogan). Living in Center City Philadelphia, I am occasionally approached by strangers for help (i.e. money) and also have had people knocking on our door for help. While it's always annoying to my dark side, I always remember my mother telling us about how our Quaker grandmother, when approached by a stranger at their little farm, would always give them something to eat and a little money. When my mom would ask her why she'd do that, grandmother would say, "He could be Jesus."

Signe Wilkinson
Philadelphia, Pa.

Jesus grew spiritually during his time here. He didn't come fully formed as he would have if he was the God incarnate I was taught to believe. When reading the Old Testament and then the New, I wonder if God also matured from an adolescent, revenge-oriented, ego-driven god to a more compassionate and wiser god.

My personal understanding is that "Jesus" is a label we have attached to a concept that is much bigger than traditional Christian beliefs. It pains me to see that label now attached to a god that is more like Zeus than to the teachings of the man/prophet/emissary from God I have come to understand from my reading of the New Testament and my observations of people of faith in other traditions.

Suzanna Leigh
Vashon, Wash.



WELCOME *and* GRACE

Michelle Downey

How One Meeting Ministers to Military Personnel

As the face of the woman sitting across from me crumpled and tears spilled out, I sat surprised: her memories were flooding back to a period of obvious pain in her life, which held lingering, deep wounds that were easily reopened and apparently still raw. We waited for her to gather herself, and she began to tell us how injured she had been by one of her previous meetings. To feel judged by others unleashes a host of emotions: embarrassment, shame, anger, resentment, animosity, grief, self-loathing, self-questioning, a feeling of alienation, and a profound sense of being looked down upon and found lacking. When we are the ones judging others, we can exude an aura of self-righteousness, perhaps cloaked as “just helping” but often coming across as acting superior or holier than

Michelle Downey is a member of Fayetteville (N.C.) Friends and is clerk of North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative). She enjoys reading, gardening, music, and deep conversations. Contact: ncfriendmichelle@gmail.com.

others. It can lack any expression of curiosity and humility. To pass judgment is to perhaps assume authority that is not ours to assume while fracturing the warmth of communion and community. Is it our place, really?

Strange and unique might be an apt descriptor of my little Friends meeting, which is located near the largest (by population) military base in the United States. Fayetteville (N.C.) Meeting's worship is not held in a meetinghouse of its own but in the family room of Quaker House, a support and counseling center for service members. Life in a military town has a strong flavor of military service and serves as a melting pot of folks from all over the world who have come to spend some time here in North Carolina. The meeting is no exception: we have veterans, military family members, and former military family members. In the past two years, we have had multiple active-duty attenders, both in-person and online. It is a hard truth that we will often have a limited time with most of

them, as world situations and changes of duty stations call them away from us. The peace testimony takes on a special dimension for us, as we focus on inclusion and welcome without reservation and turn away from any notion of condemnation. We hold the belief in individual discernment and trust all to pursue their particular spiritual journeys.

Our meeting space itself provides us with a symbiotic relationship. Quaker House is an advocate for peace. Along with their critical work staffing the GI Rights Hotline and educating people about both conscientious objection and moral injury, the organization provides no-cost individual counseling to military members, veterans, and military families. Executive director Wayne Finegar observes:

I see Quaker House as the immediate and continuing expression of the peace testimony every day. Quaker House started from a small group of soldiers asking for help without really knowing what they needed, and with Friends responding to the request without really knowing what they were going to do. Both the soldiers and the Quakers had faith that together they would find the way to provide the help that was needed. More than 55 years later, we still are.

As a participant in our meeting, Wayne points out that Fayetteville Friends is a worship space dedicated both to seeking peace and being welcoming to people who are directly connected to the military.

We are able to provide a continuing place of sanctuary from the violence and insanity of daily life everywhere, and especially in this town where everything is suffused with the influence of the base. [Fayetteville Friends is] creating a place where people who spend all of their lives being part of the military-industrial complex can have an hour of silence and contemplation. A place where they can know they are not going to be judged either for being part of the military nor for questioning being part of it.

Part of my own path regarding the peace testimony led out of seeing how moral, psychological, and physical injury as a result of military service destroyed my spouse, body and soul. It turned him into a person so filled with rage and hurt that it became impossible for me to remain in the marriage. Leaving after 20 years of struggle brought desperately needed peace into my life and allowed me to

heal. That healing eventually circled back around and allowed us to participate amiably (for the most part) together in the lives of our adult children and our grandchildren. While I will probably always harbor personal resentment towards aspects of military life, I must also acknowledge that in bringing me to North Carolina, that life has grown into a deep and rich sense of community in this military town.

Others within my meeting have come to us with their

The peace testimony takes on a special dimension for us, as we focus on inclusion and welcome without reservation and turn away from any notion of condemnation. We hold the belief in individual discernment and trust all to pursue their particular spiritual journeys.

own past experiences of reconciling not only with their own discernment but with the hurt inflicted by other Friends in regards to judgment of military service.

As a meeting, we join in the various aspects of members' and attendees' lives. I was honored recently to participate in the promotion ceremony of CeCe Bernstine, an Army judge advocate during her time at Fayetteville Friends. CeCe offers the following testimony:

The civil rights struggle of my lifetime has focused on access to housing, free healthcare, and more affordable education: all things the military offers. I had been told—and believed—that the military targeted people of color because America didn't care if they died. As I learned more about the military, I learned that many of the people who joined did so for real benefits that tangibly improved their quality of life and that of their families.

When I thought of the military from our antiwar testimony, I only thought of the front lines. Then, all at once, I started learning about the lifestyles and career paths of different support roles: IT; cooks; and most significantly, lawyers. I learned that the lawyers of the



Quaker House,
Fayetteville, N.C.

Army who work in the Judge Advocate General's Corps (JAGC) are considered "the conscience of the military."

I started feeling that "still small voice" calling me to learn more, and when I brought my confusion to a clearness committee, it became apparent to me that I was not a conscientious objector in the sense of holding a moral stance against weapons; my peace testimony comes from acting as a bridge between worlds. To bring the voices of my Friends into rooms where we were discussing how to deal with "enemies." To contribute to uphold liberty and freedom for all, from our religious freedoms to defending soldiers in a federal court of law.

I don't think I anticipated losing my connection to Quakers when I joined the military. I had the support of my meeting, but as we moved, I realized how the military impacts the community and Quaker meetings don't generally establish themselves in the same space as a military presence. I started to feel the divide and worried about how I would be received if I attended a Quaker Meeting and told them I was in the military.

The search for individual peace has been a common thread voiced by the members and attenders that I spoke with at our meeting. Veterans Nate and Amanda Crew were searching for a community that reflected their family beliefs. Nate says:

After attending Fayetteville Friends Meeting at Quaker House, the feeling of worship being based on quiet simplicity clinched it for me. Here was not just a philosophy of peace, but a whole attitude, lifestyle, and worship style based on peace. For someone who'd long been turned off by any sort of religious group, now to find myself (an army veteran) immersed in a community steeped in the way of nonviolence—this has been a healing and growing experience.

Our meeting has been deeply blessed by Nate and Amanda and their two young sons: a blessing we might

have missed out on if we had led from a place of judgement rather than one of curiosity and welcome.

And what about the woman who had broken down in tears? When I sat down privately with Mayland Reilly to learn more, she discussed openly how multiple experiences of the judgement of meetings had impacted the life of her family. When Mayland and her husband Sean had gone through their clearness committee prior to marriage, the committee initially welcomed Sean (who is not a Quaker) and agreed to marry them under the care of the meeting. Two years later, however, when Sean decided upon military service, some members of the clearness committee expressed regret at not having inquired regarding his relationship with the idea of military service. How might this experience of feeling judged have influenced this young couple as they began their life together? Sean and Mayland had discussed her concerns in a long decision process and were aligned in feeling that medical service would save lives and make a difference: young soldiers would have a chance at life because of the medical care that Sean would be able to provide. In their view, this was not in conflict with the peace testimony. The lack of thoughtful response in the committee members, implying that the marriage endorsement was a mistake, hampered opportunities for communion and deep fellowship.

Another unfortunate experience with Friends occurred when the young family moved to a new area and Mayland called a local Quaker meeting to inquire about attending. She was met with the harsh response that as military they were not welcome. Mayland did find out later that the person answering the phone did not represent the feelings of the meeting as a whole, but the damage had been done, and Mayland did not

Continues on page 51

FORGING PEACE *and* DISARMING HEARTS

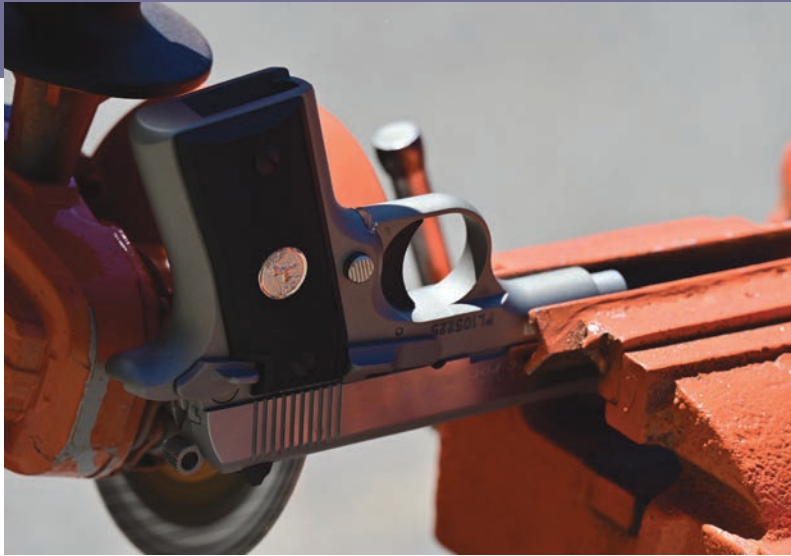


Photo by Marc Mullinax

Inside the Guns to Gardens Movement

Scotty Utz

Teresa kept pounding away over the face of the anvil on the gun metal as it drifted from bright orange to a dull red. Then the piece went back into the forge to heat up again. Over and over, she brought the face of the cross peen hammer down on the frame of the gun. The shop was hot and noisy with the forge's venturi jets sucking air to mix in with the spray of propane to create a 2,000-degree Fahrenheit chamber for heating metal. When the gun reached about 1,600 degrees, I pulled it out of the forge with tongs and held it for her to hit again and again. In time, Teresa had done all the work she could with the hammer and anvil.

Naval Criminal Investigative Service sent this gun to our shop. It was the last thing Teresa's son Lance Corporal Alexander Schrachta held. He died at 19 on active duty in

Scotty Utz isn't in the circus anymore, but life can still make him feel like he's walking the high wire when juggling the dynamic gifts of three teenagers and a spouse, while taking the RAWtools South show on the road. To keep life spicy, he's an active member of Asheville (N.C.) Meeting, Artist Blacksmiths of North America, and Forging for Peace. Website: south.rawtools.org.

the U.S. Marine Corps, losing his life to suicide in the barracks. In our shop, Alex's siblings picked up the hammer after their mom. They worked with lighter blows and greater precision, turning parts of the recoil spring assembly into a pair of hearts and a section of the slide into "dog tags" with an olive branch stamped into it. The olive branch is the maker's mark of RAWtools South. We are on a mission to disarm hearts, forge peace, and cultivate justice. Our name comes from the word "war" spelled backwards. We strive to flip the violence paradigm.

Mike Martin, a Mennonite pastor from Colorado Springs, Colorado, and founder of RAWtools, learned how to blacksmith after the 2012 massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, so he could turn guns into garden tools. He soon hooked up with Shane Claiborne, a free-range evangelical from Philly who was doing something similar. Together, they wrote the book *Beating Guns* and started a national movement turning guns into garden tools and art.

Working on ranches in Wyoming and Montana, I picked up basic welding and later got into blacksmithing to bend metal for sculptures. Shane needed a blacksmith



Photo by Stan Wilson

for some gigs and asked me and we hit it off. Taken by this work, I traveled to Colorado for a week with Mike and his dad, Fred Martin, in their blacksmith shop. It became clear that these folks not only “speak my mind,” but are living into our Quaker peace testimony in an irresistible way. One thing kept leading to another and then another; I wasn’t just “going as Way opens.” It felt more like Way kept vacuuming me in.

I had cut up a gun before. Years earlier, during a meeting for worship, near the anniversary of 9/11, a Friend gave vocal ministry about our nation’s continuing violence and our complicity. Moved by Spirit, that afternoon I took my cutting torch to a shotgun that I bought in seminary (from another seminarian) about 20 years earlier; it was the first firearm I transformed.

A couple years later, with the support of Asheville (N.C.) Meeting and later Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting, RAWtools South was launched in 2023. Since then, we have been partnering with faith communities and nonprofit organizations to host gun-safe disposal events across the South, branded “Guns to Gardens.” Community members can bring in their unwanted guns to be destroyed. We show up with a van and trailer full of protective gear, metal-cutting chop saws, grinders, vices, tents, generators, and everything else needed to cut up guns according to the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) guidelines. Then we pack up the former guns, now scrap metal, and head back to our shop and transform them into garden tools and art. With the small gun bits and pieces, we make pendants and totems so folks can carry a little slice of transformation with them. These traces of guns can spark conversations with



friends and neighbors about the violence in our country and other ways we can live.

The Guns to Gardens movement is growing. People of faith are hungry for more than thoughts and prayers. They want to do more than march and send letters to politicians but often feel stymied by our stuck system. This movement has injected new life into the communities, where folks of faith (and of no faith) get their hands dirty chopping up unwanted guns. This is something practical we can do in our own communities to make a difference. The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship is a leader of this movement; they offer “action circles,” a free six-week (one-hour per week) Zoom training on how to hold a gun-safe disposal event in your town. As more and more folks wanted in on this fun, it became clear that we needed greater consistency with how people should handle the firearms.

Stan Wilson, the coordinator for RAWtools South and co-pastor of Circle of Mercy Church in Asheville, and I begrudgingly sought out National Rifle Association (NRA) firearm safety training because of insurance. It’s been super helpful in surprising ways. Of course we needed to be experts in how to handle guns safely; how to drop a magazine; and how to clear the chamber of all the seemingly endless variations of muzzleloaders and other single shot, single action, double action, bolt action, lever action, break action, pump action, and semi-automatic firearms. But becoming more fluent in how to speak the language of folks who live inside gun culture has really helped bridge the divide between “us” and “them.”

One pet peeve of gun folks is when “libs” talk about “clips” when they really mean “mags” (i.e., magazines) or when folks say “bullet” when they are talking about a “cartridge.” Taking time to understand and learn the



Page 9: Handgun in a vice at an Asheville safe gun disposal event in June 2024.

Left: The author at a peacemaker summit in Philadelphia hosted by RAWtools, November 2024. Middle: Sparks fly as a gun is cut at the June 2024 Asheville event. Right: The chop saw team discussing proper cuts in Asheville.

language that others employ demonstrates respect for them. It's also been really meaningful to be in a relationship with our NRA instructors, who we esteem and have surprised us. Knowing and enjoying the company of folks who see this issue from a completely different vantage point is essential; it centers everyone's humanity. It's harder to throw shade or think something snarky or demeaning when you are in a relationship with the "other." Similarly, becoming a gun dealer (having a Federal Firearms Licence) has opened up doors for us that would have otherwise remained closed. Seeking out proximity is essential.

This work depends on us partnering with gun owners. In keeping with Martin Luther King Jr.'s approach, we believe that the goal of Christian nonviolence is not to defeat or humiliate our "opponents," but to win their friendship and understanding. Sometimes folks have some guns they want to get rid of and others they want to keep; we get that. We will help them safely dispose of the ones they want to be freed from and then talk to them about safe storage of their remaining firearms.

When someone is going through a difficult time, we can store their firearms in our shop's safe till that wave has passed. Our calling is to meet folks where they are and then strive to take the next step alongside them to make our communities safer.

So when we got the call from Teresa, who had lost her son, we told her we wanted to help her transform the firearm he'd used to take his life. Instead of Naval Criminal Investigative Service sending the pistol to her, we arranged for them to ship it to our shop so she wouldn't have to handle it. Stan and I reached into our faith traditions to come up with what has become a rite of

transformation for families living after a loved one has died by suicide.

This rite includes silence and some short readings—often Scripture—that reflect the family's faith tradition. It also includes cutting or crushing the firearm. Family members get to transform the object that was created for killing and turn it into something new and life-giving. At the end, we anneal

a section of the firearm, usually the barrel, by heating it up to its critical temperature, letting it soak, and placing it deep in vermiculite to cool slowly over night. "Annealing" is the metallurgical term for softening metal that has been hardened and tempered. Annealing takes time. It requires heat and abundant insulation to allow it to cool slowly. Our hearts are like metal in this way: trauma can quickly harden our hearts, and they can become brittle. Healing, like annealing, usually happens slowly.

It's been a couple years since Teresa and her kids traveled from Memphis, Tennessee, to our shop in the Appalachian Mountains, but we keep in touch. We have gotten to share meals together at Guns to Gardens events. Thanks to Teresa and her courage in reaching out to us, we got started on a new path. We now regularly work with families who have experienced the trauma of gun violence, usually suicide, and create a rite of transformation tailored to them.

This work that found us is about more than trying to curb gun violence. It's about dialing into a larger community and actively living out the prophetic vision of a time when people will "beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks" (Isaiah 2:4 in the New International Version). It is about building up the beloved community Micah goes on to depict as a place where "Everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid" (Micah 4:4, NIV).

Beating guns into garden tools is just the first step toward making people safe and ensuring everyone has a shady spot to enjoy life. It's a step on the way toward the reality of Christ's peace and community testimonies. ◻

Photos by Marc Mullinax

Hello, Sun

"Hello, sun in my face."

With the Quakers, I sit outside the meeting room, under the giant redwood trees. As we hold each other in one hour of silence, I watch the light pass through the branches, across the trunks, feel the sun brushing my cheeks.

Moved by the Spirit, Friends can break the silence with worshipful ministry.

Rita stands: "Hello, sun in my face."

Her voice is deep like the Sarabande of Bach's unaccompanied cello suites, She voices Mary Oliver, "Why I Wake Early," words that she remembers—the sun, the star, "best preacher that ever was."

"to hold us in the great hands of light— / good morning, good morning, good morning."

The sign at the door says: "Quakers welcome migrants with dignity." A Friend bought whistles for everyone, a nonviolent way of warning of ICE presence, an ICE raid. Renée Nicole Good was killed this week.

Rita's hair is long, brown, pinned up on her head. She sits in the circle next to the man with the service dog, a blonde Labrador. The animal extends one paw under the chair next to him, to reach the sun, the light. Warmth. His nose, wet with smelling scents, wiggles as he breathes in and out.

Later, as they open for announcements, the greeting Friend asks for people to keep in the light. We hear Rita again. Her John's cancer returned. He is undergoing aggressive treatments.

I think about aggressive treatments. I think about aggressive moments of joy. I think about moments. How they pass. Like the light.

When I leave, I drive home with my whistle.

"Hello, sun in my face."

Jeanne Althouse
Palo Alto, Calif.

WE MUST SING OUR LAMENTS TOGETHER



On Conscientious Objection to a World of Violence

Andrew Gorby

We live in this world, but we don't act like its people or fight our battles with the weapons of this world. Instead, we use God's power that can destroy fortresses. (2 Corinthians 10:3–4, Contemporary English Version [CEV])

Standing by for years in expectant waiting for the Inner Light to again clearly speak about conscientious objection to war had been a frustrating activity. I knew my beliefs, but I didn't know how to say them with impact. The world speaks loudly

Andrew Gorby is a member of Stony Run Meeting in Baltimore, Md., and a military-discharged conscientious objector. Andrew has taught for 18 years in Baltimore City public schools and serves on the board of Friends School of Baltimore and the Miles White Beneficial Society. He comes from a family of Quaker farmers and over three centuries of Quaker witness.

about the inevitability and utility of war and violence, about who is worthy of life (and who is not), and then, action is taken and blood is spilled. Our Quaker community's silence speaks just as clearly. The world continues to speak loudly, but today so does the Inner Light, and it burns.

The mystical antiwar clarity of my early twenties came into focus during a third-person experience of coming off of a firing range—accuracy improved (lethality improving)—a surrounding voice asked, “What are you doing here?” The voice has been almost nonexistent in the years since. Equally rare was the overwhelming feeling of confusion, followed by chilling clarity, which struck me at the U.S. Army's Ranger School. As I stared at the words, “Front toward enemy” on a dummy claymore mine, I heard that voice ask a simple question: “Who is the enemy?” I knew Jesus had already answered that question, so who was leading me?



Photo by Lisa Van Vliet on Unsplash

Is this the clearness you were seeking? Are you still distracted by what is happening in our world? Is the bigger question still: when is death, violence, war, and blood acceptable? When will the Light sanction hate? Violence is a vicious cycle; where will we be in ten years, let alone a century?

Shortly after this experience and a hard conversation with a buddy who fought in Iraq (killed as enlisted infantry, but don't ask and don't tell), I unpacked my rucksack, pulled out that same mine, stood before my squad (who had selected me to kick off our first mission at Camp Darby) and let them know, "I don't believe what I am doing here. Good luck." These were simple words which made my intentions known but lacked clearness.

You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you. (Matthew 5:43–44, New King James Version [NKJV]).

A confession that I lacked the capacity to kill, tears of relief, a place to sleep under a shed, hard boot kicks in my sleeping bag as my conscience and I rested, screaming, a debate about the war in Iraq and Afghanistan that left me pinned against a wall with spit and fingers flying, a drive out into the middle of the woods to "pick up trash" where there was none, sleeping next to a bunkmate who told me he joined to kill. The full aftermath is a protective blur. There was a phone call: "You have ruined your life," and another phone call, "I love you. Let's figure this out." Both spoken in Truth, out of love (and fear). My life wasn't ruined, but I haven't yet figured it out. Seeking has no end.

I have only written the mostly positive version of this story before. I chose to feel support and respect from many "antiwar" soldiers in training (and training others) to kill, so why focus on the negatives? They were friends, some of them good friends. The challenges weren't remotely close to the soul-wounding burdens that so many soldiers, veterans, their families, and even a far greater number of civilians across cultures carry today because of our collective infatuation with waging war. My time in the army was blessedly short, and although I was discharged as a conscientious objector, I left feeling neither like a veteran nor a person of peace; both groups remind me of this today, intentionally or not. It is a small weight I carry. I am neither angry enough, nor peaceful enough, nor aware enough, nor careful enough.

Time moved on, and my family and my role as a public school teacher became my identity. I had a peaceful purpose and was able to work in the Light every day with my students, families, school community, and in the larger field of education. There would be no unpacking of my rucksack this time and I am still teaching after many years.

Violence stalking

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing praises to God, while the other prisoners listened. Suddenly a strong earthquake shook the jail to its foundations. The doors opened, and the chains fell from all the prisoners. (Acts 16:25–26 [CEV]).

I feel convicted that I have had other mystical experiences beyond those moments in the army. I vividly remember watching my wife and life partner give birth to our three boys and feeling the kind of indescribable joy that reaches that level of hearing the Divine. With the birth of our middle son, her quickening

contractions stopped for four days when the 2015 Baltimore Uprising peaked. He wasn't ready for the violence in this world, and yet, he showed up. He emerged en caul, still seeking protection. Little did he know that I had to call down the hall for the doctors, who were distracted by what was going on outside in the city. We brought him out of the hospital into a world of violence: Humvees flanked the entryway; guards held larger guns than usual, at least for our country; and the smell of a burned East Baltimore lingered in the air. He is the gentlest of our sons.

Violence lurking

I have trouble recalling other mystical experiences with clarity beyond the birth of my kids. But there is one other experience that I recall that is outside of life or death and is mystically clear. It came with a wordless song that recently revisited my life like an earthquake.

After another difficult day of teaching and leading in a school in East Baltimore (a part of the city that is forgotten and abandoned, and where I started my teaching career in earnest and stayed for eight hard years), I lay down on my kids' bedroom floor with the room swirling and my heart racing. It was never lost on me that if you were a Black male in this neighborhood, you were statistically more likely to be killed on your own streets than on the streets of Iraq at the height of that war. The effects of that fact were felt and seen, and the students wouldn't let you forget. You could never forget it: the school pulsed with this suffering and pain.

The fights, the knives, the guns, the golf clubs, the screaming, rape, soothing and destructive intoxicants, mothers who gave a damn taking their kid into the bathroom to make their expectations felt, beating footsteps of a chase, locked down, being dragged into a back office away from a threat of murder, helicopters whirling above, a marker cap stuck in a child's head: blood—how the f— does that even happen!

Violence controlling

That same school was on the state of Maryland's "persistently dangerous list" a decade after I left: violence is a vicious cycle. Names of previous students murdered on my city streets have no grand memorials or myths paying homage to their sacrifice. They were nice, rambunctious boys. I have only told the mostly positive version of this story before.

How does any of this happen?

With the room spinning and my heart racing, I heard

that mystical voice return with a command to be a better father. The emotional demands of the job were leaving too little of me for my two (now three) nice, rambunctious boys. Playing in the background was "On the Nature of Daylight," a piece that is unforgettable and emotionally unforgiving during trying times; it's from Max Richter's *The Blue Notebooks*, an introspective classical album that is often on repeat in our household and which helped bring release after exhausting days in East Baltimore. That music is playing now as I write. A few hours ago, it spoke with explicit force that reached my soul. I had never heard it so loud before.

Why am I writing this while the world is burning? Global warfare is reaching levels not seen since World War II, and it will need "my kids." Germany and Japan are rebuilding their militaries and will need "their kids." Why must I defend conscientious objection and convince good people of the evils of war and violence? Do they really need to see all the mangled bodies of children because a strike wasn't surgical enough? Will "your kids" be pulling the trigger, defending the action, or cleaning up the mess? Violence lurking, stalking, and controlling: how many times do we need to hear the same version of death and war to understand the viciousness and inhumanity?

Photo by close to 94 blog on commons.wikimedia.org

Composer Max Richter at Cadogan Hall, London. September 17, 2010.



This is the time to take risks, seek, wrestle, and tell our untold stories. Explore those internal rooms with devotion, in the pursuit of ending war, violence, and suffering. Show up, or we will continue onward in the darkness. Speak a little more loudly; increase the cadence; make an invitation, and get the Light burning brighter for all to see.

Would it help if we saw it, smelled it? Does it smell like birth, except with man's most toxic contributions: sweat, s—, blood, body parts, explosions, fire, smoke, suffocating toxins, burning radiation, flesh-ripping machines, ruin. It cannot be sanitized nor cleaned up like birth; it is infectious. It spreads and the bits get stuck everywhere and in everything. Even a gentle scrubbing releases more blood. It stains and pollutes all living things. It rots.

Is this the clearness you were seeking? Are you still distracted by what is happening in our world? Is the bigger question still: when is death, violence, war, and blood acceptable? When will the Light sanction hate? Violence is a vicious cycle; where will we be in ten years, let alone a century?

Put your sword away. Anyone who lives by fighting will die by fighting. (Matthew 26:52 [CEV]).

I still try to be a good dad, a good teacher, and a good Quaker and Christian who follows the Light to combat the darkness, and tonight, I learned something personally profound and felt the release of another chain. There are many more, some forever earthly permanent. There will be a door opening but no walking out of prison yet.

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. (Matt 7:7–8, New International Version [NIV]).

My older boys and I are going to see Max Richter perform here in Baltimore. As I took time to learn more about the performance (and took a break from another round of edits on Stony Run Meeting's webpage on conscientious objection, itself a mystical work inspired by the concern of a young Friend and the encouragement of an older one, both Friend and Mennonite), I learned that *The Blue Notebooks* by Max Richter, the album that accompanied that Divine voice almost a decade ago and that demanded I be a better father, was composed as an antiwar protest album. For decades I've unknowingly listened to Max Richter lament war and violence and now my boys and I will get to hear him "sing" his lamentations in person while a Light for peace burns undeniably within again. It will be an evening of sad praise.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:12 [NKVJ]).

Sometimes others can make sense of our work and identity by hearing a story that needs telling. In his diaries, Franz Kafka, whose work informed Richter's *The Blue Notebooks*, writes, "Everyone carries a room about inside him. This fact can even be proved by means of the sense of hearing." There are rooms inside us all that demand exploring.

Light is hidden in drawers, cupboards, and closets. It was put there in childhood and youth for safekeeping, sometimes in panicked haste and then forgotten. Open them all. The cross-cutting Light will illuminate other hiding places; open them now. This is the time to take risks, seek, wrestle, and tell our untold stories. Explore those internal rooms with devotion, in the pursuit of ending war, violence, and suffering. Show up, or we will continue onward in the darkness. Speak a little more loudly; increase the cadence; make an invitation, and get the Light burning brighter for all to see.

Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. (Matthew 5:15, King James Version [KJV]).

We are all in the same house, being destroyed. Let us steward the cause to abolish war with the same zeal of abolishing the evils of slavery. We must sing our laments together, in unison for our children, their children, and all children of God. We can only walk out together. □

IT'S NOT JUST *about* WAR



A British Quaker's View on Pacifism Today

Dewi Heald

I have always found the response to telling someone that I am pacifist to be the same: “What would you have done in 1939?,” the start of World War II. The question misses two important points about pacifism: firstly, that it’s not just about war, and secondly, that one function of pacifism is to prevent the situation of 1939. Had more people paid heed to the witness of the All Friends’ Conference of 1920 in London, we might not have been fighting in 1939.

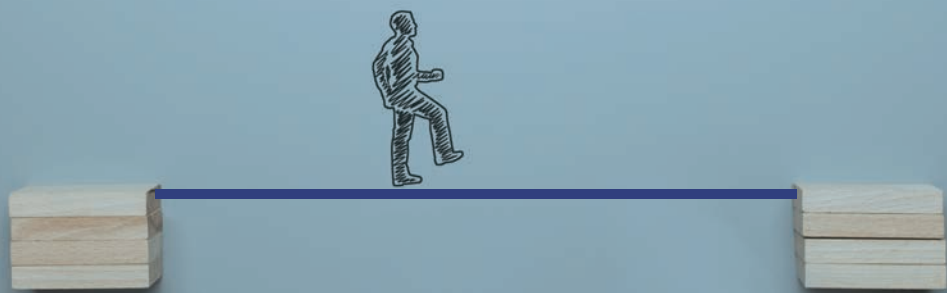
That pacifism is ineffective is a challenge that confronts pacifists. It is also part of the current criticism

Dewi Heald is a writer and musician living in south Wales in the UK. He has published two books about travels as a Quaker and writes regularly for the south Wales Quaker magazine, Hedyn (Welsh for “seed”). He is also a qualified wedding celebrant, environmental worker, and a trustee of the UK Quaker magazine The Friend.

of the peace testimony from some Friends. Certainly, it is easy to look at a world at war and think that peace has little part to play in the crises that we see on the news every night. Even within those humanitarian disasters, however, the work of Quaker pacifists makes a difference. In 2024, I was privileged to meet a Quaker who was involved with the Quaker Tent School in Gaza; she supplied a report and photos for a Quaker magazine that I was editing. Rather than recoiling from the images of the suffering in Gaza, she was promoting learning, dignity, and keeping respectful in time of war. To me, this is pacifism in action, as it emphasizes our common humanity and belief in that of God in everyone.

I would like to invert the question about the ineffectiveness of pacifism by asking when has war ever been effective. The UK magazine *Private Eye* got in trouble at the start of the current war in Gaza by printing a front cover stating that the Israeli assault on Gaza was unlikely to provide long-term stability and peace for the Middle East; this statement upset a lot of people. Whereas people always ask how pacifism is

My point is that pacifism does not have to be something passive; it can be very active. Too much of the wording around pacifism is about absence—the absence of violence or the absence of fighting—when it should be viewed as the activity of making peace.



with his new neighbor, unaware that she was a Quaker. Apparently, the base has been very worried by the local protestor and expended a great deal of energy to work out who is paying her, what her “real motives” are, and what she wants. Pacifism is a challenge to the worldview of people in positions of worldly power, and it still has the power to upset them.

This is to concentrate only on war, however, and I started by saying that there are two misapprehensions about the peace testimony: that it is ineffective and that it only applies to war. Perhaps the second misapprehension arises because pacifism is most high-profile in times of war.

effective, no one asks if war is effective.

When the UK government was proposing to intervene in the civil war in Syria in 2011, I wrote to the leading politicians involved. I reminded them that when faced with violence in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus chose healing over retaliation. I also asked if they would be prepared to talk with me in a year’s time to explain how increased violence in Syria had stopped the violence. None of them agreed.

I think that people who question pacifism also underestimate its challenge to those systems that promote warfare. As Quakers, we all accept and understand peace, but this is not a view as widely held as we would like. An instructive example is a lone Quaker protestor at the UK air force base in Aberporth, West Wales. She has sat for some time at the gate of the base with a banner objecting to the base being used for training in drone warfare. Observers might think her ineffective and assume that the base commanders would not care about an elderly Quaker with a banner sitting at the entrance. However, a newly appointed base commander happened to move into a house in the vicinity and made the mistake of discussing the protest

Yet I regard pacifism as the refusal to use violence to resolve any conflict. I have already used Jesus’s example to us, but pacifism is not just about fighting; it is about conflict of any kind. To non-pacifists, I always ask if they would settle an argument with their partner by hitting them. They are always appalled at that suggestion, so I then tell them that they are a pacifist. To me, a refusal to fight in a war is simply a different point on the same scale of refusing to fight loved ones when you disagree with them.

The concentration on war also deceives us into thinking that we live in a nonviolent society. Again, the media will highlight murders, shootings, stabbings, or any other kind of violent crime, but for me, the root of pacifism is the rejection of all violence of every kind. That means being honest about all the aggression we feel, whether we act on it or not. However annoying it is to pick up the phone to a sales call about double glazing, I am still going to be courteous and polite to the salesperson because they are also a child of God. (They are also doing a job where everyone insults them; I know because I’ve done jobs like that too.) Even refusing to be aggressive to a sales call is a statement of pacifism.

There have been several occasions in my life where I have had my pacifism tested in potentially violent situations. In the first one, I was standing in a phone booth with my girlfriend while she phoned her parents. (It seems a strange thing to write now that everyone has their own phone, but this was nearly 40 years ago, before mobile phones, when people would routinely wait in line in the street to use a phone.) A man outside the booth decided that my girlfriend had taken too long on the call and started to bang on the booth angrily. Then he tried to open the door; these booths only had handles on the outside. I could have responded violently to this, but instead I chose to stand between my girlfriend and the assailant, absorbing whatever violence he chose to use as he tried to get to her. After finding himself blocked from being able to pull her out of the box, he swore at us both and ran off. The situation was not defused, but sometimes responding nonviolently does not lead to making peace!

I have had to block violent actions since then, too. I once found myself in the middle of a group of people on a night out when some minor, drunken insult had started an argument between two people. I chose to stand between them, and when one of them lunged towards the other, I placed my hands so that he could not move forward and throw a punch. I did this several times before the would-be assailant gave up and complained to friends that I kept getting in the way. On both occasions, I suffered physically for my intervention, but on both occasions the situation did not escalate as a result. To me, this is peacebuilding in action as much as would trying to bring warring parties to the negotiating table. Of course, ideally peace should prevail, and in neither of these situations was I anything as heroic as, for instance, school staff who have talked a potential shooter out of committing their crime. My point is that pacifism does not have to be something passive; it can be very active. Too much of the wording around pacifism is about absence—the absence of violence or the absence of fighting—when it should be viewed as the activity of making peace.

That some Quakers now question the peace testimony saddens me, but I find it understandable. We do all have feelings of needing to take revenge and to retaliate; we can all be prone to holding grudges. Indeed, we live in a society where that violence is celebrated. Not long before writing this article, I was in Shrewsbury, a picturesque

town in the west of England. Being a lover of history, I visited Shrewsbury's impressive red sandstone castle. Within it though was the Soldiers of Shropshire Museum. In the museum were three floors that celebrated war: from the Napoleonic Wars of the nineteenth century to the Yugoslav Civil War of the 1990s. In filmed interviews with British troops who had been in Yugoslavia, one of the former army officers talked about "the sport of war." In this museum, there was a small case showing letters from grieving relatives over the years, and I learned that this had only recently been put on show and had caused some objections, because the museum had not wanted to show anything negative about warfare. This is the society we live in; pacifism is a challenge to this, and I believe that Quakers who wish to use violence for any cause need to consider how they might be contributing to our warlike society.

My point of view as a Quaker is that if we truly believe in that of God in everyone, we have to believe it applies to everyone. I tend to find non-Quakers like to hear about equality until you explain to them that it includes their enemies. Quakers need to bear this in mind, too, because there was someone who did directly call us to love our enemies. It should be a principle that runs throughout Quakerism. Quaker business meetings are unlikely to erupt into violence (that I know of!), but even they are built along ideas of consensus and inspiration from God rather than conflict. We already have a religious society based on principles other than conflict. I see the Quaker mission to be spreading those values to the wider society we are part of, however hard that task is.

If spreading peace seems impossible, I would leave you with the conclusion found in a book I read many years ago, which detailed a history of Quakers in the UK from the 1860s to 1920. In 1920, the International Conference of Young Friends restated the Quaker commitment to peace. The author of the book—not a Quaker herself—finished with these words about the Quaker commitment to creating world peace: "If you know society, you won't be surprised to know that they haven't succeeded. If you don't know Quakers, you may be surprised to know that they have never stopped trying." □

Consolation

On a loose stone atop the bluestone wall
by the gate, this lichen's a rough oval
of concentric bands in sage- and olive-green.

I've seen this pattern in homey braided hearth rugs,
also the colors. But sometimes I unnerve myself,
imagining it glows after dark. Were it the size

of a welcome mat, its stiffness might tempt me
to wipe my feet—then to think twice, leery
of chemical burn. In fact, the lichen's

acids *are* eating the rock—slowly, slowly—
producing a granulate my descendants could sift
with their toes. Which is consoling in its way.

I know an old Quaker cemetery tucked into woods
on a mountain-side: a few rude stones upright still,
others tipped against trees or hugging the earth.

All lichen-splotched, names ruinously weathered.
It's steadying to stand in its dappled shade where
moldered flesh and dissolving stone converge:
the kinship of matter's so evident there,

the intimacy of dust to dust.

Anne Richey
Memphis, Tenn.



Photo by Cucumbersome from commons.wikimedia.org

Entrance to the Quaker Cemetery in
Leicester, Mass., 2025.



LEARNING *the* ART of PRESENCE

Photos courtesy of the author

A Workshop for Justice and Peace in Ukraine

Chris Hunter, O.H. Jackson Napier,
and Tanya Williams

In 2023, nearly 20 Ukrainians, mostly Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) facilitators, gathered in Poland for the Friends Peace Teams Europe and Middle East two-week workshop: Alternatives to Violence Project for Justice and Peace (AVP-JP). After two years of brutal warfare following Russia's invasion in February 2022,

Chris Hunter is a member of Bude Friends Meeting in Britain and coordinator of Friends Peace Teams Europe and Middle East (contact: europe.coordinator@friendspeaceteams.org).

O.H. Jackson Napier is a spiritual seeker currently sojourning in the Plum Village tradition of Buddhism.

Tanya Williams is co-clerk of Friends Peace Teams Europe and Middle East.

even the most experienced Ukrainian facilitators admitted that the war had deeply shaken their belief in nonviolence. In the face of overwhelming violence by a powerful aggressor entering their land and their homes to kill, rape, and destroy, principles of nonviolence didn't feel sufficient to keep their loved ones alive and safe. Their very identity and way of life felt threatened.

Many of the Ukrainian facilitators hadn't attended or led an AVP workshop since before the war began: partly because logistically, it was difficult in a war zone but also because their belief in nonviolence that they had shared with others as AVP facilitators before the war had been shaken. One facilitator described this belief as a bright Light that had almost gone out.

But during the Poland workshop this Light was rekindled. It was now more of a small, flickering flame growing stronger on a personal level. Practicing the exercises together allowed a sense of joy and inner peace to return, a reminder of the gift and power of



Page 21: The groups's journeys to the Carpathians from all over Ukraine and beyond.

Left: Missile and drone strikes on the day we had to take refuge in the hotel shelter hotel shelter after Russia fired 800 missiles and drones across Ukraine.

Below: Informal time during an evening.

Bottom: Closing exercise for the day.

nonviolence. Conscientious objection to war does not abdicate a legal right to self-defense. Still, nonviolent options are stronger than violent ones and are necessary for just, peaceful civil societies during and after violence. Violence only destroys. It cannot create. It has no future. Nonviolence on the other hand is life-giving: it heals, generates, and creates. It offers a future.

Though reconciling nonviolence with the injustice of ongoing military invasion of their country still felt hard, they found different starting points for cultivating and practicing it within themselves and with those around them. They emphasized that peace without justice wouldn't work, but ways to work step by step for justice and peace had opened.

At the Poland workshop an idea to hold a workshop combining AVP-JP with trauma relief exercises in Ukraine was suggested by Olha, Friends Peace Teams local coordinator in western Ukraine. Olha and



her colleague Yuliya support Ukrainians by relieving psychological trauma among those seeking refuge from the war in western Ukraine, many of whom were displaced by attacks in the east. They counsel groups and individuals and train professionals. Their therapeutic work largely focuses on getting people to believe in

themselves so that they can stay energized and motivated. The transforming power of life helps people overcome hopeless situations, and being energized helps them to resist. Olha says:

Stress tolerance, flexibility, and striving for the best are the three pillars for people who want to survive tough battles and remain human while spreading peace. This work promotes the idea of the possibility of peace and reduces the degree of hatred between people.

Delayed by several challenges, including the logistics of organizing anything in a war, the idea for a workshop in Ukraine finally came to life in mid May of this year in the Carpathian Mountains of



western Ukraine. We gathered with a group of 20 Ukrainian teachers and psychologists from all over Ukraine to learn and practice new tools, recharge, and spend time together in a relatively safe part of the country.

The program was made possible through a partnership across the

The authors with the interpretation team.

Below: Cooperation exercise forming shapes as a group with thread without words.



programmed and unprogrammed branches of Friends. We are grateful for the fundraising efforts of Friends in Western Yearly Meeting, Fairfield (Ind.) Meeting, and to Friends everywhere who helped make this retreat possible. This is a reminder to us all that we are all needed and can work across the lines that we perceive to divide us.

The workshop, titled *The Art of Presence, Cultures of Justice and Peace*, blended AVP-JP with the trauma relief exercises that Friends Peace Teams Ukraine coordinators Olha and Yulia have been conducting. The program was tailored by Ukrainians for the needs of people experiencing war for the fifth year, with facilitators from Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Many participants arrived tense, anxious, and

traumatized. The workshop helped them relax, open up, recharge, and build a good sense of community.

As well as surviving over four years of war themselves as teachers and psychologists, they have also been caring for children: continuing their education and helping them deal with the trauma of war. Some teachers shared that they take whole classes of schoolchildren into air-raid shelters, often on a weekly basis, and some for whole days at a time. Teachers from one school close to the frontline conduct all of their teaching underground to keep the children safe.

Workshop activities allowed space for participants to consider and plan how to share these new tools with the children and other groups at home. We created a map with threads showing where everyone had come from in the country, including many from the east where the war is most intense. Some participants shared that this was the first time that they had felt relaxed and light since before the war started in 2022: a valuable opportunity to both learn new tools and recharge.

We gathered in a hotel surrounded by forest in the Carpathian Mountains, close to Slovakia, supposedly the safest area in Ukraine. It was held here because people from regions experiencing war can travel to this area easily, meet safely, and enjoy much needed respite. But on day five of the workshop, even this most peaceful far southwestern region of Ukraine was hit by multiple

Russian missiles and drones. Despite a three-day ceasefire, phone app alerts urging us to find an air-raid shelter sounded four times during the afternoon and evening. The Slovak government closed the nearby border indefinitely “for security reasons.” Chris and Tanya, British Friends, and Jackson, a former Quaker co-

Right: Informal time during an evening.

Below: Broken squares exercise in groups of five.

pastor from Western Yearly Meeting in Indiana, had used this crossing to arrive and planned to use it to leave Ukraine. The closure was a real inconvenience for us but for our Ukrainian friends, it was an unremarkable day in a war in which hundreds of thousands of people have lost their lives.

Participants remain connected through a social media group where they continue sharing resources and stories. Olha and Yulia support them on this forum and hope to conduct annual or biannual workshops if support can be found.

One of the workshop participants, Marina shared: “There are places where you go with your body, but come back with your soul. That’s exactly what the psychological training Art of Presence, Cultures of Justice and Peace in the Carpathians became for me.”

Among the mountains that silently hold the sky, one senses life particularly strongly: real without masks, rushing, and unnecessary noise. The Carpathians have become not just a location but a living metaphor for the inward journey: somewhere you had to rise above your own fears, somewhere you had to go through the fog of doubt, and somewhere you just had to stop and learn to be here and now.

The art of presence is not just about psychology. It’s about the ability to hear the silence within yourself and with people who could be mirrors in which you could see your true emotions. And it was also about warm conversations, views without judgment, and support that heals better than words. And now I know: presence is not just being there. It’s all



about being alive in every moment of your life.

“My children don’t like going to the shelter. My son ignores the air-raid sirens, and my daughter sometimes goes down to the shelter,” said Olha. “There are many parents like me in Ukraine. We all worry about the safety of our children and look to the future with hope.”

The workshop will not end the war, but it helped those who attended and those who will benefit from their new skills, mostly children, to keep going through it. It gave people a positive time of respite and a deep sense of companionship and support: in itself a powerful witness of nonviolence in the midst of war. □



THE RENEWAL *of* OUR SPIRITUAL SCHOOLING



Photos courtesy of the author

Fostering a Wisdom of Peace in Guatemala

Gustavo Adolfo Recinos

My name is Gustavo Adolfo Recinos. I'm a member of Friends Church in Guatemala City. I have belonged to my congregation for 40 years, and I believe that my contributions have been significant in helping establish a foundation of peace and harmony.

The analysis of my congregation's situation begins with the recognition that we, as a church, have struggled to enter into a sphere of peace and concord. We cannot speak of peace and harmony while incidents of violence

Born in 1960 in Guatemala City, Gustavo Adolfo Recinos lived in a picturesque part of Guatemala called Huehuetenango. That's where he graduated as an elementary school teacher, and he later earned a degree in physics from Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala. He's taught math, physics, chemistry, and biology. He joined Friends Evangelical Church 40 years ago. Translated from the Spanish by Renzo Mejía Carranza.

within the Lord's Church still occur. These are manifested through verbal aggression, accusations, and defiance of authority, all of which reflect poorly on the church in the eyes of the general public. Yet who can refrain from expressing opinions when faced with such events? Although the church's constitutional framework encourages reflection that will lead toward understanding and harmony, peace often remains little more than an ideal.

I joined the Friends Church in the 1980s, the harshest years of the military conflict that Guatemala experienced. While I cannot state this with certainty, I suspect that the historical context influenced the church to adopt a heated and confrontational tone. When I speak of violence, I refer to discussions that escalated into heated arguments and passionate exchanges, which created a tense and unpleasant atmosphere.

People's feelings were hurt. Accusations were made in insolent tones, and confrontations often seemed to



Previous page: Pastor Maudiel Arévalo and his family at Iglesia Amigos in Guatemala City, Guatemala. This page: Visit by Iglesia Amigos Friends to San Ignacio, El Salvador.

foreshadow something beyond mere disagreement. For a long time, I believed this environment could be explained by the church's organizational model: when we are naturally inclined toward debate, we begin with disagreement and try to reach consensus. However, between disagreement and consensus there is much to navigate, and at times, we found ourselves floundering in a sea of fruitless arguments, which generated anxiety and took a heavy toll on the church's spiritual health.

I also thought about the fact that the geographical center around which our church revolves is in the eastern region of Chiquimula, Zacapa, and Izabal, where people tend to have more forceful and aggressive temperaments. This might have contributed to our discussions inevitably ending in bitter disputes.

The peace accords that brought Guatemala's armed conflict to an end were signed in 1996 during the administration of President Álvaro Arzú Irigoyen. He brought together the revolutionary forces of the URNG (Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity) and the Guatemalan army. After many rounds of negotiation, they finally reached agreements that laid the foundation for a long-awaited peace. Hostilities had begun in 1957, leading to four decades of armed conflict and approximately 250,000 deaths.

It is worth mentioning that under the shadow of the civil war, other serious social problems emerged that later plunged society back into an atmosphere resembling war: drug trafficking, organized crime, and gangs. Even after peace was achieved, these forces continued to victimize Guatemalan society, creating a climate of fear and constant mourning.

Our justice system, led by the judiciary, the public prosecutor's office, and the national police, has remained weak and deeply corrupt, which has resulted in an ongoing chain of events that has consistently shocked

society with the outrage of institutionalized injustice. I'd like to believe that the church's role is decisive and that it should influence society's structure in a way that transforms it from its very core. Yet under these circumstances, I believe the opposite has occurred: evil permeated society so deeply that it eventually contaminated the heart of the church.

Amid these tangled disputes, many noble brothers and sisters experienced persecution within the church and eventually left, believing it was futile to try to change such an inflexible and harmful system. But as the saying goes, no trouble lasts forever. Gradually, we have arrived at a place where we have learned to be more reasonable and cautious in our contributions. Unfortunately, an entire generation had to pass away in the wilderness of anger, indifference, and pain before this transformation occurred.

Our governing structure has not changed significantly; the statutory framework remains intact. So what changed? I believe there were devout brothers and sisters who understood that their greatest contribution to the Church was prayer: constant intercession asking God to lead us into a new springtime in which understanding would prevail. Tentative steps toward reconciliation began to emerge at the beginning of the twenty-first century. New leaders appeared—some more educated than others—and despite differing opinions, this ultimately led us toward greater love and harmony.

Now I ask: what would have happened if we had begun with the Bible? When Jesus says in John 13:35 (all quotes New International Version), "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another," the biblical foundation is unmistakable and would likely have led us down a very different path. I do not believe that the believers of that earlier era were less spiritual than we are today, nor do I think they were incapable of recognizing Scripture as an essential guide for daily church life.

I'm analyzing the historical background of my own church. I do not intend to generalize these conclusions for the entire Quaker world. However, if we look at Latin America, our historical circumstances have been remarkably similar. El Salvador experienced a civil war;



Honduras, although it did not officially declare one, fought insurgent groups such as the Cinchoneros and also participated in the Nicaraguan Contra War during the 1980s. I will omit Nicaragua because, despite its civil conflict, we had virtually no Quaker presence there until recently. Similar stories could also be told about Bolivia, Peru, and other countries.

We must overcome historical paradigms and understand that secular circumstances should never determine the behavior of the church. Rather, the gentle, loving, and peaceful character of God's people should gradually influence society, with the hope of leading others to Christ Jesus.

changing myself, then my family, and afterward my community, I might have succeeded." And this is where I wish to focus this apologetics discussion by addressing several questions.

How do we come to the Church? Perhaps some of us fall into pride and assume that our importance within the Church should be measured by how much we can change its structure from the inside out. Yet we arrive without experience or spiritual maturity. Galatians 6:1 refers to "you who are spiritual," implying a maturity that none of us possesses at the beginning. Spiritual growth resembles wine: it requires time to mature.

Scripture also warns about appointing novices. In 1 Timothy 3:6–7, we read: "He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap." Yet, there is no formal induction process. No one tells us to wait patiently, to learn first. And what should we learn? We should learn to pray, read Scripture, meditate upon it, practice mercy, understand grace, forgive ourselves, and initiate a process of internal cleansing before we begin to contaminate others.



Top: A childcare center in Zone 18, Guatemala City. Bottom: Students at the Christian Academy of Guatemala.

Only then will we possess our greatest advantage. Society thinks backward from humanity's failures, whereas God's people think forward toward humanity's potential. Change begins with ourselves. There is an epitaph that says something like this: "I wanted to change the world, but I could not. Perhaps if I had begun by

Although discipleship is expected to accomplish this, reality often proves otherwise. Mentoring should be personal and intentional, much like the relationship between Greek philosophers and their students. Over

Continues on page 51

Hospice Bed Tales

If hospice beds could speak
We'd hear not much of ways to die
But of ways to live
On breaths of courage, truth, care,
Ways to worship in each now moment,
To notice the right ruby remains of a glass blown life
Well spent. We'd be
Coached on how to listen to the heart
Not with counting stethoscopes only
But with ear spirit that wants to know each life's
Immeasurable tectonic plates.

They'd tell
How much they wish for guests
To be by windows to wink at spatula wings gleaming by
Hear the hymn-singing trees
Or smell the moonseeking air of a warmer night.

They notice every tear that drips,
Every clench of sheet or pillow in the bang of pain.
They wish they could quiet the moans,
Silence the hammers, gently coast each
Occupant to laps of angels.

While watching,
Beds see smiles in their guest's eyes
When a concerned face dips over the rail
To inquire what is needed.
Beds know of the wish that
Such faces would linger awhile
Even when it's a nothing-to-do time,
Except sit quiet there as ancient restful pines
Without masks or gloves or anyplace else to go.

Hospice beds might like us to know
That their guests are more than old books
Packed into barn lofts,
Waiting to be de-cobwebbed and read again.
They are not mere ballerina straps carelessly
Left behind, littering Earth's Palace.
Their camouflage is always unintentional.

Hospice beds would implore:
Guests need to treasure your loving presence soon
Before beds turn chilled empty once again.

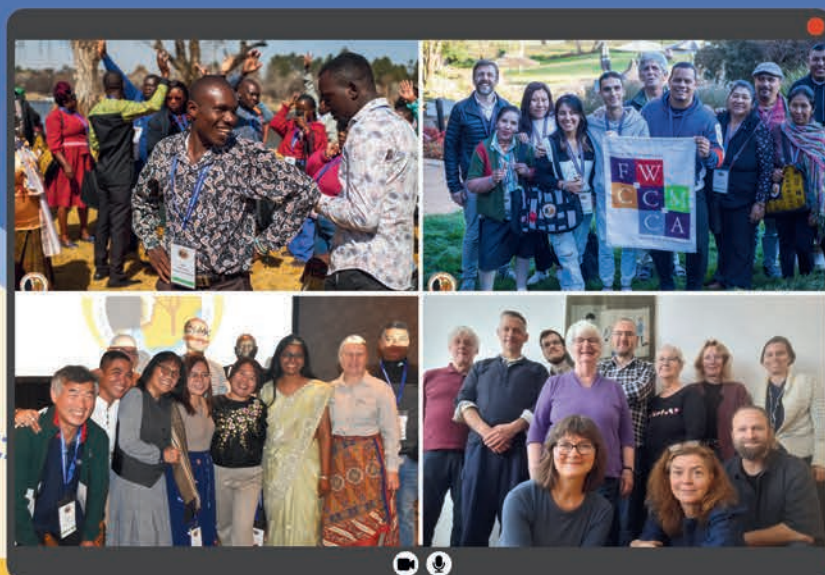
Bonnie Stockslager
Remington, Va.

Photo by Bret Kavanaugh on Unsplash



Let Peace Be Among Us

World Quaker Day



Join Friends across borders, time zones and Quaker traditions in worship and prayer for peace.

- 4 October 2026
- 8+ hours of worship
- Online via Zoom
- Each hour hosted by a different part of the world where prayers for peace are particularly needed.

Hear from Friends in Palestine, Cuba, Democratic Republic of Congo, USA and Southern Africa.

Worship will last 8 hours, you don't need to be there for the whole time – you can come just for an hour or two.

Find out more at www.worldquakerday.org



No Clean Hands: Discerning a Personal Ethics of Economics

PETERSON TOSCANO

When my cohost Diana Yañez shared her vision about an entire podcast season focusing on Friends' relationships with money, I assumed she would plunge me into a world of spreadsheets, stock portfolios, and ethical questions about earning and managing money. To my surprise, this series is really about something near and dear to my heart—discernment.

At the same time I began working on the Quakers and Money series, I ran into a dilemma on a different podcast I produce. Days before we began recording a new season, one of the cohosts messaged me that she did not feel comfortable using the recording platform I use since it is an Israeli-based company; she is committed to Palestinian rights, which includes standing in solidarity with the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement.

I panicked. I hadn't known the company was Israeli-owned, and I did not know if it was complicit in supporting the Israeli military's actions against Palestinians. As someone who supports Palestinian rights and works with various social justice-minded organizations, I faced a crisis. How could I find and learn a comparable alternative in less than a week, and who would pay for the new subscription?

Fortunately, as a Quaker, I have witnessed meetings for worship with attention to business where, after a Friend shares something challenging for the group, the clerk holds the tension in silent waiting. While this sometimes can be an inappropriate action designed to silence a dissenting opinion, usually it creates a space for Friends to pause and reflect before reacting.

I began my research by digging into the company's website, and I



pored over news articles about the founders. I sent multiple messages to the company, and I searched BDS campaign lists. I found nothing questionable about the company's actions, but to assist with my inquiry,

I reached out to Dov Baum, director of American Friends Service Committee's Action Center for Corporate Accountability. Dov brings a wealth of grassroots experience from her work with Israeli anti-occupation organizations, regularly teaching on the intersections of corporate accountability, the BDS movement, and the economics of the Israeli military industry.

Dov told me, "The fact that it's an Israeli company is an invitation to research it. Because of the current situation, many mainstream Israeli companies are basically mobilized to support the military." Dov explained though that the boycott, which began in 2005, is not an action against individual Israelis but against institutions. The key to the movement is about maintaining a targeted, strategic campaign.

Dov helped me see the important difference between individually driven actions and collective strategic campaigns. Dov raised critical questions and a sober truth: "What are we trying to achieve? Are we trying to have clean hands? Living in late capitalism, living inside a system that oppresses people, having clean hands is very difficult. Actually, my favorite quote is, 'there are no clean hands in late capitalism, only more or less strategic interventions.'"

Dov pointed out there are two tiers of action. "One is personal moral choice. We do not judge it. Everybody has a right to say, 'I'm not comfortable eating it, buying it, putting it inside my house.' That is your choice. The next level is how to create corporate accountability. And to do that, you

need an organized campaign."

I hear in Dov's words a recurring theme that has come up throughout the Quakers and Money season: We have the opportunity and the urgent need to address the illusion of separation. As with nature, individuals are part of a larger body of connected parts; similarly, in the world of finance, we are connected to each other. If we want to bring about change, we can engage the larger collective to put significant pressure on oppressive systems and companies.

While I was initially anxious about digging into the world of finance, I am beginning to understand that the values I already practice—asking deep questions and joining with others in collective action—are the exact tools I need. Unpacking my personal finances doesn't require me to act alone or be perfect. It simply requires me to stay curious and move as part of a larger community.

Coming up next month: Many meetings have been deep in conversations around reparations for years, but these conversations don't always lead to actions. In the September episode, we dive into reparations and living into abolition. Moving beyond common anxieties and the paralyzing fear of "not doing it right," the conversation reframes reparative economies around living amends—structurally changing the conditions of our communities so that historical and ongoing racialized violence cannot be repeated.

In next month's column, my cohost Diana Yañez will consider how to have money conversations that can really lead to action, whether it's about reparations for past harms or fair compensation for those who provide needed services to a meeting community.

Peterson Toscano is a queer Quaker writer, performance activist, and cohost, along

with Diana Yañez, of Season 6 of the Quakers Today podcast, in which they explore money not just as personal math, but as a spiritual practice and communal responsibility. The limited-run Quakers and Money column shares essays by Diana and Peterson on themes related to the series.

Resources and Recommendations

Revisit an article from our October 2018 issue, “Money as a Mutual Blessing” by Lola Georg (available at Friendsjournal.org/issue-archive), which invites Friends to consider financial relationships as opportunities for mutual blessing. Drawing on George Fox’s call to “answer that of God in everyone,” she asks how money conversations might shift if we moved from anxiety and greed toward community, abundance, covenant, and generosity.

Also, discover the hidden history of Monopoly. Before Monopoly became a game about buying property, bankrupting friends, and crushing opponents, it began as “The Landlord’s Game,” created by Lizzie Magie in the early 1900s. Magie designed the game to teach players about land, wealth, rent, and monopoly power. Her original version included two sets of rules: one that rewarded shared prosperity and another that exposed the destructive logic of monopoly.

Do you have a question about Quaker values and money? Or a resource to recommend from your own financial journey? Let us know and you might get featured on the show! Leave a voicemail by calling 317-QUAKERS (317-782-5377) or send an email to podcast@friendsjournal.org.

Quakers Today is a production of Friends Publishing Corporation. Listen at QuakersToday.org or your favorite podcast app, and watch extended video interviews on our YouTube channel at Youtube.com/friendsjournal.

Quakers Today Season 6 sponsors

Friends Fiduciary: Ethical investing through a Quaker lens.

American Friends Service Committee: Challenging injustice and building peace.

Voted BEST Retirement Community by the Baltimore Sun Seven Years in a row!

FOCUS

on what you enjoy.

Now's your time to enjoy it all. In our diverse and inviting Life Plan community, surround yourself with people you'll like and social opportunities you'll love. Settle into a home amongst nature, supported by a continuum of care for every age and ability. At Broadmead, you'll be able to focus on a lifestyle you truly enjoy!

BROADMEAD | **Broadmead.org**
A Dynamic Lifestyle Community

Request your free Broadmead Planning Kit!
information@broadmead.org

Nurturing Campus Environment

Quaker values of integrity, equality, justice, and stewardship guide a welcoming community where students can grow into the person they're meant to be.

UNIQUELY
Guilford
COLLEGE
GREENSBORO, NC
www.guilford.edu/uniquely

Teaching Peace, Justice, and Equality in Early Childhood Classrooms

ONE MEETING'S COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS



Photo by Sarah Sprogell

Group of teachers, consultants, and Durham Meeting members involved in the book project. The author is on the far right.

INGRID CHALUFOUR

Give peace a chance, yes, but why not get serious and give it a place in the curriculum: peace courses in every school, every grade, every nation. Unless we teach our children peace, someone else will teach them violence. —*Colman McCarthy, journalist and founder of the Center for Teaching Peace*

In these dark times when people are wondering what they can do, Durham (Maine) Meeting has found a path to peace education in local schools. In the fall of 2020, Durham Meeting held a series of conversations about becoming antiracist, including how we might live out our values in our local community. The Social Justice Book Project grew out of one of those conversations.

I have learned over many years as an early childhood educator that children benefit from seeing how others practice and nurture spiritual values. Socialization goals such as kindness and empathy are common in early childhood classrooms. In the Social Justice Book Project, we added a social justice framework to these activities.

Over the course of three years, we learned a great deal about how to use carefully selected books as a

springboard for creating an anti-bias classroom culture and as a way to pursue topics of racial equity and environmental justice. This project has taught us not only the power of books but how to use them in a way that maximizes children's social learning.

Each year we solicited volunteer public school teachers in five neighboring towns: pre-K to second grade. Supported by funds from the meeting and discounts at a local bookstore, teachers were given a selection of six to eight well-vetted picture books to use in their classrooms. Our committee, two consultants, and the teachers met several times during the year to share their experiences of using the books with students. After the first two years, a grant from Obadiah Brown's Benevolent Fund allowed us to expand and document our work.

Our Social Justice Book Project team was fortunate to include several retired early childhood educators, one with extensive familiarity with children's literature. Criteria were developed for selecting books written and illustrated by people from diverse groups that were represented in the books, as well as books developmentally appropriate for children four to eight years old. Identifying wonderful titles became an

ongoing project as new relevant books are being published all the time.

Our strategy became clustering books under topics. Using several books with related content allowed the teachers to go deeper as they pursued goals of kindness, empathy, fairness, nonviolence, and appreciation of diversity. We organized books under three topics and developed a teacher guide about each of these: Creating an Anti-bias Classroom Culture, Exploring the Black Experience in America, and Wabanaki History and Culture with Attention to Care of the Environment. In Maine the Wabanaki people are very much present but not widely recognized. The curriculum and resource materials we developed are now being used in more than 30 classrooms. (The guides are available online at the Durham Meeting website, durhamfriendsmeeting.org/?p=6895.)

Here are a few example stories we've collected from the classrooms.

Kate, a kindergarten teacher, shared how she used *Each Kindness* (by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by E. B. Lewis) and *The Buddy Bench* (by Patty Brozo, illustrated by Mike Deas) to foster kindness, inclusion, fun, and friendship as cultural norms in her classroom. After leading an activity in which the children drew pictures of their hopes and dreams

Grants for Teachers



The T. Wistar Brown Teachers' Fund grants funds to Friends who feel the call to teach at the primary or secondary school level and require financial assistance to complete their preparation for this work, or for graduate studies needed to improve their effectiveness.

Since candidates must be at least 21 years of age, we are able to help aspiring teachers, those who turn to teaching in mid-life, and experienced teachers looking to improve their skills.

Grants may be made for a few hundred to a few thousand dollars and are made two times a year.



T. Wistar Brown Teachers' Fund

For more information, please visit:

www.twbfund.org



Friends Committee
on National Legislation
Lobbying with Quakers

Stock up for justice and peace!

Donating **appreciated securities** is a great way to support FCNL's work for peace and justice. You avoid **capital gains taxes** and make an important gift toward the world we seek.

Questions? Contact Stephen Donahoe
at Stephen@fcnl.org or 202-465-7560.





Display at Durham (Maine) Meeting about the Social Justice Book Project featuring titles included in the curriculum guides.

about friendships, the class drew up a set of agreements (behavioral norms). Kate then read *Each Kindness*, a story in which a girl regrets not being kind to a new girl in her class. Next came *The Buddy Bench*. During the first reading, the class noticed that there were children in the story who wanted to play but were not being included. The children in the story came up with the idea of a “buddy bench” where kids could go if they wanted to be asked to play. Kate’s class loved the idea, and they went outside to find their school’s buddy bench. Sitting on it and around it, the children heard the story read again. Then they did some role-playing to act out the story. Kate read the book again a few days later to invite more discussion.

The book *Our Skin: A First Conversation About Race* (by Megan Madison, illustrated by Jessica Ralli) became a touchstone in classrooms. The book explores differences in skin color, the false concept of race, and the birth of racism.

Emma, a combined first- and second-grade teacher, kept the book visible when reading other books in their study of the Black experience. She referred to it often when difficult questions were asked. “Well, remember in *Our Skin* how. . . . Let’s go back and re-read that page.” Jennifer, a kindergarten teacher, used the book to help children understand the science of skin color and how it does not define who we are. On her first reading of the book, she read only the section on skin

tones. The children brainstormed words they could use to describe their own skin and then created self-portraits using crayons and paper with a wide variety of colors to choose from. On the next reading, they heard the beginning and

focused on the message that the way a person looks does not define who they are. They participated in some survey activities to get to know their classmates better. The third reading of the book focused on racism. To reinforce this lesson, Jennifer referred to it as they read other books about the Black experience.

There is much to learn about social justice from children’s literature by and about the Indigenous population who cared for our land for thousands of years before it was stolen by colonists.

Jeanne read to her first and second graders a book titled *We Are Water Protectors* (by Carole Lindstrom, illustrated by Michaela Goade), which is about Indigenous people demonstrating against a pipeline that may affect their water quality. By combining multiple readings of *We Are Water Protectors* with other books about demonstrations, she helped students explore how gathering together with signs can be a way of making change. She showed students photographs of marches, including the March on Washington, to illustrate the power of community action. Even people who are opposed to the change or unaware of the issue can end up thinking, “Wow! Lots of people care deeply about this. Maybe I should learn more.” As a follow-up the children identified a cause that they cared about and made their own posters. When they took their posters home, several children asked their parents if they could take them

to a protest.

Children often bring experiences from school home with them. We found it was important for families to know what books are being read, so they can be prepared for conversations that may arise. Brigitta sends a letter to the parents of her pre-K children when she is going to talk about race. She shares the topics of their conversations, what books she will read, and the reasons for these lessons. Jennifer sends a quick email to the parents of her kindergarteners daily and always includes the title of the book they have read.

Over the three years of this project, we learned that children readily identify unfairness and easily understand the importance of caring for the environment. These books offer them an opportunity to examine these topics from some distance, and yet through related activities, they are able to apply what they are learning to their lives.

This project and our work with the teachers gave us a glimmer of hope that kindness and empathy can be nurtured in our young children. Our committee and our Quaker meeting found joy supporting this project. We look forward to seeing the fruits of our labor of love. May this foundation of respect and appreciation for others, as well as peaceful means for resolving conflicts, create a blueprint that the children can build on to create a more just community for all.

Ingrid Chalufour brings over 40 years of work as an early childhood professional to her initiatives at Durham (Maine) Meeting. She serves as clerk of the meeting’s Peace and Social Concerns Committee. Contact: icalufour@gmail.com. Other Friends in the Social Justice Book Project work group include Margaret Leitch Copeland, Wendy Schlotterbeck, Jeanne Baker-Stinson, and Cynthia Wood.

Finding Your Way

A SPRING TERM IN RESIDENT COMMUNITY



February 27 - April 17, 2027

Join this on-campus resident student program to reset, reconnect, and rejuvenate on our 24-acre arboretum outside of Philadelphia. If you're at a crossroads in your life, need space and support to rest, or simply wish to experience the rhythm of daily study, work, and worship in community, Finding Your Way might be the reset button you've been seeking. This program will bring together Quakers and spiritual seekers of all backgrounds for three or seven weeks in resident community.

Learn more at pendlehill.org/springterm



PENDLE HILL

A Quaker Study, Retreat, and Conference Center

Grounded Presence, Sinking Deep

A TESTIMONY OF A LEADING TO ELDERSHIP

SIAN SAUL

This piece of writing attempts to capture a piece of ministry I gave at the Young Adult Friends Gathering at the Jordans Meetinghouse near Beaconsfield, England, in August 2025. I led a session entitled “Gifts of Eldership and Spiritual Nurture.” I invite you to read the following as you would listen to ministry.

My eldership journey began with an invitation. In fall 2023, I was asked to speak on a panel at a regional meeting about being a young Friend and intergenerational community. I had been a part of the Oxford Young Adult Friends (YAF) group for just under a year and still felt quite new, but I agreed to take part. By the end of the meeting, I felt inspired to find a way to take on more of a role within the YAF group.

A month later the two Friends who had been organizing the group decided that it was time to lay down the role to allow others to pick up the work. I volunteered to join the new organizing committee. As part of the handover process, one of these Friends spoke to us about what elders do in meeting for worship: holding the meeting in prayer; being attentive to the movement of the Spirit in the room; watching for Friends who may have a message but not sharing it; grounding the meeting and drawing it into deeper faithfulness.

I started to practice this and found it quite simple. It was much easier for me to focus on the meeting than on my own concerns.

Sometime later my friend Matt Rosen was looking for elders to accompany him as he traveled in the ministry. I didn't really know what this entailed but expressed an interest anyway. Our first adventure together was to Fritchley in Derbyshire. It was a great learning experience for me, not least because I was soon asked what my role there was. As I recall it, the answer I found then is one I stand by: to support my minister to be faithful. This looked different ways on our different adventures; within the meetings themselves, it was most often being a grounded presence, sinking deep into the silence and praying for Matt. Afterward, we would spend some time together reflecting on our experiences of the session.

Occasionally, there would be pieces for me to share, too. At first, I felt quite unsure as to whether that was within my remit. Matt was reassuring that my primary responsibility at all times is faithfulness even if that seems to lead outside the box I had put myself in (and that it was nice for him to not be doing all the work).

In each place we visited, there were one or two Friends who would approach me afterward and thank me for my presence, my stillness. Nominated or not, I think those Friends were elders, attuned enough to the Spirit to notice and understand what I was doing there.

Outside of meeting for worship, I think eldership and pastoral care overlap somewhat, as outside of

meeting is where the groundwork for gathered meetings is laid. Eldership in that space looks like community building. It is in making people feel welcome when they come to meeting, learning their birthdays and making sure there is cake, making sure the dinner is prepared, that the meetinghouse is set up, that the Zoom is properly configured, that there is someone to talk to about joys and about struggles. For me, eldership looks like love for everyone who comes to my meeting. It is the joy of learning how the Spirit is moving in the lives of my Friends.

Though my experiences of eldership thus far have been very rewarding, there are challenges too. Elders are often called upon to mediate conflict. It can be difficult to set aside personal feelings about a situation and listen to what God is asking of you in those conflicts.

Addressing our own spiritual needs is crucial, as we must be standing in the waters ourselves in order to lead others to them. This is what I hope eldership committees can be—places where our elders support one another in their spiritual lives for the benefit of the whole community.

I have received eldership from many places along the way. A notable

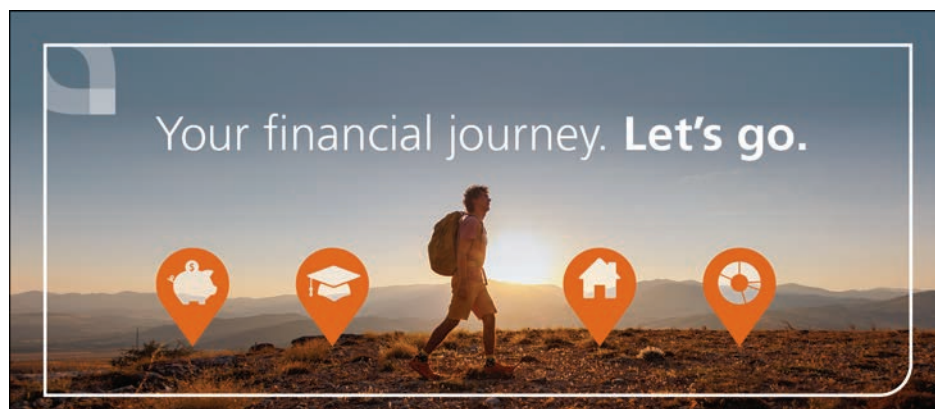


Photo taken by the author during the 2025 Young Adult Friends Gathering in Jordans, UK.

example of this for me was related to a time I was making arrangements for some visitors to the meeting. I was tasked with making Saturday arrangements, and there was a scheduling conflict for use of the meetinghouse. As it was an event organized by other members of the meeting, I thought it would be easy to resolve, but I quickly found myself in conflict with those Friends. I was very distressed in this time. I did not understand why God wanted me to proceed with actions that put me in conflict with my meeting. I spoke to some young Friends about the situation one evening and they formed a clearness committee for me that night, staying much later than we usually would. That support was so valuable to me; it helped clarify the leading for me and gave me the strength to continue on the path God had laid for me. It also transpired that conversations that those Friends then had allowed the way to open for resolution of the conflict. I needed the help of my community and it was given. I am incredibly grateful for that.

In each step of this journey, I have been motivated by love of my community and faithfulness to the will of God. In both offering and receiving eldership, it is necessary to trust God and trust each other. I have witnessed the transforming power of God; it has taken me step by step into faith. I have learnt how to listen for that power behind the words and a little of how to call to that power in others. I am still practicing listening to and trusting this power. Laying it all out like this in ministry has cemented for me the great gift that God has given me in this leading—the immense tenderness, love, and care I have received to share with others.

Sian Saul has a gift for eldership. She is a named elder in her meeting and has traveled in eldership of a traveling minister. She is a member of Oxford Young Adult Friends in Oxford and of Oxford and Swindon Area Meeting (OSAM), UK.



Your financial journey. **Let's go.**

Charting your path, together.

With expert support and a full range of services from Everence®, you can build a financial future that reflects your values and goals. Take control of your finances and let Everence guide you on your path to success.

 **LET'S GO** Find out how we can help you meet your financial goals at everence.com

 **Everence®**

Banking | Investing | Retirement | Financial Planning | Insurance | Charitable Giving

Securities offered through Cetera Advisor Networks LLC, member FINRA/SIPC. Advisory Services offered through Cetera Investment Advisers LLC, a registered investment adviser. Cetera is under separate ownership from any other named entity.

Investments are: • Not FDIC/NCUSIF insured • May lose value • Not financial institution guaranteed • Not a deposit • Not insured by any federal government agency.



Gather. At Foxdale, our residents love to gather together. Whether enjoying a movie in the auditorium, serving on a committee or catching up over cheese and crackers, the community spirit here runs deep. Learn about all we offer and plan a visit at (814) 272-2146.

 **Foxdale Village**

A Life Plan Community Guided by Quaker Values

500 East Marylyn Ave. | State College, PA 16801 | foxdalevillage.org 

All stories by Sharlee DiMenichi

Quakers defend birthright citizenship; FCNL, FGC join faith groups in amicus brief

On June 30, 2026, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed a lower court's ruling that children born in the United States to undocumented parents are "subject to the jurisdiction" of the United States and that the Fourteenth Amendment guarantees them citizenship, according to *SCOTUSblog*.

The 6-3 decision in *Trump v. Barbara* struck down President Donald Trump's January 2025 executive order 14160, which denied citizenship to children of certain immigrants. The order prohibited citizenship for children of mothers in the United States illegally and fathers who were not citizens or permanent residents. It also precluded citizenship for children of mothers in the United States only for short-term stays with fathers who were not citizens or lawful permanent residents.

Quakers from Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) and Friends General Conference (FGC) signed a friend of the court brief, also called an amicus brief, supporting the plaintiff, pseudonymously named Barbara. Attorneys filed the brief on March 4, 2026. Barbara is an asylum seeker who escaped gang violence in Honduras and discovered she was pregnant in February 2025, WCNC reported. Barbara is one of three plaintiffs using pseudonyms in the class action suit, according to NPR.

Friend of the court briefs are filed by parties with relevant interest and expertise who are not involved in a lawsuit, according to Cornell Law School.

The Fourteenth Amendment states that every child born in the United States is a U.S. citizen, the friend of the court brief argues. FCNL and FGC joined 55 other faith groups in filing the brief. Other faith groups represented include Muslims, Jews, Episcopalians, Hindus,

Baptists, Catholics, Church of England, Unitarian Universalists, and interfaith organizations.

Quakers have long supported religious freedom, the brief explains. Birthright citizenship prevents children from having to return to countries where their parents were persecuted for their religious beliefs.

Congregations represented in the amicus brief include members who have thrived in the United States and benefited from Constitutional guarantees.

"As recognized in amici's religious texts, welcoming the stranger is a broadly shared and indelible ethic. The Citizenship Clause represents the apotheosis of this value by extending the same citizenship rights possessed by one's own children to the children of the stranger," the brief states.

Birthright citizenship provides Constitutional assurance that children born in the United States have the same "privileges, immunities and rights of citizenship regardless of parentage," the brief states.

The freedom of religion guarantees in the First Amendment as well as the protections of the Fourteenth Amendment reinforce each other, according to the brief.

Congress enacted the Refugee Act of 1980 and the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act with broad public support, according to the brief.

Birthright citizenship is a source of membership in religious congregations, according to the brief. Approximately 30 percent of religious adherents in the United States are first- or second-generation Americans. First- and second-generation Americans account for 43 percent of Catholics and 69 percent of Orthodox Christians.

Trump v. Barbara would harm asylum seekers; many Friends' families came to the United States as refugees and asylees, according to Barry Crossno, general secretary of Friends General Conference.

Had the justices favored Trump, millions of U.S.-born children would

be rendered stateless, meaning they would be ineligible to work legally, collect social security, or access medical care, according to Crossno.

U.S. Solicitor General D. John Sauer, who represented the Trump administration, argued that the Fourteenth Amendment's citizenship clause did not apply to immigrants but only to formerly enslaved people and their children, according to court transcripts.

"A stateless child, they'd be in the same position as an illegal immigrant today," explained Carol Nackenoff, Richter Professor Emerita in the Department of Political Science at Swarthmore College.

Most immigrants do not come to the United States to get citizenship for hypothetical future children, according to Nackenoff. Most people leave their home countries to flee persecution or to escape poverty.

Had the June 30 decision favored the Trump administration, it could have opened the possibility of the justices revisiting the Supreme Court's 1982 decision in *Plyler v. Doe*, in which justices declared unconstitutional a Texas law that prevented state funds from being used to educate children who were undocumented immigrants, according to Nackenoff. The court ruled that children who are in the country without documentation are persons under the auspices of the due process clauses of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments. The court countered the argument that undocumented immigrants are not within the jurisdiction of the state because they entered the United States illegally.

Attorney Cecillia D. Wang, of the American Civil Liberties Union, represented Barbara, according to Oyez. Other organizations providing legal work for the plaintiff included the Legal Defense Fund, Asian Law Caucus, and Democracy Defenders Fund. U.S. Solicitor General D. John Sauer represented the Trump Administration.



An aerial view of the Federal Correctional Institution in Sheridan, Ore., 2009.

Hoopes begins 30-month prison sentence at minimum-security camp in Oregon

Robert “Jacob” Hoopes surrendered to authorities on Thursday, July 23, 2026, and began serving his 30-month sentence. He is incarcerated at the Federal Correctional Institution, Sheridan, in Sheridan, Ore., according to a Bureau of Prisons database of inmates. Hoopes is housed in a minimum-security satellite camp at the prison, according to a post on a website maintained by his father, Tom Hoopes.

The family website encourages supporters to choose one of 900 days of Jacob Hoopes’s sentence and spend the day performing actions that reflect their values, then write to Jacob and his family about what they did. Suggestions include attending a city council meeting or preparing food for a neighbor. The site also invites supporters to contact Tom Hoopes for an address to which they can send letters to Jacob.

Prisonpedia says the minimum-security prison camp lacks traditional jail cells and houses incarcerated people “dormitory-style” and that people living there can “be assigned to work details outside the secure perimeter, including grounds and support work for the broader institution.” Everyone incarcerated at the prison is male. FCI Sheridan houses 1,509 people; 266 live in the camp, according to a Federal Bureau of Prisons webpage.

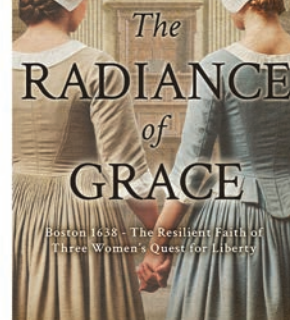
An orientation handbook for the prison states that medically cleared incarcerated people will have paid jobs and will receive re-entry support to facilitate their return to the community after their sentences. Recreational activities include sports, board games, hobby crafts, music programs, and movies, according to the handbook. Religious and psychological services are available. People living in the prison may volunteer to serve as supportive companions for incarcerated people who experience suicidal thoughts.

A 2024 report by the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of the Inspector General noted significant understaffing at the prison, leading to lack of or delay in administering medical, dental, and psychological care as well as limitations in educational and vocational programming for people living in the facility. Inspectors visited the prison unannounced between November 27, 2023, and December 1, 2023. The report states that the prison took steps to reduce the backlogs in care that the inspectors discovered.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons did not respond to a request for comment on the report.

Read the full story, with links to sources, at [Friendsjournal.org/hoopes-sentence](https://www.friendsjournal.org/hoopes-sentence).

Sharlee DiMenichi is a staff writer for Friends Journal. Follow all our news coverage at [Friendsjournal.org/news](https://www.friendsjournal.org/news); send us tips at news@friendsjournal.org.



Good Trouble
Friends In Boston 1660
HF by Margaret Cotton



www.HFreemanKnives.com



CLASSIFIEDS HAVE MOVED ONLINE!

Find housing, travel, book,
music, and custom
Quaker marriage certificates
all in one place.

Visit for the latest Quaker
classifieds or place your own at
[friendsjournal.org/classified](https://www.friendsjournal.org/classified)

Rooted and Reimagined: A Quaker Theology in African Soil

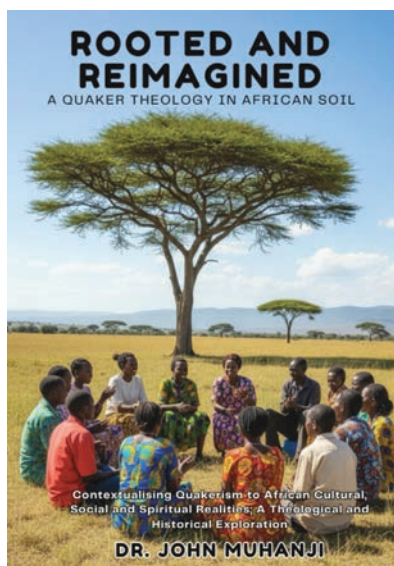
By John Muhanji. Chance Publishers, 2026. 480 pages. \$25/paperback; \$9.99/eBook.

Reviewed by Alfred Mbai

I was born a Quaker and grew up within the confines of Quakerism because my great-grandmother was among the first female Quakers in Kenya. I attended Kaimosi Friends Junior School before later joining St. Paul's University in Nairobi, an ecumenical institution by nature, and later, I moved to Switzerland for ecumenism training at the Bossey Ecumenical Institute. Throughout my time interacting with ecumenists, one question became increasingly important to me: What does it mean to be authentically African and authentically Quaker? It is the search for an answer to this question that led me with excitement and curiosity to approach John Muhanji's *Rooted and Reimagined: A Quaker Theology in African Soil*.

An African Quaker theologian, church leader, and practitioner, Muhanji is well qualified to be a Quaker church elder. He recently served as director of Friends United Meeting's Africa Ministries Office, a position he held for over 20 years before retiring this past March. His understanding of African Quakerism today arises from his experiences of seeing its growth, its institutional struggles, and its search for a theological identity.

Rooted and Reimagined was "born out of a long and prayerful reflection on the state of Quakerism in Africa," writes Muhanji. He begins with a discussion on early Friends theology in 1600s England and North America followed by an examination of the first American Friends mission that landed on Kenyan soil in 1902. After Kenya gained independence from British colonial powers in 1964, many missionaries left the country, often with little notice, leaving African Friends ill-prepared to manage the institutions they helped to build, such



as schools, hospitals, and churches. Muhanji identifies the tensions that have shaped Quakerism on the African continent: inherited and historical from the missionary era as well as later social and political realities. At the heart of his reflection are a set of questions:

What does it mean to be Quaker and African? How do we reclaim a faith that has nourished us while shedding the structures that have alienated us? How do we root the Quaker vision in African soil without compromising its spiritual essence?

Muhanji frames much of the book around a concept of contextualization—it is neither a rejection of inherited Quaker tradition nor a formation of a new tradition but a recovering of the radical spirit of Quaker faith in the context of Africa today. Muhanji is urging African Friends to create, interpret, and live their Quaker faith through African histories, cultures, art, music, languages, spiritual practice, and communal realities. It is an ambitious and passionate prophetic call.

In considering ways to carry out this call, Muhanji highlights practical concerns such as youth participation, women's leadership, theological education, public witness, peacebuilding, and economic empowerment. He argues that contextualization is not merely

translating Quaker ideas into African languages or adding African cultural elements to inherited church structures; it is the deeper work of allowing theology and practice to grow from the experiences, wisdom, and spiritual life of African communities.

During the Pastors and Leaders Conference held in Uganda last July, pastor Paul Kuloba of Uganda Friends Church reflected that God is not finished speaking and African Friends are not merely recipients of a finished tradition. I believe this strongly; it follows the Quaker belief in continuing revelation. As Muhanji would put it: Africans need not abandon Quaker essentials but instead listen to how the Spirit may be calling them to embody the testimonies and spiritual discernment within changing African contexts.

One question raised by the book is the role of individual African voices in this journey. Rather than treating Africa as an object of study, Muhanji draws extensively on African theologians, historical experiences, communal practices, and the lived realities of Friends who speak with and from African concerns. Still I would have loved to hear more voices in the book from ordinary African Friends: their stories, conversations, struggles, and experiences of worship and their testimonies.

Rooted and Reimagined took shape during Muhanji's time as the 2025 Henry J. Cadbury Scholar at Pendle Hill study center outside Philadelphia, Pa. Frances Kreimer, director of education at Pendle Hill, writes in the foreword about Muhanji's "joyful spirit and firm conviction that Quakerism must genuinely engage with African realities."

I found *Rooted and Reimagined* inspiring, challenging, and necessary for setting the foundation of further study into African Quakerism. The book opens a conversation about African ownership, theological identity, and the future of the Quaker movement in Africa. Muhanji's writing shows a conviction of urgency: pointing out that Quakerism cannot



**“Do not be overcome by evil,
but overcome evil with good.”**

Romans 12:21

Explore resources for peace, spirituality, and
Quaker practice at fgcquaker.org/resources



remain alive by repeating inherited forms, and believing that it has both a history to reckon with and a future to shape. The book is a hopeful invitation to the entire Quaker family to listen.

Alfred Mbai is a member of Friends Church Limuru in Kenya. He holds a master's in communication from St. Paul's University and a certificate of advanced ecumenical studies from the Bossey Ecumenical Institute in Switzerland. He is a champion for gender equity and rights and uses the written word as an advocacy tool. He is a corresponding editor for Africa for Friends Journal.

26 Weekends in County Jail: A Quaker Journal of Resistance

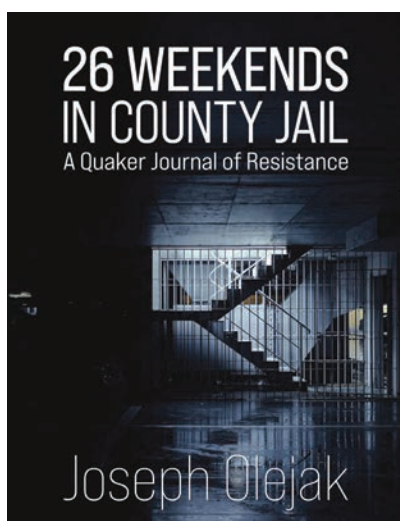
By Joseph Olejak. Flare Books, 2026. 256 pages. \$21.95/paperback; \$14.95/eBook.

Reviewed by Michele Sands

On November 22, 2013, Joseph Olejak entered the holding area of the Columbia County Jail in Upstate New York for not paying his taxes. This record of his next 26 weekends covers his musings, jail conditions, personal tribulations, and conversations with other inmates (population 140) and corrections officers, weekend by weekend. It is worth reading.

A chiropractor and father of two girls, Olejak decided in 1996 to stop paying his federal taxes in protest of U.S. involvement in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. After years of threatening letters, the IRS raided Olejak's office and home in 2009, and then in 2013, they summoned him to federal court and ordered him to county jail. In consultation with his lawyer, Olejak had decided to plead guilty in order to avoid lengthy time in court and federal prison time, as he likely would've received the maximum sentence of five years.

Olejak's initial anger at being punished for doing something that he believed in lessened as he began to understand the circumstances



that had led to the imprisonment of other inmates, as well as the prison-industrial complex that keeps pulling them back. The near intolerable jail environment included constant noise; extreme temperatures; metal beds inconducive to sleep; and non-nourishing foods that often lead to diabetes, heart disease, and general poor health. As a professional who was jailed for moral reasons, Olejak was considered an outsider by both inmates and the corrections officers. As they viewed him practicing yoga and natural health remedies, and saw his willingness to share his knowledge, they started calling him "Doc" and looked to him for advice and camaraderie.

Though he adjusted to most jail procedures, he drew the line at locking his own door at night. As punishment, a corrections officer took away his pillow: his one comfort for his neck and back when sleeping on a metal bed.

When he began his war tax resistance, Olejak was not a Quaker, but he later started attending Old Chatham (N.Y.) Meeting. He acknowledges the meeting's profound support throughout his ordeal, both during the imprisonment and in publishing the book this year.

Quaker practice made Olejak good at listening. Most Columbia County inmates were convicted of drug or

family court charges. His reports of these conversations—profanity included—bring to the reader an acute understanding of prisoners and their lives inside and outside, including their families and communities. A painful injury and a doctor-prescribed opioid leads to drug abuse; a traffic violation gets put off as other immediate bills are paid; a loss of a car leads to loss of a job; a layoff leads to lack of child support payments; all lead to the eventual destination of time behind bars. There but for fortune go I.

A well-read author, Olejak quotes from the Bible, Pope Francis, George Fox, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Malcolm Gladwell, and Rumi. As a war tax resister myself, I was most interested in his discussion of Mandela having "no choice but to become an outlaw," a quote from Mandela's autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, which Olejak began reading during his tenth weekend in jail. Later in the same chapter, Olejak writes: "As the IRS tax deadline of April 15th approaches again [while in jail], I have to face the question of what I am willing to pay for. . . . I support food stamps, but find drone strikes horrific." He makes a case for Peace Tax legislation, which would allow "persons of conscience to pay . . . a separate income tax that supports all the needs of the country except war."

In many countries, it has been universally acknowledged for centuries that conscientious objection to war is an acceptable form of protest. It is enshrined in the laws of countries worldwide, including our own. Why shouldn't we demand that our money must not be conscripted for war, as an acceptable form of conscientious objection?

One of only two war tax resisters to be imprisoned in recent history (to my knowledge), he is often asked, "Was it worth it?"

My response is that you can't answer a moral question—a spiritual question—with a pros and cons calculation based on money, status, or

comfort. The choice not to pay taxes and withdraw my money from the war system came from a spiritual place. Whether it was worth it didn't really apply because it was a choice made beyond fear.

This very human book—about prison life, about spiritual life—is to be read and shared, and perhaps, acted upon. Alternatives to Violence Project supporters and other prison advocates need this in their libraries. Book groups and individuals will find grist for thought. More about Joseph Olejak can be found in a 2014 QuakerSpeak video, “Why I Stopped Paying Taxes,” and two *Friends Journal* articles published in 2015.

Michele Sands and her husband are war tax resisters. She still worships by Zoom with Upper Susquehanna Quarterly Meeting; currently living at Collington retirement community in Bowie, Md., she also worships with Friends on land populated by Potomac and Piscataway Conoy Peoples.

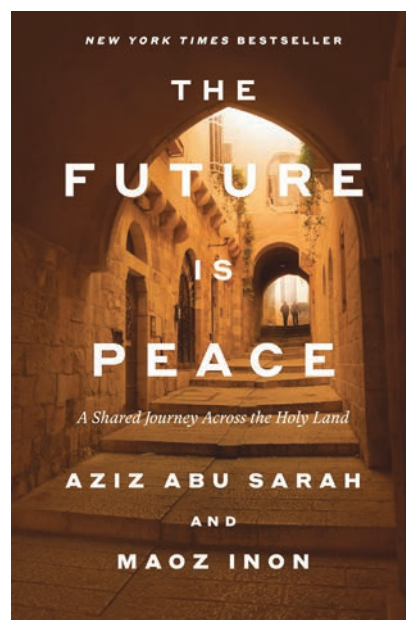
The Future Is Peace: A Shared Journey Across the Holy Land

By Aziz Abu Sarah and Maoz Inon.
Crown, 2026. 240 pages. \$30/
hardcover; \$14.99/eBook.

Reviewed by Max L. Carter

In 2002, I participated in an international Quaker study trip to Palestine and Israel sponsored by American Friends Service Committee. While in Jerusalem, our delegation met with Naomi Chazan, then a deputy speaker of Israel's Knesset. She summed up the challenge of peacemaking between the two “sides” with these words: “The great tragedy of our situation is that there are two narratives of our history together that are both true, but don't meet.”

That observation of two competing narratives is the basic theme of *The Future Is Peace*, and the coauthors seek to share in the book from their Jewish Israeli and Muslim Palestinian experiences how finding a way to



comprehend the other's story can forge a pathway to a just peace. It wasn't an easy path for either. Israeli Maoz Inon lost both his parents in the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023, and Palestinian Aziz Abu Sarah's brother

Advocacy Teams

 Friends Committee
on National Legislation

**You don't have
to work alone for
peace and justice**

*Advocacy Teams build relationships
with Congress and advocate for policies
that advance the world we seek.*



Join an Intro to Advocacy Call

[FCNL.org/Teams](https://fcnl.org/teams)



died from injuries inflicted by torture in an Israeli prison. After initial rage and grief, they reached out to each other, recognizing that revenge would only lead to further violence, and understanding that the actions that led to their loved ones' deaths did not rise out of a vacuum. Both Inon and Abu Sarah had backgrounds in the travel industry, and they joined in taking a trip together through Israel and the Occupied Palestinian West Bank to share their histories through the sites they visited.

In Jaffa and Tel Aviv, Inon shared the lively debates among Jews about the nature of Zionism and the structural inequalities in Israel. For his part, Abu Sarah described how Jaffa was a vibrant Arab city of 120,000 before 1948 and the establishment of the modern state of Israel, and a year later, it was a city with only 4,000 ghettoized Arab residents.

Visiting Jerusalem, Inon described the Jewish attachment to the city through its religious and political history, sharing the narrative on which he was raised of a city under constant siege. Abu Sarah described the strictures placed on Palestinian Arab residents in an effort to "Judaize" traditionally Arab East Jerusalem and thus create a unified Jewish Jerusalem. Their insight is that it is important to stop seeing Jerusalem as a prize to be claimed and instead see it as a sacred trust to be shared.

Traveling through the West Bank, their stories are of both Jewish and Arab connections to the land, while pointing out that Israel's military occupation and the spread of settlements has adversely affected the occupied population, particularly through the confiscation of water resources, settler attacks, and the treatment of Palestinians by the military and security police. Abu Sarah relates how Islamic texts do not dispute a Jewish presence in the land, but he opposes the West Bank settlements owing to discriminatory laws and practices. Inon explains a source of Israeli fear of Palestinians in

the West Bank by relaying the story of two army reservists who mistakenly entered Ramallah on their way to a nearby army base and were beaten to death. Although he doesn't mention it, the narrative in Ramallah is not that the two soldiers "took a wrong turn" but that they were found in a car (at the front gate of the Friends Boys' School!) with electronic equipment monitoring a funeral procession and then were attacked by angry mourners. Though Palestinian police attempted to protect them, the crowd overwhelmed the police and killed the soldiers. Competing narratives! They are abundant.

In Nazareth, Inon visits one of the guesthouses he had arranged in the Arab part of the Israeli city: one of several he once had established throughout Israel in his effort to promote "tourism as peacebuilding." While it was operating, the guesthouse helped revitalize the once rundown section of Nazareth. Now, however, it is closed because of the ongoing conflict. Both he and Abu Sarah see this turn of events as symbolic of how Israelis and Palestinian Arabs once lived side by side as in Nazareth but are now divided by bureaucracy, segregation, and even physical walls. The Israelis that Palestinians now meet are usually only soldiers or settlers; most Israelis rarely encounter Palestinian Arabs, and they stereotype them all as a threat.

Abu Sarah and Inon view the challenge to peacemaking to be a result of embedded competing narratives, of the lack of equity and justice, and of the difficulty in connecting in meaningful ways with "the other." In the face of these roadblocks (sometimes literal ones!), they cite the resilience and steadfastness of those seeking a just peace, the long hope people maintain for a better future, and the commitment of many people on both sides to take action for peace. They describe a cycle of trauma and vengeance that leads to death and destruction, but they also lay out a way to "defeat the monster" by looking

one another in the eye: to humanize the other—not to "normalize" an unjust system but to connect with one another in a mutual search for a future of a just peace.

Max L. Carter is the emeritus William R. Rogers Director of Friends Center and Quaker Studies at Guilford College. He is a member of New Garden Meeting in Greensboro, N.C., and serves on the Board of Friends Publishing Corporation, publisher of Friends Journal.

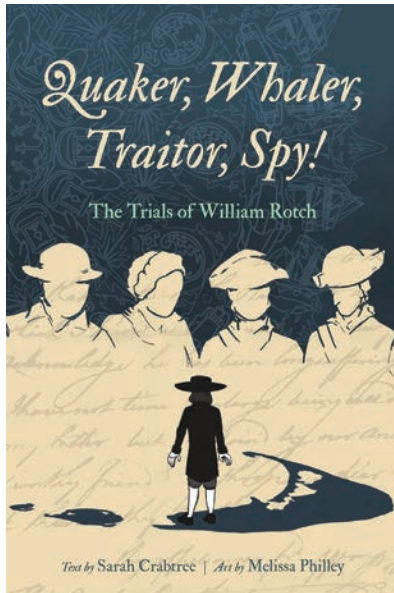
Quaker, Whaler, Traitor, Spy!: The Trials of William Rotch

By Sarah Crabtree, illustrated by Melissa Philley. Penn State University Press, 2026. 120 pages. \$79.99/hardcover; \$24.99/paperback; \$19.99/eBook.

Reviewed by Cameron McWhirter

Historian Sarah Crabtree published a book in 2015 in which she explored how Quaker missionaries traveled from Europe across the Atlantic along trade routes to spread and adapt their faith. I reviewed her *Holy Nation: The Transatlantic Quaker Ministry in an Age of Revolution* (in *FJ* Sept. 2016), and I found it to be a carefully researched, well-written academic work. I'm used to hefty histories, and *Holy Nation*, at 304 pages, fit the bill. So I wasn't sure what to make of her latest when I sat down to read a graphic history (a mere 91 pages of story) on the life of Quaker whaler William Rotch.

Quaker, Whaler, Traitor, Spy! is excellent. Crabtree could have done a service by simply turning the forgotten Rotch's memoir into a briskly paced graphic history (with great art by Melissa Philley). She does that but then adds so much more, including inserting herself as an illustrated character to address her audience directly: "This is a story about how I was wrong," she begins. History can be viewed from many perspectives, and many can be correct at the same time. As Crabtree seeks the truth about Rotch, she learns how elusive



the “real story” can be.

I am reluctant to give away too much of the story, as that would reveal the book’s ingenious format. With twists and turns, the book raises fundamental questions about the nature of history, the motivation of early Quakers, and how more than one truth can exist simultaneously. Many Quaker testimonies—from George Fox, Thomas Ellwood, and many others—can be inspiring, but what really happened? How much do people gloss over their financial interests or self-motivation with the patina of religiosity? What if a person’s motivations are both self-serving and religious? Crabtree explores these themes in an intelligent way that works hard not to be judgmental or didactic.

The book is grounded in facts, heavily quoting from primary sources where possible (all listed in the endnotes), though Crabtree makes clear that her many years in archives hit limits: there is plenty she will never know about Rotch and his battles with various governments. In his own memoir, Rotch presented his life story as that of a beleaguered yet faithful Quaker, suffering for his beliefs at the hands of vindictive bureaucrats and ignorant mobs. At one point, she quotes Rotch’s memoir that officials were “playing with our lives as with a tennis ball.”



A SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY ROOTED IN VALUES

No matter your background, beliefs, or identity, you’ll find a place of belonging here. We celebrate all people and foster a spirit of open-hearted acceptance. Residents are active participants in shaping community life—through art, discussion groups, volunteerism, shared meals, outdoor activities, and more. Residents live differently, knowing that when more support is needed, a continuum of care ensures their needs are met with dignity and respect.



It’s never too early to join the Wait List. Contact us to start planning for your future living needs.

We invite you to learn more at
info.kendal-crosslands.org/friendsjournal | 844.907.1800

KENDAL CROSSLANDS
COMMUNITIES®



Not-for-Profit Life Plan Communities Serving Older Adults in the Quaker Tradition
P.O. Box 100, Kennett Square, PA | Adjacent to Longwood Gardens



REACH THE READERS WHO CARE! ADVERTISE WITH US!

Thousands of readers and viewers turn to *Friends Journal* each month. For businesses and organizations aligned with Quaker principles, reaching this audience is a compelling promotional opportunity.

Call at (215) 563-8629, ext. 5405,
or email margaret@friendsjournal.org.

**FRIENDS
JOURNAL**

But as Crabtree makes clear, there is a lot more to the story. I really can't go into it much more—it would be giving too much away. But read this clever, well-researched graphic history.

Cameron McWhirter is a journalist. He is coauthor of American Gun: The True Story of the AR-15 and the author of Red Summer: The Summer of 1919 and the Awakening of Black America. He is a member of Atlanta (Ga.) Meeting. He has served on the Board of Trustees of Friends Publishing Corporation, publisher of Friends Journal.

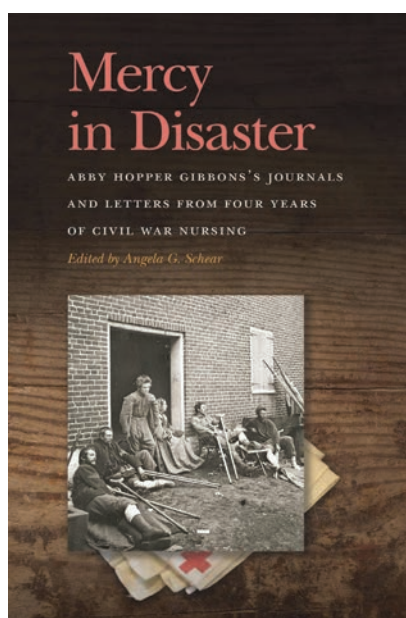
Mercy in Disaster: Abby Hopper Gibbons's Journals and Letters from Four Years of Civil War Nursing

Edited by Angela G. Schear. University of Georgia Press, 2026. 320 pages. \$29.95/paperback or eBook.

Reviewed by Gwen Gosney Erickson

Abby Hopper Gibbons's lived experience included the bulk of the nineteenth century and played out on the front lines of progressive reforms. *Mercy in Disaster* focuses deeply on the specific years she served as a nurse embedded in the inner workings of Union wartime medical relief, just one of many commitments she undertook over decades of engagement. The book's introduction shares that Gibbons's contemporaries stated that she (at age 60 at the start of the Civil War) had a "strong Quaker sense of personal independence" and used her networks to get things accomplished. Part of a University of Georgia Press series called "New Perspectives on the Civil War Era," this book brings a perspective that is more inclusive of diverse voices than those in more traditional Civil War biographies and military histories.

Some may recognize the Hopper name and already know Gibbons as the daughter of Isaac Hopper, and may already see her as an abolitionist and prison reformer in her own



right. Like her father, Gibbons was a Quaker who grounded her practice in Quaker spirituality but was not a formal member for the bulk of her later life. Her work is informed by her Quaker ethos but practiced outside of Quaker-founded institutions. This book's well-crafted introduction by longtime National Park Service ranger and historian John J. Hennessy sets the stage by introducing both the context of Civil War nursing and of Gibbons's life leading up to the war. Those wanting to explore beyond the Civil War years can follow up with Margaret Hope Bacon's *Abby Hopper Gibbons: Prison Reformer and Social Activist* (2000), which focuses on Gibbons's abolitionism, institution building, and legislative lobbying, with the latter two topics especially directed toward prisons. Additional Gibbons writings not included in *Mercy in Disaster* are available online via Swarthmore College's Friends Historical Library.

Gibbons's writing illustrates her strong personality and advocacy for justice, even when it challenged assumptions of the day—especially as related to equitable treatment of and recognition for the full humanity of Black people, whether enslaved or free. Her writing is not plagued by the oversentimentality often found

in Victorian journals and letters. She is forthright and candid in her assessment of wartime conditions, actions of individuals, and people she encountered, and she is most direct with her views of fellow nurse Dorothea Dix. The inclusion of visitation and conversation with Black people she meets is notable for her naming and referencing these relationships in much the same way that she describes her interactions with individual white people. She shows respect and admiration for all the challenges they are facing and seeks ways to protect them from deadly punishments through her networks and privileges. Lest she be presented as a paragon, she is shown to have biases in some examples offered in the editor's notes. This is seen especially in her interactions with working-class women and Catholics.

Editor Angela G. Schear has served as a field hospital nurse in contemporary disasters. She draws on a combination of journal and letters to gather documents previously accessible only to researchers along with documents that remain in private family collections. The writings are presented in chronological order and divided into 11 chapters. In addition to the introduction by Hennessy, Schear provides an overview and some context at the start of each chapter. Also included is an appendix of selected excerpts of letters from Friends during the same time period, a listing of Hopper and Gibbons family members, and relevant images. Footnotes clarify and inform without distraction. The topic and presentation methods provide a resource accessible to both professionals and casual readers.

This edition of personal writings is not only for those with an interest in Gibbons. The subject is timely in that it showcases a time of civil disorder and upheaval and how to tangibly care for those caught in the crises, including a growing number of enslaved people who seek freedom on a contested landscape. The book is strengthened by the combined

standards of an academic press and the intimacy of personal writing that is edited by a direct descendant.

Gwen Gosney Erickson is the Quaker archivist and librarian at Guilford College in Greensboro, N.C., who discovered her passion for archives from reading nineteenth-century Quaker correspondence.

In Defiance: 20 Abolitionists You Were Never Taught in School

By Tom Weiner and Amilcar Shabazz. Olive Branch Press, 2025. 248 pages. \$25/paperback.

Reviewed by Jerry Mizell Williams

Narratives about abolitionists can sometimes miss the mark by homogenizing the very individuals they portray, depriving them of their individuality and integrity, and confusing the impetus behind the conviction that propelled them onto the stage of history. In an attempt to revise how “our collective human history” needs to be studied, Weiner and Shabazz highlight examples of profiles in defiant abolitionist courage that challenge and inform our understanding of such complex lives. The authors’ critical handling of each story humanizes the 20 subjects, many of whom were influenced by their proximity to and knowledge of Quakerism.

The first chapter profiles manumitted Belinda X (later identified as “Belinda Sutton of Boston in the County of Suffolk, Widow”) and the six petitions initiated in 1782 and presented to the Massachusetts General Court on her behalf for reparations in the form of a pension from the estate of former enslaver Isaac Royall Jr. of Medford. Each petition cites biographical information that ranges from her passage aboard the slave ship from her native Ghana and her bondage under Royall to why she demanded justice for herself and her infirm daughter in the form of payment for the labor that had

*Look
to the
Light*

*“In the light
of God’s promise, we see
the light of hope.”*

Ron Hogan, *In Your Light We See Light*

Many folks have found hope and spiritual grounding through the *Look to the Light* newsletter and its adaptation into the Bible Study column in *Friends Journal*. As one of the outreach programs of Friends Publishing, it is a ministry meeting seekers and Quakers where they are.

This fall, your gift is matched up to \$2,500
by our board.

Give today and see your gift doubled.
friendsjournal.org/donate



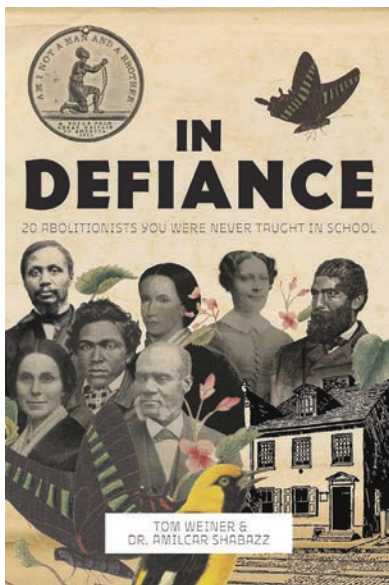
“For with you is the fountain of life;
in your light we see light.”
Psalm 36:7–10 (NRSVUE)

FRIENDS
JOURNAL

QUAKER.ORG

Quaker
SPEAK

QUAKERS
TODAY



enriched the Royalls. The authors link Belinda's fruitful efforts to those of Quakers and antislavery Evangelicals who sought to compensate freed slaves for their bondage.

In "Sarah Mapps Douglass: Against Patriarchy," the authors provide a broad context for both Sarah's thinking and actions as she confronted the acceptable threshold for racism at Arch Street Meeting in Philadelphia, Pa. (where her mother Grace Douglass was relegated to sitting on a back bench). Traditionally and unfairly presented as a victim and Black woman deprived of agency in a white Quaker meeting, multi-talented Sarah (1806–1882) emerges as a defiant Quaker whose "life begins in a space that was not the norm for people of African descent." A skilled lecturer, Sarah collaborated with the Grimké sisters and fundraised for William Lloyd Garrison's *The Liberator*. Among her notable attainments as she followed her antislavery mission were operating the school she cofounded with her mother; cofounding the Female Literary Association in 1831; and later, the Philadelphia Home for Aged and Infirm Colored Persons, and she was vice president of the Women's Freedmen's Relief Association. In 1862, after her husband of six years died, Sarah taught women

students at the Banneker Institute. As Sarah slowly reconciled with Quakerism, she remained steadfast in her defiance when questioning the extent to which the Quaker benchmark for injustice at Arch Street could be faithfully embraced.

Sarah Parker Remond (1826–1894), "Firebrand Defying Limits of Age and Sex," was an ardent Black feminist and prolific speaker who garnered an early victory when she successfully sued a Boston theater for denying her seating. Active participation in the American Anti-Slavery Society and a speaking engagement at the Women's Rights Convention in 1858 in New York City netted alliances with Susan B. Anthony and Abby Kelley Foster, and a friendship with Frederick Douglass and spouse Helen Pitts Douglass. During years spent abroad, Sarah earned degrees in nursing and medicine, and she delivered antislavery speeches in France, England, and Italy. Besides denouncing sexual exploitation of enslaved Black women, she championed the blockade of Southern ports by workers at British manufacturing companies, and campaigned for the property rights of married women. Owing to the extreme prejudice Sarah endured in the United States, she chose to live and practice in Italy, where she died.

I found compelling the espousal of Sallie Holley (1818–1893) to the rights of enslaved and free Blacks, particularly women, while she lectured widely and educated students at the Holley School in Lottsburg, Va., which Caroline Putnam founded and named in appreciation for Sallie. Holley's story reflects the victorious fight of orator John Stewart Rock (1825–1866) to be admitted to the bar of the U.S. Supreme Court in 1865 in which he defended the rights of Blacks. Her story also reflects the stance of Quaker Elizabeth Buffum Chace (1806–1899) against slaveholding Quakers and the inequality in education that women and free Blacks endured. The well-chronicled deeds of Francis Pastorius; Benjamin Lay; Anthony Bénézet; and

Robert Morris, a crusader for school integration in Boston circa 1849, support the authors' choice to include an equal number of Black and white men and women.

Readers will appreciate the manner in which the authors situate the interpretative stories "into the urgency of our now" by referencing existing battles for justice led by today's advocates. *In Defiance* contains a number of lesser-known abolitionists who have earned a place in the annals of narrative abolitionist history and who deserve greater prominence in the awareness of our younger readers. The essays not only relate to Quakers and Quaker values but also to the historical foundations of our institutions.

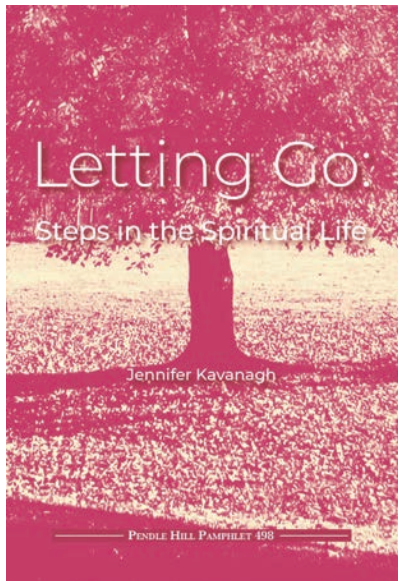
Jerry Mizell Williams is a member of Green Street Meeting in Philadelphia, Pa., where he serves as archivist. He is the author of numerous books and articles on colonial Latin America.

Letting Go: Steps in the Spiritual Life

By Jennifer Kavanagh. Pendle Hill Pamphlets (number 498), 2026. 31 pages. \$8.50/pamphlet or eBook.

Reviewed by Hope Ascher

I've read *Letting Go: Steps in the Spiritual Life* several times now, and each time, I've been deeply touched by different sections. This Pendle Hill pamphlet could be read in one sitting, but reading it carefully and reflectively promises to offer new Light each time it is read. Although letting go of physical clutter in our lives is briefly addressed, it is more about letting go of spiritual clutter. Our spiritual life is like a closet that is sometimes overlooked when we focus on weaning out material clutter. In her pamphlet Kavanagh explores the question, "So why let go?" and suggests that in letting go we "enable grace. To clear a space for the still small voice, to allow Mystery to enter our souls, to be the person we are meant to be, and to breathe in the peace of God."



Kavanagh herself lives in the UK and worships at Westminster Local Meeting. Her experiences and contributions to Quakers around the world are numerous: elder, local meeting clerk, area meeting clerk as well as an associate tutor at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre. She served as Friend-in-residence at Pendle Hill in the fall of 2024.

Kavanagh divides the pamphlet into sections with each focusing on a slightly different perspective on relinquishing control. Different sections spoke to me each time I read it. The last section “Dear Tree, Dear Leaf” contains a series of letters between a tree and its autumn leaves as they fall. The letters from the trees imagine what a mother tree might say to each leaf as it falls from her branches. The letters from the leaves respond to the mother tree with vision and gratitude as they face a new stage in their lives. This might be an interesting exercise for Friends to do if they, too, live in an area where leaves fall.

Kavanagh provides a list of discussion questions that lead the readers through the pamphlet and can be applied to their own spiritual journeys. The pamphlet could be a meaningful part of a daily spiritual practice of reading inspirational literature. Each section is brief and

Performance Focused. Mission Driven.

Learn more about the trusted investment manager of choice for Yearly, Quarterly and Monthly Meetings of Friends at www.friendsfiduciary.org.

Community Begins With You, at Pennswood Village

Life Plan Community

Guided by Quaker principles
for over 45 Years

Experience Pennswood

www.pennswood.org

Learn More, Call Today!

866-603-6799

1382 Newtown-Langhorne Road | Newtown, PA 18940

Display Ad Deadlines

Reservations are required for display ads in *Friends Journal*.

November 2026: Fiction and Expanded Books. Reservation due September 15. Copy due September 21.

December 2026: Nontheist Friends. Reservation due October 15. Copy due October 21.

FRIENDS
JOURNAL

Contact Margaret Wood with your reservation or questions: margaret@friendsjournal.org

could be used to dig deeper into what the section means and how it applies to the reader's life.

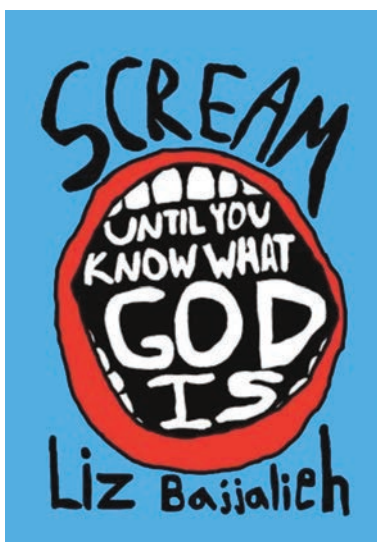
The pamphlet would also make an appropriate book-club reading. It can lead to sharing different insights as to what the pamphlet means to the members, as well as how it might lead them to "declutter" their own spiritual lives. We do not often take the time to share our own quest to live more uncluttered spiritual lives, and Kavanagh's work provides an excellent tool to do that in a non-threatening way. She writes:

We are not helpless. We have gifts, abilities given for us to use in service of the Divine. God, it is said, has no other hands but ours. As we open ourselves, we become aware of leadings, often through synchronicities or connections with other people that might help us to discern what is ours to do.

I could not help but wonder how meetings might be different if this book were a tool to deepen and declutter the life of the meeting. How might meetings for worship with attention to business be different if we somehow decluttered our agendas and kept our focus on the spiritual life of the meeting? I like this discussion question from Kavanagh: "What practices have best supported you [or us] in hearing and heeding, the still, small voice?"

Kavanagh's pamphlet is deceptively simple and relevant to all Friends, even though the individual clutter might be quite different depending on life experience. It is a pamphlet I will read yet again to assist me in my own journey of living more fully in the Light.

Hope Ascher is a member of Melbourne Meeting in Rockledge, Fla. An educator, cook, and naturalist, she is active in her meeting and yearly meeting. Hope convenes an antiracist book group whose goal is reading banned books so that those voices and stories are remembered and not stilled forever.



SCREAM until you know what God is

By Liz Bajjalieh. Fernwood Press, 2026. 132 pages. \$22/paperback.

Reviewed by Rüdiger Herzing Rückmann

Reading *SCREAM until you know what God is* immediately reminded me of Dorothy Parker's "A Telephone Call," in which the protagonist attempts to reason with God while anxiously waiting for a phone call from someone she loves. Much like Parker's short story, the collection of poems by Liz Bajjalieh is a complex, engrossing, loving, doubting, loving-to-doubt, ultimately rewarding interior conversation about God. The epigraph asks, "If God's not dead, what is she?"

SCREAM is Bajjalieh's attempt at a response to that self-imposed question. In a short note at the end of the book, we learn the effort is perhaps both fruitful and futile: "I could write ten million poems each day," Bajjalieh reflects, "and not even scratch the surface unpacking such a rich spiritual question on what 'God' (Or 'Light,' 'Love,' 'The Universe,' whatever you want to call she/they/ze/fae/xi/he/it/etc) truly is."

In fact, Bajjalieh has written 469 poems (they're numbered); most are short and they appear one after the other as if one long poem unfolding over 113 pages. The high number might seem

daunting, but Bajjalieh's voice is active, mostly in the present tense, and usually unencumbered by punctuation, enticing the reader line by line to keep turning the pages to know more of the poet's thoughts and relationship with God.

Friends may find themselves resonating with Bajjalieh's ruminations about God being everywhere and in everything. Many read like answers to queries or questions posed for worship sharing and discussion. Bajjalieh is never shy in examining their faith and testing their beliefs about their own personal spiritual experience.

Nature plays a central role in many of Bajjalieh's poems. On the first page, they state: "God is the horizon / At dusk, the dividing line / Between where the day takes its leave / And the night cycles in / The shivering hours of the unknown." They make good use of indirect rhyme: "God is a meadow of goldenrod / Yellow flowers bursting open, blooming right as fall / Begins to cast its gaze toward the ground."

A "Quaker(ish)," nonbinary, queer poet and visual artist who grew up in the suburbs of Chicago, Bajjalieh offers imagery as evocative as a coat of many colors: "God is a closet packed with vintage blazers / The doors are open wide, the sleeves rippling out like waves / Neon, flowered, a 1980s dream / So full of pounding personality / You can almost hear them scream."

I never tired of the soft or loud screaming in Bajjalieh's poems. Like any good writer, they left me savoring and reflecting on their words after I read them. For anyone who enjoys asking themselves existential questions about God or life, I highly recommend Bajjalieh's poetry.

A poet, teacher, civil rights and mental health advocate, Rüdiger Herzing Rückmann studied privately under acclaimed poets Tess Gallagher and Hayden Carruth. His poems have appeared in Friends Journal and Western Friend and have been presented at Baltimore Artscape and the Albright-Knox Gallery in Buffalo, N.Y. He is a plain Quaker living in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Welcome and Grace

continued from page 8

feel she could expose her children to potential conflict. The family later attended a non-Quaker church, drawn in by how accepting they were. This huge difference from the unprogrammed manner of worship left Mayland sacrificing her preferred way of worship in order to have a much-needed sense of welcome and inclusion for her family. “Love, care, and concern is doing the work,” she said, “[of] giving people what they need and meeting them where they are.” By choosing the military life, they chose a life rich in service to others; Mayland states firmly that she would choose it all over again.

Each of us must reconcile with our own leadings regarding nonviolence and how we use our resources to promote peace. When we examine our differences, we can enter into those discussions with tenderness and from a place of safety. Fayetteville Friends reaches out to those who may need a helping hand, listening ear, and fellowship as they face the many challenges and difficulties that military life can bring. We cannot pretend to know another’s path, and we recognize that keeping an open door to all enables Spirit to move and provides a peace resource to those in the community who might need us. Our interconnectedness draws us together as we lean into supporting one another right where we are. When we move with a sense of open listening and seek communion and explore differences with a sense of curiosity, we can leave behind the mistaken notion that we know best in regards to the paths of others. Our entire community surrounds us with the military. Perhaps our role here is to be a special place of welcome and grace. ■

Friends Journal September 2026

The Renewal of Our Spiritual Schooling

continued from page 27

time, such careful guidance produces a refined and well-formed disciple. Some people arrive impressing the church with their talents or academic credentials. As a result, they are sometimes appointed to leadership positions before they are truly prepared: physically, mentally, or spiritually.

Why must people be physically prepared? Because the work of the Lord is demanding. Those unaccustomed to such responsibilities may become exhausted, discouraged, or ineffective. Ministry requires strength and perseverance. Why must people be mentally prepared? Leaders must possess emotional stability as well as intellectual maturity. Under pressure, unresolved emotional weaknesses often emerge, causing leaders to become irritable, withdrawn, inflexible, or authoritarian as a form of self-protection.

Why must people be prepared spiritually? This is the decisive issue. Without spiritual maturity, we should not expect someone hastily placed into leadership to produce the calm and wisdom that arise from an intimate relationship with God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Sometimes we undervalue the Father’s role and fail to learn from Him stewardship, respect, and authority. Many people reduce the Holy Spirit to an impersonal force that powers the worn-out machinery of the Church. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Holy Spirit is a person—gentle, harmonious, and compassionate—who does not merely surround us but dwells within us and should be central to our spiritual growth.

And what of the Son? The New Testament presents Him so close to us that we sometimes begin to treat Him like a servant expected to fulfill all our requests. As the influential non-Quaker Argentine pastor Juan Carlos Ortiz once observed, our prayers can become like shopping carts, and we unconsciously expect Jesus to satisfy every desire while overlooking His primary role as our Redeemer.

Renewing the way we educate believers within the Church would make us wiser and more spiritually discerning. Such wisdom would not arise from speculation or human reasoning but from living in harmony with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, before whom every knee—including our own—will one day bow. We must remember that the institution we serve has endured for more than two thousand years. It is a mold that no one has been able to reshape because it offers grace, faith, hope, love, and instruction. “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation” (Mark 16:15).

The Church was not established to be changed or redesigned; it was established to be obeyed, regardless of our personal opinions. It does not operate according to the standards of a corporation. It is not negotiable; it is an inviolable standard. Its development is inherent in its nature and stands above us. It was not designed to satisfy our preferences but to instruct us—and at times to discipline us. It should be loved like the anvil upon which red-hot iron is forged through repeated blows, becoming both refined and immensely useful. ■

Deaths

Hindmarsh—*Thera F. Hindmarsh*, 96, on October 17, 2025, in White River Junction, Vt. Thera was born on February 11, 1929, to Henry Cope Foster and Thyra Jane (Meyers) Foster in Warwick, R.I. Thera was raised in a traditional Quaker household. In 1947, she graduated from Westtown School in West Chester, Pa. She received her bachelor's degree from Bouvé-Boston School of Physical Education, at that time an independent affiliate of Tufts University, which prepared her for a lifelong career as a physical therapist.

Thera married Robert Gray Hindmarsh on July 7, 1951, whom she had met on her family farm when he worked there in conjunction with earning his college degree in agriculture from Cornell University. They began a partnership grounded in shared ideals and deep commitment to education and service. In 1957, together with several other families, they cofounded The Meeting School, a Quaker boarding school in Rindge, N.H. Thera played an essential role in shaping residential life for students, nurturing a sense of home, responsibility, and care.

In 1965, Thera and Bob moved to Concord, Mass., where she resumed her physical therapy career at Emerson Hospital once her children reached school age. She and Bob were active in Acton (Mass.) Meeting.

Around 1980, Thera and Bob relocated to Wallingford, Pa., where Thera performed home care physical therapy. Thera and Bob retired to Putney, Vt., in 1989, where they were active in Putney Meeting. Thera was also active in the wider community, including the library, a garden club, and AARP—all of which reflected her belief in collective responsibility and community.

Bob died in 2012. In 2016, Thera moved to Valley Terrace assisted living community in White River Junction, where she was involved in many activities as long as she was able.

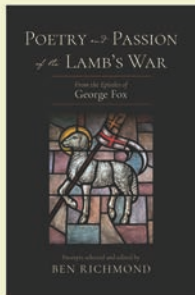
Thera was predeceased by her husband, Robert Gray Hindmarsh; her parents, Henry Cope Foster and Thyra Jane (Meyers) Foster; and two brothers, John and Harold.

She is survived by four children, Beth, Walter, Alison, and Tom; two grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

Hubbe—*Ellen McBain Hubbe*, 97, on October 2, 2025, in Eugene, Ore. Ellen was born on March 21, 1928, to Anna Hansen and John McBain in Forest Grove, Ore. Her father was a master gardener from Scotland and her mother a nurse from Denmark. The family moved frequently, but most of Ellen's school years were spent in Brooklyn, N.Y., where she received an outstanding public education. Ellen graduated from Brooklyn College. She loved growing up in culturally diverse Brooklyn among other children of immigrants. At the Dutch Reform Church where she sang in the choir, she met Gery Hubbe, whose singing voice first caught her attention. Ellen and Gery married in 1953, and began family life in Oakridge, Ore., where

Meet George Fox in a new way.

Fox's epistles, selected and versified.



And never heed prisons,
for they are but for a time;
and mind him who hath all times
and seasons in his hand.

And never heed the raging waves of the sea, . . .
nor be troubled at the cords of the ungodly;
for the cords of love,
the power of God
are stronger. . . .

And so be valiant for the truth upon the earth,
for the power is the Lord's.

"What a wonderful book. Ben Richmond brings the epistles of George Fox to life and makes them so accessible. A truly inspiring volume!"

—BEN P. DANDELION,
Professor of Quaker Studies, U. of Birmingham

POETRY AND PASSION OF THE LAMB'S WAR

From Barclay Press Bookstore barclaypress.corecommerce.com/Quaker-Books/

• Founded by Quakers in 1870

• Longtime connection with FCNL's Spring Lobby Weekend

• Prominent program in Sustainable Agriculture

• Environmental Ethics program

• WC's president is a Quaker

• Sponsors student trips reflecting Friends' mission to Costa Rica, Palestine, Japan, Native territories

• Longtime advocate for & practitioner of prison education

• Online opportunities

• Quaker Heritage Center on campus

Wilmington College
WWW.WILMINGTON.EDU
WILMINGTON, OHIO

Gery worked for the U.S. Forest Service. They lived in various ranger stations until moving to Eugene in 1960, where they raised their four children, John, Sara, Lise, and Cameron.

Ellen and Gery began attending Eugene Meeting prior to moving to Eugene. Moving to town, they joined the meeting, and over the next 50-plus years Ellen and Gery helped to build the meeting community with other families, nurtured the children's religious education, and served in multiple leadership roles in the local and regional Quaker network. Ellen was instrumental in bringing the Quaker Tapestry (Quaker history in needlework panels) to local and regional meetings. She had a lifelong interest in interfaith connections. After Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination in 1968, she organized members of the meeting to attend services at St. Mark CME church in West Eugene, out of concern for their grief.

Ellen was community minded and a natural organizer. When her youngest was in elementary school, Ellen created a job for herself as community school coordinator, where she connected children and parents with the broader community. She had a natural way with parents and founded a parent co-op pre-school that continued for many years.

Ellen and Gery traveled to Scotland, England, Denmark, and Germany, forging deep family connections that they maintained all their lives. As an only child of immigrant parents, Ellen treasured her relationships with cousins overseas.

Ellen and Gery found many ways to make community in addition to their involvement in Eugene Meeting. Ellen was a fabulous dancer, and she and Gery had great fun dancing with the Heather and Rose Scottish and English Country Dance group.

Ellen and Gery traded their "big house" in Eugene for a farm east of Albany, Ore., on which they partnered with daughter Lise on family-farm projects. Gery died in 2001. Ellen moved to SweetWell Farm for six years. SweetWell became family central for many holidays and celebrations. Lise and sister Sara continue to run the farm.

Into her 90s, Ellen continued her very active life in Eugene Meeting, where she served on committees, participated in the women's group, and attended quarterly and yearly meeting sessions. Her wisdom and experience were sought after, and she mentored generations of Quakers.

During her last two years, Ellen resided at Evergreen Assisted Living, where she made new friends and connections. Friends frequently visited Ellen to sing together, hold worshipful silence, and continue to share their lives with each other.

Ellen was predeceased by her husband, Gery Hubbe.

She is survived by four children, John, Sara, Lise, and Cameron; three grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren..

Neuhauser—Robert "Bob" Neuhauser, 97, on May 5, 2025, peacefully, at home in Fertility, Pa. Bob was born on August 19, 1927, to Homer and Miriam Neuhauser near Lancaster,

Pa. His parents were from Anabaptist Pennsylvania Dutch families. Bob became an admirer of Quakers and occasionally attended meetings for worship.

Bob graduated with a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from Drexel Institute of Technology in Philadelphia, Pa., in 1948. He met Virginia (Ginny) Steward while in Philadelphia. They married in 1949 and were active in Quaker weekend workcamps.

Bob worked for the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) until his retirement in 1984. Bob was one of the developers of a tube that made color television possible. In 1964, he was awarded the David Sarnoff Gold Medal honoring achievements in technical aspects of television.

Bob's involvement in peace and social concerns began in the 1960s during the Civil Rights Movement. When the Vietnam War broke out, Bob served as a draft counselor and attended many demonstrations.

Bob's pacifist views led to conflicts with RCA's management. In 1971, he was invited by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to participate in the Paris Peace Conference. Management required Bob to sign an oath of silence about his work at RCA. Bob declined to sign, stating that Quakers do not take oaths. Management relented and gave Bob permission to make the trip.

Bob and his family became members of Lancaster (Pa.) Meeting in 1961. As clerk of the Building Committee in 1966, Bob had a significant voice in expanding the meetinghouse, and he was a constant presence at First-day school activities.

Bob was sent by Lancaster Meeting as a delegate to the local chapter of the Overground Railroad and was elected chairman. This group arranged transportation for 150 refugees from Lancaster to sanctuary in Canada.

A survey of racial discrimination in Lancaster led Bob to focus on integrating public swimming pools. He was also involved in securing fair housing. Bob and Lancaster Meeting volunteers invested money to form a corporation that bought and rented three apartment buildings. Bob and others also embarked on a bail bond project in 1976. He arranged for two meeting properties to be used as collateral for bail bonds.

Bob did not retire from public life when he retired from RCA. He expanded his roles with American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), and in 1998, served on the Executive Committee of AFSC Mid-Atlantic Region. He focused on contact with legislators about mass incarceration and his commitment to worldwide microfinance initiatives. In 1998, Bob and Ginny's generous donation created Lancaster Meeting's Peace and Social Concerns Fund, which to this day invests funds in a socially responsible manner.

Ginny died in 1998. Bob married Dorothy Killebrew in 2001.

Bob wrote an article for *Friends Journal* describing his experience disarming a man who was threatening a woman and her small child in a domestic dispute. Guided by Quaker

principles, Bob spoke to the man. The perpetrator quietly put his shotgun shells in his pocket, got in his van, and drove away.

Bob's 2004 book, *The Cosmic Deity*, outlined his spiritual approach arising from Quaker tradition. His most beloved writings were ten years of letters written to his grandchildren chronicling his experiences growing up in Lancaster during the Depression. In 2020, his children compiled the letters into a book, *The Grandpa Bob Stories*.

Bob was predeceased by his first wife, Ginny Steward; his brother, Jim; and his sister, Susan Ann.

He is survived by his wife, Dorothy Killebrew; four children, Cathy, Carla, Judy, and Douglas; five grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

Scuitto—Patricia (Woodward) Scuitto, 93, on December 14, 2025, peacefully, at home in Talent, Ore. Pat was born on April 14, 1932, to a Quaker family in Portland, Ore. She attended Olney Friends School in Barnesville, Ohio.

Pat earned a degree in home economics and nutrition from Syracuse University in New York, where she met Tom Scuitto. Pat and Tom married in Seattle, Wash., in 1951. They celebrated their seventy-fourth anniversary in June 2025. Pat and Tom had four children.

Pat was an active member in various meetings before she and Tom moved to Southern Oregon. She transferred her membership to South Mountain Meeting (then known as Rogue Valley Meeting) in Ashland in 1994. Pat served the meeting as presiding clerk, was active on several committees, participated actively in the Quaker Women's Group, and was at one time clerk of Willamette Quarterly Meeting. She was a friendly, kind, interesting, and interested presence in the meeting. When occasionally she was moved to speak out of the silence in worship, she spoke with wisdom and with love.

A devoted mother, Pat enjoyed raising her children and inevitably became the center of the family, the matriarch. With the two younger children, she and Tom sailed a 58-foot yawl from Seattle to the Galapagos and Tahiti and back—an adventure of nearly a year. After the children were grown, Pat worked as a realtor and for a time served as president of the Ashland Board of Realtors.

For more than 20 years, Pat and Tom worked together building a home in the Talent hills. In that home, they enjoyed spectacular views, Pat's collection of Native American crafts, and reading to one another in the evenings. More recently they moved to a smaller home, which, with all its contents, burned in the 2020 Alameda Drive Fire. They then moved to another home in Talent, where Tom still lives.

Pat was predeceased by her youngest child, Melissa, in 2013.

She is survived by her husband, Tom Scuitto; three children, Ted (Debbie), Phil (Shirley), and Christopher; and six grandchildren.

Our recent video featuring three Minneapolis Friends speaking about their experiences responding to the ICE deployment in their city earlier this year has quickly become the most-watched of the past six years! At nearly 30,000 views in less than three weeks, it's clearly resonating with people.

Quaker SPEAK

Weekly Videos. Vital Ministries.

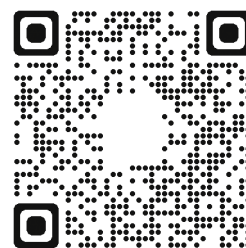


Betsy Raasch-Gilman is absolutely clear on this: She and other Friends in Minneapolis were not “protesting” against the activities of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents in their community last winter. “Protest is not what we were doing,” she says. “We were doing civilian-based defense. We were defending ourselves from an occupying army, and in this case the army that was occupying us was our own federal government.”

Watch this video at QuakerSpeak.com

A project of
**FRIENDS
JOURNAL** Produced by Layla Cuthrell

Support QuakerSpeak at
QuakerSpeak.com/donate





Where community grows naturally.



Announcing the proposed North Forest Addition at Friends House. Spacious new residences where Quaker-inspired values guide daily life, residents shape the future, and authentic friendships flourish.



The North Forest Addition is pending approval by the Maryland Department of Aging.



Friends
House

Learn more

FriendsHouseExpansion.org • 240-797-0701
17340 Quaker Lane • Sandy Spring, MD 20860





Live With Purpose

Friends House encourages residents to stay engaged with what matters most. Independent and assisted living support a lifestyle centered on meaningful experiences, thoughtful reflection and shared community. Each day offers opportunities to learn, connect and contribute in ways that bring fulfillment, foster relationships and support a life guided by curiosity, purpose and belonging.

Explore your options. Call (707) 573-4508

684 Benicia Dr., Santa Rosa, CA 95409 | friendshouse.org



Friends House
A FRONT PORCH COMMUNITY

Independent Living - Assisted Living

 License 496801929 COA 353