What hands and feet does God have but ours? What voices with which to speak, or what hearts through which to pour out God's love into the world?
AMONG FRIENDS

Reaching for Community

Because the condition of his health became more serious in late February, Olcutt Sanders was not able to write his regular column for this issue. He was hospitalized January 19 for a series of tests and treatment for his lymphoma. I am happy to report he was released from hospital March 12 and is much improved. His column in the January issue, “Meditation of a Latter-Day Samson,” touched many of us deeply as Olcutt shared so openly the nature of his health condition and his sense of personal vulnerability.

As I undertook the challenging task of preparing this column, I came upon these words by Isaac Penington: “Our life is love and peace and tenderness—and bearing one with another—praying for one another, and helping one another up with a tender hand.” I feel that the many messages of love and support which arrive daily from our readers are but another indication of the very caring community which surrounds and holds all of us at the JOURNAL. And my task seemed lifted and shared, somehow.

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The April 1 issue is very special. Three major Quaker publications—Quaker Life, the Evangelical Friend, and the JOURNAL—have cooperated on selecting and publishing a group of articles on a common theme. The articles (and a sonnet) on prayer, pages 3 to 11, will appear in each of our April issues.

We trust that the prayer material will touch a common chord in our combined readership which includes Friends most closely associated with Friends General Conference, Friends United Meeting, and Evangelical Friends Alliance—as well as those in between. We hope that similar cooperative ventures in Friendly publishing can be attempted at least once a year. What are some other common themes besides prayer which might be considered? We will appreciate suggestions from our readers to help guide us in planning such future issues.

Olcutt Sanders’s article which appears on page 3 was written from his hospital bed shortly before our printing deadline. His sharing of “a Quaker rosary” adds a further “ecumenical dimension” to the undertaking.

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Response to last fall’s “Quaker Rainbow” ad has been good (see page 24). Has your meeting or library subscribed to all three publications?

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President Reagan, speaking at the National Prayer Breakfast in February, proclaimed 1983 as the “Year of the Bible.” Friends now have another opportunity to write to the president to question whether the announced trillion dollars in planned military expenditures is, after all, the most prayerful way to begin such a year.

VINTON DEMING

April 1, 1983 [ FRIENDS JOURNAL ]

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Pathways to Prayer

by Olcutt Sanders

Let me share with you some recent explorations I have been making in the realm of personal prayer. I have found this approach useful whether alone or in unprogrammed group worship. It is an attempt to achieve at least a minimum of structure in what I have previously assumed to be totally free-flowing. Maybe the word structure is too rigid-sounding. Perhaps moods or stages would be better. Formal liturgy regularly moves through such steps.

My own prayer pathways lead me through four moods—to which I have applied four rhyming words—aware, care, share, and dare. I sometimes call these four mnemonic words my "Quaker rosary"—four linked concepts that connect my praying. I have no rigid commitment to the four "beads." I may linger over one for a full worship period, or I may skip past a stage when the spirit beckons me beyond. In group worship a spoken message may serve to break the flow and move me to another point in my progression.

But on the whole this is at present my most frequent and personally satisfying path in personal prayer. "Aware" is my first heading. By this I mean affirming that I am "at home in the universe." As Jesus' beatitude says, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

I often begin my "aware" stage with a reaffirmation of praise and thanksgiving in the spirit of the Psalmist: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows God's handiwork." The awareness of the greatness of God's universe carries with it a recognition of my own limitations. However, to be part of the universe carries the assurance of shared splendor. I am only a part, a tiny part, but I am a part. I am worth something as I share in the whole. So, humble and grateful, I am aware.

From general praise and thanksgiving I am ready to turn to specific persons and situations. This is my second heading of "care." In a sense, it is my prayer list. My own family, widely scattered, naturally comes quickly to mind. My colleagues, members of my meeting, and other acquaintances pass in review. What are their needs, their challenges, their joys, their sorrows? Can I feel with them and relate to them? This is a time of blessing for myself as well as for others—whether in happiness or adversity. The faith that others demonstrate is joined to my own faith. I pray for mutual encouragement as I try to share the witness of others. We speak of bearing one another's burdens. Besides individuals, I may give thanks for groups at work on causes that have taken shape to lift up my deep yearnings.

I am ready now to focus on specific instances under the next heading—"share." I cannot do everything, but I can do something. Not forgetting how small a piece of the universe I am, what indeed have I to share besides my general goodwill? Of course I can try for an equanimity of spirit in the many casual daily contacts, but what about the special encounters that I can anticipate? Will I measure up when someone needs extra affection, sensitive understanding, moral support, or physical assistance—from me? I try to anticipate those special cases in which demand may exceed supply if I'm not spiritually alert. Of all the good causes, where can I most appropriately cast the stubborn ounces of my weight just now? Without prayerful choices, frustration can sometimes overwhelm us.

I find the fourth heading to be the culmination of the prayer sequence—"dare." In the popular phrase of today, that's the "bottom line." Let's be practical. How much time and attention, how much energy and money does any piece of "sharing" require? Am I ready to give what is needed? If I can't do it alone, can I enlist others? What extra measure of faith and courage must I seek? Am I "at home in God's universe" enough to take my rightful part without being overwhelmed by my sense of personal limitation? How much do I dare?

That for me, then, is the development of prayer from being broadly "aware," through a network of considering those for whom I especially "care," centering down on one person who may need me to "share"—leading to tough reality in the "dare." As with each of the other steps, prayerful preparation should release me to unexpected levels of response—to dare beyond human bounds because prayer is after all a collaboration with the divine.
The Discipline of Prayer
by Richard J. Foster

Prayer catapults us onto the frontier of the spiritual life. It is original research in unexplored territory. Meditation introduces us to the inner life, fasting is an accompanying means, but it is the discipline of prayer itself that brings us into the deepest and highest work of the human spirit. Real prayer is life creating and life changing.

To pray is to change. Prayer is the central avenue God uses to transform us. If we are unwilling to change, we will abandon prayer as a noticeable characteristic of our lives. The closer we come to the heartbeat of God the more we see our need and the more we desire to be conformed to Christ.

"You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions" (James 4:3). To ask "rightly" involves transformed passions, total renewal. In prayer, real prayer, we begin to think God's thoughts after Him: to desire the things He desires, to love the things He loves. Progressively we are taught to see things from His point of view.

All who have walked with God have viewed prayer as the main business of their lives. The words of Mark, "And in the morning, a great while before the day, he rose and went out to a lonely place, and there he prayed," stand as a commentary on the life-style of Jesus (Mark 1:35). David's desire for God broke the self-indulgent chains of sleep: "Early I shall seek thee" (Ps. 63:1). When the apostles were tempted to invest their energies in other important and necessary tasks, they determined to give themselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4).

For explorers in the frontiers of faith, prayer was no little habit tacked onto the periphery of their lives—it was their lives. It was the most serious work of their most productive years. William Penn testified of George Fox that "above all he excelled in prayer. . . . The most awful, living, reverend frame I ever felt or beheld, I must say was his in prayer."

Adoniram Judson sought to withdraw from business and company seven times a day to engage in the holy work of prayer. He began at midnight and again at dawn; then at 9, 12, 3, 6, and 9 at night he would give time to secret prayer. John Hyde of India made prayer such a dominant characteristic of his life that he was nicknamed "Praying Hyde." For these, and all those who have braved the depths of the interior life, to breathe was to pray.

Many of us, however, are discouraged rather than challenged by such examples. Those "giants of the faith" are so far beyond anything we have experienced that we are tempted to despair. But rather than flagellating ourselves for our obvious lack, we should remember that God always meets us where we are and slowly moves us along into deeper things. Occasional joggers do not suddenly enter an Olympic marathon. They prepare and train themselves over a period of time, and so should we. When such a progression is followed, we can expect to pray with greater authority and spiritual success a year from now than at present.

It is easy for us to be defeated at the outset because we have been taught that everything in the universe is already set, and so things cannot be changed. We may glibly feel this way, but the Bible does not teach that. The Bible pray-ers prayed as if their prayers could and would make an objective difference. The apostle Paul gladly announced that we are "co-laborers with God" (1 Cor. 3:9); that is, we are working with God to determine the outcome of events.

That comes as a genuine liberation to many of us, but it also sets tremendous responsibility before us. We are working with God to determine the future! Certain things will happen in history if we pray rightly. We are to change the world by prayer. What more motivation do we need to learn this loftiest human exercise?

Real prayer is something we learn. The disciples asked Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). They had prayed all their lives and yet something about the quality of Jesus' praying caused them to see how little they knew about prayer. If their praying was to make any difference on the human scene, there were some things they needed to learn.

One of the liberating experiences in my life came when I understood that prayer involved a learning process. I was set free to question, to experiment, even to fail, for I knew I was learning. For years I had prayed for everything and with great intensity, but with only marginal success. But then I saw that I might possibly be doing some things wrong and could learn differently. I took the Gospels and cut out every reference...
to prayer and pasted them onto sheets of paper. When I could read the New Testament teaching on prayer at one sitting, I was shocked. Either the excuses and rationalizations for unanswered prayer I had been taught were wrong, or Jesus' words were wrong. I determined to learn to pray so that my experience conformed to the words of Jesus rather than trying to make his words conform to my impoverished experience.

Perhaps the most astonishing characteristic of Jesus' praying is that when he prayed for others he never concluded by saying "if it be thy will." Nor did the apostles or prophets when they were praying for others. They obviously believed 'that they knew what the will of God was before they prayed the prayer of faith. They were so immersed in the milieu of the Holy Spirit that when they encountered a specific situation they knew what should be done. Their praying was so positive that it often took the form of a direct, authoritative command: "Walk," "Be well," "Stand up." I saw that when praying for others there was evidently no room for indecisive, tentative, half-hoping, "if it be thy will" prayers.

Next I sought out individuals who seemed to experience greater power and effectiveness in prayer than I, and asked them to teach me everything they knew. In addition, I sought the wisdom and experience of past masters of prayer by securing and reading every good book I could find on the subject. I began studying the prayers of the Old Testament with new interest.

At the same time I began praying for others with an expectation that a change should and would occur. I am so grateful that I did not wait until I was perfect or had everything straight before praying for others; otherwise I would never have begun. P. T. Forsythe said, "Prayer is to religion what original research is to science." I felt I was engaging in "original research" in the school of the Spirit. It was thrilling beyond description. Every seeming failure led to a new learning process. Christ was my present teacher so that progressively his word was being confirmed in my experience. "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you" (John 15:7).

One of the most critical aspects of learning to pray for others is to get in contact with God so that His life and power can be channeled through us into others. Often we assume we are in contact when we are not. For example, dozens of radio and television programs went through your room while you read these words, but you failed to pick them up because you were not tuned to the channel. Often people will pray and pray with all the faith in the world, but nothing happens. Naturally, they were not contacting the channel. We begin praying for others by first centering down and listening to the quiet thunder of the Lord of hosts. Attuning ourselves to divine breathings is spiritual work, but without it our praying is vain repetition (Matt. 6:7). Listening to the Lord is the first thing, the second thing, and the third thing necessary for successful intercession. Søren Kierkegaard once observed: "A man prayed, and at first he thought that prayer was talking. But he became more and more quiet until in the end he realized that prayer is listening."

Meditation is the necessary prelude to intercession. The work of intercession, sometimes called the prayer of faith, presupposes that the prayer of guidance is perpetually ascending. We must hear, know, and obey the will of God before we pray it into the lives of others. The prayer of guidance constantly precedes and surrounds the prayer of faith.

The beginning point then in learning to pray for others is to listen for guidance. In the beginning, it is wise to set aside Aunt Susie's arthritis for which you have been praying for 20 years. In physical matters we always tend to pray for the most difficult situation first: terminal cancer or multiple sclerosis. But when we listen, we will learn the importance of beginning with smaller things like colds or earaches. Success in the small corners of life gives us authority in the larger matters. If we are still, we will learn not only who God
is but how God’s power operates.

Sometimes we are afraid that we do not have enough faith for this child or that marriage. Our fears should be put to rest for the Bible tells us that great miracles are possible through faith the size of a tiny mustard seed. Usually the courage actually to go and pray for a person is a sign of sufficient faith. Often our lack is not faith but compassion. It seems that genuine empathy between the pray-er and the pray-ee often makes the difference. We are told that Jesus was “moved with compassion” for people. Compassion was an evident feature of every healing in the New Testament. We do not pray for people as “things” but as “persons” whom we love. If we have God-given compassion for others, our faith will grow and strengthen as we pray. In fact, if we genuinely love people, we desire for them far more than it is within our power to give, and that will cause us to pray.

The inner sense of compassion is one of the clearest indications from the Lord that this is a prayer project for you. In times of meditation there may come a rise in the heart, a compulsion to intercede, an assurance of rightness, a flow of the Spirit. This inner “yes” is the divine authorization for you to pray for the person or situation. If the idea is accompanied with a sense of heaviness, then probably you should set it aside. God will lead someone else to pray for the matter.

We should never make prayer too complicated. We are prone to do so once we understand that prayer is something we must learn. It is also easy to yield to this temptation because the more complicated we make prayer, the more dependent people are upon us to learn how to do it. But Jesus taught us to come like children to a father. Openness, honesty, and trust mark a child’s communication with his father.

Jesus taught us to pray for daily bread; a child asks for breakfast in utter confidence that it will be provided. He has no need to stash away today’s pancakes for fear that none will be available tomorrow—as far as he is concerned, there is an endless supply of pancakes. A child does not find it difficult or complicated to talk to his father, nor does he feel embarrassed to bring the simplest need to his attention.

Children teach us the value of the imagination. As with meditation, the imagination is a powerful tool in the work of prayer. We may be reticent to pray with the imagination, feeling that it is slightly beneath us. Children have no such reticence.

Children who experience problems in the classroom respond readily to prayer. A friend of mine who taught emotionally handicapped children decided to begin praying for them. Of course, he did not tell the children what he was doing; he simply did it. When one of the children would crawl under his desk and assume a fetal position, my teacher friend would take the child in his arms and pray silently that the light and life of Christ would heal the hurt and self-hate within the boy. So as not to embarrass him, the teacher would walk around the room continuing his regular duties while he prayed. After a while the child would relax and was soon back at his desk.

Sometimes my friend would ask the boy if he ever remembered what it felt like to win a race. If the boy said “yes,” he would encourage him to picture himself crossing the finish line with all his friends cheering him on and loving him. In that way the child was able to cooperate in the prayer project as well as reinforce his own self-acceptance.

By the end of the school year, every child but two was able to return to a regular classroom. Coincidence? Perhaps, but as Archbishop William Temple once noted, the coincidence occurred much more frequently when he prayed.

God desires that marriages be healthy, whole, and permanent. You may know of marriages that are in deep trouble and need your help. Consider praying once a day for 30 days for such marriages.

Your own children can and should be changed through your prayers. Pray for them in the daytime with their participation; pray for them at night when they are asleep.

One delightful approach is to go into the bedroom and lightly place your hands on the sleeping child. Imagine the light of Christ flowing through your hands and healing every emotional trauma and hurt feeling your child experienced that day. Fill him or her with the peace and joy of the Lord. In sleep the child is very receptive to prayer since the conscious mind which tends to erect barriers to God’s gentle influence is relaxed.

As a priest of Christ, you can perform a wonderful service by taking children into your arms and blessing them. In the Bible parents brought their children to Jesus not so that he would play with them or even teach them, but that he might lay his hands on them and bless them (Mark 10:13-16). He has given you the ability to do the same. Blessed is the child who is blessed by adults who know how to bless!

We must never wait until we feel like praying before we will pray for others. Prayer is like any other work; we may not feel like working, but once we have been at it for a bit, we begin to feel like working. We may not like practicing the piano, but once we play for a while we feel like doing it. In the same way, our prayer muscles need to be limbered up a bit and once the blood-flow of intercession begins, we will find that we feel like praying.

We need not worry that this work will take up too much of our time, for “it takes no time, but it occupies all our time.” It is not prayer in addition to work, but prayer simultaneous with work. We precede, enfold, and follow all our work with prayer. Prayer and action become wedded. Thomas Kelly experienced this way of living:

There is a way of ordering our mental life on more than one level at once. Or one level we may be thinking, discussing, seeing, calculating, meeting all the demands of external affairs. But deep within, behind the scenes, at a profounder level, we may also be in prayer and adoration, song and worship, and a gentle receptiveness to divine breathings.

We have so much to learn, so far to go. Certainly the yearning of our hearts is summed up by Archbishop Tait when he said, “I want a life of greater, deeper, truer prayer.”
Prayer and Healing

by Benny Mevey

In the late 1950s at University Friends Church in Wichita, Kansas, Robert Cope read The Healing Light by Agnes Sanford to a newly formed men’s prayer group. My reaction: “That’s tremendous if it is true.” During my 30 years in the church I hadn’t seen much evidence that today’s Christians allowed God a very big role in their bouts with illness. There were some notable exceptions in my life, however. When our son had been born a few years earlier, breathing only two breaths per minute, he was given a very gloomy prognosis. But when we totally relinquished him into God’s hands, willingly accepting whatever outcome might follow, our baby boy made such a rapid recovery that the pediatric specialist exclaimed, “It was like watching nature take over.” I knew “nature” could be translated into “God,” and we rejoiced that our young son was now a healthy lad. I also remembered my spontaneous reaction of holding and praying for sick and wounded animals when I was a boy on the farm, as though a part of me knew even then that healing came from God.

During the 1960s and 1970s, my wife and I got acquainted with Agnes Sanford. We heard her in Camps Farthest Out and at teaching missions in four states, and we attended Schools of Pastoral Care which she and her husband founded in Massachusetts to teach the healing ministry of the church to pastors. Twice we helped bring her to Wichita, once to University Friends, to conduct teaching missions. We visited in her home and she in ours. We attended “miracle services” presided over by Kathryn Kuhlman and seminars for lay people conducted by Oral Roberts and others at Oral Roberts University. We even helped initiate short-lived healing services at University Friends. We prayed for people who recovered; we prayed for people who died. We reread the Gospels and carefully examined every account of Jesus’ miracles of healing. Our library soon contained more than 80 volumes on prayer and healing. I developed seminars on several topics which I am still giving: healing a relationship, guidance and obedience, the Christian and his dreams, Jesus the Healing Christ, and healing of the memories. (“Healing of the memories” is the phrase coined by Agnes Sanford for an extensive healing ministry which is also referred to as inner healing or healing life’s hurts of the past.)

Today we find that in addition to the seminars, our ministry of healing is primarily in the area of praying for the healing of the memories of persons who despair of ever being set free of wounds from earlier days.

A recently diagnosed personal illness helped me see the value of reexamining the present status of my belief and practice regarding Jesus, the Healing Christ, and his relevancy to my physical condition. Being fully aware that my conclusions may be different at other stages in my life, I welcome the insights of other caring Friends regarding prayer and healing as God has revealed them to you.

These things I believe:

1. Nutrition, rest, exercise, medicine, surgery, medical diagnosis/treatment, prayers for healing, and an active faith are all methods which God uses today in bringing about physical health and wholeness.

2. My relationship to God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit is more important to me than is my physical healing. In most instances, however, I believe God wants us to be well. So far as I can determine from the Scriptures, Jesus never indicated to people that it would be best for them to remain ill. “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

3. I do not know a complete answer to the question, “If God wants us to be well, why are so many of us not healed?” Isn’t there a way for us to appropriate God’s healing power for our own situations and for others? In Jesus’ days on earth, he spoke much of doing God’s will and it was not until Jesus did something that the blind saw, the deaf heard, and the lame walked. Jesus said, “He that believeth in me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father” (John 14:12). Jesus’ works certainly included healing the sick. Believing that he intends for us to do the same, I will continue to pray for those who are ill. I will not blame them or myself if prayer does not result in physical healing. I will, however, stay open to Jesus’

Benny Mevey has carried on a ministry of healing prayer in the Wichita, Kansas, area for many years. A principal in the Wichita Public Schools for 27 years, he is currently principal at the Calvin School/Community Center, a cooperative venture between the city of Wichita and the public schools. Members of University (Kans.) Friends, he and his wife, Earlene Mevey, are the parents of two married children and have two grandchildren.

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instruction and correction. Perhaps he will say to me, "... O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me" (Mark 9:19). If so, my task can still be one of bringing the ill and wounded directly to Jesus, the Healing Christ, because he says, "bring him unto me."

4. "... Prayer is not a matter of trying to persuade God to give us what we want. Prayer is giving ourselves to God so that He can work through us what He wants. And the first step in all successful prayer is to find out what He wants" (Behold Your God, by Agnes Sanford).

5. It's probably seldom, if ever, appropriate for a Christian who believes in prayer for healing to advise a sick person to "have more faith." On the other hand there are actions that can be helpful: use your own faith in that person's behalf; teach that individual how to increase one's faith; and demonstrate how to use the faith one already has for the purpose of increasing physical health.

6. Positive thinking and imaging (seeing things as you believe God wants them to be) are valid means of increasing our faith and using the faith we have. They confirm the wisdom of Proverbs 23:7, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he."

7. There are psychic and occult approaches to healing which are "out of bounds" for the Christian.

8. Prayers for healing, at their best, produce a no-lose situation for the patient. A bonafide healing and wholeness of spirit can prepare a person for the next life in ways which are so satisfying that failure to regain physical wholeness loses its major importance. Paul speaks of this attitude in Philippians 1:19-24 which includes, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

9. Although there are persons who are critical and negative about the dangers of false hope through prayer, I would no more consider omitting prayer as a remedy for illness than I would rule out physicians or medicine. In fact, I have known more people with serious physical maladies...
Response
by Dorothy H. Craven

Benny Mevey’s approach here, like his ministry, is characterized by both an assurance of God’s power and love and a realization that we as God’s disciples continue to seek answers and to learn God’s ways. I appreciate this approach and believe, as he does, that God uses many ways to heal us. Whether healing comes as an immediate response to prayer or as a gradual recovery through prayer aided by proper diet, rest, exercise, and medical attention, God is the Healer. As children who trust our Father, it is not for us to dictate His method. We might all prefer that His touch bring instant recovery rather than the pain and delay of a gradual restoration to wholeness; but if we accept, as I do, Agnes Sanford’s statement that prayer is not an effort to persuade God to give us what we want, but rather the giving of ourselves to God so that He can do through us what He wants, then we bring our needs to Him in the full assurance that we can trust His ways of meeting them. As she further suggests, we open ourselves in prayer to His letting us know what He wants.

I agree that we cannot read the Gospel accounts of Jesus’ life without noting how often he healed the sick. He showed his Father’s concern for every human need as he fed the hungry, forgave the sinful, protected the frightened disciples in the tossing boat, taught his followers how to live in the Kingdom, blessed the children, and made the emotionally or physically ill whole. Because of his concern for the totality of our lives, I pray for my own and my friends’ physical healing as readily as I pray for our guidance when we are perplexed, our forgiveness when we fail, our peace when we are tense, or our assurance when we are afraid. Like Benny, I have at times experienced or observed physical healing in response to my prayers, sometimes in remarkable ways; at other times, I have not. Like him, I have no full answer for the difference, but continue to ask God to guide and teach me. I agree that it is not wise to blame the person who is not healed for lack of faith. Nor should we blame ourselves. Rather, continuing to trust in our Father’s wisdom and goodness, we should seek to understand only what He would have us do. We are continuing learners in His school.

More important than any of God’s physical or material gifts, as Benny has also suggested, is a vital and growing relationship with God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Thus it is that when I pray for healing for either myself or others, I pray for healing for the whole person. This kind of healing may well be both instantaneous and continuing, as I have observed it in my own life. One part of me—physical, emotional, or spiritual—may instantly be made well, while other needs are granted over a period of time. The longer I walk with God and seek to live a life of prayer, the more I am able to pray with the faith that He always hears us and that, when the answer does not come according to our desire or our timing, we can trust His continued presence, guidance, and grace.

I am especially grateful for Benny Mevey’s effective ministry in praying for those who need the healing of the memories. He has also been helpful to us in learning to pray in this way for ourselves and for others. We can indeed be confident that we still have available to us a Christ who knows and cares about us, and that we can bring to him every need we have.
Thoughts on Prayer
by Carol Reilley Urner

Of course, I don't think that we can really tell each other how to pray. This would be like telling each other how to relate to our own mates. Prayer is a private relationship, intimate and deep: a relationship of constant love. Surely, however, we can share with one another, open ourselves to one another, and help each other along the way.

The dictionary defines prayer as petition—asking God for something—but to me that seems much, much too narrow. Prayer is a continuing relationship with God; the relationship that underlies all our days, and that at night sometimes even bursts into our dreams. There is no relationship more close, more intimate, more loving, more demanding, more joyful, or more all-consuming than that between ourselves and God.

Prayer is, in a real sense, a constant process, but it has many facets. I, for instance, find it essential to set aside some minutes at the beginning and end of each day. In the morning I hold up my coming day to God, seeking insight and direction. At night I bring it to God again for judgment, correction, and new leadings.

Personally I find it helpful to keep a little prayer book of my own. Each morning I jot down names of people for whom I am praying and also problems I face. During the day I seek with God for openings, for concrete things which I can do. If nothing comes immediately, I return again and again in later days. Looking back, I can find no instance where I have not been shown something specific which seemed wholly consistent with the ways of Love and Truth. I have been led to senators and governors, to slum hovels, to corporation presidents, to jungle tribal villages, to bishops...
and colonels, and to the side of a friend in trouble.

Sometimes I become impatient with people who pray for personal help and favors, or who tell God what to do in relation to their own friends and enemies, or to the problems of the world. A Catholic nun helped me when she said, “Why, I think God hears us no matter how we pray!” And I knew she was right. We must each pray from where we are; whatever the nature of the prayer, God will hear us and, loving us, lead us on. For each of us the important first step is to pray . . . and then to listen.

I myself don’t like to think of prayer primarily as asking anything for my own sake. In prayer we must not ask God to do our work in the world, or to heed our wishes; but rather, we must offer ourselves up to do the work of God. What feet and hands does God have but ours? What voices with which to speak, or what hearts through which to pour out God’s love into the world?

Prayer is not meant to be an escape from life. It is meant to give access to that force—call it the Holy Spirit if you will—that should drive and guide us. No matter where we begin praying, we will begin to feel God’s overwhelming love. It is as Jesus taught us: the more we lose ourselves, the more we give ourselves to God; the more we open ourselves to suffering, the more we find that we are caught up in the joy and love and peace of God.

I think that the most precious, intense, and fertile times are those which we do not set at all, but which are set for us; times when God literally bursts in on us, seizes us, and lifts us up. Often I wish I could share these experiences with others because they are the most remarkable, demanding, and wonderful of all prayer experiences. They come sometimes as great infusions of love or powerful surges of emotion in which I feel the agony and suffering of those who need my hands in help.

Corporate prayer, too, is necessary for me. I love to pray with a group when we can sink together into deep silence and feel God among us and in ourselves like a warm light that reaches everywhere, even into the darkest corners. Sometimes the silence is wordless, sometimes there are words. And I love the moment afterward when we clasp hands and see the love in each other’s eyes. And it is most wonderful when someone says, “I felt we were gathered up,” or “I felt God’s presence among us,” and the others smile a little and nod, agreeing quietly that it is so.

Sonnet for Prayer

A moment comes when one prays for another
Who slides inexorably towards a cliff,
And clutching lips one cries “if only—if.”
Then doubt rolls in relentlessly, to smother
In clouds of rational dust the glimmered Other.
All explanations sound a little stiff,
And the soul’s flight becomes a hieroglyph
Spelling out not “The Almighty”; only “Brother.”

But then comes memory; of bended knee,
Bowed and uncovered head; before the Lord,
Submission. Then a half-forgotten chord
Sounds. The whole world makes subtle harmony,
And prayer becomes, not a queer question mark,
But exclamation point, shining in the dark!

—Kenneth Boulding

Kenneth E. Boulding is on leave this year as distinguished professor of economics at the University of Colorado. For the 1982-83 academic year he is Eugene M. Lang professor of social change at Swarthmore College. He is a member of Boulder (Colo.) Friends Meeting.
The Clearness Committee

by Peter Fingesten

Ministry and Worship, stood up and said in a voice barely audible due to age and shyness, "If you want me to try, I will." "Approve, approve," rippled through the meeting room, mixed with sighs of relief.

"We have two, and need one more, please," urged John, the clerk. His eyes swept slowly over the entire congregation in front of him. Avoiding his eyes, no one volunteered.

Finally, Chris stood up slowly and said, "I like to be on this committee."

Somebody pointed out right away that Chris, although a long-time attender, could not qualify for such a sensitive committee, which should be composed only of members of the Society.

Another Friend added, "We can hardly understand his messages because of his thick accent. Do you think God could?"

Unity on Chris was slow in coming, but, because of the late hour and general weariness, he was appointed. John then told the three to meet with God, conduct the interview, and report in one month to the next business meeting.

Chris invited Jim and Beth to his small, book-lined studio nearby. The seriousness of the business at hand lay heavily upon them, and without further ado they settled into expectant silence, waiting for God to speak.

Jim broke the silence first, saying, "Frankly, I am terribly disappointed. Based upon God's lack of concern for humankind, with its endless sufferings and wars, we ought to do some eldersing." To Chris this seemed pretty daring.

"According to Aristotle, inaction in certain cases is as bad as wrong action, and maybe God is guilty of both. However, in all fairness, let God speak for God, as we speak for ourselves." Beth cautioned them not to be too rash, but to wait and listen some more.

Then, with closed eyes, and almost whispering, she uttered: "My silence embraces the words that fall from your lips as well as those that still sleep unborn in your hearts. In not speaking, you are addressing me, and I shall speak to you the more silent you remain. Listen is all I ask, so that the quiet mirror of your soul may reflect my light more clearly."

"I like what you said about silence," countered Jim. "But we are here to find out why you claim to be omnipotent, and yet you did nothing to prevent the bloodshed of all the wars in history, not to speak of the suffering we all undergo as individuals."

Beth, without opening her eyes, and hardly moving her lips: "I spoke to all the peoples of this world about peace in their own tongue. Who aims the bullet that kills his brother? Don't you know that those who fight cannot listen to me, and that those who listen to me cannot fight? The choice is yours: I made mine, eons ago. I neither promote nor prevent—I abide. There is a balance between weakness and strength. Even the perfect suffer—even Jesus—and I suffer through them all."

"There is no such thing as perfection in our world," sputtered Chris.

"True," said God. "The physical world is far from being perfect: it was intended by me to be a place of growth, test, and struggle. But one moment of love is a moment of perfection in a world that by its very nature is not perfect. Even though humankind is my masterpiece, I am still working on it, trying to mold it more and more clearly in my image. Believe me, it is not easy to refine such obstinate material, which ever tends to slip back into the rude lump with which I started."

At this point, Jim broke in.

"Remember how cruelly you treated Job, and yet he did not cease to love you? Did he not prove that he loved you more than you loved him?"

"Well, Job demonstrated his..."
perfection, not mine,” answered God. “It was he who had to come to the light, not me. I am the Light of Light, your light is as darkness compared to mine. Yet I loved him. But you may not be ready yet to understand what is meant by Divine Love.”

Chris became argumentative. “To us Greeks, love was always understood as something between physical, sentient beings. How can there be a disembodied lover to a physical human being, even if it’s God?”

“Am I not Essence, as your learned forebears wrote? I am the pity that moves the heart, the stillness of the quiet, the ecstasy of love, the baby’s first cry, the dying’s last sigh, and the spark that ignites every creation.”

“Well spoken!” answered Chris. “When I was younger, I chose love mostly in an emergency. In normal situations I preferred a cultivated mind in a cultivated body, as the ancients taught. Now that I am older, I have learnt to love some that have weaknesses or infirmities. Loving them lessens their suffering and increases my strength. I begin to feel like an embryo in the womb of infinity waiting to be born to the realization that spiritual love may truly exist.”

“This is all very interesting, but to come back to the Quaker question, I doubt whether you attend meeting regularly, considering your lack of concern for humankind’s well-being and peace,” interjected Jim.

God, with stronger voice: “What do you mean, I am not a Quaker? Am I not the founder of your Religious Society of Friends?”

“Oh,” said Jim, “I thought an Englishman Fox founded it.”

“Who, then, inspired him and his followers, if not I? I AM the Society—I lead those who listen, and since I am in them, and they are in me, I am indeed to be considered a member.”

Jim, looking first at Chris and then at Beth, said, “After what I heard tonight, I admit that eldering God may be a bit hasty, but you do know that membership is a formal matter that requires several steps besides the agreement of the monthly meeting.”

Beth, thinking it time to gather the sense of what had been said by all, including God, proposed the following minute:

The committee met with God, and there was an honest attempt to answer all our questions to our satisfaction.

God will ever love us in and through the love we have for each other. We therefore recommend a change in status, at least officially, to full-fledged membership in our Society so that everybody will recognize and accept God as a Friend! Agreed!

The morning paper has not discovered April yet or savored spring and pondered resurrection.

Its pages still are stained with holocaust and doom.

Wounds bleed, buildings crumble, evil and perversion peep from falling plaster in condemned buildings.

Frustrations find new ways to swear.

I sit and read beneath a blossom sky with winds that carry delicate fragrance of unfolding leaves, new furrows glistening, drop casual birdsongs through sun-rinsed air.

There should be a reporter covering the subtleties of scent and sound and spring.

Winter is over; death conquered for today.

Promise and possibility flex sleepy muscles, hope unfurls birth-damp wings.

Report the real news.

It’s a scoop!

It’s spring!

—Alice MacKenzie Swaim
by Robert H. Morris

Only now, with two full years' distance from the day I chose to associate with Pentecostals, leaving the Society of Friends, do I feel able to write about my relation with Friends with the necessary degree of detachment. Fifteen years of faithful and loving participation in two unprogrammed meetings, one in New York City and one in North Carolina, were not lightly cast aside, nor was it painless to separate from many close friends.

From a home divided on religious lines, parents both Protestants but of rival sects in a small Southern town, truth-seeking has seemed ingrained in my soul and has colored the whole fabric of my life, leading more than once to painful points of decision. Conversion to my mother's church at age 14 certainly was, in part, an assertion of independence from a loving but anxious father, yet was also an act of fidelity to truth as best my mind could comprehend it. Only deep conviction of being in the right sustained me in the years that followed, traumatic for both me and my father. Reading on my own Plato's account of Socrates' Apology and books on world religions, I continued to expand mental horizons. I instinctively chose a college that, though church-affiliated, was of neither parent's persuasion and offered a quality liberal arts education—of which I still am grateful. This included a junior year in France, where I encountered Sartre and Camus. The vestiges of childhood faith vanished as I concluded that God was a creation of the human mind and that death was the absolute that gave poignancy to each moment of life, whose significance lay entirely in the value imposed upon it by our choices.

This began a more honest search for reality, and the initial experience was one of exhilaration, of emancipation from petty systems and dogmas. I was working out my own moral code by experimentation; I studied modern theologians, the philosophy of science, Plato and Whitehead; I attended Catholic, Greek, Unitarian, Bahai churches; I read Honest to God. When I graduated from college and faced my own future, the search became an increasingly desperate one, and by the time I encountered Quakers two years later, I had come close to suicide, had dropped out of graduate school, had moved to New York City, and was struggling to build a new life with a fuller acceptance of myself and of reality.

Quakerism found me through three avenues: the American Friends Service Committee's East Harlem Project, Morningside Meeting, and George Fox's Journal. The first gave me a way to become involved and to contribute to social change; the second, a vital fellowship and support for my continued search; and the last began the reinterpretation and reintegration of my childhood Christianity in terms that helped release my inner potential. In Fox, I seemed to find the power of the early church through the spirit of Christ alive in modern times—speaking English!—and within reach of me as well. The Inner Light, the Teacher Within—this discovery was "an atomic explosion" inside me, as I termed it at the time. Though I attended meeting faithfully and was soon active on committees, I did not formally join Friends until I was already working full time with the Quaker Project on Community Conflict of New York Yearly Meeting, and had spent three days alone in meditation to be absolutely clear. Joining Friends to me was a tremendous step—a commitment first of all to follow the Inner Light, and secondly to embrace a particular human fellowship that I knew could never perfectly fulfill its ideal.

Meeting for worship invariably was the climax of my week. Also I enjoyed and grew through involvement in committees and in positions that ultimately included terms as clerk and as chairperson of Ministry and Counsel. I attended peace institutes and yearly meetings, took part in peace vigils and freedom marches, tore up my draft card, and refused certain taxes. Worship-sharing groups, a "George Fox" study group, even a personal "encounter" group, deepened relations with others and, it seemed, enhanced contact with the Inner Self. During these years I married a Friend, shifted from office work to more satisfying work in cabinetmaking, fathered a child, moved to North Carolina.

For a long time I tolerated the gap, sometimes painful, between the Quaker...
ideal, embodied for me in Fox and Woolman, and the actual state of the Society of Friends, finding resolution in the attempt at every moment to obey the Light Within which could realize the possible within the situation; and there were moments, still memorable, when it seemed in groups large or small, gathered for worship or business, that we indeed touched Truth and felt Divine Love. Aware of the example of Woolman’s humility in approaching native Indians, I remember speaking out in yearly meeting on the subject of membership, to the effect that we needed to find language that could speak to seekers of any background, even atheists. Yet, as years passed, I realized that my allegiance was to Christ and to the Bible-conformed faith of George Fox, and this was not shared by many Friends I knew, who had little interest in the person and teachings of Jesus, and who, aside from a few “Quaker” passages, saw little in the Bible that was relevant. Sin, repentance, and salvation were outside their vocabulary of meaningful concepts.

Age 30 was a turning point: my wife and I read a certain science-fiction novel, then delved into literature on noted psychics and psychic phenomena, and finally zeroed in on Edgar Cayce, the well-documented “sleeping prophet,” who died in 1945. Before long, our primary source of spiritual strength came not from the meeting but from a Search for God (S.F.G.) study group, grounded in Cayce’s teachings on spiritual laws, which met weekly to study, meditate, pray for healing of others and of society. Between meetings we attempted small “disciplines” in applying these laws in thought and action, reporting on results at the next meeting. Since the S.F.G. program taught to change self first and last rather than preaching to others, I felt no contradiction in remaining a Friend—in fact, I felt it made me a better Friend, helping me to judge less and to forgive more. However, it did have the effect of turning me from sociopolitical activism and toward a deeper concern with the individual and with the quality of the meeting life.

Although FRIENDS JOURNAL in April 1976 featured my article on “Psychic Expansion and Spiritual Discernment,” I found little interest among Friends—other than a few individuals, and occasionally small groups at large gatherings—in matters Jeanne and I felt were of tremendous importance: the vast potential of the mind, the undying nature of the soul, the power of prayer to affect conditions, the proven track record of fulfilled prophecies lending credibility to predictions of cataclysmic events unfolding in our own generation. I came more and more to see Friends as a “warm fuzzy” group—Friends of humankind in a human way, but not the Friends of Truth, or Friends of God, as early Friends saw themselves to be. Friends on the one hand seemed largely satisfied to seek but never definitely to find, while on the other hand they were never satisfied with “doing something” about society. I realized that this generation of Friends makes no distinction between the “natural” conscience and the Spirit of God, nor between the human and the divine self. I increasingly was convinced that Friends had abandoned their original basis of spiritual power, that they were moving further from that basis as they embraced every liberal cause and blurred more and more all standards of belief and behavior. While considering myself to be a Christian, I realized that the members of my meeting, as a whole, were not. As a result, I actually helped rewrite membership standards in a way that at least had the value of removing the hypocrisy that a Friend automatically was a Christian. In this act I was admitting to myself that I no longer hoped, as earlier, to convert other Friends to my views. But then, I had never been inspired by the “minimum Quaker” concept. So the stage, in retrospect, seems to have been set for a further revolution of my thought.

At age 36 to 37, I was uncertain about my future vocation, had three dependents to support, and, after some six years in Search for God study groups, found an inner need still unmet. I had become attuned to Ray Stanford, a man of psychic abilities comparable to Cayce’s, and was reading the journals of the Association for the Understanding of Man (A.U.M.) from cover to cover, finding the Source (considered as Stanford’s subconscious and superconscious mind) expressing a philosophy with which my inner being was resonated. For some time this seemed supplementary to the S.F.G. group work; eventually, however, I found myself diverging from the Cayce point of view.

In fall 1978 I spoke in a meeting for worship of a sense of deadness within myself, of lethargy, of not wanting to start anything new. This was my first
awareness of a need for renewal, of a need to dig down to the depths again, and to turn over new ground. Attendance at an Intensive Journal Workshop brought some more feelings and thoughts to the surface, but I quickly turned away from the method as—at least for me—a narcissistic trap. In spring of 1979 I had several sessions with a psychiatrist who was a member of our meeting. After only one or two sessions, however, an interior voice clearly told me: “Your help will come from the Lord, not from a person.” It was at this point that I received by mail the call to a conference whose theme was to be “An Experience in the Holy Spirit,” from A.U.M. I thought to myself: “If I’m willing to spend (x) dollars an hour on a psychiatrist, why can’t I spend (y) dollars on God?”—to attend the conference. I knew that Ray Stanford claimed he had received the baptism of Spirit the previous fall and that he was no longer giving psychic readings, finding it better to live consciously in the Spirit than merely to dream spiritual thoughts as a psychic.

As a Quaker, I had adopted the general assumption that the Inner Light, as experienced in meditation, was the same as the Holy Spirit of the Bible. It now struck me that the baptism of Spirit, promised by Jesus, and received by his disciples on the Day of Pentecost, as well as by converts to Christ throughout the book of Acts, was something outside the Quaker framework. While early Quakers shook (and thereby gained their name) under the power of the Spirit, it is questionable whether more than a few (if Pentecostal writers are correct that some did so) experienced the baptism of the Spirit and spoke in new tongues, as early Christians did and continued to do, at least until the times of Augustine.

I recalled that for years it had been in my mind to write about the Holy Spirit someday—if I could ever grasp what it was. I had never taken very seriously, nor had I ever had direct contact with, Pentecostals or the charismatic movement (except to forgive and dismiss from mind a teenage girl who, after a few harrying weeks in our home under a foster care arrangement, wrote us that we’d go to hell if we didn’t receive the Holy Ghost and speak in other tongues!). After attempting to meditate for 15 years, and spending a daily hour in prayer and meditation for several of these years, what did I have to show for it? My life had become stable and productive; my home was reasonably happy; I had friends; I had health of body and mind. And yet something in my spirit was hungry to move to another level of awareness and fulfillment that I had failed to find in meditation. Yes, I had found a Seed, or a Light, within, but some stimulus from outside myself was needed to quicken it to become the vital force it was supposed to be. My life still lacked that power that was so evident in Christ and, after Pentecost, in his disciples, and that seemed in a measure present in George Fox, also. If this power was real, I certainly wanted it for myself.

The A.U.M. conference in June 1979 did not fall short, in any respect, of its billing. From the temperamental intellectual I had heard and had once seen in New York, Ray clearly was now changed. He laughed, wept, burst into tongues of ecstasy, leaped for joy, as he testified to us of his own change and encouraged us to begin praising God (I’d never been taught to do that!) and praying to receive his Spirit. While some of our diverse group, from 40 states and three foreign countries, were skeptical, most of us responded to his message. I actually watched a few receiving the baptism of Spirit, with this evidence of other tongues and overwhelming joy.

The final night, after the formal closing of the conference, 57 of us, including me, were baptized in water in Jesus’ name by a Pentecostal preacher. I returned home excited and hopeful, but even as the plane winged me back, I realized that my mission was not, as in preconference fantasies, to return among Friends as a newly enlightened guru but rather to seek for the grace to
open my heart to God and to receive God’s Spirit.

Since that date, I have not attended a Friends meeting, except to testify to small groups and to attend a wedding. I did, soon after my return, meet with some members of Ministry and Counsel to share my experience (and, some months later, wrote a letter to the meeting asking to be removed from membership). I felt an absolute need to find a group or church where the Holy Spirit was moving with power, and so visited a charismatic group and several “holiness”-type churches, until I found the United Pentecostal Church and knew I was at home. Still, it was nine months from the time I first began seeking the baptism of Spirit when, on February 19, 1980, I let go of my tongue while rejoicing in the experience of power and victory, finally certain that I belonged to Christ and he to me. And six months later I was blessed again when my wife, after her third trip to the altar in as many nights, also spoke in tongues and knew she had been born in Spirit.

I know that, to some of our friends and family among Friends, we seem to have abandoned our individuality and independence, and to have become narrow-minded bigots. However to us, we merely are letting the mind yield to Spirit, are finding our true self and our true freedom in Christ, and are, by embracing a particular faith, being drawn closer to the heart of Love. We have the joy of new songs as well as favorite old hymns, glad music in praise of our God. We taste the ecstasy of being possessed by the Spirit and the freedom of whole-hearted worship—even shouting, clapping, leaping, running, and dancing, as the Spirit moves. We have an experience that corresponds to and is supported by the Scriptures. We know the power of Jesus’ name to heal diseases and meet every situation. We experience oneness through the Spirit, with many ordinary people of diverse backgrounds, who by the power of God are leading overcoming lives. We feel in tune with the move of history as we see the Word of God fulfilled in the current events of our time that are leading to the climax of all human history, and can feel calm though facing drastic changes in the world, knowing we are in the hands of a loving and able God.

In the perspective of my Pentecostal experience, the Eastern unprogrammed Friends of my acquaintance seem to have abandoned the faith of Fox, their principal founder (in my opinion, de Hartog emasculates and perverts Fox in his Peaceable Kingdom), and essentially to have embraced the Ranterism they once refuted: “Whatever I feel is right is right.” From the Pentecostal perspective, even early Friends were somewhat “anti” in their struggle against creeds and forms; against music in worship; against even water baptism and the Lord’s Supper, plainly endorsed by Jesus; against all clergy, as if none could truly be called of God and worthy of full-time support. However—again, in this perspective—modern Friends are in a worse position, having abandoned Scripture as a standard against which to measure inner leadings, and, anxious to embrace and to love the sinner, having finally embraced and loved the sin. From my point of view, Friends have allowed intellect to usurp the place of Spirit, and, in the words of Scripture: “They have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof.” The method of inner searching seems to have become an end in itself. Jesus said that in the last days “they will cry ‘peace, peace,’ but there is no peace.” Friends, it seems, are almost frantically crying out for peace while in fact there is less and less peace, whether in the world at large, in their meetings, in their homes, or within themselves as individuals.

I love the Friends I have known, as individuals and as souls, and Friends’ traditional “manner” still holds an appeal for me. But, having found that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus, who is Lord, I must of necessity listen to him who is the Word of Life. Prayer was the core of his approach to life. It was he who taught that divorce had never been the will of God and was only allowed because of the hardness of the human heart. It was he who spoke forcefully and vividly of hell—and far more of heaven. It was he alone, of all the world’s great religious teachers (along with Jewish prophets), who called us to repentance. I am convinced that he is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and am willing to stake my life, my very soul, on this truth.
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Friends are reminded that the Anna T. Jones Fund will reimburse cremation costs. (Applicable to members of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting only.)
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WORLD OF FRIENDS

The 1983 Calendar of Yearly Meetings of the Religious Society of Friends, published by the Friends World Committee for Consultation, has just been issued.
An annual publication, the folder lists the dates and locations of all yearly meeting sessions in Africa, Asia, and the Far East, Europe and the Near East, and the Section of the Americas. A directory of Quaker centers and offices around the world, information on several Quaker conferences, and the officers of all the FWCC sections are also listed.
Copies of the calendar are available on request from FWCC, 1506 Race Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102, or from the FWCC Midwest Office, P.O. Box 235, Plainfield, IN 46168. Please send a self-addressed, stamped business envelope with request.
The small group of Friends in San Jose, Costa Rica, is exploring the possibility of a Friends center there. Their interest was focused by the availability of a pension at a suitable location, which, once purchased, could be self-supporting. At this time the group is continuing to investigate the possibility but is keeping all options open. Anyone with ideas, resources, or services to offer may write Betty Ridgway, c/o H. W. Ridgway, 525 Kings Hwy., Mickleton, NJ 08056.
The World Peace Tax Fund has gained the endorsement of the General Board of Friends United Meeting. FUM calls upon its members to take action in support of the bill before Congress, noting that "Friends have long denied wars and participation therein."
The minute notes that there are laws which recognize "the religious rights of Friends and guaranteeing the right to conscientious objection to war." The World Peace Tax Fund, FUM notes, would provide a legal way for individuals to redirect their taxes "to nonmilitary, peaceful purposes."
The goal of raising $50,000 to build a meetinghouse in Soweto, South Africa, has been met! Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas, will continue to receive and hold funds for eventual construction, but will make no further solicitation until Friends in South Africa request it.
Information about military tax diversion and escrow funds has been mailed to all monthly meetings in New York Yearly Meeting by Rahway and Plainfield (N.J.) Monthly Meeting. Included in the mailing was a reprint of "Ideas of April" (FJ 12/18/82) and information on the World Peace Tax Fund bills before Congress.
A reunion of the Merom Civilian Public Service No. 14 has been scheduled for May 13-15 at the Merom Institute, Merom, Indiana. Reservations should be received by April 27. Contact David M. Stoffregen, 2830 Madison Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45209; (513) 631-8959.
A two-week Peace Pilgrimage will take place in Japan from July 31 to August 13. The group will join the World Conference Against A and H Bombs sponsored by the Japanese peace and antinuclear movement and participate in ceremonies in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
Deadline for reservations is May 31. For information write David Fleishman, Grassroots Tours, 1346 Connecticut Ave., NW, Room 533, Washington, DC 20036.
Teachers at Ramallah Friends Schools on the West Bank were recently ordered by Israeli military authorities to sign a pledge against the PLO. The five teachers, all from the U.S., refused to sign such an "oath." While the teachers were consulting with Friends United Meeting headquarters in Richmond, Indiana, the demand was dropped.
The English-language weekly, Al Fajr, invited Ramallah Friends to explain the Quaker testimony on oaths and to explain the impartiality of Friends' work. The article ended with these words by Edward Burrough (1659):
We are not for names, nor men, nor titles of government, nor are we for this party nor against the other... but we are for justice and mercy and truth and peace and true freedom.
An Israeli and a Palestinian have been nominated by the American Friends Service Committee for the 1983 Nobel Peace Prize. The nominees are retired General Mattiyyahu Peled, chairman of the Israel Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, and Isam Sefarvi, a diplomat for the Palestine Liberation Organization. The two have had a series of talks since 1976 in efforts to bring peace to the Middle East through nonviolent means. Both men have had military careers and have now come to the conclusion that peace and justice will come through negotiations and not through continued warfare.
The AFSC, as a Nobel Peace Prize recipient in 1947, is entitled to make a nomination each year.

Vegetarians will be interested to learn from Sally Campbell of Morningside (N.Y.) Meeting that Sally's mother was able to get a cheeseburger recently without the burger at Macdonald's for a reduced price.
Universalism and Friends

The response to Larry Spears's interview with John Linton, “Universalism and Friends” (FJ 2/1), is such that “Forum” has been expanded to accommodate a selection of the many letters we received. Philip Mayer saw a copy of Francis Brown’s letter (which appears below) and has submitted a specific response to Francis’s thoughts. —Ed.

Quaker Roots in Christianity

I write to express my disagreement with the direction of the Quaker Universalist Group as portrayed in your February 1 issue.

1. Like it or not, the Society of Friends does come out of the Christian stream. Emphatically so. In fact, “Primitive Christianity revived” was the rallying cry of early Friends. This is our heritage and our root. To recast ourselves outside—or beyond—this rootage and still call ourselves Quaker would seem a contradiction of terms.

2. Even if the goals of the Universalists were adopted, it would seem to me that the end product would be so vague, so vacuous, that we would end up with virtually nothing. People are hungry for something definite. To attempt to be all things to all people leads to disaster.

3. What we have now appears to me to be about the best arrangement we could hope for. I recognize that there exists in many of our meetings Universalist points of view. We accept a variety of religious viewpoints. We have always supported the notion of finding Light and Truth from whatever source, and this can come from the writings and teachings of the other world religions as well as from the Old and New Testaments. We have always stood for the concept of continuing revelation. We have an open ministry whose only curb is that it proceed from true leading. We have always avoided reducing our beliefs into creedal statements. In short, we encompass in what we have now a Universalist dimension—yet within the Christian framework.

4. Speaking personally, the Christian base of my Quaker faith is all-important. Remove this and I don’t know that I would want to continue my membership. I am not a Friend to escape Christianity; rather, I am a Quaker because of the concept and attitude taken by Quakers toward the Christian faith. The stance I embrace is not a narrow, fundamentalist Christianity which may properly be classified as exclusive. Quaker Christianity for me involves spiritual warmth and inclusiveness. It supports religious liberty. Yet in the background—often unarticulated—is the Christian dimension. We can be definite without being rigid or doctrinaire. I want Friends to stand for something while at the same time being tolerant.

5. For over a quarter of a century—largely through my work with Philadelphia Yearly Meeting—I have tried to work for a climate of trust and mutual respect which would foster greater understanding and rapport within the Society of Friends in the U.S. It is my firm conviction that such goals are possible only in the context of Christianity. Doubtless there are more important things than Quaker unity. But I think that those advocating universalism should have this aspect in mind, for a sure result of moving in this direction would be further fracturing of the Society of Friends. This would not only set back unity on the larger Quaker scene, but would also, in my guess, pose serious problems within our own monthly and yearly meetings. Does anyone want to repeat the 1827 experience?

6. Perhaps my strongest reservation lies in the area of our social testimonies and our witness to the world. We need all our strength—all our united strength (which isn’t too great)—to work toward peace and justice. I would deplore weakening ourselves in these areas through diverting our time, energy, and strength in internal theological debate and dissertation. At this precarious time in world history, when nuclear annihilation threatens, to raise up an issue which goes to the very heart and core of our religious faith would seem not only folly but, in terms of what the world has come to expect of us, perhaps irresponsible as well.

Let us turn all that we possess into the channels of universal love. And let us make this, which was so central to the teachings of Christ, the true business of our lives.

Francis C. Brown
Downingtown, Pa.

Universal Spirit in Everyone

I have the highest admiration for Francis Brown and am sorry to find myself in disagreement with him on the subject of Christian universalism. On other issues I may be in as much disagreement with John Linton, who is leading the Universalist emphasis, but I think Francis Brown’s objections need to be answered point by point.

1. No doubt nearly Friends thought they were Christians, but it is also beyond doubt that most Christians of that day denied them that title. Then (as now) the majority of English-speaking people set up definitions of the word Christian which left the Quakers out. Even Fox did not call his society “the Christian Friends,” but just “Friends.” When Fox claimed to be a Christian it was to claim that he was as good as others, not that...
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About Mount Holly

Located only fifteen minutes from Medford Leas, Mount Holly is the County Seat for Burlington County. Historic Mount Holly has many governmental offices and social service agencies, plus Burlington County Memorial Hospital, the county's largest medical facility. BCMH provides over 80% of the hospital care for residents of Medford Leas, and has several excellent medical departments.

A diverse community, both economically and racially, Mount Holly offers many avenues for civic and social involvement. The town is ideally situated less than two hours from New York City and the New Jersey shore. A reliable system of public transporation, a new shopping mall three miles distant, plus shops, parks and cultural outlets add to Mount Holly's attractiveness and "livability."

If you are interested in further exploring the concept of independent care or would like more information on fees (financial assistance available) please contact Lois Forrest at (609) 654-3000.
Christianity was not in terms of a creed but in terms of a universal spirit which needed to be called forth in everyone. He agreed with those who called themselves Christian. His definition of Christianity was not in terms of a creed but in terms of a universal spirit which needed to be called forth in everyone.

2. The argument that universalism is vacuous and will lead to disaster is unverifiable. Certainly Francis Brown's opinion is weighty. It was the opinion of the Church of England in making the same charge against Fox. Fortunately Fox was willing to stand his ground. He needed to be called forth in everyone.

3. Fox's opinion was not upheld. But is quitting the meeting the kind of action Jesus had in mind when he said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples"?

4. We want Francis Brown, and all other Friends, to stand for whatever they believe. Theological debate is important; we do not mean retirement from this service. We all appreciate Francis Brown's tireless efforts to hold us together. We may have differences in every meeting. To paper over these differences, or to continue our membership if our opinion were not upheld. But is quitting the meeting the kind of action Jesus had in mind when he said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples"?

5. We all appreciate Francis Brown's tireless efforts to hold us together. We hope that his retirement from office does not mean retirement from this service. Instead of seeking unity in the context of the Christian tradition, why not seek it in the context of a religious society of friends?

6. It seems to me that the strength of our efforts for peace and social justice comes from our ability to appreciate and to work with people of other beliefs. Theological debate is important; we do not mean retirement from this service. We all appreciate Francis Brown's tireless efforts to hold us together. We may have differences in every meeting. To paper over these differences, or to continue our membership if our opinion were not upheld. But is quitting the meeting the kind of action Jesus had in mind when he said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples"?

Philip F. Mayer
Swarthmore, Pa.

A Rose, Is a Rose, Is a Rose

I am thoroughly convinced that the Religious Society of Friends has little to gain and very much to lose if it abandons its Christian universalism for that advocated by some Universalist Friends.

The Unitarian Universalist Association's philosophy follows along almost exactly with that presented by Fox. If seekers don't identify with that particular denomination, they can always join the Wider Quaker Fellowship (of which I am a member) which can place them in a semiformal membership association with Friends without the necessarily declaring a Christocentric orientation (at the same time saving Friends from watering down their Christian orientation). I cannot but smile (although sadly) when Friend Linton states that Friends should not be "evangelistic" (God forbid!), but is himself very busily engaged in proselytizing as he travels from continent to continent and meeting to meeting! Of course, Friends now call it "dialoguing" and thereby it becomes perfectly acceptable. Come, Friends, let's stop these games with semantics! Proselytizing is still proselytizing—whatever modern term we choose to employ. Can't we be honest about this?

We may as well have Universalist Quakers as well as Jewish Quakers (FJ 1/15), Buddhist Quakers, Arian Quakers (earlier articles in FJ), and others. May I here make my pitch for Universalism to Christianity. If Friends now call it "dialoguing" and thereby it becomes perfectly acceptable. Come, Friends, let's stop these games with semantics! Proselytizing is still proselytizing—whatever modern term we choose to employ. Can't we be honest about this?

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Not in the "Group"

I am delighted with the quality of the articles in FRIENDS JOURNAL. I am especially pleased with Warren Sylvester Smith's "Emperors of the Endless Dark" (FJ 2/1).

"On 'Universalism and Friends,'" I missed the meeting with John Linton at Crosslands but went to hear him at Providence (Pa.) Friends Meeting. During the question period following his talk I asked John how his and the "Group's" beliefs differed from those expressed by Gladys Scott in her 1980 Swarthmore Lecture, "What Canst Thou Say?" subjude "Towards a Quaker Theology.

He said that "Gladys Scott's position was universality but that she has refused to join the "Group." Nor am I inclined to join the "Group." I feel that labeling and categorizing may in this situation lead to divisiveness and separatism.

Harry Abrahamson
Reddick, Fla.

The Highest Form of Being

The two articles in your 2/1 issue, "Emperors of the Endless Dark" and...
“Universalism and Friends,” are both witnessing to an ongoing quest for potentialities in the Society of Friends for understanding and embracing truth as it unfolds.

I write as a poet, neither a scientist nor a theologian, convinced that there are many different levels of Being open to our experience. When my best poems come to me, they originate at a level of consciousness other than the everyday one. So, I believe, does most of the good ministry in meetings for worship. Shall we call it the superconscious?

The human intellect weaves theologies in all religious traditions. The mystical experience transcends the intellectual. The truth discovered by scientists about how matter behaves is operative on a different level than the conscious and superconscious life of the scientists themselves. Why should there be contradiction between two levels of truth?

On the contrary, I believe analogies from truth discovered on one level can give hints of illumination on a higher level.

In “Emperors of the Endless Dark” Warren Sylvester Smith says: “Everything in the universe is in motion, and we can only observe the state of anything in its relation to something else.” This can also be said about conscious, Self-aware human beings, which was discovered thousands of years ago by Buddhist monks through meditation.

Is Ultimate Reality then a single organism, adopting related patterns of behavior throughout its various levels, from inanimate matter to Self-awareness?

Self-awareness is the highest form of Being we can at present experience. But who knows what other steps may await us on the ladder of expanding truth?

Winifred Rawlins Moylan, Pa.

A Different Use of the Word

I would like to take note of the difference in the use John Linton makes of the word universalism from its...
traditional use in the history of Western religion. Western "Universalists," at least those of previous centuries, have called themselves Christians. Until exterminated by the Inquisition, the medieval Albigenians practiced Christian ceremonies while proclaiming the universal salvation of all. The 19th-century American Universalists held similar views. These historic Christian deviants were concerned with the spiritual kinship of those within the church to those outside, without reference to their religious belief or lack thereof. In this cultural context—so different from our own—these groups found no need to take account of face-to-face meetings at the church door with visitors from other than Christian backgrounds; the issue was the destiny of their distant souls. John Linton, on the other hand, wishes us to better prepare ourselves for fellowship with these living individuals in our meetinghouses.

I feel sad that John Linton speaks so disparagingly of his early religious experiences—not that he relegates the form of the experiences to his past, but that he dismisses the commitments he made as irrelevant to his spiritual development, if that is what he means.

It is a common report of the mystics that formal disciplines must be passed through.

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Jack Kirk

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before the experience of formless unity is attained. In like manner, may not the religious experiences of one stage of life be incorporated in us and retained in part, if not in whole—in any case honored—as we mature in spiritual religion?

Lindley M. Winstan
Malvern, Pa.

Spoke to Her Condition

Your 2/1 issue really spoke to my condition. I couldn’t believe my eyes—two articles that said so clearly what I wanted said—that some of us are strongly Universalist rather than Christian.

Reading by itself is not enough, though it helps. I would suggest: The Tao of Physics by Fritjof Capra; The Aquarian Conspiracy by Marilyn Ferguson; Space, Time, and Medicine by Larry Dossey, M.D.; The Holographic Paradigm, Ken Wilber (ed.); and The Dancing Wu Li Masters by Gary Zukav.

We also need discussion—not the kind that produces dissension but gentle exploration of wider horizons.

Bea Reiner
St. Petersburg, Fla.

Through a Glass, Darkly

Reading Larry Spears’s article on “Universalism and Friends” (FJ 2/1) led me to reread some sections in Fox and Barclay. The universality of the light is an important concept in Quakerism as is respect for individuals wherever they are on their religious journeys. “There’s a light that is shining in the Turk and the Jew” says it well for our time. Yet Fox knew the Bible extremely well, using Old and New Testament passages to explain and support his own vital personal religious experience.

When we try to follow a great religious figure, it often happens that we interpret the vision partially and defend the partial interpretation as the whole. That was one of the causes of the Quaker separations of the last century—and our loss.

I hope that the renewed interest in the Bible in our yearly meeting will not lead to narrowness in our contacts with those coming by different paths. I hope that Quaker Universalists can be open to Christianity as well as to Eastern religions. In our Society we need to keep a good balance between the experiential and the biblical and not let words be barriers. With the Light as our common ground we can continue to know and understand each other better, realizing what Paul meant at the end of his chapter on love about “seeing through a glass, darkly.”

Bertha May Nicholson
Westtown, Pa.

CALENDAR

April


2-3 Southeastern Yearly Meeting, United Methodist Youth Camp, Leesburg, Fl. Write Gene Beardsley, Rt. 3, Box 108 F, Gainesville, Fl. 32606.

2-3 South Central Yearly Meeting, Camp Allen, Navasota, Texas, Write Margret Hofmann, 2706 Nottingham Lane, Austin, TX 78704.

8-9 114th Annual Meeting of Associated Committee of Friends on Indian Affairs, Kickeepoo Friends Center, McLoud, Okla. Write Ron Wood, P.O. Box 370, McLoud, OK 74561.


17 Historic Chichester Meeting, Boothwyn, Pa., open at 3 p.m. for meeting for worship, followed by tea. Phone (215) 356-7355.

17-19 National Convocation to Reverse the Arms Race, Riverside Church Disarmament Program, 490 Riverside Dr., New York, NY 10027.


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What Quaker pastor almost lost his job for supporting a lesbian mother in a custody case? Read about it in A Friendly Letter, the independent Quaker monthly, 12 issues $12, sample free. Box 1361, Falls Church, VA 22041.


What happened when a midwestern yearly meeting faced separation last year over its support of FCNL? The story was followed by A Friendly Letter, the independent Quaker monthly, 12 issues $12, sample free. Box 1361, Falls Church, VA 22041.

Faith and Practice of a Unifying Community: The Testimony of the Publishers of Truth. $2 from Publishers of Truth, 1520 Bruce Road, Holland, PA 19075.

Wider Quaker Fellowship, a program of Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas, 1506 Race Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102. Quaker-oriented literature and service sent 3 times/year. Sister of persons throughout the world, without leaving their own churches, wish to be in touch with Quakers and Quakerism in a spiritual movement. Also serves Friends cut off by distance from their meetings.

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Gatherings


Personal

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Associate Secretary, Friends Meeting of Washington, D.C. Administrative, organizational, clerical skills, and Quaker background. Position available July 1. Application deadline April 29. Write Pater Ainslie, Secretary, Friends Meeting of Washington, 2111 Florida Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036. Call (202) 686-1310.

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Howard Brinton, in a bulletin of 1942, asked the question, “Why pamphlets?”—and in answering it proceeded to define the Pendle Hill Pamphlet. Such a publication should be short enough to read at a single sitting, it should present a single thesis, it should have contemporary (though not necessarily topical) relevance, and it must express a concern.

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 RICHMOND—First-day school 10 a.m. worship 11 a.m. 6500 Kensington Ave. Phone: (804) 255-2105.
 ROANOKE—Selam Preparatory Friends Meeting, clerk, Genevieve Waring, 343-7699, and Blacksburg Preparatory Friends Meeting, clerk, Kate Brinton, 228-5026.
 VIRGINIA BEACH—Meeting for worship 11 a.m. (based on silence) 1573 Laskin Road, Virginia Beach, VA 23451.
 WILLIAMSBURG—Unprogrammed worship 10:30 a.m. 104 Kingswood Dr. (804) 229-6693 or (804) 229-3492.
 WINCHESTER—Centre Meeting, 203 North Washington, Worship 10:15 a.m. Phone: 622-2973.
 WINCHESTER—Hopewell Meeting, 7 mi. N. on Rt. 11, Unprogrammed worship for worship 10:15 a.m., First-day school 1st day 11 a.m. Clerk: (703) 601-1018.

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 OLYMPIA—Worship 10 a.m. Worship 10 a.m. 2nd. & 4th, other Sundays in homes. 943-9318 or 357-3855.
 BELLEVUE (Seattle)—Eastside Friends Meeting (NP/196), 1110 158th St. E.S.E. (206) 922-2461 or 653-7006.
 Unprogrammed worship 10 a.m. Study 11 a.m. 11 a.m.
 SEATTLE—University Friends Meeting, 4001 9th Ave. N.E. Silent worship, Fellowship classes 11 a.m. 632-7006. Accommodations: 634-9839.
 SPOKANE—Unprogrammed worship, Sundays 10 a.m. W. 904 Carlisle Ave. Phone: 358-1580.
 TACOMA—Tacoma Friends Meeting, 3019 N. 21st St. Unprogrammed worship 10:30 a.m., First-day school discussion 11:30 a.m. Phone: 759-1910.
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Helping Those Homeward Bound!

Fleeing war, famine, economic hardship and civil strife, more than 585,000 Indochina refugees have poured into Thailand since 1975. Of these 175,000 remain, including 40,000 from Laos. Seeing their chances of resettlement abroad dwindling, and becoming disillusioned with life in the refugee camps, a growing number of poor rural Laotian families are now seeking to return to Laos, where they will be resettled by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees’ program.

Refugees must be prepared for this trip home, both psychologically and physically. Under the UNHCR’s Voluntary Repatriation Plan, AFSC prepared 83 Lao refugees for return last fall. Now staff is preparing to train about 100 a month in literacy, tin-smithing, weaving and fishnet making, all skills that will help them resume their lives in Laos.

Some of these people have been away from their homes for as much as seven years. Overcoming their own fears and sense of estrangement is important. They must also learn to cope with the criticism of their peers who do not agree with repatriation. Discussion of life in Laos is part of the program.

“You can go home again,” Laotian refugees are learning. We need your support in making this program possible.

TO: AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE
1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102

☐ Here is my contribution to help with Refugee Resettlement $ _________.

☐ Please send me more information on this program.

NAME ____________________________________________

ADDRESS __________________________________________

CITY ________________________ STATE ______ ZIP ______