THROUGH THE DARKNESS, BACK TO THE LIGHT

SPIRITUAL ASPECTS OF DEPRESSION
1987 FGC REPORT
Among Friends: Remembering Mary

Mary Erkes came to the Journal in the fall of 1982. During the four years she was a volunteer—and more recently, a part-time staff member—she performed a variety of services. She assisted with promotional mailings, helped us send renewal notices to subscribers, often clipped and sent tear sheets or book reviews to publishers; in short, she was a willing helper in performing many tasks that go into the production of the magazine.

Mary was an extremely quiet and reserved person. Perhaps it was her appreciation of silence that attracted her to Quakerism. In recent months, I learned, she found particular joy in attending silent retreats with other members of her meeting (Central Philadelphia).

Yet she enjoyed the happy, and sometimes noisy fellowship of her colleagues at those times when we “let down our hair” (such as the moment at my 50th birthday party several years ago when a “Philadelphia Mummer” arrived and began to perform in my backyard—I shall always remember the full and approving smile on Mary’s face).

On July 20 when I arrived at work I learned that Mary had been killed the previous afternoon in a tragic accident. On her way home following her participation in a silent retreat she stepped off a commuter train near her home and was struck by a train from the opposite direction. We grieve her sudden death and extend our love and sympathy to her family.

May Sarton said it very well in her poem, “A Hard Death”:

Here in this place, in this time without belief
Keep the channels open to each other’s grief;
Never accept a death or life as strange
To its essence, but at each second be aware
How God is moving always through each flower
From birth to death. . .

Vinton Deming

Memorial arch at Oberlin College, FGC gathering

Cover art by Joseph Levenson
LET
THE SILENCE
SPEAK
FOR ITSELF

by Peter and Carole Fingesten

Silence is the inaudible echo of the voice of God which is heard with the ears of the heart. It is not simply the absence of speech but a state of being. It is a universal language that speaks and comprehends all, contains all languages and all accents, tolerates and absorbs all. The paradox of the silence is that one can never say enough about it since it is inexhaustible by its very nature.

The silence of a wise person is not the same silence as that of a beginner. In other words, there is an ignorant silence as there is a knowing silence, and finally there is the silence of the dead who have merged with the Infinite. Many of those who are not present with us anymore have left some of their silence with us.

Silence can spill over into our speech as our utterances can spill over into the silence. When the silence penetrates the words with its own quality it enhances them, but when words spill into the silence they may diminish it unless they are truly inspired and give it a new meaning the moment they are uttered. As Plotinus said, "Ask me not, but understand in silence, even as I am silent."

The silence has a way of interrogating us; that is to say, we should dialogue 
with the silence rather than in the silence. A silent meeting may be analogous to the well-known "Figure-ground" or alternating Gestalt phenomenon, except that in this context the silence is the ground and the figure is the sound.

In practice there is a distinct antiphonal relationship between the silence of a meeting and its verbal messages. Either the silence speaks to somebody sensitive to hear its voice who then answers with a verbal statement, or the message comes first and in antiphonal relationship is being answered by the silence itself. Ideally both should complement each other at all times.

We can also link a silent meeting to a quiet reflecting pool in which everyone present is floating. A passing "angel" troubles the water-mirror of all of our souls at the same time, and similar thoughts will arise in those present. It is thus that another person may almost exactly verbalize our intentions, which rest still unexpressed within us.

Silence enables us to escape the prison of words. As long as we respect it we can neither err nor offend. The implicit message in meeting is our silent presence, the explicit one our verbal statements. Silence creates its own tensions, it fluctuates like waves; after every high there is a low, even soft murmurs as its waves dissipate toward the shore. You may step into the pool of silence denuded and in pain but you will emerge from it restored in truth and peace.

Carole Fingesten is a former nun, teacher, and educational administrator. She attends 15th Street (N.Y.) Meeting. Peter Fingesten is an artist and the author of many books and articles. He is a member of 15th Street Meeting and serves on FRIENDS JOURNAL's Board of Managers. Peter and Carole wrote this article at a hospital where he was recovering from major surgery this spring.
After a tragedy and the initial period of shock comes a time of numbness followed by pain so raw and deep that we are certain we shall flounder forever in darkness. It is then, especially then, that our friends are needed. Their love and understanding, encouragement and support, sometimes even their common sense to leave us alone at specific moments, is many times the only thing that can help us cope and go forward with our lives. To be a friend during these difficult times can be emotionally draining, but never is it more needed and more appreciated.

When a death is attributed to the act of suicide, a peculiar set of grief symptoms follow, for added to the keening sense of loss are often tremendous feelings of guilt and anger. Many times, the surviving members of a family unit are left alone to handle these feelings, for in society’s eyes, suicide is not a natural death. It is ugly, terribly painful, and therefore, not acceptable. Most people, after the funeral and after the first two weeks, simply expect the immediate family to carry on. They seem not to recognize that this death is unique, carrying with it emotional problems that are distinct, that will last unless help is provided. The lack of professional help is appalling and most times out of reach financially. It is then that true friends are needed desperately to help us through this period.

Carol Roth is a freelance writer and the mother of six children. She is a member of Mickleton (N.J.) Meeting and is at work on her second novel. Her work has been published in FRIENDS JOURNAL, Christian Science Monitor, and Friendly Woman, as well as many literary and poetry magazines. This article was also submitted to Friendly Woman and appeared in that publication this spring.

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I was fortunate. I had true friends who helped me through after my beloved sister, a year older than I and my constant companion throughout my life, committed suicide last year. If it weren't for my friends, I doubt that I could write this article today. More than anything, their love and concern contributed to the healing process, and this is a tribute to them. Their ways of meeting my needs, of responding to my silent screams, may alert others to reach out and do the same for their meeting members, for their friends and neighbors.

First, there was a fellow writer, elderly and pragmatic, who responded to my hysterical phone call at dawn with a listening ear. My scream of "What will I do without my sister in my life?" was answered with a quiet "You will suffer." It was like a pail of cold water, a harsh slap in my face that cut through the hysteria and turned me toward the mirror of reality. This friend did not offer words of sympathy. She gave me truth.

Her words stayed with me as our family sped toward home from our mountain retreat to face the days of agony that lay ahead. These first days were ones of icy shock made bearable because of the presence of friends who helped us in practical ways—bringing food, babysitting, helping to handle the household of mourners after the funeral. Their busy hands and comforting arms were their ways of expressing their sympathy.

Friends who had the common sense and sensitivity to stay away at times were also appreciated, for there were many moments when my private anguish needed to express itself with no one around. These friends allowed me those moments, for they understood that the pressure of trying to pretend that I was coping only added to the pain. They simply waited until I signaled to them that I was ready to talk, to be with them again.

Strangers can also become friends during this time, as I found out when I returned to the working world shortly after my sister's death. My job of freelancing as a writer allowed me too much time alone in my empty home after the children left for school. Time spent alone brought with it the "if onlys" that almost made me go insane. If only I had not been away at the time of her death, if only I had been more loving, compassionate, knowledgeable about her deep depression... The sense of guilt was overwhelming and I knew I had to keep busy out in the world if I were to survive her death at all. The woman who interviewed me listened to my explanation of why I wanted the job, never raising an eyebrow in the expression that says, "I can't be bothered with your head problems." She hired me immediately and in the weeks ahead proved to be a compassionate and caring friend.

Friends at meeting offered help in small, quiet ways that touched my heart. One handed me a book on how to come up from grief, helping me understand the grieving process. Others phoned, expressing their love without that horrible curiosity to know the details that of-circled outside the meetinghouse as the pain, the guilt, the anger, and grief poured out. She took my raw feelings without flinching and waited until I was calm before she answered me with these words—I was to love myself.

I recoiled. Love myself? I was filled with self-hatred, with guilt. How in the world was I to make a 360-degree turn back to love?

Her instructions were simple. Pull back from heavy commitments, go to a counselor if necessary, most of all, take time to be gentle and kind toward my broken, battered spirit.

Filled with doubt, I took her advice and temporarily resigned from my involvement with the peace movement and my position on the executive board of an environmental organization. With that time freed, I turned back to my writing in an attempt to express my emotions. This time, though, I had a companion, the daughter of my sister, who shared with me all her thoughts and feelings as I began work on what turned out to be a novel dealing with the aftereffects of a parent's suicide upon a teenage girl. This time of intense sharing helped both of us open up to each other and helped us toward recovery.

Without these individuals, the road back would have been impossible for me. No stranger to death, this particular death almost destroyed me because of the fact that it was suicide. I would be lying if I said I have accepted my sister's death. I haven't. The loss of this vibrant personality, this woman I loved so deeply, is something I will mourn for the rest of my days. But I can go forward. My friends have given me the strength necessary to do that. They have been with me all the way—through the darkness, back to the Light. May your friends be there for you also.

Author's Note: This experience taught me that society does not respond to the needs of teenagers whose parents or siblings commit suicide. The guilt and pain and the anger they feel is just as intense, perhaps more so, than adults. There are not enough support groups available or even high school counselors to handle this pressing need. Any individual interested in sharing their knowledge of this, or perhaps making it a concern of their meeting, please contact me at my home address, 107 McClelland Ave., Pitman, N.J. 08071. Together, we need to address this concern for the sake of children everywhere.

Following a suicide, members of a family are often left alone to handle their feelings of guilt and anger.
Spiritual Aspects of Depression

by Larry Miller

It is abundantly clear from his writings that Isaac Penington, who joined the Religious Society of Friends in midlife in 1658 and died in 1679, suffered from a long period of depression. Not only did he describe his condition in some detail, but following his release from depression, he was particularly sensitive, as attested to by some of his published letters, to Friends and others who were themselves caught in periods of mental darkness and distress. As the preface to Letters of Isaac Penington, published by the Book Association of Philadelphia in 1883 indicates, he developed a "strong current of his sympathies towards any who might be suffering mental or spiritual distress... So deep at times was the tenderness of his sorrowing solicitude on behalf of these, that his whole soul seemed to enter into feeling with them."

While Penington recognized depression as both a mental and spiritual condition, his own experience, somewhat in common with the views of his time regarding the illness, led him to see it largely in spiritual terms. He saw depression as inconsistent with the truth and "the way of life," occasionally suggesting that the inward wounds were the work of the Lord, "through His love to thee for thy good."

While Penington, born into a wealthy family and not married until he was 38 years of age, was a seeker, "a traveler in the spiritual life," his experience of depression came as a surprise, as is the case with many persons stricken by this illness.

I was acquainted with a spring of life from my childhood, which enlightened me in my tender years, and pointed my heart towards the Lord, begetting true sense in me, and faith, and hope and love, and humility and meekness, etc. And truly my soul was very near the Lord, and my heart was made and preserved very low and humble before him, and very sensible of his rich love and mercy to me in the Lord Jesus Christ; as I did daily from my heart cry grace, grace, unto him in everything my soul received and partook from him.

Then depression hit.

Indeed, I did not look to have been so broken, shattered, and distressed as I afterwards was, and could by no means understand the meaning thereof, my heart truly and earnestly desiring after the Lord, and not having the sense of any guilt upon me. Divers came to see me, some to inquire into and consider my condition; others to bewail it, and if possible administer some relief, help, and comfort to me; and divers were the judgments that they had concerning me. Some would say it was deep melancholy; others would narrowly search and inquire how, and in what manner, and in what way, I had walked, and were jealous that I had sinned against the Lord and provoked him some way or other, and that some iniquity lay as a load upon me: but after thorough converse with me, they would still express that they were of another mind, and that the hand of the Lord was in it, and it was an eminent case, and would end in good to my soul.

Penington describes how he "lay mourning day and night, pleading with the Lord why he had forsaken me, and why I should be made so miserable through my love to him and sincere desire after him."

Isaac Penington then describes the gradual lifting of the depression and the new truths and experiences he gained from it.

"The Lord hath at length brought me back to the same spring I was acquainted with at first, and joined my heart in true sense and understanding to it..." At another time he writes, "but some may desire to know what I have at last met with: I answer, I have met with the Seed. Understand that word, and thou wilt be satisfied, and inquire no further. I have met with my God. I have met with my Saviour..."

This experience, cultivated and nurtured until the end of his life, was an expression of the spiritual nature of Christianity, and he shared it generously with Friends and others who were in the darkness of depression. His message was expressed, as was typical of early Friends, in a wide variety of images, and was a pleading for faithfulness and perseverance.

To the Lady Conway he wrote:

In tender love, and in a sense of thy sore afflictions and exercises, I do most dearly salute thee; desiring for thee, that the work of the Lord in thy heart may not be interrupted by any devices of the enemy; but that it may go on and prosper in thee, in the springing up of the pure seed of life in thy heart and in the powerful overturning, by the mighty arm of the Lord, of all that is contrary thereto in thee.

In all of Isaac Penington's letters to depressed persons, he counseled faith in the inward healing Power.

Isaac Penington's own experience of depression and the conditions to which he addresses himself in some of his letters have undoubtedly been always present within the human family. Psalm 13 records the spiritual anguish of a depressed person: "How long, O Lord? Wilt thou forget me for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me? How long must I bear pain in my soul, and have sorrow in my heart all the day?" (Revised Standard Version) From my
own experience it is precisely this sense of abandonment by God, in whatever way we conceive of God, that is for the religiously-oriented person a principal basis for the feeling of utter helplessness and hopelessness that a depressed person endures.

Depression, or melancholia as it used to be called, has always been of all diseases the most misunderstood. As Arthur Watts, a physician writing in the English publication, Quaker Monthly, points out, we all know what it feels like to be mildly depressed. Perhaps because most of us are familiar with these feelings, such as low spirits following a death in the family, and because we find a way to cope with them, there is a tendency to belittle the misery of those who are suffering from a depressive illness.

"Depression as an illness," writes Arthur Watts, "is quite different from sorrow or sadness. It has been described as the most wretched malady known to man. Not only is the victim utterly dejected, but he feels cut off from kith and kin who don't understand him, he is often completely without hope for the future, and he may well blame himself for his predicament. Time for him goes slowly so that every minute seems like an hour."

In a subsequent issue of Quaker Monthly (both articles were published in 1985), Sheila Bovell, an attender at Guildford Meeting in England, vividly describes her experiences of depression six or seven years ago.

Perhaps the blackest moment of all came when a friend, a dear and usually understanding person, said, "You've changed, you're not the same as you were," and said it in a tone not only of puzzlement but of rebuke. Anyone who has suffered from a depression will know how I felt. Of course I've changed, you scream inwardly, I've got a depression, you know that. I can't, can't, can't "snap out of it," don't you think I would if I could? Don't you see I am totally powerless to do anything about it? Have you any idea what it's like to wish you were dead, to find it almost impossible to get out of bed in the morning? And to feel raging, excruciating guilt because of the way you feel? Don't you understand?

Today, it is estimated that some 14 million people in the United States suffer from prolonged depression: one in four women and one in ten men can ex-
pect to suffer a serious bout at some point in their lives. Furthermore, the average age at the onset of the disease has dropped from about 40 a generation ago to the mid-20s today, and some experts now estimate that depression affects ten percent of those under 12. Between 1980 and 1984, adolescent admissions to private psychiatric hospitals increased more than 350 percent, with depression often cited as one of the main reasons for the rise. Friends Hospital in Philadelphia, the first private, nonprofit psychiatric hospital in the United States, has a Young People's Unit for the treatment of those from 12 to 20 years old.

And, as Arthur Watts notes, “Few families have not had to share in the suffering of a member, who day after day has had to struggle in the slough of despond.” And their families are profoundly affected. I have learned this from my own personal experience. Many times, even when I was under psychiatric care, I would turn to a family member for comfort, someone who would hold me as I cried in despair, literally not knowing how I would make it through the next hour, let alone the next day. The plight of the caring family member is insufficiently recognized and addressed by professional counselors.

The introduction of psychotherapy into the medical world, seeing depression as a psychological illness, brought with it various theories as to its cause. Freud emphasized that depressed people are unable to express anger toward those who reject them and consequently turn the anger upon themselves.

More recently, Aaron Beck, founder of the Center for Cognitive Therapy at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, has rejected Freudian theory and therapies based on Freud's theory. Beck’s research leads him to conclude that depression is a disturbance in thinking: the depressed person thinks in negative ways about the self, his or her environment, and future. The pessimistic mental set affects the person’s mood, motivation, and relationships with others and leads to the full spectrum of psychological and physical symptoms typical of depression. Cognitive therapy literally trains the depressed (and anxious) individual to change ways of looking at things and interpretations so as to feel better and act more productively.

In recent decades remarkable advances have been made in the development of pharmaceutical antidepressants. Possibly the most spectacular is the discovery of lithium, an inexpensive metallic element, as a chemical treatment for what is now referred to as bipolar depression, meaning the illness that has both manic and depressive phases. For the bipolar depressed person it is virtually a miracle treatment. A friend of mine, long a sufferer from bipolar depression, voluntarily entered Friends Hospital, where the psychiatric staff focused exclusively on working out suitable treatment with lithium in combination with another antidepressant. There was no psychotherapy involved. Evidence increases that both unipolar and bipolar depression have a biological basis in many individuals—even in some families.

Notwithstanding the advances in the biochemical treatment of depression and the considerable research taking place in respect to nontraditional approaches (for example, light therapy for the kind of depression called Seasonal Affective Disorder, in which special fluorescent lights are used that include all the colors found in natural daylight), there remains the spiritual crisis that depression precipitates. As previously noted, the common experience of despairing persons is the generalized loss of hope, a deep feeling of loneliness and helplessness, similar to the neurotic’s “basic anxiety,” which as defined by psychoanalyst Karen Horney is the experience of being “alone and defenseless in a hostile world.” Beyond this is the depressed person’s feeling of being trapped in the present situation, with the nerve of courage, risk and action having been cut.

Rightly, few Friends believe that depression has its origin either in some sinful action, as some of Isaac Penington’s visitors speculated, or in the tough love of God, as Penington in one of his letters suggested. However, with our emphasis on the indwelling Spirit or the Christ within, Quakers, I believe, are particularly vulnerable to the negative spiritual side effects of depression. The depressed Friend feels that the Light within has literally gone out, leaving in its place a painful, immobilizing inner blackness. One perhaps knows intellectually that the suffering can be a means for the growth of the soul and that hope is the capacity to wait for the time of ripening, but this knowledge barely touches the feelings of despair.

I have come to believe that Friends, if they are to speak to the condition of the depressed person from a religious perspective, must rest their case and caring more on the transcendent dimension of God, in contrast to God’s indwelling nature, recognizing that this covenant-making and loving Person is bound to people in loyal ways for their well-being. This transcendent and immanent Lord of life is seeking out those who are in the pit. We must have faith that this is so.

Paul Tillich writes: “Providence means that there is a creative and saving possibility implied in every situation which cannot be destroyed by any event. Providence means that the demonic and destructive forces within ourselves and our world can never have an unbreakable grasp upon us, and that the bond which connects us with the fulfilling love can never be disrupted.” I equate Tillich’s “creative and saving possibility” with Penington’s “Seed.”

It is my conviction that a person suffering from depression must be experimental in seeking treatment. And try with earnest prayer and with all the will to live that can be mustered—I say “try” advisedly, knowing of the truly evil ways in which depression undercuts faith and hope—to join Howard Thurman in believing that “the roots are silently at work in the darkness of the earth against the time when there shall be new leaves, fresh blossoms, green fruit. Such is the growing edge.”

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Most suicides are due to an underlying depression. Depression is an illness and it is very common. It affects 10 to 15 percent of all men and 20 to 30 percent of all women at some time during their lives. Yet, surprisingly and sadly, most people fail to recognize it either in themselves or in their loved ones.

Many who suffer don’t come to the doctor for an official diagnosis. They look quite normal and they walk about in public, among friends and family, displaying the classic signs of depression, but usually they meet no one who understands what the signs mean. Their illness remains unrecognized.

There is no reliable test for depression, so depression must be diagnosed by recognizing symptoms. Any symptom, by itself, may be normal; almost all of us have the blues now and then. However, when these symptoms occur in combinations and when they persist, depression may be indicated. These are the 12 signs of depressive illness:

1. Recurrent thoughts of death and suicide.
2. Mood is sad and unhappy; but sometimes irritable and anxious; and some deny mood change.
3. Feelings of hopelessness, of being worthless, and of self-reproach.
4. Crying, or inability to cry.
5. Withdrawn.

Suicide becomes even more of a threat with these danger signs:
1. Increasing distance and withdrawal from family and friends.
2. Absence of hope.
3. Hearing voices and other disordered thinking.
4. Talking of suicide.
5. Giving away prized possessions: e.g., trophies, hi-fi, sports equipment, and baseball cards; “I won’t be needing these anymore.”
6. Putting affairs in order: returning long-borrowed items; final contact (unspoken goodbyes) with important friends and relatives.
7. Sudden improvement (no longer painfully undecided).

If you suspect depression, or if you are concerned that someone is suicidal, don’t decide to watch and wait. We can’t leave the treatment up to the one who is depressed, because the person’s thinking and judgment are impaired. This is not the time for sympathizing, or just listening, or trying to restore hope. And don’t just lecture and tell the person to “shape up”; this isn’t possible. Delaying treatment is risky. The person needs your help.

So step in and take him or her to a doctor or to a psychiatrist, who can verify your amateur diagnosis, and who can prescribe the antidepressant medicines which are so often needed along with psychotherapy. Depressive illness usually responds well to medical treatment, although public recognition of the illness is almost nonexistent at present. Society has not failed these people. We just haven’t seen them clearly before.

by George Nichols

George Nichols is an internist in private practice in Appleton, Wis. He has training in psychiatry and has worked with a drug treatment hotline for youth. He has been committed to working for suicide prevention since his son, Bill, committed suicide in the summer of 1985.
I have nurtured a tall Norfolk Island house pine for three years. Last fall during a sudden strong wind, it blew over on the front porch. Desperately tugging to set it aright, fearing damage to its tender boughs, I saw a feathery branch lying on the steps and the jagged stem protruding from its parent bough. The branch looked alive lying there, yet totally cut off from its life line. I felt as if my arm had been ripped from my shoulder.

I picked up the green, half frond, took it over to its mother plant and told myself, “Maybe I can tape it back and it’ll granulate like cut skin does in a human body as it heals.” But I knew it wouldn’t work. I took the broken piece to the woods in back of my house and brought the plant inside for the winter, placing it with its injured frond hidden from my view, directly facing a sunny east window. I had seen to its watering, but it had never occurred to me to check the maimed bough. Why should I? When I had ceremoniously placed the broken half on its bed of leaves in the woods, I knew that decomposition was natural and that the “nerve endings” were now sealed off on the parent plant. Now my thought urged me to look at the injured stem. Swiftly walking to the tree, I could not believe what I saw. Just barely to the right side of the stubby break was a new growth about three inches long, bright green, feathery leaf in the traditional “v” shape.

I gasped, seeing the unexpected happening to my pine. A regeneration! Nature had continued its work (although I didn’t think to check on it) as nature does. Suddenly, I remembered another example. I had recently read about an experiment with insects placed on an uprooted rosebush set in the sun to die. The wingless insects, getting no nourishment from the plant, sprouted wings and flew away!

And I remembered current examples of superhuman strength of “regular people” opening mangled metal doors of sealed burning vehicles and pulling the occupant to safety, or lifting the car to rescue the trapped person. I’ve heard that kind of energy referred to as “adrenalin-powered energy.”

My thoughts shifted from broken plant boughs and mangled vehicles to saddened and anguished minds. And I wondered, can inner power regenerate a sealed-off mind to renewal? And I remembered the biblical scriptures of Saul of Tarsus, the persecutor, being transformed into Paul, a man of godly love. And in modern history, we know of Gandhi, the diligent lawyer, devoting his life to pacifism. Living in my neighborhood is a woman who was devastated with anger and resentment for months after her only son was killed in a flaming auto wreck on the eve of his high school graduation.

She wanted to be “involved in living again,” she had told me. She volunteered to work with underprivileged children in a play therapy program. Working with them, her grief released. She saw her tragedy as a part of the human universal experience. She felt a deeper meaning of life beyond her struggle to accept her son’s death. She had experienced a regeneration.

Once again I look at the new growth on the maimed bough now turned to my full view. Is there any connection, I wonder, to its regeneration and the renewal of the human mind? The answer floods over me—all energy comes from God.

As I watch the continued growth of the new “v” shaped leaf, my Norfolk Island pine is a faithful reminder that renewal can happen. As I grow in spiritual perception my once sealed-off mind opens toward love.

Judith Holmes Settle is a part-time bookkeeper and poet in Mebane, N.C. She has three daughters, all grown. Her Norfolk Island pine lives in her bathroom.

by Judith Holmes Settle
A DREAM OF QUAKER EDUCATION

LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE WITH FRIENDS

by Elizabeth Watson

By the end of the 20th century, if not sooner, the majority of Friends will be those in the underdeveloped nations—people of color, poor, pastoral and programmed in their worship, and with theology that makes many of us in the unprogrammed tradition uncomfortable. Yet, as I read the Gospels with the lens of liberation theology, I see that Christianity is about these people. Christianity is “good news to the poor.” It is the announcement of God’s realm, where things are upside-down, and the last are first.

Numerically, at least, the future of Quakerism belongs to these people. Certainly they have much to teach us. But what of us?—we who come out of the geography, the history, the traditions of George Fox and John Woolman?—we who feel that our unprogrammed tradition is the “real” Quakerism? How can we help build a world family of Friends, and beyond that, how can we contribute to the growth of a world community?

I believe we have a tool for doing this in our Friends schools. I want to share my dream of Quaker education in the future, and not the distant future, for the technology involved already exists today, though it is still prohibitive in cost.

Leap with me, then, into the future.

Elizabeth Watson is a member of North Easton (Mass.) Meeting and is on the Friends Journal Board of Managers. She has written two books and speaks widely on feminist theology, Quakerism, poetry and religion, and many other topics. She delivered this article as a talk at Quaker Pilgrimage in Reverse, a gathering of British and United States educators, at Pendle Hill on April 11.

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It is the end of the century, the year 2000. We have made some progress toward disarmament, and children are no longer afraid that they have no future. World regulation of multinational corporations has begun, but there are still large discrepancies in standards of living in the world.

We are at a Quaker school in the neighborhood of Philadelphia, not far from Pendle Hill, visiting a class of young people 12 and 13 years of age. Some were not born yet in 1987, the rest were just babies. Their large, attractive classroom has a wall of windows in which are sliding glass doors, opening out on the spacious grounds and the woods beyond. The room has comfortable, movable furniture. This morning the chairs and tables are all pushed against the wall. Large colorful cushions are scattered on the floor. Some students are already sitting on them.

This school is a sister school of one
in Kenya. It is the second year of a two-year arrangement. We had to get up early this morning, and it is now not quite 8 a.m. This is the day of the weekly simultaneous video communication between this class and its counterpart in Kenya. It is already 3 p.m. there.

The U.S. students are excited. Each has a Kenyan video-pal. Pairs keep in touch by letters as well as face-to-face contacts. At the end of the first year of being paired with this school, the U.S. class traveled to Kenya, saw the school and the villages where the students live, and visited the Friends headquarters in Kaimosi with them. Together the classes took a 10-day bus trip, visiting Kisumu on Lake Victoria; spending a few days in Nairobi, and then on to Mombasa on the Indian Ocean and Lamu, an island off the coast of Kenya which is a Muslim Sufi village, and home of the Swahili language. They visited a game park, and caught a glimpse of the snows of Kilimanjaro. The Kenyan students were proud of their beautiful country, and the U.S. students were enthusiastic about everything.

At the end of this year the Kenyan students will visit the United States. Our U.S. students are already planning this, and are not a little concerned as to what their Kenyan friends will think of their large comfortable homes and well-equipped school.

The U.S. students have studied Swahili and can converse quite well in it. Their Kenyan friends speak Luragoli at home, and are also fluent in Swahili and English, the second and third languages of Kenya.

One of our students is fiddling with the controls on the wide screen that covers an entire wall. The students all find their cushions on the floor and grow quiet. After what seems like ages, the Kenyan class appears on the screen. They almost seem to be in the room with us. Friends are picked out and greetings called back and forth. In both classrooms they settle in silence for a short meeting for worship. After a time the Kenyan class traveled to Kenya, saw the school and the villages where the students live, and visited the Friends headquarters in Kaimosi with them. Together the classes took a 10-day bus trip, visiting Kisumu on Lake Victoria; spending a few days in Nairobi, and then on to Mombasa on the Indian Ocean and Lamu, an island off the coast of Kenya which is a Muslim Sufi village, and home of the Swahili language. They visited a game park, and caught a glimpse of the snows of Kilimanjaro. The Kenyan students were proud of their beautiful country, and the U.S. students were enthusiastic about everything.

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This is world education. The World Office of the Friends Council on Education has worked out the arrangements for pairing schools on a rotating basis all over the world. A combination of foundation grants has underwritten the cost of the program, including the installation of the video equipment in Quaker schools around the world. Prior to this sister relationship with the Kenyan school, our U.S. school was paired with the Hanna-Skolen near Copenhagen, and two years before that with Bootham and the Mount in York, England. The English relationship, however, was before the days of simultaneous video communication. The cost of these devices has come down dramatically in the last five years.

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the Mondragon co-ops in Spain. They went to New York and talked to the staffs of UNICEF and UNESCO about programs in East Africa. They had lunch at Quaker House with the Kenyan representatives to the United Nations. They can tell you about child care facilities in Kenya, about infant mortality rates, about per capita expenditures on health care and education in the United States and in Kenya. They have been learning how to do social research, and have the beginnings of a working knowledge of statistics. Moreover, they are full of ideas for solving the world’s problems.

They are already concerned, responsible world citizens. It is hard for them to understand that only a dozen years ago, when they were born, their country was spending billions each year on a foolhardy arms race. They know that peace is the only real security, and that peace depends on economic justice. They see the world wholistically, not divided into enemy camps.

Their education is experiential. Their knowledge and curriculum, their concern and vision grow out of their experience of friendship with people in other parts of the world. They do not need exams to tell you what they know. They are full of it.

This is a Quaker school, concerned with the whole person. Each student is encouraged to keep a journal. They begin each day with a half-hour meeting for worship, usually in their own room. On occasion the whole school shares a longer period of worship. Our students settle into the silence willingly; they appreciate time to reflect on all they are learning. Some speak in the silence, out of the depth of their concern for their friends, and their growing awareness of their country’s role in various parts of the world. They look unblinkingly at reality and are ready to go where truth leads them. Most are trying to persuade their families to move to a simpler lifestyle. At times their meeting becomes a gathered meeting as some student puts into words the love of God for the whole world.

They are curious about the programmed worship of their Kenyan friends. They love the way the Kenyans sing with the whole body, with complicated rhythms that make even simple hymns exciting. They have begun to sing like that. They admire the articulate way most of the Kenyans speak in their worship, their familiarity with scripture and their ability to cite chapter and verse. They asked if they might study the Gospels also and have begun to catch a vision of God’s realm as the establishment on this earth of a just society, “without exploiters and without exploited.” A new appreciation and love for Jesus has been growing in them as they begin to catch his vision.

Earlier this year they asked the Kenyan students about the religion of their ancestors before Christianity came. The Kenyans became curious too, and finally found some old people who remembered hearing their grandparents talk about the old ways of worship. Theirs was a religion rooted in the natural world. Each tree, plant, and animal had a spark of divinity. If one cut down a tree to build a house or for firewood, or if one killed an animal for food, one asked forgiveness of the spirit within it. One did not lightly take life. For the Kenyans this meant a new appreciation of their heritage.

The U.S. students listened thoughtfully, and one commented that everything has the Light of God within, that it is not limited to people. The U.S. teacher read them John Woolman’s words about the principle which is pure, placed in the human mind, which in different places and times has had different names. Echoes of this whole experience surfaced again and again in the daily worship on both sides of the world.

The Kenyan students have begun to appreciate unprogrammed worship and to understand what is meant by “centering down.” They have been having periods of silence in their worship. The U.S. students have discovered that singing can be worship, and they often sing hymns learned from their Kenyan friends in their meetings, swaying and clapping as they sing. All of them are growing in the knowledge and love of God.

The future belongs to the children. Can we help them be part of the solution of the world’s problems by offering an education that is global, experiential, and rooted in our heritage and faith?

If we, their teachers, could see how much they have to teach us, we might find our way into the future with them.
"TO LISTEN, TO MINISTER, TO WITNESS"
A call to conscience, a call to act on faith propelled by inner imperatives—this was the message at Friends General Conference 1987 Gathering at Oberlin College on July 4-11. The gathering’s theme, “To Listen, To Minister, To Witness,” became a spiritual command bolstered by prayer and shared in workshops, buoyed up with singing, laughter, and fellowship. We are not alone in our searches or in our commitment to move the world toward wholeness, Friends rediscovered in this time of renewal.

Fifty-seven workshops on subjects ranging from family relationships to spiritual life and social action gave Friends a chance to explore their concerns in depth with each other. Countless impromptu groups, singing, and meals eaten together offered more opportunities for visiting and affirmation. Field trips in the Oberlin and Cleveland areas provided chances to become acquainted with local history and industry, and opportunities to swim in the college’s indoor pool and to play together on its green lawns afforded escapes to those who needed them.

Those who spoke at the plenary sessions braided together different aspects of the gathering’s theme in one strong cord. Jan Hoffman, presiding clerk of New England Yearly Meeting and keynote speaker at the gathering, spoke of her personal experiences in living her faith.

She said the Quaker mandate is to listen to each other, to listen for that of God in people we may think we don’t want to hear. “If our faith is secure, it’s not going to be shattered by hearing someone else’s beliefs. It’s a truer love, knowing who people are and accepting them. . . . We need to be disillusioned. We need to have our illusions stripped away so we can see God,” she said.

Ministering calls upon us to identify with other people, to lose ourselves in their pain, and thereby to know experientially the richness of the Spirit in its many forms. Our strength to live our faith in witnessing comes from realizing that we are all one, all part of the fabric of this earth, with each thread a part of the pattern and a part of that fabric’s strength. In the tradition of Thomas Merton, who cautioned that a life lived alone in our searches or in our commitment to move the world toward wholeness, Friends rediscovered in this time of renewal.

Later in the week, Marshall Massey, a young man with a prophetic message, called upon Friends everywhere to join other people of faith in establishing a covenant to save the earth’s environment. Such a ministry would address damage to our planet as “a problem in moral awareness,” rather than being limited to social and political solutions.

And Charlie Clements, author of Witness to War, called upon Friends to...
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Intermountain YM Explores Bridge-Building

"I found a bridge! I found another bridge!" A child's excitement rang out from somewhere near the meeting hall on the first day of Intermountain Yearly Meeting, held June 9-14. Looking for, finding, and building bridges seemed to be the central occupation during the many activities that followed, starting with Wilmer Cooper's keynote address on integrity.

He spoke of the "tragic and ironic fact" that although we Quakers are well known for our testimonies of peace, simplicity, etc., we are divided among ourselves. He wondered whether we need to put more attention on Quaker values, especially integrity, and the need for wholeness in our lives—probably what George Fox had in mind when he inveighed against "steeple houses." Friends prefer meetinghouses as less pretentious, more relevant places in which to work at unifying our inner and outer lives. "Today the world hungers—even dies—for lack of integrity. Friends try to transform the world, yet are often victims and sometimes perpetrators of the very evils we struggle against (e.g. IRS problems, family violence, etc.). We need to be role models—to live as we want the world to be or to become, not the way the world is."

The relationship of Friends with the American Friends Service Committee was a focus of attention at IMYM. A number of Friends spoke of how much they value their close ties with the AFSC. Stephen Cary, chairperson of the AFSC board of directors, told of ways in which the AFSC is trying to meet the changing needs of a changing world. He stated his belief that ties with Friends are absolutely central to the service committee. There were also a number of candid, forthright expressions of perceived differences in philosophy, objectives, needs, and methods of the Society of Friends and of the AFSC. A tentative suggestion was made that perhaps it was time each organization go its own way. This was followed by eloquent expressions of the conviction that Friends need the service committee; that without it Friends are likely to become more self-satisfied, inner directed, and uninvolved in the real world. The AFSC has taken risks—and has undoubtedly made mistakes while trying to mend the world. The upshot was a decision to try again, by way of a committee headed by Elise Boulding. The committee will work toward a clarification of Friends objectives, wants, and needs—then labor with the AFSC to attempt to arrive at a more mutually satisfactory relationship.

It is obvious from the statistics that IMYM plays a very important role in the life of Friends in this five-state area. The number of Friends in this area is reported to be 1,055. There were 477 participants at the yearly meeting at Ghost Ranch in northern New Mexico, of which 188 were young people 18 years of age or younger. The bridging between people of different ages seemed particularly skillful and caring this year. It was fascinating to watch the younger ones, taking part perhaps for the first time, tentatively and gradually becoming more independent and comfortable with their peers and with the meeting as a whole. Older youngsters helped younger ones with plans and organization, and it was good to see Young Friends teaching the littler ones how to play Frisbee.

A memorable part of the whole IMYM experience was the intergenerational discussion of sexual morality. The sharing in smaller groups, which followed listening to a tape by Eric Johnson, was intense, deep and meaningful.

As one Friend put it, "We enjoyed a spiritual smorgasbord which refreshed us so that we can go back to our day-to-day lives with renewed energy."

Marian Davis
Giving Life Meaning

I read with interest Arthur Rifkin's article on death and eternal life, "The Healing of Death" (FJ 6/1-15). I liked most of it, but I must disagree with a few of his assertions. I do not believe in life after death—or at least, I feel that what happens after death is a mystery we can never solve and might as well not try to figure out. For me the question ranks with others such as how many stars there are in the heavens or what the ultimate beginning of all existence was. I can never fathom them and would just as soon be satisfied feeling how mysterious and miraculous life is.

I don't feel the despair that Arthur Rifkin says I ought to feel (at least, not too much of the time in spite of this era of increased cold war tensions). Nor do I feel too much loss as I begin to get into middle age—my 20s were exciting but so are my 40s. I find plenty of meaning in life from working to make the present world a better place to live in. I hope I will go on doing that as long as I live. I can't take Arthur Rifkin's "leap of faith" and subscribe to any one concrete conception of an afterlife. I don't feel a need for a promise that I will be rewarded after I die; I get rewards in this current life from other people's good will and from within myself.

Jeff Keith

Clearness Lacking

It is clear from Janet Hemphill Minshall's article, "A Clearness" (FJ 7/1-15), that she is highly attuned to discrimination, which she feels to be or to have been around her. Could she therefore perhaps accept that certain statements in her article are discriminatory to me? When she says that "the laws of the world, and the police who enforce them, are regularly used as instruments of oppression against the poor and the powerless, people of color, women and religious, political and tribal minorities" the breadth of her condemnation is a bit strong for me. However, when she reproduces one of the canards of Christian theological "thinking" and dismisses the God of many people with similar broad abandon in "The Old Testament God of wrathful judgment, vengeance, and petty jealousies..." I would like to register my lack of unity with her statements.

Greet Kershaw
Los Alamitos, Calif.

September 1/15, 1987 FRIENDS JOURNAL
Gay Commitments

I've just read Estelle Ciccone's letter of response (FJ 7/1-15) to Stephen Finn's article, "My Father's Blessing" (FJ 3/15). She shows a remarkable lack of compassion and understanding for one who is involved enough with Quakerism to read FRIENDS JOURNAL. As a gay man who is neither "ill" nor a "problem to society," I feel very resentful when I read letters such as hers. I expect these diatribes from my Bible-thumping, born-again neighbors. However, I don't appreciate such denunciations from my Quaker brethren.

I'm sincerely glad that Estelle Ciccone's family members are "normal and like the opposite sex." It's easy to imagine the scorn and shame they would feel if they were lesbian or gay.

As for me, I would like to see the JOURNAL continue its positive and life-affirming coverage of gay and lesbian concerns. In a vehemently hostile world, it is vital that each of us finds sanctuary. Friends offer me such a safe refuge.

I honestly hope Estelle Ciccone can let go of some of her antipathy and try to understand the true Quaker message.

Alan M. Hamn
Searsport, Maine

In response to Estelle Ciccone's letter we wish to say that all the members of our immediate family are heterosexual and like members of both sexes. They love their spouses. We are happy that this is so, but not proud of it, because we did nothing to make them heterosexual. That's just how they are, and we love them.

Some members of our extended family are homosexual, and like members of both sexes. They love their spouses. We are happy that this is so, and not ashamed, because no one did anything to make them homosexual. That's just how they are, and we love them. They are not ill, and like anyone else they "need" acceptance.

The heterosexual and homosexual members of our extended family all are fine people who like and respect each other—nay, love each other—and we are proud of that. None of them are making any problems for our society.

We like to think that, had one of Estelle Ciccone's children turned out to be homosexual, she would be by now have accepted the fact with love for her son or daughter. She would be thankful that the JOURNAL is making it possible for Friends to understand and care about each other.

Sally and Norman Dewees
Mars, Pa.

The Lake Forest Friends Meeting has been considering the concerns of homosexuals and the role of Quakers in those concerns.

From September to June a group met monthly to discuss and to be educated. At one of these meetings a member of our meeting, who is an AIDS counselor, addressed us regarding the disease and the effect on the homosexual community. At another meeting we had a speaker who is homosexual and another speaker whose child is homosexual.

We labored long with the various concerns people in the meeting brought to the group. After loving and prayerful thought, we prepared the following minute, which we brought to the meeting for business: "We prize loving relationships more according to the measure of tenderness, caring, and responsibility they show, than the sex of the individual participants, and in doing so regard homosexual and heterosexual relationships in the same Light."

At the meeting for business in June we came to consensus, and the meeting approved the minute.

We want to share this with other meetings because we know many meetings are concerned with the subject of homosexuality and Quaker response.

Lyn Cima
Waukegan, Ill.

We attended the ceremony of commitment of Bruce Grimes and Geoffrey Kainer primarily out of a sense of duty. We have long believed that the Society of Friends should be in the forefront of a movement to uphold the rights of those of a different sexual orientation, as it had worked for the rights of blacks, women, Native Americans, and other minorities, and that this demands full equality within the Society of Friends. In speaking out on this issue, we came to know Bruce and Geoffrey, but not well.

We did not, therefore, expect to be overwhelmed with the deep sense of joy that permeated the ceremony. Judging from the size of the gathering, and the diversity and "weightiness" of those present, a large portion of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting had come together in spirit, if not in letter, to make this giant step forward. For those of us who are older, for those of us to whom it was a struggle, our reward was present. We have never been to a Philadelphia Quaker gathering in recent years where there were quite so many young couples and their families. The breadth of the ceremony's breadth of the minute on an issue that is important to the younger generation, we had assured the continuity of the Society, it seemed.

Joy came from these considerations, but it was also a product of a deep moving of the Spirit that seized this meeting, and brought us together in tears, and laughter, and song. Was Philadelphia Yearly Meeting similarly seized by the spirit when it moved forward on ridding its members of slaveholding at John Woolman's urging? When women were given full equality in Representative Meeting and in the exercise of the
Learning is True Faith

The cover of the May 1/15 issue horrified me. "... courage to be naive"?! "... Faith to be ignorant"? No! And again, no! God gave us brains with which to learn and the faith with which to go beyond.

It is that which is beyond learning that is true faith. What lies before is emptiness and fear: fear of God, fear of the many faces of God. God is complete and can only be found within the full extension of ourselves, which is a valued receptacle of God.

In the middle ages, the dark ages, the church tried to keep the people in ignorance. Do Quakers believe that ignorance is bliss? Is God and his creation something that does not bear close scrutiny? What about Quaker high schools and colleges that have helped develop brilliant and inspiring minds?

Do not call us back to darkness. As Friends we should seek to walk in the Light.

Lisa G. Janiecker
Mt. Airy, Md.

Printer's Error

Some of our subscribers have informed us that a few copies of the August 1-15 issue of FRIENDS JOURNAL were delivered with eight blank pages. Our printer apologizes for this error and offers to replace any poorly printed copies at once. Please inform us if you have received an issue with blank pages, and you will be sent a new copy by return mail. (Yes, George, there really are answers to the Quaker Crostic!) - Ed.

Environmental Note:

Ruth L. Ewers, author of “Cleaning Without the Use of Poisons” (FJ 8/1-15), informs us that her supply has been exhausted of charts outlining alternative cleaning substances. Donations ($0.50 to $1.00) will be appreciated to help her reprint the charts. Her address is Rt. 1, Box 38, Wingina VA 24599.-Ed.

Books

The Faces of Homelessness

By Marjorie Hope and James Young; Lexington Books, Lexington, MA, 1986. 318 pages. $25, $15.95/paperback.

The Faces of Homelessness is a highly informative and provocative book by two sociology professors from Wilmington College of Ohio. Through photographs and vivid descriptions we see the faces and conditions of the homeless, especially in two American cities: Cincinnati and Washington, D.C. Even more important, however, the authors put together a clear picture of the causes and workable solutions to this tragic phenomenon, based on their ten years of study and travel in the United States, Europe, and Japan.

First in New York, then other cities, the reader is introduced to the homeless: the mentally ill who used to inhabit the hospitals, the chronic alcoholics, the men released from prison with no place to go and no skills to sell, the rapidly growing newly unemployed whose jobs have left them, and, finally, the families, mostly without men, whose marginal employment or welfare grants leave them so far below the poverty level that even bad private housing is unaffordable and public housing unavailable. Homeless families are often called the invisible homeless. Having lost their house through eviction or to escape abuse, the mothers stay with relatives and friends until they “run out of them.” Then when they hit the streets and the city shelters, the children are frequently taken into protective custody, at considerable expense to the government, while the mother is left to fend for herself.

In the two study cities, the authors describe the many efforts being made by public and private groups and individuals to help, often in the face of shocking public indifference or opposition, and always with inadequate resources. The authors examine carefully and candidly the causes of homelessness and the conflicting ideologies that make solutions difficult. In the concluding chapters, they suggest the political, economic, and social strategies that can help in the short run, and the more profound changes in national priorities and policies that can prevent homelessness in the long run, and provide a better environment for all of us.

It is a carefully researched, well-reasoned, and highly readable book that anyone will...
Gleanings: A Random Harvest


The implications of the word "gleanings" are all good. At harvest time, first come the reapers with their great machines. Then the gleaners gather up what is left, a special grace for those in need. This slim volume of Douglas Steere's unpublished and out-of-print writings contains a half-dozen of what Ben Jonson called "gleanings in Divinity." It is composed of six essays and an introduction in which Douglas Steere gives us a brief preview of the essays and their provenance. The title of the first essay, "Mind Your Call, That's All in All," is taken from Augustine Baker, the 17th century English mystic. In this we learn more about Douglas Steere's own spiritual journey than in any of his other books. Most of us have known that he came originally from Michigan and returns to Michigan in the summers; that he met Rufus Jones at an early age and subsequently became his assistant in the department of philosophy at Haverford College. But the steps that led him from Michigan Agricultural College to Haverford to Oxford to Haverford have been less clear. Now we are told of the road along which he has come. When he was studying at Oriel College, Oxford, he met Dr. Henry Gillett, a well-known Quaker and friend of Rufus Jones, and through him discovered Old Jordans Hostel and first experienced a "gathered" Friends meeting for worship. His path led him next to the work of Baron von Hugel, about whom he wrote his doctoral dissertation, and to Evelyn Underhill, the English mystic, author of the great modern work on mysticism.

In 1928 he came to Haverford as an assistant to Rufus Jones in the Philosophy Department, and there spent the rest of his teaching life. Though he was involved in the establishing of Pendle Hill, in the American Friends Service Committee work in the coal fields of Pennsylvania and West Virginia, and in the reopening of Radnor Meeting, which had been closed for some 50 years, he and his wife Dorothy did not actually join the meeting until the reading of John Woolman's Journal precipitated the final plunge in 1934.

The rest of Douglas Steere's life and service is better known to most of us and is only briefly described: the work for the AFSC in Germany and Finland, the friendships with Germany and Finland, the friendships with
Roman Catholic priests, the attendance at Vatican Council II, the colloquiums of Christians, Buddhists and Hindus in Japan and India, his and Dorothy Steere's many visits in the ministry to friends and Friends in Europe, Asia and Africa, and the flow of widely read books that have come from his pen through the years. As in all of his writings, he shows a particular gift for the illustrative and interpretive incident. He has, furthermore—not the least of his gifts—an irresistible sense of humor. And he has a knowledge and understanding of mystical writings through the ages second only to that of Rufus Jones.

The next two essays—"On the Power of Sustained Attention" and "Evelyn Underhill and the Mid-Life Transformation"—are rich in references to Simone Weil, Baron von Hugel, Pascal, and others. Chapters four and five consist of "On Listening to Another," which has been out of print.

The sixth essay is about the Twenty-third Psalm. So much has been written and said about this best-loved of the 150 psalms that it seems impossible that new insights could be found or fresh comments made about it. Douglas Steere chooses two of its six verses to illuminate with his own thought. Verse two, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures," has, for me at least, summoned up mental pictures of a lush countryside, comfortable turf and pleasant dreams. Omit "in green pastures" and another picture emerges. We lie down, Douglas Steere says, because "life compels us to come to the end of ourselves and to stop, often to be shattered, to be searched in our most mysterious depths, even to be taken beyond the possibility of coming to terms with our new situation by our own means." After the experience of lying down, then comes, "He restoreth my soul." We are given a new angle of vision.

This final piece was originally given as a sermon in Bayview, Michigan. It brings the reader back to the part of the country where Douglas Steere's pilgrimage began. It assures us that, as this short but significant book has shown, "when all else is swept away . . . , God remains, Christ remains."

Elizabeth Gray Vining

Sophia: The Future of Feminist Spirituality


The authors offer us Sophia, a mythic figure who can be built upon to express feminist spirituality and who can respond to the problems of our day. "Until a just and inclusive society is established, women (as well as other marginal people) need to identify and foster distinct aspects of feminist awareness which are central for human transformation." Sophia is a real biblical person, part of Jewish and Christian tradition, whose attributes can help us revitalize these traditions. The fundamental attribute of Sophia is connectedness with all of creation, symbolizing the radical equality of all human beings.

Feminist spirituality and patriarchal spirituality are defined and contrasted at the outset. The writers review biblical and nonbiblical references to Sophia, translating from Jungian psychology. The book provides honest enumeration of the drawbacks to Sophia as potentially reinforcing sex role stereotyping, promoting biblical apologetics, or deifying a "white goddess." It is claimed that the silence and suppression of Sophia throughout history mirrors the experiences of many women. As an unfinished symbol, Sophia allows for further development in the present.

After reading this book, I remain unconvinced about the promising future of Sophia for feminist spirituality. The nature of Sophia is ambiguous, and so many machinations are necessary to derive meaning from her that I wonder if it is worth the effort. The book also presupposes that changes in symbol systems are the major source of transformation. As a Friend, I find myself with a different orientation and a need to stress inward transformation. I ask the questions: How does Sophia call us to everyday faithfulness? Couldn't we just make up her attributes to serve our own needs? On the other hand, I know many women and some men who have found female images of the Divine to be transformational. I feel it is important in our meetings to encourage full expression of the experience of the Divine, including the Divine as woman. Sophia is revealing of the process and struggle of this journey.

Kathryn Damiano

Poets and Reviewers

Elizabeth Gray Vining is the author of Windows for the Crown Prince: The Biography of Rufus Jones, and many other books. She is retired and is a member of Kendall (Pa.) Meeting. Kathryn Damiano is a graduate student in theology and is a member of Chester (Pa.) Meeting. S. Allen Bacon is the retired director of the Greater Philadelphia Federation of Settlements and is a member of Central Philadelphia Meeting.
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Milestones

Births
Falls—Michael Jonathan Falls on June 16 to David and Sabrina Sigal Falls, both members of Central Philadelphia (Pa.) Meeting.

Marriages
Ware-Allenson—Robert Durham Allenson and Dorothy Ann Ware on May 3 under the care of Clearwater (Fla.) Meeting. Dorothy is a member of Clearwater Meeting; Robert is a member of Gainesville (Fla.) Meeting.

Stenmark-Erickson—John Gustav Erickson and Jane Leslie Stenmark on June 27 under the care of Somerset Hills (N.J.) Meeting. John and his parents, Joan and Kent Erickson, are members of Somerset Hills Meeting.

Deaths
Blake—Anna G. Blake, on November 11, 1986, at 82nd birthday. Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., she graduated magna cum laude and a member of Phi Beta Kappa from Middlebury College. In 1949 she joined Montclair (N.J.) Meeting, of which her late husband, Ernest, was a charter member. She is particularly remembered for her work on the hospitality committee, where she did floral arrangements for the mantle. As a member of Quaker Ladies, she spent many hours knitting and sewing for the American Friends Service Committee and for the Red Cross. She was devoted to her family, nursing both her father and mother, as well as her husband until his death in 1978. She is survived by a son, Harvey L., and two daughters, Shirley McLellan and Margaret Wilhelm.

Collett—Carrie Hudson Collett, on March 3, a member of Community Friends (Ohio) Meeting. She was born in Blanchester, Ohio, the daughter of Howard and Opal Dowden Hudson. After graduation from Wilmington College, she taught school in Clinton County until her marriage. She was known for her support of Friends concerns through the American Friends Service Committee and other Quaker projects worldwide. Besides her husband, Wallace, she was survived by two sons, Jonathan H. and Stephen W., a daughter, Jane Collett Moeller, and seven grandchildren.

Masland—William M. Masland, on February 20. A member and trustee of Manhasset (N.Y.) Meeting and of Friends Academy, he shared spiritual insights with generations of Friends Academy students at Thursday morning worship. He was a former captain pilot with Pan American Airlines, and as a member of the International Air Lines Pilots Association, worked to improve air safety. He is survived by his wife, Sara Fairchild Masland, three daughters, Susan, Becky, and Mary Masland Adams, and six grandchildren.

Wilson—E. Raymond Wilson, on June 27 in Sandy Spring, Md. Sixty years of one man's traveling, persuading, organizing, talking, and writing for peace ended with the death of Raymond Wilson. Born in Iowa, he served in the U.S. Navy during World War I and studied animal husbandry at Iowa State University in preparation for a career as a missionary. He later studied at Columbia
University and in Geneva, Switzerland, and Japan. He came to the American Friends Service Committee as a peace education secretary in 1931 and left AFSC in 1941 to help found the Friends Committee on National Legislation, where he worked as executive secretary until his retirement in 1962 and afterward continued working full-time in an emeritus capacity. It is impossible to measure his full impact on Congress; his way was to influence, not create. He helped organize seven national conferences on disarmament, which influenced federal policy and led to creation of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. He tried always to enlist other organizations in his programs. Where necessary he formed new groups to help in special areas, such as the National Council Against Apartheid, the National Civil Liberties Clearing House, Disarmament Information Service, and several others. He urged other religious denominations to make stronger efforts with the government to work toward peace, suggesting that they declare, "Washington, D.C., a "foreign mission field." He led the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States in early opposition to the Vietnam War, opening the way for other church organizations to spend much time, too, lobbying his often-controversial positions among Friends. He was the most likely traveled Friend of his time, seeming to live on the road for 12 years with AFSC and for more than 40 for FCNL. His retirement in 1962 meant little cutback in his activities, and he continued to work full-time for FCNL as executive secretary emeritus. Raymond Wilson's faith was firmly rooted in Christianity; he was convinced that war was totally inconsistent with the life of Jesus. And he expressed his faith in terms that made him acceptable as a leader to other religious, as well as to people with no religion. In the midst of Washington, D.C., a maestrom of power, compromise, and corruption, Raymond Wilson, in his life and in his work, faithfully represented the Quaker peace testimony in spirit and in truth. His wife, Miriam Davidson Wilson, died in 1965. He is survived by two sons, Kent Wilson of Del Mar, Calif., and Lee Wilson of Washington, D.C., and four grandchildren.

Calendar

SEPTEMBER

12—Single Friends in the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting area meet for fun, sharing, and potluck. 5 p.m. at Plymouth (Pa.) Meeting. For information call Amy Traganza at (609) 235-0013 or John Bieniek at (215) 783-0867. All welcome.


25-27—Missouri Valley Conference at Camp Chiowa, north of Lawrence, KS. For more information, write Steve Lyrene, 644 Randolph, Topeka, KS 66606.

OCTOBER

3—Single Friends group meets at Haverford (Pa.) Meeting. (See September 12 above.)

3—Annual fair from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the McCutchinford, New Century Meeting Friends Home, at 112 Linden Ave., Plainfield, N.J. Handiwork, gift items and snack bar.

BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

QUAKER TAPES!

New—Interviews on important Quaker topics, and classic readings, now on cassettes for listening and reflection:

1. Orthodox vs. Hickite: interview with historian Larry Ingle.

2. Readings from Fox's Journal, and A Guide to True Peace

3. Readings from Woolman's Journal

4. Facing Social Revolution: an interview with Quaker economist Jack Powell


6. George Fox's life and work; interview with Douglas Gwyn.

Tapes $1-$4 are approx. 60 minutes; $5.50 each, postpaid; $5 and $6, approx. 90 minutes; $12.75 each. Order from: Quaker Tapes, P.O. Box 1361, Falls Church, VA 22041


Did Vaccinations Trigger AIDS? by Dr. Gene Frank. Fascinating account of London Times and Walter Reed Hospital investigations. $2.50, Pure Water Products, 2783-J, Denton, TX 76201.

Super closeup! Books valued at $15-$100. $1. Send stamped, self-addressed envelope for list. Bestellers, P.O. Box 81331-F, Mobile, AL 36608

Friends of Truth publications: Faith and Practice of the Friends of Truth ($1.25); Our Correspondence among Christians ($1.25); 16 Huber St., Glenisle, PA 19038

For Sale

Russian–English postcards by Tolstoi and Penn, 5 for $1; 100 for $17.50. Quaker USU Band Committee (F11/12/86), 1515 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102.

Mayan handmade cotton clothes, accessories and unique gifts. Four color catalogues: One World Trading Co., P.O. Box 310, Dept. A4, Summertown, TN 38483. (615) 964-2354.

Join the Towne (Quaker) Community in the Sierra foothills; 2000 sq. ft. house; 2 bedrooms; 2 bath; den; on 5 acres of undeveloped land, 60 miles north of Sacramen­to, 60 miles west of Lake Tahoe. Outstanding views all sides. $150,000. Commercial Swift, 1583 Sunnyside Lane, Grass Valley, CA 95946; phone (916) 272-2517.


Opportunities


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Personal


Classical Music Lovers’ Exchange—Nationwide link between unattached music lovers. Write CMLE, Box 31, Pelham, NY 10803.

Concerned Single Letterlinks compatible singles concerned about peace, justice, environment. Free sample: Box 555-S, Stockbridge, MA 01262.
Military Counselor/Peace Educator to live at Quaker House of Fellowship, North Carolina. Person familiar with Quakerism. Two-year, renewable commitment. Lodging, car, health insurance, and $8,400/year. Send resume and inquiries to: John Cardarelli, 1014 Lakewood Ave., Durham, NC 27707. (919) 482-5881.

Pennington Friends House, a Quaker community residence, is looking to fill the following positions: Breakfast and Dinner Chef. A creative person with interest in natural foods, nutrition and beautiful presentation needed for 5 day per week position. Experience a must. Starts Sept. 1. Room, board, and a stipend of $7.50 per hour. Also: Assistant Manager wanted starting Oct. 1, 1987. Knowledge of Quaker procedure, ability to get along well with people, plus the ability to fix things and do general handy work and odd jobs. Room, board, and stipend. Please send resumes to: Pennington Friends House, 215 East 15th St., New York, NY 10003.

Center For Teaching Non-Violence seeks full-time staff with a minimum one-year commitment. Lodging and $8,000/year. We do public interest activism, research publishing on aggression, work against war toys, and operate the National Coalition on Television Violence (TV and film violence, war toys, sports violence, pornography, etc.). We are located three blocks from the Univ. of Illinois and Quaker Meeting. (217) 364-1902. Resume to Thomas Radiecki, M.D., Box 2157, Champaign II 61820.

Couples: Live in as house parents in therapeutic community. Provide care to parents and supervision of mental health workers. Excellent salary, 4 months vacation during the year. Wonderful opportunity for couples to work and have time off together. Contact Alexandra Schmarr, D.V.M., D.H.V. (219)934-2044.

Fundsraiser with American Friends Service Committee, international organization for nonviolent social change. Chicago-based, to interpret Quaker values and programs to Quaker procedure, ability to get along well with people, plus the ability to fix things and do general handy work and odd jobs. Room, board, and stipend. Please send resumes to: Joan Oltman, 1014 Lakewood Ave., Durham, NC 27707. (919) 482-5881.

Schools


Services Offered

Invest ethically because peace, social justice and a clean environment matter. Free information: Skip Lendes, A.G. Edwards & Sons, Inc. (Member, SIPC), 4800 Lakewood, Wa. TX 77481. 800-777-8410 or (817) 776-8410. Thanks for your interest!

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Wedding certificates, birth testimonials, invitations, annoucements, addressing, poetry, gifts all done in beautiful calligraphy and watercolor illumination. Write or call Leslie Mitchell, 2840 Bristol Rd., Bensalem, PA 19020. (215) 752-5554.

Moving to North Carolina? Maybe David Brown, a Quaker real estate broker, can help. Contact him at 1208 Pinewood Dr., Greensboro, NC 27410. (919) 204-2905.

Family Relations Committee's Counseling Service (FPM) provides professional counseling to individuals, families and groups in most geographic areas of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. All counselors are Quakers. All regular attenders, and employees of Friends organizations are eligible. Sliding fees. Further information or brochure—contact Arlene Kelly, 1001 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102. (215) 988-0140.

Vacation Opportunities
Maine Island vacation rental: Mostly off-season rentals. $500/week negotiable. 8 bedrooms, 3 baths, fully equipped on 14 acre peninsula, Vinalhaven. Phone (215) 643-4034.


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Guatemala, Mexico: Small seminars, large families, or friends find “Casas Rosas” a delightful place for study, re­ unions, or holidays. Our staff provides friendly Mexican spirit, concern for guests, excellent meals. Seven double bedrooms with baths and small single; large dining and liv­ ing rooms with fireplaces, long verandah for outdoor living, quiet porch and upstair terrace; large garden, garage and parking area; 4 X 25' heated filter pool, mountain views, near central plaza, buses and taxis. Good language schools available in Quezaltenango; day excursions to archeological sites, colonial convents, haciendas, attrac­ tive villages and much natural beauty, including the great volcanoes of Tacancualli and Popocatepetl. Cuernavaca is an hour from Mexico City; a good base for Mexican travels. Inquiries: Chula Rose Nicholson, 506 Oakley Rd., Harverford, PA 19041. (215) 642-3635.

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Book storage space in Philadelphia area needed immediately. Friends schools need space to sort and store book and pack boxes which will be donated to libraries, schools worldwide. Tax deduction possible. Please leave message for Jeanne Bentz, Friends Select School, Philadelphia, PA 19152. (215) 561-9500.

Meetings
A partial listing of Friends meetings in the United States and abroad.

MEETING NOTICE RATES: $1 per line per issue. Payable in advance. Twelve monthly insertions. No discount. Changes: $10 each.

CANADA
EDMONTON—Unprogrammed meeting 11 a.m. YWCA, Soroptimist room, 1005 100 Ave. 453-9922.
OTTAWA—Worship and First-day school 10:30 a.m. 9/1 Fifth Ave. (919) 232-9923.
TORONTO, ONTARIO—Worship and First-day school 11 a.m. 80 Lowther Ave. (North from CCM, Bloor and Bedford).

COSTA RICA
MONTEVERDE—Phone 61-09-53.
SAN JOSE—Unprogrammed meeting, 11 a.m. Sunday. Phone 24-43-76 or 33-61-86.

FRANCE
PARIS—Worship Sundays 11 a.m. Centre Quaker, 114, rue de Vaugirard.

GERMANY (FED. REP.)
HANOVER—Worship third Sunday 10:45, Kreuzkirche (Gemeindezaal). Call Sander 62960 or Wolkenhauer 628461.

GUATEMALA
GUATEMALA—Bi-weekly. Call 67922 or 37-49-52 evenings.

HONG KONG
HONG KONG—Unprogrammed meeting, Sundays, 11 a.m. The Library, St. John's Cathedral, Garden Road, Hong Kong, Phone: 5-431613.

JORDAN
AMMAN—Bi-weekly, Thurs. eve. Call 629677.

MEXICO
MEXICO CITY—Unprogrammed meeting, Sundays, 11 a.m., Casa de los Amigos, Ignacio Marcial 132, Mexico 1, D.F. 705-0521.

SWITZERLAND
GENEVA—Meeting for worship and First-day school 10:30 a.m., midweek meeting 12:30 p.m. Wednesdays. 13 av. Merleve, Quaker House, Petit-Saconnex.

YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC
SANA—Worship group. Contact Nancy Cady, 271950 or evenings 215544.

UNITED STATES
Alabama
BIRMINGHAM—Unprogrammed meeting for worship 10 a.m. Sunday. Paul Franklin, clerk, 2002 11th Ave. S., 35205. (205) 849-0202
FAIRHOPE—Unprogrammed meeting 9 a.m. Sundays at Friends Meetinghouse, 1.2 mi. east on Fairhope Ave. Ext. Write: P.O. Box 319, Fairhope, AL 36533.

HUNTSVILLE AREA—Unprogrammed meeting for worship and First-day school, 10 a.m. Meeting in various homes. Call (205) 883-0178 for information.

Alaska
ANCHORAGE—Unprogrammed, First Days, 10 a.m. For location call 533-4425 or 548-1379. Welcome visitor.

September 1/15, 1987 FRIENDS JOURNAL
PROVIDENCE—Meeting for worship 11 a.m. each First Day, 99 Morris Ave., corner of Olney St.

PITTSBURGH—Meeting for worship 10:30 a.m., 9th a.m., 5th day school. 3300 Forbes Ave., 330-9090. Phone: 262-2130.

WESTON—Meeting for worship 10:30 a.m. on different Sundays. Emmaus Meeting House, 490 Main St.

REYNOLDS—Meeting for worship 10:30 a.m., 9th a.m., 5th day school. 105 S. 5th St., 556-9295. Phone: 262-2130.

RANCHO—Meeting for worship 11 a.m., 5th day school. 3005 Madison St., 300-9590. Phone: 262-2130.

MARTINSVILLE—Meeting for worship 10:30 a.m., 9th a.m., 5th day school. 100 N. Main St., 100-6090. Phone: 262-2130.

HAMPSTEAD—Meeting for worship 10:30 a.m. on different Sundays. 611 N. Main St.

MIDDLETOWN—Meeting for worship 10:30 a.m. on different Sundays. 510 Washington St.

NEW Canaan—Meeting for worship 10:30 a.m., 9th a.m., 5th day school. 208 S. Main St.

NEW Canaan—Meeting for worship 10:30 a.m., 9th a.m., 5th day school. 413 S. Main St.

NEW Canaan—Meeting for worship 10:30 a.m., 9th a.m., 5th day school. 100 Main St.

NEW Canaan—Meeting for worship 10:30 a.m., 9th a.m., 5th day school. 500 Main St.

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What is black and white and read all over?

Called "the best in local cook books," Quaker Flavors has been sold around the world, from Australia to England. It was first issued in 1976, published by Willistown Friends Meeting outside Philadelphia. Some of the recipes have come down through generations of families, and include typical Philadelphia favorites from pepper pot and scrapple to sticky buns and Washington cake. The pages are salted with local and Quaker history and leavened with Quaker stories and humor, photographs and sketches.

Here's what some satisfied users of the cookbook have said:

"Quaker Flavors is truly the best cookbook in my collection."

"Every time I make one of the apple desserts it takes me home to Pennsylvania and memories of autumn and fresh, crisp apples."

"Grandmother started to copy Quaker Flavors page by page so we are ordering one for her as a surprise."

You will enjoy using and giving Quaker Flavors because its recipes are delicious. Each one has been tested. Plus you will have the satisfaction of knowing the profits are being used to alleviate hunger through the American Friends Service Committee.

Order a copy today for yourself, for a gift.
Send $8 (this includes postage) to Willistown Friends Meeting, 7069 Goshen Road, Newtown Square, PA 19073.