Rövlaag and Jesse Did It

For some folks, it’s dangerous to go into a department store with a credit card in their pocket. Others must avoid walking past a bakery window (particularly when the good smells are exiting the door). And a Good Humor truck has a way of luring us out of the house, even when we think we’ve something urgent to do.

I could “check all of the above,” but there’s an even more serious trap I try to avoid. It is habit forming and time consuming. It may lead to life-changing insights, unexpected new friendships, expensive travel, different vocations or vacations, painful growth in self awareness, and much more. It has various names and comes in many sizes and disguises. It is commonly known as “a book store.”

Now, it’s not that I need to own more books. My house is full of them. So are my office and my car and my backpack. Better judgment tells me, “Vint, when you get the urge to buy another book, go to the library. There are lots of good books there. Public libraries are environmentally correct, a sign of your tax money at work, a nice, quiet place to spend time, and the books are free too.” All good reasons for staying out of book stores, right?

Wrong! Reason and good judgment became smoke in the wind when I just happen to walk past a Borders or Barnes & Noble or local independent bookseller. God forbid, a USED BOOK STORE (you know, one of those nondescript, dusty, poorly lighted little places that seem to appear right out of nowhere when you’re on your way to a doctor’s appointment or lunch with a friend or to catch a bus or train). At such times I NEED a book, much as someone else might NEED a drink when passing a bar. My mind plays the same games, too. Like, “it’s not a bad habit, I could stop whenever I want” or “it will relax me,” or “it’s not really a bad habit, I could stop whenever I want— I’ve proved that many times…”

If I were to seek treatment for my condition with one of those expensive therapists (a Quaker one, of course), no doubt I’d be skillfully helped to travel back about 50 years to a far different time in my life, when books didn’t mean much to me. Life then consisted of listening to radio shows like “Jack Armstrong” and “The Lone Ranger,” drinking root beer, hanging out with a bunch of guys whose main passions were playing baseball and riding bikes, looking forward to a weekly movie for 15 cents at the Community House, seeing grandparents and cousins for holidays, and of course, birthdays and summer vacations and Christmas. Not a bad life, actually.

But then one day in ninth grade Miss Dean ruined everything. She gave out copies of the required book for the term, a book by a guy whose name I couldn’t spell or pronounce right: Ole Edvard Rövlaag. And quite by surprise, the next month or so of my life (it was a big book, after all) I lived and breathed the story and characters of Giants in the Earth.

Later—that same year, I think—there was a school assembly. The speaker was Jesse Stuart, who had just written a book called The Thread That Runs So True. I’d never met anyone like him before. He told us about his experiences as a young teacher of kids in the Southern mountains. I couldn’t wait to get a copy of the book for myself. My fate was sealed. From that point on, books were important to me. I even decided to be a teacher for a few years.

So that’s my story (pardon the pun). A portion of the current issue, if you have an afflication similar to mine, will tempt you to head for a good book store. If you want to know my own favorite pick for a must read, look at the ad on page 35. It is Benjamin the Meetinghouse Mouse, about to come off the press and recommended for “children of all ages.”

Vinton Deming
Class and Me
Errol Hess
Poor. Working class. Lower class. How many of us have any experience of the reality?

That of God across the Tracks
Pamela Haines
Which is the greater barrier in our society—race or class?

On Welfare
Carole Jones
Class issues permeate U.S. public policy.

Nurturing the Spiritual Life
Marge Abbott, Max Carter, Marty Grundy, William J. Kreidler, Lee Neff, and Claudia Wair recommend formative books to FRIENDS JOURNAL readers.

The Seed: Captivity and Liberation
Douglas Gwyn
In stillness, new life can begin.

...the Quakers...
1947
Jack Sutters
Fifty years ago, the American Friends Service Committee and the British Friends Service Council accepted the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the entire Religious Society of Friends.

Cover photo by
Susan Welchman

November 1997
Volume 43, No. 11

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November with Attention to Business
Kathleen Plunkett-Black
Nature's spiritual lessons

Something fluttered on top of the lake, about 100 yards from shore. The rapid movements continued, interspersed by short pauses. After half an hour, a baby bird came clearly into sight as it flapped wing motions upon the water in a paddling manner. It gradually brought itself to shore. It lay exhausted when able to stand, then slowly made a step up onto the sand, where it remained motionless for a long time. At first, it then began to chirp, at first hesitantly, then increasingly louder and frantically. Gradually it hopped one or two steps upward. It continued its frightful call for help with a sound unlike any heard from neighboring birds.

About 20 minutes after the baby's landing, a strange bird suddenly swooped down, landed near the lonely fledgling, fed it a bug, then quickly departed, not returning for another 20 minutes. It then repeated the performance once, leaving not to be seen or heard again.

Slowly, hesitantly, the fledgling hopped to a higher perch on a rock, followed after a few minutes by a very short flight to a nearby bush. A low tree branch was its next target, and then a taller tree limb became its goal, chirping excitedly all this time. Still alone, without any observed guidance, it continued its courageous journey into more distant heights until no longer seen or heard.

Birds are not supposed to float, let alone swim. Fledglings deserted or subjected to accidents often die. Cold, thoroughly wet, alone in an unknown place without hearing aid, frantic calls for help could go unheard.

Do we presume what is or is not possible? Do we believe that courage and determination cannot and will not lead to success?

Are we too sure that a frantic call for help, when alone and frightened, won't be answered?

Anne Hume
Millbury, Mass.

Contacting resisters

My Dad was a CO in World War II, served in CPS camps, and went to Europe for relief and reconstruction after the war. That experience changed his life.

When I and thousands of other 18-year-olds faced Vietnam, we all had to make a decision. I know my decision to be a draft resister changed my life. I am writing to seek help in contacting other Quaker men who also had to make such a decision. I want to collect accounts of their lives then and since, focusing on why they made the decision they did, how it affected their lives since, and the reaction of their friends and family. I also want to focus on the reaction of other Quakers—individuals as well as monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings. I am interested in their relationship to Quakers now, what if anything has changed, how they feel Quakers dealt with this issue, and what they have told their sons and daughters about that time.

I am willing to coordinate this effort to contact these men and to compile whatever written materials they choose to contribute into a simple "book" that could then be shared with all who are interested. Please help if you can with ideas, contacts, people, or groups who may be interested or already organizing such a project.

Will Stanton
115 Michigan Ave.
Swarthmore, PA 19081-2113
(610) 328-4896 (phone and fax)

True faith

Referring to Roland L. Warren's article (FJ Sept.) "Paul and James: We Need Them Both," no emphasis on deeds is necessary. True faith always produces good works. It is powerless to do otherwise.

Nelson Babb
W. Suffield, Conn.

Like Woolman's day

I am writing in appreciation of Sally Campbell's article, "They Ask for Change" (FJ Sept.). It seems that we all too often are so busy worrying about the world outside us—the glaring and critical situations—that we may forget our own poor and destitute. The concern Sally Campbell shows to the homeless in her city, and the responsibility that she puts on them, is to be commended.

Being homeless myself at one time, and now a care provider for the homeless, has shown me the other side of things all too often not shown on TV and in the papers. We live in a world rife with hunger, pain, corruption, and sin. We have seen the world in need; now we can turn our eyes to our own nation and bring a healing.

As we all, especially Friends, know of John Woolman and his struggle against slavery, now also we have a slavery that is not much different from the slavery of Woolman's day. Scripture points out that to whom we present ourselves as slaves, to him slaves we are. So too addiction to drinking and drugs are a form of slavery that can be eliminated, in much the same way Woolman helped Friends to see the need to rid their houses of slaves.

Although I am not a Friend, I believe very strongly in the testimonies of ministers of the gospel and wish to express my gratitude for your efforts. I pray that Sally Campbell's article will bring home to many the need for understanding and compassion, as well as a sense of hard work, in helping those who cannot help themselves.

Charles Sedan
Ogden Rescue Mission
Ogden, Utah

The first two articles in September ("They Ask for Change," "A Return to Quakerism") illustrate the statement of Dom Helder Camara, "When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist." Both Friends show us how to give of our time, our money, and our work in a way that we receive new understandings of Truth.

Sometimes these understandings are hard to find in our meetings because we come from such a narrow range of education, wealth, and social class. There are some things we can learn only from our neighbors the homeless, about them and about ourselves and our society.

Our two Friends have been led to work as volunteers with those living with AIDS and with an organization for the homeless. These are clearly things that a follower of Jesus would be led to do. Many Quakers do similar work. But the question remains: Why do these poor have no homes?

One reason that many more are homeless than in the past is changing government policies. For example, about 40 percent of the homeless in our city are mentally ill. They used to be hidden out of view, and to make you think they did not exist.
Sustainability of God’s Creation

The Creator of the Earth is the owner of it. It may be faithfully improved for the good of the whole. An Indian folk saying goes: All land belongs to God, it does not belong to anyone’s father.

The 20th century has been the most violent in human history. What the ancestors had sustained for thousands of years modern society has made unsustainable in 150 years.

It is little wonder that there is a progressive deterioration in the last 30 years, where the rich have become richer and the poor have become very much poorer. Increasing millions live below the poverty line, according to the 1996 UN Development Report. The report concludes that development that perpetuates such inequalities is neither sustainable nor worth sustaining. Along with this type of development has been the growing alienation of people to people and people to the land, especially in Western society.

Such a system dominates land and nature for profit. It took other people’s lands and committed genocide among the Amerindians in the Americas and the Aboriginals in Australia. The Sioux Indian Chief, Sitting Bull, advised his people in the mid 1800s: “lately a New Race has come among us. The love of possession is a disease with them. They fence their neighbors away. They fill the rivers with their refuse. We cannot coexist.” This prophesy rings true even today.

Alienation from land and people and progressive commodification of nature and people have taken away the exercise of stewardship of God’s Creation. The growth of industrialization has been “immensely harmful,” Bertrand Russell observed some 70 years ago in his Prospects of Industrial Civilization. While production of commodities had increased, it also made wars more destructive and brought increased trivial and leisure consumption.

What has brought about this shift is worthy of consideration by Friends. European powers violently colonized nearly the whole world and imposed alien structures that disrupted relationships to land, to people, and to their cultures along with their own natural and spiritual fulfillment. Slavery was introduced on a large scale and the Opium Wars brought in a worldwide drug culture. The capital accumulated with such exploitation provided a base for industrialization. Nature and people were exploited for profit. The process of industrialization made nature and people into commodities. It created waste, pollution, the hot-house effect, the depletion of forests and their peoples, the loss of biodiversity, and more. It is not sustainable. This has sidelined our values of the stewardship of creation.

In my seeking, it came as a revelation to know how serious are the consequences of a breakdown in our relationships with the land and with people, devaluation of our spiritual and the growth of alienation.

In most developing nations people and nature have an intimate relationship. Nature is life-giving and sacred. A life-support base is shared and cannot be owned. Limitations are recognized. This is a part of stewardship, but global markets with their emphasis on profits will not allow this for long. Spiritual approaches have to give way to market forces. If this persists, developing nations, too, will lose their commons and with them the poor’s livelihood and their freedom to choose their lifestyles.

Spirituality cannot be compromised. Our Social Testimony calls us to seek an alternative lifestyle. In fact, to seek an other-centeredness.

In contrast to a highly commercialized society, most genuine contemporary grass-root movements have a spiritual dimension: Gandhian Sarvodaya; Manavdaya in Senegal; Swadaya of Athawale, which has millions of followers. In Islam and Christianity and Liberation Theology, importance is given to factors such as inner transformation, moral purity, self-discovery, self-knowledge, or the notion of God in its many different interpretations. It implies the ideal of a livelihood based on age-old moral principles of simplicity, frugality, sufficiency, and respect for every human being and all forms of life. It does not mean asceticism or the monastic life. It tries to bring back joy, tries to give back to everyone that holistic and compassionate dimension of being. This could provide both the means and an end as an alternative to the economy of the market.

In our Testimony of Simplicity, we need to seek to live in that life and power that takes away the occasion for all wars and violence, and in that life to cheerfully walk over the earth.

—Aniz Pabaney
Bombay Worship Group

sight in hospitals. Now that drugs have been developed to control psychosis, they are taken into hospital until they are functioning and stabilized and then they are discharged onto the streets with a prescription. This appears humane and, not incidentally, it is much cheaper. Some of the savings were used, at first, to subsidize housing and provide aftercare with regular medication that enabled discharged patients to avoid recurring bouts of psychosis. Now we are told that this insufficient level of care must be reduced in order to lower taxes for the middle classes. That’s us—we Quakers. Are the seeds of homelessness in our voting for lower taxes for ourselves?

I realize I am speaking from my own neighborhood and culture. Because we live downtown, the homeless are not out of sight. Because I am Canadian, I believe government is one way we can express our care for everyone. Because I am a Quaker, I am called to examine how my life as a citizen contributes to homelessness. I believe that if I ask, I will be given ways in which I can help my neighbors who have no place to live. These ways may include
I would urge Benjamin Candee Jr. to learn something about Alfred Nobel's passion for pacifism and his extreme frustration over the military use of the dynamite that he had invented for peaceful purposes. Conversely, I suspect Alfred Nobel would have recognized in Jimmy Carter a kindred spirit whose peace journey has almost curiously emanated from a life experience that has survived the roots of a military background.

Kara Newell of AFSC said it best in her reference to the "spiritual underpinning" guiding Jimmy Carter and how his work has reflected our "Quaker concerns for mutuality and respect for all persons." Wouldn't it be great if a portion of the energies devoted to our multitude of presidential libraries were focused on the peace movement in a manner similar to that provided by the Carter Center? Wouldn't it be great if all our ex-presidents were as deserving of such a nomination?

Roland L. Warren
Andover, N.Y.

Sacraments and worship

I thank Nancy Breitsprecher (FJ Aug.) for offering a channel of commonality between Friends worship and liturgical sacramental worship. Must we, with Robert Barclay, condemn sacramental symbol for its carnality?

Nancy speaks from the experience of a Quaker come secondarily to sacramental worship. As a convinced Friend, I come from an Anglican background, secondarily to Quakerism. From time to time I have read statements of Friends who draw a sharp line with their conviction, rejecting any value in the liturgical experiences to which they were formerly exposed, but I wonder if there are not those who, like me, retain memory of significant spiritual experience in the sacramental form.

The one reservation I have about Nancy Breitsprecher's presentation is what I see as a trivializing of the experiences of both the Eucharist and meeting for worship, by linking the common meal of the Eucharist with "coffee and conversation." In meeting for worship, as in the Eucharist, the Presence of Another, the Spirit, is invited, and the participants seek to be fed in common not only with those physically present but with those who have so worshiped before and elsewhere, the "communion of saints."

Brett Miller-White
Swannanoa, N.C.

Over 40 years ago Douglas Steere was the main speaker at a conference of Congregationalists in New England. Since I lived nearby, I attended. He delivered three lectures over the period of the conference. The last one was at the closing session of the conference, which closed with a service of communion. The chairman acknowledged that Friends did not practice the sacrament but cordially invited him to enter into fellowship with them. Douglas thanked them, but shook hands and departed.

A few months ago I attended an early service in a Methodist church where I am known because I represent our meeting in ecumenical activities. It was obvious as one entered that this was communion Sunday. On such occasions I usually remain quietly in my seat in meditation, but not always. If I am with my daughter I will go forward feeling that it is more important to be in fellowship than to make a Quaker statement.

This time I was alone, so I did not go up with others. Next thing I knew, the pastor was bringing the elements to me. I realized that he assumed I was favoring my knees (I am 82). I made a quick decision that I was not going to deny him the reward of his kindness, and nodding my head in gratitude, I partook.

We do not live today in the social climate of Fox's day. There is no taxation to support an established church. I feel Friends are at liberty to disregard some of the strictures of 17th-century Quakerism. We have already let go the bonnet and plain language. There is a greater spirit of liberty in which we can relax. I recall the quotation printed in every issue of the erstwhile American Friend: "In essentials unity, in nonessentials liberty, in all things charity."

Philip Kelsey
Somers Pt., N.J.
CLASS AND ME

by Errol Hess

I grew up in a very class-conscious school system, where I was put in the slow learner's class in first grade on the basis of a test where the teacher had each student stand before the class and recite the ABC's. I'd never heard of ABC's. I taught myself to read in third grade, as I was unable to use the phonics system we were taught. In sixth grade my reading skills tested on a third year of college level. Although I was a good student in academic courses, I was not selected by teachers for yearbook, school newspaper, or any of the other middle-class honors. In 1959 I received a full scholarship to attend college (this was before federal financial aid).

In short, I know firsthand there is a class system in the United States that has little to do with merit. I was only one in my family to go to college, although my sisters had the intelligence to go. Middle-class families with much less ability had all their children in college. Culturally I'm a hillbilly. I know enough of middle-class life to see how cultural limits can make it difficult for one class to relate to another. My becoming middle class was painful. I had no social graces but made a fool of myself in social situations. My college instructors laughed at me for the way I pronounced words I knew from reading but had never heard.

I have to believe, if a lower-class person can become familiar with middle-class life, certainly middle-class persons can become sensitive to those who are different: the poor, blacks, ethnic minorities. I used to laugh, watching idealistic Vista volunteers learning to live with Appalachian poor, but they did learn.

I believe the explanation is simple: why poor people, blacks, and ethnic minorities are not comfortable coming to most North American Quaker meetings. Quakers are thoroughly middle class, and they scorn many of the values of lower-class people, while not taking the time or trouble to understand people of different backgrounds.

I am convinced that if enough Friends in a meeting would venture to live among and immersed in the culture of whatever group they would like to see attend meeting, then that group would attend. I am not saying Friends should do this. But to not do it and expect to attract people from these groups is unrealistic.

Quakers have moved well into the mainstream from being a peculiar people. If we started practicing Quaker testimonies again — say simplicity — we would soon find ourselves attracting a different class of people, because we would be living and working among poor and working-class folk.

I have lived my life in poor communities, nearly always making below poverty income. The past ten years I've lived in a black, inner-city neighborhood. I try to imagine my neighbors attending my meeting, and I cannot. They smoke. My meeting doesn't. They eat meat. They like to get drunk and party loud on weekends. (I'm thinking while saying this of many exceptions among my neighbors to each generalization.) My meeting would have to be a much different place to attract most of my neighbors. If my meeting did decide to change and become such a place, I wonder, would it still be recognizable as a Quaker meeting?

I guess my recommendation, after all this rummaging, is that Friends be what they are and only worry if what they are is truly what they want to be. It is important that Friends try to have insight into how they are a part of the whole class system, which is filled with inequities of racism and classism and floats on a system of world violence to many people and peoples. In this Friends should wear their class as long as they are comfortable with it. 

Errol Hess is a member of Foxfire (Tenn.) Meeting and the administrative assistant for Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association. This article first appeared as part of a discussion of class on the Quaker-Spectrum Internet mailing list.

Friends Journal November 1997
Raised as a Quaker in a liberal community in the 1950s and '60s, I learned about tolerance and equality in a variety of wonderful ways. Our town was the one place in the county where Jews felt at home. I saw real gender equality at meeting, where women were just as likely to lead as men. The small community I lived in was intentionally integrated, and I valued our African American neighbors deeply. We were taught about racial injustice. We knew that African Americans had suffered centuries of discrimination. We knew that white people had to take a stand.

Having African Americans for neighbors and friends was deeply human and right. The attempt at generosity in the direction of people of color with less economic means was a good impulse, though distorted by distance and privilege. Unfortunately, I had no comparable experience or training around class. In my solidly middle-class community there were no working-class neighbors. There were no adults talking about economic privilege and injustice (except in the context of U.S./third world relationships). I learned early that the folks in the trailer park down the road or in the shacks up on the mountainside were less like me than my African American neighbors were. They were similar on the surface, but without our values. There was no need to be in contact with them—and that was that.

My childhood left me with a mix of experience, naiveté, understanding, truth, and misinformation that is probably not unique among Quakers. I had some understanding of the workings of oppression, particularly around racism. The attitude of generosity toward the poor and the oppressed was much better than lack of generosity. But the condescension implicit in reaching from a perspective of being the one with more to offer was a significant liability. And I had learned that a whole group of people were not my people.

I headed into adulthood with a drive to live out the implications of our beliefs. I was looking for something I couldn't find in meeting. I wanted to be ordinary, one of the regular people—not a member of a special group, aloof, "better," apart. Though it's hard for me to talk about all of this in theological terms, I feel it as a deep expression of our search for that of God in everyone.

Coming of age in the turbulence of the early 70s, there were many worldviews to try out. One that was immensely useful to me was Marxism. Finally I was offered a picture of the sweep of economic history, of the exploited role of working people who make the system run by selling their labor to someone who profits from that mis
sale. Now I could see this group through the same lens through which I had been taught to see African Americans. They too were people who had been ground down by a system of exploitation. They too deserved justice and equality.

Perhaps I could claim these people as my people. I remember reading labor history. Philadelphia led the first strikes for better wages in the United States in the early 1800s. These were the people of my chosen city. Philadelphia led the struggle for an eight-hour day. These were my people. There was much to be proud of, much to want to be a part of.

Still, the understanding was intellectual, abstract. How could I actually be a part of them for real, in flesh and blood, and in the present? Many of my friends who studied Marxism at the same time—many of them Quakers—made a choice to abandon their middle-class identity, to the extent that they were able, and join the working class in factory jobs. I was torn—feeling that they had chosen a path of greater rigor, but unwilling to make that choice myself. Somehow I had to find a way that didn’t involve casting off my identity and history quite as completely. I didn’t want to be working class so much as understand and get to know working-class people so that together we could claim our common humanity and common goals.

I started my long struggle with the question of what it is that divides us, group by group, person by person. Most of the question as well. Hunger is all too often a fact of life for families living on welfare. In addition to these physical hardships, there are psychological ones to be dealt with as well—the embarrassment and humiliation that go along with living on welfare, the sometimes subtle, sometimes overt hostility from those who resent your “free ride.” An easy life? I don’t think so.

There are those who say that welfare recipients are on welfare because they don’t want to work. To these people I point out the simple fact that wanting to work automatically guarantees a person from personal experience that having a college degree is no guarantee of employment.

I wonder why it is that these expenditures are acceptable ones, but helping those who are in need is not. This year Congress drastically slashed the federal welfare program, with a seeming disregard for the effect these cuts are likely to have on the states governments and the lives of those people who currently depend upon welfare assistance for their survival. When I think of the changes that will soon come about as a result of the new welfare legislation, I can’t help but feel a deep concern for the future of our society, a society where many of its citizens will soon be living without the basic necessities of life.

Continued on next page

ON WELFARE

by Carole Jones

In recent months, the United States Congress wrestled with the task of welfare reform and the welfare system came under close public scrutiny and some rather unfounded attacks. I listened to the various opinions expressed. Welfare recipients come from all walks of life and all sorts of backgrounds, but there is one thing we seem to have in common. We are the people who, for one reason or another, are falling through the cracks of society, for whom survival is a struggle. Some have physical disabilities that make finding a job difficult. Some have recently lost jobs when the factories where they worked moved to third world countries. Some are small farmers whose families have been engaged in farming for generations, who can no longer make a living.

Welfare recipients come from all walks of life and all sorts of backgrounds, but there is one thing we seem to have in common. We are the people who, for one reason or another, are falling through the cracks of society, for whom survival is a struggle. Some have physical disabilities that make finding a job difficult. Some have recently lost jobs when the factories where they worked moved to third world countries. Some are small farmers whose families have been engaged in farming for generations, who can no longer make a living. Some people on welfare have to live either in subsidized housing (another form of welfare), in homeless shelters, or with family (another type of homelessness), because they don’t have enough money to pay rent and utilities. Having a car is usually out of the question as well. Hunger is all too often a fact of life for families living on welfare. In addition to these physical hardships, there are psychological ones to be dealt with as well—the embarrassment and humiliation that go along with living on welfare, the sometimes subtle, sometimes overt hostility from those who resent your “free ride.” An easy life? I don’t think so.

There are those who say that welfare recipients are on welfare because they don’t want to work. To these people I point out the simple fact that wanting to work does not automatically guarantee a person employment.

In today’s job market, the number of people looking for employment far exceeds the number of job openings. In the United States, it is estimated that there are 900,000 more people seeking employment than there are jobs available. An easy life? I don’t think so.

I wonder why it is that these expenditures are acceptable ones, but helping those who are in need is not. This year Congress drastically slashed the federal welfare program, with a seeming disregard for the effect these cuts are likely to have on the states governments and the lives of those people who currently depend upon welfare assistance for their survival. When I think of the changes that will soon come about as a result of the new welfare legislation, I can’t help but feel a deep concern for the future of our society, a society where many of its citizens will soon be living without the basic necessities of life.

Continued on next page
people see race as the major dividing issue in our society. Yet it was so easy to be friends with the African Americans in the community of my childhood—they were so much like us. It made me wonder how much of the separation we feel around race is actually an issue of class.

If a well-educated middle-class white person were asked which stranger she or he would feel more comfortable socializing with—a well-educated middle-class person of color, or a white person from a working-class neighborhood—who would she or he choose? My guess is that most of us would choose the person from our own class. Though racism is a major issue in its own right, there was something in the less-acknowledged division of class that kept pulling at me.

I took a job tutoring at the community college, looking to get to know more people (both white and black), then working in an educational program for the clerical staff of a local university. In both places I had opportunities to make working-class friends—and what awkward friendships they were! I was acutely aware of my privilege, barely daring to say anything about my life for fear of widening the already enormous chasm that I saw gaping between us, yet at the same time stuck in a mindset of being the resource, assuming that it was appropriate to give to their “scarcity” from my “abundance.”

Leaving work to start a family, I looked for volunteer opportunities. How could I act powerfully on the values from my Quaker upbringing that I still held dear, without setting myself up as more moral than ordinary folks? I found a wonderful match in Jobs with Peace. Here was a place where I could be for peace and for the folks who worked in military industries to support their families and for those who needed housing and health care and jobs more than bombs. Every time we opened our mouths we were clearly for all of these people as well as for peace.

In reaching for the working class and the poor as allies in a struggle that would help us all, the people of color were quick to join in—and eventually ended up leading the campaign. Folks in the unions were harder to reach, though we tried in so many different ways. They found it difficult to believe that people who weren’t union people first—and whose talk of conversion mentioned the possibility of job loss no less—could have their interests truly at heart.

The societal forces that have kept many of us on opposite sides of the track are great. (And the reality of class mobility is counterbalanced by a widespread need to claim a new class by distancing from the old.) For those of us who try to cross, however, what we come up against is not just societal forces, but the minutiae of differences in habit and attitude and style that can separate us as surely as an ocean.

It’s been an amazing process to get to know working-class people well enough to talk together about these differences. “You are so loud and irreverent with each other; I’d never be able to be part of your group,” I say. “You are so quiet and reserved, it’s hard to tell if you like us at all,” they respond. “You get so angry and upset,” I fret. “You never show a negative emotion; how can we read you?” they complain. “When we’re trying to plan something you don’t talk, then you get mad at not being included,” I accuse. “You’re always so quick to take the lead and put out your thinking; can you really know best all the time?” they demand.

In this rich and painful process I’ve come to view the concept of privilege as one both absolutely real and completely bogus. It is undeniably true that I have had easier access to resources, education, and choice than most working-class people in this unjust economic system. Yet the training I’ve received to function well in my class has left me with a mix of clarity and unawareness that is certainly no better than the different mix of another class. With my growing understanding of the depth of that unawareness, I have no illusions that my class has any edge in terms of virtue, goodness, generosity, or courage.

My working approach to the issue of privilege is twofold. I try to live my life steadfastly in the direction of change in the larger economic system, finding different ways over the years to spread information and organize around the big picture and to empower people to believe that they can play a role in making things change. I also focus on a personal struggle to transcend the barriers that have kept me from all my people.

It’s been helpful to see class training as a burden. The middle class has been sold a bill of goods. In return for the slightly greater pay, prestige, and access to resources that come with the step up from being the basic workforce to managing and maintaining that workforce, we get a lonely ethic of individualism and competition and the fear that comes with having more to lose. And that “privilege” is part of what keeps us from other human beings that we belong with. We belong with them in terms of our most basic economic interest, and we belong with them in terms of our humanity.

How can I claim all my people? I find ways to be with them. I listen, assuming that a working-class person can be uniquely smart about me and see things I can’t see. When my working-class friend says it would be easier if I shared my disappointment when she breaks an engagement rather than trying to act as if everything is fine, I can get a glimpse of how thoroughly I’ve been trained to act “appropriately” rather than show myself. Another barrier, invisible to me until that conversation, has been named and can be surmounted. It becomes clearer and clearer that we need each other equally, that only together can we find the whole truth.

I think my hard-won confidence that I could find my way to people outside my middle-class zone of comfort helped me to more fully embrace those within it. In the midst of this growing clarity, I was ready to come back to the Quakerism I had earlier left.

I chose as an adult to live in a mixed neighborhood in the city, as a statement of who my people are, a concrete way of facing in the direction I knew I wanted. As my roots have spread and I stretch as wide and high as I can, the rewards of that direction keep getting richer. After reaching for the women in my settlement house parent and toddler group as peers rather than as clients, the connections were real enough that I got invited into homes in the tight Italian working-class community of South Philadelphia as a friend. After taking a part-time job supporting childcare workers’ struggle for better wages, I got to attend a weekend retreat of home daycare providers, to listen to their struggles and love and determination, to dance with them in the bar, to be accepted as one of them. As I face this issue as squarely as I know how, my circle widens and life gets better and better.
We asked several Friends to name five books, written in the past two decades, that they would commend to readers of FRIENDS JOURNAL for building up the spiritual life or Quaker faith and practice. Here are their responses. —Eds.

**MARGE ABBOTT**

*Marge Abbott is a member of Multnomah (Oreg.) Meeting and the author of A Certain Kind of Perfection, Pendle Hill Publications, Wallingford, Pa., 1997.*

*Dark Night Journey: Inward Repatterning toward a Life Centered in God*


Meeting God: for some, that is gentle and comforting; it turned my life on end. Sandra Cronk was one of my many spiritual guides as I sought to respond to God’s touch. Cronk knows of the paradoxical and often confusing turns we might encounter as God works to repattern our whole being and as we take on the ministry laid out before us.

*Start Where You Are: A Guide to Compassionate Living*


*The Other Side of Silence: A Guide to Christian Meditation*


*Listening Spirituality: Personal Spiritual Practices among Friends*


Three guides speak to my personal spiritual journey from very different perspectives, yet all combine to inform me in the lifelong spiritual and practical work of becoming a Friend. Pema Chodron is a Buddhist woman who offers guidance on embracing rather than denying the painful aspects of our lives as steps on the path to knowing compassion. Morton T. Kelsey speaks from the Catholic contemplative tradition of silence and mysticism. Patricia Loring takes what she has learned from Catholics, Buddhists, Hindus, and others, and combines them in a uniquely Quaker way.

*Living the Way: Quaker Spirituality and Community*


*The Spoken Ministry among Friends: Three Centuries of Progress and Development*


*True Justice: Quaker Peacemakers and Peacemaking*


Being part of a community is central to Quaker life and practice. Janey O’Shea is an Australian Friend who speaks deeply of the particular way in which Friends understand the lessons of inward waiting and outward persistence as we live out our faith. She offers these as lessons both for individual spiritual growth and for renewal in our meetings for worship. Seth B. Hinshaw draws from our history as he considers the nature of the spoken ministry among Friends. Hinshaw speaks out of the pastoral tradition, but offers all of us much to consider as we seek to speak with a distinctive Quaker witness to one another and to the world. Adam Curle gives quite practical advice about living amidst violence as a peacemaker, breaking all conventions as we seek the complex way of loving our enemies as we affirm truth and work for change.

**MAX CARTER**

*Max Carter is a member of New Garden (N.C.) Meeting and Director of Friends Center/ Campus Ministry Coordinator at Guilford College.*

I am really more of a fan of the “old standards” (Woolman, Kelly, Whittier, etc.), and I am hard-pressed to name many...
books I have really been moved by recently. These are ones that have influenced me or have been favorably received by my students.

**A Midwife's Story**

Not to be confused with *A Midwife's Tale!* Quakers have much to learn from our Amish neighbors, but much of current writing about them is either too scholarly or too schmaltzy. This first-hand account by a non-Amish midwife captures Amish spirituality and practicality marvelously. My students have been profoundly moved by this book.

**A Living Faith**

Wil's book is the best summary of Quaker faith and practice in recent memory and does such a good job of balancing the multifarious aspects of Quaker theology, worship, and outreach that it should be required reading for anyone who wishes to speak for Friends.

**Mary Barker Hinshaw, Quaker**

The simple story of a Civil War era Southern woman who packed children and wagon and traveled 600 miles through enemy lines to find her husband after Gettysburg is inspiring and revealing of the character of our Quaker forebears.

**Jesus in Focus**

A Roman Catholic and Temple University professor, Sloyan does a masterful job of placing Jesus in his first-century CE environment in prose clear and accessible, long before books by Borg and Crossan attempted to do the same with more controversial results.

**Simple Living**

"Fast track Yuppies" who abandoned the glamor of southern California to take over a struggling Quaker family orchard in southern Virginia, Levering and Urbanska write about the joys of lifestyle simplification from their own and a fascinating array of others' perspectives. Puts modern flesh on the ancient Quaker testimony on simplicity.

**MARTY GRUNDY**

Marty Grundy is a member of Cleveland (Ohio) Meeting and a workshop leader and speaker among Friends.

Which are the books I find myself returning to again and again and recommending to others, books that have informed me and also moved and molded me? How can I limit such richness to five? I have deleted Pendle Hill pamphlets and other short pieces, some of which are powerful influences in my life. I have regretfully left off books dealing with our history and testimonies, choosing to concentrate on those that have been most helpful to my spiritual life.

**Encounter with Silence: Reflections from the Quaker Tradition**

Recommended for all Friends and attenders. By describing what he did to learn how to become a Friend, Punshon offers useful ideas for all of us. The book gives practical advice for learning to worship in unprogrammed stillness; it roots our faith and practice in the mystery of Christian experience; its prophetic voice analyzes the current situation and suggests a way forward.

**Listening Spirituality: Personal Spiritual Practices among Friends**

For all Friends and attenders who want to deepen their spiritual life. It draws on a number of traditions but grounds them all within the Quaker context of listening. Loring offers a wide variety of practices and wise suggestions for the things we can do—such as meditation, reading, journaling, different kinds of prayer, lectio divina, contemplation, spiritual friendships, worship sharing—to become more open to God's love and guidance.

**Essays on the Quaker Vision of Gospel Order**

Wilson explores critical issues including ministry, community, membership, meeting for business, our testimonies, and the Bible within the overall theme of Gospel Order. He holds up a vision of Gospel Order as the unifying foundation of Quaker faith and practice and invites us to live into it more fully as meetings and as individuals who are part of those faith communities.

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November 1997 Friends Journal
A Description of the Qualifications Necessary to a Gospel 
Minister: Advice to Ministers and Elders among the 
People Called Quakers 
bym Samue l Bovas, edited with an introduction by William 
Taber. Pendle Hill Publications, Wallingford, Pa., and Tract 

An essential handbook for anyone who feels a call to vocal 
ministry or to work with those in whom such a gift is 
emerging. Points to the God-centered, intentional life through 
which true ministry flows, which characterized the lives of 
traditional Quaker ministers and elders.

Dark Night Journey: Inward Repatterning toward a Life 
Centered in God 
b y Sandra Crenk, Pendle Hill Publications, Wallingford, Pa., 

This is only for those who have had a growing sense of 
relationship with God and are suddenly alone with no 
experience of God's presence, guidance, or consolation. It is for 
those who have been stripped of familiar sources of self-identity 
and are being reformed in the Void, unable to perceive God's 
loving presence. For those in the Abyss or those companioning 
them, the book is a godsend of loving wisdom and 
enlightenment. It also has excellent insights into ministry and 
the role of the spiritual nurturer (elder).

WILLIAM J. KREIDLER

William J. Kreidler is a founding member of Beacon Hill (Mass.) 
Meeting, and be frequently speaks to Friends groups.

Guide My Feet: Prayers and Meditations on Loving and 
Working for Children 

Guide My Feet begins: "I set out to write a very different 
book—a policy book—but out tumed prayers instead." And 

wonderful prayers they are too. Sometimes joyful, sometimes 
cries of pain, sorrow, and frustration, the prayers and 
meditations in Guide My Feet remind us that our social action 
needs to be grounded in and guided by the Holy Spirit. For 
Edelman, it is a constant Truth that social action, at its core, is 
about showing God's love in practical ways in the world, a 
Truth Friends will resonate with. This is an inspiring, 
optimistic, and, perhaps surprising for a book of prayers, very 
useful book.

Enduring Grace: Living Portraits of Seven Women 
Mystics 

These are seven profiles of extraordinary women who took 
extraordinary risks to nurture their relationships with the Holy 
Spirit, with extraordinary results. Some of the women are well 
known—Teresa of Avila, Clare of Assisi; others less so— 
Mechtilde of Magdeberg, Catherine of Genoa. None of them 
are Friends, but in their passionate, intense, and sometimes 
over-the-top relationships with God they remind us of early 
Friends, and the mystical landscape of their interior lives will 
seem surprisingly familiar. This book is also a gentle reminder 
that the Christian tradition is extremely rich and varied in 

ways to relate to the divine. Carol Flinders's graceful style and 
relaxed "let me tell you about these fascinating women" voice 
contribute to making this an engaging and pleasurable read.

Quakers and the Use of Power 
b y Paul A. Lacey. Pendle Hill Pamphlet #241, Wallingford, Pa., 
1982.

Quakers, when they talk about power at all, tend to talk 
about it in negative terms, as something in opposition to 
Truth. But mostly we don't talk much about power, and Paul 
Lacey thinks we should. In this pamphlet he simply and 
persuasively explains why and gives some useful suggestions for 
how. Now out of print, this pamphlet is well worth hunting 
up, and while you're at it, hunt up Paul Lacey's other Pendle 
Hill Pamphlet, Leading and Being Led. It too is superb.

Walking on Water: Reflections on Faith and Art 
b y Madeleine L'Eng le. Harold Shaw Publisher, Wheaton, Ill., 
1980.

The spiritual life, says L'Engle, is a creative process in which 
we are continually creating and recreating our lives in 
partnership with God. This makes all of us artists. L'Engle's 
main themes have to do with discerning God's will in art and 
in day-to-day life and with the importance of storytelling in 
this discernment. This is a particularly fine and personal work 
by someone who excels at both discernment and storytelling.

The Road to Daybreak 

Henri Nouwen, who died this past year, was a Roman 
Catholic priest who spent the last years of his life with the 
L'Arche community called Daybreak, a community in 
Toronto, Ontario, where mentally disabled and abled people 
live and work together. The Road to Daybreak is Nouwen's 
journal of the time before he affiliated with the Daybreak 
community and how he came to that decision. Nouwen's 
constant questions are "What is God's will in this situation?" 
and "How can I show God's love to the world?" He was 
unspiring in his willingness to examine his life honestly, no 
matter how painful it might be. His reflections are so down-to-
earth and human that many Friends will find echoes of their 
own spiritual journeys in his and will gladly claim Nouwen as 
a fellow "Seeker after Truth."

LEE NEFF

Lee Neff is a member of University (Wash.) Meeting. She has 
recently returned from a peacemaking journey to the Middle 
East.

In sum, I guess these five books connect, spiritually, to 
the past, to others in the world who offer inspiration, to my 
spiritual family, and to the earth. When I chose them I didn't 
know it would turn out that way, but there it is.

Jesus: An Historian's View of the Gospels 

Grant's study of what we can truly know of Jesus helped 
and continues to help me frame the nature of my Christianity.
The historical framework of Jesus' life makes his actions, and his humanity, clear.

This Side of Peace

Having just met Ashrawi, the story of her life and her commitment to peace in the Middle East is all the more compelling. Seeing her, in person, gently and firmly disagree with Yasser Arafat was inspiring. In addition, she attended Ramallah Friends School and the American University of Beirut, two institutions that contribute to peace by their very being.

Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue.

This is a remarkable book by Edwin H. Friedman, who unfortunately died a year ago. Friedman, an ordained rabbi and family therapist, focuses on the emotional life of religious congregations and their leaders. His insights apply to every "family"—each nonprofit organization, Quaker meeting, and even to the war-torn countries of the Middle East.

New and Selected Poems

Gardening from the Heart: Why Gardeners Garden

Although all five of these books speak to my awareness of my Quakeriness as it carries me through life, Mary Oliver's poetry and the heartfelt, often poetic, descriptions of these gardeners' lives with growing things remind me over and over again of Oliver's final five lines in "Wild Geese":

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely, the world offers itself to your imagination, calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting—over and over announcing your place in the family of things.

CLAUDIA WAIR

Claudia Wair is a member of Langley Hill (Va.) Meeting and assistant editor of FRIENDS JOURNAL.

Quaker Faith and Practice

What struck me first about Faith and Practice was the mention on worship and prayer, entitled "Approaches to God." This chapter provides me with the preparation needed before entering meeting for worship. It is a place to go when my mind is full of things of the self and centering to listen is difficult. The later chapter on the "personal journey" has helped me in difficult times; creativity, loss, self-acceptance, and living a full life are addressed. Finally, and in many ways the most important chapter I visit repeatedly, is that on membership. This chapter reminds me of my responsibility not only to my own path to God, but to those with whom I worship and to the God we worship together.

Celebration of Discipline

I came across this book at the annual retreat of Baltimore Yearly Meeting's Spiritual Formation Program. My meeting used it as a text for our local group. We followed it together, meeting regularly to discuss our progress and the difficulties and joys of embarking on spiritual disciplines. Inward disciplines (prayer, submission, solitude), and corporate disciplines (confession, worship, guidance, celebration) are laid out and opened up for readers to discover and explore. I return to this book whenever "the world" encroaches on my spiritual life.

A History of God

I bought this book almost a year before I read it, and if I had not joined a reading group at Pendle Hill, I might never have finished it. Thankfully we read it together because this book begs for discussion. While the section on the evolution of the Christian notion of God had few surprises for me, those on Judaism and, even more so, Islam opened a new world for me, showing similarities and particularities and the role differing societies played in the "legitimizing" of God through the centuries and throughout the monotheistic world. This book demonstrates that though there are indeed many paths to God, human beings started out on pretty much the same road.

The Complete Gospels

After the class for which this translation was required reading, I told a classmate, "I feel like I've been given keys to a set of doors I never knew existed." I had never known before that there existed a "Gospel according to Mary Magdalene." The book of John, in particular, now has a more intimate meaning for me. Jesus seems far more human in this translation, in which there appears more emphasis on translation than interpretation, leaving all that between the reader and the Creator.

Spock's World

This New York Times bestseller about Star Trek's Mr. Spock depicts the evolution of the Vulcan society (from violence and barbarism to wisdom and pacifism) and its religion, a very Quakerly blend of spirituality and reason. The Vulcan emphasis on education, truthful speech, and mysticism very much resemble Friends. I came upon this book long before I attended my first Quaker meeting, but once I'd learned more about Friends, the more their religion resembled the Vulcans' (except Quakers do laugh, from time to time).
I am very much a seeker. I am also a committed Christian and involved Friend. I feel, however, that these identities urgently need renewal today. So I have traveled, sojourned, and worked, among pastoral and unprogrammed Friends, across Christ-centered and universalist boundaries, "back east" and "out west," searching for that renewal. Along the way, I have studied the powerful witness of the earliest Friends, but I have also been challenged and changed by insights from the newest Friends. Across these vistas of Quaker time and space, I find reasons for hope, seeds of renewed faith and practice today.

Recently, I have become interested in the seeking phenomenon itself. Over the past three years, I have studied seekers past and present, especially the English Seekers of the 1640s. These were restless ex-Puritans, or perhaps hyper-Puritans, who formed the seedbed of the earliest Quaker movement. Why were they dissatisfied with the religious options of their day? What were they looking for? What did they find in the Quaker movement? To understand the breakthrough the first Friends experienced and the social and spiritual power of the early Quaker movement we do well to look at the Seekers of that day. Seekers were creative and controversial innovators in the 1640s.

This is more than a matter of historical curiosity. I notice important parallels between their seeking and our seeking today. The key comparison is between our two historical situations. The English Seekers were a generation of young people shaken out of their inherited religion by the English Civil War of the 1640s. In those upheavals, the English national church lost credibility for them as a religious institution. Where was a spiritual authority they could trust? They left their local parishes, looking for the true church.

As many different churches grew during the Civil War, all of them claimed to be the true church. These young people moved from one church to another, finding only fleeting satisfaction. Finally, many concluded that there was no authentic church. Indeed, the variety and conflict between the churches were the most damning evidence of spiritual bankruptcy. England had become a battlefield of competing creeds, clergies, and sacramental practices.

The classic English Seeker gave up on all of these. Seeker groups began to meet without clergy, without creeds, without sacraments, speaking nothing unless moved by the Holy Spirit. That sounds pretty close to Quakerism. Yet, if these early Seekers were "convinced" of anything, it was that they had not found the answer. They did not want to offer one more product in the new religious marketplace. They were searching for something truly new and transforming. They continued to meet...
together in small groups, waiting—waiting for new apostles to come with a new revelation. Many of them concluded that only a divine intervention as great as the coming of Christ and the Pentecostal birth of the early church would deliver them from this wilderness of confusion, this captivity to false religion.

Many seekers today have been through a comparable experience, especially those of us of the Baby Boom generation, who came of age during the 1960s and early 1970s. That was a time when traditional institutions and authorities lost credibility for many. The bland, conformist religion of the '50s became odious to us, especially as we were confronted with unprecedented crises of conscience: racism, the Vietnam War, sexism, the persistence of poverty in an affluent society. At the same time, our expectations were also raised by a boom of affluence. At the same time, our age brought the violence of war and racism, as we were confronted with unprecedented crises of conscience: racism, the Vietnam War, sexism, the persistence of poverty in an affluent society. At the same time, our expectations were also raised by a boom of affluence.

So the utopian vision of the religious right is not the emergence of a new paradigm but the reconstruction of the old one. The millions who have become born-again Christians and Jews over the past 25 years are mostly Boomers seeking shelter from the corrosion of mass culture, seeking a safe, wholesome place to raise families and rebuild communities.

Well, maybe they never did catch sight of that new paradigm coming just around the corner. But we sell the religious right short if we do not recognize that they are seekers too. We may seek in different directions, in different ways, with different hopes and fears. But we do have parallel understandings that American culture is in trouble. We don't agree what the trouble is. Some say we've gone too far. Others say we haven't gone far enough.

In view of our common seeking condition, it becomes clear that the "culture wars" of the '80s and '90s, between conservatives and progressive of all types, are a continuing struggle over the meaning and legacy of the '60s. Every new battle over racial issues, women's roles, gay and lesbian rights, sex education, or militarization is another aftershock of the '60s.

I have been surprised to discover that the Seekers of England in the 1640s moved in two directions similar to what I have just described. A number of people at the time recognized two basic types of Seekers. The classic type still operated within a Protestant worldview. They hoped for the recovery of a pure New Testament faith and practice. Their agenda was the Reformation call for "primitive Christianity revived." But they saw that all the Protestant reformations had failed. Beholding

Early Friends proclaimed that a living seed, a sort of "genetic code" of truth, would not only survive; it was rising to new life, wherever earnest Seekers gathered to stand still, to "wait upon the Lord."
Saltmarsh and others felt they had already shadowed the liberal Enlightenment. These saw that England was moving toward sisse revelation, each new age, each new dispensation, this spiritual Christianity, as they called it. Isaac Penington, who later became a leading Quaker, wrote in much the same vein in his Seeker years.

These "Type B Seekers," let us say, were still strongly Christian. Yet some themes in their writings seem to fore-shadow the liberal Enlightenment. These were protoliberals. They saw themselves leaving behind the dead forms and hypocrisy of traditional Christendom, evolving into a more rarefied mysticism. They were optimists. They saw themselves as the vanguard of a new age of the Spirit. This was no point in repeating that exercise. He prophesied that God would unfold this new paradigm, this "spiritual Christianity," as they called it. Isaac Penington, who later became a leading Quaker, wrote in much the same vein in his Seeker years.

However, quite a number of Seekers of both types became Quakers, starting in 1652. The new Quaker movement answered the hopes of both groups, but in surprising ways. Friends claimed to possess the same spiritual power the prophets and apostles had. They claimed to renew both the church in its original simplicity and rational analysis and democratic politics.

During the English Civil War, both types of Seekers were filled with hope. It seemed that England was moving toward religious freedom and democratic government. But as the Commonwealth faltered and conservative reenforcement began by 1650, the same Seekers began to despair. The new apostles had not shown up for the Type A Seekers, and theescalator of progressiverevelation, each new age, each new dispensation of the Spirit, becoming brighter and clearer. They were social reformers. They envisioned the new dispensation improving the human condition through rational analysis and democratic politics.

The important thing to note is that neither type of Seeker was a happy seeker. They called themselves "Mourners after Sion," "Sion's Travellers" (as in "travail"), and other names suggesting that they were not out there following their bliss. They hoped for nothing less than the kingdom of God on earth—a private utopia would not do.

In terms of spirituality, early Friends came closer to the deep mysticism of Type B Seekers. But the Quaker sense of being a peculiar people with a prophetic mission gravitated toward the Type A position. Early Friends rejected speculations upon new dispensations, new paradigms just around the corner. Such notions kept the mind searching in the outward mode, looking here and there for the latest thing. The Light that was in each person was the same Light that had shone in every age. The point was to stand still and deal with what the Light revealed then and there.
Seekers of both varieties felt they had moved into something profoundly new when they were convinced in the power of the Light. What changed? I believe the fundamental shift from Seeker to Quaker was a shift from lateral seeking, here and there, to what Francis Howgill (a Seeker leader convinced in 1652) called the "narrow search." Stand still. Fox counseled Seekers time and again. Sarah Blackborough wrote to Seekers, exhorting them to come out of the many things and know the one necessary thing.

To summarize, then, the beautiful flower of Seeker hope faded, withered, and died by the 1650s. But early Friends proclaimed that a living seed, a sort of "genetic code" of truth behind those Seeker hopes, survived. Not only had it survived; it was rising to new life, wherever earnest Seekers gathered to stand still, to "wait upon the Lord," to feel the Light of Christ shine in their hearts. That Light broke open the hard heart, allowing God's seed to come forth, a new creation, a new kind of human being, a new way of being human.

We can recognize Seeker A and Seeker B positions among Friends today. Since the '60s, many Type A's have become neo-evangelical. Neo-evangelicalism has intensified Christian identity and has been a polarizing factor in Friends United Meeting, for example. Meanwhile, some Type B's continue to seek and work for the new paradigm through feminist spiritualities, multicultural politics, environmental action, new physics, etc.

Somewhere along the way, seeking became a steady-state proposition. Some Friends maintain that it would be a mistake to find in any definitive sense. I think the ideal of permanent seeking has evolved as a result of the failure of our liberal ideal of progress. If we can no longer be confident of human progress, we can at least pay better attention to the human process. We can perfect techniques of meditation, conflict resolution, decision-making. Let's focus on the means and the ends will take care of themselves. Ben Pink Dandelion, Quaker Studies Tutor at Woodbrooke, suggests that "process Quakerism" may represent a new, third seeking position, a Type C. When the means become the end, process is all. This is the path of permanent, happy seeking.

Process Quakerism has been a creative development among Friends. But in a technological age where processes define products, sometimes with dangerous and unexpected outcomes, it is important for us to keep our eyes fixed on some transcendent horizon, no matter how utopian and unattainable it may seem. The term "Quaker faith and practice" suggests that there is a Quaker faith content as well as a way of practicing it. Similarly, we do not have to choose between seeking and finding. Finding redirects seeking, just as continued seeking reframes past findings.

Over the years, I have been a fellow-traveler along these various trajectories of Quaker seeking. I have deepened my Christian commitment with evangelical Friends; I have broadened my horizons with liberal Friends; I have been processed with process Friends! I have learned from all and with all—but I am still not a happy seeker.

During the '90s, our different seeker quests have continued to diverge and antagonize one another. This pattern is clear in the wider culture and among Friends in particular. I believe seeking has become increasingly preoccupied with the business of "shadowboxing." We look at each other across the "great divide" of culture and of Quakerism, and we project caricatures of one another. In many cases, we project our own unexamined inner shadows, vague "boogey-man" images of fear and loathing; "those fundamentalists," "those universalists," "those feminists," "those homophobes." The longer we project shadowy caricatures of one another, the longer we refuse to engage in honest dialogue, the more we become caricatures of ourselves: laughable at best; potentially dangerous to ourselves and others.

Over time, without our noticing very clearly, seeking has floundered and deadened in the '90s. Of course, there are still significant movements and individuals making important personal breakthroughs. But when we look across the culture in general and the Quaker scene in particular, we can see a twilight, a deepening gloom, a subtle decay. We have depleted ourselves with endless lateral seeking here and there. We have opened ourselves to new light from some directions but hardened our hearts to light from some other quarters. Our seeking after is equally running from. Over time, we have withdrawn into safe, sullen enclaves of subculture. Slowly, I have recognized this pattern in myself. That has helped me see it more broadly among us as well.

We are captive peoples. Most of us are not especially oppressed. But we are captives—captivated by a system that serves most of us rather well in material terms. Enslaved by consumption, isolated from one another, fearful and suspicious, we struggle for solid footing, for a place to stand to resist the forces that daily carry us further into captivity. Seeking and running to and fro, every new place ends up more like the old places.

The Seekers of the 1650s felt an acute sense of captivity. The stories of Seekers who became Friends in those days are full of the language of captivity. They had learned from the Exodus story of liberation. It was when the children of Israel groaned in their captive misery that God heard and responded. Early Quaker conviction stories are full of the language of groaning, sighing, crying out to the Lord. Early Quaker meetings experienced waves of groaning, sighing, and trembling among the participants. Do we groan in our captivity? Or are we still in denial, happy seekers?

I do not deny that many among us have struggled and gained a degree of liberation. There have been personal liberations from oppressions based upon gender, sexual orientation, or race. There have been personal liberations from the captivities of addiction, destructive relationships, etc. These have been hard-
fought and transforming. When we sang “We Shall Overcome” in the ’60s, most of us Boomers did not realize just how hard the struggle would be or how much we would have to overcome ourselves.

In a number of ways, we have struggled out of Egypt, out of the most patent forms of American cultural captivity. We have wandered long and languished in a trackless wilderness. Rootlessness, aimlessness, loneliness, cynicism, rage: these bewildered conditions have worn many of us down. Like the alienated Israelites that left Egypt, my generation may live and die in this wilderness. But when one is lost in a wilderness, there comes a point where it does no good to continue wandering. Sometimes the only way out is to stand still, cry for help, and let ourselves be found.

Somewhere along the line, a beautiful flower has faded. For some seekers, it was the full flower of post-war U.S. religion and culture, the ’50s and early ’60s. For others, it was the opening bud of the counterculture, the “flower power” of the latter ’60s and early ’70s. In different ways, we grieve for something lost. In different ways, we blame one another for the fading of the flower. It is easy to become so obsessed with the faded flower that we do not recognize the seed that has slowly come to maturity within it.

The prophet Isaiah belonged to a demoralized Jewish community that had spent decades captive in Babylon. He writes, “A voice says, ‘Cry out!’ And I said, ‘What shall I cry?’ All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass.” (Isa. 40:6-8). That word, the living word that lodges within each of us, is like a seed. It can lie dormant for many years, in dry conditions, under hard-baked soil. But when the conditions are right, the same seed can awaken and rise with gentle yet irresistible strength. That seed of God, that deep-encoded hope lodged in the human heart, still lies within the faded flower of our youthful hopes and dreams.

That promise, that seed, stands forever. I know, because it is still alive in me, in spite of everything! Yes, the flower has faded—I’ve gone bald, I’m getting gray, and I’ve slowed down a bit. Yes, the grass withers—I’ve seen many cherished dreams die. Dreams for my own life, dreams for the world, dreams for the Religious Society of Friends—come and gone. I know that many of those dreams were naive, wishful, but the deep truth that encoded those dreams in me still lives. In fact, that seed has been slowly maturing in us through these long years of hope and disappointment. The time has come for it to rise.

For the seed to rise in this generation, I believe it must re-engage our diverging paths of seeking. By themselves, our conflicting agendas will never move beyond captivity and bewilderment. Observe how in nature, every seed or egg combines two different strands of genetic code. The strands combine and intertwine in a double helix of oppositions that encode new life out of the old. Over the course of most generations, the new life will simply reproduce the old, with minor variations. But at times, new combinations produce startling new varieties. I believe we are living in such times, like those that produced Quakerism.

In his day, Isaac Penington was a world-class Seeker. His powerful intellect had roammed far and wide in the 1640s and ’50s. Yet his many insights only led him further into twilight. Despite many brilliant departures, he had not arrived. When he finally broke through as a Quaker, he experienced God’s presence within as a seed. He writes, “some razy 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.” He urges Seekers: “sink down to the seed which God sows in the heart, and let that grow in thee, and be in thee, and breathe in thee, and act in thee.” Sinking down to the seed amounts to...
what George Fox called standing still in
the Light. Both Fox and Penington used
seed and light metaphors extensively. We
all have some experience of what they call
seed and light. We all have some experi­
ence of sinking down, of standing still. I
have found that reading and listening
deeply to their spiritual counsel helps me
be more faithful in my walk with God.
Other spiritual teachers and traditions can
help us, but we also do well to listen more
closely to the depth of our own tradition.
The special challenge for us as seekers
today is not merely to stand still in our
safe cultural enclaves. The challenge is to
stand still for one another, stand still next
to that "other" that disturbs us. The chal­
lenge is to sink down to the unexamined
shadow that the disturbing "other" rep­
tsents: the fundamentalist or the universal­
ist, the witch or the Friends pastor. The
one we are running from is the messenger.
The message is already within us.

My past year at Woodbrooke, the
Quaker study center in Birmingham, En­
gland, was filled with many important
experiences. At the end of the term, I had
a conversation with a man from Tanza­
ia. He told me he was impressed with
what he had learned of Quakers. I
shrugged and said sheepishly that we have
some problems. But he replied that Quaker
ways had made a difference to the Re­

sponding to Conflict group, especially at
their closing session. They wanted to end
with some kind of spiritual affirmation,
but the tensions across religious bound­
aries were an obstacle. They ended up
resorting to Quaker silent worship. That
created the space for a powerful
experience none of them could
have planned. I was again
humbled to relearn a basic lesson
of Quakerism from a newcomer.
We Friends are outstanding at
creating spaces where different
groups can meet and make peace
together— you know, those
groups that "have problems." Are
we willing to step into that space
ourselves?

This is the space where seek­
ing comes to a standstill, no
longer running from what we
fear, no longer chasing after a
past golden age or a future one.
Rather, it is standing still next to
our shadow-opposite. Here the
light comes not through the self
we own, but through the shadow
we fear and loathe. This is the
place of dread, where the flesh
fries in its desperation to bolt,
where the mind loses its tena­
cious grasp, where the heart
melts, where the seed rises to freedom.
This is the end of the world, the
new creation.

I have run to and fro more
than 20 years among Friends,
sometimes running away from
one version of Quakerism as
much as running toward another.
Like many forms of seeking, it
has been a faithful errand, a cre­
ative process, up to a point. It
has also been erratic and self­
defeating at times. I am weary of
it. Slowly, I am learning to stand
still. The peace that I find and
the strength that comes, con­
trary to all expectation, are sub­
line. I know that many of you
have found and are finding that
place to stand still. Can we stand
still together?

Kathleen Plunkett-Black
lives on Ostensible Farm
in Arkansaw, Wisconsin.
FOURTH IN A SERIES ON QUAKER NOBEL PRIZE WINNERS

"... the Quakers..." 1947

by Jack Sutters

The Nobel Committee of the Norwegian Parliament has awarded this year's Peace Prize to the Quakers, represented by their two great relief organizations. ..." Fifty years ago, Gunnar Jahn, chairman of the Nobel Committee, thus announced that the Nobel Peace Prize had been awarded jointly to the Friends Service Council (FSC) in London and the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) in Philadelphia. Over the years, certain mythologies, legends, and misconceptions have accumulated around the prize. This anniversary offers an appropriate occasion to mention them along with some facts regarding the award.

In his paper, "The Quaker Peace Testimony and the Nobel Peace Prize," Irwin Abrams pointed out that the Religious Society of Friends was considered for the prize as early as 1912 and again in the 1920s after the large food relief program in Germany. The work of both Quaker service bodies, carried out cooperatively in many parts of Europe—particularly Germany—had attracted much attention following World War I, as did the activities of the FSC and AFSC on behalf of those persecuted by the Nazis and in Spain during the civil war. As a result, Quakers were on a short list to receive the prize several times in the late 1930s.

Following World War II, the Nobel Committee once again raised the possibility of offering the prize to Friends, although the dilemma of what Friends entity could be awarded the prize had to be solved. While only one yearly meeting existed in Britain, there were more than 20 in the United States. The solution seemed to be a joint award to the two service bodies, which represented, and were supported by, most of these yearly meetings. Once this was worked out, the Nobel Committee asked the FSC and AFSC to provide information about their work.

Private channels indicated that Friends were likely to be awarded the prize, but British Friends were hesitant, questioning whether they could "accept nomination for a prize for work undertaken under religious concern." Friends in the United States, on the other hand, felt no such hesitation and even went so far as to ask Eleanor Roosevelt and Herbert Hoover to write to Oslo about the nomination. They were able to convince their British counterparts to overcome their reluctance, and following the announcement of the award, a representative from each service body was chosen to travel to Oslo to receive the Peace Prize.

Henry Cadbury, chairman of the AFSC Board, was selected to represent the Service Committee. Realizing that he did not possess the required formal attire in which he would be expected to appear for the presentation ceremony, Henry paid a visit to the AFSC Clothing Section—or Material Aids as it is called now. At that time, the AFSC had collected tuxedos in an effort to outfit the Budapest Symphony Orchestra, which was planning a concert in London. Having located a suit of proper dimensions, and with the appropriate attire in his luggage, Henry Cadbury proceeded to Oslo to receive the prize in the presence of King Haakon of Norway.

Henry Cadbury in the borrowed tuxedo he wore to accept the Nobel Peace Prize
Inset: The prize medal

Jack Sutters is archivist for the American Friends Service Committee.
head waiter somewhere in Europe. At the award ceremony held in Oslo on December 10, 1947, Gunnar Jahn, chairman of the Nobel Committee, made the presentation speech in which he recounted many of the important events initiated by the Religious Society of Friends or in which Friends had been involved for more than 300 years. It was obvious the prize was not being awarded for any one particular effort, but rather for the accumulated efforts of the Society since its inception and the way in which Friends carried out their concerns: "It is not the extent of their work or its practical form which is most important in assessing the services rendered by the Quakers to people whom they have met. It is rather the spirit which animates their work." This is important because one of the lingering myths is that the prize was specifically awarded for the AFSC's work among refugees—in particular Jewish refugees—prior to and during the period of World War II.

A few other misconceptions persist. One is that the AFSC was the only recipient, which tends to puzzle the British. One of the most frequent historical questions addressed to the AFSC relates to the Nobel Peace Prize. On most occasions the answer is begun by calling attention to the fact it was a joint award to the AFSC and FSC.

Another misconception concerns what was done with the AFSC's share of the Peace Prize money. In 1947, the prize was worth slightly more than $40,000, which was divided equally between the FSC and the AFSC. Clarence Pickett, who was then executive secretary of the AFSC, had made a speech at Yale University announcing that the Service Committee would use its share of the prize money to try to improve Soviet-American relations. A few days later, two representatives of a Soviet trading corporation presented themselves at the AFSC offices, indicating they had come to receive the AFSC's gift. After the initial surprise had abated, an effort was made to determine what the Service Committee could do to help the Russian people. The trade representatives mentioned that tuberculosis was a serious health threat in the Soviet Union, and it might be successfully addressed by using streptomycin, a new drug developed and available in quantity in the United States. The AFSC decided to spend $25,000 to purchase a substantial amount of streptomycin, which was sent as a gift to the Russian people. The money spent for this purchase came from a fund previously established at a time when there was hope of starting a relief project in the Ukraine. The bulk of the AFSC's Nobel Peace Prize money eventually was spent to make a film and publish Quaker proposals for peace between the Soviet Union and the United States. As a Nobel laureate, the AFSC is entitled to make nominations each year to the Nobel Peace Committee. It is interesting to note that on three occasions the Peace Prize has been awarded to those whom the AFSC nominated: John Boyd Orr, chairman of the British National Peace Council; Dag Hammarskjöld, second secretary general of the United Nations; and Martin Luther King Jr., civil rights activist.

Still in the possession of the AFSC is the elaborate leather box that contained the award scroll; the scroll itself, which has been framed; and the gold medallion, which resides most of the time in a bank vault.

At the end of Gunnar Jahn's award speech, he quoted some lines of a poem of Arnulf Overland. It seems fitting to end these historical highlights of the Nobel Peace Prize award by repeating those lines: The unarmed only has inexhaustible sources. Only the spirit can win.

Still at Work

Using the 50th anniversary of Friends receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, more than 60 Friends' and other schools in the United States and England, numerous monthly meetings, and a few other community groups and individuals are participating in Peacemaking As A Way Of Life, a project led by the head of the Moses Brown School in Providence, R.I., the Friends Council on Education, and the AFSC. The focus of the project is to nurture in students the concept that everyone can be a peacemaker. For more information, contact Karen Cromley, AFSC, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102, telephone (215) 241-7057, e-mail kcromley@afsc.org.
While there are relatively few congenitally deaf Friends, acquired hearing loss among Friends, as in the general population, is quite prevalent. This is especially true among older Friends who have lost some or all of their ability to hear. Friends who once could move to speak in meeting for worship or who were able to converse, convene meetings, and assist with First-day school, now find that their inability to hear isolates them from the activities they once enjoyed. There are, however, many things that hearing Friends can do to assist those who cannot hear well. I hope the following suggestions will prove helpful in recognizing and dealing with these unique and often challenging needs.

For Large Group Sessions of More than a Dozen

1. When preparing registration materials, provide space to clarify if anyone has special needs. Provide a checklist of examples so those with hearing loss realize what accommodations are available. Communicate with Friends with hearing loss in writing to be sure that details as to both their needs and the provisions you are able to make are understood.

2. Provide a group FM system and a microphone for the main speaker(s) or performer(s). If you are unsure as to how to locate information about such equipment, contact your state department of education; speech, audiology, or special education department in a college or university; or a school or private audiologist. This equipment will most likely need to be rented.

3. For those who use signed communication, provide certified interpreters. Oral interpreters also might be requested. These professionals need to be hired at least one month prior to the event. If you are unsure how to locate interpreters, contact the professionals listed above.

4. Create seating arrangements that ease visual communication (e.g., semicircle, horseshoe, etc.).

5. Monitor rooms to adjust for adequate lighting and to control glare. Friends with hearing loss should have sufficient lighting to make speech reading possible. If there is a bright light (e.g., window) behind a speaker, pull shades or rearrange seating so the bright light does not create a shadow on the face of the speaker(s).

6. Provide a section in front for those with hearing loss to sit with their friends and family. These chairs should be roped or taped off or labeled “for those with hearing loss.” When individuals continue to move back and forth in front of those with hearing loss, it causes visual distraction; key words or phrases can be missed. To solve this problem, a hearing Friend (not the interpreter or person with hearing loss) should be assigned to monitor the section.

7. Provide as much graphic/visual support as possible. For example: use an overhead projector with the words to songs (as it is hard to read a handout of lyrics and look up to read speech simultaneously), an outline of a lecture, graphics that illustrate key points, a flip chart for spontaneous discussion, or other aids. Encourage speakers to point, use natural gestures, and provide a handout when they are asked to share.

8. Ask speakers to use a microphone, articulate clearly, and pause or repeat main ideas for emphasis. It is also helpful to rephrase or summarize important terms or messages.

9. Ask singers to face front, state the title of each song before they begin singing, and rehearse lyrics with the group before each song. Musicians might also consider using more bass on their instruments.

10. Ask presenters and singers to face front and keep their hair back from their faces so as not to interfere with speech reading. If female, consider wearing lipstick (to aid speech reading) even if it is not typically your style. Men who wear false hair or a wig may want to request an area of seating where it is not visible.

A member of Penn Valley (Mo.) Meeting, Barbara Luetke-Stahlman has written extensively on issues related to deafness. Two of her books include a textbook on Deaf Education and Hannie, the story of a Quaker girl with two adopted, deaf sisters.
with mustaches and beards should be aware that it is difficult to read lips that are obscured by facial hair.

11. Although some Friends might not be comfortable asking someone to take notes during meeting for worship, it is an option utilized by some meetings. You can ask Friends with hearing loss if they would like to be tapped if someone has started to speak so they can look at the speaker.

For Small Group Sessions of Less than a Dozen
1. The suggestions made above for large group sessions should be considered when appropriate for small group sessions. The convener or facilitator of the small group should be informed prior to the session that a Friend with hearing loss is in attendance and where that Friend is seated.
2. The convener should ask when participants are introduced for clarity of needs and then assist in having those needs met throughout the session. This might occur in several ways: ask every 15–30 minutes if everyone can hear, model the requested behaviors (for example, to stand while speaking), and reinforce participants who practice the requested behaviors. If a Friend is monitoring group process, the accommodation requested by the Friend with hearing loss should be included in any reported feedback.
3. The convener should ask each person making a contribution to stand before speaking so the person with hearing loss can identify the source of the message. The convener also might point to this person, making sure the eyes of the Friend with hearing loss are on that speaker before he or she begins.
4. The convener should request that people take turns speaking and not interrupt each other. Comments made as aside should be discouraged. When interruptions and informal comments are made, the Friend with hearing loss cannot keep his or her eyes on the lips of all the different people speaking. In addition, an interpreter can translate only one person’s contribution at a time.
5. The convener should ask people to stay on topic and inform the Friend with hearing loss when the topic has shifted (for example, if a Friend is speaking primarily about Pendle Hill, but Susan was just explaining Pendle Hill On the Road").

For Social Times
1. A quiet area for socializing should be provided in addition to the large group areas so Friends with hearing loss are not forced to stand amidst loud noise or leave because they don’t feel included.
2. It might be suggested to Friends with hearing loss that they stand with their back to a corner so that hearing Friends do not pass behind them, making remarks that cannot be understood without speech reading.

For Junior Gathering or First-day School
1. The suggestions made above should be considered where appropriate.
2. Interpreters should be hired who have experience working with young children. Public schools are usually a good place to locate such talent.
3. Interpreters should be asked to (and paid to) attend all team meetings and treated as members of the team.
4. Eye-level communication should be considered. Adults should stoop or kneel to talk with children and youth who are deaf or hard of hearing so these young Friends are better able to speak legibly to them.
5. Books on hearing loss, sign, and deaf culture should be read aloud to hearing children and youth during sessions together. One resource that carries many stories about deafness is the Gallaudet University Bookstore in Washington, D.C. (See Resources, below).

Resources
Your meeting or Quaker event may benefit from the information available from the following groups:
1. SHHH:
   Self Help for the Hard of Hearing
   7910 Woodmont, Suite 1200
   Bethesda, MD 20814
   (301) 557-2248 (voice)
   (301) 567-2249 (TDD)
2. Gallaudet University Bookstore
   7th and Florida NE
   Washington, DC 20002
3. Your State Department of Education—ask about services for those who are deaf or hard of hearing.
4. Your State Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
5. The National Association of the Deaf (and publishers of the Broadcaster)
   814 Thayer Ave.
   Silver Spring, MD 20910-5100
   (301) 587-1788 (voice and TDD)

The above suggestions are provided in the hope that hearing Friends might better consider and problem-solve the unique needs of Friends with hearing loss. If you would like additional assistance, please contact the author directly:
B. Luette-Stahlman, PhD
Director of Def Education
Department of Hearing and Speech
University of Kansas Medical Center
Kansas City, KS 66160.
(913) 588-5750 (voice and TDD).
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Northern Yearly Meeting

Northern Yearly Meeting gathered for our 1997 session at River Falls, Wis., June 6-9. There were 291 of us present, including an estimated 70 young Friends.

As we gathered on the banks of the Kinnicinni River, we were joy-filled by the deep connections found between new and old Friends. The weather presented the lessons we were to learn, combining sunshine and thunderstorms, both aspects of the beauty of spring.

Keynote speaker Elizabeth Watson invited us to a wider understanding of God. She challenged us to expand our vision of God to include all aspects of creation, light and dark, life and death, summer and winter. She encouraged us to see God as the universal binding force. As we worshiped, worked, and played together, we experienced this binding force of love.

As we entered into our community of love, we were able to drop the shields we maintained in the world. We seek to live without shields in order to embrace the totality of God. How we are in the world is more important than what we do. Our relationships here are the foundations for creating change.

Our theme, "Living Values, Changing Times," was carried out in a variety of workshops. Topics included: sustaining our connections with the Divine through nature, building agreement through Public Policy Consensus Councils, living sustainably, improving communication in families, demonstrating solar ovens designed by meetings or families, living our values in changing times, and exploring Quaker testimonies. Singing and dancing lifted our spirits in the late evenings. We delighted in a new practice of worship sharing in song before our final worship. A highlight for many was the Sunday evening "Bizarre Bazaar," a celebration of games and exercises led by young Friends.

There was enthusiasm for the 1998 Friends General Conference Gathering, which will be held within the region of Northern Yearly Meeting. A large committed group came together to carry on the work of preparation for this event. We looked at the facility at the University of Wisconsin at River Falls with new eyes and were pleased with what we saw. We look forward to hosting the 1998 Gathering. Because many of us are involved in planning the FGC Gathering, Northern Yearly Meeting was led to alter its regular practice of meeting in late spring and instead to hold a simplified yearly meeting session on Labor Day weekend in 1998.

We were drawn to the image of yearly meeting as a forest with large, established trees, younger saplings, perennials, and an-
nuals. Some plants have beautiful flowers and edible fruit. Others have prickles and thorns. And, there is poison ivy. We do not always see the value of the poison ivy and thorns, but as Elizabeth Watson admonished us, they belong. Every piece is important. The forest would not be what it is without all of these. As the forest is incomplete without its flowers, fruits, poison ivy, and thorns, so too would Northern Yearly Meeting be incomplete without each of us.

—Frank Wood and Mary Snyder, co-clerks

Nebraska Yearly Meeting

Nebraska Yearly Meeting of Friends met in their 90th annual session Sixth Month 5-7, at the Friends Meetinghouse in Hominy, Oklahoma. We were blessed with the warm hospitality of Hominy Friends Meeting and a taste of Osage Indian culture.

Our keynote speaker was Gerald One Feather, member of the Lakota Tribe and a staff person for the American Friends Service Committee on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. He instructed us that the heart is where the Spirit lives, and the Spirit is the way you have to walk with other people. The challenge of working together is to find who you are walking with.

Our banquet speaker was George Kamwesa of Kenya, now on the staff of World Ministries of Friends United Meeting. He reminded us that Friends need a vision that sees beyond the immediate; a big picture of God. If our God is too small, our vision is too small.

Our sessions came alive hearing from staff and representatives of Friends agencies, as well as special interests such as the Friends of Jesus. The yearly meeting approved a more formal relationship with the Wichita Friends School in Kansas, including appointments to the board of trustees. Our sessions were greatly enriched with an active children’s and youth program that is uniquely intercultural. The meetings were interspersed with epistles from around the world, worship experiences, and timely readers’ forum. We invite your participation in the dialogue.

Lake Eric Yearly Meeting

“Sampling the Powerful Roots of Quakerism” was the theme that animated Lake

Friends Journal November 1997

Scholarship Opportunities at Pendle Hill

Applications are now being accepted for 1998-1999 (due March 15)

Henry J. Cadbury Scholarship for a Quaker scholar doing research related to the Religious Society of Friends

Wilmer Young Scholarship for persons working for social justice

Vail Leadership Grants for leaders or potential leaders in the Religious Society of Friends

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For information contact:
Liz Kamphausen, extension 126
(800) 742-3150 or (610) 566-4507
fax: (610) 566-3679
e-mail: ekamphsn@aol.com
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ERIC YEARLY MEETING AS WE GATHERED AT BLUFFTON COLLEGE IN OHIO, SIXTH MONTH 12-15.

Our plenary speaker, Lloyd Lee Wilson, spoke of the taproot, not only of our individual, familial, and national stories, but of all stories—the cosmic story of the eternally-developing relationship between God and creation. All other roots may perish, but the taproot remains to sustain us. Lloyd Lee Wilson used the story of Moses’ encounter with God in the burning bush on Mt. Horeb to illustrate the ways in which God continues to deal with creation. As early Friends rediscovered, any ground can be holy ground, and God may communicate directly with anyone. God intervenes on behalf of the poor, the oppressed, and the powerless, and calls us to do the same. Our concern should not be with our own salvation, because God, not we, is the center of our story. Rather, we are called to intervene radically—to work to free the world of domination and hierarchy and to create new circles of community—to love one another without regard to an individual’s worthiness.

In worship-sharing groups, we focused on our own meetings and on writings that have inspired us—powerful roots of our faith. The Bible and the scriptures of many faiths, the writings of Friends past and present, and other spiritual texts have given direction to our lives, provided sustenance in times of sorrow and need, furnished daily inspiration, and fed and nourished meetings in their spiritual quests.

Separate programs for children and youth followed the same overall theme, blending with the adult program on the final evening in intergenerational Bible skits.

In our meetings for worship with attention to business, we were led through the exercises of committee reports, nominations, finances, and other affairs of our religious society. We rejoiced to learn that Friends School in Detroit, Mich., is operating “in the black” for the first time in memory, and we received with thanks the report of Marty Grundy and Connie McPeak’s travels in the ministry among Friends in the West and in Alaska. Our Peace Committee helped us to address issues of militarism and to begin to face the lack of racial diversity in our own meetings. Florence Kimball shared with us the work of Friends Committee on National Legislation.

This yearly meeting was an opportunity to reestablish contact with our roots in personal friendships, memories of yearly meetings past, the lives of our individual meetings, and inspired writings that sustain and nurture us. It also was an opportunity to establish anew our contact with the taproot that is always there, whether we acknowledge it or not.

—John Howell, clerk
Foulkeways at Gwynedd celebrated its 30th anniversary on Sept. 13. Foulkeways, the first Quaker-affiliated retirement community, celebrated its anniversary with a gala picnic on its 97-acre grounds. More than 1,000 people attended the picnic. Foulkeways came to be when Charles O. Beaumont left his farm to Gwynedd (Pa.) Meeting as a memorial to his late wife, May Foulke Beaumont. Gwynedd Friends planned a community in which older people could live a good life in a secure and dignified manner. Douglas A. Tweeddale, executive director of the retirement facility, said, "This anniversary holds a lot of meaning for us. Not only because we have been pioneers who helped develop and execute the revolutionary continuing care concept, but also because we have managed to keep up with the changing times and offer services appropriate to each era. There is a lot to celebrate!"

Mt. Toby (Mass.) Meeting has approved a statement on gay and lesbian concerns. Approved on July 10, the statement is intended primarily for the general public in response to a given situation and can be used by individuals or committees. The statement reads: "In response to (a given situation), Mt. Toby Meeting ... makes the following statement: From our earliest history in the 17th century, Quakers have affirmed that of God in everyone. We have experienced God speaking directly to and through all people. Sexual orientation is not a bar to hearing God's voice. We affirm that all of us have equal access to spiritual leadings and the capacity to act in faithfulness to them. However, in the larger world, gay and lesbian people face great obstacles to acting on such leadings. We of the Mt. Toby Meeting ... try to support each other in living faithfully. We pledge to continue educating ourselves on issues that affect gay and lesbian people and to actively work in society and our meeting to bring about change so that all individuals and families can openly lead lives of integrity and faithfulness."
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**Bulletin Board**

- "Wege zur Versöhnung: Ways to Reconciliation." Austrians will commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Nobel Peace Prize award to the Friends Service Council and the American Friends Service Committee with an exhibition to take place from November 24 to December 12. Organized by the Museum für Gesellschaft Wirtschaft in cooperation with Friends in Austria, the exhibition will be in the Bank für Arbeit und Wirtschaft. For more information contact Irene Schuster, Burgerstraße 45, A-4060 Leonding, Austria; phone and fax +43-732-79 75 86.

- The Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) Calendar of Yearly Meetings is now on the World Wide Web at http://cpcug.org/user/wsamuel/cym.html. This online version contains updates and changes since the printed version went to press.

- Proposals for papers on any aspect of Quaker History are invited for the 12th biennial meeting of the Conference of Quaker Historians and Archivists. The meeting will take place at Stony Run (Md.) Meeting in Baltimore, June 19–21, 1998. Send a one-page abstract to John W. Oliver, History Department, Malone College, Canton, OH 44709. Deadline is Dec. 31.

- The Interfaith Sexual Trauma Institute (ISTI) is planning a national conference for June, 1998. The theme is "After Awareness: Preventing Abuse by Creating Healthy Communities." The ISTI board invites victims, offenders, advocates, lawyers, trainers, clinicians, researchers, educators, writers, and leaders from all faith traditions to submit proposals for presentations on Clergy Misconduct and on Creating Healthy Communities of Faith. For more information or to submit a proposal, contact Roman Paur, Executive Director, Interfaith Sexual Trauma Institute, Collegeville, MN 56321; voice, (320) 363-3994; fax, (320) 363-3954; e-mail, isti@csbsju.edu; home page, http://www.osb.org/isti/.

- The Awakening the Giant Writing Awards, sponsored by the Amy Foundation, will be awarded to writers who have challenged and equipped the Christian church to disciple the nations in articles published between January 1 and December 31, 1997. For more information, write to The Amy Foundation, P.O. Box 16091, Lansing, MI 48901, or call (517) 323-6233.

- "Acting Strategically: Whites Working on Racism, Part II," to be held on Nov. 22–23, in Philadelphia, Pa., is a workshop designed to help participants develop strategies and action plans for anti-racism work in our...
selves, our families, work places, and other institutions. This workshop will be repeated January 31–February 1, 1998. For information contact Matt Guynn, Coordinator, Training for Change, 4719 Springfield Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19143-3514; voice, (215) 729-7458; fax, (215) 729-1910; e-mail, peacelearn@igc.org.

**Calendar**

**NOVEMBER**

Early November—General Conference of Friends in India. Contact: Kamala Kanswar, PO Bishrampur via Singa, District Raipur, MP 493101, India.

Early November—Mid-India Yearly Meeting. Contact: c/o Arvind Swan, G-3/114, 1100 Quarters, Bhopal, MP 462 016, India.


6–9—Friends Committee on National Legislation Annual Meeting, at the Sheraton National Hotel, Arlington, Va.

8—“Corporate Conscience and War Taxes,” sponsored by the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee (NWTRCC) in conjunction with the War Tax Concern Support Committee of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, at Moorestown (N.J.) Meeting. For information call the NWTRCC at (1 800) 269-7464.

8–9—Japan Yearly Meeting. Contact: Japan Yearly Meeting, 8-19 Mira 4-chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo 108, Japan.

10—Annual Meeting of the Friends Historical Association at Arch Street Meeting House, 4th and Arch Streets, Philadelphia. Speaker David McFadden, professor of History at Fairfield University, will speak on “Quakers in Soviet Russia: Service, Presence, or Politics?” Reservations are required for dinner. For information call (610) 896-1161 or e-mail fha@haverford.edu.

11–14—Iglesia Evangélica Nacional Amigos (Guatemala). Contact: Rodimiro Ramos, Apartado Postal No. 8, Chiquimula.


14–16—Annual Silent Retreat, Ben Lomond Quaker Center, Box 686, Ben Lomond, CA 95005, (408) 336-8333.

**DECEMBER**

25—Pemba, Tanzania, Yearly Meeting. Contact: Emmanuel Yohana, P.O. Box 100, Chake Chake, Pemba, Tanzania.

27-Jan 1, 1998—Year End Retreat, Ben Lomond Quaker Center, Box 686, Ben Lomond, CA 95005, (408) 336-8333.

Re-Membering and Re-Imagining


Most Quakers probably know little about the Re-Imagining Conference, a global theological colloquium held in Minneapolis, Minn., in November 1993. Planned and carried out by a group of mainline Protestant church women to promote the World Council of Churches’ Ecumenical Decade: Churches in Solidarity with Women, the event brought together clergy and lay people from 49 states and 27 countries to “do theological work born out of a women’s perspective.” While the conference itself was revelatory for many and upsetting to a few, it was the huge effort of conservative factions within some denominations to denounce what had occurred that gave this event much fame and notoriety among mainline Protestants. This volume is a collection of 95 articles, reflections, letters, poetry, and artwork offered by planners and participants as a candid, often worshipful look at what occurred in Minneapolis and the aftershocks that followed. This volume chronicles the worldwide growth of Christian women’s understanding of themselves as ministers of faith and speaks clearly about how that understanding has helped many go deeper in their spiritual lives.

Several aspects of Re-Imagining made it unique. From the beginning it was an attempt to have an inclusive group of people (clergy, non-clergy, men, women) create theology experientially as opposed to academically. Much of the conference took place in the context of worship. This atmosphere allowed for unusual sharing, such as a spontaneous call for lesbians, mostly closeted within the church, to make themselves known. People left with a new sense of themselves as powerful, theology-making members of a global Christian community and the human spiritual community beyond.

As Volunteers We Can Change Lives

Five years ago I was 64, newly retired and wondering what to do with the rest of my life. I like children and thought there might be a way to help more of them toward rewarding lives and away from learning problems, welfare dependencies, or jail time. As it turned out, children have changed my life, providing the enthusiasm and sense of purpose I used to get from inventing new anticancer agents as a research chemist with a pharmaceutical company. Since 1992 I’ve volunteered about 12 hours a week for remedial reading, tutoring one child at a time at a grade school and also in an after-school program at a Martin Luther King Center. I recommend it as something to do that is easy and fun. It also feels good to know that a child’s reading ability will be essential to almost everything done in school and in much of later life. As a bonus I get to know all kinds of kids and to see a lot of picture books such as Dr. Seuss and Berenstain Bear stories, fascinating things about whales, dinosaurs, and ants, and “Goosebump” mysteries.

Chad Murdock is a member of Rockland (N.Y.) Meeting.

Sometimes there is an exciting moment when I realize that a child has reached a “take-off” point, where a faltering, perhaps reluctant reader gets some feeling of fluency, fun, discovery, and power and is eager to read. One memorable evening I was leaving the King Center in the fading light and could hardly believe my eyes when I saw one of my students intently reading a book as she went down the sidewalk with her mother. When I first saw her about six months earlier she was starting first grade for the second time, couldn’t really read at all, and seemed afraid to try. Within a few weeks, however, she started to get the hang of it and progressed with a remarkable speed.

Early on I learned that it doesn’t pay to push a lot of rules about phonics. Kids get enough of that in their classes. What does get results is simply finding good stories suited to each child. Then I give encouragement, patience, honest praise, and only as much gentle help as is necessary to understand and enjoy the story, thus helping mental blocks and fears to fall away. I try to build rapport, trust, and self esteem.

The process works best with second- and third-graders. With each child I take turns reading aloud for about half an hour. The kids already know their ABC’s. After that it seems that much of the skill in reading and understanding is learned similarly to the human miracle of learning to talk: we just continue to listen, watch, and do it.

Taxpayers can’t afford school systems providing anywhere near enough one-on-one tutoring by paid staff. So volunteers can provide an especially valuable service. At my grade school I’ve been fortunate to work with an excellent remedial reading teacher who selects the most likely students for me, schedules them, has a lot of good books I can borrow, and is good at answering questions.

There are some reading volunteers in many school districts, but school authorities would like to have many more. Volunteering opportunities for as little as two hours a week are coordinated through the Retired and Senior Volunteers Program (R.S.V.P.) in local phone books or via (800) 424-8867.

Three cheers to the parents, grandparents, other relatives, and friends who have started their own to read with kids at home or volunteered at the nearest school!

—Chad Murdock
consistent with Quakerism. It is one of an inclusive, diverse religious community in which all are ministers with the power to help others come closer to God. Friends should read this book to know more about the openings occurring among mainline Christians that are leading them closer to us and can lead us all toward a more inclusive, experiential, universal faith.

—Liz Yeats

Liz Yeats is a member of Green Street (Pa.) Meeting and serves as Religious Education and Publications Coordinator for Friends General Conference.

Out of Hitler’s Reach: The Scattergood Hostel for European Refugees 1939–43


This book is a history of the four years during World War II when a total of 185 mostly urban professional European refugees (the hostel called them “guests”) came to West Branch, Iowa, to essentially change their identities to become U.S. citizens.

In the program, sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee and both Iowa Yearly Meetings, the guests learned about U.S. history and government, as well as how to drive a car—because even then, that was a survival skill in this country. They had classes and individual tutoring in English, and their children attended school in West Branch. There were weekly seminars on U.S. authors and field trips to other parts of Iowa.

City folks did farm work at Scattergood, and everyone shared the manual labor and housekeeping chores. This required some adjustment on their part; many probably had had domestic help in their previous lives.

There were birthday parties, picnics, swimming in nearby quarries, speakers from the University of Iowa, games, group sports, and group singing. They also produced plays and skits. Staff and guests shared joys and sorrows. Farewell parties were held as each individual or family left the hostel to move where a job had been found for them.

The hostel closed in March 1943, after the flow of refugees to this country came to an end. Scattergood was available for use as a hostel because it had closed as a boarding school during the Great Depression. It opened again several years later.

The program was conducted by the AFSC Philadelphia office; there was no regional office in Iowa at that time. The names of Jay Newlin and Roy Clampitt appear as volunteers or committee members at Scattergood and give me the impression that the regional office must have been started in Des Moines at least partly as a result of the Scattergood refugee program.

Michael Luick-Thrams was in Hamburg, Germany, when he had the idea of doing the research on the hostel for a PhD dissertation. Michael was a member of Ames (Iowa) Meeting while he was a high school student in Clear Lake, Iowa. He traveled to Philadelphia to do research in the AFSC archives and visited many of the children of refugee families in widely scattered places. The book contains photos from the guests, as well as...
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Risley focuses the second part of his guide on advertising, encouraging persons working in this area to make sure they know their aims and objectives. Advertising offers users the opportunity to say what they want, though a cost is attached to that privilege. Effective advertising demands understanding who your audience is, speaking in terms they understand, and choosing the right medium to reach them.

Perhaps Risley gives his most important advice in his closing summary—communicators should always plan ahead, keep their message simple, and evaluate and learn from what they’ve done.

In an increasingly mediated world, Risley’s advice to Quakers to communicate with clarity and simplicity feels amazingly fresh.

—Ron Byler

Ron Byler is a former media relations director for the American Friends Service Committee. Prior to his work with AFSC, he held various communications posts for the Mennonites.

Grassroots and Nonprofit Leadership:
A Guide for Organizations in Changing Times

It has been reported that there are over one million not-for-profit and community organizations in the United States alone, and that number is increasing. The growing influence of nonprofit organizations upon society, coupled with the need for enlightened leadership and management practices within these organizations, has challenged many of us to think about how we can better serve one another. In so doing, a deeper understanding is emerging around how we may best approach our work within nonprofit and community organizations.

Grassroots and Nonprofit Leadership is a helpful guide for the many people who are involved with nonprofit organizations, both Quaker and non-Quaker. It is a good mix of organizational theory, practical applications, and many superb insights provided by exemplary trustees, staff members, and volunteers.

Written for anyone interested in the management and leadership of nonprofit institutions, major sections of this book focus upon the underlying dynamics of social movements, the creation of organizational structures within social change groups, exemplary management approaches for team-oriented organizations, and learning to deal with both organizational and individual challenges through renewal.

While the authors offer many great ideas into the nature of strengthening nonprofits, some of the best insights emerge through the many sidebar comments from staff, trustees, volunteers, and others that are sprinkled throughout the book. Many of these voices offer keen observations on the importance of building healthier, more holistic organizations.

A closing chapter, "Pacing Yourself for the Journey," offers many good insights and helpful tips on avoiding burnout through overwork—a frequent trap for many who work within cause-oriented nonprofits. "Overwork often has the effect of reinforcing low self-esteem," comment the authors. "When we choose to work too long, we are in effect..."
telling ourselves we aren’t worthy unless we do that. We also leave family members, friends, and lovers feeling undervalued and unappreciated.”

—Larry C. Spears

Larry C. Spears is a member of FRIENDS JOURNAL’s board of managers. He is executive director of the Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership and editor of Reflections on Leadership.

Common Fire:
Lives of Commitment in a Complex World


These four Quaker authors sought out and intensively interviewed more than 100 people who had maintained, in their words, “long-term commitments to work on behalf of the common good.” They found community organizers, civil rights activists, workers in relief agencies, teachers in inner cities, and volunteers—more than 100 altogether. The object was to find out what kinds of families, schools, childhood experiences, social insights, and religious motivations produced such people and kept them active and confident in the absence of any strong general cultural support.

The resulting book—a thoroughly Quaker document—includes extensive quotations from the interviews and major narrative sections about some of the interviewees, all accompanied by thoughtful reflections on the meaning of the authors’ findings. The writing style is so graceful and uniform that it’s hard to believe that four different authors worked on this.

Not surprisingly, most of the conclusions of the study are speculative. Those 100 interviews represent unique individuals, each with their own story and personality. Finding a pattern in those stories is very like responding to a Rorschach test and depends on the mindset of the interpreter. Moreover that same mindset was at work in the choice of the subjects to be interviewed, so there are very few surprises. The book is more a celebration of the people studied than it is a certain guide to producing more people like them. I happen to applaud the authors’ conclusions, but mostly because those conclusions are so consistent with my own Quaker beliefs.

The one observation that they found most surprising was the importance to their subjects of having had the experience of working constructively in another culture: ‘‘to me a strong argument for the value of the interna-
tional program of the Friends World College in its heyday, and even for the work-study program first brought to Antioch College by Quaker engineer Arthur Morgan. (I was glad to see that the Keens are now both on the faculty at Antioch.)

Finally, while early Friends surely shaped the clear vision of the common good that the authors of this book used as their first criterion for choosing the people they interviewed, this is a book of our time.

—Paul Mangelsdorf

Paul Mangelsdorf, an emeritus physics professor at Swarthmore College, is a member of Sandwich (Mass.) Meeting, sojourning at Swarthmore (Pa.) Meeting.

None Were So Clear: Prophetic Quaker Faith and the Ministry of Lewis Benson


This book, "for seekers and for those seeking greater faithfulness," is an important book to be read by those interested in renewal among Friends, spiritual growth, and in discerning and carrying out ministry. The reader can learn of the experience of early Friends that "Christ has come to teach His people Himself" through some of the writings of Lewis Benson and those led to work with him in reclaiming the experience of early Friends in the New Foundation movement.

Benson, one of the leading George Fox scholars in modern times, was self-taught and his scholarship was informed by faith. His life was committed to bringing others to reclaim the message of George Fox, who was "calling people to have an experience of a personal encounter with Christ who is alive and who is teaching his people the righteousness of God and giving them the power to obey." Fox knew the living presence of Christ "as a revealer and enabler who teaches us what is right and gives us the power to do the right."

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- maximum 8-10 double-spaced, typewritten pages (2,500 words)
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Without Apology:
The Heroes, the Heritage
and the Hope of Liberal Quakerism


This book says almost as much about liberal Quakerism in its style and editorial choices as it does in its content. Without Apology is not simply a book about liberal Quakerism, it is one that speaks to the reader as a liberal Quaker publication. As the front cover states, it is a theological treatise with jokes. It is self-confessedly optimistic and is eclectic in its choice of topics and sources. In keeping with modern liberal Quakerism, it is not systematic in its theology but rather its charting of beliefs lies incidental to its expression of values. It is data as much as description.

On the flyleaf we read the Elias Hicks quotation, "There are two kinds of people in the world; those who divide people into two kinds, and those who don't." In a sense liberals are both kinds of people. The liberal Quaker enterprise is notoriously inclusive to the point of often failing to see how such inclusivity excludes those who find it inappropriate or distressing. To say everyone is right excludes those who don't believe that.

Such a statement, however, also has to necessarily validate its own opposition. When this is recognized, liberals typically divide the world into two.

It is in avoiding the suicidal trap of extreme liberalism that Chuck Fager's book scores most highly. Chuck is an avowed liberal, proud even—certainly believing that his branch of Quakerism has much to offer and is particularly well equipped to meet "the key issues facing vital religious movements on the brink of the millennium." Chuck, however, breaks with other modern liberal commentators in clearly defining liberal Quakerism. He breaks, too, with many liberal Friends in placing that liberal Quakerism firmly within a broadly Christian tradition. This is Chuck's personal inspiration, and he is clear that it has been true for the tradition over 350 years.

From such a well-rooted stance (and there is a particularly good section outlining the ways in which liberal Quakerism is and isn't Christian) Chuck can look in both directions with an eye open for aberrations and apostasy. This is no new role for the man who used to edit A Friendly Letter and it is one his journalistic wit and lucidity equip him for well. Passages from A Friendly Letter are rehearsed again here, linked with the broader analysis this kind of book and its readers require. There are also moving portraits of liberal-Friends-to-be-proud-of.

This book is then a celebration and an apology in its classical meaning (albeit "without apology" in its modern day sense). It articulates all that Chuck sees as good about liberal Friends and their faith, and while this is sometimes, and awkwardly, at the expense of "the other," the book ends with realism rather than romanticism. Having spent the most part of the book building up a symphony of celebration, the final notes are not ones of triumph but of caution. There is the conclusion of the victor, but over the page, "a modest postscript" in which some of the hesitations less optimistic commentators such as myself trade in are outlined. Chuck is not naive enough to see that the prophets of doom are totally off their trolleys, even if his optimism outshines what may appear as our Eyore temperaments. At the end of four pages, he can take this self-criticism no more.

"... enough is enough. Our foibles and follies do not discourage me. We still have reason enough to walk cheerfully over the earth, answering that of God in all as best we can." Those who read this book will most likely agree.

—Ben Pink Dandelion

Ben Pink Dandelion is Quaker Studies Tutor at Woodbrooke College and a member of Lewes Meeting, Britain Yearly Meeting.

November 1997 FRIENDS JOURNAL
Think a George School education is out of reach?

Last year, a loyal alumna of George School created a fund so that excellent students, regardless of their economic level, may attend George School. Four $10,000 Anderson Scholarships will be awarded each year to boarding students who embody the principles of social involvement, respect for others and a commitment to academic excellence. At least one of those scholarships must go to a Quaker student.

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The Sorrows of the Quaker Jesus: James Nayler and the Puritan Crackdown on the Free Spirit


While the author says "My own beliefs, I should state explicitly, are entirely secular; yet I am suspicious of historical scholarship that translates religious concepts into what they 'really' mean, I shall try to do justice to their original contexts."

In places, he does, and he is particularly good at ferreting out the scriptural bases for statements. Nonetheless, the book's whole perspective downgrades Quakers from "enthusiasts" (the pejorative labels used by Luther and Knox) to "antinomians"—in fact a "radical antinomianism" defined as the "replacement of an external moral law by an internal spiritual one," but which in its extreme form holds "that a saved person was liberated from moral obligations of any kind"). He does say once that "Quakers firmly repudiated" this "extreme form." He does not, however, make that obvious in the 29 other applications of the term to Quakers.

If that doesn't convince you how irrelevant Quakerism really was or is, be ready to accept 20 uses of the word "sect," ("Sectary" was a term applied in the 17th and 18th centuries especially to Protestant Nonconformists in England and occasionally applied by modern writers to "those whose zeal for their own religious body is considered excessive") or "group" without the adjective "religious." The author's comment on someone else's work that "the facts are accurate but the presentation is tendentious" could well apply to his own study.

There are lukewarm editorial comments after nearly every positive evaluation of Quaker faith and practice. If you can still credit the author with something resembling objectivity, this book may be for you. It does take a careful fresh look at James Nayler: not just his "triumphal entry" into Bristol but how he saw himself; what his role among Friends had been; and the wide range of opinion that existed in the 10-day Parliamentary "trial" that charged him with blasphemy, not only regarding the significance of the Nayler affair, but whether Parliament even could legally try him.

The Quaker community distanced itself from the Bristol events and rapidly consigned Nayler to near oblivion. Even today he is little read, although he was a competent scholar and expositor who was a major figure...
in the beginnings of London Quakerism, and to some extent he rivaled Fox as leader of the whole movement.

On the positive side, the book superbly analyzes the political context of the 1656 Parliamentary trial and gives a very clear picture of the "profoundly ambiguous terms of the entire inquiry." Nayler comes out pretty much a "saint" and "martyr" who suffered grievously and endured well the repeated lashings, the tongue boring, and red-hot-iron branding of the letter "B" for blasphemer on his forehead. The author also quoted in full "the Nayler Sonnet" incorporating his dying words, several years after the Bristol affair. These (although it is not mentioned) are in a small inspirational volume by the late Quaker economist, Kenneth Boulding.

According to the author, until Bristol, Friends were not even a religious community, but a "social egalitarianism" with a "doctrine of the free spirit," and an "ideology of absolute individualism." In their "bumbling pereginations" and "disruptive deviants" who "interrupted" church services (a distortion of their practice of waiting until, in Fox's actual words, the preacher "had done his stuff" and the floor was legally open to anyone).

The Gospel Order that Fox instituted (as a direct result of the Nayler affair, according to the author) turned the "charismatic movement into an organized sect." "In effect the Quaker leaders had developed exactly the same kind of authoritarian minsty they had originally opposed" [sic]. The unique subordination of self will to the leadership of Christ "who has come to Teach his people himself," which is still the central focus of most business procedures in both pastoral and non-pastoral meetings, is not even mentioned.

Of the positive side, again, there is a very good summary of Quaker beliefs, although it is said to include a "strong temptation to Gnostic dualism." The opposition to tithes is taken out of context and considered an "idée fixe" but is otherwise good. Nonetheless, "their movement directly challenged principles of collective order" and constituted "a drastic rejection of the whole conception of moral and social order."

—Dean Freiday

Dean Freiday, editor of Barclay’s Apology in Modern English and author of Speaking As A Friend, has been a member of the Christian and Interfaith Relations Committee of FGC since 1956.
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The Silent Revolution—A Sociological Analysis of the Theology of Quakers

By Pink Dandelion, Edwin Mellen Press, Lampeter, Wales, 1996. 417 pages. $150/
hardcover.

Liberal Quakerism, by its title and allegiance, is likely to be strongly influenced by the general intellectual climate. It appeals to the thoughtful and educated, and its greatest modern growth areas are probably college and university campuses. We live in an age exercised by diversity of all kinds, and this book represents an attempt by an academic sociologist to come to terms with the variety of faith and practice among contemporary liberal Friends. Going well beyond hearsay and personal impressions, it merits very serious consideration as a picture of liberal Friends today.

The analysis put forward rests on certain terms. The author suggests as a starting point "Quaker Orthodoxy," the summary of a yearly meeting's self-understanding that it expresses periodically when it revises its Discipline. He suggests that the use of silence, the free ministry, continuing revelation, and the Quaker business method are the main components of contemporary liberal "orthodoxy," and this conclusion seems hard to fault.

He then argues that these elements support two distinct compartments in Quaker life: the noncredal belief system, in which there are few, if any, constraints on personal belief; and the behavioral creed, the practices of liberal Quakerism that are very carefully guarded against any kind of formal change. There is a fascinating passage illustrating how the standard arguments against credal statements, while being used to justify the noncredal belief system, are pointedly ignored as Friends refuse to countenance any questioning of their conventions of worship and gospel order. Hence the term "behavioral creed," and the implicit question as to whether there is a double standard here.

From this, a theory of the dynamics of liberal Quakerism emerges. The behavioral creed is the preoccupation of office bearers in the Society, like clerks. Ministry and Counsel, monthly and yearly meetings. It is an
essentially conservative function, preserving things as they are. Within the noncredal belief system, on the other hand, we see the forces of change at work in all kinds of unofficial ways. The result is that the statement of "orthodoxy" in the periodic reviews of the Disciplines is always out-of-date, and there is a free market in religious ideas that the Society is institutionally unequipped to influence. The diversity we all know seems to be the inevitable outcome of the dynamic the author describes.

This book is closely argued and possesses a great wealth of detail. It is impossible to do justice to the complexity and incisiveness of Ben Pink Dandelion's analysis or adequately to represent his conclusions. His account of "the culture of silence," for example, is particularly important. The book is equipped with numerous helpful tables and diagrams, and Friends can do for themselves the questionnaires that form the basis of the research. It is about Britain Yearly Meeting, however, and two questions arise: is the analysis sound, and if it is, can it be used to give a satisfactory account of Friends General Conference also?

I very much hope this book will have wide circulation in spite of its inevitably high price. It is one of the few, if any, resources we have that is based in research rather than opinion or speculation. The sociological concepts and terminology are highly illuminating and should give us a framework within which to orient our discussions with one another.

I put the book down pondering whether faith and practice are as severable as we seem to have made them, and whether it is now time for some plain speaking among us. We could not do much better than to look into Ben Pink Dandelion's mirror and ask, "Is this us?"

—John Punshon

John Punshon, a British Friend sojourning in the United States, teaches Quaker Studies at Earlham School of Religion. He is a recorded minister of Indiana Yearly Meeting and author of several books on Quaker topics.
Milestones

Births
Hurley—Aidan Morgenthaler Hurley, on July 11, to Lynelle Hurley Morgenthaler and Robert Morgenthaler Hurley, of Evanston (Ill.) Meeting.
Keller—Zachary Cole Keller, on Feb. 5, to Carie S. Keller and David H. Keller 3rd. David is a member of Wrightstown (Pa.) Meeting.

Marriages/Unions
Hines-Remmse—Nicholas Remmes and Kate Hines, on July 26, at Greensboro, N.C., under the joint care of Nick’s meeting, Rich Square (N.C.), and Kate’s meeting, Columbia (S.C.).
Lescce-Collins—Roger Collins and Betsy Levee, on Aug. 9, under the care of Athens (Ga.) Meeting.
Warren-Cost—David Williams Cost and Mary Elizabeth Coolidge Warren, on July 26, in Santa Fe, N. Mex., under the care of Doylestown (Pa.) Meeting, of which Mary is a member.

Deaths
Aucoin-Unruhe—Russell Aucoin-Unruhe, 45, of melanoma, on April 2, in California. A native of Inglewood, Calif., Russell was a member of Santa Cruz ( Calif.) Meeting. He graduated from Culver City High School in 1969 and attended Santa Monica Junior College and UC Los Angeles. He started “Chim-Chimney Sweep” of the San Lorenzo Valley and helped restore many homes after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. He was a member of the Felton Business Association. Russell had a lifelong interest in promoting peace, protecting the environment, and was among the first male members of the Valley Women’s Club of the San Lorenzo Valley, which is dedicated to the health and welfare of that community. He was a member of the Sierra Club, Friends of the River, and Save the San Lorenzo River organizations. He liked helping folks in various ways and also enjoyed contacts on the Quaker Internet. Russell met his wife, Ellen Aucoin, at the home of another Friend while they worked with an anti-nuclear campaign in 1979. They were married at Ben Lomond Quaker Center in 1983 under the care of Santa Cruz Meeting. Russell is survived by his wife; and two daughters, Jennifer Burbank and Adriana Aucoin-Unruhe.
Hernandez—Jorge Hernandez, 65, on March 7, in Mexico City. Born in Santiago Ixcuintla, Nayarit, he grew up with American Friends Service Committee volunteers working on a long-term UNESCO project nearby. As a result he was sent as a volunteer to El Salvador. On his return he continued his education in Mexico City. Active in the Mexico City Friends Meeting, he was founder of the Casa de los Amigos (Friends Center). He married Corinne Joseph in 1955; the first wedding in Casa de los Amigos. In 1977 he was founder and clerk of the Latin American Committee (COAL) of the FWCC Section of the Americas. He began translating many Quaker publications into Spanish when he was Friend in Residence at Pendle Hill. His final contribution was his translation of John Woolman’s Journal, now in the process of publication. Jorge and Corinne began their married life co-directing a
shelter for street children in Mexico City with David and Skippy Pace. Later they directed the Casa de los Amigos guest house while Jorge studied for a degree in sociology at the National University. He then went to Harvard for graduate studies. On his return he became chief of staff for the governor of his native state and later regional director of the Historical and Anthropological Institute. Moving back to Mexico City, Jorge designed a bilingual program in the Department of Education for 54 different cultural groups. He died for a degree in sociology at the National Institute. Moving back to Mexico City, Jorge returned to his first love, teaching, as a professor and later the suicide of her father. Margaret fled her down to send notes of appreciation. Animals, plants, and music were always present in her education to the end college and received her MA in education from what is now Tufs University. In the 1950s Margaret moved to Pasadena, Calif. She taught at Pacific Oaks College, the Pasadena Public Schools, and for three decades in the South El Monte school district. Margaret was a teacher a few forget. Students from 40 years ago and tracked her down to send notes of appreciation. Animals, plants, and music were always present in her classroom. It was Margaret’s respect for children that her students remember most. As a tribute to her teaching, a tree will be planted in her honor at Pacific Oaks Children’s School. During the 1960s Margaret took a leave from teaching to serve in the Peace Corps as an English teacher in Tanganyika. She continued active in support of Peace Corps ideals as a board member. Two years ago her health failed, forcing her to give up her garden apartment, but the many trees and flowers she planted still thrive.

Mitchell—Seth Aaron Mitchell, 19, on April 30, in a car accident in Doylestown, Pa. Known as Ari, he was completing his senior year at Central Bucks West High School. Ari was a person who encouraged others to believe in themselves. Having faced many personal challenges himself, Ari was instrumental in giving others the courage to choose life. Ari and his siblings were active in Doylestown (Pa). Meeting and regular attendees of First-day school. Ari was a very active child, moving and thinking fast, as though he had a lifetime to fit into a short 19 years of life. Ari’s intensity and ability to embrace life found expression as he became a gifted young artist and writer. He is survived by his mother, Helen Mitchell, and siblings, Laney and Reid.

Classified

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NYC—Greenwich Village Accommodation. Walk to 15th Street Meeting. One-four people; children welcome. (Two cats in house.) Reservations: (212) 924-8650.

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Assistance Sought

Seek publisher to print my 1980 all ages worldwide bible, Coffin of Pearls. Betty Stone, telephone: (910) 595-8320.

Quaker Witness of a Growing Meeting in a Major Multicultural Southwestern City Friends Meeting of San Antonio owns the land and architect’s plans for our new meetinghouse. Charitable gifts will be gratefully accepted for this Quaker venture. Please send contributions marked “Building Fund” to Ruth Lobel, Treasurer, Friends Meeting of San Antonio, P.O. Box 6127, San Antonio, TX 78209. Information sent on request.

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Books and Publications

Beautiful Christmas Gifts by Alison Davis. A Sense Of Wonder ($7.55) has become a little classic of spirituality for any age or stage of growth. Loved by Friends, it is short, easy, sensitive and offers lively techniques for becoming centered. Beloved Children ($7.55) gives you a letter for each week of the year to help keep you centered. Both available from Pendle Hill or FSC Bookstore, 8704 Pickwick Place, Hampton, VA 23667. (804) 722-1172. Gifts will be gratefully accepted for this Quaker venture. Donations. 89-772 Hua Nui Road, Captain Cook, Hawaii 96704. (808) 326-8711, 325-7323, 222-1112.

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For Teachers and Friends Interested in Outreach: Videos (VHS) by Claire Stone, Of Lime, Stones, and Wood: Historic Quaker Meeting Houses in the New York Yearly Meeting Region. Exciting stories and beautiful pictures of three Friends’ meetinghouses. Approx. 50 min. V.H.S. $35.00.

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Friends Journal November 1997

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Consider a Costa Rican Study Tour. January 29—February 9, 1998, or February 26—March 9, 1998. Write Roy Joe or Ruth Bromley, 1162 Homebird Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93108, or call or fax (907) 354-2930.

Resident(s) wanted to share in the life of a vital 75+ member meeting. Located half an hour from the ocean and redwoods, and an hour north of San Francisco. Please address inquiries to: Resident Committee, Redwood Forest Friends Meeting, P.O. Box 1831, Santa Rosa, CA 95402.

Study Tour of Bolivia and Its Quakers April 15-May 2, 1998. An unforgettable opportunity to visit the High Andes to promote understanding between Friends in North America, the UK, and Bolivia. Approximate cost from Miami $1,025. For information contact tour leaders: Ken and Pam Barrett, 12 Reddick, Newbury, MA 01950; or travel with an anthropological focus, write Hinshaw Tours, 2696 West 160th Terrace, Stilwell, KS 66065. (913) 665-3665.

Quaker House Intentional Community seeks residents. Sharing life and meal arrangements in historic Friends meetinghouse. Community is interested in spirituality, peace, and social concerns. One- or two-year terms. Directors, Quaker House, 6613 S. Woodlawn Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637 (773) 842-1096, email: o-m@eh.com.

"Quaker Spiritual Friends for Prisoners Program" is an opportunity for an individual Friend to become a spiritual friend through writing to a prisoner with the interface of QSP. Does your ministry lie in encouraging your own and your friend's spiritual growth by corresponding? For more information about this program of Friends General Conference, contact SFPG, 1216 Arch Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107.

Mexico City Volunteer Opportunities: one-week, service-learning semester, and year-long internships; positions managing Quaker center, Casa de los Amigos, Ignacio Mariscal 132, Mexico, DF 06300; (52-5) 705-0521; amigosc@laneta.org.

Single Bookkeepers, a national group, has been untracked bookkeepers together since 1970. Please write Box 117, Gradyville, PA 19043, or call (610) 358-5048.

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FRF Journal is a Quaker journal that focuses on Quaker news, events, and opinions. Its mission is to provide a platform for Quakers to express their views and to engage in critical thinking and dialogue on issues of faith, social justice, and peace. The journal is published quarterly and is available to subscribers as well as to the general public through online and print formats. FRF Journal aims to foster a deeper understanding of Quakerism and to promote a more inclusive and diverse Quaker community.

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