In Search of Pendle Hill and George Fox
Confessions of an Undisciplined Gardener
Quaker Testimonies and the Third World
Among Friends

What Are We Willing to Buy?

A significant frustration of publishing Friends Journal is that the lead time for publication precludes our ability to comment on current events more quickly than in a few month's time. This constraint has weighed heavily during the past weeks as I have heard Friends’ anguish over the NATO bombing of Kosovo. As I write this column, the weight is heavier still because it is the first day after the first day after the mass murder of students and faculty at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. Although not timely, I hope my comments may still be worthwhile.

As I watched the news coverage of the tragedy in Colorado, I was struck by two deeply troubling realities. As a nation, we have turned even real violence into a form of entertainment. And President Clinton, while articulating the belief that “we must teach [our children] to express their anger and resolve their conflicts with words, not weapons,” is at the same time escalating a bombing campaign against Serbians precisely to achieve the goals of our country and its allies. Even the simplest school child cannot miss the stunning hypocrisy of this juxtaposition. Is it any wonder that misguided and immature kids have learned from the behavior rather than the words and resorted to horrifying violence to settle their own personal scores? Those of us who are parents have the sorry burden of holding our children accountable to higher standards of behavior than those modeled by our nation’s leaders.

Beyond the problem of hypocrisy, I was deeply disturbed by the slick news coverage of the crisis in Littleton, Colorado. Computer-generated screens with flashy display titles and logos swirled across the front of each news clip; shots of terrified, bloody students running outside replayed repeatedly; voice-overs interpreted each clip using narrator style; frightened students and local officials were asked to provide instant interviews; graphic coverage on other tragedies was inserted; and the anchor deftly switched from clip to clip very much like the anchors for large sporting events or political conventions, offering interpretation and commentary. What is the subtle message sent to our nation by this kind of coverage? Is the media really providing news coverage, or is it providing a gruesome form of entertainment? What is gained by the footage of past tragedies, today’s bloodied bodies, and instant interviews with eye witnesses? How far do these techniques go towards desensitizing all of us, turning a tragic reality into a packaged story not so very different from the thousands of videotapes ubiquitously available for rent in outlets across our nation? If children with social or emotional problems turn to horrific violence to act out their distress, who is to be held accountable in a society which not only glorifies but also consumes products that graphically depict violence in countless horrifying ways? We have only to turn on our televisions—present in nearly every home—to see regular programming, movies, or cartoons with gratuitous violence served up regularly every day.

The solutions to these problems are tremendously complex, yet it seems to me that they must begin with the simple phrase used by the anti-drug movement, “Just say NO.” If we vote with our feet, and our dollars—if the TV ratings begin to drop, and it’s no longer profitable to produce violent films and shows—then we will begin to see broad cultural change. The problems of the shooters in Littleton are symptomatic of a culture in deep moral crisis. These tragically misguided teens are not so very far removed from the messages of the mainstream. We all need to be a part of the solution. There are letters to write, campaigns to mount, anti-violent and nonviolent films and advertising to create and distribute widely, counseling and intervention services to provide. And the next time we’re in the video store choosing that night’s entertainment, perhaps we should take a moment to realize (or remind ourselves) that our choice is more than a few hours of diversion—it sends a tangible message to the marketplace about what we value, what we’re willing to buy.

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Cover photo by Terry Foss
Challenge authority while rebuilding burned churches

In response to Harold Confer’s appeal to help Quaker volunteers rebuild burned churches (FJ Dec. 1998): Here in Europe, some of us are committed to Quaker Voluntary Action [name still provisional]. I hope that in the near future some cooperation between QVA and Quaker Workcamps International may develop.

Over 600 churches burned in the space of three years is extremely alarming! If Harold Confer and others were challenged by the question, “What are you going to do about it?” and saw this as a message from God, I am prompted to ask whether those in power should be similarly challenged? President Clinton proposes to spend some $10 billion to combat the threat of terrorism from Arab/Muslim extremists around the world. What about trying to uproot “home-based” terrorism?

To volunteer to help rebuild is natural for Quakers and like-minded people, especially if done in cooperation with both victims and perpetrators. However, no volunteer work should be carried out in a vacuum, without questioning those with specific responsibilities. Decades of voluntary service experience have led me to discover a catalyst in such action that can lead to improvements in society as a whole.

Franco Perna
Embrun, France

A precious gift

It came in a plain brown envelope from Boligee, Ala., postmarked March 12, 1999. It was sent to me from the Sunday School Superintendent, Mrs. Lillian Black of Mt. Zion Baptist Church. It was from class #1, taught by Mrs. Watkins. It is a simple child-made and illustrated book of thanks from class #1 to “Dear Quaker….” Mt. Zion Baptist Church was one of the first arson-burned churches rebuilt in a ministry to burned churches by Quakers and many others who eagerly came at our invitation.

The cover is a somewhat surrealistic depiction of Mt. Zion, leaning a bit like the tower of Pisa and sprouting a surprising chimney out of which rises a cloud of smoke in which God’s message, “God Bless everyone,” is neatly printed. On the facing page, a printed card greeting is taped, but around it is handwritten, “This is Giving to you out of love. No. 1 class.”

The rest of this book consists of thank you notes from each child. Most of the pages have school pictures of the children pasted inside, sometimes their mother shares the spotlight, sometimes it is a plain letter in which the careful adult editing gently corrects the children’s English.

The closing in most of the letters says simply, “Thank you quakers,” followed by a drawn heart in which is squashed the message “God loves you all.” The heart is placed in the middle of the phrase “My love—For you.” There are different pages authored by Erica Daniels, Angela Means, Tomsnd and Wyeshia Daniels, Ciera, and Brittany. On the last page is the traced hand of a child, evoking memories of the large mural, in which hundreds of volunteers traced their hands, signed them, and sometimes penned a message, which hangs in the church today. This author is anonymous, but over the tracing is the following message:

This a Hand say
Love is so wonderful
This is a hammble of love
Think you.
Dear Quakers
I just want to say thank you—For good work—Quakers you Bring so much Happy and love to Alabama—race did not matter to you all. All work in love. I love this church.
Come and fellowship with my Sis. and Bro. What make this church so lovely.
To come and fellowship because you quakers have part in it. May lord bless you all.

This is a precious book of thanks from the children of Class No. 1 to the 850 Quakers and fellow church rebuilders that rebuilt the Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Boligee, Ala., in the summer of 1996. If by chance you are driving down from Tuscaloosa toward Meridian, Miss., on a Sunday morning, stop off the Interstate and fellowship with the people of this small rural church. They will make you feel like you have come home.

Harold B. Confer
Quaker Workcamps International

Response to the NATO bombing of Kosovo

These days I have the same gut feeling that I had in 1965. Compare:

Vietnam 1965:
1. Communist enemy that has mistreated its minorities.
2. U.S. President a notorious liar.
3. Democratic President supported by liberals.
4. War begins with massive bombing.
5. "No U.S. ground troops," but ground troops already in area, and more set to go.
6. President all but unstoppable after landslide election victory.
7. Unlimited weapons supply from USSR.

Serbia 1999:
1. Ditto
2. Ditto
3. Ditto
4. Ditto
5. Ditto
6. President all but unstoppable after great victory in impeachment case.
7. Large arms industry in Serbia.

Please pray that I am wrong.

Jeremy Matt
Ridgewood, N.J.

We are not bound by our forebears

Diane Pasta’s perceptive article “Membership: Joining a Sect or a Church?” (FJ April) is a valuable addition to the ongoing discussion of what Quakerism is, one that includes such questions as “Must a Quaker be a Christian?” and a number of other related issues. I wish to add another approach.

To me, being a Quaker means participating in Quakerism’s ongoing history, one that has many strands—among others: local to international aid, education, political action, evangelism, mysticism, contemplation. At different times, different strands are emphasized by different individuals, meetings, and the culture in which the Religious Society of Friends is embedded. What holds members of the Society together is our conscious, deliberate reference to our roots.

We are not bound by our forebears. We are rooted in them like plants that reach out of the soil to flower and bear fruit. We do not need detailed information on the beginnings of Quakerism and how it grew: we do need enough knowledge to comprehend with our hearts as well as our heads the ways in which, historically, worship and service are interdependent. Ideally, each individual exercises both functions, and certain among us do. Others of us are called to exercise primarily one of them to the neglect—although not the exclusion—of the other. So in a particular meeting, contemplatives will support the service of the activists but not engage in those activities; activists will be nourished by the contemplatives without themselves engaging in contemplation. Their interaction is necessary to the ongoing process, and it is grounded in Quaker history.

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Within Quakerism there have been, and are, the Spirit-centered and the Christ-centered, distinguishable but not separable aspects of the absolute and ultimate center, distinguishable but not separable science or kindergarten. And some to sink deeply into the mystical relationship with the Divine.

Does not include, I believe, those who deny that the body and soul of a person can be called to work locally within the Quaker meetings. Membership does not include those who deny the God in us overrides the gaps in his/her knowledge and has filled the decision mind, a decision made by the whole group to place an application on hold need not be divisive.

Once the prospective Friend has filled the gaps in his/her knowledge and has discussed the matter with the clearness committee, the individual then decides whether he/she is comfortable joining Unami Friends Meeting. Note that this is different than expecting a new member to agree with each testimony or practice. Also note that this decision must not be rushed. A second meeting of the committee or an extended waiting period may be the best for everyone concerned. It often takes time for the new information and experience to mature.

As a group of seekers, our meeting has struggled with the question of membership. We agreed that membership clearness committees are not gatekeepers whose job is to bar the unfit, but seekers whose job is to join with the prospective member in his/her search. We therefore developed the following minute to help guide the membership clearness process:

**Philosophy of Membership and Clearness**

Clearness committee has the following purpose: The assembled group, committee and prospective member together, will decide in a worshipful manner whether the best next step in the spiritual development of that prospective member is to become a full member of Unami Meeting. Membership itself is not as important as the spiritual growth of the prospective member. With this in mind, a decision made by the whole group to place an application on hold need not be divisive.

Once the prospective Friend has filled the gaps in his/her knowledge and has discussed the matter with the clearness committee, the individual then decides whether he/she is comfortable joining Unami Friends Meeting. Note that this is different than expecting a new member to agree with each testimony or practice. Also note that this decision must not be rushed. A second meeting of the committee or an extended waiting period may be the best for everyone concerned. It often takes time for the new information and experience to mature.

Irving Hollingshead
Boyertown, Pa.

A group of sincere seekers

Diane Pasta, in "Membership: Joining a Sect or a Church?" (FJ April) describes a different Religious Society of Friends than the one I belong to. I could not disagree more with her statement, "Open membership without pastors creates a Society of Friends that is not a Religious Society at all." In fact, from the very beginning Friends repudiated the "hiring ministry" (whether paid or not). This was a direct result of the fundamental Quaker belief that that of God in each person gives that person something to contribute to the religious life of the meeting. Many, if not most, Friends whose ministry has deeply moved me would deny ever having had a special mystical experience. After 70 years as a member of the Religious Society of Friends, I myself could not describe a personal mystical experience that would satisfy a judgmental clearness committee. I would be forced to join and withdraw my application for membership. Furthermore, our local meeting consists of a group of Friends who are far too humble to call themselves anything grander than "sincere seekers." I believe the Religious Society of Friends is a group of sincere seekers who give no special recognition to "charismatic leaders" as is done in many Christian churches.

Declining to become a member

The juxtaposition of two excellent articles in the April issue of FRIENDS JOURNAL brought new light to both. In "Living Our Quaker Values at Work," Janet Minshall described leaving her job in a "crisis of conscience." In "Membership: Joining a Sect or a Church?" Diane Pasta recounted a longtime attender who declined membership after his clearness committee frowned at his lack of mystical experiences. Diane then looked at membership, sects, and churches.

It seems every spiritual group has a handful of members who want to make much of their mystical experiences. Perhaps Diane's friend had the misfortune of running into some of this in his "clearness" committee—and, in a crisis of conscience, he declined to be a part of it. It seems to me, his position of declining may have been more in line with the Quaker values of integrity and simplicity than the actions of his committee members. I hope he finds what he's seeking, if not in a Quaker meeting, then elsewhere.

When Jesus and Buddha created their early spiritual groups, did they deny entry to those less holy than the founders? Or were they open to all earnest seekers?

Steve Sullivan
Boulder, Colo.

More is needed on Iraq

Cheers for the excellent letter from Mary A. Glover in the April issue of FRIENDS JOURNAL! And cheers for the headline you put on it—"What might love do?"

But why is there nothing else in this issue about the war against Iraq? U.S.-backed economic sanctions are killing thousands of Iraqi children every month, and our own military enforces those sanctions. Our tax dollars at work!

If the dying children were our own, wouldn't we expect every faith-centered publication in the world to publish protests in every issue? Wouldn't we expect photos, eyewitness news, and editorials about the immorality of a war that targets children?

I hope that future issues of FJ will include more about Iraq. I believe the war against Iraq is the most evil war our country has ever waged. It's already our second-longest war, and it's being escalated. Shouldn't FRIENDS JOURNAL urge peace now? Wouldn't that be in accord with our historic Peace Testimony? What might love do?

Marjorie Scher
Levittown, Pa.

The October 1998 issue featured two articles about visits to Iraq (breaking the sanctions). In February 1999 we reported the fine listed against Voices in the Wilderness, the faith-based organisation that sent one of the October authors. In May 1999 we included a Viewpoint reflection on President Clinton's justification for bombing Iraq issued by the Saint Louis Religious Society of Friends. FJ welcomes further submissions from Friends that reflect the response of individuals and meetings to the war against Iraq or that offer suggestions for how Friends can become involved. —Eds.

FRIENDS JOURNAL welcomes Forum contributions. Please try to be brief so we may include as many as possible. Limit letters to 300 words, Viewpoint to 1,000 words. Addresses are omitted to maintain the authors' privacy; those wishing to correspond directly with authors may send letters to FRIENDS JOURNAL to be forwarded. Authors' names are not to be used for personal or organizational solicitation. —Eds.
I am lost. I had set out to climb Pendle Hill, and now I cannot even find it. Time is running out as well. I am due back at the Bronte Parsonage on Haworth Moor in two hours to pick up my wife and daughters.

When I first heard of Pendle Hill in the northwest of England, I had assumed it to be a rolling Lancashire moor top, easily accessible by foot. I should have known better. I sought Pendle Hill because of its role in George Fox's life, and he had completed the ascent only "with much ado." As he recalled later in his Journal, "it was so very steep and high."

An hour earlier I had at least caught sight of Pendle Hill in the distance. Snow-dusted and cloud-catching, the limestone ridge soared above small villages near its base, rising out of the lesser hills like the back of an enormous whale.

"Moved of the Lord to climb it" in the spring of 1652, 28-year-old George Fox, son of a Puritan weaver and a mother "of the stock of the martyrs," looked out into northwest England. "From the top of this hill the Lord let me see in what places He had a great people to be gathered."

The vision from Pendle Hill would orient the rest of his life.

George Fox, solitary wanderer and disillusioned seeker, had paced restlessly about England, like a fast walker to a dead end. Dissatisfied with tepid answers to his fervent questions, stung by incongruous lives of preachers, he had found, he bemoaned, no one to "speak to my condition." Five years before Pendle Hill's commissioning vision, Fox's anguish with churchmen reached a climax:

I cannot declare the great misery I was in ... when all my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could tell what to do; then, O, then I heard a voice which said, "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition;" and when I heard it, my heart did leap for joy.

Empty-handed and wearied, Fox encountered Christ in a series of revelations he called "openings." Like Julian of Norwich's "shewings," these were not second-hand rumors of religion but experiences of the immediacy of divine love. Reaching the end of his rope, Fox found it attached to God.

The ecclesiastical landscape through which Fox had wandered left little room for such first-hand experiences. Many Puritan churches held "that God had spoken to man through the Scriptures and in the finished work of Christ," wrote the Quaker historian William Charles.
Brathwaite. "They believed that He would speak again in judgment at the second advent; meanwhile man ought not to look for further direct communication."

It is arid terrain familiar to travelers from any age; thirsting for living water, they are handed empty canteens. Fox sloughed off doctrines like road dust. He turned his back on pastors or, to their consternation, confronted them in midstream, indicting them for barren rhetoric. "Seeing parsons like sleepwalkers, he roused and prodded them.

I who lean toward decorum and quiet voices would have frozen at hearing George Fox rise behind me. This man means not to let us sleep.

By the time he stood atop the 1,830-foot-high Pendle Hill, Fox had exchanged a private vision of a self to be saved for a great people to be gathered. As the Quaker writer Elfrida Vipont Foulds added, "It was as if he had suddenly received a new sense of direction in his wandering life."

I do not seek my own vision (I tell myself) as I drive narrow back lanes toward Pendle Hill. I go instead lured by Fox's story and his legacy of the Religious Society of Friends. I once assumed that "Friends" derived from the Quaker hallmarks of compassion and witness for peace. But the term originates in "Friends of the Truth"—truth being found, wrote Fox, "in God's voice speaking to the soul," in an encounter with one who said "I no longer call you servants but friends." (John 15:15)

I think of three Quakers in the southwestern United States during the 1880s, welcoming a 16-year-old boy from El Salvador, a survivor of a massacre who was unable to enter legally into the U.S. They pressed on him coffee and blankets. All half-expect a constabulary knock at the door, handcuffs for the refugee. Years did not separate them from early Quakers. I watched their quiet attentiveness, their obliviousness to the risk (born of their faith or their history—or both). In the refugee's eyes I detected a hint of repose: he knew he had landed among friends.

The Quaker movement may have been founded at Pendle Hill, but now Pendle Hill cannot be found by me. A curving road of hedges has led me down past farms into jangling Lancashire towns, more industrialized than they had appeared from a picturesque distance.

No signs alert drivers to Pendle Hill or the Quakers. When I asked directions from a farmer atop Haworth Moor, his only response had been, "Aye, Pendle Hill, it's the witches you'd be interested in them," referring to an alleged coven during the early 17th-century when witch-hysteria triggered the hanging of several women living near Pendle Hill. My tourist map fails to distinguish between major and minor roads, and I have forgotten the name of the village nestled at the base of Pendle Hill that would offer easy footpaths leading to the summit. (It is "Barley," I learn much later, along with the name of the indispensable guidebook: The Birthplace of Quakerism: A Handbook for the 1652 Country, by Elfrida Vipont Foulds.)

Thirty minutes of frenetic driving brings me only to a town somewhere northwest of Pendle Hill. I stop to ask directions. No one knows. Finally, a large, bright-eyed woman in her 60s nods when I mention the name. Shifting her shopping bag, she beams a broad smile and begins talking, rapidly giving me apparently precise instructions, but in a Yorkshire accent so thick as to be like Gaelic to me. I thank her, she smiles and moves on, and I point my car toward the nearest incline.

Fox once wrote reassuringly, "I saw also that there was an ocean of darkness and death, but an infinite ocean of light and love which flowed over the ocean of darkness. And in that also I saw the infinite love of God; and I had great openings."

Temptation being what it is, Fox might have begun with the experience of divine love only to disappear into the mists of quietism, like some ancient seeker of the Holy Grail inclined to "follow wandering fires, lost in the quagmire," as one chronicler of the Grail Legend observed, "and leaving human wrongs to right themselves, cares but to pass into the silent life." But as Fox and other Quakers made clear, transcendent visions are not the goal. "Let us be quite clear that mystical exaltations are not essential to religious dedication," wrote the 20th-century Quaker Thomas Kelly. "The crux of religious living lies in the will, not in transient and variable states. Utter dedication of will to God is open to all ... Where the will to will God's will is present, there is a child of God."

Fox's vision from Pendle Hill proved less private theophany than prophetic call. His legacy meant cells visited, hospitals cleansed, hungry fed, slaves freed, and wars spurned. The view from Pendle Hill linked heaven and earth.

From my readings of Quakerism over the years (readings that skimped on roadmaps), one line in particular, familiar to every Quaker, resounds from George Fox. He wrote it from jail, his prison letter, in the tradition of St. Paul and Martin Luther King, Jr., far outlasting his prison bars.

"Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one."

Whether we meet strangers, adversaries, or friends, we are to discern the "Light of Christ" within them. As Jessamy West noted, "The truth Fox worked to bring to others was the possibility of a oneness with Christ, and those who experience this 'oneness' would demonstrate it by growing 'loving.'" Such recognition, undermining our penchant for scorn and contempt, runs far deeper than mere mutual respect or humanist creed, and perhaps has been practiced with the surest touch in our time by Mother Teresa.

"To answer that of God in every one," becomes a charge to the hearers, a benediction, and finally, one hopes, a way of life.

I follow a slender road leading upward, in the general direction of Pendle Hill. A sign promising a "View" reveals moments later only a mobile home park, commanding an airy perspective indeed but without giving a hint of Pendle Hill. As I drive fretfully on, suddenly my luck changes. Around a corner a country inn appears, and beside it a sign declaring "Footpath." I park the car and enter the
inn, encountering a genial pubkeeper and his wife. Though dubious about my spying Pendle Hill from the moor top above, they assure me of a splendid view of Yorkshire's dales, and—pointing to a table by a wood fire—hot soup and a sandwich on my return.

I quickly set off up the hill on an ancient stone footpath ("part of an old Roman road," explained the innkeeper), delighted to be out of the car, walking briskly up the high sloping pasture as air and sunshine pour over me.

Knowing time is short, calculating the hour of rendezvous with my wife and daughters, I occasionally break into a run up the hill. I pass dry-stone walls that enclose farmers' cottages and sheep-grazing lands, then open fields of heather with pools of clear water in the grass. Voices of other hillwalkers echo over the distance, along with the low churning of a tractor. Climbing higher, beyond the walls, I reach what turns out to be a false summit, with a higher rise of moorland yet beyond that. Pendle Hill remains hidden.

I stop and turn around, breathing heavily. In the clear noon sky, I can see 40 miles into Yorkshire and Lancashire. Green and yellow fields spread with sun run toward the Irish Sea. The disappointment I feel for missing Pendle Hill begins to be eclipsed by the realization that I am looking out on nearly the same view Fox did, the same dales, moor, and sun-stoked land. For the first time in hours, I stop moving and stand quietly as the wind rolls lightly over me.

Fox looked over this same scene from his loftier vantage and saw men and women waiting "to be gathered," to be yoked together by Christ into a people of prayer who would wait upon the Lord.

They would know persecution. "Friends," wrote one of the best known ones, William Penn, "suffered great hardships for their love and good will, being often stocked, stoned, beaten, whipped and imprisoned."

Defiant, iconoclastic, tipping his hat to no one, disturbing deconun, dismissing oaths, and rejecting taxes, Fox offended and frightened. He himself was brought before the courts 60 times in 36 years, spending a total of 6 years in different prisons for heresy, plotting against authority, attendance at prohibited meetings, as well as refusing to take oaths or carry arms.

More than 15,000 Friends faced legal sentences in the early decades; jail would imprison thousands, and death took the lives of hundreds in prison. "No cross, no crown," William Penn perceived, commemorating those who laid down lives instead of principles.

With Fox's emphasis on the inner life, with rejecting pastors, doctrines, and sacraments while seeking out this mystical union, how did he hold himself accountable—and urge others to—so that it did not become untested exaltation leading to spiritual anarchy?

For Fox, as for John Wesley nearly a century later, the answer lay in part within the community, a gathering of kindred souls, with trust that God would not let someone deep in prayer get too far away. The weekly meeting would provide the framework.

From his vantage on Pendle Hill, Fox might have glimpsed the folds of northwest England where the first meetings would be held: villages such as Sawley, Settle, and Sedbergh, and far out of sight, Ulverston's Swarthmoor Hall, home of stalwart Margaret Fell, the "mother of Quakerism" (and eventual wife of George Fox), whose manor house would provide a harbor for early Quaker meetings.

"Quakerism is peculiar in being a group mysticism," wrote Howard Brinton in Friends for 300 Years. The meetings would take place each week as Friends gathered to listen, to wait upon the Lord in the corporate stillness.

Accountability is one hallmark of a true visionary: after recognizing the inner flame, to create boundaries to check it from becoming wildfire. In the Quaker sense, to test the voices in the tincture of silence.

The Quaker movement began here. Or near here. It is probably just as well that I cannot climb Pendle Hill, cannot find the exact spot where God granted Fox a vision of a people to be gathered. Here, at a distance, I can only approach the outskirts of the story; disorientation keeps my presumption in check. Fox descended from Pendle Hill not with sudden faith—faith he had known before—but with clearer purpose that seemed validated by God.

Fox's message would be echoed in the 20th century by such spiritual descendants as Thomas Kelly (writing in A Testament of Devotion that "continuous renewed immediacy, not receding memory of the Divine touch, lies at the base of religious living") and Elton Trueblood. "We believe," Trueblood once noted with words simple in phrasing but staggering in significance, "that Christ can be known now as truly as He was known by the disciples."

It is nothing less than the essential rediscovery of each age, indeed each day.

I wait in the noon sunlight. I hear distant voices of people—an older couple walking dogs on the high moorland. I listen for a more proximate, intimate voice, but, though I am unusually attentive, there is none. I receive no commissioning vision from this hill, and I begin the descent down through bracken and heather to my car and lunch.

Fox walked down from his Lancashire hill to speak God's word, to disturb the contented, to draw people from darkness to light. He would speak of the nearness of Christ to thousands in streets, hillsides, fields, prisons, cottages, and mansions.

As I walk down, a question comes to mind from this pursuit of Fox and Pendle Hill: Am I willing to speak to even one person?

That is what I am left with in the sun of northern England. Not a commissioning but a question.
Confessions of an Undisciplined Gardener by Lee C. Neff

How often I find myself struggling with my most deeply held beliefs. Let me give you an embarrassing example: I am a Quaker, a member of the Religious Society of Friends, and Quakers believe in living a life characterized by simplicity. "It need not be cloistered and may even be a busy life," thank goodness, but it should be "unencumbered by that which is unessential."

These reminders about simplicity come from my meeting's Faith and Practice, and the "discipline" it addresses relates to how one lives a religious or spiritual life by following one's inner leadings and adhering to practices or teachings to which one is committed.

"Simplicity is best approached through a right ordering of priorities." A fine notion, in theory. And even somewhat in the practice. In the past few years I have done all sorts of resigning and delegating, all to "rightly order my priorities," to do more gardening.

And over those same few years, we have also worked to simplify the structure of our garden. Because the garden is located on the site of an old holly and fruit farm, it is almost entirely surrounded by a tall holly hedge. Some of the hedge might be feebly characterized as disciplined. We call the most unruly stretch "the dragon."

Our home is centered in the middle of the property. Lawn and garden beds circle the house and are, in turn, encircled by the hedge. The house feels "centered," another good Quaker term. It is content to be surrounded by plants and protected by holly.

When we bought the house, five years ago, it had three small doors that separated the house from the yard. They seemed most comfortable when closed. Since then, we have added double porch doors and double patio doors, which fling their arms wide, welcoming the outdoors in and making it easy to wander from damp to dry and, occasionally, from shade to sun.

It all seems simple enough, the joining of house and garden, the creation of this respite. It has even, on occasion, felt somewhat disciplined: relaying brick paths, rebuilding stone walls, removing and pruning old plantings, refurbishing the vision of dedicated gardeners. Disciplined—until I open the next plant catalog, visit a favorite nursery or friend's garden, or succumb to temptations touted at a study weekend. Then I find myself purchasing my 29th rose and 15th clematis—even feeling compelled to order every species tulip I can find. It is easy to become encumbered "by that which is unessential."

In fact, it is tempting to ignore the testimony of simplicity, just to admit that life is enticingly complex, and that there are dozens more gentians to try, and fritillaries, and salvias, penstemons, and ferns. But "... we must remember that there is one worse thing than failure to practice what we profess, and that is to water down our profession to match our practice." So I think I will continue to put my faith in the value of simplicity and to struggle in its practice. After all, I can always decide that roses number six, nine, and thirteen were poor choices, give them to more suitable gardens, and try to create a simpler, more effective garden composition with rose number twenty-nine.

Fortunately, thankfully, Quakers also believe in "continuing revelation"—that truth is not the province of one era of history, one individual, or one faith. It is continuously revealed to those who seek it and who endeavor through study, contemplation, and work to learn from their experience. If I am faithful to my vision and to practice, eventually, the way will open. If I am patient, my experience in the garden may even reveal how many species tulips I must buy. "For Friends, faith and practice are inseparable."

Lee Neff, a member of University Meeting in Seattle, Wash., is gardening and writing after abandoning a 25-year career in education.

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Friends Journal June 1999
Experience in the Third World can strengthen a person’s commitment to Quaker values and sharpen one’s insights. One person influenced by such an experience is Marc Forget, formerly head of a Quaker program in Nicaragua and now working for Canadian Friends Service Committee.

Travels through Latin America at the age of 19 led him to question how we can tolerate such misery, such a gap between rich and poor. “I had traveled to Europe during high school, and I wanted to experience something different. I wanted to see ‘how the other half lived.’

“. . . It’s a life-changing experience. Many years later, after many spiritual changes, I believe it was during meeting for worship, I saw how deeply connected we all are to each other. The water and minerals our bodies are made of have all been through countless other bodies before. The air we breathe is all shared. We are all so intimately connected. This vision influenced my approach to testimonies of equality and simplicity; the misery and pain of another is also mine. From that perspective, the inequalities we have in the world, the disparity in access to resources, food, and general well being, became more and more unacceptable.

While working in Nicaragua, Marc took high school and university students from the United States to see many things the ministry of tourism wouldn’t want any foreigners to see. Some students said the experience changed them while some were just glad they lived in the U.S. The important thing is, “Do I, as a human being, clearly see that there is no difference in worthiness between these poverty-stricken people and me?”

Marc’s connecting with Quakerism was a long time coming. My parents left the Roman Catholic Church a long time ago and had a negative attitude toward religion when I was growing up. I always believed in God and something spiritual in life. I had a couple of—I suppose I would call them mystical experiences—which were very powerful.” Something told him to seek the Quakers, about whom he knew very little, but “I thought I wanted nothing to do with anything religious.” Many months later that “something” was still urging, so he went to the library and got a book on Quaker spirituality, which has a wonderful introduction by Douglas Steere. “I thought “this is exactly what I believe, what I’ve believed for a long time,” and I realized why I was drawn in that direction. . . . Finally I went to the nearest meeting and it was like coming home. My meeting is small, which I really like, it’s very welcoming.”

We discussed the importance of both nature and meeting for worship in one’s spiritual life. Visiting Walden Pond we were reminded of Thoreau and the other transcendentalists who believed that to feel God’s presence one must be close to God’s creations, both nature and people.

“I have always spent a lot of time in the natural environment. As a child there was a forest at the end of our street, I used to go for long walks and sometimes just sit on a log to meditate in my own way. Then I worked in forestry for about ten years. It was during that time, while rock climbing in the Rocky Mountains, that I had my first mystical experience.

“I really feel that I am a part of this ecosystem we call Earth, that I’m not separate from it. Being surrounded by nature always gives me back some perspective. It brings a consciousness of what is important in life. To me corporate worship is similar to being alone in nature in that I’m connected with something much bigger than myself. Both nature and group silent worship help diminish the clutter of everyday life.

“The two experiences are complementary; spending time alone in nature is important to feeling connected and centered, but sitting down and sharing silent worship and vocal ministry with a group is also very important. It is a form of community building. I know some people in my meeting better than I would know them without meeting, there is a level of knowledge there that is not really conscious. It’s deeper than what comes out of social contact alone, especially when something is shared which ‘speaks to one’s condition,’ as often is the case if one is open and centered.”

Marc’s strengthened spiritual life at the time he started attending meeting led to a big turning point in his career. His work in forestry had been valuable. “I planted about a million trees, give or take 50,000.” After years of working in the cold and rain, a few injuries, and the onset of arthritis, he completed a television and multimedia program in a technical college. “After working a few years as a producer I wound up in broadcast advertising and quickly realized that this career was not for me. At that time [he laughs] I had no idea what I wanted to do when I grew up, but it seemed that I was growing up and I had to decide what I wanted to do. I knew it had to be something positive, constructive, but I was really stumped as to what it was. At that time I felt led to a service experience in the Third World. That seemed to fit in; it would help me decide where I wanted to be on the spectrum between advertising executive and volunteer in the Third World. This is a point where my inner and outer lives came together, and I ended up going to Nicaragua as a volunteer where I subsequently became coordinator of Southeastern Yearly Meeting’s Pro-Nica project. I was there over a year-and-a-half.

“Nicaragua was a huge education in so
we have up here .... The Canadian Cen­
tre for International Cooperation states that we could adequately feed everyone in the world for seven percent of world military expenditure. How much do we spend on pet food in the United States?

"Dogs are scavengers in their natural habitat; they do very well on kitchen scraps, very few people bought dog food 30 years ago. Do we really need so much new tech-

ology and new machines? Every hospital doesn't need to have a magnetic resonance imaging machine. MRIs don't cure people of anything. We've now got them everywhere but can we find a doctor who really listens anymore?

"We now campaign for a stop to the cutting of the tropical rain forest in Central America. . . . Yet the United States and Canada are cutting what's left of their forests at a higher rate than any Central American country. We say there might be cures for our diseases in their forests. At the same time we want cheap raw materials and cheap beef from those newly cleared pastures. How can we talk to them about sustainable development living the way we do?"

Also very troubling is the fact that First World banks make doubtful loans that the Third World poor pay for with greatly increased suffering. Someone interviewed on public television says with a straight face that these loans must be paid back or the industrialized nations could suffer.

"There are many reasons for poverty: bad government, lack of natural resources, high population growth, etc., but how can we in the rich countries justify living the way we do? Do we really have to have so much when thousands die of starvation every day? Of course we want the debts paid; if the World Bank fails today we all have less in our own bank accounts, stock portfolios, and retirement plans tomorrow morning. When the World Bank was created in 1946 the income disparity between rich and poor countries was 10 to 1; now it's over 60 to 1. The standard of living of the rich has gone way up while the poor have stayed just as poor.

"Foreign aid alone isn't the answer. It has created enough fiascos. It can create more bureaucracy and more poverty. There are good foreign projects, usually by nongovernmental agencies. Schools and health clinics are built. Subsistence farmers grow more food. Unfortunately population growth often sets countries back in spite of these improvements.

"One small thing we can do that can change things is buying "fair traded" products, which come from Third World coun-

tries where the workers are paid a fair wage. To me that's a very good alternative. It's not a handout, and it's a direct involvement. If more and more of us make that choice things will start changing. These products cost slightly more, but this is one way we start sharing. If I buy the fair traded coffee I may drink less of it, or maybe I won't go to the movies as often.

"Quaker principles are very relevant here, but we don't think of our concept of equality on a world scale as much as we could, and when we do, it is mostly as 'rights.' Nothing is changing that will create economic equality, perhaps the most difficult type of equality to achieve. I don't think the issue is so much racism as having or not having economic privilege. As Quakers we need to look at equality and justice from a whole-world perspective. We need to look at economic justice. John Woolman certainly did."

The Quaker testimony of simplicity has enormous relevance for Marc. "It is John Woolman's approach that's most attractive to me." What does simplicity mean today? Marc said half jokingly, "Living on $100 a month, mostly on rice and beans." More seriously: "There are two aspects to simplicity. The first is reducing my needs. I can reduce my need for income so I can pursue what I really want to pursue, my personal interests. This makes me a lot happier. Most of us work eight hours a day on the installment plan, and we've forgotten why.

"The other aspect of simplicity is that for us to live this lifestyle, one half of the world has to live in poverty, and half of that in extreme poverty. This is a simple fact of mathematics—with all the known resources in the world there is enough to go around if we all live simply. Not everyone in the whole world can ever live the way we do here. Could everyone in the world drive a car or eat meat every day? It won't happen automatically, but diminishing our use of the world's resources will make it possible for others to have more. That's the first step."

How does the enforced simplicity of poverty versus the speeded-up pace of modernization affect people? This was a concern of mine; I commented that many Maryknoll people and others working with the poor in Third World countries have been very impressed with their warmth and generosity. I myself had been very distressed to find the changes in Mexico City over 30 years—the charm-

Marc Forget

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to each other. This vision
and simplicity; the
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another is also mine.
ing warmth, the genuine interest in other people, and time for people had really deteriorated there, though not yet in other parts of México or in Nicaragua. Is this what modernization does?

"Other countries don't know what they will lose by modernizing: breakdown of the family, loss of human scale, increase in violence. Everyone wants to be like the United States, overworked and overstressed. Some who dies with the most toys wins.' We run on the idea that if we have this next thing our lives will be better. How satisfying is this? We eliminate a lot of pain from our lives, we make life so easy, but what do we end up with? Life in some sort of sensory deprivation tank, more depression, more worries, and new diseases.

"A life with all our comforts and possessions is also an extremely busy life, and I think it's a very sad thing because we're so busy we don't have time to look at what's important. People in the Third World countries work very hard, but they don't have so much busyness in their lives. If they're not starving, if they can feed their families, most of the people who are poor there are really quite happy. Because they have so little they seem to put more emphasis on family and friends, sharing moments with others. When I got the Pro-Nica vehicle fixed, the mechanics always stopped and talked a while. It's important to them to have that interaction.

"I don't think we're any happier than people in Nicaragua. The level of material wealth—as long as the most basic food and shelter needs are met—seems to have little to do with the level of happiness.

"There is also an impact on spirituality from being so busy with work, work, work and spend, spend, spend. People have a more spiritual outlook with more time, and less insulation from suffering and pain. A simpler lifestyle can promote spirituality. Of course we in the rich countries can get our priorities straight and be less busy, but it's hard."

Marc feels that Quakerism has something important to say to the political polarization and self-righteousness that he has seen in both rich and poor countries. "The George Fox quote, 'Walk cheerfully over the earth, answering that of God in everyone' is so important. Everyone means everyone, especially those who disagree with us. John Woolman must have realized that you can't reach people's humanity by screaming at them and putting them down. He always approached people with respect and love, even a slave owner or the worst capitalist. There is a wonder-

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### John Woolman and Economic Globalization

In recent years there has been much talk and writing about the effects of the globalization of the economy and the resulting increase in the power of transnational corporations. In circles I have the most contact with (Friends and nonprofits/NGOs) there are two things that cause me concern in what I hear and read.

The first one is that everything is presented from a "victim" perspective, as if all of us didn't play a role, and as if most of us in the middle class had no responsibility in the way things are. The second one is that most of what I hear fosters a conflictive, confrontational approach. It's us versus them, righteous against sinners.

John Woolman, 250 years ago, wrote: "May we look upon our treasures, the furniture of our houses, and our garments, and try whether the seeds of war have nourishment in these our possessions." In his personal life Woolman applied the same thinking to slavery and poverty.

The great strength of John Woolman's personal campaign against slavery in the mid-18th century rested on two important concepts. First, Woolman made changes in his own life. He ceased writing wills and bills of sale that involved the transfer of slaves, and, more importantly he stopped purchasing items that were produced using slave labor (in his day this was not an easy task). Second, he approached slave owners in a spirit of love and respect, trying to help them find the answers in their own hearts.

Today we often point accusing fingers at CEOs and their obscene salaries as if they alone were the cause of all poverty. Are we perhaps only making them scapegoats for something in which we all share some responsibility? The ubiquitous, impersonal transnational corporation has become the New Age demon, the root of all economic evil, but was there not widespread poverty and economic injustice centuries and millennia before the advent of the transnational corporation?

Living in any of the C7 countries, can we really dissociate ourselves from the corporate world? What are these transnationals after all? They are the cheese and gasoline we buy every week, the shoes we wear, our mortgages and bank deposits, our pension plans and retirement funds. Transnationals are the long-distance calls to family, the college our children attend, the MRI our doctor wants to see. Finally, they are also the salaries we draw, whether directly from them, their subsidiaries, or suppliers. Even if we work at a university, for a foundation, or for the government, our participation in any economic activity ties us to all other integral parts of our current economic system. That includes transnational corporations, huge military expenditures, and the exploitation of millions of our fellow humans in poor countries. The economy is no exception to the web of interconnections that scientists are discovering is the foundation of all systems.

We accuse them of this and that, when in fact transnational corporations can no more make a decision than my pencil can; it is only people, individual human beings, who can make economic decisions.
ful quote from Gandhi that embodies Woolman’s approach: ‘I discovered in the early stages that pursuit of truth did not permit violence to be inflicted on one’s opponent, but that he must be weaned from error by patience and sympathy.’

“There’s always this tribal mentality—us versus them. We want to be part of a group and we want to think we’re right. Our side is perfectly right all the time. Liberals are as prone to this as anyone. Many came to Nicaragua with a need to find all the truth on one side; reality is a lot more complex. In Nicaragua I saw people accepting and making excuses for things such as nepotism and fraud within their group while they were loudly condemning ‘the other side’ for the very same things. It seems that by belonging to one group we lose much of our objectivity.’

I’d become aware of the liberal ‘party line’ on issues like fluoridation and busing in the U.S., when I became aware that the complexities of these domestic panaceas were being ignored.

“Yes, group-think discourages objectivity. In this context the consensus process used by Quakers is extremely valuable. We try to keep our minds open and to understand other positions, then revise our own position as the process evolves. To me this is a wonderful alternative to the ‘us versus them’ mentality. The Alternatives to Violence Project has exercises that also help with this ‘either-or’ problem. Some help us see other points of view by switching roles, some help us find common ground. These are good places to start from.”

Marc’s current job is part-time with the Quaker Committee on Jails and Justice, a standing committee of Canadian Friends Service Committee. He is currently working on an educational project on the alternatives to our criminal justice systems. A full-day, participatory workshop is currently being offered to monthly meetings across Canada.

He also continues to facilitate and coordinate Alternatives to Violence Project workshops and is volunteering with a local victim-offender mediation program. Marc is still involved with Pro-Nica (currently working on setting up a youth exchange between Canada and Nicaragua) and is a very active board member in a nonprofit organization that supports a vocational school for land mine survivors in Cambodia.

Listening to his story made me feel that he had often been “led” in the right direction, and I wondered if this was due in part to the discernment that nature, meeting for worship, and simple living together can give.

“Those things are definitely important in my life. Before I left Nicaragua I was offered a position with CFSC in Toronto, but I convinced them to let me work in Calgary. I wanted to go back to Calgary because that’s where my home is spiritually. My meeting is there, and there’s easy access to many wilderness areas. I have friends all over the world. To me having a
group of people I have a lot of fundamental things in common with—how I view the world, how I want to live my life—to have such a group in one place is a real luxury. I do feel that there is a community that develops from worshiping together; we all share a certain understanding of the Divine.

"I'm on the Outreach Committee in my meeting now . . . Since joining our meeting I've heard many people—in other meetings too—talk about how hard it was to find Quakers. We need to do more outreach—that's what George Fox did all the time! Today we are petrified of seeming self-promoting. Sometimes I think we take pride in being almost a 'secret society' one has to be initiated into. Some of the ideas our Outreach Committee brings to meeting for business are perceived as going too far, even though they seem pretty conservative to me. Some meeting announcements don't explain what Quakerism is. There are many people out there who think we are Shakers."

I commented that a social worker had recently said to me, "So you don't believe in marriage? But you make nice furniture," and that I feel very strongly that it isn't enough to say "Quakers are here." It isn't fair to Quakerism or to those people who might find that Quakerism meets their spiritual needs, when people don't know about Quakerism.

"I think we have a great message. Our testimonies have a lot to offer. The Mormons used to have wonderful ads, just saying 'we're here' with very positive life/love messages, talking about the most basic Christian/human values. Our message is just as valuable as that of the Mormons; it's very pertinent, especially at this time in history."

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Chiapas

If you went to those villages and lived with those people a season and came to love them as you would come to love them and they told you as they would tell you how the fields where beans and rice were grown are fallow now, fenced for hamburger cattle, you would hate it, you would change it—the way we live, the way we eat here in North America

—Kathryn Gordon

Kathryn Gordon is a member of New Paltz, N.Y. Meeting © 1997 Kathryn Gordon

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June 1999 Friends Journal
Our Testimony against RECREATIONS
by Mark S. Cary

Robert Barclay, our Quaker theologian, listed six specific activities that he considered not lawful for Quakers. Along with “making war” he listed “to use games, sports, plays, comedies, or other recreations which are inconsistent with Christian silence or gravity.”

Today, Friends might agree with Barclay that recreations like “drunkenness, whoring, riotousness, and similar offenses” are contrary to Quaker principles. But what about the use of cards or dice, sports, amusing plays, and dancing? Or to sing, fiddle, or pipe? Barclay was quite clear: “There is nothing to be seen in these except frivolity, vanity, lewdness, and obscenity. They are contrived to draw men from the fear of God and are undoubtedly calculated for the service of the devil.”

Historian Hugh Barbour noted an “uncompromising sternness” with which some early Friends held these views. One Friend, Solomon Eccles, renounced teaching music and sold his instruments, “but feeling guilty, bought them back, and burned them.” Historian Frederick Tolles noted that in the early 1700s, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting “took vigorous action to stamp out such temptations to frivolity as dancing schools and theaters.”

Things have changed. Today, we have a piano in our meetinghouse. We sing, we fiddle, and we dance.

We dearly love amusing plays. I will not argue against these recreations. But there is danger in completely dropping our testimonies against the excess of recreations, and I ask that we reconsider those testimonies. I’ve come to this conclusion slowly over the 15 years that I have worked in market research because I’ve seen how some modern recreations are precisely crafted to lead us subtly along a path to our detriment.

Three Principles
I believe there are three principles that govern much of our tendency to excess.

The first is scarcity evolution, the notion that our psyches generally want “more” because, in general, more has been better in our biological past. When released from constraint in our modern world, we tend to overshoot the mark. Food provides a useful analogy to recreation because marketers consider food a recreation, as much of what we consume is not in any sense essential to our nutrition but is for entertainment.

Our biological heritage predisposes us to a bit of fat because food was scarce on the African savanna where we evolved. Our brains developed built-in mechanisms predisposing us to eat when presented with the valuable and rare fats and sugars. In the modern world of plenty, these brain mechanisms overshoot the mark. I believe that other psychic mechanisms within us also overshoot the mark when freed from restraint and inflamed by advertisements. Like food, highly involving and “rich” entertainment is now plentiful.

The second principle is the slippery slope, the tendency to take one little step at a time and end up sliding down the hill. We may begin with something harmless in itself that leads to harm. For example, granola bars were invented as a health food. During the 1970s the market became large enough for major companies to offer them in grocery stores. Health conscious consumers bought them, often for their children. Most parents like to have their children eat healthy foods, even if they themselves won’t eat them. Marketers quickly learned that they obtained greater sales with a sweeter granola bar and even more sales with a moist and chewy granola bar.

The third principle is the supernormal stimulus, a creation that is “better than reality,” or “larger than life,” and thus quite compelling, which then plays on our emotions. Many modern entertainments have these “supernormal” elements that are more compelling than reality. Some modern foods, for example, a hot fudge sundae, are supernormal combinations of sugars, fats, and flavors that exceed anything available to our wandering ancestors. We respond with a supernormal interest to the supernormal sundae.

Entertainment

Entertainment can overshoot the mark, just as food does. In the days when we had

Mark S. Cary, a member of Swarthmore (Pa.) Meeting, delivered the original version of this article as a Pendle Hill Monday night lecture. He welcomes responses via <caryweber@worldnet.att.net>.

Friends Journal, June 1999
a town fair twice a year, a traveling circus once a year, and perhaps singing in the cathedral once a week, we could safely crave endless entertainment, just as we could safely have visions of roast duck dripping with grease. But today, entertainment comes over the airwaves as a free and endless stream.

Entertainments can evolve, just like the granola bar. I once did research for a television magazine show. People said the show was boring, so the writers gave people what they wanted and increased the interest level. Soon we had the prototypical story, called “Can-nuding down the Delaware.” Yes, indeed, nude canoeing down the Delaware River. This was mostly shots of naked people sitting in canoes artfully arranged so you couldn’t see much. More people watched the show. The ratings went up.

The networks are not “foisting” this drivel on a totally unsuspecting public; they are often reacting to the public’s stated desires. When I worked for ABC-Disney, I saw exactly how the fall lineup is created. We began by taking 30 or so test shows—pilots—and then showing them to consumers in selected areas over a cable TV system. The consumers were called the next day and interviewed about how well they liked the show and whether they would watch it again. The shows that went into the fall lineup were primarily those that everyday people wanted to watch again. There is no overt deception here, just giving people what they say they want.

But modern entertainment also creates supernormal stimuli, events that are bigger than life and more compelling than reality. TV has evolved to be as compelling as possible in terms of drawing attention away from other activities. Television fight scenes are more exciting than life; soap operas are more compelling than life; people are funnier than life. Children’s cartoons, in particular, are strangely compelling, especially to children, who seem particularly vulnerable.

Television reminds me of Barclay's comment, “What are comedies but a studied complex of idle and lying words?” For these are not representations of reality; they are representations of more than reality. I am also reminded of the advice in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting’s Faith and Practice, paraphrased from epistles from about 1700, “Keep your recreations from becoming occasions for self-intoxication and avoid those conventional amusements which debase the emotions by playing upon them.”

Some biologists have also suggested that our fascination with the rich and famous is an evolutionary “mistake,” in which our mental organs are fooled in the modern world. In a small hunting-gathering band, it makes sense to be attuned to the personal lives of the powerful persons in the band, for they can have a direct effect on our own lives.

Knowledge of gossip and personal lives can also give us power over others whom we know. In a small band, knowing who is sleeping with whom, for example, is a source of power. In a modern society, the queen of England and her offspring have no real effect on our lives, but our gossip-seeking mechanisms hone in on them as the most prominent persons on the map. Likewise, soap operas on television simulate the small hunter-gatherer group in which we were aware of the personal lives of those around us. Our interest in these soap operas is a certain kind of “mistake” our minds make.

When I watch the evening news to get the latest gossip, I find myself asking, “Is this a mental mistake?” Am I mistaking this situation for something that matters, much as I might mistake a printed postcard of the Mona Lisa for the real thing? I often answer, “Yes, this is irrelevant to my life,” and it ceases to be entertaining or compelling.

I still believe that some literature does more than entertain, that it instructs and can help us clarify our lives and can bring us closer to that which is eternal. Less and less “entertainment,” however, seems entertaining to me.

Entertainment and Materialism

Entertainment and materialism are closely related. Al Boscov, the owner of a large department store chain recently said, “Retailing is recreation... It has nothing to do with need. We don’t need a... thing. We buy things because it makes us feel good.” A professor of marketing recently wrote of the CEO of Barnes and Noble that “he was the first retailer to understand that the store is a stage and that retailing is great theater.”

In this view, consumerism is fundamentally a matter of entertainment. We are misled when we think of consumption as being about things; it’s really about experiences, about entertainment. We need food, shelter, medicine, and other basics to live. I am sure that we have a deep-seated urge to accumulate possessions, an urge that serves us well in times of scarcity. But, as with food, the urge can run away with us and we grow fat with possessions. When I see a man wearing a $3,000 watch and driving a $100,000 car, I now think, “My, how fat he is. He could fast for ten years and still be quite plump.”

Controlling Recreation

To control our own recreations, I recommend that we 1) ask for and accept God’s help, 2) review our recreations in the Light, and 3) change the environment by removing temptations and changing how our world works.

Barclay, unlike many modern Friends, does personalize evil. He writes that the devil:

... keeps men busy with things that are probably innocent in themselves, but which prevent them from beholding the true light of Christ, and hence knowing distinctly what their duty is and doing it...

Yes, he can even accompany the doctor of divinity to his study and cheerfully allow him to work among his books. He even helps him to discover and invent subtle distinctions and caviling questions. With these, his mind, and the minds of others through him, can be kept from heeding God’s light in the conscience and from waiting upon the Lord. ... Many times the only way the soul can discern this is to stand still and be silent, for then he too must stand still.
The second step is to review your recreations with God’s help. Financial planners tell us that the first step in controlling money is to know where it is being spent. Your time is like money; where do you spend it? Have you made a list of what you commonly do “for fun” and what it costs? Do you have any uneasiness or “stops” in your mind concerning various recreations or amusements? Make a list of these recreations, and then pray about each one, asking God the simple question, “Should I be doing this?”

Even Barclay felt there were some healthful recreations. Barclay felt a certain amount of liberty should be given to those who require a little “letdown in their mental activities because of the intense use in their particular occupation.” He recommended that “Friends may visit with one another. There is the reading of history, or serious conversation about present or past transactions. One can follow gardening, or use geometrical or mathematical experiments, or other things of that nature.” Traditionally, Friends have used these recreations.

You may not be able to change the world, but within limits, you can change your world and the world of the people around you. I looked at the way we arranged our house. We had left many temptations about. I moved the television to a little used room. Now, I watch less TV, especially entertainment disguised as news. The large comfortable chair in the living room has the Bible and religious books at hand. I also read less about the gossip in the business world and have stopped following the stock market on a daily basis. I do more visiting, especially of the elderly. I read more science. I am reading the Bible, because it lasts. And it does have quite entertaining stories.

I am reluctant to tell others how to spend their time, and to recommend their recreations. I am sensitive to our desire for freedom in these matters and also recall the advice in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting’s Faith and Practice, “The power of God is not used to compel us to Truth; therefore, let us renounce for ourselves the power of any person over any other and, compelling no one, seek to lead others to Truth through love. Let us teach by being teachable.” Yet I am concerned that by not opposing the more outrageous forms of entertainment we contribute to the downfall of others.

I have come to understand more clearly that life is not supposed to be fun all the time. We have both a sinful nature and a nature of the Spirit that is nurtured in Christ. We are to answer to that of God within, not that of Satan—to call it, to address it, to increase it, and to bring ourselves more fully out into the Light. Let us continue to testify against those recreations that raise up the evil instead of weakening it.
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Life in the Meeting

On Opening and Closing Meeting: Gathering the Web of the Spirit

by Dorothy Mack

At our most recent Ministry and Oversight meeting, we dispensed with important business then moved to the details of who would close meeting for the next month, like a sign-up sheet. As each of us perfunctorily took a First Day, I remembered my first Quaker meeting.

I was 18, a student at Oberlin College, trying to find a religion without preaching. A friend took me to unprogrammed worship, where we sat on chairs in a circle of silence. I enjoyed the meditative silence and the messages flowing through the silence. But I was not prepared for the closing handshake. Emerging from meditation, I saw 20 Friends shake hands on cue from God, in perfect harmony. Without a benediction, I wondered, how could anyone know that worship was over? Yet this magic happened week after week. Only after I joined the Quakers did I discover that a designated person closed meeting using clock time. How naive I felt. How sad I was to lose those spontaneous handshakes! Yet meeting still felt as if God were guiding us with God-time, after all.

Much later I learned that following the Spirit wasn't magic, but hard work. Gathered meetings don't happen by passive worshippers, they descend upon us—if we are working, if we are praying to become one mind. We have an active part in the gathering of Spirit, and the designated meeting closer can help to open and to gather the meeting as well.

Opening Meeting

Now when it's my turn to close meeting, I go early, before anyone else comes, to open the room as well. I may rearrange the chairs, turn up the thermostat, or open the curtains. The deeper process of opening the way is harder to explain. I call it bringing in the Light. Whatever it's called, a person anchored in prayer can set the tone, the ambiance for worship.

Sometimes I anchor a room with a rock in each corner. Sometimes I pray up a room by circling around, sending out light and love. Sometimes I talk to the corners, brushing away the cobwebs.

Dorothy Mack is a member of Corvallis (Oreg.) Meeting.

June 1999 FRIENDS JOURNAL
Holding or Gathering the Meeting

As people enter, I welcome them with my mind and make way for them to be included in the circle of worship. It is as if we form an invisible web, and soon we are all threaded together. Very delicately this thread can be pulled together to complete the web. It's as if I hold the meeting in my hands. Yet it is not I, but the Spirit using my physical hands in a physical room. The weaver is the Divine Weaver; I merely hold the invisible thread that connects God with the God-Within-Each-of-Us.

If someone comes in late, if someone is restless or disturbed, the web quivers, and we can each feel it; but any anchor person can steady the web. If someone sinks or drifts, the web can catch them. If someone spins a private web, the larger web can encompass it. Together we weave a design in which we each find our own meaning.

Closing Meeting

Closing a meeting is not looking at a watch, waiting for an opportune moment, and shaking the hand of the next person. It is a releasing of the web, the web of Spirit woven during those minutes or hours of worship together. In some cases, the design is apparent to all: a gathered meeting. Other times the pattern is different for each of us. Sometimes unprogrammed worship is like a hopeless snarl of yarn, and we try again another First Day.

In a gathered meeting, who has done the gathering? We have, and we've done it with the Spirit's guidance. And our closing handshake comes from the heart-clock.
Some kids earn an extra diploma at George School

Some very capable George School students can earn both a traditional diploma and an International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma.

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are like seeds planted within the members and attenders that need to be nurtured by the meetings. In the beginning, when the Society was young, Friends felt led by God to travel amongst meetings both near and far. Such attenders that need to be nurtured by the meetings are like seeds planted within the members and Friends were supported in their call by their Meetings that hosted a traveling Friend provided hospitality. With the aid of this special nurturing, the spiritual well-being of the Religious Society of Friends prospered, and the support received from each of the program committees under the FGC Central Committee. This program is the result of a three-year discernment process by the FGC Central Committee.

Friends General Conference has heard the request for more spiritual connection among its yearly and monthly meetings. In response, a new Traveling Ministries Program (overseen by a committee with representatives from each of the program committees under the FGC Central Committee) has been created. The Traveling Ministries Program, Friends General Conference can assist monthly and yearly meetings by finding seasoned Friends who can meet their needs. We know of many Friends with special gifts and skills who are willing to undertake occasional travel as volunteers to serve Friends’ meetings, and we can help meetings arrange for visits from seasoned workshop and retreat leaders. One of the purposes of the Traveling Ministries Program is to help coordinate travel by such Friends. If a meeting or worship group cannot cover all of the travel costs for a visitor, we may be able to help financially.

Friends General Conference also encourages Friends to reach out to each other and to have seasoned Friends visit and share their understandings of Quaker faith and practice. We still recognize the spiritual garden planted by early Friends, but we are not sure what to do because the garden has become overgrown.

As the years have passed, the Religious Society of Friends has felt less inclined to recognize and nurture the gifts of the Divine among its members, especially in the case of those being called to travel with a ministry. Perhaps as the physical act of traveling has become easier and quicker, meetings have felt less of a need to support their members. Perhaps a mistrust of the ministers who contributed to schisms among the Society’s meetings, now well over 100 years ago, has added to the hesitation to support those being called to travel. Perhaps the energies being directed to the many social action programs that have grown out of those early leadings have diverted our attention. Perhaps, as Friends became more involved in the wider society, the dominant culture of individualism affected us more than we realized.

For whatever reason, recognition and support of Friends called to travel in the ministry has declined. And with this decline has come a loss of spiritual identity and connection for Friends as well as for monthly and yearly meetings. Many Friends meetings are expressing feelings of being isolated and alone. Many meetings have little contact with the wider Quaker world except through the newsletters of various Friends organizations, which tend to focus on the social action aspect of Friends’ work. The lack of encouragement for those called to carry spiritual witness has convinced some Friends that our spiritual garden needs attention.

There are still Friends being called to travel with concerns, leadings, and gifts of listening ministry. Few, however, receive the support they need from their own meetings to be able to answer those promptings. Many new meetings feel a lack of seasoned Friends to help with their spiritual discernment and growth. Many old meetings struggle for survival, needing the energy and vision of the younger meetings. Monthly and yearly meetings feel a need to reestablish a spiritual connection with each other and to have seasoned Friends visit and share their understandings of Quaker faith and practice. We still recognize the spiritual garden planted by early Friends, but we are not sure what to do because the garden has become overgrown.

Friends General Conference has heard the requests for more spiritual connection among its yearly and monthly meetings. In response, a new Traveling Ministries Program (overseen by a committee with representatives from each of the program committees under the FGC Central Committee) has been created. This program is the result of a three-year discernment process by the FGC Central Committee.

I began working as the full-time coordinator of the Traveling Ministries Program in June 1998. I have traveled to several yearly meetings and Quaker events to listen to Friends’ requests, ideas, and concerns. Friends throughout FGC have affirmed the need for more spiritual connection among the yearly meetings and gatherings. They seek the assistance of seasoned Friends. Through the Traveling Ministries Program, Friends General Conference can assist monthly and yearly meetings by finding seasoned Friends who can meet their needs. We know of many Friends with special gifts and skills who are willing to undertake occasional travel as volunteers to serve Friends’ meetings, and we can help meetings arrange for visits from seasoned workshop and retreat leaders. One of the purposes of the Traveling Ministries Program is to help coordinate travel by such Friends. If a meeting or worship group cannot cover all of the travel costs for a visitor, we may be able to help financially.

Friends General Conference also encourages monthly and yearly meetings to recognize and nurture seasoned Friends in their midst who feel called to travel in a ministry. We are available to counsel meetings that want to consider and discern how they can best provide such support for Friends. We also expect to arrange occasional retreats to provide opportunities for worship, discussion, and renewal for Friends who travel to serve distant meetings.

Meetings interested in arranging for a workshop, retreat, or visit from a seasoned traveling Friend are invited to contact the Traveling Ministries Program coordinator. Seasoned Friends who wish to offer their own services as workshop and retreat leaders, as well as those with a leading to travel with a concern or ministry, are also invited to contact me. I can be reached at (515) 277-2189; 916 41st Street, Des Moines, IA 50312-2612, or e-mail at <debf@fgc.quaker.org>.

—Deborah Fisch
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Ed. by Chuck Fager

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Reports and Epistles

1998 Missouri Valley Friends Conference Epistle

Greetings to Friends everywhere:

On the weekend of October 2-4, 1998, 71 Friends (53 adult, 18 children) from isolated Quaker meetings and families in Kansas, Missouri, and Iowa gathered for their annual meeting of support and exchange at Camp Chihowa near Lawrence, Kans. Under cloudy, gray skies, the Inward Light shown bright and warm.

Missouri Valley Friends Conference is making a strong intentional effort to strengthen its relationships with American Friends Service Committee and Friends Committee on National Legislation and now is studying formal affiliation with Friends General Conference. The MVFC already sends representatives to AFSC and FCNL and this fall will have a visitor at FGC. As a body of scattered and geographically isolated Quakers who often have little or no connection to other Quakers, Missouri Valley Conference both represents its members and their problems to the wider world of Quakers, and its representatives report the work of these national groups back to local meetings and individuals.

Special guests this year were Eloise Cranke, director of AFSC Central Region, and Deborah Fisch, the new FGC Traveling Ministries staff coordinator, both of whom attended the full weekend of the conference and led focus groups on the activities of their organizations. There was a rich assortment of other workshops offered: Fellowship of Merry Christians, Isolated Quakers, report on Companions Along the Way Conference, and Being 50-Something. There was also a trip to Three Sisters Arts and Craft Fair at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kans.

We had two lively sessions with the plenary speaker, Tom Mullen, of Earlham School of Religion, who reminded us of the need for more laughter and humor in our families and meetings. He showed us how humor illuminates both situations and the way to good decisions. And we all joined with our own examples. Quoting Garrison Keilor, "The ability to laugh is an act of Grace," he showed how humor has great healing power as well as great power to hurt. For example, ethnic jokes are generally cruel and cutting, but in the ethnic community they can be unifying. The discussion was followed with worship sharing on the subject of the healing power of humor.

We adjourned with a deep feeling of refreshment and with plans for a spring meeting and the main gathering next fall.

—Loring Henderson and Scott Searles, for the MVFC Epistle Committee

Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative)

The 121st gathering of Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) was held July 29-Aug. 2, 1998, on the campus of Scattergood Friends School, near West Branch, Iowa. About 145 Friends and visitors enjoyed the shady campus during a week of moderate summer weather.

There were two important developments. First, the yearly meeting approved a minute on marriage, after having failed to find unity last year. The minute reaffirms the yearly meeting's commitment to the leadings of the Spirit within its monthly meetings; therefore, if individuals in committed relationships ask to be recognized by their monthly meeting in a ceremony of commitment or marriage, and if that monthly meeting reaches clearness under the guidance of the Spirit to take that couple under its care, the yearly meeting records the union.

The minute continues: "We affirm that the Spirit of God summons us to extend love and opportunity with equal generosity to all human beings, regardless of sexual orientation. Friends have a special responsibility to be aware of infringements of civil rights and to work to correct them . . ."

The Scattergood Friends School report contained the other important development—that the school had been granted accreditation by the Independent Schools Association of the Central States. Previously, accreditation had been through the Iowa Board of Education. We are a small yearly meeting with a large commitment to a small boarding school. Friends were delighted with the news.

The yearly meeting approved a letter to governors, majority and minority state legislative leaders, and selected newspapers in Iowa, Missouri, and Nebraska expressing concern about the dehumanizing effects of incarceration and the growth of prison populations, and recommending more use of community corrections. Panelists discussing environmental issues emphasized exponential world population growth, the continuing rise of earth’s temperature, and the importance of combining faith witness with protest. In a panel on marriage stories, two heterosexual couples and one same-gender couple enlightened and amused us with examples showing the importance of forgetting small things, learning to listen, having good communications skills and a sense of humor, and being best friends.

Yearly meeting closed with long-time clerk Bill Deutsch turning the position over to Deborah Fisch, who will carry on the tradition of “leader as servant.” A spirit of tenderness and care for one another prevailed throughout the week.

—Sherry Hutchinson and Doris Jean Newlin

June 1999 FRIENDS JOURNAL
NATO bombing of the former Yugoslavia has triggered a wide response by Quaker organizations, meetings, and individuals. Space does not permit reproducing the excellent minutes shared by Friends. We can only give a brief overview. The minute prepared by South Central Yearly Meeting in some ways represents the main thrust of most Friends' thinking in opposing the violence:

- Stop the bombing.
- Encourage renewed negotiations among parties on all sides of the conflict.
- Recognize nonviolent, long-term peace efforts inside Serbia and Kosovo.
- Work to rebuild livable conditions in the area by support for the use of peace observers.

The yearly meeting, in session April 1-4, called upon Friends to "take all available actions consistent with their peace testimonies, including: writing letters to legislators, policy makers, and local newspapers, calling radio shows, and hosting nonviolent vigils or any such additional action as events merit."

American Friends Service Committee opposes both the NATO bombing and Serbian violence. They are collecting resources to assist refugees fleeing the conflict, including "Emergency Kits for Kosovars." Kits should include:

- 6 candles (emergency/plumber's type, 4" to 8" long)
- 1 bath-size bar of soap
- 1 box of bandages (various sizes, about 50 per box)
- 1 tube triple antibiotic ointment
- 1 cotton hand towel

Kits should be packed in a clear zip-lock bag (12"x12" max.), include the donor's name and address, and be sent to AFSC, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102. A $5 donation for shipping also is appreciated.

Friends Committee on National Legislation has issued strong statements opposing the NATO bombing and ethnic cleansing. To quote from an Action Message: "We must do what we can now to minister to the suffering people, to achieve a ceasefire, and to educate ourselves as to how to encounter evil conduct without doing evil ourselves." FCNL's Washington Newsletter is available on request from FCNL, 245 Second St. NE, Washington, DC 20002-5795, (202) 547-6000. website <http://www.fcnl.org>.

Friends publisher and activist Chuck Fager has posted a "Kosovo Peace Web Page." It includes links to information and analysis about Kosovo, links to groups working to end the war, reports on what individuals and groups are doing to promote peace, and much more. Chuck writes, "I hope Friends can put our
We have excerpted a Balkan Peace Team's report from Lyn Back of Central Philadelphia (Pa.) Meeting:

BPT tries to be a positive, trustworthy, nonreactive presence. We try to mitigate rumor and suspicion by accurate reporting. We work to exchange helpful information between groups, or make connections if we see a common interest. We offer a continuing concern to all parties, which is known to all parties. Our theory is that if we create safe spaces for the human spirit to connect and be heard, we have taken away one occasion for war.

What BPT does now will have consequences in the future. The first priority is not to give way to discouragement. We know from experience that the dramatic power of nonviolence often emerges against a backdrop of war or fear and suspicion. Our work now keeps the doors open and lets people know that what they're doing matters. BPT must take responsibility to decide what we can and can't do, as circumstances change very quickly and as the needs of our contacts also change.

About rumor, suspicion and accurate reporting, the "truth" here very much depends on who is telling it... This is an important reality, the separateness of the worlds in which we travel; Belgrade to Pristina, Serbia to Albanian. We can be used and manipulated by stories and situations, and we can become the focus of rumors and suspicions, especially as an international in a country suffering under such repression and violence. We must learn to read signals in two other cultures. We must be careful of our intuition. We must not be too conspicuous. We work very unobtrusively, our presence is very low profile, and our network is extensive. There is a constant tension between the need to keep out of the limelight and our desire to extend our contacts. BPT has established a reputation among activists, and I am surprised at how many people know of us, including a taxi driver in Pancevo. He wasn't sure what we did, but he knew we had something to do with "nonviolence..."

It helped the level of our credibility that BPT stayed in the country during NATO bomb threats. It was particularly true that our absence would have been noted in Belgrade last October. For a few weeks immediately following the end of the bomb threats, we were often quite pointedly asked whether we had stayed in Belgrade or been evacuated. We heard some activists give angry reports of internationals who had evacuated, leaving the local groups feeling abandoned.

In Pristina, where the bombings would supposedly have been welcomed by much of the Albanian population, our presence was also remarked on. Whenever we were asked, we took the opportunity to say that we were opposed to the use of NATO bombs and hoped that better, more long-term solutions could be found.

In times of suspicion, fear and hatred all kinds of rumors fly around. BPT hopes that by meeting people, following their activities through the long term and providing information or advice or encouragement when it is possible, we can support the efforts already in place and encourage new ones. We find that our ability to relate to both the grassroots organizations and the large international NGOs is a great benefit to opening communication.

Young people can sway the course of history here. The last time I was in Pristina, at the beginning of February, I met with a medical student, "V", who had been involved in a hunger strike involving 5 Albanian students. He had written a report about the event and was explaining how it got started and who was involved and what he thought about the group. He offered to set up a meeting with one of the organizers. After about an hour's conversation, he suddenly asked if I wanted to meet with one of the women who had been in the strike. She told us in a flat and inexpressive voice how she had participated in the group. She had been harassed by thugs and both she and her younger brother had been threatened. But, she said she was sure that she would continue the strike again if needed. And she knew that thousands of students would join with her. I was sad for this young woman, who didn't seem aware of the high price she had paid in order to bring cooperation to the internal struggles among the Kosovar Albanians.

This story is a cause for celebration because it is another example of successful nonviolent strategy. The hunger strikers were able to achieve their goal: a promise from all major factions to talk together and present a common platform. BPT will report about this action to other students and to the outside world. We will try to make common connections that can be useful. What do others think? Is there something to be learned from this experience that Belgrade students would want to know? We are often surprised at how little one group knows about the actions of the other.

Peace comes also at a price and that price shouldn't be forgotten. I keep this young woman, with her martyred look, very much in mind. For me the work of Balkan Peace Teams is just as important as humanitarian assistance and community building; it is the work of honoring the human spirit.

[Balkan Peace Teams members left Yugoslavia when the NATO bombing began.—Eds.]
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**Bulletin Board**

**Upcoming Events**

- July 3-10—Friends General Conference Gathering, Kalamazoo, Michigan
- July 7-11—North Carolina (Conservative) Yearly Meeting
- July 13-19—Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting
- July 14-18—Friends United Meeting Triennial, Williamsburg, Virginia
- July 17-21—Evangelical Friends Church Eastern Region
- July 17-22—Evangelical Friends International, North American Region, Canton, Ohio
- July 20-25—Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
- July 22-25—Central Alaska Friends Conference
- July 24-30—Northwest Yearly Meeting
- July 26-31—New York Yearly Meeting
- July 27-30—Mid-America Yearly Meeting
- July 27-August 1—Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative)
- July 28-August 1—Illinois Yearly Meeting
- July 31-August 3—Indiana Yearly Meeting
- Late July—Embajadores Yearly Meeting, Guatemala

The Annual Calendar of Yearly Meetings 1999, which includes locations and contact information for yearly meetings and Friends gatherings, is available from Friends World Committee for Consultation, 1506 Race St., Philadelphia, PA 19102.

**Opportunities**

- The Friends General Conference Centennial Celebration Committee is soliciting written materials, photos, and artwork that celebrate and communicate the history, purpose, and services of FGC. They plan to gather these materials for a special FGC Centennial Issue of FRIENDS JOURNAL in May 2000.

  Writers, artists, and collectors of FGC memorabilia are invited to submit written anecdotes, biographies, articles, interviews, transcribed and edited oral histories, artwork, and photos. Articles should be limited to 500-2,000 words. The types of topics about FGC might include: its founding and history; demographics and affiliated monthly meetings; its influence within the Religious Society of Friends; its programs of religious education, bookstore services, and traveling ministry; and remembrances and highlights of past gatherings. Anecdotal materials of fewer than 500 words are also acceptable.

  All articles, interviews, or transcribed and edited oral histories between 500 and 2,000 words must be submitted by Sept. 1, 1999. Anecdotal materials of less than 500 words, as
well as artwork and photos, may be submitted by January 1, 2000. All materials should be mailed to Barbara Hirshkowitz, Publications Coordinator, FGC, 1216 Arch St. 2B, Philadelphia, PA 19107 or by e-mail to <barbarah@fgc-quaker.org>.

FRIENDS JOURNAL will have ultimate responsibility for selection, editing, and layout. Materials not selected for use in the May 2000 special issue may still be utilized at the FGC Centennial Celebration at the Gathering of Friends in July 2000 in Rochester, N.Y.

Suggestions and ideas are being sought for topics, writers, photos, and artwork. If you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns about this project please contact Richard Barnes, Clerk, FGC Centennial Issue Committee, 338 Plush Mill Rd., Wallingford, PA 19086, by fax (610)566-3679, or e-mail at <QUF@ot.com>.

Resources

• Want to learn more about Friendly land management, building strawbale houses, improving wildlife habitat, new developments at Quakerland Friends Community in the Texas Hill Country? Check out Quakerland’s website at <www.quakerland.org>, write to 345 Thrill Hill Rd., Ingram, TX 78025, or e-mail <friends@quakerland.org>.

• Ojai Friends Worship Group, Ojai, Calif., offers a telephone service on which you may hear a message written by a Quaker thinker of the past 350 years. The phone number (available 24 hours a day) of Quaker Dial-a-Thought is (805) 646-0939.

• A 12-page catalog of “New Peace Education Resources” is available on request from Growing Communities for Peace, 16542 Orwell Rd. North, Marine on St. Croix, MN 55047. It contains many books, tapes, and pamphlets on creative peacemaking, especially valuable for teachers, school counselors, parents, and families.

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Books

Love at the Heart of Things: A Biography of Douglas V. Steere


Love at the Heart of Things provides the first full biography of Douglas Steere (1901–1995). Steere may be familiar to readers as an author, a teacher, a scholar, and a philosopher. From the 1930s to the 1980s, he was also one of Friends’ foremost global ministers, relief workers, and ecumenical pioneers. Knowing Douglas Steere may be prerequisite to understanding what it has meant to be a Quaker in the 20th century.

Unlike many biographies, most of this book is not organized chronologically. Although the early chapters deal with his origins, family, and early adulthood, Hinson has arranged much of the material into chapters each of which emphasizes a major focus of Steere’s life: Pendle Hill, Haverford College, his wife, etc. This is a particularly effective approach and will benefit those who are interested in a particular aspect of his life.

One result of this structure is that different people are going to find that particular chapters speak to them. For myself, the material towards the end of the book on Steere’s scholarship and the development of his philosophy was an uncommon delight, and reading it in a concentrated format (rather than spread over multiple age-related chapters) was valuable.

Each chapter presents amazing detail on Steere’s accomplishments. Hinson has made good use of the journals and letters of both Douglas and Dorothy Steere in providing many of the particulars. The resulting picture is a densely colored portrait of a life seemingly spent on the run—a life of incredible busyness. While there is a completeness in this approach, it sometimes serves to hide the reality of the man behind the minutia of the details. There were times when I wished that Hinson had written more about fewer things.

Love at the Heart of Things: A Biography of Douglas V. Steere, a text that includes color as well as black-and-white photos of family and friends, is a credible and well-documented work that will appeal to Quaker historians and the many others who knew or wish they had known Steere.

When Thomas Kelly died unexpectedly in 1941, Douglas Steere wrote a 26-page “Biographical Memoir” of his friend and colleague for inclusion in A Testament of Devotion. It sketched “a life which has grasped intuitively the whole nature of things.” When I finished reading those few short pages, I felt I knew

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Thomas Kelly. Few biographies achieve such completeness and such economy. In the end, Glenn Hinson’s biography devotes 15 times as many pages to Douglas Steere without leaving as intimate a portrait. For those who have only heard of Steere or have only read any of his many writings, this book may leave them without a sense of what made the man tick—the love at the heart of things.

—Paul Buckley

Paul Buckley is a member of 57th Street Meeting in Chicago.

A Quaker Book of Wisdom: Life Lessons in Simplicity, Service, and Common Sense

This well-produced, highly readable, lunchbag-sized book by a birthright Friend and former headmaster of Sidwell Friends School in Washington, D.C., is probably the best-promoted and most accessible title about Quakerism currently available in the mainstream book market. It is too good to ignore and too flawed to recommend without serious reservations. Its strengths are in doing exactly what it seems intended to do—describe for non-Friends principles for living according to Quaker values. The chapters on “Service” and “Conscience” particularly spoke to this reviewer.

The flaws that will cause consternation to many Friends are of two kinds. Most perturbing are a number of factual errors, many of which perpetuate the already-problematic Philadelphia-centered view of Quakerism. Programmed Friends, for example, will pass their test of spiritual forbearance if they succeed in reading past page 11, where the text states (most erroneously) that “silent Meetings for Worship, the essence of Quakerism today, continue to be by far the predominant form.”

Another level of difficulty for Friends is the fact that any book representing itself as definitive with regard to Quakerism cannot escape being controversial. Most Friends will find something to quibble with. Is there too much emphasis on the outward, as opposed to the inward? Is nonviolent action overstressed at the expense of spiritual pacifism? There will be something to trouble everyone—and from this, I have high hopes for continuing fruitful dialogue.

—Chel Avery

Chel Avery is a member of Goshen (Pa.) Meeting.

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Milestones

Marriages/Unions

Cavell-Allene—Tamara Cavell and Zizever Allene on July 18, 1998, at Stony Run Meeting (Baltimore, Md.). Tamara is a member of Richmond (Va.) Meeting.

Deaths

Boone—Ruth Jackson Boone, 90, on Feb. 2, in Kennett Square, Pa. Ruth was born in Philadelphia, Pa. She graduated from George School and later from Swarthmore College, where she was a Kappa Alpha Theta and Phi Beta Kappa. A lifelong member of the Religious Society of Friends, she was a masterful gardener, an ardent bridge player, and a community activist. Ruth was preceded in death by her husband, William Anton Boone. She is survived by three sisters, Caroline Rushmore, Edith Nelson, and Elsbeth Kamp; a daughter, Sue Olvey; two sons, W. Daniel Boone and James A. Boone; and five grandchildren.

Cope—Jane Davis Stanton Cope, 88, on Jan. 14, at Rockhill Mennonite Community in Sellersville, Pa. Born on the campus of Westtown School in Pennsylvania, Jane grew up in a world of Friends. She graduated from Westtown in 1927, and after obtaining her bachelor’s degree from University of Pennsylvania in 1931, she returned to Westtown, where she taught and worked in the school office. In 1936 she married Robert Cope. Jane taught for many years in the Schwenksville and Perkiomen Valley schools. She poured herself into teaching, following the lives of her students long after they left her classroom. Her belief in the importance of education, and devotion to her husband led her, after his death, to the continuation of the Perkiomen Valley Student Loan fund that he had established.

Even when she was teaching full-time and raising a family, Jane contributed ideas for projects, organizational ability, and hard work to many community organizations. She volunteered at Rockhill Mennonite Community, where she helped in the dining room, answered the telephone, and assisted individuals in various ways. No project required more dexterity, creativity, or care than she could manage. She made cross-stitch pictures of people’s homes and community buildings, knit sweaters, and made quilts and clothing both for good causes and children, grandchildren, and acquaintances.

Jane taught First-day school and served on many committees at New Garden (Pa.) Meeting. She was later active in Schuykill (Pa.) Meeting where she was a member. Jane is survived by two daughters, Esther S. Cope and Anne D. Cope; two sisters, Ruth Kaltenbach and Katherine Stratton; a brother, Dean Stanton; two grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

Davis—Joseph A. Davis, Jr., 80, on Jan. 24, 1999, aboard the Queen Elizabeth II at anchor off Maui, Hawaii. Joe was born in St. Johnsbury, Vt. He married Josephine (Josie) Mierley in 1942, just before beginning alternative service as a conscientious objector at the Civilian Public Service camp in Big Flats, N.Y. He subsequently served at Fowall Hospital in Maine and at the Concord, N.H., State Hospital on a "detached service" basis. Joe and Josie lived in Pennwood Village for the past eight years, following 43 years of residence in New Britain, Pa. Their summer home in Maine

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was where Joe fulfilled his passion for the ocean. Formerly a member of Germantown Meeting, Joe transferred his membership to Doylestown (Pa.) Meeting in 1951, shortly after it was established as a monthly meeting (following indulged status under the care of Buckingham Meeting), and served as the new meeting’s clerk. Joe and Josie were instrumental in the growth and teaching of First-day School; from 1949 to 1954, and Joe was always an advocate for Friends education, both at the meeting level, and in the wider Friends community. A life and casualty insurance agent for more than 50 years, Joe also served for 25 years as a Trustee of George School, a founding director and vice president of Chandler Hall Health Services, vice chairman and, for 30 years, a director of the Delaware Valley Mental Health Foundation, and a past chairman of the Philadelphia Orchestra Youth Concerts. In addition to his wife, she is survived by his sister, Alma D. Struble; his daughters Susan D. Atkinson and Mary D. McNitt; and grandson Joseph McNitt. He is remembered by his meeting as “Quakerly presence, a man who loved life, results and consistent, with a jolly laugh and big heart.”

Rickfels—Elsie Mae Gardner Rickfels, 79, on Jan. 2, quietly at home in Hoopa, Calif., after a long illness. Born of full Hupa Indian parents, she was the first from Hupa Valley to attend University of California, Berkeley, in the 1930s. Due to severe illness, she was unable to complete her education until 1979. She married Richard Rickfels in 1942. Richard entered Civilian Public Service in 1943 and upon his transfer to mental hospital service in Middletown, Conn., Elsie worked there as a psychiatric aide until she underwent surgery for a brain tumor. She taught preschool at Haverford (Pa.) Friends School, while her husband studied medicine in Philadelphia from 1947 to 1951. They both attended, then joined Frankford (Pa.) Meeting. Her first activity with Friends was with American Friends Service Committee of northern California in the Japanese-American evacuation, helping to ease the hardship on children and the elderly, and in workcamps, seminars, and institutes of international relations. On return to Hupa Valley in 1952, she worked as an office nurse, receptionist, clerk, and set up projects for fundraising for the first community hospital after the Public Health Hospital closed. She helped with an AFSC workcamp there after the 1955 flood. She was the first woman to chair the tribal council of her people in the 1950s and again for two terms in the 1980s after receiving her degree in education at Humboldt State University. In 1972-75 she and Richard moved to Fairbanks, Alaska, where he practiced medicine and she worked with a noted linguist in Athabaskan languages (Hupa being an Athabaskan-speaking tribe). They attended Friends meeting while there. Later she was one of the leaders to develop a dictionary of the Hupa language. Elsie considered her tribal religion a basic part of her entire life, finding it in consonance with her Friends experience and beliefs. She was a fine traditional Hupa Indian, a great storyteller, and enjoyed making people happy. She is survived by her husband Richard; many nieces and nephews; great-nieces and -nephews; and numerous cousins of Hupa Valley.

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Frankford Friends School: coed, K–6, serving center city, northeast, and most areas of Philadelphia. We provide children with an affordable yet challenging academic program in a small Friends setting. Frankford Friends School, 1500 Orthodox Street, Philadelphia, PA 19124. (215) 533-5368.

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Wedding Births, wedding testimonial, poetry, gifts all done in beautiful calligraphy and watercolor illumination. Cresting high in quality since 1825. Call or write Leslie Mitchell, 2190 Summer Hill Avenue, Montoursville, PA 17754. (717) 736-1115.

Quaker Writers and Artists! Join the Fellowship of Quakers in the Arts. QFA's goal: To nurture and showcase the literary, visual, musical, and performing arts within the Religious Society of Friends, for purposes of Quaker expression, ministry, witness, and outreach. To these ends, we will offer spiritual, practical, and financial support as we open the doors. Help build an inter­ national network of creative support and celebration. Membership, $15/year, QFA, P.O. Box 55665, Philadelphia, PA 19143. Web: www.quaker.org/qfa.

Summer Rentals

Adirondacks—housekeeping cabins on quiet, unspoiled lake—fireplaces—fully equipped—June through September. (505) 854-5959 or write Drayly, Cranberry Lake, NY 12927.

Meetings

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

(Handicap Accessible

MEETING NOTICE RATES: $15 per line per year. $20 minimum. Payable a year in advance. No discount. Changes: $10 each.

BOOTSWANA

GABORONE-Phone (267) 347147 or fax 352888.

CANADA

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA—(902) 461-0702 or 477-3690.

OTTAWA-Worship and First-day school 10:30 a.m. 91A North Ave., Ottawa, Ontario KIN 1A4. Phone: (613) 230-5422.

PRINCE EDWARD IS—Worship group (902) 566-1427.

TORONTO, ONTARIO—Worship and First-day school 11 a.m. 60 Lowther Ave. (north from oor. Bloor and Bedford).

COSTA RICA

MONTEREVE-Phone 645-5207 or 645-5036.

SALON-Unitprogrammed meeting, 11 a.m. Sunday. Phone: 224-4376 or 233-6160.

EGYPT

CAIRO—First, third, and fifth Sundays at 7 p.m. Call Alan Swanson, 357-1201, or Ray Langsten, 576-6989 (days).

EL SALVADOR

SALVADOR—Unitprogrammed meeting. Call Carmen Bram, 2242-4399.

FRANCE

PARIS—Unitprogrammed meeting for worship 11 a.m. Sundays at Centre Quaker International, 114 Rue de l’Université, 75005 Paris. Admission by entrance fee. Phone: 01 45-24-74-23, The Center has no sleeping accommodation.

GERMANY

HAMBURG—Unitprogrammed meeting 10:30 a.m., second and fourth Sundays. Winterhuder Weg 98. Phone 040521-95021.

HEIDELBERG—Unitprogrammed meeting and First and third Sundays. Call Brian Ely. 06223-1380.

GUATEMALA

GUATEMALA—Unitprogrammed. First and third Sundays. Call Mary Thompson. 3014251, Nancy España; 8392461.

INDIA

NEW DELHI—Unitprogrammed worship, 10 a.m. Sundays at National YMCA Office, 10 Parliament St., Tel: 51-11-696325.

MEXICO

CIUDAD VICTORIA, TAMALAPA—Iglesia de los Amigos, Sunday 10 a.m.; Thursday 8 p.m. Matamoros 73. Phone: 806-225-2673.

MEXICO CITY—Unitprogrammed meeting Sundays 11 a.m. Casa de los Amigos, Iglesia Marcial 132, 06030, Mexico D.F. Phone: 520-75-1251.

NICARAGUA

MANAGUA—Unitprogrammed, 10 a.m. Sundays, El Centro de los Amigos, APDO 5391, Managua.

NIGERIA

Ibadan County-Worship group. (205) 420-3088.

UNITED STATES

ALABAMA

BIRMINGHAM—Unitprogrammed meeting. 10 a.m. Sundays. Girls, Inc., 5201 8th Ave. South. (205) 592-6579.

FAIRHOPE—Unitprogrammed meeting 10 a.m. Sundays at Friends Meeting House, 9261 Fairhope Ave. Write: P.O. Box 319, Fairhope, AL 36533. (334) 293-0982.

Huntsville—E—Unitprogrammed meeting 10 a.m. Sundays in various homes. Call (205) 837-6327 or write P.O. Box 3550, Huntsville, AL 35810.

NORTH CAROLINA—Unitprogrammed meeting. 10 a.m. Sundays, El Centro de los Amigos, APDO 5391, Managua.

BOOTHBAY HARBOR, ME—Call or write Jennifer Lowther, 2234-4376 or 233-6160.

GEORGIA

ANCHORAGE—Call for time and directions. (907) 566-0700.

FAIRBANKS—Unitprogrammed, First day, 10 a.m. Hidden Valley Community Center, 2626 Gold Hill Rd. Phone: 473-3796.

JUNEAU—Unitprogrammed, 10 a.m. Sunday, 750 St. Anne St., Douglas, Alaska 99624. Phone: (907) 466-4409.

NORTH ALASKA—Unitprogrammed. Call for time and directions. (907) 376-4551.

Arizona

BISBEE—Workshop group, (520) 432-7893.

FLAGSTAFF—EFU—Unitprogrammed meeting and First-day school 10 a.m. 405 S. Beaver, 86001.

McNEAL—Coosie Friends Meeting at Friends Southwest Center, 7 1/2 miles south of Elliffa. Worship 11 a.m. (520) 642-9274 or (520) 642-9900.

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BOONE-Unprogrammed meeting for worship and First-day school, 9 a.m. 381 E. King Street, Melissa Mayer, clerk, (704) 827-3694.

BREARD-Unprogrammed meeting for worship at 11 a.m. Oakdale and Duckworth Aves. (704) 664-7000.

CELIA-Meeting for worship, 9 a.m. 1115 Shady Lawn Dr., off Rt. 80, 455 Hannah Branch Rd., (704) 675-4456.

CHAPEL-HILL-Meeting for worship 9 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. First-day School 10 a.m., Children. During June, July, and August, worship at 9 and 10 a.m. 531 Raleigh Rd., Clark Matthews Drive, (919) 968-0044, Meetinghouse.

CHARLOTTE-Unprogrammed meeting for worship and First-day school 10 a.m., forum 9 a.m. 570 W. Rocky River Rd. 374-0033.

CHARLOTTE-Concordville, one block south of Rte. 1.
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