Hannah’s Song, the Magnificat, and Millennial Reflections on Motherhood
A Journey into the Future from Norfolk Prison
Gathered for Greatness?
A Season of Light and Love

The time of year is upon us when families come together to celebrate the coming of Light into the world. Traditionally, the birth of Jesus is understood as the incarnation of the Word—the action of the Spirit to bring us Light and a message of Love. In our meeting, we will gather for our annual Christmas potluck and carol sing—a warm tradition, lit by candles, flickering light over happy faces, many familiar and many not, as we eat, talk and sing. It is a time when our family groups, our friends, and our meeting members underscore our sense of community, and our understanding that bringing a loving presence to whatever we do matters the most.

Sadly, the warmth of this festive season can emphasize feelings of isolation and loneliness for those who are far from loved ones, or who feel alienated or abandoned by family and society. During recent years I've visited elder members of my family in nursing homes and become very aware of the loneliness of others who are seldom visited. Similarly, many in prisons and correctional facilities are removed from loved ones, often seldom or never visited. For these souls, the season of Light and Love must have poignancy unknown to those of us who are blessed with freedom, health, and time to share with family and friends. Do we realize how blessed we are? How might we share our joy with others?

One of the miracles of Light and Love is that blessings are to be found everywhere. In her article, “A Journey into the Future from Norfolk Prison” (p. 11), Elise Boulding writes about the experience of holding a workshop on Imaging a Nonviolent World with inmates at the Massachusetts Correctional Institution at Norfolk. She writes movingly of her initial hesitation to lead these men through an exercise focused on a reality seemingly so unavailable to them in their current circumstances—and of her discovery that they readily imagined a nonviolent world not unlike the images of the wide variety of groups with which she's worked. Most moving of all—each participant was able to conceive personal actions he could take, despite the very limited circumstances in which he lived, to bring a nonviolent future closer to the present. What actions might the rest of us take to bring this peaceful vision into being?

The future and the gifts offered by Quakerism to address its dilemmas are discussed by Daniel Seeger in his article, “Gathered for Greatness?” (p. 15). “This is a time in which a new civilization is seeking to come to birth,” he writes. “Such moments of great transition occur from time to time...[and] People search for a new way of seeing things and of ordering individual and collective experience.” Quakerism, if lived boldly and honestly, has much to offer at this time of new birth: a message of respect for and celebration of differences, our testimonies of peace and simplicity, and an understanding that the purely rational cannot address our deepest needs.

Here at FRIENDS JOURNAL we celebrate the blessing of good work and the resources to accomplish it, wonderful colleagues, and remarkably interactive readers! While some of the faces in our holiday photo on the facing Contents page are new, the sense of community amongst us is enduring, and it embraces those who have left us and those who are newly arrived. Wherever you are, we wish you the joy of the season—and all the blessings Light and Love can bring to the future we collectively share in the new millennium.

Sue Corson-Finnerty

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Cover photo by Terry Foss

Holiday Greetings from the staff of FRIENDS JOURNAL to you!
From left to right: Rear row: Kenneth Sutton, Nagendran Gulendran, Nicole Hackel, Robert Deckhorn; Middle row: Susan Corson-Finnerty, Marianne De Lange, Rachel Messenger, Barbara Benton, Alla Podolsky; Foreground: Pamela Nelson and baby Timothy Nelson Pyne.
Homeschooling uses Penn's theories

It was a joy to read J. Timothy Esser-Haines's article, "The Changing Face of Quaker Education" (FJ July). I found it well written, informative, and timely. The author, a student at a Quaker school, laments that "even in Quaker schools, Penn's ideas are not really put into use in any substantial way." I felt sad to read that he is thus prevented from pursuing many of his interests.

There is a way of following the three educational ideas of William Penn mentioned in the article: learn from the world, learn at one's own pace, and learn from hands-on activities as well as from books. These very ideas undergird the education our son is receiving. That way is homeschooling.

Our son (age ten) has never been to school, except to visit. He learns in the world and from the world. At home we read, write, do math, use the computer, do projects, do chores, tell stories, have discussion, and have fun. In the community he studies karate, is a Webelo Scout, goes to workshops, goes on field trips, attends meeting, gets together with friends, goes everywhere I do, and has countless conversations with people of diverse careers and interests.

He learns at his own pace and follows his own interests. He did not learn to read fluently until age nine. He now reads daily and at his grade level. He has had no formal math instruction until this year, yet again, at his grade level. He has had time and opportunities to try his many and diverse interests, from Barbie dolls to dirt bikes, from polar exploration to space exploration.

He learns from hands-on activities as well as books. He designed and built a bookcase, dog house, and grape arbor. He was involved in every aspect of researching, looking at, and buying our car, a riding lawn mower, and a trailer. He has managed his own money since age five and is responsible for buying most of his toys. These and other similar activities provide real-world learning opportunities for math, reading, economics, art, research, etc. Books are also important. We read to him for several hours daily, mostly fiction, but also nonfiction and current events.

I have long felt and thought that homeschooling incorporates essential Quaker values: that of God in each person, continuing revelation, and the equality of all persons. I am grateful to Esser-Haines for making me aware of how homeschooling incorporates the educational values of William Penn. I hope Esser-Haines finds a way to pursue his many worthy interests.

Anita Bower
Nottingham, Pa.

Repentance is necessary

I was reading with interest the article "Paradox: Key to Unlocking the Perfection Trap" (FJ Sept.) when I came upon this troubling statement, which the author quotes from another source:

"The Greek word translated as "perfect" can also mean "complete" or "whole." We are called to be complete human beings just as God acts out of a sense of complete divinity. We are not called to be like God but to be fully human. Too often this verse has been seen as calling us to a God-like life which is unreachable. Such claims to perfectionism drive many people to reach [for] standards which cannot be achieved, leading to low self-esteem, depression, or worse."

The author of the article that contains this quotation found it "an opening through which to explore the paradoxical divine/human mystery." I find it a counsel of despair. God provides us many avenues by which to approach and embrace a God-like life, and perhaps the easiest of all is forgiveness, with the accompanying abandonment of fault-finding, of endless complaints against others raised in the heart and given room there. As a creature, I have the same pride and capacity for resentment as our four-footed cousins, and even some of these are able to forgive. An unlimited capacity for forgiveness has been demonstrated in people, today and in centuries past, but not without passing through the gate of repentance, which pride is unwilling to do. This "one right way" opens up a multitude of avenues for approaching God-like in an active, paradoxically Christ-like way. Of course, until this happens, a conscientious striving for perfection will indeed lead a person into "low self-esteem, depression, or worse," until he or she comes to heart-broken repentance, at which point all these troubles melt away. The Christian life for Quakers is not the call to be human by contrast to divinity, but to embrace God's angelic calling, through discipleship. This aspiration was the source of the early Quakers' evangelistic fervor, upholding perfection's attainability against continual denials from other denominations.

The spirit of the world never ceases to draw us away from this redemptive activity, back to the creature level and its discontents, but the wary see through its devices. Early repentance is necessary, in calling people out of the prison of the world's expectations, emphasizing the need for repentance to clear the way.

Bryan Dragon
Sparta, Ontario

Reflections on the nature of God

Thanks to Renee Crauder for her thoughtful article on spirituality (FJ Oct.), and to FRIENDS JOURNAL for publishing it.

One comment—presented basically as an accepted article of Quaker faith—warrants further consideration. She says, regarding a right relationship to God, "We have to accept God as God, not as an extension of our ego or imagination." (p. 13).

It is clear from the rest of the article that not only does God exist out there beyond the human imagination, but that it is a loving God. If so, the love has sometimes been expressed in ways that can only be considered remarkable. Witness the catastrophe—natural as well as human in design—that occur in many parts of the world with distressing regularity. Not to mention the personal tragedies that good people endure every day.

How do we reconcile this loving God with the evidence around us? I believe we can start by returning to that initial assumption: that a caring, loving, intervening God exists apart from the human imagination. In the first place, we should appreciate the power of the human imagination. Without it the little progress, scientific and otherwise, that has been made in human affairs would never have occurred. Has the human imagination also had harmful consequences? Of course, but that shouldn't detract from our acknowledgment of the benefits.

The 19th-century German thinker Ludwig Feuerbach believed that God is an idealized projection of ourselves, the perfection we can only strive for but never achieve. Human and needs to believe, says Feuerbach. Furthermore, since God is perfection we are impelled to view it as something separate and apart from flawed humanity.

God can be thought of, not as something apart, but as a capacity in each of us to transcend the limits of our existence. I have known too many persons whose lives have been transformed by the God within not to believe that it is indeed a living presence. It is what makes it possible for us to endure and engage in the work of healing in the face of evil deeds and natural disasters.

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The Peace Tax movement has dangerous implications

David Bassett's article on the Peace Tax movement, which appeared a couple of years ago (Ft July, 1997), was of interest to me, for I had long been unclear (and uneasy) about the concept. As a Friend and a pacifist with a lifelong affinity to dissent and lose causes, my heart sympathized with the movement, but my head warned me it was in error. Even after reading David Bassett's article, my head, which writes this essay, has prevailed.

The Peace Tax movement is meaningless in practical effect. Congress determines, and will continue to determine, the military budget. "Earmarking" one's taxes for non-military purposes will have no influence whatsoever, except in the conceivable event that so many subscribers signed up that there were not enough non-earmarked funds to satisfy what Congress considered military needs—at which point Congress would repeal the law. A large number of subscribers would be required to reach this point. A smaller number of determined lobbyists and agitators could persuade Congress to curb military expenditures, even though the protesters represented a minority of the electorate, just as the gun lobby is effective despite the rejection of its agenda by a majority.

A Peace Tax Fund is not only meaningless, but counterproductive and potentially dangerous. It would ease the conscience of pacifists by creating the illusion that they are influencing policy, but it would deflect attention from meaningful and essential activity aimed at a) electing sympathetic members of Congress and a sympathetic President and b) lobbying, demonstrating, and agitating to persuade the executive and legislative branches to reorder the national agenda.

The movement has dangerous implications. It undermines representative democracy, the only viable system of government for a huge, diverse nation. Policy-making is entrusted to democratically elected representatives who can be (but often aren't) held accountable to the electorate. On any issue, there are bound to be voters who disagree with a decision of Congress.

Our social contract requires us to accept—with rare exceptions to be discussed below—decisions we dislike. To allow an end-run around this compact for one group invites other interests to demand equal treatment. The lumber baron can forbid the use of his taxes to extend national parks. Right-wing bigots will withhold their taxes from a school lunch program. Permitting individuals to allocate their taxes as they see fit would probably result in a government agenda worse than what we have now, and it would ultimately lead to chaos.

For several reasons the Peace Tax movement will have symbolic significance of little or no value. First, the movement will not generate publicity. It is so low-key and so "legal" that it will be disregarded. Second, unlike the tax-refuser, the peace-taxer courts no risk of prosecution or penalty. His or her act will not be seen as brave or noteworthy; it will evoke no admiration, no controversy, no reflection (in fact, it will be invisible). Third, since the earmarking will be sanctioned by statute, its use will cause the government no embarrassment and almost no inconvenience. By legally sanctioning the earmarking, Congress is effectively removing the movement's symbolic significance, and channeling a potentially effective resistance movement into a harmless backwater.

Each of us should, as a general rule, abide by decisions of Congress. For today's pacifist—as for last century's abolitionist—the occasion will arise when an act of government is so repugnant to conscience that one must resort to civil disobedience. This point is reached when in one's estimation the issue of conscience transcends the demands that society lays upon us.

The Peace Tax movement boils down to a feel-good means of solving the conscience of those of us distressed by militarism. It deflects us from hard work within the democratic process, and it absolves us from the penalties inflicted upon those who choose civil disobedience.

Spencer Case
And Mary said
My soul doth magnify the Lord,
And my spirit hath rejoiced in
God my Savior.
For he hath regarded the low estate of his
handmaiden,
For behold, from henceforth all generations
shall call me blessed,
For he that is mighty hath done to me great
things,
And holy is his name.
And his mercy is on them that fear him from
generation to generation.
He hath shewed strength with his arm.
He hath scattered the proud in the imagina-
tion of their hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their
seats
And exalted them of low degree.
He hath filled the hungry with good things;
And the rich he hath sent empty away.
He hath holpen his servant Israel in remem-
brance of his mercy,
As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and
to his seed forever.”

—the Gospel of Luke, 1:46-55

Ever since singing the Magnificat
with a choir several years ago at
Christmas, I've been tempted to
see if I might fit myself into this expres-
sion of maternal joy that reaches back over
millennia.

Christians have recited the Magnificat
in one form or another s ince before the
fourth century. The Roman Catholic
Church has written it into its daily office
and vespers. Anglicans have used it for
evening prayer at communion. Lassus,
Palestrina, Monteverdi, Bach, Schuetz,
and Vaughn Williams have set it to music.

The text of the Magnificat (from the
Latin: Magnificat anima mea Dominum,
my soul doth magnify the Lord) is thought
to be derived from Hannah's Song (1Sam.
2), itself a lyric poem that dates from well
before Hannah’s time of around 1,000
B.C. Biblical scholars have long pointed
out that Hannah's Song was inserted into

or “layered on to” Samuel’s account of
how Jewish monarchy began. Some stud-
ies trace the song to several centuries prior
to Hannah.

As Sarah and Rebecca before her, Hannah
determined the future of Israel
by bearing a significant male. Hannah
gave birth to Samuel, who in turn anointed
Saul, and later David, as king.

Hannah was one of two wives of
Elkanah. Elkanah's other (although not
his favorite) wife, Peninnah, bore many
children. Hannah had none. Peninnah
	tormented Hannah and “Whenever
Hannah went up to the House of the
Lord, her rival provoked her till she wept
and would not eat.” (1 Sam 1:7) In her
misery Hannah begged God for a son,
vowing to give this child back to God in
exchange for the favor. “The Lord re-
membered her” (1 Sam. 1:19) and she
finally became pregnant with a son.

Hannah held good on her promise. As
soon as the boy, Samuel, was weaned, she
brought him to Eli, the high priest at
Shiloh. As she was leaving the boy behind,
Millennial Reflections on Motherhood

she expressed her gratitude and joy in song. Maybe she was simply singing a well-known woman's poem of the day.

Thanks to Yahweh, Hannah got even with Peninnah. History vindicated the faithful Hannah. (What little girl ever gets named Peninnah?) Hannah became a model of virtuous womanhood. Upon her promise to release her son into priestly service, God granted her maternity. As with Sarah and Rachel, Hannah secured benefit for Israel with her ability to have children. Women gained prestige, security, and fulfillment by becoming mothers. But it was the sons of these once barren women who were to become divinely chosen leaders.

Even at that, Hannah's Song may very well have remained unheard. Men voiced the liturgy in sing-song chants in the synagogues while women mouthed their prayers—"as silent as Hannah" (1 Sam. 1:13).

"And Hannah prayed and said, My heart rejoiceth in the Lord. ... They that were full have hired themselves out for bread And in them that were hungry has ceased hunger So that the barren hath born seven And she that hath many children is waxed feeble. ... The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich. He bringeth low and lifeth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust And lietheth up the beggar from the dunghill To set them among princes and to make them inherit the throne of glory ... For by strength shall no man prevail. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces. Out of heaven shall he thunder upon them. The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth."

—1 Samuel 2:1-10

That Mary, instrumental in bringing a messiah from the house of David a thousand years later, would sing a version of Hannah's Song seems natural. She had been of "low estate" (unmarried, few resources), but bearing this son would set things right.

So, trying to take millennial strides from Hannah of 1000 B.C. to Mary and then to myself of A.D. 2000 has been irresistible. Three and two millennia later, respectively, I've looked through these lyrics, seeking some understanding for myself.

Are Hannah's and Mary's sentiments extensions of a patriarchy that ought to be debunked once and for all? It's easy to dismiss the patriarchy under which both women, and especially Hannah, lived. My modern sensibilities leave no question about pacts with God to obtain male offspring or of rescue from "low estate."

Hannah sings of a powerful, vengeful God who will bring justice to Israel. Mary echoes the notion, although softens her verses with reference to God's mercy. By Mary's time, Israel is to become a servant of the Lord, as Isaiah called for, a welcome progression from Hannah's view.

For me the challenge comes from another dimension of these texts. Both Hannah and Mary expected their sons would enhance Israel. Both seem to have a vision that goes far beyond the individual child or their own trials of public humiliation. Each in her own way is exalting in a providence that reaches broadly to all Jews and that extends forward beyond the lifetime of her own son.

It has been this second aspect of the songs, namely, that a woman could ponder her own motherhood in terms outside her own child, which has caught my interest. I, like many of my contemporaries, have no trouble in revising the patriarchal underpinnings of these lyrics. But in a culture of fierce individualism, what's there for me to sing about that goes beyond my immediate children?

I have not had to struggle under Hannah's humiliation or under Mary's low estate. Hannah lived in polygamy, enduring the pain of "barrenness." Mary was not married and a source of shame to Joseph. Her motherhood became contorted into an immaculate conception. I have married twice, adopted once, and birthed once.

Circumstances of my own motherhood may not have been fathomable to Hannah or Mary. I, a privileged American, have received two children in a time of growing enlightenment. I'm as happy with a daughter as with a son. I was as joyful to receive an adopted child as a birth child. No tradition dictated to me that a male birth child might possibly be more valued.

My adopted son came simply as "Baby Garcia" from a Brownsville, Texas, mother whom I've never seen. My daughter was born to me at home where my husband and I filled out a State of Illinois birth certificate, giving no thought to lineage or legitimacy. My daughter has no more pedigree than my son, and he no rank by law or feeling in my heart that she does not enjoy. No seed of Abraham. No house of David.

And no royalty or messiahs on the horizon either. What I accept has a simplicity to which I am the religious heir: there is that of God in both my children. I pray for divine light to shine on both, but no authority will secure their destiny.

This same divine presence that is in my two children lives in every mother's child. If mothers feel a special connection to one another, it becomes divine where they recognize that of God in every child.

Inspired by Hannah and Mary, each of whom surrendered a child and managed to sing about it, I have brought the millennial stride to present with my own poem. And like Hannah's, my poem is almost always silent, pondered with loving silence around me in meeting.

This is joy!
That of God in my son,
That of God in my daughter.
And that of God in their children.
My joy and my call.

The justice is this:
In high times or low,
That of God remains in them
And remains in their children.
Justice is my call.

The mercy is this:
Light shines on me,
Dries tears from the pain,
Sets in me a song for my children.
In mercy lies my call.

—D.A. Garcia

December 1999

The sound still reverberates in my head. That is the prayer (mantra) of the Buddhist Nipponzan Myohoji order of monks and nuns. Basically, it means "All life is sacred," but it has been explained to us this way: Out of the muck of a pond comes the beautiful lotus blossom. These monks and nuns from Japan believe that if they walk and chant and beat their drums throughout the world, out of the muck and mire of this world will come the beautiful peace lily. And so they walk and chant and beat their drums, bowing to everyone and everything in reverence. Living near the Peace Pagoda in Grafton, New York, I have had association with the nun-in-residence, Jun Yasuda, since 1986. My husband, Don, and I have assisted her walks by housing or transporting walkers for peace and justice on their way through our part of the state. From March 15 to April 14, 1999, Jun-san would lead a 350-mile walk focused on prison reform, stopping at 16 prisons in New York State. With that issue being close to my heart, I decided that I should join her walk for 12 days, as the driver of a support vehicle (and sometimes as a walker). The following are some of the highlights and insights of those 12 days.

The group started off from the Grafton Peace Pagoda at 9 A.M. on Monday, March 15, in a terrible snow storm for the 12-15 mile stretch to Troy, New York. When I woke up that morning and saw the snow, I wondered what that foretold for the rest of the journey which I would join on the third day. For the whole way, the lead walker would carry a sign that said "Prison Walk, Abolish the Death Penalty," followed by a young man carrying a gorgeous dark purple banner on a long aluminum pole, which said "Na-mu-nyo ho ren ge kyo" in Japanese. The banner would fairly soar and dance in the wind.

When I joined on Wednesday, March 17, the group had progressed as far as Schuylerville, New York, along Route 4. A Quaker family hosted a potluck supper for the 15 walkers and about nine other supporters from the community. A talk followed about how Pell grants for prisoners had been abolished nationwide and funding had been cut for higher education in the New York prisons, even though education is the best way to reduce recidivism.

I began learning how a spiritual walk functioned. With my natural inclination to be a "night owl," I was not too happy for a few days with going to bed by 9 or 10 P.M. and getting up at 5 A.M. It took those few days to reset my internal clock.

In the morning I learned the routine. Prayers (drumming and chanting Na-mu-nyo ho ren ge kyo) before a Buddhist altar, bows of respect, and interfaith prayers always began the day. After breakfast, provided by our host family, there was chanting and bowing toward the home that had housed us for the night and bows of thanks and respect for the family that had provided for us. We started off many days with a Native American ceremony of burning sage and wafting the smoke around our bodies. Then the band headed off, beating their drums and chanting. Neighbors must certainly have been aware of our presence.

With a walk of this kind, anyone is welcome to join for any length of time. Some people came for about an hour, some for a few days, but the core group for my two weeks numbered seven. Jun-san, with her shaved head and yellow robe, is 50 years old. Then there was Toby, age 50; Hattie, age 60; Tetsum from Tokyo, Japan, age 20; Ryo from Fukuoka, Japan, age 17; Greg from Guilderland, New York, age 20; and me, nearly 63 years old. The group would walk about three miles in an hour, then have a break for five to ten minutes. The lunch break was about an hour. (I call Jun-san the "loaves-and-the-fishes lady" because she always had food enough for anyone who might come along.) The average walk for a day was 15 miles. In the two weeks, there was one planned day of rest. It snowed, blew, and rained three inches that day, but we were comfy and dry near a wood stove in Bridport, Vermont.

I learned that the driver of a support vehicle plays an important role. We had two vehicles—Jun-san's Isuzu Trooper, given to her for the trip, which carried most of the baggage, and my little Toyota Tercel, which carried my stuff and anything we would need during the day, such as lunch, jackets, and rain gear. I would drive with Toby to the stopping point or to a lunch spot to leave the Trooper, then I would take him back to the walk. I would then go ahead about two miles and park my car. I eventually got so I would start walking back toward the group and then take my place at the rear of the group until we got to the car, when I would leapfrog again. Walking alone back to meet the group, I could feel the drums long before I could see them, and I would watch expectantly for the banner to come into view. When I joined the group again, I felt like a Canada goose must feel as it flies in a V-formation. I would get a lift from the drums and chants. I also had to do other errands, like make copies of materials to give away, make phone calls, or scout out.
a good place to eat out of the wind.

Our route took us through gorgeous country. The snow-peaked mountains were majestic, and the snow geese were migrating north for the summer. The weather was perfect for walking—cold, clear, sunny, and breezy, but never wet!

We walked north to Lake Champlain, then across to Vermont by ferry at Essex, up to Burlington, across on the ferry again to Plattsburgh, New York, and then to Dannemora, a total of 160 miles. At that point, the walkers rode back to Albany, New York, on Monday, March 29, and on Tuesday they began their walk to New York City, where they would have a meeting with the Commissioner of Human Rights at the United Nations. April 14 would also be a day of fasting at the UN.

We were put up by many wonderful host families, and we stayed in a Presbyterian church camp, a UCC church, two Catholic churches, and a Zen center. Many people were extremely kind and generous. Once we were fed at a soup kitchen. Most people along the roads just looked at us and kept on driving. Some gave us honks and waves, but others yelled or gave us “thumbs down.” One man almost turned the air blue with his language as he told us to “Get the h— out of here; I own both sides of this street, so get . . . off my property,” as if he owned the road, too. How can a big, middle-aged man in a large red pickup truck feel so threatened by a group of pacifistic people on foot? The most common yell was from young men who would holler, “Get a job!” Such crass comments seemed irrelevant after the thought that we all had put into making the commitment to this walk in the first place. Jun-san’s commitment to her “job” is anything but frivolous.

Besides raising consciousness about the violence in our society and the need for respect for human life, our objective was to visit four prisons north of Albany and to chant and pray at each one.

The first prison complex we came to was Great Meadow at Comstock, New York, a maximum-security prison across the street from Washington Correctional Facility, a medium-security prison where Don and I do Alternatives to Violence Project workshops. We gathered in a parking lot across from the prison. Tom, an Abenaki Native American, joined us to perform a pipe ceremony. He spoke first in Abenaki, then in English. He blew smoke in all four directions, praying to the Father creator and the Mother earth, asking the spirits of the ancestors to be with us. Then he prayed for the inmates (male and female, in all prisons) and their families, for the guards and their families, for the victims and the families of the victims, and for those who live in fear or need. He said that locking people up is not the solution, that murder and revenge are not the solution. Then he asked the spirits of the ancestors, who roamed these lands long before these prisons were built and cannot be kept out by walls or bars, to go into the prisons and roam the hallways, whispering solutions from the wisdom of the ages.

Tom had no sooner finished his ceremony when two AVP facilitators stopped to greet us. They were just going into Washington Correctional Facility to do a weekend workshop and would take the word in to the inmates that there were people outside praying and walking the length of the state for prison reform. They were our contact with the “inside world” there.

Then eight walkers went into Great Meadow to visit inmates. One of the walkers had a pen pal there, who had provided five names of other inmates who would accept visits. For some of the walkers, it was their first time in a state prison—and Great Meadow is an old, soul-deadening, dreary looking facility. (I couldn’t go in because of AVP rules.) Jun-san, Hattie, and I drummed and chanted outside for quite a while.

Five days later, we had progressed to Moriah Shock Incarceration Correctional Facility (minimum security) in Mineville, New York. I couldn’t believe the sign. Under the name it says “Gateway To Excellence!” It reminded me of the sign I saw at Auschwitz that said “Work Brings Freedom.” We drove in the very long driveway and started to have our prayer circle when four guards arrived to tell us we couldn’t be on the property. Jun-san asked if we could walk off the property and was told yes. Toby and I drove the cars out. I expected the group to be there in a couple of minutes (because, after all, they walk three miles an hour!), but they didn’t come and didn’t come. So I walked in to meet them. I just had to laugh as I saw them inching their way along the driveway! They were staying on the property where the inmates could hear the drums as long as possible. Once at the end
of the driveway, we stood, drummed, and chanted for about half an hour. During that time, six vans full of inmates going out on work detail passed us. We bowed to them in the Japanese fashion, and they responded with waves, cheers, and thumbs up. To add to that, many hours later two of the vans returned, passing the walkers about 15 miles farther along the road. The inmates again waved and cheered. At least they knew that someone cared. Some of the guards waved and cheered, too.

The group made a very short, unexpected stop at a county jail in South Burlington, Vermont, simply because we were passing it. The superintendent was very courteous, as long as we stayed on the sidewalk. Some of the inmates were taking leaves in the yard and read our sign. I'm sure they all could hear/feel our drums—like a heartbeat.

Our last prison to visit was Clinton in Dannemora. About 15 of us walked in on Palm Sunday, a beautifully warm, sunny day. Clinton is where New York's two death row inmates are being held; however, when/if the time comes, I believe they will be executed by lethal injection at Greenhaven Correctional Facility. The old part of the facility at Clinton reminded me of the old hospital for the insane in Worcester, Massachusetts, where I grew up. This facility is the industry in Dannemora; there is virtually nothing else. One side of the short main street is little shops, but the other side is a 25-foot-high white wall with three guard towers on it. There is not even room for a sidewalk between the street and the wall. How depressing I would find that if I lived there. The guards videotaped us as we walked back and forth on the sidewalk across the street. Did they really want our pictures, or were they trying to intimidate us? At sunset, we had a candlelight vigil at a little park across from the wall.

Jean, a kind, sensitive woman who works inside the prison and is in touch with the death row inmates every day, happened to meet us walking along the road. She joined our vigil (at the risk of losing her job) and said a prayer. I couldn't hear it all, but I heard her say, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do." Was she talking about the inmates? Or about the prison system? Or both? I said my prayer for my inmate friend, "City," incarcerated for 22 years already, who calls us (Don and me) Mother and Father. In large part, it was for him that I took part in this walk.

Back at the Catholic church where we would spend the night, we began the process of disbanding our group. Some people had to be back at work the next morning. Jean joined us again so we could support each other. At the end of the evening, Ruby, from Syracuse, sang a song for us. Appropriate for the beginning of Holy Week, softly she sang, "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?", with a second verse in the same manner: "Were you there when they executed my child?" I don't remember all her words, because I was so moved. It was such a poignant ending to a beautiful experience.

You might ask, "Why do this walk?" I know I have asked myself that question when Jun-san has walked before. I am not sure that I can put into words how meaningful this walk was—to the many people who walked in it or the many people who came in contact with it in some way or other.

To start the day at dawn with prayers, to step out into the crisp air and pass the beautiful scenery, to walk with the constant drumming and chanting, to talk with so many people who hosted us, fed us, stopped to take our picture, or came out of their houses to see us pass, and to pray in front of the prisons kept us focused on our mission—to bring peace to the world, especially to some of the most violent and inhumane segments of our society.

Prison building, prison staffing, and prison filling is the number one growth industry in the United States! The racism, the classism, and the lack of respect for human life on all sides in our society is appalling. Where is it leading us? As a nation, we need to look at these concerns now. Statistics say that crime is dropping, but we are incarcerating about 4,000 people per week. As taxpayers, we need to ask how long this can go on.

As we drummed and chanted before the walls of prisons, I thought of Joshua and the battle of Jericho. I wished we could bring down the walls—the walls of racism, classism, ignorance, and fear that are everywhere in our society. To see each person as a precious human being and to treat each other with respect would go a long way toward instilling civility and compassion into our culture.

I was impressed with Jun-san as she led us on this spiritual journey. The respect she has for all living (and non-living) things is inspirational, as is her courage to stand up for what she believes. As I get back into the "real world," I hope I can hold on to much of what I felt and learned on this journey.

If you ever come upon a band of pilgrims, led by a monk or nun with shaved head and a yellow robe, bearing drums and chanting, feel blessed, for they are walking to bring peace to the world. Give them a honk or a thumbs up. We need to encourage each other to "keep on keeping on" on this journey through life. We are all one. And becoming one will make us whole.
A Journey INTO THE FUTURE
from Norfolk Prison

by Elise Boulding

Elise Boulding is a member of Wellesley (Mass.) Monthly Meeting. She helped start peace studies programs at the University of Colorado and Dartmouth College.

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Usually the regulars of Norfolk Recognized Meeting at the Massachusetts Correctional Institution at Norfolk (a meeting under the care of Wellesley Monthly Meeting of New England Yearly Meeting) meet on Sunday evenings for their weekly worship. But this is a wintry Saturday morning, and I have been asked to lead a daylong workshop on Imaging a Nonviolent World, a world at peace, with the 20 or so gathered inmates. I look into the intent faces of these men—youthful, middle-aged and elderly African American, Hispanic, and white long-termers—and wonder how their imaginations can possibly vault the prison walls that enclose such harsh, discipline-laden, heavily guarded life space, to visualize a different and better world. I feel hesitant, unsure. But I’ve promised to do this workshop!

This type of imaging workshop first evolved in the late 1970s as I realized that we peace activists, working to bring about a nonviolent world without war, really had no idea how a world in which armies had disappeared would function. How could we work to bring about something we couldn’t even see in our imaginations? Stepping back in my own mind into the 1950s, I remembered translating Fred Polak’s Image of the Future from the Dutch original. His macro-historical analysis showed a war-paralyzed and depressed Europe how past societies in bad situations but with positive images of the future had been empowered by their own imaginations to work to bring the imagined future about. Here was a possible answer! I developed a workshop format with Warren Ziegler and other colleagues that took people 30 years into the future to a world at peace. The format allowed time for imaginative exploration of “how things worked” in that future, followed by a remembering, looking back from this future to the present to imagine how all this peaceableness came about. The workshops always closed with time for personal commitments to action in the present to help bring about the future that participants had pictured. We found that this type of workshop actually empowered people in their peace activism.

These workshops had involved participants free to be change agents in their world. How could prisoners imagine a more caring world, let alone see themselves as change agents to bring those changes about? To make the leap into the future less daunting, I chose ten rather than thirty years as the time span. How would they deal with 2010 in their imaginations?

Well, I found out. After talking about the failed hopes from peace and justice efforts in the past, and the new hopes for action as we stand on the threshold of the 21st century, I asked them what they might hope to find in 2010. Through individual reflection and small group discussion, they constructed a list of hopes. Their first major theme was to be at peace with ourselves and one another and the world in which we live, to recognize, understand, and communicate what’s going on.

Further themes followed:
• There should be a peaceful environment for all humankind: no wars, hunger, homelessness, disease, violence, racism; no TV commercials; no pollution.
• People listen, respect one another; there
is equality, also just laws, freedom from fear.
*Life is local, families peaceful; there is strong community feeling and conflict resolution; people help each other, have fun together.

Those were the hopes expressed for what might be found in the future. The hopes themselves were more well defined than I had expected. What their imaginations revealed when they mentally travelled into the future and then drew pictures of what they imagined was deeply moving. Prison walls had melted away, and all the beauties of nature and the life of free humans stood revealed: open countryside, trees, bushes, flowers, distant mountains, lakes and rivers, farmlands with houses dotting the landscape, often a church in sight. A few drawings pictured villages, malls with shops, and people walking about in the malls. One of the most striking features of these pictures was the presence of sunlight and other sources of light: lamps, candles, lighthouses, beacon lights.

Everywhere in these pictures were friendly, often smiling, people—walking in couples, bicycling, singing, dancing, playing games, working in small groups, fishing by a lake, growing food, offering helping hands to each other, walking to church, seated in meditation, praying. One picture revealed housing being built for the homeless, one the opening up and transformation of a prison. Two pictured bombs dropping on a city with the caption, "THIS MUST NOT HAPPEN!" The absence of cars in these pictures was notable.

The themes of open green spaces, the beauty of nature, sunlight, friendly sociability, and joyful activity had significant similarities to the themes in the pictured futures of workshop participants that I had been collecting for years. Whether the participants were peace and social change activists, members of women’s, youth, or church groups, diplomats, soldiers, scholars, or teachers, their pictures suggested a bright, clean, green world and conveyed the "feel" of a joyful local community in which people delight in celebrations, in caring for others. Why should I have been surprised that prisoners could imagine that same world? Whatever impacts prison had on their lives, these men who participated in the weekly meetings for worship at Norfolk had vibrant social and spiritual imaginations.

After the participants had worked together in groups of four or five to develop more details about the kind of changes in economic, political, and social institutions that would keep this peaceful world functioning, each group was asked to present a short pantomime that would convey what it was like to live in that future. Once again, the liveliness of their imaginations showed through. The pantomimes of facing differences and resolving them peacefully, of cooperation in difficult tasks, and of going from loneliness to joyful community could have been the pantomimes produced in very different workshop settings.

The "Remembering History" exercise was done with the same zest. The future they had delineated was of course one that would have required at least the 30-year time lapse specified in the usual Imaging a Nonviolent World workshop, but since the decision had been made to set the imagined future only ten years away, there was a tacit acceptance of a strategy of speeding up time.

Mentally standing in the peaceful, prison-free 2010, the participants "remembered" what had happened over the previous decade. In 2009 (just last year) there had been a great celebration of the emergence of a new personal/global consciousness that was making power struggles obsolete, and a more effective successor to the UN was now functioning—a system of local-global governance. The last nuclear weapons were destroyed, and prisons were transformed into rehabilitation centers. The year 2008 saw contact with beings in outer space, a surge in community dancing and music-making, the end of substance abuse, and the implosion of the Pentagon.

The year 2007 saw reparations to African Americans, replacement of private cars by public transport, decline in materialism, elimination of the U.S. arms budget and its replacement by equivalent funding of peacebuilding activities including the work of the UN successor organization, and the achievement of zero population growth for the planet. The year 2006...
witnessed the return by the United States government to Native American peoples the lands previously taken from them, and the development of a global food distribution system that drastically reduced hunger, and the development of human services that drastically reduced homelessness. A real Middle East peace treaty was signed by all the countries of the world.

In 2005 the successor organization to the UN was able to administer effective pollution controls, and people now enjoyed clean air. Human needs budgets and health services greatly increased, along with global immunization against AIDS, as did overall life chances for those who had been poor. In 2004 the process began of dismantling prisons as punitive institutions, and crime rates dropped drastically. The increase in human services, public housing, and education began equalizing opportunities for people everywhere. City playgrounds were now safe spaces.

In 2003 the new successor organization to the UN, known as ESO, or Earth Survival Organization, established an Educational Resources Council to improve learning worldwide and make recycling of all processed goods universally mandatory. Social movements worldwide emphasized the importance of public celebration, dancing, and support of all the arts. Hopeful attitudes toward the future began to replace earlier despair, and greed declined. In 2002 the United Nations was officially transformed into the Earth Survival Organization, accompanied by great celebrations and dancing everywhere. All technological development was now shifted toward saving the planet. A gradual exodus from prisons was under way as new community support systems developed that enabled former prisoners to rejoin their families and share their wisdom with their communities.

The year 2001 witnessed a global ban on the production and deployment of nuclear weapons by a changing and evolving UN and the development of national gun control programs in every country. The logging industry came to an end as wood substitutes were developed, and the world’s forests were saved. The Internet involved more and more citizens worldwide in communications systems that support cooperation and peace. Power struggles no longer attracted adherents. In 2000 the United States elected its first woman president and moved toward being a softer, gentler nation. The seeds of a new consciousness were sown. The environmental and peace movements became allies.

Are these the kinds of issues and developments prisoners think about during long years behind bars? For the prisoners in this workshop, the answer is yes.

The point of “remembering history,” of working back from the future to the present, is to help participants decide what action strategies they personally will commit to in the present in order to bring the desired future about. What kind of freedom of action do prisoners have? What could they possibly commit to? Each participant contributed his own thoughts on this, and six action themes could be identified from their statements. By far the most frequently mentioned action theme was inner peace and personal development. This was expressed in the following phrases: find inner peace, find out who I am; get more grounded; develop myself physically, spiritually, mentally; continue studies; read sacred literature; become more forgiving, more patient, more nonviolent; stay focused; deal righteously.

The next two most frequently mentioned themes were, respectively: tell people good things, help others, share with family and friends, network with others; and speak up when necessary, share my truths with the world, write letters, write a book. At least two people proposed the next two themes: work with AVP (Alternatives to Violence Program) to develop new projects at the prison, and respond directly to bad situations when things go amiss. The last theme was a commitment to more ecological awareness, to consuming less. Challenging commitments, all of them!

That persons with such severe limitations on their daily activities and personal space not only can visualize a positive future for the society that has in so many ways rejected them, but have the inner resources and moral integrity to consider concrete personal actions that could help bring about such a future, suggests how vastly we underestimate the capacities and potentials of our fellow human beings. These human capacities are to be found among the men—and women—in-accrusted in the prisons of our country. Kenneth Boulding always used to say, “What exists, is possible.” We have many more potential co-workers in the task of building a more peaceful world than we ever knew.

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Off Route 108 by the fire station, a narrow, rural road leads to Sandy Spring Meetinghouse, a structure on the Maryland landscape for nearly two centuries. Sunday morning, I am here to connect with what is real, to balance the din of my earthly concerns with the silence of an unknown, mysterious presence. Infused through the years with Geraldine Cosmas Curran, a member of Sandy Spring (Md.) Meeting, is a faculty tutor at the Writing Center of Montgomery College in Rockville, Maryland. © 1999 Geraldine Cosmas Curran emanations of seekers striving toward a higher reality and by seekers today on the same path, the meetinghouse is imbued with power and force.

Repeatedly I am drawn, compelled by organic need, to this old meetinghouse, a place that leads me on an inward journey.

I enter the doorway, quietly settle myself on the bench, and sense the power of this simple, brick structure. The vision of its pure starkness, its clean structural lines: vertical doors, windows, and pillars against horizontal wooden benches and balcony. The contrast of light and shadow: rays of shimmering sunlight through glass. The perception of color and texture: luminous white walls, earthy brown carpet, deeply ingrained wood. The view through the window: giant oaks, wrought iron fence, old stone markers in the graveyard. The sense of timelessness: a ticking clock. From these impressions I absorb a sense of being.

Gradually, inexplicably, the meetinghouse permeates my being and awakens an inner life. I am grounded and focused. A silent, inward exploration begins. One world fades, replaced by another, becoming more quiet, more meaningful. Stray thoughts are quickly put to rest. Body relaxes, dissolves, pulsates with energy. Vibrations resonate. Breathing finds its own rhythm. Light intensifies.

How to hold on to this vital sense of being? So quickly does it fade and slip away as the meeting ends and I return to life immersed in practical concerns. When I truly feel lacking, yearning for a deeper life, I try to balance my attention between the quiet of my inner world and the noise of external demands. Sometimes, amid the commotion of everyday life, I find inside myself a place of stillness—the meetinghouse within. How do I bring the meetinghouse me into my home, my workplace, my everyday world of flux, movement, and disorder to balance a life of moving fragments with a life of stillness?

The meetinghouse—simple, mysterious, powerful—evokes in me this question, reminds me that something immeasurably important is at stake, reminds me that I am a being of two natures, inhabiting the ordinary, mundane world, but with the possibility of opening myself to a deeper presence. Of this I need to be reminded. I am fortunate and profoundly grateful that just off the main route on this quiet, narrow road stands the meetinghouse, which over the years has become for me sacred, its doors open, inviting me to enter and explore.
GATHERED FOR GREATNESS?

by Daniel A. Seeger

As we look back over the succeeding century’s two world wars, countless regional wars, worldwide economic depression, the Russian Revolution, several dozen imitations of it, the Cold War, and the breakup of colonial empires, it is amazing how naïve the perspective of many of the historians of the 1890s seems. For within

nism haunting Europe, the specter of capitalism haunts the globe. And most eerily reminiscent of the attitudes of the 1890s, the pundits of the 1990s have proclaimed the victory of the European/U.S. political and economic systems, and some have even announced the end of history! According to this view the basic values of the West will inevitably inherit the earth.

Is this expectation that we are entering an era of stability and triumph credible?

Do we not suspect that an environmental catastrophe looms if a modern industrial way of life is extended to all who aspire to it?

Do we not suspect that a reasonable way to govern the global economy has yet to be discovered? The global economy has no social safety net for the poor, and it has no laws or institutions to protect labor or the environment. The free play of market forces can provide needed discipline; it can also produce chaos and victimize many. Socialism and communism were invented because capitalism can be very offensive. The fact that communism has failed does not mean that capitalism has succeeded.

Do not the tribal and ethnic conflicts taking place in Europe and in other parts of the world appear uncontrollable, and do they not threaten to drown many in a sea of blood? Are there not a host of other international issues for which no clear solution is in sight? Is there any way to end arms trading and profiteering, activities of both governments and private operators? Is there any way to protect the common good in the achieving of disarmament—conventional, biological, chemical, and nuclear disarmament? Is there any way to rescue the environment?

And what of the increasingly frequent abrasions between Islamic fundamentalism and Western secular culture? Each is marked by a different understanding of the relationship between God and humankind, between parents and children, between citizens and the state, and between freedom and authority. Islam, after Christianity, is the second largest religion.

...
on the planet. Are the conflicts between Islamic culture and Western secular culture simply going to vanish?

What of the enlarging holes in the ozone layer, global warming, the melting of the polar ice caps, and the AIDS crisis?

I don’t bring all this into view to be a “prophet of doom.” I raise it to counter the naïve assumption that the new age has already dawned. In reality we are living in a twilight time, but a time of great opportunity as well.

A new civilization is seeking to be born. Such moments of transition occur from time to time in history, when the worldview, habits of mind, and commonly accepted assumptions that have sustained civilization and fueled human progress have reached a point of exhaustion—their strengths having been fully exploited, their limitations becoming more costly, and their resilience and adequacy in the face of developing historical events faltering. People search for a new way of seeing things and ordering individual and collective experience.

The first thing that people who proclaim the end of history and the triumph of Western values have failed to perceive is our fatal over-reliance on reason. Communism, capitalism, and liberal democracy all share this foible. Before the modern era, the fundamental truths that guided our lives were presumed to emanate from God and to be revealed to us in canonical texts as interpreted by duly constituted religious authority. The problem that occurred, as we know, is that these religious authorities could not agree with each other, and this led to many calamitous civil and international wars, The Hundred Years War, which Joan of Arc brought to a turning point, and the Thirty Years War, which pitted Calvinists, Lutherans, and Catholics against each other, together with the tendency of all established religions to support absolutism and monarchy, eventually made it seem useful to people of good will to de-emphasize the role of religion in the management of affairs.

As the interwoven religious and political world of medieval times collapsed, the view arose that a new human culture could be based upon reason and that human good nature could be relied upon to iron things out. The commercial and industrial revolutions, the growth of scientific method and of engineering, and advances in philosophical thought all held out the hope that henceforth human life would be characterized by an inexorable, rationally determined march of progress toward truth and freedom. Presumably all we needed to do was to think logically, proceeding from self-evident premises or closely observed and incontrovertible empirical facts. Reality was seen as a puzzle to be solved, an entirely knowable system governed by a finite number of universal laws that human beings could grasp and exploit rationally for their own benefit.

The problem we face, however, is that moral and spiritual claims cannot be proven or disproven the way matters of fact can be. Spirituality cannot be made to fit into the rationalist scheme. It is true that when we are dealing with intermediate moral principles, principles that rest on more fundamental premises, logical reasoning is essential. But the rationalistic model breaks down when we try to establish the fundamental spiritual or moral principles themselves. Logic is a way of getting to conclusions from premises. By

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**Hat Honor Revisited**

**Quakers**

once went to prison for refusing to give “hat honor” to the king.

It was a matter of principle. They would bow only to God.

Now

with few hats left to not doff we still purpose to exalt no one.

In and out of our own society we use forms with pretty much no decoration.

We wear sensible shoes and sit still in meeting for worship, praying to be quiet enough to hear God’s whispers and brave enough to follow instructions.

**At Gethsemane Church of God in Christ in Dayton, Ohio**

Heavenly Hats abound.

My grandsons command drums and organ while two-year-old Davina is High Queen of the Tamborine.

All joyful noise rises sanctified.

There is no shortage of glory to shine on two pastors, sister Pat, Mother Dargon, Deacon Dennis.

And I am called Grandma Kiddo, Peculiar and perfect title for a visiting Quaker who tries again but always fails to clap at the right time to the warm and foreign rhythm.

Nevermind. what I do get is this: Holiness, silence, plain or Fancy, we are all simply busy about the business of honoring God, God in God and one another.

**Janeal Turnbull Ravndal**

Janeal Turnbull Ravndal lives at Pendle Hill. She is a member of Stillwater Monthly Meeting in Barnesville, Ohio.
its very nature, a logical argument cannot justify the premises upon which it rests. There is no way to justify, through logic, the ultimate starting point for moral reasoning. The rational and enlightened founders of the United States recognized this when they declared: “We hold these truths to be self-evident...” and then proceeded simply to announce the starting points of their thinking.

The reason why we are surrounded by a worldwide ethical chaos in the cultural, economic, and political spheres is that so many people begin their moral reasoning from rival but incommensurable first premises, and we possess no rational way of weighing the claims of one against the other.

Quakerism can speak powerfully to this contemporary dilemma, a dilemma stemming from disillusionment, on the one hand, with the rigidity and false pretensions of traditional religion, and, on the other, with the spiritual failures of the rationalistic and scientific culture that succeeded the age of faith.

First, Quakerism is clear that the meaning of our existence lies in something outside of ourselves, in something to which we owe loyalty and gratitude, in a principle of Truth that seeks to make itself known to us, in a principle of Goodness to which we can resonate in the way we live. Quakerism does not look for ultimate Truth in the purely rational or human sphere, but seeks to discern the will of God.

At the same time Quakerism avoids the flaw of much traditional religion, which has tended to assume that our grasp of the foundational truths by which we must live is a static thing, that the faith that must sustain us has already been fully revealed for all time. It is due to this misconception that so many mainstream religious institutions seem periodically to become oppressively outdated and hollow. It is a misconception that leads to a kind of spiritual imperialism based on a sense of owning the complete truth.

For Friends, our faith is not akin to clinging to a shrine; rather it is an endless pilgrimage of the heart. We know that our awareness of God’s Truth is always beyond our secure apprehension; yet we are committed to seeking after it diligently and then living faithfully according to the measure of Truth given to us. The great breakthrough that Quakerism represents...
is that, with our special attitude toward Scripture and ecclesiastical authority, and with our emphasis on living spiritual experience, we are prepared to participate in a process of continuing revelation.

Key to all this is the Quaker discernment process, the testing of all important issues of faith in a worshipful deliberation participated in by all members earnestly seeking not a human consensus but the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This is a highly disciplined process and requires much patience. It is the practice of a corporate mysticism through which the prophetic function operates collectively. Past experience has proven that out of this discernment process Friends can be empowered to enact a vision that will be a compelling example to others. Friends’ insights and practices in education, the equality of women and men, race relations, the treatment of the mentally ill, and even commerce and government, came to be widely acknowledged as worthy of emulation. By continuing to open ourselves to divine guidance, and by practicing our corporate discernment patiently and conscientiously, I believe we will find that much more will be given to us, which will support the human family’s search for the universal and eternal truths upon which all right living and peace are based.

There are at least three other aspects of Quaker experience and practice that also have enormous relevance to the future: our practice of Christian universalism, our Peace Testimony, and our Testimony of Simplicity.

While there is a growing spiritual crisis that must be addressed by people of faith everywhere, it cannot helpfully be addressed by religious people whose only vision is to impose their particular scheme on everyone else. Fundamentalism and fanaticism, while always representing a distortion of Truth, are under current conditions extremely dysfunctional. Since it is the transforming power of religious faith that offers the only way out of our present impasse, a significant aspect of the great task before us is to come increasingly to discover how the world’s faiths can nourish each other and how all people of faith can collaborate with respect to the challenge we must face together.

Unprogrammed Friends have, for the most part, rejected the untenable proposition that Christianity is superior to all the other world faiths, and that all of humanity is destined to be Christianized. Quakers have recognized the significant strand of insight in the New Testament, brought into view in the Gospel of John and in the letters of John, and in the Pauline texts, indicating that the sophia and the logos represent the universal presence of the Word in all of human history. There is a light that enlightens everyone ever called to live. Or, as Friends say more commonly, “There is that of God in everyone.” We are, therefore, not surprised to find beauty and truth in many different religious communities and faiths.

Quakerism’s extraordinary vocation in the common task of structuring the new age that is struggling to come to birth lies precisely in its capacity to be both Christian and universalist. As Friends we must continue to seek to heal any overt or covert power struggles among religious communities. We must help people of faith see that the world will be enriched if people of different spiritual traditions develop an active sympathy for each other and a willingness to learn from each other’s religious path. Is it not the peculiar mission of Quakerism to embody a Christianity capable of the magnanimity and the devotion appropriate to the task of building a world of peace and rapport among the different religious communities of the earth?

Even though the threat of nuclear omnicide, a killing off of everyone and everything in one reckless moment, seems to have receded, the Quaker Peace Testimony remains highly relevant to the human prospect. For surely in terms of actual human suffering, the cost of war and violence is as great and tragic today as it has ever been.

As the globe seems to shrink, as human populations multiply, and as advanced scientific, technological, and economic systems increase the volume and variety of the interactions that occur among the various peoples of the world, it becomes more and more clear that conflicts among groups are apt to escalate, much in the way aggression becomes more pronounced among people or animals confined to a small space than it does when there is more room. This brings the Peace Testimony and the work of many Friends in the fields of conflict resolution, mediation, and alternatives to violence into sharp focus and increasing relevance. A renewed way of life for the future must be based upon a commitment to conciliation, a commitment to upbuilding a sense of charity and unity in the human family.

The spirituality of the future will reject a commercialism based totally on unleashing and manipulating of egoistic and selfish desires. It will advance a renewed sense of the wonder, the mystery, and the miracle of life just as it is given to us. It will encourage a profound sense of the blessedness of all that is perfectly ordinary. It will refuse to see an individual conceived independently of social relationships, as the primary human reality, who is expected to advance interests of his own in competition with others, interests which are determined essentially by the passions. Integrity will count more than worldly ambition. There will be a respect for limits, a healthy skepticism about unending material progress, and a realization that everything has its price. In short, the spirituality of the future will be rooted in something akin to what Friends know as the Testimony of Simplicity.

We live in a time of profound confusion. Disagreements and doubt are pervasive. Few societies or individuals enjoy a life of untroubled certitude and, judging from the disorder of the world, few are living in a way expressive of divine truth. Shall we ever transform the pandemonium we know as human society into a community of saints? Do all the horrors and humiliation of the 20th century leave us with any basis for hope? Will this earthly city ever come to resemble the City of God?

Of course, here at the end of the 20th century, we cannot know the future. What we do know is that it is better to look first for a change of heart, to look to the spiritual foundation in the present upon which the city of the future will be built. People will never create a family, a community, a nation, or a global society that exceeds in wisdom and goodness what they have a grasp of within their own hearts. Those who hunger and thirst for justice, who are merciful, who are pure in heart, who are peacemakers, who are gentle, bring the City of God into sight. So in Quakerism’s search for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in its Peace Testimony, in its universalism Christianity, and in its Testimony of Simplicity we find a way of life worthy of our profoundest enthusiasm. If we follow it fully and faithfully, our lives can pour out teaching like prophecy, and we will prepare a place where future generations can make their home.

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WOODEN BENCHES

In the New Hampshire village of West Epping, there is a small Quaker meeting organized in 1772 or possibly earlier, still active with a dozen or so hearty souls meeting for silent worship. The present meetinghouse, built in 1851, is nestled in a stand of tall pines, seedlings when the building was erected.

the hush of an ancient pine grove
— "Where two or three are gathered . . ."

Unaltered in its century-plus, the meetinghouse is a pristine example of Friends' architecture. In keeping with the lifestyle of early Quakers, it was built sturdy and plain—without embellishment.

smell of musty old wood
mingles with new paint—
ghosts of elders

through the old bubbly glass
the pine tree
an impressionist painting

Rows of simple wooden benches—straight backs and hard seats, but with a graceful curve to the arm that softens the austerity of the room—fill the tiny meetinghouse.

curve
of the wooden bench—
the woodcarver's gentleness

The early meetinghouse was built with two front doors—separate entrances for the men and women. Inside, the house is divided by shutters that can be raised or lowered as needed. Friends have always believed in the equality of the sexes and have long since discontinued the practice of separateness.

tiny white meeting house—
two front doors—
one rusted shut!

Friends gather together on First Day to meditate in silence. Silent meditation is a process called "waiting" or "centering down." There are no programs, no formal speakers—although anyone who feels led may speak out of the silence. There are no musical instruments nor singing of hymns.

centering down—
the woodstove crackles—
cold feet!

The annual candlelight Christmas Eve meeting means a full house. The smell of fresh pine—candlewax—wet wool—and hot mulled cider on the woodstove blend into the gentle stillness of the hour.

on the windowsill
wet pine sizzles—

drop of candlewax.

—Evelyn Lang

Evelyn Lang is a member of Gonic (N.H.) Meeting and of the Haiku Society of America. This combination of prose and haiku poetry is called a haibun. It was previously published in Modern Haiku, Winter/Spring 1992.
The autumn sun poured in the window. Leaves were being stripped from the maples by westerly winds, tumbling in cartwheels to shifting piles below. All of a sudden, a single leaf soared past, not tumbling, but stem pointing straight ahead, gliding like a seagull. It reminded me of the surfers at Malibu beach, hanging ten on the edge of roasting waters. This leaf’s ecstatic last ride made me pray for a similar embrace of death when I leap off my tree in the end.

I have had other similarly resonant moments of perception. Once I marveled at the endless fractal variations of ferns and felt God’s giddy delight in diversity. Another time the wind-carved channels on a bleak January snowdrift evoked the powerlessness of my life and friendless howling wind that comes around, I come to recognize I am not an omnipotent god at the center of the universe. I am instead a limited creature, subject to all sorts of whims and whiles—pure accidents, genetics, environment—over which I have little if any control.

When I struggle to assert control over my world, I relate to the world as an object (or set of objects) to be manipulated. There are things to fear, which I must either make vanish or flee; there are things I want, which I must figure out how to get and retain. When I recognize that I am powerless, not in control, I relate to the world as a series of revelations. I tend to be more open to ask what this situation is teaching me, to look for the grace tinged my experience. Or, as one version of the Beatitudes has it, “How blest are those who know their need of God; the kingdom of heaven is theirs.”

If Jesus is powerless, what of the rest of us? Reflecting upon Jesus’ powerlessness, reflecting upon my life and thus is not passive seeing. We are able to see in this same way, my attention, does not, I am in control. I refer to the world as a series of revelations. I tend to be more open to ask what this situation is teaching me, to look for the grace tinged my experience. Or, as one version of the Beatitudes has it, “How blest are those who know their need of God; the kingdom of heaven is theirs.”

JOHN 5:19
by Tom Clinton-McCausland

The Gospels use a number of words for “power.” Sometimes it refers to the dynamic capacity itself. This last sense of “power” is the one that appears in Matt. 5:36 “you cannot [i.e. lack the power to] make one hair [of your head] white or black,” and in Matt. 6:27 “Can [i.e. do you have the power] any of you add one hour to life by fretting about it?” Thus when Jesus says, “The Son can do nothing by himself,” he meant that, on his own, he was devoid of the basic capacity to do anything. Just as humans lack the fundamental ability to change the color of one of their hairs or to add a minute to their life, so Jesus is powerless in himself.

The Gospels use a number of words for “see.” The one John uses in this verse entails attention (and is sometimes translated “behold”) and thus is not passive vision, but rather perceiving and noticing. A related word is used in several places in the Gospels when seeing and recognition come together, as when John “beholds” Jesus, proclaiming him the Son of God; or Jesus looks at Simon and declares him to be “Peter.” It is also used when we are asked to behold the birds of the air. Luke uses a different word with a similar meaning when he has Jesus say “consider the ravens” and “consider the lilies of the field.”

In all these cases we are invited to both perceive and comprehend, to observe fully and discover.

Our attention, my attention, does not, however, create the meaning—rather, it connects us with the meaning awaiting us. For example, when I behold the lilies of the field, I learn of God’s wondrous beauty, and from this I can begin to intimate the selfsame love that encompasses us.

Many of Jesus’ parables and metaphors illustrate this “beholding.” “The kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed,” “… yeast …”; the parable of the sower, the insensible widow. Each of these presents an event that Jesus witnessed—he saw mustard growing from seeds, bread being made, seeds being sown. But he saw more: each event resonated with grace, with a noetic revelation of God. In seeing the mustard seed Jesus saw God’s insistent creativity; in seeing the yeast, the Spirit’s invisible dynamo; and so on.

Besides Jesus and John the Baptist, Luke also records Moses’ perception of the burning bush, and Peter’s vision of all the four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air as being clean to eat as instances of this deep seeing. We are able to see in this same fashion as well.

One clue for me that this seeing is occurring is the stirring in my heart that accompanies it. My heart may say, “oh, yes,” or “now I see.” It may laugh. Often,
tears arise. In each case, though, the heart feels more open, less constricted, more vulnerable, more grateful. The "thou" I am seeing may be a flower, a bird; I may have a sudden sense for another person’s state of being (“deep calls unto deep”). In all cases, I both see and hear, perceive and learn.

In beginning to connect with these experiences, I find it fruitful to ask, “Where does God break into my world?” or “What makes my heart feel softer, more open, more vulnerable?” And when I have these answers, I can then ask, “And what does this tell me about the world; how does this reveal the Spirit’s irruption into my life, into all of life?”

**DOING**

One thing I learn as I open to the meaning of our seeing is that God is active in my world. This is what the third movement of the verse addresses: “...what the Father does, the Son does.”

What is it that the Father was doing in Jesus’ experience? He was sending rain on the just and unjust, he was merciful, he fed the birds of the air and clothed the flowers, he attended to the life of each sparrow; and he raised the dead. God was an unfathomable, relentless generosity—unfathomable because unconcerned about human measures of worth, relentless because incessant in bounty.

How did Jesus “do likewise?” He saw God’s care for the lilies and so sent the disciples out without money. He saw God’s presence in the corners (like the mustard seed) and built his group of disciples in the corners. He saw the self-sacrifice of seeds and understood crucifixion.

How do I “do likewise?” This will, certainly, differ depending upon what I am able to see, upon how my heart is moved. A good starting place can be to ask, “Where do I see God in my world, right now? When I see God, what do I see; how is God in my world?” As I learn more about how, I learn more about doing likewise. If God is present as a minute-by-minute sustainer, then part of my doing can be to release my concern for the morrow and loosen my hold on my possessions. If God is the halo of grace around the flower, I can feel that same love for me and everyone. If God is the heavy heart when seeing the homeless, I can work to gladden Mother/Father God’s heart as I lessen the misery of my homeless sibling. If God is the thrilling splendor of the sunset, I can give away the beauty I create.

Earlier, I spoke about integrating the divine into my daily life. By coming to realize my powerlessness, opening to the epiphanies punctuating reality, and realizing (“making real”) the meaning of these revelations, I can begin to manifest the divine, not merely integrate it. This process not only reveals God to me, but reveals also that particular being God created in creating me.
When my children were small, we taught First-day School at home because there were no other small children in our meeting. They were receptive to stories and simple explanations of our religious beliefs, and we encouraged them to think for themselves. As time passed, we brought up topics of concern as they arose in the context of the day. This worked great until their teenage years, when they were not around much.

When I did see my teenagers, I overheard conversations that told me they were struggling with materialism, violence from other students, and plain old greed. I wanted to help them in some way, but when I tried to talk to them I got the standard, “Oh Mom, you just don’t understand how things are today,” accompanied by eye-rolling.

Finally I realized that if they could not talk, perhaps they still remembered how to read. In an act of desperation I put a sign on the refrigerator. It said “Live simply so that others may simply live.” This was the beginning of what ultimately would be called my “Refrigerator First-day School.” I chose the refrigerator because that was the one place I could count on teenagers to go on a regular basis. After I hung the first sign, they skirted around it for a week or so, silently watching me, waiting for me to say something. I simply pretended it wasn’t there.

The second week I put up a new quote, this time about decision-making and responsibility. This time I noticed it took longer for them to get the milk out, but of course it wasn’t because they were reading my sign. No, not at all. Then one day a heated discussion broke out at the dinner table, and to my amazement my son defended his position with my quote on simplicity! He looked over at me and said, “OK, so I read it!”

As time passed, my children’s friends noticed the signs on the refrigerator too.

One even said, “Hey, that’s a great quote. Do you mind if I use it in the paper I have due for English?” My knees went weak, but I managed to hang on to the counter and say, “Sure. Why not?” I couldn’t believe that I had found a way to penetrate the blank stares of adolescence!

Each week I changed the quote, and as time passed, my husband and my kids started to hang signs of their own. Some of them were not specifically on Quaker topics mind you. One week there was a sign from my son that said, “Life’s too short to eat health food.” But I knew we were on the right track and communicating.

I decided that since the Quaker quotes were getting through, I might try something about helping around the house. I dug out a card my oldest daughter gave me once for Mother’s Day. On the front it read:

Step on a crack, break your mother’s back. . . .
Clean your room, give her a coronary. . . .
Wash the dishes, make her hair stand on end. . . .
Pick up that dirty glass that’s been sitting by the TV for three weeks, and watch her faint right there on the living room floor. . . .

Inside it said: “or wish her a Happy Mother’s day.”

I cut out the front of the card and happily taped it up on the refrigerator door, serene with my success in getting them to read my sign. There was no response. So, I backed it with bright blue construction paper and put it back up. There was no reaction at all. Apparently, there were limits to what teens would read. Sadly I took down my signs and went upstairs to the computer. I thought a long time about what my next effort should be. When the kids came home that day, the sign simply read, “Love is expressed in many ways.” And so it is.
Young Friends

Baltimore Young Friends’ 1999 Epistle (Excerpt)

To become a Young Friend is to become a part of a loving, living, and ever-evolving community. Throughout the 1998-99 year, conferences have provided Young Friends with the chance to examine, discuss, and solidify our role both as Quakers and Young Adults. Young Friends as a whole and as individuals have advanced on both a personal and spiritual level. As a generation of Young Friends moved on, those left in our group arose to create a new harmony. The questions of what testimonies were, and are our own, and how to live them were continuously discussed throughout the year. *Faith and Practice* and our own Gathering Expectations and queries were consulted and worshipped on repeatedly to arrive at a new spiritual leading.

**Minute on Same-Sex Marriage**

We, as Young Friends of Baltimore Yearly Meeting, living in the Quaker tradition, believe that the greater Quaker community should not only permit but should embrace same-sex marriage. Quaker testimonies, according to BYM *Faith and Practice*, provide ample justification for this stance. The testimonies spring from respect for truth, for peace, harmony, and a settled intention to practice love, for simplicity, community, and the equal worth of all people (*Faith and Practice*, p. 48).

The testimony of equality provides the most obvious support for our position. In living this testimony, we must allow the ministry of love to be available to all. Sexual orientation does not diminish or alter the Divine Light that Quakers recognize in every person. Quakers have often been at the forefront of similar struggles for equal rights, such as the abolition of slavery, women’s suffrage, and the civil rights movement. Now presented with a new struggle, should we not continue to put our testimonies into action?

Our respect for peace and harmony leads us to uphold the spirit of the community. Since we strive to be welcoming to all people, must we not foster an environment in which all can pursue their spiritual journeys? If in the course of that journey a leading for marriage occurs, their meeting has an obligation to allow way to open for the couple. When a religious tradition cannot fulfill the spiritual needs of its members, they are excluded from the community. As marriage is a spiritual need, people who cannot marry under the Religious Society of Friends may be forced to meet their needs elsewhere.

Our community should empower people to be true to themselves and their leadings. If two people are led to make a lifelong commitment to each other, then to repress such an essential part of themselves goes against the testimony of truthfulness.

Quakers have no expectations about what is necessary in a marriage, besides the existence of a powerful love. Every marriage is unique. In celebrating same-sex marriage we will enhance the already present diversity and strength of our Quaker community.

These issues have been a vessel of growth throughout the 1998-1999 year. Focusing our energy on the importance of community led us to the belief that it is imperative that our community be based on true unconditional love, trust, and acceptance.

—Interchange, September 1999

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**Life-Work: A Career Guide for Idealists**
By William A. Charland
Paper 216 pages $15.00 (Available December, 1999)

Bill Charland, career counselor and employment training consultant, shows how to find meaningful work today by asking the right questions—and listening carefully for the answers. The Quaker author of *The Idiot’s Guide to Changing Careers* (Macmillan, 1998) takes a deeper look here at work—its history, meaning, and current trends.

**A Winding Road to Freedom**
By Randall Wischart
Paper 152 pages $13.00 (Available December, 1999)

Cassie risks her hard-won freedom from slavery in order to rescue the infant son she left behind on a Kentucky plantation. On her side are a savvy black abolitionist network, Levi Coffin and other Quakers of the Underground Railroad, and her courageous friend Luke. Sequel to *Luke’s Summer Secret* (Gr. 6-8).

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**The Clouded Quaker Star:**
James Nayler 1618 to 1660
By Vera Massey
With Sessions Book Trust
Paper 113 pages $21.50 (available November, 1999)

Vera Massey offers a compelling perspective on James Nayler’s ministry before and after his trial and conviction for blasphemy by Parliament. It’s all here: Nayler’s power and faith, his torment, his stormy relationship with George Fox.

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Available from FGC Bookstore
1-800-966-4556
Life in the Meeting

Spiritual Discernment within the Nominating Process
by Perry Treadwell

How might Friends improve the spiritual discernment within their nominating committees? I posed this query to my interest group, "Nominating: Discernment and Delight," at the 1999 Gathering in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The incentive to sponsor this interest group arose out of a recent concern that has come from my experience as clerk of the nominating committee for the Central Committee of Friends General Conference.

Before serving in this capacity, I served as clerk of Atlanta Friends Meeting and then of its nominating committee. I have also watched the nominating process in the Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association as well as other yearly meetings. In all these cases the process is chaotic at times. At yearly and quarterly meetings, nominating committee members rush around accosting attenders, pleading for their commitments. Committee caucuses may be held in a noisy dining hall.

At the monthly meeting, the committee may not begin its discernment until shortly before its report to the business meeting is due. Frantically, names are suggested and discounted for some reason, often because the people are "too busy." The committee may caucus by phone.

Where is the spiritual discernment in this scramble?

Recently, I became aware of the nominating committee process of Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting in Berkeley, California (see sidebar). I found it grounded in the process of meeting for worship and kept the goals of the committee in focus. The FGC committee has used the process with, for me, moving spiritual results. Out of our worship a person's name arose which surprised us all. When I approached the person with the outcome of this process, he said that he had been looking for a leading in a similar direction. I am convinced that the Spirit guided us together.

Curious about the history of the Strawberry Creek process, which lists Eleanor Warnock's name as its author, I wrote to the meeting. The present clerk of their nominating committee, Leslie Leonard, replied that the document was written in 1980, "in the early period of our history, and fortunately several of our founding members felt compelled to articulate the process for the many new seekers in the meeting."

Leonard went on to observe "that the document has been passed on through the successive nominating committees and has pride of place in our nominating binder...We find it a valuable, but difficult, process to keep before us. All too often the press of business and the rather substantial slate we are called upon to fill take precedence over this kind of careful discernment. When we have particularly critical or difficult nominations, however, we find ourselves moving naturally into the deeper, richer silence out of which the process Eleanor describes flows."

The health of many meetings depends on the discernment of the nominating committee. Basic is the question whether filling the meeting's personnel needs depends on volunteers or discernment, or some of both. As one attender at the interest group asked, "What do you do when people volunteer for a job for which they are not qualified?" Another observed, "You have to know how strong the committee is to include the oddball." One added, "Sometimes you need an oddball to get the committee to rethink things."

During a visit to Beacon Hill Meeting in Boston, I learned that the meeting had changed the name of the nominating committee to the Gifts and Leading Committee. This change was more in keeping with their discernment process. Margaret Benefiel told me that they used the Strawberry Creek process regularly. She also recommended the writings of Elizabeth O'Connor, one of the original members of the Church of the Savior in Washington, D.C., who writes that a spiritual life rises from a journey inward, journey outward. The inward journey requires an understanding of oneself, an engagement with God and a commitment to one's community. The outward journey is one's servanthood to the wider world. Thus we ask of our members: What are your gifts that can minister to your communities?

I, like some other Friends, flinch when I hear the word ministry; it conjures up visions of preaching. But Friends' ministry is really service in every aspect of our lives, whether preparing the hospitality for the meeting, clerking the meeting, or a job at a food bank. My concern about how Friends discover these gifts has led me to some observations which may help focus on the nominating process.

Perry Treadwell is a member of Atlanta (Ga.) Meeting.
The nominating committee is a standing committee that must do its work during the whole year. In some small meetings it is a committee of the whole. Its first role is to be aware of the gifts and interests of all the meeting’s attenders. For the monthly meeting, the roster of the participants in its life should be annotated with such information. Representatives in quarterly and yearly meetings need to bring the same information with them. Nominations should not be limited to the names of people who turn up at these meetings.

How is the membership of the committee chosen? Is it self-perpetuating? Is it made up of coerced volunteers? Is it the last committee on the meeting’s agenda? Or is there a naming committee whose charge is to form a nominating committee that represents the diversity of the meeting?

The nominating committee is clear on what is expected for service in every office and committee. Many meetings rely on clerks of committees to be chosen from within the committees. Without nominating committee discernment, as another interest group attender recalled, “Sometimes this leads to nonfunctional committees.” An attitude of “I'll do it if no one else wants to” is not good order.

The committee recognizes that one of its duties is to nurture the future leadership within the meeting. Frequently the same names are just cycled between offices and committee clerkships. Where will the next generation of seasoned leaders come from?

Nominating is not a process of finding the blanks—although I must admit to that desire myself when I am constructing the roster for the next year. Sometimes the inability to find names is telling us something. One clerk of a yearly meeting nominating committee said that when she couldn't find in the blanks, she recommended laying down several committees. The yearly meeting agreed to all but the finance committee being laid down.

Finally, discernment comes out of worship. Rather than being an apparent model of Quaker chaos, the nominating committee can be a model of spiritual discernment. All it takes is time and the willingness to leave the blanks blank. The delight comes from knowing that the process works. An added delight is meeting some wonderful people during this process.

Another former clerk of Atlanta Friends Meeting and the present clerk of the nominating committee, Mary Ann Downey, summarized these observations as queries:

1. Do members of nominating committees seek to know the gifts and interests of all
meeting members and attenders, planning throughout the year how best to match the meeting’s needs to these gifts?

2. Does the naming committee seek to represent the diversity and experience of the meeting when choosing the nominating committee?

3. Are members of the nominating committee well informed and current on what is required for each office and committee?

4. Do you provide the kind of training and nurturing that will furnish new leadership?

5. Are you careful to wait for discernment and direction by the Spirit before asking Friends to serve? Do you encourage those called to take time to discern if they are led to accept this call?

6. Are there committees or offices that are no longer needed? Are positions filled too often by the same few people?

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The Nominating Committee Process of Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting

1. Focus on the position (like clerk) or the committee to be considered. Nominating committee members remind each other first of the functions of the position or committee, then on the personal qualities necessary to fulfill those functions. If no one present is clear on these functions, do not proceed until the next nominating committee meeting when the relevant information will have been found. When focusing on a committee to be appointed, questions of age and gender balance are relevant. (In the following steps, it is assumed that an individual is being sought, say, for clerk. When a whole committee is being sought, the process changes somewhat in the number of names presented and the number which rise to the top. This process can also be adopted for finding yearly meeting themes and speakers.)

2. When all committee members feel they understand what is being sought, the committee goes into silence out of which members identify whatever names occur to them, without commenting on the name. (Comments wait until step 3.) One person is responsible for writing down all these names, though other members may also write them down.

3. When it seems clear that no more names are forthcoming, questions may be asked about names which are unfamiliar to someone on the committee. When all are clear that they know enough about each name, the committee enters into silence again. (Note: Comments like “I don’t think s/he’ll do it” are not relevant here; only descriptive comments should be shared.)

4. One person slowly reads all the names that have been suggested. Out of the silence which follows, each committee member identifies the one name which rises to the top for them. Again, no comment is given on any name. Sometimes the clerk will move to stop someone who begins to comment. If no name rises to the top for someone, s/he can simply state that.

5. When all committee members have shared who rose to the top for them, there may be only one name, and the clerk can call a sense of the meeting on that name. If one name seems to dominate, the clerk may ask if the committee is clear on that name or wishes to continue.

6. If the clerk feels there is no sense of the meeting, committee members then share why they think a given name rose to the top for them. After this sharing, committee members go back into the silence and once again identify the one name that rises to the top for them.

7. Usually the clerk will be able to call a sense of the meeting after this second period of worship. If not, the committee needs to discern the next step.

Strengths of This Procedure:

1. The person to be asked to serve is chosen out of worship and from a sense of their gifts for a particular task, so that gifts and sense of call can then be shared with the person when s/he is asked to serve. Since the nominating committee has reviewed the functions of the position under consideration, the person asking the chosen person can also articulate the responsibilities of the position in which s/he is being asked to serve.

2. The process doesn’t focus on what gifts people don’t have. There are perfectly fine names who are just not right for a given position. In worship, these names will just drop away without any comment on what they can’t do.

3. The person to be asked to serve is not chosen by elimination, i.e., when a name is given, a committee member can’t say “They are too busy” or “They don’t get along with so and so,” or “They are disruptive on a committee.” If these things are true and relevant, that person’s name will not rise to the top and no negative comments need be made.
Share the joy of Christmas with someone you care about. This year let us help you bring a gift of inspiration that lasts all year long. As you plan your holiday gifts, consider our special offer: *Three new gift subscriptions* for less than the price of one! For less than the cost of one new gift subscription, you can send two more for free!

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**Reports and Epistles**

North Carolina Yearly Meeting

The 302nd session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting opened in the meeting room of New Garden Friends Meetinghouse, Greensboro, N.C., on Wednesday, August 4, 1999, at 10:00 a.m. Brent McKinney, clerk, introduced attenders to the theme of the sessions, "Celebrating Our Faith." Friends were excited with the clerk’s creative presentation outlining events for the week. Using Faith and Practice, he skillfully set the mood for Quakers to deal with the problems of poverty, hunger, greed, war, hate, and people’s indifference to human ills. “Does the world have a need for Quakers? We have come to celebrate our faith and find where we belong in the world.”

Ben Hurley, pastor of Cedar Square Meeting, continued the yearly meeting theme with his stirring message. He emphasized the fact that growth comes out of peril and not from ease. II Chronicles 20:12, “We know not what we do, but our eyes are upon thee, was the theme woven throughout his comments. In the afternoon, Ben Hurley was joined by three other members from his meeting who sang for the opening session of Ministry and Counsel. The worshipful tones of the music wafted through the halls of New Garden and warmed hearts in the meeting room as well. Other devotional speakers were Joseph Neal, Terry Venable, and Steve Lawrence. Reatha McCutchen, associate secretary for world ministries of FUM, and Carl Jones, youth director in Florida, inspired Friends with their messages.
John Porter, superintendent, proclaimed that part of the good news of the North Carolina Yearly Meeting is that three people have completed the recording process in the yearly meeting, while six others are entering the care of the Recording Committee. In addition to the wider array of services offered by the yearly meeting, the Task Force on Corporate Healing has composed a mission statement as follows: "North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends seeks through the power of the Holy Spirit to equip and energize our meetings in their witness to the love, message, and power of the Living Christ, encouraging Friends to translate our faith into practice."

Attention is being given to smaller meetings, perhaps 30–40 in number, and a Pastoral Care Committee is addressing the problems of pastoral families. John Porter challenged Friends who are involved in other vocations to answer the call to full-time Christian work.

Ann Parks, director of Quaker Lake, has provided able leadership for more than 700 campers and staff members this summer. Several hundred young people were turned away from the camp this year because of lack of facilities. She left the audience with an appeal for more service project workers, volunteers, nurses, and expansion of present facilities.

The yearly meeting celebrates the phenomenal way that Quaker Lake has made a lasting impact upon the lives of so many people during its 50 years of existence.

Friends grappled with the problems of poverty, hunger, greed, war, hate, and people's indifference to human ills through workshops, talks over lunch, and sharing of ideas. First, there was the honest confession that these problems can be overwhelming. Second was the recognition that the reluctance of individuals to contribute their small part is a mistake. Third, the attempts at solution are as diverse as individual Quakers. Some approaches involve the help of affiliated organizations. Others involve programs like Mustard Seed Mountain Movers, Students for a Better Tomorrow, Project Love Gifts and Friends Disaster, the Quaker Lake ministry, and Kids for the Kingdom.

Perhaps the greatest celebration of all came from the satisfaction of feeling a sense of peace in the gatherings. After realizing that the debate on homosexuality had become both futile and divisive, Friends backed away from the issue and terminated the use of the Task Force on Corporate Healing and Clarifying Vision. The statement of 1990 on sexual integrity (reaffirmed in 1993) still stands as approved.

—Florence Allen, Viola Britt, Bobbie Teague, Yearly Meeting Message Committee
A Simple Christmas

For Christ-centered Quakers who celebrate Christmas, A Simple Christmas is a sweet gift from our Mennonite friends at Herald Press.

Written by Alice Chapin, the elementary school teacher who also wrote 400 Creative Ways to Say I Love You, the book is packed with hundreds of simple, practical tips that are designed to focus your family’s attention on the Light Within instead of the lights at the mall.

Family retreats with spiritual readings and group meditation, video-and-popcorn parties for homebound neighbors, Christmas eve potlucks for an entire faith community, alternative gift-giving, community service, and ways to avoid excesses in spending, shopping, and working all contribute to creating a spiritually-centered winter holiday that effectively counters the mall madness that lures your children far from the paths of righteousness.

The book is particularly sensitive to the lack of time available for pre-holiday preparation to many working families with young children. One suggestion to avoid the gargantuan amount of time frequently spent on food shopping and cooking, for example, is to simply double what you make at Thanksgiving, freeze half, then serve on Christmas day!

The book also includes a chapter on celebrating the New Year in ways that enhance family togetherness and extend the spirit of Christmas into every day of the year. One way, for instance, is to abolish bedtime rules and throw a pizza party at 11 p.m. on New Year’s Eve. Fill your cups with cider, suggests Chapin, light a fire or some candles, then sit in a circle on the living room floor, and discuss the past year. Questions to ponder—out loud and without criticism from others—include:

- What has been the high point of the year for our family?
- What is the best thing our family did together this year? The worst?
- What is the best thing that happened to you personally? The worst?
- What is your biggest disappointment?
- How have you changed?
- Who was the most important person in your life this last year? Why?
- What is one thing you wish you had done differently?
- What are you most thankful for right now?
- All told, A Simple Christmas is truly a “gift that keeps on giving…”

—Ellen Michaud

Ellen Michaud is the JOURNAL’s book review editor and a member of South Starksborough Meeting in Vermont.

The Presence of Absence:
On Prayers and an Epiphany


At 27, the totally unreligious Doris Grumbach had a luminous experience while standing on her front steps—what she described as “a unique feeling of peace, an impression so intense that it seemed to expand into ineffable joy, a huge delight.” And, “... for the seconds it lasted I felt, with a certainty I cannot account for, a sense of the presence of God.”

After a 30-year absence from both belief and faith, I had a similar experience. Yet it was not the coincidental similarities of our epiphanies that drew me to Grumbach. It was her subsequent struggle to find that “luminous and absorbing feeling of love” once again.

Dogged by post-herpetic neuralgia, an unceasingly painful condition caused by a latent form of the chicken pox virus, Grumbach searches for God over five decades. Rackled by pain and unable to pray—even for relief—the unceasingly looks for a blueprint for prayer that will eventually lead her back to the presence of God.

Her guides are eclectic. Among them: Simone Weil; Roman Catholic monk Thomas Merton (whose writing makes her wonder if the epiphany that led her to God was mere self-delusion); Swedish diplomat Dag Hammerskjold (whose intensely spiritual life was revealed in writings published only after his death); and Quaker writer Thomas Kelly, whose words encourage her to pursue the sense of God through contemplative prayer with renewed fervor—“But then comes the crucial period in life when the quest for God grows hot, when the hot breath of the Hound of Heaven is at our heels, when the heart cries out, ‘Give me the presence or I die.’”

I found this part of Grumbach’s journey the most provocative and at the same time the most disjointed, for this is truly the chronicle of a struggle, an unedited daily diary with no foreshadowing of an outcome of any kind. While honest and inspiring, Grumbach can also be vague and downright crotchety. And there are times when she sounds like a long-married woman yearning for the skyrocketing of first romance, unwilling to settle into the comfort of commitment and companionable love.

What I found myself longing for was a conclusion, a realization, an “Ah-ha!” moment—though anyone serious about faith knows that’s as unrealistic as recapturing first love, even first love of God. The closest Grumbach comes is the acknowledgment that peace is found in the search and comfort in the mystery. But I believe, as Grumbach says,
that "My cloud of unknowing may some day contain God's presence."

—Denise Foley

Denise Foley is a seeker and the senior staff editor for features at Prevention Magazine.

Traces of Wisdom: Amish Women and the Pursuit of Life's Simple Pleasures

This lovely, gentle book transcends the mundane. At times it seems a mix between a book of meditations and a book of proverbs. Dotted with brief stories out of the lives of her Amish friends, and peppered with her own observations of life among the Amish and elsewhere, Stoltzfus shares the wisdom of the women of "her people."

Stoltzfus grew up in an Amish family, but her parents left the Old Order Amish Church when she was 17 to join the more modern Beachy Amish. As a consequence, the family was excommunicated and placed under ban by their former congregation. This meant that the Old Amish were to "shun" them. Her grandparents, however, took such rules as "Do not eat with them" with a literalness that approached tongue in cheek, and would set up separate tables in the same room for dinner in order to be faithful to the church and maintain relations with the family.

Traces of Wisdom covers the expected—the cooking, the simplicity of life, child rearing, the farm, living with the rhythm of the seasons—which are among the better known aspects of Amish life. She also speaks of salvation, temptation, death, and forgiveness. While she is blunt about some of the painful aspects of life bound into this traditional community, such as shunning, her purpose is to make the wisdom of Amish women's experience accessible as a model for those of us whose lives are bound up in the world.

The format of Traces of Wisdom makes for easy reading, and it is much less formidable than its 360 pages would indicate. Closer to the size of a paperback than most hardbacks, it is a book filled with space and light. The chapters are generally three to four pages, and each begins with the pattern from an Amish quilt and a short quotation. Stoltzfus' writing is as straightforward as her people. This is a lovely book that should resonate with many Friends.

—Marge Abbott

Marge Abbott is a member of Multnomah Meeting in Portland, Oreg. She is the author of several books and pamphlets, including A Certain Kind of Perfection and Mysticism Among Friends.
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News

Friends are among thousands of residents in a large area of eastern North Carolina recovering from record levels of rainfall and flooding during September. First Hurricane Dennis and then Floyd, and their aftermaths, dumped 31 inches of rain on the region. Both the Tar and Neuse Rivers flooded their basins with record depths. Counties heavily impacted were Wayne, including Goldsboro; Pitt, including Greenville; Lenoir, including Kinston; Edgecombe, Duplin, and Jones. The area encompasses Cantonne Quarter of North Carolina Yearly Meeting. The eight meetings in the quarter are Bethesda, Goldsboro, Hood Swamp, MarMac, Nahunta, New Hope, Northeast, and Rhodes.

The North Carolina Yearly Meeting office in Greensboro reported that, as far as is known, members and attenders of New Hope Meeting and Rhodes Meeting suffered the most damage to their homes and other properties. No meetinghouse was damaged, although some shingles were blown off the roof of the New Hope meetinghouse, which is located just east of Goldsboro on U.S. Highway 70. Gordon Clarke, minister at New Hope Meeting, said water from the Neuse River rose to the top of the steps into the meetinghouse, but the interior was not flooded.

Clarke said that upwards of 10,000 homes in the region may have to be demolished because of damage caused by flooding. He estimated it would take 18 months to two years for the area to recover from the devastation. Ministers in Cantonne Quarter are coordinating relief efforts among Friends in the area. Checks may be sent to Friends Relief Fund, c/o New Hope Friends, 4451 U.S. 70 East, Goldsboro, N.C. 27534.

Meanwhile, more relief efforts and assistance are being provided by other meetings throughout North Carolina Yearly Meeting. The yearly meeting office is coordinating these efforts. Personal hygiene kits, bedding, blankets, sheets, cleaning supplies, and drinking water are among items needed initially.

American Friends Service Committee, working with the North Carolina Friends Disaster Service (FDS) and local Friends churches, is providing assistance to flood victims. Money has been pledged and truckloads of emergency supplies have been sent from Philadelphia and from around North Carolina. AFSC announced a grant of $10,000 to FDS and an additional $5,000 to assist the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC). Farm laborers in the predominantly lowland agricultural part of the state, especially hard hit by the heavy rains during and after the hurricane, will be the recipients of aid through both FDS and FLOC. The AFSC welcomes financial contributions to expand this assistance. Contributions can be sent to AFSC...
Hurricane Floyd Relief, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 10102, or by calling toll free 1-888-588-2372.

Also involved in relief efforts are the Salvation Army, the Red Cross, and federal and state government agencies. Friends Disaster Service of North Carolina Yearly Meeting plans to assist in the long-term rebuilding effort.

Church-burning continues to be a problem, although it is not being reported in the media. The National Church Arson Task Force (NCATF) reported 670 cases of proven church arson, 105 cases of highly suspicious burnings of undetermined cause, and 315 cases of accidental burnings from all causes from January 1, 1995, through early September, 1998. This summer the National Coalition of Burned Churches updated those figures to include another 68 burnings from all causes in late 1998 and another 57 burnings from all causes from January to April, 1999. Those numbers jumped again when three synagogues on the West Coast and a church in Tennessee burned after the report was released.—Harold B. Confer, Director, Quaker Workcamps International

Palestinian stateswoman Hanan Mikhail-Ashrawi received an honorary doctoral degree from Earlham College in October. Ashrawi, who is widely credited for winning legitimacy of Palestinian grievances in world public opinion, was born in Nablus, Palestine, and attended The Friends Girls School in Ramallah, West Bank. She is Dean of the Faculty of Arts at Bir Zeit University; has served on the PLO’s Diplomatic Committee and as the Palestinian Delegation’s official spokesperson; is an elected member of the Palestinian Legislative Council; and is founder and secretary general of the Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy.—Earlham College

The International Conference on War Tax Issues will meet in Washington D.C. in July, 2000. The event, co-hosted by the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee and the educational arm of the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund, will be the first time the international conference has been held in the United States. Marian Franz, executive director of U.S. Peace Tax Fund efforts, reports that many countries around the world have active peace tax campaigns and organized war tax resistance groups. The International Conference on War Tax Issues will enable participants to meet with people of conscience from around the world, and all those interested in issues related to the conscientious objection to military taxation are invited to join the gathering.—National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund

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Friends Journal December 1999
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Upcoming Events
• January 1-3—Pemba Yearly Meeting, Chake Chake, Tanzania
• January 8-15—Australia Yearly Meeting
• January 9—India Yearly Meeting, Bhopal
(The annual Calendar of Yearly Meetings is available from FWCC, 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. 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 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 by e-mail at quf@orc.com.

• Overseas of the FWCC Elizabeth Ann Bogert Memorial Fund make grants of up to $1,000 to individuals involved in the study or practice of Christian mysticism. For information on how to apply, write to Carolyn Terrell, 46 B Brainerd Street, Mount Holly, NJ 08060. The deadline for proposals and letters of reference is March 1, 2000.

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December 1999 FRIENDS JOURNAL
John worked for the World Federation of Trade WCAX radio in Burlington, Vermont. In 1954, went to work in a garment factory to pay the bills.

In the early 1950s he became news director for Sullivan. Raised as a Roman Catholic, he attended the BBC in England analyzing news broadcasts from Scandinavia. They were married on October 8, 1946, and went to live in Paris, where John worked for the World Federation of Trade Unions. After a long job search, he bought the Manistee County Times in Michigan for $1, and repotted the news on WMTE radio. His dream of owning a paper hardly provided a living, and Nina went to work in a garment factory to pay the bills. In the early 1950s he became news director for WCAX radio in Burlington, Vermont. In 1954,

Milestones

Marriages/Unions

Hillas-Potter—Barbara Potter and Mary Hillas, on September 11, 1999, under the care of Portland (Maine) Friends Meeting.

Deaths

Bernard Wheeler—Edith Kelsey Bernard Wheeler, 81, of West Chester, Pa., on August 8, 1999. She was the widow of the late Burdette Bernard and Nelson Wheeler. Her parents were Edward and Marion Kelsey. Edith spent her early years at the Friends meeting. After attending a Friends boarding school in Providence, R.I., she went into training to become a nurse at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. In the summer of 1941 she volunteered as a nurse at an AFSC workcamp in West Virginia. Later during World War II she was a nurse at a Civilian Public Service camp in eastern Tennessee. There she met Burdette Bernard, whom she married in 1944. At the end of the war they moved to Westtown School, where her husband taught for over 30 years until his death in 1976. Edith taught at the Emily Lower kindergarten at Westtown and was nurse for several summer camps including Camp Dark Waters in New Jersey, Westtown Day Camp, and the Chase Tennis Camp at Westtown. Edith served on the board of managers of the Girls' Shelter at Cherry and as a board member of the Hickman Home in West Chester. In 1979 she married Nelson Wheeler, whose career had also been at Westtown School. They lived in West Chester until his death in 1995. They had recently moved into the Hickman Home on the grounds of West Chester Meeting. She was a member of Westtown Meeting, and after her marriage to Nelson Wheeler she attended West Chester Meeting for several years. She is survived by her daughters Patricia DiGiacomo of Westtown, Margaret Schmidt of Fleetwood, Pa., and Kathrin Donatucci of Amherst, Ohio; two granddaughters; and a brother, Philip Kelsey of Somers Point, N.J.

Sullivan—John Andrew Sullivan II, 82, on May 9, 1999, in Seattle, Washington. Born in Boston on April 17, 1917, he was the ninth and youngest child of Congressman John A. and Mary A. Sullivan. Raised as a Roman Catholic, he attended Boston Latin School and graduated from Harvard College in 1938. While at Harvard he worked as a newsman for the Boston Globe, and later at the New York newspaper PM. During World War II, he worked with the U.S. Office of War Intelligence at the BBC in England analyzing news broadcasts from Europe and the Middle East. There he met Nina Lindstrom, who was translating radio broadcasts from Scandinavia. They were married on October 8, 1946, and went to live in Paris, where John worked for the World Federation of Trade Unions. After a long job search, he bought the Manistee County Times in Michigan for $1, and repotted the news on WMTE radio. His dream of owning a paper hardly provided a living, and Nina went to work in a garment factory to pay the bills. In the early 1950s he became news director for WCAX radio in Burlington, Vermont. In 1954,

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Quaker Education Since 1837
on the same day his second son was born, WCAX, Vermont’s first TV station first went on the air with J.A. Sullivan reporting. He anchored the 6 o’clock news for eight years. It was in Vermont that John found friends among Quakers, and in 1956 he became a Friend, joining the Upper Connecticut Valley “Monthlyly” Meeting. So called because it met quarterly, bringing together Friends from Vermont and western New Hampshire. When the Burlington Worship Group became a Monthly Meeting in 1959, he transferred his membership there, and became its first clerk. Politicians of all stripes remarked on his fairness and sense of justice. Even though both the Republicans and Democrats had approached him about running for Governor of Vermont, in 1962 John left the new business to join the staff of American Friends Service Committee, where he devoted the next 20 years to the peace and justice organization incorporated on the day he was born. He was regional executive secretary in Cambridge for the New England Regional Office from 1962 until 1965, then for the Pacific Northwest Office from 1965 until 1969, when he was appointed Associate Executive Secretary for Information and Interpretation in Philadelphia. In this position he oversaw AFSC publications. Nena worked for FRIENDS JOURNAL. A well known Quaker speaker, John spoke to quarterly and yearly meetings as well as regional and national AFSC annual meetings and retreats. Many of his talks dealt with the spiritual basis of service and social action. He was deeply valued by his AFSC colleagues for his intellectual and spiritual honesty and caring friendship, qualities which led to integrity in his writing and public speaking and an openness to being changed by the insights and experiences of others. For most of his many years with Friends, he was concerned for the relationship of the AFSC with the Religious Society of Friends. For AFSC, John traveled to many “hot spots” around the world, seeking contact, information, and opportunities for peace. In 1982 John “retired” with his wife Nina to Vashon Island, Washington. He continued a deep AFSC involvement serving on the Regional Executive Committee and National Board, and clerking the National Peace Education Committee. In Seattle he facilitated the first informal dialogue among Jews and Arabs in the area, helping form the Seattle Committee for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, which was active from 1984–1989. He edited the translation of Ham Sok Hon’s History of Korea, Queen of Suffering, and Nen by Myeong-A Vjeanen Memoir by Bronson Clark, friend and AFSC colleague. John remained committed to Quakers and his community throughout his life. He transferred his membership from Burlington to University Meeting, then to Germantown Meeting, and finally back to University. He was a member of Worship and Ministry at both University and Germantown Meetings. After retirement, he served on the Discipline Committee, which developed the North Pacific Yearly Meeting’s first Faith and Practice, and clerked the Yearly Meeting in 1991–92. He focused his energy and love on the Vashon Worship Group and represented them at the monthly ecumenical gathering of Vashon ministers. He was an active member of the Vashon Mauit Island Health Clinic Board. In his final days, words which had come to him so easily, were becoming harder to find. Even so, his death was sudden and unexpected. After a week of critical care, he died on May 9, 1999 at news time, 6 p.m. Friends in Philadelphia organized a memorial meeting at Germantown Meeting on Sunday, May 16, 1999, which was attended by over 30 old friends and colleagues. Another memorial meeting was held at University Meeting June 20, 1999. John is survived by his wife Nina, sons John III and Donal, and his 92-year-old sister, Grace Mahony, his last surviving sibling.

Tyson—Diana Tyson, 81, on March 23, 1998, in Huntersville, North Carolina. Diana was born in Boston, Massachusetts on June 13, 1916, and spent her early adult life working at Massachusetts General Hospital. In 1947 she married Mike Tyson, a union organizer who became a laborer in the 1950s. The couple lived in Philadelphia, where they were active in the civil rights movement and worked for nuclear disarmament. Deeply concerned about harmony and justice, they were active in the peace movement during the Vietnam War. After Mike’s retirement, they went to live with their son Bill in North Carolina. Here they became involved with Charlotte Friends Meeting, which welcomed Diana as a member in May 1995. After the loss of her husband, she suffered a stroke and moved to the Brookwood Retirement Home in Huntersville. No longer able to attend Charlotte Friends Meeting, Diana became a regular attendant of the Davidson Friends Worship Group. Surviving Diana are her two sons and their wives, Kenneth and Patti Rosen, and William and Madalyn Tyson, and four grandchildren, Andrew Rosen, Ingrid Rosen, Daniel Tyson, and Miriam Tyson.

Wentworth—Ruth Jones Wentworth, 87, on August 14, 1999, in Bloomington, Indiana. Born into a Quaker family in Lansdowne, Pennsylvania, the daughter of Samuel W. and Florence (More) Jones, she was educated from first grade until college in Pennsylvania Friends schools. After learning to play basketball at Friends Select School and field hockey and tennis at Westtown, she majored in physical education at Connecticut College for Women. Upon graduation she accepted an invitation to join the Westtown faculty. During a summer of graduate study at the University of Wisconsin, she met William Norris Wentworth. They were married in 1936 under the care of Lansdowne Meeting. They settled in Bloomington, where Norris was named director of the Indiana University Conference Bureau and Ruth was in charge of filing in the university library. From 1947 until 1967 Ruth played a leading role in the development of the Girl Scout movement in the area, and she was responsible, with her husband, for laying out a Girl Scout camp at Bradford Woods, just north of Bloomington. She was also instrumental in establishing Opportunity House in Bloomington, a used-clothing outlet, the proceeds of which go to support Monroe County United Ministries. For more than 40 years she was a role model, inspiration, and stabilizing influence in Bloomington Meeting, with its diverse and ever-shifting population so characteristic of Friends meetings on college campuses. She was preceded in death by her husband in 1995. Survivors include a son, Dr. Samuel Wentworth of Darnall, Indiana; a daughter, Nancy Dolphin of Durango, Colorado; four grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.
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FRIENDS JOURNAL December 1999
Michigan, this past July, I became aware of two issues that should be considered in depth at the next FGC Gathering: the updating of the Peace Testimony to address the systemic violence inherent in "The New World Order," and the decline in participatory membership in the Religious Society of Friends. It is becoming more challenging to construct a faithful witness on the basis of an eclipsed rationalistic humanism as the ideologies of "inevitable progress" falter. Perhaps an intensified examination of the faith that was central to generations of Friends should be undertaken—the absurd radicalism of the message of Jesus and the prophets—past and present. Are we neglecting our own spiritual classics?

There was distress evident at the Gathering about the diminished participation of strongly committed and "seasoned" Friends in the operation of schools, agencies and action groups bearing the name Quaker. The distinctly Quaker content in various social enterprises seems diluted. The issue is not to moderate the radicalism of the vehicles of Friends testimonies, but to infuse them with the faith-based charisma that self-giving Quakers have offered. Let's not be misled into neutralization of their missions. The need is for a regenerative presence. That requires a larger and more committed "Light-bearing" community.

Without strategies for outreach and growth by FGC, the numerical decline will accelerate. The Unitarian Universalists have undertaken a membership advancement initiative that has increased their numbers. They speak frankly and positively about "evangelism." Consultation with Unitarian Universalists to develop media presentations and growth models among Friends should become a priority. There is still a great need to reach "the un reached" in our community, and "outing" is essential in the future. Friends can't just wait to be discovered. Let's focus on the "E" word in its most universal sense—"bearing good news" as we claim "holy ground."

Cari Davidson

Can we have a Quaker history series?

Over the past ten years, I have been a regular attender at two different worship groups (Cairo, Egypt; Hanoi, Vietnam) and three different monthly meetings (Ithaca, N.Y.; Charleston, W.V.; Hartford, Conn.). In each of the meetings Friends were struggling with how to share the richness of Quaker history with newcomers to the meeting. Newcomers are attending Quaker meetings, and given the lack of preaching, it is difficult for attenders to learn specifics of Quaker tradition. In addition, those who try may find that many of the older writings, such as George Fox's and John Woolman's journals, are not very accessible to the casual reader.

As I have pondered different ways to encourage the study of Quaker history, one that comes to mind is a series in FRIENDS JOURNAL. I wonder if the Journal would consider doing a Quaker History series, with short excerpts (perhaps one to three pages long) from different works? If possible, a Quaker historian could provide explanatory notes, and perhaps discussion questions could also be included.

Debbie Humphries
Waterbury, Conn.

Nearly all of the material published in Friends Journal is received unsolicited. We invite readers to respond to this request.—Eds.

A candidate for the hero list

I'd like to present my wife, Betty Broadbent Carter, as a candidate for your hero list. She is now 99 percent blind and profoundly deaf without her state-of-the-art computer chip hearing aid. She is a published writer as a result. Betty is 77 years old.

Joseph S. Carter
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A Quaker-minded leader with a clear understanding of Quaker beliefs and goals is needed to begin a 1-year term. The applicant must have a bachelor's degree and a comprehensive background in administration and elementary education. United Friends School is in its 29th year and has grown to include 132 students in eight multi-classrooms from kindergarten to eighth grade, with plans for growth. The school has a staff of 13 full-time and 9 part-time employees and runs after-school and summer camp programs.

Faculty and students work collaboratively, sharing their experiences in ways that convey a strong sense of unity and community. Special teachers work closely with classroom teachers to create a cooperative, experiential, and fully inclusive environment.

Currently, the school operates out of two sites. It is, however, about to launch a capital campaign to build a new school and create an intergenerational community with Quaker health care organization Chandler Hall. Please send resumes and references to Search Committee, 515 East Capitol Ln., Quakertown, PA 18951. Calls may be directed to Sharon Drezes at (215) 538-3202 between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., or (610) 955-4451 after 7 p.m. Deadline: January 15.

Beacon Hill Friends House

Quaker residential community seeks live-in Assistant Director: Monteverde Quaker thought and practice to community of 18 adults. Organized, able to balance long-term projects and daily tasks; able to live a simple life. Responsible for resident life, including community living, food preparation, community life and administering. Boarding home for Quakers, an experimental living arrangement. The Beacon Hill Friends House is a Quaker community and includes a school and peace center. Offers room, board, and an opportunity to work in lieu of cash. Utilities included. Stipend. Write: Beacon Hill Friends House, 5 Chestnut Street, Boston, MA 02108, or call: (617) 227-9118. See also http://www.bhfh.org.

Monteverde Friends School needs K-12 teachers and volunteers to help with a young school in Monteverde, Costa Rica. The school is on-site, bilingual school with multi-classed grades in Costa Rica’s rural mountains. While salaries are low, the experience is rich. Simple living includes food for teachers. Teachers please apply by January 31, volunteers any month, to Jenny Howe, Monteverde Friends School, Monteverde 5898, Guanacaste, Costa Rica, Tel/Fax: (506) 845-8902. Email: mfschool@raccoon.co.cr with copy to vandansten@raccoon.co.cr.

Orchard Manager: Enjoy working with plants? Interested in sustainable agriculture? Hard-working? Satisfied with most East Coast income? Peaceful scenic area. Friends worship group. H. Black, 170 Hidden Springs Ln., Cookeville, TN 38501. Phone: (901) 268-6969, e-mail: hblack@twinsave.net.

Interns, 8-12 month commitment, beginning January, June, or September. Assist with seminars and hospitality at William Penn House, five blocks from U.S. Capitol. Room, board, some garden services. Write: RHS, NPM, 515 East Capitol Stk, SE, Washington, DC 20003.

Rentals & Retreats

Quiet Wisconsin Country Home: Private room. Share house 95 acres with horses on owner, 2500/month or sometimes $50 while attending. Write: (315) 957-4338.

A Friendly Maui vacation on a Quaker family organic farm. 20 minutes to local beaches. New stone and cedar bungalow with large oakgrove, skylight, ocean view, walk-in closet, and private bath. Full kitchen, organic vegetable garden, and hot tub. Bed and breakfast included and suppr: $70 per day. Weekly and monthly rates available. Write: Barb, 897 Stillwater Dr., Northridge, CA 91324.

Retirement Living

Foxhall Retirement, Quaker-directed life care. A vibrant and caring community that encourages and supports men and women as they seek to live life fully and gracefully in harmony with the principles of simplicity, diversity, equity, mutual respect, compassion, and personal involvement. Spacious ground-floor apartments and community amenities such as library, computer center, computer classes, exercise room, $4,650-$16,050, monthly fees $1,363-$2,754. Fees include medical care. 500 East Marlin Avenue, Department F, St. Louis, MO 63124-0989. Telephone: (314) 253-4651. www.foxhallvillage.org.

KENDAL: Communities and Services for Older People

Kendal communities and services reflect sound management, adherence to Quaker values, and respect for each individual.

Continuing care retirement communities:

Kendal at Horseheads — Kendal at Hanover — Kendal at New York

Kendal at Oberlin — Kendal at New Hampshire

Kendal at Bicknell — Kendal at Cleveland

Kendal communities under development:

Kendal at Lexington — Kendal at Lakeside — Kendal at Granville

Independent living with residential services:

Kendal on the Thames

Skills nursing care; assisted living:

Barclay Friends — Kendal at Cleveland — Kendal at Cincinnati

Schools

John Woolman School, Rural Califo...
10 a.m., with First-day school for children. Discussions at 11 a.m. 625 Tower Street, Raleigh, N.C. (919) 821-4414.

GOWENWESTRIDGE - Open worship and childcare, 10:30 a.m., (919) 878-3196.

WELPINGTON-Unprogrammed worship 11 a.m. Discussion 10 a.m., 350 Peiffer Ave., 781-8111.

WELSPRING - Sabbath school 10 a.m., meeting for worship 11 a.m., Bill Remmes, clerk, (919) 877-9991.

North Dakota

BISMARCK - Faith and Practice, 8 a.m., and meeting for worship, 10:15 a.m. 371 Behrens, E. Divide Ave. Contact Them Kraftahl, clerk, at (701) 256-0498.

FARGO-Unprogrammed meeting, 10:30 a.m. Sundays. UCUM, 1259 12th N. St. (620) 232-5050.

AKTON-Unprogrammed worship and childcare, 10:30 a.m. Discussion and childcare, 9:30 a.m. 216 Myrtle Place, Akton, OH 44032 374-0231.

ATHENS-Meeting for worship, 9:30 a.m., 22 Birge, Chauncey (740) 787-8636.

BOWLING GREEN - Broadhead Friends Meeting FC, Unprogrammed worship group meet at: BLUFFTON-Sally (419) 358-5411.

SIDNEY -(937) 523-1061.

TOLEDO - Friends meeting, 10:30 a.m. Sundays, 289 Western Ave.; (614) 291-2331.

LANCASTER-Meeting and First-day school, 10:30 a.m. 371 Peiffer Ave. Contact Clerk, (919) 821-4414.

CLEVELAND - Meeting for worship and First-day school, 10:30 a.m. 1110 Magnolia Dr. (216) 791-2220.

COLUMBUS- Unprogrammed meeting 10:30 a.m. 1964 Indianapolis Ave., (614) 291-3331 or (614) 487-8442.

DAYTON-Friends meeting FC, 1617 Nagel Road, Sunday, 11 a.m. (614) 476-9757.

CINCINNATI - Community Meeting (Lisnell FCG and FUM), 1960 Wading Way, Sunday, 11 a.m. Meeting and First-day school 10 a.m. Quaker-house phone: (513) 861-4393, Frank Huss, clerk.

CLEVELAND- Meeting for worship and First-day school 11 a.m. 1071 Magnolia Dr. (216) 791-2220.

COLUMBUS- Unprogrammed meeting 10:30 a.m. 1964 Indianapolis Ave., (614) 291-3331 or (614) 487-8442.

DAYTON-Friends meeting FC, 1617 Nagel Road, Sunday, 11 a.m. (614) 476-9757.

GRANVILLE- Unprogrammed meeting 10:15 a.m. UCUM, 1259 12th N. St. (620) 232-5050.

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Giving Thanks at Year End

The end of the year is traditionally when people review their financial transactions for the past year and assess their fiscal health. Did we meet our budgetary goals? Did we reduce our debt? How did our investments do?

It is also the time when people pay off their pledges or consider a "bonus" gift to their Meeting and to other Friends organizations they support. Giving securities, especially long-term appreciated stock, makes a lot of sense! Why? Because the donor receives a DOUBLE tax benefit! First, you receive a current income tax deduction for the full fair-market value of the stock. Then, you pay NO capital gains tax on the "paper profit."

For example, Betty Smith has stock she purchased in 1985 for $250 and is now worth $1,000. If Betty gives the stock to Pendle Hill instead of cash, we receive a gift of $1,000 - the fair market value of the stock - and she can claim a $1,000 charitable deduction on her next income tax return. In a 28% tax bracket, that is a tax savings of $280. Plus, she avoids $150 in capital gains taxes that would have been due if she had sold the stock.

Transferring stock to Pendle Hill is not as difficult as it may seem. If your stock is held by your broker or your trust department, it can usually be transferred electronically to our account. If you hold the certificates personally, they can be mailed by certified mail.

Invest in the Future of Pendle Hill

If you want more information on how to make a charitable transfer of stock and other securities, please contact:

Richard Barnes
Director of Development
Pendle Hill
338 Plush Mill Road
Wallingford, PA 19086-6099
800.742.3150, ext. 132
E-mail contributions@pendlehill.org
www.pendlehill.org

Founded in 1930, Pendle Hill will be celebrating its 70th anniversary in the year 2000. We will be sponsoring a series of monthly announcements on the back page of Friends Journal around the following themes:

* 70 Years of Service
* Founding of Pendle Hill
* Henry Hodgkins
* Rufus Jones
* The Pendle Hill Idea Course of Study
* 1930-The First Class
* 70th Anniversary Celebration
* Campaign for a New Century Update
* Howard and Anna Brinton
* Clarence Pickett
* Henry Cadbury
* Douglas Steere
If you haven't considered a Friends education, what are you waiting for?

Scholarship Opportunities for Quaker Families

Each year George School awards...

...At least one of the four $10,000 Anderson Scholarships, recognizing academic achievement, community involvement, and leadership potential, to a Quaker student.

...Five $2,000 John M. George Scholarships to new boarding students. Criteria include participation in Monthly Meeting, demonstrated interest in Quaker concerns, and academic achievement.

...Two $1,000 John M. George Scholarships to new day students. Criteria are the same as above.

...$2.6 million in need-based scholarships.

Admission and scholarship application deadline: February 1, 2000.

For more information, please contact:

George School
Box 4000
Newtown, PA 18940

Phone: (215) 579-6547
Fax: (215) 579-6549
E-mail: admissions@georgeschool.org

Visit our Website: www.georgeschool.org

Founded in 1893 as a Friends coeducational school, George School provides an unusually broad curriculum including Honors, Advanced Placement, English as a Second Language, and International Baccalaureate courses. Activities include student government, intramural and interscholastic sports, clubs, and a cooperative work program. Quaker values such as tolerance, equality, and respect for the individual help us create a diverse community where academics, sports, arts, and service share emphasis.