Healing Our Separation from the Land

Elias Hicks, Environmentalist

The God Within: A Jewish Refugee's Path to Quakers
Thinking about Faithfulness

In 1986 I was a mother of young children, struggling, with my husband, to make ends meet on his salary from a Quaker organization. We'd managed for five years (supplemented by savings from my first stint at FRIENDS JOURNAL) but it was increasingly clear that we could not continue to do so. We sought divine guidance for what would come next. The leadings began to emerge, but I was not altogether eager to follow those promptings. Gradually, it became clear that we were to leave our beloved home, neighborhood, meeting, friends, and community to move to upstate New York in service to New York Yearly Meeting. We knew no one there. I confess I struggled with this decision; it would take us far outside my comfort zone. I ruefully smile now at how unadventurous I was. I worried about our children's education, about our family finances, about anything I could imagine. But as I prayed for clear, unequivocal guidance, it came and it was clear we should go—and that we would love it. We did. So much that it still feels like home to us.

As I look at the feature articles we present this month, the word “faithfulness” comes to mind. I am struck by the call to follow one's leadings that is delineated in many of these pieces. In ways far more remarkable than in my story, the movement of Spirit can be traced in the lives of our authors, and the life-changing experiences that followed. Stephen Angell, one of the wonderful New York Friends I met after I surrendered to my Guide, writes in “The Nature of God” (p.6), “The Divine Spirit is not to be envisioned as a remote entity . . . but rather as a compassionate Spirit all around us, ‘the one in whom we live and move and have our being’” (Acts 17:28). He goes on to share two particularly remarkable experiences he has had of Divine leading, and the astonishing and, in one case, very far-reaching results of his own faithfulness.

In “Uncommonly Enduring Decisions: The Legacy of Gilbert F. White” (p. 13) Robert Hinshaw shares that the remarkable Gilbert White, whose career as a central figure in the management of natural resources laid the groundwork for the sustainability movement of today, said “little or nothing about the Inner Light . . . as the basis for his decision-making . . . but he would share his conviction that only through everyone's listening to the personal conscience and experience of every other participant could the group collectively discern the most appropriate path.”

“The Liberation of Nathan Swift” (p. 20) by Daniel Jenkins, traces the path of another Friend, a young farmer from upstate New York, who, in 1839, as he plowed the family fields, was arrested by the local constable for nonpayment of his militia exemption tax. The willingness of Quakers in that period to risk the loss of their property and their freedom and to go to jail, as Nathan Swift did, for the sake of their belief in nonviolence and their faithfulness to that leading was remarkable.

This issue of FRIENDS JOURNAL also has a strong environmental theme. It is perhaps no coincidence that the themes of faithfulness and concern for the Earth—and healing of our human relationship to it—are coupled in much of what you will read here. I know that I am increasingly feeling leadings regarding the issue of environmental sustainability and the changes that will require of us. How about you?
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Cover photo by Benjamin Earwicker
take to dispose of a light bulb?

A gift of four energy-efficient light bulbs for the Penn Valley Friends Meetinghouse has led to a dilemma of sorts for our meeting. Now that the new bulbs have been installed, we feel good that we’ve helped the meeting save energy and money, and that we’ve done what we can to help prolong the life of the planet.

But now we have a problem. What are we to do with the old, slightly used, inefficient light bulbs? Do we give them away or destroy them? Do we let them sit on the shelf? Do we hide them in a closet and try really hard to forget they are there?

But there are deeper questions we must address: By giving away the bulbs away are we encouraging the inefficient use of electricity? Are we enabling the energy burners of the world? Is it really worth the time it takes to write this silly story? On the other hand, should the meeting resist easier knowing that by giving away the bulbs it has helped some needy person make it through the night? By throwing away these light bulbs, we would be helping to fill the landfills. Not a good thing.

And if you’ve lived through the Great Depression or ever heard a survivor of that dreadful time speak on the subject of wastefulness and economy, then you know that tossing away “perfectly good” light bulbs would make us candidates for eternal hellfire.

 Granted, it is not as if the four light bulbs—combined weight of about 12 ounces—represent the 900-pound gorilla in the room, but it is an interesting dilemma.

If anyone can, um, shed any light on this topic, and if you have a suggestion, facitious or not, please contact Jim Kenney, chairman of the Light Bulb Conundrum Committee.

Jim Kenney
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 Kansas City, Kan.

The new conscientious objectors

As more and more people are questioning U.S. policies on war, in Iraq and elsewhere, the subject of conscientious objection is very relevant. Many soldiers currently serving in the military have requested CO status as they question the morality of our military policy. Other soldiers have questioned the legal and efficacy of our government’s foreign policy for they are in a prime position to do so. Those of us outside the military who care about this issue can act now to

Craig Jacobson
for Agate Passage Meeting
Indianola, Wash.

Friends are everywhere

On September 21, 2006, while my husband, Sam, and I were visiting national parks in the West, we had a terrible auto accident. After the “jaws of life” extracted me from my 2001 Prius, I was flown to the University of Utah Hospital in Salt Lake City. Upon being admitted I was asked if I wanted to state a religious preference. I immediately responded “Quaker” and the next question was “Would you like someone to visit?” My spirit soared.

The next day I was contacted by Salt Lake (Utah) Friends. Co-clerk Heidi Hart visited me frequently during my two-week hospitalization, on occasion bringing her harp with her. Co-clerk Elaine Emmi and Friends, on the spur of the moment, arranged a meeting for worship in the hospital chapel. With it being Yom Kippur, Heidi was able to put Sam in touch with the Jewish community so he could attend services. Both communities brought me chicken soup.

If a Friend with 20 broken bones were to appear in our midst, how would our meeting respond? From your lips, to God’s ears, to my bones, I have been blessed with prayers.

Betty L. Miller
Santa Rosa, Calif.

Religion and science

For many religion and science have either teamed together or against one another. Both need reins, i.e. authority. For theism, a clear God is necessary. The nontheists want a new harness. The theists say “Only a good bit works.”

The nontheists hold that the style in harness changes, in other words, the image of the Deity changes.

This nontheist of 2007 can’t sketch, but I
Contentious and divisive

I have read many articles in FRIENDS JOURNAL over the years, but the article “Misunderstanding Quaker Faith and Practice” (FJ Jan.) prompted me to write, trying to understand, as a relatively new member of the Religious Society of Friends, what Terry Wallace is trying to say. After reading and examining it point for point, I’ve found the piece to be contentious and divisive. I don’t know what unprogrammed meetings Terry Wallace has attended, but I have never found what he has said to be the case. I offer my perspective on what he has written.

1. All religions are saying the same thing only in different words.

I agree with Terry Wallace completely. Underneath the surface, most religions are certainly not the same, but we have much to learn from all faiths!

2. You can believe anything you want to as a Friend.

Who, as a serious Friend, would ever state this? Never have I heard this uttered, and I know no fellow Quaker who ever would! I know of no unprogrammed meeting that has a bias against any faith.

3. Friends have no creeds.

Terry Wallace has italicized the words on Philadelphia Yearly Meeting’s recent welcome poster: “We believe” and “These beliefs”—which do, in fact, resemble a creed, but not in the way that he infers. I grant that stating we have no creed is, in and of itself, a statement of creed. I agree that early Friends believed that creeds had no saving power. But I do not understand his statement that Friends who do not subscribe to this idea are “quietly isolated from the meeting.” What experience brings him to this sad conclusion?

4. That of God in every person is that Divine spark, that little piece of God, in each of us.

Did the 19th- and early 20th-century Friends take a definitive course to reinterpret Neo-Platonism to “make early 20th-century unprogrammed Quakerism more acceptable in college and intellectual circles”? I find it hard to believe that there was a conspiracy to bring Neo-Platonism into Quakerism. Granted, I see in Quakerism the Neo-Platonist dimension of spiritual love. We humans are the link between the material world and the spiritual world through our souls, just as the early Neo-Platonists believed. Just as humans are bound by love, so too are all parts of the universe held together by bonds of sympathetic love.

5. The Bible is just one great book among many.

I don’t believe that Quakers today think that early Quakers didn’t believe the Bible was really important. Of course they did, and so do Quakers today! I take issue with Terry Wallace’s statement that, “Even most non-Christian scriptures can’t match the Bible’s remarkable evolution, being the works of many hands over more than 1,000 years: a book of books detailing the work of God in salvation history.” The evolution of other religions’ testaments, however, has no lesser meaning for their believers.

6. All Friends embrace the Peace Testimony.

I don’t question Terry Wallace’s knowledge of early Quaker history; I am not well versed in it. But I see no difference in what Quakers believed then and now. Almost all 21st-century Quakers I know believe “There is no way to peace: peace is the way.” And they certainly do not divorce peace from integrity, compassion, gentleness, and truthfulness. I see so many of my Quaker friends, especially in my own Seaville (N.J.) Meeting who view their lives as testimony, a witness to the presence and power of Christ, but they do not discard or reject others who attend our meeting who do not believe as they do.

7. Friends are rugged, spiritual individualists.

Our meeting at Seaville and several other unprogrammed meetings I have attended are filled with many “rugged individualists” who, despite this feeling and demeanor, are still actively involved in the community of Friends. They are certainly not unwilling or intimidated not to bring their opinions and feelings to the meeting, but are also mindful of their responsibility to the community of Friends.

8. Quaker business meetings work by consensus.

No one would deny that we expect our Lord to be a very real presence at our meetings with a concern for business. We expect that the will of God will guide us as we make our decisions in the active power of God. I believe that the actual outcome of that however, is a sort of consensus, because when we cast aside our personal agendas, we defer to others, we see their point of view and sometimes disagree (with love and patience). Is this not consensus?

I disagree that Quakers want to avoid any challenge and cut off conversation that may lead to conflict. The term “Quaker unprogrammed fundamentalism” is frankly insulting to the many unprogrammed meetings that do not demonstrate the behaviors “evidenced” in this article. I take serious issue with the statement that many Friends claim to be seekers, but are uncomfortable with those who claim to be finders. Our meeting has many who have come to us from a wide variety of religions: many ex-Catholics, a Jew, a Buddhist, several ex-Baptists, Presbyterians, and other Protestant denominations. No one who stood to speak of their foundations or ministered from their own beliefs would be ignored. Oftentimes I find myself enriched by the vast array of those who bring their opinions into our meeting. They bring their beliefs without fear of retribution or castigation.

I take great umbrage with the statement that positions taken by Friends are rooted in feelings of guilt over the sins of Western Civilization; that we feel bitterness over the sins of colonialism, racism, and violence done to other non-Western cultures. I know of no one who continues to “beat themselves up” through the horror of the Middle Passage were perpetrated by our ancestors and are a fact of our history. Sure, we regret that it happened, but that was then; this is now. I am not judged by the behaviors of my ancestors. I live today and must demonstrate by my actions that I make myself a living witness to the power of Christ.

I think the biggest mistake Terry Wallace makes is to unfairly paint every Quaker (obviously we unprogrammed folks in particular) with the same broad brush. Using the pronoun “we,” he assumes all are making the same mistakes.

Bob Holden
Bob Holden, a member of Seaville (N.J.) Meeting, was a public school elementary teacher for 31 years and currently teaches History at Atlantic Cape Community College and Cumberland Community College.
Where does the concept of God come from? We humans, as a sentient, introspective, inquisitive species, seek out answers to this question. God is a title we have given to an entity that we cannot fully visualize, understand, or physically touch. We view God as creator of the universe. Christians have developed their conception of God largely from Hebrew Scriptures and the teachings of Jesus. Other religions seeking to understand the entity of creation have credited other sources. The scriptural passage that most speaks to me about the nature of God, with the exception of the use of a personal pronoun (I do not perceive God as having a gender), reads: "God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24).

As for human existence, we are merely a small piece of all creation—and creation undoubtedly will continue for a period of time far beyond our human capacity to conceive. In our squandering of the gifts that make human life possible (i.e. nonrenewable natural resources and protection of the environmental envelope) we are moving toward our end faster than we may realize. I believe this to be a sign of our unwillingness to be sensitive and/or responsive to God. We ascribe to God events that occur naturally because the human race understands the universe in physical terms. For example, Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia is quoted as saying about the recent tsunami in Southeast Asia, "I know there is some reason God in his wisdom permitted this to happen, but do not know all of the elements of his message." According to Reuters, Sephardic Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar, one of Israel’s top religious leaders, said: "The world is being punished for wrongdoing—be it people’s needless hatred of each other, lack of charity, or moral turpitude." Similar sentiments have been expressed by other religious leaders of various faiths throughout history about such "acts of God."

The current environmental and political situation in which our planet finds itself raises the question: What is God's nature? President George W. Bush feels keenly that he was following God's will in his preemptive invasion of Iraq. Bob Woodward, author of Plan of Attack, when asking Bush if he had consulted his father, former President Bush, regarding the launch of the war with Iraq, responded that he was consulting "a higher father."

In contrast, some Islamic leaders believe that God is on their side and that Americans are infidels. Both parties cannot be right. This dichotomy raises further questions: namely, does God take sides in human affairs? And are we as human beings just using God’s name to justify our actions?

Throughout human history horrendous things have been done "with God's blessing." Generally, people in the United States have been led to believe that we have fought wars with "God on our side." This depiction of God is not the divine entity that I have experienced or feel that I know. For me, the Divine Spirit is not to be envisioned as a remote entity supporting destructive human behaviors, but rather as a compassionate Spirit all around us, "the one in whom we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

There have been two experiences in my lifetime that have connected me with this conception of God. The first instance occurred in June 1970. At that time I was active with Friends Committee on National Legislation and served as clerk of the General Committee. It was a time of great national unrest because of the Vietnam War. President Nixon was in office. On the particular weekend involved—which was the weekend of the largest antiwar demonstration, following the killing...
by the Ohio National Guard of four Kent State University students during an anti-war rally—I was traveling to Washington, D.C., to attend a meeting of the FCNL Executive Committee and had some business appointments in town that required rather precise planning of my travel time.

Before leaving, I received a call from a Friend inviting me to a gathering of Quakers and others in Lafayette Park, opposite the White House, to hold an open office hour on the theme of peace and justice for the victims of the Vietnam War. I would be there if I could.

I had made the journey to Washington many times before. I would usually choose the most convenient route to take me to my initial location. This time, for unknown reasons, the route I found myself taking was not the route I would ordinarily have chosen.

While traveling, I was listening to my car radio. Much of the news was about national unrest: the aftermath of the Kent State killings, the upcoming demonstration in Washington, and a report that the President was at Camp David. I was very much focused on my travel progress and getting to Washington for my first appointment. All seemed to be going well.

It was at this time that I received a message. The leading was that I should go to Camp David and give a message to the President. This took me completely by surprise. First of all, I had no notion of how to get to Camp David, and secondly, I did not know what the message was that I needed to give to the President. “This has to be a whole lot of nonsense,” I thought, and I was right on time to make my appointments. I kept trying to put the idea out of my mind, but it would not let me go.

I kept driving and found myself in the Catoctin Mountains in rural Maryland. I came to a side road to my right where an army jeep was approaching and received the instruction that I should turn right. It was not a road I had ever driven before and I had no idea where it led. Besides which, I was right on schedule and did not know if Camp David was 15, 25, or even 50 miles away. It didn’t make sense to turn there and I refused to do it. I kept driving for about two miles until I literally could not drive any further. I had to pull the car over to the side of the road.

What made me pull over requires the telling of another story. A few months earlier, I had heard over the radio that President Nixon and the war in Vietnam. I tried not to think about it, but that I don’t know what it is! I pulled up to the gatehouse. There were two officers inside. One asked me what my business was, and I said that I had come with a message for the President. He told me if I gave it to him he would see that the President received it. I said I could not give him the message and could only tell him how I got there. While telling my story to one officer, the other officer was on the telephone. This officer soon came over and spoke to the officer listening to me. I was then instructed that if I would pull my car off to the side, one of the President’s staff would come out and speak to me. I did this and very short-
ly a man came from inside the compound and sat in the passenger seat of my car.

I retold the story of how I got to Camp David and then reached the point of relating the message for the President which I did not know until that moment—I had faith that when the time came the words would be there. My feelings and opinions about Richard Nixon were very negative. I have no clear recollection of what my exact words were to the staff members. What I do remember clearly is that suddenly I had great compassion for the man. I did not know until that moment that I had great compassion for the man.

The presidential staff person wanted information about who I was. It just so happened that the most recent issue of the FCNL Newsletter had profiled some of its leadership. In this issue were both my picture and an accompanying article. I had a copy with me that I gave to him and he left. I was then able to resume my trip to Washington D.C. The President did not attend the Meeting in Lafayette Park. I did, however, write him a letter expressing our regret that he could not be with us—the compassionate feelings that came over me while at Camp David were still with me. In response, a week or so later I received a short letter of appreciation signed by Richard Nixon.

A second experience that has had a major impact on my life happened in the mid-1980s. I was alone, driving in my car. Suddenly there was a voice that said, “Barbara (my wife) will be dead in three years.” She was not ill at the time and was functioning normally. She had had mastectomies (one 16 years previously) but seemed well recovered. I did not feel I could talk with anyone about this message, however, I continued asking God, “Why did you tell me this? What am I supposed to do with this information?” I received no direct answer. Finally I became aware that there must be something the Divine Spirit wanted me to do. The task that became clear was for me to devote my life to sharing the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) to bring about a more peaceful nonviolent world. When this became clear I told God, “If indeed what you said would happen happens, I will devote the remainder of my life to sharing AVP as broadly as possible.” Barbara died just four or five weeks short of three years after my original message. I have been committed to AVP ever since and to helping it spread across the United States and other continents. I expect to continue in this ministry as long as I am able, and indeed the way has opened for me to do more than I ever expected. Many individuals who have been in workshops that I helped to facilitate have gone on to the training to become facilitators. (It is the practice of AVP to always work in teams.) These individuals, in turn, have inspired others to become involved and to take the message to many places around the globe in a trail far beyond my expectations. A group is currently active under Friends Peace Teams in Central Africa (Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya), where genocide took place in the 1990s. Similar groups are active in other places around the planet.

Since early childhood, I have had leadings that I felt come from a Source beyond myself and have given direction to my life. None were as intense as the two I have just described. I see these leadings as derived from the same energy source as the teachings of Buddha, Mohammad, Gandhi, Lao-tzu, Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King Jr., and many others. I believe that we all have the capacity of being touched and directed in our lives by this Universal Source, although not necessarily with the same level of intensity and mystical manner of those just named.

I believe the Divine Spirit leads us only to restorative and caring actions. Unless we can incorporate into our lives the seminal teachings as shared with us through the life of Jesus and these other inspired leaders, I believe our chances of survival as a species on planet Earth are indeed greatly reduced.

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PRAYER QUERY

Am I praying to an outside God
or calling on some Wisdom from within?
Is light a particle, a golden drop
of rain that brings conception from the sky,
or a welling wave, Old Faithful on the clock?
Are You mine, or am I Yours, and does it matter?
Two hearts share walls in the township of my chest.
Does it matter which of us holds title
to those chambers, and which is guest?

—Donna Glee Williams

Donna Glee Williams lives in Balsam, N.C.
A Christian Vision of the Earth

by Ellen M. Ross

The Source of Earth-Alienation

We are by nature Earth creatures, lifted from the mud of the ground and stirred to life by the breath of God. Intimate both with the life-giving Earth beneath our feet and with God's vivifying breath, we come into being in a wondrous garden-world of soil, plants, water, and air.

But then something goes wrong, and we find ourselves hiding from the God who comes walking in the garden in the cool of the evening. Just what goes awry is the subject for another meditation, but the biblical insight is profound that we find ourselves in a world alienated from our Creator. Even more startlingly, the Genesis narrative tells us that the "fall" fractured not only our connection to God but also our relationship to our other life source: the Earth. So God, speaking to Adam, says, "Thorns and thistles [the ground] shall bring forth to you. . . . In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken. . . . Therefore the Lord God sent [Adam] forth from the garden of Eden" (Gen. 3:18-19, 23). God-alienation and Earth-alienation are paired in this biblical portrait of the broken human condition.

The shattering of humankind's founding Earth-connection is reinscribed in the next generation after the Fall. After Cain kills Abel, God confronts Cain, "What have you done? The voice of your brother is crying to me from the ground" (Gen. 4:10). The Earth, as if recognizing its kinship with human well-being, takes up the blood of the innocent Abel and carries his voice to God. "And now you are cursed from the ground which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength; you shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the Earth" (Genesis 4:11-12). Human violence marks the land, and humans are now even further estranged from their life source in God and in the Earth. The Earth has strength and bounty to share with humans, but interpersonal violence saturates the ground with blood, causes the land to withhold its strength, and humans once again become fugitives from their Earthen life source.

The wisdom of these stories is the spiritual truth they tell about the human condition: many of us experience a deep and abiding sense of separation from the natural world. Acknowledging the biblical lineage of this fundamental brokenness may help us to understand our own and others' resistance to compassionate love of the Earth. It may help us to see the urgency of nurturing spiritual and ecological practices to restore our individual and communal sense of belonging to Earth community.

I have been wondering why for so many of us the devastation of our planet home seems so remote, as if it is happening far away in distant lands. On some level we know it is not: of course, the degradation of our Earthen home is here, in our midst, in the communities we love, on the grounds we walk. The sites we now cherish, the places of our memories, and the open spaces of our children's futures are fast disappearing. But so often, I feel, we live in denial of our participation in this destruction, and in abdication of our responsibility for sustaining the well-being of the creation around us.

Strangely, the biblical stories of Earth-alienation console me because they remind me of how primal our estrangement from the natural world is. The problem begins with our first parents, as it were. These stories tell me why I find it hard to make the difficult, and even not so difficult choices to live more simply—why it is I drive rather than walk, make one more set of xeroxes, waste paper towels or hot water, or continue to miss numerous opportunities for sustained
Earth advocacy. Recognizing the intractability and the generations-old lineage of my Earth-separation attested to in the biblical narratives urges me compassionately to admit that it is hard to walk the green road of Earth-love. Earth-alienation is an ancient character trait, bred into the bones and inscribed onto the hearts of our ancestors and our own selves as well.

Given our primordial loss of kinship with the biotic community, we often overlook our own implication in the destruction of habitat around us. When we encroach upon wild spaces to build athletic fields, for example, so that our children can play soccer; or when we make incremental inroads into wetlands to build institutional structures; or when we choose as a community, for seemingly “good” purposes, to grant variances to statues designed to protect streams and rivers, we are not acting in any way that is egregiously destructive. And yet when we are weighing goods in land-use decision making, the good of human expansion consistently takes precedence over the good of the ecological integrity of the insect, plant, and animal world around us. The problem is that our piecemeal environmental impacts are, when considered together, monumentally catastrophic; clearly, the momentum is on the side of disappearing habitat and increasing noise, air, and water pollution.

One day this past summer I stood at a place called Sakonnet Point in Little Compton, Rhode Island, watching a dredging barge and stone-searing drills tear up the edge of the harbor where I had paddled in rowboats and played in the sand as a child. My heart ached as I surveyed the carnage, the noise, the broken rocks, the trash, the piles of sediment produced in the interests of building a private club that would restrict public access to this nature area and discharge various contaminants into the pristine waterway. I wondered again why so many otherwise well-meaning people, myself included, are so often tone-deaf to the cries of the natural world. Why do we repeatedly experience the same struggles in trying to persuade ourselves and others to prioritize the well-being of the land and its more-than-human inhabitants? I agree with those who say that the current situation of “Earth distress” is at its heart not a crisis of technology, but is rather a symptom of the spiritual malaria of our culture. I observe that most people are not malicious or hateful; rather, in the idiom of the Christian story, we are all simply the bearers of the heritage of Earth-alienation.

Christian history teaches, and Quaker traditions, in particular, perceive that restoration of the God-human relationship is paired with a renewal of the human-Earth relationship: spiritual transformation heals the Earth-alienation that plagues us. In 1650, when Quaker founder George Fox began to experience God’s power in the world, all things became new to him: “All creation gave another smell unto me than before, beyond what words can utter. The creation was opened to me.” Fox says he considered becoming a physician since he had gained this knowledge, but instead perceived that he was called to reform physicians, to bring them and others to the “wisdom of God.” The early 18th-century traveling Quaker minister Elizabeth Webb writes that after she publicly spoke of the goodness of God, “I was in love with the whole creation of God … so everything began to preach to me, the very fragrant herbs, and beautiful innocent flowers had a speaking voice in them to my soul.” While at times Christianity is a contributing cause of humans’ isolation from their Earth source, this is, nevertheless, not its only heritage. Christianity beckons us to reexperience our rootedness in the

Earth and warns us of the dangers of neglecting our origins: we live as fugitives and wanderers from our very life source when we violate the ground from which we spring. The promise of Christianity is a restored relationship to God and to Earth.

As our relationship to the land heals, we can once again affirm our kinship with the Earth, a kinship signaled by our origin in the mud of the ground and echoed in the Earth’s absorbing of Abel’s blood and crying out to God. We are, each of us, then, both Cain and Abel—at once deeply separated from the Earth, and at the same time deeply linked by kinship to the Earth. We are, like Abel, joined in our suffering to the Earth, reunited once more to our life source and at one with the ground as it cries out for justice and compassion.

Healing Our Separation From the Land

In the spirit of dialogue with those who seek to nourish Earth-connection, I offer two suggestions for practices we might employ to cultivate compassion for the community of creation.

As I stood with an aching heart at Sakonnet Point this summer and wondered how I might find comfort, I envisioned communities holding “Evenings of Remembrance” at times when their open spaces are considered for development. These rituals of remembrance provide opportunities for people to recount what they love and enjoy about the spaces to be developed, and to celebrate these special sites in stories, images, pictures, and poetry. These “Evenings of Remembrance” could be occasions to lament the impending loss of places that we have loved; they could be a chance to recall the funny, simple, poignant stories of time spent in these places.

Why do I want our communities to gather to share these stories? A few summers ago, I participated in a weeklong workshop for environmentalists and educators sponsored by Maine Audubon. In a session on memory and childhood, people wept as they described places of lifelong significance to them; they recalled with grief the loss of open forests and fields to construction; they tenderly spoke
of particular trees, plants, and small city spaces that nurtured their love for the Earth and inspired their current work as environmentalists and educators. This session demonstrated what many friends of the Earth have observed: living in the presence of our Earth-connections provides people with personal sustenance and meaning, and, even more, it often empowers people to advocate for environmental well-being as well.

I believe that one of the important ways to slow the relentless destruction of the natural world is for us to live in compassionate mindfulness of the places we love. We must remember the spaces we care about: what they look like, smell like, sound like, what colors we see, and how we feel when we are there. We must feel deeply the specialness of these places. For many of us it is only when we feel again the comfort, the oneness, the beauty, the joy, the calm, the delight, and even at times the grief of the loss of these spaces, that the energy will well up within us to protect these lands and these experiences for the generations to come. I wonder, for example, whether community leaders, in awareness of the meaning of open spaces in people’s lives, might be a bit more reluctant, once the political discussions have started, to grant the variances so often needed to develop our natural areas.

My second idea emerges from a discipline that I first used in my teaching. In a class on Christian Visions of Self and Nature I introduced an exercise I initially envisioned in narrow academic terms. We were reading books that included detailed scientific observations, and I wanted students to hone their own perceptual skills as a way to foster their appreciation for the texts we were studying. I asked each student to observe a tree for the duration of the spring semester, and I invited students to reflect on their trees in their weekly papers. They did write about their trees, much more frequently, and with much more energy than I had imagined.

I cultivate relationships with traditions, books, and people when I teach, but I realized that it was the relationships with their trees that sparked the most meaningful transformation for some of my students. In a reflection paper at the end of the course one student wrote, “One image that has continually resonated with me throughout the course is my first visit to my tree. . . . I was extremely skeptical about the whole thing and really did not see trees as anything more than wood that would eventually be covered in leaves. My tree looked especially dead on
this particular day, but as I got closer my opinion started to change. I noticed that the moss on its bark was still alive and also that a couple of tiny buds had started to sprout up on some of its branches. ... There definitely seemed to be a lot more going on with this tree than I originally assumed. The reason this image has stuck with me is that it constantly reminds me to have a more observant view of nature. Whereas before I might have just passed things by, now I usually try to take a second or third look if I can." I learned that the practice of being attentive to a tree awakened some of my students to the significance of the ecological concerns that were so compelling for their classmates.

Trees evoked memories, gave pleasure to my students, and, most surprisingly and significantly, cultivated a sense of connection with Earth community. Another student wrote, "[Simone de Beauvoir] speaks in terms of humans, economic revolutions, but it's terribly easy to borrow her language to talk about this tree. I have now seen this tree, thought about it, lain on its petals. It's no longer something I can divide myself from, so of course my self is tied to it, if only in small ways." Many people live in communion with the land, but I have become increasingly aware that many people do not, and that we can spark or reawaken connection by practices of mindfulness. Maybe there are ways to incorporate such simple disciplines as "attending to a tree" into our schools, our First-day schools, and our communities, as ways to nurture land-based connections, to cultivate compassion, and to participate in the healing of the ages-old Earth-alienation many of us experience.

Just as we forget the intimacy with God signaled by the Genesis story of our first life-giving breath shared with God; and just as we forget that we are by our very birth from the ground in kinship with the Earth; so also do we forget that the crises of Earth-separation recounted in the Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel narratives has at times become fully realized in the personal decisions we make in our own lives. Envisioning ways to address the ecological suffering that depletes this good Earth involves first recognizing just how isolated we are from the land. Once we acknowledge our heritage of separation from the Earth community, we can more effectively heal our brokenness by cultivating practices that can bind us again to our primal life source. Our sense of unity with the biosphere can be rekindled through retelling the biblical stories of our ancient origins. Our alienation from the Earth can be healed through the sharing of personal and communal memories and practicing Earth awareness. And our voices can unite once more with our Earth home in calling out for compassionate living in renewed relationship to God, self, and world.

YOUR SEASON

Jesus, your season again. The ash, the palms, the Cadbury eggs, the bread and the wine, Gethsemane's anguish, Judas and Caiaphas, Pilate and Peter, instant tax refunds, Easter outfits from Malaysia, eggs in the shrubs, dollars in the eggs, sugary chicks, the mob, the dust, the blood, Relic Nails Available, your forgiveness, your thirst, the empty tomb, Magdalene running as she had not run since she ran as a girl to tell them, breathless, Oh, breath resumes.

—Elizabeth Gordon

Elizabeth Gordon is a longtime attender, currently attending Unity Meeting in Philadelphia, Pa.
THE LEGACY OF GILBERT F. WHITE

Managing Conflict and Natural Resources through Good Clerking

by Robert E. Hinshaw

Gilbert Fowler White, one of the world’s foremost geographers and a member of the Religious Society of Friends, died in Boulder, Colorado, on October 5, 2006, a little more than a month shy of his 95th birthday.

His remarkable career as a scholar and advocate of social and environmental equity was reflected in the more than 50 awards he received during his lifetime, including the Public Welfare Award (the National Academy of Sciences’ highest honor), and the national Medal of Science, presented to him by then President Bill Clinton at the White House on December 1, 2000. Gilbert’s involvement with Friends included serving as president of Haverford College from 1946 to 1955 and chairing American Friends Service Committee from 1963 to 1969. His prominence among Friends receded markedly after that, yet paradoxically he may have been the most influential Quaker internationally, effecting over the last four decades perhaps more social change than did any other Friend. This paradox is the subject of this memorial article.

Following his chairmanship of the national AFSC in the Vietnam era, Gilbert remained an active member of Boulder (Colo.) Meeting and Intermountain Yearly Meeting. He was a particularly strong advocate of increased service opportunities for Friends, and he authored several articles in FRIENDS JOURNAL and Friends Bulletin regarding that need.

But apart from chairing various conferences for diplomats under the auspices of AFSC and subsequently the Quaker United Nations Office, he quietly retreated from involvement in Quakerism at the national level. Instead, he channeled his energy almost wholly into his career as a social scientist, where he became a central figure in such issues as management of natural resources (primarily water), the management of natural hazards, and the mitigation of losses due to natural disasters (primarily flooding). He was also a strong advocate and initiator of international scientific cooperation to address humankind’s increasingly unsustainable use of natural resources and the related global warming. In retrospect, his decision in 1970 to focus on his academic career and the associated environmental problems proved a blessing for our planet.

As his life and career progressed, Gilbert White became increasingly critical of what he viewed as AFSC’s modest efforts in “speaking truth to power” regarding issues of environmental stewardship and sustainability. He felt that governments, especially our own, had to be made aware of these issues and compelled to use scientific knowledge to manage resources and mitigate losses from extreme natural events such as floods, droughts, and earthquakes. Further he perceived that political and religious leadership regarding our rapidly changing and endangered global environment was sorely lacking. Without action, environmental losses and the violence spawned by growing inequities in access to resources such as water, soil, and energy would become unavoidable and irreversible.

Despite these concerns, Gilbert chose not to publicly criticize the AFSC agenda or its administration. Rather, he redoubled his own efforts to model by example his conviction that at least two basic precepts of Quakerism warranted reinterpretation and expanded application to help society address the grave environmental problems facing our times: first, the tenet of nonviolence; second, the Religious Society’s commitment to discernment of “a sense of the meeting” in decision making.

Gilbert White’s commitment to pacifism began with his resignation from ROTC at University of Chicago following a seminal conversation in 1928 with a campus guest speaker, the well-known Quaker and professor of Philosophy at Haverford College at the time, Rufus Jones. White’s experience and facility with Quaker decision making started a few years later when he began attending Friends Meeting of Washington (D.C.). It deepened as he became more involved with AFSC—first as a volunteer during World War II assisting refugees in Vichy, France, and thereafter, until the end of the war, as AFSC’s assistant executive secretary in Philadelphia. Subsequently, after being appointed president of Haverford, he convinced the faculty to substitute “Quaker practice” for Robert’s Rules of Order in their meetings. He used and further refined his skills as a facilitator of group decision making while chairing the
Chicago Regional Committee of AFSC and then the national committee during the 1960s while chairing the Department of Geography at University of Chicago.

Perhaps because his study of geography (defined at University of Chicago as the field of Human Ecology) coincided with his introduction to Quakerism (he was raised a Baptist), the sanctity of life that was central to Gilbert's spiritual consciousness included not only respect for human life, but also respect for and stewardship of the ecosystems that sustain all life. This holistic, spiritual interpretation of human ecology was reinforced between 1934 and 1942 when Gilbert served in Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "New Deal" White House, first as staff secretary for a series of committees on land and water use that were part of Roosevelt's innovative program of centralized planning for management of natural resources and subsequently as a staff member of the Bureau of the Budget, where he reviewed congressional initiatives concerning land and water and summarized proposed legislation for the President. This work and his later scholarship led to a seminal conviction central to Gilbert's work that humankind's shared dependence on natural resources and vulnerability to nature's extremes could be a tool for shaping nonviolent resolution of personal, local, national, and international differences.

This conviction was the basis for Gilbert's inaugural message when he assumed the chairmanship of AFSC in 1963. At the time, he was simultaneously chairing a Ford Foundation mission assembled to advise the United Nations Mekong River Committee regarding options for cooperative management of the lower Mekong River drainage basin, which encompassed Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam. This work proceeded throughout (and despite) the expanding Vietnam War. Indeed, he subsequently published an article in *Scientific American* and *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* entitled "Vietnam: The Fourth Course," which offered joint resource management as one approach to avoiding further conflict in the region. But to Gilbert's disappointment his group's recommendations, which were shared with and publicly acknowledged by President Lyndon Johnson, did not stop the slide of University of Colorado, to work with AFSC to develop a program of environmental stewardship to augment the organization's programs of human service and aid at home and abroad.

Despite these disappointments,

Gilbert White speaks with a reporter in front of the White House during a Vietnam-war protest.

**Gilbert White's procedure in chairing national scientific and policy meetings was little different from chairing a Quaker meeting for business.**

Gilbert's belief in the ability of environmental concerns and environmental stewardship to bring together human beings did not waver. Indeed, 30 years later he still felt that a key to managing the tensions among Jews, Christians, and Muslims worldwide was to mute the religious and ideological differences by promoting collaborative negotiations among these groups regarding stewardship and more equitable distribution of the limited resources upon which people of all faiths depend. To this end in the late 1990s, at the invitation of the U.S. Academy of Sciences, Gilbert chaired a National Research Council Committee on Sustainable Water Supplies for the Middle East, which was a committee of water experts representing the national academies of Jordan, Israel, Palestine, and the West Bank. Previously he had chaired several committees in and out of government that addressed different but comparably contentious environmental issues. Those issues included determining a policy of sustainable energy use for the United States, managing the nation's floodplains
In chairing such groups, Gilbert insisted on certain ground rules, including, more often than not, the “sense of the meeting” precept. His procedure in chairing these scientific and policy meetings was little different from that of chairing a Haverford faculty meeting, an AFSC conference for diplomats, or a Quaker business meeting. His focus was as much on the process of the meeting as the outcome. He wanted to ensure that all opinions were voiced and that all voices were heard. Even in contexts where no other participants were familiar with such practice, the essence of Gilbert’s “leader-as-servant” or “servant-as-leader” approach was truly to listen, in order to ensure that the group and its decisions could benefit from the various views and truths that collectively would determine the best possible recommendation. His challenge and mission through this threshing process, as in any clerking, was to help discern that recommendation.

Inevitably, this process demonstrated that there is much that is worthy of being heard: the facts, including scientific findings; the subject; the vested interests of assorted audiences affected by the decisions; the opinions of persons in positions of authority and power responsible for implementation and enforcement of policies adopted; and, finally, cultural traditions and contextual experience. The latter included values and views regarding the moral issues at stake.

Mostly, Gilbert would say little or nothing about the Inner Light or “that of God within” as the basis for his decision-making ground rules. But he would share his conviction that only through everyone’s listening to the personal conscience and experience of every other participant could the group collectively discern the most appropriate path. Moreover, he discouraged representation of employer, agency, or government policy in favor of personal experience and conviction. Each participant’s personal input was insisted upon. The degree to which each participant did or did not agree with the final recommendation as articulated by the chair was to be voiced and, if requested, recorded for inclusion as an accompanying minority opinion.

When serving as chair, Gilbert always offered this option to others, and when serving on committees that he did not or alternative view. For Gilbert White, listening to the Light Within was subsumed under hearing all that bears on the issue. For him, the human mind and voice was the vehicle for conveying all such information—be it scientific knowledge, professional counsel, or spiritual insight. Group discernment based on such information was essential for achieving the best possible recommendation.

Whenever Gilbert was asked how his Quakerism informed his style of leadership, he was quick to explain that he joined the Religious Society of Friends because in his experience its basic tenets were efficacious. But he did not want others to assume that the approach he took and recommended for others was particular to Quakers. Accordingly, he seldom identified his leadership method as Quaker procedure. The approach often worked well, and many of those who knew and worked with Gilbert adopted it and used it in contexts far beyond what most Quakers might consider possible.

In September 2006 the Institute for Water Resources of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (to which Gilbert had donated his extensive collection of water-related papers and books) hosted an event focusing on Gilbert’s legacy of leadership. Among other tributes, it featured part of an hourlong interview with Gilbert taped by former president of the National Academy of Sciences Bruce Alberts. Regarding Gilbert’s work chairing the NRC Committee on Sustainable Water Supplies for the Middle East, Alberts had earlier remarked that possibly only a Quaker could have created the mutual trust need-
Elias Hicks, Environmentalist
by Paul Buckley

Elias Hicks is best known among Friends as the man for whom one branch of Quakers was named following the separations of 1827-28. The "Hickites" were the spiritual forbears of many of the Friends now within Friends General Conference.

In preparing a new edition of the Journal of Elias Hicks for publication, I came across the following passage which had been deleted from the current version. Elias Hicks wrote this reflection on his youth when he was 80 years old. It seems to demonstrate an extraordinary degree of what we today might call environmental consciousness.

Of particular interest, he sees the change to humanity in Genesis (frequently disparaged as justifying the abuse of nature by humanity) as requiring the preservation of a balance in the natural world.

This material comes from the Elias Hicks Manuscripts in Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College and is used with their permission. It has been edited to modernize spelling and punctuation.

Paul Buckley, a Quaker historian and theologian, attends North Meadow Circle of Friends in Indianapolis. He gives short courses, workshops, and retreats for Friends gatherings across the Quaker spectrum and teaches occasional Quaker Studies courses at Earlham School of Religion.

I have already observed that the delight I took in fishing and fowling had a tendency frequently to preserve me from falling into unlawful and sinful amusements. Now, I began to feel through the rising intimations and reproofs of the precious gift in my own heart that the manner in which I sometimes amused myself with my gun was not without sin. I mostly preferred going alone, thereby, while waiting in stillness for the coming of the fowl, my mind hath been at times so taken up in divine meditations that they have been to me seasons of great instruction and comfort, wherein my gracious redeemer was striving gradually to turn my mind from such low and perishing amusement. Nevertheless, at divers other times, when in company with others on party of pleasure, and no fowls presented that were good and useful when taken, we have merely for sport and to try which could excel in shooting, fell upon the small, though innocent birds that we could decoy and cause to fly to us that were of no use when dead. We destroyed many of them from wantonness or for mere diversion and for which cruel procedure my heart is sorrowfully affected whilst penning these lines. This conduct, from the conviction I felt and the result of such reflection, soon appeared to be a great breach of trust and an infringement of the divine prerogative. Therefore, it soon became a principle with me not to take the life of any creature, but such as were esteemed really useful when dead or very obnoxious and hurtful when living. And it also appeared to be a duty that, when we apprehend it right to take the life of any of these, that we endeavor to do it in the most mild and tender manner in our power. From due consideration, it must appear to every candid mind that the liberty we have for taking the lives of the creatures, and using their bodies to support ours, is certainly an unmerited favor and ought to be used as the mere bounty of our great benefactor and to be received by us with great humility and gratitude.

I have likewise, from reflections founded on observations and from the nature and reason of things, been led to believe that we frequently err by the liberty we take in destroying what we esteem noxious creatures. We not only abuse the power and rule given us over them by our great common creator, but likewise act very contrary to and subversive of our own true interest. For no doubt, as all in the beginning was pronounced good that the good God had made, there was a right proportion and a true medium and balance among the creatures that were to inhabit this lower world. Man, being made as a crown to the whole, no doubt his true interest lay in preserving, as much as might be, this true medium on balance. But man fell from the state of rectitude in which he was created and wherein he only was capable of governing the crea-
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tutes agreeably to the will of the creator. Hence, by exerting his power over them under the influence of his fallen wisdom, and not understanding their true nature nor end of their creation, he has wantonly fallen upon and destroyed such kinds as to his limited understanding appeared noxious, because at some times, they were observed to feed upon some of the fruits of the field that were the product of his industry. A little care in frightening them away would have been sufficiently effectual and their lives preserved to fill up the place assigned them in creation. Hereby, the true balance has been so materially affected that the tribes of lesser creatures, such as reptiles and insects (which were to feed and support those creatures man had wantonly destroyed and which come not so obviously under man's comprehension nor so generally within the limits of his power to destroy), have increased to a proportion sufficient to spread destruction and devastation over the fields and left the face of the earth, at times, as a scorched or barren desert.

For such has been the wisdom and goodness of the Supreme Being in the creation of man that he has so intimately connected his duty with his true interest, both in regard to temporals as well as spirituals. If man falls short in the first, he will likewise feel himself affected in the latter and, for every shortcoming or act of sin, feel the consequent punishment and disappointment.

Therefore, it is our indispensable duty, as reasonable, accountable beings, wisely to ponder our ways and consider the consequent effect of all our conduct. If we are to give an account for every idle word, it must appear clear to every rational mind, therefore, every idle or presumptuous act must be still more criminal. How presumptuous must it then appear from rational reflection for limited, borrowed beings to sport themselves with the lives of other beings? However little they may appear in the view of proud man (who vainly supposes all made for his use), yet they may be as necessary a link in the great chain of nature and creation as his own existence.

In the course of divine providence, we may be permitted to take the lives of such of the creatures in a reasonable way as are suitably adapted to the accommodation of our bodies in a line of real usefulness. Yet, that by no means carries any warrant for us wantonly, or in a sportive way, to destroy the lives of those that are not useful when dead. Neither is this privilege given to man, any partial act of the deity. We see he has given the same privilege to almost every other creature and also furnished them with means whereby they are enabled to take such of the creatures as he has intended for their use and by which the true balance might be maintained. Had man kept his station as well as the other creatures, I have no doubt but the true balance would have been at least much better preserved than it now is—if not inviolably kept.

**SPRING CLEANING**

Thoreau, cleaning, declared even his pet rock a dust-catcher. I'm with Henry big-time, the clutter on my desk a foot thick, a sea of sentimental claptrap: cracked spines held together with brittle rubber bands; resentments rusting with paperclips; tarnished hopes leaned against the wall, casting looped shadows; accolades stored in cardboard boxes atop stacks of rejections eaten with holes by silverfish; file-drawers groaning piteously with forgotten causes; the obligatory Dundees marmalade crock bristling with ancient resolves, hardened and greasy; too good to throw away; everywhere the dull patina of the once true: little that would survive a thorough cleaning.

**SHADOWS**

So much I know by shadows. Waterbugs whose dimpling footprints cast coins of darkness on pebbled stream-bottom, switch direction in a flash to face rivals for some patch of moving water—little shadow warriors made fierce by what cannot be seen. A shadow that swoops across the bed sheet I'm pinning to clothesline, I know by trajectory is the red-tailed hawk, one of a pair that nests in the cottonwood overlooking my back yard, and not some lumbering cow. Even before I hear the screech I know the hawk by what it's not—and myself, met in some chance mirror, by the missing younger man.

David Morse is a member of Starrs (Conn.) Meeting.
the first-person story of France Pruitt, as told to Judy Priven

A ccording to Quakers, God is present in everyone. I first learned the great truth of this saying in a time of war, in the strangest of places—the remote Cévennes Mountains of southern France. I was only six years old at the time my Jewish family sought refuge from the Nazis there, but the simple kindness of the many Cevenol villagers who saved us has shaped my life ever since.

The Kindness of Strangers

W hen I was born, in the fall of 1934, in Brussels, my life seemed charmed right from the beginning. Both my parents were highly respected throughout the community—my father as a popular, free-thinking Chemistry professor, and my mother as a generous friend to all who knew her. Although we were assimilated, non-practicing Jews, my father and his brother recognized the threat presented by Adolf Hitler before most other Europeans. By the time the Germans invaded Belgium on May 10, 1940, the two brothers and their families had sold their apartments, put their furniture in storage, and moved to the southern coast near the French border, ready to flee.

Early on the morning of May 11, the ten of us—my paternal grandparents, my parents, my uncle and aunt, my two cousins, my sister, and I—piled into my grandfather’s big, black Buick and crossed the Belgian border into France. We did not know exactly where we were going or what would happen to us that day and all the days ahead. All we could do was rely on luck, our own wits, and the help of strangers we met along the way.

Le Pays de Miseres

T wo weeks later, we, the Dujarli families, arrived in the Department of Lozère, deep in the Cévennes Mountains, just northwest of Provence. Although this area is wildly beautiful, with deep, scenic valleys and lush chestnut forests, it was often called “Le Pays de Misères” (“the country of miseries”) because of the suffering of the Protestant Huguenots who fled there to escape religious persecution in the 17th century and because of the dearth of natural resources.

By the time we arrived in Lozère, the Germans had invaded and occupied nearly all of France, including the Cévennes Mountains, and harboring Jews was already a dangerously defiant act, even in the unoccupied area where we lived. Even so, the two brothers reasoned, the Germans would seldom enter into this area since it was so sparsely populated, rugged, and resource-poor. More important, the brothers hoped that the descendants of the Huguenots who had escaped here would remember their own history and offer a similar refuge to us. So we stopped there.

The brothers were right. When my father walked into a nearby village and asked for help, the mayor himself found us an abandoned farmhouse where we lived in the open and made friends with the country folk who lived nearby. Still, as the puppet Vichy government intruded more and more into the mountains during the next four years, the two Dujarli families, helped by the community around us, kept moving on, always in search of more isolation and safety.

Our last home was in a remote, two-family hamlet on the other side of the mountain, where we shared a home with a woman called Mamé (grandmother) and her daughter Tata (aunt). By then, my father and uncle were hiding with the French Resistance, which was very active in the area.

Like so many other families throughout France, Mamé’s whole family was suffering from the two world wars. Mamé herself, a large woman with long, dark hair, always wore black in memory of her husband, who had been killed in the First World War; both women survived on a small pension given by the government to compensate for his loss, yet they shared their resources with the four of us—me, my mother and sister, and my baby brother, who was born during the war. Down the mountain from us lived Mamé’s brother, who had been gassed during that war. Depleted in mind and body, the only job he could perform was to sit on a rocking chair by the railroad station and lower and raise the bar over the track crossing whenever a train passed through; the rest of the time he just rocked and napped. In the meantime, for the year and a half we were there, Tata never received any word from her husband, whom we assumed was fighting somewhere in Germany. (Later, we learned he had been a prisoner of war in Germany, and after the war he returned as a broken man, unable to earn a living or even manage the simple chores around the house.)

Although in many ways our lives seemed uneventful, the fear of disclosure was constantly with us, the gnawing fear that one day a single collaborator would tell on us, or that a German soldier would discover and take us away. In fact, a lot of people knew about us but closed their eyes and kept silent. Indeed, a few collabor-
orators who lived in the area told the Germans where some of the Resistance camps were. But there was also a lot of trust in those small communities—and an awareness of who the collaborators were.

One night we heard that a large convoy of German soldiers was approaching our tiny village. Everyone in the hamlet, including us refugees, fled to the other side of the mountain and camped in the cemetery grounds the entire night, afraid that the soldiers would come down to demand food or some other kind of favor. But the Germans didn’t want any trouble either. Afraid of a Resistance attack, they kept their lights on all night and left first thing in the morning. That’s how it was in those days; everyone was afraid—soldiers and villagers, friends and enemies alike.

Some months after we arrived, Tata took me along with her to a small group of Quakers who met in a private home nearby. They were called “Les Amis,” the French word for Friends. I was introduced to them, as to everyone else in the area, with a false name and identity—France Millard, a distant cousin from the city. As far as I can remember, the meetings did not include singing or any formal programs beyond the silent worship. No more than ten people attended each meeting.

Although I was only nine, I was impressed with the silence and simplicity of these meetings. Most of all, their emphasis on the commonality of all humankind—the sacredness of each individual person, regardless of circumstance or belief—intrigued and consoled me. Here we all were, I thought, surrounded by fear and hatred, yet daring to declare that all people—those whom we loved and those whom we feared—have the potential to be good.

A Grateful Family

After the war, the two Dujarli families emigrated to Philadelphia, where they started to attend Merion Meeting outside the city and became members of the Religious Society of Friends. Later, as an active adherent to Quaker ways, I went to Swarthmore College and got my first job at Davis House, the Quaker international center in Washington, D.C.

Through the years, we Dujarli children have never forgotten the stoicism and deep ethical commitment of our many friends in the Cévennes Mountains. For me, part of this inspiration also came from my mother, who died of breast cancer just a year after we arrived in this country. Although she had never been religious in a formal way, her sense of ethical responsibility, so intertwined with that of the Cévenol community, inspired all three of her children to work for the betterment of the world around them—my sister through her continued involvement with the Quakers; my brother through the Peace Corps and his development work in Africa; and I through my career as an international education specialist.

On June 2, 2005, over 64 years after the families’ first arrival in southern France, my cousins, brother, and sister decided to honor our friends and their families in southern France with a bench made from local granite. Over 100 local residents and their children attended the dedication ceremony. Many later told me how grateful they were to feel appreciated and to know that their children had learned all that their families had done to better the world. “It was the best day of my life,” many people said to me over and over again.

Continued on page 28
The Liberation of Nathan Swift
by Daniel Jenkins

On an April day in 1839, a young Quaker farmer was out with his plow-horse working the family fields in Dutchess County, New York, when he was stopped and arrested by the local constable for not paying his militia exemption tax.

In the early part of the 19th century, able-bodied white males in New York between the ages of 18 and 45 were required by law to appear for state militia drills. They were also required to supply the armament: the musket, the shot, and the powder. However, there was an exception in the state militia law: Quakers with religious “scruples of conscience” were exempt from military service, but they had to pay a special tax. The first New York State Constitution of 1777 protected this individual right of conscience, and later constitutional revisions expanded the exemption to include anyone with religious objections.

Quakers objected to any form of participation in the state militias, the only armed forces of those times. They refused to attend the drills or to supply any armament, and, because they could not participate with good conscience in any military-related activity, they also objected to the exemption tax. Initially these taxes were used for militia purposes, but state statutes later directed the revenue to the funding of common schools and to support the poor. Still, Friends objected on principle to paying this tax; we know this because they expressed their collective beliefs clearly in writing to their elected state officials.

Many Quakers and Shakers suffered “distrains”: when they refused to pay the militia tax, their personal property was seized by government agents and sold. And some, like the farmer in this story, Nathan Swift, served time in the local jails.

The Dutchess County Constable rounded up three other young Friends that April day, hoping they would all “pay a little money” so that he would not be required to lock them up. He even gave them ample opportunity to walk away when he saw that they were not frightened into compliance. But they were steadfast and had been supplied with food and bedding by their families, so the four of them ended up in the Poughkeepsie jail.

During the first week of their confinement Nathan’s uncle, Beriah Swift, traveled to Albany and interceded on their behalf with State Governor William Seward. Beriah returned with a signed paper ordering the release of the four young men.

The plow was still stuck in the furrow when Nathan Swift returned home. It had rained so hard in the interim that all outdoor work had been impossible. He had borne his testimony, so everything turned out for the best—except, of course, Uncle Beriah had slogged his way to Albany and back through the downpour.

Two years after the imprisonment of Nathan Swift, Governor William Seward included the following remarks in his annual message to the New York State Legislature:

It is a well settled principle of the Society of Friends, that its members can neither conscientiously bear arms, nor contribute for military purposes. The [state] Constitution defers to these scruples, by exempting those who entertain them from the performance of military duty; but it exacts a commutation [tax]... To this commutation the Friends raise the same conscientious objection, and urge it in a manner sufficiently general and persevering to show that it is neither temporary or capricious; while their known liberality proves that the objection does not arise from any unwillingness to bear an equal portion of the burdens of government. Every year produces instances in which the property of Friends is sacrificed, or their persons imprisoned for conscience-sake. In such cases, I have never refused to remit the penalties imposed.

Governor Seward continued:

Believing that war is the chiefest of national calamities, I am quite willing to see the principle of non-resistance obtain all the influence it is likely to acquire in this country, which above all others needs peace. For this reason, as well as because I regard concessions to conscience, in matters not affecting public morals, as essential to religious liberty, I should cheerfully consent to the amendment of the [state] Constitution in this respect.

That same year, a Memorial and Remonstrance concerning militia penalties, fines, and imprisonment was sent by the Religious Society of Friends in New York to the state legislature.

An assembly report, from the Militia and Public Defense Committee, acknowledged the sincerity of the Quaker communication, but stated that current state law relieved “every person conscientiously averse to bearing arms... from all liability to contribute, even indirectly, to military purposes.” The report pointed out that militia commutation taxes were currently paid into county treasuries for local civic expenses, and it concluded by recommending that the legislature should...
convention held a few years later, the militia service requirements were revised. All persons with religious "scruples of conscience" were no longer "exempt" by paying a tax; they were simply "excused." And any other state resident who chose not to perform militia duty could be exempt by paying a reduced fee. So it appears that New York Friends were then free of the militia exemption tax. Confirmation of this is now being sought from other historical records.

Some elements of this story may speak to us today:

- Friends, as individuals, and as a collective group, were clear and steadfast in witness to their beliefs. And the general society in which they lived was fully aware of these personal convictions.
- Friends expressed their beliefs to elected government officials, as individuals, and in carefully crafted written statements that were composed by the corporate body of the yearly meeting.
- Friends gave the issue high priority.
- Friends did what was necessary to maintain a tangible expression of their beliefs—some went to jail, some lost their livestock or property, some supplied spiritual and material support to others, and some, like Uncle Beriah, just got on a horse and did whatever had to be done.

The unwavering testimony of these Friends established a precedent for the Peace Tax Fund legislation currently proposed in the U.S. Congress. Quaker convictions of religious conscience were acknowledged and accommodated by the State of New York, there was an exemption fee in lieu of militia service, and that tax revenue was applied to nonmilitary purposes. Thus the concept of "alternative service for tax dollars" is grounded in an individual right of conscience retained by the people decades, also maintained and extended the concept of religious exemption to military service. The rights of conscience retained by the people are still on the books and are ready for revival.

Many accounts of conscientious objection do not have such happy endings. But this particular, hopeful story is the historical legacy of New York Friends. It reminds us of the strength of clarity in belief, and of the need for worldly expression of personal religious conviction.

The Sub-Committee has asked everyone within the embrace of New York Yearly Meeting to consider writing a personal "statement of conscience" and to share it with others. When many individuals become clear about their own beliefs, then the gifts of each will contribute to a whole that is greater than the sum of the parts. And when the compounding of individual clarity leads to the group dynamic once shared by the Quakers of New York, who simply lived their convictions of faith, then the power of conscience could be felt again throughout our entire nation.
Giving Attention to Our Leadings

by Shirley Dodson

The most precious gift Friends have to offer is our worship and the leadings that come from it. Yet this worship can be brittle or stale sometimes, particularly if we come to it unwilling to be changed. Do we really want to know what Friends are called to today? Do we yearn to discern God's leading now for the Religious Society of Friends? Are we ready to have the Spirit of Christ guide us?

My experience of calling has been that when I've really wanted to know what God was calling me to do—wanted to know this more than anything else—I've been given guidance. And sometimes I've gotten guidance when I didn't really want it. Other times, however, when I've felt tired, contented, comfortable, or distracted—in other words, when I didn't really want to know what I was being called to do—I didn't get direction; I was left to wallow in whatever situation I was in at the time. Do we long to know what Friends are called to today, more than all the other interests and concerns that impact our lives?

When we gather for worship, we bring whatever hopes and longings we have to meeting with us. Coming to worship regularly can help us even if we feel fragile or dull. Insight and discernment grow over time as we listen and genuinely want guidance.

What more is asked of us? We are asked to give attention to leadings as we discern them and test them within the meeting and the broader Quaker community. We are asked to be faithful to what God is calling us to do, allowing ourselves and our meetings to be changed. We are asked to be faithful in daily living as well as in more dramatic callings, recognizing that the impact of what we say and do is often unknown to us.

Worship is held at Pendle Hill every morning. Some who come are skeptical about God, prayer, and the concept of a gathered meeting. One practice that draws people together is taking time after worship to hold one another in the Light and to hear and respond to requests for prayer. Those present are gathered into spiritual community, and sometimes profound change happens. The experience of daily worship and the intercessory prayer that follows grows into direct communion with God and guidance for our lives. While very few of us will sit in meeting for worship every day, we can hold other Friends in the Light, in God's love, as we seek together to know our calling and hope to be faithful to it.

What I am writing is not new, but simply an expression of what I see at the core of Quaker faith and practice. Through yearning, worship, listening, and faithfulness we will know what Friends are called to today, and be empowered to live out our calling.

THE SPOKEN WORD

Puzzles, dark and light, whirl in their quiet orbits through a buzzing glare that had once been order. Finally the spirals slow, dropping syllables, cold summer hailstones from my lips. Alone in this crowded meeting, I do try for truthfulness, when driven away from silent light. An hour or so later, I don't know what I said here.

Must it always be like this? Unknown, broken. Five days, each week, I'm paid to speak, to pretend I know something. Sometimes I do—but not now.

What I know is no concern. Only what I'm told by waiting, figures of Light that topple headlong through my dimmer-than-dawn conscience, Christ in the present.

—William Jolliff

William Jolliff teaches Writing and Literature at George Fox University in Newburg, Ore.

April 2007 FRIENDS JOURNAL
Laughing Pilgrims:
Humor and the Spiritual Journey
By Howard M. Macy
$14.99/softcover.

“Walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one,” urged George Fox. We Friends are pretty good at the second part of that suggestion, but often could use some work on the first, which is good reason to give thanks for Howard Macy's new book. Laughing Pilgrims is a much-needed reminder that, while the life of the Spirit is often serious, it's not something to be undertaken in grim earnestness. Howard Macy, professor of Religion and Biblical Studies at George Fox University, has given us a book that is less a study of spirituality and humor than it is a "how-to" for holy humor.

Macy presents some wonderfully accessible analyses of the uses of humor in the Bible, a book we rarely think of as funny. These helpful examples remind us that the biblical stories are about and meant for people like us. "The Bible is often funny, just as we should expect it to be," writes Macy, "if it truly reflects the full range of faith and life." He goes on to point out jokes, riddles, comic stories, satire, and wordplay.

The truly helpful parts of the book, though, are those that show us ways to walk cheerfully. He urges us to remember that our spiritual journeys have "to do with all of life, not just with consecrated chunks set off in a corner... If Brother Lawrence could experience God fully while peeling potatoes, perhaps we can learn to love God amid peals of laughter." This book encourages readers to discover themselves through laughter (the "Kurt Factor" chapter is especially delightful) and then provides instruction in "walking cheerfully day to day," Macy is careful to offer up advice for making sure our holy humor is just that—not harmful or hateful. He gives guidance for how to live in a spirit of fun and how to cultivate a joyful attitude in the midst of family, work, and our other personal experiences. The book concludes not with a list of jokes or compendium of funny stories, but with questions and activities that can be used to help us walk cheerfully. All in all the book is geared toward learning to enjoy a "life of holy hilarity."

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Human Beings: Yearning for a Faith

By Clive Sutton. Quaker Universalist Group Pamphlet #31, 2006, 36 pages. $6.75/softcover

In Human Beings: Yearning for a Faith, Clive Sutton, a Quaker teacher of science and of teachers of science, has written a stimulating pamphlet on the truths that humans seek to understand the meanings and purposes of their lives. His thesis is that "truth"—a con-

April 2007 FRIENDS JOURNAL
cept that is not final nor complete—can be found in a story, whether in sacred writings, history, or scientific facts.

In an orderly and succinct manner, the author introduces his essay and then continues it with three sections that offer a view of spiritual seeing in the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries.

Sutton suggests that, for Quakers, the decisions made at the 1895 Manchester Conference, where “a refusal to reject the new knowledge chimed in very well with the long-standing Quaker distrust of written creeds and they chose to regard themselves as holders of a ‘reasonable faith,’ not tied to falsifiable doctrinal statements.”

There are many stimulating ideas put forth in this short treatise: “We should now be teaching ourselves and our children that human beings are storytellers, and stories matter for how we understand and how we try to live our lives. . . . The old question ‘Is it true?’ will have to be replaced by, ‘In what ways is it true?’ . . . . The truth of one story does not destroy the ‘truth’ of another.”

This path is one where all are able to respect and honor the understandings and beliefs of other cultures and religions as well as enabling us to grasp the universality of human learnings, yearnings, and guides.

I highly recommend this brief essay for all Friends to give it thoughtful consideration and, perhaps, even use it as a “springboard” for a series of First-day school discussions.

—Sally Rickerman

Sally Rickerman is a member of Mill Creek (Del.) Meeting.

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New from Quaker Author

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The Philadelphia home of the American Friends Service Committee, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting and twenty other Quaker and Quaker-related groups.
Six Friends were attacked by a gang of young men as they were traveling in cars near Nairobi, Kenya on February 4. Three people died: renowned AIDS researcher and Friend Job Bwayo, Lawrence Regaru, and Felista Njeru Kuria. Elizabeth Bwayo, the widow of Job Bwayo, and Carol Briggs of Northwest Yearly Meeting were gravely injured. Carol Briggs was staying with the Bwayo family while attending a health conference in Nairobi. An Australian visitor reported “She is unable to speak at the moment due to the jaw surgery. Her hands were damaged also, so she is not really able to communicate through writing.” Doctors were predicting that she would be well enough to travel home after two to three weeks. According to the Australian visitor, Elizabeth Bwayo “was shot through the head and had had jaw surgery, but is able to communicate through notes.” As of February, there were no further details reported. — Friends World Committee for Consultation

In response to an act of violence among students on campus in mid-January, Guilford College was startled into reexamining its values as a Quaker school. According to a report released by the college, an altercation occurred at approximately 12:30 AM on January 20 in the courtyard before Bryan Hall, a dormitory on the campus. About a dozen students, including students who were acquaintances and residence hall neighbors with no history of conflict and some who were under the influence of alcohol, were involved in a fight. Lasting less than five minutes, the incident involved physical violence and verbal abuse, according to the report by Guilford College. “Individuals refused medical treatment immediately after the incident, but at the urging of college staff received medical attention the following afternoon,” the college reported. On Sunday, January 21, three Palestinian students, Fari Khader and Osama Sallah, who attend Guilford, and Omar Atwarmani, who attends North Carolina State University and was visiting the other two, filed complaints before magistrates in Greensboro. According to court documents, as reported by the Greensboro News-Record, the three alleged that up to 15 members of the Guilford College football team assaulted them with fists, feet, and brass knuckles and verbally assaulted them with racial slurs and calling them “terrorists.” The News-Record reported that, according to their attorney, the three suffered concussions, one had nerve damage to his hand, another a fractured nose, and the third a fractured jaw. Subsequently, six students, Christopher Barnett, Michael Bates, Jazz Alfray Favors, Michael Robert Six, Jonathan Blake Underwood, and Micah Rushing, all members of the Guilford College football team, were charged with assault and battery, and each released under a $2,000 bond. All but Rushing were also charged with ethnic intimidation. The school’s administration issued a “no contact” order on campus and asked the charged students to move off campus temporarily, while allowing them to attend classes. The families of Michael Bates, Michael Six, and Christopher Barnett issued a statement that none of the six “have yet to be interviewed” by any college official or by the Greensboro police. The parents also asked that the students not be “unfairly prejudged.” They showed a picture of Michael Six with stab wounds and scars of a belt lashing that they claimed one of the Palestinians inflicted on him during the fight. Greensboro police interviewed the three Palestinians but, because the charges were brought from their statements made to a magistrate who issued the warrants, the police department ended its role in the investigation, saying the matter will be “adjudicated in Guilford County District Court.” Greensboro police later said that they had not found any evidence of racial motives among the students there. County prosecutors later said they would wait for Guilford College to complete its response to the fight before deciding what their response would be. The FBI, however, was investigating whether the incident was a “bake crime,” in violation of federal civil rights laws. Meanwhile, Guilford College began its own judicial procedures in accordance with its Student Conduct Code in the Student Handbook. “The College has chosen to take this opportunity to reaffirm its core values as well as its commitment to the peaceful resolution of conflict,” noted the statement released by the college. In remarks at an open forum on January 26, Kent Chabotar, president of the college, said, “This is a sad time for Guilford College. This is a sad time for the students, especially the students who were injured Saturday morning. Our sympathy and prayers are with them and their families. We seek truth, justice, and reconciliation. Truth, justice, and reconciliation are hard things to achieve. Truth, justice, and reconciliation are impossible without due process, respect, and listening to other voices.” Among concerns are the role of athletics and relationships among student athletes, the prevalence of alcohol, and the changing demographics of a diverse student body totaling 2,700 persons of whom 10 percent are Quakers. There has been a recognized division between the majority of students and athletic students; recently, efforts have been made to bring the athletes into more of campus life. Max Carter, director of campus ministry at Guilford, said other voices were being listened to on campus after the fight among the students. “There have been teach-ins, panel discussions, student stump speeches, all about what happened and why it did happen. There are different...
people involved were motivated by prejudice. There was the toxic brew of alcohol. The response on the campus has been similar to the response a person often experiences when a member of the family or when a friend dies, Carter continued. "There is disbelief, denial, anger, rage, blaming, pointing fingers. That is what we are experiencing now. There is the realization that Guilford College may not be perfect. The world has intruded," Carter said.

Another voice heard in response to the events was that of Brennan Keene, president of the Guilford College Alumni Association, who concluded a statement to fellow alumni with these words: "We hope you will join us in holding all members of our Guilford community in the Light, and in taking responsibility for promoting honest and open conversation that will lead to the upholding and deepening of the core values of our alma mater: community, diversity, equality, excellence, integrity, justice, stewardship." The Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Project scheduled a public meeting in a local church to discuss the events at the College. "We have become especially sensitive to the many ways that the conversation and the action of the community at large can help or hinder the process of truth seeking, understanding, and healing, which the Guilford College community must undertake now and indeed is courageously undertaking in response to their tragic event," the Reverend Greg Headen, a co-chairman of the project's local steering committee, affirmed.


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The God Within

Now that I am 71 years old, I can truly say that my life has been charmed, although not in the way that anyone would have suspected back in Brussels, where I was born. Although I remain a Quaker to this day, I am also proud of the ancient religion of my ancestors. I know that my parents, who

...Today we are bringing you a copy of this Liberty Bell, because you also fought for your liberty."

After the ceremony, I learned that a conference of historians held in the Cévenol town of Valleraugue in 1984 concluded that about 800 to 1,000 Jews and other refugees hid in the neighboring Departments (Provinces) of Lozère and Gard during World War II. It concluded: "The majority of the 20,000 to 40,000 inhabitants of this area risked their own lives to hide and protect these refugees 'with solidarity and without failure.'"

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MILESTONES

Deaths
Cooley—Victoria Lyn (Vicki) Cooley, 63, on April 10, 2006, at her home in Dundee, N.Y. Victoria was born on April 9, 1943, in Joliet, Ill., the daughter of Robert D. and Lila J. Robie Baker, natives of northern Wisconsin who followed Robert's civil engineering work to communities around the world. Vicki first attended Quaker meeting on her own at age 11 in Swarthmore, Pa. She spent her teens in Germany. A graduate of Mount Holyoke College, where she attended Mt. Toby (Mass.) Meeting, she earned a master's degree in English from University of Virginia, where she attended Charlottesville Meeting, which she joined when asked to be clerk. Here she met John H. Cooley, and in 1968 the couple was married in Swarthmore. After starting out in Philadelphia, Alaska, and settling in Rochester, N.Y., the couple became members of Rochester Meeting and in 1974 first attended New York Yearly Meeting. Vicki taught English to machine tool trainees at Rochester Institute of Technology's community campus, directed the Youth Participation Project for the Monroe County Youth Bureau, and served as director of training at the Center for Dispute Settlement. Vicki actively encouraged John's family medicine practice, and while their four children were growing, made their home a welcoming place for many people, including traveling Friends, exchange students, and refugee families traveling to Canada. In 1994 John and Vicki moved to Dundee, N.Y., joining Central Finger Lakes Meeting and welcoming extended worship gathering and other groups in their group-sized country kitchen. She served on the Dundee Area United Fund, and as advisor for the Cobblestone Springs Retreat Center and the Rochester Folk Art Guild, Central to the life of Rochester and Central Finger Lakes Meetings, Farmington-Scipio Regional Meeting, and New York Yearly Meeting, Vicki spoke clearly and insightfully, with love, and was sought out for her wisdom and guidance. A gifted listener, she was often able to hear differing sides and help to find common ground. She was widely recognized for her clerking skills. Her clerking was characterized by humor, clarity, truth-seeking, and worshipful waiting. For more than two decades she worked passionately to define and move forward the missions of New York Yearly Meeting, American Friends Service Committee, and the Alternatives to Violence Project. Following September 2001, she helped form the Worship and Action for Peace Working Group, helping to articulate the worship and witness of Friends in a time of war. She was a gifted facilitator of AVP workshops inside prisons, where participants remember her family for accompanying, rather than teaching, and for holding a vision that finds meaning in life and that includes everyone. She served as president of the AVP-New York Board, considering her work with that organization a spiritual practice that formed and transformed her. Prisons became a central concern for Vicki. First at the Auburn and Attica Quaker Meetings, then to other state prisons, she actively supported and encouraged several Friends following their release. With all her sensitivity to the pain of others, Vicki was a joyful spirit whose delight in being alive was evident. Bird books and binoculars in hand, she was an explorer on all levels, from back roads and forgotten paths through...
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Dickman—Gordon Lawrence Dickman, 66, on July 12, 2004, in LaConner, Wash., of cancer. Gordon was born on February 1, 1938, in Seattle to Leina and Larry Dickman. He graduated from Bellevue High School in 1956, and Whitman College in 1960. He did a post-degree year of study in the German language in Vienna before earning his master's degree and teaching certificate from University of Washington in 1966. Gordon was married to Barbara Lee Nye in 1969. His love for and pride in his sons was a major joy in his life. In 1972 Gordon was awarded a Fulbright Teacher Exchange position and took his young family to Schiltz, Germany, for a year. This began a love of the German landscape and people that would last for the rest of his life. Gordon became a teacher of German language, psychology, and human sexuality at Inland High School for almost 25 years. During that time he designed two award-winning courses, one in Human Sexuality and another in Cultural Diversity. As a counselor in the Bellevue Public Schools system he worked with at-risk youth to prevent school dropout, suicide, and drug abuse. He also worked as a clinician with a National Institute of Mental Health research program administered by University of Washington's School of Nursing to facilitate support and recovery groups for at-risk students. He co-authored the facilitators' manual currently being distributed nationwide by NIMH. In 1991, Gordon received an applied behavioral sciences degree in Psychology from City University in Bellevue, Washington. After retirement from the public school system in 1993, he became a counselor to adults in distress. Gordon was a psychotherapy consultant to Seattle Sexual Health Center; taught courses in human sexuality at Antioch College, Seattle; and was an adjunct faculty member in psychosocial issues at Marylhurst College in Oregon. He authored chapters in university-level health texts. His volunteer work included helping a local chapter of American Friends Service Committee set up an outreach program for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth. Nationally, he was twice elected president of the Northwest District of American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors, and Therapists. Gordon was a member and elder of Seattle's Salmon

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Bay Meeting. He served as a member of many committees. He was cherished for providing interesting and enjoyable adult education sessions, and often hosted Salmon Bay gatherings in his home, including Christmas parties and New Year's Eve rituals. Gordon's gentle and witty ministry, his seasoned advice, and his caring Quaker spirit were deeply appreciated by his fellow Friends. He was survived by his loving partner, Frank Gonzalez; his mother, Leita Dickman; his sons, Matt and Tyson Dickman; three grandchildren; a sister, Sally Dickman; and many friends.

Greenler—Barbara Greenler, 75, on March 23, 2006, in Madison, Wis., of cancer. Barbara was born on May 9, 1930, to Leland and Grace Stacy in Waterbury, Conn. The family moved several times, taking her around New England, to Kansas City, and to upstate New York. Her only sibling, a brother, died when she was two years old. She was a graduate of Allegheny College where she was first introduced to Quakers. During the summer of 1953, during a workcamp in a low-income area of Washington, D.C., she and others were arrested and charged with disturbing the peace for singing on the street. The song was "Jacob's Ladder." The real offense appeared to be singing in a racially mixed group. She and her friends were taken to jail, and after refusing to accept segregated cells, they sang the night away. Years later, Barbara's own children loved this story about their mother and understood it at an early age what kind of "peace" was being disturbed. She then trained in occupational therapy at Columbia University in New York City. Barbara was working with children with cerebral palsy in Baltimore when she met Bob Greenler. They married in 1954. Barbara was recorded in 1955 as a member of Homewood Meeting in Baltimore. Two years later, she and Bob moved to Milwaukee, their home for the next 45 years. Barbara became a full-time mother to raise their three children, then returned to occupational therapy. In 1974, she earned a Master's in Social Work and practiced therapy until her retirement in 1990. Throughout her life, Barbara loved anything to do with nature and relished getting her hands dirty. She volunteered at the Riveredge Nature Center for many years as a naturalist and as a self-taught entomologist. She loved painting and drawing. On her own land, she restored prairies and planted and tended numerous gardens. For the last 50 years of her life she served Friends and tended her own spiritual life by participating fully in her Quaker community at Milwaukee Meeting, Illinois Yearly Meeting, and Northern Half Yearly Meeting. In 1975 she was part of the founding of Northern Yearly Meeting and contributed greatly to its life and development. Barbara wrote of those early years: "We didn't get together and 'found' Quaker churches as missions. We found each other in our needs and concerns for peace, race relations, and other social issues as well as our need to share parenting that emphasized those Quaker values." In the late 1950s Barbara and three other Quaker women were drawn together in their passion for singing, which gave birth to Northern Yearly Meeting's "Nightingales," a group that now gathers three times a year for weekend singing retreats, as well as at yearly meeting gatherings. One of Barbara's gifts during singing was to look into other people's eyes. She challenged Nightingales not to become slaves to the songbook but to learn the words and look at each other. In the early 1980s, Barbara became the Northern Yearly Meeting representative to Friends General Conference. Over her 20 years of service to the meeting, she was known for her significant gifts of clair-voicing, discernment, and leadership, and were highly regarded. In 1998 she co-chaired the annual FGC Gathering at River Falls, Wis. After moving to Madison in 2002, Barbara involved herself in the life of Madison Meeting. She is survived by her husband, Bob Greenler; three children, Lee Greenler, Karen Greenler, and Robin Greenler; Sue Coffin; and six grandchildren.

Hadley—Ruthanna Davis Hadley, 85, on October 18, 2006, in Gwynedd, Pa. Ruthanna was born on February 17, 1921, in Holguin, Cuba, the daughter of Merle L. Davis and Carrie Hays Davis. Her father was director of a Quaker school there. The family returned to the United States in 1929, to Richmond, Ind. She graduated from Earlham College in 1943, and taught English, home economics, and music in the Wilmington, Ohio, public high school and at Moorestown Friends School. She married Herbert M. Hadley in 1946. Herbert and Ruthanna lived in Washington, D.C., where Herbert was executive secretary of Friends Meeting of Washington. In 1956, Herbert became executive secretary of Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) in Birmingham, England. Here they raised their three children. Ruthanna was very involved in her husband's international Quaker life, traveling with him and opening their home to hundreds of international visitors. In one six-year period they hosted over 500 overnight guests from 27 different countries. They returned to the United States in 1962 and settled in Philadelphia, Pa., where Ruthanna taught in the public schools before joining the staff of William Penn Charter School, managing the lunchroom from 1965 to 1968, and where Herbert continued as head of the American section of FWCC. As with most things, she saw the role of the lunchroom at Penn Charter in holistic ways, as a palette for thoughtful hospitality and as an extension of the school's Quaker education. A 40-year active member of Germantown Meeting, she served on the Westtown Friends School Committee, on the board of Friends Boarding School, and as a Quaker study center, and Fairhill Burial Ground (a green space in North Philadelphia), and was clerk of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's Nominating Committee. She was an involved member—and for three years, president—of the Germantown branch of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. At Foulke's she chaired the Current Issues and the Archives committees. Ruthanna played the violin and piano. As a young woman, she conducted school orchestras and church choirs and later, in her home, ad hoc choral groups. For many years, she was an active volunteer with Young Musicians Musicales, providing concert opportunities for superbly talented music students in Philadelphia. She was inclusive and generous, in her thinking and dealing with people, thoughtful beyond measure, and her home and spirit were always open to others. One of her prized accomplishments was the co-authorship with a friend in 1971 of Travelers Joy, a book of recipes, information, and anecdotes from the homes of Quakers around the world who had opened their doors and lives to visitors from
Thich Nhat Hanh

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abroad. Ruthanna was predeceased by her husband, Herbert M. Hadley. She is survived by her son, Stephen J. Hadley; her daughters, Helen Hadley Dana and Carol Hadley Brown; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; and her brother, Ray L. Davis.

Ham—Minnie Jane Ham, 73, on June 24, 2005. Minnie Jane was born in November 1931, the daughter of William Baker and Ethel M. Johnson. In 1954 she completed her bachelor's degree from Temple University, and in 1956, received a graduate degree from Wesleyan University. She worked for the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs in the 1970s, writing grants and helping displaced homemakers. She was member of Trenton Meeting. She retired in the spring of 1996. Minnie Jane was a feisty, creative woman who advised, "Walk in beauty. Beauty is balance." She followed her own advice, bringing the beauty of a truly committed activist to the community outside, and inside, decorating her workplace with art on every available wall. She lived fiercely, devouring every moment as she blazed through life following the Light of her commitment to equality for all. Her art and vision provided her with a way to deal with the injustices of the world. In 1993 Minnie Jane became the founder and organizer of the Fellowship of Quakers in the Arts, an organization to nurture and showcase the literary, visual, musical, and performing arts within the Religious Society of Friends, for purposes of Quaker expression, ministry, witness, and outreach. Minnie Jane is survived by her daughter, Suzanne Ailie Ham; her son, James Andrew Ham; and a brother, William Baker.

Mills—David Nevell Mills, 88, on November 7, 2006, in Royal Oak, Mich., as a result of a rupture of an aortic aneurysm. David was born on May 23, 1918, in Detroit, Mich., son of Wilson Waddingham Mills and Clara Elizabeth Avery. He was a graduate of Harvard University, where he majored in Mathematics, and University of Michigan Law School. He served as an Army meteorologist in Panama and the Caribbean during World War II. In 1942 he married Julia Conner Ligon. Members of Ann Arbor Meeting, the couple helped to found Friends School in Detroit. David possessed an enormous zest for life. Devoted to his family, he was as comfortable a Seuss-reading, tree-climbing father and grandfather at home as he was a respected attorney of nearly 50 years with the firm of Cross, Wrock, Miller, and Vieson (later Cross, Wrock, PC), in Detroit. A man of robust integrity who never compromised his moral values, he told a client who wanted to avoid estate taxes that the best way to accomplish this was not to die. An amateur astronomer, he searched the night skies with the admonishment that to see a comet or planet just once didn't count: you must see it two nights in a row to be sure it moved. "Old Man," as he was affectionately called, also embraced classical music, art history, covered bridges, Dr. Seuss, and world-wide travel. He once organized a trip to Greece, joined 13 friends who didn't know one another, and assigned each of them to be a figure from Greek mythology. Whether pondering the hyperbolic cosine of the St. Louis Arch, treating his grandchildren to ice cream, refusing to shovel his driveway so it would be a good place for them to go sledding, or opening his home in Farmington to AFSC weekend retreats and lively discussion ses-
sions for students and others with foreign back­
grounds, he experienced a curiosity about life with as much enthusiasm as the children. David was pre­
deceased by his wife, Julia Conner Ligon Mills; a son, David H. Mills; a granddaughter, Laura
and a brother, William J. Mills. He is survived by his
dearest companion, Peggy Marlin; two sons, Christo­
pher and W. Joseph Mills; two daughters, Rebecca
Bremermann and Amanda Wilcox; 14 grandchildren;
4 great-grandchildren; and a sister, Ann Hyde.

Mock—Ronald Lester Mock, 78, on August 19,
2005, after being struck by an elevator door. His
hip was broken, and he succumbed to pneumonia
and heart failure nine days after the accident. Ron
was born in Oakland, Calif., on May 29, 1927, the
only son of Francis “Frank” Bloodgood Mock and
Jean “Major” Lillian Desoto. Ron grew up during
the Depression, and his family moved several times
around northern California as his mother sought
nursing jobs to support them. He started school at
Mission Dolores in San Francisco and spent several
unhappy years boarding at St. Vincent’s boys’
school and orphanage in San Rafael while his par­
ents separated. He attended high school in Los
Angeles and graduated from Polytechnic in 1944.
After high school, he worked as a pipefitter in the
shipyards. He dreamed of being a writer, but enlist­
ed in the Navy during World War II, and was dis­
charged as a Seaman First Class in July 1946. In
1948, on his 21st birthday, he married Catherine
Ann Dorothy. They traveled to France, where Ron
studied French at University of Grenoble and then
worked for the U.S. Embassy in Paris. After two
years in France, Ron and Catherine relocated to the
Bay Area, where he completed his BA at University
of California Berkeley, having found psychology,
a major for which he was well suited. He graduat­
ed Phi Beta Kappa and was accepted into Berkeley’s
doctoral program. His marriage ended after seven
years and he struggled with depression. During this
time, his father’s remarriage had produced 28-year­
old Ron’s only sibling, Susan Moran. At the begin­
ing of the 1960s, Ron worked for California’s
Department of Mental Hygiene in Sacramento. He
returned to UC Berkeley in 1962, where he met
Kathleen Ranlett. They married later that year. Ron
was disturbed about the war in Vietnam, and one
of his professors told him about a group that had
been long committed to working for peace. Ron
became a regular attender at Berkeley Meeting and
became a member in 1970. In 1964 Ron became
involved with the Free Speech movement and par­
ticipated in the FSM sit-in in December 1964.
One of the oldest protesters to get arrested, he was
proof of what he and the others had done, seeing
it as a way of honoring his convictions. Following
an upbeat period for both the campus and himself,
he slipped again into a deep depression. After a few
years, he completed both his doctorate in clinical
psychology and postdoctoral training with chil­
dren. During this time it became evident that Ron
was gifted with an ability to understand the pain
and problems of others. He worked in Alameda
County child and family clinics and he liked being
called Doc Mock. Humor was another of his gifts.
He fulfilled his early desire to write, creating sever­
al screenplays and humorous essays. Shortly before
his death, he completed a piece about life in Salem
Lutheran Home, his residence for the two last years
of his life. As a member of Berkeley Meeting, he

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was long an active participant in the vigil protesting the university's involvement in weapons research. He served several terms on the Committee for the Defense of Marriage and Family Ties. He was moved by the work done by physicians in the Heart Program, and he supported the Adopt-a-Minefield Program. Ronald had a unique sense of humor, which a Friend described as "sardonic whimsy." Ron is survived by his wife, Kathleen Ranlett Mock; his daughter, Denise Francesca Mock; his sister, Susan Moran; and many others whose lives he touched.

Reese—Matthias Reese, 74, on November 16, 2005, of cancer. Matt was born on June 16, 1931, in Baltimore, Md., to Matthias Forney Reese Jr. and Jean McCollum Reese. Matt was a self-made and self-reliant man. Shortly before his graduation from high school, a judge gave him the choice of going to jail for stealing cars or into the service. Matt chose the Coast Guard, and became an MP in Hawaii. After his discharge, he landed in jail again on the journey home to New Orleans; his mother sent him to Baltimore to live with his uncle. He ran afoul of the law again and ended up in prison. There he finished his high school degree, earned his college degree in electronics, and as a result was paroled. Later, when he became involved with Quakers, he decided that it was important that he be able to vote. So he petitioned the Governor of the State of Maryland for a pardon, and was granted it. Matt was very proud of having regained his right to vote. He moved to the West Coast, and met his future wife, Ruth, a nurse, in San Francisco. They married in 1972 in San Jose, Calif., and they eventually moved to Pasadena. When they separated amicably in 1979, Matt bought two houses on Reposa Lane where Atadena meets the mountains. He lived in the smaller one, while his ailing mother came to live in the larger one. He hand-built a library for her extensive collection of books. When his mother died, he moved into the larger house and maintained his various businesses from there. Matt had a keen mind and liked using it. He enjoyed the symphony and the local playhouse. He and his wife, Ruth, remained close. When she became ill with cancer in the '90s, he took care of her, as he had his mother. Matt became involved with Orange Grove Meeting in the early 1980s. He became a member in 1994. He was active on the Property Committee during work days, as treasurer of the meeting, and on the Peace and Social Order Committee, having a special concern for prison issues, the death penalty, and land mines. But it was in his service to individuals that Matt's life spoke most clearly. He could always be counted on to help. Many Friends witnessed his faithful service to Toussaint Jennings in his declining years, bringing him to meetings and visiting him regularly. Matt had a wonderful sense of humor. One way he identified himself was as the guy with more hair on his chin than on his head. Matt served on the board of Meals on Wheels and regularly made deliveries, sleeping at the Bad Weather shelters established at churches to deal with overflow from Union Station, tutoring people in the use of computers at the Atadena Public Library, and volunteering at Eaton Canyon Park. Matt was preceded by his wife, Ruth Reese.
Samuel Laughlin. He is survived as well as by three brothers, Stanley; and five great-grandchildren, Eric Jeffries, Charles Laughlin, Nathan Smith, and Rebecca Cassidy Jeffries, Skylar Jeffries, Hugh Laughlin, and one great-great-grandchild, Skylar Jeffries.

Deceased by his wife of 52 years, Alice Black where he was an important part of the John Abbott school in Newtown, (N.J.) Meeting. He was also a member of the New Jersey Association for the Insurance of Houses and Boars, and, in his later years, he established and operated Seaman Yacht Sales in Port Washington. In 1950 Fred married Carolyn Mason and during a long, happy marriage the couple raised four children, who gave them three grandchildren. Throughout his life Fred was a member of Manhasset (N.Y.) Meeting, where he is remembered as a wise, gentle, quietly competent member who devoted himself to caring for the old meetinghouse. Fred was preceded by his wife, Carolyn Mason Seaman. The couple are buried in Young’s Memorial Cemetery in Oyster Bay Cove, in a gravesite, immediately alongside that of former President Theodore Roosevelt.

Waln—Samuel Morris Waln, 93, on October 24, 2005. Samuel was born on Oct 30, 1911, in Hamilton Township, N.J., to Nicholas and Edna Bulk Waln. He graduated from Trenton High School and Rider College. A poultry farmer, Samuel became director for the New Jersey Association for the Insurance of Houses and Other Buildings in Crosswicks, a real estate broker, and a member of the Hamilton Township Historical Society, where he was an important part of the John Abbott House restoration. He was a member of Crosswicks (N.J.) Meeting. He was also a member of the New Jersey Farm Bureau and the Elks. Samuel was preceded by his wife of 52 years, Alice Black Waln; as well as by three brothers. He is survived by three daughters, Jane Rockhold, Barbara Laughlin, and Prudence Gaskill; six grandchildren, Holly Jeffries, Amy Rockhold, Shannon Laughlin, Charla Laughlin, Nathan Smith, and Rebecca Stanley; and five great-grandchildren, Eric Jeffries, Cassidy Jeffries, Skylar Jeffries, Hugh Laughlin, and Samuel Laughlin.
No litmus test for faith

Among Friends there have always been those who, like Moses' flock waiting at the foot of Mt. Sinai, have sought comfort in orthodoxy. Nevertheless I was startled by the harshness of Mary Grundy's critique of *Godless for God's Sake: Nontheism in Contemporary Quakerism* (Books, FJ Nov. 2006), edited by David Boulton. She's clearly upset to the point of hostility by the candor of those who seek on nontheist paths.

"The experience of the Presence of God is real," she asserts, "Once you have tasted it, you know it. It cannot be measured by science, but that does not make it unreal." She has not noticed that the term "Presence of God" is itself a notion, a theoretical construct of human intellect applied to a real experience. With her own religious vocabulary confined to 17th century masculine imagery, her dismissal of the transcendent experiences of nontheists as "emasculated" is quite revealing. And she seems unaware that nontheists have also been with us from the outset. They're not newcomers unwittingly allowed in, as she speculates, by "sloppy membership procedures."

The fact that Friends do not hold with creeds and that we do trust in continuing revelation discerned through honest seeking, open-hearted dialogue, and expectant waiting means that there can be no litmus test of faith or belief for membership in our venerable, resilient, and beloved Religious Society of Friends of Truth. That way is more challenging, but it's also the source of our strength and disproportionate influence in human affairs. It's not easy to live always out of our higher consciousness, to keep above the dark ocean of fear and conformity and swim indefatigably in the uncharted ocean of light. Especially in this difficult time of violent religious literalism we need to be buoying each other up with mindfulness of the precious light entrusted to us.

*Janet Nagel*
Greensboro, N.C.

Response to review of *Living with Nature's Extremes*

We were very disappointed in Margaret Bacon's review of the biography of Gilbert White, *Living With Nature's Extremes* (FJ Nov. 2006). The reviewer dismissed with a throwaway comment the deep concerns Gilbert White developed about the direction and governance of American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) in the late 1960s.

These issues became so troubling to White that he abruptly resigned as chair of the AFSC Board in 1969. White did not "go public" with these differences for more than 30 years, until they were spelled out in this book.

In light of Gilbert White's distinguished career and service to Friends and as a Friend, we believe that these issues deserve to be identified and clearly addressed, not shrugged off as if they were of no consequence.

As stated in the text, as Board chair, White was firm in "believing that the Society of Friends, through its representation in the [AFSC] Corporation, should lead in establishing [AFSC] priorities and policies" (p. 109).

However, during his tenure "Gilbert felt that the agenda of the AFSC was unwisely determined more by staff than by the Board. He also felt that the gradual decline in numbers of American Quakers was in part the consequence of reduced opportunities for voluntary service and career development" (p.115). When his repeated requests were ignored, he resigned and cut his ties to the group.

The book notes that more than 30 years later, "Gilbert's concerns about the staffing composition of the AFSC and service opportunities for Friends did not abate." These were shared again privately with the new Board chair.

Moreover, the author quotes the late Stephen Cary, a longtime AFSC insider, acknowledging in a 2001 interview with the biography's author that "As to whether staff are too central, I think they are. The Board hasn't been willing to exercise due control. And Gilbert in my opinion was correct in his belief that the right balance has not been struck" (p. 129).

Over the past 35 years numerous other Friends have raised similar concerns about AFSC's relationship to the Religious Society of Friends, and the character of its governance—and had them similarly dismissed out of hand by AFSC defenders, as they were in the FRIENDS JOURNAL review, usually without even being named.

We reject this way of dealing with differences by suppression. These issues were important to Friends in the 1960s, and they remain so today. We wish Gilbert White had spoken openly about them earlier, but are grateful to see them now in print.

They should stay on the table among Friends. We call on AFSC and FRIENDS JOURNAL to step up and support an open, full, and searching reexamination of the questions of right governance and authentic connection between the Religious Society of Friends and a service body that claims the name "Friends."

Gilbert White raised these questions almost 40 years ago based on close, firsthand experience. Dealing with them was timely then. Dealing with them openly now is urgent and long overdue.

*Chuck Fager and H. Larry Ingle*
Fayetteville, N.C., Chattanooga, Tenn.


This issue of FRIENDS JOURNAL includes an article by Robert Hinshaw (p. 13) that comments on Gilbert White's concerns about AFSC's relationship to the Religious Society of Friends and AFSC's priorities. —Eds.

More thoughts on independence from cars

"Questions for Quakers about Cars" (FJ Jan.), by Benjamin Vail, sounded a wake-up call that Friends have been needing. The writer provides good background to the declaration made recently by someone else that "Americans are addicted to oil."

As with all good queries, there are no pat answers to the car questions. The response must come from within us, after some soul-searching. Vail has done such searching and has come up with some good answers for himself. Many years ago a similar effort by my wife and me resulted in the resolve to live without owning a car. We were living in San Francisco at the time and, because the public transit there is comprehensive, we were able to live without a car. We rented a car occasionally, whenever we couldn't get to a chosen destination by train or bus. Even after we moved to other locations we were able, for more than 30 years, to get by without car ownership.

Vail suggests that people could benefit from living close to meeting so they could walk or bike there without having to drive. It seems to me that another possibility would be to encourage the meeting to subdivide into scattered worship groups or "preparative meetings" so driving to meeting could be limited to just a once-a-month gathering for business.

*Otto Steinhardt*
Santa Rosa, Calif.

April 2007 FRIENDS JOURNAL
What transportation is practical outside cities?

I am writing in response to Benjamin Vail’s article “Questions for Quakers About Cars” (FJ Jan.). I am glad he is living in Europe, where mass transit is readily available even in the smallest villages. However, living without a car is not a practical choice for many in the U.S. I also have been concerned about our reliance on automobiles and foreign oil. And I am concerned about the environment and global warming. Yet, I am a member of a U.S. family with more vehicles than licensed drivers.

My husband and I have chosen to live in a rural area where there is very little in the way of mass transit. I envy those of you who can read on the way to work. However, I would not trade our home, and the woods and ponds surrounding it, for an urban apartment.

The two of us have three vehicles. My husband owns a pickup truck. He uses it to haul firewood, gardening supplies, lumber, etc. and he sometimes uses it for work (he runs a business from our home). Even though it is a small pickup, it gets poor mileage, so when he can, he uses a small compact car. I drive a hybrid (Toyota Prius). Having the extra vehicle has come in handy a few times when we have loaned it to friends or relatives while their cars were in the shop. In our area, you must have a car to get to work. I am sure if my husband had to sacrifice a vehicle, it would be the car. We would be using more energy in that case.

We try to consolidate trips as much as we can. My husband has a huge garden and raises much of our food. That helps energy-wise as much of the U.S. food supply is transported for long distances. We buy small, energy-efficient vehicles. The closest meeting for worship is 45 minutes away. Because so many members have so far to drive, an attempt is made to schedule as many committee meetings, etc., as possible on Sundays. To go to work or to a movie is a half-hour drive. It is not practical to walk to the post office, the bank, etc. There are no sidewalks in my area and the bank is five miles away, with none closer.

In his article, Benjamin Vail suggested Friends move closer to their meetings and how this would revitalize the meetings. While I can see that this might be so, it would not eliminate the need to drive to work. In our case, to move closer to a meeting might be possible now that my husband works at home. But when we built our home in 1992, we were actually locating between our two jobs. My commute became longer, but...
Examination of the Inner Light

It was surprising and confusing to read Terry H. Wallace’s article, “Misunderstanding Quaker Faith and Practice” (FJ Jan.). I found many of his assertions—as well as the general tone of the piece—very troubling, but there is one point in particular I want to address. His statement that the concept of the Inner Light and its universality was antithetical to the thinking of the original Friends and is a product of late 19th- and 20th-century “polite mysticism” is simply untrue. Isaac Penington and William Penn in the 17th century, John Woolman in the 18th, and Elias Hicks in the early 19th century—among many others—all wrote of the Inner Light and its centrality to the spiritual life of Friends. And they did indeed assert explicitly that the Inner Light is possessed by every human being—by each one of us individually and by all of us without exception. John Woolman in his essay “A Plea for the Poor” called it “universal light.” Quaker affirmation of the rightful equality of women, the full humanity of Africans and African Americans, and the respect due Native Americans and their traditions—as well as, more recently, the intrinsic value of the spousal relationships of lesbians and gay men—all of this flows from Friends’ conviction of the universality of the Light.

Wallace writes that “it is only in the 20th century that the Light has been divorced from Christ Jesus,” but this also is untrue. Elias Hicks in his published sermons denied the divinity of Jesus, asserting rather that Jesus was simply a human being, just like you and me, illumined by the same Inner Light and “different” only in the perfection of his obedience and the fullness of his understanding. That the ancestors of today’s liberal Friends called themselves “Hicksites” in the 19th century is an indication of how widespread such thinking was at least as early as the 1820s.

Walt Whitman, who was raised by a Quaker mother and whose parents were friends of Elias Hicks, wrote in his account of Hicks’ life and ministry: “Always E.H. gives the service of pointing to the fountain of all naked theology, all religion, all worship, all the truth to which you are possibly eligible—namely, in yourself and your inherent relations. Others talk of Bibles, saints, churches, exhortations, various atonements—the canons outside of yourself and apart from man [and woman]—E.H. to the religion inside of man’s [and woman’s] very own nature.”

The Inner Light is given many names in the writings of Friends—the Seed, the Leaven, the Divine Teacher, the Inner Guide, the Inward Counselor, the Little Child to Lead, the Voice of the True Shepherd, the Life and Power, the Heavenly Principle, the pure Principle of Light and Life, the Place of Christ in the Heart, the Word which is milk, that of God in every person, the Divine Spark, Hidden Life, Innate Wisdom, and so on—and these names are themselves testimony to the richness of Quaker meditations on the Light through the centuries. The unprogrammed meeting, the rejection of clergy, Friends’ manner of conducting business, the testimonies of equality and peace, and much more—all rest upon the thought of the Light and its universality. Indeed, it seems to me that without the thought of the Light—whether it is understood as the presence of God in the human soul, or as an innate human capacity for an intuitive relationship with the universe, or as the inherent dignity and worth of every individual—without the Light there is no Quakerism at all.

The emotional tone of Terry Wallace’s article is, as I said, very troubling, and I wonder at his hostility to these ideas and traditions. I don’t know what motivated him to write as he did, but I believe the above represents a more accurate history than is to be found in his essay.

Charles Simpson
Northampton, Mass.

Range of beliefs signal vital diversity

Terry Wallace in “Misunderstanding Quaker Faith and Practice” (FJ Jan.) says that “several perspectives” are “widely
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embraced” by unprogrammed Quakers. Among these are the beliefs that “all religions are saying the same thing,” and that “the Bible is just one great book among many.” Friend Terry implies that these beliefs are so widespread that all readers will recognize them. I cannot say that I have ever heard them.

I am a member of Central Philadelphia (Pa.) Meeting, a meeting that is more spiritually diverse than many others. The members hold a wide range of beliefs about the authority of the Bible and vary in the degree to which they read or consult it. We disagree on the relative importance of vocal ministry and conscience when they conflict with the Bible. But I have never heard any member say that the Bible is just one of many great books. We do, however, agree with the words of George Fox, “You will say Christ saith this, and the apostles say this, but what canst thou say?”

Further, I am a guide at the Arch Street Meetinghouse. We have about 20 volunteer guides from about 15 different monthly meetings. One of the most often asked questions by the tourists and school children (who are the most frequent visitors) is some version of “what is the Quaker religion?” Our answers vary, depending on where we put the emphasis. But all the guides include the beliefs and practices that make Quakerism unique: the ministry of silence, the absence of an agenda, the simplicity of the meetinghouse, the belief in nonviolence, the value of vocal ministry, and so forth. No guide, so far as I know, has ever said that Quakerism is no different from other religions. We do, however, agree with the words of William Penn, “The humble, meek, merciful, just, pious and devout souls are everywhere of one religion.”

No doubt there are some Friends who espouse the ideas that Friend Terry says we do. But this range of beliefs is a sign of the vital diversity that has always existed in the Religious Society of Friends. Friend Terry, in my opinion, exaggerates this vital diversity into what sounds like a parody of contemporary Friends’ faith and practice.

Ray Bentman

Care should be taken

Terry H. Wallace is quite correct to denounce and correct the various misconceptions that grieve him. There are undoubtedly some less than thoughtful Friends, but at the same time the author might do well to heed the warnings of James Fletcher in “A Quaker Speaks from the Black Experience” (“FJ Jan.”) against “tendencies
toward excessive worship of Quaker ancestry, history...; certain cultish tendencies among Friends in language and behavior; the special role of worthy Friends..."

Concerning the matter of creeds, before engaging in a discussion on whether Quakers have one, let us define the word. Plainly a creed is a list of beliefs. Immediately one must distinguish between two main types of beliefs. Beliefs about what? The first and most common type of creed, as exemplified by the Roman Catholic “Credo,” lists “doctrinal” beliefs, for which no evidence can be found by reason or experience. Paradoxically, for a statement of presumed extreme importance, one cannot find in it a single word about “how to live.” This is of course the type of creed that Quakers do not have and that is what they mean when they say they do not have a creed—a doctrinal creed. On the other hand, Quakers most certainly have a creed, but it is a behavioral creed, a list of beliefs on how to live, expressed for the most part within the Testimonies. Just as for the doctrinal beliefs, these are not derived by reason alone but are felt internally and discovered externally through the experience of living.

Hubert Morel-Seytoz
Atherston, Calif.

More tolerance needed

Wow! I feel as if I’ve been lectured, scolded, and spanked by Friend Terry Wallace’s article on misinterpretations of Quaker faith and practice (FJ Jan.). He seems to think he is the only one who understands the Bible, Quaker history, and the facts and truth about Quakerism. Unfortunately, his views seem to me to be quite narrow and rigid, and in some cases simply mistaken. I’ve been studying the Bible and Quaker history and literature for decades. I don’t come to all of the same conclusions and would urge Friend Terry and others who may think like him to be more tolerant and open-minded about views different from their own.

For example, I don’t think that “all religions are saying the same thing, only in different words.” Once while visiting Thailand, I spoke to a Buddhist priest about Buddhist beliefs and practices and he asked me about Quaker faith and practice, after which he smileingly doused me with some holy water and said “Now you are a Buddhist.” Of course he was just joking. I’m not a Buddhist. At the same time, I respect those who sincerely believe and practice their faiths, whether Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, Taoism, and all the rest.

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I don’t believe “Friends have no creeds,” but we certainly don’t have the kind of dogmatic, mandatory system of beliefs and rituals most other churches have. A good friend who is a lifelong Roman Catholic jokes that in his church everything is either required or prohibited, and sometimes things are switched from one to the other. Quakerism allows room for doubt, just as Scripture says, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief” (Mark 9:24).

Friend Terry sets up a series of straw men like this, then knocks them down with his version of the truth. His claim that the idea of that of God in every person is a late development in Quakerism is contradicted by George Fox’s well-known 1666 admonition to “walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one.” Not just every Quaker, or every Christian, but every person in the world.

Friend Terry’s opinion that the Inner Light can only be associated with Jesus flies in the face of the Quaker notion of continuing revelation which allows for a broader interpretation of the Inner Light than that set down nearly 2,000 years ago in the Book of John. Whether the Bible is “just one great book among many” or the sole repository of the words of God on Earth has been openly debated among scholars and people of different faiths for centuries and surely cannot be finally settled by a simple assertion by one Quaker scholar, no matter how learned or sincere. Errors in translation, transcription, and printing are still being discovered as well as evidence of changes and additions inserted many years after the original texts were written. Surely Quakers are not going to join the fundamentalist rush to enshrine the Bible, with all of its inconsistencies and internal contradictions, as the inerrant, perfect word of God. Divinely inspired, perhaps, but clearly a human document from Genesis to Revelation.

Another straw man: “All Friends embrace the Peace Testimony.” Of course not. Some Friends have fought in or supported many U.S. wars, some have been disowned by their meetings and some have not. None of this means that Friends don’t hold peace and nonviolence as an ideal for which to strive, whether or not it is always possible to achieve that ideal in the real world of crime, military aggression, terrorism, ethnic cleansing, and the like.

With respect to Friend Terry’s seventh straw man: “Friends are rugged spiritual individualists,” I confess I have no idea what he is talking about. “Rugged individualism” is a U.S. frontier notion concerning self-sufficiency, which largely faded away with the coming of the industrial revolution and...
What is the sound of no creed clapping?

Is a creed of having no creed a creed or no creed? I find myself less worried than Friend Terry Wallace about his list of eight “unseemly misinterpretations” that could lead to a misunderstanding of Quaker faith (FJ Jan.). As an unprogrammed Quaker, I find that these misunderstandings are less common than feared and more a problem of language than faith. The “unseemliness” relates to inadequacies of language and, happily, Quakers seldom rely entirely on language. Such blithe statements as “you can believe whatever you like as a Friend” are quickly belied by any time actually spent among Quakers.

So much of religious dialogue is about what one believes, whereas much of Quaker life concerns how one lives. It is often easier to “speak Quaker” with verbs than with nouns: seek, act, follow, live, look, and listen for Spirit moving and leading. This is a language of action verbs directly related to Christ’s admonition to “Seek and ye shall find” (Matt. 7:7). It’s a language of how, not what, and it is no wonder new seekers (and old) have pain expressing themselves in a culture engorged with religiosity and entirely concerned with things: religions, beliefs.

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Speaking to my condition

Several aspects of the January issue spoke to my condition: the new column on Earthcare, our thirst for oil, the article by James Fletcher, but most of all the nudges from Terry Wallace about being careful about what we say to others about Quakerism. Increasing numbers of inquirers are checking us out and attending our meetings, particularly near urban areas. We are often given an opportunity to enter into serious dialogue about what we believe. It is not easy to do this, nor should it be, and the pat answers many of us are guilty of using just do not open the door to our own experience.

Terry warns us against familiar answers, explains what brought us to some unseemly misinterpretations and identifies the dangers. We obviously need in many of our meeting...
Bojalian Friends alive with the Spirit

The power and impact of Bolivian Friends and Friends organizations that I saw in a recent brief visit to Bolivia far exceeds the cool and modest description Newton Garver offered us in his excellent and clear article “The Aspirations of Andean Quakers” (FJ Feb.).

I had heard that Quaker Bolivia Link (QBL) had problems with some early projects, and I wanted to see how they were doing now. I walked into the QBL medical clinic at Armacari and my jaw dropped. I beheld the best-designed, best-constructed modern building I had seen in the length of Latin America. Better than much in the U.S., and all the more amazing because volunteer labor built it. With QBL direction, volunteers who had never seen that type or quality of construction rose above their experience to produce something on the order of a miracle.

I’m no expert on medical programs, but what I could see of this program administered in conjunction with the medical school of the Universidad Católica de Bolivia looked right. Not only were sick people being treated, I could see evidence of numerous programs to teach people how to keep from becoming sick. The staff seemed alert and interested in their jobs. The rapport between staff members and villagers seemed smooth and warm.

But people’s faces attracted my attention most. One face won’t leave my memory: a woman’s small face covered with tiny wrinkles. She looked 90, she may have been 40. Life had been rough for her. It was obviously easier now. She smiled. She glanced. She looked relaxed and moved fluidly. Her manner indicated she felt closely and comfortably connected to the people around her. The clinic—and the QBL water system there—had done that. It changed her life and the life of the village. People had better lives, felt closer to each other, worked together better.

For a U.S. Friend to add a greenhouse to one’s residence means not having to go down to the store anymore for winter lettuce, maybe getting better produce, having some fun in the dirt. To add a simple QBL greenhouse to a Bolivian’s residence could mean that for the first time in many generations that family might get sufficient food, that the kids might grow up with fully developed bodies, that the family and village might continue to exist rather than people drifting to the slums of La Paz or Sucre. That the people have a reason to be happy.

Bolivians are the happiest people I encountered anywhere. Bolivian Friends seemed the happiest of the bunch. Much happier than U.S. Friends. There’s no good reason for all this happiness. Life is difficult. Climate is strenuous. People are poor. But something good always seems to be going on inside a Bolivian. Maybe Bolivian Friends can come up and give gringo Friends lessons on how to be happy.

When evangelical Friends went to Bolivia in the 1920s they probably didn’t set out to make political history. They apparently did, however. Every village that had a Friends church usually had a Friends school too. Not surprising. Friends have always been interested in education. Except in Bolivia the schools were illegal. Until the 1950s, law forbade educating an ingenue person. Quaker schools operated anyway—secretly. Education became possible. Country—people—as they like to be called—became educated. One of them became president of Bolivia. Perhaps even a very good president who displays some Quaker-style values, keeps people’s needs closest to his heart, and has courage to speak deep, simple truth to enormous, frightening power.
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North Haven Meeting - Unprogrammed worship and First-day school 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. (207) 433-2383.

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Northport - Unprogrammed worship and First-day school 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. (207) 433-2383.

Ogunquit - Unprogrammed worship and First-day school 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. (207) 433-2383.

Penobscot Bay - Unprogrammed worship and First-day school 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. (207) 433-2383.

Western Mass. - Unprogrammed worship and First-day school 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. (207) 433-2383.

Wiscasset - Unprogrammed worship and First-day school 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. (207) 433-2383.

Woodstock - Unprogrammed worship and First-day school 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. (207) 433-2383.
New Jersey
ARNEY'S MT- Worship, 10 a.m., 2nd and 4th First Days; Intercession for sick and imprisoned. Information. Downtown Manhattan Allowed Meeting; outdoors in lower Manhattan, Thursdays 7-8 a.m. June-Sept. For exact location call (212) 797-3393.

OLD CHATHAM-Meeting for worship 11 a.m. Powell House, Rte. 13, Phone (516) 794-0250.

ONEONTA/COOPERSTOWN-Butternuts Monthly Meeting, Phone (607) 547-5450 or (607) 435-6951.

ORCHARD PARK-Worship and First-day school 11 a.m. East Quaker St. at Freedom St. Phone (716) 625-3748.

POPULAR RIDE-Worship 10 a.m. (315) 364-8102.

POTSDAMCANTON-St. Lawrence Valley Friends Meeting, (315) 369-2556.

RUG HookE-keeping-Meeting for worship and Sunday school 10 a.m. 249 Hooker Ave., 12903. (845) 454-2170.

PURCHASE-Meeting for worship and First-day school 10:30 a.m. Purchase Meeting House, 10 Second St. Phone: (914) 946-0256 (answering machine).

ROCHESTER-64 Scio St. Between Avenue E. and Main St. Unprogrammed worship and child care 11 a.m. Adult religious ed 9:30 a.m. Child RE variable, 9:15-9:10 worship a.m. (585) 325-7263.

ROCKLAND Meeting for worship and First-day school 11 a.m. 60 Leber Rd., Blairstown, (845) 735-4214.

SARANAC LAKE Meeting for worship and First-day school; (518) 831-0403 or (518) 831-4940.

Saratoga Springs-Worship and First-day school 10 a.m. Phone: (518) 399-5013.

SCARSDALE-Meeting for worship and Sunday school 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. 142 Scarsdale Ave., Scarsdale, N.Y. (914) 722-7420.

SANTIAGO Meeting for worship and First-day school, 10 a.m. 113 Sarum street, (814) 384-5770.

Shreve-Friendship Meeting for worship and School, 9:30 a.m. Farnsworth M.M., Austin Rd., Shreve, (717) 777-3666.

Troy State Meeting and Worship, 10 a.m., 1st and 3rd Sundays, 2:30 p.m. First Presbyterian Church of Troy, (518) 454-6436.

WADINGTON-Meeting for worship and First-day school, 10 a.m. 249 Hooker Ave., 12903. (845) 454-2170.

Watskill-Friendship Meeting for worship and School, 10 a.m. 113 Sarum street, (814) 384-5770.

WHARTON Meeting for worship and First-day school, 10 a.m. 249 Hooker Ave., 12903. (845) 454-2170.

YORK CITY-Meeting for worship and First-day school, 10 a.m. (914) 525-5791.

York Meeting for worship and First-day school, 10 a.m. 825 Euclid Ave, (518) 476-1196.

Westbury Meeting for worship and First-day school 10 a.m., forum 11 a.m. 570 W. Rocker River Rd. (718) 599-4699.

Westfield Meeting for worship and First-day school, 5758-9101.

Trenton Meeting for worship and worship and First-day school 10 a.m. 142 E. Hanover St. (609) 204-1651.

Trenton Meeting for worship and First-day school 10 a.m. Rte. 9 north, Trenton. Worship 10:30 a.m.

Waldwick Meeting for worship and First-day school 10 a.m. 115 E. 5th St. (201) 484-4500.

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