I Am Who I Am

What is the Quaker Testimony on War Taxes?

Making Peace with Mother Earth
Considering Prayer

Not long ago, I sat down to a tall stack of correspondence, manuscripts, email, and other things that have piled up over the time I took away from work to enjoy the holidays with my family. As I was flipping through and sorting my mail, my cell phone rang. On the other end of the connection was my older son, Paul. He had recently relocated to Philadelphia and was about to go on an important job interview. “Please pray for me,” he asked. “I know that if you and my friend, John, are praying for me during that interview, it will go as well as possible.”

I was deeply touched. And of course I kept him in my prayers even more actively than usual that afternoon.

Paul and I are no strangers to prayer together. His life has been a very challenging one, and in more recent times, we’ve bowed our heads together before his surgery for cancer, at family meals where we once thought he’d never be able to join us, and for strength and guidance to face each day. In our little family of five, we’ve experienced the miraculous—the gift of life when hope was gone—and the amazing power of prayer, when one yields one’s will and trust to God. I long ago came to believe there is nothing more powerful that we can do than to pray—with open heart, without guile or self-interest, and with constancy.

Prayer leaps out at me, as I consider the contents of this issue, as a thread that appears in two of the articles. Mariellen Gilpin, in “Advice for Clerks” (p. 18), mentions it as the very foremost thing she recommends that a clerk do for her or his meeting. What a gift to the meeting! And her suggestion that we “keep a pen and paper handy during prayer,” because we are often given a task to do, is a wonderfully useful one. Writing it down releases us to continue with our prayers. How important to hold our meeting and its members, attenders, and visitors firmly in the Light on a regular, ongoing basis.

In “My Year of Cancer” (p. 6), Paul Hamell speaks movingly of his spiritual challenge when diagnosed with an aggressive cancer. He shares about his confusion and uncertainty about how to pray, a sleepless night full of fear—and prayer, and then the dawning clarity that he had been heard by God. His long hours and days of prayer came down to an experiential awareness that “the only reason I exist is to love, and the real reason I want to continue living in this world is that I have more loving to do in this life.” Our lives have “only one purpose,” he writes, “and that is to love.”

Paul Hamell speaks my mind. Whatever good we accomplish in this life has its origin in love—not that hackneyed emotion promoted by romance novels—but love that is far deeper, more unconditional, both very specific and very universal, that revels in the tiniest sunbeam on a mote of dust or the huge complexity of the human heart, and all else that is—embracing it all with joy and affirmation. It is our connection, our lifeline, to the Divine.

As a new year unfolds before us, with so many issues and concerns to address, so many challenges to face and problems to solve, I believe the most important thing we can offer, before we roll up our sleeves and dig into finding the solutions ahead of us, is prayers—for ourselves, for our neighbors, for our enemies, for our leaders, for our nation, and for the whole of humankind and this immensely beautiful planet we inhabit.

—Susan Coron-Finnerty
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A need for an apology

I was extremely gratified to read the letters dealing with reparations by Elizabeth Gordon and Roberta Nobleman, and the Viewpoint by Milton Erhardt, all in the December 2008 FRIENDS JOURNAL.

Recently, New Zealand offered an apology for mistreating its indigenous people and transferred 435,000 acres of plantations, forest, and rents to seven Maori tribes. How can we not follow in these footsteps?

Rosemary Bothwell
Jenkintown, Pa.

Divinely inspired?

Bruce Nevin’s poem “Trouble Comes to Meeting” (F July 2008), seems to imply that no individual can have a divinely inspired sense of purpose. Such an understanding of mystical religion strikes me as contrary to the history of mystical religion in general and Friends expression of it in particular. The life of Jesus of Nazareth can be interpreted as an example of a person constantly following the leadings of the Divine Spirit. The more than 700 pages of George Fox’s Journal are mainly Fox’s account of how he believed God inspired him to act. How can it be said that either Jesus or Fox would have brought “trouble” to Quaker meeting? Nor, does it seem to me, that any person bringing a concern to a Quaker meeting is necessarily a cause of trouble. There are innumerable examples of Friends bringing concerns that they believe divinely inspired to meetings, and asking that the meetings endorse the concerns. John Woolman and Lucretia Mott did this in regard to their anti-slavery leadings. Representatives of American Friends Service Committee and Friends Committee on National Legislation are constantly doing it today in regard to their social and political leadings. People doing this have enabled the Religious Society of Friends to evolve toward greater expressions of humanity. It strikes me that trouble in a Quaker meeting can be generated not by people bringing concerns that they want endorsed to the meetings, but rather if ascenders of the meeting dismiss these concerns out of hand rather than respectfully, thoughtfully, and prayerfully considering them. This is true of society in general. Because each person is a unique individual, each person has a somewhat different “take” on what is reasonable, or what is “Divine Will.” If these differences are dealt with openly and democratically, as they largely have been in our recent national

The dangers of nuclear power

Commendations to FRIENDS JOURNAL for publishing a special issue on the timely and vitally important topic of Energy, Climate, and Building Community (F Oct. 2008). Bravo! Most of the articles are informative, thought provoking, and inspirational. However, I am impelled to share my distress about Karen Street’s article, “A Friend’s Path to Nuclear Power.” She implies that nuclear power can contribute to solutions for global warming when in fact, if the entire nuclear fuel cycle is considered, it contributes greatly to global warming. It also creates radioactive waste, some of which will be lethal, carcinogenic, and mutagenic for hundreds of thousands of years. What a legacy to leave to our descendants, who forever will need to guard this waste! I echo Louis Cox’s words in his Earthcare column “Putting the Nuclear Genie Back in the Lamp” in this same FJ issue: “We play, they pay.” And our descendants will pay dearly.

Karen Street’s concern for our planet and her years of research and soul-searching to find her own ways of response are admirable. May she inspire all of us to offer our own contributions to the healing of Earth, our matrix of life.

Karen grieves, and I share her anguish. I, too, grieve—daily if not hourly—for if we continue on our current trajectory, climate change will put all species currently on Earth at great peril. Like Karen, I have spent years researching, soul searching, and honoring Quaker testimonies to find my own responses—which include urgent efforts to abolish nuclear power. My spiritual leading on this is different from Karen’s. Karen emphasizes scientifically reliable sources of information about nuclear issues. These are abundant, and I have cited a few of them in the article I co-authored for the July-August 2005 issue of Quaker Eco-Bulletin, “Nuclear Energy and the Care of the Earth.” I invite readers to access this article, available on the Quaker Earthcare Witness website (<www.quakerearthcare.org>), for a brief summary of nuclear dangers and reasons why nuclear power is no solution to global warming. I do not need scientific research to tell me that the highly radioactive “spent” fuel rods sitting in the cooling pool (outside the containment building) at the nuclear power plant 25 miles from my house—with radioactivity equivalent to hundreds of Hiroshima bombs—pose significant danger in the event of an accident or terrorist attack. For Karen and others who somehow think the United States’ nuclear power plants are immune from risk of meltdown, please review what happened at the Davis-Besse nuclear reactor in Toledo, Ohio, in 2002, where only 3/16 inch of stainless steel barely prevented nuclear catastrophe!

Accidents, near-misses, and routine radioactive releases occur all the time and are rarely reported in our public media. Tritium from nuclear power plants leaked into the water supplies of nearby residents in northern Illinois for years before the public ever knew. Radioactive emissions are invisible, unlike coal plant pollution, but nonetheless deadly. The federal agency charged with protecting the public from nuclear risks, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, most unfortunately is in the “pocket” of the nuclear industry. The risks and dangers of nuclear power, its extraordinary costs, and the length of time needed to build reactors and get them online all make use of nuclear power both dangerous and impractical for addressing climate change.

Karen and many others consider it “fantasy” that all of our energy needs could be met through renewable sources. Actually, even using existing technology, concentrated solar power (CSP) across a 100-mile-square portion of our Southwestern deserts could provide power for our entire nation! (A unified smart grid would be needed to transmit this across the country.) Many strategies to make our country both carbon and nuclear free within the next few decades are now readily available, some of which can be found in the following books: Arjun Makhijani’s Carbon-Free and Nuclear-Free: A Roadmap for U.S. Policy (see <www.ccre.org>), Letter R. Brown’s Plan B 3.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization (see <www.carthopolyc.org>), as well as the American Solar Energy Society’s report Tackling Climate Change in the U.S.: Potential Carbon Emission Reductions from Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy by 2030 (see <www.ases.org/climatechange>).

As Friends, we need to use our considerable resources and talent to support development of the many truly renewable, clean, cheap sources of energy, which do not contribute to global warming.

As Quakers we have much more to offer...
Nuclear power and climate change

I grew up living about 120 miles from a nuclear power plant (Kolodzhi in Bulgaria) and close enough to Chernobyl to have nighmarish associations with nuclear power. Even the faint possibility of an accident seems too scary—millions of people could be exposed to radiation that they can't hide from or escape. As a result, I have been deeply suspicious of anyone (even Friends) making a case about the benefits of that technology. Like most people, I am interested in harmless ways to satisfy our human needs rather than hurtful ones.

As clerk of the Environment Committee of Berkeley (Calif.) Meeting, I have heard Karen speak on climate change. I found her facts and figures reliable and convincing and I respected the scientific sources she used. Yet, when she spoke at our forum on nuclear energy, I felt much resistance to what I was hearing. Naturally, I was at first suspicious of Karen's passionate enthusiasm for nuclear power—a technology I had learned to fear. I felt there were two possibilities—either she was unaware of the damaging effects of radiation and dangers of nuclear accidents or she must know something that I did not know.

I found her article “A Friend's Path to Nuclear Power” (FJ Oct. 2008) very moving and revelatory—it describes Karen at a time when she was against nuclear power herself and what made her change her position. I appreciate her diligent research and choice to evaluate and compare energy technologies such as coal, natural gas, nuclear, wind, and solar based on benefits such as actual amount of energy they could supply and the downsides such as human lives and monetary cost. I was surprised to learn that coal technology is causing the deaths of six Chernobyls per year in the United States alone. My reaction was: If this is really true, why is there no public outrage? Then I remembered that from the invasion of Iraq to our response to obesity, the knowledge of unpleasant truths does not necessarily lead to fast change in reality. It is hard to change course once we have set infrastructure and habits.

Karen is bringing to our attention the unpleasant news that climate change caused by activities of the industrialized nations could exacerbate human conflict and add conflict over survival-related resources, such as water, in addition to eradicating most other species on Earth in the span of the next century.

I do not know what the answer for the climate change crisis is. But I know that I am more and more interested to hear what Karen's diligent research points her to. I also find myself more open to consider nuclear power expansion as necessary to avoid the worst climate change scenarios for my son's generation.

Biliana Strenska
Oakland, Calif.

The amount, not the rate, of energy

I would like to comment on one sentence of Gordon Thompson's thoughtful article (“Friends and the Consumption and Generation of Electricity,” FJ Oct. 2008). The sentence reads, “A modicum of electrical power (750 kW per summer month to be exact) is allowed at the lower rate at any time to provide some rate relief to those on fixed incomes.” The watt is a measure of the rate at which energy is used. The amount of energy used depends on how long the bulbs are turned on, for instance one “kilowatt hour” (kWh). So the sentence should read: “A modicum of electrical energy (750 kWh to be exact) is allowed at the lower rate...”

In the hottest month last summer, my two-bedroom, well-insulated, air-conditioned home used 1190 kWh. Apparently, if it were situated in Ontario, 750 of these 1190 kWh would be assured to be charged at the lower rate and I should be economically concerned about the time of day I used the remaining 440 kWh.

On a related subject, it should be noted that electrical energy consumption is a measure of economic activity. There needs to be enough energy produced to permit sufficient gainful employment. In the short run, renewable sources will not be adequate to supply the need. Thus in the near term, it will be impossible to maintain the welfare of society without some environmental cost. I hope that we as Friends will be led to see how environmental costs can be minimized without undue social cost.

George McPherson, Jr.
Rolla, Mo.

Continued on page 41
by Paul Hamell

At a recent gathering of Friends, the discussion leader asked us each to describe a joy we had brought with us to the gathering. When my turn came, I gave what I felt was a Spirit-given message as much as an answer to the question: “I am held in this life by the power of love alone.”

I believe this statement to be absolutely true. At the time I spoke this message, I was nearing the end of nine months of aggressive medical treatment for a very aggressive cancer. I was skinny from radical surgery that rearranged my digestive system with fewer parts, and I was hairless from chemotherapy. The five-year survival rate for the cancer I had is 16 percent; I am now ten months post-diagnosis, cancer free, and reclaiming my life. I think that I will remain cancer free. In any case, I know with certainty that I will live as long as I need to.

I believe now that God had been preparing me for my year of cancer for some time. Several years ago, I came to a resolve to fill in the gaps in my knowledge of religious thought and practice, and I began reading and wrestling with the Bible. I have found my attention focused on the Gospels and have found myself fascinated by the stories of miraculous healing. My thinking held then that the miracles attributed to Jesus aren’t really important; they might be legends added to the story of Jesus to enhance peoples’ willingness to believe in him, and it would not change the substance of his message in any way. Still, I found myself believing—or at least suspecting—that these accounts were true, and that faith and healing are connected.

During that time, I was harassed by frequent migraines. I was taking strong medication to head off or end a migraine about six times a month. I prayed for an end to my migraines, and I tried to make myself believe it would happen. It didn’t. But I did find myself believing, for no particular reason, that a time could and would come when my faith would be sufficient to heal me of this ailment. I began praying to learn true faith. And for reasons I cannot remember, I quickly added two more spiritual gifts to my request: to learn to truly love, and to learn to truly pray.

A few months after this, I began to have difficulty swallowing, and I began to have food get stuck in my chest before it reached my stomach. Although my doctor never mentioned cancer as a possible cause of this, it was the first thing that came to my mind, and the idea never left me— even after I consulted a gastroenterologist who assured me that I couldn’t possibly have esophageal cancer because I looked too healthy and hadn’t lost weight. But I believed that I had this cancer and did some research. I learned that adenocarcinoma of the lower esophagus is increasing in incidence more rapidly than any other cancer and is becoming increasingly prevalent in middle-aged men, which is my demographic. I read articles about this cancer that referred to it as “dreaded” or “terrible.” I learned that it is treated very aggressively and the treatments are debilitating and life-changing.

I learned that in the previous year, just over 14,000 people in the United States were diagnosed with this cancer, and just under 14,000 died of it. I stopped reading and hoped that my doctors were right. They were wrong.

I have since asked my family doctor if she had thought all along that I might have cancer, but just wasn’t saying so. She said that she really didn’t think so, but thought it was important enough and just possible enough that we had better find out. The gastroenterologist said that by referring me to him quickly, she had given me a good shot at surviving. He also said that when he did the endoscopy that found the cancer, he didn’t see anything that he thought could be malignant. There was just a small lesion in my esophagus that he almost ignored, but at the last minute, on an impulse, he took a biopsy specimen. (The Lord works in mysterious ways.)

About three weeks later, a surgeon performed a more advanced endoscopy procedure to stage the cancer, and by that time, the little lesion had grown to a puffy swelling that blocked half the width of my esophagus.

When I was told that I had cancer, my first thought was that I should have been more careful about what I prayed for because this was not what I had in mind when I asked to learn true faith and true prayer—but it looked like school was now in session.

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but the ironic connection impressed me at the time. It has taken me all these months to understand that I saw the connection backwards, like an image inverted in a mirror. God knew from years earlier that I was developing cancer, and God saw that I could be spiritually prepared to better endure my misfortune and even draw some benefit from it. And so God led me to prepare for what lay ahead.

The first few days after learning I had cancer were confusing. I couldn't figure out what to pray for or how to pray. If I prayed to live, I felt it would be faithless—a repudiation of Jesus' faith when he prayed at Gethsemane, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39). But I wasn't feeling that accepting; I really did want to live.

I endured this confusion for three days. On the third night after my diagnosis, I couldn't sleep. I was terrified that I would endure months of painful, debilitating, humiliating medical treatments, only to die anyway. I spent the night praying and working through my confusion.

I came to understand clearly that I wanted to live. If God willed differently, I would have to accept it, but it was important enough to me to tell God quite clearly what I wanted; so I did. That done, I realized that God had just been waiting for me to make up my mind, that God had no particular will to impose on me, and it wasn't God's will that mattered, but mine. I felt a need to explain myself, to tell God why I should live, why I should be the exception and survive this cancer. So I did—at length. I recounted all of the good work that I do, all of the people who depend on me in some way, all of the people who love me. But it wasn't right, I knew I hadn't explained it quite right yet, and I could not stop trying to justify my life. When I didn't know what else to say, I said just this. I want to live because I love and I have more loving to do in this world.

My fear disappeared, and I was able to sleep for an hour until dawn. I have nor known fear since.

I have had chemotherapy and radi-

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ary to the one great purpose of our lives: to love. I believe that the clarity I achieved on that one question is what healed me of migraines, and, at the very least, beat back the cancer for a time—perhaps cured it. I now know that the only reason I exist is to love, and the real reason I want to continue living in this world is that I have more loving to do in this life.

I also know two corollaries to this great principle. The first is that faith and love are either the same thing or so close to the same thing that I cannot distinguish between them. Prayer brings us to faith, and faith brings love. This is why I was led to seek these three gifts together.

The second corollary is that love is the most powerful force there is. I have seen it at work before and marveled at its power to change the world; it is love that moves mountains when our faith blossoms into love. I now understand that it is love alone that ties me to this life; love is the force through which God created the universe, and love is the only thing that God wills and the only law we must obey to achieve paradise.

Paradise: that is something else I have learned a little about in this year of cancer. I'm not referring to the life to come. I have no doubt that there is yet another life to follow this one, and that every aspect of that life is grounded in love, but that is not the paradise I am talking about. I am talking about this life.

As far back as the Hebrew prophets, our spiritual teachers have envisioned a world to come that would be transformed into paradise by universal acceptance of God's sovereignty. Isaiah wrote very clearly of a time when all the world would accept the sovereignty of God. Not only will we beat our swords into plowshares and our spears into pruning hooks, but the leopard will lie down with the young goat and the lion will eat straw, like the ox. "They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9).

Isaiah's image of this world to come, this Kingdom of God, this Peaceable Kingdom, is so compelling that the 19th-
and again over many years. But what has struck me about this vision most recently is how much it looks like Eden.

The earliest spiritual storytellers in our tradition understood that God's original intention for us was not suffering, but paradise. Isaiah's Peaceable Kingdom to come was present in God's mind, and was, in fact, God's will when creating us. Only our insistence on hiding ourselves from God (as Adam and Eve did) causes us to suffer in this life.

Love transforms suffering into joy—I know this experimentally; I have lived it. I believe that when we all learn to love fully, love will transform our world, and the diseases and misfortunes that cause suffering in a world deficient in love will, themselves, cease to exist. Hallowed will be God's name, God's Kingdom will be established, and God's will shall be done, on Earth as in Heaven.

Jesus talked about the Kingdom of God a lot. He told his disciples, "Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power" (Mark 9:1). But those men are long dead, and the Kingdom of God seems as far as ever. Was Jesus wrong?

I don't think so. Jesus also said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst" (Luke 17:20-21).

When Jesus said these things, his listeners included John, Peter, and James. These men have left us books and letters written much later in their lives. Can anyone who has read these texts doubt that these men had seen God's Kingdom come with power; that they were, in fact, living in the Kingdom at the times they wrote, because their beautiful words of faith were grounded in and infused with love?

Prayer brings faith. Faith fills us with love. Love transforms our lives. Our new lives transform the world. It's the end of the world—as we have known it. It's the coming of the world as God planned it, the Kingdom of God. It is coming with power.

Lord, teach us to pray.

How I've loved certain material things, like my long, warm winter coat—charcoal gray, wool, goes with everything. I love it more than the sheep did.

And how my year-old puppy chews a hole in a favorite long-sleeve shirt, and in one blink of an angry eye she's infinitely more precious than any of it.

And how, in the Quaker meetinghouse, a simple room, designed around Light, the bareness opens into the Essential—Community. The Divine. Radiant Spirit.

How the women sitting next to me on the bus have stories to tell.

How the man in the Yankees T-shirt is a minister.

How on the ferry going to the island the sea is full of hidden life.

I am a crocus stem pushing up through cold soil.

I am the man with a handful of sand on the beach, looking into infinity.

Resurrection is an everyday occurrence, and the river, the rocks, the herring, the Light, the hawk, the prairie dog, and the wild iris are Spirit Incarnate.

—Jill A. Oglesby

Oglesby lives in Los Lunas, N.Mex.

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Moses came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. . . . Then the Lord said, . . . "The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt." But Moses said to God, "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I am who I am." He said further, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I am has sent me to you.'"

In the Religious Society of Friends we often struggle with our true identity, with exactly who we are. Sometimes we even fight about it, in a peculiarly passive-aggressive faux-Quaker way, by imposing the least offensive spiritual language on the whole. Are we Christian or universalist? Nontheist or theist? Can we use Buddhist terminology, pagan terminology, Christian terminology, and still be considered Friends? When do we asanas on the lawn at

Merry Stanford, a member of Red Cedar Meeting in Lansing, Mich., is a psychotherapist and shamanic practitioner. She currently serves Friends as clerk of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting, and as a Couple Enrichment leader with her husband, Peter Wood. She occasionally travels in the ministry among Friends and others.

Gathering, drum in the meetinghouse, or study with Thich Nhat Hanh, do we run the risk of parting ways with our Quaker heritage? Or should our spiritual experience and language be rooted in the spiritual traditions of the Friends who lived before us?

I've struggled with these questions, trying to discern the truth, alone and in the company of spiritual friends. In the end I have discovered (no surprise!) that the test of the discernment is in the fruit of the labor. I invite you to taste the fruit gathered from the orchard of my experience. See if it satisfies.

I am a Christian. I was raised in an exceptionally abusive household. An oasis in the desert of my childhood was a Catholic school, where I came to know about Jesus Christ. Later in life, it was the saving power of a personal relationship with Jesus that saved me from despair and suicide, all-too-common aftereffects of childhood trauma. I know what it feels like to be lost and then found, to be imprisoned and then set free, to be loved even in the absence of human love, to find an end to fear. This transforming and healing relationship has gone beyond any belief about Jesus I may have had. He has stood with me through challenges that I could never have faced alone—acknowledging deep wounds in myself and growing through them; finding tenderness for the deep wounds of others; coming to know the many ways I have failed my calling and the world—and the many ways I have been faithful to my calling and am a
I am a child of the Light. I experience the creative, conscious, enlivening, and transforming Spirit who breathes into and through all creation; who challenges, transforms, and renews all Life. I have sometimes experienced the oneness that mystics and poets speak of in their impossible language, experiencing the movement of the “burning oneness binding everything” described by Kenneth Boulding in the Naylor Sonnets. I also experience the healing and challenging Light Within, which restores and refreshes, which reveals the true nature of things, and from which I sometimes try to hide. And I understand that what I think I know or experience of the Divine is still a very small glimpse of a great and unknowable Mystery; that the Universal Presence is far more complex than the God of my understanding. While I will never have a complete understanding of this conscious, moving, healing energy that is Life and Light and Love, I trust that it operates in my life and in the world for the highest good of all, even when there are seemingly logical reasons to give up on the idea of Love or God or Spirit.

These experiences are each an integral part of who I am, as different from one another as my heart is from my hands, and yet part of the whole that enlivens my own “I Am.” I imagine my spirituality something like the beaches along Lake Michigan: there is great water across which one cannot see land; there is sandy and rocky shore, among which only small and hardy plants and animals can live; and there are the forested dunes, where mammals and birds can live. The edges of these places, where one “climate” meets another, are liminal. They are “betwixt and between.” This liminality is also present in twilight and dawn when light and darkness mix; in March when the winter meets the spring; in the winter solstice when the longest night of the year melts into a slightly longer day; in the condition of illegal immigrants who are present but not “officially” so; in the experience of transgendered people as they pass from one kind of body to another; and so on. My direct experience of the Divine is like this—betwixt and between the labels that define people as being of this spiritual tradition or that one.

I count this multiplicity of experiences as gifts from a multilingual God who heals and sustains me. And yet some people, even some Friends, try to juxtapose my experiences as if they are opposites of one another, accusing me of being an apologist for impossibly contradictory positions. Friends have referred to my experience of God as being “fundamentalist” and “anti-Jesus and anti-God,” and also as an “anything goes as long as it feels good” spirituality. Plainly, there are few places in our world where someone like me, who lives in the liminal places, can find a spiritual home. And yet, in spite of the difficulties, I have found a home.

I am a Friend. I have worshiped in expectant waiting for 23 years with other Friends, coming to Friends from the Catholic Church because of a dream. In the dream I was at Mass, where a beloved priest friend was giving the homily. Quite unexpectedly, surprising even myself, I stood from the pew where I was sitting and—unheard of—opened my mouth to preach. But I could only make garbled, unintelligible sounds. I was horrified to discover that my tongue had been cut out. The horrible reality of this dream, in a church where women's voices still are silenced, sent me looking for another place to worship. At my first Friends meeting, when I witnessed women standing to minister, I wept in
in the stream of these many traditions with spiritual integrity, commitment, and focus. I no longer feel torn between Christ, Spirit, or Mother Earth.

joyful recognition.

So it was among Friends that I first felt the freedom to bring into the light the voice that sounded in the depths of my soul. It was among Friends that I yearned so strongly to belong that I strove to be a "good" Quaker, rather than an authentic one. It has been among Friends that I have learned from the fiery power of George Fox and the quiet courage of John Woolman. It has been among Friends that I have finally come to accept the diversity of my experience. And it is among Friends that I have gradually discovered my power as a human being, and the power of submission to "I am."

I would like us to know these things, to help us understand something that is happening in the Religious Society of Friends. We are living in a special time, when it is not uncommon to wear jewelry from Poland, download music from Kenya, speak with computer technicians in India, eat chocolate from Belgium, sit on furniture made in Norway, and regularly spaced trash cans, and I realized that this park was not what I wanted. I yearned for the bigness of the ocean, and for its wildness. So I left my friends and found my way back to the cliff, where I was met by a wise and friendly climbing guide. He smiled broadly, looked intently into my soul, fully outfitted me with rock climbing gear, gave me a quick

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P eople often hear of the troubles besetting the population of Darfur, in western Sudan, but feel no personal connection. Compound that with the recent devastation in Haiti or Cuba caused by hurricanes, and the world’s troubles seem endless enough to cause us to shut down and say it’s too much to care about. We run out of compassion.

I’d like to point out three ways we remain intimately connected to Darfur, whether we realize it or not—ways that might help to reframe our thinking and overcome our inertia.

I’ll begin with a personal story. One night, a year ago last summer, I was in South Sudan and I found myself in a very peculiar position. A two-year-old Dinka boy was pointing a pistol at me—a pearl-handled automatic. He was with his father, a colonel in the Sudan People’s Liberation Army.

This happened in a dark crowded bar in the town of Kuajok, which is the capital of Warrap state in the western part of South Sudan. The bar was a narrow, makeshift affair, jury-rigged from poles and woven rush mats—like Kuajok itself, where everything is makeshift and very poor.

Warrap state is right next to South Darfur and has about 8,000 Darfuri refugees, who are technically Internally Displaced Persons—IDPs—who have taken refuge from the violence next door. So in essence this is a poor region of Sudan, impacted by another poor region of Sudan. South Sudan, still reeling from 22 years of civil war, is feeling the spillover from the violence in Darfur that is now entering its fifth year.

Anyway, this toddler is pointing the gun at my chest. And he says khawaja, which means white person. I’m in the bar trying to find something to eat. There are no actual restaurants in Kuajok.

The boy’s father grins and holds up the gun’s clip, to show me he’s removed the bullets. The boy is just playing. “He’s a very intelligent child,” the colonel says. “He points the gun at you because he thinks you’re Arab.”

That incident made a deep impression on me. I don’t know which disturbed me more—the toddler’s behavior or the father’s explanation. It was okay for him to point the gun at me because “he thinks you’re Arab.”

This is one of the dynamics at work in South Sudan, as in Darfur and most of Sudan: the deep distrust between black African tribes and Arabs. It’s partly a legacy of colonialism—not only in the early days of slave trading, but also more recently. In 1956, the Arabs were put in charge of this sprawling country by the English colonial administration as it was hastily leaving—much as other colonial occupiers did when forced to abandon their hold on Africa. In Rwanda, the departing Belgians put the Tutsis in charge of the Hutus. The colonial legacy has been a prescription for future conflict.

“I’m in the bar...”

One reason Darfur and South Sudan are so poor is that the Arab-dominated government in Khartoum, in the north, is siphoning off the revenues from the country’s oilfields, which lie mostly in the south. Most of that money stays in the city of Khartoum. A lot of it is used to purchase weapons to keep down the rebellion that has been brewing in Sudan since independence.

The conflict involves ancient enmities, exacerbated by drought and fueled in turn by oil. So that’s another way that we’re connected with Darfur, whether we’re aware of it or not. I’ll return to that later. For now, I want to linger on what I call the “heart” connection—our ability to empathize across the barriers of culture and past the cocoon of our own comfort and safety.

What happens when that two-year-old Dinka boy is old enough to carry a loaded gun?

How do you break the cycle of violence?

I was traveling as an independent journalist with three Lost Boys who were visiting their home villages for the first time in 20 years. They’d all been under the age of ten when Arab militias attacked their villages in the 1980s, and they had fled on foot to Ethiopia and then Kenya. They had survived the violence that killed 2.2 million people during Sudan’s protracted civil war, which fell most heavily on the south.

We didn’t know whether we would find their families and friends alive or dead. Although the war had officially ended, we encountered extreme poverty everywhere. And next to nothing in the way of infrastructure: roads, schools, clinics, clean water. Infant mortality, we were told, is about 60 percent.

Think about that. Infant mortality of 60 percent.

We talked to everyone. Women focused on children. Village elders, soldiers, nurses, aid workers, government officials all the way up to the president, Salva Kiir. (Under the power-sharing...
agreement, Kiir occupies the dual offices of vice president of Sudan and president of the semi-autonomous state of South Sudan.)

We watched people scratching out a living—planting sorghum and millet and okra on plots of land, some of them no larger than an average U.S. living room.

What happens to the more than two million people in neighboring Darfur who don’t even have that much—who were driven from their homes and are now wholly dependent on international aid? In Darfur the killings are not taking place at the pace they were three and four years ago, but these people can’t go home. Their land has been stolen.

The Darfuris remain at extreme risk. Food rations have been cut repeatedly from the 2,300 calories considered necessary for survival to about half that. So now it’s a genocide of attrition. And because Sudan is so fragile, a tinderbox, it’s also a genocide in waiting. It’s a genocide in pause mode.

So one basis for this heart connection is simple human decency. In a material sense, Sudan needs us. It needs our individual caring, it needs the attention and support of our government, and it needs our ability to rally international attention. The United States helped broker the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that was signed in January 2005. It was one of the few foreign policy successes of the George W. Bush administration. We need to give it continuing bipartisan support.

This is not a one-way connection. In a moral sense, we need Sudan. Why? Because we in the industrial world owe our wealth to an industrial revolution that was driven, in large part, by colonialism. Our system was financed by the seizure of land and wealth and labor of indigenous peoples in the New World, Africa, and elsewhere.

Our Eurocentric claim to moral legitimacy is challenged by the events unfolding in Africa—most visibly for now in Darfur, but also in Congo, Uganda, and other places. The African continent remains “dark” to us because our mainstream media ignore its cultural richness and its political complexity.

I say “we,” referring to all of us who make our lives within the world’s industrial societies, although individually we may be active in the pursuit of global equity. We include people of color, the colonized, and the oppressed. We include people struggling to pay medical bills. We include the homeless. But the likelihood is that few people reading these words went to bed hungry last night.

We are incredibly wealthy compared to the average African.

Forget about the iPods and the $40 billion we in the United States spend annually on nutritional supplements. Forget about the $12 billion we spend on Prozac and other antidepressant drugs. Just to be able to turn a tap and obtain pure water is a blessing that few Africans enjoy—and it’s one of the many blessings that we didn’t earn individually, through our own hard work.

Most of the abundance that we take for granted, we inherited.

Let’s acknowledge that we are the beneficiaries of an aggressive industrialism that we as individuals did not ourselves create. That acknowledgment should challenge our sense of who we are, as the “haves” of the world, and our responsibilities in relation to the “have nots.”
At the core is poverty—a poverty that is created by the central government in Khartoum as it exploits Sudan’s mineral wealth and marginalizes the outlying regions, including Darfur in the west, but also in the north, east, and south.

We have to look at the still larger picture—which involves the geopolitical machinations of the United States and China, relations between Israel and Islam, and the extent to which the Iraq war has sucked the air out of U.S. foreign policy. But I would like to direct your attention for now to South Sudan, because frankly one of the best things we can do at this moment for Darfur is to support the very precarious peace in South Sudan.

We need to care as much about peace as we care about war. And we especially need to nurture the fragile peace in South Sudan, where a question looms larger every day: What happens two years from now, when, under the present Comprehensive Peace Agreement, South Sudan may vote in 2011 to break away from Khartoum?

Everywhere I traveled in South Sudan, people said the same thing: If the plebiscite were held today, the South would almost assuredly vote to secede, because so little of the oil revenues have reached the villages. And everyone agrees that secession would mean a return to war.

That’s why I support the efforts of my Dinka colleagues—the three Lost Boys I traveled with: Gabriel Bol Deng, Chris Sudanese Diaspora who have settled in the United States and Canada and are now taking an active role in nurturing the peace at a grassroots level.

They are doing practical things: drilling wells and bringing clean water to their villages; building clinics and schools; training teachers and nurses. These are small-scale projects, but there are many of them going on around South Sudan, and they will make a difference in people’s lives.

I also support the “Return of the Lost Boys and Lost Girls of Sudan Act” (originally H.R. 3054), introduced last year by U.S. Congressman Frank Wolf (R-Virginia) “to assist Sudanese refugees in the United States known as the ‘Lost Boys and Lost Girls of Sudan’ to voluntarily return to southern Sudan to assist in reconstruction efforts.”

The third connection is simply this: We need to face the brutal fact that our addiction to fossil fuel is driving the conflict. Khartoum uses the proceeds from its oil sales in South Sudan to purchase the guns and helicopters used to kill people in Darfur.

As the world approaches peak oil, expediency rules. Competition for strategic oil and natural gas reserves trumps political stability, social justice, and long-term development. This is as true in Nigeria as it is in Iraq. It’s shaping the Western stance toward the former Soviet Republic of Georgia, in a looming struggle over the oil and natural gas in the Caspian basin.

So we’ve got these three connections. We’ve got the simple bridge of empathy between ourselves and the people of Darfur—what I’ve called the heart connection. We’ve got the connections between Darfur and the bigger picture, in South Sudan and the rest of the region. And we’ve got the connection between Darfur and the petroleum-based economies of the industrial nations—most prominently the U.S. and China.

Put these connections together and you’ve got the potential for an agenda. I invite you to research the various organizations and approaches and contribute in any way you can. One of the ways to personalize your effort is to make an actual change in the way you live. We
When Jesus Came
(From John 12)

He found me in the laundry
Sorting mounds of clothes,
And mentioned homeless friends
Of his that froze.

He watched me clearing table,
Discarding untouched food,
Till thoughts of starving multitudes
Muted our mood.

He heard me loathing clutter
I found no time to file,
And mentioned places clogged with waste,
Mile upon mile.

Then he showed me his compassion
In manger, cross, and tomb,
Breathing my deserts of despair
To glorious bloom.

—Charles Waugaman

Grain

A grain of wheat in the ground
lives alone—a single seed.

But if it dies, seeds abound
more grain to grow and food to feed.

—Todd Oyler

In the Desert

You know that manna I was young
and scoffed at yesterday,
Abba? Any chance you'll touch my tongue
this morning anyway?

—Peter Meister

Charles Waugaman
lives in Jamaica, Vt.

Todd Oyler lives in
Blanco, Tex.

Peter Meister lives in
New Hope, Alabama.
Nonpayment of “war taxes” is a Quaker testimony that I have always found confusing, and I don’t appear to be alone.

Peter Brock, in his book *The Quaker Peace Testimony 1660 to 1914* (published in 1990), relates the difficulty that colonial Pennsylvania Quakers had in contributing financially to the military protection of their frontier communities while trying to be faithful to the Quaker practice of nonviolence. They sensed an obligation to help protect their neighbors, but could not bear arms and were uncomfortable paying others to do so in their stead. The problem was finessed by the Quaker-dominated Assembly, which made grants to the governor “for the King’s use.” The practice was uncomfortable to many Quakers in Pennsylvania, some of whom in 1755 advanced the idea of a boycott of taxes levied primarily for the purpose of defense. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting strove to avoid a schism, declining to urge the refusal to pay taxes but approving disciplining of Friends who (for example) furnished the army with horses or wagons. In 1764 the Paxton Riots were the occasion of citizen outrage at what was viewed as a Quaker refusal to defend the community. The conflict contributed to the eventual withdrawal of Quakers from political positions.

New York Yearly Meeting’s *Faith and Practice* notes that we “support the testimony of those who have refused to pay war taxes” (p. 51). But it also offers the Advice that we should “examine... voluntary payment of war taxes” (p. 82, Advice 14). All taxes are involuntary, by definition. Rosa Packard, a longtime war tax resister in New York Yearly Meeting, attempted to make a distinction between paying her taxes to an escrow account in trust for the government, rather than paying her taxes to the government, but her eventual legal claim sought return not of her tax payment, but rather of the penalties and interest imposed by the government by virtue of her failure to timely pay taxes due, leading to discovery by levy: Packard v. United States, 7 F.Supp.2d 143 (D.Conn. 1998). So insignificant does this distinction seem—i.e., that it’s okay to pay “war taxes” as long as the government has to levy your assets to get them—that I’m not sure what’s being advised in Advice 14.

And that’s not the only thing about which I’m not sure.

**Which Taxes are “War Taxes”?**

I don’t know which taxes are included in the term “war taxes.” Is it the proportion of all revenue that supports the Pentagon budget? If so, do we not support the Army Corps of Engineers while it rebuilds the levees in New Orleans? Do we withhold money for reparations to Iraqis whose property is damaged? Do we deny funding to the Air Force’s remarkable mediation program that resolves employment and procurement disputes without litigation?

The Interstate Highways were built and justified as a defense strategy, in order to effect the speedy deployment of military personnel within the United States. Should we withhold highway taxes? Or pay less than all of the federal gas tax when we fill up, in order not to support this system? Do we each decide what a “war tax” is, and each pay what we think is right? Or does someone determine what a “war tax” is and we follow that person’s lead, even if we disagree with it? In her article, “Not in My Name, Not with My Money” (FJ Mar. 2008), Elizabeth Boardman suggests that we withhold any multiple of $10.40, offering the simple explanation that 1040 is the number of the individual income tax form.

**Should Head Start, research on solar energy, unemployment benefits, and support for healthcare all be underfunded in the exercise of our righteousness?**
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Withholding an arbitrary amount of our taxes has no relationship to war or peace, and it does not reflect our concern that we decline to assist war. What, then, is the religious integrity of this action? And what are the consequences to others of our conduct?

**What Are the Moral Consequences of Nonpayment of Taxes?**

By yearly meeting's Faith and Practice advises that, having determined what we are prepared to do with our tax payment, we should "be prepared to accept the consequences of [our] convictions." As a young male pacifist in the late 1960s, I understood this to mean that I would need to find the courage to accept the consequences of my refusal to be drafted (if that refusal was determined unlawful). I never considered it moral to try to change the law, or to evade my responsibilities. The options were clean and stark: Either be classified as a CO—conscientious objector—or accept the consequences of breaking the law.

How does a non-taxpayer do that? Withholding, for example, 15 percent of one's tax obligations doesn't mean that non-war programs are fully funded but war programs are not. All tax-funded programs will receive 15 percent less. Does the objector then go ahead and use the public schools, or accept protection from the fire department, or eat federally subsidized food, even without having paid for these services? Should Head Start, research on solar energy, unemployment benefits, and support for healthcare all be underfunded in the exercise of our righteousness?

A consequence of my not joining the armed forces in 1971 was that someone else did who would not otherwise have had to. People were hurt because I was not there to help. This too is a consequence of conscientious objection. Are those who advocate withholding part of their taxes prepared as well to live with the consequences of their actions?

**Is Selective Payment of Taxes Christian? Quakerly?**

**Faith and Practice** urges us to "participate actively and intelligently in the political life of our country" (p. 85, Query 9). And of course Jesus taught that rendering what is due to Caesar is not inconsistent with leading a Christian life. Is deciding which taxes we will pay, and which ones we will not, the teaching of our faith?

One could argue that Quakerism reaches the exact opposite. Our tradition is to share our Light and then to yield to the Truth as it is communally received. In conducting our affairs we are "advised not to be unduly persistent in advocacy or opposition, but, after having fully expressed [our] views, to recognize the generally expressed sense of the meeting" (New York Yearly Meeting's Faith and Practice p. 83, Advice 16).

Civil society in the United States was deeply influenced by this tradition. As Quaker columnist and author David Yount notes in his book How the Quakers Invented America (published in 2007), "Quakers, by dint of their role in forming the American character, can be said to have invented America" (p. 2). Active and intelligent participation in probing public discourse, then yielding respectfully to the community's final decision, is a contribution that Quakers made to the early social expectations of the New World.

On what basis, then, does an individual U.S. Quaker decide which enacted taxes to pay and which ones not to pay? Is each of us, as a matter of our faith, compelled to comb through the federal budget and pick out those line items that we find offensive and refuse to pay them? Should we do this with our own monthly meeting budgets? I think we are taught the very opposite.

Emmanuel Kant held that men and women should conduct themselves by the Categorical Imperative: "Act only by that maxim whereby you can will at the same time that it shall become a universal law." This principle is very close to the one our parents tried to imbue when asking, "What if everybody did that?"

In refusing to be conscripted, objectors are not protesting war. Pacifism is an attribute of a CO's being, like height and weight. That attribute is either accommodated by the law or it isn't. Pacifism is not a choice with Quakers; the way we live is our testimony.

Is refusing to pay taxes—or paying only those taxes that support activities we approve—the same kind of testimony?
Advice for Clerks

by Mariellen Gilpin

Here are my thoughts for a new clerk. You'll have your own way of doing things, and they'll be wonderful ways, but I thought perhaps you'd like to see in one place my own ideas about how to clerk effectively.

Praying for the meeting. However egalitarian Quakers may think they are, they tend to look to their clerk for spiritual leadership. The best advice I can give is to pray for the meeting, daily, in whatever way you are guided to do. I pray for everybody by name, and it works for me, sometimes in amazing ways, sometimes in perfectly ordinary ones.

Whenever a visitor comes, I add their name to the prayer list, whether or not I ever see them again. Thus I seldom forget a name. Recently a woman appeared in worship. It was her second visit, after a six-month gap. I shook her hand and called her by name. She was amazed—and she came again, a couple weeks later. That's one of the ordinary ways praying for Friends by name is helpful.

Keep pen and paper handy during prayer. So often in the midst of prayer for meeting, I'm given a task to do. I write it down, and move on with my prayers.

Praying for the quality of our worship—every day, not just on Sunday mornings. Sometimes this means that I speak in worship; sometimes it means others speak. Also, sometimes we have a totally silent meeting, but I will have a sense afterward that it has been a very good meeting for everyone present. Another Friend and I meet about an hour before worship in order to hold the meeting in prayer. I don't find it hard work to pray for the meeting during worship, because I always go away feeling I've been blessed just as much as those I've been praying for. It is not a selfless act, in other words, to pray for the meeting. I have been advised to include myself in the prayers for meeting, and judging by the effects on me, the meeting is indeed being blessed.

I have found that being clerk seems to increase the number of times I speak in worship. That may be peculiar to me, but I suggest you be open to the possibility you'll be used in the spoken ministry more often than you're used to.

In business meetings, keeping discussions moving. Meetings for business that are allowed to bog down in discussion are going to lose members. Have some standard moves to bring things to a timely conclusion. For instance, state early in the discussion what you think is the growing sense of the meeting. If you state where you think the group is headed, it helps keep discussion moving. You may have to state the sense of the meeting several times as the discussion develops, but you will have helped the group stay on track. If it's clear there's not going to be an agreement that day, postpone the issue and move on to the rest of the agenda, asking an appropriate committee to discern the issue further and make a recommendation later.

Creating agendas. Ask committees to send you their minutes a day or two before business meeting; it reduces the level of discernment needed on the floor of business meeting, because you already know what business needs to have priority. Put the business items that will take lots of energy first on the agenda, while Friends are fresh. Put the treasurer's report dead last, when Friends are ready for the meeting to be done. They are less likely to question minutiae in the treasurer's report and drive everybody else crazy.

Appreciating. As you read the committee reports, spend time and prayer being appreciative—draft minutes of thanks often for special efforts Friends have made.

Giving committees homework. Encourage committees to draft minutes they want the meeting to consider. In this electronic age, it's a simple matter to copy a draft minute directly into your agenda as you prepare it. Friends work more efficiently and stay on task better if they have the exact wording in front of them. Detailed agendas help Friends stay focused—and make the job of the recording clerk much easier. Drafting a proposed minute in committee means less time and effort in business meeting deciding the exact word choice—it won't, and shouldn't, stop Friends from thinking carefully about word choices, but having something down on paper helps to keep the discussion moving.

Dealing with controversy. Controversial matters may need their own business session, or several special sessions. Friends are more tolerant of two two-hour meetings than one four-hour meeting—and the decisions reached will be more durable. A shorter meeting helps to keep Friends' tempers from fraying. Consult with an appropriate committee (in my meeting, Ministry and Oversight) about how to conduct a session about a controversy. Lack of careful planning may open the door for wrangling and miscommunication. Before you begin a difficult discussion, remind Friends of good practice:

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• Friends should not compose what they want to say in rebuttal while another Friend is speaking. Focus on listening deeply to the speaker, not on the rebuttal.

• Leave a short silence between speakers, so Friends can reflect on each speaker’s words.

• Friends who agree with an earlier speaker should not reiterate a point, but simply say, “That Friend speaks my mind.”

• Encourage silent Friends to speak to an issue. The light of each Friend should be cherished by every other Friend present.

• Do not speak unnecessarily. In the words of John Woolman: It behooves all to be cautious how they detain a Meeting. . . . In 300 minutes are five hours, and he that improperly detains 300 people one minute, besides other evils that attend it, does an injury like that of imprisoning one man five hours without cause.

Having strong opinions of your own. I strongly recommend against it. Bring your concerns up in the appropriate committee and let the committee stir your ideas into the pot along with their own to come up with their own recommendations. For the clerk to have a strong opinion makes it harder for the meeting to find that Third Way—to let the Spirit create a unique new alternative that is better for everyone present.

Dealing with complainers. Listen, but don’t fix. Don’t feel you need to make the problem go away yourself, however sensible you think your solution might be. You don’t have a complete understanding from listening to one person’s view, or even both points of view. This is a matter for the wisdom of others. Fixing is not the role of clerk. Fixing is a good way to divide a meeting into sides, for and against. Fixing is a good way to reinforce a Friend for playing If Daddy Won’t Say Yes, Ask Mommy. Instead, make it clear to complainers that they should talk to, rather than about, the person giving them a problem.

Remind both yourself and the complainer of Matthew 18:15-17:

If your brother commits a sin, go and take the matter up with him, strictly between yourselves, and if he listens to you, you have won your brother over. If he will not listen, take one or two others with you, so that all facts may be duly established on the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, report the matter to the congregation; and if he will not listen even to the congregation, you must then treat him as a pagan or tax-gatherer.

The complainer can be encouraged to ask for a clearness committee to help resolve a disagreement.

Following up. Make sure someone has taken responsibility for implementing any decision reached. Each month, review business meeting minutes for the past two or three months to find what balls have been dropped. A gentle reminder to the person responsible will usually help get the ball back in action.

Friends can waste a lot of time in business meeting not volunteering for a task. Ask the appropriate committee to discern who to ask and then announce who has agreed to do the work. Don’t let the business meeting bog down waiting for someone else to implement a decision.

The person who volunteers for a task is not always the right person for the job—for instance, the person who volunteers to cook but doesn’t bother to read the recipe beforehand, so that dinner is two hours late. Or the person who doesn’t really have a commitment to the job of writing a procedures manual—who may actually be opposed to having one—should not be allowed to volunteer. Don’t allow the business meeting to get itself into the situation of asking for volunteers. Again, refer the choice of who should do the work to the appropriate committee. You’ll like the results a lot better. You might even get dinner on time.

Doing the work of the committees. Don’t do this. Remind them if need be, but leave the work to them. If they need more than a reminder, ask to attend the next committee meeting. Show your interest in their work, but don’t volunteer. You have enough to do already as clerk. Leave committee work to committee members. The meeting will be the stronger for having committees that take responsibility and carry it out. Appreciate their work publicly and often, but don’t do the work yourself. Consider that you’re training less experienced Quakers to someday take the role of clerk in their turn. Letting them do the work their way is part of their training in Quaker leadership.

Collaborating. Quaker leadership is collaborative, not authoritarian. Your role as clerk is to inspire and sometimes to suggest and propose—but encourage others to contribute their ideas and make the dream their own. Name concerns, focus the meeting’s attention and energy, listen carefully as the sense of the meeting develops—and then step back. If you find yourself taking ownership of an idea, you’re stepping outside the clerk’s role.

Dealing with brand-new concerns. Have a time at the end of business meeting when Friends can bring up new concerns. Do not discuss new concerns at business meeting; instead, assign the concern to a committee and have the committee season it and make recommendations to business meeting. When committees are allowed to do their work appropriately, Friends don’t end up dealing with half-baked ideas on the floor of business meeting. If it’s a good idea, it’ll get better in committee as other Friends contribute their ideas. If it’s a bad idea, it’ll die in committee rather than taking up business meeting time and energy.

Listening. The last bit of advice I can offer on clerking is this: Listen. Listen in worship, listen in business meeting, listen to conveners of committees, listen to individual Friends who just need a friendly ear. You don’t have to fix things, but you do need to know the state of the meeting—and that’s done by listening. Sometimes you’ll be clear that something needs to be shared with a committee, or a gentle word needs to be put in someone’s ear. Mostly, though, just listen, acknowledge the pain you’ll hear, and wait for divine guidance.

I love the job of clerking the meeting. I love the collaborative style of leadership Friends ways make possible, and I love the way the Spirit moves in business meeting. I also love the way God makes available to the meeting the spiritual gifts the meeting needs at a particular time. The Spirit has chosen you to be clerk, and if you pray for meeting and listen deeply, yours will be the gifts the meeting needs.
She has sheltered us all our lives. She is the source of our sustenance. She is steadfast and unwavering though we war upon her surface. When our government rained thousands of bombs on Baghdad one dark night, the sun rose on that ravaged city right on schedule the next morning. To the artist, the Earth is endless inspiration. To the child, quoting Rogers and Hammerstein, she is “a hundred million miracles happening every day.” She is our Mother from whom we came and to whom we will return.

She is reason for grieving. For centuries, we have been at war with this beautiful planet. Colonizers arrived on this continent, killed off the inhabitants, and “tamed” the land. In Florida, not one living representative of the indigenous population remains. Thousands of Apalachee, Calusa, Timucua, and other native peoples were killed, enslaved, or died from diseases brought by settlers. All that remains of these peoples are their names—the Apalachicola and Caloosahatchee Rivers, Ocala and other place names, and a few of their relics from sacred shell mounds that somehow eluded grave robbers and road builders. The settlers exploited the land ruthlessly. They plundered millions of acres of longleaf pine, which once blanketed the southeastern United States. The tall straight timbers were used for ship masts for the British navy. The colonists drained land for farming, rechanneled rivers, and imported exotic plants that overran native vegetation.

Over the years, there were a few—some of them Quakers—who tried to warn us. Eighteenth-century naturalist William Bartram, a Pennsylvania Friend, described the Earth as “a glorious apartment of the boundless palace of the Sovereign Creator.” But in Travels he foresaw a time when the beautiful places he visited could be overrun with people. In Man and Nature, 19th-century conservationist George Perkins Marsh brought ecological issues to a global level by comparing the denuding of forests in Vermont to the despoiling of landscapes in Italy, where he served as the U.S. envoy. Quaker ancestors inspired Margery Stoneham Douglas to save the “river of grass”—the Everglades—that settlers wanted to drain and transform into profitable farmland. After shooting a wolf and seeing the “green fire” in its eyes, Aldo Leopold became a strong advocate for the planet and created a new land ethic. In the 1950s, Rachel Carson, alarmed by the rampant use of pesticides, raised the specter of a silent spring. In the 1970s, Edward Abbey raged against the desecration of Southwest desert lands where he worked. And

Fran Palmeri is a dual member of Annapolis (Md.) and Sarasota (Fla.) meetings. She interprets the natural places of Florida in essays and photographs for regional publications.
Can we dispense with hierarchy and see ourselves as a species among species, as Thomas Berry urged us to do? Can we accept all creeping, crawling things as a part of the Peaceable Kingdom? Our irrational fear of snakes still compels us to destroy them. Thomas Slaughter, the Quaker historian, writes in his book on John and William Bartram that killing a “rattler” was a rite of passage for 18th-century men. (Not, however, for William, who thought they were “wonderful creatures.”)

Can we stop the tidal wave of destruction of plants and animals? The press of humanity is driving whole ecosystems to extinction. Species are disappearing before we even discover them. As the population grows, abuse is compounded generation after generation, so that what were once isolated incidents of environmental degradation by pio-

Can we refrain from wiping living things off the Earth with the idea that we will replace like with like? A tree is not really replaceable. Chopping down mature trees and replanting saplings uses up precious resources before young trees can offer what mature trees did in terms of energy conservation, air cleansing, and aesthetics.

Can we change our approach to the Earth from one of business—trees are good for property values—to one of ethics—trees are good because they are? Even the Archbold Research Station in central Florida—guardian of some of the rarest plants on the planet—feels compelled to explain its work in terms of what these plants can do for us, such as their medicinal value.

Can we think of the Earth as the

Old sabal palms destroyed to widen a road
Page 20: Wood stork, a threatened species, feeding in a dumpster; lubber grasshopper on saw palmetto
Photos by Fran Palmeri
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On Being “In the Moment”

by Wayne Norlin

Stokely Creek Lodge, February 10, 2008

I find that, while on retreats like this, it is difficult for me to break from my usual pattern of multitasking, even though I know intuitively that trying to do or think several things at once is not particularly effective—or healthy for that matter. But it is a necessary way of functioning in my normal surroundings, and hard not to carry over into these surroundings, though totally unnecessary here.

Or is it? After all, I brought along the tools for reading, writing, drawing, painting, snacking, skiing, and snowshoeing (the main purpose for being here, really), so in reality, I’ve set myself up with an expectation to do at least some of each, which I have been doing so far. My simple reflection this morning, in the pre-dawn hours, with the wind howling and snow swirling outside my window, is over the mental and spiritual process of reflection itself. How does it mesh with the physical activity that accompanies it?

I read in a magazine on healing that I picked up last weekend, that it is virtually impossible for humans to do anything that is not “in the moment.” This was the primary message in an article entitled, “Don’t Believe Everything You Think.” We are constantly encouraged to strive to live in the moment, when in reality, according to the author, we really are not capable of doing otherwise. Even when we are being nostalgic, using our memory with particular intensity, we are still in the present, thinking about the past. (Note that “when we are being” is a present-tense phrase.) When we are planning for the future, whether some distant dream we’d like to fulfill, or deciding to take a sip of water soon, no, right now, we are making those plans, dreaming those dreams, now.

When I was out skiing yesterday, I had planned to stop on the way out to Norm’s cabin at the junction of the well-used Trapper’s Trail and the now-abandoned Hakon Lien trail. There, I would remove my skis, put on the snowshoes that I was hauling on my back, and trudge up the trail for a promised view over Bone Lake. This plan was hatched the day before, while sitting at the summit of King Mountain, after a similar trudge up the Mantle Trail, a well-blazed course that can only be done on snowshoes. The overlook there promises an incredibly satisfying panorama of Batchawana Bay on Lake Superior. There I was, sitting on my pack in the snow, enjoying my ham and cheese sandwich and a breathtaking 30-mile view, planning my next adventure. I will admit that I caught myself in the act of not being “in the moment,” but rather than admonishing myself for that, which is a really stupid and negative way to be “in the moment,” I recognized that I was just celebrating the present joy I felt by conspiring to search for more of the same tomorrow.

On the Hakon Lien trail the next day, which is now yesterday already, I was dutifully doing my trudge, lost in thought, when I suddenly became acutely aware of the abandoned nature of this trail. I had learned from my breakfast companions that morning, people who have been coming to Stokely Creek for years and actually claim to have blazed the Mantle Trail I was on yesterday, that the Hakon Lien had never been more than a backcountry trail anyway, meaning it was not maintained by motorized equipment like most of the other Stokely trails. But during summer and fall, crews would at least cut back the intruding brush and retrench any natural erosion that might surprise a skier when obscured by snow. That hazard is not an issue for a snowshoer, so I was told it would make for a pleasant trudge (that’s what you do on snowshoes, you trudge, but it’s a pleasant sort of trudge), even though the trail had not been maintained for skiing in several years.

Thus, the scene of an abandoned place, abandoned by people anyway, of which I suddenly became conscious, was due to the curious lay of the snow over the land. The former trail still cuts a recognizable course through the woods, even though underbrush is staking its claim on the pathway. And the terrain still has that unmistakable cut-fill profile indicative of a level road bed carved along the contours of a curving slope. But every 30 to 40 yards or so, the relatively level path is interrupted by a contrasting havoc of curling, sculpted mounds of snow, dipped and domed in and around cave-like hollows and mysterious dark recesses, often with glimpses of trickling, icy water flowing below. These are little mini-canyons, created by natural wash-outs, normally retrenched and reveled when the trail was being maintained. I was told later that the trail is actually trying to become a creek bed, but can only do so in small segments before gravity takes over and pulls the eroding runoff down into Bone Lake. The result is this intermittent series of badlands, forming the skeleton beneath a serous, undulating landscape of snowy skin, that interrupted my solitary trudge and put me “in the moment.”

Now, the next morning, sitting on the bed in my little room at Stokely Creek Lodge, listening to the first murmurings and knockings about from the breakfast crew in the kitchen below, I am again in the moment, propped against pillows, leaning against the wall so I can look out the window and monitor the slow, persistent brightening of the new day. I try to paint word pictures of the scene from 20 hours ago. I try to recall and describe more than the visual experience. I try to bring back that moment, and express it in this moment.
A Quaker Koan: How Can I Help without Doing Anything to Help?

by Elizabeth Barnard

A koan is a Buddhist mechanism for opening to a larger reality by presenting a situation that cannot possibly be solved through the intellect.

I've noticed more and more commonly that I have a hard time staying neutral when others speak about suffering in some way. I've also become aware of the extent to which people in Quaker discussions share that condition. We move so quickly to fixing, offering solutions, trying to solve the person's difficulty.

At the 2007 Friends General Conference Gathering, I was acutely aware of my own discomfort while listening to the plenary address given by Cécile Nyirumana about the recent history of genocide and the resulting conditions in Rwanda. The story went on for some time, and I got to a point where I could hardly stand hearing any more. I wanted to solve it! Do something! Make it not be happening! And from some people's questions to her, I imagined they wanted that, too.

As I investigate this condition closely, I realize that my desire to solve the situation came from not being able to accept what was happening, not tolerating the inner pain and uncertainty I was feeling. Most of all, I wished for my own discomfort to go away! This is not the best impetus for helping. Buddhists understand that one must come to a place of accepting the reality of the situation. Only then will the mind be clear enough to know what to do. Early Quakers knew that waiting was important, so that God's guidance could come through; otherwise, our actions are about ourselves, not the workings of the Spirit.

Because of my work in education, I have thought and read a lot about learning and about education (not the same things). John Holt and Maria Montessori wrote about how unsolicited “helping” can actually be a hindrance to learning. The subtle message to the learner, albeit undesired, is “you couldn't do this without my help,” or worse, “you're so stupid you can't figure it out by yourself.” However unintentionally, unrequested interventions often undermine a person's learning and actually disempower him or her. This shocked me at first. Then I started seeing how it operates everywhere.

When someone in our community conveys that she or he is hurting, or confused, or pondering something, I've observed that many of us (myself included) want to jump right in with suggestions. When people do that to me, I hear their good intentions, but the rush toward solutions is quite alienating. I feel increasingly disconnected from the people. There is nothing that necessarily needs solving. I just want someone to be there with me. Join me in this human condition, a condition of the heart. See me; hear me; be here. There's no need to leap to the intellect; that's not how we connect. If I'm hurting, just have compassion—shared empathy—and trust that it's enough to sit with me without flinching. Parker Palmer puts this so eloquently somewhere in his writing about meeting someone on his or her deathbed: there truly is nothing to be done. His advice is to be neither evasive (don't look away from the condition) nor invasive (don't try to change it).

Can we Quakers make this a regular practice? For myself, I hope so. I hold it as an aspiration, an inspiration.

Elizabeth Barnard is a member of Twin Cities Meeting in St. Paul, Minn.

FRIENDS JOURNAL February 2009
The Death of Michael Lambert
by Ken Stalcup

On June 8, 2007, the Indianapolis Star reports that the Indiana Parole Board has voted unanimously to deny clemency for cop killer Michael Lambert. The state schedules his execution for the early morning hours of Friday, June 15, 2007. After that hearing, I begin to notice a change in the quantity and quality of e-mails I receive.

In the weeks before the execution, I receive a steady stream of e-mails discussing the status of the last-minute appeals for Lambert's life. But as Indiana continues to move forward with arrangements for the execution, more and more e-mails arrive in my mailbox.

In the days before the execution, as the message volume increases, the quality of the messages changes too. Writers begin to show the stirring of their passions. Writers express more feelings, fewer facts. As legal avenues close, hearts open.

Three days before the execution, I receive, "A call for holding in our hearts all those who are part of the execution, from the victim's family to the person being executed, from the warden to the cook, from Lambert's fellow death row inmates to all of us who are taxpayers." Finally, with an uneasy familiarity with the process, the e-mails that arrive on Wednesday don't mention appeals or hearings; the e-mails discuss schedules, travel arrangements, and meeting locations for protesters and vigils.

I feel a leading to attend the vigil at the prison on the night of the execution.

I leave work a little early on Thursday afternoon and pick up a small rental car. It's a three hour drive to Michigan City in northwestern Indiana. I begin my drive across northern Illinois and around the traffic-congested south side of Chicago. I hear nothing on the radio as I cross into Indiana. No stay. No mention of the execution on the news—nothing.

I arrive at the prison a little later than expected. I see activity all around. The prison grounds are surrounded by an old wrought iron fence and I see uniformed men patrolling the fence line with guard dogs. I'm directed into an employee parking lot directly across the street from the prison. Prison officials have carved the employee parking lot into sections.

Ken Stalcup is a member of Irvington (Ind.) Meeting. He was a volunteer chaplain for the Indiana Department of Corrections for five years, and currently volunteers with recently released prisoners and writes letters to current prisoners.

One section is for those protesting, one section is for the media, and one area is set aside for police officers and others supporting the widow of the slain officer. Plastic yellow tape carves out a generous section of the parking lot for those of us protesting the execution. We're allowed to gather near the main gate of the prison. Officials, witnesses and others arrive and enter the facility. Police and prison officials stand near the main gate. I hear a few locals say the mayor of Michigan City is among those by the main gate. After a short time, there's no other traffic going in or coming out.

Several people make short, informal speeches to the protesters. After the final speech, we sit, sign petitions and exchange names and information. Before the sun sets, we begin to picket with drums and handwritten signs along the street and sidewalk near the main gate. I count 25 protesters. Several TV stations are present and begin turning their cameras to us. For a time, we march quietly back and forth. We answer a few questions posed by the media and explain our position... Even cop killers don't deserve to die.

Approaching sirens overwhelm the quiet. From a distance and growing louder, supporters for the slain officer arrive, en mass, in police cars with their lights flashing and sirens wailing. The lights and sounds fill the air and announce their arrival to the entire prison. I wish Michael didn't have to hear this, but I'm pretty sure he did. I imagine it's one of the last sounds from the outside world he heard.

During the evening hours, a few people from both groups meet informally and chat. I meet an officer and his son in the employee parking lot. They both are wearing shirts with police badges. I'm wearing a shirt that says, "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind." We shake hands and talk. We're here for different reasons, but it's a friendly conversation. There's no animosity. There is common ground. Everyone is here for someone else.

The hours pass. The neighbors, who are watching from their front porches, begin to quietly retire. Friday is another work day for them. Protestors too begin to excuse themselves and leave. The evening grows even quieter. The groups get smaller and huddle together. We wait. We know that things are beginning to happen inside the prison.

Shortly after midnight, prison officials escort Michael Lambert into Indiana's death chamber. He's shackled to a table. They find a vein in his arm and enter. They perform the process. He didn't put up a fight.

I'm back on the road to my apartment. I'm alone and driving on dark, empty streets, trying to figure things out. Should we protest? Did it make a difference? Was my voice heard? Did I do enough?—should I have been arrested to make my point?

I remember reading Advices and Queries. I remember one I read years ago: "Every stage of our lives offers fresh opportunities. Responding to divine guidance, try to discern the right time to undertake or relinquish responsibilities without undue pride or guilt. Attend to what love requires of you..."

Maybe I didn't stop an execution, but I opposed it. Maybe someone heard my voice. How silent the woods would be if only the best birds sang.

Every love song, every act of love is important and everyone is capable of making a difference by and through love in the life of another person.

I want to do today the work that love requires—even if I'm sad when it's done; even if it ends with death.

February 2009 FRIENDS JOURNAL
Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship
Quakers, African Americans and the Myth of Racial Justice
by Donna McDaniel and Vanessa Julye

The myth that all Quakers helped fugitive slaves and that all Quakers were civil rights activists does not tell the whole story. *Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship* lifts up the lives of Friends who were committed to ending enslavement and post-enslavement injustices, while showing how insidious, complex, and pervasive racism has been in the lives of all of us.

Quaker Press of FGC, 2009, 576 pp., hardcover $45.00 / paperback $28.00
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The Beautiful Soul of John Woolman, Apostle of Abolition


John Woolman's ministry continues two centuries after his death. Every day, someone is reached, comforted, challenged, disturbed by his words and life. Several books have appeared recently, some aimed at enriching our reading of Woolman (A Near Sympathy: The Timeless Message of John Woolman, by Michael Birkel), or exploring his ideas in more depth (The Tendering Presence: Essays on John Woolman, ed. by M. Heller), but there has not been a full biography for many years. Thomas Slaughter has filled this gap with a valuable, readable book.

This is certainly the best Woolman biography now available; yet still it is lacking in some significant areas. Slaughter does a good job of portraying colonial culture, but he does much less well in conveying Quaker culture, spirituality, and psychology of the time, both the traditional and the "reformation" Quakerism that were live cultural trends during Woolman's life.

Readers of Slaughter's book will be grateful for the range of sources he draws upon to set Woolman's life in the context of the Quakerism and the United States of his time. Slaughter takes advantage of much recent research on the slave trade's interweaving in the economic, social, and religious life of the colonies, including its Quaker element, which, of course, is important to his take on Woolman as the "apostle of abolition.

Slaughter provides useful information on Quaker attitudes toward slavery in previous decades, which shows how Woolman expanded an already strong current of antislavery to encompass the economics of slavery and its effect on slave owners. Slaughter also makes an interesting case for Woolman's impact on the thinking of later antislavery activists, most of them non-Quaker.

Woolman was unusual in his intellectualism and the power of his philosophical reasoning. His moral and political philosophizing was infused by his experience of Christ, and vice versa. A treatment of Woolman's "philosophical method" and its groundedness in his experience would have helped Slaughter clarify some of his uniqueness, while giving our knowledge of his times and associations more explanatory power.

Slaughter seeks to describe Woolman's unfolding sensitivity and faithfulness by way of interpretations that do not reflect what we know of the experience of Quaker ministers and communities at the time. He often makes conjectures about Woolman's state of mind, as a historian and biographer must do, but often these impressions do not have the interpretive weight that a deeper, more interior treatment of Quakerism-as-experienced could provide.

Readers who share my concern for current Quaker faithfulness (in addition to an interest in Woolman as a subject) will definitely want to read The Beautiful Soul of John Woolman, but would do well to keep at hand the books mentioned above. Let me also remind Friends of Janet Whitney's 1942 biography John Woolman, American Quaker, a detailed commentary and dramatic reading of the Woolman's journal that also features careful historical work. Whitney is more successful in discussing Woolman's "inward unfolding," although her style feels dated. For the reader interested in moving beyond Woolman's own writings, I feel both biographies are necessary, Slaughter's for its modernity, Whitney's for its interiority.

Reading about Woolman can lead to a lifetime's engagement. Some of our questions can be addressed by more reading about him, but others can only be learned through direct encounter with his writings and others based in the Quakerism of his times. Still other questions can only be addressed by the dialogue among the Inward Teacher, our growing personalities, and our endeavors to act in the world, as Woolman says, so as to turn ourselves and all we possess into the channels of universal love. I encourage Friends to read this book, but in the reading to keep Woolman's journal close to hand—and sometimes to close the book.

—Brian Drayton

Brian Drayton is a member of Weare (N.H.) Meeting, and travels in the ministry and gives workshops and retreats on Quaker topics and belief. He is author of Our Living with a Concern for Gospel Ministry.

Jesus for President: Politics for Ordinary Radicals


Not long after Jesus for President was released last spring, I recommended the square-shaped, bright red book to an older Friend, although I hadn't yet read it.

Now I wonder what that Friend thought when he got the book home and realized that the intended audience of this book is 20- and 30-something adults, specifically younger Christians with an emphasis on mainline Protestants and evangelicals. Was he surprised, excited, turned off, or confused by the page after page of collage-style illustrations? Did he appreciate the concise treatise on resistance to the empire in the Old and New Testaments, or the suggestions for cultivating a Christian political imagination outside of mainstream? Did he experience the book as a rallying cry?

The book's first two sections focus on the engagement with empire and hierarchical power in the Old and New Testaments. The third section discusses the establishment of Christendom and takes a long, hard look at the United States and U.S. Christianity's engagement with the state; while the last section offers ideas to help readers embody their beliefs while resisting empire, including stories about nonviolent responses to assault, models for alternative healthcare systems, and proposals for new holidays and new heroes like Dorothy Day and Oscar Romero. Friends will recognize in this our own historical and ongoing struggle to "be in the world but not of it."

The message of this book—that a Christian faith calls us to lovingly resist the oppression and brutality engendered by our political and economic systems, and to cultivate alternatives—is not new, as the authors show through
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careful citation of other resources. Instead, it’s the presentation of those interpretations to their target audience through stories and the timing that make this book unique. Its tone and graphic design make it accessible and appealing, and give the book a youthful, alternative vibe that is in keeping with Claiborne’s first book, The Irresistible Revolution: Living Life as an Ordinary Radical. Though alluring, the extensive art is occasionally distracting. However, you won’t soon forget this book, and the art more than once deepens engagement with the text.

The authors are careful to step aside from partisan politics. What matters to them is how a Christian faith, or at least a certain kind of Christian faith, inspires people to engage with their governments and economies every day, not just on election day. These questions persist even after the election and inauguration of Barack Obama.

—Angelina Conti

Angelina Conti attends Central Philadelphia (Pa.) Meeting and is project coordinator for FGC’s Quaker Youth Book Project (www.quakeryouth.org/quipbook).

It’s My Life: A Guide to Alternatives after High School


As a recently retired high school guidance counselor, I know that many high school seniors, recent graduates, and dropouts believe their only options are the military, continuing in their present jobs, or joining family businesses. There are very few publications in high school guidance offices to meet the needs of this audience—and many of the materials that do exist are sponsored by the military. As Friends, we need to help these students explore other possibilities. This guide is an excellent tool for us in that endeavor.

The information is presented in a logical and attractive format. Students who decide to pursue a particular goal, such as international volunteering, will find a small amount of information and a resource for additional information. The publication has many Internet and other resources to help figure out what career field to enter, how to find a job, and how to find a trade or technical school. It also discusses internships, apprenticeships, green jobs, starting your own business, international travel, and volunteering. There is information about applying to college and how to pay for it, as well as a low-key warning about the military as a job. It also addresses basic problems such as how to find a place to live.

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I was concerned that the book does not offer more explicitly myth-busting information: For example, it could have mentioned that the “gap year” student who works will be less likely to receive financial aid than a classmate who went directly to college; in fact, an income may disqualify them—I’ve seen this happen frequently in my experience as a counselor. The book also seems to assume that students who do not know exactly what they want to do, cannot go to college, which is obviously untrue. Still, this book, which meets a real need, could serve as an excellent starting point for that student who is not college bound, or who has not yet discovered a direction in which to move. I recommend it to other guidance professionals who would find it a useful addition to their libraries.

—Eileen Redden

Eileen Redden is assistant book review editor for FRIENDS JOURNAL and a member of Camden (Del.) Meeting. She currently attends a worship group at Cadbury in Lewes, Del., and recently retired after 34 years as a school counselor and teacher at Lake Forest High School in Fenton, Del.

Quaker Witness as Sacrament


In this pamphlet, Daniel Snyder applies his experience as an activist, pastoral counselor, and teacher to understanding the relationship between peace work and personal spirituality. Through the impact of outward events, he says, the way to inward transformation is begun. Through inward attentiveness to God, the way to outward action becomes clear.

In the passages of his own spiritual journey, Snyder has learned how inward and outward movements flow into one another. He heard the call to action in bearing witness to the suffering of the world’s children, yet found the need to ground that action in the deep listening made possible by retreat and study at Pendle Hill. He found that his work as a pastoral counselor “always deepened when I spent regular time in prayer for my clients,” and brought this depth also to teaching both inward and outward spiritual skills to others.

“If therapy is a kind of nonviolence for the soul,” Snyder says, “then nonviolence is a kind of therapy for the culture.” Thus he advocates ecological integrity at every level: a
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Walking with Wolf: Reflecting on a Life Spent Protecting the Costa Rican Wilderness


Walking with Wolf tells the story of a Quaker whose pursuit of peace led him unwittingly into a central role in the environmental movement. In 1949, Wolf Guindon spent four months in federal prison with several other graduates of Olney Friends School for refusing to register for the peacetime draft. As a result of this experience, they decided to move to Costa Rica, a country without an army.

Guindon and his friends settled in primitive conditions in the Monteverde Cloud Forest and set out to tame nature. Though careful not to be wasteful, they had no compunction about shooting spider monkeys or green macaws, or chopping down tropical trees. At that time, none of them dreamed the rain forest might be an endangered ecosystem. To them, environmental and social stewardship meant turning the wilderness into productive farmland and helping provide job opportunities for local residents.

After 20 years, during which they introduced new breeds of cattle, started a cheese factory, and cleared countless acres of growth, Wolf found himself in midst of a worldwide effort to save the rain forest that he and his friends had been unintentionally helping to destroy. In 1971, visiting biologists George and Harriet Powell, alarmed at the rate of deforestation in Monteverde, sensitized Wolf to the urgent need for conservation.

Chornook, a Canadian who spent 16 years visiting Wolf and the rain forest, has written a book of extraordinary depth and insight that make the story leap to life. If you are interested in seeing what it was like to farm in Costa Rica in the era before ecotourism, a vibrant picture of the rain forest, or a grassroots view of what an environmental movement can look like to ordinary people caught in the middle of it, this is the book to read.

The themes of change and adaptation are central to the book. Wolf adapted to a chang-
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ing world, one in which the assumption of environmental abundance was turned upside-down and replaced with a practice of safeguarding precious resources. Symbolic of his transformation, he went from being the first seller of chainsaws in Costa Rica to someone who retired his chainsaw to become a steward of the forest.

As she tells an ecological success story, Chornoook gradually reveals more about Wolf, an exuberant man who first attracted her as a soul mate with his energy and good sense of humor. She doesn't flinch while examining the price paid by his wife and family for his obsession with the rain forest, or his struggles with bipolar disorder. She also touches on her own story of healing from cancer in the serenity of the Costa Rican preserve.

Although Chornoook is not a Quaker, her book provides insights into the relationship of Quaker practice to environmentalism. We learn that environmental conservation doesn't just happen, but is rooted in strong communities, such as the one Wolf and other Quakers built in Monteverde. Because the Quaker settlers had established trusting relationships with native Costa Ricans, it was easier for them to work with local people to help international environmental groups, such as the World Wildlife Fund, buy land and promote conservation.

Walking with Wolf also speaks to Friends by underscoring the importance of following leadings. By being true to their belief in the Peace Testimony and to lives lived with simplicity and integrity, Wolf and his Quaker community experienced a closeness to nature few of us can imagine, and the completely unforeseen opportunity to be at the center of a movement to save the rain forest. The lesson that shines out from this book: Go where the spirit leads and life around you will be changed in amazing ways.

—Diane Reynolds

Diane Reynolds is a freelance journalist and a member of PatapSCO Meeting in Ellicott City, Md. She is currently attending Stillwater Meeting in Barnesville, Ohio.

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Central Philadelphia (Pa.) Monthly Meeting and Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting are among Friends who in their monthly meetings and yearly meetings continue to voice opposition to the war in Iraq, to threats of war with Iran, and to expansion of the war in Afghanistan.

For example, Central Philadelphia Meeting, in the minute it approved, attests that "since the beginning of the United States' pre-emptive war on Iraq...we have been dismayed as the government has put forth excuses for attacking Iraq, and one after another, these excuses have been shown to be false...We grieve for the tens of thousands of deaths, for the disruption of millions of lives, and for the immense waste of resources...As William Penn reminds us, 'A good end cannot sanctify evil means, nor must we do evil, that good may come of it.'" Central Philadelphia Meeting concludes its minute: "We therefore urge the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops and contractors from Iraq and call for U.S. government financial support for— but no other involvement in— non-violent and non-military humanitarian efforts to help the Iraqis rebuild their nation. And we continue to pray, speak, and work for peace, freedom, and social justice." Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting, which
encompasses traditional Quaker meetings in Indiana, Kentucky, and Ohio, addressed its minute “To Indiana, Kentucky, and Ohio Representatives and Senators.” In its minute, approved during its annual sessions, Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting affirms, “We are concerned about our nation’s threats to attack Iran and its plans for expanded war in Afghanistan. The war in Iraq has lessons for us. . . . Not only did this war fail to achieve many of its objectives, but it has worsened our nation’s position in the Middle East.” The yearly meeting’s representatives and senators are urged “to work for a more realistic foreign policy that emphasizes multilateral diplomacy and working through international organizations. We urge you to resist the idea that war is an effective strategy for addressing terrorism. Terrorism is a criminal activity that is best addressed by good intelligence and cooperative international police work. . . . Please work for peaceful alternatives to war in Iran and Afghanistan,” Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting concludes its minute.

-Friendship from Central Philadelphia (Pa.) Meeting newsletter of Bloomington (Ind.) Meeting

Friends General Conference’s Ad Hoc Committee for Quaker Sweat Lodge Discernment issued its final report on October 4, 2008, which was accepted by FGC’s Central Committee later that month. The committee was formed in September 2006 to address concerns about the Quaker Sweat Lodge that arose following the decision to cancel the QSL workshop planned for the 2004 FGC Gathering and the passionate and conflicting viewpoints on appropriateness of the QSL to Quaker faith and the role it plays as a rite of passage in the spiritual journey of Quaker youths. The cancellation of the QSL workshop also raised concerns about relations with surrounding Native American communities. These concerns arose in response to a letter from a representative from the Mashpee-Wampanoag tribal council that criticized the QSL as a form of cultural appropriation. This letter was a factor in the decision to cancel the QSL workshop in 2004. Concerns surrounding racism and relations with Native Americans were among many that found their way into FRIENDS JOURNAL’s Forum between 2005 and 2008. Discussions and opinions of all sides that were voiced in the Forum and elsewhere are addressed in the Ad Hoc Committee’s final report. While acknowledging and honoring the ministry of George Price (see his article, “The Quaker Sweat Lodge,” FJ Feb. 2002) to Quakers through the QSL, the committee recognizes that “the QSL as we have known it will never happen again at the Gathering.” Recommendations make suggestions for the future handling of concerns like this one. To view the Ad Hoc Committee’s
SOA Watch, an advocate for closing the School of the Americas (now named Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation) at Fort Benning, Ga., plans to carry its concern directly through petitions to Congress and the White House February 15–17. The school has been the target of mass demonstrations at Fort Benning every November since 1989. Critics claim that the school provides Latin American military personnel with advance training that includes techniques of torture and other violations of human rights. On November 16, 1989, a unit of the El Salvador army led by officers trained at the School of the Americas was blamed for the massacre of Julia Elba Ramos, her 14-year-old daughter, and six Jesuit priests. Jon Sobrino, a Jesuit priest who survived the massacre, attended the demonstrations at Fort Benning last November 22–23. The demonstrations were attended by several thousand people. The protesters included human rights activists and supporters with longtime commitments to concerns about the SOA. Among such groups are Quakers, according to Hendrik Voss, communications coordinator for SOA Watch. “Friends, the American Friends Service Committee, consistently have been activists supporting efforts to close the school,” he said. Meanwhile, encouraged by the results of the election last November, SOA Watch believes that both Congress and the White House now will be receptive to the concerns about the School of the Americas. According to Voss, the last vote by Congress in 2007 to deny funds for the school failed by a margin of only six votes. In the November election last year, 35 Representatives who voted to continue funding of the SOA were defeated. “Human rights activists have their sights set on pressuring the new Congress to permanently shut down the school in 2009,” Voss said. While President Obama has not yet expressed a clear position on the SOA issue, he has promised to close Guantanamo and to ensure that U.S. forces do not use torture, Voss noted. “SOA Watch is circulating a petition to the President urging him to issue an executive order to close the SOA/WHINSEC,” he said. –E-mails from SOA Watch; telephone conversations with Hendrik Voss

**BULLETIN BOARD**

- **March 6–8**—Weaving Sacred Wholeness conference at the Penn Center, South Carolina. This intergenerational conference, collaboratively organized by the Youth Ministries Committee and Committee for Ministry on Racism of FGC, is an opportunity for all Friends to explore diversity through deep conversation and experiential activities. As a group we will share our experiences with racism, classism, sexism, ageism, homophobia (and more), and begin to identify ways to strengthen our faith community and build a more whole Religious Society of Friends. For more information see [http://fgcquaker.org/weaving-sacred-wholeness](http://fgcquaker.org/weaving-sacred-wholeness).

- **March 19–22**—FWCC Annual Meeting in Canby, Ore.

- **March 27–29**—Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

- **March 28**—The 10th Bridge Film Festival, an international celebration of student filmmaking from Friends schools and meetings reflecting Quaker values in action. The festival will be held at Ackworth School in England on March 28. Deadline for submissions is February 27. Visit [http://sites.google.com/a/brooklynfriends.org/bridge-film-festival/](http://sites.google.com/a/brooklynfriends.org/bridge-film-festival/) for more information.

- **April 10–17**—European and Middle Eastern Young Friends (18 and up) Spring Gathering in Damascus. The theme: How has your faith been formed and informed by the faith of others? How do your beliefs interact with the other? The program has been designed to strike a balance between experiencing and learning about the sociopolitical, cultural, and religious history of the area and attending to spiritual growth. More information and applications are available at [http://emeyf.quaker.eu.org/](http://emeyf.quaker.eu.org/)

**Opportunities**

- **African Great Lakes Initiative** is seeking volunteers for workcamps this summer in Burundi, Kenya, and Rwanda. Workcamps go from June 21 to July 25. For more information go to [www.aglionline.org/Program/workcamps.htm](http://www.aglionline.org/Program/workcamps.htm) or call (314) 621-7262.

- **Friends Meeting in Greenhaven Correctional Facility in New York** is seeking pen Friends interested in corresponding with its male members. For more information, contact Irma Guthrie at (607) 256-7028 or <findirma@localnet.com>.

**CREMATION**

Friends are reminded that the Anna T. Jeanes Fund will reimburse cremation costs.

(Applicable to members of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting only.)

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I Am Who I Am
continued from page 11

was more manageable, predictable, and safe. Then there were painful periods when, learning that I couldn’t force God back into my set of little mental boxes, I believed that I was too Christian, or too shamanic, for Friends. I struggled with speaking about my experiences, and I feared that I would have to leave Friends. Gratefully, when I am now led to speak truthfully about the fullness and complexity and depth of my experiences, I no longer struggle with the leading. I have learned that God does not require this struggle of me. Nor does God require me to leave Friends.

If other Friends are feeling the movement of the Spirit in this way, I suspect that similar struggles may arise for them. So I pose some queries that I have been carrying:
• Is Spirit leading others of us in the Religious Society of Friends to experience the wildness of earth and waves, the saving power of the Christ?
• Do we need to rediscover a balance within our meetings that includes more of the Spirit’s passionate transforming qualities, as well as the quietly transforming ones?
• Has this invitation been held out to me as an individual, alone, or is it also being kindled in the hearts of other Friends? And if it is, what does this portend for the evolution of the Religious Society of Friends?

My own conversations and interactions among Friends have led me to the hope that the transforming power of the Spirit is breaking in upon us, as a people, in new ways. I dare to hope that we are being transformed by the power of Christ, of God, of the Great Mother, of the Holy Spirit, of that mystery of Beingness who lives as a fiery spark within the heart of each of us and who is so very ready for a new day.

I am coming closer to living the private and public life that I am inwardly prompted to live, no matter the risk. And I yearn to draw closer to a family of Friends that honors our predecessors while celebrating the diversity of our experiences. A family of Friends that says as a community, “We are who we are,” and that courageously continues the act of creation in our own time, with our own understanding.
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Darfur
continued from page 14
in the United States constitute only 5 percent of the world’s population and yet we use more than a quarter of the fossil fuel.

To the extent that our emissions of greenhouse gases contribute to global warming, we exacerbate the drought in sub-Saharan Africa that is driving the conflict in Darfur and elsewhere.

We are incredibly wealthy. Our petroleum obesity wreaks havoc on the world. We are gassing up our SUVs with people’s lives.

So let’s ask ourselves: How can we use our material advantages to build energy bridges to a sustainable energy future that supports global peace?

I invite us all to find ways to help.

Learn more about Sudan. Use your material wealth and your political voice. Support programs and appropriate technologies aimed at alleviating suffering in Sudan. Make sure your pension funds are not invested in firms that contribute to the cycle of violence in Darfur. Work toward building the political consensus in the United States that is necessary to bring an international effort to end the conflict.

Consider changes in your own lifestyles to reduce your reliance on fossil fuels. Support local and regional programs aimed at reducing fuel use—everything from bicycle trails and public transport to tax incentives aimed at promoting alternative energy. Darfur may be thousands of miles across the globe, but these are ways of bringing it home.

And let’s work to get the United States out of Iraq. Nothing has crippled the U.S. potential for influencing the government in Khartoum more than the Bush administration’s costly adventurism in Iraq. Let’s bring all the pressure we can on the Barack Obama administration to wage peace—to shape an ethos of social justice that removes the occasion of war.

If we look at Darfur holistically, it’s not just a burden on our conscience; it’s a litmus test of our humanity and of wise policy in many spheres. It’s an opportunity to set things right.
Deaths

Clark—Roy Albert Clark, 91, on May 30, 2008, in Phoenix, Ariz. Roy was born on March 11, 1917, in a sod house in Broken Bow, Nebr. His education began in a one-room schoolhouse and continued at William Penn College, where he met Marie Johnson, the love of his life, and turned from a strict Baptist background to find a new spiritual home as a Friend. Roy was drafted into the Army after Pearl Harbor but refused to carry a weapon and was jailed. He conceded to serve in a noncombatant role in the Medical Corps, but the Army reneged on this agreement and assigned him to the Signal Corps instead. He felt so betrayed that he contemplated deserting, but decided to accept an assignment as a mail carrier in Hawaii. Roy and Marie were married under the care of Honolulu Meeting. There Roy served as a Boy Scout leader. After the war, Roy and Marie returned to Iowa, where they raised hogs and corn, and where he continued his Boy Scout work. When the Iowans winters began to take their toll on Marie's health, the family moved to Buckeye, Ariz., where Roy taught general science and physical education in high school for 30 years.

To earn extra money for travel to watch their son Wayne play professional football and to visit their son Howard on State Department assignments, he worked during the summers hauling hay, teaching driver education, and milking cows. After he retired, he and Marie traveled, became Senior Olympic athletes, and volunteered at the retirement center where they lived, leading exercise classes, playing the organ, and helping in the Care Center. Roy was preceded in death by his infant daughter, Anne Irene Clark; and by his son, Raymond Clark. He is survived by his wife, Marie Clark; his sons Wayne and Howard Clark; and his daughter, Joan Keck.

Forwood—Wilbur Allen Forwood, 77, on March 26, 2008, in Lancaster, Pa. Wilbur was born on January 17, 1931, near Elizabethtown, Pa., to Annie Fry and Roland Ralph Forwood. After his parents left the United Brethren Church, Wilbur's father provided religious instruction, preaching what he saw as the "divine right of male domination." As a boy, Wilbur sought refuge in the woods from a harsh home life. There he found peace and felt a union with nature and with his fellow humans. His contemplation led him to an awareness of the struggles of women and the poor. When he was about 12, Wilbur began to question his father's teaching, although he felt that his greatest sin was doubt about the immutable truth of his father's biblical accounts. Graduating from high school in 1949, Wilbur worked at various jobs until the Korean War, in which he served as a medical laboratory technician in a Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH). In 1960 he received a BS in Biology from Franklin and Marshall College. Wilbur became an agnostic in college and began a lifelong search for meaning, truth, and purpose, struggling for years to understand the truth about a cosmic God, an eternal soul, and the meaning of life. Later he became a Lutheran, but eventually found his spiritual home with Quakers. He was drawn to waiting in expectant silence for a message from God and to the diverse yet united meeting. He said at one point, "It is in Quaker meeting that I am reminded that while we have each traveled a

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different path, and are each at a different point in our search for truth, we are united by the same Spirit of Life.” Wilbur worked for Wyeth Laboratories for 31 years, retiring in 1994 as vice president of U.S. manufacturing. Once a born-again Christian, late in life Wilbur felt that he was saved in the present moment by the existential choice to view his life and his awareness as a sacred gift, rather than as a meaningless accident. He wrote: “A little hit of God in me? It cannot be! And yet, how else can I explain Infinity?” Wilbur was a nurturer and a steady presence. A member of Lancaster (Pa.) Meeting, he served on many committees, shepherded construction of a new community room, gave many hours to meetinghouse maintenance, and was clerk in 2002 and 2003. He had a strong aesthetic sense and was an artist with a camera, especially for photographs of rocks, water, and flowers. Wilbur’s ashes were scattered in the Endless Mountains of Pennsylvania, signifying the human spirit’s endless nature and a return to the peace he found in the woods in his youth and in his lifelong spiritual journey. He is survived by his former wife, Faye Forwood; his sons, John and Mark Forwood; six grandchildren; his brothers, Larry, Harold, and Glenn Forwood; and his sister, Anne Nagle.

Larrabee—Kent Larrabee, 90, on October 15, 2008, in Medford Leas, N.J. Kent was born on January 8, 1918, in Fredonia, New York, to Charlotte and Benjamin Larrabee. Following two years at Hillsdale College in Michigan, Kent worked his way around the world in 1938 and 1939. Afterwards he earned a Bachelor’s degree in Sociology and Psychology from University of Syracuse, and later a Master’s in Social Work from Bryn Mawr College. In the 1970s, Kent studied for two years at the C.G. Jung Institute in Zurich, Switzerland. Kent chose a life of social service, working with people at the grassroots level, in the Quaker ministry, and as a staff person with Fellowship of Reconciliation. He participated in many other programs for peace and social justice, including the Movement for a New Society, a 2,300-mile walk to Moscow to oppose the nuclear arms race, and three years of public speaking in the United States and Russia on the nuclear crisis. For much of his life, Kent purposely lived below the poverty line in order to identify with the poor and to avoid payment of income taxes for war. He was jailed three times for witnessing at Big Flats, Nevada, against the testing of nuclear weapons. He was active in concerns such as the death penalty and race relations, and was a friend to young men dying of AIDS. His spiritual journey took him to South India on four occasions where he lived for six months at a time in different ashrams. Kent was preceded in death by his older brother, Hadley Larrabee. He was survived by his three children, Arthur, Benjamin, and Deborah Larrabee; and two grandchildren, Kate and Teddy Larrabee. His former wife, Margery Larrabee, died on Dec. 1, 2008.
Omissions in the special issue

The October 2008 special issue on Energy, Climate, and Building Community was timely in dealing with these three interconnected issues. However, I found two startling omissions. The first is that you did not deal with the ultimate cause of the problems with energy and climate—the growth of the human population. This rapid growth, in conjunction with our profligate consumption, is causing most of the worst environmental troubles that we face. Although Friends have long believed in simplicity, and this special issue of FJ did touch upon consumption, there was only tangential mention of population. If there were only 100 million people in the United States, and only 2 billion worldwide, our planet would be in a lot better shape!

The other omission is lack of reference to the preeminent Friends organization dealing with sustainability: Quaker Earthcare Witness (<www.quakeearthcare.org>). QEW "is a spiritually centered movement of Quakers and like-minded people seeking ways to integrate concern for the environment with Friends long-standing testimonies for Simplicity, Integrity, Peace, and Equality." I am glad that you did include two articles by Hollister Knowlton, QEW's current clerk: "ZERI: A Philosophy and Methodology to Reinvent the World," and "Climate Change, Quakerism, and a Transformed Life." Please offer an invitation for Friends who are concerned about energy and climate change to join the community of similar-minded people in QEW.

Richard Grossman
Bayfield, Colo.

Questions about 9/11

This note is in response to Walter Hempel's presumably "factual review" expressed in "Another view on 9/11" (FJ Nov. 2008, Viewpoint). I consider that officer Hempel fails to touch on topics often of great importance to "a law enforcement officer of 32 years." Isn't he surprised that the site of the World Trade Center, with its complex of towers, was never even considered and investigated as a crime scene? Why not? Doesn't such destruction and the deaths of about 3,000 persons by "terrorists" constitute a crime scene? Why not, if there was a desire to reveal the truth? Why the coverup?

When photos and identities of 19 terrorist suspects (supplied by the FBI, I assume) were flashed on national TV and in newspapers within a few days of 9/11, within hours, six of these same suspects let the world know they were very much alive. And not one of these original suspects was ever arrested and brought to trial. Why not?

As for the notion of "competing theories on 9/11," I have read over a dozen books and viewed many videos on the events surrounding 9/11 and have concluded that there has only been one true conspiracy theory regarding 9/11. And that is the theory promulgated by the George W. Bush administration. Otherwise, many persons differing with the government's revelations, have provided elucidations of these same revelations, not additional conspiracy theories.


Robert Vetter
Richmond, Ind.

Canadians and the U.S. election

For me, the most poignant vignette in TV coverage of the recent U.S. election was that of the face of a young Arab-looking man in the joyous crowd in front of the White House who excitedly exclaimed, "This is not just about blacks—This is about all of us!" Barack Obama first came to my attention when I was living in a Chicago suburb—when he helped Carol Mosley Braun win a Senate seat—as someone worth supporting. I'm not sure whether it made the U.S. news, but there were so many Canadians who wished they could vote in the recent U.S. election—but could not—who went down to volunteer with door-knocking to make sure Barack Obama was elected. A bumper sticker on at least one Canadian car in this little Canadian city where I have retired sports an "Elect Obama" message.

This courageous man needs our ongoing prayers, for he has inherited a complex mess. Even if it is possible to set the financial system on its feet again, the
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FRIENDS JOURNAL

February 2009 FRIENDS JOURNAL

Robbing our gay and lesbian Friends

On the last day of Western Yearly Meeting’s 2008 annual session, which I attended as a representative of Baltimore Yearly Meeting under a traveling minute, Friend John Punshon preached during the morning worship service. He recounted the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), asking his listeners to imagine themselves as the story’s characters and advising his listeners to act with kindness, like the Good Samaritan himself, and to have gratitude, as the man who was robbed must have felt toward the Samaritan who rescued him.

In the silence that followed Friend John Punshon’s sermon, a message came to me: that we members of Friends United Meeting must indeed ask ourselves what role we play in this parable. In many ways we are the Samaritan who helps to heal those who are hurt, particularly when we serve those who are poor, ill, or who are victims of violence. Yet we are also the thieves when we stop those who would follow their divine leading to serve simply because these Friends are different. We are robbing these Friends of their divine gifts (and what gifts can possibly be greater or more important in one’s life?) to follow their callings, forcing them to hide their light under a bushel (Luke 8:16-18) and bury their talents (Matthew 25:14-32). We are committing this wrong through our personnel and volunteer policy that states, “It is expected that intimate sexual behavior should be confined to marriage, understood to be between one man and one woman.”

I spoke to a Baltimore Yearly Meeting member who is a lesbian and who has been faithfully married to another woman for more than 20 years. She has training and skills that could benefit Kaimosi Hospital, an FUM project in Kenya (and, as a volunteer from the hospital told attendees at Western Yearly Meeting, the hospital desperately needs help). This BYM Friend feels strongly led to help the hospital, but the FUM personnel and volunteer policy ban her from serving, and obeying a leading, just because she is a lesbian.

I know this policy is based on the belief some Friends have that “intimate sexual

James Baker Nelson, B.C.
behavior” between two men or two women is sinful and that marriage should be limited to heterosexual couples. This creates a double standard, an inherent inequality, as it forces gays and lesbians to live a life of celibacy not required of straight Friends, nor does the policy recognize the long-term, faithful, committed marriages of gay and lesbian couples.

Jesus said, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” (Matthew 7:12). Jesus advised his followers to remove the plank from one’s own eyes before removing the speck from one’s neighbor’s (Matthew 7:1-5, Luke 6:41-42). Jesus ate meals with, spoke to, and spent time with those whom the people of his religious community considered sinful, evil, and unclean, such as lepers, prostitutes, and tax collectors (Luke 5:12-16, 7:36-38, 17:11-19, 19:1-10). Jesus asked a Samaritan woman for a drink—much to her surprise, since the Jewish people of the day considered Samaritans to be evil and unclean. Yet Jesus did not see her that way (John 4:7-9). He didn’t let old, archaic laws that said he must avoid and vilify these people stand in the way of ministering to them and communing with them. He broke those rules because the divine calling for equality and full inclusion of all people is more important than those rules. Indeed, Jesus criticized the religious authorities of his day for putting tradition or the old laws before the command of God (Mark 7:9). We in Friends United Meeting are failing to follow Jesus’ own words and example so long as we hold to a discriminatory personnel policy.

What is Jesus’ command? To love God and to love your neighbor (Mark 22:37-40, Luke 10:25-28). When asked “And who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:29), Jesus replies with the story of the Good Samaritan, a story about a person whom his religious community considered sinful and unworthy. This supposedly evil man, whom the Jewish people of the day thought would contaminate them and their holy work, earns Jesus’ praise as being merciful. This man, whom the religious authorities of the day said could harm their integrity and their holy fellowship, is the one whom Jesus raises as an example to others.

So, Friends, we must ask ourselves: should we act like Jesus, who ate with and talked with those considered sinful and unworthy of human contact by the religious tradition of his day? Or will we be like the Pharisees who refused to see a new way? Will we allow those among us whom our society hates today—gays and lesbians—to love their neighbors and serve as the Good
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Samaritan by following their divine leadings, or will we in FUM continue to use the personnel policy to rob them and ourselves? Will we, FUM, be the man who is robbed, the thieves, the innkeeper or the Good Samaritan? We must ask ourselves: Who is our neighbor?

Jennifer Chapin-Smith
Baltimore, Md.

An open letter to Barack Obama

My feelings on the issue of gay marriage have only been made more clear in the light of Barack Obama’s election to the U.S. Presidency and his own comments on the subject.

The handwritten letter went into the mail this past Friday. My best guess was to send it to his current Senatorial office, and I wrote “Please forward” on the envelope.

I sent a typed copy of the letter to my folks, too, while they didn’t sign our wedding certificate, my father did write a letter a few years later to a U.S. Senator explaining his views on why there mustn’t be a constitutional amendment that would limit the rights and freedoms of anyone in the United States, including two people who wish to marry each other.

Dear Barack Obama,
I tend not to write these kinds of letters, the kind that goes to a President, let alone to a President-elect.

I find myself in a whirl of conflicting emotions as the news of your being elected to serve as President of the United States sinks in...

On the one hand, I am thrilled that a man who lives such a principled life, even during such crazy times as running a presidential campaign has advanced to an office, a station that one would think would also require a principled and moral life.

Our lives are a testament of our principles that guide us, and I tell you that I am ready to have as President an individual who will ask us to do as he does, to act as he acts, to serve as he serves.

On the other hand, even as radio reports, television news broadcasts, blogs on the Internet, and individual accounts from around the world affirm that someone other than a white man can be elected into the presidency of the United States; even as you declare that “This is our moment. This is our time”; even as you say, “Nowhere else in the world is my story even possible”; even as you say, “Change is coming,” my heart

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catches in my throat.
I can indeed affirm, "Your story is possible. Your achievement is historic." I can affirm, "Anyone, anyone can be President!"

But I cannot yet affirm, "Anyone, anyone can marry."

I tell you, Barack Obama, this breaks my spirit.
While it's true that your story as an African American in this country is much longer than my story as a woman who loves another woman in this country, I cannot yet affirm, "Anyone, anyone can marry."

Instead, I must tell my seven-year-old niece that I can't marry because not even the President-elect of the United States says I can.
A white man who knows "enough" about the Civil Rights Movement and about the Women's Movement can say, "Of course an African American, a woman could become president," But African Americans and American women are the ones who can testify directly to just how possible it really is. Or wasn't.
A straight person who knows "enough" about gay rights can say, "Of course a committed same-sex couple can enjoy the same freedoms and protections as a straight, married couple can." But gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer people in those relationships are the ones who can testify directly to just how possible it really is. Or isn't.
It's not the same to be told that there will be certain freedoms and protections in place, just as it isn't enough for there to be certain laws in place to protect the disabled, the young, the elderly, and the foreign-born. Discrimination in their day-to-day encounters with average people still happens. It's not about whether or not my partner and I can receive the same ownership rights in property, the same visitation rights in hospitals, and the same inheritance rights in death as my straight counterparts do.
It's about whether or not my partner and I can receive the same legal status, the same automatic respect, the same cultural opportunity, the same institutionalized access, the same inalienable rights, the same ineffable joy that straight couples receive when, at their mosque, synagogue, church, or courthouse, they say "I do."
I humbly and respectfully ask you to reconsider your views on gay marriage, on the change of the institution of marriage over the decades, and on who is or isn't served, who is or isn't lifted up—legally, financially, emotionally, and spiritually—in marriage.

Elizabeth A. Oppenheimer
Minneapolis, Minn.
Accommodations

Coming to London? Friendly B&B just a block from the British Museum and very close to London University. A central location for all tourist activities, ideal for persons traveling alone. Direct subway and bus links with Heathrow Airport. The Penn Club, 21 Bedford Place, London WC1B 5JU. Telephone: (+44) 207-407-4716. Fax: (+44) 207-659-5161. <www.pennclub.co.uk>.


Beacon Hill Friends House: Quaker-sponsored residence of 19 interested in community living, spiritual growth, peace, and social concerns. All arts welcome. For information, application: BHF1, 6 Chestnut Street, Boston, MA 02108-3204, (617) 227-9118. Overnight and short-term accommodations also available. <www.bhf1.org>, (617) 227-9118.

Looking for a creative living alternative in New York City? Pennington Friends House may be the place for you! We are looking for people of all ages who want to make a serious commitment to a community lifestyle based on Quaker principles. For information call (212) 673-1790. We also have overnight accommodations.


Santa Fe—Charming, affordable adobe guest apartment with kitchenette at our historic Canyon Road meetinghouse. Convenient to galleries and downtown. More at <santa-fe.quakerhouse.org>. <santafeypavilionapartment@gmail.com> or (505) 983-7241.


QUAKER HOUSE, Managua, Nicaragua Simple hospitality, dorms, shared kitchen or catering, meeting space, Internet, laundry, library. For information, volunteers, and groups: <mamishouse@gmail.com>, <www.mamishouse.org>, (505) 209-2652, (727) 921-2426.

Secure your reservation at Pendle Hill Pennsylvania (formerly Friends Bumble), a magazine by Western Friends, supporting the spiritual lives of Friends everywhere. Subscription: $29, 10 issues, 6 month intro subscription just $10. Email for free sample copy. <editor@ pendlehill.org>. Western Friends, 933 SE Main St. Mailbox #130, Portland, OR 97217. Visit <www.westernfriends.org> for news, photos, more.


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The Tract Association of Friends (founded 1816)

Offers Friends Calendar, pamphlets and books on Quaker faith and practice. 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102. Telephone: (215) 579-2752. <e-mail tractassociation@verizon.net>.

The Peaceable Table

A Free Online Journal for Quakers and other People of Faith
<www.vegetarianfriends.net>.

Quaker Writers and Artists! Join the Fellowship of Quaker Writers and Artists, 59th year, and share your work with Friends in our exciting quarterly, "Types and Shadows." Seeking short fiction and nonfiction, poetry, drawings, B&W photos, and NEWS of Quaker artists. Help create a new chapter in Quaker history! Info: FQA, c/o PYM, 1515 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102. E-mail subscriptions: OK. <fqa@pym.org>.

Do you care about the future of the Religious Society of Friends? Support growing movements and a spiritually vital Quaker church. For all ages with a deferred gift to Friends General Conference (bequest, charitable gift annuity, trust). For information, please contact Michael Leff, FGC, 1121 21st Ave., Suite 200, Philadelphia, PA 19103.

The Peaceable Table: A Free Online Journal for Quakers and other People of Faith (developed by FGC)

Quakers at Workcamp: May 15-19, 2009: Pendle Hill, PA. Contact: <peacefultable@verizon.net>.

For information and applications: <www.quno.org>.

Do you want to join us? For more information, call: (937) 728-9887.

For information contact: Louise Kevelson, 2011 Pine St., Philadelphia, PA 19103. E-mail: <lois@quaker.org>.

The Journal of Quaker Studies focuses on scholarly work on Quakerism and the religious experience, and is published quarterly with the Quaker Studies Workshop on Quakerism and the Religious Experience. It is published by the Quaker Studies Workshop on Quakerism and the Religious Experience, located in the Department of Religious Studies, Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana, 47374, USA.

Position Vacant

Assistant Director—Friends Meeting of Washington (DC)

The Friends Meeting of Washington (DC), a large, urban, unprogrammed meeting belonging to both FGC and FUM, seeks an assistant director who will coordinate the operations of the office. The position is a part-time position, with the possibility of full-time employment. The position is a full-time position, with the possibility of full-time employment. The position is a full-time position, with the possibility of full-time employment.

For information contact: <joseph@quaker.org>.

April 1, 2009

Volunteer Internship at Ben Lomond Quaker Center, a retreat and conference center near Santa Cruz, CA. Resid- ential, flexible term. Great opportunity to grow spiritually and work in all areas of the Quaker non-profit. Mountain, redwoods, woods, hiking, management, and other environment. Contact: <jordan@verizon.net>.

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Rental & Retreats


Blueberry Cottage: organic lavender, blueberry, and dairy goat farm in the mountains of Northern Carolina. Pond, mountain views, pet friendly, rent by the week or day. Call: (828) 211-1234.


Provence, France. Beautiful secluded stone house, village near Avignon. Sleeps 6-8, $150,000. Rent for 12 nights. Contact Alison Jablonko, Via della Ginestra, 12, 00166 Rome, Italy, Email: jablonko@in.it.

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In the mountains of North Carolina. Pond, mountain view. Hiking trails from back door. Weekends or by the week. Contact Melanie Dwyer: (717) 576-9048.

Sleeps

Rentals & Retreats

The Hickman, a nonprofit, Quaker-sponsored retreat community in historic West Chester, has been providing quality living accommodations for older persons over a century. Call today for a tour: (484) 760-6300, or visit our brand new website: www.thehickman.org

Retirement Living

Friends Homes, Inc., founded by North Carolina's Quakers, has provided retirement options since 1968. Both Friends Homes at Guilford and Friends Homes West are for-service communities, continuing care retirement communities offering independent living, assisted living, and skilled nursing care.

Living in Retirement: People who believe in peace and justice never retire, they just move to Upland. An ecumenical community with UCC relationships. Contact: Upland Village. (931) 277-3516.

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Continuing care retirement communities:


The Locomotives: south London to East Hampton, Mass.


Collage: Assessment Tool for Well Elderly

For information, contact: Doris Lambert, The Kendal Corporation, 1107 N. Baltimore Pike, Kendal Square, PA 19348. (610) 335-1200. E-mail: info@kscp.kendal.org.

Schools

Friends School of Portland: An independent Quaker school for grades Pre-K to 8, emphasizing integrated, developmentally appropriate curriculum, arts, and music programs. Busing available. 1018 West Broad Street, Quakertown, PA 18936. (215) 528-1733. www.friendsschoolofportland.org.

ARThUR MORGAN SCHOOL: Boarding and day school for grades 7-12. A small, coeducational, Quaker school preparing students for college. 207-731-6021.


Lansdowne Friends School: A small, Quaker school for boys and girls ages 7-12, coeducational, 100 years old, 26 acres. Under Quaker leadership for over 100 years, 30 minutes from Philadelphia. (610) 625-2454.


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Friends Journal February 2009
“What’s my motivation for giving?” asked Mary Anna Feitler. “Wanting to be part of a larger whole is some of my motivation for giving. I feel better when I share.”

When Fred and Mary Anna Feitler established their Family Trust, they knew they wanted to include Friends General Conference among the charitable beneficiaries.

“FGC is a dynamic organization, fostering beliefs that we share, educating and encouraging young and old Quakers, and being a light in the world—how could we not want to support an organization that will help maintain a practical, spiritual presence in a difficult world?”

Read more about the Feitlers at www.fgcquaker.org/development

You can establish a trust with cash, securities, even real estate and property. Trusts can be structured in a variety of ways that provide tax benefits now and income for life, with the remainder of the trust benefitting FGC and other charities of your choice.

“There is satisfaction in knowing we faced our end of life questions, thought about what made sense for us, and got things in order. As Quakers, we want to be good stewards of our resources and make things easier for our children and grandchildren.”

Friends General Conference will be glad to assist you in designing a gift or gift plan that balances your philanthropic and financial goals while nurturing vital Quakerism. Please contact FGC’s Office of Planned Giving: 215.561.1700 or plannedgiving@fgcquaker.org.