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FRIENDS JOURNAL

Quaker
Thought
and
Life
Today



Forgiveness:

*An Amish Lesson
for the Rest of Us?*

An
independent
magazine
serving the
Religious Society
of Friends



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■ AMONG FRIENDS

A Fond Farewell and a Welcome

In February 1990 Nagendran Gulendran joined the staff of FRIENDS JOURNAL, coming to us from Surrey, England, where he had worked in the import and export business for various firms over a 12-year period. Born and raised in Sri Lanka, Gulen (as many know him) had worked there in the import business for 17 years before relocating to England. A Tamil, Gulen and his family found staying in their homeland of Sri Lanka increasingly difficult as persecution of his ethnic group and armed resistance grew. Gradually, his large family experienced a personal diaspora, with sisters and brothers in Europe, Australia, Canada, and the U.S. When Gulen joined us in 1990, he had just been reunited with his wife and daughters after a years-long separation, complicated by immigration issues. Lillian and George Willoughby had been instrumental in helping his wife and daughters immigrate to Philadelphia.

For more than 18 years, Gulen brought his prodigious gifts as a sales person to the JOURNAL, providing essential advertising revenue to support our ministry of the written word. Many, many Friends knew him well—his friendly calls, his easy laugh, his willingness to work with a customer to ensure satisfaction. At the JOURNAL our staff work exceptionally hard and support each other with great affection. Gulen suffered health problems for many years, but having mastered a British “stiff upper lip” during his sojourn in the UK (or perhaps having developed that quality in Sri Lanka), he rarely complained or gave evidence of his difficulties. Last October, while diligently calling his customers from our office, Gulen was stricken with severe pain and ended up in hospital and rehab for many weeks, which stretched into months. I am happy to report that he is slowly mending, and that he has taken a well-deserved retirement, in which we hope he will have the joy of visiting with his grandchildren and seeing some of his far-flung family. Gulen’s contribution over the years to the stability and well-being of the JOURNAL was enormous, and although I’ve thanked him privately, I want to do so publicly here. His ready laugh and sense of humor is much missed by our staff.

When it became clear that Gulen would not be returning to the JOURNAL, we launched a search for a new ad sales manager.

We were pleased to receive applications from 61 highly qualified individuals and we interviewed six. I’m delighted to report that we have appointed Brianna Taylor as our new ad sales manager. Brianna started life as an Indiana Quaker (member of Clear Creek Meeting) but grew up primarily in Pittsburgh (Pa.) Meeting. A Political Science graduate of Haverford College, Brianna has experience in public relations and served as assistant manager and marketing manager of Sweetwater Farm, a bed and breakfast in Glen Mills, Pa. Brianna found our search ad on the JOURNAL’s Facebook page and brings a level of enthusiasm and creativity to her new position that is very exciting. One of our staff mentioned after her interview with staff that “you can hear the smile in her voice.” You can. If you are fortunate to speak with her on the phone, please welcome her to her challenging new position!

Gulen

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Cover art: Freiman Stoltzfus. Artist Freiman Stoltzfus is a native of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Born into an Amish-Mennonite home, he began drawing and painting professionally while in his teens. He has lived in France and Italy, where he studied art, language, and music. He currently makes his home in New York. He continues to find a wellspring of inspiration in the people, colors, quilts, and farmland of his rich heritage.

Writings that stood out for me

Three articles in the April and May issues spoke to me especially strongly. First, Dean Bratis, in "The Eye of God" (*FJ* April), conveyed vividly the intensity that can occur in human-animal encounters. We are so often focused on human affairs that we forget our interconnection with the rest of the Earth. Encounters such as he described can lead us back to valuing and respecting our fellow creatures with whom we are so intimately connected—a respect that Native Americans and other indigenous people never lost.

Second, Kristin Grabarek's "On the Cutting Edge: The Peace Activism of Earle Reynolds" (*FJ* April) was riveting; what a role model for us all! I would love to see more people with his courage and commitment to action in bringing about the betterment of the world. And hopefully we are seeing more like him, as the consequences of our present ill-advised actions become ever more apparent.

And third, Robert Newhauser's letter, "Heroes—Or Victims?" in the May Forum was an eloquent and convincing plea for us to treat our military, and the military of other countries, not as heroes but as victims—victims of the dark forces that lead to war.

Arden Buck
Nederland, Colo.

With tolerance and love

I appreciate the sensitive way that Newton Garver approached his Viewpoint article, "Are We Christians?" (*FJ* June). He ended his message with a hopeful note: "Spiritual fellowship does not depend on our having identical ideas any more than it depends on us having identical lives. So my not being Christian does not isolate me from Quaker fellowship."

I hope that Christian Quakers (Liberal, Conservative, Evangelical, and Pastoral) will also enjoy that same level of tolerance without being scorned for being followers of Jesus. We Quakers need to practice Jesus' admonition to love each other as we love ourselves, even if we do not call ourselves Christians.

Maurine Pyle
Libertyville, Ill.

The value of Christianity

If some Quakers are Christian and some not, then as Quakers "Are We Christians?" Friend Newton Garver asks the question,

True Relationship

Thank you for your focus in the June issue on "Marriage, Gender, and Relationships." Taken together, these articles enriched and inspired me. Phillip Schrodt's "The Miracle of Death" describes a partnership that fulfilled its promise: a rare miracle. Joanna Hoyt's "Sexual Ethics: What is our Goal?" reports on another miracle: a tentative new relationship/partnership among young Friends who seek clarity on sexuality and relationships. This is an area of our lives that is murky with misinformation and misconceptions; one with great potential to gift us and/or wound us. Mutual exploration of this could benefit all of us if we can get beyond our differing beliefs about such, as Joanna wrote.

One of these articles may contain the key to explore this and other issues where we experience conflicting opinions and beliefs. I was stunned by the power of Paul Sheldon's definition of a Quaker marriage ("Quaker Marriage: A Journey"). In a moment of startling clarity, I saw that it elucidates the conditions that give rise to all true relationships. When this broader application is applied to his statement, I see that it both predicts the course of all relationships lacking this foundation and is inherent in all relationships that fulfill their promise. Here is his statement with this broader application substituted for "Quaker marriage" and "marriage": "The root of [true relationship] is spiritual responsibility. The root of love is continuing revelation. You must accept spiritual responsibility in [relationship] for the continuing revelation of love."

When I first read this, I sensed its relevance in my experience, but two

parts of it needed closer examination. What did Paul mean by "spiritual responsibility"? Was he talking about being true to Friends' practices and testimonies? He mentioned that he and his partner, soon to be his wife, agreed to take questions that they couldn't resolve themselves to their clearness committee. This seemed to equate spiritual responsibility with that which is experienced within an intimate Friends' circle. Could this have a broader application? I was sure that it did. Otherwise I could not apply it to my partnership.

Daniel Richards and I are both Friends. We'd intended to marry in Reno (Nev.) Meeting eight years ago. We asked for, and received, clearness committees for marriage from both Dan's meeting, Reno, and mine, Berkeley (Calif.) Meeting. In our meetings with these committees, it became clear to us that I had serious reservations about making our partnership a legal marriage. My reservations were based on experiences in my prior marriage, which ended with my husband's prolonged illness and death. Dan and I decided that our partnership needed to be one of mutual commitment without legal endorsement. Could we celebrate our partnership in the manner of Friends without the legal formality of marriage?

Reno Meeting was not comfortable holding such a celebration. Berkeley Meeting might have held such for us but our increasing chemical sensitivity, especially to fragrance, laundry, and body care products made it likely that if held, we couldn't attend! Berkeley's urban setting was a further limiting factor. Thus, by strict definition, Dan and I don't have a Quaker marriage. Also, due to our inability to meet in settled areas with groups of people, we don't have the close physical ties with our monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings that we once had. How, then, can spiritual responsibility,

but doesn't answer it in the June FRIENDS JOURNAL. He speaks, however, about why he himself isn't Christian, lifting up what he sees as negative in Christianity as if that were the all-of-Christianity. I have heard his points made by many people over many years—and have said some of these things myself in the past. But, as I have gotten older, the religion of my childhood, intellectually rejected by me and the culture I hung out in during the 1960s and '70s, has come back to me in unexpected ways. Like other "great" religions today, Christianity has revealed a strength and wisdom to me.

Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, pagans, or Muslims are called upon to follow a practice that encourages adherents to work for peace, to help and care for others, and to connect with a spiritual entity that exists beyond themselves and that will provide guidance and wisdom, individually and communally. (Buddhists suggest detachment to get beyond oneself.)

And there is a belief and practice suggested by all these religions to help people live into religious and spiritual ideals. But—for Quakers? We "liberal" Quakers may have thrown the baby out

as seemingly described by Paul, or Quaker marriage apply to us and to others in similar situations? There are other Friends who have committed partnerships without legal marriages for reasons different from ours. Also, in today's mobile population, many, like us, live some distance from Friends meetings. To understand my strong identification with Paul's statement, I was inspired to work it backwards: from the fruit to the root. Here is what I discovered: If love is the result of continuing revelation, and continuing revelation is the result of our ability to be responsive to Spirit (spiritual responsibility), then relationships of enduring, growing love are the flowering of Spirit/God's planting.

Spirit/God is the source of all true love. As we come into alignment with Spirit/God's purpose for us, our relationships manifest deepening, enduring love. Can there be a greater purpose for us, or one more needed in our human relationships, than to manifest Spirit/God's love?

Looking at the structure provided by Friends meetings, I see that our meetings are potential supportive contexts for our continued growth, together, in spiritual responsibility. This need for supportive structures is also identified by Paul. These structures, of Friends and others, are only as successful in their promise as the people using them. When we see clearly our path to develop true relationships with each other, whether in committed partnerships or in group settings such as our Friends meetings, we can begin to develop this promise. I see that it is this potential that has led visionaries through the ages to create such structural support.

Working with Paul's statement has clarified for me Dan's and my position and that of others in situations similar to ours. This, plus early Friends' testimony on marriage,

shows me that we do have the ability to create "Quaker marriages"—with or without societal endorsement or group celebration. What is difficult for us to provide for ourselves is structural support for our relationships. Unique circumstances call for unique solutions to this need. Perhaps this is something that far-flung Friends can discuss together.

Paul Sheldon gifts me with a supportive context of understanding for my partnership with Dan: we have a Quaker marriage. Our life together has been a learning, growing adventure of opening to be responsive to Spirit and continuing revelation. Our partnership is celebrated with the fruits of our intention to be thus shaped and guided: enduring, growing love.

Love engendered in true relationship escapes its original container and spreads out. "My cup runneth over" expresses perfectly what Dan and I are experiencing. Facsimile-relationships are falling away; true relationships are taking their place. Whether it's a momentary connection with a store clerk or a longer-term relationship with the staff of a dental office, we are seeing others through Spirit/God's vision. In particular, our relationship with the natural world, including our bodies, is clarifying and deepening.

Could it be that our part, as humans, in ushering in the Peaceable Kingdom is to mutually celebrate a Quaker marriage with all Life?

Alicia Adams

Alicia Adams, a member of Berkeley (Calif.) Meeting, lives in Mimbres, N.Mex. Her most recent article in FRIENDS JOURNAL is "God: The Ultimate Vacuum Trap," which appeared in August 2007.

Personal reflections

In the 1970s there was a considerable effort by many people to have a gathering of all Friends in the Americas. Nearly every yearly meeting was represented in a conference in St. Louis. A remarkable achievement; we listened to each other respectfully.

There were regional follow-up conferences. Ellen and I were at one which I think was in Richmond, Ind. In a discussion group about how Christian we are, led by the president of George Fox College, Cathy Gaskill said that she was a

"Jesusan," a follower of Jesus. I don't think the newly coined word caught on, but it has stuck with me.

When Christian friends ask me why Friends don't celebrate Christmas or Easter, my response is that every day we are grateful that Jesus was born and that his spirit is alive and we have him with us always. Every day is both Easter and Christmas.

My familiarity with the Bible, particularly the synoptic gospels, was enhanced by working on them with Albert Bailly, a student of Henry B. Sharman. Jesus became more real, and even closer in spirit.

I must have met Newton Garver some place in the last 92 years, but if not, I met him via his Viewpoint in the June issue. He spoke my mind better than I could have done it myself.

As for marriage, Ellen and I are in our 66th year. Whenever there has been a question, we asked ourselves to remember what we promised, "with divine assistance to be . . . loving and faithful." When each of us was satisfied that we were keeping our promise, mountains usually became foothills, if not molehills.

Charles K. Brown III
Brunswick, Maine

Finding the Divine

Thanks very much for the interesting array in the June 2009 issue.

Newton Garver's testimony, "Are We Christian?" (*Viewpoint*) causes me to question what labels we choose for these material, temporary bodies housing our eternal souls, the constitutional portion of which is to love God regardless. Whatever label Friend Newton opts for, I see his soul as of divine nature.

Johanna Hoyt, in "Sexual Ethics: What is Our Goal?" states that her "experience of sexual judging and shaming has come from the instant gratification culture." Gratification of material desires may be said to be the root of all evil, for such thoughts supplant those of God.

I find information on these topics in Bhagavad-gita, if I may share these two verses:

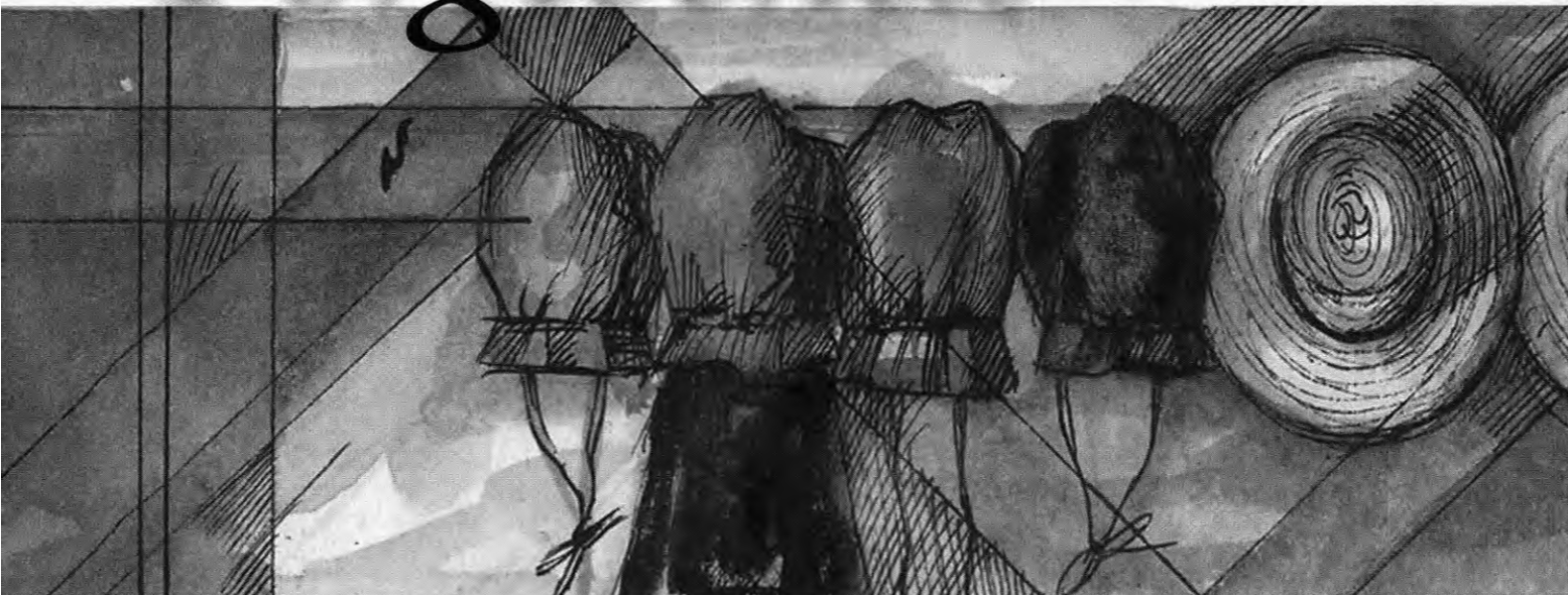
"Always think of Me, become My devotee, worship Me and offer your homage unto Me. Thus you will come to Me without fail. I promise you this because you are My very dear friend." (Bg. 18.65)

"A person who is not disturbed by the incessant flow of desires—that enter like rivers into the ocean, which is ever being filled but is always still—can alone achieve

with the bath water by distancing ourselves from most communal religious belief and practice. What are we left with? Sometimes it seems we are an association of individuals who think more or less sort of alike, but who also resist a corporate/shared religious challenge, struggle, or common ground. Of course, Friends may disagree with me. So, maybe the real question facing us today is, "Who are we as Quakers?" Or, more challengingly, "Are we Quakers?"

Karen Winner
Philadelphia, Pa.

Forgiveness



AN AMISH LESSON FOR THE REST OF US?

by Jonathan Kooker

Inside the Nickel Mines Amish Schoolhouse

On October 2, 2006, while waiting for my Alternative Dispute Resolution class to begin, I found, on my Yahoo! login page, a headline on the screen: "Six Dead in Amish School Shooting in Pa." Attached to the headline was an aerial photo of a one-

Jonathan Kooker works in New York and Pennsylvania as an Attorney for the Law Offices of Perry Novotny, a firm based in Tel Aviv, Israel. He is a 2008 graduate of Georgetown University Law Center and he currently advises clients in the areas of labor, employment, and corporate law as they relate to U.S. immigration. He also handles appeals for the firm and is committed to the furtherance of alternative dispute resolution practice in the litigation system. He is a member of the East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa., and is currently working to establish a Mennonite Lawyers Association. This is an edited version of an article that originally appeared in the American Journal of Mediation, 2nd edition (2008), and is reprinted here with permission.

room school, much like the one down the road from my parents' farm in Pennsylvania. As soon as I saw the photo, I knew the shooting occurred at one of the many Amish schoolhouses in the community where I grew up.

A law student in Washington, D.C., I called my father in Pennsylvania to hear firsthand what was going on. Through our conversations over the ensuing days, and by reading articles in Lancaster, Pa., *Intelligencer Journal*, I found the following details about how the Amish faced the brutal violence perpetrated against them with nonresistance and forgiveness.

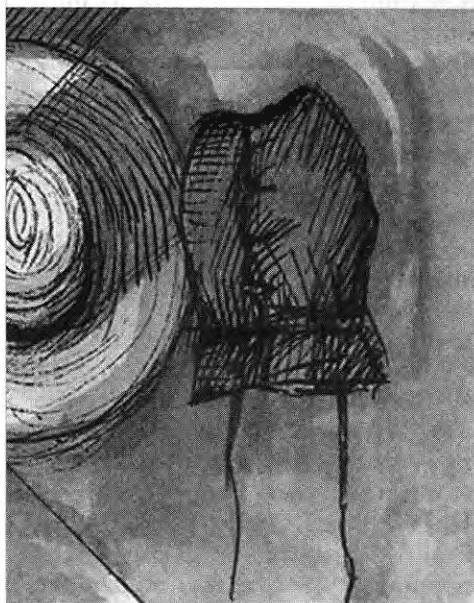
At 8:45 AM on Monday, October 2, 2006, Charles Carl Roberts IV, a 32-year-old milk truck driver, walked his children to the school bus stop by his home near Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania. He returned to an empty house—his wife had already left to attend a prayer group meeting. At that time, Roberts proceeded to write suicide notes to his wife and each of his three children, all under seven years old. Although the note to his wife was cryptic,

it contained innuendos to having molested young female relatives 20 years ago, and expressed a desire to repeat the actions. The note also indicated Mr. Roberts' anger toward God for the loss of his daughter, who had died approximately 20 minutes after her birth nine years earlier.

Roberts arrived at a nearby Amish hardware store and purchased eyebolts, plastic cable, and a box of assorted hardware at 9:16 AM. At 9:51 AM, he entered a one-room Amish schoolhouse less than a mile from his home, interrupted the German lesson, and asked a question. Although he refused to look the teacher, Emma Mae Zook, in the eyes, he showed the class a clevis and asked if anyone had seen one on the road. Zook said no but offered that the class help him look for it.

Without comment, Roberts stepped out of the schoolhouse and returned to his truck. About five minutes later, he re-entered, brandished a gun, and demanded that all the students lie down in the back of the classroom. Zook and her mother, who was visiting at the time,

looked at one another and darted out a side door. Roberts ordered a young boy to retrieve them, threatening that he would kill everyone in the room if they failed to come back. Within a few min-



utes, Roberts dismissed the boys and remaining adult women from the room.

At 10:36 AM, Zook completed her sprint to a nearby farm and telephoned the police, reporting a hostage situation. While she had been running to reach a telephone (Amish do not allow telephones in their homes or schools), Roberts had barricaded himself in the schoolhouse with ten girls, ages 6 to 13, using the merchandise he had purchased from the Amish hardware store. Within five minutes of the 911 call, police arrived on the scene and began communicating with him.

Apparently feeling thwarted from his plot, Roberts began to panic and told police that if they did not leave within ten seconds, he would begin shooting. Within seconds, the police heard gunfire and attempted to storm the schoolhouse only to be stymied by the blocked windows and doors. They gained entry as Roberts turned the nine-millimeter semiautomatic pistol he had used on each of the ten girls onto himself.

The police found that the girls had been shot at close range, execution style. They also found KY jelly and toilet paper on the scene, indicating an intent to sexually molest the children and to remain in the school for an extended period of time. Two girls, Naomi Rose

Ebersol, age 7, and Marian Stoltzfus Fisher, 13, were pronounced dead at the scene. One girl, Anna Mae Stoltzfus, age 12, was pronounced dead upon arrival by helicopter to a hospital approximately 20 miles away. Two sisters, Lena Zook Miller, age 7, and Mary Liz Miller, age 8, died the following day. Rosanna King, age 6, was removed from life support after being declared brain dead on October 3, but has since shown signs of regaining consciousness while at home in her parents' care.

There are often questions raised to those of us who practice nonresistance regarding what we would do if someone were to kill our child, parent, or sibling. The implication in the question is that if we refused to take an opportunity to defend our loved ones against an aggressor, then we are cowardly or unreasonable. However, after the incident in the Amish schoolhouse in Nickel Mines, details emerged about how the Amish girls courageously answered this question. Roberts asked the girls to pray for him, which they did. One of the girls asked if he would pray for them as well. The girls granted their aggressor his wish for mercy and provided it graciously, as lovers of human life and forgivers of sin. Additionally, they reminded him that they shared his fear, subtly pleading that he reciprocate the favor and believing in his power to communicate with God, despite the horrendous act he was committing.

Marian Fisher, the 13-year-old who died at the school, appealed to Roberts to shoot her first, hoping to spare the younger ones. Her sister, Barbie, who survived gunshot wounds to her hand, leg, and shoulder, asked to be shot next. These young girls implemented a selfless tactic as a measure of defense which held true to their beliefs that they should "turn the other cheek." In response to this action, some people still criticized these innocent children for not responding violently. On the Huffington Post's *Fearless Voices* blog, a member wrote:

I would have liked it better if the Amish girls had died trying to wrestle the gun away from the madman rather than sweetly volunteering to be shot next while the others watched—in what way was this sparing the others? Maybe she thought he might run out of ammunition?

This blogger's posting exhibits disso-

ciation from human emotion and lack of value for basic human life. Not only does the viewpoint characterize the brave acts of children committed to nonresistance as stupid and feeble attempts based on illogical understandings of killers, it also faults them for respecting the life of this abominable man. The notion presented disregards the likely outcome of such action, specifically, that Roberts would have become more confused and panicked (as it appears he did when the police arrived), and would have executed his plan with vengeance. Furthermore, it neglects the fact that Roberts was also a human with feelings, children of his own, and a member of the community. Although he was poised to do one of the most horrendous acts imaginable, the girls still knew that he was a human being and cleverly appealed to his inner person. By appealing to these emotions through nonviolence, the Amish girls increased their own chance of survival by setting up a scenario where he might have been compassionate. The scenario created by Marian's actions also had the effect of deterring Roberts from molesting the other girls. In the community, there have been reports that her offering herself as a martyr was in immediate response to his attempts to molest some of

There are often questions raised to those of us who practice nonresistance regarding what we would do if someone were to kill our child, parent, or sibling.

the younger girls. Her goal, therefore, was to distract him from his plan to molest and kill all of the girls by urging him to gain release by murdering her.

Zook, the school teacher, chose to alert authorities instead of remaining in the schoolhouse to fight Roberts. One could argue, perhaps, that she did this because she believed that she did not have the force or resources to overtake Roberts. However, there were at least

three adult women in the schoolhouse and she and her mother had already connected minds by eyeing each other. It appears more likely that Zook knew that combating violence with violence would not be her best role in this situation, and that persons trained in dealing with hostage crises were best equipped to deal with Roberts. It was a very brave act for a teacher to risk leaving the schoolroom where a gunman had already ordered those inside to obey him.

Amish and Mennonites

My father has been a large animal veterinarian in rural southeastern Pennsylvania since I was two years old. Many of his clients are Amish dairy farmers, who rely on his services to care for the health of their cows. He has spent much of his professional life in Amish barns, tending to the herds to monitor pregnancies, perform emergency cesarean sections, and treat illnesses that may infect the animals' milk and could become public health issues.

I used to ride along with him as a child. I loved watching him examine the animals and chit-chat with the Amish farmers. While he was working, I would often play with the Amish children in the barnyard, ride in wagons, run in the grass, and keep a distance from the horses. In fact, my father became so close with one Amish family that they became my baby-sitters while he ran his calls and my mother worked as a nurse. I vividly recall the dark kitchen where the Amish mother, Salome, worked, and her son Steven and I played with toy tractors on the floor. Although Steven and I did not speak the same language (Amish children only speak German until they begin school at the age of five), we got along marvelously. We rode around the yard on tricycles and played with kittens, prattling in tongues that each of us only understood ourselves.

My family's connection with the Amish community was not limited to my father's work or my child's play; we also shared a similar religious and ethnic background. My paternal great-grandfather was the Mennonite son of Dutch immigrants. My mother's ancestors were Swiss-Mennonites named Bomberger, who lived in the Palatinate area of Germany and came to the United

I decided to go to the Nickel Mines Amish community to find the reasons why they responded so peacefully.

States in the early 1700s to flee intermittent persecution and wars that razed their land.

The Amish and the Mennonites were once one religious group in Switzerland, known in the 1500s as the Anabaptists. The term means "re-baptizers," which they were named during the Reformation because of their belief that their infant baptisms were performed without consent, and adult re-baptism was required to show commitment to God. The Protestant and Catholic civil authorities immediately began killing the Anabaptists for sedition and the group began seeking refuge in Moravia, Alsace, the Palatinate area of Germany, and the Netherlands.

Despite forming an Anabaptist diaspora throughout mid and northern Europe, the group was able to maintain a congregational form of government that articulated the religious beliefs of the group. Professor of Religion Donald B. Kraybill writes in *The Riddle of Amish Culture* that among these tenets were the social separation from the evil world, the church as a community, and the rejection of violence in all spheres of human life. The group functioned as one community, now called the Mennonites, until a dispute produced a division in 1693. The quarrel was over the severity of treatment toward excommunicated members of the community. One group, the Alsatian Mennonites, believed that those who left the community should be shunned socially, whereas the more lenient Swiss Mennonites only kept them from participating in communion. The Alsatian group became the present day Amish, and the Swiss Mennonites, along with their Moravian, Palatinate, and Dutch counterparts, formed what has become as the Mennonite church today.

As a result of the split between the Amish and the Mennonites, the two

groups developed their own interpretations of the basic tenets laid out by the early Anabaptist leadership. The most obvious difference appears in their understanding of what it means to be separate from the evil world. The Mennonites tend to view this belief more liberally, accepting into their lives innovations such as electricity, the use of automobiles, and modern attire. This comes from the Mennonites allowing for a more individualized interpretation of the Bible.

Mennonites value education. Prior to coming to law school, I went to Mennonite schools my entire life, and I was always encouraged to articulate my own beliefs. The Mennonite history and Bible classes of my childhood were rife with debate, which included interpreting biblical teachings. We would often have guest speakers from both sides of the issue come to our classes and explain the scriptural and experiential support they drew from to come to the understanding they held.

One of the disputes I recall being involved in at the age of nine was whether jewelry was appropriate for women to wear. Our teachers allowed students from a range of points on the conservative-liberal scale to contribute to the discussion, and they asked us each from where in the Bible our viewpoints came. Often, the principle of "being in the world but not of the world" would be used in discussion; however, we referenced this more as a malleable term that was up for debate. I cannot recall a time where someone would articulate that a specific leader or church group deemed something "of the world," and that being the end of the discussion. Given the flexibility of the Mennonite Church, and the value placed in examining the reasons behind a belief, it is easier for a Mennonite to assimilate into the larger culture and remain unrecognized as Mennonite.

Unlike the Mennonites, the Amish forbid the use of electricity in their homes, will not drive automobiles or tractors for fieldwork, and conform to church-delineated specifications for dress. The system for keeping members in check with these interpretations is supported by a system of sanctions administered by the church. If it is reported that someone is secretly using electricity or has been violating the dress code, church leaders will visit the mem-

ber and, upon confession, the indiscretion will be solved. Kraybill explains the Amish value of keeping "fences" around "the Lord's vineyard" through the words of an Amish preacher:

The Saviour warned against little foxes that dig their way into the Lord's vineyard. . . . If the little foxes dig their way in and are not dealt with at once, or if they are allowed to remain, there is great danger that still more will come in. Because they are allowed to remain and are not chased out, they become bigger and used to being there. They feel free, and build nests and dig themselves in and multiply, and do great injury to the grape stalks. Finally, they become tame and take over completely, and the grape stalks will wither and die. It is just the same with permitting little sins to go on till they are freely accepted as the customary thing and have taken a foothold. Wickedness takes the upper hand, and then, as the Saviour says, the love of many becomes cold.

The Amish system of interpretation of what the Scriptures mean and what behaviors are acceptable is supported by the *Ordnung*. The *Ordnung* contains written and unwritten codes known by all members of the district. It can be very explicit, such as stipulating where the women's hair should be parted, whether embryo transplants are allowed in cows, and which types of wheels are to be used on farm wagons (rubber is considered too worldly). The *Ordnung* is established through both practice and education; personal interpretation of the Scripture as it relates to the *Ordnung* is not encouraged. For this reason, the Amish consider it essential to have their own education system to maintain their way of life and remain separate from the evil world.

Given our common ethnic, religious, and even personal backgrounds, I felt my community had been uprooted by the headline I saw in October. I knew that the Amish and I held most beliefs in common, despite differences in gradation of how to apply them to life. Specifically, I was aware we shared a philosophy of nonresistance, which we understood to mean that we forgive our oppressors. I also knew that I had been given the ability to learn more about why I held this understanding, and that I had been exposed to much more of the world than they had been. Enrolled in a class that dealt with resolving conflict through less adversarial measures, I wondered not only how I would react to



such an attack, but also how the Amish would handle it. So I embarked upon a quest to learn more about the Amish reaction to the slayings.

The most publicized act by the Amish in the school shootings was their statement of forgiveness. CNN reported that Marian Fisher's grandfather, while standing next to the girl's dead body, instructed his grandsons, "We must not think evil of this man." He went on to urge them to forgive Charles Carl Roberts. The grandfather of the sisters Lena and Mary Liz Miller agreed, responding to CNN's question about whether or not he had forgiven the killer by stating, facing away from the camera, "In my heart I have [already forgiven him]." An Amish delegation visited

the Roberts family and told them, "Do not leave this area. Stay in your home here. We forgive this man."

This sentiment was widespread throughout the Nickel Mines Amish community, said Wes Yoder, a community native. "[There is] a deep desire throughout the Amish community to ensure that the members forgive [Roberts]," he told CNN. Jack Myer, a member of the Nickel Mines community, told MSNBC, "Even though there has been this terrible thing [that has] happened, [we] don't need to think about judgment, [we] need to think about forgiveness and going on." Catherine Saunders, a midwife for the Amish community who was in close communication with the families and who lost daughters, reported that "every family that I've talked to that's lost a child, didn't speak of their child without also expressing concern and sorrow for his family."

The Amish exemplification of forgiveness went beyond statements to the press and ideological instructions to family members; indeed, the Amish actually acted on their words. The same day the girls were killed, members of the Amish community met with the Roberts family to grieve with and console them. The family of Marian Fisher invited Marie Roberts, Charles Carl's widow, to the funeral for the 13-year-old girl. Likewise, Elmer Fisher, a cousin of Naomi Ebersol, the 7-year-old who died at the school, told ABC that Marie Roberts and her children would not only be welcome in the community, but also at the funerals of the girls. Most notable, however, was the attendance of dozens of Amish at Roberts' funeral.

The media flourished with responses to this compelling reaction of peacefulness. Many thought the speed of the Amish forgiveness unfathomable, or even unjustly disregarding the violence committed against their children. Op-ed writer for *The Boston Globe*, Jeff Jacoby, quibbled:

Hatred is not always wrong and forgiveness is not always deserved. I admire the Amish villagers' resolve to live up to their Christian ideals even amid heartbreak, but how many of us would really want to live in a society in which no one gets angry when children are slaughtered? In which even the most horrific acts of cruelty were always and instantly forgiven? There is a time to love and a time to hate, Ecclesiastes teaches

[emphasis in the original]. If anything deserves to be hated, certainly it is the pitiless murder of innocents.

A blogger on <Benwitherington.com> echoed criticism of the forgiveness and nonviolent reaction:

The pacifism and instant forgiveness of the Amish is not a model for the state, which must at times pursue justice in the form of retribution. It's not even something that works very well for the Amish themselves. I cannot help but think that if those poor kids, as well as others who have been murdered in schools by maniacs, had been protected by an armed guard, this may not have happened. Seeing the Amish so willing to reach out to the family of the man who murdered some of their children is indeed touching and impressive, but these sentiments die away when I think of the fact that these same people would not, and will not, bear arms to defend innocent lives. They would not do it during World War II.

They would not have done it when these children were being threatened. There is virtue in being willing to die for one's principles, but when those principles force you to let others die, the principles are vicious, not virtuous.

Although criticism of the Amish forgiveness appeared, the majority of the responses applauded their actions. Often, writers and speakers reflected a sentiment that something could be learned from the example the Amish embodied. Russ Eans of Johnstown, Pennsylvania's *The Tribune Democrat* wrote:

In my heart, I am wondering if [the Amish] are not giving a message to America at a time when we are so polarized and gripped by an ethos of violence. I begin to dream of an attitude of forgiveness actually gripping our whole nation. I wonder if, as a nation, we did not miss the mark after the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. . . . What if, instead of

vengeance, we had spoken of grace and forgiveness? I believe now that such a response would have done much more to "shock and awe" our enemies than all the bombs and cruise missiles dropped in Afghanistan and Iraq. Maybe our enemies might have had their hearts moved?

Joan Chittister expounded on applying forgiveness to national policy in her widely circulated article *What Kind of People are These?* originally published in the *National Catholic Reporter* on October 9, 2006. In that article, she writes:

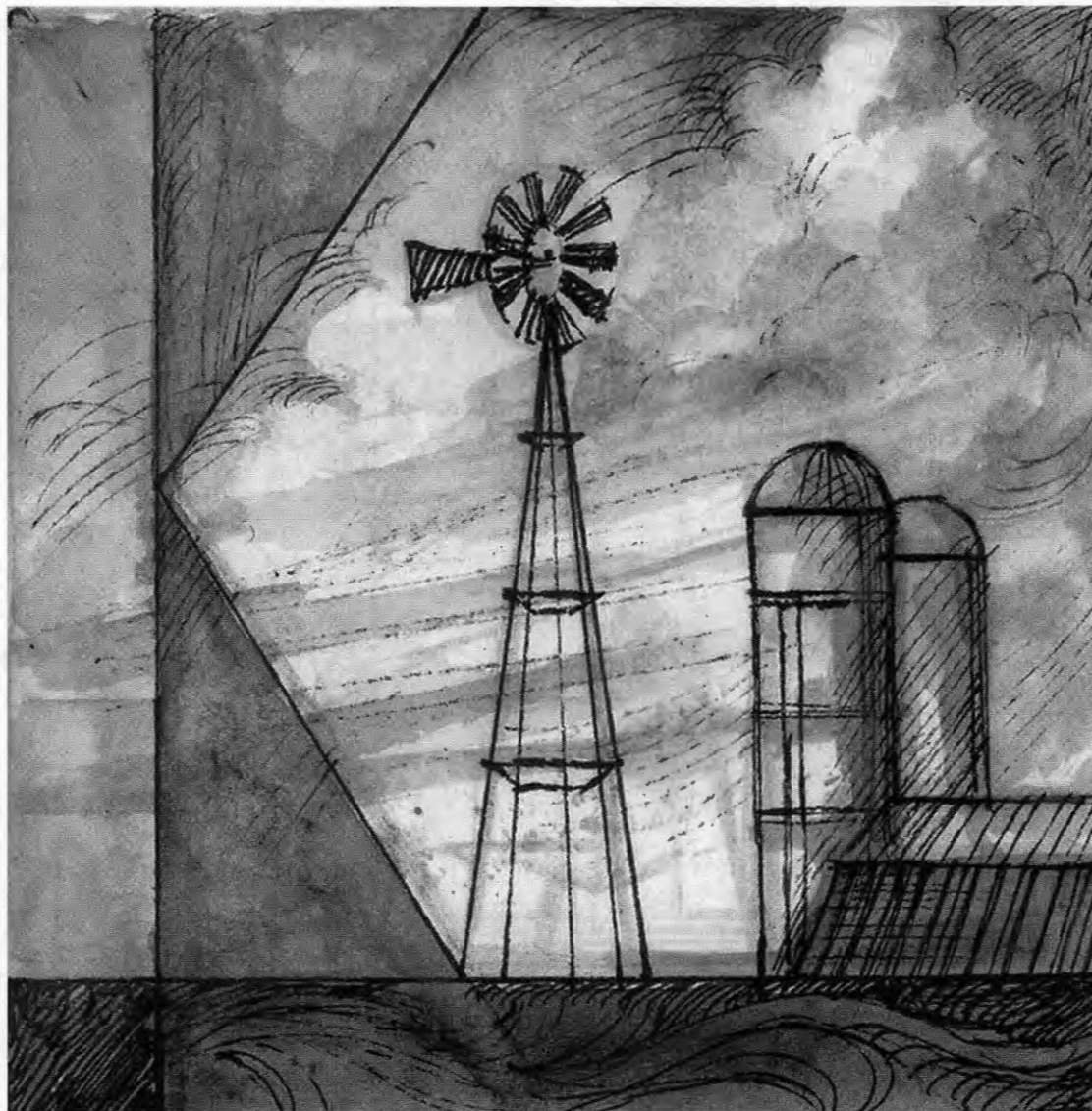
It was not the murders, not the violence, that shocked us [about the shooting of the Amish girls]; it was the forgiveness that followed it for which we were not prepared. It was a lack of recrimination, the dearth of vindictiveness that left us amazed. Baffled. Confounded. . . .

The real problem with the whole situation is that down deep we know that we had a chance to do the same. After the fall of the Twin Towers, we had the sympathy, the concern, the support of the entire world.

You can't help but wonder when you see something like this what the world would be like today if, instead of using the fall of the Twin Towers as an excuse to invade a nation, we had simply gone to every Muslim country on Earth and said, "Don't be afraid. We won't hurt you. We know that this is coming from only a fringe of society, and we ask your help in saving others from this kind of violence."

Indeed, we have done exactly what the terrorists wanted us to do. We have proven that we are the oppressors, the exploiters, the demons they now fear we are. And—read the international press—few people are saying otherwise around the world.

The tensions between these two types of reactions to the Amish forgiveness squared closely with the issues we were wrestling with in my Alternative Dispute Resolution course. We were wondering when the appropriate times were to negotiate, when it was out of the question to have



tems that worked. Overriding these considerations was the question of whether a society could maintain its legal structure and order with private dispute resolution systems like negotiation and mediation in place.

Fieldwork: What I Learned

In order to find out more about these issues, I decided to go to the Nickel Mines Amish community to explore their understandings of what happened on October 2, 2006, and to find the reasons why they responded so peacefully. I wondered whether they were blindly following the Ordnung out of a sense of tradition rather than conviction. Did they think that those of us in the larger society who held the same beliefs would be able to implement similar policies that would be sustainable in the U.S. system? Was this attack as similar to the September 11 attacks as the media's parallels indicated? How do the Amish reconcile nonresistance and separation from the evil in the world from their actions to call the police when they were attacked?

I told my father of my desire to meet with some members of the Amish community in our home neighborhood, and he immediately went to work on my behalf. He had been talking regularly with Leroy Zook, the father of Emma Mae Zook, the schoolteacher. He also said that he had a few other men in mind who would offer insight to the Amish belief system. While dropping by their homes during his daily rounds, my father obtained consent from the men, and I was scheduled to meet with them.

I planned to be respectful, noninvasive, and subtle with my demeanor and questioning. I recognized that although I was Mennonite, I still was considered "English" by them with my clothes, education, and flashy modern accessories. Given my separateness and the sensitive nature of my project, I got ready to keep myself in check. I met with all men the same day and found that, by far, the most informative interview was with Leroy, on whom I will focus.

I arrived at Leroy's farm around 9 AM on a rather cool winter Saturday. After parking my car by a shed, I walked to

plained who my father was and that I was set to meet with her husband. She directed me to the barn and I was greeted eagerly by Leroy and his son.

Initially conversing by the horse stalls, I began with some questions about how he learned of forgiveness and refrained from mentioning the school shooting directly. Leroy explained to me that the basic concept of "peaceful dispute resolution" had a much longer and complex nature than simple forgiveness. There are also strategic concerns when dealing with the outside society, he told me, such as conflict deterrence and avoidance of litigation.

In typical Amish manner, Leroy told me stories to illustrate his point. "Did you hear about that accident Amos Stoltzfus (name changed to protect anonymity) caused with that tractor trailer down here on Route 41?" I hadn't. "Well, we asked the guy if he would be happy with \$80,000 to cover his costs." The man had not yet made a formal claim but had suffered significant damage to his rig and cargo. According to Leroy, the immediate offering, without any demand made, not only makes those on the other side of the conflict feel respected, it also ends the matter before anger begins to build. This, therefore, allows Amish to rarely be required to enter the courtroom and, thereby, to remain at peace with their potential adversaries.

In addition to constructive peacebuilding, this approach to negotiation has some significant advantages in achieving a successful negotiation. First, as Professor Carrie Menkel-Meadow writes in her book, *Dispute Resolution: Beyond the Adversarial Model*, a primary quality of a beneficial negotiation involves collaboration. This means that both parties recognize the needs of the other side and balance them with their own. In the story that Leroy told me, the Amish did this by recognizing that the truck driver had experienced a loss and offering financial compensation in return. They also put forth their needs to specifically maintain peace and separate themselves from the outside world, which, in this case, was court. They arrived at a number they thought was fair considering his losses and their willingness to accept responsibility outside the

her text that labeling members of a conflict transforms the dispute into one between adversaries. Curiously, in the situation with the Amish buggy and the tractor trailer, the Amish never blamed anyone. Leroy said they saw it could be questionable as to whether Mr. Stoltzfus was at fault, so they decided to resolve it on their own without pointing fingers at themselves or at the truck driver. Had they accepted blame, they would have done themselves a disfavor, as the driver may have seen it as an occasion to demand more money, extending the conflict. Likewise, had they said something like, "We think Mr. Stoltzfus was mostly at fault, but you seemed to be driving too fast as well, so we're offering you \$80,000 instead of our normal \$100,000 in these situations," they would have met with antagonism. The subtle way in which the Amish chose to dismiss the claim kept the relationship with the outside world peaceful and enabled a successful negotiation.

I now thought that I had broached closely enough to the topic of the Amish school shootings that Leroy and I could talk more directly about some of the issues involved in that matter. I pointed out that the scenario he had just described to me dealt with a member of the Amish community having done something specific that impacted another. But, what about a case where the Amish have been innocently wronged without any action on their part?

Again, Leroy told me a story. An Amish farmer in central Pennsylvania had a gasoline tank on his farm. Apparently, this was acceptable in the jurisdiction as it was for certain machinery that fell within the code. Every Sunday morning after church, he would return to the farm to find the meter had run, and gasoline had been taken. So, one morning, the man stayed home from church and waited in the house for the regular visitor to conduct his weekly scheme. Eventually, someone drove up to the tank in a pickup truck and began filling. The Amish man went to the tank and greeted the driver of the truck. Awkwardly, the driver responded to his dialogue and, feeling guilt-ridden, admitted that he had been taking the gas. The Amish man said he did not want any money for the gas the driver had been

family for dinner the following Thursday. The man agreed and departed.

Surprisingly, the following Thursday the Amish man saw the same pickup truck come up his lane. He invited the man inside and the family shared a very silent meal with him. After the dinner, the Amish man ushered him to his truck. Before he left, the man confessed that he had been going through an extremely difficult time: he had lost his job, he was nearly out of money, he was losing his house. He then apologized through tears and left the farm. From that time on, the Amish man returned from church to find an unmolested gas tank.

Leroy's point by telling this story is that successful peacekeeping requires effort regardless of which side of the conflict one finds himself. Even if a complete stranger comes into another's



"Our ways are not for the larger society," Leroy said. My heart sank. . . . But, why not?

home to take from him, the peaceful man tries to mediate with him. In one paradigm for successful mediation, Menkel-Meadow writes that both sides should have the opportunity to describe the other's point of view. This allows for an increased ability to reach compromises that may not have come to light when each party remains entrenched in articulating its own stance. It also elevates the parties to a point where they are working together without drawing attention to that goal. Finally, it fosters compassion, understanding, and trust,

The Amish man in Leroy's story never professed to know why the truck driver was stealing his gas. He also told him explicitly why he stayed home that Sunday and approached him. However, the Amish man's acts embody the mediatory technique Menkel-Meadow depicts in her book. He expressed an understanding that the man was not financially secure by offering him a free meal. He did not focus on getting to know the man's problems or attempting to put a stop to the theft. Instead, he sat with him in silence through the meal and politely walked him to his truck. He was also compassionate, understanding, and trusting when he invited the thief further into his life, offered him fulfillment of a basic human need, and pardoned him. As a result, the Amish man allowed the truck driver to find an honest way to continue on while spreading the peace he lives by.

The Amish man's actions seemed so similar to those of Leroy's daughter and the students in the school that I decided to show him the above-extracted article from Joan Chittister. At this time, we moved to where there was more light and stood together next to the dairy cows. He was very impressed with the article, so I asked him what he thought would have happened if an Amish person would have been President after September 11.

"Our ways are not for the larger society," Leroy said. My heart sank. I had heard this line of reasoning before and I was disappointed to find that he, too, believed that a nation could not survive with this peaceful approach. But, why not? Is there too much at stake when you have the responsibility of protecting others? Is there no way to implement the Amish ways in foreign policy?

Leroy said that the Amish can continue to work the way they do because they live separate from society. This enables them to eschew the problems of foreign policy and war because they are not at all involved. In other words, wars are the rest of the United States' problem, and they will get themselves into and out of them on their own. Leroy's words indicate a belief that a modern society could not function in such a cloistered fashion, and, as a result, is going to be confronted with the need for

Carter's *Introduction to International Law*. One of the main criticisms of international law is that it has few enforcement mechanisms. Therefore, the peaceful, legal means for regulating war crimes and stopping illegal incursions are backed by the powers of the militaries of those opposing the violence. Still, I believe, and I think that Leroy would agree, that though military might may be what gets opponents to listen initially, that power should be used for facilitating negotiation and mediation similar to that of the Amish. The Amish had power in the Amish school shootings in that the law and police were on their side. In Leroy's story about the theft of the gas, the Amish man had the financial ability to suffer a loss and to provide additional assistance. In the traffic accident, the Amish again had the financial ability to pay a large sum of money upfront. Finances and the law are strong forces in this country, just like a solid defense system is an immense asset in the international arena. Therefore, it seems that although U.S. military power may be behind another regime's willingness to enter into dialogue with the United States, the negotiations and mediations can remain successful and peaceful.

The Amish belief in forgiveness serves as a peaceful method for effecting successful negotiations and mediations. It serves the purpose of spreading a nonviolent response to conflict while engaging in meaningful interaction with adversaries. Just like the events of September 11, the Amish school shooting involved a person from outside the community who attacked and killed innocent people. However, the Amish response provided an example to the world as to how one can promulgate peace even in the face of the most wretched aggression. The Amish had the power to do this, just as the United States did. Their example documents how an entire attack, from beginning to end, can be handled peacefully. This way of responding to violence is attainable in larger schemes as long as there is the will to give it a meaningful chance to succeed. □



Burlap Sonnet

I am a person now embracing plain
 committed to the simple, homely way
 of something nearer basic, more whole grain
 than dance or diets hereabouts today
 in manner, style and taste. At work or play
 I choose something akin to coveralls.
 Preferring humble as a theme, I say
 amen to woods and walk, avoid the mall.
 Redeeming others' designated trash,
 the velvet of clothes purchased secondhand,
 a joke, a song, a flower, sweet memory's cache,
 these are my journey joys, which, though not grand,
 the fundamental makings offer yet
 for fancy poetry or private pirouette.

—Janeal Turnbull Ravndal

A Presence

Bookman though I am, I've known the touch
 of calloused hands. And having passed
 my chapter on the dull end of a hoe, sometimes
 those hands were mine. As a boy, too, I knew

the just-damp mist that wicks across the palms
 of sweethearts, a touch that foreshadows love.
 I've known the wriggling, too, of a child's grip
 tight around my little finger, blessing me

with faith in flesh. And there are more.
 But today, just before the rise of meeting,
 I held the hand of a holy old man,
 and felt—felt what? A perfection of bone,

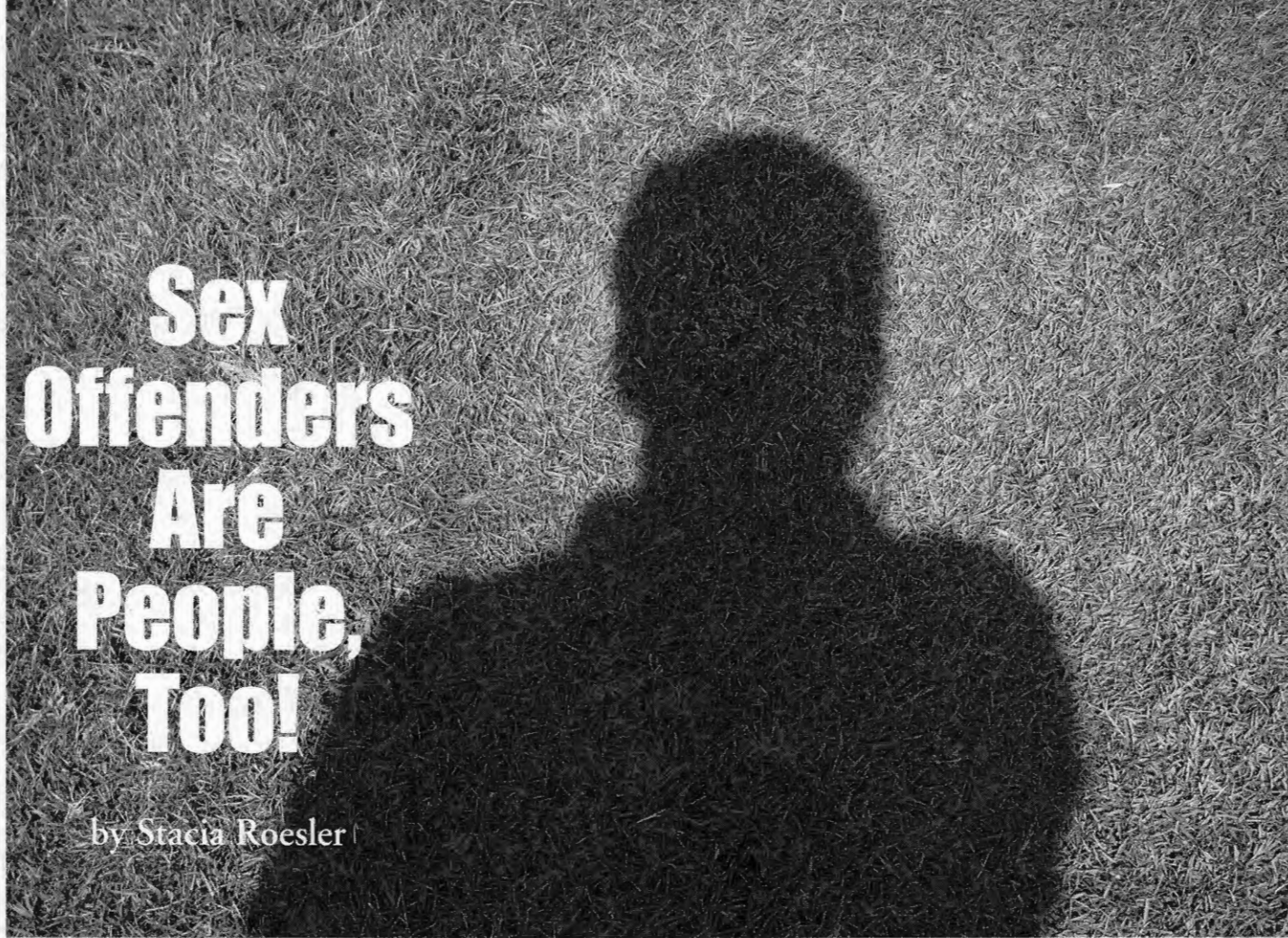
muscle, and sun-pocked skin? It could have been
 the heat of the room, or my anxiety—
 being the Friend responsible to close—
 but as the meeting held the ring complete,

I felt the sense that something else had passed,
 skin to skin, like the Spirit, not in a flame,
 but in that elevation—call it a Presence—that
 we live for, but that seldom comes quite clear.

—William Jolliff

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Sex Offenders Are People, Too!

by Stacia Roesler

To love means loving the unlovable. To forgive means pardoning the unpardonable. Faith means believing the unbelievable. Hope means hoping when everything is hopeless.

—G.K. Chesterton

We often watch sensational news coverage of young children who have been abducted from their homes, molested, or even murdered. There is little wonder then that learning of the presence of a sex offender in one's neighborhood or church is worrisome. Some readers of this article may have experienced abuse at the hands of just such a person. It is no surprise that anyone labeled as a sex offender is reviled and avoided like a modern-day leper.

Stacia Roesler, a contract manager for a large firm, is an occasional attendee of Woodlawn Meeting in Alexandria, Va., where her husband is a member.

How do we, in our meetings and in society as a whole, deal compassionately yet safely with those who have sexually abused others? As Christ ministered to lepers, are we called to minister to people who have sexually abused others? How can we be Christ's hands and feet here on Earth, loving those who are the most unlovable? For those who have been victimized, how is one to find the strength to emulate Christ in finding forgiveness within, despite one's own injuries? Do we seek that of the Divine in everyone—including sex offenders?

To even focus on these difficult questions could be interpreted as minimizing the trauma, horror, and anger that sexual abuse brings. This leads to a further query: Can we reach a place where we are treating the offender with watchful love, while still being sensitive to the needs and feelings of survivors of abuse? Those who have suffered abuse must be treated gently and with extreme concern since the presence of any ex-of-

fender can reignite horrific memories and feelings. While a child who has been harmed deserves justice, does an offender who has served the sentence required of him deserve a second chance at life?

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony M. Kennedy said in a speech at the 2003 American Bar Association meeting:

One day in prison is longer than almost any day you and I have had to endure. When the door is locked against the prisoner, we do not think about what is behind it. To be sure, the prisoner must be punished to vindicate the law, to acknowledge the suffering of the victim, and to deter future crimes. Still, the prisoner is a person. Still, he or she is part of the family of mankind."

When has the offender been punished enough to satisfy us?

Once the punishment determined by the state has been fulfilled, our options are to treat the released offender with love and concern—or not. Surely love

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to encompass both victim and offender. How can we bridge the gap between the need for safety and seeing that of God in all, even those who have done great wrong?

Although sex offenders can be either male or female (and the incidence of female offenders is increasing annually), roughly 90 percent of offenders are males. For convenience only, this article will use male pronouns for offenders.

I am the founder and president of a prison charity, the Simple Gifts Foundation (see <www.simplegifts.us>), dedicated to helping prisoners and their families. As a result of this work, I was

While a child who has been harmed deserves justice, does an offender who has served the sentence required of him deserve a second chance at life?

invited to join the Baltimore Yearly Meeting's Criminal and Restorative Justice Committee. During my tenure, the committee was asked to review the struggles of meetings that have had a sex offender introduced, and to consider the schism this situation can cause within a meeting.

I also have a personal interest in this subject: a close relative of mine molested another 13-year-old relative. As a result, I have done a lot of self-education about sex offenders—an area in which I, a middle-class professional, never had any interest in before it affected my own family. When one member of a family walks that path, the entire family is dragged right along. When a sex offender is arrested, the ripples and waves caused by his actions have very far-reaching effects, impacting all those around him (an outcome called “secondary victimization”). I personally witnessed the devastation my offender relative's actions wrought upon his victim

children. His kids were found not to have been victims of abuse, but they suffered the loss of a parent and had total turmoil visited upon their lives. They have not been allowed to see their father for several years now.

I had significant anger towards the offender relative that I had to work through, primarily centered on my concern for his victim and for his own children. My husband and I raised his children for a period of time when they were removed from both parents' custody, although we had to hire an attorney and it cost us thousands of dollars to keep them from being placed in a foster home. The authorities assumed that I, being a very close relative of the offender, must also have aberrations, and I was placed in the odd position of having to defend my own morality. It felt like being in the McCarthy era, having to stave off veiled and spurious accusations while proving allegiance to the country.

The term *sex offender* typically brings to mind a child molester, but this term is technically applied to anyone committing any sexual offense, including indecent exposure, adult rape, peeping, and viewing child pornography. The label “violent sex offender” carries a connotation that is sometimes very misleading. This label is attached to those who use force upon their victims, but it is also applied by some states in any case where the victim is under a certain age (typically 12 to 14)—even in cases of groping and fondling, with no force and no penetration. A man who is convicted of fondling a 13-year-old babysitter may very well find himself registered as a violent sexual offender. The label “predator” is attached to those who are considered by the authorities to pose the highest threat of recidivism (re-offending), based on prevailing psychological theory. But even so, the definition varies widely from state to state. Those guilty of the worst crimes—true pedophiles, for example, and also those who murder children—are not likely to receive a short enough sentence to be out on parole, or even to remain alive for long in prison.

The labels we apply to sex offenses comprise a very broad range of crimes, all of which raise strong emotions. As an example, here are the offender clas-

ed by several other states:

High risk sex offender: an individual who has been convicted of multiple violent offenses, of which at least one offense is a violent sex crime. This individual has been identified by the California Department of Justice as having a higher risk of re-offending and therefore poses a greater danger to the public.

Serious sex offender: an individual who has been convicted of a felony sex offense (except those listed in the “other” category) or of misdemeanor child molestation.

Other sex offender: an individual has been convicted of child pornography, indecent exposure, spousal rape, incest, or misdemeanor sexual battery, or has been adjudicated in juvenile court.

Note that what is considered to be a “violent offense” is not stipulated. On October 24, 2005, Idaho's Sex Offender Classification Board sent this response to my request for the Idaho definition of “violent”:

Often, the offenders who have been classified as being violent sexual predators have not displayed acts of physical violence. The Sexual Offender Classification Board considers sexual violence to be actual, attempted, or threatened sexual contact with a person who is non-consenting or unable to give legal consent.

The dictionary definition of *violent* is “marked by extreme force; notably furious or vehement” (offering synonyms such as “brutal” and “savage”). This is the definition that most of us think of when we hear the word. While some offenders deserve the label, the public may be misled by the above criteria. The authorities will classify an offender as “violent” when they desire longer jail sentences and harsher parole terms. While it is indisputable that all sexual offenses cause damage to victims, making the jump to “violent” can be a word leap calculated to influence the listener emotionally. In the interest of truth, it is important to reserve the term “violent” for those who inflict injury in a forcible way.

Some states define a violent crime as any sexual assault, battery with intent to commit sexual assault, or any offense involving pornography and a minor. In Florida, even the threat of physical harm

al physical harm or the threat of physical harm to a person, or the crime has a reasonable probability of causing unintended physical harm or physical threat of harm to a person." Many states use the criteria set forth by the FBI's Uniform Crime Index defining a violent crime as any "hands-on" offense against another person, and touching a child in any manner would automatically be considered a violent offense. Thus, an offender may be classified as violent if he is a resident of one state, but nonviolent if he lives in another state; or even classified differently depending on which county he resides in, or which parole officer he draws within that county. In applying this label, there is no distinction between violent sexual acts such as rape and consensual statutory rape. In some states the term *predator* is attached to one who is deemed "likely to engage in the future in one or more sexually oriented offenses"—although how "likelihood" is determined depends on the opinion and theories of the individual psychologist assigned to the case.

What are we as Friends to conclude from this? Perhaps we should not be so hasty in judgment; perhaps we might even try to be a voice for rationality within the legal system. Those family members who defended my relative were told by authorities and therapists that they were in denial—and maybe we were, at first. Yet the legal system tends to demonize the alleged offender. Many offenders have charges piled on them in order to increase the District Attorney's chances of obtaining a conviction or plea bargain. Authorities will record "facts" in the worst possible light, using words with negative spin. As an example, this article might be recharacterized as "defending sexually violent offenders" rather than as seeking a Christ-centered response to offenders. Some offenders are even railroaded; the authorities (with far greater resources at hand) can simply outwait a family who will ultimately run out of money and no longer be able to afford to continue the defense.

In the early 1990s, San Diego County conducted a study on the handling of sexual molestation cases, which led to a total revamping of their system. Their

Child sexual molest is real, it happens, and it is terrible. Whether or not it is as prevalent and widespread as the media would have us believe is subject to considerable debate. The current trend in therapeutic treatment is to accept reports of molest as true, notwithstanding that they may be inherently incredible, made for motives of harm or gain, or the product of months or years of "therapy." The justice system, particularly the dependency process, has "bought into" this therapeutic model. The legal system's traditional truth-finding tools—witness confrontation, cross-examination, restrictions on hearsay and "expert" testimony—have been abandoned in a rush "to protect." However, when truth suffers, as it has, the system fails to protect and ultimately harms the innocent child, as well as the parent.

In many cases, those who deny molest are guilty. However, in many other cases, those who deny are, in fact, innocent. Ironically, "denial" is taken as evidence of guilt unlike any other area of our judicial system; in Juvenile Court the alleged perpetrator of in-house molest does not have to be proven guilty in order to achieve a true finding. . . . Once the system musters sufficient cause to suspect molest, the child becomes a ward of the system and the family is forced to comply to its dictates or suffer the loss of the child. If the court believes a molest occurred and the family member could have been responsible, a "true finding" is made and wardship declared. If a father denies molest and a true finding is made, he suffers the ultimate Catch 22—he can either admit and take a chance that the department will allow him to begin reunification with his family or he can deny and no reunification will occur.

But the irony does not end there. If the spouse supports her husband's denial, she is "accommodating his denial." If she accommodates this denial, she cannot be trusted to protect the child and she too will not be allowed to reunify with the child. Even when the mother believes the molest occurred and wants to protect the child, a current assertion is that the mother must have known all along and failed to protect. That then becomes a protective issue and reason to remove the child from the mother.

Still worse, if the child denies the molest, this can be seen as part of a "child abuse accommodation syndrome" and an additional reason why the child should have no contact with the parents. The child may be diagnosed as "multi-phasic" dissociative, or "in-denial" and thus unable to remember the experience. (While this does happen on occasion, the jury has been convinced by

norm.) Thus, all members of the family can deny a false molest allegation and, in each instance, the system uses the denial as evidence of guilt.

The report goes on to detail the case of one child whose father was charged with molesting her, although the father, mother, and child all consistently denied this. The authorities refused to believe the child, who said she was molested by a stranger:



*The labels we apply
to sex offenses
comprise a very
broad range of
crimes, all of which
raise strong emotions.*

In order to allow her "the freedom" to "remember" without trauma, visits with her parents were terminated until she could come up with "a more believable story." This child was kept in court-ordered therapy for two and a half years, twice a week, "dealing with the molest." The Jury has heard reliable expert testimony that it is a mistake to force a child to relive and keep talking about an alleged traumatic event. Further, there is little evidence that a child will repress a traumatic event. There is good evidence that a traumatic event tends to etch itself indelibly on the mind.

Strangely, the current legal system tends to reward those abusers who are in complete denial, who do not cooperate with the police and who take no responsibility for their crime, and punish those who admit their involvement, take responsibility, work with the police, and so forth. Many prosecutors

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against him, since there is little probability of taking a case to trial after he has incriminated himself. He is thus forced to take whatever plea bargain the prosecutor offers. In contrast, those who refuse to cooperate and do not incriminate themselves are typically offered much better plea deals because of the difficulties inherent in conclusively proving molestation.

There are volumes upon volumes of published studies and data, some of it

watching girls' gymnastics on TV. The question, "How safe are our children if this person can't control his impulses?" may arise, but it is for this reason that reasonable safeguards must be in place while the offender is learning restraint. Many experts say that, with reinforcing therapy, offenders can learn to control their actions, but like most of us, the more stress we're placed under, the more likely we are to revert to our basic instincts. Providing a support system for

cinctly when he said:

Can anyone get out of prison with \$50, limited skills, limited education and no hope to get anything more than a minimum wage job, and then be able to support their family, make restitution, pay court costs, and pay a monthly stipend to the parole board for the privilege of being monitored? We set them up to fail and when they recidivate, we act offended. They can't make it under these circumstances and neither could you.



conflicting. One example is a widely-held belief by experts that an offender's preferred victim will mirror the age at which an offender suffered abuse; yet one study showed that 87.3 percent of offenders denied any history of such abuse (see <<http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Lobby/6027/research.htm>>). More commonly, offenders state that they were emotionally or physically abused as children, but not sexually abused.

Prior to my own family's ordeal, I held opinions about sex offenses that are probably shared by a large percentage of the U.S. population. For example, some people may feel intolerant towards sex offenders because they believe that the offender is able to control his actions but chooses not to. This is like blaming an obese person for being fat since the impulse-control disorder can be the same root cause in both cases. Some experts believe that offenders build up to an episode through obsessive thinking—similar to eating one potato chip, then a handful, then gorging on the whole bag. Supposedly, this

an offender that lessens stress, including sympathetic mentors with whom he can be honest when undergoing stress, can be expected to actually lessen the chances of re-offending. Teaching him coping skills helps to prevent relapse. In helping the offender, we are actually helping to keep children safer.

The offender may enter our meetings in any number of ways: for example, as a returning member, through prison ministry, as a family member, or as a seeker who just shows up one day. Suppose the offender in your midst was recently released from prison. Currently, the typical offender exits prison with between \$50 and \$200 in "gate money" (depending on the state), no job history for the past several years, one set of clothing, no car, and no place to live. The gate money has to feed, shelter, transport, and clothe him until he can get a job and start bringing in some money. He has to keep his one set of clothes clean enough to impress at a job interview. He is under severe parole restrictions, including mandated therapy for which he has to pay.

If an ex-felon has no stability, no home, and no way to support himself, do you think he is more or less likely to commit another crime? While recidivism rates among sex offenders are hotly debated among experts, the very high recidivism rates mythically quoted apply to compulsive offenders (about 40 percent of the population of all sexual abusers). Not all sex offenders are alike; for example, males who target young boys have a higher recidivism rate than males who target girls. Generally, offenders fall into three categories: those who offend against adult females; those who molest children in their own families (inter-familial or incest offenders who do not have much interest in other victims and so have lower recidivism rates); and those whose offenses are extra-familial, including stranger offenders. Some child molesters are pedophiles; others are not. In 2003 the State of Illinois published an average recidivism rate for sexual offenders of only 3.5 percent. Dependable studies have shown overall recidivism rates of 13 percent for child molesters and 19 percent for rap-

thereby pushing up the average. Nonetheless, it is very rare to find any study suggesting an average recidivism rate higher than 50 percent.

Recently, multiple states have passed legislation severely restricting where offenders may live. Especially in heavily populated areas of such states, there is literally almost nowhere that an offender may legally live. While the language varies, such residency restrictions typically read to the effect that an offender cannot live within 2,000 feet (a distance that is less than one-half mile) from any school, park, daycare, or "place where children congregate." Depending on the state, this may be interpreted to include malls, movie theatres, stadiums, and libraries, and the one-half-mile limitation is not from the property's front door but one-half mile from the property line (which makes a big difference for many schools, parks and stadiums). Yet *no study* suggests that this will actually keep children safe, and in 2008 a geographic analysis was conducted in the state of Minnesota (and published by the *Journal of Criminal Justice and Behavior*) with the following results:

Examining the potential deterrent effects of residency restriction law in Minnesota, this study analyzed the offense patterns of every sex offender released from Minnesota correctional facilities between 1990 and 2002 who was reincarcerated for a new sex offense prior to 2006. Given that not one of the 224 sex offenses would have likely been prevented by residency restrictions, the findings from this study provides little support for the notion that such restrictions would significantly reduce sexual recidivism.

Other studies concluded:

Residence restrictions attempt to prevent predatory sexual recidivism, despite the fact that approximately 93 percent of all sex crimes are perpetrated by offenders known to the victim prior to the offense (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002). The majority of sexually abused children are victimized by someone well known to them and approximately 60 percent of offenses take place

tics, 1997).

Currently, only one study (Minnesota Department of Corrections, 2007) has investigated the potential effectiveness of sexual offender residence restrictions to reduce recidivism. The authors examined the offense patterns of 224 sexual offenders released between 1990 and 2005. The results demonstrated that residence restrictions would not have prevented any re-offenses. Of the 224 offenders, only 27 (12 percent) established contact with their victim(s) within one mile of the offenders' home and not one established contact near a school, park, or playground.

The Colorado Department of Public Safety (2004) used mapping software to examine the residential proximity to school and daycare centers of 13 sexual offenders who sexually recidivated in a study of 130 sexual offenders over a 15-month follow-up period (15 offenses by 13 offenders). The results demon-

Rapist

Is it possible to survive, say, a gang rape?
I mean the one you committed that terrible night
when you were eighteen perhaps, and drunk;

to ever again trust yourself to touch someone gently,
or even to offer your own ravished core to another
knowing the possibility, knowing it that well?

Will time and kindness, your own kindness perhaps,
heal the thrust of memory? Can you sob, or sing
or shout it away, or give enough to the Red Cross

so that, finally, you are saved and again feel clean?

Must you ever after resort to bravado or blame, be a
stone, or drug and drown all clear and candid thought?
do you feel safe only behind prison bars?

Or can you manage, like the rest of us do,
eventually to tame a memory, to cancel the certain
knowledge of what our lust has done in the world?

—Janeal Turnbull Ravndal

Janeal Turnbull Ravndal lives in Yellow Springs, Ohio.

likely than non-recidivists to live within 1,000 feet of a school or daycare.

Such residency laws, which remove the discretion that is appropriate for a parole officer to wield when considering the offender's living arrangements, stemmed from Internet registries enabling parents to become more aware of sex offenders living in close proximity. The laws are nonsensical: note that the sex offender may, for example, live in an apartment complex that is teeming with children, as long as it is not within the legislated distance. Many halfway houses, established for the purpose of assisting felon reentry, suddenly found themselves inside the magical radius and therefore no longer able to shelter paroling offenders. Such laws turn sex offenders into societal pariahs, lending a false sense of security to those who seem not to realize that even if an offender lives outside these limitations a) sex offenders have cars (and feet) and b) this protects children only from known offenders.

It is worth considering that while a released offender in the midst of the meeting bears watching, there may be *more* to fear from an *undiscovered* offender in our midst—a greater danger because this person is as yet unknown, can continue to operate in secrecy, and will not be identified even via a background screening process (which would still identify an offender who has served his full sentence and has no parole restrictions). If a released offender comes into our midst with humility and repentance, boundaries and safeguards can be put into place. Not so with the unknown offender, who is free to prey at will. (Recidivists who have been in prison multiple times for the same offense probably need more help than we can provide, and they present an increased risk.) Keep in mind that if he is an inter-familial offender, he most likely presents little risk to anyone outside his family. If on parole, the released offender will also have strict parole ob-

with minors. This means that although the ex-offender may see children in a public venue (for example, at church or the grocery store), he must in no way communicate with them, and if he accidentally does (i.e. the child independently approaches him), he must immediately report the interaction to his parole officer. An ex-offender who is not carefully following this rule should rightly be subject to intense scrutiny by the meeting. Also, the meeting should meet with the offender's parole officer to understand fully the terms of the parole. If the offender is considered a predator, the meeting should be made aware of this.

Yet there must be concern not just for the offender, but for those who may feel threatened by his presence at the meeting: e.g. parents, the children of the meeting, and adults who have experienced victimization, which may be unrevealed. (The rules of parole would typically forbid the offender from any contact with the crime victim.) However, the presence of an offender can offer a potential opportunity of healing for victims of other abuse who may not be able to enter into dialogue with their own victimizer, yet with time and work might receive healing if the offender were open to listening to the fears of the community. There are, however, some past victims who simply don't feel comfortable with any offender in the meeting, and this is a very difficult situation to arbitrate. The ideal would be to achieve a middle ground where all people can be nurtured—offenders too, but under the watchful supervision of other adults.

Christ said, "Judge not lest ye be judged," but he also said, "Be ye wise as serpents." While it is prudent for a meeting to always have at least two adults present in any interactions with children (protecting the children from harm as well as the adults from any suspicion or false accusations), it is especially important that an ex-offender never be alone with either children or victimized women; studies have found that victim selection is primarily based upon accessibility and vulnerability. One meeting reports that assigning an adult "shadow," "mentor," or "buddy" to the ex-offender can increase the comfort level of the other attendees. Others have suggested in-

offender because he must submit to being accountable to the entire meeting. Neither the offender nor his mentors or other supporters should be allowed to minimize his crime or make excuses for him. The Center for Sex Offender Management (<www.csom.org>) advises:

Jurisdictions across the country that apply a multidisciplinary model of sex offender management are learning that no single entity can prevent sexual assault alone. Only through the use of collaborative approaches can those responsible for sex offender management contain these offenders and minimize the risk of future sexual victimization.

It is also extremely important to remember that offenders—both discovered and undiscovered—can be very crafty and manipulative in achieving their goals. As one study points out, "The general sex offender is not an aggressive and violent person who lashes out at his victims; instead, he is a sneaky and manipulative predator who extracts sexual gratification out of young people who trust him." A meeting with one or more attending ex-offenders should offer training in identifying and deflecting manipulative tactics. Further, since offenders thrive on secrecy, all members—especially the children—should understand the value of speaking up and be warned of the dangers inherent in maintaining secrets. Such openness will help the parole officer and therapist to adjust the offender's treatment. At the same time, accusations should never be made lightly, since even spurious suspicions can have devastating consequences.

Offenders know that suspicion of them is heightened, and they fear false accusations that can lead to their re-imprisonment. I know this not only because the published literature supports it, but also because my work with the Simple Gifts Foundation puts me in contact with many sex offenders and I have discussed these issues with them. One sign of a released offender who is truly trying to go straight is that he will assiduously avoid children or any circumstance that could lead to misinterpretation, because such situations are inherently dangerous to his freedom. The meeting must remember that parolees can be re-imprisoned for relatively small infractions, let alone a signifi-

necessary boundaries.

Offenders, like everyone else, need a haven of trust in order to feel safe. In order to divulge their behavior to the meeting, they must feel reasonably safe in doing so. Released offenders fear not just the loss of others' goodwill and friendship, but also persecution and actual physical retaliation from vigilantes—with good reason, since they are frequently subject to such vendettas. One may feel pity for such a person, even though his crime was awful and the responsibility for being in such a predicament rests solely with him. It is extremely hard for a sex offender to get a job and find a place to live, and many offenders experience neighbors who post "crime flyers" about them at their home and workplace or threaten the offender with physical violence.

While this article has focused on how we might best handle offenders present in meetings, perhaps we ought to consider as well how we as Quakers ought to treat offenders in the rest of the world. There may be one living near you, in fear and self-loathing, who needs someone to reach out; who, if ministered to, loved, and mentored, might not re-offend—and more importantly, might come to know God's love. Some Quakers may believe that this issue is of no import to them since they have no children attending their meeting. If your meeting has no children, then it may be a "perfect garden" for mentoring ex-offenders and helping them establish re-entry to society.

If any one of us had to stand before the congregation and be judged on the single most heinous deed of our lives, how would we fare? Condemn me at once, because there are things in my life I've done of which I am not proud—and for which I throw myself on the mercy of the living God for forgiveness. The offenders in our midst are being publicly judged by the worst act of their lives, and they are throwing themselves on our fallible human mercy. In response, let us be dispensers of love, not judgment—while exercising due caution. □

"I desire mercy, not sacrifice. For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."
—Matt. 9:13

There are many men in this prison who have turned to God for guidance. These men gather in the yard to hold prayer circles. At times, they take turns preaching. Some sing songs about Jesus, others join in a form of religious chanting.

A man named Will is one of these men of God. He takes it upon himself to evangelize the Word as much as possible. Pacing the tier, he tells us that Jesus loves us. When he passes by, I smile and nod appreciatively.

A few days ago during breakfast, Will sat at my table. Accompanying him was another man of God. Will was looking over a piece of Prison Ministry literature. He offered his opinion that the author knew nothing about God.

"There is no antichrist," Will calmly

said, spitting fire and brimstone. "It's your payback for molesting children."

The old man was now splayed out on the cold San Quentin concrete. His hands searched his head, feeling the knots forming after the seizure had violently pummeled his skull against the unforgiving floor. Despite Will's disgusting allegations, I felt sorry for the old man.

Wasn't it resentful of Will to insult the old man while he lay helpless and confused on the ground? The man was obviously in a lot of pain and it seemed unethical to harass an injured person. But Will continued to spew his insults with fury. "It's God's revenge! It's payback!"

I had had enough. I decided to challenge Will over his insensitivity. I turned

would brazenly condemn someone as he lay helplessly injured on the ground.

I thought that if I spoke in Will's language, maybe he would understand. I managed to interject that the Bible says only God can judge sin, and that Jesus tells us to seek forgiveness. But Will continued his righteous condemnation.

It was beyond me how this man could take the teachings of Jesus and use them as a weapon. I had never met a militant Christian who held God as a shield and Christ as his sword. This was the type of person who could remorselessly shoot an abortion doctor and claim it was God's will.

My anxiety growing, I decided to see if logic would work. It seemed to me that everyone in prison is supposed to be guilty of a crime. How could this

Nonviolence and Forgiveness

purred. "There is only Jesus, and he will save us all." Will's smile convinced the man to set the pamphlet down, where it remained when we left to return to our cells.

Yesterday, as soon as we stepped out to head for breakfast, I heard the cries of other inmates calling, "Man down!" I looked down the tier, and there on the concrete lay an old man thrashing about like a fish out of water.

"They recently changed his medication," another inmate informed me. "It's not working. This is the second seizure he's had in two days."

Officers gathered around the old man as his tremors began to subside, waiting for the medical staff to arrive.

Will's eyes focused intently on the old

man and said, "God must hate a lot of innocent people who suffer from seizures even though they have never done anything wrong."

Maybe if he realized that many good people also suffer from seizures, Will would see that God could not possibly inflict a rhing like this as punishment. But it didn't seem to make a difference. Will insisted that the man deserved punishment because of his crime. His reasoning was simple: the man was disgusting because he molested kids.

In order to get us to the chow hall, the officers ushered us past the old man. Lying in a fetal position on the concrete, he looked up at us while we carefully made our way past. His blue eyes were filled with confusion and terror.

Suddenly Will walked by and his gaze met that of the old man below him. Will's face contorted with hatred. He yelled violently, "This is God's revenge, you child molester!"

If indeed the old man had commit-

The man was obviously in a lot of pain and it seemed unethical to harass an injured person. But Will continued to spew his insults with fury. "It's God's revenge! It's payback!"

man think he's any more righteous than the man on the ground? As far as I could recall, Jesus had not created a hierarchy of sin. There was only one state of sin, and all of us were required to repent equally.

Stumbling over my explanation, I told Will that to condemn the old man for his sins without condemning his own was nothing less than using the Bible for hypocrisy.

All of a sudden a flying fist landed squarely on my nose. I quickly regained my footing, but sure enough, there was Will standing with a grin on his face and

his hand coiled in a tight ball. He had hit me!

I was surrounded by inmates, so none of the officers had seen Will's attack. I wasn't quite sure what to do. I knew that the other inmates expected me to retaliate. In prison, showing disrespect is the worst thing you can do, and if someone disrespects you, you're expected to take care of business. In their minds there was only one path to fol-

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in San Quentin Prison

www.sxc.hu

low: fight back and end up in the hole.

My mind was racing. I didn't want to be labeled a wimp because that might make me a target. Certainly I'd be justified in defending my safety, my honor, my pride. I felt anger and frustration welling inside. This would be an excuse to let it all out. Then I remembered my commitment to nonviolence, so even though I wasn't sure what I was getting into, I turned and walked away.

Will continued to stare me down. He stood defiantly like a victorious crusader, confident that he was defending God's wishes.

The other inmates began circling me. They asked why I didn't strike back. If it were them, they said, the guy would have been paying a visit to the infirmary.

I ignored their words and felt my nose for damage. In my head, I could hear my mother's voice, worrying, as she has done for many years. But the fist hadn't really hurt me aside from minor bleeding, and there wasn't anything broken.

I collected my breakfast and sat down to mull over my options. I thought that I probably should have kept my opinions to myself. Voicing confrontational ideas was not wise inside San Quentin's walls. I still felt Will was wrong for ha-

assing the old man, and I was certain he was wrong for striking me, but I could accept that I had crossed a line by insulting his understanding of the Bible.

After breakfast I had to walk past Will's cell to reach my own. Sure enough, he was waiting, watching me as I made my way down the tier. When I got to his cell, I stopped and met him with my eyes. I apologized for insulting his religious views and asked him if we could drop the issue. With a confident smile, he agreed.

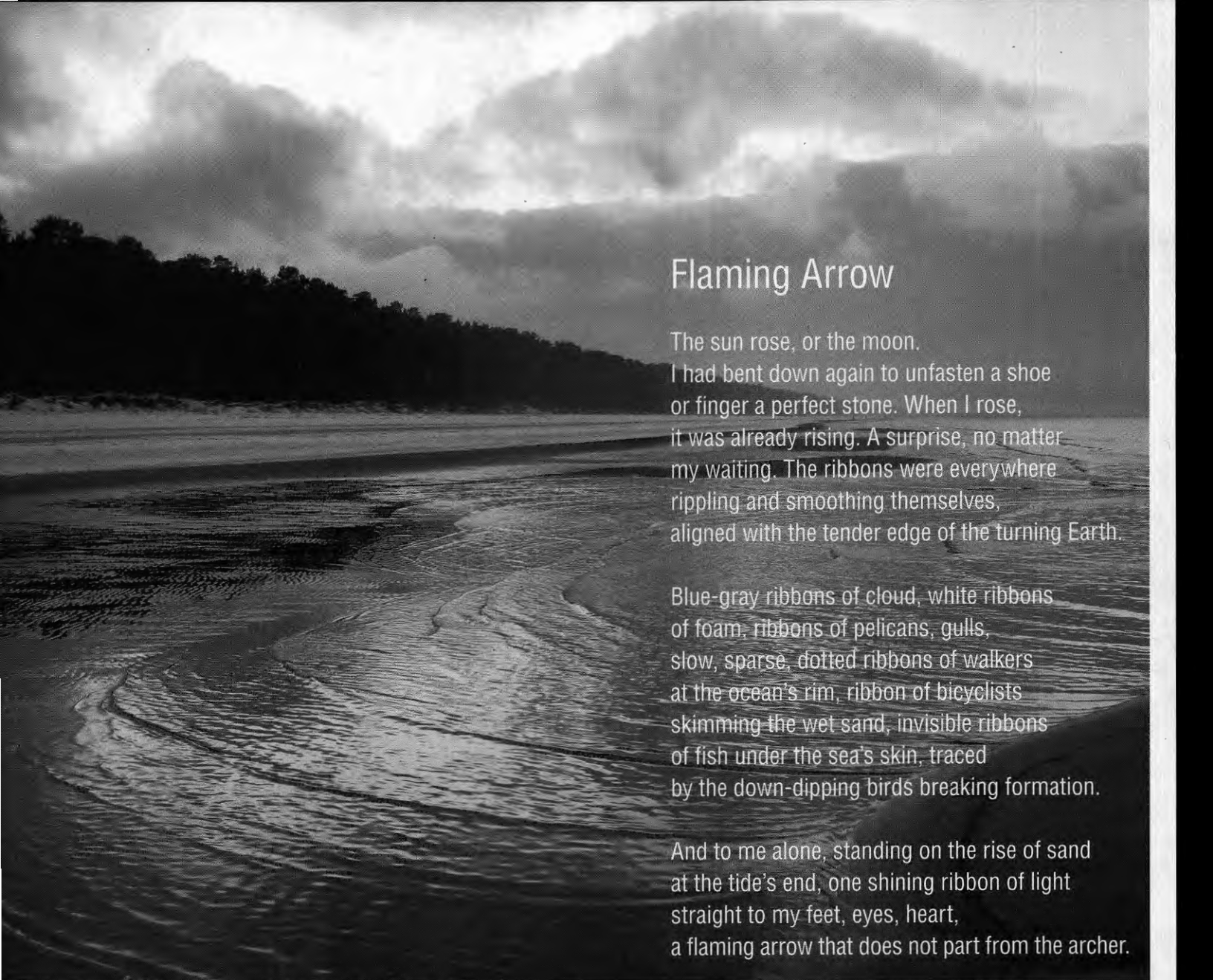
The next day, on the way to breakfast, Will stopped me. His eyes were different, softer, and he told me in a mild voice that he was sorry he had struck me. I accepted his apology and gave him a hug. It felt good to resolve our dispute through mutual forgiveness.

It occurred to me that by choosing nonviolence, I had empowered Will's apology. If we had gone to battle we both would have been wrong. Neither one of us would have regretted our actions. Anger would have begotten anger, leading to retaliation and animosity.

Jesus understood that the way to end violence is to break the cycle of retaliation. He once stood in the way of an angry mob that was intent on stoning an adulterous woman to death. Jesus

knew that adulterers were considered criminals; they were harassed and beaten, and the public despised them enough to kill them on sight. But Jesus believed that we all deserve a chance for redemption. So he refused to condemn the woman, and instead, he confronted the mob with a simple ethical dilemma that none could honestly resolve: "Let him who has not sinned cast the first stone" (John 8:7). Jesus did not invoke God's will, he did not invoke holy wrath, he simply asked the vigilantes to remember that instead of looking for evil in others, we should seek first to control it in ourselves.

In the end, I wonder what Will thought after I stepped away from our confrontation. Was he thinking that Jesus spoke of love? Did he remember that the language of love is nonviolence? Maybe he remembered that we all deserve a simple chance for forgiveness, regardless of our sins. Maybe that is what being a man of God is truly about. □



Flaming Arrow

The sun rose, or the moon.
I had bent down again to unfasten a shoe
or finger a perfect stone. When I rose,
it was already rising. A surprise, no matter
my waiting. The ribbons were everywhere
rippling and smoothing themselves,
aligned with the tender edge of the turning Earth.

Blue-gray ribbons of cloud, white ribbons
of foam, ribbons of pelicans, gulls,
slow, sparse, dotted ribbons of walkers
at the ocean's rim, ribbon of bicyclists
skimming the wet sand, invisible ribbons
of fish under the sea's skin, traced
by the down-dipping birds breaking formation.

And to me alone, standing on the rise of sand
at the tide's end, one shining ribbon of light
straight to my feet, eyes, heart,
a flaming arrow that does not part from the archer.

If You Love Me

my commandments
will not be my commandments
but our dance

—Peter Meister

Peter Meister lives in New Hope, Alab.

—Maryhelen Snyder

Maryhelen Snyder lives in Vienna, Va.

Hello, Good Morning

It is said that Saint Francis,
seeing a worm on a path
in front of him, would gently

move it to the side,
that it might not be stepped on,
such was his love for God's
least creatures.

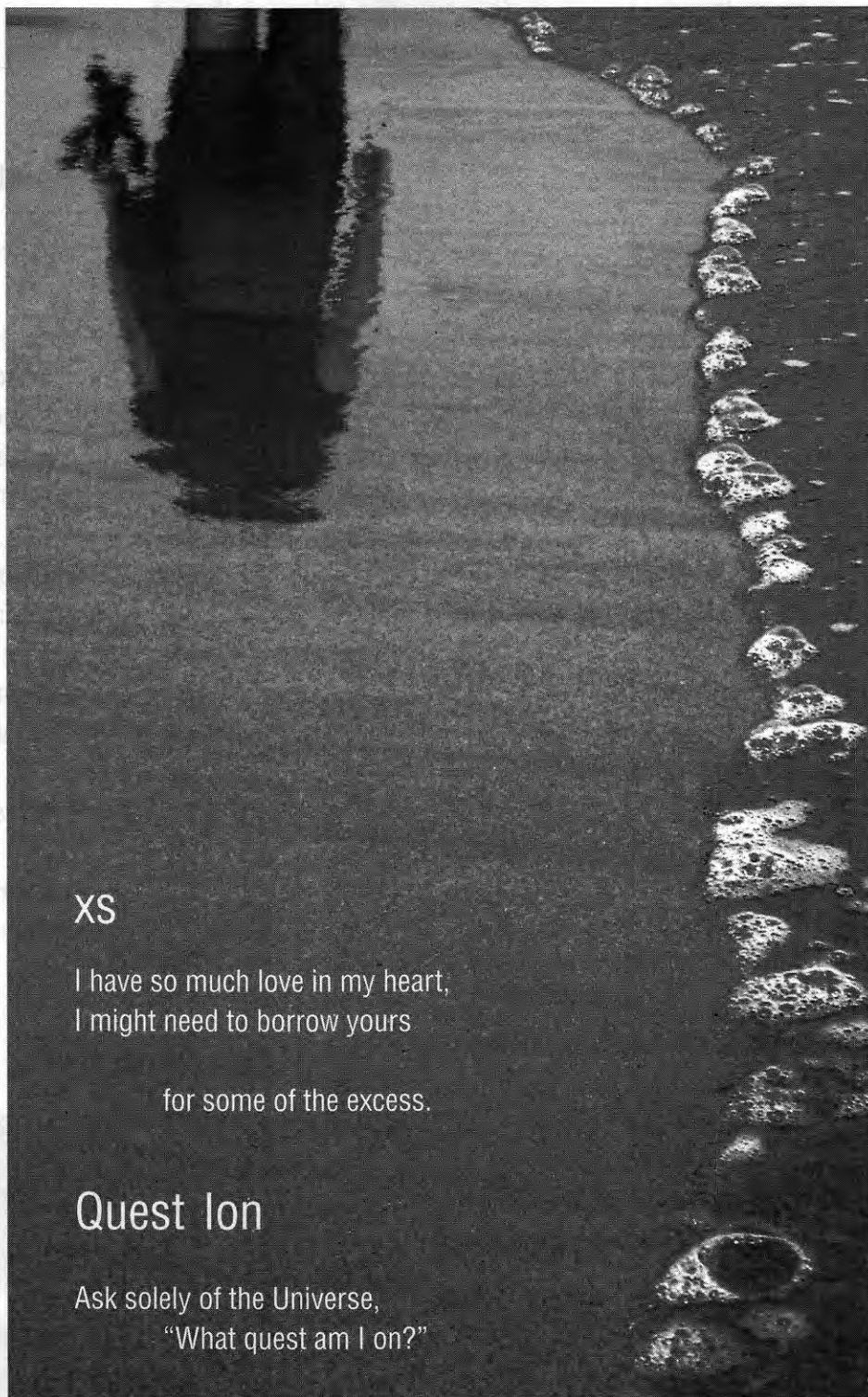
Without speaking, for rich
silence is the language
of the blessed tongueless,

the creature might thank
the hand it rested on for the light
of a moment's elevation.

That is maybe all it will need
to say Good Morning to God,
offered, by Francis' gift,
this precious chance.

—*Richard Fenton Sederstrom*

*Richard Fenton Sederstrom lives in
Tempe, Ariz., and, from June to
October, in Park Rapids, Minn.*



XS

I have so much love in my heart,
I might need to borrow yours

for some of the excess.

Quest Ion

Ask solely of the Universe,
"What quest am I on?"

Just Ice

Blindfolded, She has forged forward
through what is frozen in us.

—*Sharon Fitzpatrick*

Sharon Fitzpatrick lives in Nokomis, Fla.



Wren <www.scc.hu>

Blind and Alone

I wonder if the newspapers have blown
about your door, flyers and plastic bags
that always tried to clutter up your home

I'd stoop for them and dump them with a groan
complaining of the trash I had to drag
you'd worry that the newspapers would blow

away and say that if we didn't comb
with care through all the mail you'd let things lag
and they'd begin to clutter up your home

you kept it up so neatly all alone
you showed us though you were not one to brag
you'd wonder if the newspapers had blown

away important news you should have known
before interest in life began to flag
and things began to clutter up your home

until they found you blind and somehow flown
beyond the need of brooms and cleaning rags
I wonder if the newspspers have blown
away or clutter up your empty home

—*Kelley Jean White*

Kelley Jean White lives in Philadelphia, Pa.

Catalunya

Catch it if you can and hold it fast.

Yet, like drops of water in the sand,
you cannot keep it, cannot make it last.
The moment on the hill, the straggling band
of hikers, smell of perfumed smoke, the smiles;
all are gone.

The little, never planned
intensities: the moment of the snail,
the girl singing as she walked, the view
of distant towns and farms, the uphill miles
to go before we slept, the laughter too
is gone, all racing to the shrinking past.

The moment dwindles, no matter what we do.

Perceptions all are lost in the flux of seemings,
only to persist, transformed, as meanings.

—*Stan Carnarius*

Stan Carnarius lives in Lititz, Pa.



Fazakas <www.scc.hu>



Reverence

The air vibrated
with the sound of cicadas
on those hot Missouri nights after sundown
when the grown-ups gathered on the wide
back lawn,
sank into their slung-back canvas chairs
tall glasses of iced tea beading in the heat

and we sisters chased fireflies
reaching for them in the dark
admiring their compact black bodies
their orange stripes and seeking antennas
as they crawled to our fingertips
and clicked open into the night air.

In all the days and years that have followed,
I don't know that I've ever experienced
that same utter certainty of the goodness of life
that was as palpable
as the sound of the cicadas on those nights:

my sisters running around with me in the dark,
the murmur of the grown-ups' voices,
the way reverence mixes with amazement
to see such a small body
emit so much light.

—*Julie Cadwallader-Staub*

Julie Cadwallader-Staub lives in South Burlington, Vt.

PAUL

I Witness a Friend's Difficult Calling

by Marti Matthews

It's 11:30 AM—picture-taking time for our foursome: four friends who have found each other on the face of the Earth for such a short time and now will soon be parted. Antonio from Lisbon and Sara from Madrid are waiting, but where is tall Paul from Boston? Antonio has paralyzed legs; gentle, elegant Sara, here seeking clearness on some difficult decision, is resting after packing. It seems to be my place to hurry down the muddy Brazilian street to find Paul.

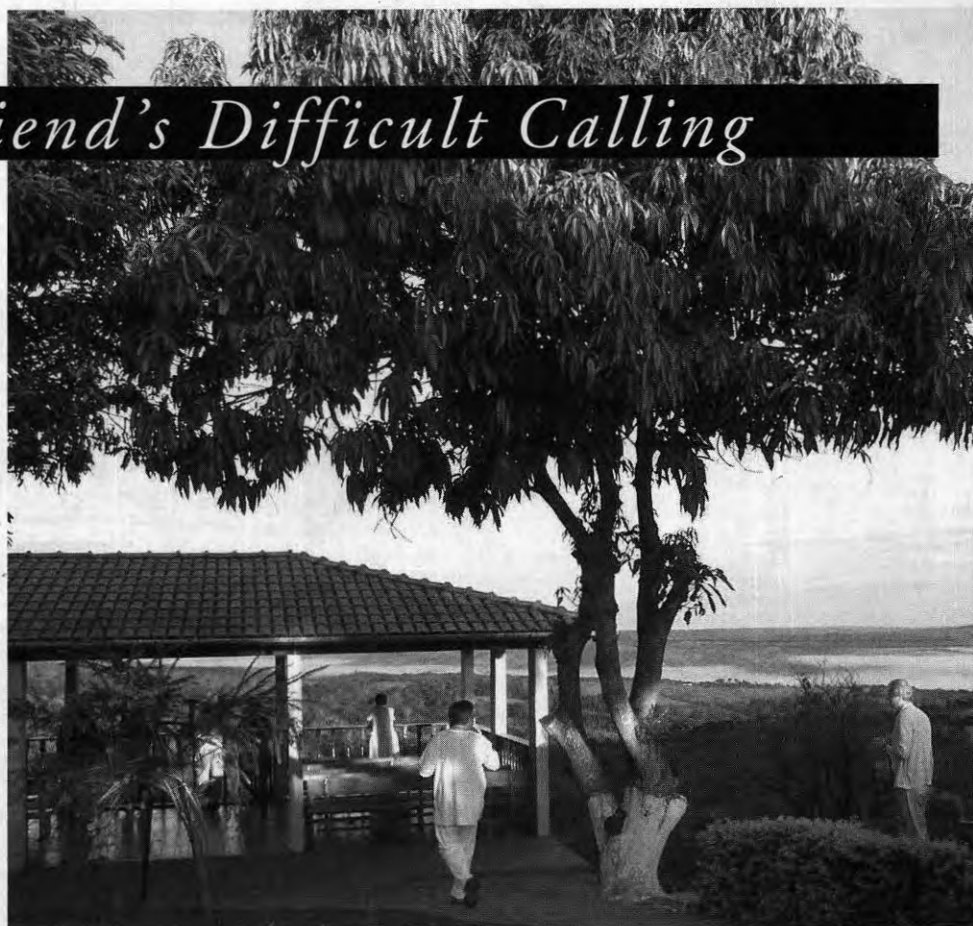
Finally, I see him wandering to and fro in front of a row of tiny open-sided storefronts. "Come back now for lunch and photos," I urge him.

"I can't," he says quietly, but with anxiousness. He walks up closer and holds out his hands, fingernails up. "I have to do this before I leave. It's my first obedience. I have to do it *now* while I'm feeling strong, but there's a fat lady in front of me taking forever."

I look at him in surprise. Then I simply nod and say "Okay" and return to our friends with a general report of lateness. Inside, I'm amazed.

Paul and I connected from the start. We both have the "caretaker" syndrome and have encouraged each other in our efforts to get out of this prison. Two years ago, he reduced his work to part-time in order to commit himself to his healing work. His first spirit-goal was a tough one: to love himself completely. "Taking care of others, jumping in as rescuer or helper, these are just projections," he says. "What we really seek is to love and value *ourselves*. We connect to others by helping, but this isn't really

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loving them. We want, in return, to feel loved and needed; it's still about ourselves, not about real love." I talk about my struggle to get free enough from mothering an ever-expanding family, related and unrelated, in order to do my writing. Others share in this discussion about our "helper syndrome," the challenge to feel that it's okay to love ourselves first, to take adequate care of ourselves, and allow others to find their own strengths.

We are at a very spiritual center, the Casa of Dom Inacio, in Abadiania, Brazil. Suffering people from all over the world come here asking for cure or improvement from the compassionate spirits who work through John of God, called a "healer." Seeking a healing here is not a passive act; we are asked to work on ourselves. We are given advice and prescriptions for the direction and support of our own work, then some are given psychic, or even physical, surgery, and all are given healing energy. Most people stay at least two or three weeks to get deep inside themselves and do their own part in their healing. Many

stay longer; many come back yearly. Some have quick healings, many have gradual healings supported by their own changes.

Meals in the open-air dining room of our simple *pousada*/hotel are full of sharings with thoughtful people from around the world. Thanks to the blessing of nearly universal English, people from across oceans quickly become friends, sharing about their various spiritual practices and their paths of growth and healing.

Some people in suffering can become self-absorbed, buried in bitterness or fears, or by the need to pay attention to the challenge in their bodies. Here at the Casa, we are urged daily to lift our energy to a positive place and, above all, to focus on *love*. Here, *energy* is a fundamental element in the healing process, and love for ourselves and others, thankfulness, forgiveness: these all generate positive, healing energy.

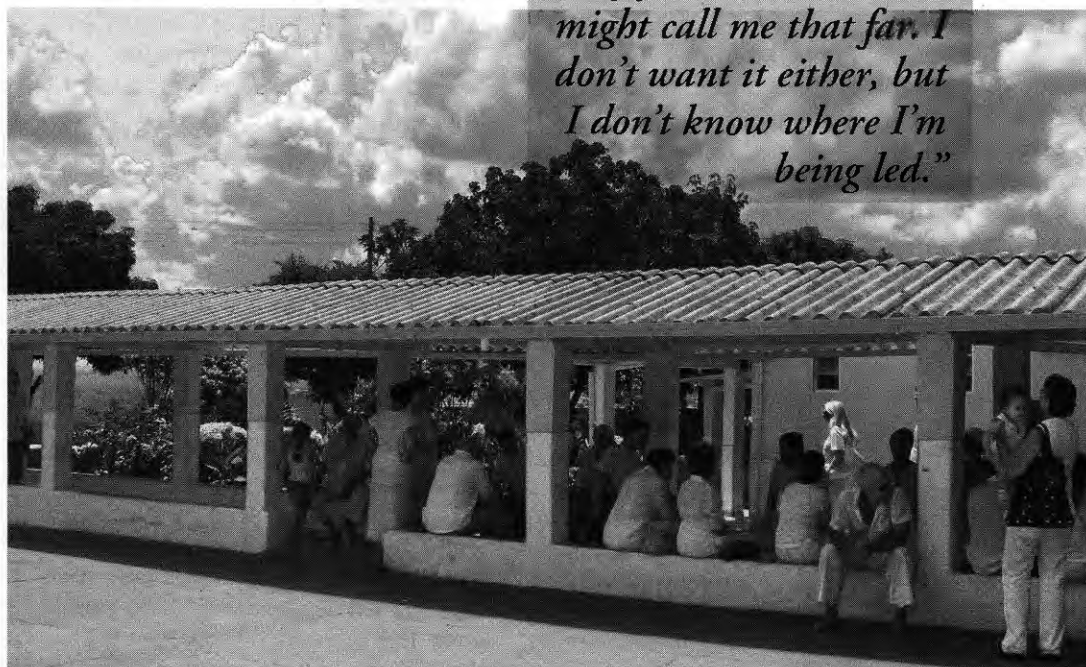
Paul and I observe that we have practiced "loving others" for years. At least we know how to put others first. We honestly don't feel a need to learn the

challenge seems to require more love for ourselves, the other half of the Golden Rule: *Love your neighbor as yourself.*

Paul fell into this caretaking pattern as a child. During his early elementary years, his mother was diagnosed with kidney failure; within a few short years, she was dead. At that point his older sister, who had been his pal all through childhood, seemed to turn her back on him. He felt that she and their father had left Paul out. "Did I do something wrong?" he puzzled. His mom had died, his sister and dad were more distant to him. He tried to compensate for whatever bad thing he must have done by being extra helpful, hoping that by pleasing others they wouldn't leave him. Paul continued this pattern into adulthood—trying to connect to others by being

Here with John of God, Paul is driven by a hunger to spend as much time as possible in meditation and prayer, struggling into a deep place with his Inner Guide, his Higher Power, with the Source of his life. These are my own terms, though here at the Casa we use ordinary terms like "God." We all know

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being led."*



thoughtful and caring. I could see how he had developed beautifully into a caring friend, with a large heart that felt the suffering of others. But I also understood the desire not to feel trapped in service and to value himself.

Paul is a writer, a playwright. He's not one to brag, but over time I've learned that he teaches both graduate and undergraduate courses; that he has won awards, his plays have been performed abroad, and he has taught abroad. He is highly respected and gifted. He mentions in passing that he counsels homeless people and ex-prisoners. More and more, I see his modest

toward what we are pointing and what that term requires. Just as English has united us, so the simple symbols common to Christians, especially Catholic Christians, and the language used with those has also allowed us all to share a common spiritual experience.

Yesterday, my friend made a giant turn: Paul received a healing he has sought for years. Something inside him opened and he realized, not with his mind but finally at a deep emotional level, that his father and sister were not rejecting him; they were both hurting like him over the mother's death and his father turned to his sister as a substitute

porting each other. They weren't judging and abandoning him, they were just buried inside themselves and hurting too much to be there for him. What a big opening! He was a newborn babe yesterday as he received part of the healing for which he had asked.

But today, as he said, his daimon—the guiding spirit whose responsibility is to make sure we accomplish whatever we came here to do in this life—was relentless. For several years, something has been coming that Paul has sensed and dreaded but wouldn't go away. This feeling, like a newborn babe, feels to him connected with a call for death and rebirth. He jestingly quotes a medieval writer, Jakob Boehm: "If you don't die before you die, when you die, you rot!" I know that death/rebirth is a

common theme in all spiritual work—we must let go of the familiar self, with its center in our ego and habits that we know so well, and allow ourselves to be born into a new person. Ideally, we do this before our final, physical death, by free assent of our will to stay one with the guidance of a Higher Power, however we experience it.

While Paul has been working on this "letting the old man die," so to speak, he's been sensing that the new person being born is more feminine than he would expect. He's trying to get used to this, trying to obey this surprising turn on his path.

And so, here where he's supported in his best spiritual self, he feels here he must take one step. This is an intense spiritual obedience and takes a strong act of self-control. He's waiting to get his nails painted.

In a bit, Paul shows up at lunch. He hurriedly shows me his nails—colorless but painted. Then it's time to part as my three dear friends head for Brasilia, two to the airport. Perhaps I'll never see them again! Paul will return after sight-seeing a bit, and then he'll be leaving in two days. Myself—tomorrow.

Evening comes and Paul is back for supper. We decide we will go as our group used to, to the Casa for the rosary. Neither Paul nor I is Catholic but we

being chanted in Portuguese in a beautiful, slow singsong that enables us to center into a quiet place. The open-air hall is cool and dark; a few lights illuminate the platform in front of us where John of God does surgery in the morning—using no anesthesia and causing no pain. We sit facing the prayer triangle where we put photos of others for whom we pray for healings. As the rosary moves on, I become aware of my day, and aware that, by far, the biggest experience I've had today has been of Paul and his obedience. Something inside me is deeply moved.

At the end of the rosary, people quietly leave into the night, some in twos and threes, some alone. We sit there in the dim light and cool air and I take Paul's hand, wanting to say something—I don't know what. I tell him how I respect the spirit in which he's doing this. I feel how difficult it is. As we look at his hands he says, "I know—it hardly shows. The next step will have to be color." I agree. "This is just a baby step anyway," he says. "But I'm scared shitless! I'll lose every friend I have, and all my professional life. I've seen how they're scorned, even in the gay community. They're the lowest of the low, the outcasts. Once I was on a crowded bus and I saw a man in drag sitting by an empty seat so I sat down and started a conversation about ordinary things. He looked so appreciative. He told me that *no one* will ever sit beside him on the bus, and no one ever talks with him."

I'm silent; I just continue holding his hand. I know enough about counseling to know that it can only confuse a person's own process to give advice, especially if the advice goes against what that person feels is the right next step. I wish I could take away this calling from him. But I also know enough about callings to understand the consequences of *not* saying yes to what your spiritual path calls you to.

The affirmation of his total self—this will feel good to him and he will certainly become free of his ego and of any remnants of trying to please others. He will be one strong spirit. But the cost is what we're both thinking of. Perhaps he'll find himself quite alone.

He tugs a little at something under his wool neck scarf, under his jacket,

pearls that he pulls out of hiding. His next step. He's not wearing it right. I tell him this and he takes it off. I show how it should be doubled over and clasped together in back. He does that and is grateful, but he says, "It'll only emphasize my big neck. And I'm cursed with such a masculine face! What am I supposed to do with this jaw?" he asks. It's true: he's a good-looking manly man. Will it be possible to make him beautiful? Well, I see his very loving and gentle eyes; maybe this will be the first thing people notice.

He also mentions dread of the discomfort of hormone treatments, the emotional roller coaster, the surgery. Here I do encourage him to go slowly, step by step, and keep surgery in the far future. In my mind, I'm hoping that a few steps on this path might satisfy his daimon. He says, "It's far from clear. My fear is that the call might call me that far. I don't want it either, but I don't know where I'm being led."

I don't say this, I just see it: Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane saying, "Father. If this cup can pass from me, please let it. But not my will but thine be done." And then, in fact, the crucifixion is asked and accepted.

The next day I say goodbye to Paul and to other friends I've come to love in my three weeks at the Casa in Abadiania with John of God. My own body, including my emotions, has received marvelous improvement. I feel like a tree that's been growing in sand and blown about too much, now settled with its roots deep enough to hold me on course. And my heart has been opened even wider than it was, among the beautiful and suffering people gathered here from around the Earth.

What will become of my friend Paul? Something in me is silent when I think of him, as if I'm in a temple, as if he is a temple, where worship is happening. I can go there with him in my heart and quickly return to the Root of our lives, the Ground of our Being, as the theologian Paul Tillich calls It.

On public radio I heard an amazing news item about a woman in Turkey who transgendered from manhood in 1981. There was, of course, a great fuss when she did this, but then things settled and she's now called a diva of Turkish song; she has a gorgeous voice and is very

She was in the news because she made a public statement saying, "Our government was wrong to send troops against the Kurds. If I had a son, I wouldn't want him killing Kurds, I wouldn't want him killing anyone, but especially in such a wrong war." The Turkish government may arrest her for this public statement, but many Turkish people have said, "She speaks my mind."

This reminds me of the writings of Jamake Highwater, a Native American anthropologist who has written that in many indigenous societies, transvestites were honored as having a particular calling for the tribe. He tells of We'wha, a Zuni male transvestite met by an anthropologist in 1896. We'wha lived as a woman; she was large, and had a big heart and an unusually bright mind. She represented her tribe in Washington, D.C., met President Grover Cleveland, and had learned English well. When she died the tribe was in intense mourning for a long time, and it gave her the greatest honors of the people.

Highwater writes that transvestites were able to counsel both men and women equally well, and were often asked to mediate marriage disputes. He explains that primordial people usually handle unique personalities as "special gifts" while we might label them as "problems" or "dangerous." "Such behavior was seen by Indians as a manifestation of great power and spirituality and regarded with considerable respect."

Highwater also sees all this in the larger context of societies that support *transformations* more comfortably than ours. As we move through life, people often feel or need big changes within themselves, but in modern Western society we are stuck with whatever identity we've developed already; significant transformations are not supported. "Identity is a prison in the West," says Highwater. "Yet, among primal peoples, there are numerous social and personal ceremonies that make all types of drastic changes in identity and reality possible for virtually everyone. And these changes are considered actual transformations."

I ponder all this now that I'm home again and alone. Why does Paul touch me so? I do not feel repulsed by what he's doing, just confused. I immediately recognize the scent of a true calling

here—as in Jonah and the whale, Moses, et al.—“Not me, Lord. I’m not the one.” And still the relentless call. There’s something here about the ego, the necessity of getting free of the fears and self-protectiveness of the ego, free of the cage of what other people think.

Later I ask Paul on the phone if this isn’t a little aggressive, though, stepping right into the arena with the things that might hurt big time—like rejection, abandonment, the harsh judgment of others? I say, “It seems to me that life brings enough natural challenges each day if we just accept them. These seem plenty sufficient for me.”

He responds, “I agree; this is a really challenging assignment, but it seems to be where my path is leading. I do put a lot of effort into my spiritual work. If it’s coming from my Higher Source, I trust it must be for my good. So then I think: What might I get from this? I’m just saying yes and wondering where we’re going. Among other things, it seems to be forcing me to deal with abandonment and judgment issues. My only reference point has to be my Internal Light; I’ll just have to keep my internal fires bright and not pay attention to the exterior world, keep my reference point inside myself. I’ll have to develop a strong backbone to balance my overly developed empathy for the needs and thoughts of others, and this would be a great gift. I’m afraid, but I’m also ready.”

I am silenced. I ask myself if perhaps I deceive myself, perhaps I avoid the disciplines I need to become a truly free person? Perhaps I’m actually a spiritual wimp?

My interest in Paul drops down to a more personal level. “What do I hold onto most?” I query myself. “What fears of my self-protectiveness hold me back from living fully?” I quietly hold this question in the Light for a while, and gradually I see. First, I see my fear of speaking—of doing so spontaneously, truthfully, respectfully, and completely. Then I see my fear of taking the risks of making decisions. Both of these fears are the walls of my experience. If I were to be as courageous as Paul and try to shed the skin within which my ego hides comfortably, I would simply have to open my mouth regularly and say what I’m truly thinking, and then ac-

Continued on page 30

GRANDFATHER ROBIN

Mygod,
at 4 a.m.
the robin’s at it
off-key and with such passion.

He’s the first up
and the last to bed
a regular, factory worker type bird
like my relatives

rising before daybreak
to make sneakers
or fill bottles of beer
or working

the late shift
racking up those pensions.
Health care junkies,
with two cars and a mortgage,

they all quit school at 16,
put their pay in my grandmother’s
hand,
till they married and moved out,
one less mouth to feed

in a family of 17. All my uncles had
pride like the robin
orange breast aglow
in an off to work light

The girls were quiet. Good girls,
threading the bobbins
folding the boxes
packing auto parts

for shipment to the rest of the world
somewhere out there
beyond the factory,
like a picture on a calendar

hanging on a door,
advertising sneakers, beer
auto parts, gorgeous
women in gilded dresses.

The early bird gets the worm,
my grandfather would say,
a regular robin type factory worker,
singing the American dream.

So how does that explain me
one generation away
a lesbian who wears sneakers, drinks beer,
and buys a glitzy dress now and then?

I sleep through the robin’s wake up call
every chance I get.
The America my family built
wishes I’d go away.

My relations won’t say the L word,
vote Republican with pride,
but they’re stuck with me
because of grandpa,

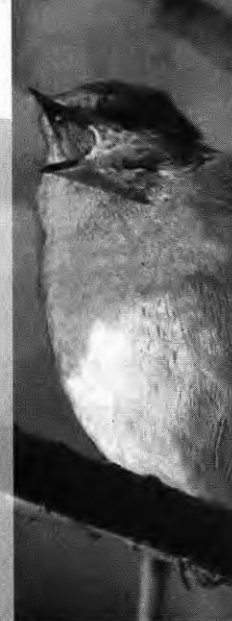
who, like the robin, fed his young
each and every one,
even the occasional cowbird
mistaken in the nest.

We belong.
Even Bobby who OD’ed on heroin,
Even Sara who is Portuguese,
even me.

So what if we sing
a little off key
Grandpa says,
Family is Family.

—Lynn Martin

Lynn Martin lives in Brattleboro, Vt.



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cept the winds that come back and let the world respond to me honestly. Secondly, I would have to jump off the cliff over and over again: make decisions and live out their consequences.

I feel in my body the wide-eyed fear of my ego as I imagine living like this. "But, but, I might lose all my friends!" I could say, as Paul fears. "I might put my foot in my mouth. I might offend someone, or hurt their feelings. I could find myself quite alone, not understood or appreciated."

And still my daimon won't be quiet. "Get out there and find your power," she says. "Stand in your true self." I remember Jonah, Jesus, Moses, and how their lives became vessels for great good, once they had stepped beyond their worst fears. And Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.—yes, he died stepping out. But—we all die! He died a vessel for Great Good. Mother Teresa—she just let go of what others thought of her working with Untouchables and so, through her, Love could enter new corners of our world.

I see that the fears of the protective ego are the prison within which we hide, in both comfort and discomfort, until we're ready to be a vessel. "A vessel for what?" my threatened ego demands. The answer comes immediately, from Somewhere: "For Power larger than our egos could dream; for Love and Good to flow from the Source, through us as our own precious experience, and out into Creation."

I've often thought of The Source of my Life as a Fox, as if I'm trying to follow a fox and find myself zigging and zagging in unexpected directions, my life always surprising me. I believe in Paul's calling; this certainly is an appearance of the Fox. I feel how Paul is connected solidly to the Root. I feel honored to have been witness to an important moment on his spiritual path. And I pray, with confidence, that the great, loving, powerful Source of all our lives and callings will uphold him in his faithfulness, and guide me in mine. ☐

It's great to have your own copy



The Living Tithe

By Chuck Hosking

(and Mary Ann Fiske, in spirit)

On the morning of Wednesday, September 19, 2007, I awoke at 4 AM in a reclining chair by my wife's bedside at University Hospital. Earlier in the week, she had spent her nights thrashing about, clawing at the veil of unconsciousness. Now she lay subdued, breathing softly, her life force spent. I had just been given the message that today she would succumb to lung cancer. We had been married nearly 36 years—60 percent of each of our lives—and I had no idea how my remaining days on Earth would continue to have meaning without her.

The message of her imminent death came to me not via nurse or doctor, but through a small, still Spirit-voice that I'd never before experienced. Immediately awake and alert, I began a 90 minute "dialogue" with Mary Ann's spirit, which was vibrant and lucid but locked within her unconscious body. Our communication climaxed when I tearfully implored her spirit to come live in my soul and received an eager positive response. Since that movement, I've been grappling with how a dual-spirited soul lives a life true to the values that initially attracted us to each other and sustained us through our decades together.

So I set out to discover all the hidden aspirations of my other-directed soul mate in a quest to discern how we might proceed in our relationship across the death divide. Leafing through a pile of her personal papers a few days later, I discovered a two-month diary from the summer of 1969. She and a friend had just graduated from Cornell with degrees in Human Ecology (largely home economics). The two of them had decided to share an inner-city slum apartment and press the limits of home economics to see just how minimally they could consume. The results: they each lived those two months on \$17 per week for all expenses.

No wonder she had responded with tears of joy when two years later we met and I

confided that I had in mind a life that would at all stages challenge myself to consume as little as possible in order to have the maximum amount to return in restitution—for the crime of global corporate greed that indirectly bloats the wages of all of us in overdeveloped nations, often to our chagrin, though we accept the privilege—to the world's lowest-income folks, and that I was asking her to join me in this lifelong journey. We were a match made in heaven, and we forged a dual-unit entity that was mutually enhancing and spawned multiple positive feedback loops.

But now here I was, only half of that dual unit. How would my life look without my better half? What challenge could I pose to animate the dual spirit in my soul? For many years, I had felt called to aim for what I call a living tithe. Instead of tithing 10 percent to charitable work and living on my income, why not strive to reverse the percentages? In our decades together we were averaging 65 percent of our income on donations. But in Mary Ann's final years battling cancer we weren't able to increase that percentage. Now that I was alone, I felt that perhaps a living tithe would be a fitting tribute to my thoroughly other-directed soul mate.

As I reminisced over our lives together, trolling for a direction to focus my pursuit of this tribute, it struck me that every morning, Mary Ann would rise, shake the sleep from her limbs, and proceed to explore just how she could best be of service to humanity during the coming day. So each day for a few months I asked the Great Spirit to direct me into a similar path of service. Before the new year's end, I received a leading. While cycling to work, I saw food service employees tossing cartons of items into a dumpster. Always sensitive to food waste, I returned to the dumpster after dinner and found a large bag of oranges and two loaves of bread. Another dumpster yielded over 100 day-old bagels.

Two thoughts came to me: (1) I could fill some of my empty, lonely time scavenging every evening and cut my food costs by salvaging otherwise-wasted food, and (2) since I lived in one of the lowest-income neighborhoods in the nation and I could only consume about 10 percent of the food I was salvaging, I could distribute 90 percent of it to my neighbors, who were struggling a recessionary economy plagued by high energy food costs. Having managed a food bank for five years, I would be cautious about which food I discerned as safe to pass on to others, which food only I would consume, and which must go on my

compost pile. (There is always a higher use for food than simply to be garbaged). So, voilà! The problem of wasted food had become a partial solution to people's economic squeeze in the neighborhood that Mary Ann loved and devoted 15 years of her life to improving, and I had another living-tithe focus (salvaged food) for my otherwise grief-stricken evenings.

Now, my intention was to have the living-tithe tribute be a permanent change in my life, not just a one-year experiment. During my solo month of 2007, my expenses were just under 10 percent of my income, but I decided to track my income and expenses for all of 2008 to see if 10 percent was sustainable. One year during our mutual quest for minimum consumption and maximal restitution, Mary Ann and I had managed to live on 14 percent of my income and disburse the rest, except for retirement fund deductions (to avoid war taxes), which would be given away later. Our primary donor channel is a wonderful Friends group, Right Sharing of World Resources.

So, would my scavenging get me even lower than 10 percent? After all, my long-range goal is global equity, a fairness standard that goes far beyond income equality to compensate for my privileged personal infrastructure of elite education and healthcare to redress entrenched financial burdens due to physical or mental disabilities and the legacy of accumulated wealth disparity. So I took a pulse after five months: 7 percent for all my needs. I was encouraged, and I dove even deeper into downward mobility. At year's end I tallied again: down to 6 percent—\$1,880 for all my expenses for 2008.

To put this into perspective, my \$5-a-day expenses are still roughly double the global median income, and for a statistic such as personal earnings, which is so highly skewed, the median is much more representative of "average" (or equal) than is the mean. Equity would, of course, require an even lower income level for me, given my baseline stockpile of privilege relative to most of my global citizenship.

Still, I've made a step toward that goal by opening myself to transformation into someone who more deeply lives the values I profess—values that were the glue bonding me to my beloved partner and soul mate—and I'm on my way to what I hope will be a lifetime (going forward) of living-tithe years and a fitting tribute to the other-directed spirit that agreed in the wee hours of September 19, 2007, to dwell in my soul forever. □

Chuck Hosking lives in Albuquerque, N.Mex. He is a member of Harare (Zimbabwe) Meeting, and he actively promotes Southern African Yearly Meeting's Zimbabwe Relief Fund through Schenectady (N.Y.) Meeting.

Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting 2009 Epistle

To Friends everywhere:

Yearly Meeting was held this year at Kadesh Barnea near Johannesburg from April 8 to 14. Our theme was "Living Quaker Concerns in Africa."

We were blessed to have Rex and Catherine Ambler lead us in seven sessions spaced over the time of our meeting. We were taken through an "experiment with Light." This was a guided meditation directed at revealing the Light within and what it shows us. It related to the individual, the world, and the meeting. Courage is needed to find and accept the truth one knows about personally from experience. Books and CDs were available, as were the Amblers themselves, for help and advice.

In line with our theme, the Richard Gush lecture by Dudizile Mtshazo was not only inspirational, but also prophetic. She outlined the pain she had experienced in growing up in apartheid South Africa and how that has affected her life and family. "We were told lies about each other and ourselves," she said. And she discovered with great pain how she had been complicit in propping up an evil system by conforming and complying. However, the challenges she faced in her journey through those dark days paint the picture of a courageous and determined woman who, through her resilience, managed to improve her condition and that of others. She owes her spiritual growth to many southern African Friends and has in turn nurtured many more through her prayer and insightful ministry. As Quakers today, in a world of violence and injustice, our task remains the same as it was for early Quakers: to be so moved by the Light within us as "to let our lives speak" in the cause of peace. We can all look for and find reconciliation by being truthful and mindful of the Light. Do what God does, and what God instructs us to do: "Love one another as I have loved you."

Zimbabwe continues to be a major concern for C&SAYM. The inclusive government may have brought with it new players, but Friends' humanitarian concerns persist. Land grabs continue, as well as abductions, imprisonment, and intimidation by law enforcement agencies. The economic meltdown has caused untold suffering to the ordinary citizen, crippling service delivery and threatening the lives of millions. Hlekweni has not been spared these hardships,

but continues to operate under the innovative leadership of its coordinator, David Jobson. Currency changes have negatively affected training programs, putting training fees out of reach for many. Rampant theft has left Hlekweni with power shortages following the invasion of its farm, and power poles have been lost to woodcutters. Adequate supplies are critically needed for the center.

Twenty-four participants, largely young Friends, went through the Alternatives to Violence Project under the guidance of three facilitators: Marie Odendaal, Nokuthula Mbethe, and Kumbirai Muzangi. A well-chosen mix of brainstorming, listening, role-playing, and reflection was used to raise awareness on the importance of effective communication and cooperation as vital for community building when done with trust and respect for oneself and others—an approach that affirms oneself while promoting nonviolence.

We have been reminded during C&SAYM that there are differing views on the subject of same-sex relationships. Friends at C&SAYM understand the difficulties that some African Friends may have with such relationships. We affirm those Friends' desire to live by values that reflect the Truth. Antagonism to same-sex relationships may derive from the prejudices of those who colonized and evangelized us. It may also derive from our own cultures. It may be fostered by a reading of Scripture that appears to confirm this antagonism. In the past, Friends have condoned slavery and colonialism, but in the Spirit of love and truth we have overcome these errors. So now we seek, in the same Spirit, to affirm and respect each other's sexual orientation.

Margaret Roper presented the first edition of *African Quaker Faith and Practice*. This will be an immensely valuable resource to our Friends and meetings. Appreciation was expressed to Margaret and Justine White for their dedicated work on this project, and for the inclusive process they followed.

We are grateful to Betsy Coville, who rose to the challenge of overseeing the children's program at short notice. There were eight very young Friends, ranging in age from 3 to 12. Betsy not only mentored them as they learned through play, but actually provided all the materials used, thus creating a very stimulating environment for the children. The crowning moment was the meeting for worship with a special concern for children and to welcome newly arrived babies in yearly meeting. Alex Kuhn and Edwin Ritchken brought their newborn

twins Lila and Gabriel, and Justine and Daniel Limpitlaw brought their newborn baby Kate. In both cases, our Friends' pregnancies had been difficult and we rejoiced at this happy outcome.

In reports from our meetings we have again been struck by the remarkable range of social witness in which Friends are engaged throughout our region. The seven-minute talks gave an opportunity for Friends to share some of these:

- David Andriamparison on Madagascar;
- Siphso Nsimbi on the Matabeleland Widows' Community Initiative
- Bridget Nomonde Scoble on the Southern African Faith Communities Environmental Initiative
- Gustave Wembo on an HIV/AIDS game
- Jeremy Routledge on the transforming power of reconciliation between women and men
- Polaki Polaki on sustained symbiosis
- Pauline Mitchell on working with the blind
- Nicholas Goodale on a 1652 country pilgrimage
- Marie Odendaal on politics and Quakers
- Les Mitchell on discourses on the abuse of animals

An evening of Taizé worship was led by Winty Thomson with candles, chants, Bible readings, prayer, and periods of silence.

In a special interest group, Dereje Woldorfa, Simon Fisher, and Hollyn Green explained the curtailment of the work of American Friends Service Committee to Zimbabwe, Somalia, The Democratic Republic of Congo, and Burundi, and the removal of their office to Nairobi. This was due to financial constraints and a review of their priorities. We shall miss their presence in Pretoria, but we are pleased that their work in Zimbabwe will continue.

Another special interest group helped us sharpen our understanding of the issues surrounding the production and use of energy in South Africa.

"Journaling and visual chronicles" was led by Betsy Coville. She showed us how we can enhance our journaling by sketches, paintings, and collages. Visual material can be prepared in advance. We all wrote for ten minutes on what we do, what we love, and what our hopes are. Journaling has been a traditional form of reflection for Quakers through the years.

Julie Povall led us through a presentation on different aspects of loss, from infancy to old age. We agreed that this is a hugely important area, which we as Quakers

ers need to consider in depth—for example, the questions of living wills, funerals, and grief work. We shared our experiences of these themes and came to understand that loss involves a wide range of life experiences and can even have positive aspects. We held a second session where we each individually drew our lifelines with ups and downs and shared them. This was a fascinating and moving experience.

Richard Aitken gave us an overview of Phoenix Zululand, working in the ten prisons of Zululand.

A video was shown tracing Barack Obama's origins and his campaign leading to the White House. An award-winning documentary entitled *Taking Root* featured the work of Kenya's Nobel prizewinner, Wangari Maathai, who has been repeatedly arrested and detained. By 2007 the Green Belt Movement, which she started, was 30 years old and was credited with planting 35 million trees in Kenya. Another documentary shown and discussed was *Inside Out*, which was filmed at Pitseng in Lesotho and focuses on Phelisamong ("living together and helping each other live"), a center for people with multiple disabilities in which Caroline Mohapi is involved.

As usual, worship sharing was a highlight for many, and this practice continues to grace our yearly meetings with surprises from the Spirit among us. Singing also continues to inspire our gatherings, and our celebration was an occasion for ministry in music, drama, and humor, particularly from young Friends, very young Friends, and grandmothers, who entered into the spirit of that event with great verve.

We are grateful that Geoff Harris, who was taken ill during yearly meeting, is on the road to recovery.

Early morning exercise activities were in the form of yoga with Rory Short and walks with Neil Brathwaite.

Trees were planted to compensate for carbon emission caused by traveling to the meeting.

We ask Friends around the world to continue praying for Southern Africa.

—Lucille Kent, Sipho Nsimbi,
Neil Brathwaite, and Rob Thomson



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■ QUIZ

Speaking Truth to Power: Continuing 350 years of Quaker Witness

by Maureen Brookes and Jim Cason

1. *When and where was the first Quaker lobby committee founded?*

A. In 1784, Philadelphia Quaker activists formed the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, which petitioned the Constitutional Convention to end slavery in the U.S.

B. In 1654, George Fox met with supporters at the Bull and Mouth tavern when he came to London to lobby Oliver Cromwell for the release of Quaker political prisoners.

C. In 1943 in Washington, D.C., FCNL was the first Quaker organization to engage directly with lawmakers.

2. *Quaker signatures appear on which of the following documents?*

A. Declaration of Independence

B. United States Constitution

C. Articles of Confederation

D. All of the above

3. *In 1783, Quakers submitted to Congress the first petition calling for the abolition of slavery. The petition followed years of Quaker leadership in the abolition movement. In what year did Quakers issue the first public declaration opposing slavery in the United States?*

A. 1775

B. 1688

C. 1763

D. 1724

4. *How many members of the First U.S. Federal Congress (1789–1791) were Friends?*

A. 2

B. 4

C. 12

D. None

5. *Dr. William Thornton (1759–1828), a Quaker inventor and artist, became the first superintendent of the U.S. Patent Office in 1802. Prior to that, he was also the first person to hold this position:*

A. Architect of the Capitol

B. Secretary of the Treasury

C. Postmaster General

Jim Cason is FCNL's associate executive secretary for campaigns, communications, and community building. Maureen Brookes is a writer and editor who worked for two years as a program assistant at FCNL. This quiz was created collaboratively with others at FCNL.

6. *The statues and busts in the Capitol Rotunda are primarily of Presidents. Of the handful of exceptions, three depict women. How many of the women represented were Quakers?*

A. 0

B. 1

C. 2

D. 3

7. *Alice Paul, a Quaker and Moorestown Friends School graduate, formed the National Women's Party to pursue a federal amendment ensuring women's suffrage. The group drew criticism in 1917 for picketing a wartime president, Woodrow Wilson. On what charge were Paul and other protesters arrested as they demonstrated outside the White House?*

A. Illegal assembly

B. Sedition

C. Obstructing traffic

8. *Representative Henry Reuss of Wisconsin said FCNL played a "pivotal" role in the 1961 creation of this federal program:*

A. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency

B. Peace Corps

C. Global Change Research Program

9. *Prior to passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act in 1965, Quaker civil rights activist Bayard Rustin took part in organizing which of the following?*

A. Montgomery Bus Boycott

B. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference

C. The March on Washington

D. All of the above

10. *The collection of lobbyists working to advance this bill, passed in 1990, held regular meetings in FCNL's E. Raymond Wilson Conference Room:*

A. Americans with Disabilities Act

B. National Environmental Education Act of 1990

C. Clean Air Act of 1990

11. *In 2006, FCNL constituents successfully lobbied Congress to oppose "Divine Strike," a nuclear program test of the nuclear "bunker buster." Citizen response blocked tests scheduled in which three states?*

A. Nebraska, Montana, and Iowa

B. Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Ohio

C. Nevada, Indiana, and New Mexico

Answers:

1. *When and where was the first Quaker lobby committee founded?*

B. In 1654, George Fox met with supporters at the Bull and Mouth tavern when he came to London to lobby Oliver Cromwell for the release of Quaker political prisoners.

2. *Quaker signatures appear on which of the following documents?*

D. All of the above. George Clymer (Pa.), Benjamin Rush (Pa.), Joseph Hewes (N.C.), Stephen Hopkins (R.I.), and Richard Stockton (N.J.) signed the Declaration of Independence. John Dickinson (Del.) signed the Articles of Confederation. Clymer, Dickinson and Thomas Mifflin (Pa.) signed the Constitution.

3. *In 1783, Quakers submitted to Congress the first petition calling for the abolition of slavery. The petition followed years of Quaker leadership in the abolition movement. In what year did Quakers issue the first public declaration opposing slavery in the United States?*

B. 1688. In 1688, Germantown Friends documented their opposition to slavery.

4. *How many members of the First U.S. Federal Congress (1789–1791) were Friends?*

B. 4. Lambert Cadwalader (N.J.), John Hawthorn (N.Y.), and George Clymer (Pa.) served in the first House of Representatives. Philemon Dickinson (N.J.) served in the first Senate.

5. *Dr. William Thornton (1759–1828), a Quaker inventor and artist, became the first Superintendent of the U.S. Patent Office in 1802. Prior to that, he was also the first person to hold this position:*

A. Architect of the Capitol

6. *The statues and busts in the Capitol Rotunda are primarily of presidents. Of the handful of exceptions, three depict women. How many of the women represented were Quakers?*

C. 2. The newest addition to the statutory collection in the Rotunda is a representation of suffragettes Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Lucretia Mott. Anthony and Mott were Quakers.

7. *Alice Paul, a Quaker and Moorestown Friends School graduate, formed the National Women's Party to pursue a federal amend-*

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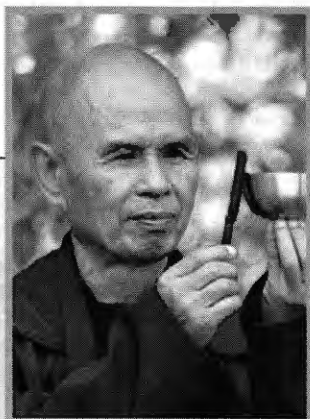
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August 29
Buell Theater, Denver, CO

CALIFORNIA EVENTS

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Peace, Harvesting Happiness*
September 8-13
Deer Park Monastery, CA

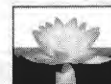
Public Talk:
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Tending to the Space Inside*
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Vietnamese Retreat:
September 23-27
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ment ensuring women's suffrage. The group drew criticism in 1917 for picketing a wartime president, Woodrow Wilson. On what charge were Paul and other protesters arrested as they demonstrated outside the White House?

C. Obstructing traffic

8. Representative Henry Reuss of Wisconsin said FCNL played a "pivotal" role in the 1961 creation of this federal program:

B. Peace Corps

9. Prior to passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act in 1965, Quaker civil rights activist Bayard Rustin took part in organizing which of the following?

D. All of the above

10. The collection of lobbyists working to advance this bill, passed in 1990, held regular

meetings in FCNL's E. Raymond Wilson Conference Room:

A. Americans with Disabilities Act

11. In 2006, FCNL constituents successfully lobbied Congress to oppose "Divine Strike," a nuclear program test of the nuclear "bunker buster." Citizen response blocked tests scheduled in which three states?

C. Nevada, Indiana, and New Mexico.

■ PUZZLE

Twentieth-century Quakers

By Kathryn Parke

Approximately half of those who comprise Swannanoa Valley Meeting are seasoned Quakers, most more than 50 years old, and half newly convinced attenders who have little knowledge of Friends history, except for George Fox, William Penn, and (perhaps) John Woolman.

A post-meeting forum on "Getting Acquainted with 20th-Century Quakers" made the most of this mix, educating newcomers and drawing stories out of seasoned Friends. As introductory tools, we used what pictures we could find of about 20 well-known Friends and a version of the matching exercise below. We began with Lucretia Mott, who died in 1880 but exemplified the modern activist Quaker, forecasting the 20th century.

We assured newcomers they were not expected to identify more than one or two without some coaching. Then, as the answers were given, several seasoned Friends delightedly shared their own personal recollections about these modern heroes. It was a pleasant as well as instructive exercise, enriching our community considerably.

BECOMING ACQUAINTED WITH CONTEMPORARY QUAKERS

Choose from the following names and place the appropriate number opposite each statement in the following list. Some names may be used more than once, and in some cases two different people might be correctly attached to one of the services listed.

- A. Emily Greene Balch
- B. Kenneth Boulding
- C. Howard Brinton
- D. Henry J. Cadbury
- E. Stephen G. Cary

Kathryn Parke is a member of Swannanoa Valley (N.C.) Meeting and a former member of Quaker Street (N.Y.), Rochester (N.Y.), and Asheville (N.C.) meetings.

- F. Judi Dench
- G. Fritz Eichenberg
- H. William Bacon Evans
- I. Chuck Fager
- J. Perry Hayden
- K. Rufus Jones
- L. Thomas Kelly
- M. Sigrid Helliesen Lund
- N. James Michener
- O. Marjorie Nelson
- P. Clarence Pickett
- Q. Douglas Steere
- R. Elizabeth Gray Vining
- S. Elizabeth Watson
- T. George Watson

1. ___ Prominent member of the team that created The New English Bible. Represented the AFSC in receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo in 1947.
2. ___ Leader of CO camps, featured in the TV film *The Good War* and *Those Who Refused to Fight It*. Clerk of AFSC Board, 1979–1991.
3. ___ Economist, peace researcher, and such a witty speaker that listeners forgot his severe stammer. Author of *The Naylor Sonnets*. His widow continues Quaker activism.
4. ___ Peace activist, director of Quaker House in Fayetteville, North Carolina.
5. ___ Wood engraver and illustrator for *Friends Journal*, his version of *The Peaceable Kingdom* is one of his best works.
6. ___ President of the innovative Friends World College at a crucial time in its history.
7. ___ Pulitzer Prize winner and writer of many historical novels.
8. ___ The first Quaker Nobel Peace Prize laureate. Colleague of Jane Addams. Co-founder of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.
9. ___ Called "the last plain Quaker." Member of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, but often visited others. Brought not only tradition and love wherever he visited, but also fun.

10. ___ Doctor for paraplegics in Vietnam; spent 52 days as a Viet Cong captive.
11. ___ College professor who, with two other Quakers, challenged the Nazi state and held a silent meeting for worship in Goebbels' waiting room. Wrote several books on mystical Quakerism.
12. ___ Author of *A Testament of Devotion*, one of the most popular books on mystical Quakerism.
13. ___ Expert on the work of Walt Whitman; author of *Women of the Bible*; frequent speaker at Friends General Conference gatherings and elsewhere.
14. ___ Popular film and TV star; created Queen Victoria as "Mrs. Brown."
15. ___ Author of *Friends for 300 Years*, a classic introduction to Quakerism. Believed in the value of fun.
16. ___ Active in the Norwegian Underground, 1941–1945; later did relief and reconciliation work in Scandinavia and Germany. As executive secretary of the Europe/Mideast Section of FWCC, was influential in moving Guilford College to racial integration ahead of most other southern colleges.
17. ___ In six years, he parlayed a cubic inch of wheat into food for thousands of starving people.
18. ___ Opened windows to the world for the Crown Prince of Japan.
19. ___ Longtime executive secretary of AFSC, acquainted with presidents from Hoover to Kennedy; a valued advisor to Eleanor Roosevelt.
20. ___ Belatedly (age 86) received the decoration of Knight First Class of the White Rose of Finland, in recognition of his work with the AFSC and help in rebuilding Finland after World War II.

Answers: 1, D; 2, E; 3, B; 4, I; 5, G; 6, T; 7, N; 8, A; 9, H; 10, O; 11, K; 12, L; 13, S; 14, F; 15, C; 16, M; 17, J; 18, R; 19, P; 20, Q.

BOOKS

Letters from Kabul: 1966–1968, A Memoir

By Janice Minott. Trafford Publishing, 2008. 402 pages. \$29.50/paperback.

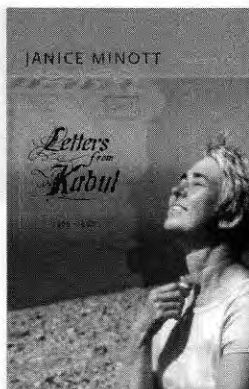
In 1966, Janice Minott had the rare opportunity to spend two years in Kabul when her husband was appointed Peace Corps director for Afghanistan. Her detailed letters to friends and family about her daily life comprise the backbone of *Letters from Kabul*, a memoir about sojourning in a remote part of the world 40 years ago.

Minott's book vividly records what it was like for a Quaker to raise three young children amid the culture of the time—a "biblical" world of robed Afghans; narrow, unpaved streets; poor sanitation; and the occasional band of nomads passing through on camels. At the same time, she documents life in a version of U.S. culture that can seem almost equally alien: a community of expatriate government workers that expected wives to receive visitors at the airport dressed in "the required female attire" (hat, high heels and gloves), to host welcoming receptions for 100 guests, and to offer counseling to lonely Peace Corps volunteers—all with no pay or training (except for a little tutoring in Farsi).

With Quaker intelligence and wit, Minott blends the personal with the political to provide a vivid bird's-eye view of life in Afghanistan during the brief period between the end of British Empire and the beginning of the Soviet invasions. She offers lively scenes of daily Afghan life, including encounters with donkeys, cows, small camel caravans, shops for woodworking, tin-smiths, fruit bazaars, and roasting kabobs "all open to view, part of the heartbeat of the street." Black-and-white photos enhance the text; particularly poignant is one showing the 175-foot Bamiyan Buddha that was destroyed by the Taliban in 2000.

Minott's letters reveal mixed feelings about the Peace Corps workers and their presence in the region. As time goes on, she moves from distress at the smallpox, dysentery, and poverty to respect for Afghan resourcefulness, hospitality, and culture; and she increasingly questions whether the U.S. push for modernization is doing harm or good. She also comments on significant events that erupted during her stay, such as the Israeli Six Day War and racial unrest at home.

There's a bit of irony in Minott's descriptions of oppressed Afghan women; to a contemporary reader it seems obvious that U.S. wives of the time were, to a lesser degree, also exploited by their social order. At the

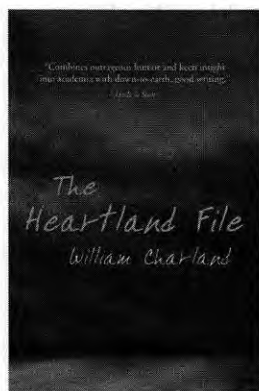


same time, there's something touching about the energy and enthusiasm with which she embraced her duties—from seeking peanut butter at the bazaar, to entertaining a U.S. ambassador, to teaching English to Afghan women.

Minott's life in Kabul reinforced her awareness of the need to move from consumerism to simplicity. She notes that Afghans waste nothing, and she is determined not to fall back into U.S. materialism, begging relatives not to shower her children with plastic toys. She also values a lifestyle with no possibility of watching TV or movies. "We may not be able to buy a steak, but we have something you can't buy in the States—time to be together as a family," she says. These are issues U.S. women still struggle with 40 years later.

—Diane Reynolds

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



The Heartland File

By William Charland. Wheatmark, 2008. 292 pages. \$21.95/paperback.

Bill Charland is a Friend who has written six nonfiction books and one other novel. *The Heartland File* is the first of his works I have read, and I'm ready to go look up his other pieces, secure in the prospect of a good read.

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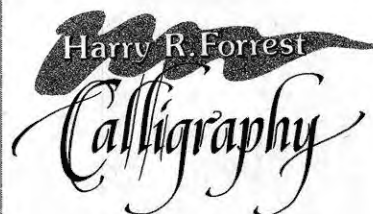
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man returning with his new PhD as dean of students to the small Kansas college where he did his undergraduate work and starred on the basketball team. Matt's stunningly beautiful and talented wife draws sketches and observes the social interplay as Matt greets his former professors and coach as fellow faculty members.

The novel gradually shifts into mystery mode as the dire financial straits of the college are revealed and the college president jumps (or is pushed?) from his fourth-floor office window. With excellent use of foreshadowing, Charland lets the reader discover that things and people are not as they seem. There are some surprises and interesting turns along the way to a rather satisfying ending.

How is this a Quaker novel? Well, the protagonist enjoys good sex, but we don't dwell on it. He agrees to teach a course on Wicca, and offers acceptance to a subject many would automatically cast into the villain role (a role that is reserved for a shadowy corporate entity). He wins the athletes' respect by listening to them and challenging their posturing. A major confrontation that could have become violent is channeled into a climactic basketball game. In the end, the protagonist supports a negotiated settlement of the university's relationship to the corporate entity. Is this how a Friend would behave in these situations? Yeah, most likely.

The Heartland File is not too gory but plenty exciting, and particularly appealing to anyone with experience in a small college setting. I recommend it for your next extended air or railroad trip; it's a page-turner.

—Sandy Farley

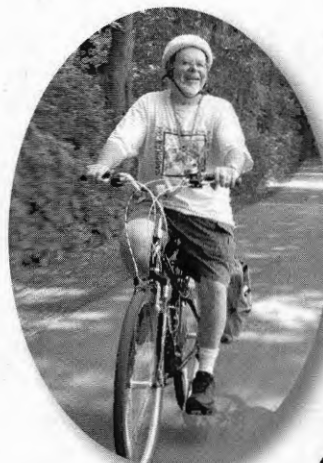
Sandy Farley is a member of Palo Alto (Calif.) Meeting.

Listening Below the Noise: A Meditation on the Practice of Silence

By Anne D. LeClaire. HarperCollins, 2009. 240 pages. \$19.99/paperback.

Anne LeClaire's engaging account about learning the discipline of silence begins with an epigraph from May Sarton's *Plant Dreaming Deep*, a memoir about settling down after a life of peregrination: "Silence was the food I was after." As LeClaire's book makes clear, the satisfactions of silence can fill us like a good meal, moving our spirits toward a serenity that's increasingly rare in this frenetic world.

Early on, LeClaire notes that she mis-



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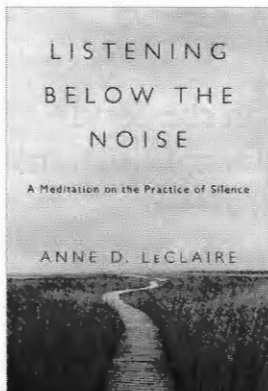
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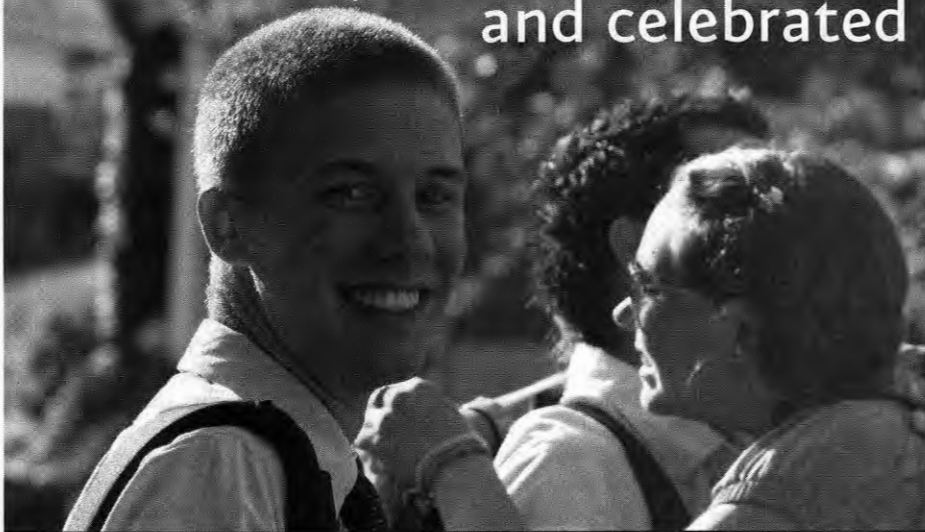


took a busy life for a rich one. As a novelist with two children and a Cape Cod fisherman husband, her daily activity for many years revolved around work and a busy family. She suggests that "we live our days with ears turned outward, ready to respond, always on the alert, almost as if we walked around holding huge ear trumpets to our heads, like figures in an old cartoon." It's an arresting and comical image, skewering gently we who live in reaction, ever-ready to answer the cell phone, email, or text. This chatter-heavy life warps our sensibilities like rain-soaked lumber, twisting along odd lines that come to feel all too natural. We morph into ludicrous figures, checking our BlackBerrys under the tablecloth at dinner.

LeClaire's book does not spend the bulk of its energies, however, railing against the complexities of "that modern-day horror—multitasking." It mainly tells the story of the effects of setting aside a full 24-hour day for silence every two weeks since January 1992. It all began one afternoon while the author was watching a pair of eiders at the edge of Nantucket Sound. Concerned about a friend whose mother was dying, LeClaire went to the ocean and stood watching the ducks, suddenly overwhelmed by a sense of reverence and an extraordinary "sensation of timelessness and connection with the universe." She actually heard a voice speak the words, "Sit in silence." This surprisingly literal call—especially for an extroverted, talkative woman—led LeClaire to begin a practice that had nothing to do with religion. The balance of the book records the ups and downs of her years-long adventure with every-other-Monday silence: from its initial, serendipitous benefits (increased focus and a boost to her writing), to the predictable conflicts with friends and family, to a leveled-out acceptance and worn-coat familiarity.

For Quakers familiar with silence as worship and spiritual practice, this book will not be revelatory. Observations like, "Silence was serving as the portal through which I was beginning to come fully into life," will probably not strike Friends as par-

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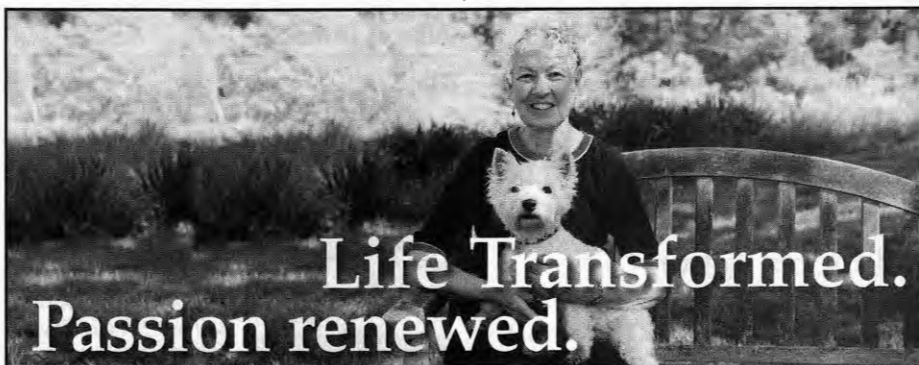


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ticularly noteworthy. Yet there is much to garner from this pleasantly crafted book, with its novelist's knack for laying down a good narrative line. The author is also wise to remind her readers that to be silenced "is not at all the same as choosing not to speak." One does wonder about the level of privilege that made possible the writer's foray into quietude. It's easier to bathe in silence when one has the financial means to afford the spa.

LeClaire finally discovers, at the end of the book, that she's been engaged in a spiritual practice long recognized by Friends and other religious groups, and she now leads workshops about silence. These are good things. And while this book will never be a spiritual classic—its fare is too frothy and familiar for that—I still welcome nearly any plea for more quiet in a world where Jetsons ringtones drown out the plaintiveness of the wren's song. As LeClaire points out, "Noise is a form of violence done to us, but we have become so accustomed to it, it barely registers, like a car alarm that blares on and on but no one heeds." Hers is a call that more of us would do well to hear.

—James W. Hood

Jim Hood, a member of Friendship (N.C.) Meeting, teaches 19th century British literature at Guilford College.

Finding the Taproot of Simplicity: A Movement between Inner Knowledge and Outer Action

By Frances Irene Taber. Pendle Hill Pamphlet No. 400. 28 pages. \$5/paperback.

Originally published 22 years ago in Leonard Kenworthy's 1987 anthology, *Friends Face the World: Some Continuing and Current Quaker Concerns*, this pamphlet puts the search for simplicity squarely in Quaker history without feeling the slightest bit dated. In Taber's view, simplicity is not a goal unto itself, but "the by-product of a single-hearted intention to follow God all the way, wherever we may be led." Even more to the point, she adds, "Attempts to talk about simplicity in itself, without recognizing its vital root, usually end by going in circles around the impossible question of deciding just what is simple."

Early Quakers, says Taber, developed a Testimony on Simplicity through their focus on the constant movement between the inner life and the outer one. She discusses George Fox's influence on this thinking,

and John Woolman's focus on "the right use of things" with relation to what Taber calls "the congruence between the inner and the outer life and the resulting simplification of the outer." Woolman, she says, was very clear in drawing the connection between luxury, unnecessary labor, oppression, and war; yet he also allowed for full enjoyment of that which we possess in good conscience.

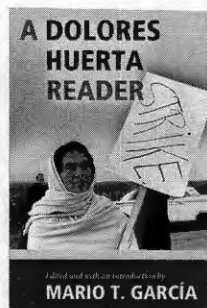
Taber then goes on to explore examples of 20th-century witnesses to simplicity and to compare the voluntary simplicity movement with Quaker beliefs.

I found this deeply thoughtful and thought-provoking pamphlet one that I could read (and have read) many times over with the same sense of inspiration and discovery. It's a true gem that encapsulates much about the relationship between Friends' history and their core values—and might make a good addition to the syllabus of a "Quakerism 101" course.

—Catherine Wald

Cathy Wald, a member of Amawalk (N.Y.) Meeting, is the book review editor for FRIENDS JOURNAL.

Also of Interest



A Dolores Huerta Reader

Edited and with an introduction by Mario T. Garcia. University of New Mexico Press, 2008. 350 pages. \$27.95/paperback.

An overview of the work of an often overlooked civil rights activist who co-led the farm workers' struggles with Cesar Chavez. She is a key proponent of feminist, pacifist, and environmental issues who has served as a role model for generations of Chicana and Latina women.

The Golden Thread: A Godlike World, Nirvana

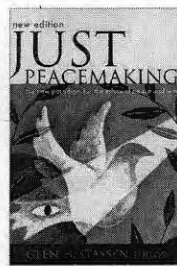
By Robert Frank Sisler. Xlibris, 2008. 204 pages. \$19.99/paperback.

A self-published work by a retired professor and moral ethicist who serves as clerk of Peace and Social Action at Conscience Bay (N.Y.) Meeting.

Houses on the Sand? Pacifist Denominations in Nazi Germany.

By James Irvin Lichti. Peter Lang Publishing, 2008. 292 pages. \$78.95/hardcover.

This UCLA dissertation on nonconformist denominations that did not embrace Nazi values includes several chapters about Quakers in Germany at the time.



Just Peacemaking: The New Paradigm for the Ethics of Peace and War

Edited by Glen H. Stassen. The Pilgrim Press, 2008. 234 pages. \$18/paperback.

Originally published in 1998 and revised in 2004, this new edition of 23 essays contains a new introduction, conclusion, and comments; edited by Lewis B. Smedes, Professor of Christian Ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary.

Quakers in Medicine: Friends of the Truth

By J.M.S. Pearce. William Sessions Ltd., 2009. 115 pages. £9.95/paperback.

This reference work briefly describes the careers of 26 British medical doctors and medical scientists.

The Westminster Handbook of Women in American Religious History

Edited by Susan Hill Lindley and Eleanor J. Stebner. Westminster John Knox Press, 2008. 249 pages. \$19.77/paperback.

A wide-ranging but inconsistent reference work with brief biographies of women ranging from Catholics, Hindus, Methodists, Jews, Baptists, Buddhists, and including abolitionists, women's rights advocates, poets, Wiccans, and several Quaker women.

The Web Working Group has implemented Google Maps for Baltimore Yearly Meeting. Not only does this enable pan and zoom to find meetings, but also to investigate a satellite view of the yearly meeting region. The maps depict the highway system, and can overlay satellite photography at any scale. Visit www.bym-rsf.org/quakers/meetings/BYMap.shtml. —*Interchange, Baltimore Yearly Meeting*

In a statement addressed "To Friends Everywhere," the executive director and the two clerks of Pendle Hill announced that the Quaker center for study and contemplation, located in Wallingford, Pa., is considering a recommendation that its two governing boards be replaced by a single board. This recommendation, presented in meetings last April to the Pendle Hill General Board and the Pendle Hill Board of Trustees, came from the Visiting Committee on Pendle Hill Governance. The Visiting Committee urged that Pendle Hill "create a simpler governance structure more in keeping with the scale of the institution." During the April meetings, the Pendle Hill General Board asked the board of trustees to develop a proposal for a single governing board as recommended by the Visiting Committee. In response, the board of trustees charged a liaison group, composed of both trustees and general board members, to bring to the next meeting of trustees a proposal for a "single board structure, and to specify committees as needed." The board of trustees met in July, and the next meeting of the general board is in October. According to the Pendle Hill statement released by Steve Smith, clerk of the general board; Deborah Shaw, clerk of the board of trustees; and Lauri Perman, executive director of Pendle Hill, the general board and trustees "made these decisions at the end of a weekend of careful listening and attention to one another. We are grateful for the trust within and between Pendle Hill's two current boards. When the opportunity to act came, Friends moved quickly, infused with joy and the in-rushing of Spirit." —*Statement from Pendle Hill; telephone conversation with Lauri Perman*

State College (Pa.) Meeting has embarked upon a nationwide campaign to get the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill, H.R. 2085, passed in Congress. In the 1940s, the U.S. government recognized conscientious objection to military service. A process was set up to recognize those who could not and would not participate in military activities due to leadings of their conscience. The government allowed these in-

dividuals to serve communities both in the U.S. and abroad in positive nonmilitary ways. So far, the government offers no legal recourse for nonmilitary conscientious objectors, including Quakers, to allocate their annual tax dollars to any nonmilitary appropriation within the Federal Budget. H.R. 2085 was first introduced in 1972 as H.R. 1921. Representative John Lewis (Ga.) recently reintroduced this bill as H.R. 2085 along with ten co-sponsors. For further information, visit the website <http://capwiz.com/fconl/issues/alert/?alertid=13277711>. —*Jane M. Madsen*

Quaker Faith and Fellowship is a cyberspace community that offers online meetings for worship with a coffee and tea room for after-meeting discussions and a forum for informal discussions. All from around the world are invited to visit and schedule a meeting for worship, or to simply attend one already started. George Leonard is the administrator of the website, found at www.quakerfaithandfellowship.org. —*The Friendly World, Ireland's Quaker Journal*

■ BULLETIN BOARD

Upcoming Events

- September 4-7—North Carolina Yearly Meeting
- September/October—General Conference of Friends in India

Opportunities

Quaker Quest, an outreach program created with contemporary seekers in mind, is generating interest among meetings in the Chesapeake Region. The program is based on the premise that the Quaker way is "a spiritual path for our time," which is "simple, radical, and contemporary." Quaker Quest is simultaneously an inreach program, asking host meetings to articulate their faith and to deepen relations within their meeting community. Monthly meetings wishing to host a Quaker Quest series participate in a process that includes a full-day workshop with trainer/facilitators followed by discernment with the entire meeting about whether to proceed with the program. To learn more about Quaker Quest, visit www.fgcquaker.org/quakerquest or contact Elaine Craudercuff at (215) 561-1700 ext. 3052.

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Deaths

Evans—*Arthur Evans*, 89, on March 10, 2009, in Santa Rosa, Calif., of cancer. Arthur was born on Feb. 21, 1920, in Philadelphia, Pa., where he grew up attending Germantown Meeting. He attended Haverford College, where he was in a meditation group sponsored by Thomas Kelly. After a brief period as a teacher at Scattergood School, teaching of the mystical aspects of Quakerism, he earned his medical degree at University of Pennsylvania. He married Johanna des Plantes in 1949. They moved with their three children to Denver in 1955, where Quakers were familiar with his work with Tom Kelly. He later gave up his medical practice and worked at an inner-city clinic treating low-income people as part of the War on Poverty. For 20 years, Arthur withheld the portion from his federal income tax that he believed went to war and weapons, and in 1963, he was jailed for 90 days for refusing to turn over income records to the Internal Revenue Service. After being released, he protested the treatment of inmates in the Jefferson County Jail in Golden, Colo. In the early 1970s he became a follower of Prem Rawat, then known as Maharaj Ji, and founded a center for followers in Denver. At the same time, he remained a member of Mountain View Meeting in Denver, saying when asked about the apparent conflict, "If you had the opportunity to sit at the knee of Jesus Christ or Buddha, wouldn't you do it?" After his divorce from Johanna, he married Patricia Brackett. Inspired by the non-violent examples of Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., Arthur was an early organizer of protests against the Vietnam War and the U.S. military incursion in the Dominican Republic. Later, he and Patricia divorced. For many years he was also a prominent activist for organizations such as the Fellowship of Reconciliation and AFSC. In spite of his strong, stern views, he was calm and centered, and Friends often went to him for personal and spiritual advice. He lived most of his life with a debilitating congenital circulatory disorder that hampered his movement and resulted in several surgeries. For many years he walked with two canes and later used a wheelchair. Arthur was preceded in death by his former wife, Johanna Evans. Arthur is survived by his former wife, Patricia Evans; his sons, Steve and Caleb Evans; and his daughter, Alida M. Evans.

Johnson—*Mary Leeds Johnson*, 79, on January 13, 2009, in Lexington, Mass., of complications from Parkinson's disease. Mary was born on May 14, 1929, in Philadelphia, Pa., to Quaker parents Hadassah M. and Morris E. Leeds. She graduated from Germantown Friends School in 1947 and earned a BA in Biology from Antioch College. In 1953 she began attending graduate school at Harvard, earning a master's in Biology. While she was there she married fellow graduate student and Antioch graduate Everett Mendelsohn. She and Everett had a son and two daughters, and Mary put aside aspirations for a PhD. As a young family they lived in both Cambridge, Mass., and Cambridge, England, where Everett did research and Mary took the opportunity to compare school systems and teaching

approaches, visiting widely in local schools. In 1961 Mary and others from Friends Meeting at Cambridge (Mass.) opened a Quaker school in Cambridge, where her experiences kindled a passion for teaching. Initially working in the office as treasurer and bookkeeper, Mary soon began teaching math and science and became the 8th grade homeroom teacher. Several years later she received a master's in Education from Harvard and taught for two years in an alternative public school in Cambridge. Everett and Mary divorced in 1974. Having remained in touch with her high school sweetheart, Walter Johnson, a Quaker from Philadelphia, Mary married Walter in 1974. Her challenging experience at the alternative public school had aroused her interest in the behavior of groups, and after earning a master's in Counseling from Lesley College in 1977, Mary worked for several years as a family counselor, especially in the areas of divorce, remarriage, and stepfamilies. She continued to serve on the Board of Trustees at Cambridge Friends School and worked with the Cambridge School Committee. In 1982, Mary returned to Cambridge Friends School, this time as head of school. She loved the job, stayed for 12 years, and spearheaded an effort to diversify the school. Committed to the school's antiracism work, Mary worked hard to open doors for teachers and families of color. She loved all sides of education, and throughout her life participated in local choral groups. She also enjoyed getting together with friends to play the recorder, mandolin, and guitar. Walt and Mary spent many happy summers sailing around Cape Cod. She spent her final years living in Brookhaven at Lexington. Mary was preceded in death by her husband, Walter Johnson, in 1998. She leaves behind a son, Daniel Mendelsohn; two daughters, Sarah and Johanna Mendelsohn; a stepson, Ralph Johnson; five grandchildren; and a sister, Esther Cooperman.

Leonard—*Mary Jane Leonard*, 91, on March 27, 2009, in Gwynedd, Pa. Mary Jane was born on October 31, 1917, in Pittsburgh, Pa., and married Rowland King Leonard after her graduation from Chatham College in 1939 with a BA in Social Work. She and Rowland joined the Religious Society of Friends in 1941 and did social work in cities across the northeast: Pittsburgh, Pa.; Montclair, N.J.; Newburgh, N.Y.; Bangor, Maine; Manchester, N.H.; Reading, Pa.; Richmond, Va.; Philadelphia, Pa.; and finally Gwynedd. Mary Jane was a feminist who considered it a woman's privilege to do whatever work she wished without having to worry about what it paid. In the first 30 years of her marriage she acted on this belief by serving in local and regional leadership positions the American Association of University Women, Boy and Girl Scouts, League of Women Voters, and YWCA. During the Vietnam War, her protests led to her arrest for civil disobedience. In 1969, the family's economic situation led her to take a job in the Admissions Department of Germantown Friends School, and she worked there until 1982. Always physically active, she and Rowland repeated their honeymoon trip canoeing the Fulton Chain of Lakes with their four children for their 18th wedding anniversary. Mary Jane spent her last 40 years in Central Philadelphia

Meeting, but she was active in local meetings wherever she lived. She led the First-day school program for many years in Reading Meeting, and served on the Worship and Ministry Committee and the Westtown School Committee. She also served on the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Religious Education and Temperance Committee and the Boards of Friends Select School and Stapley Hall. She traveled to East and Southeast Asia, Europe, and Africa, where she climbed 17,000 feet of Tanzania's Mount Kilimanjaro in her late 50s. In later years she and Rowland rode a first-generation Schwinn ten-speed tandem bicycle. Mary Jane was still swimming and doing water aerobics a few months before her death. A woman of sharp intelligence, she often expressed her strong convictions pointedly but lovingly. Mary Jane was predeceased by her husband of 55 years, Rowland Leonard, in 1994, and by her grandson, Kevin Bewley, in 1998. She is survived by one son, David Leonard (Leslie); three daughters, Jo Bewley (Richard), Linda Leonard, and MaryLou Leonard (Andy Stein); eight grandchildren, Kenneth Leonard, Joanna Leonard, Christopher Leonard, James Leonard, Owen Bewley, Elizabeth Pageotte, Gulielma Leonard Fager, and Asa Leonard Fager; and 13 great-grandchildren, Joey Good; Wesley Leonard, Cameron Leonard, Camerah Leonard, Kathleen Leonard, Sarah Leonard, Megan Leonard, Sean Leonard; Alex Pageotte, Haley Pageotte; Emory Bewley, Gavin Bewley, and Evan O'Leonard.

Richardson—*Channing B. Richardson*, 91, on March 22, 2009, in Kennett Square, Pa. Channing was born on October 13, 1917, in Cambridge, Mass., to Norman E. Richardson and Agnes Clough Richardson. Channing grew up in Evanston, Ill., where he graduated from Evanston Township High School in 1935. In 1939 he graduated from Amherst College, where he had majored in Government and History. At Amherst he developed his lifelong love of international affairs and interest in peace. Channing attended Cambridge (Mass.) Meeting for two years while studying law and government at Harvard, and when he was called up for the draft he applied for and received conscientious objector status (as a Methodist). Soon after that he joined the Religious Society of Friends, and during World War II he served in Civilian Public Service Camps in Petersham, Mass.; Coleville, Calif.; Pendle Hill, Pa.; Big Flats, N.Y.; Penhurst, Pa.; and Glendora, Calif. Upon discharge in 1945, he joined the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration and managed Displaced Persons camps. In 1947 he entered Columbia University, and during his study he ran the university's UN Office at Lake Success, administered Palestinian camps in the Gaza Strip for the UN, and ran foreign student seminars for AFSC. Channing met his future wife, Comfort Cary, while climbing Mt. Katahdin in Maine, and they were married in 1948, in Germantown Meeting in Philadelphia, Pa. Channing finished his PhD in 1950, receiving the university's Curting Fellowship for his dissertation on the beginnings of the Palestine refugee problem. After teaching at Columbia for two years, he moved to Clinton, N.Y., where he

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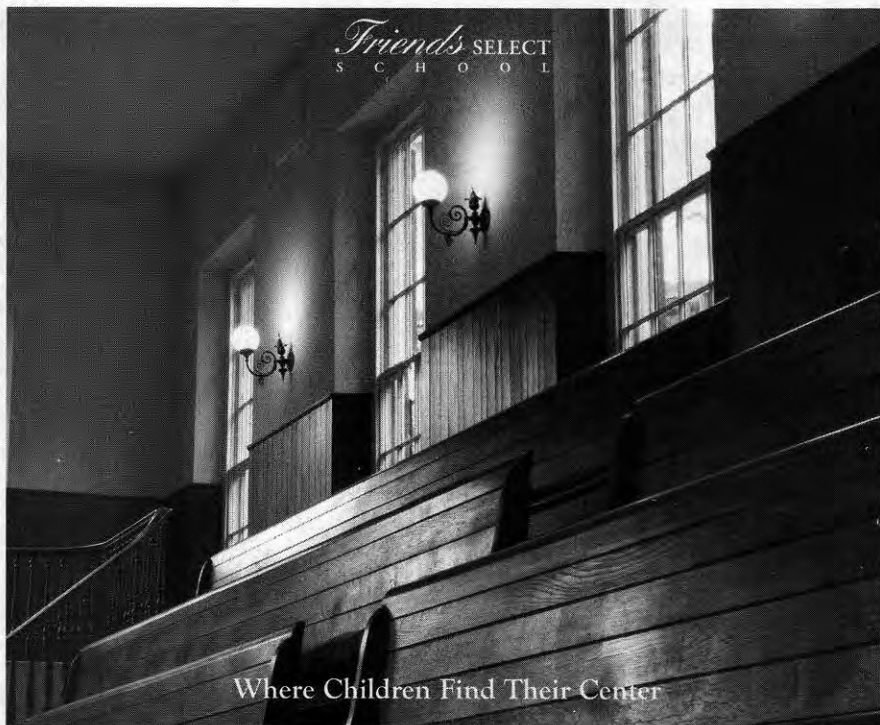
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taught at Hamilton College until he retired in 1983, and where he was active in Mohawk Valley Meeting. He was Hamilton's first professor of International Affairs and served as chairman of the Department of Government. Channing felt that it was in the U.S. interest to lead the world towards peace through the development of effective international law. He taught classes in international relations, American foreign policy, African politics, international law, Vietnam, African literature, and international organization. He moved in 1957 to what is now Zimbabwe, having won a Ford Foundation grant for a year's study of southern Africa. He spent the summer of 1961 in Africa, laying the groundwork for AFSC's series of conferences for young African diplomats. In 1963-64 he lectured on international law and politics for the U.S. Agency for International Development in Nairobi, Kenya. Channing was active in a local program offering accommodations to visitors for Hamilton Commencement and Family Weekends called "A Better Chance" (ABC). He spent time in Nigeria during the Biafran war on behalf of AFSC, served on selection committees for the Fulbright awards and Ford Foundation, and lectured at the Salzburg Seminar in Austria in American Studies. Channing enjoyed hiking, tennis, skiing, squash, sailing, travel, and gardening. He read widely and freely gave reading suggestions to anyone who would listen. His love for art and classical music grew steadily. He is survived by his wife Comfort Cary Richardson; four children, Margaret Morris Richardson, Ann Poore Richardson, David Channing Richardson, and Eric Cary Richardson; his children's wives and partners; and three grandchildren.

Tesdell—*Loren Tesdell*, 88, on November 19, 2008, in Edina, Minn. Loren was born on April 20, 1920, on a family farm near Slater, Iowa, to Dora Tonsfeldt and Bernt L. Tesdell. As a teen, he attended an interdenominational church summer camp where community service was the main focus. It was at such a camp that he met his future wife, Margaret Stanley, a Quaker. Loren and Margaret had a great influence on each other, and during World War II, realizing that he could not kill another human being for any reason, he worked in Civilian Public Service at Cleveland State Hospital and with relief shipments to Europe at Church World Service. He became a Quaker in 1948, when he married Margaret in a Quaker ceremony on the campus of William Penn College in Oskaloosa, Iowa. Even before he became a Quaker, Loren sought to live in "that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars." Margaret and Loren spent their first year of marriage in Gaza working with Palestinian refugees as members of an international Quaker relief team. Loren decided to become a teacher after earning his PhD in Political Science from Stanford University. He taught first at University of Texas in Austin and at Temple University. Loren and Margaret brought up their five children in Bryn Gweled, an intentionally diverse community started by Quakers on a 240-acre farm in Bucks County, Pa., where the family were members of Southampton (Pa.) Meeting. Loren returned to the

Middle East in 1964 to teach at American University in Cairo. Later he taught at University of Minnesota. In 1969 he began teaching at Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall, Minn., where he remained for 20 years. He and Margaret started a Quaker meeting in their house, the closest meeting being in the Twin Cities, more than three hours away. Loren administered international programs for several years with AFSC in Philadelphia, and after retiring, moved to Saint Paul, Minn., where he attended Twin Cities Meeting, transferring his membership in 2005. He was active on the Peace and Social Action Committee at the meeting, and often spoke about the Middle East in an effort to counterbalance what he saw as a one-sided perspective presented by U.S. media. He gave historical background from all sides, believing that peace in the Middle East is possible and that it is the key to world peace. Loren was preceded in death by his wife, Margaret Tesdell, in 1991. He is survived by his children, Lee S. Tesdell, Rebecca Tesdell, Erica Tesdell, Jon B. Tesdell, and Carl W. Tesdell; and his grandchildren, Omar L. Tesdell, Ramsey G. Tesdell, and Marty List-Tesdell.

Valentine—*Bruce Roberts Valentine*, 91, on August 23, 2008, in Dayville, Conn. Bruce was born on July 20, 1917, in New York City, to Elizabeth Conrow and Morris Crawford Valentine II. Bruce joined Brooklyn (N.Y.) Meeting at the time of his marriage in 1941 to Virginia Mayer, whose family was one of the founders of Brooklyn Meeting in the early 19th century. Bruce graduated from Swarthmore College in 1939 and Cornell Medical College in 1943. During World War II he served as a physician in the U.S. Navy, crossing the English Channel 63 times to take care of wounded. He and Virginia were active in Brooklyn Meeting until 1947, when they moved to Abington, Conn. There he helped found a small hospital, the Eliza F. Clark Memorial Center, where he practiced until 1982. During that period he was active in many civic and professional organizations in northeastern Connecticut, serving as head of Day Kimball Hospital's Obstetrics/Gynecology department; president of the Medical Society; president of Connecticut Academy of Family Practice; delegate to American Academy of Family Practice; school physician for the Pomfret, Eastford, and Ashford school systems; President of Abington Social Library, and assistant state medical examiner. Bruce also served on committees that founded the Windham Tolland County 4-H Camp and Dempsey Medical School. Even though Bruce and Virginia rarely attended Brooklyn Meeting during the following 60 years, they maintained their membership. Bruce was preceded in death by two brothers, Morris C. Valentine and George W. Valentine. He is survived by his wife, Virginia Mayer Valentine; his son, Robert Valentine (Althea Stickney Valentine); his daughter, Mary Feathers (Ken); a granddaughter, Kira Valentine (Tommy Ender); three grandsons, Eric Valentine (Shari Tarleton), Andrew Feathers, and Stephen Feathers; a great-granddaughter, Zoe Ender; and two great-grandsons, Cailean Tarleton Valentine and Zane Ender.

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peace, and not the one who strives to satisfy such desires." (Bg. 2.70)

Gerald Niles
Daytona Beach, Fla.

Factual corrections

The special edition of *FRIENDS JOURNAL* on Marriage, Gender, and Relationships was magnificent. Allow me, however, to correct some factual errors in Steve Chase's piece on "Homosexuality and the Bible" that not only weaken the force of his argument but may also confirm common misperceptions (dare I say longstanding cultural prejudices?) that Judaism is a religion of severity and intolerance.

Chase writes that Leviticus 20:13 contains "two of the 613 religious laws described in the Torah as being directly commanded by God . . . and 'a perpetual statute throughout your generations, in all your settlements.'" These two laws are the prohibition of gay male sexual behavior and "the moral imperative on the part of the faithful to kill all men who engage in" such. In contrast, Chase claims to "side instead with Jesus," who has other priorities to achieve the Kingdom of God.

Not exactly so. Going back millennia, Judaism has never believed in biblical literalism. Chase mistakenly conflates the literal biblical text with the many centuries of rabbinic interpretation and application of the text. It was rabbinic tradition that found 613 commandments in the Hebrew Bible long after the biblical canon was closed. That number was enshrined by tradition and, while many lists enumerating the 613 were attempted, I know of not one in all of history that includes the death penalty for homosexual acts. Indeed, the two most famous and authoritative lists for Orthodox Jews, by the medieval Spanish rabbi Maimonides and the modern Lithuanian rabbi "The Chofetz Chaim," contain the prohibition on homosexual acts but do not include any punishment for them.

Jewish tradition is even more definitive on other acts that Chase, but not the ancient rabbis, includes among the "613 laws of Moses." Chase asks whether the Pope, relying on the Hebrew Bible, "would demand that all faithful Catholics kill every child they know who talks back to their parents." On this matter the Talmud is clear: "There never was and never will be" a child who is so rebellious as to deserve death.

I hope readers of *FRIENDS JOURNAL* know that the vast majority of Jews wholeheartedly agree with Chase that if

occasional biblical passages are "hateful, cruel or violent . . . as a few of them are . . . they should not only be disregarded, but actively challenged by the faithful" on the basis of our core religious values. With regard to homosexuality in particular, the Reconstructionist, Reform, Renewal, and Conservative movements of Judaism are on record as advocating absolute civil and religious equality for gays and lesbians, including the right to marry. Only the Orthodox, representing some 5–10 percent of U.S. Jews, continue to follow the biblical prohibition.

(Rabbi) David Osachy
Winter Park, Fla.

Jesus on judging

In reading Steve Chase's article, "Homosexuality and the Bible: One Quaker's Response to the Pope" (*FJ* June), I realized that he was not aware that Jesus condemned those who called their brother "effeminate" (abnormal). Yes, it is in the Gospels, namely Matthew 5:22, translated from the Aramaic language, which Jesus spoke. Unfortunately, the translation in the King James Bible was, mistakenly, "fools."

In the early 1900s there were small, rural villages in eastern Turkey that still spoke Aramaic. George Lamsa grew up in one of them and later translated into English the "Holy Bible" from the Aramaic of the Peshitta. This was/is the Bible of "The Church of the East." Although identical to the translations of the Bible we are familiar with in most respects, there are some real differences. In Aramaic, the word for "rope" and "camel" are almost identical, but in the Bible the translation from Aramaic is "it is easier for a rope to go through the eye of a needle," not camel.

So, the accurate translation of the last phrase of Matthew 5:22 is "and whosoever says to his brother, you are effeminate (abnormal, brutish) is condemned to hell fire." Here is Jesus, once again, sticking up for all of God's children.

Marilyn Roper
Houlton, Maine

Quaker weddings and spiritual citizenship

More often than not, the family and friends of the bride and groom are unfamiliar, not just with the traditions of Friends, but also with our distinctive beliefs. As a newly convinced Friend of less than a decade, I understand the bafflement of parents and old school friends. Upon

first acquaintance with the peculiar people, you can read about Friends or be told about their ways in more detail than you would care to hear—and still not quite understand. It isn't that Friends don't have a liturgy or rituals; it is just that ours tend to be less formal and more subtle than what non-Friends are used to. The structure is far less apparent.

Also, we make it up as we go along. We improvise. To those familiar only with the other "major" traditions, the value that we place upon inspiration and spontaneous expression is unusual, to say the least. It probably seems pretty risky. You can describe a Quaker wedding—a meeting with attention to marriage—to other people, but they are not really going to understand the process until they have experienced it. Experience is what Friends are all about, and there are severe limits on the ability of human beings to describe experience. You had to be there, as they say. Having been there, you might agree with me that there is something wonderful about Quaker weddings.

The number of non-Friends present may actually be larger than the number of meeting attenders and members, which creates a challenge for the latter outnumbered group. There may be a moment of truth in the process. The bride and groom have made their vows. The parents each stood and spoke. Some Friends, in turn, have spoken. Out of the extended silence which follows, it slowly becomes clear to the friends (who are not Friends) that it is their turn, and if they do not speak now, the opportunity will pass and be gone forever. "Hearts are witnesses," a Friend once said, quoting an ancient proverb. Often, it is a person who has been a longtime friend of either the bride or groom who rises to the occasion, sometimes with humor, sometimes with tears. And the message is usually heartfelt, perhaps what has never before been said quite so explicitly: this is what you mean to me. Only a stone could fail to be touched. As other non-Friends catch on, seizing the opportunity to speak, the emotional release became an avalanche, the mood one of exhilaration. This is the miracle of the wedding: without realizing it, all of the non-Friends become Quakers, if only for the time being. The meeting becomes a covered meeting (which I have rarely experienced otherwise) in which all of that affectionate attention, all of that love, is given in a focus upon the couple who are basking in its glory. It is, after all, not every day that all of the people who are

important to you gather in one place and make a concerted effort to tell you how much they love you, and why. At the last wedding I attended, the brother of the groom suddenly remarked, "Hey, this is really cool!" Exactly. This is us at our best, and it feels wonderful.

The other wonderful thing about Quaker weddings is the participation of the children. The kids of a meeting love the celebratory aspect of a wedding. It's a party with lots of treats! And eventually, lots of running around! Ironically, the kids of the meeting are old hands at the ways of Friends. For once, they have a better idea of what is going on than do many of the adults.

Some of the kids of the meeting may discover that there is no barrier to their participation. The culmination of the wedding is signing the wedding certificate. I stood behind a very young girl, whom I am glad to say did not hesitate, nor ask permission, but stepped right up, took the pen and laboriously created the nine block letters of her first name. It took her some time and effort to do this, and when she reached the end of her first name, there was no room left for the five letters of her last name. So she carefully wrote her last name on an ascending diagonal which reached up almost to touch the line above, yet managed to avoid intruding upon the white space of the adjacent gutter. What a wonderful gift to the bride and groom! At that moment, I realized that for any child of a Quaker meeting, spiritual citizenship begins as soon as they are able to sign their name to a wedding certificate. To his delight, a small boy had to be held horizontally above the table—a big grin on his face—in order to reach a line high up on the document.

The implicit message to the kids is that their participation is just as important as that of the adults, which is why the kids of the meeting should attend weddings. Weddings are good for them, as they are for us.

David Hopkinson
Bellingham, Wash.

Some notes on sexuality and marriage

Love isn't this gooey feeling you have inside. The theologians tell us that love is an act of the will. And the proper object of the will is the Good. And so I add: the love of another is the good of the other, the wholesome integrity of the other. Among the worst words ever spoken are: "If you love me you will. . . ." Irresponsible, mischievous sexual activity with no



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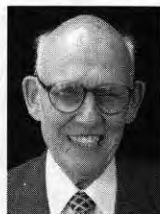
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permanent commitment redefines love, and redefines the beloved, as solely an occasion for sex. Whatever was a wholesome appreciation of the character, talents, intelligence, good humor, yes, even beauty and future earning power, the wholesomeness of the beloved is shabbily redefined as the good-in-bedness.

Irresponsible sexual activity even when discontinued creates memories, powerful memories that can disturb later self-appraisals. Such behavior can also inhibit more wholesome relationships both with a new acquaintance and with a better-reconsidered new attempt with the prior lover.

Fear (of pregnancy and/or STDs) was once a powerful motive for sexual abstinence. The high incidence of teen pregnancy and disease tells us that this is no longer the case. Perhaps fear is not the best word to use in this consideration. Let us try prudence, one of the four scriptural gifts of the Holy Spirit, as a protector from such undesirable results. Or we could try justice, another such gift, the justice of seeing another person as we would have others see us, a whole person with wit, hopes, and real love, a spirit, not an object of physical gratification. The other two gifts of the Spirit also fall neatly into context: Temperance teaches us that we are much more than our physical appetites and empowers us to control them, and fortitude gives us the strength to enter into a mature, responsible, committed relationship that will endure and provide joys yet undreamed of.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the faithful and kindle in them the fire of thy love.

Clarence Burley
Paxton, Mass.

How I became a Quaker: safe places

When I was first beginning to attend meeting for worship, I noticed that the clerk sometimes broke meeting a bit early and announced, "Friends, today is the day we Quakers hold meeting for business, so after a short break, let's reconvene." Not feeling ready to attend a meeting for business, I left the first few times I heard that announcement. Then one day I decided to stay and observe.

One of the business items that a Friend brought before the group that morning was a request from two ladies who were not present, friends of his but not Friends themselves, to use the meetinghouse for a

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commitment ceremony. A same-sex commitment ceremony—just in case I need to spell it out for you, gentle reader.

I waited for lightning to strike the building.

This was the first time I had ever been in the company of persons gathered as believers and practitioners of a religion who were openly talking about—you know—uh—gay people—who were intending to—well—you know—live together—with the blessing of God.

Then the Friend said something that I'll never forget:

"You may have noticed Gail and Kathy (not their real names) here attending meeting the past few weeks. They told me they feel safe here."

That's when lightning hit me.

They felt safe at the meetinghouse. They felt safe among Quakers.

And I thought of all the Christian denominations I knew about, including the one I had grown up in (and had been married in and had baptized my children into)—and I thought: Many gay people feel threatened or judged when they go to pray in those places. And I wondered for the first time in my life: How can any church say it proclaims the message of Jesus knowing (for they must know) that there are people sitting in the congregation who don't feel safe, who feel judged?

As the discussion progressed, I learned that this was not the first time such a request had been brought before meeting for business, and that the members had already threshed the question of whether or not to accept gay persons and had eventually decided in the affirmative.

"The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find. So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests."

Wherever some of God's children are threatened, all are threatened, and wherever some of God's children are made to feel safe and welcome, then all are truly safe and truly welcome. This, I think, is what the parable of the wedding feast is about in Chapter 22 of the Gospel of Matthew.

And you know, I'm straight, but I realized that I felt safe there too.

Barbara Quintiliano
Malvern, Pa.



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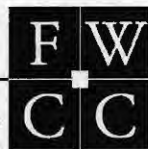
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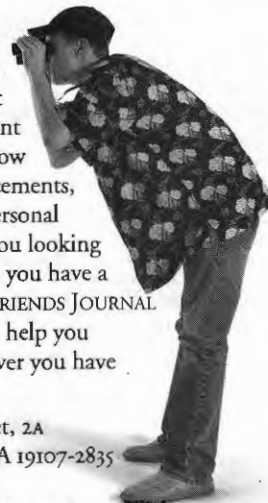
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Photos: (top) Ambon youth, Indonesia (AFSC photo); (left) China Summer Project, 2008 (AFSC photo); (right) Somali-Bantu students (Terry Foss)