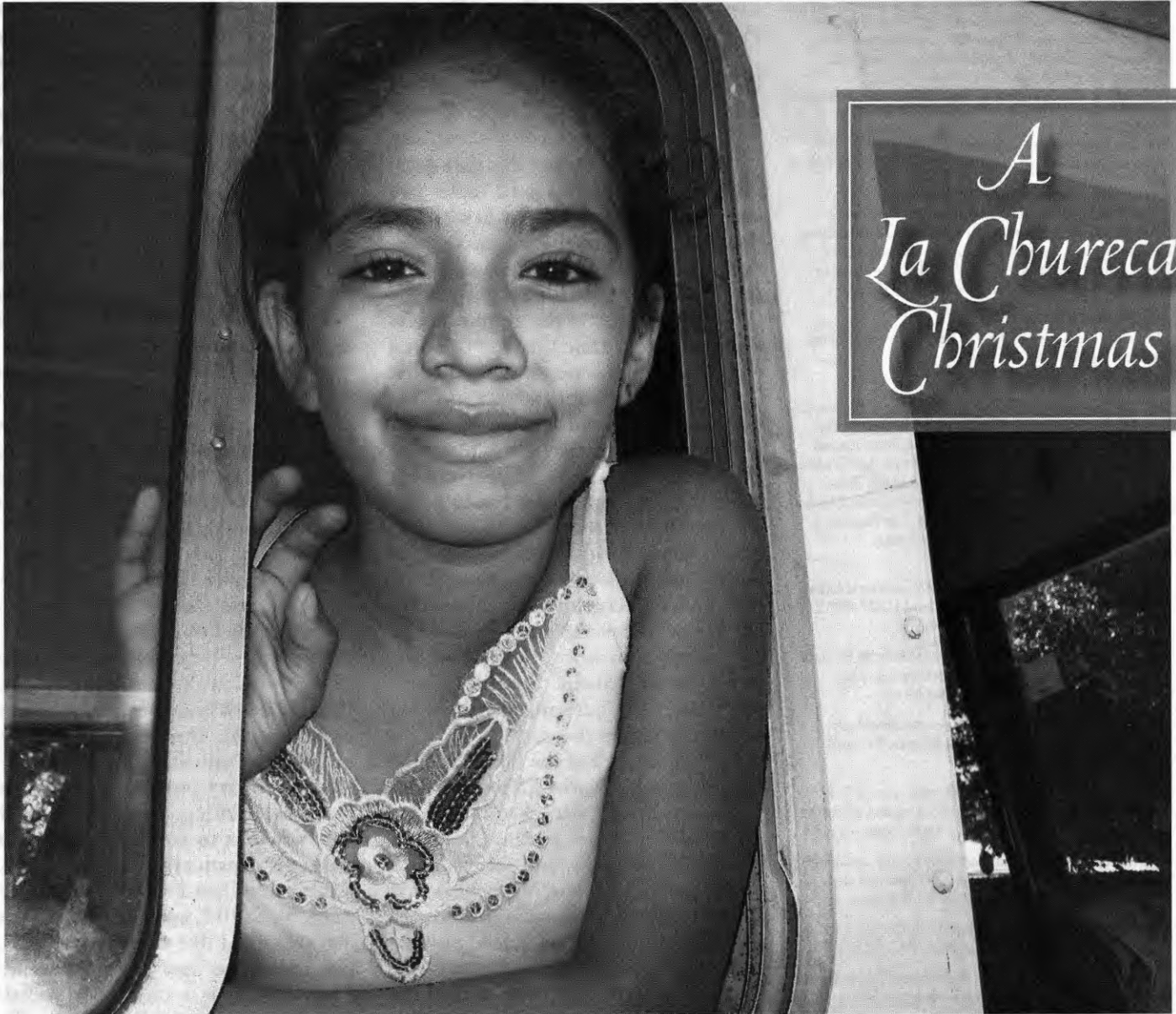


December 2009 • \$6

FRIENDS JOURNAL

Quaker
Thought
and
Life
Today



*A
La Chureca
Christmas*

Quaking with Confidence

Addressing the Differences
among Friends

**An independent
magazine serving
the Religious
Society of Friends**



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■ A Message from the Board and the Publisher

Is It Time to Lay Down FRIENDS JOURNAL?

An Open Letter from Janet Ross, Clerk of the Board of Trustees, Friends Publishing Corporation and Susan Corson-Finnerty, Publisher and Executive Editor

Dear Friends,

Is it time to lay down the FRIENDS JOURNAL? We do not like this question at all, but we need to let you know that our current financial situation is untenable. So, this is a serious question that we are asking ourselves, and—through this letter—are asking you.

We will describe the circumstances that force us to raise this question in a moment. But first, we want to note that laying down (closing) an institution is a question that Friends should always be willing to face. The Religious Society of Friends is not about buildings; it is not about historical properties and artifacts; it is not about particular schools or particular causes; and it is not about particular publications—even though we may love and cherish such things. We are “about” following God’s leading. We are “about” nurturing the Life of the Spirit. We are “about” Speaking Truth to Power. No outward form should hamper or hinder our path.

We—the Clerk of the Board and the Publisher and Executive Editor—strongly believe that FRIENDS JOURNAL helps Friends follow God’s leadings, nurtures the life of the Spirit, and speaks Truth to empower its readers. We believe that FRIENDS JOURNAL provides a source of communication among Friends unlike any other. That it is read across the branches of Quakerism and around the world. That it is used by discussion groups, monthly meetings, and bloggers as a starting place for searching conversations. That it offers connection to the Quaker world for isolated Friends and seekers. That its pages intrigue and reach out to those who resonate with its content, some of whom are searching for a religious community to call home. That its back issues are a treasure trove

of Quaker thought, which is often plumbed by authors and publishers who request permission to reprint, or by meetings who use its articles to assist meeting business. That outreach committees and worship and ministry committees alike make good use of it. That it is given as a gift to young Friends upon graduation from high school and to new members of Friends meetings. That it offers information, guidance, reflection, solace, inspiration and challenge to its readers every month. That it does all of this dependably and with excellence. We believe that FRIENDS JOURNAL is a **ministry made manifest in a magazine**.

FRIENDS JOURNAL has remained spiritually vigorous and financially viable for more than 50 years. Now we are faced with the question of how we can sustain its ministry in a volatile economy at a time when its message is more needed than ever.

What do *you* believe? Is FRIENDS JOURNAL a spiritual asset to Friends and other seekers? Does FRIENDS JOURNAL matter to the future of Quakerism? Or has it reached the end of its usefulness?

We do not ask these questions to cause alarm. **We ask because during the next eight months, the Board of Trustees of Friends Publishing Corporation—whose primary purpose is publishing FRIENDS JOURNAL—will have to decide whether to continue this effort, reduce it drastically, or lay it down.**

Our next Board meeting will be February 5-7, 2010, and before that meeting, we would like to solicit your opinion and encourage your involvement. There will be a second Board meeting June 4-6, 2010, at which time a decision may have to be made.

At the end of this letter, we will suggest ways that you can be a part of this decision process. But first, let us give you the background that you will need in order to provide informed assistance.

The cost this year to produce each paid subscription to FRIENDS JOURNAL is \$112.24. That means that **each paid**

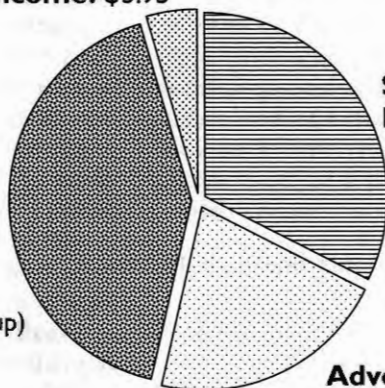
subsidized by \$72.25 that we must raise in other ways. Advertising revenue is projected to provide less than 26% (\$18.70) of that needed income, and this a hopeful projection in a time of falling ad revenues. Outside jobs, anthology sales, and rental income provide another 5.5% (\$3.95) of what's needed. This leaves \$49.59 (68.5%) that must come from gifts, grants, and investment income. (The pie chart shows how much every subscription relies upon gift support.)

FY10 Actual Subscription Cost: \$112.24

Other Income: \$3.95

Contributions: \$49.59

- Annual Appeal Giving
- Charitable Gift Annuities
- Major Gifts (\$5,000 and up)
- Endowment Earnings



Subscription Income: \$39.99

Advertising: \$18.70

Like most Friends organizations, in years past we have needed investment income to balance the budget. As recently as our 2007 fiscal year, our carefully managed investment portfolio increased in value by \$145,771, giving us enough income to help balance our budget. But in FY08 we saw the net value of that portfolio decline 10.6%, and by 6/30/2009 its value had decreased by an additional \$793,652 (50.8%) as a result of unrealized losses and an increased requirement to utilize unrestricted reserves for operations. Despite improved market returns, our draw on reserves has continued; and we now find ourselves with dramatically reduced funds in our investment accounts. Over the last two years (9/07 to 9/09) total equity in these accounts has been reduced by an unprecedented 42%.

There are many metrics by which FRIENDS JOURNAL can be judged to be healthy and successful:

- *Paid circulation has been growing* 7,296 in 2009, up 6% since 2006.
- *Online readership has been growing* 102% more monthly visitors than in 2006.

with increasing readership outside of Quakerism (up to 14% of readership in 2008 vs. 6% in 2001).

- *Participation by readers and writers* Approximately 400 manuscripts volunteered yearly.
- *Feedback by readers* 82% of readers ranked *FJ* as important to them personally; 50% ranked it as quite important to them.
- *Quality of product* Improvements since 1999 include 2

special issues annually, an average of 17% more pages, and a wider diversity of content.

- *Strength and dedication of staff* Average years of service to *FJ*: 10.27; highly skilled professionals; a great collaborative team.
- *Annual awards from independent judges* 30 Associated Church Press awards since 1999.
- *Outstanding internship program* Provides up to 15 interns annually with professional skills and real publishing hands-on experiences.

However, there are other metrics that have forced the question of our survival:

- *Advertising income* \$171,612 in 2009, down 11% from 2007.
- *Grants and gifts* \$208,782 in 2009, down 19% from 2007.
- *Resistance to subscription increases* Despite a real cost-per-subscription of \$112.24, raising the nominal subscription price above \$40 would

• *Loss of endowment and reserve* Down 42% since 9/2007

We realize that the global financial crisis has brought us to this point of decision. And we realize that if we can weather this crisis for another 24 or 36 months, the economy may improve, causing advertising revenue, subscription income, Internet-based revenue, and donations to increase. We also understand that the management of FRIENDS JOURNAL now must take every available step to reduce costs, and avoid further erosion of our precious reserves.

Sometimes the suggestion is made that we could put the magazine online, thereby saving printing, paper, and postage. True enough—but the most significant costs we incur are the modest salaries (and benefits, including healthcare) of our staff. **Creating an online product will not eliminate the need for our staff and the functions they perform, nor will it save nearly enough money to balance our budget.** Additionally, our recent market research tells us that an overwhelming majority of our paid subscribers are not interested in receiving the JOURNAL online, even if we make it available at a lower cost, so going entirely online risks losing most of our subscribers. Surprisingly, only 25% even of those under 50 are interested in an online edition, thus this can only be a partial solution. While we will pursue an online option for subscribers that may attract new readers, it will not solve the JOURNAL's immediate financial distress.

Friends occasionally tell us that they won't make donations to our ministry because "magazines should pay for themselves through subscriptions and advertising." If we had a much larger number of paid subscriptions than we do, that could work. We could charge more for ads, and subscription revenue would be substantially higher. The relatively small numbers of Quakers unfortunately precludes this. And these days, even very large publications are considering soliciting donations to stay in business.

We do have a plan for cost reduction and new revenue. Beginning immediately, we will take the following steps, among others:

- Turn the Bulletin Board and Announcements into an affordable,

our website, <www.friendsjournal.org>.

- Accept two-page spread advertisements and advertisements at the front of the magazine.
- Create "Sustaining Subscriber" and "Sustaining Meeting" programs with special benefits in exchange for committed support.
- Institute a postage and handling charge for print subscriptions.
- Move to a less recycled or non-recycled paper stock.
- Cap the number of pages at 52.
- Combine the June and July issues, reducing frequency to 11 issues per year.
- Send renewal notices by e-mail when possible.
- Create an electronic subscription option, using PDFs.
- Potentially reduce personnel costs by raising employee health insurance premium contributions, eliminating life insurance, and reducing staff wages (already frozen at 2008 level).

The Executive Committee and the other Committee clerks of the Board and the staff have together developed this cost-cutting/revenue-generating program. It includes many steps we would rather not take, but that are necessary in this financial environment. However, these steps alone may not insure that FRIENDS JOURNAL will make it through the 24 or 36 more months we need to survive this economic downturn.

Can increased fundraising bridge the gap? Only if more and larger donations are received. All of our subscribers have received our recent appeal, and some have responded generously. We've received 174 gifts, totaling \$29,202, compared with 173 at the same time in 2008, with a total increase of \$17,186 (70%) in gift income for the same period. This is heartening; but, frankly, it is not enough.

FRIENDS JOURNAL needs four kinds of income if this ministry is going to continue. We need *regular annual* income that makes up the four main streams that cover our annual expenses. Those streams are *subscription* income, *advertising* income, *gifts and grants*, and *investment* income (from major gifts or endowment contributions).

While appeal contributions of \$50, \$100, and \$500 have, until now, kept us

endowment and reserve that will support and sustain FRIENDS JOURNAL for years to come. Our current endowment/reserve stands at \$767,400 as of 6/2009. Projecting forward, without change in income or expense, it will be entirely exhausted in 12–18 months. Clearly a dramatic reversal is needed. We will need to raise \$400,000 to \$600,000 this year, and more to build an endowment in the next few years.

We do not know if such funds can be secured in 12–18 months—the time that we have available. Friends and readers have significant resources, but those personal resources have been diminished by the crisis in our economy. Furthermore, many charitable and educational organizations are also experiencing difficult times, including many Quaker institutions. There are many worthy uses for philanthropic dollars, and those who do have money must decide among them.

How you can assist our Board in deciding our future

There are several ways that readers of this letter could assist us:

First, you can write to us and tell us what you think. Is the JOURNAL important, even vital, to the future of Friends? What ideas and suggestions do you have that may be helpful to the Board in its February and June meetings? You can contact us at <publisher@friendsjournal.org> or FRIENDS JOURNAL, 1216 Arch St., Ste. 2A, Philadelphia, PA 19107.

Second, you can share this letter with others, encouraging them to share their views with us.

Third, you can make regular gift donations to our work. Fully 85% of our subscribers pay no more than the price of their subscription; we estimate another 8,200 readers pay nothing for their regular readership and do not donate. Because each subscription costs \$72.25 more than we charge for it, all these readers are being subsidized at a rate we can no longer sustain. We understand there are many reasons why Friends do not pay for subscriptions or send donations. But we do want the facts to be plain.

Fourth, you can subscribe to FRIENDS JOURNAL if you value its ministry or just enjoy its contents, especially if you've been reading someone else's copy. **You can renew** your subscription prompt-

costs to retain you as a reader. For us, every reader has great value as a participant in a community that ministers to itself. Our writers are not paid journalists—they are our readers, members of our community. Your participation is important to us on many levels.

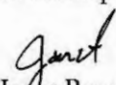
Fifth, you can become a sustaining subscriber or ask your meeting to become a sustaining meeting, giving regular monthly donations above the price of your subscription, at a level that is right for you. Regular monthly gifts enable larger yearly donations from modest donors and help us greatly with cash flow.

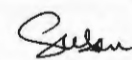
Sixth, you can volunteer your time. This letter can be shared, and discussed at your meeting or with friends. Members of our Board and staff would be happy to respond to invitations to speak about the JOURNAL, and to hear the views of your meeting or community. You can let us know if you might be willing to be a volunteer fundraiser, if our Board decides to undertake a capital drive.

Finally, there are a few people reading this who have the ability to make or help secure a transformative gift for the JOURNAL. That is to say, a significantly large gift that would build our endowment. We do not expect such a gift to arrive in the mail, but if you feel led to consider such a step, we would be grateful to hear from you.

In the end, our decision is *your* decision—you who are reading this now—whether through the pages of the JOURNAL or through the Internet, or through letter, or photocopy. Is FRIENDS JOURNAL vital to the Religious Society of Friends? Is its ministry to the various branches of Friends, and to fellow seekers, worthy of significant support? We think that it is. We hope that you agree, and that we will hear from you.

Yours in peace,

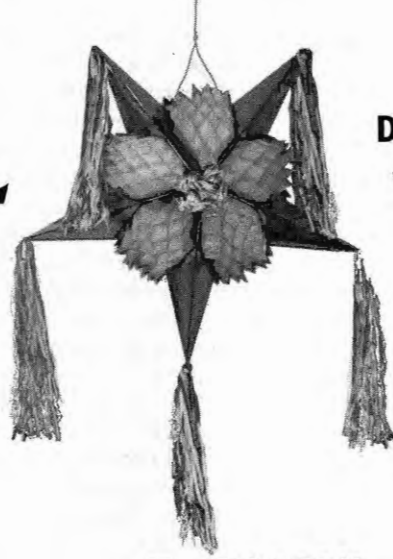

Janet Ross
Clerk, Board of Trustees


Susan Corson-Finnerty
Publisher and Executive Editor

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FRIENDS JOURNAL

DECEMBER 2009
VOL. 55, NO. 12



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On left and on cover: photos courtesy of Herb Haigh

We walk the Blessing Way

Recently I received a letter from FRIENDS JOURNAL asking for financial support: our magazine is in jeopardy. I agonized over what I could do to help. It's clear that we don't have funds to contribute. This request sank within me, to germinate a response appropriate to my ways and means. It was stirred into inner life again by a communication with our Inner Guides last night. It surfaced today as I read two pamphlets on John Woolman. Now I know: I am to remind Friends that we walk the Blessing Way together. Further, our walk today is empowered by those who came before us. Those who come after us will need our example of steadfastness in the Light to guide and empower them. As John Woolman says:

A trust is committed to us, a great & weighty trust, to which our diligent attention is necessary. . . . I feel a living invitation in my mind to such who are active in our religious society, that we may lay to heart this matter, and consider the station in which we stand. We stand in a place of outward liberty, under the free exercise of our conscience towards God, not obtained but through great and manifold afflictions of those who lived before us. Can our hearts endure, or our hands be strong if we desert a cause so precious; if we turn aside from a work under which so many have patiently laboured?

Our JOURNAL represents a trust: one given into our care. It is also a treasure. We can look again to the life and work of John Woolman to see what the blessing is in this publication. Woolman "laboured" with many regarding the concerns that came to him. He felt "motions of love" and inner suffering from the "pure principle" within, as he termed the inner movement of the Divine. Our record of Woolman's inner motions and outer results is not from those who were affected by his actions; it is from Woolman's writings. What survives to guide and inspire us today are his published journal reflections. Woolman gave us a gift: the gift of how he came to be transformed by the Divine and act out this transformation. He gave this gift to us in his writing.

Daniel and I are now attending Gila Meeting in Silver City, New Mexico. Its religious education program includes a focus on John Woolman. To prepare to

join the discussion, we are reading several works written about him. On the table in the entry is displayed an array of Friends written pamphlets and magazines. Among these is FRIENDS JOURNAL. How many people in this meeting read the JOURNAL? How many in meetings elsewhere subscribe to it for themselves? In two meetings that I know, an individual used to subscribe and share a copy with others; now, there is no JOURNAL available for meeting attenders and members. Apparently no one now subscribes to it.

Our JOURNAL has let me share my gifts of insight with other Friends. It's also given Daniel and me a heart and mind connection with the work of Spirit in other Friends. This is particularly important for those of us who can't be physically part of their Friends communities.

What worth are our gifts if they can't be received, if there is no ready heart or avenue for our sharing? What is the worth of the short poem by Janeal Turubull Ravndal, "Centering," in the September issue? It points to territory in all of us that we need to examine from that place of "pure principle" within. When we define ourselves as Friends and individuals by our outer actions and accomplishments, what enduring worth is this to the generations that come after us? These individuals will have challenges different than ours to face. Janeal speaks to the inner shift that is necessary if we are to stay close to "the root," as Woolman calls this centering place of insight and power. Do our actions truly reflect the action of the Divine, through us, or do they reflect our concerns and ideas of how to be a "good person," a "good Friend"?

In one of Woolman's visions, he heard a voice saying, "John Woolman is dead." In reflection afterward, he determined that this was the death of his inner "contending spirit": that which opposed the "pure principle." How do we die to ourselves, as we see ourselves, that the Divine might lead us into Its ways? First, we have to see the deception under which we labor. Janeal's inner revelation could have stayed with her if her gift had no place in which to be shared and preserved for future generations.

How little we value our visionaries and prophets in their own time! How important is it to read of the visionaries of prior times if we ignore the experiences of our own community, powerful evidence of the working of the Divine in our midst? There are many gifts we have to offer; there are few places in which such gifts can be both received and recorded for future generations.

The JOURNAL is one of these receptive, recording places. Everyone who contributes to it, the writers as well as members of the staff, is giving Friends a great gift: the gift of attention to the power of the Divine in our lives today.

Our adult education committees have a source of ready inspiration and instruction on the manner of Friends today: FRIENDS JOURNAL. Religious education is best conveyed and expanded through examples. Our stories, the events of our lives presented with inner reflections about their meaning, are living testimony to the treasure we've inherited in our Friends tradition. Let our JOURNAL be regular reading for our people. Let us weave ourselves together in understanding as well as in Spirit: grow together, strengthen each other. Let us walk the Blessing Way, together.

Alicia Adams
Mimbres, N.Mex.

Information sought on conducting Friends business remotely

A number of yearly meetings and other Quaker organizations are grappling with how to do Quaker business with less travel. This is resulting in widespread experiments such as conference calls, combined "hub" meetings with conference calls, Skype, etc. There is consternation even among experimenters about what can be handled when we are not in each other's presence, whether Skype is or is not being present, and other questions. I would like to collect information about these experiments and write an article discussing the issue. Please send write-ups on your experience with this problem to Mary Gilbert of Friends Meeting at Cambridge (Mass.) at <mary@gilbertwhire.com>.

Mary Gilbert
Arlington, Mass.

Always my Friends

I met a number of people a few years ago who introduced themselves to me as Friends. Since then we have traveled and journeyed to many a place—near and far—and not once did they falter or stumble along the path. Many a day the single set of footprints in our wake was theirs—for in my world there is always need for support and so few available or willing to provide it. As we moved

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Active Nonviolence and the Nickel Mines Tragedy

In his very thoughtful article about the Nickel Mines tragedy, "Forgiveness: An Amish Lesson for the Rest of Us?" (FJ Aug.), Jonathan Kooker focuses on the important lesson of transformative forgiveness, but at the same time he ignores another potential lesson that was lost—that of the transformative power of active nonviolence. He explains that the teacher decided to leave the schoolhouse because she "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 [the attacker]." With that statement, he falls into the same false dichotomy trap as the online commentators he quotes, who derided the failure of the Amish teachers and students to attempt to overpower their attacker with force.

The trap is the assumption that the only choices available in that moment were "fight" or "flight"—to strike back or to submit to the gunman's demand to leave the building. The outcome, as described in this article, clearly challenges the further assumption that the institutional threat of violence or punishment embodied in law enforcement was the best response to this violent situation. The gunman's panic upon the arrival of the police is what precipitated the rapid killing of the young girls, as well as the gunman's suicide.

The article provides a powerful telling of the actions of the girls who were left behind, reaching out to the young man in love and with offers of self-sacrifice. We will never know whether their words and actions, given more time, might have touched him and transformed the situation. We also cannot know whether the outcome might have been different had the teachers

made different choices, and it is not my intent to condemn them in any way.

Rather, my intent is to challenge the false dichotomy of choice described in the article and apparently underpinning most of the popular debate about this tragic incident. While the lessons contained within the story of communal forgiveness are important, I believe we also need to remember and celebrate other stories that offer a different set of lessons. We need to understand and to believe that another outcome was possible so that we can free ourselves to choose actions outside the "fight or flight" duality.

I still remember being overcome with grief mixed with disbelief on the afternoon when I first heard the news on the radio. "Why did they leave?" I asked myself over and over again. "Why did the adults walk out of that room?" As I am a student of non-violent action, my reaction was based on a very different set of assumptions than those that prompted the criticism of their lack of violent resistance. My grief arose from the assumption that they must have been unaware of the rich heritage of stories that reveal the potential power of active nonviolence to transform a violent situation.

Those powerful emotions returned one evening last winter as I sat in midweek worship and noticed the small framed painting on a shelf in our meetinghouse. The painting depicts the famous incident in which a Native American war party bursts into a Quaker meeting for worship. The incident is notable because the Quakers remained in worship, completely surprising their would-be attackers and transforming the threat of violence.

My thoughts returned to Nickel Mines. I wondered whether the story in the painting—a part of our heritage as Friends—and its underlying truths are sufficiently embedded in the collective consciousness of our community to instill in each of us a vision for alternative responses to violence or the

threat of violence.

Thich Nhat Hanh has been quoted as saying: "If you wait until the time of crisis, it will be too late... Even if you know that nonviolence is better than violence, if your understanding is only intellectual and not in your whole being, you will not act nonviolently. The fear and anger will prevent you." I know the truth of those words in my own life experience—especially when translated into the language of active nonviolence, which is more than simply walking away from or avoiding violence.

We must learn and teach the stories of ordinary people like ourselves tapping into and trusting the power of the Spirit, responding to the threat of violence in unexpected and extraordinary ways. But that collective work is not enough; we each have our own work to do, as well—both practical and spiritual. Acquiring some training in specific skills is helpful, but my experience teaches me that the real learning comes from seeking opportunities to put the knowledge and skills into practice, and stumbling, and trying again.

For most of us, that will involve consciously stepping outside of our comfortable lives and surroundings. The two years that I commuted by public bus provided a number of such opportunities; living in an urban neighborhood "in transition" has provided others; and engaging in various forms of public witness for peace and justice has provided still more. Each opportunity involves the frightening choice to engage, to trust the Spirit's guidance in that moment. Preparing to make that choice is our spiritual worship.

John Humphries

John Humphries is a member of Hartford (Conn.) Meeting.

forward I have, in very subtle ways, found myself in a constant state of metamorphosis, growing and expanding in depth and development. I began to acquire a greater sense of respect for knowledge and to listen to my innermost thoughts more as I intuitively rationalize and analyze the cause of the mechanics behind my past life, existence as I know it to be now, and what lies ahead for myself and others, both alike and unlike. Throughout this transformation

process the motivation and drive was that first Spark of Light that was ignited when I was introduced to Friends. I would like to feel that now they are truly my Friends—but my feelings tell me that they have always been my Friends. Do you have a Friend?

Knowledge Y. Johnson
Clinton Correctional Facility
Dannemore, N.Y.

Christianity—or Constantinianism?

I thought of responding at once to Newton Garver's "Are We Christian?" (FJ June, Viewpoint)—but glad I held off, as letters from Steve Chase and Hannah Logan Morris in the September issue expressed much of what I would have said.

Continued on page 39

La Chureca Christmas



by Herb Haigh

My friend Michael popped into my office. When he told me he couldn't make it to Nicaragua this year for the Los Quinchos Christmas party, his tears welled up. My wife, Pam, operates two beauty schools in Managua, and he knew that in a day or two we would be traveling there so she could officiate at the annual graduation. He took a deep breath, looked straight at me, and said, "As a personal friend, please promise me that 'all my babies' will get presents; it will be a great party, and you'll bring back plenty of pictures." I agreed, at least to the part about the pictures; but in my heart I knew that I would have to overcome some considerable disappointment from "Mike's babies."

The Los Quinchos he referred to is a refuge for children in the mountains of Nicaragua, the second-poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. It is one of the projects that are supported by ProNica, a Quaker-sponsored organization in which my wife and I play a part. It is not a place for folks who have a passing interest in helping those less fortunate—

Herb Haigh, a member of St. Petersburg (Fla.) Meeting, is president of Ameri-Plus Select Services, a Medicare Select hospital network. He and his wife, Pam, are available to talk about the work of ProNica to monthly meetings and other interested groups; contact through <www.pronica.org>.

it is a much tougher place than that. Los Quinchos is a place that, by its nature, melts the hardest of hearts and at the same time demands disciplined dedication. The children who live there were found alone on the streets of Managua, the country's capital. Until they arrived there, they had lived a child's life without love, and many of them are addicted to the glue they inhale to quell the pain of hunger. To them, "Papa Miguel" is a combination of father figure, rock star, and generous benefactor. He is their real-life Santa Claus, who visits in December each year. When he arrives, it's officially Christmas at Los Quinchos.

I accepted his request, but I knew success would be in God's hands.

The two beauty schools Pam operates teach a less dangerous way for young women who have been forced to work in the sex trade to support themselves. It is a big job, and Pam had traveled to Nicaragua several days before me to help the staff prepare for their annual graduation ceremony. When I arrived a few days later, she had already learned that the traditional Christmas party at Los Quinchos would not be carried out this year. The powers that be decided to do something different, and she knew I would be worried about my vow as a personal friend to "Papa Miguel."

Los Quinchos has several campuses, and the usual procedure was to pick the

kids up at the larger campus in San Marcos, take them to Lake Nicaragua, and let them swim, open presents, do a lot of hugging, wish them a "Feliz Navidad," and get them back to San Marcos.

This year's plan was that a busload of kids from La Chureca, in Managua,



would ride up to San Marcos, where they would join the other kids and they would have a party together. Sounds simple enough, but look at the arithmetic: about 30 kids from La Chureca would join about 40 kids from San Marcos.

Yes, that's a lot of kids and Christmas presents that weren't anticipated. It would also require several additional piñatas filled with loads more candy and a



score of other details. If we could get those chores done in a few hours, there was also the part about the two-hour bus ride on unmarked mountain roads, followed by a 30-minute walk through the rain forest with a horde of Spanish-speaking, affection-starved kids who, shall we say, "don't get out much."

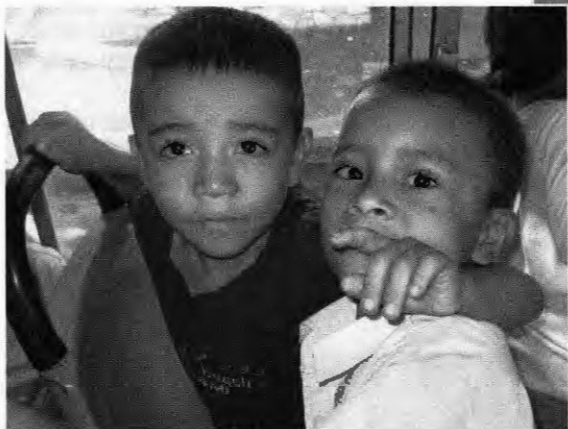
San Marcos is a small town some distance outside Managua. "La Chureca" is not a town. It is a burning, smoking mountain of stinking refuse within the city itself, about the size of a golf course. It is also home to many of God's poorest people. I am not sure that there are any census takers in Nicaragua, but if there

the porch of the ProNica residence, "Quaker House," having a casual morning coffee on the not-so-quiet residential street when a bus load of children arrived a full 15 minutes early (perhaps

ment at La Chureca.

Most people confuse poverty with being impoverished. That's because most of us spend our lives in a culture that deeply believes in the American dream of success. As such we usually can't accept as fact that the basic structure of some economic systems perpetuates poverty. In other words, these individuals live in poverty with no chance, no ability, and no hope of change; they live in a world where the concept of upward mobility is absent. Their condition exceeds that of poverty; they are impoverished. A very few, I will admit, do escape—with scars, but nonetheless, they do escape. Then again, some of us end up on MTV, getting money for nothing, but I don't know any of those peo-

Photos courtesy of Herb Haigh



are, I am certain none would be willing to walk around and count heads in such a terrible place. It is estimated that more than a thousand souls find themselves there. With a life expectancy of only 35 years, by default, most of them are children. They make their way in life, sifting through trash for recyclables that can be sold, garbage that can be eaten, and "johns" who will pay meager amounts of money to exploit the women and children sexually.

When Jesus attempted to describe hell, he used the name Gehenna, which was the place south of Jerusalem where the ancients rook children to be sacrificed to the god Moloch. During his time, it was a city dump that was constantly in flames. It is said that if a proper tomb had not been donated, after his crucifixion his body would have been left there as refuse. La Chureca is the modern-day equivalent of Gehenna.

Fortunately, the people of Nicaragua adapt to changes in schedules with ease. I am not sure how it came about, but somehow presents were bought, piñatas were loaded with goodies, and I, on Saturday morning, found myself sitting on

a Nicaraguan first). I have always wondered what it was like inside those white buses that the prisoners ride in when one pulled up in front of Quaker house. I realized I was going to have my chance to find out.

Unlike the ones at home, this ancient, smoky, recently hand-brush-painted white bus wasn't filled with prisoners as we normally know them. This bus was filled with prisoners of life: children, from one who was a few months old (accompanied by her three siblings and her 24-year-old mother) up to one about 13, as best I could guess, who by bad luck were born into a life of impoverish-

ple personally. I suppose that given six degrees of separation we all are connected to someone living in both of these extremes, but they are still intangible.

The bus squealed to a stop in front of me with all the noise and commotion of a freight train arriving at a depot. It took me so by surprise that at first I didn't notice that all of the windows were open or absent and peering thru every one of them was a child who was thinking, "Donde está Miguel?"

I took a moment of silence and reminded myself that I had put this whole thing in God's hands. I got on the bus, smiled, waived, and introduced

my wife, "Pam Ella" (in *español*) and myself as "Hereberto."

The arrival of the bus a full 15 minutes ahead of schedule was a situation so rare and unexpected in Nicaragua that our translator had not yet arrived.

In my panic my mind briefly went back to my arrangement with God, reminding God that this is in God's hands, and since that's the deal, now would be a good time to tell me how I inform 30 children who are raging with yuletide excitement that Miguel can't make it, Pam and I will have to do, and—oh yeah—they have to sit there and behave for 15 minutes, and God, please remember, I don't speak Spanish.

I am here to tell you, that God delivered on God's end of the deal. God reminded me that way back I acquired a few very poor juggling skills (I mean that literally), so a set of keys over the shoulder and caught behind the back, got us through. I guess I should mention that the kids' fascination with my movie star-looking, blonde, gringo wife being on the bus with them put them a little bit in awe and bought me at least half of those 15 minutes. I just know they were wondering if they had ever seen her in a movie.

By being the world's clumsiest juggler, I had produced a half dozen howls of laughter mixed with finger pointing when a motorcycle shrouded in a cloud of carbon monoxide pulled up and stopped, and off stepped a rider who even with a helmet on, is easily understood to be female. As if she'd been born on a motorcycle, in one sweep she dismounted, removed her helmet, shook her head, and revealed her long, flowing, raven black hair.

She walked over to us, gave Pam a hug as they had met before, and looked at me and said, "Hi, I'm Carmen, I am going to be your translator." My secret voice inside my head is saying, "Thank you God, again."

Back in the world outside my head it was clear that it was going to be a far

from ordinary day.

Now everyone was aboard the completely full prison bus, and, there being no seats left, I was perched on the very warm engine cover riding backwards, looking at a busload of adorable urchins who were looking at me.

I smiled as my senses abruptly informed me that this year Santa was not the only one who was covered in ashes and soot from head to foot. The 30 elves I was about to spend my day with, spend their life that way, and guess what, every one of them wanted to take a turn sitting in my lap. Oh well, there was plenty of time. I had a pocket full of Purell. God had already proved to be paying careful attention—so, I thought, as they say, let's "dash away, dash away, dash away all."

We don't think of poor people as being pleasing to the eye, but that was the reality with these children. They lived inside magnificently beautiful brown skin, with bright eyes augmented by long eyelashes. By the time we arrived in San



Marcos, we all smelled the same, and I was in love with every one of them.

I was filled with the sheer joy of it all, and my inside voice was saying, "Thank you, Michael, with God's help you have given me this day, and I am very grateful for that."

Although I noticed that none of the dashboard gauges work, and we always had to park on an incline because the starter doesn't work either, the prison bus did its job and after an hour or so we arrived in time for lunch at the Los Quinchos Pizza Parlor.



my mind conjures up an image of a skeleton on a small deserted island, long dead, but still clutching a fishing pole. But I must say that this point of view is alive and well at Los Quinchos. The pizza parlor serves as local restaurant and a vocational program for the kids who work rotating shifts from 11 to 7 every day. They prepare the dough, wait on tables, etc. It's a potential occupation for them, it puts money in their pocket, it makes money for the school, and it doubles as the bakery for the kids' meals. I should mention it is considered the best pizza in all of San Marcos, a town of maybe 100 people.

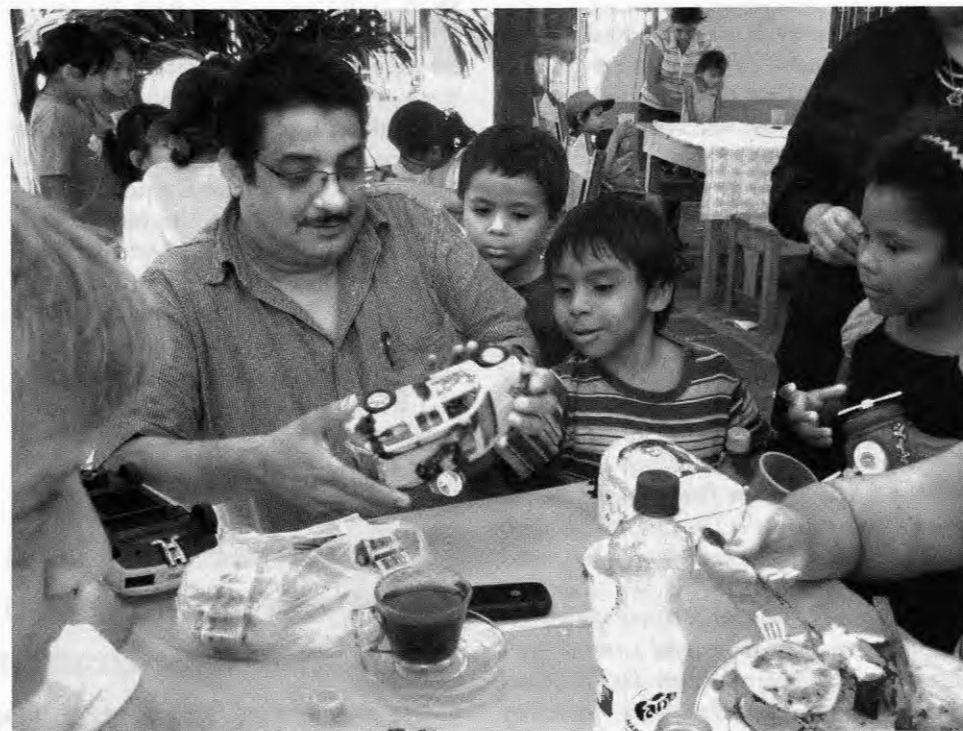
I was intrigued and took my place at the grownups' table, my mind reeling with potential names for the place: 'Pizzas for Peace, a slice for a life,' or maybe, "we knead dough," and on and on.

I didn't have time to find out why we were served bologna sandwiches at a pizza parlor because we were late getting to the party, which began with disappointment. The kids were led to believe that they would be able to swim in a real swimming pool, as opposed to the drainage ditch back in the city. However, when we arrived, the pool was still being cleaned, there was no water in it, and there would be no swimming.

When you live in a dump that is constantly on fire in the relentless heat of Central America, not getting your annual chance to swim in a real pool is a big disappointment. But to my amazement—or should I say, "But what to my wondering eyes should appear"—in front of me were 30 kids who took it in stride and moved the whole party over to the soccer field and quickly chose up sides. Once again, I was reminded that these kids are in many ways very special, and in case I was doubtful, I was reassured that God stayed on the bus and was still the guest of honor at our party.

Things went well; there were soccer, dancing, piñatas, smiles, laughs, and lots of presents, all of which required batteries. What a feeling of being a grandfather to these kids as the director of the program, Carlos, and I put battery after battery into the toys while long lines of children patiently waited to find out what the toy actually did once powered. Oh yes, note to the powers that be: Even though they were joyously received,

...tive, strange as that may seem to some. Everyone was enjoying themselves, and nothing was wrong, but I felt that something was lacking. Something inside me said that we had not achieved that special status the Christmas spirit demands. Little did I know that the spirit of Christmas within us had just begun to do its work.



Suddenly an idea popped into my head that was so radical I felt my inside voice screaming "Oh, no! Please God I know you have been helping out all day, but please don't lead me to that traveling Mexican circus we saw back in Managua! We can't do that, it's too much, over the top, beyond my ability, and way too scary." I must have sounded like Moses saying God had the wrong guy, and there must be some mistake.

I calmed down a little when the inside voice said, "The bus driver probably won't go for it, maybe that will stop this foolish idea in its tracks." No such luck. For 50 U.S. dollars and a ticket for him and his son, the bus driver had plenty of time. Rats! What other possible deal breakers can I find? How about we can't afford it! The inside voice quickly reminded me that I had a garage full of motorcycles, and taking these kids would cost less than a few of my motorcycles getting an annual oil change;

ing so helpful. I want to remind you that once a bus full of deprived kids stops in a parking lot anywhere near a circus, there is no going back."

With that thought, the Spirit reminded me that earlier in the week I had received word that a friend of mine had suddenly lost his son, Andrew, during what should have been a routine op-

eration. This friend had shown a genuine interest in these kids from the dump. I had been thinking all week about what I could do to honor my friend's son. This idea was so far out that I knew in my heart I was being led to do this. God was up to mysterious ways again. And way had been put in front of me. Perhaps I had simply lost my mind, but I felt that Pam and I were being led by the spirit to take 30 beautiful orphans to a circus in honor of my friend's son and we were now on a "mission from God."

If I live to be 100, I will not forget the look on the guy's face at the ticket office. He looked at me, he looked at the long line of obedient but excited ragamuffins standing behind me, then back at me and his eyes said, "Okay, let's see if I get this—you're from the United States, and with your movie star wife, you are going to take 30 poor Hispanic

Continued on page 34

Quaking with Confidence

by Ben Pink Dandelion

I'd like to clear up right away a question that seems to crop up repeatedly at these more public moments in my life, and that is where I got my name. My parents were strict atheists, one intellectually, one emotionally—any religion on the television and it would be turned off, and the vicar welcoming us to our new home when we moved had the door shut in his face by my mother, but when in their 40s, one year after they married, they had a son, they called me "Benjamin," born of elderly parents after the biblical story of Jacob and Ruth. So that's how I got to be called "Ben."

I'm glad we've got that out of the way.

I have in my time elicited such reactions as: "What Ben Pink Dandelion says is largely nonsense" (The London Friend); "That Ben Pink Dandelion—he's nuts" (ministry during worship in Indiana in 1997); and "I wanted to throw the manuscript across the room and scream" (colleague on reading one of my drafts). However, I have the perfect response inspired by the Friend who asked, "Are you the Ben Pink Dandelion?" No—I'm the other one.

I have also been eluded in my teaching: "What's more important: the truth, or getting a laugh?" Getting a laugh, I replied—but of course they didn't know if I was telling the truth.

All these caveats aside, let us begin.

Ben Pink Dandelion is Professor of Quaker Studies and Programmes Leader at the Centre for Postgraduate Quaker Studies, Woodbrooke, and University of Birmingham, England. He worships at Sawley Meeting in the shadow of Pendle Hill. He has written numerous books and articles about Quakerism and Quaker history. This is an edited and shortened text of an address to the Friends General Conference Gathering in Blacksburg, Va., on June 28, 2009. It is reprinted by permission from Friends General Conference. ©2009 FGC. To acquire an mp3, CD, or DVD of Ben's full talk, go to <www.quakerbooks.org>.

I grew up as what I have termed a strict and particular atheist. Ethics were important but after that, hedonism or the degree of pleasure an action resulted in, was the usual criterion for decision making. Which is most fun? However, when my family moved north from London close to the border with Scotland when I was 11, both the local private schools had a religious foundation: I was sent to the Quaker school rather than the Catholic one as they thought it would do me the least harm.

I left as I had arrived, theologically speaking, and after a year out, mainly on a seven-month cycle trip, I went to

Maybe Quakers would bring about the change in society I still dreamt of.

I have to admit one of the first draws was the free refreshments. I was still largely atheistic, seeing in Quakerism a set of values and aspirations but not understanding at all the "rooted in spirit" of our theme. I joined after only six months so I could attend business meeting, and I believe I was let in too quickly. Sometimes others agree!

Two years on, I was given a bursary to come to the United States to look at the different political context of the origins of U.S. and English Quakerism. At the end of my study time, I used a Trail-

In the midst of this onward journey, just outside St. Louis, unbidden, unwanted, unimagined, and all the more powerful and compelling for all that, I felt lifted up.

college only to become quickly involved in student politics and the surely soon-to-be revolution. I was a member of a whole variety of socialist, communist, Trotskyite groups—I was elected to the student union executive but resigned when I became an anarchist. I left college, too, and went to live at an anarchist peace camp for some six months. (That's where I changed my name to Pink Dandelion, by the way, reserving "Ben" for my friends). When, within another few months and after many arrests, I finally concluded that the revolution was unlikely to take place in England, I left the camp, trained to become a chauffeur, but remained anarchistically unemployed for the next five years, and revisited Friends. Here seemed to me a group of voteless, leaderless pacifists much like my anarchist group.

ways bus pass to go to San Francisco, traveling three days for two days there—after all, to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive—and then back again. However, on Labor Day the schedules changed and I found myself waiting in Denver for 12 hours instead of two, suddenly realizing that on the new timetable I would miss my flight home from New York. What was a boy to do? I had \$67 in my pocket and the only chance of catching my plane was to buy a Greyhound ticket for \$120. I begged. Try it: "I'll send you a check—no, I'm a Quaker, you can trust me." Finally I found another Briton and cajoled him to buy me a ticket on his credit card giving him every dollar and cent I owned as sign of good faith. I caught the Greyhound bus and all was right in the world. Every time the bus stopped

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Barbara Benton

for food, I washed instead, thus finding other forms of self-care to nourish me. I rationed out a few grapes I had. Perfect.

In the midst of this onward journey, just outside St. Louis, unbidden, unwanted, unimagined, and all the more powerful and compelling for all that, I felt lifted up and cradled by what I have called God, held and reassured even in that time of contentment and apparent confidence. It was a powerful experience for me and delightfully, it hasn't ever left me since. Since that time, I have lived an accompanied life. God is with me, and I know this in George Fox's terms, experientially. Thus I became a lapsed atheist kind of Quaker.

For five years God sat alongside me, affirming and encouraging me in my choices, sort of, "Whatever you want to do, Benny, I'm right with you."

In 1991, my mother died and in early 1992, I had a motorcycle accident. Then began what I call "holy nudges," times of God calling me to greater faithfulness. "Ben, you need to be more responsible," was the message at that time. I felt God guiding me, but also reminding me, calling me to account—an overdose of pride would lead to an embarrassment, undue materialism would be beset with complication, or at least illumination. Along with some other Friends in the mid-'90s I developed a personal rule to help me lead a more faithful life. It addressed in particular key areas of temptation for me, where the desire for pleasure outran the ethical consequences. One of these was my love of cars. After another motorcycle accident, I sold my car to buy another bike and included in my rule that

from here on, I would buy only to replace, so much had I accumulated. It is clear that if I held to my rule, I would not be buying another car. A year later, I had three. Well, if you're going to break the rule, why not break it! It also highlights that you have the explicit aspiration only when it is in doubt! I have never been interested in books, that more typical Quaker vice—I didn't have a rule about or for that. I had the rule because I might be tempted to break it!

God laughed, I think, and gradually decreased my income so that all the cars needed to go.

I have often suggested that greater seriousness on our part about the spiritual life can also lead to a greater sense of fun and joy. If we know what we are about, we can then joke about it, and bring laughter into even the most mundane moments. That is the balance I want us all to achieve, the balance that will help us all in our responsibilities and help others in theirs. Sometimes this means taking risks and we need to find the courage to create and sustain joy within an authentic everyday life.

In my new book *Celebrating the Quaker Way* I have written that "I am a Quaker and I inhabit that knowledge daily. . . . I feel clothed in my faith." What does that faith look like and how does it relate to 17th-century insights?

Here is the initial transforming experience of George Fox, age 23. He had been traveling around the army camps, among the dissenters once he stopped listening to the ministers, but was in a state of despair:

Now, after I had received that opening from the Lord, that to be bred at Oxford or Cambridge was not sufficient to fit a man to be a minister of Christ, I regarded the priests less, and looked more after the Dissenting people. . . . But as I had forsaken the priests, so I left the separate preachers also, and those esteemed the most experienced people; for I saw there was none among them all that could speak to my condition. When all my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could I tell what to do, then, oh, then, I heard a voice which said, "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition"; and when I

Fox in Ulverston church in 1652: All are "shut up in unbelief," in Fox's terms; "thieves, all thieves" of true faith, as Fell puts it. Their former lives have been about profession not possession. The Light shows up their lives as they have truly been. Being "just" a "good Christian" is now exposed as anachronistic and part of the apostasy of all that is not Quaker as this new group of "saints" heralded a new New Covenant with God.

Consciousness and awareness were transformed, so was the sense of relationship with God. These early Friends were co-agents with God, an intimate

We are not Friends because we are good. Indeed, we are Friends together exactly because we are not good, or not good enough. We need each other.

heard it, my heart did leap for joy. Then the Lord let me see why there was none upon the earth that could speak to my condition, namely, that I might give Him all the glory. For all are concluded under sin, and shut up in unbelief, as I had been. . . . And this I knew experimentally.

This moment remains foundational and central to Quakers worldwide today. Indeed, we can see all the changes over time and divisions between Friends in terms of how this passage is interpreted and emphasized.

In Fox's conviction, God breaks into Fox's life, in God's time. This is a critical experience of direct unmediated encounter with the Divine. This is still what we aspire to—we cannot summon God up but we can remain open and mindful so as to not miss those particular moments of intimate encounter. A repeated theme in early Quaker writing is that the more we surrender, the more we are given and the easier it is to inhabit our spiritual aspirations.

Importantly, the experience is inward. Also, there is a distinction between *inward* and *inner*—that shift came in the 20th century, dramatically redefining where divinity resides and for some replacing the former Quaker idea of original sin with a sense of innate goodness.

Fox is transformed by his 1647 experience as Margaret Fell is by listening to

relationship. They transcended their old selves by replacing the old self with God's power acting through them.

In 1648 Fox had a second life-changing experience, when he felt taken back into Eden through the flaming sword God had put across the entrance after banishing Adam and Eve:

Now I was come up in spirit through the flaming sword, into the paradise of God. All things were new; and all the creation gave unto me another smell than before, beyond what words can utter. I knew nothing but pureness, and innocency, and righteousness; being renewed into the image of God by Christ Jesus, to the state of Adam, which he was in before he fell. . . . But I was immediately taken up in spirit to see into another or more steadfast state than Adam's innocency, even into a state in Christ Jesus that should never fall.

Fox believed in original sin, but unlike the Calvinist Puritans around him, Fox believed that everyone could be saved and saved within their present lifetime. More than that, as this passage suggests, early Quakers preached a doctrine of perfectability. Nothing annoyed their opponents more than this claim to be "beyond Adam, beyond falling" while the Quakers claimed of them: "All you do is preach up sin."

Quakers did not have formal mem-

bership lists until the 1730s and only instituted them so as to be clear which meeting would give poor relief to which Friend. (This is one of the reasons we remain so confused about the meaning of membership). However, lists were not necessary to determine who was and who was not a Friend. Quakers even from the earliest days dressed and talked differently, refusing to participate in the world's superfluities.

When new convert Thomas Ellwood met some of his friends, they all bowed in greeting as you did in those days. He stood straight and said nothing. They did it again, "Tom, it is us." Then one clapped him on the back and said, "What, Tom, a Quaker?"—already Quakers were an identifiable group. Forms of plain dress—no earrings!—came quite early on and Quakers used "thee" and "thou" rather than the polite "you," leveling society down before God. They refused to use titles or the pagan names for days and months, and did not swear oaths in court for they sought to tell the truth at all times and because, in Matthew 5:34, Jesus says not to swear at all. Friends operated fixed price trading: no haggling and no eBay!

These first Friends had a new sense of how their lives were situated between heaven and Earth and how they were to further God's purposes over and against "the world," a pejorative term in Quaker parlance. When we hear of walking cheerfully "over the world," I read this as "over and against" the world; as is said elsewhere in the passage, "trampling all that is contrary under."

In terms of our testimony today, much of the world has caught up in terms of titles and the right to affirm in court, but we have also relaxed: we are no longer accountable to our meetings but decide for ourselves what and what is not Quaker for us. Where are we united in the consequences of our spirituality in everyday life today?

Rufus Jones told a story about an allotment being given to an unemployed miner in Wales and how after tilling and tilling and a great deal of care, he turned a most unpromising bit of land into a fine garden. The local vicar came along and congratulated him saying "Look what you and God have achieved," to which the miner replied "Yes, but you should have seen it when God had it all to himself." What is our role in

how tomorrow looks? How, in Rufus Jones' terms, are we to lend our hands to God?

At some level, us all being here this evening is the mark of a luxuried people. We have the time, the lack of other pressing concerns. I suggest, given this privilege, we need to ensure that we make the most of it and that the consequences of being here "up the mountain" this week are felt throughout our lives by those we encounter. The quality of our everyday exchanges and manner is so crucial—the extra gesture of care, the extra engagement is a powerful ministry. And it means we need to get the pace of life, not just the peace of life, just right so we are able to have those extra words in the store or at the toll booth or down the telephone to the stranger trying to earn a living by conducting phone surveys. How we are in the world is a crucial reflection of the nature of our spirituality.

How do we transcend the individualism of modern society? How do we create community in our meetings, especially when, as Parker Palmer reminds us, they include the very last people we might hope to be in community with. (Though what riches that can bring!) In an era of increasing national and international travel, of always "leaving" to go to elsewhere, of allowing our technologies to take us away from face to face here-and-now contact I want to advocate that, if only we looked for it, we can find enchantment on our doorstep. Who am I to say I hesitate over being called a 21st-century Friend? Why do we try to set ourselves apart from other Quakers through such specific labeling as if difference is a virtue, and from wider community as if we do not care for the future of the world? Our Quaker heritage has always been about linking our mysticism with everyday life. Who am I not to go to business meeting because I don't want to? "I" am "it." Any Quaker "they" are "we" and ultimately "me." If our business meetings are not speaking to us, let us revitalize them. If I don't like a Quaker decision, I need to remember I am part of the Quaker priesthood who discerned it.

Sometimes attenders say they are hesitant to join a group of such good people with this amazing heritage of spiritual insight and social activism. What a terrible reputation to have that keeps others out. We are not Friends because we are good. Indeed, we are Friends together exactly because we are not good, or not good enough. We need each other, to help each other along, in our faithfulness in everyday life, in our discipline or discipleship, in our activism. Isaac Penington said: "Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one

with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand."

The spiritual stakes today are much lower—few of us believe in original sin, and we don't talk much about salvation. It is not our primary concern. We live our faith in a secularizing society in which we present Quakerism as one faith option equal to many or none, rather than as the True Church.



It Is Now

It is the dying time of the year
The fingers of the grey trees point out entreating:
Come down, come down, you slow leaves to feed us,
We'll store the fruits and dust 'til spring.
I am alive today, feeling my heart beating:
It is now, it is now.
The Sun brings God into my soul:
Warm arms, warm arms around my body;
My joy in today encompasses
The dying season
And God's everlasting love every moment:
It is now, it is now.

Louise D. Harris

Louise D. Harris, an attender of Salem (N.C.) Worship Group and a graduate of the School of the Spirit Ministry's program On Being a Spiritual Nurturer, class of 2008, died of pancreatic cancer on January 17, 2009.

Mike Wade

What, then, is our corporate calling? What is God calling us to do? And is it really something we need to do privately so only the most determined get to our doors? What is wrong with commu-

Creeds are useful; they communicate the faith, draw boundaries, provide a form of memorable words to help newcomers. We often say we want these sorts of things. No, Ben, we do not have

This “absolute perhaps” is surely some of our good news. It is not about what we believe, and it transcends our form.

nicating our insights and growth?

What is our good news?

We could look for clues to the founding architects of liberal Quakerism such as John Wilhelm Rowntree or Rufus Jones. Seeking to counter evangelical revival and Quietist Quakerism, they reinvented the distinctiveness of Quaker faith along four principles:

- That experience was primary (i.e., rather than Scripture)
- That faith needed to be relevant to the age: they didn't want the old practices of dress and speech back
- That Friends needed to be open to new light
- That we know more of God in each age and that new revelation has a necessary authority over earlier revelation—what is called progressivism.

This remains our framework. It has meant that our Quaker believing need not be tied to any text or any part of tradition, and over the 20th century we have seen patterns of believing shift beyond what Rowntree and Jones might have imagined.

Belief itself has become marginal for us. It is not how we identify ourselves as Quaker, and we are cautious about belief as a category, feeling the words never quite do justice to an experience that is ultimately “beyond what words can utter.” Theology is a story rather than a truth claim. We emphasize silence over speech, and many of our theological differences are masked by our form of worship and a lack of sharing about where our believing currently is.

This fits very much with our historic opposition to creeds—put a group of Friends together, and quickly and with great unity we can come up with about 11 reasons why we do not hold to creedal statements of belief.

Sometimes I play devil's advocate.

a creed. How about a little creed, just some basics? No, Ben, we do not have a creed. We could change it every year. No, Ben; or have perhaps a kind of creed, creed-ish. No, Ben, we do not have a creed. We do not have a creed. We believe we do not have a creed.

Ding. Not a belief creed but a creedal attitude to the form of Quakerism.

Rather, we are held together by the way in which we are a religious group, what I have called a “behavioral creed”: the way we worship and do business and areas of testimony.

If I were to run “how to resign from your Quaker meeting without a fuss” workshops, or maybe a telephone helpline, 1-800-EX-QUAKER, I would say there are two obvious ways to ease your departure:

- Cut across the behavioral creed: e.g., suggest an hour of hymn singing, *or*
- Rush into meeting and say you have found the truth for all people for all time, and that everyone needs to learn from you!

That will do it. Having a crisis of faith or a period of doubt will not work—chances are the meeting will see no dilemma, will labor tenderly with you, and you could be talked back in.

We are absolutely certain of being at least a little uncertain in our believing and are very cautious or even suspicious of those individuals and groups who claim to have the final revelation or whole truth.

From a rational place, the basis of liberal religion, we have come to be clear that any claims we make about God will necessarily be “perhaps” kinds of statements. We operate an “absolute perhaps” and it sets us apart from other spiritualities—it is very different to be certain of partial uncertainty than to be uncertain

at times of the certainties of, e.g., the creed. It is a powerful and distinct aspect of our faith. It is to me the mark of a liberal Quaker, and total finders or zealots of any persuasion will be in tension with the group.

Those who feel elderled for the theology of their ministry, be it Christian or nontheist, may rather have been elderled for the certainty of their ministry.

This absolute perhaps is surely some of our good news. It is not about what we believe, it transcends our form, and it conveys wonderfully our intention to be faithful people, surely more important, especially given our tradition of inward spirituality.

Links with the wider Quaker family, which I think are crucial to revivify world Quakerism, need to be built on this intention, i.e. to be faithful above all, even where other Quakers hold different theologies, different forms, and different modes of believing. Intention is critical.

We liberal Quakers are a minority of the Quaker world, both in our way of worship and numerically, probably less than 15 percent of global Quakerdom. Only a lack of resources on their part and lack of will on ours keeps us from hearing the insights of our African and South American sisters and brothers. We may feel disinclined to their more traditionally Christian Quakerism. I am part of the now 86 percent of Britain Yearly Meeting who have come in as adults, and one of the 50 percent of that number that came from no immediately prior religious affiliation—some of us have little baggage as a result—and I have worshiped in programmed Friends churches without any distress because I have felt the sincerity, the intention, that surpasses form.

For others of us “refugees,” there may be things we need to process about earlier affiliations before we can listen easily to different articulations of our faith. But we have a choice. We can go forward with confidence and infectious enthusiasm or we can remain a gathered remnant, hedged in by our disinclinations.

I have a list of our things that unite Quakers worldwide: direct encounter, forms of worship and business that reflect and nurture that; similar testimony; and the reality of the priesthood of all believers. At a recent gathering ex-

the keynote speakers, young adult Friend Evelyn Jadin, listed three other commonalities that bind us: a) self-righteousness and pride; b) worship that is often ungrounded and ungathered; c) a superficial and often hypocritical witness in the world. Ouch! Let us make that list part of our past.

Romans 8:24 reads, "A hope that can be observed is not really hope, for who hopes for what can be seen?" In other words we need to go forward with faith, trusting that what is meant for us will be given and that we will be faithful to it.

I have been going through the Quaker motions for too long but am now ready to step up to the spiritual plate. I have been professing at times without possessing.

If *our* Quakerism is part of *wider* Quakerism, we need to keep celebrating, and keep talking. We need to find joy in and of our spiritual experience (I mean, after all, what a wonderful gift we are given in and through our worship in and out of meeting), its universality and the radical consequences for societal and church life, the possibility and reality of personal transformation, of global transformation, our life together in daily community (and not one tethered to technology but face to face), and through our communicating the wonderful insights we have as a people of faith to the rest of the world, particularly around the primacy of experience, the availability of experience, our finding and seeking, our testimony, our hope.

I can feel the excitement, even in me, starting to become obvious! Early Quakerism set up such a list of grand claims: unmediated spiritual experience, spiritual equality, personal transformation, perfection, salvation, the second coming—I can hear kettle drums beating—such vibrancy, such excitement. Friends, this experience, if we want it and if we are prepared to open ourselves to it fully, is still there for our taking and living and communicating, our living and breathing and acting. Let us embrace the passion and the joy and go forward authentically, with integrity and, as I have learned recently, with absolute confidence. □

A BIRTHMOTHER'S PRAYER

(for Stephen Adam Strong)

In a chapel high on a hill above Gex, in the Jura mountains,
I lit a candle for you.
If you are still somewhere, you are 23.

The candle next to yours had burned down halfway,
Then gone out. I lit it again, hoping to help along
a stranger's prayer. But some unseen wind immediately
blew it out again, or maybe the candle itself
was deficient.

Yours burned true.

And I wondered: what was it the stranger had asked for
that led God to answer just half a prayer?
I had been taught we can't always know what's best for us.
Maybe candles do.

I would have stayed long enough to make sure your candle
kept burning, turning all the wax to smoke and heat.
But my children were calling me to come out
into the light, and join them.

I did not leave you there, no. I never do.
Not in that dark and desolate place, filled with the sorrows of Mary.
We finished hiking to the top of the mountain,
then looked far out across the valley.
You are there in everything I see,
and you always will be.

Madeline Strong Diehl

*Madeline Strong Diehl lives
in Ann Arbor, Mich.*



Sava Marinkovic

Addressing the Differences among Friends

by Howie Baker

The painting *Fierce Feathers*, by James Doyle Penrose, is an iconic Quaker painting. It is set in the state of New York in 1775, when the Iroquois were fighting for the British. Friends were meeting on Sunday morning when an Iroquois war party approached. Four braves came through the door, ready for battle, followed by their chief. He sensed the Spirit that filled the room, and that the Friends were peaceful, devout individuals. The warriors sat and joined the Friends in worship. Later, the chief and his warriors joined the Friends for lunch, and they spoke about the incident through a translator. The natives were surprised to learn that Friends worshiped the Great Spirit in silence, as they did. The chief left a white feather and an arrow as a signal that the building and those who inhabited it were peaceful, and should be left alone. The painting captures the chief just as he comes through the door, hatchet raised for a blow, Friends looking up at him, in the moment when the chief realizes why they are meeting.

What strikes me about this story is that the Native American war party, armed and psyched for killing, and ignorant of the theology and methods practiced by the pioneer Friends, *correctly identified the Holy Spirit in terms of their own religion*. The Friends were waiting upon the Most High God for instruction, and the chief recognized them as followers of the Great Spirit. This story and others like it have led me to believe that God speaks to us universally; though language cannot fully capture the experience, it is recognizable by any who know it, regardless of culture

Howie Baker, a member of Louisville (Ky.) Meeting, plays violin in a local community orchestra. He is deeply involved in the Young Adult Friends network.



The important part of the instrument is the dark interior space where the sound resonates.

and background. The worship experience of being in the presence of the Divine is the same; only the language and methods of practicing worship differ. Experiences of mine such as the Young Adult Friend (YAF) gatherings of May 23-26 and November 14-15, 2008, have lent credence to this notion. Friends have been debating what the proper practice and terminology should be since 1827, if not earlier. The most damaging effect of this debate is that we have become estranged from each other. Friends, we have been arguing over *semantics* for the last 180-some years. I therefore offer *some antics*, in the hope that they will provide some grounds for reconciliation:

- God is to people as people are to musical instruments. The purpose of the instrument is not realized until it is picked up. If a player picks it up, its job is to sound in accordance with the structure of the instrument and the input of the player. If a craftsman comes, its job is to receive the repair.

- Whether it is picked up by the player or the craftsman, the important part of the instrument is the dark interior space where the sound resonates. It is this interior space that gives the instrument its own sound and personality; the player plays it because of this particular resonance, and the craftsman works on it to clean it and strengthen the broken parts so that it may be played more beautifully.
- Varnish is an integral part of the instrument. I work on violins for a living, so I'm speaking from experience. It prevents damage from the elements, and so lengthens the life of the instrument. It must be thin, though, or it will stifle the sound. One should take care not to varnish oneself so thickly (that is, take on an overly protective shell) that one ceases to resound as the maker intended.
- Brokenness, suffering, is an undeniable condition of human existence. We all know it, whether an outside

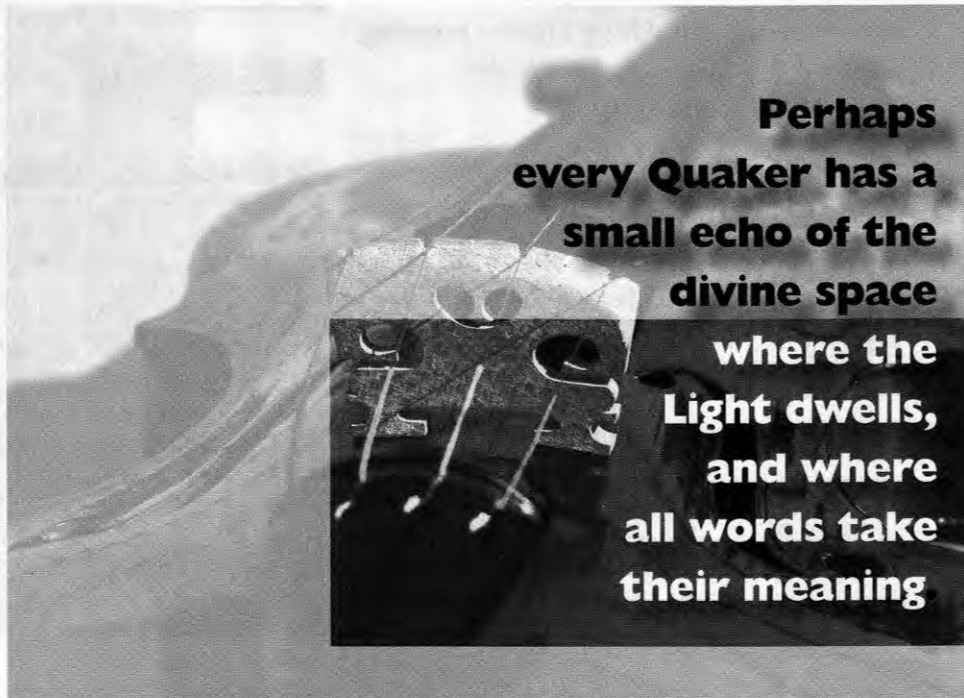
- from a motivation that stems from brokenness (sinning) only serves to worsen the condition. It breaks others. Brokenness is also a blessing. It is only from our broken state that we can be healed; and from our experience of being healed, we can teach healing.
- Separation is a disease whose symptom is brokenness. The action of brokenness is sin.
 - Separation from what, you ask? The short answer is: everything. The long answer is the Word of God, but since God spoke all of creation, including, us into being, the answer remains everything.
 - It is possible to believe in the absence

- ble text.
- Christ is an action of the Divine. Specifically, Christ is the action of the Divine becoming active among us mortals.
 - The Inner Light is the halo around Jesus' head. The Still Small Voice is Christ whispering what we need to hear. We are saved because we know him thus. I offer the following Bible verses for consideration on this point: 1 Kings 19:11-13; Psalm 43:3; Matthew 3:11; Mark 13:11; John 1:1-14; John 14:15-21; John 16:12-15; Acts 26:23; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Ephesians 5:14; 1 Peter 2:9; and 2 Peter 1:21.
 - The point is this: That we all, down

family: we have a lot in common, including an extensive history, and if you can get us all to sit down together we can work well with each other despite (or perhaps because of) our different experiences. Here is what I have experienced: I was raised by two Quaker pastors (one a lifelong Friend from Iowa, one who converted during the Vietnam War and who currently frequents a Unitarian church, still happily married) in New England Yearly Meeting, a yearly meeting that has only eight programmed meetings in it. I have attended four yearly meetings in the United States (New England, Northwestern, Western, and Ohio Valley), two YouthQuakes (1997 and 2000), the 1999 Friends United Meeting Triennial, the 2009 Friends General Conference Gathering, and Vienna Meeting in Austria. I graduated from Earlham College with a bachelor's degree in Philosophy. I worked with the programmed Christian Friends at Quaker Haven Camp for three summers. I moved to Louisville (Ky.) Meeting in Ohio Valley YM, where I am witnessing an unprogrammed FGC meeting take programmed evangelical Quaker refugees from Burundi under its wing and provide them not only with the necessities of living, but with the necessities of worship as well. I can say with confidence that *we are one faith*.

There is a peculiar quality that defines a Quaker, but is so peculiar that I have not yet found the words for it, even years after I became aware of it. Perhaps every Quaker has a small echo of the divine space where the Light dwells, and where all words take their meaning. If this is the case, it would explain why no words can capture the fullness of this quality, but it is still a quality that all Quakers share. We are a very loosely organized religion, full of mystics, artists, pastors, activists, teachers, craftsmen, parents, scholars, children, and performers, all of us and each of us following what God has revealed to us. Theologically, we run the gamut from hippie Buddhist Quakers to evangelical Christian Quakers; we draw inspiration from the Bible, from others' holy texts, and from our own history. We worship in silence, and in

Dave Dyet



**Perhaps
every Quaker has a
small echo of the
divine space
where the
Light dwells,
and where
all words take
their meaning**

of creeds to the extent that the absence of creeds becomes a creed. Likewise, one can forget that one is speaking to a child of God when one is thumping the Bible at another.

- I have heard that the Bible is a crutch. A crutch provides support to a broken individual, and since the Bible does so admirably, there is no problem with this assertion. However, it is appalling to attempt to remove a crutch from someone who is using it, and it is alarming to bear someone else over the head with our own crutch. So please, Friends, use the Bible as it was intended, for our own support. Offer Scripture to those who ask for it, or if someone tries to move without it,

to the lowest, most wretched, most corrupt of us, contain a spark of inspiration that was put there by the Divine Creator of the Universe, that calls us into being, that burns most fiercely when we truly live, and that is fed by the fires of others. Not everyone tends it or even pays heed to it, but it's there, and those who act in accordance with it are healed and transformed for the labor at hand. This is the central tenet of Quaker theology. Since we have this common faith, we are one faith, and we need to act like it. Some of us labor for peace in the Middle East, in Iraq and Israel, in spite of 5,000 years of bloody conflict. *Why can we not handle a mere 180 years of squabbling?*

us power to be healing hands in a world that is broken and torn. Sectarian bickering is paltry and embarrassing next to that, and we have suffered because we indulge in it.

There is a growing feeling among my generation that our debate over what truly makes a Quaker is pointless. It has only created rifts that isolate us from those with experience we need. YAFs, roughly 18 to 35 years old, are hungry for a living, relevant faith, and our searches have led us to examine not only our own branches of Quakerism, but the other branches as well. We are finding that other branches of our faith have useful insights that we have not been taught. Liberal Friends are looking into the Bible, both from curiosity as to what it actually says and as a tool to understanding Christian thought that in many cases has been sadly neglected at home. Programmed Friends have heard about how compelling unprogrammed worship can be, and are experimenting with it. The gathering in May was intoxicating. Over 100 of us learned about each other's faith and learned that we can, in fact, work together, and if we can, why not our elders? I found the November conference more sobering: our religion needs this energy. Our meetings are getting older, more complacent, and may simply die out, either from lack of young people or from a slow death of the Spirit. No other religion that came from Christ's teachings provides the variety of faith experience that is found within Quakerism, and my generation finds we can feed off the energy we find in other forms of Quakerism than the one into which we were born.

I realize this article flies in the face of the ongoing theological spat that is currently still active among Friends, and that many readers may feel that their identity as Friends depends on "winning" the argument. My overwhelming experience is that one's identity is strengthened as one is exposed to new insights. We Friends have never accepted the excuse that just because a position is historically untenable we shouldn't hold it anyway (abolition, anyone?), and I would not be living up to my heritage if I let this slip by. If I am acting against the trend of the past 180-some years of our Religious Society, so be it. I don't

have been wounded by Christianity who find comfort in the Spirit with unprogrammed Friends, and missions from the Christian yearly meetings have certainly brought comfort to desperate parts of the world; both these ministries need to be maintained. I ask only two

those relationships.

I wonder if perhaps we are not like the Iroquois and Friends in *Fierce Feathers*. We're in the same room, and we are not in the situation we've expected, but *the Spirit is there*. That one fact trumps everything else. □

ON THE BACK OF A WOODEN BENCH IN A QUAKER MEETINGHOUSE

For Lucy

Just three letters: "CNR". It seems to me that Mr. or Ms. CNR could not have carved them during Quaker meeting; even a quiet chisel would sing out like a lark at dawn.

I imagine CNR
with a chisel discreet in grey folds
of Quaker cloth, on some supposed errand,
perhaps to bank the fire some wintry day,
slipping in the wide main door,
whistling.

Then out with the chisel. Working
quietly in slantways light through
window panes that then were new,
CNR curved gently round the C,
relaxed a bit on the masculine lines
of N, then swerved round
the neck-twisting loop of R.
Simple, but with attention to flourish and serif.

Just three letters. CNR
banked that fire, then exited
whistling
out into a life full of pleasures or difficulties,
loves made known or kept secret,
passing on that day by the east wall
of the broad graveyard where I might find today,
some hundreds of years later,
the whole enigmatic name
spelled out for me.

Douglas Fleming

*Douglas Fleming lives in
Princeton, N.J.*



Douglas Fleming

Central America, 2008

by Loida E. Fernández G.

What contrasts in
such a short time and a
small distance.

I remember anew: God
is not only God of things
as they are, but also God
of things as they were
meant to be and for which
they were created.

IN MONTEVERDE

In late January 2008, I waited for several hours in the Mexico City airport as the prelude to a two-week trip to Central America. My plan was to attend a writers' workshop for Central American Quakers in Monteverde, Costa Rica, entitled "Writing as Ministry," organized by Friends World Committee for Consultation and Earlham School of Religion. My role was to coordinate the workshop, and also serve as its interpreter. Following the workshop, I planned to visit Nicaragua so I could see the country and connect with long-

Loida E. Fernández G. is a member of General Reunion of Mexican Friends, Ciudad Victoria Friends Church in Mexico. She is executive secretary of COAL, the Latin American region/program of Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas. Sara Palmer, a member of Central Philadelphia (Pa.) Meeting, translated this article, with editing assistance from Helene Pollock, also from Central Philadelphia Meeting. This is an edited version of an article originally published in Spanish in the newspaper El Eco del Mante, in Ciudad Mante, Tamaulipas, Mexico (March 10, 2008), and as part of an anthology, Antología, Colectivo3, ed. Carlos Acosta Guerrero and Loida Fernández, printed by the Municipality of El Mante (2008).



León's
cathedral,
Nicaragua

time friends.

I arrived in San José, Costa Rica, at midnight and joined the other participants. After a good rest, we traveled another four hours the following day up to Monteverde. The days there, though packed, were a refuge for the spirit, with sunrises and sunsets that I could see from the kitchen window of my host family, who were among the first settlers of that Paradise-like place. We enjoyed a unique, incomparable view of the Gulf of Nicoya on the Pacific coast.

Strong winds kept reminding me of the Bible text, "The wind bloweth where

it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth" (John 3:8). Feeling the soft massage of the *garúa*—a kind of dew that sometimes turns to rain in the cloud forest and at lower altitudes—reminded me of another text that speaks of the breath that rose from the earth before there was rain, and watered all the face of the earth, including the garden God had planted to the east of Eden (Gen. 2: 6-8). Another resonant passage for me those days was one that speaks of a new heaven and a new earth (Rev. 21: 1).

What can I say about the presenter, Professor Susan Yanos? Her manner of instruction truly communicated a sense of *calling* as a teacher. She guided us through a profound experience that transformed our time together into something that was *spiritual* in the fullest sense of the word.

Leading each of us figuratively by the hand, she opened us to literary analysis, then took us to deeper, more intimate regions of human existence. We shared heart to heart without superficiality. This was literary analysis that allowed us not only to dissect texts but also to approach them in a different way—from our own experience. “Ways to Attract and Transform Readers,” “The Power of Story,” “Organizing the Climax of the Story,” “The Personal and the Persuasive”—these were some of the topics on which we reflected, in the mode of narrative theology.

The days in Monteverde were full of new experiences for all our senses. The natural world surrounded us—many new plants, birds, small mammals; new foods; new people to get to know; new names for familiar plants and fruits; new paths; new music; and, for some, even a new language. But what undoubtedly has stayed with us from the time together has been our common experience as human beings, rooted in spiritual light that unites us beyond cultural differences and life heritage. Despite our differences in background, we shared a language of inward life. We were amazed by this inward sharing, just as we were amazed by sunrises and sunsets, recognizing that God is not only the God of things as they are, but the God of things as they were and are destined to be. As the days passed, they seemed to grow shorter because of all we wanted to learn from and share with each other.

Back in San José we returned to reality, encountering numerous peasant leaders protesting the Central American Free Trade Treaty (CAFTA). Each of us went our separate way; I continued on to Nicaragua. As I prepared for this sec-

ond phase of my travels, I felt as if I were 1,000 light-years away from that special time in Costa Rica.

IN NICARAGUA

The 90 kilometers between Managua and León Santiago de los Caballeros went by slowly. So did the hazy, hot afternoon, as we rode the minibuses that make that trip every day. As we rounded Lake Managua, a body of water that receives the entire city's garbage, and as we went past the



base of the imposing, fearsome Momotombo (I wonder, do other capital cities have volcanoes that guard them—or destroy them?), the lowlands and somnolence brought on by heat reminded me of other weary, torrid trips in my Mexican homeland, from Mante to Ciudad Valles. “León, León, León,” shouted the agent, trying to snag additional passengers from another minibus driver at the Universidad Centroamericana stop.

It took us about an hour to arrive in the “city of poets,” which holds in its cathedral the remains of the renowned Nicaraguan legendaries Rubén Darío, Salomón de la Selva, and Alfonso Cor-

tez. That was an hour of hearing others' conversations: the endless ringing of cell phones, arranging get-togethers, closing deals or simply sending messages to who-knows-who in cyberspace.

The local foods are special. “For that reason alone it's worth enduring the heat,” I was told by a woman selling *pinolillo* (a classic Nicaraguan beverage made of corn, cacao, sugar, and cinnamon) when I asked her if she was from León.

I felt tired but relieved when I connected with a good friend of mine for more than 30 years, nicknamed *la negra*, in the legendary Sesteo de las Aves. This coffee shop boasts that it served as the meeting place for the greats of Nicaraguan literature, as proven by the old photos hanging on one of its walls. Not many people approach the place now, or if they do they may discover to their disappointment (as we did) that to eat a *nacatamal* (a very close relative to our banana-leaf-wrapped tamales) and to drink a *pinolillo* costs around ten U.S. dollars. That's prohibitive for most Nicaraguans these days, since for many it is equivalent to several days' pay.

Three days before, my friends had welcomed me at the airport that hasn't changed its name since it was christened during the period of the Sandinista Revolution as Augusto César Sandino Airport.

“Ajá, and how was the trip?” “And *deai*? How's the traveler doing? Let's go straight to the UCA stop before the afternoon hits us and it gets impossible to travel to Carazo.” That's what we did just to find spots on the minibus that would carry us for over an hour's travel

tas, El Crucero, Diriamba, Dolores, and other little towns where the minibus stops to drop off those who are returning from their daily job hunt, from selling their wares, or from manual labor in smoldering Managua. Others make similar rounds every single day through Granada, Masaya, León, and Managua, just to survive.

"Watch out for thieves, put your

in Managua. After several hours' visit to two of the museums in León—whose Colonial buildings reminded me of Old Havana—we visited the Art Center of the Ortiz Gudián Foundation. Located on Calle Real across from the San Francisco Church, the center is said to have been founded by one of Nicaragua's richest bankers. It offers the public an

were off in the five o'clock minibus, hoping to connect with the last bus in Managua that will take us to Carazo.

LAND OF EXTREMES

After a marketplace fire years ago, Masaya, city of craft-making par excellence, has a new market full today of many things that are far from being traditional Nicaraguan crafts. Instead of those *guayabera* shirts from the La Aguja house of embroidery (which was located in Granada, if I recall correctly), one finds an international mix of personal effects, accessories, and handwork similar to what I'm used to seeing in our own market back in Managua. Crafts made by hand are yielding to the invasion of synthetic textiles, Taiwanese bags, and backpacks. Woven hats and *jícara* water cups are giving way to cheaper plastic versions.

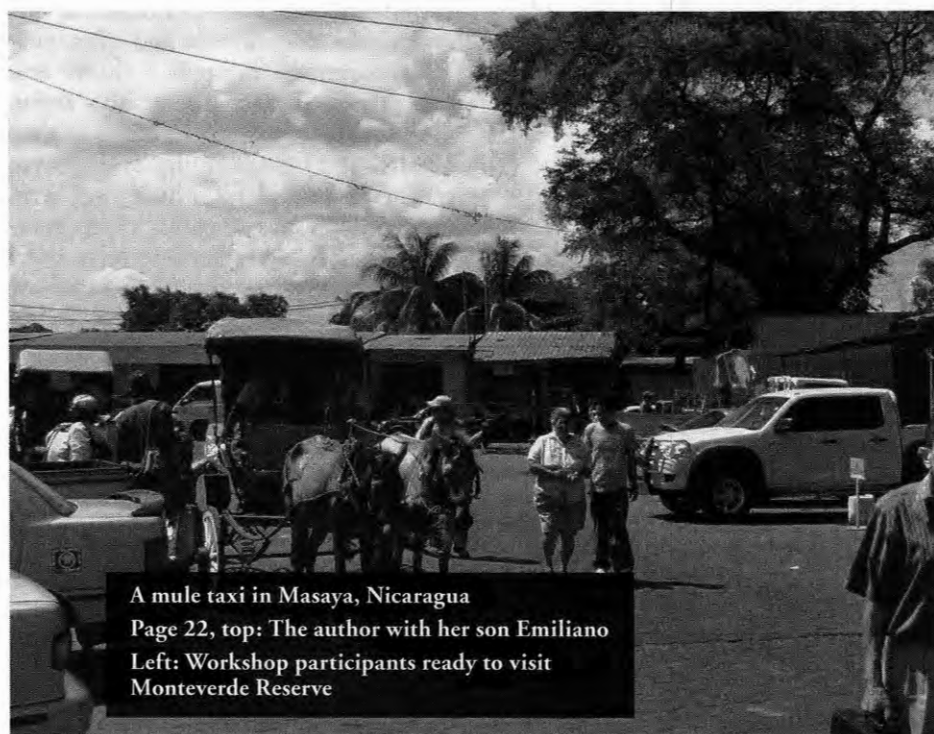
And the cities are shadowed by despair, by discouragement from the daily struggle for survival. The extremes of wealth and poverty are now growing ever more distant from one another, with nothing in the middle. In Nicaragua today, you can be either very rich or miserably poor. There is no middle ground. It would seem that nothing has changed.

CHECKING IN WITH FRIENDS

I couldn't track down Lena the anthropologist, an old friend whom I had hoped to visit, who I know lives in a very unstable situation and has resorted to spiritualizing neo-Christian religiosity in the midst of her poverty.

Adriana, another friend, lives in the country, working with street kids. She's a psychologist, has worked in prisons, and she has now started a foundation for these youths to make hammocks. They sleep in them, but also sell them. They also cultivate a little coffee. For them, she represents hope.

My friend Aurora amazes me on the last night of my stay with the news that she's going to throw her husband out of the house for being irresponsible. She doesn't want anyone to know yet. Perhaps she tells me because she knows I'm leaving tomorrow and can therefore be



A mule taxi in Masaya, Nicaragua
Page 22, top: The author with her son Emiliano
Left: Workshop participants ready to visit Monteverde Reserve

money in your shoes, be careful crossing the streets" were some of the many recommendations with which I was sent off in the mornings as I went out to visit various places in Managua. It's with this fear that thousands of people of all ages set out every day, entrusting themselves to all the saints before leaving at six in the morning, and ultimately sleeping on the minibuses that bear them day after day to their work in the country's capital.

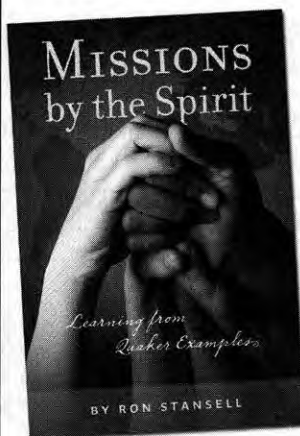
The dream of seeing a different Managua vanishes in the scorching sun and in the middle of the crush of people in the Eastern Market or Roberto Huembes or any other market. There, still more vendors offer fresh produce ranging from *yuca* (cassava), cashews, yams, plantains (both whole and fried), pumpkins, and squash. Then there are the shoes, jewelry, and endless Taiwanese products sold by the ton in the streets. It was as

outstanding collection of Western paintings from the Renaissance, Baroque, and Romantic periods, as well as modern Latin American art. To the latter collection are added prize-winning works from the Center's biennial painting and sculpture competition. These pieces—treasures that invite contemplation—are housed in two beautiful colonial mansions, amazingly preserved. These buildings, located in the midst of the bustle of transit, pedestrians, and street vendors, are a refuge in the city, the first capital of Nicaragua and the cradle of Nicaraguan culture.

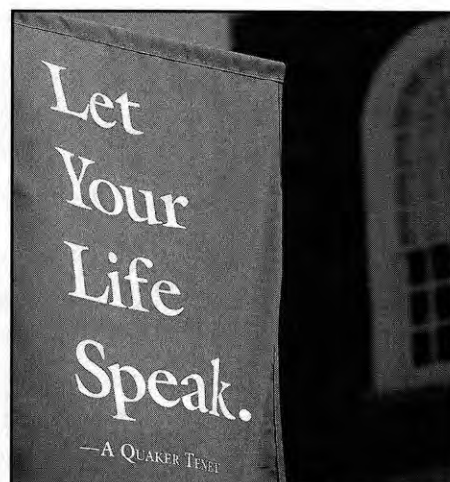
Getting back to Managua took us over an hour since hardly anybody travels to the capital once afternoon arrives. One has to wait till the minibus fills up, engulfed in the sounds of bands, the agent's loudspeaker, and the music of the Mejía Godoy family.

"Move it," is heard, and yet another

coming soon



The ministries of Arthur Chilson, R. Esther Smith, Everett Cattell, and Jack Willcuts tell the story of *Missions by the Spirit*.



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himself, they've told him to stop smoking and not to eat pork, but he doesn't listen." Her children don't know she'll do it, but tomorrow, early tomorrow, at breakfast, before everybody goes off to Managua, she'll run him out. She already has her speech memorized and all that's left to do is ask him to take his things. "Ah! but yes," she added, "I'll ask him to leave the first book of poems he wrote, that he dedicated to me." Definitely tomorrow, tomorrow will be another day for them all.

Calixro, another friend, has an epileptic son. His medicine changed his sleep patterns and now he can't stay awake during the day; since he works all night, he hasn't finished his thesis. Calixtito, as they call him, is 25 and very intelligent; yet his only option is to work as a watchman or, if he's lucky, sometimes in a nighttime telephone service, but that's it. The family has two more children who haven't yet completed their studies.

A married couple I know, Abdias and Amira, are housing Amira's mother, who can no longer live in the United States; she's diabetic and has no insurance. Though her life expectancy may possibly decrease, her quality of life may improve with all the affection she will now receive here—something nobody showed her when she was in the U.S.

I open the newspapers and find the same news I read in newspapers in other cities—the same in Managua as in San José, Costa Rica; or Chiquimula, Guatemala; or any Mexican city. The model, just as misery itself, is duplicated.

I watch a video about places that we—the humans of the world—should be ashamed of seeing. It shows children living in the Managua landfill, not to mention the hundreds of thousands of vultures hovering or roosting in trees around the San Salvador dump. The sight gave me goosebumps, both on my skin and on my soul.

And I wonder, where is hope? Are we any better off? Do I need to come to Nicaragua and see extreme poverty so that I can say, "I'm okay, we're okay"? Do I care to see those same things in my own country? Or, is it easier to deal with those realities in a foreign land?

I read: "A scrap of blue is more intense than the whole sky/And I feel my

And I add: "our yearning."

WHAT PASSETH AWAY

I return to Mexico overwhelmed by so much poverty, yet deeply moved that in the midst of all that poverty and hellishness, people keep going without losing sight of a better tomorrow. I can only think of the paradox, of the extremes through which I passed in just two weeks. Monteverde and Managua! What contrasts in such a short time and a small distance. I remember anew: God is not only God of things as they are, but also God of things as they were meant to be and for which they were created. I tell myself: perhaps little paradises like Monteverde allow us to draw breath so that we can then continue moving through life without being mere spectators.

Finally, I think, I get a clearer sense of the meaning of those verses from Revelation, from John of Patmos, which resounded so much in my mind during the workshop in Monteverde:

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. . . . And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them; and they shall be his people. . . . And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the first former things are passed away. —Rev. 21:1,3,4

And I wonder: When will these things truly pass away?

Ah! But that's not where it ends; the text continues:

And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write . . . —Rev. 21:5

And so it goes on. I've just written this. I don't know where it will go, nor to what end.

Tomorrow I'll hand my friend Mariano, a Nicaraguan from my home town Mante, the book on poetry I brought him from his homeland, along with these words I've written. I hope he won't weep as much as I have wept. □

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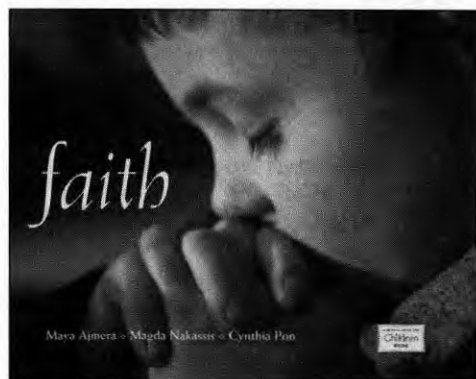
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Young Friends Bookshelf



Faith

By Maya Ajmera, Magda Nakassis, and Cynthia Pon. Charlesbridge, 2009. 48 pages. \$16.95/hardcover.

This photo essay introduces world faiths through images of children participating in various elements of spiritual life: prayer, study, cleansing, holy places, holidays, food and drink, rites of passage, and caring for others. The focus is on what we hold in common, while differences among the world cultures and religions are self-evident in the photos. The book has a valuable aim that resonates with Friends beliefs: "Respecting and working to understand the differences among faiths helps create a more peaceful and just society."

It is striking to see the special clothes and the elements of ritual that are so different from the visually subdued practice of Friends. There are many photos that a Quaker child could relate to personally, and others that would be familiar from the experience of friends and family. Children and adults alike should enjoy the visual beauty of these images from around the world.

Each double-page has a sentence or phrase of text, plus captions for the photos. After the photos, there is a map indicating the areas in the world where the photos were taken. The map is followed by four pages of detailed description of the topics covered, including a wonderful two-paragraph summary of what praying means.

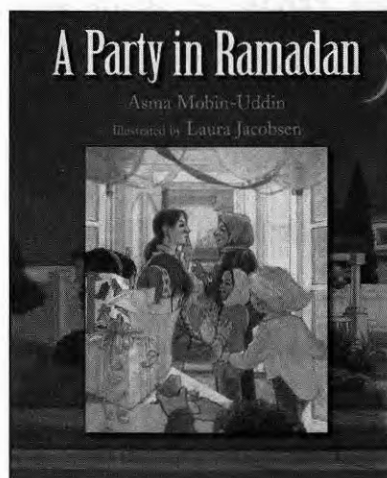
At the end of the book, there is a five page glossary, especially helpful for explaining the less familiar terms. For example, I had heard of Zoroastrianism, but could not have explained it without help. I was pleasantly surprised by the inclusion of images from shamanism and indigenous religions, as well as Rastafarianism and the Baha'i faith.

Parents and teachers can read the explanatory text (written for ages 9–13) and use background information to help their

child when looking at the photos. The text accompanying the photos is suitable for children ages 4–9. This book would be a valuable resource for anyone teaching about world religions, regardless of the age group involved. The book would be a helpful tool for Friends living in diverse communities to introduce the religions of their neighbors. This highly recommended book was developed by the Global Fund for Children and proceeds will go to support that organization's work.

Lisa Rand

Lisa Rand is a member of Unami Meeting in Pennsburg, Pa.



A Party in Ramadan

By Asma Mobin-Uddin. Illustrated by Laura Jacobsen. Boyds Mill Press, 2009. 32 pages. \$16.95/hardcover.

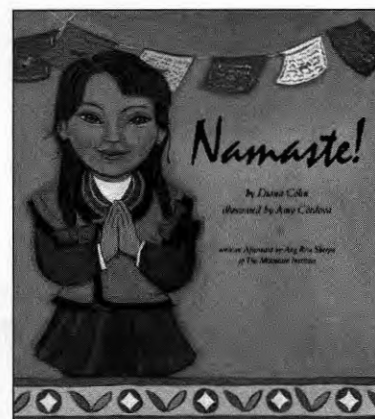
In this story, young Leena is invited to a birthday party, which falls on the first day of Ramadan. While fasting is optional for young Muslims, Leena wants to observe the fast with her family. This includes no eating or drinking from dawn to sunset and fasting at a birthday party certainly is challenging. I appreciated the kindness and support that Leena received from her friends as she refused chocolate cake and lemonade.

The last page of the book includes factual details about Ramadan and an explanation of the hijab, the headscarf worn by some Muslim girls and women for modesty. Since Leena and her mother wear the hijab in the story, this definition is welcome. The beautiful illustrations are detailed and true-to-life, and pastel pencil lends warmth and softness to the colors.

This book is a lovely way not only to learn about the Muslim observance of Ramadan, but also to open a discussion about doing the right thing even when that is dif-

ficult. The story would be suitable for ages 6–9 (with some adult assistance) and could be useful for introducing a discussion with older children. Adults interested in Islam would find the book a lovely introduction to an important Muslim practice. Homes, schools, and meeting libraries could benefit from this book.

Lisa Rand

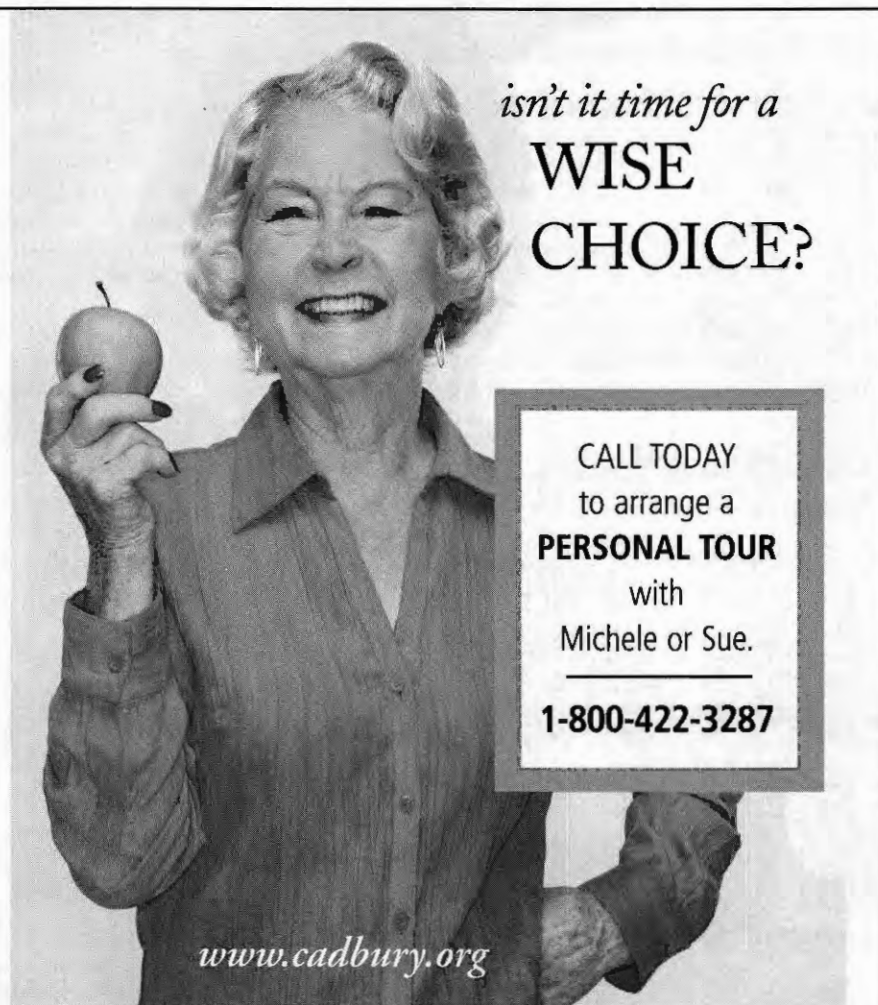


Namaste!

By Diana Cohn. Illustrated by Amy Cordova. Steiner Books, 2009. 32 pages. \$17.95/hardcover.

High in the mountains in Nepal, Nima Sherpa is a little girl who, like many little girls, wants to please her father when he goes away to work. Nima's father is a mountain guide, who leads groups up the icy slopes of Everest. He promises her stories when he comes back, and asks in turn for her to have a story for him. Her father often tells her how he was able to help people, so on her way to school Nima tries to find a way to help someone so she can tell her father about it. But she is too little to be of much use to anyone. At least she can raise her hands in the prayer position and greet people with the blessing "Namaste!" which her mother has told her means, "The light in me meets the light in you." When Nima greets porters carrying heavy loads with Namaste, they smile and return the greeting. Nima sees that for a moment their load was lighter. She greets others, including yaks and foreigners and her father's old Tibetan friend Tenzig in the same way. Tenzig gives her a spoonful of honey, saying "Nima, you are full of sweetness and light, just like this honey."

Amy Cordova, a fine artist with a gallery in Taos, journeyed to Nepal with Diana Cohn to research the art for this book, and the effort shows in attention to detail both actual and mythic. Her art is bold and expressive: she uses a pallet of vivid colors chosen from the daily life of these



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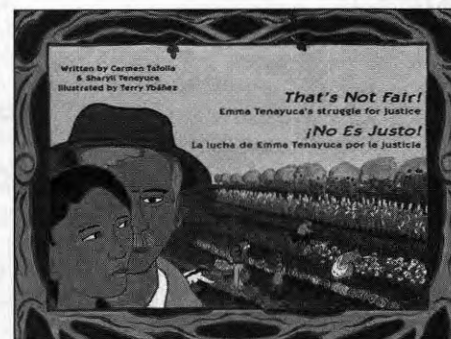


mountain people. The paintings are stylized, with a different decorated border running between the text and the art. Through playful, loving facial expressions, she is able to convey visually the Inner Light in each character.

The simple story is particularly powerful for Quaker children who are raised with the idea of the Light of God being inside each of us. Nima learns how when one person's Divine Light greets another's, both Lights shine more brightly. *Namaste!* is a practical, gracious story that illustrates the most basic of Quaker beliefs.

Alison James

Alison James is a member of South Starksboro (Vt.) Meeting.



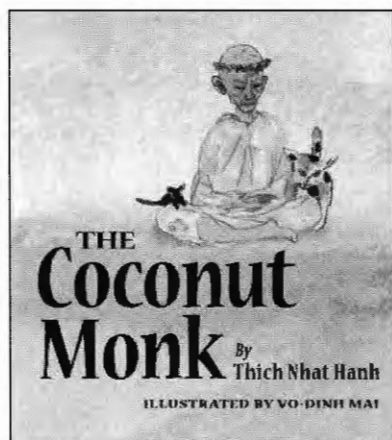
That's Not Fair! / No Es Justo! Emma Tenayuca's Struggle for Justice / La Lucha de Emma Tenayuca por la justicia

By Carmen Tafolla and Sharyll Teneyuca. Illustrated by Terry Ybanez. Wings Press, 2008. 40 pages. \$17.95/hardcover.

That's Not Fair, with text in both English and Spanish, describes childhood experiences of Labor Leader Emma Tenayuca. Tenayuca worked for the rights of pecan shellers in Texas. This book focuses on Emma's everyday encounters with injustice that are easy for young children to understand and also demonstrates simple ways in which even children can help others in need. The story, with illustrations evoking its setting of the 1920s and '30s, also serves as a point for initiating discussions with older children about more complex topics of equality, injustice, and peaceful social action. This book works well for ages 6-12, and is a good basis for a First-day school lesson on peace and equality.

Michelle McAtee

Michelle McAtee is a member of Nashville (Tenn.) Meeting.



The Coconut Monk

By Thich Nhat Hanh. Illustrated by Vo-Dinh Mai. Plum Blossom Books, 2009. 40 pages. \$10.95/paperback.

If you are looking for a beautifully illustrated picture book that provokes many avenues for discussion about peace, war, cooperation, collaboration, and determination, this is the book for you. *Coconut Monk* is based on the true story of Dao Dua, known as the Coconut Monk because of his vegetarian diet. Dao Dua lived on an island in the Mekong Delta during the Vietnam War. The sanctuary he built on this island can still be visited today. It served as a refuge for Vietnamese people and U.S. soldiers during that long war.

The story told is a parable of peace. In it the characters of the monk, the cat, and the mouse living together in harmony quietly acknowledge that while peace is possible, it is not easy and requires effort on the part of all involved. The cat uses his will to be peaceful with the mouse and the mouse in turn trusts the cat. The monk's relationship with these two gives their partnership an element of order and respect. His absolute acceptance of this improbable, yet obvious relationship makes it real.

The trio travel to see their president, who lives in a big white house surrounded by guards. My heart cried when the guards locked up the monk because he had no business with the president. The cat and the mouse stayed with the monk. People did not forget the monk and his mission of peace. They wrote to him and asked him questions when he was in prison.

Readers who know Thich Nhat Hanh will have their expectations met with the simple truths presented in understandable words in this story. New readers may wish to know more about this man of peace and poetry who has authored over 60 books and three delightful children's books.

Lucinda Hathaway

Lucinda Hathaway is a member of Sarasota (Fl.) Meeting.

Continued on p. 28

FRIENDS JOURNAL December 2009

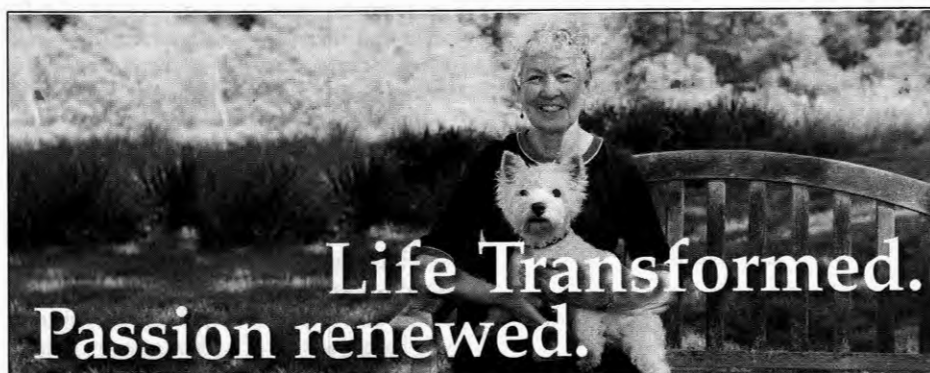


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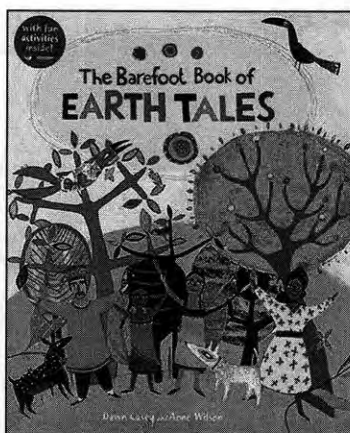
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The Barefoot Book of Earth Tales

*By Dawn Casey. Illustrated by Anne Wilson.
Barefoot Books, 2009. 96 pages. \$19.99/
hardcover.*

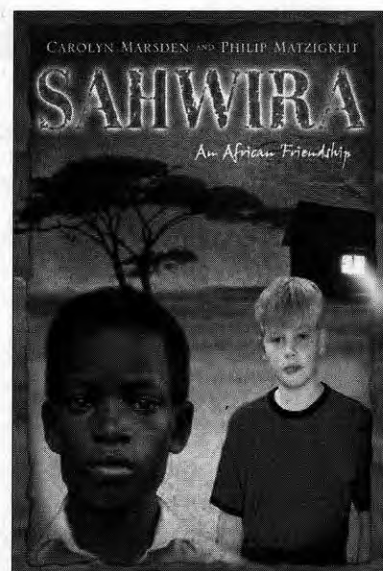
The Barefoot Book of Earth Tales is a delightful collection of seven stories with environmental messages each from a different part of the world: Australia, Nigeria, the U.S. Southwest, Bali, Kazakhstan, India, and Wales. Each story is followed by instructions for a related activity.

The stories, some familiar, some not, are all very well told in a style that says "Read me out loud." This is a great lap book. The illustrations have a bright child-friendly style that says "Try this yourself," which is what the first activity for the first story is: painting in the Australian Aboriginal style. We could easily see a First-day school teacher gathering the activity materials and preparing a whole lesson out of each of the stories. The stories are engaging and the craft ideas are too.

However, some of the activities are seasonal or better done at home. For example, the "Build a Willow Den" activity assumes you have a source of willow prunings and a lawn that may be cut into. We'd caution that you might be disappointed in the result if you try this activity at any other time than early spring. The "Grow Your Own Tomatoes" activity works best in late spring. The "Make a Pine Cone Bird Feeder" is probably more suited to fall or winter, yet none of these activities have any mention of their seasonality. The directions are very general, probably in an effort to avoid using measurements that differ from country to country. So it would be wise to plan ahead and maybe do a trial run before bringing an activity to meeting or classroom. The stories and activities are appropriate for ages 4-10.

Tom and Sandy Farley

Tom and Sandy Farley are members of Palo Alto (Calif.) Meeting



Sahwira: An African Friendship

*By Carolyn Marsden and Philip Matzigkeit.
Candlewick, 2009. 189 pages. \$15.99/
hardcover.*

Evan is a 12-year-old Caucasian American living with his parents at a Methodist mission. Blessing is African, a Shona boy whose father is the pastor at the mission's church. Despite their apparent differences and the pressures placed on their relationship by society, Evan is devoted to his friend. Blessing thinks of Evan as his sahkira, a friend who is closer than a brother. Their life together should represent the brotherhood that is possible between all people.

But this is Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in the early 1960s. Huge changes are coming to the country both boys call home and these changes seem destined to tear apart both their friendship and their nation. Violent incidents by freedom fighters are threatening the peaceful (if unjust) way of life Blessing and his community are used to. Evan is being pressured into joining the cadets at his all-white school, a move that threatens more than just his friendship with Blessing.

This book takes readers to a place and time most young adults probably know little or nothing about. That alone might be reason enough to recommend it. But in addition to seamlessly weaving in details of daily life and culture from a time and place that could at first seem almost alien to the reader, the authors have created a fast-paced, emotional story that deals with issues such as peer pressure, personal integrity, and how we face the consequences of the choices we are sometimes forced to make. The authors tell their story in chapters that alternate the perspective between Evan and Blessing, a technique that not only serves to

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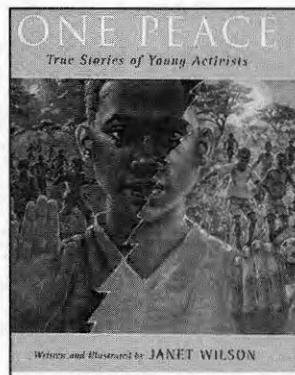
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flesh out the characters more fully, but which also helps build dramatic tension.

Friends will appreciate this novel because of the unflinching pacifism of both Blessing and his father, both of whom see nonviolence as the path of first (and only) resort, during a period in their country's history when are spinning violently out of control. In addition, the overarching theme of reconciliation—an idea sorely lacking in much of today's young adult fiction, especially in stories directed at a young male audience—is one I found refreshing. This highly recommended novel includes a section of notes on the historical context of the story and a glossary of important terms.

David Austin

David Austin is a member of Haddonfield (N.J.) Meeting.



One Peace: True Stories of Young Activists

By Janet Wilson. Orca Book Publishers, 2008. 32 pages. \$19.95/hardcover.

Snowflakes, their individual fragility, and their collective endurance are invoked by illustrator/author Janet Wilson on the endpapers and title page of her book. As we turn the page to the first "true story," the blue and white colors of a snowflake fade to the sable night pinpointed with stars, and the geometry of a melding of human and animal in the limbs, roots, and trunk of a towering tree.

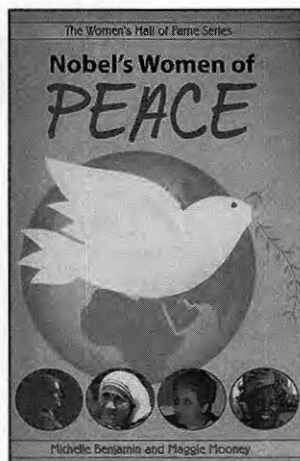
This image is a powerful attempt to visualize the dream of unity that impelled a Native American boy to announce to his mother and grandmother that the Creator had spoken to him in a dream, telling him "to stop wars and killing among nations." This boy wove a legend among different, often warring nations, as the Peacemaker. *One Peace* strives to achieve a dynamic balance between the lyrical celebration of child activists and the unflinching statements of the facts and figures of war, famine, and

conscienceless profit. The readers are introduced to Song Kosal of Cambodia, the first person to sign the Mine Ban Treaty in Ottawa in 1997 and Kimmie Weeks of Liberia, the founder of Voices of the Future, the first child rights advocacy group in Liberia. A poem, "Now I Lay Down the Arms," by Rashid Peters, a former child soldier, tells concisely and poignantly of his ordeal. And so it goes.

If you've ever wondered, as a child or an adult, where to start "picking up the pieces," begin with Janet Wilson's *One Peace*: an illuminating artist's journal, meditation and handbook for the day, for the journey.

James Foritano

James Foritano attends Friends Meeting at Cambridge (Mass.) Meeting.



Nobel's Women of Peace

By Michelle Benjamin and Maggie Mooney. Second Story Press, 2008. 146 pages. \$10.95/paperback.

Nobel's Women of Peace contains short and engaging biographies of the 12 women who have received the Nobel Prize for Peace. The reader learns what these women felt was so important to change, and how they overcame many obstacles to achieve their goals. Peace activism is seldom easy.

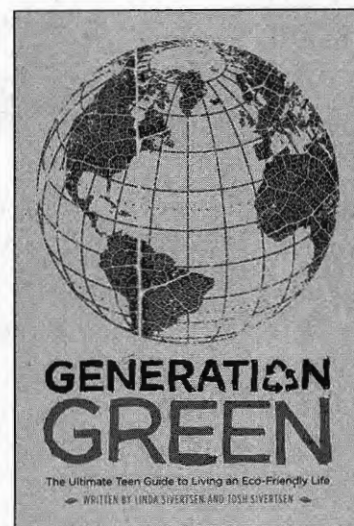
Like the other Nobel Peace Prize winners, these women encounter many struggles, personal and professional, national and social. However, they also often had to overcome sexism. Frequently they did not have an easy time making their voices heard in cultures that are primarily patriarchal or in countries where men are traditionally in charge. Yet their voices were heard.

This book may encourage young adults to read more extensively about peace activ-

ism. It may even prompt social action. Warning: If you read *Nobel's Women of Peace*, it may inspire you.

Meagan Healy

Meagan Healy attends Patapsco (Md.) Meeting.



Generation Green: The Ultimate Teen Guide to Living an Eco-Friendly Life

By Linda and Tosh Sivertsen. Simon Pulse, 2008. 272 pages. \$10.99/paperback.

Imagine living "off the grid." Living simply in the northern woods of New Mexico where chopping wood for fuel and walking a quarter mile to draw water from a well were part of the daily routine for mother and son Linda and Tosh Sivertsen. They describe these experiences and their subsequent return to city life in this book. They offer many practical suggestions (and at least a couple not-so-practical suggestions such as drying used paper towels for pooper scoopers) for ways we as individuals can reduce our consumption of Earth's resources as well as tend to our own health. It is written to be engaging and accessible to young adults.

Generation Green covers a lot of ground. Some major environmental issues are briefly covered, such as global warming, worldwide water shortages, deforestation, declining fish populations, limited reserves of fossil fuel, and desertification. Interviews are interspersed throughout the book telling about individuals, including some celebrities, who have found ways to make positive environmental choices.

Several chapters address "green" ways to

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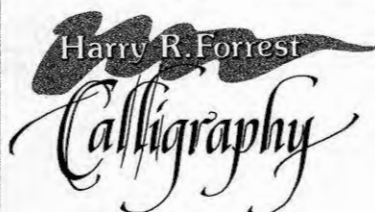
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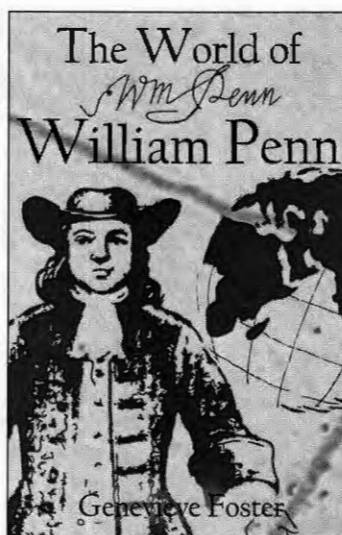
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live. There is discussion of some thorny issues that affect health, like the dangers of antiperspirants and some types of cosmetics. There is also discussion of organic foods. There is an emphasis upon the recycle and reuse concept as well as some green ways to have fun. The authors encourage making changes at a comfortable clip: from small incremental ones—eating vegetarian one day a week or riding your bike to school—to big ones—you could select an environmental or green career. Many teens would enjoy *Generation Green*, and it would certainly resonate with Quaker teens.

Vickie LeCroy

Vickie LeCroy is a member of Cincinnati (Ohio) Meeting.



The World of William Penn

By Genevieve Foster. Beautiful Feet Books, 2008. 192 pages. \$14.95/paperback.



Benjamin West and His Cat Grimalkin

By Marguerite Henry. Beautiful Feet Books, 2008. 147 pages. \$13.95/paperback.

These Quaker classics have recently been reprinted. *The World of William Penn* not only recounts the life of this famous Quaker, but informs the reader about what was happening in other countries, including France, Russia, India, and China, during Penn's lifetime. The second book is a charming tale about the famous painter as a child and his beloved pet. It might interest today's children to learn how art was perceived as frivolous by his family and meeting and how Benjamin West overcame those obstacles. Both of these books belong in every meeting library. So if your meeting does not own them or over the years your copies have been mislaid or are tattered and torn, this is the time to get or replace them.

Eileen Redden

Eileen Redden is assistant book review editor for FRIENDS JOURNAL. She attends Lewes (Del.) Worship Group.

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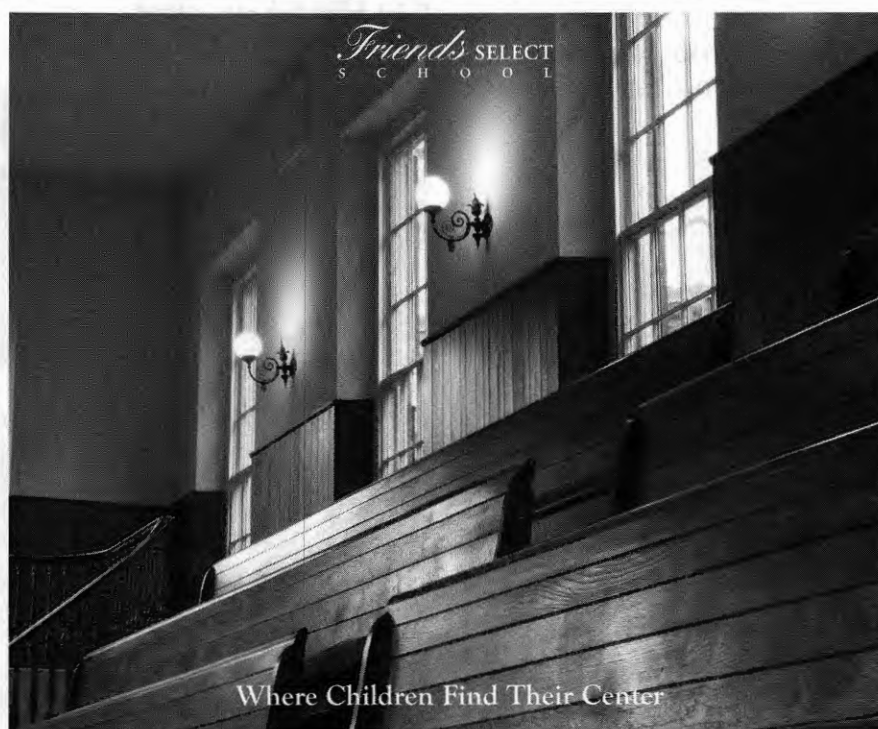
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■ NEWS

Due to political changes in Zimbabwe in 2009, Bulawayo (Zimbabwe) Monthly Meeting has been able to resume its distribution of maize meal to the hungry in southern Zimbabwe. Six years ago, Schenectady (N.Y.) Meeting began to collect money from Friends and meetings in North America, joining individual Friends and monthly and yearly meetings in Britain, Ireland, Botswana, and South Africa who had already been aiding the maize-meal distribution. To date, \$85,000 has been collected by Schenectady Meeting, and the funds are wired either to Botswana Monthly Meeting for transfer or directly to purveyors of the maize meal. Both options have proven to be reliable and effective. The maize meal is distributed in southern Zimbabwe by members of Bulawayo Monthly Meeting. For more information email Schenectady Meeting at gerhand@union.edu.

Manhasset (N.Y.) Meeting was added to the National Register of Historic Places by the United States Department of the Interior on September 9. Built in 1762, the meetinghouse is in the process of renovation. "This is very important for the meeting for several reasons," reported Danny Maietta, the meeting's clerk. "Most importantly, it recognizes and protects the property as a national place of historic importance. It also allows us to apply for state and federal preservation grants." Mark A. Hewitt of Chatham-Summit (N.Y.) Meeting is the architect on the project. A history of the meetinghouse can be found at www.nyym.org/manhasset/history. For more details contact Danny Maietta, at dmaietta@aol.com.

FRIENDS JOURNAL encourages Milestones submissions of births, marriages, and unions in narrative detail. Send submissions, including full names of the people in question, date, meeting or other Quaker affiliation, location, parents names, and narrative detail to Rebecca.Howe@departments@friendsjournal.org.



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A La Chureca Christmas

continued from page 11



kids to the circus, and in case that isn't enough, you don't speak Spanish?" Shaking his head, he handed a fist full of tickets to me, and I could have sworn I heard him say, "May God's love go with you."

I thought it would be real grandfatherly to be the one to show these kids their first acrobats, magicians, and white tigers—and it was.

What I hadn't counted on witnessing were the things that will stay with me forever.

The first thing that hit me was that for perhaps the first time in their lives they were in a large crowd of people. Not only was it a large crowd, but in this crowd everyone was well dressed and wearing shoes that fit. These are children who live their lives either outside or in small shacks with no windows. Now they found themselves inside the largest indoor space they had ever seen. A tent! To them it was magical! One little girl kept looking around at the roof and the stage and the lights and the seats, repeating to herself, "Big top, big top."

Pam and I were trying to understand why, regardless of what was happening on stage, they kept running to the door in what seemed to be a panic. They



would take a quick look outside, and then run back to their seats. We could only guess that being inside was such a new experience for them that they constantly had to reorient themselves. They weren't just experiencing a circus; incredibly, they were sitting in their own seats legitimately. They hadn't conned anybody to get there; they hadn't sneaked in; they hadn't stolen the tickets. No one was going to throw them out and they were free to enjoy the show just like anyone else. They weren't sure it wasn't a dream.

Pam and I constantly held back tears while the kids showered us with a constant stream of questions about what we have long since ceased to appreciate. (Did you ever try to explain cotton

candy to a kid who relies on dogs to sniff out a snack in the garbage?):

"Why are people clapping their hands?"

"Where does the poop go when you flush a toilet?"

"What is a concession stand?"

You have never been humbled until you have watched children, who should be old enough to know better, follow the popcorn vender, pick up whatever falls to the floor, and eat it as naturally as other kids eat French fries at McDonalds.

I realized that I was watching children who had honed the skills they needed to survive inside Gehenna; but once outside, they were nearly helpless. It was breaking my heart but Pam and I were witnessing the process of impoverishment. It was no longer a theory to me. All I could think was, "Thank you, Lord, for the blessings you have given me today."

When the show was over, we moved cautiously among the throng and made it back to the prison bus. The Christmas party now seemed complete. One little girl of about three fell asleep in my arms on the way home, and as she did, I came to sympathize with Angelina Jolie and Madonna. In her sleep she would cough every few minutes; it was tough to give her up and I will always pray that she got well, and lived a good life.

The bus stopped outside the dump by waiting parents. There were 30 adioses and 30 graciases, and then it was over. It was starkly sudden. I wanted to hug them one more time and tell them things like, "It will be okay if you work hard and do well in school; I will always love you." But all too suddenly, it was over.

Now, as I sit tapping away at my computer, it is late, I am alone, and I no longer need to push back those tears. Tomorrow I will be back in St. Petersburg wondering if all of this really happened. But for now, Merry Christmas, muchachas and muchachos; rest in peace, Andrew; thank you, Michael; and God bless us every one. □

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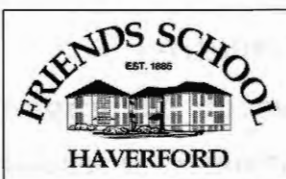
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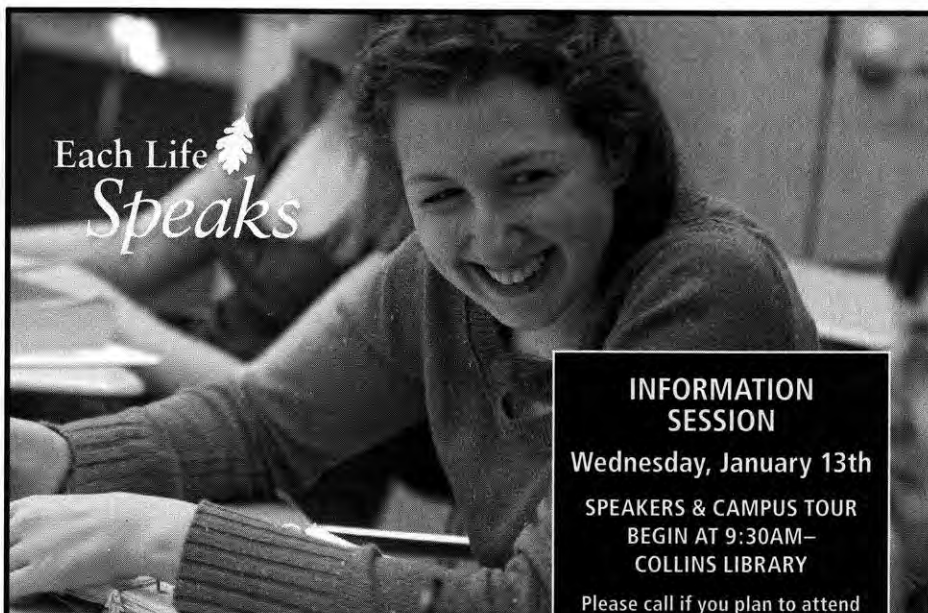
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■ MILESTONES

Birth

Mateo Martin Vera—born on January 25, 2009, to Melinda Glines and Arturo Vera. Melinda Glines is a member of Strawberry Creek (Calif.) Meeting.

Marriages/Unions

Colin-Shea—on October 17, 2009, *Alexandra (Coco) Shea* and *Aaron Colin* exchanged marriage vows in a meeting for worship held under the care of Lake Forest (Ill.) Meeting, of which Alexandra is a member. Overseers were Bertram Frey who clerked the meeting for worship for marriage, and Linda Sizemore who signed the marriage license for the State of Illinois. Alexandra, daughter of Sallyann Garner and John Shea, is an environmental attorney with a Chicago law firm. Aaron is an environmental consultant for a Chicago engineering company. The couple resides in Chicago.

Crownfield-Edminster—On June 27, 2009, *Elizabeth Crownfield* and *John Edminster*, both of Fifteenth Street Meeting, New York City, wed under the care of that Meeting.

Fong-Kennedy—on June 13, 2009, *Erin Hwei Hannah Fong*, of Singapore, N.Y., and *Nathan T. Kennedy*, of Owego, were married in Warren Center, Pa., at the Warren Township Municipal and Community Building, under the care of Binghamton Community Meeting. Nathan is a member of that meeting.

MacDermott-Norlin—on May 23–25, 2009, *Laura Norlin* and *Hannah MacDermott* married each other under the care of the Atlanta (Ga.) Meeting. The event had been prepared for in the manner of Friends. Months of preparations were finished. On a beautifully rainy morning, a building's worth of friends arrived and waited. The spirit moved in silence. Laura and Hannah spoke vows, promising love and faith. Out of the silence, hands were held, verbal messages arose, eyes were wet, laughter was heard. The meeting was gathered. When it rose, a long, slow line formed to sign the wedding certificate and begin to sort through what we had witnessed. And then the gathering continued, with a potluck. A glance around the full meetinghouse might pick out the organizers, slightly cockeyed from detail-overload, or the families, faces shining, or the friends, grinning with the pleasure of reunion after long travel. A pause for cleanup and a quick drive to Indian Springs State Park, and the gathering continued for another two days of rain (including magnificent body-surfing in a rain-soaked field), dancing, fine food, singing, swimming, a bonfire, porch-sitting, worship, and 200 hands helping with everything. Throughout, the glowing couple at the center of our circles was creating those very circles. Laura and Hannah live their lives as if we are all members of a deep communion, and their wedding was an affirmation of their intimate link with each other and equally of our larger weddedness. We all felt joined.

Deaths

Barnebey—*Merrill Hallowell Barnebey*, 90, on December 28, 2007, in Medford, Oreg. Born on June 25, 1917, into a Methodist family in Madison, Wis., he became a conscientious objector



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by the time he entered college. Ohio State University expelled him for not completing compulsory ROTC, and he went to Ohio University, graduating in Mathematics, and served with Civilian Public Service during World War II in Philadelphia and in Coshocton, Ohio, where he became acquainted with Friends. He eventually earned master's degrees in Botany, Mathematics, and Health Education. Merrill, who always enjoyed punning, quipped that he needed these three degrees because "no one can serve two masters." After college, he married Mary Louise Hartman, and they had three sons, one of whom died in a canoe accident at age 37. Merrill taught mathematics at Wesleyan College in Macon, Ga.; at Tougaloo College in North Dakota; and at University of Wisconsin-Lacrosse. His first Friends meeting was Eau Claire-Menomonie Meeting in Wisconsin. Mary Louise died in 1983, and Merrill married June Worden Smith in 1987. They moved to Ashland, Oreg., in about 1990, and became members of Rogue Valley Meeting, now called South Mountain Meeting. Merrill served the meeting as treasurer and as a member of several committees, including Ministry and Oversight, Nominating, and Peace & Social Concerns. Merrill was a war tax resister, and he represented the meeting to the Ashland Interfaith Ministry and served as a member of the board of Peace House in Ashland. He had many interests, including science, chess, and running, which he took up at age 50 and continued into his 80s. Merrill was preceded in death by one son, Warren Merrill; his wife, Mary Louise Hartman, in 1983; and his wife, June Worden Smith, in 2004. He is survived by two sons, Donald Barnebey and Frank Barnebey (Cindy); and one sister, Beverly Dall.

Largman—*Roselynd (Roz) Largman*, 93, on April 1, 2008, in Walnut Creek, Calif., in the presence of her son. Roz, as she was known most of her life, was born on November 5, 1914, in Philadelphia, Pa., to Sarah Raubfogel and Morris Golden. Roz began playing piano at an early age and studied at Curtis Institute of Music, earning a master's in Music Education from University of Pennsylvania in 1935, and later teaching music at Temple University. She married Franklin Largman in 1938, and they had two children, Corey, born in 1944, and Kenneth, born in 1949. Roz and Franklin attended Providence Meeting in Media, Pa., Media Meeting, and Swarthmore (Pa.) Meeting for several years before joining Providence Meeting in 1949. When they moved to Palo Alto, Calif., in 1958, they transferred their membership to Palo Alto Meeting. Roz taught music at San Jose State University for several years. Franklin died in 1972, and Roz moved to Berkeley, Calif., where her son Corey had settled. In 1974, she transferred her membership to Berkeley Meeting, where she became known for her piano and improvisational ability. She served on many committees, including Peace, Library, Ministry and Oversight, Adult Education, First-day School, and Hospitality. She also served as the meeting's representative to Pacific Yearly Meeting and as liaison to AFSC, although she was not able to attend meeting for the last few years of her life. She lived in Orinda, Calif., for several years, and



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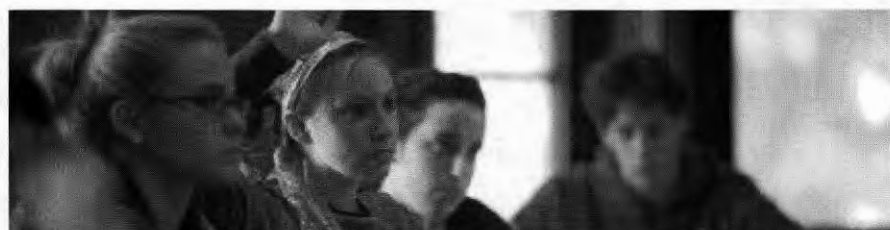
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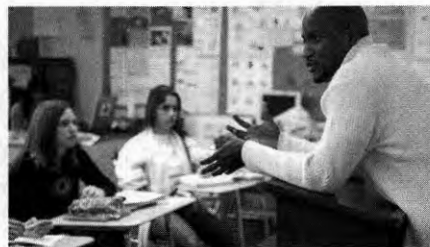


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then moved to Rossmoor in Walnut Creek in 1995. Roz is survived by two sons, Corey Largman and Kenneth Largman; three grandchildren, Jezra More, Jenna Lewis, and Jeremy Largman; and four great-grandchildren, Reuben Lewis, Myer Lewis, Addy More, and Evan More.

Nybro-Stevens—Carol Nybro-Stevens, 62, on May 20, 2008, in Oakland, Calif. Carol was born on March 24, 1946, in Carmel, Calif., to Eileen Sjöberg and Paul Nybro, and grew up in Pacific Grove, Calif. The Nybros moved to San Jose, Calif., in 1948, where they attended a Lutheran church. She graduated from Lincoln High School in San Jose in 1964 and from San Jose State University in 1970 with a BA in Psychology and a Teaching Credential. At San Jose State Carol met her future husband, Fred Stevens, and in 1972 they married and moved to Oakland, Ca., where she worked as an instructional assistant at Peralta Elementary School. In 1975, Carol took classes in Library Science at Chabot Community College and UC Extension and worked for several months for the Alameda County Library System. She experienced her first Quaker meeting for worship at a Fellowship of Reconciliation retreat at Ben Lomond, and began attending the Berkeley (Calif.) Meeting in about 1978. Carol served as clerk of the Kitchen Committee, served on the Peace and Social Order Committee and Nominating Committee, and organized monthly vigils to end the death penalty. She also helped out with First-day School and was an active participant in a Berkeley Meeting women's group. After working in 1979 as a library technician for the U.S. Geological Service (USGS) in Menlo Park, Calif., in 1980 Carol began work as a library technician for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which awarded her certificates for excellent service and for the many classes she taught there. Carol and Fred started the process for private adoption in 1984, bringing their son, Eric, home in 1985 when he was two days old. Carol and Fred moved to El Cerrito, Calif., in 1993. She was active with Eric's school activities, supporting and encouraging him with his goal of becoming a geologist. At the USDA, Carol arranged afternoon refreshments for staff from various departments and actively collected and circulated scientific articles. After becoming a member of Berkeley Meeting in 2000 Carol served as clerk of the Nominating committee and as a member of Ministry and Oversight Committee, Accessibility and Inclusiveness Subcommittee, and clearness committees for membership. She seemed to have unlimited energy. A person who remembered the trials of others, she was always willing to listen and to do whatever needed doing. Even in her last days she listened intently to her visitors, disregarding her own suffering and telling Fred to make sure the library books at work were returned. Hidden and unadvertised beneath her cheerful countenance was a serious commitment to peace, justice, and racial equality. Her outward cheerfulness rested on an inward determination to follow her leadings no matter what the cost. Carol is survived by her husband, Fred Stevens; one son, Eric Stevens; and one sister, Deborah Nybro-Cooney.

I have a couple of comments to add.

Some Mennonite historians have proposed a term for the phenomenon Newton Garver has named Christianity. Their term is Constantinianism. Like Newton Garver, George Fox and William Penn rejected Constantinianism. I do, too! This is why William Penn called Quakerism "primitive Christianity restored."

Insistence on creeds is an essential aspect of Constantinianism—but not of original Christianity or Quaker Christianity. When the emperor Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire, he saw that religion as the glue that would hold the empire together, just as previous emperors saw the religion of emperor-worship as the empire's glue. When he found theologians arguing heatedly about doctrine, he feared it would destroy the unity of the empire, and so he forced the bishops to meet in a council at Nicaea, where he made them settle on a set of beliefs that all Christians would have to subscribe to—i.e. a creed.

The creed was a political necessity in Constantinianism—not an essential ingredient of the Christian movement.

T. Vail Palmer Jr.
Albany, Oreg.

Was this in jest?

I found Chuck Fager's article, "The Top Ten Reasons (Plus Three) Why Bottled Water Is a Blessing" (*FJ* July) offensive. What spiritual value has such an article in a world where most now recognize humanity's failure to respect creation, even if Chuck Fager was writing such an article with tongue in cheek. Surely he could not be serious!

Rose Mae Harkness
Ottawa, Ont.

Seeking balance in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict

Thank you for publishing Lindsey Fielder Cook's excellent essay "Concerned about Israel and/or Palestine? Perhaps We Are Part of the Problem" (*FJ* Sept.). Lindsey articulates many of my own feelings on this issue as a "concerned insider." I am a Palestinian American Quaker with deep ties to my ancestral homeland and have dedicated much of my adult life to studying about and working in the region.

I was drawn to Quakerism because of

Quaker social justice work, particularly work on Middle East issues, but I became a Quaker because of our testimonies, especially that of Equality. This is what guides my thinking about a solution to the tragedy of Palestine and Israel. I am grateful that Palestinian civil society has increasingly adopted the language of seeking equal rights with Israelis. This is a positive, hopeful development, reminiscent of the long struggles for civil rights in the United States and South Africa. The old language used by Palestinians and their supporters focused on victimhood and oppression, and while spoken in truth and concern, did not express the aspirations of the Palestinian people and created an "us" and "them" dichotomy. The language of equal rights puts Palestinians on a par with Israelis and ceases to inadvertently dehumanize Israelis.

Have Quaker supporters of Palestinian justice examined our feelings about Israelis? Do we fall into the trap of siding with the good or right side and effectively labeling the other side the bad or wrong side? We are called to find language and actions that represent our beliefs and make us pro-equality, rather than pro-Palestinian.

I absolutely welcome Quaker solidarity with the Palestinian cause, but what efforts are we making in our solidarity work to reach out to progressive, peace-seeking Jewish Israelis who many times are also victims of the militaristic Israeli state? Are we falling into the trap of separation that is imposed by the occupation? We need to be anticipating a collapse of the occupation and the bridge-building that will need to occur to rebuild Israel and Palestine into a just, democratic society. My hope is that Quakers can be a part of that bridge-building. However, without laying the foundations now, we may miss an opportunity to be trusted and called upon by potential allies in Israeli society.

Sandra Samaan Tamari
Glen Carbon, Ill.

Judging and forgiving Paul Wolfowitz

Friend Debby Churchman shared with readers her spiritual struggle to forgive Paul Wolfowitz in "Learning to Love Paul Wolfowitz and Other Impossible Tasks" (*FJ* Sept.). However, one crucial aspect seemed missing—there is no hint that Paul Wolfowitz has asked for forgiveness. Jesus exhorted us to forgive—"not seven times

but seventy times seven" (Matt. 18:22). But he also talked of repentance before forgiveness. "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in one day, and each time he comes to you saying 'I repent' you must forgive him" (Luke 17:3-4).

If we forgive those who do not recognize the wrong they have done, repent, and ask forgiveness, then what is to keep them from continuing their wrong/violent ways? If your child beats up the neighbor's child you judge his/her behavior, give consequences and only then forgive. Or, since Paul Wolfowitz is an adult, perhaps a better analogy would be if you catch your spouse having an affair, you judge as wrong the act and then if your spouse asks forgiveness, you forgive. The (excess) deaths of about one million Iraqis is not a minor sin, and Paul Wolfowitz needs to be judged and repent. Similarly, it is appropriate and important that George W. Bush and Richard Cheney be brought to trial for war crimes for violating the Geneva Conventions and our own laws (e.g., authorizing torture, imprisoning children, unlawful wiretaps) and then after sentencing, President Obama (and we) can pardon (forgive) them. Gandhi's nonviolence was not passive in the face of evil but active, and he did judge evil/oppression and confront it lovingly (e.g., his negotiations with the viceroy before the salt march).

Friend Churchman and others presumably support the judgement of law that sends criminals to trial and prison. And there is nothing wrong with righteous anger as long as we recognize that we deserve to be on the other end of it sometimes too. Thus, to me it would be appropriate to say, after greeting Paul Wolfowitz: "I am glad you are here. But I need to tell you that I am terribly saddened by the deaths of over 600,000 Iraqis and about 4,000 Americans that are in no small part due to your pushing for a war with Iraq whose justification was based on lies about Saddam Hussein possessing weapons of mass destruction and having links with al-Qaida." And depending on his reaction, I might add, something like: "Do you not feel remorse for what you recommended?"

In summary, nonviolence does not mean passivity in the face of violence or vis-à-vis those who have done violence. Nor does Friendly confrontation (speaking Truth to power) regarding evil deeds imply a lack of love for one who has done those deeds. And as a Baltimore Friend reminds me,

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our calling as Friends is to "speak to that of God" in Paul Wolfowitz in the moment.

Stan Becker
Baltimore, Md.

The inherent good

Thanks to Debby Churchman for her article, "Learning to Love Paul Wolfowitz and Other Impossible Tasks" (*FJ* Sept.). Just the day before I read it I had run into one of those people in whom I have difficulty seeing that piece of God.

Many years ago a friend taught me a tool that I have found helpful in these situations. I regress the person back in age until I can see that piece of God in them. This particular person I had to take back all the way to two or three, but then I could love her and stop fighting myself so that I could give her my full attention.

I hope others find this helpful.

Polly Coe
Clarksville, Tenn.

A different response to Paul Wolfowitz

I found Debby Churchman's essay about her encounter with Paul Wolfowitz a moving expression of her experience. I was, figuratively, able to watch as she went from unbridled anger toward him over the horrible consequence of his three-decades-long effort to get at Iraq, and then on to her beautiful, valiant, introspective search for reconciliation, and forgiveness toward him. I'm not really sure if she has yet succeeded in her search, but admire her effort.

As her piece closed I realized that my own view of Paul Wolfowitz's actions was much simpler because I am not religious in any sense. I simply saw that the resolution of this would come when he, George W. Bush, Richard Cheney, and the others responsible for this destructive, illegal war, and all who died unnecessarily, stand guilty before the Hague and go on to life in prison—the day when the world's justice prevails, if it ever does.

Conrad Istock
Ithaca, N.Y.

Religion and high schools

I read Jeff Baird's discussion of his experience of learning about religion in a Quaker high school ("On Teaching

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Religion in High School," *FJ* Sept., *Young Friends*) with great interest, as I was also reading at that time the essays of four scholars who had led a major meeting on religion in public education back in the 1990s. Those attending contributed to the development of guidelines for public schools to teach about religions at all grade levels, not just high school.

If Jeff Baird is interested in the topic of teaching religion in public schools, he will find much useful information in *Religion in American Public Life: Living with Our Deepest Differences*, published by the American Assembly of Columbia University in 2001. While this book in no way negates Jeff Baird's positive experience, it will, I think, broaden his understanding of the issue of teaching religion in public schools.

Carol Kitchen
Rochester, N.Y.

Religious education in public schools

Jeff Baird's article about teaching religion makes good points about the value of religious understanding for high school students, but the core premise of the article is false. He asks, "Why is religion banned from public schools?" It is not. Public schools can teach about religion, but they cannot teach religion. Comparative religion courses are permissible, for example. Public schools can teach students how people of different faith traditions pray, what sacred texts they read, and what they believe. Public schools cannot teach students how the students should pray, what sacred texts the students should read, and what the students should believe.

I do want students equipped to live in a religiously diverse world, and public schools are an appropriate setting for that. I think students are better prepared for the world if they understand what Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Quakers, atheists, and others believe.

But I do not want Muslim public school students to be taught by their teacher that they should be baptized and accept Christ. I do not want Christian students taught that they should accept the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism. And I do not even want atheist students taught that they should believe that there is that of God within them and all people.

The courts and the framers of the U.S. Constitution were wise here to allow

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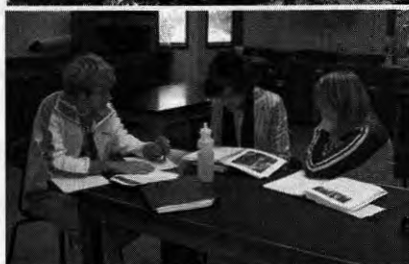
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public schools to teach about religion but to prevent them from teaching religion.

Chuck Warpehoski
Ann Arbor, Mich.

What is the purpose of the economy?

I disagree with Pamela Haines' review, in the September issue, of *Right Relationship, Building a Whole Earth Economy*. I found the book devoid of any clear understanding of how a real economy works and flush with typical Quaker stereotypes regarding U.S. living standards and the production of consumer goods. If you reflexively think that a market economy is a ruse for making the rich wealthier while at the same time blindly destroying our environment, then this is the book for you. If, on the other hand, you are looking for a reasoned description of how markets can effectively handle the environmental challenges that face us, perhaps with tax policies or regulations or consumer demand that will establish effective pricing on air, water, and land use, please look elsewhere.

Peter Brown and Geoffrey Garver ask us to throw out the baby with the bath water, extolling us to work for the establishment of supranational organizations that will right our broken world, administered by representatives who will be free from the financially based lobbying that taints our current form of governance. Having based their whole thesis on the assumption that the billions of people who participate in our current world economy do so for greed and growth, I fear it will be easy for them to carry along many Friends towards goals that will have Quakers spinning wheels for years to come.

Had the authors started out with the assumption that an economy is a system to bring together those people who have needs with those people who manufacture goods and services to meet those needs in the most efficient way possible, their book could have ended up in a more practical and helpful place.

Rich Ailes
Swarthmore, Pa.

Another experience with integrity

I read with great interest Shelley E. Cochran's article, "Witnessing to Integrity in an Untruthful World" (*FJ* Oct.).

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I found myself in the same position a year ago. I have been a volunteer Boy Scout leader for ten years. In early summer 2008, I received a letter from the BSA national office informing me that BSA was doing criminal background checks on all BSA volunteers, and requesting my permission for such, and furthermore, I would need to supply my Social Security number.

This request was of great concern to me, for the same integrity issues that Shelley explains in her article.

For several months, I pondered what my response should be. At first, I decided not to respond at all, and prepared myself for the end of my Boy Scout career. I informed my Troop Committee of my decision. They understood and supported my position.

But Scouting is very important to me, and I decided to write a letter to the chief Scout executive expressing my concerns. I gave permission "under protest" for the criminal background check. The gist of my protest was essentially the promotion of an environment of distrust. I also explained that I was refusing to give my Social Security number, based on issues of ID theft, and the original purpose of Social Security numbers. I felt that by writing this letter explaining my position, I was making my point, and making my choice to "cave in," although I was still uncomfortable. I thought that was the end of it.

In January 2009, I was invited to serve as a staff member for an advanced Boy Scout leader training program. I eagerly accepted, therefore obliging myself to be available.

Well, big surprise! As our Troop's charter came up for renewal in the spring, my name was not on it because they did not have my Social Security number! I felt that I was caught between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand, I didn't feel that it was appropriate for BSA to have my Social Security number, and understood that I would not be allowed to continue to serve as a volunteer without providing it. On the other hand, I had obligated myself to serve as a Wood Badge staff member—not to mention continuing to serve my local Troop!

In the end, our district executive called me to request that information. I caved in, and gave it to him, along with my lengthy explanation of the gist of the letter I had written to the BSA national office. I asked that he pass the message along to the national office that local folks were protesting this issue.





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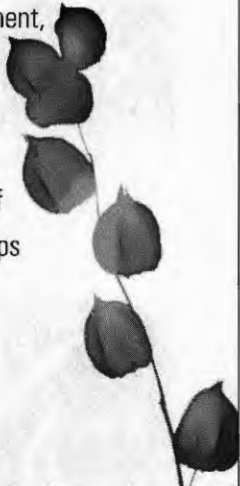
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My position was uncomfortable in that I already had the job when I was asked for the information. I truly feel that God supports me in my work with the Boy Scouts, and it is very important to me. I hope that I ultimately handled the whole situation in the best way possible.

Amy G. White
Cobleskill, N.Y.

The power of direct contact

Some years ago, I watched a PBS program that featured a 25-year reunion of what had been a sociology class taught at a Deep South college. The reunion was of class members whose major project consisted of living with a white family if they were black students, and a black family if they were white. I can't recall with certainty the duration of the exchange but it was at least a week and perhaps considerably longer. The film was absolutely thrilling, as these one-time participants shared the nature of their personal growth and the removal of blinders that had occurred during their unique learning experiences. For many, if not for all, theirs was a life-changing experience.

In our own case, quite a few years ago, my wife and I ran perhaps a dozen three-day Alternatives to Violence Project workshops in medium security prisons in New York State. The program is designed to build communication skills, self esteem, trust, and openness, while sharing techniques for solving tense problems without resort to violence. To our extreme delight, in all but one workshop, we came home imagining that most, if not all, of the roughly 20 to 25 men we had been working with would make great neighbors and friends because when the workshop goes well, it brings out the best in its participants.

For another personal example, we have been to Japan nine times to recruit volunteers to come to our country to share a bit of their culture and, more importantly, to share the peace message of the atomic bomb survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As a result, a great number of our very best friends in the world are Japanese, whose country was once our mortal enemy.

What I mean by these examples is simply that, under favorable conditions, strangers, often the product of very different life experiences, can easily move

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beyond mere tolerance to acceptance and often to close friendship.

From a different perspective, it's hard to imagine a person more to the right, more unreservedly friendly to big business, more callous in regard to torture, etc., than our former vice president, Richard Cheney. And yet, counter to the positions of many in his mold, he is accepting of homosexuals. I heard he is even leaning toward supporting gay marriages. In his case, Mr. Cheney knows and loves a lesbian, his very own daughter. This opens him up to a wholly different understanding from so many of his otherwise like-minded associates.

Wendell Potter, former vice president of the large health insurance company, Cigna, could no longer continue at his highly paid, prestigious job, once he attended a free, three-day healthcare clinic held under primitive conditions in stalls in a county fairground, where individuals had often traveled a great many miles to have access to otherwise unaffordable medical care. After this experience, Potter became an outspoken advocate of affordable health care for all.

Empathy is a small word, but it has monumental meaning. There are many ways one can acquire deep empathy for the conditions of another's life, but none more so than positive personal contact. Once individuals achieve that goal, the world can be changed as a result. What would have to happen to bring about more such contacts between the very rich and those very much in need, as in the case of Wendell Potter?

Don Lathrop
Canaan, N.Y.



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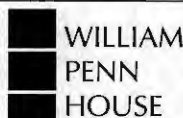
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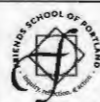
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Collage, Assessment Tool for Well Elderly
For information, contact: Doris Lambert, The Kendal Corporation, 1107 E. Baltimore Pike, Kennett Square, PA 19348. (610) 335-1200.
Email <info@kcorp.kendal.org>

Schools



Friends School of Portland

An Independent Quaker school
for grades Preschool-8
Learning based on inquiry,
reflection & action
<www.friends-school-of-portland.org>. (207) 781-6321.
1 Mackworth Island, Falmouth, Maine 04105.

Stratford Friends School educates elementary school students (ages 5-13) with language-based and similar learning differences through a structured, multisensory program that celebrates students' strengths, builds self-esteem, and develops self-advocacy. The school provides individualized attention and instruction in an intimate, caring environment guided by Quaker values. For more information, contact <slaye@stratfordfriends.org> or visit <www.stratfordfriends.org>, 2 Bishop Hollow Road, Newtown Square, PA 19073.

Arthur Morgan School (AMS) is a boarding and day school for 29 students, grades 7-9, located in the western N.C. mountains. AMS features small academic classes, a strong outdoor program, community service opportunities, consensus decision-making, and daily work projects. Students are encouraged to question and evaluate, think creatively and work cooperatively. For information about admissions or hiring: (828) 675-4262; <info@arthurmorganschool.org>; <www.arthurmorganschool.org>.

United Friends School: coed; preschool-8; emphasizing integrated, developmentally appropriate curriculum, after-school arts, sports, and music programs. Busing available. 1018 West Broad Street, Quakertown, PA 18951. (215) 538-1733. <www.unitedfriends-school.org>

Lansdowne Friends School—a small Friends school for boys and girls three years of age through sixth grade, rooted in Quaker values. We provide children with a quality academic and a developmentally appropriate program in a nurturing environment. Whole language, thematic education, conflict resolution, Spanish, after-school care, summer program. 110 N. Lansdowne Avenue, Lansdowne, PA 19050. (610) 623-2548

Frankford Friends School: coed; Pre-K to grade 8; serving center city, Northeast, and most areas of Philadelphia. We provide children with an affordable yet challenging academic program in a small, nurturing environment. Frankford Friends School, 1500 Orthodox Street, Philadelphia, PA 19124. (215) 533-5368.

Services Offered

Free Book Search. We do out of print book searches. Send author and/or title to Kemp Krafts, 288 Flynn Ave #20-F, Burlington, VT 05401-5374.



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Green Burial Grounds—Cambridge, Pennsylvania After careful preservation of existing tombstones, permanent archival of cemetery records 1831-1863, and respectful eternal rest given to any remains discovered during reburial, the Conservative/Green Burial Friends Group would like to recycle the unmarked section of this graveyard for reburial following green burial practices of the early 19c. and those of the time of Christ (no funeral director, no embalming or vault, wood coffin or other simple biodegradable container, hand dug graves; shroud burial optional). Burial would be open to anyone. For more detailed information or comments, please write to the law offices of David R. Morrison, 600A Eden Rd., Lancaster, PA 17601.

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Contact: Penny Jackim: <ahimsa@earthlink.net> (410) 783-1972
Samples: <www.pennyjackim.calligraphicarts.org>

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Purchase Quarterly Meeting (NYYM) maintains a peace tax escrow fund. Those interested in **tax witness** may wish to contact us through NYYM, 15 Rutherford Place, New York, NY 10003.

Custom Marriage Certificates and other traditional or decorated documents. Various calligraphic styles and watercolor designs available. Over twenty years' experience. Pam Bennett, P.O. Box 136, Uwchlan, PA 19480. (610) 458-4255. <prbcall@verizon.net>



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Summer Camps

CAMP CELO: A small farm home camp in the North Carolina mountains. Under Quaker leadership for over 50 years. Boys and girls ages 7-12. 3:1 camper/staff ratio. <www.campcelo.com>, (828) 675-4323.

Journey's End Farm Camp

Farm animals, gardening, ceramics, wood shop, outdoor games. Program centered in the life of a Quaker farm family focuses on nonviolence, simplicity, reverence for nature. Sessions of two or three weeks for 34 boys and girls, ages 7-12. Apply early for financial aid. Welcome all races. One-week Family Camp in August. Kristin Curtis, 364 Sterling Road, Newfoundland, PA 18445. (570) 689-3911; <www.journeysendfarm.org>

FRIENDS MUSIC CAMP at Olney, 4 week summer program, ages 10-18. Musical growth in a caring, Quaker community. Parent comment: "A profound, life-changing experience." Camper comment: "Awesome!" For information, including camp video: <www.friendsmusiccamp.org>, or P.O. Box 59311, Chicago, IL 60659-0311. (773) 573-9181. <musicfmc@yahoo.com>



*“I Feel
Better
When I
Share!”*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

