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The Canadian Friend

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Canada

Editor's Corner

Late August on the prairie, in a wee country church near my great-grandfather's homestead, I sat in pews that his devout family has filled for close to one hundred years. The prayer reminded us that the earth is the Lord's and we are to be loving caretakers. Yet, that very day, the fields on all sides were sprayed with poison – Roundup! I sobbed in the face of this foolish disobedience and violence.



I thought of the S.P. Gardiner Lecture, in which Rick McCutcheon challenged us to examine all aspects of violence. Poisoning that which was created for our nourishment is violence. I thought of our inability to support the anti-nuclear minute. Until such time as hazardous nuclear waste is not poisoning, doing violence to our environment, how can we embrace nuclear energy?

A plaque hung on a cousin's wall: "The want of an age is men who will condemn wrong...who will stand up, though they stand alone...men of God." My family does not embrace chemical agriculture and they are aware of rising cancer rates in their communities, but their church fails to stand up to condemn the wrong being done to God's creation. While paying lip service to stewardship of the earth, there is little concrete guidance for earth care. Essentially, belief in the Bible as the Holy Word of God, and Jesus as God's only messenger and our personal saviour, is the main concern - no matter what is done in the fields; what chemical products we use in our homes and gardens, that leach into streams and rivers; what processed, chemical-laden foods we eat. This is dangerous thinking. It ignores our main calling to love and care for the gift of all life and all species.

Jay Cowsill's Bible study supported my long-held suspicion that its books were scrambled out of sequence, and its stories were taken out of context to facilitate personal power-mongering agendas. In the Book: *With or Without God*, Gretta Vosper writes: [We need to be] "...open to the eternal God-experience that has been translated in radical ways during our walk through history... Our future...depends on how we respond to new insights...the future needs people gathering to recommit themselves to loving relationships...with the wider community and the planet."

I am thankful for spiritual communities standing up and speaking of our interconnectedness with all life, and supporting the holy work of stewardship. I am glad of these Advices and Queries: "Bring the whole of your life under the ordering of the Spirit of Christ."(2); "...search out whatever in your own life may contain the seeds of [destruction] war. (31); [Consider] "...the effects your style of living is having...on the environment." (41).

This issue attempts to capture the essence of Canadian Yearly Meeting: the prayer, the business, the friendship and the fun.

Blessings, Sherryll



In This Issue

<p>2 Editor's Corner</p> <p>4 Letters to the Editor</p> <p>5 Readers Respond</p> <p>7 Readings from CYM</p> <p>8 Berith: Covenant and Crisis Bert Horwood</p> <p>9 Query # 4 Ellen Pye</p> <p>10 Reflection David Greenfield</p> <p>11 Perspective: Quaker Bible Study Jon Karesmeyer</p> <p>12 Reflections on the Covenant Carol Dixon</p> <p>12 What Dost Thou Say? Barbara Horvath</p> <p>13 Minute 79: Justice is Possible</p> <p>14 The Threshing Session <i>Margot Overington</i></p> <p>15 What Dost Thou Say? Robert Kirchner</p> <p>16 Challenges for Australia YM Elizabeth Kwan</p> <p>17 What Dost Thou Say? Lynne Phillips, Lesley Read, Jacquie Smith</p> <p>18 Photo Spread</p> <p>19 What Dost Thou Say?</p>	<p>Rob Hughes, Anne Mitchell, Jennifer Preston, Dan Cooperstock, Susan Stevenson, Patty Lembke, Kate Johnson, Caroline Foster, Joyce Holwerda, Adrian Bishop, Gail Harwood, Lana Robinson, Molly Walsh, Sylvia Powers</p> <p>23 Discovery - <i>Daniel von Schulmann</i></p> <p>23 First Ministered To by Young Friends Marilyn Church</p> <p>24 One Youth's Joy and Frustration Ben Segel-Brown</p> <p>25 Interviews with Friends</p> <p>26 The S.P. Gardiner Lecture Adrian Dolling, Arnold Ranneris</p> <p>27 Fruits of Silence Retreat Letter from Deborah Fisch</p> <p>28 What Dost Thou Say? Orion Smith, Tasmin Rajotte</p> <p>29 Book Review Michael Lee Zwiers</p> <p>30 Film Review - Laurel Dee Gugler</p> <p>31 Quaker Book Service</p> <p>32 Ads - Notices - Gleanings</p> <p>33 Awkward Question - Bert Horwood</p> <p>33 Around The Family</p> <p>35 The Quacker</p> <p>35 Last Words Jo Vellacott</p>
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Letters to the Editor

Readers are invited
to submit letters to the editor.
Email: cf-editor@quaker.ca

Greetings Sherryll Harris,

When the Canadian Friend arrives, I squirrel myself away to read in the quiet and in the solitude of my home. There is always one article that speaks to me, that touches my soul. My favourite bolt hole for the winter and cooler months is the sun room. With the pines, with the public wooded glade out back, and with the road seldom traveled, I can be lost in the country. Then, The Canadian Friend adds to the illusion of rural living, for as I indulge, I am soothed, calmed and comforted.

Thank you. May blessings and goodness be showered upon you, today and always.

*Raymond Beskaw (aka a crotchety curmudgeon)
Kitchener, Ontario*

June 2010

Thank you Joyce (Holwerda) for submitting my name for subscription to The Canadian Friend. It is most welcome when it comes in the mail. I read it cover to cover and think it is a wonderful piece of literature.

In friendship,

Christopher Parker, Coldstream MM

Dear Sherryll,

I found Dave Greenfield's article so extremely one-sided that I felt it was necessary to present another side to the issue. There are indeed two sides. Many of the complaints of the Palestinians are just, but the way Greenfield presented the issue was to damn the Israeli side and purify the Palestinian side. I don't think this helps Quakers understand the issue. And I believe a boycott of Israel, as he calls for, is harmful and un-Quakerly, as it assumes guilt on the Israeli side, without recognizing the full horror and negative consequences of the Palestinian attacks on Israel.

I hope you will print my statement. My only problem is that if and when printed it will be so long after the original Greenfield article was published that Friends will believe that (his) is the only perspective to take on the issue.

Possibly when controversial issues like this are to be presented to Friends, it would be well to ask for a differing view to present a balanced perspective.

Sincerely, Maida Follini, Halifax Monthly Meeting

Readers Respond:

I read the article *Discerning a Quaker Perspective on Israel and Palestine* (May 2010 CF). Over many years, leftists, including many Quakers, have thrown their support behind the Palestinians, seeing the conflict as a simple David and Goliath struggle where the Israelis have become the Goliath oppressors of the Palestinians. Unfortunately this is an over simplification of a complex struggle which is prone to distortions and omissions of fact, and ignores the greater historical context of the struggle. I would like to point out only two of these distortions and omissions.

The writer never tells the true story of the foundation of the state of Israel. He claims simply that Israel "...not only took fifty-five percent of the land that the UN resolution had given it, it also took another fifteen percent (of Palestine) by force". He neglects to mention that the Palestinians refused to accept the land given them by the UN resolution. They had no intention of sharing any of it. Instead, they and the combined Arab nations immediately attacked the newly created Israel, hoping to destroy the weak, tiny state. If the Israelis took another fifteen percent of the land, it was as a result of winning that war for their initial survival.

The writer then explains that after the 1967 Six Day War, Israel began the long occupation of Gaza and the West Bank. Again, he omits to mention that the 1967 war was begun by the Arab nations, particularly Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. Israel was caught by surprise, finding the massed armies of these nations on their borders ready to attack. The situation was a dire and almost hopeless one for Israel, which found itself days short of being cut in two and destroyed. Israel ended up winning this war, and saw the occupation of those territories as essential for preventing another such attack.

There is never mention that the Charter of Hamas calls for the destruction of the state of Israel. This has been the aim of most Arab nations from the beginning. One must not forget the historic imperative the Holocaust gave the Jewish people for the creation of the state of Israel, as one way to protect themselves from the vilest persecution in the modern history of mankind. The Jewish people have been an oppressed people throughout the world for thousands of years. We can pride ourselves in Canada that in the last fifty years, Jewish people like others, have found a place of acceptance here. But let us not fool

Readers Respond con't:

ourselves into thinking the rest of the world is free of the most virulent hatred of Jews. In fact, that hatred is in a growing resurgence. When assessing the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians, Quakers need to look carefully at the truth of statements and at the historical context. From the Quaker perspective, the continual threat of violence against, and destruction of Israel, are issues that cannot be dismissed any more than the violence of Israel against the Palestinian people can be. From the beginning, Israel's safety has been precarious, and with the impending spread of nuclear weapons to Iran, that danger may create new anxiety. I ask Quakers to examine this issue carefully before taking sides in this violent struggle.

Long before there were Quakers, long before the settlement of the New World, long before the phrases "social justice" and "human rights", the Jewish people were in search of those very things. They were oppressed in every way, victims of the most horrible prejudice and discrimination in all nations of the world for over thousands of years. Their desire to live in their ancestral homeland is part of that ancient struggle for their right to freedom of the person, freedom of religion, and peace for the individual. Few have ever stood up to protect the Jewish people; it has always been the most unpopular of causes. Quakers must think hard on this issue.

Richard Volet, Victoria, BC

[Spouse to Carol MacIsaac, Victoria Friends Meeting]

In *Discerning a Quaker Perspective on Israel and Palestine* Dave Greenfield fails to express a true Quaker perspective. Traditionally Quakers do not take sides in violent conflicts, but try to minister to human needs, regardless of which side. Bringing about peace in a conflict involves understanding each side's point of view and helping communicate each side's perspective to the other.

Greenfield states: "The Israeli state has been trying for decades to drive the Palestinian people from land that is rightfully theirs, to erase all memory of a Palestinian history in the region, and to destroy the possibility of a viable Palestinian state."

Some background: In 1948 when the last British forces left, seven Arab countries rejected the UN Partition of Palestine and declared war. Egypt, Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and forces from

Saudi Arabia and Yemen, invaded Israel. One may well ask: "Which party wished to drive the other party from the land and destroy the possibility of a viable state?"

Greenfield continues: "In 1967, when Israel invaded and occupied the remaining thirty percent (the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip) they were in violation of international law." In May 1967, Syria, Egypt, and Jordan massed troops along the Israeli borders, and Egypt closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping. Egypt's Nasser threatened war and the Egyptian radio predicted a coming genocide of the Jews. When Israel launched the Six-Day War in 1967 it was in the face of these threats. It is legal for nations to defend themselves.

Greenfield deplores Israel's blockade of Gaza, and sees the wall built between West Bank and Israel as a way of grabbing more land for Israel. Background: Israel has endured thousands of rocket attacks from Gaza, and persistent attacks from the West Bank from terrorists who have killed and maimed civilians in Israel. The blockade and wall are intended to defeat these terrorists.

There have been many attempts to arrive at a peaceful solution, only to have the Palestinians reject these solutions. From the initial rejection of the Partition by the UN into two states in 1948, to the rejection by Arafat of a Camp David accord in 2000, the Palestinians have turned away from peace and chosen the option of violent attacks on Israel.

The United States, as the only consistent ally of Israel, cannot be a neutral observer, as it must be a necessary counter-weight to the hosts of Islamic nations who support the Palestinians' war against Israel. The basic need of the Israelis, in the face of sixty-two years of attacks by Palestinians and other Arab peoples, is security. If the Palestinians really desired their own state as part of a two-state solution, they would end their attacks on Israel. Encouraging them to see themselves as injured victims who should hold out and reject compromise is the worst advice to give them. Rather than sympathy for their plight, the Palestinians would benefit from a dose of realism about how to get out of their situation.

The Palestinians have their future in their own hands. They can choose to negotiate and make compromises to achieve their state.

*In Friendship, Maida Follini
New Brunswick Monthly Meeting*

Readers Respond con't:

Dave Greenfield's discernment of a Quaker Perspective on Israel and Palestine is a useful reminder of the relevance of our core testimonies as the basis of a fundamental criticism of many of the policies of Israel towards the Palestinians. It's a criticism that should serve as the basis of active support for all forms of non-violent resistance. It is limited in its focus on occupation and blockade, to the neglect of the similarly egregious treatment often meted out to Palestinians who are Israeli citizens, and of the need to address the problem of the Palestinians in refugee camps outside Gaza. More important is its introduction of a set of secular concepts: peoplehood and indigeneity, which establish another basis for his criticism. These concepts establish a principle of equality, one that Israel is systematically violating.

Our core testimonies are sufficiently strong that they need no secular support. Indeed, to introduce it is to reduce the clarity with which they [the Testimonies] illuminate specific problems. In this case, the secular concepts are both misleading and dangerous. The first way in which an appeal to indigeneity is misleading is the reference to the Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Although the declaration fails to define its core concept, it is clear that it refers to peoples who have a strong sense of collective identity, but without the social organization that permits the formation of statehood. It therefore is irrelevant to the current case.

More important is the attempt to extend indigeneity to the Jews. From a secular perspective this does not work, since only a tiny minority of Jewish Israelis can establish an unbroken connection going back over countless generations; the rest are all immigrants and their descendants. Indigeneity/peoplehood only works as a set of ideological/religious concepts that are central to Zionism, but which have always been contested by many Jews on both religious and secular grounds. Equality between Jews and Palestinians cannot be constituted along these lines.

The root source of the problem lies in British gentile philo-semitism. They became captivated by the idea of a Jewish homeland, and when the government conquered Palestine it felt free to issue the Balfour declaration in 1917. That opened up the prospect of more extensive Jewish immigration with a vague expectation of equality between Arabs and Jews. Imperialist conquest was "legitimated" by a League

of Nations Mandate, but its experience showed that equality was not practical. When Jewish terrorism forced Britain to abandon the mandate and turn the issue over to the United Nations in 1947, the General Assembly's plans for partition proved to be grossly unequal in the distribution of land and resources, and were naturally rejected by governments representing the majority of the world's population. However, Israel was very fortunate in the timing of the UN resolution, since it came just before the emergence of the cold war, and both Truman and Stalin could cooperate in leaning on their respective satellites to ensure its passage. Of course, the actual issue was settled not by any reference to these plans but by the inequality of war. This historical sketch leads to the conclusion that the search for equality is simply chimerical. What is worse is the fact that it is counterproductive, since it fails to recognize the immense harm caused by the whole Zionist project, one that only succeeded because of the contingencies of power politics and violence with which Quakers can have little sympathy.

Rather than trying to find a fundamental principle that would allow a just solution to the Israel/Palestine conflict, Quakers should reflect more on the real strengths of Dave Greenfield's article which demonstrate how our core testimonies can sustain the vitality of active non-violent resistance, and consider whether they are ready to endorse his judgment that the time has come for the "promotion of a boycott, sanctions, and a divestment program".

John Hillman

Peterborough Allowed Meeting

[Editor's note: John died August 24, 2010. See page 34]

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CANADIAN YEARLY MEETING
MONDAY MORNING AUGUST 16, 2010

Clerk Dale Dewar read from *The Witness of Conservative Friends*, by William and Frances Taber

When we are in this listening or waiting state we are often brought into the Stream, that Stream of reality which has always existed from the beginning of time. In that Stream time is in some sense irrelevant, in another sense is important. All who have ever known this life are in some mysterious way in that Stream even now, or so it feels to me. When we enter worship or a Meeting for worship for business, when we are in the right place inwardly, we step into the Stream, a slightly different state of consciousness. Many of us have known what it feels like. It's as real as stepping into a stream of water, although it's very hard to describe.

“Working toward a sense of the Meeting is about listening for what the Spirit would have us do in this instance.”



Clerk, Dale Dewar, Prairie MM

TUESDAY MORNING, AUGUST 17

Clerk: Dale Dewar

Recording Clerk: Marilyn Manzer

Also at the Table: Anne Mitchell and Steven Fick

The Meeting opened with worship during which the clerk read from the Draft Canadian Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice, 3.43 and 3.42 as follows:

We see our meetings for church affairs not as business meetings preceded by a period of worship, but as 'meetings for worship for business.' Ideally, the sacred and the secular are interwoven into one piece. Believing that all our business is brought before God for guidance, we deprecate all that may foster a party spirit or confrontation. We therefore seek for a spirit of unity in all our decision making. London Yearly Meeting, 1986

As individual Friends we are called to discipline ourselves both before and during the sessions in relation to the Yearly Meeting program, remembering that we are a religious society. This means having a prayerful attitude, humility, questioning ourselves about our personal position in relation to what seems to us to be a very deeply felt "concern".

Kathleen Hertzberg, 1966

TUESDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 17, 2010

Clerk: Anne Mitchell - Recording Clerk: Steven Fick - Co-clerk: Dale Dewar

Anne Mitchell read from *Four Pillars of Meeting for Business* by Debbie Humphries:

One of the assumptions in Quaker business practice is that something more than the best wisdom of the group will be achieved - that those present are listening for something more than what each person thinks. Working toward a sense of the Meeting is about listening for what the Spirit would have us do in this instance. It is not a negotiated settlement or compromise, giving each person some of what they want. Rather, it is a moving toward, which does not require logical agreement.... At its best, Quaker business builds the worshiping community, strengthens relationships, and encourages each of us to grow. When our corporate decisions are faithful to this spirit, they not only change the participants, they hold the seeds that change the world.

REVIEW

Berith: Covenant and Crisis in the Jewish Bible

Bert Horwood

Jay Cowsill led us through roughly one thousand years of political and literary history to reveal the evolution of the Jewish Bible. Anyone who expected an exposition of the Christian Old Testament quickly learned that it varies in quantity and sequence from the Bible of the Jews. Using strong scholarship, larded with humour and emphatic vernacular, Jay outlined the complex series of events and writings which were edited, combined, separated, and recombined to express the political and theological needs of the children of Israel over time.

The 'Covenant' of Jay's title was the deal between Yahweh and his people: He would be their God and they would be His people. The 'Crisis' was the destruction of Solomon's temple and the removal of the Jewish elite to Babylon. It was hard to believe in the deal with God any more. But did God break the contract, or was the exile punishment for the people breaking the contract?

The Jewish people were in two groups: those in Babylon, and those remaining in Judah. Both groups had scribes and storytellers who worked with older texts and their own thought to develop literature. The upper class, in Babylon, had a priestly party, which studied and rewrote older material to produce what are now the first four books of the Bible. The under-class scribes in Judah were equally diligent, and produced a body of writing called *the former prophets*. This included Deuteronomy (meaning: second law) as a prologue, and the books of Joshua, Samuel, Judges, and Kings.

These writings expressed two different views of the covenant with different theological and political implications. The original writers of Deuteronomy were convinced that the covenant was conditional on the behaviour of the people. They wrote the rules with "if" statements. This meant that God was present and active in human affairs. Ethical consequences ensued. These were articulated vigorously by the social prophets.

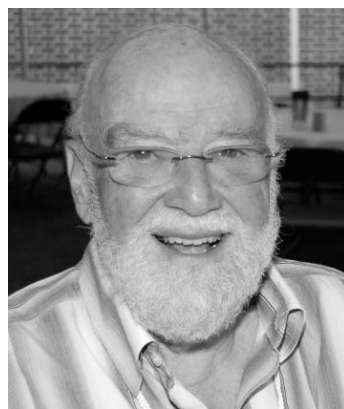
The priestly writers were convinced that God was remote and not engaged in human affairs. For them the covenant was unconditional, a set of laws, rules and taboos laid down once and for all. Only humans

broke the deal, and became polluted, or unclean. Ritual cleansing by some prescribed process was the redeeming response.

Tensions and alliances were inevitable in biblical Israel. Interests of priests and kings were convergent. Prophets had divergent values from kings and priests. These tensions led to compromises after the Jews returned from Babylon, resulting in Deuteronomy being moved to the end of the priestly books (the Torah). The rest of the compromise was to accept the other books of the scribes who had remained in Judah. These changes were influenced by external events and political changes imposed after the Persian conquest.

This fascinating tapestry of events, writing, cutting and pasting, has given us a rich legacy of literature about various possible relationships between the creator and the creation.

In his final session Jay leaped over millennia to draw parallels of covenant and crisis today. The crisis is the destruction of the biosphere. Belief in two different patterns of covenant persists. North America is dominantly populated by a people who have invaded and claimed a new land. They believe that they are a favoured, if not a chosen people. The priestly perception survives today in a political ideology of entitlement. Large environmental shifts are thought to be natural variations of the planetary system which divine providence will adjust in its own way and time. The prophetic perception also survives. It would have humans take responsibility for their part in environmental degradation and call for ethical responses by humans to cooperate with the spirit in action among us.



Bert Horwood
Thousand Islands Monthly Meeting

The Queries:

- 1] Jews and Christians traditionally considered the Bible to be an inspired text. What do you think, knowing that the text was continually revised over a thousand years? Is the doctrine of biblical inspiration an ideology that we can now discard?
- 2] Have there been communities that lived in a special relationship with the divine, producing sacred writings? Or is this an artistic effect of their story?
- 3] The prophetic school conceived of a god within history, whose responses to human action explain historical change. The priestly party conceived of a god beyond history, whose purposes are inscrutable. Which do you prefer? Or is there an alternative?
- 4] How would you assess the spiritual traditions of the Society of Friends, in terms of the Covenantal theology outlined above?
- 5] How do these ideas speak to your behaviour in terms of the looming environmental crisis?

Examining Query # 4

Ellen Pye

How would you assess the spiritual traditions of the Society of Friends in terms of the tension between theologies of a Conditional Covenant/Prophetic tradition as against an Unconditional Covenant/Priestly tradition as discussed?

My first reaction to this query was to think: 'Of course we find this same cleavage running through the Society of Friends, it is the divide between Friends General Conference (FGC) and Friends United Meeting, (FUM) leaving aside the additional branches of Conservative and Orthodox Friends.' On further reflection, I realized that in reality things might not at all be as clear-cut as that.

This is how I would answer the query: First of all, the choice between a conditional and an unconditional covenant which biblical Israel had been faced with, was moot for Quakers from the very beginning. God's love

and care was unconditional. This understanding is best summed up by George Fox's words: "the Gospel is the Power of God and the Love of God for Humankind". What was conditional was the human response to it in terms of 'ethical doing'; the choice between yielding to that love and power on the one hand, or dismissing or resisting it on the other.



Early Friends also bridged the gap between prophetic and priestly functions. Their prophetic stance in the face of prevailing theological and sociopolitical views, was vigorous and unmistakable.

In their understanding, the priestly function was not applied from the outside by another person, but by the Inward Priest - the Spirit of Christ. To the extent the Spirit was yielded to, it led to ethical behaviour.

The early Friends had found the same way of reconciling the two seeming opposites that Jesus had revealed, into a unified vision that had faded in the course of Church History. It was lost in favour of a dichotomy very similar to the one prevailing in biblical Israel. However, the prophetic option was largely excluded, as it was considered heretical by the Church, leaving only the original priestly, hierarchical alternative.

In response to severe persecution in the Seventeenth Century, Friends became more concerned with the preservation of their Society in the following period, and less provocative in challenging the prevailing religious orthodoxy and social inequities of the surrounding culture. They increasingly rejected their secular milieu, often considering it a source of spiritual pollution to be shunned rather than remedied. Purity (for the group rather than individual Friends) would be maintained, not by another person, but by unwritten rules regarding lifestyle and dress, to which one was expected to conform. Failure to do so might well result in one being 'written out of Meeting' [expelled]. Over all, the emphasis shifted from the prophetic to the 'priestly' mode, although the priestly role was not lodged in an individual, but with the Meeting community, and never created a hierarchy.

Yet, in daily life, in the trade and commerce in which Friends became increasingly active, they lived out their ethical testimonies by their integrity and humane treatment of employees, long before others started to consider this. Some, such as Elizabeth Fry, sought to improve, by working for prison reform, the miserable lot of many of the victims of a patently unjust society.

The horrors of the Boer War in South Africa led to an about-turn: two major conferences in Manchester resulted in the vigorous re-acceptance of the prophetic role of the Society of Friends and engagement in secular affairs.

In Britain the two strands have held together, whereas in North America the body split, with each side moving further away from the centre. Friends General Conference turned wholeheartedly, and at times perhaps uncritically, to the surrounding culture. This allowed increased seepage from it, as well as a prophetic engagement with it, while the mainly conservative Friends United Meeting (FUM) viewed it with some suspicion, seeking safety and separation from it in restrictions regarding lifestyle, beliefs, and understanding of the place of the Bible in it.

*“Our most essential treasure:
how we relate to God and each other,
with love.”*

Yet FUM has also sought to address the suffering of those less fortunate in some Third World countries, in running orphanages, hospitals and schools there, and has exercised a limited prophetic religious role in its missionary activities in Africa and Central and South America.

In the Jewish Bible one can detect two strands that make a sometimes lumpy rope. My hope is that Friends will come to view these two aspects as two sides of a coin. Their real value lies in what holds them - the precious metal it has been struck from, representing our most essential treasure: how we relate to God and each other, with love.

*Ellen Pye
Vancouver Monthly Meeting*

Reflections

Dave Greenfield

We were treated to Jay Cowsill's literary and historical critical analysis of the Hebrew Bible. In my worship-study group, we had a somewhat mixed response. My general sense is that there are many approaches to scripture and that an intellectual literary approach, while useful to a point, has its limits. While the approach of literary criticism differs from a fundamentalist approach, they share the same problem: they both tend to keep the Hebrew Bible frozen in time, as the document of a patriarchal society composed over two thousand years ago. A Quaker approach is more spirit-based and interactive, in which the words of scripture are given life and transformed through our own reading and meditation. While the authors of the Torah, the Hebrew prophets, and so forth, had their various motivations and concerns in their particular time, two thousand years of reflection and meditation have given meaning to their words, and have given rise to the progressive traditions in both Jewish and Christian thought.

I tend not to agree with comments Jay made on the final day, when he compared the prophet Amos to Timothy McVeigh (the leading conspirator in the Oklahoma City bombing) and when he compared the Hebrew prophets to right-wing revival movements, such as the early Nazis. These comparisons imply that the Hebrew prophets were social reactionaries whose purpose in life was to strengthen a world military empire. I think Jay's analysis here is badly mistaken. My reflection on this topic will require an additional article which I hope to write for a future edition of the Canadian Friend.

*Dave Greenfield
Saskatoon Monthly Meeting*

*“The king becomes God's ruler on earth. Thus the lineup
of books of the bible were moved around to prove the
line of Judah.”*

Jay Cowsill in Bible Study

PERSPECTIVE:

Quaker Bible Study

Jon Karsemeyer

For five mornings at Canadian Yearly Meeting Jay Cowsill masterfully spoke on *Berith: Covenant and Crisis in the Jewish Bible*. It was an overview of what is currently known academically about the Jewish Bible, Torah, and the Old Testament. It was not a religious or devotional commentary, but a scholarly review of it as literature, its sources, and cultural/political development.

The meaning of the Hebrew word “berith”, usually translated into English as covenant, was examined, making clear the distinction between the unsought favour of a divinely assigned covenant - and the conventional ideas of negotiated treaties, contracts, or legal agreements.

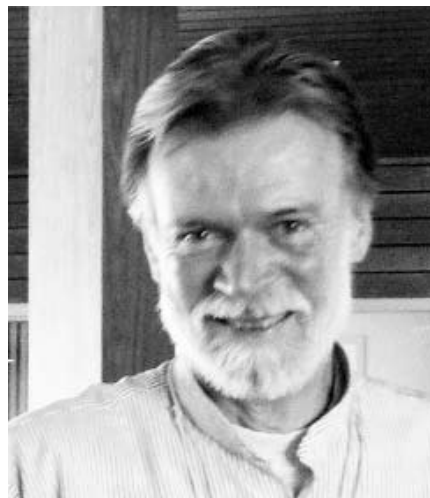
Also explored were some of the unresolved theological conflicts: those between priestly and prophetic traditions, southern and northern tribes, Jerusalem and the imposed Diaspora in Babylon, along with differing ideas of God. He told how story-telling and teaching traditions came to be written down as a result of Babylonian rule.

Perhaps, to salute and gently mock the now dominant intellectual orthodoxy of materialist reductionism - that has both served as a ruinously compartmentalized and distorted western academic and secular thought in general, and religious study in particular, Jay briefly projected an image of Karl Marx on the large screen with the caption: “Uncle Karl”. Like Freud, Lenin and Mao after him, Marx was pathologically anti-religious, although Uncle K. is known to have said some nice things about Quakers.

Jay modestly professed to “...know nothing about God” in his introductory comments. This underlined his unstated intention to avoid the conflict of religious opinion and bias, founded on cultural or religious beliefs, or divine religious experience. It seemed that Jay chose to keep to what was professionally familiar to him, and avoid both the priestly as well as the prophetic ministry cherished by early Friends, followers of Jesus, and ancient Jews.

The first of the presentation Jay boldly concluded - with scalding contemporary orthodoxy - that none of what we now know as Torah, or Old Testament, is in its original form. Those scriptures are now composed

entirely from secondary sources - in other words not directly inspired by God. When the basis for this rash and unprovable conclusion was questioned, Jay was delighted. He emphatically acknowledged that this view, presented as if it were fact, is actually “pure speculation!” His genial acknowledgment of this was greatly appreciated.



The following day, Jay raised the question of proof of identity, not only of authenticity in terms of source material, but even of living, present, individual persons. Can we prove our own identity? The classic question of *being*, and the ontological challenges that emerge with that consideration, was not his focus for the series, and beyond the cursory acknowledgment, it remained an unexplored sidebar.

The “Who am I?” question of *being* and true identity is at the very heart of all religious seeking, pilgrimage, worship, and spiritual inquiry. It resonates with George Fox’s question, “...what canst thou say?” as well as his soaring prophetic letter: *To Friends in the Ministry*, written from Launceston Jail in 1656, challenging all to “...walk cheerfully over the earth, answering that of God in everyone.”

We are grateful to Jay for presenting a well-crafted enhancement to serious consideration of scripture, in an engaging form that helped inspire commentary during worship-study at CYM 2010 and beyond!

Jon Karsemeyer

Toronto Monthly Meeting

Reflections

Carol Dixon,

Jay Cowsill gave us some very interesting insights into the political and social dynamics of the communities of the Jewish bible. These he distinguished from both the Catholic and the Protestant Old Testaments. Catholics and Protestants he noted, have added and/or subtracted texts and rearranged the order of the stories over the centuries. Protestants for example rearranged the writings to fit the prediction of the arrival of Christ. Jay made it clear that he is a biblical scholar and not a theologian. We were reminded that there is very little archeological evidence to confirm the accuracy of these biblical stories, but that they do represent a rich secondary source of understanding about how life was lived, the power structures of the time, and the tensions between various levels of society. These biblical stories were passed down by oral tradition over many centuries and represent a variety of sources from two main traditions known as the Deuteronomist tradition and the Priestly tradition. Generally they tell a story of a people evolving from tribal politics to monarchical rule and then into exile.

Jay noted how the term 'covenant' in ancient Israel was an agreement between God and individuals, or God and a group, but in either case between very unequal partners - a big power differential. There were two main varieties of covenant in ancient times - conditional and unconditional. Deuteronomists described the conditional covenant: "I will be your God and you will be my people". The land of Canaan was for the Israelites but they needed to obey the laws. There was a temple for God and a palace for the king. Loss of the land was the ultimate curse for disobedience, and when it happened the question arose: why had God let the Babylonians overcome their impregnable fortress? Interestingly it was the upper levels of society who were taken as prisoners to Babylon - the educated and the experienced administrators whose skills were useful. When in their turn the Persians invaded Babylon, they sent some of these captives back to Israel to become friendly administrators to impose the rules of the Persian Empire. The Priestly writers wrote about an unconditional covenant - a transgressor might be obliged to go through a cleansing ritual for purification but the basic agreement continued.

One of the observations that Jay made was that there tended to be tensions between the kings and the prophets. Prophets were not from the ruling classes.

Prophets provided social criticism and leaned toward revolutionary ideas. By contrast, the priorities and interests of kings and priests tended to converge. It seems to me that there has been a continuing use of political and religious power alliances ever since. The religious spectrum however is broader today and coalitions may vary according to the priorities of the ruling party.

Jay's final presentation on Friday was a sweeping portrayal of uses and abuses of history, and the idea of covenant and prophecy relating to present circumstances. He related examples of activists looking back on a golden age of yesteryear, but observed that this is not generally helpful. We need to be open to new Light in order to deal with the realities of our current crises.

Our historical Quaker testimonies can be a source of Light, but our worship in the present gives them relevance for our time.

Carol Dixon, Ottawa Monthly Meeting

Reflections

Barbara Horvath

CYM Trustees' Reporting and Clearness Session was included on the 2010 CYM agenda, so I knew I would be going to Winnipeg. But what propelled me was the anticipation of having a full week among Friends again. I looked forward to the rhythm of the days that include worship, study, Quakerly decision-making, and lots of time to talk with both long-cherished and newly acquainted F/friends. My roommate, Skye Ferris, provided a welcome "book end" to my days, as we shared our expectations each morning, and our differing experiences each evening.

I found Jay Cowsill's Bible study to be informative, provocative and very engaging. In the final session I especially appreciated his application of the concepts of conditional and unconditional covenant to the world's current dialogue about climate change.

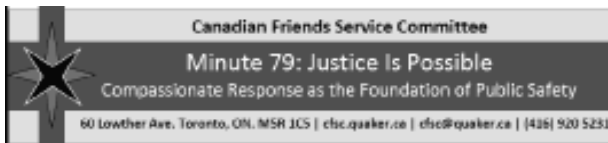
I worshipped with the Clerks' team each morning, before we outlined and adjusted the constantly expanding and contracting agenda for Meeting for Business. As Business concluded early on Friday afternoon, the time for extended worship was a fitting reward for everyone.



For me, the most unanticipated and deeply moving event was the drafting and approval of the Justice minute: *Justice is Possible: Compassionate Response as the Foundation of Public Safety*. I am bringing it home as a Quaker statement to share with the broader community concerned with justice issues.

I find Yearly Meeting greatly rewarding. I am in awe of the many Friends who work throughout the year with such vision, commitment, and love, to make the sessions successful for those who attend, and valuable for the family of Friends across Canada. I return home tired but spiritually refreshed, and personally nurtured. It was a wonderful week!!

Barbara Horvath, Yonge Street Meeting



Canadian Yearly Meeting reached unity in the Spirit on a statement about justice. We hope that it will inspire and call to action many Canadians who share this concern. We invite difficult conversations and partnerships as we work towards building a more peaceful and just country.

Canadian Friends call for and agree to work towards a radical transformation in the way Canadians deal with crime. We know that mainstream law enforcement, through the courts and correctional

systems, currently does little to alleviate the suffering of victims of crime, and equally little to rehabilitate the perpetrators. The ineffectiveness of this system also leads to pain for those who work on our behalf within it. Violence, pain, and suffering are real and affect us all.

Canadian Yearly Meeting (1981) Minute #93, recognized that addressing economic and social justice concerns would reduce crime. Punitive approaches are guided by coercion, misuse of power, and fear, which fosters additional trauma. The predominant focus on punishing offenders commits the great majority of the system's energy and resources to legal processing, prisons, and incarceration. Justice for survivors and communities becomes unlikely.

Friends believe there is that of God in all people, those harmed and those who have caused harm. Therefore, we feel an obligation to respond compassionately to alleviate pain and tragedy, and recognize the many who cry 'injustice' and are not heard. Alongside our long-standing concern for the dehumanization created by prisons and punishment, we raise up our concern for those who have been harmed.

Crime's lasting legacy is the torn fabric of people's lives. We believe the system needs to focus on the harm caused by crime in the context of all the lives it has disrupted. We believe that harm to people and relationships is the main outcome of crime, and that the burden of this harm is borne mostly by its survivors and their communities, who in the current system are little more than passive witnesses to the proceedings.

[Excerpted from CFSC Bulletin]

"The Quaker tradition challenges us to relate to others in ways that call forth and resonate with the good within them, however deeply it may be buried. Quakerism is an optimistic tradition, as we believe that hearts can change and the good can be raised up. The potential for growth in the Spirit is there for each of us. Our worship and our business practice, at their core, are about creating the conditions for hearts to change." [Monday afternoon, Anne Mitchell read from *Four Pillars of Meeting for Business* by Debbie Humphreys.]

The Threshing Session

Margot Overington

Friends gathered to consider the question: Should Canadian Yearly Meeting be every year or every two years?

There is a summary of this Meeting that will be attached to the Minutes of CYM in Session. The summary accurately reflects what Friends said during the session. Since that time I have found myself searching for a way forward that resonates with the wide range of Friends' concerns, expressed with deep rivers of thoughtful attention to our balance with nature and our need to meet face to face.

Friends gathered in silence and spoke out of the silence. Several Friends spoke of the need to meet every two years because of our environmental footprint. Global warming, oil dependency, and overall costs are factors we must consider. If we are serious about reducing our carbon footprint and living simpler lives, we need to make decisions that reflect our desire to live in greater harmony with the earth. We need to do less damage. A variation of this theme came from a Friend who asked: What percentage of our annual carbon footprint is caused by our Quaker activities? What percentage of the footprint is caused by our family activities and by our work activities? Are we making choices that best suit a lifestyle conducive to a life of simplicity; a life of harmony with the earth? If our Quaker activities are a small percentage of our overall carbon footprint, perhaps we should look at other aspects of our lives to see where we might reduce energy consumption, rather than look at travel to Yearly Meeting as the source of a problem. It may be possible within our annual lifestyle choices that we can reduce somewhere else rather than give up travelling to CYM.

Others spoke of being part of CYM from the time they were young children through to their adult years. The transition into adulthood and taking part in the business sessions was a natural course of events, a natural order of growing up in a Quaker community. Friendships that started in childhood continue to remain strong because of gathering every year. It was clear to me, listening to Friends share the depth of their love for each other, that there is a burning desire to continue to meet annually. I also heard parents speak from their hearts of their love for both CYM and their children. They said that sending our children to Camp NeeKauNis rather than to Yearly Meeting

would be a mistake. There is no "growing up" within the Yearly Meeting context if we separate the children from the adults. We need to come to CYM with our children and our grandchildren. We all need to be family together. If we do this every two years, and we continue to meet in four different parts of Canada, it may be that families come to CYM only once in eight years. This is not enough contact for young Friends to bond with each other. It is difficult enough to build a bond if someone is only able to come once every four years.

CYM started to meet in different locations in Canada in order to broaden the base of Friends throughout Canada. It is very expensive for families to travel to other regions, so many families with children are limited to attending CYM when it is closest to home.

This is the overall direction I see from what I heard during the Threshing Session: We need to increase attendance at CYM, not to reduce the number of times we meet. We need strong Half Yearly Meetings across the country where Friends of all ages will experience each other as a wider community. We need to strengthen our numbers at regional gatherings in order for Young Friends to meet others outside their home Meetings. Once they get a taste of the wider circle of Friends, they may be more excited about coming to Yearly Meeting. As well, these smaller more frequent gatherings are important in giving us experience in doing business. Thus, when we gather at Yearly Meeting in Session we will be better able to do business in the manner of Friends.

At our fall meeting, Program Committee will seek a way forward together. We will consider this Threshing Session, along with concerns that were raised in our 2009 Reporting and Clearness Session. These concerns included complex audio-visual requirements; personal computer needs; WI-FI; allowances for a food co-op (campuses are increasingly restricted due to the outsourcing of their food services); a wide variety of needs for elderly Friends; food sensitivities, and special diets. We are also very aware of the extra work placed on small Meetings when CYM needs their help with local arrangements. We will continue to consider all these realities, as well as the global issues of increased airfares, climate change, and increasing costs, as we develop the framework for CYM 2011.

*Margot Overington, Halifax Monthly Meeting
Clerk of Program Committee
[photo opposite page]*



Reflections *Robert Kirchner*

My predominant experience at CYM this year was immersion in an atmosphere of unconditional love. I'm a confirmed introvert, and small talk is difficult and awkward for me. In no other group but Quakers have I felt such openness to sit down with 'anybody', or have 'anybody' sit down with me and start a meaningful, soul-nurturing conversation about things of eternal value. As someone observed: we Friends are a mixed bag. Some of us have impressive talents and considerable influence in society; others of us are, frankly, rather odd birds, and the majority of us have some combination of these traits. In the secular world, I am constantly reminded of my oddnesses and social shortcomings, and I experience rejections and marginalizations, some trivial, others deeper. In contrast, the atmosphere of mutual acceptance which we have at our yearly and half-yearly gatherings, is a rare and precious gift. For me, this sense of acceptance is what the presence of God/dess feels like. That's an important insight, so let me say it again: my awareness of the presence of God/dess comes with, is facilitated by, and results in a sense of loving acceptance of myself and those around me. It frees me to put aside fears about how I will be perceived and to just allow the light of God/dess that is in me to shine forth - not just at CYM but also in my Monthly Meeting, in my family, my friendships, and in my workaday life.

In light of this precious experience at CYM, our threshing session topic was particularly poignant for me. Friends clearly were not ready to unite with moving to a less-than-annual CYM. Yet my sense is that we, like the society around us, have not yet faced up to the environmental destructiveness and uncertain

future of air travel. It is cogently argued in George Monbiot's book: *Heat*, that if we want to mitigate global warming we simply cannot continue to travel by air: the combined positive effects of all the other carbon-reducing practises that we as individuals may adopt are more than wiped out by a single jet flight. In my judgement, our reliance on air travel is the moral equivalent of reliance on slavery by earlier generations of Friends. I am implicated in this as much as anybody, particularly as I am now coming onto Program Committee, and I do not yet have clearness on how to fulfill this ministry without engaging in air travel. Moreover, peak oil may soon put air travel beyond the means of all but the super-rich. As Canadian Friends, our institutions, including CYM, have come into being during a period of abnormally cheap energy. How will these institutions survive the collapse of the energy infrastructure that enables us to operate at the supra-local level? Shouldn't we be facing up to this question now, while we have the space to consider adaptive restructuring, rather than when the crisis is upon us and our options may be severely curtailed? An upside to being on Program Committee is that I will have the opportunity, and responsibility, to keep this concern squarely before us as we plan the logistics of CYM over the next three years. I trust that if we continue to hold this concern in the Light, way will open, somehow, for us to meet our needs for spiritual community with Friends without dependence on fossil fuels, and without contributing to environmental harm. "For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6: 31-32)

*Robert Kirchner, Edmonton Monthly Meeting
Co-clerk, Program Committee*



Challenges for Australia Yearly Meeting

Elizabeth Kwan

Caring for the earth, placing the young at the centre of our community, involving our smaller Meetings, acknowledging and resolving our conflicts, and developing a national Quaker Centre. These are challenges for Australian Friends. They may resonate with Canadian Friends also.

Friends at local and regional levels have been trying to live more sustainably. Our Yearly Meeting Earthcare Committee has had the critical task of defining its role, drafting a public statement on global climate change, and cooperating with non-Quaker environmental organizations. Mindful of our concern for our children's future, Friends are increasingly aware of the urgency to care for the earth and to be accountable to future generations.

We need to place our children and youth at the centre of our Quaker community. Most Regional Meetings reported occasional camps or activity days during the year that draw children together from several Meetings. However, the challenge is to place the young at the *centre* of the Quaker community, a challenge the Children's and Junior Young Friends' Committee recognized would 'require a culture change for Australian Friends' - a sobering indictment. The Committee requested Regional Meetings to appoint committed children's coordinators to support and involve parents, caregivers, and children, whenever Friends meet. It was a reminder of Helen Bayes' plea in 2003 for us so to include children and young people in worship, 'that we may more fully hear their Truth and nurture their capacity to speak and live by it'. What more can we do to make that vision a reality?

Regional Meetings have been seeking to involve the smaller, less experienced, more vulnerable Worship Meetings, through regular visits, residential weekends, and travel subsidies. One Regional Meeting occasionally holds its Meetings for Business away from the metropolis. This practice informs both the smaller and larger Meetings' understanding of Quaker processes.

Revision of practices and procedures reflected this more inclusive view of the Quaker community, emphasizing the 'threefold allegiance' to the Worship Meeting, Regional Meeting, and Yearly Meeting. But how can Regional Meetings ensure that smaller Meetings are familiar with Quaker processes and

are just in using them? How can smaller Meetings contribute to the wider Quaker community?

Acknowledging and resolving conflict within our Quaker community is particularly challenging. Friends have a reputation for peacemaking in the wider society, yet sometimes find acknowledging conflict and making peace within our own Society difficult.

Regional Meetings reported significant progress on this issue, and our Yearly Meeting's Handbook Committee has revised its grievance procedures. There has been growing awareness of the importance of training Elders and Overseers. But Regional Meeting reports were largely silent on their training programs, and the anticipated national curriculum for Elders has yet to be developed.

We considered developing an Australian Quaker Centre and asked the questions: 'rather than continue to pay the costs of travel to retreats and courses centred in Britain and America, are we willing to develop an inspirational study centre for Australians and others in the Asia-West-Pacific region? If so, how can that best be done?'

The Centre became a reality in 2009 on a leased rural property not far from the federal capital, Canberra. It opened with a series of courses in September and October. This was a significant milestone in establishing Australian Quaker institutions, beginning with the emergence of the journal, *The Australian Friend* in 1887, through to the creation of Australia Yearly Meeting in 1964.

Regional Meetings responded with both excitement and caution to the idea of the Centre. There was concern for the costs faced by a small Society in a large country with limited material and human resources. Yet there was also recognition of the Centre's potential to inspire and nurture.

At Yearly Meeting, Friends welcomed a stronger leadership role for the Earthcare Committee, to inform and coordinate the efforts of Regional and other Meetings, as well as to liaise with international Quaker organizations. Revised procedures encouraging a more integrated Quaker community gained support, as did the new grievance procedures. These are all to be used and tested before finalization next year. Also significant, was Yearly Meeting's decision that the Australian Quaker Centre continue with the program planned for 2010. The practicality of purchasing the property will be explored, while other alternative models are considered and determined by January 2011.

Conscious of our small ageing Meetings scattered over a large continent, we are drawing our members together to move forward in unity of Spirit. These are hopeful signs for our Society.

[State of Society Address at www.quakers.org.au/]

*Elizabeth Kwan
South Australia Regional Meeting*

what dost thou say?

I was informed by a friend that Winnipeg was hot hot, hot, so I packed for hot weather. The weather gods decreed otherwise. For the first four days it rained and the wind blew. This would not have been something to whine about except that I was eating and cooking in the outdoor food co-op. It was quite chilly at 6:30 a.m. when preparing breakfast for seventy-five hungry Quakers. However, dampness and chill did not seem to quell the good humour and appetites of the food co-op folks.

“...cold oatmeal with brown sugar and milk can be reconceptualized...”

It is wonderful how the meals get prepared, the dishes washed, and the area cleaned up – all in the midst of the Quaker biz of meetings, outings, conversations, projects, and friendships renewed or started. I ate lunch in the cafeteria, mainly to be with the indoor Quakers, whose conversations etcetera were just as lively, and we were a good deal warmer. I have to report that while the folks at the Canadian Mennonite University are friendly and do their best, the food outdoors was much more interesting and tastier, which made up for the lack of heat. Actually cold oatmeal with brown sugar and milk can be reconceptualized as oatmeal pudding dessert.

*Lynne Phillips
Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting*

One morning I happened on a substance which Lynne told me was yogurt that had not yoged/thickened! She was rather sad about it, until I said: “Well, it looks like Kefir to me.” That put a gourmet spin on it and rather cheered her up, it did!

Ed: Sherryll Harris

As a member of Continuing Meeting of Ministry and Council (CMMC) I try to attune myself to a sense of the Meeting. This year CYM seemed more relaxed but also more spiritually grounded than recent ones. Was this because of the pre-gathering retreat so ably led by Deborah Fisch? Was it because we had fewer Special Interest Groups? Was it because the setting and clerking provided us with quiet moments for reflection during business? Was it because I am feeling more at ease with Friends’ ways now?

A high point was when the Minute on Justice went through so easily and movingly, in a truly gathered Meeting. The Quaker process can be awe-inspiring when it works well and I give thanks for that.

“I suspect the answer is in all of the above.”

Lesley Read, New Brunswick Monthly Meeting

My “aha” moments at CYM were how unique everyone is and yet they could prayerfully come together for the common good, on so many diverse concerns. The more exciting Meetings were not when everyone spoke the same truth, but rather when there were so very many truths. Yet in time, and with discernment, there was a truth united. Never did I later hear that someone felt voted down or forced to agree when their heart was not in it.

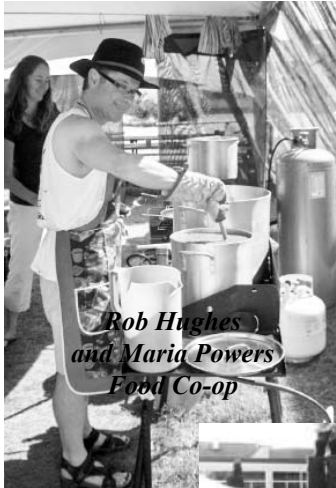
“Time in [Jay’s] Bible study was time well spent.”

The amount of good humour at CYM was sometimes overwhelming. It is not at all like the historical, dour woodblock carvings of Quakers in session.

For me, the general tone of CYM was one of comfort in community. That is not something I have ever had in my life. What a blessing!

I was entranced by Jay’s bible study. He filled in some gaps of learning for me and left me with more questions for further study. He was thought-provoking, learned, and entertaining. Time in this Bible study was time well spent.

*Jacquie Smith, Duncan Worship Group
Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting*



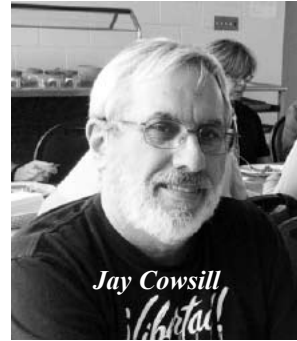
*Rob Hughes
and Maria Powers
Food Co-op*



*Keith Barber
Youth Leader*



*Kate Johnson
son Lorne*



Jay Cowsill



Peter Stevenson



Youth Balancing



*Steve Abbott, Anne-Marie Ziliacus, Kate,
Ross - meal coordinator*



Janet



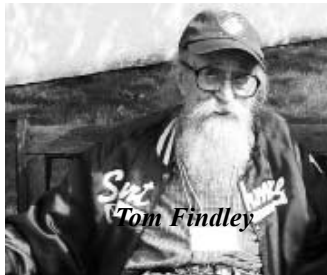
*Rose Marie Caryk, Margot Overington
Elaine Bishop, Virginia Dawson*



Martha McCure



*Program Committee:
Nathan Dick, Paul Sheardown,
Robert Kirchner,
Leigh Turina, Margot Overington*



*Sgt.
Tom Findley*



Young Adult Friends



*Daniel von Schulmann and
Issac Klaassen-Wright*



*Joyce Howleda, Marilyn Manzer
Michael Kaufman-Lacusta*

what dost thou say?



This was my first time at Yearly Meeting, since completing my terms on Continuing Meeting of Ministry and Counsel. What a joy to have more free time and opportunity for additional experiences outside our structured business and worship activities! I had more time for long conversations with old and new Friends, fun spending a morning with the Children's Program on a trip to the Conservatory at Assiniboine Park, and in a playground where I exhausted myself pushing three kids at a time on the swing. I marveled at Alan Tatro and Jesse Thompson's patience and creativity in running the program. I participated in the Food Co-op where Janet Ross organized the most nutritious and delicious meals I've ever eaten at CYM. I did a couple of extra shifts cooking to express "my inner Julia Child". I felt I connected with more Friends on a personal level this Yearly Meeting. *Rob Hughes, Van. Monthly Meeting*

Meetings for Worship for Business were – for the most part – gathered, worshipful, and productive. Several important items of business were approved: the draft *Faith and Practice*; a process with which to move ahead and hire a youth secretary; a minute on prisons and justice; a minute on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; the budget and nominations for 2011. Some business items, including Peaceful Energy, needed further discernment and will be brought back to Yearly Meeting in 2011. Many Friends held me in the Light during the week and others provided needed, direct, and practical help to Gordon, my husband, who was convalescing at home. This support enabled me to take up my responsibilities as clerk. It was an honour and privilege to serve CYM in this way.

Anne Mitchell, Toronto MM



CYM in session is great because I get a chance to see people that I communicate with by email and phone all year long. Even if we only have time for a quick chat, it is a real blessing to see Friends face to face. For my work with Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC) it was a real delight to spend time with Lynne Phillips, Elaine Bishop, Bill Curry, Don Alexander and Merrill Stewart. For the Aboriginal Affairs work of CFSC, the SIGs are great. We have thoughtful dialogue with many Friends on the work. This exchange gives us a chance to share with Friends the work we do all year, and it also gives CFSC good feedback and guidance. Of course the very best thing about CYM in Winnipeg, was hanging out with my Dad. *Jennifer Preston, Hamilton Monthly Meeting*



I really enjoyed doing the "microphone ministry" (prayerfully walking the wireless mic around to those in the M4W4B who were recognized by the Clerk) and finding and training others to do that valuable ministry. *Dan Cooperstock, Toronto MM*



'I would be constantly in touch with God.' That wish framed my week. Washing lettuce; making change at the Quaker Book Service; sitting in silence; speaking in business Meeting; listening to the rain on the tent;

hearing the joys and sorrows of Friends. How to bring that tenuous sense of the Spirit home to my daily life? I would be constantly in touch with God. *Susan Stevenson, Vernon Monthly Meeting*



I always enjoy the sense of community and Spirit that is present. This year, because of my husband's illness, I truly needed the fellowship of Friends. Caring words and touches carried me through a difficult time. Keeping busy helped. Margot commented that she liked having her own 'personal slave'. Love, laughter and faith. I let them wash over and shelter me. Everyone's support meant the world to me. *Patty Lembke, Prairie MM*

what dost thou say?

I attended CYM 2010 for two reasons: My son Lorne loves Yearly Meeting and really wanted to connect with other Quaker children. I wanted to talk to interested Friends about my work as a chaplain, lending my support to the work of Quakers Fostering Justice, and sharing my concerns about the dreadful things that are happening in Canadian corrections. Lorne was able to connect with other Quaker children. He greatly enjoyed the activities and is still playing with the felted minion that he made at CYM. He is grateful to York, from Edmonton, for adding the word 'minion' to his vocabulary. The highlight for me of CYM was the approval of a draft statement that had been prepared by several members of Quakers Fostering Justice, and thoroughly threshed at a Special Interest Group. The fast approval speaks to the immense amount of work that went into its preparation, and I believe also to the strength of the Spirit that inspired the statement. CYM was largely a time of retreat for me this year, and this was the only session of business I attended. It absolutely filled my sails to leave CYM with this highly quotable statement approved for use in my work, both with prisoners and in communicating the issues to other church and community groups.

Kate Johnson, Thousand Islands Monthly Meeting

I was very fortunate to be able to attend CYM this August. I am relatively new to KAIROS, so the experience was an important opportunity for me to get to know one of our member institutions at a deeper level. I felt very welcomed by everyone and met many dedicated, supportive, and interesting folks during my three-day visit. I learned a great deal in the Special Interest Groups I attended. The presentation on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was very informative and relevant to the 2010-11 KAIROS Campaign.

Thank you for conversations over meals or in-between programs, where I was given the opportunity to learn more about Quakers and your commitment to social justice on a more personal level. I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to attend and to have met so many hopeful and joyful people working hard to create positive changes in the world. I extend my thanks for the hospitality and generosity, and hope to continue working along side Quakers in the struggle for peace and justice.

Caroline Foster, KAIROS representative

My strongest impression is of the wonderful people I met. I am so grateful to be part of a group of people who understand that we are on earth to be of service. It gives me hope and strength and encouragement. My conversations at Yearly Meeting changed some of my opinions. Previously I was willing to give Friends United Meeting time to change on their personnel policies, but now I am clear that I don't want people to feel *less*, or be discriminated against for being who they were meant to be in the world. I more clearly understand the needs of people with food issues, after seeing the care and respect that was given to preparing meals in the co-op, for people coping with various food restrictions. As well, it became more evident to me that protection of the earth is critical.

The connection between Monthly Meetings and CYM does not seem to be as strong as I expected. I learned that the response rate to questions sent out by committees and staff is very low. We need to show our support for the work even if it is to say "we are with you in Spirit, but we aren't able to consider this right now". Yearly Meeting could be the catalyst for more work being done by Meetings.

Also, I feel too much time is spent on *adminis-trivia* and not on the work we need to do on this earth. Twenty-five years ago George and I attended CYM and didn't return because the nit picking was overwhelming. This is not a criticism of the clerks - this is a criticism of our traditional agenda. I would much rather have the interest groups be the centerpiece of the agenda. Let's look at the minutes when they are ready and see what can be streamlined in the future.

Finally, I sure loved the sweater I borrowed from the warm-layer pile!!! [generously loaned by Pamela Leach] I also enjoyed having a buddy all week long.

In Friendship, Joyce Holwerda, Coldstream Monthly Meeting

what dost thou say?

I came to CYM primarily to represent Friends Peace Teams (FPT). I am passionate about facilitating the work of all the projects of Friends Peace Teams, including creating new financial resources and guiding more Friends to volunteer at home and abroad. Many Canadian Friends have served on FPT projects (more are welcome) and supported us in many ways. FPT includes the African Great Lakes Initiative (AGLI) Paz en Las Americas, and the Indonesian Initiative. It is governed by the FPT Council, which is mostly made up of representatives from sixteen Yearly Meetings from all stripes of Friends.

My other passion is to serve Friends, particularly in Baltimore Monthly Meeting, by supporting them in enhancing their spiritual lives; helping them develop social networks within the Meeting; encouraging the Meeting to be a center of peace, reconciliation, and community-building. All Friends need to be stepping up our evangelism. If we don't we will deprive the world of an excellent way to know God. As well, I enjoy building links among folks who may not have realized their shared concerns, but who can become much more powerful when they network effectively.

It was great being part of the Canadian Friend's community. I enjoyed re-connecting with many Friends, some of whom I have known from childhood, and visiting my Winnipeg family, including three grandchildren. A high for me was the reconvening of the Abbott-Bishop episcopate, a play on ecclesiastical nomenclature from the 60's. Ed, Vivian, Steve and I had a fine reunion.

A warm greeting to Canadian Friends. When you are south of the border, be sure to drop in to Stony Run in Baltimore.

Adrian Bishop, Adelphi MM, Maryland, USA



Ed Abbott, Adrian Bishop, Vivian Abbott

This was my third CYM. I came this year because I wondered how a spiritual organization with no hierarchy - or at least a rotational one - with no clergy, went about its business. I wanted to experience again how Friends make decisions coming from the Spirit. I needed time to meditate on a few questions that had been dogging my conscience: Since God is not a white man with a beard, who and what is it? Am I still a Christian or does it really matter if I call myself anything at all? How are my old buddies from BC and Prairie Monthly Meetings doing?

In my twenty-one-year sojourn with Friends I have had periods of frenzied activity in Meeting and long periods away. I was led further into mainstream Christianity. At one point I attended Cranberry Commons and a progressive Baptist church in my neighbourhood. I was engaged in the Christian and Jewish scriptures with a periodic spiritual sleepover with the Tibetan Buddhists - particularly the writings of the Dalai Lama and Pema Chodrun.

“... a Hindus' interpretation of Jesus' teachings cut to the core...of the Christian message.”

Around 2007 I began regular attendance to the Light Group - a meditation and discussion group at our Meeting. During the early days of my return to Vancouver Meeting I was very pleased to see a renewal occurring. Friends were engaging more with the Marpole neighbourhood and becoming more active with outreach. This continues with the Quest Program. In 2008 I read a book called *The Beatitudes According to Vedanta*. The author, a Hindu guru, did not have the dubious benefit of two thousand years of Christian infighting, which in more polite circles is called theology and creeds. However, his interpretation of Jesus' teaching cut to the core of the meaning and practical application of the Christian message. At that point I knew in my heart why creeds and theological arguments about baptism, the trinity and resurrection are not only a waste of time, but also lead to misunderstanding and violence. Most Friends can recount many previous and current examples of these misunderstandings.

This year's CYM - from the great Bible Study to the Special Interest Groups, and the spiritually lead clerking of Business Meeting, and the Meeting for Euchre and Bridge - have helped to answer these questions. I have been very blessed with remaking old connections and meeting new Friends.

*Gail Harwood, Cranberry Commons Worship Group
Vancouver Monthly Meeting*

what dost thou say?



This was my first Yearly Meeting. I found it to be very rich and deeply meaningful for growing my Quaker Roots deeper in Spirit. The time spent in the food co-op allowed me to meet and work with many new Friends, as well as ones I have known from previous gatherings. Meeting for worship with attention to business was an exercise in deep listening that I truly appreciated. Bible study with Jay was fascinating. I am not well versed in biblical scripture but am none the less interested in the Bible as a guide and as a piece of literature. The analysis from a literary perspective allowed me to explore parts of the Bible without feeling too much guilt over my doubts of its literal or physical truth. I am secure in my faith without needing the Bible to be the one and only historical record of the life and times of Jesus, real or imagined. I enjoyed the opportunity to explore the Bible in the context of historical writing - so much so that I bought myself a study Bible and intend to continue this exploration. *Lana Robinson, VIMM*

I was struck by the many ways Friends of all ages lovingly cared for one another. Perhaps I noticed because I was recovering from a broken wrist? A few highlights for me included Young Friends helping Vivian and Ed Abbott get seated and served at meal-times, Jesse Thompson's patient and loving attention to our youngest Friends, the cheerful contribution of so many volunteers to keeping things running smoothly. The list is endless: Food Co-op, circulation of microphones during Meetings, and well-organized snack times. As well, so many of us benefited from Pam Leach's stock of warm sweaters, socks, and scarves to stave off the cold. I marvelled – as I always do at CYM – over the unique and special character of our Canadian Family of Friends. A special highlight for those of us on the Faith and Practice Development Committee was the presentation and acceptance of the draft version of our Canadian Faith and Practice on Monday, August 16. Those of us on the committee were pleased that the long work – to which so many Friends and Meetings contributed – is nearing completion.

Molly Walsh, Montreal Monthly Meeting



Being in Winnipeg at CYM this year was in response to a promise to three of my grandchildren. They begged me to help them get to Yearly Meeting so that they could meet the friends they have made over the years of coming to CYM. They are treated with respect by all ages and they have a sense of kinship and belonging. It was great to see them, and my daughter Maria, adopting my spiritual community as their own. One of the highlights was seeing Maria becoming friends with Friends of my generation and older. Watching the three generations of Abbotts interact was a pleasure. Greeting Friends after a long absence I can sense the same rapport despite the years. Lesley Robertson, who had introduced me to Friends, remained a steadfast friend even though we had not seen each other for about eight years. Meeting first timers and visiting Friends was also a pleasure. Thanks Lana for letting me use your computer while we were roommates. Giving and receiving hugs were definite pluses. I appreciated visiting with Jean from Richmond, Va. and learning that she uses therapeutic touch to heal. I enjoyed visiting and working with old and young Friends at the food co-op. It was fun to watch the balancing - both the traditional and the new style with the tow strap. I was glad I attended the inspiring Transition Towns film and discussion, and the thought provoking "Living Downstream" film. A definite highlight of the business Meeting was on Friday when the lengthy but timely statement about our Justice system was read and approved without discussion. The spirit was working among us.

Sylvia Powers, Ottawa Monthly Meeting, Land O'Lakes Worship Group

Young Friends YM

We did improv theatre, followed by swing dancing led by Frank Klaassen and Jessica Klaassen-Wright. Rachel Singleton-Polster presented a film about resisters to the Iraq War, and spoke about her internship with Canadian Friends Service Committee. Many youth attended business Meeting to show support for the Youth Secretary position. We 'balanced' and danced some more. A few of us attended the threshing session to discuss whether Canadian Yearly Meeting should be held every other year.

Robert Kirschner presented a film on Transition Towns - towns attempting to become locally sustainable. Later, Caroline Foster spoke to us about the KAIROS initiatives. We had a brief and successful business Meeting and sorted approximately three thousand pounds of potatoes at Winnipeg Harvest - a local food bank. [We were happy] that the proposed funding for the Youth Secretary position was approved. [Dr.] Dale Dewar and Bill Curry gave their famous sex talk, followed by the annual YF/YAF game of Wink.

CYM was a lot of fun and a very worthwhile experience. We felt supported and included by all. With many great memories to carry with us, we look forward to returning and creating more next year.

[Excerpted from the Youth Program Epistle]

Discovery

Daniel von Schulmann

CYM was an amazing experience for me. There was always something to do, from volunteering at the food bank with Young Friends, to serving on my first committee – the Canadian Young Friends Yearly Meeting nominating committee. I was glad of the time to connect with other Quaker youth from across the country. However, the thing that amazed me the most was Quaker history (or more accurately my lack of knowledge of it). That didn't bubble to the surface until a few weeks after CYM had concluded.

A good example of this is Pendle Hill. When I arrived at CYM I knew the name but I didn't know its significance at all, let alone where it was located. (I assumed it was in Pennsylvania). So when my Integrated Studies teacher informed my class that we would have to do a semester-long research article on the topic of our choice, mine was an easy one. I hope to learn a lot about Quaker history over the next few months.

*Daniel von Schulmann
Victoria Friends Meeting*

Youth Ministry

Marilyn Church

When I first attended CYM some fifteen years ago, I spent all my time helping with the Youth Program. In fact, I was first ministered to by Young Friends. The ministry was rich and led me to membership in the Society. I was soon nominated to the Religious Education Committee, where I worked alongside a now-cherished group of Friends with similar needs and interests.

As the years went by my involvement moved into the adult world. Stints on the Outreach Fund then Home Missions and Advancement Committee (HMAC) and Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC) broadened my view of the work that Friends do. CYM committee work and the activities I participate in at the annual gathering give me the opportunity to spend time with people I have come to love, and to grow relationships that span both time and distance.

“I was first ministered to by Young Friends. The ministry was rich and led me to membership in the Society.”

CYM 2010 was full of joyful connections and nurturing visits with Friends from all over the country. This year I didn't spend any time with the Youth Program. Instead I watched it blossom under the care of responsible Young Friends, while I attended lots of Meetings for Worship for Business, helped make many meals at the food co-op, did snack duty, facilitated a worship sharing group, attended Special Interest Groups, and visited, visited, visited.

The greatest gift I received from this gathering was the time spent working with Friends of all ages, on the Youth Secretary position. I arrived at the gathering feeling discouraged about my work toward hiring a Youth Secretary. I knew that our small committee needed time to worship together, and we needed some of that special rich ministry that Canadian Young Friends Yearly Meeting can provide. I give thanks that we were able to worship and work with others who are interested in the Youth Secretary position. I have returned home feeling refreshed and invigorated, ready to start the hiring process in the near future.

Please help the Youth Secretary Committee make this important position a reality in our Yearly Meeting. We can only do it with the work, help, and Spiritual guidance of Friends from all across this country.



*Marilyn Church
Yonge Street Monthly Meeting*

One Youth's Joy and Frustration

Ben Segel-Brown

This was my second Canadian Yearly Meeting. I came this year as a Canadian Friends Service Committee intern and as a delegate from Ottawa Monthly Meeting. These dual obligations overlapped with the Young Friends program, and volunteering in the Food co-op. Consequently, though constantly busy, I was also constantly missing events.

I joyfully participated in a worship-sharing group. It was a wonderful open experience, and it was refreshing to hear what people really feel - the family and political issues that are on their minds. It felt awkward at first hearing such personal thoughts, but it is great to hear people speak so honestly.

One issue discussed in this group was the Peaceful Energy Minute. I discovered that two other participants and I, had completely different perspectives on the success of the working group. My impression was that there was no unity, either with the statement or its underlying ideas. I felt the Special Interest Group was hurtful, frustrating, and unproductive. A fellow member of my worship-sharing group felt that the SIG was revealing, healing, and had done much to improve communication and move us towards consensus on the underlying issues.

At the Peaceful Energy SIG the working group presented the minute of Saskatoon Monthly Meeting, rather than bringing forward last year's minute that had been presented on Monday. Few had read it and it did not incorporate many Meetings' concerns. I found this very frustrating. Having been inspired by the previous day's presentation, and disappointed in the text presented Monday, I wrote my own version

of the minute, and scrambled to have it edited and deemed acceptable by each member of the committee. The SIG identified the same issues which had been raised in consultation with Monthly Meetings. I read and attempted to incorporate the feedback from this process into my version, but many of the concerns were not addressed in the Saskatoon MM's minute. There were high tension and accusations relating to MMs refusal to host the Uranium Working Group (UWG). They had refused because they believed the UWG was forcing its ideas upon MMs, rather than attempting to understand and address Friends' objections. The UWG was likewise frustrated and offended by MMs raising concerns at the SIG, when they refused to try to resolve their differences by hosting presentations of the UWG. Whether this was healing or hurtful was apparently up for interpretation.

There were many wonderful experiences at CYM - for instance the shedding of tears and expressions of joy when a minute from Quakers Fostering Justice was approved almost without modification. In the ministry of one Friend: "This is why I became a Quaker!" Being surrounded by people passionate about the same social issues I'm passionate about was a very energizing experience. The little time I had to spend with young friends was also amazing. We learned some swing dancing; we had our annual actually-helpful-and-somewhat-relevant sex talk; we sang as we walked; we played Wink with only minor injuries.

During the Special Interest Group on the Tar Sands, Rachel Singleton-Polster and I presented reports. I spoke of my findings on the oil sands leases. This SIG informed people about the issues then agreed on a statement for which there was already a strong underlying consensus. We summarized feedback from Monthly Meetings and proposed that we work with KAIROS on the tar sands.

CYM was a productive experience overall, and I am thankful for Ottawa Monthly Meeting's support.

Ben Segel-Brown, Ottawa Monthly Meeting



Interviews with Dick Preston and Bill Curry

Ed Why are you here?

Dick To give support to my daughter Jenn and my dear friend Rick McCutcheon; guilt for a long lapse in attending CYM.

Bill For the practical and spiritual benefits which always outweigh the effort and time getting to CYM.

Ed What is your passion?

Dick Building a culture of peace

Bill Ecology - healing - home

Ed What is your vision? your hope?

Dick That people everywhere will deeply realize that peace is not just the absence of war. It is the love of spouses for each other, the love of parents for children, the love we have for each other.

Bill To be open, not despair, to rebound.

Ed Words, images, or “aha” moments gifted to you during CYM?

Dick That the Jewish Bible (and all other sacred writings) come from multiple authors and editors, with differing situations and convictions, over many centuries, and as such are great moral mythologies.

“Practical and spiritual benefits outweigh the effort and time demanded to get to CYM”

Bill Despite a car breakdown which forced cancellation of our carefully planned dinner with Winnipeg family and friends, we managed to arrive at CMU Friday by midnight. The warm welcome from Program Committee hosts.

Ed Aspects of CYM 2010 most important?

DP One-to-one Friendships

Bill Wonderful reconnection with Gini Smith; combining early involvement in Quaker Committee for Native Concerns (QCNC - now QAAC) with current Ecumenical Interfaith participation. It is always wonderful to connect so deeply, beyond decades, with so few words needed.

Experiencing the power of communication in silence, beyond our distances, confirming this with face-to-face words.

Being present for the Prison Abolition minute sustains my expectation and patience that such depth shall come, as way opens, for [other] pressing concerns. The work and waiting to reach unity can be frustrating, and painful, but once achieved it is much more powerful than faster majority votes.

“Peace is not just the absence of war. It is the love of spouses for each other, the love of parents for children, the love we have for each other.”

Ed Aspect of a previous CYM to share?

Dick When Susan Bax, our long-term self-appointed and very competent CYM parliamentarian, ministered to the effect that she was aware that many Friends were irritated by her frequent correctives, but only expressed (this irritation) in gossip. Then a good Friend spoke directly to her: “Are you sure that you are spiritually deep enough to be so open?”

Ed What are you called to do/be in the world?

Dick To be a witness to the lives of those I love, and to try to act on my vision and hope, as an elder.

Bill Called to listen, give voice, clear out my backlog of messes, jumbles of words; live and love.

Ed What reaction or thoughts regarding Jay’s Bible study?

Dick A critic can be a fascinating teacher and a confusing examiner (his queries). I hope for something different next time.

Bill It was confirmation and elucidation of my simple understanding of the ancient ongoing tension between Prophets and Kings - Oppression and Liberation.

Dick Preston, Hamilton Monthly Meeting

Bill Curry, Prairie Monthly Meeting

The S.P. Gardiner Lecture

At the outset the S.P. Gardiner lecture seemed quite normal – a Quaker talk about violence by Rick McCutcheon - an academic in the field. But this was to be different. This was to be about the personal experience of violence; the violence within; the thoughts that go with it, the observations and direct experience of violence - violence received - violence given, all woven together with academic threads of research.



I found it surprising to learn that historical Quaker spiritual writings around the world contain very few, if any, references to actual violence. Yes, lots about peace, taking away the occasion of war, but not about our observations, feelings, acts, hurts, or violence itself. How could this be? We certainly think about it and try to create our own version of the peaceable kingdom.

So here was a large-framed, fifty year-old gentle, red-headed man, acknowledging being picked on, and fighting back – more than once – so effectively that he was not bothered again - talking about disciplinary violence in his family of origin; talking about his feelings of experienced or practised acts of violence. Yet he had chosen an academic career in this field.

This was brave speaking. Open hearted disclosure. Rick was well supported – they were there, eight members of a support committee across the back of the stage. Tamara, Rick's wife, was part of the team.

The essence of the annual SPG lecture is something to make you think - something with a spiritual connection. When Rick started, his format was almost conversational – he was going to tell us difficult stuff to listen to – this might bring stuff up for us – there

were listeners available. Ooh – this could be big and scary. But as he engaged with us, his voice gradually softened and became quiet, as he coaxed and coached us through his own life experiences. We understood his stories and contemplated the meaning for our own lives. Now there will be something written.

Adrian Dolling

Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting - Victoria

Working in Darkness, Waiting for Light

“In a blend of personal experience, academic theorizing, and spiritual reflection, Rick [McCutcheon] invited us to engage the ocean of darkness. We all know from personal experience that being hurt leaves lifelong memories. Violence can be a lesson.

“To be devoted to violence reduction and peace building is most realistically based on acknowledging the nature of being hurt. The ocean of darkness deserves careful understanding, although most of us find it more comfortable to distance the experiential by naming types of violence, and believing we know it accurately. We were invited to engage more fully in the darkness so that we can bring our light to meet it and affect it, and so live our faith and practice in the Twenty-first Century. We were challenged to see how we exist in both darkness and in light and learn to integrate both as part of God's creation.” [Summary from the 2010 CYM Epistle].

I think it would be good to have several queries prepared to help Friends contemplate Rick's lecture. Rick made reference to Murray Thomson's 2006 Lecture *Toward a Culture of Peace*. As part of that pamphlet there are three Queries for Friends. In 2006 we prepared and approved a Minute: *Toward a Culture of Peace; a Statement from Canadian Yearly Meeting*. In 2010 we had a Minute approved, arising from a Special Interest Group sponsored by Quakers Fostering Justice, titled: *Justice is Possible: Compassionate Response as the Foundation of Public Safety*. In many ways I think this Minute is linked to the SPG Lecture, and I hope it might be appended to the printed pamphlet of the lecture.

Arnold Ranneris

Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting - Victoria

Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. Trust them as the leadings of God whose Light shows us our darkness and brings us to new life.

[Advices & Queries 1.02]

Fruits of Silence Retreat

[facilitated by Deborah Fisch]

Several Friends attended the pre-Yearly Meeting retreat to prepare their hearts and minds for Meeting for worship with attention to business. They understand that how we prepare ourselves for Meeting for worship with attention to business is just as important as what we do in Meeting for worship with attention to business. They were there to prepare themselves to listen for the leadings of the Spirit.

Friends acknowledge that Meeting for worship with attention to business can offer the deepest experience of God and holy work, or can be the most awful experiences. It seems to depend on our commitment to Spirit. Remember, that to truly put our faith into practise, and experience exciting, centered, and fruitful Meetings for worship with attention to business, we must wrap all we do around and under, over and through, with the love of God. "Love never insists on its own way." (I Corinthians 13-5). In Meeting for worship with attention to business, how do we love all? How do we let go of our own egos and get out of the way of the Spirit? God's love can take us where we can't take ourselves. It can free us to let go of animosity, or issues with others that get in the way of our work together.

The Meeting for business is one of the most important times for the personal use of prayer – prayer that we may stay in touch with the great and living Stream. William Taber

We must seek to make all decisions with a loving Spirit, aware of each other's thoughts. Even the small decisions are worthy of our loving attention, loving listening. The decision itself is not what is important but how we are with each other in making decisions. Decisions of less consequence are opportunities to practise good listening. How we Listen to each other does make a difference in how we hear God.

"If I speak with the tongue of men and angels but do not have Love, I am a noisy gong or clanging cymbal..."(I Corinthians 13-1). We can carefully choose the most perfect language, but if that language is not rooted and grounded in God's Love it "profits us nothing". If we seek to be faithful in finding the best way forward our hearts and minds must be rooted and

grounded in Love. Even when we do all this "perfectly" and find just the right words and language, we need to check where the words come from... are they from our heart or our heads?

Deborah suggested that whenever we have full agendas and more work than time allotted, we do well to remember that God gives us the time to do the work we need to do, but not extra time, so we need to be attentive to the Spirit. The work is more effectively done by worshipping longer, not cutting worship to make more room. She boldly suggested that extended worship removes the ending time so that people feel the leisure of sinking deep down into the presence of God - the Divine, without the concern of ending at a specific time.

Remember: what we take from Meeting for worship with attention to business, we use in our lives, our Meeting, and the world.

[Ed: a collaboration from notes]

Letter from Deborah Fisch

As best I can remember, this was my sixth visit to the annual sessions of Canadian Yearly Meeting. Even though I am a visitor to your beloved Yearly Meeting, I am not a stranger to it. This year I was invited to facilitate the pre-yearly Meeting retreat. It was wonderful to have the extra time to get to know some CYM Friends more deeply in "that which is eternal"; consider with Friends how to 'Be' in Meeting for Worship with attention to business; to look together for ways we can stay more attentive to the whispers of the Spirit, as we consider the reports and work before us.

I noted that CYM is laboring with many of the same concerns as Yearly Meetings in the US. This didn't surprise me, since my experience is that the Spirit is at work among us all. The good work CYM has been doing: on Faith and Practice; Friends' concerns for the environment, and for peace and justice; the faithful participation of Adult Young Friends; the concern about the size and vigor of Monthly Meetings, is all shared by CYM's sisters and brothers in faith. Religious education and the nurture of young Friends is high on the list of topics other Meetings are considering. Friends in both Canada and the US, seek to stay connected and deepen connections within and among the Monthly Meetings and worship groups. CYM's new intentional inter-visitation program will be something I can lift up to other Meetings



It was blessing upon blessing to be with you, as unity of Spirit broke forth after the reading of the proposed “Justice is Possible” minute. It is exciting to see God at work among us.

Thank you for the warmth with which I have been welcomed through the years. You share so freely and deeply of yourselves and it doesn't go without notice. A long time ago I read in a Quaker book: “I knew not that of God in me, until entwined with that of God in thee.” I am living into this experientially because Friends like you continue to take the risk to love.

Deborah Fisch, Iowa Yearly Meeting - Conservative Friends General Conference, Associate Secretary for Programs and Traveling Ministries



Tasmin Rajotte

what dost thou say?

We have many mixed emotions about CYM. On the one hand, it was a privilege, joy and blessing to be able to attend; learn about the work of other committees and Friends; catch up with Friends, and meet new Friends and young Friends. On the other hand we were extremely disappointed - and at times distressed - by the conduct of certain Friends during Business Meetings; it took away from the spirit that guides our business. Our process at times felt very disrespectful: a small group of Friends repeatedly spoke to business items, Friends sometimes stood to speak before the previous speaker was finished, and some disregarded pleas from the Clerks. This left an impression that we as a community need to strengthen our discipline of listening, waiting, and supporting the clerks in their challenging task of listening for the unity in the Spirit in the room.

If we are not waiting upon the Spirit - really attending to it in Business Meetings - how can we profess to be practising our faith, let alone finding unity?

It is worrisome. We are a small and widespread community in Canada. A real expression of our love for one another - which also strengthens and revitalizes our community - is listening and being open to new Light. Through focusing on deep listening as the core of our discipline in Meeting, rather than preparing to speak, we are better able to hear and respond to God's calls for us.

*Tasmin Rajotte, Ottawa Monthly Meeting
Jane Orion Smith, Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting*



Jane Orion Smith

Book Review:

The Night is Full of Stars

by Dr. Friedrich Schmitz, translated from German by Kathleen Schmitz Hertzberg with Evelyn Schmitz-Hertzberg

Reviewed by Michael Lee Zwiers, Ph.D.

Dr. Friedrich Schmitz-Hertzberg was a Quaker and member of Toronto Monthly Meeting from the time he and his family immigrated to Canada in 1952. Little known was the fact that before he came to Canada, Fritz had been a prisoner of war in the Soviet Union between 1945 and 1949. After his release from captivity he wrote an account of his experiences. That manuscript sat unread for the next 40 years. Following his death in 1993, his wife Kathleen Hertzberg began the intensive work of translating his memoir. Much awaited by people who knew Fritz and continue to know Kathleen and their extended family, this book has now been released by the Quaker publisher Sessions of York.

Fritz was a young medical student in Germany when World War II broke out in September of 1939. Although Fritz was never a Nazi, he was conscripted into the German army as a medical officer on the Eastern Front. He was taken prisoner on the thirteenth of March 1945 by the advancing Soviet army as they swept through East Prussia. Although the war was almost over, Fritz was to spend the next four years and two months in captivity in various Soviet prisoner-of-war camps. This book describes his experiences working as a physician in those camps in East Prussia, Lithuania, and the oil-producing area of the Ural Mountains - now known as Azerbaijan - and north in the Russian republic of Bashkortostan, bordering Kazakhstan.

Following his release in 1949, Fritz wrote about his experiences while recuperating in the Quaker Rest Home in Bad Pyrmont, Germany. As his wife Kathleen said, "He felt he had to do it immediately, so that his impressions were fresh". Fritz's reflections encompass the physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual aspects of captivity as well as the political and sociological dimensions of the Soviet prisoner-of-war system. Significantly, he also considers the tragedy of the individual human being caught up in that system. At times moving, poetical, informative, insightful, and challenging, Fritz reflects lucidly on the conditions that he and his fellow prisoners had to endure. More

than a million did not survive the hard labour and near-starvation in captivity.

Fritz puts humanity under the spotlight, revealing the flaws and the beauty. He asks hard questions as he makes his inquiry into the complexities of the human condition, that lead on the one hand toward goodness and charity, and on the other hand toward self-interest, revenge, greed and indifference. Above all, he offers a look into the human spirit and the conditions that are required for the survival and flourishing of the soul, even under terrible conditions. Remarkably, he never expresses hatred toward his captors. Rather, he endeavours to understand both the Soviet system and his Soviet captors, and strives to maintain a critical and objective perspective on them and their character. This mental attitude enables him to remain healthy, and most significantly, to survive his captivity. Fritz was able to find meaning and purpose in providing medical care to his fellow prisoners, even though his efforts were greatly hampered by the oppressive circumstances.

This book is a significant contribution to the literature about the Second World War and its aftermath. It is a powerful, moving, and thought-provoking memoir of the Second World War period, seen through the eyes of a young physician. The title of the book *The Night Is Full of Stars* comes from a passage in Fritz's text when he was in a prisoner-of-war camp near Okjabris, in the foothills of the Ural Mountains:

In the morning, the sun crept from behind the mountains in a surprising medley of colours, spreading its rays over a world so full of malevolence and suffering. Thus, nature was often a comforter in the desperate situations that occurred only too often. When I gazed at the wonderful starry sky on a cold frosty night, the earth seemed so small and insignificant. For a moment, the oppression and the fears could be forgotten. All the pettiness of living in such close quarters in the camp faded in the presence of the power of nature. And then, as an insignificant human being, one became aware that there was much, much more beyond one's own small existence.

Fritz had a firm conviction of God, an unseen power that was guiding him along an uncertain and risk-filled path. This gave him the strength to be fully alive, no matter what providence handed to him. As he stated:

I did not want to live out my life as someone to be pitied. I preferred to take the risk as a healthy person, to live my life as it was entrusted to me, as one who had

endeavoured to come through the trials of war and the hardships of captivity with integrity. This meant that I must not lose faith in the guiding hand of God leading me into an uncertain future....

In addition to the manuscript, the book contains archival records such as photographs and letters, passed between Fritz and his English fiancée Kathleen during the war, via a Swiss Quaker, and even some of the original Red Crescent correspondence cards that Fritz sent from the P.O.W. camps to his fiancé in England. Several of these cards contain hand-drawn images of Fritz that were sketched by fellow prisoners. The manuscript also contains extensive historical endnotes and references compiled by Fritz's widow and daughter.

Here is a book that will contribute to the fulfillment of a vision we all have, no matter what our place in life: a vision of a just world, a peaceful world, a loving world where the hungry are fed, the sick are nursed, the disabled are enabled; a world where sensitive souls not only survive but flourish.

*Michael Lee Zwiers, Ph.D.
Kitchener Area Meeting*



Friedrich Schmitz-Hertzberg

Film Review:

That of God - produced by Chanda Chevannes

Reviewed by Laurel Dee Gugler


That of God is a one-hour documentary on Quaker values, practices, and commonly held beliefs. Interest is maintained by a skilful weaving of narrative and conversation in various settings. We catch glimpses into the lives of individual Friends. In particular, the documentary follows the spiritual journey of Quaker, Jane Orion Smith, over a five-year period. She is the primary narrator throughout the film, telling of her own journey to Quakers, as well as stating commonly held Quaker principles. Within the documentary we also meet Carol Leigh Wehking, Bev Shepherd, Marc Forget, Janet Ross, and others. Carol Leigh speaks from the context of Toronto's annual Storytelling Festival. Bev speaks from the Hamilton Meeting House and we also witness a silent Meeting there. We meet Marc as he facilitates an International Human Rights Training Program in Montreal. He attests to a belief among Quakers regarding the importance of peace which cannot be separated from social justice. Other filming locations include Camp NeeKauNis and Victoria Meeting where we witness the wedding of Orion (Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting) and Janet (Toronto Meeting). Also there is a conversation between Orion and her former guidance counsellor who had a formative influence in her life.

Among concepts highlighted are: the divine inner light, the importance of answering that of God in everyone, the accessibility of the divine to all without the authority of a religious hierarchy, and the Quaker testimonies of peace, equality, integrity, simplicity, and community. These precepts are indicated in print in the introduction, and later are verbalized by those we meet during the course of the film. Useful as a Religious Education resource, this may also be of interest to non-Quakers who wish to catch a glimpse into Friend's ways. This viewer found it to be an enjoyable and moving film.

The film may be ordered from Chanda. Cost is \$20 plus shipping and handling. Contact information can be found at the following website: www.theppcine.com

*Laurel Gugler
Toronto Monthly Meeting*

Quaker Book Service



The following titles have been added to our stock. For a complete listing of QBS books, see our 2010-2011 Quaker Book Service Catalogue, which was included in the July 2010 edition of The Canadian Friend and is also available on the CYM website, www.quaker.ca/qbs.

Refusing to be Enemies: Palestinian and Israeli Nonviolent Resistance to the Israeli Occupation by Maxine Kaufman-Lacusta, with a foreword by Ursula Franklin. Ithaca Press, Reading, UK. 2010.

An extensive study by a Canadian Quaker of peaceful opposition by both Israelis and Palestinians, based on well-documented interviews, as well as essays, from several Jewish and Arab activists. (502 pp \$30.00)

Spirit Rising: Young Quaker Voices. QUIP, Quaker Press of FGC, Philadelphia. 2010.

Ten young adult Friends from five different countries, including Canada, representing all spectrums of Quaker faith, met over a period of two years to select and edit some 200 contributions from young Quakers in 17 countries, which reflect their worship, practices and views, in both traditional and modern terms. A solid achievement. Illustrated. (356 pp; \$22.75)

Ordering Instructions

Mail orders, enclosing payment by cheque or money order, should be sent to Quaker Book Service, Box 4652, Station E, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5H8. Phone orders cannot be accepted.

For orders from North America Please add the following mailing costs:		For orders outside North America
Value of an order	Postage Add-on	We require an extra 20% to be added to the total cost of the order to cover the extra mailing charges
Up to \$9.95	\$2.50	
\$10 - \$19.95	\$5.00	
\$20 - \$34.95	\$7.50	
\$35.00 - \$59.95	\$9.00	
Over \$60	\$10.50	

Notice Board

Quaker Center in Ben Lomond, CA (90 minutes south of San Francisco)
Personal retreats/Weekend programs
(831) 336 8333 or visit www.quakercenter.org

Taylor PhD Residency Fellowship

The Centre for Postgraduate Quaker Studies is offering a prestigious three year PhD residency fellowship. It covers the costs of the required 25 weeks residency in Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, UK, for a full-time 'split-location' student, working mainly from home. This reduces the cost of a PhD by one third. The selected student will receive the benefits of working with Woodbrooke and the University of Birmingham.

The cutting edge research topic will be on believing and belong in present-day Quakerism.

Closing date March 31, 2010 for October 2011 start

For further details, please contact Ben Pink Dandelion

+44 (0)121 5171 b.p.dandelion@bham.ac.uk www.woodbrooke.org.uk/CPQS

African Summer Workcamps 2011 AGLI - African Great Lakes Initiative of Friends Peace Teams - is sponsoring intergenerational workcamps in Burundi (clinic) and Rwanda (peace center). Orientation begins June 25 near Washington DC. Workcamps end July 30. Workcampers will help build with construction - no skills needed. All ages welcome - including families. Learn more: <http://www.aglifpt.org> or dawn@aglifpt.org.

Good News

Jean Zaru, a long-time member of Ramallah Friends Meeting in Palestine, received the 2010 Anna Lindh Award

This award honours and supports women and young people who have the courage to fight indifference, prejudice, oppression and injustices in order to promote a good life for all people in an environment marked by respect for human rights. In a part of the world that is often painted in different shades of violence, Jean Zaru is a beacon of hope. She is an advocate for dialogue between religions and is, as a lone female church leader in the Middle East, a role model for women's leadership. During her entire life, Jean Zaru has chosen non-violence to resist the oppression under which she lives. *Submitted by Orion Smith*



Rare and out-of-print Quaker Journals, history, religion:
Vintage Books

181 Hayden Rowe St., Hopkinton, MA 01748

books@vintagequakerbooks.com - www.vintagequakerbooks.com

Gleanings - what the eavesdropper heard:

The regular cabs could not hold five people with their luggage, so the Friends had to arrive at CMU in a white stretch limo. One of the Friends was heard to remark: "Don't let Finance Committee hear about this!"

A great fundraising proposal from Program Committee: During business Meeting when a Friend is brought the travelling microphone, he or she pays a user fee of \$5 minute.

A Friend mentioned something about the Epistle Summarizing Committee. Her young son asked:
"What's the pissy committee do?"

Awkward Question

A reader has suggested this question: **Why do sincere dear people who believe in the goodness of creation and in our God-given responsibility to take care, see nothing wrong with poisoning the wonderful diverse living soil and waters which provide our physical and spiritual nourishment?**

This question is especially awkward because it calls attention to the gap between our beliefs and our behaviours. Many of us may not realize how thoroughly our soil and food supplies are treated with toxic materials for pest control, and cheaper storage and transport. It is a truism in ecology that what goes on the soil ends up in the water. So healthy water supplies are at risk. In the same way, industrial and mining pollutants find their ways into the food web. "There is no health in us", says one of the general confessions. The statement becomes less metaphorical and more literal daily.

[Editor's Note: Bert Horwood of Thousand Islands Monthly Meeting answers your pressing questions. We look forward to hearing and sharing your thoughts. Write to *The Canadian Friend*.]

Young Friends YM

We are between the ages of five and eleven. Meredith did the iceberg activity with us. It was fun. One Young Friend said, "It was fun because I wrote 'Be Quiet' on it." Some of us felt sick after swinging on the tire swing in the park. We had to go to that park because the other one was closed for construction. We also went to the Children's Museum. One Young Friend liked the 'Embarrassing Thing'. One Young Friend liked 'the spooky parts'. Many liked the Beaver Dam. At the Conservatory in Assiniboine Park we saw turtles, a hobbit hole, and a banana tree with bananas. We called for the bananas to fall, but they didn't. The banana leaves were huge. We did finger painting, dyed wool with kool-aid and felted with it. We made friends. One friend had to leave early and we were sad.

[Excerpted from the Children's Epistle]

Around the Family Around the

Coldstream Monthly Meeting Retreat: Fifteen Friends including one Friend from Yarmouth Meeting gathered at the Meeting House on Sunday February 14. The day was spent in worship, in sharing, and in various activities which helped us consider our experiences of Quaker corporate worship, how these differed from individual meditation, and how we as individuals could better prepare ourselves to enhance our shared worship. We also considered how our shared worship affected our lives and the world outside our meeting.

We used journaling, Quaker dialogue, and guided meditation to deepen our discussion. Brain storming and writing short poems helped us collect our shared ideas.

Writing things down helped impress ideas on our minds, and rereading our earlier journal entries was also important to our growth and spiritual development. It helped us to make connections to God; helped us question our own thoughts and ideas; was a discipline that helped us observe our surroundings and pay attention to our lives. It also helped us take time to consider the direction we wanted to go and to live intentionally. We talked about the importance of making mistakes.

Light without darkness would not make us aware of the goodness in life.

We discussed corporate worship as a life changing inward journey. We talked about our responsibility to, and accountability for, each other in our shared worship. We noted the need to show respect for that of God in everyone and to be open to receiving messages directly and through others. We talked about centering down in expectation, in seeking, and bringing our support for others. We talked about bringing our various gifts, including vocal ministry to the Meeting, and about taking away a collective awareness, a greater balance, and support from the Meeting. We talked about going beyond self-centeredness, seeking a "right (spiritual) view", and about Meeting helping us remember who we really are. We talked about taking our new awareness into our lives outside the meeting.

During lunch there was time to chat and learn more about one another. We were thankful to have been granted a day apart.

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Around the Family Around the Family Around the Family

Annapolis Valley Monthly Meeting met on September 19, 2010, in Hortonville Community Hall at 3:00 p.m. to celebrate the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of our joining together as a Quaker Meeting, and becoming part of Canadian Yearly Meeting. Starting as Wolfville Monthly Meeting we became Annapolis Valley Monthly Meeting five years ago, to better describe the wonderful region from which we draw support and Friends.

Recently we have re-evaluated our library holdings. We have a very few extra copies of *Christian Faith and Practice in the Experience of the Society of Friends*, of London Yearly Meeting. If there are Meetings who find themselves short or out of this book - which is now out of print - we will share as we are able. Contact Carol Bradley (carolbrad@eastlink.ca)

Peterborough Allowed Meeting is grieving the loss of John Hillman. John with his wife Ruth served as anchors for this Meeting for many years, and for much of this time John served as Clerk. He stated once that he felt Quaker to his core - that it was his identity. John had an acute mind, with an impatience for sloppy thinking. One Friend summed up his attitude thus: "John expected Friends to have strong opinions, but he also expected us to be accurate, and to respect the strong opinions of others." John's long white beard and bright eyes were noticeable at peace demonstrations and peace meetings, and his name often appeared on letters to the editor and on cheques to worthy causes. He expected us to think.

John wrestled with several topics including Friends' positions on Palestine/Israel [see page 6] and nuclear energy. In notes he wrote shortly before his death on the peace tax, John left us these queries, which may get a few backs up, but now form part of his legacy to us:

Why is our tradition of plain speaking vulnerable to misleading rhetoric? How do we discern the limits to moral tolerance? to engagement, with the formal political process?

We did not always understand what John was getting at - and his formidable vocabulary didn't always help - but we unfailingly felt his kindness and his interest and concern. His presence among us is painfully missed.

[John's life-work - *The International Tin Cartel* - was recently published by Routledge. He attended the book launch in March.]

Vancouver Monthly Meeting: Our beloved Friend Dorothy Stowe passed away at the age of eighty-nine on Friday July 23, 2010. Dorothy and her late husband Irving Stowe were deeply involved in the peace movement. They became Quakers and even took the surname Stowe, after the great Quaker abolitionist author Harriet Beecher Stowe. Dorothy was a cofounder of *Greenpeace*. When the American government announced it was going to test nuclear bombs on Amchitka Island, off the coast of Alaska, the Stowes and Jim and Marie Bohlen launched a protest group called the *Don't Make a Wave* committee, which later became known as *Greenpeace*. She helped found the first freestanding abortion clinic in Vancouver, and volunteered for many years at the Vancouver General Hospital Palliative Care unit.

Celebrations of Dorothy's life were held on August 7 at the Vancouver Unitarian Church and on September 25 at the Vancouver Friends Meetinghouse.



Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting recently welcomed Cameron Fraser into membership. Cameron and his bride Angela Tongue were married under the care of Victoria Friends Meeting July 25.

Several dear Friends have recently died. Memorial Meetings were held for Janet Hawksley on May 8, for Brenda Davis on August 14, for Peter Seale on August 28, and for Phyllis Hatch (the late Joe Awmack's sister) on September 11.

The Closing Minute

Ann Mitchell read the closing minute as follows:

We have been guided by the Spirit this week. We have seen God work in our midst in wondrous ways. And now our time for business at this Yearly Meeting is over; our time of worship together is ended and we leave today to go back to our families, to our Meetings and Worship Groups, and to our communities, energized and renewed to work to answer the call to serve faithfully. We plan to meet again in Windsor, Nova Scotia, August 5-13, 2011.

Message from the Quacker

Do you know that ducks have no blood vessels or nerves in their feet, so they can't feel cold, even in frigid water? This is good news for me, now that fall is here.

But I really want to tell you that back in August there were some special moments at CYM in Winnipeg. You can tell from the wonderful pictures and stories in this issue of the CF. What was the best part for me? I showed up every day to let you know what was going on, and sometimes I gave you useful information! It is great to know that you read me, and I can help to make your time at CYM more valuable and less stressed. Good for me! Since I'm so useful during the CYM sessions, I thought I'd try hanging out here in the CF, and see what I can do to stir things up a bit, and get you excited about CYM in Nova Scotia next year.



Do you know that John Cabot claimed Nova Scotia in 1497, and that "Nova Scotia" is Latin for "New Scotland"? It was named by James the VI of Scotland in 1621. When you cross the border from New Brunswick to Nova Scotia you will experience the traditional Gaelic welcome: *Ciad Mile Failte*, or One Hundred Thousand Welcomes and for those who love bagpipes, those will be playing too. You will be heading to Windsor, which is one of the locations for the deportation of the Acadians in 1755. The fort is a museum now, so you can catch up on your Acadian history while you are here! There is a lot to see and do while you are in this tiny Province, and it may be worthwhile to stay a few extra days to discover some of the cultural heritage.

Ciad Mile Failte, indeed!

Last Words:

Like Meeting for Worship itself, every Yearly Meeting is an adventure. You do not know what to expect. I have to admit that in some past years the surprises have been daunting. But this year was one of pleasure for me.

I do not volunteer for much these days, and count myself blessed to be able to be fully present at business sessions, and some evening events, and the occasional Special Interest Group. This year the quality of clerking stands out for me; the discipline of the travelling microphone faithfully insisted on by the clerks helped keep us focussed. Keeping my hands busy enables my mind to stay quiet and generally attentive (I am not claiming that it never wanders!).



Other things I particularly enjoyed included visiting with old Friends and friends; the tactful consideration shown for us old folks, the focussed energy I see emerging among younger Friends (they are all younger, of course!) sitting in on part of the work of Quakers Fostering Justice, as they developed their compassionate minute; the friendliness of our Mennonite hosts; even little things like the appreciation shown for my modest crafts - in particular the two-dollar napkins snapped up by so many who had meant to bring their own.

Jo Vellacott, Thousand Islands Monthly Meeting

Editor: Sherryll-Jeanne Harris

Editorial Support: G. Harris, Diana Mitchell, Judith Monroe, Michael & Lynne Phillips, Margaret Vallins

Please Note: You, the reader, create this journal. Your submissions and suggestions for themes are necessary for *The Canadian Friend* to thrive. **Do not delay!** Send articles, poems, art, photos, and thoughts today: cf-editor@quaker.ca

Themes & Deadlines for upcoming issues:

Winter / December Celebration - Joy - Wonder

March 2011 Interpretation of Scripture/Holy Writings

Please submit articles by January 8, 2011



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