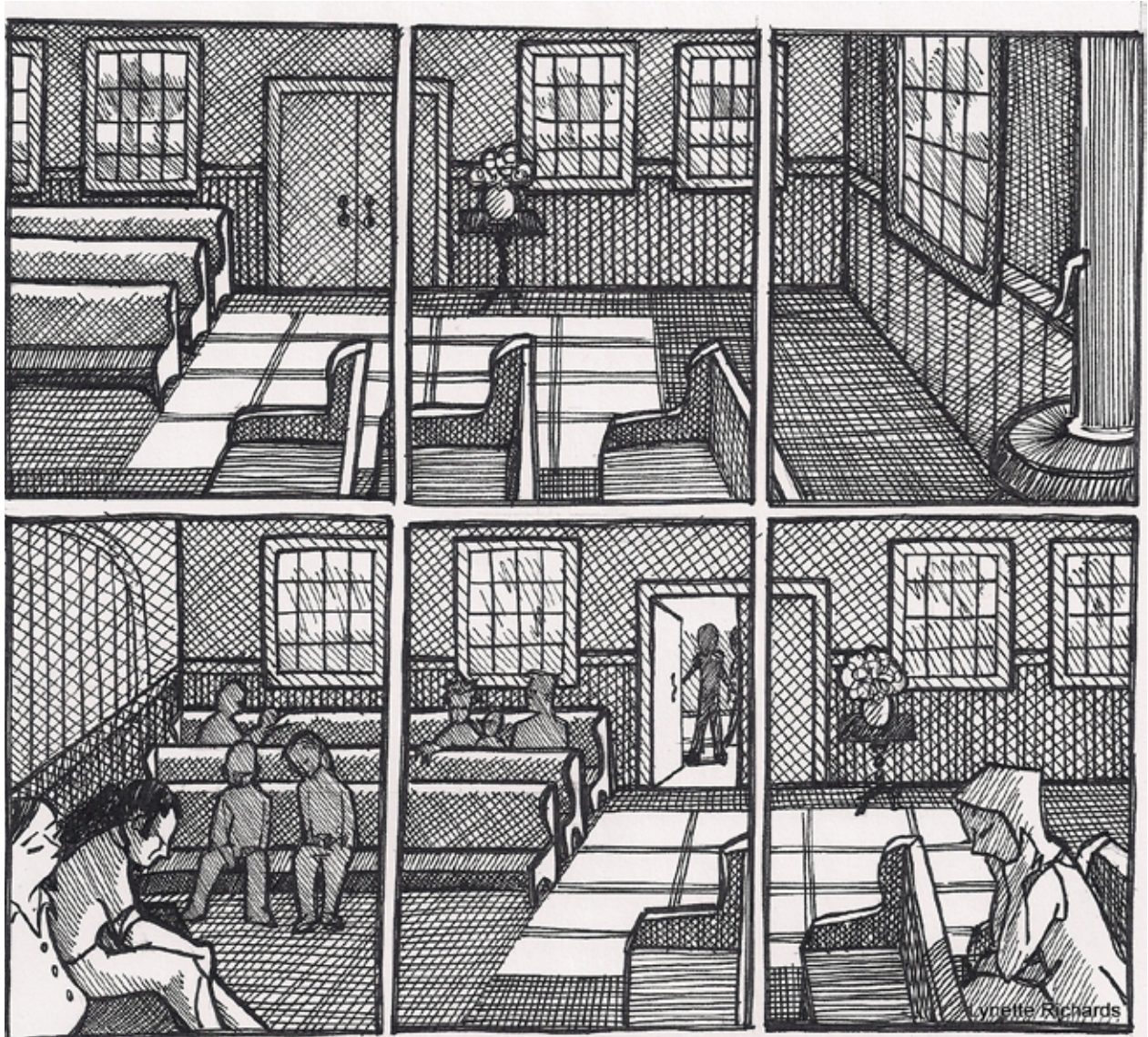


# The Canadian Friend

Volume 106, Number 5

December 2010



Experience of Silent Worship  
The Gathered Meeting  
Isolated Friends

# The Canadian Friend

## Editor's Corner

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**Canada**

At this time of year, some of us consider the birth of Jesus. I think he came to help humanity become conscious. To me, becoming conscious means making choices that honour creation, that honour and love the wonder of life. This commitment demands of us that we carefully consider our actions, our pursuits, our consumer habits, and the ways we get caught up in popular culture.



Along with Chaplain Rev. John Perkin I too am troubled by lack of silence. (*Silence in the Age of Noise* - page five.) True silence is harder than ever to find. Each day, as the wireless industry grows, increased sound pollution is added to our surroundings. No matter that we seek silence, these pervasive, relentless, high frequency wireless-signals, are zinging about and through us. Noise pollution rattles our equilibrium, wearies us, and unbalances us - and what about its impact on other species and forms of life? I find the words of Aldous Huxley true today: "...this din goes far deeper, of course, than the eardrums."

My views may not be popular, but I wonder: do our testimonies for simplicity, appropriate entertainment, and caring for the environment, not ask us to pause and consider whether we should buy into wireless technology? Does our commitment to honouring our life as a gift from God not ask us to maintain healthy practices? Does walking in the Light not call us to walk and live a different rhythm from the world, that makes choices from a place of greed for power and money, rather than from a place of wisdom?

As I read the St. Lawrence Gathering's tips on how to be kinder to the environment, I thought, 'let's add to that list: avoid getting appliances with built in 24/7 energy drains, and unplug, unplug, unplug those items that constantly draw electricity when not in use'.

Recently, I read of the Nubian people who were forced - by the creation of the Aswan dam - to relocate from their fertile Nile valley home to an arid unfamiliar place. They died of broken hearts and spirits because of greed for electricity. It is very wrong that there are clocks and lights built into almost everything. These remain ON all the time unless we go about consciously unplugging. Simply turning off the switch is not enough. *Off* does not mean off anymore. How many dams are flooding fertile land? How many people are being displaced to feed appliances that are drawing electricity even when they are not in use? Let us be conscious.

Blessings, *Sherryll*





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Cover art: Lynette Richards, Coldstream M. M. Sketch opposite page: Clare Singleton, Vancouver Island.

## *Letters to the Editor*

Please send your letters to: Sherryll Harris, Editor  
E-mail: cf-editor@quaker.ca



*Very interesting articles [in Community] especially the one on Israel and Palestine, and how by using Quaker testimonies of peace and justice, Quakers can work there, and must do. I enjoyed the ambivalence and delight of your editorial, and the fine editing of my piece.*

*Good work.*

*Marge Street*

*Many thanks for giving the Spirit Rising the billing it rightly deserves. [Summer 2010] A splendid issue too.*

*Kyle Jolliffe*

*Congratulations on the Young Friends issue. Beautiful layout, such a wide range of voices and interests.*

*David Millar*

*Hi Sherryll,*

*I have been meaning to write and say how much I enjoyed the QUIP report you wrote. And I have been reading the Young Adult Friend issue. It was such a good thing to publish it. I am sure it will really get people thinking - especially about our relationship with Friends United Meeting and evangelical Quakers in general.*

*Steve Fick*

*Dear Sherryll,*

*The fall issue is very good - capturing the mood and issues of CYM 2010. Thanks.*

*Arnold Ranneris*



## **Friendly Typo**

I have begun  
to compose  
this missive  
to my circle  
within The Religious Society  
of Friends, to the beloved  
community - those who gather  
in silence, hold the world  
and its woes in the Light  
of Divine Grace,  
who wait within unencumbered time  
for seasoning and discernment.  
Yet in this moment  
of good intention  
arising from caring Concern,  
my mind, or my fingers,  
or the two in concert, begin:

**Dear Fiends**

*Roger Davies*

*Halifax Monthly Meeting*

## Silence in the Age of Noise

Sometimes we need to quiet the world around us, to listen differently and to refocus, so that we can give the Spirit an opportunity to be heard. Silence can allow us to hear differently, or to hear different things. When the traffic stops, the heaters shut off, the ipods are quiet, we can hear the wind in the leaves, the birds chattering for one another, the children laughing in the distance, and the sounds of creation and re-creation at work

It was Aldous Huxley who noted, decades ago: "... that the Twentieth Century is, among other things, the *Age of Noise*". He noted that "... all the resources of our almost miraculous technology have been thrown into the current assault against silence". With a particular invective levelled against the radio, he wrote in 1946, that the radio is nothing but a conduit through which pre-fabricated din can flow into our homes, and this din goes far deeper, of course, than the eardrums. It penetrates the mind, filling it with a babel of distractions, blasts of corybantic or sentimental music, continual repeated doses of drama that bring no catharsis, but usually create a craving for daily or even hourly emotional enemas. Harsh condemnation, but prophetic words about the need to step away from those things that simply fill the brain, whether sounds or images or information. To pause in silence is to clear the chaos from our minds and to re-order life. As one hymn suggests, silence is a friend who claims us.

I am increasingly aware of the need for silence in my own life. Silence can be powerful, helping us to get in touch with who we are, as well as to contemplate our place in the world and in the universe. Psychologist Erich Fromm notes, that an inability to find ourselves in the noise of our world, contributes to the sense of alienation and frustration in North American life. He suggests [noise] is one of the roots of violence in our society. He says we are at odds with ourselves, and we seek release through fantasies and dramas of violence that are an amplification of inner noise. In stillness and silence, we open ourselves to deeper possibilities, to richer meaning, to an awareness of the world in ways that noise does not allow. The biblical story of the prophet Elijah describes how, after fleeing from the wrath of the king, he came to a place in the wilderness

where he encountered God, but it involved waiting and listening: "Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence." (1 Kings 19:11-12) It was in the silence that God spoke, and in the silence that Elijah found his comfort and his challenge for his prophetic task.

When I am able to, I appreciate the opportunity to worship in contemplative silence with the Quakers. Local community members and students who are part of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) worship in the Chapel on Thursdays at noon. In the silence of the building the presence of the Spirit is even more real, and the colour of the world even more vivid as it streams through stained glass.

*Rev. John Perkin*

*Chaplain of Mount Allison University*

[Rev. John Perkin frequently joins the New Brunswick worship group where they currently meet in the chapel at Mount Allison University. This article originally appeared in the weekly column *Through Stained Glass* (Oct. 7) in the student newspaper: *The Argosy*]

[We] "... need to free ourselves from the busyness and the cumber of daily life, to allow our spiritual lives to grow. How can we be open to new Light if we do not have time to see it? How can we learn to know each other in the ways that are eternal if we don't have time to sit and listen to each other? Time is a most precious gift...We need to have time to sit quietly and pray and to listen. Do we not owe it to ourselves ...to allow room for the still small voice to be heard, and for our Meetings to grow as we become real communities, with the connections between us, forged by our getting to know each other in the things that are eternal?" *Trish Carn*

[Excerpted with permission from *the Friend*], July 24, 2009. Trish Carn is the sub-editor for *the Friend*]

# An Experience of Silent Worship

*Joy Belle Conrad-Rice*

A woman sits in the circle, waiting, hands resting in her lap. A burgundy wool shawl flows over her shoulders, its tips nestling on her forearms. She has traveled far to be in this circle, in this chair by the window, to wait in expectant silence. She and three men and three women have been waiting in the silence for some minutes, enough for her brain to switch from daily conscious mode to meditative mode. The silence signals to her.

Silently she expresses appreciation of the Creator, using words that speak to her, as English cannot. "Danke Goddum, wie immer und sei mit. Drinnen und draussen. Drinnen und draussen." (Thanks to you God, as always, and be with me, with us, inside and outside, within and without.)

Minutes pass. The woman has not moved - no twitching, no adjustment of her hands. Her eyelids stay halfway open - rarely do they blink. Only her breathing, slow and deep, indicates to an onlooker that she is alive. The woman is separate in her space but not alone. She hears but does not react. She is aware of no particular odors other than an earthy emanation, as from wet wool socks. She feels warmth in the air around her - air that was cool when she arrived.

Her vision centres on a scintillating point of light perched on the carpet somewhere toward the center of the circle. This light moves when her focus moves. She stares at a labyrinth-like pattern, traces it slowly and methodically. Then her focus moves to the brown leather boots across from her. Their edges become fuzzy, and soon there is no distinction between the matter that is the boots and the matter that is the carpet. Ribbon-like waves of energy reach upward from the boots and the carpet, not unlike energy particles that rise upward from freshly cut stumps of trees.

As her mind centres, slows, and changes, she feels an increased density of air and a pulsation of 'something' newly revealed. It slowly envelops her. Now she feels a particular density of particles approaching. It passes around the back of her neck and head, and through her head, neck, shoulders, and shawl. A Presence has come into their midst, like a large umbrella whose points extend down, around, and into the carpet. The hovering drifting density is sensed as protection.

The others wait silently. Now the woman recognizes spoken words. A man has risen. The woman's ears receive the sounds while a part of her mind chooses whether to reflect on them, decides not, and effortlessly stores the message and tone in her short-term memory. She accepts this offering without being changed within herself.

Silence returns. The man settles into his chair. The woman continues her meditative centering. The six others wait in their chairs, hands resting in their laps, breathing quietly. She can sense them but is not distracted by their presence.

Suddenly part of her is high above the circle, looking down on the worshipers, the Meeting room, the building, the shape of the prairie town, and the blue marble planet called Earth. In this high distant space she feels safe, while knowing her physical body remains rooted in her chair. If she were to react, she would smile slightly, in appreciation for the wondrous universe.

After a while her eyes rest again on the fuzzy light shimmering on the carpet. Soon the woman in the burgundy wool shawl senses movement. She returns to regular consciousness and joins in the long moment of hand holding. She feels relaxed, serene, at peace with herself and the universe - ready to go forth. Meeting for Worship has drawn to a close. The rise of Meeting has begun.

*Joy Belle Conrad-Rice, Vernon Monthly Meeting*

(The technique of participating in meditation from both the micro and the macro perspective, was taught to me by a Quaker who is also an ordained Buddhist monk.)



*Sketch by Janet Lehde  
Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting*

## My Concern:

*by Peter Stevenson*

# Creating Welcoming Meetings

I have attended many Meetings and churches in my life. Growing up, I attended the church services of my friends. Now, when I travel I make a point of attending Meeting whenever possible. I have met with Friends throughout Canada, the United States, and Kenya. In Regina, Meeting only happens biweekly, and I have been attending a different church service each off-week. I have been a faithful weekly attender of three different Friends Meetings. Of all of these Meetings and churches, I am sorry to say that unprogrammed Meetings rate near to the bottom on the *welcoming scale*.

The care of Meetings has been on my mind a lot recently because of a large upcoming change in my home Meeting in Prince George, BC. For many years the Meeting has been held in the living room of my parents' house, usually with one to eight additional attenders present. However, my parents will be selling their house and moving next year. Where will the Meeting be held? Who will be the contact people? Who will close Meeting at the end of our worship? I expect that after my parents leave, I will have a large part in answering these questions, in shaping our Meeting, and in making sure that Prince George Allowed Meeting is welcoming for new attenders and for young people.

In my experience visiting different Meetings and churches, three things stand out as important for making a Meeting welcoming and spiritually nourishing: having a greeter, beginning the worship in silence, and having inclusive post-Meeting conversations.

Many small Meetings have the same attenders every week for long periods of time. Having a greeter system seems unnecessary, but if we are unprepared for the odd time when a visitor does arrive, then it is unlikely the visitor will return.

I find that one of the best ways of helping our worship be centred is to have people come ahead of time to pray for the Meeting. Otherwise, the transition from chit-chat to silence is often awkward. This goes along with having a greeter. If the Meeting room is for silence, there needs to be another place by the front

door for the greeter to welcome newcomers, and brief them on what they may expect in Meeting.

Unprogrammed Meetings tend to be fairly culturally homogenized – white, educated, and over forty. After-Meeting discussions that tend toward politics, careers, or news about absent Friends, can exclude visitors, or those with different cultural backgrounds. Most visitors, and young people, for that matter, are seekers who yearn for spiritual connection. I believe that it is by debriefing our experiences in worship, in sharing our goals, difficulties, and joys in our spiritual lives, that we will make our Meetings both more welcoming and more vibrant.

These ideas are gleaned from my experiences visiting other Meetings and churches. However, helping Meetings become more welcoming and spiritually vibrant is never as easy in practice as it is on paper. So as I become more and more involved in my local Meeting, I pray that I may assist in the work that has already been done in creating a welcoming, safe and comfortable, yet challenging Meeting community.

*Peter Stevenson*

*Vernon Monthly Meeting*

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## Gratitude

Our world is rushing into the future. Everyone is wired one way or another with Ipods, iPhones, Blackberries, Skype, or voice-mail. Internally, we respond to the rush of our world's expectations through increased stress, high blood pressure, and short tempers. We are coiled tightly inside. Thankfully, our community allows me to decompress and gently release the issues on my mind.

Our community is motivated by a strong sense of caring. This caring extends to our environment, each other, and issues of social justice. Each week as I enter the Meeting House I am greeted by a firm handshake, a smile or a hug. It is a good feeling of welcome and it seems to me to be an invitation to come in; to be a part of the Meeting; to feel valued by other Friends.

We reinforce the belief that we are all valuable, capable, responsible, and can make a positive difference in our world. Our community strives to do no harm and recognizes the goodness shared in the Light. I am grateful for this community of Friends.

*Carolyn Crippen*

*Victoria Friends Meeting*



# The Gathered Meeting

*Brenda M. Davis*

Let us consider how Quaker Meetings first began. George Fox, together with a few others, found themselves unable to sit passively in a church listening to men telling them how to think about religion, reading from printed prayers, and singing hymns. They felt that they needed no intermediary between themselves and their God. God would direct, inspire and enlighten them. They knew that they could only hear the still small inner voice of God by sitting in silence.

This was not an idle silence filled with wandering thoughts, but rather an active expectant silence. Today we would call it a form of meditation or an altered state of consciousness. Often they were rewarded by a very real awareness of a *Presence* among them. They termed such Meetings “gathered Meetings”.

In a pamphlet entitled *The Gathered Meeting*, Thomas Kelly so well describes this experience. He wrote: “Such gathered Meetings I take to be cases of group mysticism. They are transient. The sense of Divine covering in a group is rarely sustained for more than three quarters of an hour or an hour. One cannot seize hold of it and restrain it from fading; or restore it the next Sunday at will. Each such Meeting is a gracious gift of the Eternal Goodness, and the eyes of all must wait upon Him who gives us meat in due season.”

He goes on to say that we cannot expect every Meeting to be a gathered Meeting, but we should always aim at providing the right conditions. It is here that I suspect Quakers of being somewhat at fault. We do not explain to enquiring newcomers the conditions or the essential components of a gathered Meeting. This is a failing derived from our readiness to say little more than that they need to become accustomed to sitting in the silence. Because of this, our Meetings have become - to my mind at least - more like social gatherings, where individuals must endure the “quaint” old Quaker custom of sitting for an hour in silence, before a more social time can begin. Do we ever set out to trace those who quietly fade away without ever expressing their need for more information or help?

Let us again consider the first Quaker Meetings. Out of the experiences in those Meetings, arose concerns for social conditions and the urge to remedy them. For example Friends engaged in prison reform

and offered many other social services for which Quakers have become renowned. Granted, such activities evolved from urges born in Quaker Meetings, but we must ever remember and prize the fact that these came secondary to the first purpose of Quaker Meetings. They can never out-value, nor supersede in importance the spiritual inspiration flowing from the gathered Meeting. The basis of Quaker faith was, and remains, the experience in the silence.

If there is a quality of worship that more than anything else distinguishes Quakers from all other Christian bodies, it is the potential, ready at every Meeting, to be thankfully grasped and effortlessly fashioned by one of Kelly's episodes of group mysticism. Each time we gather it is within our reach to experience a sense of spiritual unity. It is something fragile and fleeting, given us only after a regular and practised discipline. It is a demanding discipline requiring abandonment of self-centredness, tomorrow's plans, and today's cares. The gathered Meeting will never come to those unwilling to concentrate all of their attention upon its expected coming.

*Brenda M. Davis*

[Brenda was a former member of Fern Street Meeting, Victoria. Her memorial was held at the Fern Street Meeting House on August 7, 2010. Brenda and her husband Dennis established a Friends Meeting group in West Vancouver during the 1980's. Then they moved to Parksville in 1993 where they attended the Mid Island Quaker worship group.]

**God here and now and all around  
God of heart and God of sound  
God present, infinite, real  
God in everything we feel**

**God of night and God of day  
God you guide us on our way  
God the goal and God the start  
God in each and every heart.**

*Bill Curry*

*Prairie Monthly Meeting*



## The Will of God

Human beings have many senses. We can detect and interpret numerous (but not all) chemicals. A small section of the total electromagnetic spectrum is detectable to our eyes; all the rest is darkness. We are sensitive to vibrations in the air within the limitations of our ear bones and nerves. The human frame can detect its own position and the force of gravity; the skin is aware of touch, radiant heat, pressure and stretching. Our gut continually supplies information about the degree of stretch or collapse of its walls.

There are important physical components of the world to which we are oblivious. Dangerous radiation goes unnoticed. We have no feeling for the earth's magnetic field. These forces are detectable only by instruments whose invention is central to the history of science. Humans also have no sense mechanism for spiritual energies. No one has invented an instrument to detect them and there are those who claim that they do not exist. (A possible exception may be the work of the Menninger Institute which measured electric fields generated by reputable spiritual healers.)

Nevertheless there is a long history of experience which can only be explained by thinking that human beings are able to feel something - best described in mystical language - as *hearing the Light*. Mystical language is maddening because its terms can't be connected with more concrete reality. But somehow mystics recognize the experiences they share even when expressed in exotic terms. Poetry is better at this than prose.

Such experience might be thought to belong to a supernatural or paranormal realm. Given what we know about nature and the cosmos as a whole, I find it impossible to think that anything exists which is not part of nature. Poorly understood experiences aren't supernatural or miraculous, simply because we can't know how they work.

These experiences get lumped together as "the will of God". This is language common to the three monotheistic religions of Western Asia (Judaism, Christianity, Islam). The expression is used to explain otherwise inexplicable events such as a child being run down by a runaway bus. It even has legal standing as "an act of god" in some contracts. Many spiritual communities have developed techniques which they

believe will enable them to discern what God's will is.

Being dissatisfied with "the will of God" I need to find another way to understand and express this widespread human experience of being touched in some way, by influences that are beyond our senses and our reason. We know that chance, randomness, and unpredictable dynamic chaotic systems are part of the universe. It's hard to think that there's a personal god who has a will that directs events whether great or small. It's hard to think that there is a god who wants us to guess what it is that s/he wants. Yet I've had experiences that demand some sort of explanation, however shaky.

In a Quaker Meeting we sit in silence with worshipful intention. Some call it expectant waiting. Anyone in a Meeting may rise and speak as they feel moved. Such speech is meant to be inspired rather than planned. It is not unusual for such speeches to evoke reactions from others present. "I had exactly the same thought" or, "That was just what I needed to hear." Of course coincidences happen but not often. In another context, when Quakers are struggling to make a difficult decision that all can agree to - despite strong differences in beliefs - it is not unusual after much earnest talk and listening, interspersed with periods of silent waiting, for a course of action to emerge that no one had thought of. Where do such events come from?

My current guess is that humans, alone or in groups, can tune themselves to the power of the universe; that power which is present within and among every part of the cosmos. Practiced and gifted individuals find it easier to feel these "nudges of the spirit". Groups with common intent and focussed silence are even better at it than individuals. The analogy of iron filings in a magnetic field appeals to me. We have no sense for detecting magnetic fields any more than we have a sense for the power of the universe. But when we sit, it's as though we were allowing our selves to be aligned with a universal spiritual field.

Another appealing analogy is that the power of the universe is like a great river. This idea originates in Chinese literature where the unspeakable power of the universe, called Tao is likened to running water. The metaphor appeals because it connects a diversity of experiences. A strong current carries us along with it. There is no doubt what the course before us is. But if the current is weak, directions are unclear. Sometimes, when the current is strong there are resistances and contrary influences, just like the rocks and eddies in a swift river. The Tao, "the watercourse way", flows on

and wears down resistance just like a river washing away its banks and eroding the hardest rocks. The power of the universe, like the proverbial mills of the gods, may be delayed, but never denied.

Quakers have an expression: “the promptings of love and truth”. This suggests a more down-to-earth understanding of the search for what is right: “God’s will”. Most of us have experienced love. We know that there is deep truth in our affairs, which exists despite the layers of denial that bury it. The discernment of God’s will is finding and acting on the promptings of love and truth.

There are experiences which we call *spiritual*. These are common enough to be considered a normal, natural part of the world. We attribute these experiences according to our understanding of the nature of the universe. Because there is no sense organ for the cosmic influence, we have no sensory language to describe the experiences or their source. There remain only imperfect analogies and sometimes precious silence. “The Tao is spread out over the earth but no one knows it is there.”

*Bert Horwood  
Thousand Islands Monthly Meeting*

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## Insight:

The collective heart has a mission of its own that wants to be known and felt. As we sit together our unspoken stories and prayers weave feelings, strengths, aspirations and yearnings, into a deep tapestry of Spirit. Together we are a field of worship. The walls of the Meeting House surround and shelter us, as the walls of our bodies - sitting side by side - dissolve, and we create a landscape together. A wordless and at times, a wondrous feeling expands among us.

The tree outside the window; the crows that caw to us as we sit in silence; the sun beam that floods the room; the baby’s nuzzling sounds; the sneeze that wakes us, are all parts of the transformative power of Meeting.

*Ann Jacob  
Victoria Friends Meeting*

God of vision, God of place  
God of species, every race  
God of time – fast and slow  
God above and God below

God here and now and all around  
God of heart and God of sound  
God present, infinite, real  
God in everything we feel

God of family, son and daughter  
Mother God and God the Father  
God of love and God of water  
God of space, God of matter

God of seasons, God of earth  
God of heaven, God of birth  
God of feast and God of fasting  
God the moment everlasting

God specific and precise  
God of fire, God of ice  
God of every star and sun  
God of All and God of One

God’s equator and each pole  
God the centre, God the whole  
In the midst of greed and pleasure  
Fear of God is wisdom’s measure

God of justice, liberation  
God transcending every nation  
God of work and Sabbath Day  
God of study, God of play

God in you and God in me  
God in everything you see  
God in all our great inventions  
God resolving human tensions

God of day and God of night  
God of darkness and of Light  
Oh God bring peace to every nation  
God bring peace to all relations

*Bill Curry, Prairie Monthly Meeting*

## Quaker Community

Quaker Meeting is community. Community takes time to form. The Quaker way may appear slow to those unfamiliar with it, but grows to be comfortable and comforting within that slow-pace. No one is pushed or pulled within the Quaker life. Each moves in time to his/her own drummer. There is strength of communion that occurs both from worshipping in silence together week after week, and in the social fabric created from the diverse activities Friends share after and between Meetings. Most will say that the Meeting is another home, a broadened family, and that it adds spiritual richness to their lives.

“...is any of this really so today? Or are they words, thoughts, not practices?”

Participation in Meetings for Worship and Meetings for Worship for Business on a regular basis over time, leads to a knowing of each other at levels of deep meaning. Participation opens doors to understanding others' lives, allows for strengths to co-mingle, and for worries and burdens to be shared. When trouble comes, community pulls together to support those in need in very personal ways. We take the time to get to know each other, and help each other. It is a large part of what and who we are.

When conflicts arise, both within and outside the Quaker community, we have numerous resources for coming to resolution - all Friendly. The Quaker way is peaceful. It is persistent in the face of adversity. It is a way that quietly insinuates Friends into places others often will not go, in order to bring relief of suffering; to investigate and expose the good that is present and perhaps hidden, as well as that which oppresses, in order that social justice may be done. The Quaker way depends on each Meeting's strength of community for inspiration and support, but historically it also produced individuals who bring Light to dark places all on their own. Our belief that there is God in every person helps us in our smaller Quaker communities, and within the larger communities of the world, to continue to follow the Testimonies in daily life. But Meeting for Worship alone is not how Quaker community is built or maintained. Daily, each person must consciously live the Quaker ways, incorporating Quaker practices within and outside family life. So

doing strengthens each of us and our community. These things we know.

Or is any of this really so today? Have these become merely words and thoughts, not practices?

These thoughts I've written represent what I grew up with, having been raised in the old Quaker traditions. As a child I had no idea I was being raised differently from my friends. (The sleepover was a phenomenon that would not gain popularity until I was away from home.) The short times I spent in the homes of girlfriends for birthday parties and family visits didn't occasion talk about "how did your parents handle this or that?" As a result, I thought everybody grew up with Meetings for Worship - in and out of home - calm handling of all problems, large and small.

When I went with Mum or Grandfather to Meeting at Fern Street Meeting House, the familiar silent gathering comforted me. When I went with Grandmother to the Anglican cathedral services, those comforted also. Comparisons were not made. Both sorts of worship just were. To the child I was, the daily living practices meant everything. The times of worship outside our homes were nowhere near as powerful as the regular activities that made for a Quakerly life within both my family, and the circle of Friends in which we associated.

Some practices stood out as being particularly strongly associated with community. My grandfather took me with him to each bi-annual visit to the orphanage. As well, we went regularly on a round of visits to isolated Friends. This entailed taking the various railways and streetcars that went to the outer regions of the Peninsula beyond Victoria. The rides in themselves were such fun. There was so much to see, and Grandfather was my hero, so spending hours in his company was like eating almost all icing, little cake. We chatted as good friends do, as we approached the homes of those we were visiting. He was a great listener. And he remembered things. We did two such visits in a day, once a month, and saw each family twice a year.

The core of his visit would be to sit in a small Meeting for Worship with host and hostess and me, then to listen to them tell of their lives since the last



visit. I would be invited in for the beginning of Meeting for Worship, then Grandfather would tap me to signal that I could go back to the cats. We always ended each visit with kindly farewells, smiles and waves from the ends of driveways; good wishes and promises of visits to come. I remember solid feelings of shared comfort among us all at the end of every visitation day. Those were a stable part of my growing up Quaker. What has happened to those ways?

Another memory I cherish is the special family Meeting. These were not often comfortable and one stands out in technicolour. My brothers and I had each taken a chocolate bar and a small toy from the corner store. I had no idea that by copying them I was joining in theft. When we got home, two blocks away, I showed Mother my great good fortune. She was silent. I explained where we'd gotten these treasures. She instructed me to go next door to invite Grandfather and Grandmother to a special Meeting to take place after dinner that night. I experienced a sinking feeling. Special Meetings after dinner often meant someone had 'gone off the path'. The Meeting was held. Silence enveloped us. No one spoke until finally the Meeting ended. Grandfather spoke, and gently reflected on what the boys and I had done that day. He looked at each of us and told us, equally gently, that Mr. Holland and his wife bought every item in the store, and then sold them to people like us, who loved going to the corner store when we needed or wanted something. This was how he made his living. That hit me like a spear. Immediately I knew the rest, but Grandfather spoke it, nonetheless. We kids squirmed. Tears poured down our faces. The talk was mercifully short, and ended with the dreaded words: "You each may wish to think on this in your rooms. You will know what to do. We have faith that each of you will do the right thing."

I frantically checked with Mum. Did this mean I had to go to Mr. Holland and tell him what I'd done? "Yes, and take him the chocolate bar wrapper and the car. Is there anything else you've thought to do while you are there?" My own "yes" was followed by her smiling approval and the words: "I know you can do this." She didn't ask me what it was that I planned. When I look back, I realize that they all believed so strongly that their own behaviours had shown the ways to deal with personal lapses, that she did not need to ask me what I would do. She knew what I would do.

No one made us feel guilty but ourselves. Knowledge coupled with doing the right thing, even when that is deeply uncomfortable, creates experience

that an individual can choose to store as a positive net outcome, and use again and again. That lesson came from a Quakerly, old-fashioned way of dealing with difficulty, that stood me in good stead throughout life, just as it undoubtedly stood many others before me.

I don't hear people talking about how they incorporate Quakerly practices into their child raising and daily living any more. Where have such common talks gone? Are they museum pieces? Dinosaurs? Is there a place in our contemporary lives for bringing them back and using them now? Is it that we think going to Meeting for Worship once a week makes our lives Quakerly? Would family life be strengthened if we regularly studied, talked about, and practised what generations of Quakers before us did? Would community be strengthened? Do we have such positive, kindly practices for dealing with even ordinary problems and conflict in our daily lives any more? Perhaps not. Do we regularly make visits to Isolated Friends? How many of us today who are retired, and have the time, set some of it aside to so regularly, and so devotedly visit Friends they know are isolated by *anything*?

"We can look to the past to teach us how to live now and in the future, if we choose. We'd better get going before there are no more Quakers who were raised by generations of Quakers, who went before them."

What comes to me is that regular discussion would be a good thing. Discussion of the lost or infrequently- seen Quakerly practices which require this thing we seldom hear of: conscious daily living of the Testimonies. This would mean that all across Canada, Meetings would be talking about a kind of course of studies to bring Quaker ways into custom once again - Quakerly practices for raising our children and grandchildren - of being Friends. It would mean consciously, and with deliberation building and strengthening the kinds of community that will make for Quaker life in its most meaningful fashion. It might result in an increase in Quakers in Canada, instead of what we see now as its slow, gradual decline. We can look to the past to teach us how to live now and in the future if we choose. We'd better get going, before there are no more Quakers who were raised by generations of Quakers who went before them. Some things are best learned at the knee, rather than only from books.

*Diana Mitchell*

*Saanich Peninsula Monthly Meeting*

# Archive Treasure:

## Isolated Friends

*Louise R. Rorke*

As we gain more knowledge of the subscription lists of Canadian Friend we are interested to note the number of families, and individuals to whom it goes who are "isolated" in the sense of being far from Friends' Meetings or from other Friends' families. As we write their names in our lists our heart goes out in special fellowship to them for we, too, belonged to a family of "isolated Friends", and are still more or less "isolated" in the fact that the nearest Friends' Meeting is some twenty miles from our home.

"...people are... desirous of a deeper knowledge of the Divine;"

We have heard from others in this position the remark, "Once a Friend, always a Friend", and while - so far as our personal belief goes - we think that Friends should be ready to cooperate with others in the advancement of all Christian aims, and even where they feel it right to do so - to attend such Meetings for Christian worship as are accessible to them - there is something in the Quaker consciousness which tends to consider the programed services of other churches rather in the light of an address on a religious subject accompanied by "sacred" music, [rather] than as a deep and personal communion with the Divine, and many isolated Friends are homesick for the old Friends' Meetings to which they have belonged.

It is not, however, numbers which make a Friends' Meeting, as many of us have proved: it is essentially a Meeting of God with us, rather than the coming together of individuals. One of the most loved members of our own home never missed his First day morning Meeting with God and we have a very dear friend, who though she is far from other Friends, always says she "likes to hold her own little Meeting". This, we think, is a matter for individual decision. It seems to us, the one, need not in any way prohibit the other.

But it was not primarily any interest in the extent of the co-operation of isolated Friends with other religious groups which led us to write. It was rather a desire on our part to say how much we, as a Society, owe to these "scattered families". For they are, as it were, our pioneers and standard bearers. The Society

as a whole is approved or condemned according to their words and actions. On them much more than on the individual members of Friends' communities, rests the burden of making known those principles by which Friends are governed.

It is surprising how deeply interested people are in Friends' beliefs and practices. We believe that now more than ever before, people are dissatisfied with their lack of spiritual experience, and desirous of a deeper knowledge of the Divine; so that our time is like that of George Fox when the country was filled with "seekers after truth". We are too apart to think that people around us are not interested in these things, or to shrink from stressing a difference in belief between ourselves and others, and often people who would like to know more of our religious principles

hesitate to ask. If we are willing to be guided by Divine Wisdom we shall know when to speak and when to keep silence; but let us be so grounded in knowledge that we may have a reason for the faith that is in us, and as occasion offers let us be ready to express that faith, not merely in words - in some cases it may not be in words at all - but in all the actions of our daily lives.

It is our sincere hope that Canadian Friend, entering these isolated Quaker homes, may carry with it that feeling of friendliness and of fellowship, which is in the hearts of all those responsible for its existence; that it may be of value, not only in giving us news one of another, but in encouraging and helping its readers - and its editors - to carry out, alone or in groups, or in Meetings, that service which they feel is required of them by God.

*Louise R. Rorke*

[Kyle Joliffe sent me this piece from *The Canadian Friend* February, 1938, Vol. 34, No. 8. Louise Rorke was editor of *The Canadian Friend* from 1936 to 1949. She was a Conservative Friend who grew up in Thornbury, near Collingwood, Ontario. She was a prolific writer and a school teacher.

Author Michael Bedard wrote Rorke was: "...a remarkable woman. If there is a thread that runs through [her writing] it is that no man liveth for himself. It is the sympathy one shows for those who suffer that begins to heal the broken world."

It appears that the collection of short stories by Louise Richardson Rorke, edited and introduced by Kyle Joliffe would be an interesting read. *Gold and Frankincense and Myrrh* may be in your Meeting library. Ed. Sjh]

## Practising Hospitality

I attend Keystone Fellowship Meeting, a small Meeting in south central Pennsylvania affiliated with Ohio Yearly Meeting (Conservative) in Barnesville, Ohio. Besides the fact that some of us are plain (or simply dressed) one of the more visually noticeable things about our Meeting is that we don't always meet in a Meeting House. We could if we wanted to, and we do meet there once a month. The rest of the time we worship in each other's homes, like early Friends did. This is also the practice of our spiritual and geographic neighbors, the Old Order Amish.

Hosting Meeting can be a bit of an undertaking. It requires planning, since our Meeting for worship is always followed by a sit-down meal. When my family prepares for this, the work starts a week in advance with menu-planning and grocery shopping. Hosting also most often means cleaning. We put away books. My mother clears her papers off the dining room table and I vacuum while my father rearranges the furniture in the living room to accommodate Meeting members. We get out the plates and flatware and set them on the counter.

There are only ten to fifteen of us in our Meeting, and cooking is not usually a monumental task. I enjoy cooking and love preparing meals, and I look forward to when Meeting is held at our house. I love sitting in worship while the smell of our meal wafts out of the kitchen into the living room, especially when I have helped to make it. Some Friends may offer vocal ministry during Meeting, but I offer food afterwards. I like to think the love and joy I had while preparing it makes the food really special.

Once, our Meeting hosted a gathering of Conservative Friends. We prepared meals for sixty or so Friends, three times a day, for almost a whole weekend. That was a deeply spiritual experience. It was a lot of work, but it was meaningful to make food for Friends who so deeply wanted to visit and worship with each other. Food was a medium through which this could happen, and so preparing food was service I offered from my heart.

Practising hospitality is a Meeting-wide spiritual discipline for Keystone Meeting. Because we live at a distance from each other (for some of us, it is a two-hour drive to get to Meeting) we regularly spend a few

hours with each other when we meet. Worship and sharing a meal are very important aspects of our time together, and they do require time and energy, but going to each other's homes deepens the fellowship.

Holding Meeting in homes means that we are inevitably involved in each other's lives, and sometimes personal concerns become corporate Meeting concerns.

I don't know what the practice of hospitality means to other Keystone Meeting members, but I do know what it means for me. Besides the opportunities for creative expression and heartfelt service, I find the practice of hospitality is really a discipline of making room, of opening to something much greater than I am. In the Scriptures I read about Christ wanting to be within us and to engage us in fellowship: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20). As I help my parents tidy the house and move the furniture for worship, I am also preparing myself for a time of deeper fellowship with Christ. I sometimes find it helpful to avoid books or movies on the day of Meeting. I also feel strongly about preparing spiritual space so the rest of Keystone Meeting can come into an atmosphere that is calm and conducive to listening. I want Christ to feel at home among us. When I sense in my heart that Christ can sit down and eat with me, that is a deep fellowship I would never trade for anything.

One day during the summer our hosts were busy arranging chairs for a backyard Meeting for worship. "We've got an extra chair," one host said. "Is there anyone else coming?" "Elijah", my sister and I said at exactly the same time, thinking of the Jewish practice of keeping an empty chair at the table during Passover. There were a few chuckles. One thoughtful Friend said quietly, "If Elijah comes I will be happy to give him my seat", and then we settled into silence. The food in the kitchen waited. Behind us, the picnic table waited, and so did Christ, who had found the empty chair.

*Eileen R. Kinch*

*Keystone Fellowship Meeting*

*Ohio Yearly Meeting (Conservative)*

[Excerpted with permission from *Spirit Rising: Young Quaker Voices Speak*, published by Quakers Uniting in Publications (QUIP) and Friends General Conference, 2010.]



## Why I Love Meeting for Worship

*Bob Johnson first attended Quaker Meetings over forty years ago. He tells us why he's still going:*

Much to my surprise, I now love the silence in Meetings for Worship. I was four when I first went to Meeting – it was in the large Meeting room in war-torn York and we were wriggling in the back row. I looked out over the vast room at all these grown-ups and wondered what was really going on. I couldn't make it out then and I'm not that much wiser today. I expected adults to rush round, chatting, reading newspapers, drinking tea and generally doing things – yet here was an amazingly large number of them, apparently doing nothing. [I thought it was] weird.

'Meetings for Worship' – isn't that a bit odd for our Twenty-first century? Aren't we all much too scientific, even post-modern? Well, the 'worship' side of things is still a mystery to me, and one with darker undertones, reminiscent of totem poles, rituals, even rain dances. But 'Meeting' – ah, there's the key that I can understand and agree with. Whatever else may be going on, there can be no denying that these apparently silent human beings are meeting each other. They may be meeting something else, something invisible, but I can't see that, so cannot really know. But I do know they are meeting.

And they are meeting in silence – afterwards and before, they chat – but here, they are quiet. And the reason for this is well established in Quaker lore: "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life". Words are invaluable for communicating, but there are some places where they just get in the way. It so happens that [meeting in silence] is important. It has something to do with the Spirit – itself an elusive concept – the tighter you try and grasp it, the more it slips through your fingers; but it's there and we can nurture it. Not always, and not invariably, but when conditions are right, something happens in the silence that doesn't happen anywhere else.

I cannot describe what it is in words – because that's not what words are good at. I cannot prove it in any scientific way, but I can experience it, and I'm learning what helps and what doesn't. Words such as 'respect', 'getting to know one another better', 'honouring one

another', 'seeking to raise up the good in each of us' – all of these point to a central core, which cannot ever be strictly defined. Indeed that's [Spirit's] chief asset – you can never know what it will do next, how it will manifest itself or where it will lead. Like life itself, Spirit moves forward, it grows, it blossoms – but only in living hearts that are open to it.

Of course it can easily be frightened off. There are a myriad ways to freeze it or snuff it out. You can dismiss [Meeting] as superstition, as a 'Sunday morning social club', but you can also explore it. You can also approach it in a spirit of inquiry – asking what it's about, what it's for. Then you can open your eyes to the miracle; the inexplicable aspects of spontaneous creativity that only occur when people are alive to the possibilities. [This] is not weird, it's miraculous. And who can't benefit from bona fide miracles?

*Bob Johnson is a member of  
Hampshire & the Islands Area Quaker Meeting*

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*This Constant Yearning  
We are like lutes  
Once held by God.  
Being away from his warm body  
Fully explains  
This constant yearning.  
Hafiz*

## Reports:

Atlantic Friends gathered under blue skies and summer-like weather. Over fifty Friends and guests met in May at the University of New Brunswick, to consider the role of women in building a moral economy. The four plenary sessions were open to the public and interested persons from the community attended each one.

### Turning the World Right-Side Up: Exploring the Role of Women in Re-Balancing Economic Priorities Toward Right Relationship with the Whole Commonwealth of Life

Barbara Aikman and Keith Helmuth introduced the conference theme as an extension of the book, *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy*. Keith spoke to the insights of feminist economics and eco-feminism as he explored the book's ideas and brought in new and important concerns. He presented the following question for general reflection: **"If women had had the authority and the cultural initiative over the last three hundred fifty years that men have had, how would our economy and society be different?"**

Barbara noted that Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) has launched a world-wide discussion on the closely related topic of Global Change. Local clusters of Friends are being formed to consider six queries. The result of this discernment will be compiled and processed at a special world meeting in late 2011. The result of this meeting will be carried forward to the FWCC World Conference: *Being Salt and Light*, in 2012. (See [www.fwccglobalchange.org](http://www.fwccglobalchange.org))

The gathering opened Friday evening with a presentation by Marilyn Keyes Roper, *How the Sacred Feminine Was Uprooted in Western Culture: Remnants and Renewal*. This gave us a window into our heritage before patriarchy and hope for a recovery of gender balance.

Keith Helmuth spoke to the question: *How on Earth Do We Live Now?* with regard to the dilemma of economic growth and ecological destruction. Later, Joanna Macy's Truth Mandala was led by Roger Davies. David Millar clerked an FWCC worship-cluster on Global Change

In her keynote address: *Working Together Toward a Moral Economy: The Importance of Diversity*, Ellie Perkins spoke to the need, not only for gender equality, but for the participation of all classes and social groupings, in decision-making on economic policy and on resource allocation issues. She highlighted many examples of progressive and hopeful action.

Imelda Perley, a Maliseet linguist and community educator, spoke about *Women and Right Relationship in First Nation Community Life*. She told how women in First Nation communities can show the way to right relationship. She gave moving examples of how she was led to take up Elder responsibilities, and how her people are reviving their traditional wisdom and culture. She explained that in her language there are no gender divisions; all creation is equal and worthy of respect.

Jane Orion Smith led a visioning exercise *From Wrong to Right Relationship – What are the Means to the Ends?* It included a number of call-and-response queries. Finally, Carol Bradley took us on a photo tour of Woodbrooke College, 1652 Quaker country in Britain, and the Findhorn community.

Many connections were made as a result of this gathering. Plans and possibilities have opened for exploration. Friends, for example, are invited to look at and comment on the *Toward an Eco-Economy* blog, and join the CYM-QEAN listserv on Quaker.ca. You may join discussions between Quakers from five continents on global change <<http://QEWnet.ning.com>>, or start an FWCC-Global Change cluster, as outlined in preparatory instructions at <<http://fwccglobalchange.org>>

The conference included a display of books on rebalancing gender initiative and authority, and on feminist and eco-feminist economics. An annotated bibliography of this collection is available from Keith Helmuth ([ekhelmuth@mindspring.com](mailto:ekhelmuth@mindspring.com)) Conference proceedings will be prepared for publication as a *Quaker Institute for the Future* Pamphlet.

*David Millar, Montreal Monthly Meeting*  
*Keith Helmuth, New Brunswick Monthly Meeting*

[Atlantic Friends Gathering was jointly sponsored by Friends World Committee, Section of the Americas, Northeast Region and Quaker Institute for the Future]

“We are in a very holy time because times of crisis are the times when we are moved from our comfortable complacency and become seekers for a larger truth that can speak to our condition. It is the time when society becomes open to a larger vision. George Fox did not live in a comfortable time. For those tender to, open to, the crisis that is upon us, we may well feel overwhelmed by an ocean of darkness. Yet, my friends, we live in an ocean of light. . . . We are sprung from that holy ground. Let us, like our Quaker predecessors, speak out against our modern-day steeple house, the blind and self-serving religion of economics which ignores the priceless, the community, and the environment. Let our lives be a testimony to the presence and the power of the Light. We are entering a time of darkness and despair where Quaker joy and hopefulness coupled with openness and stubbornness, will be great contributions on the path ahead.”

*Tony McQuail, 1999*

[Quoted from the draft *Faith and Practice*]

This quote, read by Margaret Slavin, set the tone for Friends at the St. Lawrence Regional Gathering in May. They found a hopeful focus for responding to global change, in the book: *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy*, and its associated study guide: *One Book, One Yearly Meeting*. Using the study guide they explored the theme *Planting the Seeds of Change*. The report from the gathering is long but very interesting. It can be found at <http://pamecostudy.wetpaint.com/page/Planting+the+Seeds+of+Change>. The program outline can be obtained from Anne Trudell ([annemtrudell@gmail.com](mailto:annemtrudell@gmail.com)).

“Our challenge is to turn from talk to the walk of right relationship. What am I called to commit to? To build an economy that respects the integrity, resilience and beauty of the whole earth? What is God’s idea for how I can live in a way that cares for all living things?” [Margaret Slavin]

- eat raw foods, sprouting beans before cooking
- let cars, shoes ...wear out instead of replacing
- unplug appliances that constantly draw energy
- skip the news - it’s not empowering
- share pleasures of life
- choose your emotions
- plant for benefit of birds and butterflies
- care for your neighbours
- take public transportation

#### Some Tips

## Faith in Diversity

A unique event took place in New Brunswick last April 8, 2010. Unofficial representatives from thirteen religious groups came together for a Celebration of Faith in Diversity.

This event at St. Thomas University in Fredericton, was organized by Dr. Alexandra Bain and her students. As part of their studies in the Rituals II course, the students invited members of various faith groups to participate in the all-day event. The morning session consisted of eight-minute talks by each representative, followed by a potluck lunch featuring ethnic foods. The afternoon was devoted to presentations. Each faith group spoke of their ceremonies, customs, and practices.

Unitarians, Roman Catholics, Baha’is, Jews, the United Church, First Nations, Buddhists, Baptists, Quakers, Anglicans, Islamics, Mennonites, and Hindus, were all present.

What was enlightening about the Celebration was the fact that the various groups were willing to share their beliefs and customs without proselytizing. All implicitly recognized the right of other faith communities to hold beliefs that not only differed from their own, but possibly challenged them.

I cannot help wondering if a consensus regarding God and faith might eventually be reached through such sharing. A virtuous way of life will no longer be identified with a particular religion. Even non-theist approaches and values will come to be appreciated.

We might come to see religion not as an absolute, unchangeable truth. Rather, we will realize that religion is embedded in a nation’s culture, its history, and its own mix of vision and blindness, virtues and faults. Until recently, religion concentrated on personal salvation in the afterlife. Now we need a spiritual dialogue between faith groups that recognizes our dependence on nature. We might become better stewards of Mother Earth and give up the illusion that we can be her masters. Together we can think more about improving the quality of life for everyone on earth, here and now.

*Michael R. Miller*

*New Brunswick Monthly Meeting*

[See page 25 re: Michael’s *Peace Cantata*]



# “This is a Nonviolent Classroom!”

*Rebecca Higgins*

I recently returned from a year of teaching English to middle-school students in Honduras. An attender of Quaker Meetings for the last few years, I missed the prayerful quiet while dealing with one hundred fifty young teenagers every day, and I found a way to bring Quaker principles into the classroom.

Olancho, the state in which I taught, is known as the Texas of Honduras. Along with the beauty, hospitality and friendships, I also found a gun culture. There are signs that tell you that you can't bring your guns into banks or restaurants, but sometimes you see a gun sticking out of somebody's waistband or, more often, you hear shots. Partly because the police have historically let them down, people have guns to protect themselves and to mete out their own justice. As a pacifist, this was one of the few things about Honduras that I did not like.

After a few months of teaching, I introduced a new rule: “This is a nonviolent classroom.” The kids laughed about it and at me. I told them that for forty-five minutes a day they could leave their guns at the door. Since of course the children did not actually bring guns to school, I meant no pretend guns, no writing about guns, and no hitting each other, even as a joke. Some of the kids thought this was crazy, but most agreed when I made it clear: “I'm not telling you what to do in the rest of your life. That's up to you, but in my classroom, for forty-five minutes a day, we are going to share a nonviolent space where everybody can feel safe.”

Throughout the year, if the kids were teasing each other, I'd hear, “Stop it! This is a nonviolent classroom!” Sure, they used it against each other, but they remembered it.

One day a kid was playing with something in the front row. I got closer. I peered down. It was a bullet. I confiscated a bullet from a child in my nonviolent classroom. I sent him and his bullets packing. But other than that, there were not many major challenges to the rule besides, “You're crazy!”

After we'd learned about Martin Luther King Jr. and Gandhi, one student said to me, “Miss, you should be Day-Star (the name of the school) Gandhi! You are so peaceful!” “Hardly”, I told him, but I was

thrilled that he had paid attention. We had studied how King and Gandhi made huge, tangible changes without lifting a gun.

By the end of the year, as funny as it seemed to them initially, kids remembered. One wrote to me that she had learned many things, including “This is a nonviolence classroom.” Perhaps I should have spent a little more time on the parts of speech?

*Rebecca Higgins*

[Rebecca Higgins is a teacher, social worker, and writer currently teaching in Brazil. Photo taken in Brazil by a six year old. She attends Quaker Meeting in Fredericton when she is home.]



Sunrise of humanity's evolution  
on earth:  
great mystery  
on Golgotha's heights.  
In the Christmas light  
dawn's radiance shines;  
revere the soul in this  
daybreak's gentle light:  
our own being's spirit-kinned  
power and source of life

*Rudolph Steiner*

[From *Breathing the Spirit – Meditations for times of day and seasons of the year* - p.112 - no title.]

# A Quaker Chaplain Speaks Up

It has been just over two years since I began working on behalf of Canadian Yearly Meeting, at Pittsburgh Minimum Security Federal Institution, outside of Kingston, Ontario. This article will address the two main questions that Friends ask about my work.

The first is a general question: "What is it like to be a Quaker chaplain?" I was a little taken aback at CYM when I was confronted by a Friend for being a "hireling clergy". I had thought that Friends had put that question to bed with CYM's endorsement of chaplains, but of course, it is possible that a person who was not at CYM in session when the decision was made, might still have reservations. My answer is that I believe that Canadian Friends are very well suited to chaplaincy work, if that is their leading.

First of all, Friends understand ourselves to have abolished the laity. We are all priests by virtue of our conviction and we have a responsibility to minister. That ministry may be scientific exploration, administrative support, teaching, housekeeping, or raising children. We each live out the ministry we are led to for a period of time, and through it we make our contribution to the realization of God's kingdom. If I claimed that I am set apart, or above others, and that my chaplaincy is somehow more godly than others' ministries (or even than my other roles as wife, mother, Friend) then I could understand Friendly objections. The Quaker chaplains I know do not see their ministry as more important than the paid work that others in the Society do. We are merely living up to our particular call. I am so grateful that CYM as a whole has endorsed my work. It is a privilege to be paid to do it.

I believe that Canadian Friends are uniquely suited to serve as chaplains in Canada's current multi-faith reality. We contend that there is "that of God" in all people. Each of us has a unique experience of God that enables us to offer respectful pastoral care to everyone in institutional settings. Such care is a priceless response to the demoralizing and dehumanizing influences of the prisons.

Our non-credal stance makes it easier for us to advocate for religious rights and freedoms, without an agenda for conversion or "sheep-stealing" as some in the business call it. In the prison system, chaplains are employed by their own denominations. The contract

includes an obligation to advocate for freedom of religion. This can be a difficult duty for chaplains from other faith groups. They often find themselves caught between their employer (faith group) and the job description. I believe Friends support the ministry of hospitality and advocacy that I extend to all the faith traditions I meet in my work. I believe that regardless of the institution - be it hospital, nursing home or prison, our liberal - even Liberationist - theology is what is required to do the job with integrity. I cannot see Friends serving as military chaplains because the job requires witnessing to the divine sanction of war. Even then many Friends minister to current and former soldiers, particularly as conscientious objectors, and we do not object to payment for that ministry. Indeed, I believe many of us wish we could afford to do more of it.

The second question is more specific. What is it like acting as a Friendly chaplain in a Federal Penitentiary? In part, I have answered the question above. My theological position, and Friends theological tradition, makes the job easier for me than it is for many of my colleagues. The fact that Friends have such a tradition of involvement in the system means that I receive a much higher level of interest and moral support from Friends, than I see available to my colleagues from other denominations.

The challenge these days is the wider political agenda which continues to make regressive changes to the system as a whole. The closure of the prison farm program, the burgeoning prison population, the cancellation of clinical supervision for sex-offender-treatment programs, and the complete lack of services for victims and offender families, are demoralizing for offenders and staff alike. While the "statement of work" for chaplains honours the use of the prophetic voice, each chaplain must constantly discern the balance between pastoral and prophetic. Maintaining this balance in a way that makes it possible to continue being welcome in the institution, is how I am led at the moment. Again, I am so grateful for Friends' traditions on matters of justice, because my church can speak from the "outside" in ways that I can not, if I want to maintain my "inside" ministry. This is a matter of constant discernment. A new call may emerge and when that clearly happens I pray that I will have the courage to answer it.

*Kate Johnson*

*Thousand Islands Monthly Meeting*

## Ask Margaret Fell

Editor's Note: Margaret Fell (1614-1702) was a key member of the Religious Society of Friends. After her first husband Thomas Fell, a circuit judge, died, she married George Fox, founder of the Quakers. Readers may direct their letters to :

Margaret Fell  
c/o editor of The Canadian Friend

*Confused Friend*



Margaret Fell  
c/o The Canadian Friend

Dear Margaret:

A person just released from prison is worshipping with our Meeting. I am very uneasy when he is there and don't know what to do.

Flickering Light

Dear Flickering,

*Tis a proper dilemma thou hast. Dost thou approve rehabilitation? Dost thou approve the outreach that has brought this person to worship? Dost thou take to heart dear George's plea "to go cheerfully answering that of God in everyone?" In my day, we had intimate knowledge of terrible gaols and many worshippers had "done time". A difficult thing is now in thy path, not to stop thee, but to call up thy courage and strength.*

Friend Margaret

The following interview with Kirsten Ebsen and scene from her play *Margaret of Swarthmoor*, is excerpted by permission from *the Friend* Sept. 17, 2010. The first reading of *Margaret of Swarthmoor* took place at Oxford Quaker Meeting House on 12 September. [The sketch of Margaret Fell is by Lynette Richards, London, Ontario. Photo of Kirsten Ebsen, page 21, by Trish Carn.]

## Margaret of Swarthmoor



*Margaret Fell - Fox*

### Why did you choose the format of a play?

I began as an actor and studied drama at York University and the Banff School of Fine Arts. When I was an understudy at the Stratford Festival, I received a Canada Council grant to study with international theatre luminaries at a special Canadian Actors' Equity International Theatre Symposium in Toronto. I had written plays previously, including one called *Even in our Sleep*, which was produced on radio by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. [Playwriting] was a skill that had been languishing and it felt right.

### How did you become interested in Margaret Fell?

I became a Quaker in 1997, although in my beliefs I had always been one, I just didn't know it. At Canadian Yearly Meeting in 2007, a Canadian Friend, Elaine Bishop, gave a talk on Quaker history. This was the first time I heard anyone voice the fact that Margaret Fell had written the first Peace Testimony. In my own Meeting all I heard was George Fox this and George Fox that, with no acknowledgement of other early ministers, or the crucial role Margaret Fell and her family played in early Quaker emergence. One of the important points is how her struggles are still relevant today. Women have achieved so much more freedom in our society, and yet...the same old, same old... in slightly different disguises. The poor are still being overtaxed, however it's named! I felt it was important that Friends know more about Margaret Fell, so I decided to use my skills as a playwright to make her better known. The play is a window into her life, not the definitive biography. It covers both her marriage to Thomas Fell and, subsequently, to George Fox.



*Kirsten Ebsen, Vancouver Monthly Meeting*

### How did you begin your research?

I came to Friends House on Euston Road and used the Library for the beginning of my research. Then a Friend told me about the Eva Koch scholarship. I e-mailed my application to Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in England, describing the work I had done so far. To my delight I was awarded the scholarship. This enabled me to have twenty-four-hour access to the Library at Woodbrooke to research and write in residence. I was also able to study with tutors in some of the adult education courses during that time. The Bevan-Naish Collection was extremely helpful - precious actually. I was able to take some verbatim accounts from Margaret Fell's life. [The Bevan-Naish Collection is a special collection of early Quaker books and pamphlets].



[Margaret Fell looks on during the trial of George Fox]

I wrote *Margaret of Swarthmoor* in modern language. Some of the scenes are taken verbatim from her writings but slightly edited. Others are based on historical events written as I suppose Margaret Fell would have responded. Yet others are fiction to bring out aspects of her life and character.

## Scene Six: Attacked Again

An actual historic incident as it might have occurred. Tom Salthouse was the warden at Swarthmoor at the time and was replaced by Leonard Fell (no relation) a couple of years later, when Tom joined the travelling ministry. Leonard remained in the employment of the household until after Margaret's death.

\* \* \* \* \*

Margaret: My good heavens! George, speak to me.

George! (Fox groans)

Leonard: He's in great pain, but no broken bones.

Margaret: Let him sit quietly. (She calls off) Mary dear, bring bandages and brandy. Be quick. (to Leonard) Who has done this to him?

Leonard: The entire community on Walney Island came after him with stones and pitchforks.

Margaret: This for bringing God's message to them? My dear Lord in heaven!

Leonard: Forty men and women came after him. He managed to flee in a rowboat, but a second pack waited for him on the further shore.

Margaret: How did he ever survive?

Leonard: The priest, Lawson from Cocken intervened and took him into his house. That's where I found him.

Margaret: God bless you Leonard. And Nayler?

Leonard: Hiding somewhere on the island.

Margaret: If Thomas were here, they would not dare do this. But he's in London. (Formally) Cromwell has been named Protector of the Commonwealth. We must get names of all persons who did this. Charges will be laid.

Leonard: I'll collect the names.

Margaret: An entire mob attacking one defenceless man. Was Nayler injured?

Leonard: I didn't see him, only heard he had escaped.

Margaret: Priest Lawson saved his life. George, can you speak?



## Book Review: Dave Greenfield

### *Refusing to be Enemies, Palestinian and Israeli Nonviolent Resistance to the Israeli Occupation*

by Maxine Kaufman-Lacusta

Maxine Kaufman-Lacusta is a Canadian Jewish-Quaker activist, with over twenty years experience working with nonviolent anti-occupation activists in Israel and occupied Palestine.

The book has two underlying premises: the belief that Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem - since 1967 - is fundamentally wrong and illegal under international law; that Israel must withdraw from these lands. She believes the only way to force Israel to withdraw is through massive nonviolent resistance in Palestine, Israel, and the international community.

The book opens with Maxine introducing us to several Palestinian and Israeli nonviolent activists who tell us why they chose nonviolence, and why they got involved in activism against the occupation. Through their voices the book reflects on the last several decades of nonviolent activism in Israel/Palestine, the successes, failures and challenges of nonviolent organizing, and on the activists' hopes and visions for the future.

It discusses the work of Israeli organizations like *New Profile*, which uses the power of the word to challenge the increasing militaristic nature of Israeli society; the *Israeli Committee Against House Demolition* which works in solidarity with Palestinians, using direct nonviolent action to resist the bulldozing of Palestinian homes; joint organizations like *Combatants for Peace*, which consists of former combatants from both sides who have now committed themselves to peace-building; Palestinian civil societies, like the *Palestinian Centre for Rapprochement Between People*, which teaches the skills of nonviolent resistance to the people of occupied Palestine.

One theme that recurs throughout is that nonviolent resistance is popular resistance. Active nonviolence allows entire oppressed communities to mobilize through boycotts, strikes, blockades, peaceful demonstrations and trespassing.

Many of the activists look back favourably to the First Intifada, from 1987 to 1993, when a largely nonviolent grass roots uprising occurred in occupied Palestine. The decision-making power was very much in the hands of the community. In 1994, the *Palestine Liberation Organization* (PLO) leadership returned to Occupied Palestine and imposed a very strong

state structure on the West Bank and Gaza. This marginalized the civil society that had emerged in the preceding years. The Second Intifada since the fall of 2000 has been a much more state-centred operation, with a more militarized focus. While a new wave of nonviolent resistance has emerged since 2000, its practitioners have often felt marginalized by the official channels of the state-based Palestinian struggle. (I use the term, state, in this paragraph rather loosely, since the Palestinian Authority might best be called a kind of quasi-state, with authoritarian institutions typical of a state, but without real autonomy or international recognition.)

While the book celebrates the many people and groups dedicated to nonviolence, it is honest about their frustrations. In Chapter Five, you feel the warmth and joy of Palestinians, Israelis and internationals gathered around a camp fire in the village of Bil'in, where grassroots Palestinians have maintained an ongoing nonviolent protest since 2005. In Chapter Six, you share the pain and frustration of activists who talk about how marginalized the path of nonviolent resistance often is, in both Palestinian and Israeli society. Then in Chapters Eight and Nine, you share the hopes and dreams that the anti-occupation activists have for the future of Palestine and Israel.

Four reflective essays by individual thinker-activists round out the book, and help ground the spiritual energy of the journey the book has taken. A bibliography and a list of related web sites invite the reader to explore these topics further.

There is perhaps one weakness in the book. It would have been helpful to have a first chapter that set forth the chronological background to the current situation, stating what happened in 1947, 1948-49, 1967 and 1987. An explanation is needed of how and why the Israeli occupation is illegal under international law, and describes the general nature of the occupation. Just as many in North America are unaware of nonviolent activism in Palestine and Israel; many are profoundly ignorant of the general historical facts. As it is, the reader pieces things together chapter by chapter, or has to go elsewhere for historical background.

I agree with Ursula Franklin's opening words. "This is an important book." Every open-minded North American should read it, and more importantly, act upon it.

Dave Greenfield  
*Saskatoon 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](http://www.quaker.ca/qbs).

***The Amazing Fact of Quaker Worship***, Swarthmore Lecture, 1973 by George H. Gorman, Quaker Books, London, 1973 (reprinted five times). BACK IN PRINT. In this Quaker classic Gorman looks at Quaker worship as seen by a newcomer. He approaches religion as human experience seeking spiritual meaning. *Recommended for inquirers*. (157 pp; \$20.00)

***Building the Life of the Meeting***, 24<sup>th</sup> annual Michener Lecture, by William Frances Taber, Southeastern Yearly Meeting, Florida, 1994. The author explain how, by working together as a body in a community, participants can develop meaningful Quaker worship and action. (24 pp; \$5.20)

***The Friends Quarterly***, Issue Two, 2010. The Friends Publication Ltd. United Kingdom.

This issue contains the three winning essays, by Linda Murgatroyd, Simon Best and Felicity Kaal, selected from 106 diverse entries on "The present and future of Religious Society of Friends in Britain." An excellent and timely coverage of current problems and thinking, with close applications to Quakers in Canada as well. (86 pp; \$12.50)

***Twelve Quakers and Faith***, Quaker Pamphlet 8 by Quaker Quest, London, UK. 2009.

Twelve Quakers of differing backgrounds examine what faith means in their lives in this popular series. (36 pp \$6.25)

***The Unequal World We Inhabit***, Swarthmore Lecture 2010 by Paul Lacey, Quaker Books, London, UK 2010. Paul Lacey, an American Quaker experienced in such matters, examines terrorism and fundamentalism, both religious and political. He considers the pressures that promote suicide bombing, martyrdom and revolution on one side, and the responsibility to protect on the other. He recognizes that answers, sought as part of the Quaker peace testimony are elusive. (106 pp; \$20.00)

## 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.

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## Around the Family Around the Family Around the Family

### Coldstream Monthly Meeting:

On Friday September 10, 2010, we enjoyed a potluck lunch with Barbara Wybar, coordinator of the African Great Lakes Initiative's (AGLI) project in Bududa, Uganda. The Initiative consists of an orphans' program and a vocational school. Barbara wished to thank the "Coldstream sewing ladies".

In 2009, Coldstream Meeting and some Hamilton Friends, sewed over thirty dresses for Sheila Havard to take to Bududa for the Children of Peace orphans. The Meeting also donated funds for the purchase of some local cloth to be used by the tailoring students at the vocational school. In return the students sent back to Coldstream some colourful aprons sewn with African cloth. Future tailoring students will be able to upgrade their skills, thanks to a sophisticated sewing machine donated by the Canadian Friends Foreign Missionary Board. [See "Apron Ladies" page 25: Left to right: front: Sheila Havard, Joyce Holwerda, Barbara Wybar. Back row: Carl Thomas, George Webb, Coldstream, Mary Edgar - Yarmouth MM, and Carol Wilkins, Lorna Bycraft, Marilyn Thomas, Margaret Saunders, from Coldstream Monthly Meeting.]

This event included the showing of a movie of the Bududa Development Centre (<http://www.formula1movies.com/video/pwRga7B9Hvs/Bududa-Development-Center.html>) Barbara explained her involvement in the Centre's development and its role in addressing the area's high employment rate. Sheila Havard will be volunteering in Bududa again in February 2011.

### Ottawa Monthly Meeting:

The fall St. Lawrence Regional Gathering took place on the weekend of October 15-17, at Waupous Family Farm near Ottawa. Saturday we viewed an excerpt of the movie "Burma VJ". A moving discussion was led by three Burmese monks and an interpreter. Two of the monks had been part of the 'Saffron Uprising' of September 2007, during which Buddhist monks who led a peaceful demonstration against the repressive military dictatorship were brutally attacked. Linnea Rowlett led a series of role plays to help us see how we might respond to loss of civil liberties in Canada.

We are deeply saddened by the death of Rose Mae Harkness. A celebration of her life took place October 23, 2010.

**Annapolis Monthly Meeting** celebrated their twenty-fifth anniversary of becoming a Monthly Meeting. Friends from other parts of Nova Scotia, joined us for worship and dinner.

**Sparta** hosted a Hundred Mile Dinner on September 29. It was well attended. Proceeds were given to support Mary Edgar's work in Uganda. We hosted *Open Doors* October 2. Many toured and talked with us. Questions were asked about what Friends believe and do in the present. Visitors admired the lovely simple building - the foundations of the past.

The 200 year Celebration of the Peter Lossing (Quaker) Settlement in Norwich, took place November 11 - 13. Canadian composer, Michael Miller's Peace Cantata was part of the *Simple Gifts* Concert at this celebration. Michael and Edith Miller were in attendance. [See Michael's article on page 17]



### Canadian Friends Historical Association

The CFHA met for their annual meeting September 25, 2010, on the site of the former Pine Street Meeting House. Pine Street Meeting was a preparative Meeting of Norwich Monthly Meeting and their Meeting House was one of five Meeting Houses formerly in the area. The conference took place in an octagonal home, lovingly restored by volunteers of the South Norwich Historical Society.

Our Conservative Friend explained the Quaker bonnets on display. The sides were originally so long that it was impossible to see sideways. As Quaker women started to drive cars, this was a drawback and the sides grew shorter. [Sketch by Lynette Richards]

*Excerpted from a report by Sheila Havard in the Coldstream Newsletter*

## 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](http://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 belonging in present-day Quakerism.

**Closing date March 31, 2011 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](http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/CPQS)

**African Summer Workcamps 2010** AGLI - The African Great Lakes Initiative of Friends Peace Teams is sponsoring intergenerational workcamps in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. Orientation begins June 19 near Washington DC. Workcamps end July 24. Workcampers build clinics, schools and peace centres - no skills needed. All ages welcome, including families. Learn more: <http://www.aglifpt.org> or [dawn@aglifpt.org](mailto:dawn@aglifpt.org).



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# P r e v i e w s

## Sunderland P. Gardner Lecture 2011: “In Search of a Moral Economy”



*Presenter: Marilyn Manzer*

When I was growing up in the 1950s and 60s in Fredericton New Brunswick, I was disturbed by the economic and social inequity I saw around me. I wanted to know why our society could not ensure everyone had good housing, enough to eat, and adequate resources for their children. To look for answers I studied social science in university. My SPG lecture will share the answers I found while working with a profoundly inspiring teacher at McGill University. It describes how they affected me the rest of my life. Social economic issues, both personal and systemic, have been my most passionate interest. My career and lifestyle decisions have been influenced by my search for a moral economy, but God also led me in different and unexpected directions.

For the last twenty years I have been teaching music, when I always thought I would be working in public education on economic issues. This has mystified me, but I am now on a path to understanding the importance of music and beauty. I am learning how they may be significant in the human search for a moral economy, to replace the immoral one that now governs us. Given that my four daughters and two granddaughters (several musicians among them) have promised to be with me during the lecture, I am hoping that music will also play an inspiring part in my presentation.

*Marilyn Manzer  
 Annapolis Valley Monthly Meeting*

## CYM Quaker Study 2011: “Stand Still in the Light”

George Fox frequently exhorted this message in his letters and epistles as a way to self-knowledge and alignment with the will of God.

What we know and who we think we are, as individuals and as Friends, determines our behaviour. How do we test it and find new ways of being and living in the world?

*There is a spirit which I feel, that delights to do no evil, nor to avenge any wrong, but delights to endure all things in hope to enjoy its own in the end. Its hope is to outlive all wrath and contention, and to weary out all exaltation and cruelty, or whatever is of a nature contrary to itself.* – James Nayler

History and Quaker theology provide us with a context for understanding our present pieces of the puzzle, as we search for a glimpse of the whole and our place within it.

Join us on a journey of discovery. What will we find? What might the Light show and reveal?

*The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.* (Marcel Proust)



*Presenters:  
 Orion Smith, Vancouver Island Monthly Meeting  
 Janet Ross, Toronto Monthly Meeting*



## THE QUACKER

I wonder as I wander, 'what would my world be like if I had no clean water?' I need marshes for my world to be just right. Do you know about the Tantramar Marsh that is the connecting link between New Brunswick and Nova Scotia? It is a marsh teeming with life. On one side is the Bay of Fundy and on the other side is the St. Lawrence Seaway. The Acadians called the region Beaubassin. They were burned out several times, and eventually they moved to Beausejour, on the New Brunswick side. When you come to CYM in Windsor, you may want to spend some extra time in this area, rich in history, heritage, and of course, wildlife. It's just ducky!

### Grants Available:

**The Elizabeth Ann Bogert Memorial Fund**  
**offers up to \$1000 for the Study or Practice of Christian Mysticism**  
Contact Miriam Feyerherm - [mfeyerherm@atlanticbb.net](mailto:mfeyerherm@atlanticbb.net) - for details



**Home Missions & Advancement Committee of CYM (HMAC) offers study grants:**

#### **The Pendle Hill Scholarship Fund**

A grant for an eight-day sojourn at Pendle Hill, US. with an additional adjacent weekend possible.

#### **The Dorothy Muma Bursary**

Available to Ontario Friends or other members or attenders of CYM who wish to pursue a project or leading in Ontario. The purpose of this bursary is to support the next step in an applicant's spiritual journey and to nurture his or her deepest inward spiritual leading. The amount for disbursement each year is \$500. At times further funds may be available.

**Note: Deadline for applications is March 1, 2011**

For application forms or further information see the CYM home page on the web, or contact HMAC Grants & Loans Officer Brent Bowyer, at 519-357-1883, or via e-mail at [<bandcbowyer@hotmail.com>](mailto:bandcbowyer@hotmail.com).

### Last Words:

#### QUERY:

IS MY MONTHLY MEETING AT THE CENTRE OF MY LIFE?

\* \* \* \* \*

#### **Overheard at the pre-CYM retreat:**

**"Yearly Meeting is a practice arena for love and trust, a Quaker laboratory. It is important to go to Canadian Yearly Meeting to be in Quaker community." A Nashville Friend told me that Meeting should be at the centre of our lives. I had not had that thought myself, nor do I remember hearing it expressed among Canadian Quakers.**

*Rose Marie Cyprik  
Pelham Executive Meeting*

Editor: Sherryll-Jeanne Harris

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Appreciation to all of you who have given generously over the years.

*The CYM Publications and Communications Committee*

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### Themes & Deadlines for upcoming issues:

March 2011	Interpretation of Scripture/Holy Writings Submissions due early January
May 2011	CFSC Celebration Issue Submissions due February 28
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