

Canadian Yearly Meeting Quaker Education Program Newsletter – March 2013

Learning Around the Community

This issue offers a taste of what some Meetings and Worship Groups have chosen for learning activities this year. Perhaps you'll see something that catches your attention or sparks your curiosity. Contact the Quaker Education Program Coordinator (or these Meetings/Worship Groups) if you're interested in exploring learning possibilities.

PEI Worship Group

Since the fall of 2012, the PEI Worship Group has been meeting the second and fourth Tuesday of each month for an hour and a half in their own version of "Quaker 101." A Friend, formerly from Rhode Island, who 'turned up' one day has been facilitating. (How many small worship groups would welcome a seasoned Friend 'turning up'!). Discussions on the Testimonies covered the Peace Testimony, Truth and Integrity, Simplicity, Equality, and That of God in Everyone. Although not possible of course to fully explore these subjects in such a short time, they moved on to other themes, finding not surprisingly that the Testimonies pop up all over the place. More recent topics have included What Canst Thou Say?, Quaker process, and the Ocean of Darkness flowing over the Ocean of Light (a.k.a. Heaven and Hell). The next one will be Silence. Average attendance has been 6 – 7. Daphne Davey, who reports that she has wanted for many years to have such learning sessions, says she has been delighted with the response and participation. Three non-attenders to their worship group have been regular participants, and one has now started attending worship (and the recent New Brunswick MM retreat).

Victoria Friends Meeting

Friends at the Fern Street Meeting House in Victoria, (as well as celebrating the 100th



anniversary of their Meeting House this year) are doing a 6-part worship-sharing series on Life Transitions. They have focused on these themes: 1) The Need for Change – Being in Transition, based on Canadian Faith and Practice, the Lifelong Journey; 2) Beginnings and Endings; 3) Love and Work; 4) Family Life; 5) Friendships in Community; 6) The Lifelong Journey: Listening Spirituality. They prepare single sheets with quotations from books like Canadian Faith and Practice and use the quotes as a prompt for their sharing.

New Brunswick Monthly Meeting

New Brunswick Monthly meeting held a retreat at Memramcook Institute in mid March. The theme was "The Mystery of Beauty, Friendship & Belonging". For one of the exercises, Friends were invited to bring something of beauty in their life to share with the group. Ellen Helmuth reports this was one of the most powerful experiences of the weekend, and goes on to say, "It was just amazing what arose from the heart of the creativity and beauty in the lives of those there. We looked at the writings of John O'Donohue, especially his book, "Anam Cara". ('soul friend' in Gaelic) and watched a video about him. So much of what he says about light, inner peace, beauty, friendship, belonging, etc could also be attributed to Quaker thought - remarkable insights."

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Toronto Monthly Meeting

In the fall of 2012, Jo Vellacott and Bette Logan of Toronto MM, with the assistance of others, presented a course on Quaker history, Faith and Practice at LIFE (Learning is Forever) Institute at Ryerson University. LIFE provides interest courses for people aged 50 and older. Sessions offered were: the origins of Quakerism in the turbulent seventeenth century; waiting in the silence as it emerged as the core of Quakerism and how it continues in Meeting for Worship and in Meeting for Worship for Business; the development of the testimonies; the corporate witness of Canadian Friends Service Committee; personal witness of four individual members; the lives and contributions of several prominent Friends over the years; a discussion among four Friends on the topic of "What being a Quaker means to me in my daily life"; and finally, examples of how Quakers function as a community. Each session, organized with seating in a circle, began and ended with brief silence, so that participants could have some experience of Friends' ways. Many Toronto Friends took part and different views were heard. Jo and Bette report that the learning sessions were well received and many participants recommended they be presented again.

St. John's Worship Group

On March 30, St. John's WG is planning a shared discussion on practices of entering and emerging from worship, both in personal experience and in the larger Canadian Quaker experience. There is a double purpose to this discussion. For the worship group, it serves as an opportunity to deepen knowledge of each other and of our Quaker practice. It is also an opportunity to help a friend who is interested in questions of Quaker traditions

and practice as part of his graduate research in Folklore! The group has invited the Quaker Education Program Coordinator to participate via SKYPE and she is excited to explore both the topic and the possibilities for using the technology for connecting more broadly within our community.

Ottawa Monthly Meeting

Ottawa Monthly Meeting held a January retreat on the theme, "Speak Truth to Power". On coming together, Friends were presented with some history on the phrase and offered some questions for reflection and sharing, "Tell about a time you spoke the truth", "When were you inspired by the truth someone told?", "What truths do you need to hear/speak these days?". Open Space Technology was used to further explore the theme. A film, "Transition 2.0" about Transition towns, shared singing, Meeting for Worship and several Meetings for Eating rounded out the weekend.

Staying in Touch

The Quaker Education Coordinator will be in Ontario most of April - attending Education and Outreach

Committee, visiting with Yonge Street Monthly Meeting and attending Representative Meeting. Ontario Friends - Contact Sue at qepc@quaker.ca if you want to have tea...or conversation...or just connect.

Be sure to check out the learning resources on the Quaker Education Program Web Pages. Just click on this link:

[Learning Resources](#)



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