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"Reconciliation is not an aboriginal problem — it is a Canadian problem. It involves all of us."

— Justice Murray Sinclair

Canadian Friends Service Committee



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LETTER

In Praise of Plain Writing

Dear Editor,

Thank you for accepting this exciting and challenging job. I have a challenge for you: please convince Canadian Friends to write plainly.

I enjoy a wide variety of Christian magazines. I look forward to learning about new ideas and reading about people in my spiritual community.

However, when I pick up our journal and scan it for interesting content, I seldom make it past one or two articles. If I leave *The Canadian Friend* out on our coffee table for visitors, they quickly put it back down. The reason? Readability.

Readability is the ease with which a reader can understand the written word. We know that only 20% of Canadian adults have strong literary skills, where they can understand material at a grade 11 level or higher.¹

Even strong readers generally prefer to read below their ability level when reading for enjoyment. However, most articles in the Winter 2018 *Canadian Friend* were written at a university level when tested by several readability formulas.

Indeed, it is not just *The Canadian Friend* that is written at this level, but many of our other publications. Why would we choose to leave out so many readers? We are a religious group that believes in the value of all people.

Many factors make an article readable, including the following:

- simple words;
- short sentences (fifteen words or less);
- short chunks of information;
- the active voice;
- a personal, conversational tone;
- an easy-to-read layout;
- logical organization;
- a larger font;
- a reader's interest in the topic;
- a reader's motivation to read the article.

Numerous formulas have been developed to check the reading level of written materials. Obviously, none can account for all of the contributing factors. Different readability formulas can produce different results so an average is frequently used.

Quakers may push back at the idea of written simplicity. "We need to express complex ideas," they may argue. In fact, most sophisticated ideas are best expressed in simple language. They reach a larger audience and are more clearly understood.

Indeed, if we cannot explain an idea with plain English, we should wonder why.

Quakers may mourn the loss of beautiful language but simple language can be elegant, too. I ran samples of writing from famous authors through on-line readability formulas with these results:

Margaret Atwood: Grade 9

Timothy Finley: Grade 7

Margaret Laurence: Grade 8

D. H. Lawrence: Grade 6

W. O. Mitchell: Grade 7

Carol Shields: Grade 9

John Steinbeck: Grade 5

These writers use the English language better than any of us but manage to do so in a way that is accessible to more people.

Canadian Friends should ask ourselves why we choose to write at a college level. Are we following the example of others? Are we worried about using plain language? Are we having difficulty narrowing down our ideas?

It is challenging to write for someone who reads at a different level than you. If you think the readability level of your material excludes others, try writing the way that you speak. Spoken language is often straightforward.

Try to use shorter sentences and concrete terms. You can easily check your writing with an on-line readability formula. Several versions of MS Word even have this function built in.

If the level remains too difficult, consider sharing your ideas with a non-expert, then having this person write the article. They are more likely to summarize the ideas in clear English.

The Canadian Friend should welcome experienced Friends and curious friends, too. New ideas and community-building stories can be shared. If we put our magazine on a coffee table, we hope that a visitor will pick it up and read it. Indeed, we hope to read most of the journal ourselves.

Let us speak plainly, Friends!

Susan Tucker

Interior BC Monthly Meeting

(This letter is written at a Grade 8 level.)

¹ p. 15 of *Learning a Living: First Results of the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey*. Statistics Canada and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2005.

AROUND THE FAMILY

Tribute to Frank Showler

Toronto Monthly Meeting

Keith R. Maddock



Frank Showler (seated) at his 99th birthday celebration.

Photo: Ruth Malloy

On Friday, August 17, 2020, a special tribute was held at Toronto Meeting House to honour Frank Showler on his ninety-ninth birthday. Predeceased by his wife Isabel (a long-time member of Toronto Monthly Meeting), Frank has continued to serve Toronto Monthly Meeting on the Peace and Social Action Committee and is much loved and respected in the Toronto social justice network.

Welcoming the Stranger

Yonge Street Half-Yearly Meeting

Keith R. Maddock

In June, Friends from Yonge Street Half-Yearly Meeting gathered at the Toronto Friends' House to attend to business and to reflect on an important theme of our time: "Welcoming the Stranger." With debates continuing around the world about assisting refugees persecuted and displaced by deadly conflicts in their homelands, Canadians are especially challenged to share our privilege with strangers seeking new homes in our midst.

On Friday evening, Friends were invited to participate in a welcoming ceremony which included reading excerpts from five spiritual traditions: Jewish, First Nations, Christian, Islamic, and Quaker. After announcements, all those present were asked to introduce themselves to someone in the room they had never met before.

Then, after the anticipated mayhem subsided, Sandra McCallum (an attender at Toronto Monthly Meeting) recited a poem by the Sufi mystic Rumi, "The Guest House," which described the collective reaction perfectly:

Meet them at the door laughing,
And invite them in.
Be grateful for whoever comes,
Because each has been sent
As a guide from beyond.

Then individual readers stepped forward to share specific scriptural and non-scriptural messages familiar to Friends, compiled and introduced by Keith Maddock. As the theme of welcoming the stranger figures prominently in the Torah, some readings from the Hebrew Scriptures served to emphasize the centrality of the teaching through our own era.

Readings were greatly enhanced by songs led by Jordan Kerr, another Toronto Monthly Meeting attender, beginning and ending with another poem attributed to Rumi:

Come, come whoever you are:
Wanderer, worshipper, lover of leaving,
And come, come, whoever you are:
This isn't a caravan of despair,
Because it doesn't matter if you've broken your vows
A thousand times before;
And yet again, come again come,
And, yet again come.

On Saturday, the theme continued after Meeting for Business. Joe Kanji interviewed some Syrian women who experienced prejudice in their homeland – as well as from Canadian immigration – in their search for a new home. After a musical interlude provided by Syrian musicians on traditional instruments, Jordan Kerr interviewed a Jordanian immigrant who experienced prejudice when he converted from Islam to the Bahá'í faith.

Some very stimulating discussion resulted from these encounters with strangers in our midst. Copies of the Friday evening readings can be obtained from Keith Maddock at krmaddock@sympatic.ca.



A 15th century copy of Rumi's *Masnavi-i Ma'navi* ('Spiritual Couplets').

I Have Called You Friends

Atlantic Friends Gathering Maida Follini

Atlantic Friends Gathering took place May 18 to 21 at Camp Geddie near Merigomish, on the North Shore of Nova Scotia. The theme was “I Have Called You Friends,” taken from Jesus’ words to his apostles in John 15:15-17.

Forty-seven people registered at the camp – 37 adults and 10 children. Seven sessions dealing with spiritual and service interests were well-received.

Friends came from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, PEI, Newfoundland & Labrador, as well as from Maine, Vermont, England, and Scotland.

A “Meeting for Readings” was held Saturday evening, followed by group singing. Family Night featured youth and adult talent, with the children’s program putting on a skit (in costume) called “The Boy and the Lion.”



The children’s group join the Meeting for Worship.

In both the planned program activities and the informal socialization and meals, there was a marvellous feeling of community, and the event was filled with good feeling and inspiration.

Ellen Helmuth led the session on “Atlantic Half-Yearly Meeting,” and her letter requesting Canadian Yearly Meeting affirm our Half-Yearly Meeting was approved by the Gathering with a few amendments. This letter will be presented at Canadian Yearly Meeting in August.

The Gathering tentatively decided on an Autumn meeting of Atlantic Half-Yearly Meeting for Saturday, October 27, at Open Sky Cooperative in Sackville, New Brunswick, subject to CYM approval of the Half-Yearly Meeting.

Editor’s Note: Attenders at Canadian Yearly Meeting – or those who read the minutes – will know the creation of Atlantic Half-Yearly Meeting was approved there with great joy.

Gleanings & Quotations

Peace Poetry

Hugh Mann

Religions are based on scripture, which is mostly poetry. So it only makes sense that religious conflict must be resolved through poetry, and not through politics, negotiation, or war.

I propose that all religious conflicts be redefined poetically, so that they can be resolved without bloodshed, winners, or losers.

So let’s sharpen our words, not our swords; send missives, not missiles; and apply our minds to metaphor, simile, rhyme, meter, and prosody, but not pomposity, animosity, ferocity, atrocity, or monstrosity.



A costume from the children’s skit at Atlantic Friends Gathering.

Keith Helmuth, proprietor with his son Brendan of Chapel Street Editions, brought a display of his publishing company’s books. Dick Cotterill, member of the Canadian Friends Service Committee, displayed the work of the CFSC, and made available free CFSC pamphlets.

Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities

Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Regional Gathering David Millar, Montreal Monthly Meeting

The Regional Gathering took place the weekend of June 15-17 in the Land O' Lakes Worship Group region of eastern Ontario. We particularly thank Sylvia Powers for hosting all 36 Friends – a new peak attendance – on her farmland and in her home.

Sylvia and Claire Adamson deserve particular credit for arranging transport, bedrooms and tenting (complete with compost toilet!), and providing child play spaces. For those under fifteen, the trampoline was one of the weekend's great successes.



Some of the adults and children who attended the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Regional Gathering.

The main feature on the adult program was Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities (HROC) detraumatization workshops, led by Etienne Paul Mungombe. HROC is an African adaptation of Alternatives to Violence (AVP, avpusa.org) a set of non-violent trainings developed by Quakers.

The HROC workshops were created in the last decade by African Great Lakes Initiative of Friends Peace Teams (AGLI-FPT) to help survivors of the genocides in Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, and Kenya. For further details see the Quaker books by David Zarembka, Judy Lumb and others at davidzarembka.com and agli.friendspeaceteams.org.

We learned that trauma is not necessarily caused by physical violence. It can also be experienced in everyday life, as a result of deep grief, family crisis, or discrimination. We experienced how it can be dealt with by exercises based on Quaker leadings and process.

On Friday we were invited to share whatever we wished about trauma in our personal lives – voluntarily and in confidentiality, so I cannot give specifics. The stories ranged widely, covering things such as wartime memories, childhood disappointments, and the death of a dear one.

On Saturday, Pastor Mungombe told some of his personal history of growing up as a birthright Quaker in Friends Church in Ruvira, in the eastern Congo. He described his early hopes of becoming a teacher, meeting his future wife Binwa Binnety, and how their hopes were shattered by invasion, genocides, and a decade-long guerrilla war that left an estimated thirty million dead.

This led to their exodus to Kenya, where he became a Quaker pastor in Kakuma refugee camp, studied at Friends Theological College in Kisumu,¹ and became a HROC facilitator in AGLI-FPT.

When his family was accepted for resettlement in Canada in 2016, he had to leave his Friends Theological College studies uncompleted. He is now searching for recognition of this work from a Montreal university so he can finish his degree. He is still involved in aiding and sending clothing to disabled refugees back in Kakuma, who suffer from extreme discrimination as “not fully human.”

Etienne and his brother-in-law Joseph Anali Kapita then presented a Power Point on the basic principles of AVP and HROC, followed by one of its key exercises, a “Trust Walk.” This is where Friends pair up and take turns being blindfolded and led through a complicated space. (There are at least fifty more exercises, varying from ones that are one-on-one to cooperative games for children and adults, and lasting from ten minutes to several hours.)

In the afternoon we reconvened and divided into three worship-sharing groups. Our topics were “what is your personal experience of physical or emotional pain?” and “how do leadings, and exercises such as AVP-HROC help?” In the manner of Friends, we heard whatever testimony each one offered, without comment or discussion. It was an extremely moving experience.

Etienne and Joseph also led us in a Congolese hymn-sing, and a call-and-response – “Are you a Quaker?” and our reply, “Aye.” We recommend the HROC workshop for future programs at CYM.

We also held a Meeting for Worship for Business. Our agenda included Etienne's invitation to attend the August 2018 founding conference in Quebec City of UFC (United Friends Churches) in Canada, which will bring a number of African refugee congregations under the Quaker banner.

¹ The college is affiliated with Friends United Meeting (FUM). Canadian Yearly Meeting has dual affiliation with FUM and Friends General Conference (FGC). Like Canadian Friends themselves, those from the Friends Theological College in Africa may best be viewed as our co-affiliated partners.

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Communities Coming Together for Reconciliation

Reflections on the Blanket Exercise

Barb Everdene, Vancouver Monthly Meeting

On June 9th, 2018, Vancouver Monthly Meeting gathered with the Vancouver Unitarian community on unceded Musqueam and Coast Salish territory in a beautiful intergenerational [Blanket Exercise](#).

The Blanket Exercise is a teaching tool developed by KAIROS, an ecumenical network of ten churches (including Canadian Yearly Meeting) focused on ecological justice and human rights. The exercise was created in partnership with Indigenous advisors, in response to the 1996 Report of the [Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples](#), which recommended education on Canadian-Indigenous history as a key step towards reconciliation.

Coming to terms with the colonial legacy for Indigenous Peoples and ourselves

We gathered in the large sunlit atrium of the Vancouver Unitarian church, finding seats encircling many bright woven blankets spread over the floor. Our facilitator, Melaney Gleeson-Lyall of the Musqueam Nation, introduced herself and shared a ceremonial song to begin the event in a good way. Many of us had not met each other before. A low drumbeat invited us to step onto the blankets, and a warm hum of introductions filled the room.

Melaney then asked us to step into the roles of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Over the next ninety minutes, she led us through five hundred years of colonial history – from pre-contact to treaty-making, colonization, and resistance.

Some of us representing smallpox victims left the circle early. Others were directed to leave their blankets and move to residential schools. Participants contributed to the narrative by reading scrolls with quotations from Indigenous people.

As we reached the present day, the inner circle had only a handful of isolated participants on tightly folded blankets, now little islands in what had started as a living continuity of land and people.

After the exercise, Melaney invited us to participate in a Talking Circle to process the experience as a group. She began by placing herself in the history we had just walked through, sharing her experience as a survivor of the [Sixties Scoop](#). She was firm that the exercise was not about assigning guilt and shame, but rather a call to come to terms with the colonial legacy we have all inherited.



Participants in Kairos' Blanket Exercise from Vancouver Monthly Meeting and Vancouver Unitarians, with a gift blanket depicting a medicine wheel. Photo: Tariq Jooya

Many expressed their surprise at a history they had not learned in school. One person shared, "I didn't realize how systemic the violence has been."

In the circle, we were moved to share experiences working with Indigenous communities and our own ancestral roots, touching on loss of language and culture, racism and persecution, sadness and shame. Some of us found our tears.

With gentle attentiveness, Melaney held space for everyone to reflect on the past, the present, and our hopes for a decolonized future. Gail Harwood, a retired educator, shared heartfelt words that resonated with many in the room: "I am going to spend the rest of my life taking a stand, and I will do everything in my power to ensure this system is no longer perpetuated."

Gifts and teachings to inspire reconciliation

To commemorate this event and important milestone on our reconciliation journeys, the organizing committee gifted each community with a woven blanket designed by Melaney. The blanket (see image) features a medicine wheel that reflects an important Indigenous teaching on diversity—in particular, the gifts that each of the four colours of people bring to one another and the world.

The teaching suggests that the oldest people are the black-skinned – representing Indigenous peoples in Africa and Australia. Theirs is the gift of sound: singing the world into existence. Next are the red-skinned, representing the Indigenous peoples of the Americas. Theirs is the gift of stewardship of the land, waters, plants, and the animal and human world: honoring interconnectedness and maintaining the balance and harmony of all life on earth. Third are the yellow-skinned, representing the Asian peoples, whose gift is deep understanding of how the human mind and body function. Last are the white-skinned, the youngest of creation. Theirs is the gift of communication: enabling all four people's gifts to be brought together and understood by each other.¹

1 Adapted from Rupert Ross' *Returning to the Teachings* (2006) and Jessie Sutherland's *Worldview Skills: Transforming Conflict from the Inside Out* (2005).

The blanket and its teaching were presented to Vancouver Monthly Meeting at Meeting for Worship for Business on June 10, 2018. Each participant was gifted with a copy of the [United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UNDRIP). We closed the event with the joyful knowledge that UNDRIP is close to becoming a legal instrument in Canada. (Bill C-262, which applies UNDRIP to Canadian law, has passed third reading and is now under review by the Senate.) This achievement has come from the visionary leadership of Indigenous activists, and has been a long-term project of the [Canadian Friends Service Committee](#) (CFSC).¹

To honor Indigenous tradition and to express our appreciation for the knowledge and experienced Melaney Gleeson-Lyall shared, the joint organizing committee presented her with cedar essential oil, a pottery mug, and a book on Indigenous spirituality. Gifts of Indigenous craftsmanship were also presented to the exercise facilitators and witnesses.

Aspiration, education and action: building relationships for reconciliation

The idea for this event began with Vancouver Monthly Meeting's aspiration to develop a closer connection with the Musqueam First Nation. Our Meeting House in the Vancouver neighbourhood of Marpole is on unceded Musqueam territory, within a close walking distance of ɕəsnaʔəm (also known as the Marpole Midden), an ancient village and burial site dating back at least 4,000 years.

While many of us in the Meeting have personal connections to Indigenous friends and organizations, we wanted to explore ways to engage with the Musqueam in a more formal way, beginning with respectful acknowledgement of our presence on their unceded traditional territory.

Reconciliation Committee member and lead event organizer Rachel Yordy worked thoughtfully with Melaney Gleeson-Lyall to invite Indigenous Elders from the Musqueam Nation (and the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Society) to serve as witnesses at the Blanket Exercise. None could attend the gathering this time, but we were pleased that the event allowed us to share our journey and our desire to get to know them and find ways to work together in solidarity.

Through the organizing process, Rachel Yordy affirmed that the Blanket Exercise is primarily a transformative education tool for settlers. She explained, "This exercise gets to the 'truth' part of Truth and Reconciliation – understanding the truth is how we can begin to heal our relationships with Indigenous peoples. This is the work before the work. Before we can act in solidarity with Indigenous communities, we

need to develop a shared understanding and an embodied experience of the colonial history they have endured. This healing circle, so beautifully facilitated by Melaney, will help us approach our Musqueam neighbours with mind and heart prepared."

It has been a gift to work together on this project with the Unitarian community and learn more about their Reconciliation work, including their Truth, Healing and Reconciliation Reflection Guide. We look forward to strengthening the connection between our communities and our shared goals in reconciliation education and action.

Acknowledgements

Our deep gratitude goes to Melaney Gleeson-Lyall for sharing her wisdom, courage, and strength with us as the facilitator of this event. We also offer a warm thank you to the Unitarian Social Justice Committee for hosting, as well as providing financial assistance and childcare.

We also thank the Vancouver Monthly Meeting (Quaker) Reconciliation Committee for event planning and facilitation support, especially Kirsten Ebsen and Maxine Kaufman-Lacusta. A very special thank you goes out to Leslie Kemp and Rachel Yordy, who served as lead organizers of the event. Finally, we would like to share our gratitude to John and Nancy Denham, who have been actively engaged in reconciliation work with the Shíshálh Nation, for joining us as witnesses.

Resources

Canadian Unitarian Council – Truth, Healing and Reconciliation Guides:

cuc.ca/social-justice/truth-healing-reconciliation

The KAIROS Blanket Exercise:

www.kairosblanketexercise.org

Indigenous Foundations – Sixties Scoop:

indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/sixties_scoop

Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples:

www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/royal-commission-aboriginal-peoples

United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP):

www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html

Vancouver Quakers:

vancouver.quaker.ca

¹ CFSC is the social justice arm of the Canadian Quaker community.

A Complete Sermon Given By Many Voices

The General Gathering of Conservative Friends

David Raymond, Ottawa Monthly Meeting

With the support of Ottawa Monthly Meeting and Education and Outreach Committee of Canadian Yearly Meeting, I joined my friend Zaley Warkentin (of Winnipeg Monthly Meeting) for the General Gathering of Conservative Friends. This weekend gathering was held in Barnesville, Ohio in June 2018. It brings together Conservative Friends from far and wide and introduces their ways to seekers.

Perhaps in harmony with this goal, the agenda was simple and open. The only scheduled activities were Bible readings, Meetings for Worship, a Meeting for Concerns, and meals. This left time for quiet reflection and exploration of the beautiful grounds of Olney Friends School.

The Friends there had a calm and reserved nature. A small number wore plain dress. A few used plain speech such as “thee” and “thou.” I feel deeply moved by the way they conducted themselves.

Bible readings were held on the front porch of Stillwater Meeting House before worship. We sat reading our Bibles and sharing favorite passages aloud. The only rules were that there be no commentary, just the passages themselves, and that Friends leave a pause between speakers.

Before we began a Friend explained to the newcomers that the Bible is not *the* word of God but *a* word of God – and that Jesus Christ himself is the Word. He then quoted 2 Timothy 3:16: “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.”

There were four meetings of unprogrammed worship over the weekend. The three over Friday and Saturday were close to an hour and a half – but not exactly timed, perhaps in keeping with early Friends’ practice. Worship on Sunday was with Stillwater Monthly Meeting and was roughly an hour.

Vocal ministry focused on lessons and advice for those gathered. Bible passages were quoted and a couple songs were shared. Zaley remarked that over the course of a session, the combined ministry created a complete sermon given by many voices.

The Meeting for Concerns allowed anyone present to bring questions to the body. One concern raised (familiar to us) was that of an aging membership. Another was spiritual mentorship.



David Raymond & Zaley Warkentin tabling at Canadian Yearly Meeting Photo: Pat Moauro

A book published by Ohio Yearly Meeting was recommended called *Traditional Quaker Christianity*. This book is a wonderful resource and is the subject of the podcast “Quaker Faith and Podcast” (quakerpodcast.org). This podcast is led by Liberal plain Friend Mackenzie Morgan (who was present) and Quaker Pastor Micah Bales.

There was wonderful conversation over meals. I cherished talking with an older plain Friend. Even though it was brief, I felt elderled and cared for, so that my faith and hope were strengthened. I will be continuing my relationship with the Friends I met and look forward to future gatherings.

If you have questions for me or Zaley about Conservative Friends, please email us at widerfellowship@gmail.com.

Two years from now will be the next Gathering. Perhaps you will come too?

Poem

Amidst the sea

Celso Mendoza, Victoria Meeting

Amidst the sea still we long
For sweet water to quench our thirst.
When thirst is o’er and lips have songs,

Why call Bacchus with loving chords?

Gleanings & Quotations

“Telling you all would take too long. ... Let’s invite something new by unifying our silences.”

– Rainer Maria Rilke, “Telling You All”

Translated by A. Poulin Jr., in *Rilke: Poems* (Knopf, 1996)

Archives Corner

Sylvia Powers, Archives Committee

The records of Canadian Quakers from the late 1700s onwards are kept for us and future generations at Pickering College, a former Quaker boarding school located in Newmarket, ON. Thanks to the generosity of the college, the Canadian Yearly Meeting Archives and Library has a climate-controlled vault in the basement and the crowded Dorland Room on the second floor.

In the vault you can find minute books, a Quaker bonnet, and records of the Canadian Friends Service Committee, the Yearly Meeting, and all of its committees (provided they are deposited). Each Monthly Meeting has its own file box containing its minutes, which hopefully are sent regularly to the archives for safekeeping.

You don't necessarily have to come to Newmarket to benefit from the archives. Ancestry.ca has digitalized many of our early microfilmed records – including most of the minute books and some registries and diaries – and made them available on-line.

These are wonderful sources for genealogists, since many of the records predate the government censuses. You can put in your ancestor's name and, if he or she was a Quaker, an item in a record will be found attesting to this.

Meanwhile, the Canadian Friends Historical Association, with the leadership of Randy Saylor and his dedicated team of volunteers, have been transcribing the minutes of the early Monthly, Quarterly, and Yearly meetings into legible English. These are available on their website (www.cfha.info).

The Dorland Room holds books for and about Quakers. Many researchers use this room while looking through material from the vault. This library contains a very large collection of Disciplines, including a hand-written one from the mid 1700s prepared by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

Researchers must arrange for an appointment and staff or volunteers must be available to find the material for them. We now have hired an archivist for a very few hours as well as a cataloguer. The college staff supports our efforts with reception, maintenance, and computer assistance.

The Archives is an important asset for the Yearly Meeting and a wonderful outreach to non-Friends. A number of books based on their research in the archives have been published, including Heather Kirk's recent book *Seeking Peace*.

If you live too far away to enjoy the facilities, be sure to look us up on-line at www.quaker.ca/archives.

Poem

Goshen Friends Meeting

Caroline Balderston Parry, Ottawa Monthly Meeting

Shadows of my childhood family align along this plain meetinghouse bench in Chester County, where I have come to worship. Once our row was anchored by my strong blue serge-suited Father. Now I sit immersed in today's quiet, seeking Source.

Long ago I would touch his round stone watch-fob, slide it in and out of its shallow stitched vest fold, fingering its shape. Was I finding my own place among parents, brother, sisters, gathered seekers? I felt his still body beside my restless small girl self.

Where is my Self this Sunday in my seventy-fourth year? O Father-Mother Spirit, *Abba, Amma*, breathe through me. My father's gold watch chain spanned his chest, rose and fell with his breath, that timepiece enclosed In a deeper pocket. Was Spirit hidden or within our reach?

We searched other faces and watched the wall clock, brass pendulum swinging, tick-tock tick-tock; then I counted thin gray stripes on Daddy's pant leg, and the firm elders on the solid facing benches. Today, I list my blessings, these stirred-up recollections.

My mother sat amongst her little ones, another support. Her loving arms curled round us; calm hand held mine; sometimes she whispered careful counsel. Each sibling squirmed and slowly dropped into the silence undergirded every Sunday by familiar, faithful Friends.

Their deep patient waiting enveloped every one of us. Panelled wooden walls framed our souls, and we rested in those circles of connection, of parents, other Quakers. Seated on stiff horsehair cushions, we all eased into some surprising Infinity – and found an hour passed.

In this later century, watching my inward cycles, I beseech You, Spirit of the slow-ticking wall clock, expand my sense of Mystery, infuse my aging adult days with timelessness, transform these memories of older ones overseeing children, reaching into Truth, and let history slip into Presence.

Gleanings & Quotations

"Words are useful if they can take you to the point in which words are no longer necessary."

– Katie McEwen

Meet a Friend

Bertha Small, Ottawa Monthly Meeting Interview by Linda Taffs, **Cowichan Valley Monthly Meeting**

Bertha, you have just returned from Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where you were representing the Quaker Peace Committee (QPC).¹ Can you say something about why you were there and how that was for you?

It was a very interesting trip because I was in places I had not been before and I didn't know what to expect. I was excited to be visiting two different groups that we are helping to support,² and to get to know them a bit better and see what they are doing.

[First] I visited the Friends Woman's Association in Burundi. They are a group that is supported by a number of organizations. Quaker Peace Committee is just supporting one piece of what they do, but I got the chance to see a few of their various activities.

I met Parfaite Ntahuba, who is well-known to some Quakers in Canada. It was my first time meeting her. She is a lovely, dynamic, wonderful woman.

The day after I arrived, I went to the church where she is the pastor, and experienced for the first time a service in a Friends' Evangelic Church. Then I visited a clinic, which is a major piece of their work. I met with some of the doctors, nurses, and people who work there and gave them some medical supplies that I had brought as a contribution.

The piece of work that the Quaker Peace Committee supports is the education and training [on] gender-based violence. It was lucky I was able to go because I got to see the end of a three-day workshop on gender-based violence. I got a sense of what was going on even though I didn't understand the language.

I also went to another village and witnessed a [piece of] street theatre by some people who had already been trained. It was huge fun. Even though I only got the gist of it through partial translation, it was very entertaining, with a lot of enthusiasm from the audience.

From Bujumbura, Burundi, I went to Kinshasa in the Democratic of the Republic of the Congo to visit Muinda, which is another organization that Quaker Peace Committee supports. I freely admit that I went there with significant



Parfaite Ntahuba, Bertha Small, and one of the clinic doctors at the Friends Women's Association clinic in Bujumbura, Burundi.

trepidation because I am intimidated by large African cities, and I know how completely dysfunctional the Democratic Republic of the Congo is anyway.

Happily, I had Leon, a Congolese fellow, travelling with me. That visit's purpose was largely to offer Alternative to Violence Program (AVP) training that had been requested by the people in Kinshasa. Leon is an experienced AVP trainer and at the last minute we were lucky to get Basamani, a second experienced trainer.

We met the people from Muinda at the airport and drove to an old slum area where we stayed in a compound. In spite of their very warm welcome, I did wonder how I was going to last two weeks there. The physical conditions were challenging because there was [only] sometimes electricity, sometimes water, lots of mosquitoes, it was very hot, and it was not safe to go outside on your own.

It helped a lot to give the AVP training, which kept us very busy – and the enthusiasm of the participants and the facilitators, Leon and Basamani, were great. I had to learn on the fly how to be a facilitator. The goodwill, creativity, and interest of the participants were quite overwhelming. It was grand and exhausting.

¹ Quaker Peace Committee is one of the three program committees within Canadian Friends Service Committee. (The other two are the Quaker Indigenous Rights Committee and Quakers Fostering Justice Committee). Each program has three volunteer committee members and a paid staff coordinator. CFSC members are nominated by their Meeting. (CFSC is a committee of Canadian Yearly Meeting, CYM, and so nominations are approved by CYM). Bertha Small is the Clerk of QPC.

² As will be explained later, the two groups are Muinda in the Democratic of the Republic of the Congo and the Friends Woman's Association in Burundi.



Bertha and a group of peace workers in Kinshasa supported by Project Muinda.

Also, I had a chat with David Bakamana, the founder of the Muinda Peace Project, and I saw the building which QPC is supporting. It is progressing really nicely, and I witnessed the major step of the concrete roof being poured.

One of the things I most enjoyed of this visit was that after the workshops were done, we went and visited a number of peace cells that are supported by Muinda, who intervene in disputes to try and reach a nonviolent solution. In each of these peace cells were some of the same people who were participating in the workshops. Seeing them again and hearing some of their stories was very interesting and also a practical example of how the training was important.

What else would you like Friends to know about QPC's work?

QPC is supporting groups and projects that are doing peace work in other parts of the world, and there are various projects in Canada. One is the book *The Peace Virus*¹ that Matt Legge has written. There are many strands of peace work in Canada that sometimes come to the fore and sometimes sink in the background – such as conscientious objectors, refugees, and civil rights – depending on the political tone of the moment.

What led you to become a member of QPC?

I had for three years been the Recording Clerk for the Religious Education Committee, when it existed, which I enjoyed. So when I heard of the opening for a Recording Clerk of CFSC, I thought, “I could do that.” I had always been in awe of CFSC.

Then after a year, I was told that QPC was looking for a member. I was told “we think you would do really well with QPC because you have worked with MFS, Médecins San Frontières.” I was also told “it would not really take much of your time.”

I said, “I don’t think I can really do this,” and they said, “We think you can. Why don’t you give it a try?” I said “OK,” then

I found out what really was needed was a person they could put forward as a Clerk when Trevor Chandler left. I requested that they try as hard as they can for another person to be Clerk, but they couldn’t find anyone who would fill the role. So here I am.

So far how have you found being the Clerk of QPC?

I find it extremely nerve-racking because I don’t feel I have the skills, the knowledge, or the time it deserves. But I am doing what I can. I must say Trevor Chandler was extremely kind because he let me watch how he worked and participate in his weekly conversations with staff person Matt Legge. So he tried to bring me in as gently as possible. I’m certainly learning lots and hope I am doing my bit the best I can.

Could you share a bit about your work with Médecins San Frontières? Are you finding any correlation in your work with MSF and QPC?

I have done two missions with them in the Congo, and I’ve done a couple of short training trips with them. I’m hoping to do a few more.

I think the connection between MFS and QPC is that both activities are based in an interest in people of other places and cultures. And in the desire to not only understand a bit but be helpful, in whatever way I can, to people who are living in parts of the world where life is much more difficult than where I happen to live.

I realized when I was making this trip with QPC that it felt very different from making a trip with MFS. When travelling with MSF, I have an enormous organization at my back, making all the crucial decisions for me. They decided when it was safe to go and where I should go. Whereas when I was travelling with QPC, I had to make all those decisions, so that felt much less secure to me. I had to figure out if something was going wrong, and what to do about it instead of someone else doing that for me.

So the sense was different, but the reason for travelling was quite similar.

What led you to becoming a member of MSF?

That was something that developed out of the loss of my husband. After he died in 2011, and I was actively grieving and thinking “what do I do with my life now?” I realized that I had freedom to move.

That was not necessarily a welcome freedom, but it was there nonetheless and I felt it would be nice to make some good use of it. So it occurred to me that maybe I could actually try and do something with MSF that I had previously just given money to.

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1 Since this interview, the publishers have changed the title from *Spreading the Peace Virus* to *Are We Done Fighting?*

>>>>

I was under no illusion. I realized I was running away from being alone. And it is very addictive. After I did one trip, very tough as it was, I came back thinking, “Maybe I could do this a second time.” I came back from the second trip thinking, “Maybe I can’t do this again, but maybe there is some other way that I can stay involved with them.”

Do you have any goals or vision for QPC?

Other than continuing the good work that it has been doing over the many years, I am looking forward very much to Matt’s book *The Peace Virus*, which is coming out next year (2019). I am hoping that it opens up new opportunities for education and training, both locally in Canada and perhaps further afield. That is the new, exciting thing on the horizon.

What led you to becoming a Quaker in the first place?

I first heard of Quakers when my sister went to Swarthmore College in the US, so I started reading about the history of Quakers. I was very impressed with all the people who went into the prisons in England and were persecuted. I found that quite romantic.

I ended up also going to Swarthmore and I started attending Meeting for Worship, which I found a peaceful thing to do.

Then at the end of my first year on campus, the black students staged a sit-in and the president died of a heart attack. It was a pretty dramatic time and the way the college community reacted to this was mind-boggling. There were all kinds of groups meeting to talk about what was going on, what the issues were that were distressing the black students, about how the college should be moving forward. The students were allowed to sit in the faculty meetings, to listen to how discussions were proceeding on a basis of consensus. It was just amazing.

And the second year I was at Swathmore, there was the bombing campaign of Cambodia. There were all kinds of spontaneous workshops developed in ways that amazed me. There were debates going on and there were many fellow students trying to avoid the draft, doing it in different ways. One friend starved himself to avoid it for medical reasons. Another person chose to go to jail when he could have successfully applied for conscientious objector status, because there were others who had the same belief of right or wrong that would not be accepted.

I was just seventeen when I started at Swathmore, and my mind was just blown open by all these things. Therefore, when I finished at Swathmore and went to medical school in Rochester New York, I continued to go to Quaker Meeting. And it was in Rochester Meeting that I decided to become a Quaker.

Can you briefly share a bit about your life in general?

I’ve have had an extremely fortunate life in general. My parents were very loving and keen on education of all sorts, so I was exposed to music, art, and lots of academic education. I was very lucky – I was growing up in a family that had adequate funds for all these pleasures.

My parents came from a very poor background, but scrimped and saved and managed to do very well by their children. I had the right colour skin, spoke the right language, and had the pure good fortune to be born in North America and not sub-Saharan Africa.

I consider myself still very lucky. I love my job as a doctor. I hated the training – every bit of it. But I think it is the best job in the world. And I am very lucky that I am able to do it. It has taken me to very interesting places.

I have two great healthy children with two lovely grandchildren and another two on the way. It is hard to imagine how much more fortunate I could be. I do wish my husband was still around to see the grandchildren and so on.

What do you do to nurture your own well-being?

I’m not as good at that as I should be. But I knit, I occasionally have the chance to sit down at a piano and play a bit, and I read enormously. And I look at my garden and daily admire the growth of a monarch butterfly caterpillar that is on one of our butterfly bushes.

When I take a deep breath and look at what is around me, I remember how lucky and how small I am at the same time. And those are good things to remember.

Learn more about the work CFSC supports in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo by visiting quakerservice.ca/our-work/peace/africa.

Meet More Friends!

Linda Taffs was kind enough to revive “Meet a Friend” with this interview and she also passed along this note:

“With heartfelt thanks to Tim Kitiz, Editor of the Canadian Friend and Quaker.ca, not only for his support in writing this article but also for bringing forth the “Meet a Friend” addition to *The Canadian Friend*. This is a wonderful way for Friends to get to know other Friends and of their service to our Quaker community.”

If you too would like this feature to continue, please email editor@quaker.ca to suggest a Quaker for the next “Meet a Friend” or contribute to writing it yourself.

CANADIAN YEARLY MEETING 2018

A Touching Welcome¹

Reconciliation and Faith¹

Sheila Havard, Coldstream Monthly Meeting

Yearly Meeting is a wonderful time to reconnect with F/friends from all over the country. Attendance this year – August 3 to 11 – was slightly more than 160, compared to the more than 200 who normally attend when Yearly Meeting is held in Ontario. It was sad to see more Friends now relying on mobility devices. But we were blessed with the presence of a number of Young Friends and Young Adult Friends.

CYM is a place to refresh and reaffirm your faith. You learn so much, both formally in the various sessions and informally by interacting with Friends on topics of common interest.

We met this year in Georgian College in Barrie, Ontario. This was a new site for us and had a number of challenges.

The next two Yearly Meetings will be held in Winnipeg, a site that has met our needs admirably over the years.

There were business sessions Monday through Saturday and each one began with the recognition of the Aboriginal history of the land on which we were meeting – a minuted request by CYM to Monthly Meetings.

After the initial retreat, the week started out on Saturday with a greeting from Anishnaabe Elder Jeff Monague of Beausoleil First Nation Band on Christian Island. Because I was detained by program committee business, I arrived late for his welcoming talk – but just in time to hear him say “we are hurting but we are resilient.”

I at once felt deeply touched by his words. Jeff’s talk covered a range of past injustices inflicted on Indigenous peoples, from the personal to the general. His mother went to residential school and died young of diabetes. He pointed out that the land on which we were meeting had never been paid for after being invaded by settlers, although payment was promised.

Jeff learned the traditions of his people from his father. Being a teacher, he enjoys teaching groups of schoolchildren how to thrive in the wild by building shelters and making fires, etc.

Jeff closed by stressing that although his people were strong, they would greatly appreciate outside help – including from Christian denominations – to right past wrongs. He encouraged us all to work together, as we are all connected to each other and to the earth.

The Quaker Study at CYM 2018 focused on the theme of reconciliation, faith, and relationships with Indigenous Peoples.

At the 2015 and 2016 sessions, a CYM minute expressed strong support for Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the resulting 94 Calls to Action.

Friends committed to engage with this work in an ongoing manner and many Meetings and individual Friends are continuing to do so.

Jennifer Preston led the Study’s week of daily sessions, and gave the Monday and Friday presentations. Jennifer is the Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC) staff person for the Indigenous Rights Program Committee,

She quoted Murray Sinclair, head of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: “Education got us into this and education will get us out” and we are “either for or against reconciliation. There is no middle ground.”

Reconciliation is not possible unless we are familiar with the background to the issues. Jennifer sketched out some of the history of the Doctrine of Discovery, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Tsilhqot’in Supreme Court decision, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

On Tuesday, we heard from Rob Hughes, Clerk of CFSC’s Indigenous Rights Program Committee. Rob recounted his experience as a 63-year-old gay white man who married, under the care of Vancouver Monthly Meeting, a man with an Indigenous background.

The only Indigenous history Rob received during his elementary schooling was a passing mention of ‘Indian tribes.’ We settlers are in collective denial about our theft of Indigenous land, Rob said. His first actual contact with Native people was at an international workshop, where he was shocked to learn about residential schools.

Of course, at the time he did not know that his future mother-in-law would be a survivor of a residential school. His discovery at the workshop did lead to his work as a lawyer advocating for Indigenous rights. >>>>

¹ An earlier version of these articles appeared in *The Coldstream Friend* (Fall 2018). Anyone interested in being on the newsletter’s mailing list can contact Sheila Havard at havard_translations@hotmail.com.



Jennifer Preston with CFSC's booklet *Truth and Reconciliation*.

Photo: Pat Moauro

>>>> Rob reminded us of the story of the Good Samaritan, urging us to work for Indigenous rights by walking with Native peoples rather than trying to take the lead.

On Wednesday, Jennifer's father Dick Preston (Hamilton Monthly Meeting) and Monica Walters-Field (Toronto Monthly Meeting), continued the reconciliation discussion.

Dick came to Quakerism through his former work as an anthropological field worker. (Jennifer grew up living in Cree communities in the North, where Dick was doing his fieldwork.)

Dick defined reconciliation as an attitude of respect that can guide our relationships. He described an instance of how well-intentioned colonialists had done more harm than good by consulting with "the Indians" instead of referring to the Elders and the Band Council.

Monica came to Canada from Jamaica to attend school. With her customary verve, exuberance, and humour, she recalled her encounter as a black woman with Canadian society.

Her parents chose Canada instead of the United States for her as they thought there would be no racial discrimination here. Little did they know that she would not be sheltered from encounters with racism. As a teacher in the Jane and Finch area of Toronto, she bristled when overhearing derogatory remarks about people of colour.

Monica first met Quakers when her children were in Friends Day Care. She liked their egalitarianism and saw Quaker values as closer to her beliefs than her Anglican roots. She became a Quaker.

Through CFSC she became acquainted with Jennifer Preston. She started accompanying Jennifer to her UN work after seeing how exhausted she became after a tour of duty in New York. After a while Monica herself started participating in the work.

Monica said she is a product of colonialism. Her language and culture are lost to her. Monica minced no words: "If you are white, get a grip – go out and really treat everyone else as having that of God!"

Apparently, one Sunday after Meeting for Worship, a member of her Toronto Meeting suggested going to the nearest Friendship Centre, five minutes' walk away. One single person went with him – and it was somebody from Winnipeg.

On Thursday, Ottawa Friend and social worker Manuela Popovici described how she became involved with Aboriginal people.

She was attracted by the constant reiterations of gratitude when she interacted with the Native community and by the daily presence of the sacred, expressed through ceremonies and prayers. She always waited until she was invited to join and always felt welcomed.

Manuela told us that we need to listen to the concerns of First Nations people and ask what we can do. Guilt gets us nowhere. Fixing and helping is not what is required; that is disrespectful. What is required is respect. True activism starts with prayer and gratitude, and is not prompted by anger, guilt, or even a sense of duty.

Is there a common thread in these various talks? Perhaps respect is the answer, not barging in, but being willing to engage and take the lead from Indigenous Peoples.

Fact Sheets on Indigenous Rights from Canadian Friends Service Committee

Canadian Friends Service Committee has worked with Indigenous peoples and various human rights organizations to develop three brief fact sheets.

The fact sheets are on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), Bill-262 (to implement UNDRIP), and free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC). They are designed to help clear up the confusion we regularly see in the media, from politicians, and even among Friends when it comes to Indigenous rights issues.

The fact sheets are perfect for handing out at gatherings, rallies, or when meeting with your Member of Parliament. Feel free to download the fact sheets from quakerservice.ca/factsheets.

Business Meeting Blues

*By David Cheatley, to the tune of "Folsom Prison Blues" by Johnny Cash
As performed at CYM 2018's Family Night*

I hear the highway humming, they're rolling round the bend
And I ain't felt the sunshine since I don't know when
'Cause I'm stuck in business meeting & time keeps dragging on
But those Friends will keep wordsmithing until the break of dawn

When I was just a baby, my mama told me "Son,
Always be a good boy and try to have some fun"
But now I joined Programme Committee, now I watch & sigh
When I hear that traffic rolling, I hang my head and cry

I bet there's Quakers eating in the caf and then
They're probably drafting minutes, then drafting them again
Well I know I had it coming, I know I can't be free
But those Friends keep on revising & that's what tortures me

If they freed me from this Meeting, if that agenda was mine
I bet I'd move some words and commas farther down the line
Oh far from Business Meeting, that's where I want to stay
And I'd let that roaring highway just blow my blues away

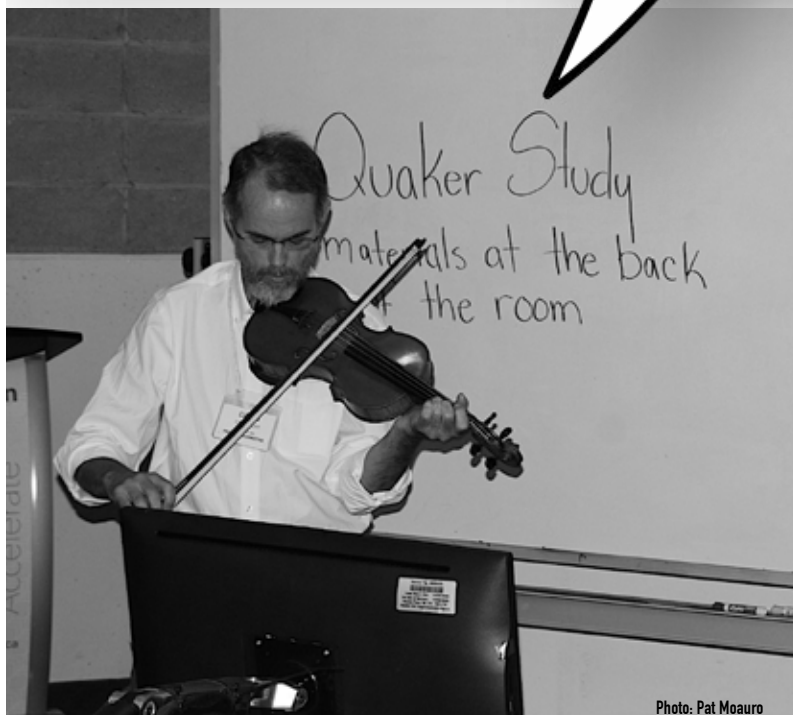
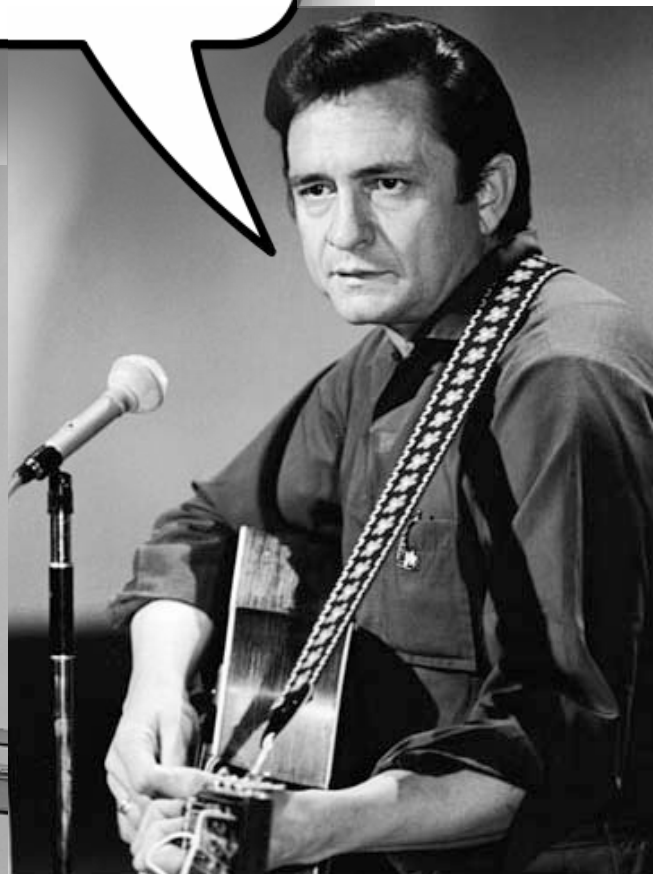


Photo: Pat Moauro



Examining Liberal Quaker Principles

*With Sunderland P. Gardner Lecturer
Arthur M. Larrabee*

**Pat Moauro & Sheila Havard,
Coldstream Monthly Meeting**

In his Sunderland P. Gardner Lecture, Arthur Larrabee of Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting explored practices Friends can use to make room for Spirit in their lives. His talk, printed as a booklet, has been distributed with this issue.

Later in the week at Canadian Yearly Meeting, Arthur led a SIG (Special Interest Group) discussion on the “Principles of Quakerism.” This is a document Arthur developed, through many revisions, to help answer questions from inquirers. It attempts to name core principles collectively held by unprogrammed Liberal Quaker meetings in the United States and Canada.

One version of it, entitled “Core Quaker Beliefs,” can be found as a [QuakerSpeak youtube video](#).

Arthur Larrabee speaking during a Business Meeting session at CYM.



These nine principles generated considerable discussion at the SIG:

1. There is a living, dynamic spiritual presence at work in the world which is both within us and outside of us.
2. There is that of God in everyone.
3. Each person is capable of the direct and unmediated experience of God.
4. Our understanding and experience of God is nurtured and enlarged in community.
5. The revelation of God's Truth is continuing and ongoing.
6. The Bible is an important spiritual resource and the life and teachings of Jesus are relevant for us today.
7. Spiritual truth is welcome regardless of its source.
8. Our inward experience of God transforms us and leads us into outward expressions of faithful living, witness and action.
9. Modeling God's presence in our lives is more important than espousing beliefs.

Under this last statement Arthur said, “We believe in the power of letting our lives, not merely our words, speak. We aspire to be living examples of God's Truth in the world.”

Gleanings & Quotations

“Two of the greatest hungers in our world today are the hunger for spirituality and the hunger for social change.”

– James E. Wallis, founder and editor of *Sojourners* magazine

“We are not to simply bandage the wounds of the victim beneath the wheels of injustice, we are to drive a spoke into the wheel itself.”

– Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Letters and Papers from Prison (1943-1945)

Though it can be empowering for those who have spent their lives under the heel of oppression to settle the score with their oppressors, liberation is not a matter of exacting revenge, but of rendering it unnecessary.

– CrimethInc. Ex-Worker's Collective.

The Ex-Worker Podcast #5, “Still Not Lovin’ the Police.”
10 July 2013.

We must reject the division of labour so often proposed to us: individuals can get indignant and talk; governments will reflect and act.

– Michel Foucault

p. 213, *The Chomsky-Foucault Debate* (New Press, 2006)

No Wrong Turns Possible

The Labyrinth At CYM

Beverly Shepard, Hamilton Monthly Meeting

At Yearly Meeting 2018, as for the past six years or so, Friends set up a portable labyrinth on one of the grassy areas of the campus. This year it was at Georgian College in Barrie, Ontario, on the traditional lands of the Anishnaabeg peoples.

To those of us who are committed labyrinth walkers this is an important activity. It's important not just because the result is a labyrinth which we can walk when we want that quiet, focussing experience to keep us grounded during a busy week. The construction itself is also an instance of working together toward a common goal in a Friendly manner.

This year, the group that formed itself for this service during the Intergenerational Activities time on Sunday afternoon consisted of Rosemary Meier, Caroline Parry, Mark Ebden, Jobran Khanji, and me, Beverly Shepard. We had a good time!



This year's labyrinth builders, in front of their handiwork.

The labyrinth that we build every year at CYM is made of white cord and blue tent pegs. It snuggles down in the grass, so you can see it readily when walking it. But it's not attention-getting, so it doesn't seem an imposition on the campus.

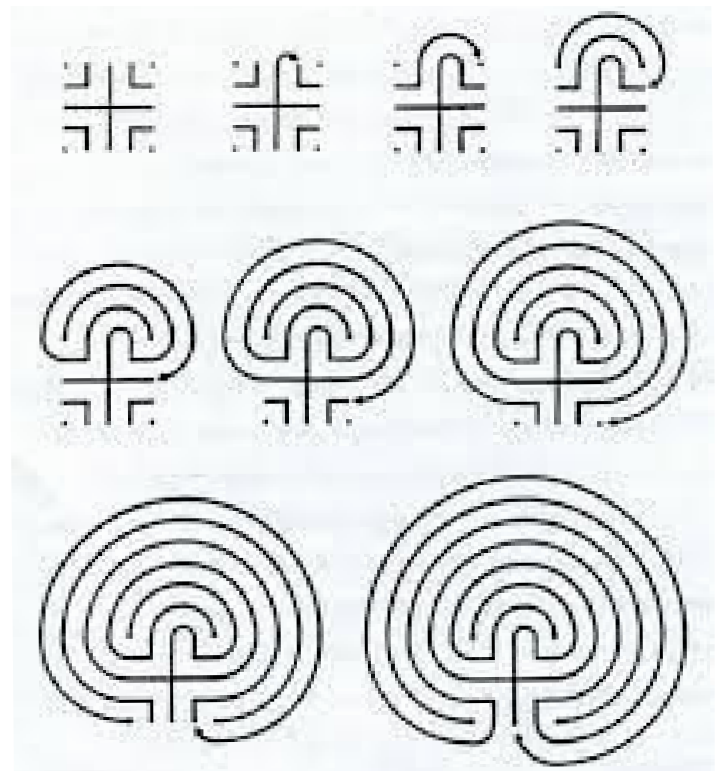
However, those who mowed the grass in the area at Georgian College did notice our labyrinth. They kindly did not mow the area where it was laid out, so it was not destroyed. By the end of the week the grass was long and luxuriant, a beautiful substrate for walking barefoot – and thick enough that the path had been made clear by the feet that had pressed upon it.

The design is that of the seven-circuit classic or Cretan labyrinth. This is one of the two most-frequently-used designs

for labyrinths around the world. (The other is the Chartres labyrinth, which copies the one in mosaic on the floor of Chartres Cathedral in France.)

There are volumes of material about labyrinths on the world-wide web – these two and many others – so I won't go into too much detail here. Suffice it to say that the classic type is the easiest to draw. By a simple expansion (or reduction) of the 'seed pattern,' its initial diagram, one can make a labyrinth with more (or fewer) paths or circuits. This classic labyrinth design has paths which all trace full circumferences of varying diameters. Meanwhile, the Chartres labyrinth has various places where one makes a 180-degree turn within a circumference.

Here's how to draw a classic-type labyrinth.



Seven paths is the usual size, and is the size of the one constructed at Yearly Meeting. If you wanted a three-circuit one you would leave out the little corners added in the second drawing.

For five paths you would have the corners but not the dots. To increase the number of paths you would draw more corners within the corners.

If you build a labyrinth – a temporary one similar to the one we made at CYM or taped on a floor perhaps, or a permanent one with stones or pavers, or paint on a floor – what then? What do you do with it? Who uses it?

>>>>

Anyone can use it, of course, and in any way that's helpful. As you can see, there are no choices or possible wrong turns in a true labyrinth. You walk to the centre by a complex path, and you walk out again by the same way. Done quietly and mindfully, it is a calming and grounding experience, an aid to meditation.

Caroline Parry, who has been trained to lead group walks by Dr. Lauren Artress, a leading figure in the resurgence of interest in labyrinths, suggests 'the four Rs' as one approach to a labyrinth walk, especially if you haven't come with a specific request, question, or need:

- **Remember** your blessings as you start the journey.
- **Release** your expectations or doubts on your way in to the centre.
- **Receive** there guidance, peace, and creativity.
- **Resolve** to honour your insights and take the next step as you leave the labyrinth.

Another way of thinking about the journey is the 'four Gs.'

- Walk in with **gratitude**, feeling thankful for your blessings.
- Ask for **guidance** as you stand in the centre.
- Feel the **grace** that accompanies you as you walk out.
- Prepare to **go** forth refreshed and rightly-led.

For me, the calming effect is often all I need. But if I'm having trouble staying focussed, I sometimes use a kind of narration to keep my thoughts in line. I describe the journey I'm taking and feel the metaphors that arise for events in my life: "I'm walking directly toward the centre, but now I'm turning, and I'm farther from the centre than before. I go all the way around before I turn again, and now I am still farther from my goal. But now I'm walking toward the centre again, and this time I am closer before I turn..."

It can be quite a revelation when the turns and changes apply themselves to events in my life! This approach, however, really works better when walking on a more complex labyrinth, such as the Chartres design, or the tripartite labyrinth at Camp NeeKauNis.

For still more metaphors and revelations, walk the labyrinth with a group. Leave a good space between walkers, at least a third of the circumference. You will find that sometimes you are following along behind someone on an adjacent path – and then later you are passing that person going opposite directions, or you are leading instead of following, or following or passing a completely different person. If you are all walking meditatively, the experience can be particularly deep and spiritual.

The labyrinth that was set up at CYM 2018 will come to future Yearly Meetings as long as I can manage it in my luggage – and as long as we can be given a space to place it on the campus where we meet. We will be in Winnipeg at Canadian Mennonite University for at least the next two years and we know we can install the labyrinth there. Perhaps I'll walk it with you!

Labyrinth

In truth, it is a short journey,
But not a simple one.
I walk circles, arcs;
I make tight turns and easy ones;
I walk nearer, farther;
I do reach the centre.

And I learn
That sometimes those things that are walls
Are also guides.

A Fly on the Wall

How it feels to follow Yearly Meeting remotely

**Bert Horwood,
Thousand Islands Monthly Meeting**

It's common to wish to be 'a fly on the wall,' to be able to observe an event without participating or even being noticed. I would much prefer to be at Yearly Meeting, 2018, but since it is not possible I choose to be an electronic fly on the cyber-wall and witness the event as it is revealed on the emerging pages at quaker.ca.

My plan for the week is to follow the daily agenda. I begin with my own worship on Sunday and use the afternoon to read key items in the documents in advance.

My eye catches the Continuing Meeting of Ministry and Counsel report. I am touched to know that the spiritual well-being of all has been in such good care. I hold everyone involved in the Light as they grapple with the especially tender topic of estranged Friends in evening meetings later in the week.

But before that, I 'attend' the Memorial Meeting by reading the Minutes provided. Here I meet old friends who have died, although I'm not there to hear ministry. The minutes make me think that we sometimes describe rich secular biographic detail and forget that these minutes are meant to witness to the grace of God in the lives of deceased Friends.

Hooray! *The Daily Quaker* will be available on-line. And here I learn that my virtual observations of this Yearly Meeting are entirely dependent on many people getting text onto the in-session web pages. But this quirky daily newsletter is a special gift that opens a unique window through which to view events. It is obligatory breakfast reading when available.



A Business Meeting session at Canadian Yearly Meeting.

Photo: Pat Moauro

I use the Monday session to read some documents in advance. I know how hard it is to get those key writings in on time. But how glad I am to have them in an accessible way!

I catch up with Meetings across the country by reading the State of Society reports. My head nods with sympathy at well-known difficulties. And I smile with joy at accounts of tenacity, creativity, and success. What a rich web we weave!

Each day, the previous day's Minutes appear. I picture the doorkeeper holding latecomers until a suitable moment for entry. My imagination calls up the voices, people struggling to make the travelling microphone work, and the Clerk reminding us to hold the Recording Clerk in silence while the richly demanding work of putting collective discernment into words goes on.

In my mind, I track the long line of faithful labour: the Committee's report, the agenda, full consideration on the floor with numerous perspectives, the minute's approval. Then it moves to further refinement by the Minute Review Committee and ultimate posting for an absent Friend to read.

Mentoring Clerk Elaine Bishop and Co-Recording Clerk Dale Dewar hard at work on minutes.

Photo: Pat Moauro



I feel a surge of gratitude.

I can only imagine this process, which is entirely invisible on web pages. From the posted minutes I get content, the fruit of the process.

There is now a new Half-Yearly meeting – well done Atlantic Friends! A complete rewrite of *Organization & Procedure* is about to begin – a timely step after years of piece-meal updates. New advices and queries are to be drafted for addition to our beloved but dated collection. The Young Friends and Young Adult Friends are asserting themselves appropriately through a session of prolonged worship.

The other business adds to my feeling that Yearly Meeting has emerged with vigour from its fallow year. Only the unfilled vacancies on committees leaves a twinge of concern.

Unfortunately I can only take note of that which emerges on the web pages. There is much more of value that remains hidden at the time. But a mere fly should not carp about his lot, but rather offer quiet words of solemn thanks for all wealth that has been revealed so far. And I do.

David Cheatley (Tech & Programme Committee), Co-Clerks Elaine Bishop and Beverly Shepard, and Co-Recording Clerk John Samson Fellows.

Photo: Tim Kitz



CYM attendees visit Camp NeeKauNis

Pat Moauro, Coldstream Monthly Meeting



Photo: Pat Moauro

Two busloads of attenders from Canadian Yearly Meeting (CYM) 2018 meeting in Barrie were taken to visit Camp NeeKauNis on August 8.

The Quaker camp located in Waubaushe, Ontario, a half-hour drive north of Barrie. It is under the care of Canadian Yearly Meeting.

Since its founding in 1931 and first camping season in 1932, NeeKauNis has operated primarily in the hands of volunteers. The camp grounds, which overlook Sturgeon Bay (part of Georgian Bay), consist of 32 acres of partially forested, elevated land. The camp operates mainly for two months in July and August, with limited usage at other times.

Photo: Pat Moauro



Moments from Family Night, CYM 2018

Photo: Tim Kitz



Photo: Sylvia Grady



Photo: Sylvia Grady



Reflections During Yearly Meeting

**Jane Zavitz-Bond,
Yarmouth Monthly Meeting**

Because of the care and support of Friends on the Archives Committee. I was able to attend Yearly Meeting – likely my last. I am grateful for sharing with f/Friends.

At the second day of Yearly Meeting, a reference to Camp NeeKauNis at the morning session sparked a memory of the first time I heard of Camp. I was in my early teens at Cincinnati Friends Meeting. The pastor, Burton S. Hill, told of carrying a lantern to a cabin as a youth there was no electricity. That sounded enticing to me.

Burton continued, “Thy word is a lamp into my feet and a light unto my path,” quoting a verse from Psalm 119.

I never expected to actually see camp. Yet it has impacted my life. Paul Zavitz was there and became Clerk of Canadian Young Friends. Then we each represented our Yearly Meetings at the 1948 International Young Friends Conference held at the Dutch Friends School at Eerde, near Omme. And our lives changed.

Paul then went to Poland for Friends Service on the reconstruction truck transport team and I entered Earlham College.

To return to Burton Hill and the group Young Friends, they were instrumental in the 1955 reunification of their three Yearly Meetings. The process started when Young Friends worked together at NeeKauNis with camps for youngsters from Toronto for holidays. They even had camps for mothers with small children during the Depression.

These Friends continued to serve CYM. Burton wrote the important CYM solicitation letters to all members for many years. (The current solicitation committee – or Contributions Committee, as its now know, also reported on Monday morning).

At my first Yearly Meeting in concurrent session, four persons sat at the front. There were three Clerks, one for each Yearly Meeting,¹ and a Recording Clerk, three men and a woman, Mable Brown Willson. This year we have three Clerks, current, incoming, and mentoring, with a recorder – three women and one man!



Leading the discussions during daily Worship and Meetings for Business at Canadian Yearly Meeting 2018 were, from left to right, Mentoring and Retiring CYM Clerk Elaine Bishop of Winnipeg Monthly Meeting, Presiding Clerk Beverly Shepard of Hamilton Monthly Meeting, and the two Recording Clerks, Dale Dewar of Prairie Meeting and John Samson Fellows of Winnipeg Monthly Meeting.

Photo: Pat Moauro

Named to the original Discipline Preparation Committee in 1953 prior to official unification in 1955, I worked on the membership. I checked the three Disciplines' contents and prepared a composite for presentation. I thought it was ready!

Well, we continue to have a Discipline Committee. Our *Faith & Practice* is a work in progress. As soon as a new or revised portion is approved for change it may be outdated!

We relate Truth to the times in which we live. Living our truth often brings us into paradoxical situations. Arthur Larrabee pointed this out in his down-to-earth Sunderland Gardner Lecture! We meet paradox as we live and seek to be faithful in these challenging times. Our *Faith & Practice* can assist us. We should use it even as we discern new portions.

All during Yearly Meeting, Archives Committee encouraged Friends to look at duplicate books from the Dorland Research Collection for items they or their meeting would like. In the main hallway at Georgian College others passing stopped by.

Outreach takes many forms. Welcome visitors. We thought the tables in the public hall a limitation. But in fact the questions about who and what we were doing there led to many exchanges with those passing by, which was important.

After a Yearly Meeting week full of meeting old f/Friends and making new, we all wonder what the future for Friends in Canada may be.

Whatever comes, the best preparation is to live each day fully, present in the presence of the Eternal Creative Spirit.

¹ These were the “Hicksite” (or Liberal) Genesee Yearly Meeting (affiliated with Friends General Conference), the “orthodox” Canada Yearly Meeting (affiliated with Five Years Meeting, later Friends United Meeting), and the “Wilburite” Canada Yearly Meeting (Conservative).

Gleanings from Canadian Yearly Meeting 2018

"We will break for a ten minute coffee break, which will hopefully bring you back in fifteen."

"How do you keep all those acronyms in your brain & why?"

"I don't know, they're just in there, like Britney Spears lyrics."

"A lot of work moves at the speed of trust."

"I love triple bookings – that's two things I don't have to do."

"You're not supposed to stand out, but I love your rainbow-coloured hair."

"Margaret Fell said, 'It's a silly poor gospel that does not allow people to wear bright colours.'"

"Our task is not to seek for love, but to find the barriers we have built against love."

Reading gleanings at Family Night.

Photo: Tim Kitz



"Attitudes guide a lot more than we want to think."

"Living in the present welcomes life on its own terms without judgment there is room for spirit."

"The sign over Carl Jung's door read 'Summoned or not, God will be present.'"

"Mary Ann Williamson once said 'You can let the force that holds planets in place and causes flowers to grow run your life, or you can try to do it yourself.'"

"A number of us are in our fifth quarter of life."

"Hope is not losing sight of the good things in life, even when they are not visible."

"I am here because people have listened."

"The journey is a lot more rewarding when we travel with others."

"The peace testimony is not against war it is for all those things that bring about peace."

"I'm not asking you to raise the roof, but it is helpful if the Clerks' table can hear when you approve a minute."

"Gonna lay down all acronyms, down by the river side." (A welcome new verse to "Study War No More.")

Clerk: "If you don't receive something that you don't know we've sent, please let us know."

"It's not that I'm encouraging you to be late ... it's just that I forgive you immediately."

"We have all witnessed a child beginning to walk. A child takes its steps and falls down. We all respond not by saying 'you failed' but by saying 'hooray.' We need to say 'hooray' more often."

Clerk to many Friends wishing to speak: "Try to be as concise as possible. Simplicity is one of our testimonies."

"Murray Sinclair, chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, has said many quotable things. Seriously, he could go into bumper stickers."

"Discipline Review Committee is not required to scramble or compromise their health."

Speaking of reconciliation: "We have to stop ministering to populations and participate with them."

Speaking against a skills registry: "I don't want to see all the psychologists and psychiatrists on M&C and I don't want all the economists on finance committee."

“Dear me, something just went through my mind without leaving a footprint.”

We were told of: “A well-intended, courteous, piece of colonial decision-making by people who were trying to do right, but did wrong, due to a lack of self-awareness of what they were doing.”

“It’s never too late to have a happy childhood.”

“There is no place of comfort in reconciliation work.”

“It doesn’t matter where you start. The starting matters.”

“Quakers get a lot of credit for work done by others of us.”

“Indigenous people do not want our fixing or our help. These are disrespectful. Indigenous people are not broken or weak.”

“Activism starts and ends with prayer and gratitude... leading to beautiful joy. Otherwise it is disconnected and depleting.”

“Being needy is my strength.”

“To see that of God in everyone does not mean seeing everyone as identical.”

“You are to manage life. Life is not to manage you.”

“I believe that one of the best ways to foster religious education is to instigate arguments.”

“Those who are flexible shall not get bent out of shape.”

“We need more than names – we need people for these positions!”

“Can I put aside some portion of my present life to take on new service?”

“Most monumental work in the world happens in baby steps.”

“White liberal guilt gets in the way. Don’t go there.”

“Peace is a minority view.”

Description of a 10 minute break: “Make a choice, pee or tea.”

“There is a difference between being elderly and being an elder.”

“It’s wonderful that Friends don’t use membership as a tool of exclusion.”

“Some Young Friends call the ‘first named,’ ‘first cat herder.’”

“Elevating device license – maybe Quakers need that.”

“Cottage country is full of recreational settlers.”



Photo: Tim Kitz

“Quaker intellectual and ethical infrastructure is our most valuable property. Based on this we can build beautiful human buildings.”

“Quakers need a Committee for Joy. It is serious business.”

“Nature and Quaker business abhor a vacuum.”

“Why do Young Friends avoid leaving the room during Meetings? That’s how you get nominated.”

“You’ve been nomin-told.”

“May we all go forward as Young Friends in spirit.”

“Hey Mom, what’s are Quaker bloopers called again?”
“Gleanings.”

YOU'VE BEEN NOMINATED TO THE COMMITTEE FOR JOY



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WIDENING THE CIRCLE

Canadian Quakers and the Birth of the World Council of Churches (WCC)

Anne Mitchell, Toronto Monthly Meeting and CYM representative to the WCC

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Canada was very much involved in the strong ecumenical currents that began in the latter part of the 19th century and gathered strength in many parts of the Western world throughout the early decades of the 20th century.

Delegations were sent from Canada to the World Missionary Conferences – including the conference held in Edinburgh in 1910, where many attribute the beginnings of the modern ecumenical movement. It was out of this movement that the founding of the World Council of Churches was finally accomplished in 1948.

In 1921, Quakers in Canada appointed several people to be in touch with churches in Canada to organize some form of peace association. These proceedings eventually resulted in the organization of a branch of the World Alliance for International Friendship – and the participation with other churches in several inter-church associations, including the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the League of Nations Society.

The spirit of unity that underpinned the ecumenical movement also led the three Quaker Yearly Meetings in Canada, each with a different approach to their faith, to begin discussions that ultimately led to a unified Canadian Yearly Meeting in 1955.

This desire to work together led to the founding of the Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC) in 1931 as the service arm of Quakers in Canada. CFSC was dedicated to “unify, co-ordinate and expand the work of the Peace, Social Service and Temperance Committees” of the three Yearly Meetings. CFSC worked not only with Friends, but also with the missionary branches of Canadian churches to provide relief abroad. The next step in the process of Canadian Friends working toward an ecumenical presence on the world stage was for CFSC to become the voice for Canadian Friends.

In 1937, a world conference of Friends took place to work at achieving understanding and common ground between what were, and still are, quite different approaches to faith and practice among Friends worldwide.



The first WCC Assembly in Amsterdam in 1948.

Photo: WCC

That year also saw two Christian conferences, one on Life and Work in Oxford and one on Faith and Order in Edinburgh. The desire to bring together these two often conflicting approaches to faith and practice eventually prevailed at the Edinburgh conference, where a proposal to unite the Christian churches in a World Council of Churches was approved.

Not surprisingly this was in the face of both support and dissent. Dean Sperry of the Congregational Church of the US said, “the air they had breathed in Edinburgh had been untainted by the rank odour of ecclesiastical politics.”

Meanwhile, a representative of the Presbyterian Church of the United States said he regarded the formation of the proposed world council of churches as a matter of life and death. “It is the one thing we have got that will appeal to the imagination of simple people and that the ordinary layman can understand.”¹

Voicing opposition, the Bishop of Gloucester in the UK stated,

“Over many years I have followed the resolutions passed by Christian Churches on political, social or semi-political matters and they often have seemed to me to be inexpedient and ill-considered. A World Council of Churches might lead to considerable friction between the nations and might very likely be a cause rather than a preventive of war.”²

At the same time, some questioned whether or not Quakers could become part of the proposed World Council of Churches:

“We greatly hope that in the United Church the members of the Society of Friends may be included, but we are unable as yet to see what place they will have in a Church united on the basis of generally acknowledged ministry and sacraments. We trust that the Holy Spirit will show to us and to them His will. Meanwhile we rejoice in the share which they are taking in our efforts to find the way towards union.”³

1 p. 8 of *The Gloucester Citizen*, 16 August 1937, “World Council of Churches, Bishop of Gloucester Opposes Idea – ‘Likely Cause of War.’”

2 Quoted in the same article in *The Gloucester Citizen*.

3 p. 354 of the *Proceedings of the Second World Conference on Faith and Order held at Edinburgh* (August 1937, Edited by Leonard Hodgson).



Delegates at the first WCC Assembly.

Photo: WCC

Canadian Friends were represented at this Edinburgh conference in 1937, alongside Friends from Great Britain and Ireland. A Friend from Ireland, when it was his turn to speak, said that the most important obstacle to unity was still a want of mutual understanding, respect, love, and recognition of other Christians as being Christians. He concluded “I do not believe that we can get towards any real unity in the more open sense that we are aiming at if we do not get that kind of unity and understanding and Christian love.”¹

The Second World War intervened in the plans to implement the resolution to found a World Council of Churches. In the meantime, Canadian and American Friends moved forward as best they could.

In Canada, representatives of the Missionary Branches of the Canadian churches and CFSC came together to form a Canadian Committee of the World Council of Churches. At a meeting in New York in April 1943 attended by Canadian and US representatives, there was unanimous agreement that both Canadian and American churches each form a Council of Churches to enhance communication between the two countries and eventually with a World Council.

The Canadian churches, CFSC, and other Canadian inter-church organizations who had participated in the New York meeting adopted a resolution that “a Canadian Council of Churches should be organized forthwith.” A constitution was developed and the first meeting of the Canadian Council of Churches, which included a representative of Canadian Friends, was held in September 1944.²

World events swirled around all this and undoubtedly affected the renewal of resolve to move forward with the founding of the World Council of Churches in 1948. That year, Canadian

Friends issued a statement to the Canadian Press and to the Canadian Council of Churches:

“The Canadian Friends Service Committee records its deep concern at growing tension made evident by events in China, Greece, Czechoslovakia, Finland and other countries. In all these situations spiritual values are being subordinated to the struggle for material and political power... at this time we believe that the Christian forces of the world should take a common stand in confirming their primary allegiance to Jesus Christ and his way of life, thus strengthening bridges of goodwill across national and racial frontiers, and providing the nucleus of moral and spiritual power without which instruments of political policy are worthless.”³

Not only was the desire still strong to set aside the tensions between “faith and order” and “life and work,” there was now also a strong impetus among all Christian churches, including the different branches of the Religious Society of Friends, to work together to build relationships and support people as they worked on the basic concern of the world’s peoples – how to live in peace.

That was the impetus when the World Council of Churches was formed and it remains the impetus today. Now, the WCC is reaching out to work together with organizations and people of other faiths. Let us continue to work together on promoting peace and all its ramifications in this our 21st century world.

Prepared by Anne Mitchell, CYM representative to the WCC, along with Gini Smith, Lesley Read and Gale Wills, ad hoc committee appointed by CYM to work with Anne on WCC concerns. With thanks to Jane Sweet of Toronto Monthly Meeting for her research help.

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1 p. 13 of *The Scotsman*, 16 August 1937, “Practical Proposals for Church Unity.”

2 pp. 84-85 of Fred Haslam’s *1921-1967: A Record of Experience with Canadian Friends (Quakers) and the Canadian Ecumenical Movement* (self-published, 1968).

3 p. 50 of Haslam’s same book.

The World Council of Churches Central Committee Meeting & 70th Anniversary Celebrations

June 15-21, 2018

Ecumenical Centre, Geneva

**Anne Mitchell, Toronto Monthly Meeting,
CYM representative to the WCC**

The World Council of Churches (WCC), made up of representatives from 350 Christian denominations around the world, marked its 70th anniversary at the recent Central Committee meeting held in Geneva in June. I was privileged to be there as the CYM representative to the WCC.

CYM has been a member of the WCC since its founding in 1948 – and was involved in the lead up to its founding. What follows is a brief report of some of the activities at the WCC Central Committee in June.

Public Issues Committee work: I was a member of the Public Issues Committee. Our task was to review draft statements and agree on the final version to go to the Central Committee for approval. Our work included statements on:

- “Progress for Peace on the Korean Peninsula”;
- “Building a Just and Sustainable Peace in Colombia”;
- “70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights”;
- “The Situation in the Philippines”;
- “Solidarity with the People of the Democratic Republic of the Congo”;
- “Recent Events in Gaza and Jerusalem”;
- “Anniversary of the Poor People’s Campaign in the United States of America and its continuing call”; and
- “Christian Presence in the Middle East.”

These statements are on the WCC website.

Several other issues were raised – but there was no time to prepare statements, therefore these additional issues were referred to the WCC staff for further action. They included:

- the political situation in Brazil;
- attacks by Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria;
- the humanitarian crisis in Yemen;
- the 10th anniversary of the end of the civil war in Sri Lanka;

- the situation in Nicaragua;
- Bioethics, genetic engineering, and artificial intelligence; and
- increased religious intolerance in Indonesia.

During the Central Committee meeting, the WCC re-launched a campaign called Thursdays in Black. The campaign is calling on people of faith to speak out against sexual and gender-based violence, starting by wearing black on Thursdays. The campaign grew out of the WCC Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988-1998). The campaign was inspired by the Mothers of the Disappeared in Argentina, Women in Black in Israel and Palestine, Women in Black in Rwanda and Bosnia, and the Black Sash movement in South Africa.

Peace Churches Caucus: Quakers met with the Mennonites and the Moravians. The General Secretary of the Friends World Committee of Consultation (FWCC) was also present. We decided that FWCC and Mennonites would work together on a regional pilgrimage of Justice and Peace to Nicaragua.

Dr. Baldwin Sjollema from the Program to Combat Racism (initiated at the 1968 Council in Uppsalla Sweden), addressed the Central Committee. Dr. Sjollema was the first director of the Program. In his address, Dr. Sjollema explained that in 1968 the world was in turmoil. He described it as a time of outbursts of liberation theologies and support for liberation movements. He called it a “Kairos moment” or a God-given opportunity to act. There was a need to address the structures of power.

Among other things, this led the WCC to cut its links with three banks in 1981 over their ties to the South African apartheid regime. Mandela visited the WCC in 1990, shortly after his release from prison, to thank the WCC and its member churches for their solidarity.

Dr. Sjollema said that we are again “back wandering in the desert.” The world needs decisive leadership to help it figure out how to move forward to a more just and sustainable existence. He suggested that we need a strong mobilization of civil society and that the WCC could play a role.

He asked, “Is the church willing to take risks?” “Is the church leadership willing to take risks?” “Is the church leadership willing to engage in civil disobedience?”

Pope’s visit: Pope Francis visited the WCC Central Committee at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva on June 21, the last day of the Central Committee Meeting. The Pope said that he wanted to take part personally in the 70th anniversary celebrations of the WCC, not least to reaffirm the commitment of the Catholic Church to the cause of ecumenism and to encourage cooperation with the member churches and with our ecumenical partners.



Nelson Mandela visiting the WCC in June 1990, while serving as the Deputy President of South Africa.

Photo: Peter Williams/WCC

Francis reflected on the motto chosen for the Central Committee Meeting: “Walking, Praying and Working Together.” He commented that

“the broad gamut of services provided by the member churches of the World Council finds emblematic expression in the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. The credibility of the Gospel is put to the test by the way Christians respond to the cry of all those, in every part of the world, who suffer unjustly from the baleful spread of an exclusion that, by generating poverty, foments conflict. The more vulnerable are increasingly marginalized, lacking their daily bread, employment and a future, while the rich are fewer and ever more wealthy. Let us be challenged to compassion by the cry of those who suffer.”

Francis urged the WCC to see what we can do concretely together rather than grow discouraged about what we cannot. He said,

“Let us encourage one another to overcome the temptation to absolutize certain cultural paradigms and get caught up in partisan interests. Let us help men and women of goodwill to grow in concern for events and situations that affect a great part of humanity but seldom make it to the front page. We cannot look the other way. It is problematic when Christians appear indifferent towards those in need.”

He concluded “So let us ask ourselves: What can we do together?”

2021 General Assembly and 2020 Central Committee Meeting: The 2021 Assembly will be held in Kalsruhe in southern Germany in June 2021. The decision was made by secret ballot. The runner up – Cape Town – will host the next Central Committee meeting in June 2020.

More information about the WCC, the Central Committee Meeting and the 70th Anniversary Celebrations can be found at www.oikoumene.org.

Gleanings & Quotations

Your Friendly editor can't resist pointing out that Dr. Sjollema's address is online (at www.oikoumene.org) and it's quite a barnstormer, with statements like this:

- “Racism was not just one amongst many injustices: it was a specific Christian heresy.”
- “Combating racism is about taking sides, challenging injustice and even getting angry.”
- “Resistance is a key word in the life of Christians as long as there is a threat to humanity.”

“It is okay to feel guilty about things that you are guilty of. It will not kill you, but hiding from that guilt and responsibility can kill others.”

– Ijema Oluow

“Welcome To The Anti-Racism Movement—Here's What You've Missed,” theestablishment.co

“Common sense is nothing more than a deposit of prejudices laid down in the mind before you reach eighteen.”

– Albert Einstein

quoted on p. 214 of Dale B. Martin's *Sex and the Single Savior: Gender and Sexuality in Biblical Interpretation* (Westminster John Know Press, 2006).

We are so busy doing the urgent that we don't have time to do the important.

– Confucius

It is dangerous to read the newspaper.

– Margaret Atwood, in the poem of the same name

“A quotation is a handy thing to have about, saving one the trouble of thinking for oneself, always a laborious business.”

– A. A. Milne

Poem

Tombeau

for/from Hester Duggleby

Kenna Manos, Monteverde Monthly Meeting (Costa Rica) and Halifax Monthly Meeting

I wandered through the world by mazy ways,
All crazy, committing mayhem. . . .
And the forgiving spring came and came.

I have learned – late and hard –
No thing but good,
No corner where I could not hear the laughter.

Tears, Love, & Laughter Whilst Travelling in the Ministry

***Sylvia Sanderson and Bill Shaw,
Swarthmoor Area Meeting
(Britain Yearly Meeting)***

Between 1652 and 1654 Friends – the Valiant Sixty – left Swarthmoor Hall in Ulverston, England to ‘travel in the ministry’ to spread the Quaker vision. This allowed the Quaker message to reach many people who accepted it as their faith. It probably ensured Quakers were not persecuted out of existence, as many in authority in England had wished.

Today, ‘travelling in the ministry’ is underused as a way to reach out to people and, more importantly, to support isolated Friends and small Meetings.

Our experience whilst working at Swarthmoor Hall from 2003-2011 was that small Meetings in the UK were glad to welcome visitors and hear new ministry, on the whole. But some wanted to be left alone as they had become Sunday Clubs.

As our service at the Hall was coming to an end, we applied and were accepted to become Resident Friends at Christchurch Meeting in New Zealand for a year. However, whilst we were working things out, a series of severe earthquakes hit the Christchurch area. This damaged both the Resident Friends’ cottage, the Children’s Room, and the Meeting House so badly that they were ‘munted.’ (This New Zealand word means that the buildings were to be demolished and rebuilding was, for the meantime, forbidden.)

Having resigned from our work at the Hall and with Sylvia selling her house, we were left wondering what on earth we could do. People say that the Spirit moves in mysterious ways, and for us it did indeed. After some thought and discussion, we were moved to say we would still go if, and only if, Friends in New Zealand and particularly in Christchurch thought we could be of some help.

We offered to go for a period of six months, spend time in Christchurch, and travel the country without being a burden to Friends in New Zealand. We would live in a campervan whilst there and look after ourselves.

Fortunately Friends agreed. We applied to three Quaker trusts in the UK and found some welcoming financial support.

One trust said it had not had a request for support to travel in the ministry in living memory, even though it was on their list of things they would support.

So, we set off on this amazing adventure, with a penstick containing a power point presentation of the 1652 Quaker Story and the basic outline of a workshop on the Quaker Testimonies. These and our presence were the main tools we used as we travelled in New Zealand.

When we returned, Sylvia had so many wonderful photographs of our travelling and visiting that she thought it would be good to make a coffee table album of the best, as a reminder to us of our time there. Of course, good photographs will speak for themselves, but some captions and maybe a bit of helpful text can enhance the enjoyment of those looking on.

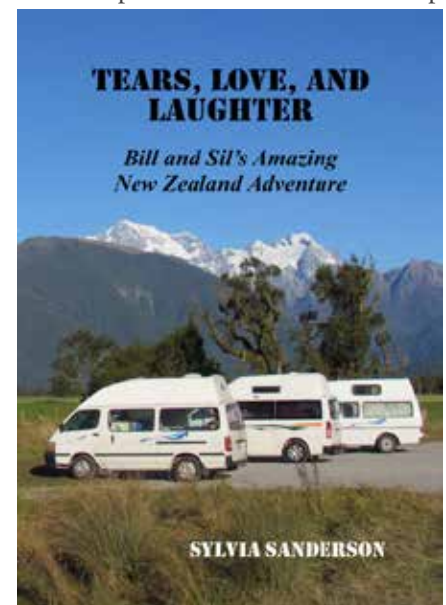
Well, five years and 80,000 words of text later, Sylvia had in fact written a book. Details of our travelling in the ministry are there, alongside a travel log, and the everyday life of two Friends trying hard to live in a campervan after only living together previously for a few months.

Looking back on our travels in New Zealand and the UK, we found a hunger and thirst amongst isolated Friends and Meetings for more contact and Quaker fellowship. This fellowship is difficult to deliver by the Yearly Meetings and even the Area and Monthly Meetings, in our modern hectic society.

The needs of our families, work, and other networks does not leave us enough time to do our ‘Quakering’ as the early Friends did. They had considerable financial support from their own or other thriving Quaker businesses. We can’t replicate this today. But can we find other ways we can encourage true travelling in the ministry, to help our Yearly Meetings be more encompassing of isolated Friends and Meetings?

We would highly recommend such travel, as we both grew in the Spirit during our time travelling. And we know from feedback that our presence, our presentation, and workshop were welcome and helpful to those who experienced it.

Sylvia Sanderson’s Tears Love and Laughter: Bill and Sil’s Amazing New Zealand Adventure is available post-paid from the Book Depository, Books to Anywhere US, Wordery, the UK Paperback Shop; and the usual online retailers.



Silver Wattle Quaker Centre, Australia

Brendan Caulfield-James, Director of Silver Wattle Quaker Centre

About thirty years ago, Franciscan Friar Richard Rohr, started a Centre for Action & Contemplation in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He was motivated to do so by the realization that many activists tended to adopt a confrontational stance towards those they were campaigning against.

Rohr felt an alternative approach was needed, in keeping with Jesus' teaching to love one's enemy. This is what Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr sought to practise. He concluded that a contemplative lifestyle was best equipped to achieve this. It may come as a surprise to readers that there is such a centre in Australia.

Silver Wattle Quaker Centre is located on the shores of Lake George, amid stunningly beautiful surroundings. Because this was a place of plenty (the lake was full then), coastal and inland indigenous groups would historically gather here. It later became a sheep grazing property. For a period after the Vietnam War, it became a place where returning veterans were helped to make the transition back to civilian life. In 1995, it was turned into an outdoor education facility for young people, then used as an executive training centre. It subsequently became the home of St Joseph's House of Prayer, a Catholic community. When this community dispersed, the Catholic Diocese of Canberra-Goulburn took it over as a Retreat Centre.

In 2011, it was purchased by the Australian Religious Society of Friends, also known as Quakers, who continue to run it as a place of spiritual regeneration and restorative landcare.

Here we offer opportunities for individual or group retreats, courses, and venue hires to people of all faiths or none. Our vision statement declares that

"Silver Wattle centre is upheld by a Quaker community which welcomes all those seeking to deepen the spiritual dimension of their everyday living and to find the source of their inward strength. We celebrate the beauty and spirit of the land and offer opportunities for learning, personal retreat and time apart. In service of this vision, we strive to

- Connect with the spirituality and wisdom of First Peoples of this land which we hold in sacred trust.
- Encourage one another to surrender to the promptings of Love and Truth, trusting them as the leadings of God.
- Be a place where people experience spiritual transformation, healing and refreshment in community.



A view of Silver Wattle Quaker Centre

- Practice a way of life that is spiritually, physically and environmentally sustainable."

A special role we offer is to become a Friend in Residence (FIR), where we invite you to join us in observing our Rhythm of the Day. This is based on the monastic traditions of both East and West, which in turn derive from the rhythms of the cosmos. The three elements to this are (1) experiencing living together, (2) praying together, and (3) working together.

Our aim in following this rhythm is to nurture the contemplative in us. The contemplative lifestyle helps us tap into our spiritual wellsprings, find our true identity within the cosmos and surrender to the promptings of the Spirit. The decisions we make and the actions we take are then less likely to be dictated by our egos.

The goal is to become a "contemplative in action," something that is not achieved overnight but requires the work of a lifetime. The term was used by Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus.

In recognition of the service FIRs provide, they are offered free board and lodging. Most who take up this challenge report that what they gained from this experience far exceeded what they gave in service. Some go so far as to say it proved a turning point in their lives.

There is one crucial benefit to coming to Silver Wattle. Our centre is located in one of the most magical of natural surroundings. Embraced by such an awesome environment, we are drawn to become intimate with the natural world and find 'that of God' in all creatures.

Alienation from nature has been cited as a major reason for the climate change crisis we currently face. Silver Wattle is uniquely sited to reconnect us to our roots and remind us that, together with the rest of creation, we belong to a single sacred community.

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REFLECTIONS & CONCERNS

Mother Earth

Eric Schiller, Ottawa Monthly Meeting

Gaia is the creative and protective goddess of mother earth. Worship of her is relatively simple – protect Mother Earth and keep her safe, because she is the only home that you have.

If we go back into prehistory, we find that the very earliest faiths that humankind had were nature based. We see evidence of this in the surviving beliefs of indigenous peoples. They regularly speak peacefully and quietly of their reverence for mother nature.

We in the West are inheritors of male-dominated monotheistic faiths. These arose in the Middle East. First came Judaism, then Christianity, and then Islam. They did not easily tolerate earlier nature based feminine religions.

When the Israelites long ago invaded present-day Palestine, they encountered nature-based and polytheistic faiths. They were not to be tolerated. In one of the ghastlier statements in the Old Testament, Yahweh the God of Israel instructs the invading Israelites to destroy whole towns, killing every man, woman, and child.

“In the cities of the nations the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, do not leave alive anything that breathes. Completely destroy them¹ –the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites—as the LORD your God has commanded you. Otherwise, they will teach you to follow all the detestable things they do in worshipping their gods, and you will sin against the LORD your God.” (Deuteronomy 20:16-17)

This was the horror of an early God-inspired genocide!

These three monotheistic faiths have a view of the earth radically different from early nature-based faiths. In the Bible, early mankind is told to multiply and dominate the earth.

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image. After our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea. And the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.’” (Genesis 1:26)

Presently the planet is being ravaged by humankind’s excessive exploitation of the Earth’s resources. Our fossil-fuel-based economy is slowly creating a dangerous future. The climate is warming, the sea level is rising, and extreme weather conditions are increasing.

It is true that this planet, mother earth, has known extreme climate changes in the past. About ten thousand years ago, the earth was again warming and emerging out of an ice age.

However, the change now creeping upon us is very different from past events. It is neither gradual nor natural.

The present rapid environmental change is largely produced by our prodigious population of over seven billion souls. Never has the world been populated by so many productive, consumptive, and contaminating people. As a result, our whole species is now beginning to experience the effects of climate change.

What to do? Should we not harken to the call of those earlier nature-based faiths and work to protect mother nature, work cooperatively, and walk more lightly on her soil? If we do not, we may soon suffer the consequences of our inaction.

Image: Steve Fick (www.fick.ca)



Mythology

Eric Schiller, Ottawa Monthly Meeting

What is mythology? It is a story that society tells to explain its *raison d'être*. And what are the characteristics of the mythological story?

- The mythological story is rooted in the society’s history. It has widespread community support.
- Since the story is supported by the community, it is retold

¹ Editor’s note: The Hebrew term used here is sometimes translated “dedicate them to the Lord,” as in something that will be dedicated to God for ritual sacrifice and burning. Point being, the biblical text presents annihilation of a city as a religious, sacrificial act.

and passed on to the children and its inheritors. In the retelling of the story it can be altered and reshaped to better embody the community's emerging values. The guiding principle of the evolution of the story is that it is used to inculcate values that are important to the group. If it ceases to do this, the mythical story may become obsolete and die.

- The main purpose of the myth is to preserve and pass on the values that the group considers important.
- The story can be enhanced by ritualistic acts that further strengthen the mythic story.
- Why a story? Why not just logically explain the values being embraced? Often the story tries to explain the unexplainable. It tries to answer such questions as; How did life begin? Where are we headed? What happens after death? Mythical stories try to give an answer to these imponderables.
- Finally, as Yuval Noah Harari explains in his book, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Mankind*, the mythical story is the glue that holds larger societies together.

So how does this apply to Christianity?

In the Old Testament, the dominant myth is the story of the exodus of the Hebrew tribes as they came out of Egypt to present-day Palestine. This story is accompanied by attendant miracles such as the Israel's passage through the Red Sea and the slaying of the firstborn of the Egyptians because they would not, in the words of Moses, "Let my people go." The Israelites escaped this retribution by painting their doors with blood, so that the angel of death passed over their houses.

Jews today still celebrate the ritual fast of the Passover. And why is all of this important? Because it can be used to remind present-day Israelites that the God who redeemed them out of bondage in Egypt is still their redeemer God and has bound them together as a peculiar people – and even to say that this is why they have a right to inhabit present day Israel.¹

In the New Testament, the dominant myth is that of the resurrection of Jesus. As in all myths, this story is rooted in history. Jesus really lived. He was a remarkable wisdom teacher and healer. He ran into conflict with the religious leaders in ancient Israel. He was then crucified by Roman state power, with the acquiescence and encouragement of the Jewish leadership.

Out of the traumatic experience of Jesus' crucifixion, his followers experienced his presence among them. No matter what one thinks of the resurrection story, it is clear that many of his followers believed in it. They proved their belief by going out into the Roman empire and preaching this story everywhere. And they were willing to die for this story.² The Roman emperors, at times, lined the streets with crucified Christians.

As the early Christians continued to spread this story, the incredible happened. The Christian movement emerged triumphant and the Roman Empire declined.

So, what was the value here? The resurrection story gave the people a sense of hope that the crumbling Roman empire could not give. Again, it is the values embedded in the story that are important and not the historical details – often exaggerated – of the story.

This is how religious myths operate in Christianity. Now secularists may think, "That's religion for you, full of mythical stories." However, we are all bound by our mythical stories, whether religious or secular.

Yuval Noah Harari, in his book *Sapiens*, explains how myths have always been important for mankind. As emerging *homo sapiens* developed, at some point they were able to develop imaginary orders – i.e., concepts that had no physical equivalent. These stories enabled large groups of people to have a sense of common purpose. Before this cognitive revolution the only possible way to hold groups of people together was by personal experience and relationships with others. However, there is a limit as to how many people we can know and trust – probably around 150 people.

The cognitive revolution that produced mythology enabled groups to create fictive language and stories that made possible larger group cohesion and thence nation states and regional powers. It is even possible that this cognitive revolution was more important for mankind's evolution than the technical discovery of tools.

Even in our modern era we still have operative myths that hold us together.³ When we say that these are the mythical glues that hold us together, we mean simply that these concepts are ideas that we all hold and they maintain our common life together.

And that, dear friends, is the story of myths. Believe it or not, they have a hold on all of us.

1 A comment from the editor who can't resist butting in: Apart from its current political uses, the Passover story also gave Jewish people hope for thousands of years that, though they might feel like strangers in their home and face severe persecution from the people of the land, God was looking after them and would preserve and rescue them.

2 Another comment: This was also the main appeal and value of the myth. Jesus' resurrection showed that death had no power over God's children – and so individual believers need not fear it. (Of course, this myth also supported a devaluation of this life and earthly things).

3 Finally: Think of things like the American Dream or the Canadian multicultural mosaic – or imaginary constructs like nation-states and their borders. One of the defining characteristics of a society's mythology is that it is taken for granted by the society's members – like proverbial fish who can't notice the water in which it swims.

The Faces of Present-Day Persecution

Meeting Turkish Hizmet Refugees

David Kitz

What do the faces of present-day religious persecution look like? They look remarkably like the faces of the boy and girl pictured here.

After fleeing arrest in their hometown in Turkey, this family risked their lives in a daring midnight dash across a rain-swollen river that marks the border with Greece. Currently, these children live with their mother and four other refugee families in a crowded apartment in Athens. They subsist on funds sent to them by their father, who has gone ahead of them to start a new life in Canada. He works as an Uber driver in Ottawa.



Turkish children who fled persecution

So what heinous crime did they commit? Their mother was an employee of the Ministry of Education and a member of the Hizmet movement. That was their crime.

The Hizmet movement is a Sufi Muslim religious movement that advocates for peace, civil engagement, and interfaith dialogue.

Following the coup attempt of July 15, 2016, all Hizmet schools were shut down by order of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. But the Turkish government was not content with simply closing the schools, firing the teachers, and revoking the teachers' licenses. In the weeks that followed they began to systematically arrest and imprison all Hizmet-associated teachers.

Since the coup approximately 120,000 people have been imprisoned in deplorable conditions, in overcrowded cells. Many have died.

On a trip to Athens in late June of this year, I met with several Turkish refugees and heard their firsthand accounts. I made this trip on behalf of a personal friend, David Kilgour. David is a retired MP and cabinet minister, who is a tireless advocate for international human rights.

Two months earlier he had made a similar visit to Athens and he had reported his findings to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). Due to a scheduling conflict, he was unable to make a return visit, so he called on me – a little out of the blue – to take his place. It didn't take me too much reflection to say 'yes.'

My initial interest in this topic was sparked by a chance meeting with a former Turkish naval officer at New Year's levee hosted by my local member of parliament. His account of fleeing Ankara after the failed coup attempt of 2016 put this matter squarely on my radar.

In Athens, I learned that most of the refugees who escape to Greece from Turkey have been fugitives in their homeland for more than a year. Often they have been secretly staying with relatives or friends to avoid arrest. But their presence is a burden that endangers the lives of their hosts. Since there is a nationwide warrant for their arrest, they are unemployable. They see escape to Greece as the only way out of the predicament they find themselves in. They frequently hire human smugglers to act as guides to avoid arrest.

The Turkish refugees fall into three broad categories: journalists, teachers, and intellectuals.

Upon arriving in Athens, my first interview was with a senior level journalist with *Zaman*, formerly the biggest daily newspaper in Turkey. In 2013, *Zaman* reported that truckloads of armaments were crossing from Turkey into Syria in support of ISIS fighters. It also began to expose corruption in the Erdoğan government. The government's response was swift. They did not want this dirty secret revealed to the world. The newspaper's assets were seized and the journalists were arrested.

The government attack on *Zaman*, which has ties to Hizmet, provided a reproducible model. Since the 2016 coup, at least 131 independent Turkish media outlets have been shut down, 117 journalists have been arrested and a further 500+ have lost their journalistic accreditations. A number of websites are blocked within the country, including Wikipedia, Wikileaks, and the Turkish satirical *Leman*. Thousands have been purged from the judiciary, academy, military, and government bureaucracy.

The next day I met with a university professor and engineer, Yunus Karaca. Karaca patented an award-winning system for separating glass, metal, and plastics for municipal recycling. Yet despite numerous accolades – including some from NASA – his career has been stifled, because he refused to endorse the Erdoğan government. His passport was cancelled by the Turkish authorities, and fearing arrest, he fled with his young daughter to Greece.



Above: Yunus Karaca with his daughter.

Below: Teachers' Union leader with his wife in Athens. Their faces are hidden for the safety of family members who remain in Turkey.

All photos for this article by David Kitz.



But my most gripping interviews were with teachers, some of whom were imprisoned for a year or more, with as many as 28 men crammed into a cell. Some have died behind bars.

The leader of a Hizmet-affiliated teachers' union told me that after the coup attempt, the 30,000 members of his union lost their jobs. Then they were systematically arrested and imprisoned for being members of a terrorist group. For most of his career, this man worked as a teacher of deaf children. Now the Turkish government sees him as a terrorist.

On my last day in Athens I had breakfast with another family with three children. Back in Turkey the husband had been a teacher. After a delicious meal they began to tell a shocking account of government sponsored terror and torture. It all centred on their youngest child, a daughter.

After the coup, to avoid arrest, the family went into hiding. But the wife soon realized she was pregnant. Under normal circumstances she would see her doctor for prenatal care. But a doctor's visit would reveal her identity and trigger her husband's arrest. The pregnancy proceeded normally, but in the final weeks she experienced bleeding. Fearing that she would lose the baby she made the fateful decision to see a doctor. A caesarean section was scheduled.

The procedure went well, resulting in the birth of the healthy baby girl pictured here. But the mother awoke in the recovery room surrounded by four male police officers who demanded that she sign a confession that she was a member of a terrorist organization –the Hizmet movement.

The mother refused to sign. What followed was 36 hours of intense interrogation, intimidation, and torture. At one point the police insisted that she be taken to the police station for further questioning. Despite the pleas of the doctor and medical staff, the mother was forcefully removed from the hospital. Her stitches were ripped as she was transported in a paddy wagon to the police station. They also threatened to transport her in this condition to a city five hours away, where the warrant for her husband's arrest was originally issued.

Fortunately, the direct intervention of a courageous member of the Turkish Parliament prevented further abuse. Needless to say, it was a delight to see mother and baby united and healthy, with the whole family safe and sound in Athens.

So is the Hizmet movement a terrorist organization? The exact opposite appears to be the case. In fact in some respects, they embrace many of the tenets that Quakers adhere to.

Hizmet movement members follow the teachings of Fethullah Gülen, a contemporary Muslim cleric from the Sufi tradition. Within the social movement he founded, there is a strong emphasis on living at peace with all humanity regardless of race or religion.¹ >>>>

¹ The terms Gülen movement and Hizmet movement are used interchangeably.

>>>> Here is a direct quote from the Gülen movement website regarding the values they embrace:

“A major focus of the movement is the need to create bridges between the Muslim world and the West, between the poor and the wealthy by embracing and practicing certain values, spiritual and material, such as love, tolerance, human rights, democracy, synthesizing science and religion etc.”¹

Bridge-building is a major component of the movement’s mission. They encourage dialogue, particularly among those of the Abrahamic faith—Jews, Christians, and Muslims. This stands in sharp contrast to the rigid fundamentalism that some adherents of these faiths have embraced. This has also put them at odds with the strongman tactics of Turkish President Erdoğan.

After serving as mayor of Istanbul in the ’90s, Erdoğan became Prime Minister in 2003, switching to President in 2014, and remaining in power to the present. Erdoğan’s program promotes economic liberalism paired with a religious conservatism that seeks to undo the secular basis of the Turkish state. His ‘neo-Ottomanism’ glorifies the era of Turkish imperialism, when the Ottoman Empire dominated the region.

Erdoğan deploys a cult of personality, projecting an image as the individual personification of Turkish democracy. He uses religious rhetoric to legitimize his political authoritarianism among the devout, according to critics like the Islamic Felicity Party

Erdoğan and those close to him have amassed enormous fortunes. When his associates were arrested in 2013 in a \$100 billion corruption scandal, he dismissed and reassigned thousands of police officers, prosecutors, and judges. No convictions were ever made.

Many observers see the July 2016 coup attempt as a staged event aimed at consolidating Erdoğan’s grip on power.

After purging the country’s democratic and civil institutions, Erdoğan held a referendum in 2017 that altered the constitution. This shifted Turkey from a parliamentary to a presidential system. It centralized legislative, executive, and judicial power in an Executive President position that seems to have been created with Erdoğan in mind.

Critics have called the role an “elective dictatorship” and Erdoğan won an early election in June 2018, amidst accusations of ballot stuffing and the arrest of opposition party leaders on terrorism charges.

In a world where authoritarian leaders are emerging, controlling the media, and stifling any form of dissent, how

should we respond? Members of the Hizmet movement refuse to retaliate when subjected to arrest, hatred, and abuse. They have refused to take up arms or call for any form of revolt. In this respect they adhere to the basic pacifist principles that undergird the Society of Friends.

Those of us rankling under the petty tyranny of Trump or Ford might learn from the Hizmet response to this brutally repressive regime.

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus laid out this directive for how we should interact with one another:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:43-48)

The above passage has been a touchstone of Quaker faith and life for multiple generations. It may surprise many to know that there are adherents of the Muslim faith that follow the same guiding principles.

A local leader in Ottawa’s Hizmet community – who wishes to remain anonymous to protect his family in Turkey – states, “We are all servants of God. We have the same Creator, so there are no grounds for hatred because of race or religion.”

Are there practical ways in which Friends can respond to the persecution these fellow pacifists are facing? The first step is to become informed about what is going on in Turkey. Secondly, many cities in Canada have vibrant Turkish immigrant communities. Discover if there is a Hizmet-linked community in your city. Build relationships with community members. They will value your encouragement and friendship.

Finally, you can act as an advocate for the steady stream of Turkish refugees that are arriving in Canada. Some of them are arriving through the regular immigration or refugee process. Others are crossing the US border seeking asylum in Canada. At a time when other countries are building walls, we need to keep our doors open. In the face of suffering and persecution, Friends have an opportunity to build cross-cultural bridges.

David Kitz is an author, actor, creator of Biblical dramas, and ordained minister of the Foursquare Gospel Church, a Pentecostal denomination. He sometimes attends Ottawa Monthly Meeting with his son, Timothy.

1 www.gulenmovement.com/gulen-movement/values-promoted-by-gulen-movement

A Straight Line in 5 Parts

*Written at the CYM Retreat
(Barrie, Ontario, August 2, 2018)*

Margaret Slavin, Peterborough Monthly Meeting

Canadian Yearly Meeting began this year with a retreat. Its theme was "Sharing of Spiritual Journeys." The moment came when leader Ellen Helmuth opened up one whole hour to write. I wrote steadily, a bit surprised at what arrived on the page.

Has my spiritual journey really been as calm, clear, focussed, and directed as it appears to be when I look back?

There I am as an infant, being baptized Anglican in the little church in Elstow, Saskatchewan, that has long since been torn down.

I am raised a Christian by gentle parents. No bombs fall. I am held in loving arms and taken on a train across the wide country to join my father in Belleville, Ontario, where he has found work. My parents plunge into the life and support of Holloway United Church.

I go to junior kindergarten class there and graduate to the cubicles with green curtains drawn where earnest Sunday School teachers (ours was Mrs. Rayfield) show us boards with felt-backed Bible characters moving around as they tell us stories. Jesus is everywhere, sitting on a stone and holding out his arms as a child climbs into his lap. "Suffer the little children to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

At seven I stand on the stage in that Sunday School auditorium and there is a microphone. I lead the gathering, which seems very large – rows of children all ages with their teachers – the junior kindergarten not present, behind closed doors, strains sounding from them of "God sees the little sparrow fall, I know He loves me too."

I lead that gathering in the medieval five-part prayer – where had I learned it? – this is easy, I thought, I can do this, just fill in the blanks: Confession, Thanks, Praise, Intercession, Petition.

No one claps, of course, but as I take my seat again, I am infused with a sense of having got it right, having done very well.

Fast forward to university, the Student Christian Movement, the safe and challenging place for moving from literal interpretation of the Bible to the profoundly exciting revelations of Myth and Metaphor. I remember copying some passage about myth that struck me as the possible shadows of Truth. I seriously thought about pursuing graduate studies in Myth, in pursuit of Truth.



Student Christian Movement Study Camp, Winnipeg, St. Augustine United Church, summer 1961. Margaret is far right, at the back. Paul Dymont, very front, Sylvia Powers (p. 12) on his right.

Off I go to SCM Study Camp in Winnipeg, summer of 1961. I am lying on a church pew in the darkened nave of Augustine United Church. We students live downstairs for the summer. I am spending much time with Paul Dymont, who thinks he will marry me, and I am intrigued with this summer romance.

I have come up into the nave to be by myself. I collapse onto the pew and sob my heart out, because I cannot maintain my objective, semi-academic stance any more in this search for Truth. I am Christian. I am stuck with it. I can't prove this faith or in any sensible way account for it. I am culturally Christian, and God seems to have hold of me. I am helpless to resist. It is painful – I am launched onto an ocean of belief without a rational rudder.

I go to Yale. I study theology. I learn facts. I meet the professor of Church History, Roland Bainton, my first Quaker. I spend time with fourteen-year-old black girls from the dirty, dangerous slum of New Haven. They teach me a lot more than they will ever know. I climb up from those sessions to the holy hill where we live, with the literally gilt-covered dome.

Paul and I marry and drive our blue VW windowvan to teaching jobs in Newfoundland. It is supposed to be our year of Saving the World but instead it becomes the year of Margaret's political radicalization. There are injustices in this world and I can't fix them – certainly not by doing what I am told.

Back on the mainland and going on with my life, the urge to obey is still strong within me, to be reliable, follow the rules, follow through on promises, be the one people can count on. I do pray, and being reliable does seem what God wants me to do, even as life presents me with more and more chaos.

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Emotions beset me that married women are not supposed to feel. Children – two, over the years – are born out of my body and bring their mess and cheerfulness and uncontrollability into my life. I learn patience, along with intractable love.

God dies. The God who can rescue us becomes impossible to believe in. Slowly, the God who accompanies us emerges as still there, still holding my hand. Power over: no. Power within: okay. I feel this.

I have stopped attending church. “I will fill my life with what is meaningful to me,” I tell myself, “instead of the rules. I’ll do this and see where I come out. If the Church meets me where I am, I’ll come back.”

And then, through poetry and friendship and the pull of Christmas carols, the Church does. The Friends Meeting House in Ottawa pulls me in at the door, pushes and pulls me in, makes it pretty well impossible to miss.

I become a Friend. Love and emotional tumult unfold against the ongoing rhythm of Meeting on Sundays, expectant silence, openness to Mystery.

Our marriage ends after thirty-five good years; our children develop and grow in ongoing surprise.

Now I am Clerk of Peterborough Monthly Meeting.

I am sitting in a circle of about thirty Friends, writing this all down.

Was it really the straight line it seems to be, straight back to Sunday School and the five-part prayer?

Now I try to bring in children, teach them stories that might sustain them in the dark, dark times ahead. I pray. I forge on with this feeling of being upheld, sustained.

Children smashing geodes to discover the million-year-old crystals inside at the Earthcare program in Peterborough MM



Every time I try to close it down, acknowledge emptiness, every time I cry to the cosmos – So, where are you? Is this so-called spiritual journey just something I made up? – or sometimes just as I start in on the five-part prayer, stuff happens, too obvious to miss.

I am waiting for a bus and a stranger opens his pick-up truck door, crosses several societal barriers and mosies over to chat. I meet a Métis farmer, a former jockey. We talk about horses and then about Indigenous relations. For twenty minutes we neighbours engage in an astonishing short trip into trust.

I am at the farmers’ market on an icy Saturday. I realize I have overdone it. How will I lug all these vegetables home? A woman I scarcely know walks up to me and asks, “Would you like a ride?”

I am swimming at the Y and a baby boy in the other pool peeps over the edge directly into my eyes – and he smiles. Dear Jesus, what was that?

As a Friend here just said, the outward sacrament of inward grace.

Because I Love You

Don Vipond, Saanich Peninsula Meeting

In the silence,

On my mind,

In my heart...

Puzzled: Sacred Presence, I have waited long in silence and now we are in company at last. I have a monumental question. Please explain to me why you keep what happens to us after our bodies die such an eternally haunting mystery.

Sacred Presence: Dear Puzzled. You are my treasure. Do you trust that is so?

Puzzled: I want to trust that is so.

Sacred Presence: Then let us work on this great question together. What if I was to convince you that there is nothing after the death of your body, you have no enduring spirit presence, that there is only oblivion? How would you respond to that?

Puzzled: I think I would die quickly, in despair. I think I would be outraged with you. Our lives, our children’s lives, all our struggles to no purpose. We live, we die. Emptiness.

Sacred Presence: So, if that were true, I wouldn’t tell you so, would I? Because I love you.

Puzzled: I suppose.

Sacred Presence: What if I was to convince you that when your body dies, your unique spirit, with all that you have learned in life, goes forward to some greater outcome, that life and love prevail. How would you respond to that?

Puzzled: I think I see where this is going. If that were so, and you were able to convince me absolutely, in times of trouble and despair I might say: why am I lingering here, mired in misery, when such a glorious future awaits me? I might choose to end my life before my body dies.

Sacred Presence: So, if that were true, I wouldn't tell you so, would I? Because I love you.

Puzzled: So you leave us this great mystery, you leave us to live our lives in bafflement. Is that how a Divine Spirit displays its love for me?

Sacred Presence: I leave you this great mystery as a gift, trusting you will eventually discover your priorities, that you have been given a life, your very own life, to live as the spirit you gather over the years moves you, or to fret through your life about what comes next. I trust you. Remember, I love you. You do believe that, don't you?

Puzzled: Well, I certainly want to. But I don't think I'm trustworthy.

Sacred Presence: Well, I do. You live with a great mystery because I trust you will eventually see it as an act of love and come to understand it as an invitation to stop fretting, not to be distracted, to focus on living your life as the spirit you have been given and are gathering moves you. Let your life speak. Leave the rest to me.

Because I love you.

Extra Photos from Yearly Meeting



Above: Program Committee and other Friends in the cafeteria.
Below: The Adamson sisters, Lyn and Claire. Both photos by Margaret Slavin.



CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS



The next issue of *The Canadian Friend* is scheduled for March, with a final due date of **1 February 2019**.

Speak to your community; be part of the conversation among Canadian Friends. Please submit articles between 500-1200 words long. Submissions on any topic of potential interest to Canadian Friends are warmly welcomed, as are photos and suggestions and submissions for "Meet a Friend" or "Gleanings & Quotations" (i.e. funny or interesting quotes).

Due Date: 1 February 2019

Submit to: editor@quaker.ca OR Canadian Friend Editor
c/o CYM Office, 91A Fourth Ave., Ottawa, ON, K1S 2L1

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DEADLINE: 1 FEBRUARY 2019.

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