

THE CANADIAN FRIEND



QUAKER NEWS & THOUGHT

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Note from your editor

This is my last issue editing *The Canadian Friend*. I've generally appreciated working for and with Canadian Friends and I owe a big thank you to all the contributors and readers – as well as to the office staff and members of Publications & Communications Committee – who have supported this work. I've learnt a lot and been proud of the issues I (we, really) have produced – even if, truth be told, I haven't produced them as often or as on time as I would like. The pandemic has been one long wake-up call, perhaps, that I need to move on from a work-life juggling various editing contracts and freelance gigs, so I'm wandering off to an uncharted future with a thankful heart.

I wish you all the best, hope you find this issue a blessing, and look forward to worshipping and making music with many of you down the line. **TK**

archives

corner

The Canadian Quaker Library & Archives (CQLA) has been an invaluable resource for many researchers *outside* of Canadian Yearly Meeting (CYM), whether they're writing academic papers or are amateur genealogists or historians. However, one of the most important functions of the CQLA is to provide support to the Monthly Meetings *within* CYM. Monthly Meetings produce so many important records that document the spiritual life of the Meeting, the business processes, and the personal stories of Canadian Friends. The CQLA is there to collect and preserve those records, to provide guidance and assistance to Monthly Meetings and their members on what to preserve, how to get those records to the archives, and how such records may be used in a variety of ways, such as religious education or retreat resources.

One of the most common questions we receive from Monthly Meetings is: what records should we deposit? Sometimes it may be difficult to discern what is important and what is not, especially when so much communication now is done through email threads or hastily scribbled on scraps of paper. While every Monthly Meeting may have differing opinions on this, we may provide guidance on records to preserve in the CQLA.

The majority of records we house from Monthly Meetings are minutes. These may be submitted electronically to archives-minutes@quaker.ca or they may be printed and mailed to the CQLA directly. Often minutes have supplementary materials (addendum) which need to be attached. Such documents often provide the background and context to a minute. Missing documents may make it hard for future readers to understand decisions made today.

Some Meetings may have questions about style and formatting for minutes. Archives Committee's handout, 'Template for Agendas and Minutes for Clerks,' offers helpful information including effective minute numbering formats, inserting page numbers, and putting dates on the top of each page – so that, if pages get separated from their document, the two can be re-united. Anyone may receive a copy of the template from Archivist Michelle Tolley (cym-archivist@quaker.ca).

Monthly Meeting membership records are important documents. These may include a member list including

contact information, welcome letters for new members, notifications of members who have left, and any births, deaths (including memorial minutes and obituaries), and marriages within the Meeting. These records often contain personal information, so it's understandable if some feel uneasy with how that information is being preserved. However, all documents deposited at the CQLA are held confidential for thirty years – a best practice for archives – unless the depositing Meeting directs otherwise. Monthly Meetings may choose to set their own period of confidentiality for records – whether no period of confidentiality at all or up to 100 years, as is done at times by the government of Canada. Should a researcher ask for access to records, the CQLA will contact the Meeting directly for it to decide whether to allow access. If your Meeting has not already confirmed with the CYM Archivist its choice of a period of confidentiality, please let us know.

Now we get into some of the more nebulous areas of record-keeping. What if your Meeting put on a program and has a copy of the flier or brochure? What if a member took photographs at this event that include members or the Meeting House? What if your Meeting is celebrating an anniversary or has written a local history? What if a newspaper wrote an article about the Meeting, its Meeting House, or a member of the Meeting? These are all valid items to preserve and in fact are some of the material we are most excited to receive! Minutes can only tell so much of the Quaker story in your area.

We accept newsletters that have been published by Monthly Meetings, and newspaper articles and brochures are both items that we currently have in supplementary files. Such personal touches, or "notes in the margins", can paint a much more interesting picture of the life and activities within your Meeting. We also welcome photographs of Meeting activities, the Meeting Houses themselves, and of members. We ask that photographs include descriptive information: the names of any individuals in the picture, the place the photo was taken, and the date on which it was taken.

These are just a few examples of material that we are pleased to preserve for your Meeting. If your Meeting has more questions about what would be appropriate to deposit, the CQLA is always happy to help. 🌿



Friends Meeting House, Sparta ON, c. 1909, photo courtesy of Evelyn Schmitz-Hertzberg

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sensitive, and supportive. I am sad it is
over.... It was so wonderful.”**

— *Are We Done Fighting?* workshop participant (from anonymous feedback survey)

Contact Matt Legge at Matt@QuakerService.ca to schedule the series for your Meeting. Find out more and get on the wait list as an individual at <https://QuakerService.ca/Register>



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News from Yonge Street Half-Yearly Meeting

by Beverly Shepard, Hamilton Monthly Meeting

Yonge Street Half-Yearly Meeting began with a short period of online gathering and chat, during which Friends were informed of the death of John Horvath of Yonge Street Monthly Meeting. His obituary may be found at www.dodsandmcnair.com/memorials/john_horvath/4943664.

Another Friend, also in Yonge Street Monthly Meeting, Gini Smith, is in palliative care but welcomes contact.

After some minutes of Friendly exchanges, we settled into worship, which included the reading of a quotation from Epistle CXXXI by George Fox (1656):

“and all Friends take heed of Jars and Strife, for that is it, which will eat out the Seed in you; therefore let not that harbour in your bosoms, lest it eat out the good in you, and ye come to suffer in your own particulars. Therefore dwell in love and life, and in the Power and Seed of God, which is the honourable, royal state.”

The morning Meeting for Worship was attended by approximately 16 people. It concluded with reading Testimonials to the Grace of God in the Lives of six Friends who have died since the last reading of testimonials. It was both saddening and inspiring to hear about the lives and service, now ended, of these remarkable Friends.

As Hamilton Monthly Meeting, Toronto Monthly Meeting, and Yonge Street Monthly Meeting presented their respective State of the Society Reports, we noted a common theme: the extraordinary needs the COVID-19 pandemic has caused. We have had to learn to adapt to Zoom Meetings for Worship and still be true to Quaker witness and mode of worship; to conduct our various committee activities mainly electronically; to continue in modified ways our various outreach ministries, including sponsorship of newcomer families; and to stay connected and maintain good relationships when there is no opportunity for the closeness of personal contact. Our Monthly Meetings are coping with the stresses of the pandemic with varying degrees of satisfaction about the measures required and undertaken.

Yonge Street HYM is also struggling with some of these issues. Without the joy and inspiration of in-person gatherings, interest in the behind-the-scenes business needs of the HYM has waned. In the Meeting for Worship for Business, Clerk Jane MacKay Wright particularly noted the need for a new clerk and a new treasurer. She consented to stay on as Clerk, though her term has ended, through the fall meeting of YSHYM.

We will continue to seek names of Friends to fill these positions, and a small ad hoc committee was named to give interim approval to a name that we hope will be found for treasurer. This way the incoming treasurer can be oriented to the position before the next meeting of YSHYM, when appointments to both positions will be approved.

Our Meeting for Worship for Business took somewhat more time than had been scheduled. We left our computer screens and had a slightly shortened break for lunch, stretches, walks, or whatever we most needed before returning for the afternoon.

Julie Harlow from Pacific Yearly Meeting provided a timely afternoon programme on “Friends House Moscow: 26 Years of Service in Russia and Beyond.” The presentation included, after a bit of technical finagling, a fascinating show of still photos as well as a lively video of “Big Change,” one of the services which Friends House Moscow supports. Her presentation and responses to questions were informative, inspirational, and topical.

Julie emphasized that Friends House Moscow is not a religious body and not a building. Instead, it is an international Quaker organization which provides needed practical support for small Russian efforts to make conditions better for the most vulnerable, which includes disabled children, orphans, conscientious objectors, and refugees. Big Change provides continuing support for orphans as they learn to function independently. Friends House Moscow also sponsors Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) workshops and translates (into Russian) and distributes traditional Quaker books, pamphlets, and other writings.

Julie anticipates there will be tremendous future need to provide assistance to those who will undoubtedly suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder when the Ukraine conflict is over. In closing, she invited Friends to enter into worship and asked us to envision peace and breathe peace into the world.

Friends across CYM who would like to experience Julie’s presentation are encouraged to contact her at fhmus@sbcglobal.net.

For Friends in Yonge Street HYM, it was an interesting and stimulating day, but we – no doubt like Friends all over Canada – are eagerly looking forward to the resumption of gatherings where we can meet face-to-face, laugh together, share lunch, and have hugs. 🤗

Why I make time to attend wider Quaker Gatherings

by Chris Hitchcock, Hamilton Monthly Meeting

This past week I have been collating the details of ground transportation options for those who want to attend Canadian Yearly Meeting (CYM in Session) this summer and do not want to fly. As I consider the time and the costs of attending, I wonder what it is about the opportunity to gather with Quakers that makes it worthwhile for me.

I attended Western Half-Yearly Meeting (WHYM) for the first time in May 1994. This was the month that I arrived in Vancouver to take a new job and combine households with my partner. We had been in a long-distance relationship while I studied in England, and we both moved together to Vancouver (he from Toronto, me from England) to continue our lives together. I was in a major life transition and a time of great upheaval.

I was in the Sorrento, BC, area for work, and arranged to be dropped off on Saturday night for WHYM. I got a ride back to Vancouver with two members of my Meeting: Rob Hughes and Barbara Bazett. That was the first of many meetings. I was a member of Vancouver MM from 1994 to 2012, and during that time I think I only missed one spring meeting of Western Half-Yearly Meeting.

WHYM is unique in Canada and perhaps more widely. It is the half-yearly meeting for Quakers from the western edge of Ontario to the Pacific Ocean. When Tom Findley was alive, he would flag down a bus from his remote home in the Ontario bush and travel to join us. WHYM may well end at Manitoba now.

Quakers in western Canada benefited from a group of American Friends who chose to leave the U.S. in the 1950s for political and faith reasons and who settled in Canada. This group of families settled in a remote community called Argenta in British Columbia. For a while, there was a Quaker school called Argenta Friends School, and there is a generation of Friends who grew up together and knew one another well. The tight bonds and shared history of these Friends has been part of the foundation of WHYM. It is a warm, loving, and supportive community. I miss those Friends now that I am here in Ontario.

WHYM was an important event for teenagers and young adults. There were a lot of Quaker youth who rarely if ever attended their local Quaker meetings, but who would go to great lengths to travel to spring WHYM, which was held over the May long weekend at the Anglican Sorrento Centre in

Sorrento, BC. There was a critical mass of families that provided the community that many isolated Quaker families had trouble getting in their local meetings.

Attending a community gathering over decades has allowed me to witness life. Several young people who I knew as children are now married and raising children of their own. Many of the active and energetic Quakers have aged and become frail. And many are no longer with us. Witnessing the circle of life in an intergenerational community is also something I have learned from and value.

When I became a parent, I faithfully took my daughter to be among Friends every spring. Her first WHYM I put her on a blanket in front of me during Meeting for Worship for Business. Having a loving community to witness her growth and to support my parenting is something I cherish.

Quaker gatherings offer the chance to spend an extended time with Friends and to listen and be heard in a way that I find difficult to find in the secular world. They allow us to share in Quaker Business process in a much larger group of Friends. Many of us find that to be a profound experience.

There is the opportunity for learning from the speakers, and from Special Interest Groups. Quaker gatherings typically involve Worship Sharing Groups (or Worship Fellowship Groups) – a small group of people who meet in the spirit of Quaker worship over the course of the event. These small groups have introduced me to many Friends over the years, and both the listening and the sharing have been a blessing.

Now that I live in Ontario, my annual Quaker gathering is Canadian Yearly Meeting, and I meet many of my WHYM Friends there. I feel passionately that these wider Quaker gatherings are a blessing and an opportunity to grow our understanding and experience of being a Friend. That passion led me to volunteer as the Clerk of Program Committee, supporting online CYM in Session events during the pandemic in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

This year I am looking forward to attending our first in-person (and hybrid) CYM in Session in Winnipeg, MB, from July 8-13, 2023 (<http://quaker.ca/yearlymeetinginsession>). You can find some information about how to get there without flying at quaker.ca/yearlymeetinginsession/home/registration/travel-options. I hope you will consider attending CYM-in-session this summer, either in person, or remotely via Zoom. 🌐

Corrections & Notes

for Caroline Balderston Parry's book of poetry

The last issue of The Canadian Friend (Fall 2022, p. 17) carried some information on Caroline Balderston Parry's book of poetry Turbulent Times, which some Friends assembled after her passing. As printed, some comments from Beverly Shepard got mis-attributed to Susan McMaster. Here are Susan's comments in full, for context and as tribute to Caroline.

Caroline left us too soon. Knowing her as a Friend and poet, I offered to publish a volume of her collected poetry a few months before she died. She was very pleased, and together we put together a preliminary manuscript. Unfortunately, she died before we could have a final discussion. Evalyn Parry and Richard Reed Parry, her son and daughter, wanted it to go ahead, however, and have been involved throughout.

Caroline's poems have a spiritual aspect, especially appreciated by Ottawa Friends, who soon answered my call to help complete the publication for those who loved her. The Meeting showed its support of the book financially for its value as wider ministry, as did individual Friends.

The following notes by Bev Shepard express sentiments shared by many who have helped with this collection.

"When I was asked to assist in the publication of this book I immediately felt it was the right thing for me to do. Caroline and I had been friends since we both had preschool children and had known each other in a variety of contexts – Quakers, camp, cooking, poetry, singing, labyrinths. She appreciated life – hers and others' – at many levels, even as her illness worsened, and her death left me feeling loss at all those levels. To work on this book was to restore my sense of Caroline's involvement, connection, caring, and passion. Her poetry tells us about her deepest self. I have felt her presence as I read it, thought about it, considered where each poem would best be placed. She has been beside me through this work. It has been not just a labour of love. It is a labour of life."

I am grateful for all those who joined in this work: without them it would have been immeasurably more difficult. They are listed with their main functions on the credits page, but in fact they all, along with many other Friends and friends, joined in wherever needed.

Caroline, thank you for this blessing.

– Susan McMaster 🌿



Caroline Balderston Parry died on Feb 11, 2022, after which some of her dear friends assembled and published *Turbulent Times* posthumously. This book is a labour of love, just like Caroline's life.

Caroline was a Quaker, poet, celebrator, artist, writer, and educator.

This book is generously supported by Ottawa Quakers and blessed by her children, Evalyn and Richard. All proceeds will go to a project selected by Ottawa Quakers to honour Caroline's divine spirit. Donations are welcome.

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A Haiku for CBP

heron head hangs low
eyes tear stain blue feathers deep
wings take flight hope soars

Bert Horwood, Thousand Islands Monthly Meeting

Wildlove

Some say
we use the word "love" too freely
in our society these days:
we cheapen it;
we dilute its meaning.
And maybe that is true.
Yet there are those we do love,
and there are different but real loves.
As for me,
I say this truly:
I love the creatures that live
in the woods outside my door.
I know it's love from the way they stir my heart,
occupy my thoughts,
lift up my soul.

I do not know how well they keep house
or what makes them laugh
or their views on, well, almost anything.
I love them for the way they move:
silently through deep forest,
or floating majestically high above,
or scampering and leaping flawlessly through the trees,
or skipping with utter freedom through the air.
I love them for the way they face the rain
and the wind, and the winter
with such straightforward courage.
I love them for the grace of their long legs,
the glory of their plumed, expressive tails,
the perfect architecture of their feathers.
They show me both God and science.
They do not try to kill me
or even damage my way of life,
but simply fit
with radiant beauty
into their own.

Beverly Shepard, Hamilton Monthly Meeting 🐦

Brightening My Corner

A Memoir of Dreams Fulfilled

by Ruth Lor Malloy, Toronto Monthly Meeting

In February 2023, Barclay Press published my book, *Brightening My Corner: A Memoir of Dreams Fulfilled*. It is my story about a Chinese-Canadian woman who took part in a racial discrimination test case in Dresden, Ontario in 1954 – years before sit-ins challenged segregation in the U.S. – and then a Quaker workcamp in Mexico.

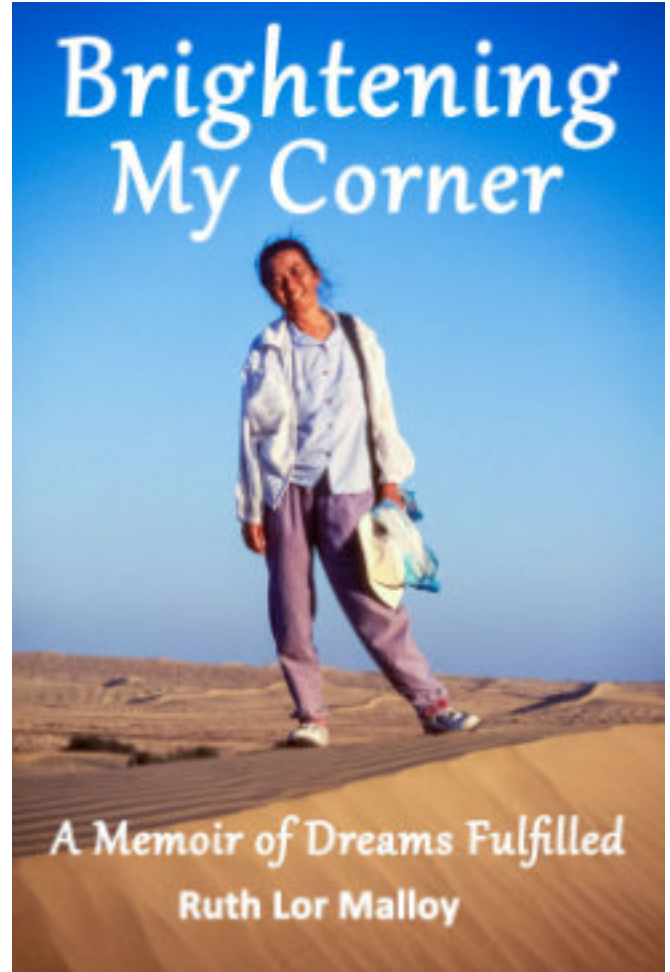
This journey of trying to understand and fight discrimination also led to a Quaker workcamp in Japan and to join the staff of the Quaker conference and seminars program in India for almost two years. It led to writing a dozen guide books on China and to Mumbai, where I helped to write a booklet that brought some respect to a much-despised transgendered group of beggars and prostitutes.

I have also been a house painter at a workcamp in the Canadian Arctic and collected hand-made shoes worn by Tibetan monks and oppressed women in ancient China for Toronto's Bata Shoe Museum. I have been a member of Toronto Monthly Meeting since 1960.

For more information, many photos from these adventures, and to purchase the book, you can visit:

www.ruthlormalloy.com

See also the recent Canadian Encyclopedia article about Ruth: www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/ruth-lor-malloy



The Reluctant Radical

A Book Review

In *The Jesus Myth* (John Hunt Publishing, 2021), Chris Scott brings his experiences as a psychotherapist and priest to consider the role of myth in the lives of people today. The ancient myths developed by what he calls “Bronze Age” Jews about Jesus and Christ are the chief subjects of inquiry in this slender (65 pages) and readable book. But he also treats myths in general, recognizing that readers will not necessarily have a relationship with Christian mythology.

Myth making is a critical part of all cultures, peoples, and places. Their role is to provide an explanatory basis of how the people live their lives. Myths ought to be more about behaviour

than about belief. The author's experience with gospel myths is that they have been rendered more and more irrelevant as we have moved, during two thousand years, from the flat earth worldview of the first century CE to the present understanding that we are a remote and tiny speck in a vast cosmos. Scientific and spiritual experiences today demand new mythologies.

That demand is the radical content of the book. It forms a basic analysis of the myths of Jesus, Christ as Messiah, and God. As a psychotherapist influenced by Carl Jung, the author includes consideration of the archetypes involved.

Good News Outside the Comfort Zone

Equality, Insecurity, & Writing a Memoir
by George Lakey, Central Philadelphia MM

The book resembles a basic summary of the publications of the Jesus Seminar, which it does not reference. In its few pages it comes to roughly the same point as do over a thousand pages of highly technical scholarship in the two major volumes of the Jesus Seminar. Both sources find the myths wanting for modern life.

The author uses his clinical experience to reduce the centrality of sin in Biblical stories. He explains that sin is a symptom of deeper problems, such as fear and alienation. For conventional Christians, this radical idea throws the point of much Biblical mythology into doubt.

I was uneasy with references to other religions. Scott's grasp of Judaism and Buddhism is not strong. In general he asserts the legitimacy of other faiths but remains convinced that only Christianity has solutions for global humanity.

As if to rub this point in, the book ends with a lovely prayer called St. Patrick's Breastplate. It dates to the fourth Century CE, definitely a "flat-earth" period. In short he moves from extreme critique of Jesus myths to reclaim their value.

Quaker readers will appreciate the book's emphasis on experience. The experience of new insights we call continuing revelation, while not specifically mentioned, is a potent way to reconcile traditional myths with current understanding. Being free of a myth-driven creed and liturgy, we can practice a faith with relatively few barnacles attached.

The style of the book is approachable. The author speaks directly to the reader in places. He is perhaps a little careless with numbers, preferring to speak of some people, many people, most, or few people. I had to wonder how he could possibly know.

Interesting quotations are set off in boxes that do not interfere with the flow of the text but are well worth reading.

Each chapter ends with three provocative questions that invite individual readers or groups to grapple with the challenges raised. The questions would be excellent for use in worship sharing groups. Overall, the book is a worthy addition to the shelves of people who are ready to engage the largest and most important ideas.

Bert Horwood is a member of Thousand Islands Monthly Meeting and worships with Prince Edward County Quakers Worship Group in Picton, Ontario. 🌿

When I think about our testimony for equality, I sometimes return to an experience I had with the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. I'd been advising the education department of CUPW for a couple of years and was asked to facilitate a weekend team-building retreat for officers and shop stewards in a western province.

By the afternoon of the second day, I decided the group of twenty was ready to take a risk. I asked them to do an activity in which they would move around and experience a series of one-on-one interactions. Each time they encountered someone, the person initiating would start a sentence with a formula and then complete it. The formula was "Something I'm proud about in my contribution to the union is. . . ." The other person in the pair would simply respond, "Thanks for telling me that," and the two would move on to others.

As I finished the instructions, I could feel the tension in the air. We were surely out of the comfort zone, which I find to be a ripe place for growth and learning. They reluctantly rose from their chairs and started slowly into the center. Two went directly to the toilet. I could barely hear the sound of the statements being made; they were more like murmurs. After completing one interaction, most people walked aimlessly around inside the circle, staring at the floor. I called a halt to the exercise and asked them to return to their seats.

"That was one of the hardest things I've ever tried to do," one man said. "It was torture!" another broke in and got some laughs. One after another expressed the reluctance, almost dread, they felt in trying to do the task.

"You know, it seems like a simple thing – tell something we're proud of! Hell, we're all proud of something! But to say it to somebody, like we mean it . . . I just couldn't do it."

"If it seems like a simple thing," I said, "and yet everyone found it really hard to do, then what do you think makes it so difficult?"

Silence. "I gotta say...I mean, this is going to sound shitty...but I mean it. I just don't feel that great about myself. I mean, I actually most of the time feel bad about myself." Heads nodded. Others made statements of agreement.

I waited, because I was hoping someone there would say it instead of me. One of the officers spoke next: "OK, I was thinking it was just an individual thing, you know, like I don't feel good about myself, so what? It's just me." ➡➡➡

“But if that’s how most of us feel, then we gotta ask why? How come us elected leaders, people who get things done, who have our lives together – why don’t we feel great about ourselves?”

Someone else chimed in immediately. “Well, we don’t get much help from the outside, do we? Like how many times do they tell us on TV that common people like us are great? Did we hear it in school? Do we hear it from our families? I never heard anyone give me a lot of respect, I’ll tell you that.”

The discussion deepened into the dynamics of oppression and how people internalize low self-esteem and then feel frustrated and often focus their aggression on people who remind them of themselves. The energy in the group continued to rise as participants rapidly made connections between phenomena that before had seemed unrelated. They were joking now and doing a lot of laughing.

What surprised me was the excited discussion that then broke out about “problem people” on the shop floor who are endlessly criticizing the shop stewards and how much more understandable that is now. They were peeling their onion and seeing another layer of internalized oppression.

“And how about this?” another officer said. “How about that we do the same thing to the national leadership of our union? We criticize and complain and act as if they don’t do anything right. We never think of really supporting them. Aren’t we doing just the same – taking our bad feelings about ourselves out on our leaders?”

“Right,” someone else chimed in. “Solidarity begins at home.” He pointed to his chest. “It starts right here! We gotta learn to respect ourselves and each other!”

“OK,” I said, “It’s about time for a break. I’d like to challenge you to walk your talk. You can turn the rest of this weekend into a lab where you practice respecting yourself and respecting each other. You could even tell each other something about yourself you’re proud of.”

They laughed. “Would you be willing to turn this into a practice space?”

“You got us this far, George. We might as well go the rest of the way!” General laughter accompanied nodding heads as we started our break.



Like the Society of Friends, the labour movement has a formal adherence to the principle of equality. I was struck by how quickly these grassroots leaders saw the connections between the inward and outward aspects of their lives, and how much energy it gave them – once they had been put on their learning edge by a contrived exercise. (As early Friends also knew, “being comfortable” is no great friend of learning!)

Class society, reinforced by race, gender, sexual orientation, and other hierarchies, counts on our compliance by reinforcing in ourselves and each other negativity, disappointment, and a lack of self-respect often disguised as modesty. I encountered this inner dynamic recently when writing my memoir.

At first I was surprised. I’d published ten books previously and, while they

all required hard work, they didn’t provoke the inner turbulence of writing the memoir. In writing the memoir, I repeatedly felt like I had been caught naked by a spotlight on the stage – even though, objectively, I had nothing very shocking to reveal, since it was mostly adventure stories! But just like those postal workers, I felt I had little right to describe proudly ways I’d made a positive difference – even if the book offered points that would be of use to others.

Fortunately, it makes a difference to know how oppression works to keep us down and to receive the aid of prayer to reclaim from confusion the clarity that we are made in God’s image. We really *can* count on the power given by Love.

George Lakey, 84, is a long-time member of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. At age twelve, he lost his boy preacher career among evangelicals when he preached that racial equality is God’s will. He was first arrested in the civil rights movement, then co-founded A Quaker Action Group (AQAG) to confront the Vietnam war. He was active in the LGBTQ movement and in 2010 co-founded the Earth Quaker Action Team (EQAT) to work for climate justice. He led over 1500 workshops on five continents and published Facilitating Group Learning (PM Press) and How We Win: A Guide to Nonviolent Direct Action Campaigning (Melville House). Trained in sociology, he taught at Pendle Hill, Haverford and Swarthmore Colleges, and the University of Pennsylvania. A documentary film is currently being made about his life, and his memoir, Dancing with History: A Life for Peace and Justice, was published last November by Seven Stories Press. 🌈

Reflections on Decades of Being Open to Spirit

August 19, 2022, Friday Montlake, Seattle, Washington

Dear Friends,

I have been loyal to the message and practice of the Religious Society of Friends since 1964. That winter is when I first went to a Meeting for Worship at University Friends Monthly Meeting in Seattle, Washington. I was an undergraduate student at the University of Washington and saw an ad or notice in *The Daily*, a campus newspaper. It said the time and place and “All Welcome. Quiet.”

I had been raised a nothing, being scolded out of following my maternal grandmother’s adherence to the beliefs of Jehovah’s Witnesses by my parents and by my own childhood questioning. One year my father insisted that my younger sister and I attend Sunday school run by a local Protestant church. The atmosphere seemed benign to me and as the young minister was approachable, one Sunday during tea-time, I took courage to ask him a question.

I challenged him, at age eight, with the question: What is it, really – the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost? I understand the concept of father and son, but what is a Holy Ghost? The minister sputtered out the “party line” while looking at me with sincerity. When I realized that he could not answer my question, I told my father I would not go to that Sunday School again. To his credit, and my mother’s, there was no pressure for me (or my sister) to go again.

Then began my quest. In high school in Spokane, Washington, I went to meetings of a group called Young Life. While it was not particularly “spiritual,” it was a group experience that spoke to me.

Decades later, my quest was answered in the form of a quiet Meeting for Worship whose chairs were filled predominantly by people associated with the nearby university and whose lives had been shaped by their experiences as draftees or Quaker medics during World War Two. There I found a sense of peace. I found trust and honesty. I found searching and openness to revelation.

At one point, being in a small group discussion on a Wednesday night in the Meeting’s library with a woman – Elsa Sherwin, who coincidentally was my professor of German language and literature – this dear woman provided a persuasive argument for believing in the divinity of Jesus Christ and the whole basis of Christianity. She told us to go home, indulge this point of view overnight, and let her know if we had a profound insight. So, I slept on it and was pleased to wake up thinking that “I believed” – that I accepted the tenets of Christianity, the God concept, the child of God concept. (I don’t remember being bothered by the Holy Ghost concept.)

When next I saw Elsa, on First Day before Meeting for Worship and told her I believed, she smiled cryptically and did not challenge my conclusion. Little did I know then that deep down, I wasn’t a believer. I had been led by argument and my trust in her, a person I respected deeply, and concluded that if she believed, then so did I. In my naivete, I didn’t realize until years later that she hadn’t confided in us, our little group of students, in the sense that she had revealed her own true beliefs or non-beliefs. She had simply set up the “argument” for believing, and I had fallen for it.

It took me some months of reflection to realize that I had been too easy on myself and her persuasion and the total concept of God or Spirit. I had been too readily a recipient of acceptance, the deep human wish to know and believe. After all, there was no proof, no undeniable “data” to show that the entire basis of Christianity was provable. So, I lingered among Friends for decades, always faithful to the quest – the quest for knowing, for following, for wisdom, for openness to leadings, for patience regarding signs of leadings and actual communication between myself and a divine presence.

The closest I have gotten, in retrospect, were several experiences that included healing touch. While I didn’t understand the outcomes, positive though they were, I accepted them as something of value, but not something understandable.

So, Friends, I need to admit that going into my eighth decade, I am not really any closer to knowing the Truth than I was in my mid-twenties. Of course, I have experienced many nudges that could be called Leadings. I have been blessed by numerous experiences, for instance, with a Protestant minister, a neighbor who “laid hands” on me at my request and through his spiritual energy provided me with some relief from grief about my mother’s death.

Though I have been relentless in participating in Friends Meetings both in the Seattle area and in British Columbia, I cannot say that I am substantially closer to knowledge, to knowing what it’s all about, to believing based on fact and reality. For me it’s not enough to pretend to believe because that’s the cool thing about being a part of the Religious Society of Friends: that there is a respected forum for waiting for leadings and being led towards certain actions and beliefs. But it’s within this forum that I want to stay and relish the possibilities.

In the end, Friends, I don’t know. I simply don’t know. And I don’t believe that any human knows. The mystery remains.

Yours truly,

Joy Belle Conrad-Rice, Kamloops Worship Group 

Reflections on a visit to countries bordering Russia and Ukraine

by Tim Gee, General Secretary, Friends World Committee for Consultation

When I close my eyes – whether to sleep, rest, or pray – I find my mind going to Central Europe, and in particular to a ship docked in Estonia’s principal port. This is where 2000 Ukrainians, mostly women and children, wait to work out what’s next for them.

It wasn’t that the conditions were bad. It was clean, there was a playroom for the children, free food, free medicines, and professional support to access the social system and to help find employment and accommodation. It’s more that it brought home to me, powerfully and symbolically, the long, tense wait that millions of people face as they hope and pray for an end to the war in their home country.

I had spent the last week in a small delegation to some of the countries of Central Europe, where upwards of 375,000 soldiers stand ‘pre-positioned’ for war. This is also a humanitarian frontline, which countless people have escaped to or through.

Quakers in the region are sparse but spirited. Thanks to the generosity of Friends around the world who donated money, a group nominated from the Central European Gathering have been able to distribute funds to places and projects where they know it will make a difference.

As well as helping refugees, though, Friends are interested in root causes. In this case, that’s the war in Ukraine. Some have questioned whether our peace testimony still stands in such a context – questions I carried with me in my heart.

To my reading, the peace testimony is not a condemnation of all people who seek to defend themselves through use of arms in any situation. Rather, it is an affirmation that our vocation as Friends is to be peacemakers who profoundly seek peace that “others’ feet may walk in the same” (as Margaret Fell put it in one of the first articulations of Quakers’ peace testimony).

My travel partner, QUNO director Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, often quotes one of her predecessors, Sydney Bailey, who summarised Friends’ peace testimony as the refusal to kill, the relief of suffering, building the institutions of peace, and removing the causes of war. We saw every one of these being manifested in Central Europe.

Firstly, refusal to kill. There are not Quakers (that we know of) engaged in fighting in this war.

The second part is relief of suffering. In Warsaw we met Friends who described feeling strengthened by Quaker Meetings for Worship and a community helping with sign-language translation, providing pro-bono legal support, and

distributing hand-made toys made by Friends in North America. In Krakow, we met with staff from a charity assisting refugee families with special needs to access the support they need, supported financially by Quakers. In Estonia, Friends have been helping to distribute essentials to newcomers, providing access to free activities like ice-skating, and helping establish new institutions to welcome people like a school.

We also heard some tragic stories highlighting fixable problems in European governmental systems for welcoming newcomers. Another set of sad stories concerned relations between newly arrived, traumatised Ukrainians and ethnic Russians living in the bordering countries.

Friends in Tallinn are already working with an established psychotherapeutic drama organisation to organise local-level sessions promoting intercultural understanding, with the hope that this could be adopted elsewhere. On a small scale at least, this is part of building institutions of peace.

On a larger scale, our global Quaker peace institutions are oriented towards the UN. At the time of writing, direct negotiations between Russia and Ukraine have broken down. We have been asked, though, by grassroots Friends to do what we can to encourage conversations about shared security between the states in the region, leading towards a settlement that meets each country’s needs.

We also can and should carry on talking about other root causes, including the role of fossil fuels both in the fighting itself and in the economic war that accompanies it. Likewise, interpretations of Christianity used to justify violence and aggression need to be assertively questioned, while voices for peace are lifted up.

In this spirit it’s worth quoting the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organisations, who in February declared: “The only pious way to correct mutual difficulties and contradictions is through dialogue.”


There are military routes to an end to the present fighting, but all would result in avoidable death. Quakers may be unusual in how consistently we have held to Jesus’ teachings of peace, but we are by no means alone in our concern for a just peace and the negotiated settlement of conflict.

After visiting the refugee boat in Tallinn, I was taken by my hosts to the nearby Ukrainian church. So much good was happening there – including culturally-relevant craft activities to help people process what was happening – within a community of support and of prayer. As we were hearing about

this and being shown the fruits of the various projects, a mother and daughter entered the room. They wanted to use the chapel. They had just found out that their husband and father had been killed. As the room was opened up and we continued on our way, I felt I carried some of their grief with me.

There are about six Friends in Estonia, four in Latvia, even fewer in Lithuania, and a few more in Poland and the other Central European states. Proportionate to their size, the work

the Central European Gathering is supporting is extraordinary. I am sure that further funds would do more good to that end.

I went asking questions about our peace testimony. I returned sure that it is needed now as much as ever. How it manifests in this climate is still emerging. What is certain is that our vocation is to make peace, which the world sorely needs right now. 

Statement on the Peace Testimony and Ukraine

Quakers are a people who follow after peace, love, and unity. Our peace testimony is our witness to the Truth as we experience it.

Our testimony manifests as a cumulative set of actions, continually tested and added to over centuries. These actions are diverse in form, but have been broadly united by:

- 1) refusal to kill,
- 2) relief of suffering,
- 3) building the institutions of peace, and
- 4) supporting peacebuilding and removing the causes of war.

At the onset of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia, the Friends World Committee for Consultation issued a Christian Call for Peace, affirming that invasion and occupation are the opposite of Christ's universal call to reconciliation and unity, and echoing church statements in many countries, including Ukraine, calling for an immediate ceasefire replaced by a peacemaking dialogue. This call would echo the Golden Rule (Do unto others as you would have done unto yourself) which is a foundational value of all major world religions, has the potential to eliminate violence, and helps us to recognize one another.

Almost by definition, peacemaking often involves engaging with people making war and understanding the reasons they do so. Nevertheless, our vocation as a peace church is to seek and make real the peaceful alternatives to armed conflict, which with God's help, are possible, and to ensure that the long-lasting human costs of war are not forgotten or neglected.

We continue to uphold the right to refuse to kill. We stand with conscientious objectors on all sides of this conflict, with the people in Russia who stand up against their leaders' belligerent actions, and the people in Ukraine employing creative forms of nonviolent civil resistance.

We continue to help relieve suffering and hold that all nations must radically improve their approach to welcoming refugees, to fully honor the United Nations' Refugee Convention and ensure that all displaced people – no matter their origin – have access to civil, political, economic, social, and cultural

rights. We will continue to press for this.

We continue to seek to build the institutions of peace. Justice with peace requires binding frameworks of international law and restorative justice, as well as global investment in violence prevention at the community level. We know that all of these have been insufficient to prevent the injustice in Ukraine and must be strengthened to win peace.

And we continue to support peacebuilding measures. We call on the governments of Ukraine, Russia, neighboring countries, the United States, NATO, and the European Union, to explore all avenues – whether public or private – for a renewed conversation to address the human security needs of all the peoples and countries in the region, to help provide the basis for long term peace.

Whichever way this war ends, we are realistic that healing and sustainable peacemaking will in all likelihood take more than a generation and will only be possible through inclusive and sustainable processes from the international to the local. That process must begin now.

We are ready to play our part.

Timothy Gee
General Secretary, [Friends World Committee for Consultation](#)

Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge
Director, [Quaker United Nations Office](#), Geneva

Sarah Clarke
Director, Quaker [United Nations Office](#), New York

Bridget Moix
General Secretary, [Friends Committee on National Legislation](#)

Joyce Ajlouny
General Secretary, [American Friends Service Committee](#)

Jennifer Preston
General Secretary, [Canadian Friends Service Committee](#)

Tracey Martin
Director, [Quaker Council on European Affairs](#)

Oliver Robertson
General Secretary, Quaker Peace and Social Witness

Harry Orchard

The Quaker-Adjacent Murderer

by Daniel Nelson, Wooler Monthly Meeting

Speaking of Wooler Monthly Meeting, Albert Horsley¹ once declared:

“My mother was a Quaker, and in my boyhood days I attended the Quaker Church and Sunday school. I believe that a larger percentage of the members of that little wooden church were sincere Christians than of any other church I had known in my younger days.”²

That’s a lovely quote about Wooler Meeting and, if you’ve ever been to Wooler, you might have a picture in your mind of that “little wooden church” referenced in the quote. But, in fact, the one that stands today is the third Meeting House on the site, having been built in 1896 after Albert left Ontario. Instead, Albert was referring to the second Meeting House, which had been built around 1858.³

Now, at this point, you might be wondering why I wanted to bring that quote to your attention, besides being a proud member of that Meeting. But, before I tell you why, let me tell you a bit more about Albert.

Albert Horsley, whose paternal family had emigrated from Yorkshire, England, to what is now the Municipality of Brighton, Ontario, was born in 1866. He grew up on a farm on the Old Wooler Road, just about a mile from the Wooler Friends Meeting House. The house – just three doors down from the house I grew up in – would later, and coincidentally, become the home of my great-aunt and uncle, Vera and Douglas Fox. Albert’s mother, Margaret Horsley (née McKenna), was a member of Wooler Meeting, and by the 1891 federal census, the entire household reported such a religious affiliation – except for Albert, who reported Methodism as his faith.

His brother-in-law, Gideon Bowerman, who married Albert’s sister Clara Anne Horsley, came from one of the most well-known Prince Edward County Quaker families and was a recorded Quaker minister. Gideon’s mother was Mary Mott and, given the propensity of Quakers to marry within the Society, perhaps Mary was a member of the famous Quaker New York Mott family, of which Lucretia Mott was the most famous of all.



Albert Horsley, from the 1911 pamphlet *Capitalism's Conspiracy in California*.

Speaking of Gideon, Albert wrote “I had an uncle [brother-in-law Gideon] who was a minister. During the winter my wife and I went to visit him, driving to his place about eighty miles from our new home. We intended to stay only a day or so. But one of those blizzards that sometimes seep that country and block up all the roads kept us there for two weeks. During those days, under the influence of that happy home with its prayer and thanksgiving, I heard the still, small Voice that often speaks to the burdened heart, and I yielded considerably to His pleading and felt the change. I vowed that I would turn my back on the world and live for God.”⁴

Census data reveals that he and his family lived with an unrelated elderly Quaker woman, Sarah Palmer. Perhaps she was a boarder? He worked as a teenager for the Valentines, another local Quaker family, as a farmhand. Albert’s parents are buried in the Friends Cemetery, adjacent to the Wooler Meeting House, along with several other family members. Although he, at that time, claimed Methodism as his religion, he was, as can be seen, deeply tied to the Quaker community in Wooler.

At this stage, I must introduce a new character to the story and his name is Harry Orchard. In comparison to Albert, Harry Orchard was not so nice.

¹ I wish to thank my great aunt, Yvonne Green, for the use of her research materials on Albert Horsley, which were gathered as part of her genealogy of the Horsley family.

² p. 141, Harry Orchard with LeRoy Edwin Froom, *Harry Orchard: The Man God Made Again* (Southern Publishing, 1952).

³ The first Meeting House at Wooler was built on the site around 1832.

⁴ p.32 of Orchard and Froom’s *Harry Orchard*.

REFLECTIONS & CONCERNS

Indeed, Harry was a thoroughly disreputable and despicable man, and he would agree with that assessment. Largely forgotten in this country but still remembered in the United States of America, his story can be found in his two autobiographies (*The Confessions and Autobiography of Harry Orchard*, published in 1907) and *Harry Orchard: The Man God Made Again*, published in 1952), on various websites,¹ and even on a Wikipedia page. His grave is highlighted by the City of Boise, Idaho, where he is buried.² He was even the subject of a PBS TV documentary made in Idaho.³

Harry married and had a daughter and operated a cheese factory at Hilton, Ontario, near Wooler. Cheese factories are now a forgotten industry, but they once dotted the landscape of rural Ontario. Things may have seemed to be going well for Harry, at least on the surface, but Harry was a spendthrift. To cover growing debts, he burned down his cheese factory and defrauded the insurance company for the proceeds.

Harry then compounded his illegal ways by leaving his wife and young child in Brighton and fleeing to British Columbia with another woman who was, herself, married to another man. That woman soon returned to Brighton.

Harry, on the other hand, never returned home and permanently abandoned his wife and child. He drifted down into the United States where he continued his unlawful ways as a fraudster, bigamist, and thief. He ran scams and other unsavoury schemes and eventually became involved with the ruthless Western Federation of Miners in their fight with mine owners in the western United States who were, quite frankly, just as ruthless.

In an escalation of his criminal behaviour, he would later claim to have killed up to 17 people while working as an assassin for the Western Federation of Miners. But it is one murder for which he is most famous, and for which he was prosecuted. After several attempts, on 30 December, 1905, in

Caldwell, Idaho, Harry wired a bomb to a garden gate and assassinated a former governor of Idaho, Frank Steunenberg, for his support of the mine owners.

Rather than fleeing, Harry stayed in his hotel there and was arrested by Pinkerton's Detective Agency staff – who, interestingly enough, had been hired by those same mine owners. (Some would later accuse Harry of being in Pinkerton's pay). Harry confessed to the murder and said that he'd been put up to it by key members of the Western Union of Miners.

In the initial trial for the murder of Frank Steunenberg, union leader "Big Bill" Haywood was defended by the redoubtable Clarence Darrow,⁴ perhaps one of the most famous American trial lawyers of all time. Haywood was found not guilty and his "accomplices" as named by Orchard were also acquitted or had their charges dropped. Prosecutors (who later turned out to have been in the pay of the mine owners, at least in part) relied heavily on the testimony of Orchard in (unsuccessfully) making their case.

In a separate, later, prosecution, Orchard was found guilty and sentenced to death in 1907. After having found God (yet again) and becoming a Seventh Day Adventist, in part due to the labours of Frank Steunenberg's widow, his death sentence was commuted. He lived out the remainder of his life at the Idaho State Prison, dying in 1954, after spending 46 years in prison.

You might, therefore, be asking what ties these two *very* different men together. Why am I telling you about

Albert Horsley *and* Harry Orchard? It's simple: they are but one and the same. Albert Horsley, a boy deeply connected to Quaker faith and practice, was also Harry Orchard, convicted murderer and self-confessed thief, scammer, and bigamist. The name 'Harry Orchard' was merely the best known of many aliases adopted by Albert after he left Canada. He's also, as it happens, my first cousin, four times removed. 🐣



Harry Orchard, shortly after his arrest in 1906

¹ For example, "The Conversion of Harry Orchard: The Adventist Connection to the country's most infamous twentieth-century assassin" at www.adventistreview.org/141513-18

² "Harry Orchard (Killed Idaho Governor Frank Steunenberg)," www.cityofboise.org/departments/parks-and-recreation/morris-hill-cemetery-walking-tour/list/harry-orchard-killed-idaho-governor-frank-steunenberg

³ See *Assassination: Idaho's Trial of the Century* at www.idahopty.org/shows/specials/assassination

⁴ Clarence Darrow is perhaps best known as the defence lawyer in the infamous 1925 Scopes Monkey Trial (properly *State of Tennessee v Scopes*), which dealt with the teaching of human evolution in schools.

My Journey to Rwanda

by Jocelyne Tranquilla, Halifax Monthly Meeting

This past year provided me the opportunity to take a yearlong sabbatical from my job. Although the global pandemic changed my plans, it did not ruin them. I have relished the break from my regular routine, and have spent time with family, in silence, in nature, and engaged in meaningful work (including as the interim Secretary for CYM).

I also had the great privilege of travelling to Rwanda, a place I have long dreamt of visiting. Many people have asked me: Why Rwanda? Here is my answer.

I was 12 years old in 1994, the year when hell came to earth in Rwanda. The exact number is debated, but 800,000 is a common estimate for the murders that took place between April 7 and July 15, 1994, in the small, beautiful country. Certainly, if all the deaths related to the war, the genocide of the Tutsis, and the direct aftermath are taken into consideration, the number is much greater.

I remember seeing footage on television depicting the mass exodus from Rwanda to refugee camps. Of course, I did not understand the situation. What I understood was that I lived in a safe place where my basic needs were met. My biggest problem was that of ennui. It just did not seem fair that children my age were experiencing such suffering when life was so easy for me. It was not fair. We do not choose the circumstances that we are born into.

My 12-year-old self was deeply affected by the injustice of the situation. From that time onwards, Rwanda has held a special place in my consciousness. When I first gained access to the internet, Rwanda was the first thing I looked up. I have been hooked ever since, and Rwanda has continued to hold my gaze.

Another important reason for my initial interest in Rwanda has to do with my family background. My paternal grandmother – her name was Augustine Rondeau Tranquilla – played an important part in my childhood. We visited my grandparents in rural New Brunswick on most weekends, and I loved those visits. Grammy was a skilled cook, and her food was always delicious. She reliably smelled good. She showed me affection and love, and I loved her in return.

My Grammy was a war bride who came to New Brunswick following WWII, and never stopped longing for her beloved Europe. She was born in 1923 in Couillet, Belgium. When my great grandmother (Adolphine Latteur) was pregnant with her, Belgium occupied the territory then called Ruanda-Urundi. My grandmother was born into a time and a place where racism against black Africans was normal.

As a child I was taught that racism is wrong, and I understood colonial occupation to be bad. The grandmother I loved also held racist beliefs. The conflict between my love for my grandmother and her racist beliefs was confusing for me, and I felt a deep sense of shame that was difficult to articulate.

At an early age I also learned that my paternal grandfather's uncle died fighting for Italian occupation in Ethiopia, in what is known as the Second Italo-Abyssinian War. I also loved my half-Italian grandfather despite his racist beliefs.

My truth is that I have ancestors who supported racist military occupations, including in East Africa. I am left with the question: How can I work to make right the wrongs that my ancestors participated in? Is that even possible?

Like many modern-day Quakers on Turtle Island, my faith journey has had some twists and turns. I was born into an evangelical Christian family. Church was primary in our household. My mother had been raised in South America as the child of missionaries. So, at the same time that I was struggling to reconcile my paternal ancestral connection to military occupation in East Africa, I also began to doubt the value of Christian proselytizing in faraway places. Although well-intentioned, what my maternal grandparents did as missionaries in Bolivia seemed to me to be wrongheaded. I remained an active church member throughout my youth, yet I began to seriously question my faith.

I was yearning for a faith that values social justice. How could I follow a church that supported colonialism and militarism? Does everyone who doesn't accept Jesus Christ as their personal saviour really live in eternal damnation? I just could not make sense of that.

So, in my early adulthood, I threw out the baby with the bathwater and turned away from my Christian roots. But I continued to seek. I explored Buddhist meditation, I dived into yoga, I completed a degree in religious studies. I spent time in Israel/Palestine and explored the birthplaces of the Abrahamic traditions and the Baha'i faith. I became involved in interfaith groups. I kept seeking.

I also went to a Quaker Meeting, and over the course of years I returned enough to eventually want to become a member. My process of becoming a Friend feels as though I am coming full circle. I now want to grow my Christian roots. I know that many Quakers in Canada do not identify as Christian, but I now do. It is with some reluctance, but it is genuine. My return to the faith of my ancestors is both fraught and lifegiving. And this is where I return to my journey to Rwanda.

Christianity was brought to Rwanda in 1899 by German Roman Catholics known as the “White Fathers.” These men accompanied the colonists who had traveled to East Africa to make the bold and arrogant claim that the land was now a colony of the German Empire. The conversion process was swift, and Catholicism was quickly adopted by many Rwandans. Other Christian denominations began to establish themselves in the country, in particular Anglicanism and Seventh Day Adventism.

The most established churches in Rwanda were also unfortunately complicit in the 1994 genocide, which included horrific mass deaths that took place in churches. Many people changed churches following 1994. However, Rwanda remains a country of practicing Christians. Identifying as a non-believer does not make sense to the average Rwandan. Faith is central to providing meaning and hope.

Whether or not Rwanda would have been better off without the initial introduction of Christianity is up for debate, but what I witnessed makes me believe that faith contributes to the incredible strength and resiliency of the Rwandan people. I went to Rwanda in part to experience the positive impacts of Christian belief in daily life.

Quakers came to Rwanda in 1986 and have maintained a small but mighty presence that promotes peace building, trauma healing, and reconciliation. While I was in Rwanda, I had the honour of meeting and befriending many Quakers. I was invited to church services that looked almost nothing like the Quaker meetings I am familiar with, but which were undoubtedly Spirit-led.

My hosts in Kigali, David Bucura and Rachel Bugenimana, are beautiful living examples of our Quaker values. They are humble people who hold a global perspective, and they are involved in innumerable projects, organizations, and volunteer efforts. In talking about the difference between programmed and unprogrammed meetings, Bucura



Jocelyne visiting the Children's Peace Library Kigali site with Francine Muhawenimana, CPL coordinator. The library is situated next to George Fox Primary School.

explained to me his view that Quakers are all part of the same family, but that there are “different flavours” of Quakerism. I like that. And I certainly like and respect how I saw Quakers in Rwanda lead their lives and the service projects that they spearhead.

On such project is the Children's Peace Libraries (CPL), which is an initiative of Friends Peace Teams (friendspeaceteams.org) & the Transformational Leadership Centre (tlcrwanda.org). Starting in 2019, I began to raise funds for the CPL. Quakers in the Atlantic Region were especially generous, and I was able to raise \$3,878. These funds provided children with much needed personal protective equipment during the pandemic, so that they could continue to attend the libraries, and bought a supply of culturally relevant children's books written in Kinyarwanda

(the common language in Rwanda).

Most impactful of all was that the funds allowed for a new library branch to open in the northern province. This site will have a sign which commemorates the relationship between the CPLs and Quaker Friends in Mi'kmaq.

I witnessed firsthand the positive impact that these libraries are having on children and communities. These libraries are so much more than just places where children can go to read. The six sites (soon to be seven) are vibrant community gathering spots with organized activities that include peace clubs, peace debate teams, peer mediation, and the read aloud program. If you would like, you can read more about the Children's Peace Libraries on the updates section of my GoFundMe page: www.gofundme.com/f/childrens-peace-libraries.

I consider myself blessed to have been able to journey to Rwanda, and I continue to learn and grow from the experiences I had. While there I talked to enough people to understand that there is much more to the Rwandan story than what is presented by Western media or in government-sponsored rhetoric. May we hold our brothers and sisters in the African Great Lake Region in the Light. 🌈

Are you a Quaker without knowing it?



**Experience rather than
prescribed belief?**

Non-violence?

**Direct, unmediated
experience of the Sacred?**

Non-hierarchy?

**The transforming power
of silence?**

Community?

Integrity?

**Social action grounded
in spiritual practice?**

Simplicity?

For more information:

quaker.ca

Created by Steve Fick

Bridging the Generational Divide

by Rebekah Percy, Pacific Yearly Meeting (USA)

Sent in by Carol Bradley and reprinted with permission from the January-February 2021 issue of the Western Friend.

Quaker meetings in the U.S. are generally filled with whiter, older, highly educated, middle-to-upper class people – or in other words, very privileged people. Today's youth face far fewer options than their parents had at the same age. Consequently, a disconnect has been growing for some time between generations, both within and beyond our Quaker community.

Young people are now deviating away from high-income occupations. They are either actively choosing or being forced by necessity to take steps such as attending trade school rather than four-year university, taking time off between high school and college, or intentionally focusing on heavy internal work, such as healing generational traumas.

The divide between generations is further evident in recent, primarily youth-led social justice spaces, including the climate and Occupy Wall Street movements. Today's youth did not ask to inherit these broken systems forecasting such a bleak future. Even so, they are stepping up to the plate as political warriors, often unpaid and struggling to solve lofty dilemmas. As a result, young people find themselves broke, with older adults assuming they are somehow failing, due to a lack of material wealth. It's not a secret nor a surprise that many young adults and even teenagers are jaded and encounter frequent onsets of depression in response to these compounding forces.

Today's elders can be naively optimistic about the future of our planet and economy, especially if sheltered in homogenous bubbles of entitlement. While some do continue to be involved in the political sphere, standing up for their beliefs and Quaker values, others seem to merely cash in on yesterday's actions: justifying low levels of present engagement by recounting previous activism – protesting the Vietnam War and the draft, campaigning for civil and women's rights, etc. Many seem to believe these past actions acquit their failure to act now.

This multi-factored divide between generations makes it hard for Friends to sense our shared foundation and talk deeply about spirituality and other topics of significance. Relationships are about meeting each other where we are

and uplifting gifts; they should not involve misplaced expectations. We won't get anywhere by trying to force a square peg into a round hole, nor by fearfully avoiding connection for perceived lack of commonalities.


Our Quaker youth cohort is especially valuable because it is few in number. Older Friends say they want to see more youth involvement and leadership, but don't always seem to appreciate or respect the crazy acrobatics required of younger people as they juggle work, career advancement, relocation, relationships, and more.

Though older adults crave connections with younger generations and all the vibrancy that these exchanges may bring, at the same time, they might not recognize the importance of treating younger people as equals. Younger Friends similarly crave connection with older Friends, but might feel intimidated about approaching adults they haven't met yet. Intentionality will be needed to create truly intergenerational spaces. Just as Friends are now establishing opportunities for deep listening as part of expanding our understanding of racism, we should also

prioritize open and honest intergenerational conversations.

Quaker meetings would do well to consider new ways to offer mentorship and support to young Friends during life's difficult transitions such as entering high school, moving out of one's family home, and gaining new employment. Friends could also offer more support for transitions later in life, such as throughout marriage and retirement.

We must acknowledge our differences and develop creative ways to support youth and engage both youth and elders in meaningful dialogue and activity. Some of these new approaches might fit within our current structures, like allocating time in committees for mentorship. Such approaches could help foster relationships between individuals of different generations who hold similar interests. Small and consistent actions go a long way toward creating the sense of community and connection that we all seem to crave. Let's bridge this divide.

Rebekah Percy grew up in Pacific Yearly Meeting (PacYM), is a member of La Jolla Monthly Meeting, and currently serves as PacYM's Interim Youth Programs Coordinator. 



Spoken Messages in Meeting for Worship

Submitted by Brent Bowyer

The Lucknow/ North Huron Worship Group is a small group of 10-12 regular attenders and members that meets twice-monthly by Zoom and face-to-face when possible. We value our shared search for wisdom and the support the group gives each of us to live with integrity and responsibility. We recently held a meeting where we discussed spoken ministry. We used the following queries as a starting point for discussion.

1) Settling into silence

What makes it hard for you to settle into silence?

What helps you to settle and still the anxious, frenetic, racing, switchboard mind?

In what sense is Meeting for Worship “worship?” Are there other words that describe what goes on for you in Quaker meeting? Might Quaker meeting be seen as a search for wisdom, courage, patience? What else?



2) Speaking out of the silence

Where have the ideas come from that you choose to share or speak your truth? (Does it matter?) Is it:

- a “still, small voice?”
- a sense of something urgent or persistent?
- a joy or sorrow?
- a new insight?
- a perplexing quandary?

What are the barriers you experience that make it hard for you to share or uninterested in sharing or speaking?

Are there things you wonder about sharing or speaking a message?

Is Meeting for Worship totally different from group therapy or a support group like Alcoholics Anonymous?

Would a totally silent Meeting for Worship be ok for you:

- never
- occasionally
- often
- all the time?

Is there a danger in sharing political¹ concerns? Partisan political concerns?

3) Listening to the messages & shared reflections of others

Can we hear the spirit behind the words?

Can you recall something that was quite meaningful to you that someone shared?

What things make it hard to listen to others speaking?

Is every concern we feel a leading to action? Do we assume our own leadings

will or should be shared by everyone else?

What do you do with spoken messages with which you don’t agree? Would it be helpful to have a structured time to have follow-up to what someone has said? Do our potlucks give that opportunity? 🍷🍷

GLEANINGS & QUOTATIONS

“You do not even have to leave your room. Remain sitting at your table and listen. Do not even listen, simply wait. Do not even wait, remain still and solitary. The world will freely offer itself to you unasked. It has no choice. It will roll in ecstasy at your feet.”

- Franz Kafka

¹ See the article by Margaret Slavin (Peterborough Monthly Meeting) “About Drifting Away from our Roots” on pages 15-18 of the [Winter 2021 issue](#) of *The Canadian Friend*.

Inner Testimonies

by David Summerhays, Montreal Monthly Meeting

In my mid-twenties, only four months after attending my first Quaker meeting in 2008, I made a couple of decisions. First, I was going to date again. Within a few weeks, I was in my first relationship in years. Second, despite my inherently calculating, chess-player personality, I decided was moving to Canada... with few contacts, no job, and, honestly, no plan.

Looking back on it all years later, I realize that attending my first Quaker meeting was the spark that set off this series of excellent decisions.

Within a couple of years of my first Quaker meeting, I woke up one morning with a preternatural calm, a peace that washed over my life like a morning bathe in a cool lake.

Fast-forward: I was redoing our Montreal Quaker website recently and rereading our Quaker testimonies, the so-called SPICES of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality and stewardship. The SPICES are an invention of one Quaker in the 1950s, as his way of summarizing what Quakers stand for over our nearly four hundred years of history.

The SPICES are true. But also, they don't directly speak to the way attending Quaker meeting blesses our lives. Among newcomers to Quakerism, only the most activist crowd is drawn to Quakers because of the SPICES testimonies. I am part of the activist crowd, don't get me wrong, but they don't speak to me. The SPICES are values – no doubt values that result from Quaker worship, but they speak of the fruit of worship, not the root of how worship changes us. We need testimonies that speak to the spiritual roots, the impact of the Quaker way upon us.

I was at a clearness committee recently where everyone present spoke of the way going to Quaker meeting had transformed not their outer values but their inner lives, their relationships to themselves and others through more listening, more inner calm, more discernment – which ultimately led to more connection and a more meaningful and satisfying life. For example, one person noted that going to Quaker meeting had helped them hear not only their own leadings, but those of others as well.

Inner testimonies are important not because I support quietism, nor do I think the more activist-y testimonies should be forgotten. They're perfect. But they also don't fully explain the impact Quaker worship has on our lives.

So I'd like to end this article with an invitation: I'd like to propose to you the six C's of Quakerism, the inner testimonies.

- **Calm** – the inner state of peace, God's grace. We practice this in Quaker worship, a calm that is invincible to the noise and complexity of the world. This peace is the root of everything Quakers do.



- **Concentration** – listening to ourselves, others, God. All are equally worth being heard. Quaker worship helps us listen “between the lines.” Concentrating our attention on listening to all is the inner version of equality.

- **Consideration** – when appropriate, discerning possibilities, threshing, making sound decisions as individuals and a group. This is the

importance of community.

- **Clarity** – when appropriate, letting go of inner doubt and noise. This is inner simplicity.
- **Courage** – without which all discernment is for naught. This is the inner integrity that leads to action and calculated risk.
- **Creation** – this is meaningful living, stewardship, realizing that we act.

Our testimony is that Quaker worship improves us in the ways of the six C's. And those six C's in turn lead to us being more ready to live the SPICES testimonies of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality and stewardship – because we have the calm to concentrate on listening, allowing us to consider possibilities, leading to clarity, courage and creative action. 🌱



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