

# Fostering *Vital Friends Meetings*

Part Two:

*Resources for Working with Quaker Meetings*

**Compiled by  
Jan Greene and Marty Walton**

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# Table of Contents

## Introduction to Resources ix

### Section R1: Field Work as Ministry

- R1-1 Preparation for Traveling in the Ministry *Bill Taber*
- R1-2 The Use of Queries in One's Work *Meryl Reis Louis*
- R1-3 When You Find Yourself in Charge Without a Plan *Paul Schobernd*
- R1-5 Not Only Do We Struggle with a Dependence upon Things,  
We Struggle with a Dependence upon Activity *Bruce Bishop*
- R1-7 Time and Ministry *Nadine Hoover*
- R1-10 Queries on Our Work in Ministry *NEYM/NYYM Pastors' Retreat*

### Section R2: Concerns of Ministry and Counsel

- R2-1 Strengthening Our Meetings as Caring Communities *Arlene Kelly*
- R2-5 Inner Work *Marty Grundy*
- R2-7 Spiritual Friendships *Liz Yeats*
- R2-8 Covenant Groups *Carole Treadway and Liz Yeats*
- R2-9 Processing Leading Through Friends' Community Structures *Rosa Packard*
- R2-10 What Monthly Meetings Can Do and Teach Friends to Do  
in Support of Leadings and Peacemaking Efforts *Rosa Packard*
- R2-11 Clearness Committees, Committees of Care, and Committees of Oversight *Canadian YM*
- R2-15 Clearness Committees and Their Use in Personal Discernment *Jan Hoffman*
- R2-17 Responding to Calls to Ministry *Central Philadelphia MM*
- R2-21 Support Groups *Mary Lou Leavitt*
- R2-24 What is Ministry? *Virginia Schurman*
- R2-25 The Ministry of Pastoral Care *Arlene Kelly*
- R2-28 Tips on Eldering *Leanna Goerlich and Carol Holmes*
- R2-28 Queries on Eldering *Bill Warters*
- R2-29 Setting Limits *Gospel Order Sub-Committee, NYYM*
- R2-30 Signals and Actions *Gospel Order Sub-Committee, NYYM*
- R2-33 Friends and Conflict *Jan Greene*
- R2-35 Sense of the Meeting, Sense of the Parking Lot *Jan Greene*
- R2-36 Compassionate Use of Information *Portland (ME) Meeting, NEYM*
- R2-37 Addressing Conflict *Ad Hoc Committee to Address Conflict, NYYM*
- R2-40 The Steps Involved in Following Gospel Order *Steven Davidson*
- R2-41 Strife in the Meeting *Outreach Committee, NPYM*
- R2-42 Confrontation *Bruce Bishop*
- R2-43 Workshop: Meeting Problem-Solving Process *Jan Greene*
- R2-44 Workshop: Identifying Your Meeting's Conflict Norms and Sanctions *Jan Greene*
- R2-45 Meeting for Reconciliation *Steven Davidson*

- R2-47 A Guide for Conducting the Meeting for Reconciliation *Steven Davidson*
- R2-51 Suggestions for Leading a Worship Sharing Group *Shirley Dodson*
- R2-53 Spiritual Assessment Guidelines *Marcia A. Schnorr*
- R2-55 Towards a Gathered Friends Community *Leanna Goerlich*

### **Section R3: Quakers and the Shadow Side**

- R3-1 Quakers and the Inner Dark *Jo Farrow*
- R3-8 The Shadow: A Definition *Rita Varley*
- R3-9 Merciful Jesus *Anne Thomas*
- R3-11 Policy on Sexual Harassment *Canadian YM Personnel Committee*
- R3-13 Dealing with a Child Abuser in the Meeting Community *Rochester (NY) MM*
- R3-19 The Agony and the Ecstasy *Richard Foster*
- R3-21 Workshop: Beginning to Explore Violence *Anne Thomas*

### **Section R4: Friends and Leadership**

- R4-1 Our Long Night of Preparation: Leadership Among Unprogrammed Friends in North America *Anne Thomas*
- R4-4 The Dilemmas of Organizational Leadership in the Religious Society of Friends *Bruce Birchard*

### **Section R5: The Ministry of Visitation**

- R5-1 Report of a Visitation Preparation Weekend *NYYM Ministry and Counsel*
- R5-5 Travel Procedure for Members of the Religious Education Committee *FGC Religious Education Committee*

### **Section R6: Advancement and Outreach**

- R6-1 Twentieth Century Organizations Founded by Friends *Sally Rickerman*
- R6-5 Friends for 300 Years: It's a Good Life! *Max L. Carter*
- R6-9 There is Still a Great People to Be Gathered: A Collection of Thoughts about Outreach *Jan Greene*
- R6-11 Evangelism: A Four-Letter Word? *Jan Greene*
- R6-12 Annual Monthly Meeting A and O Checklist *1977 Outreach Conference*
- R6-13 Notes for the Guidance of Speakers at Quaker Home Service Enquirers Weekend *Harvey Gillman*
- R6-17 Workshop on Outreach *Anne Thomas*
- R6-19 When a Worship Group Wishes to Become a New Monthly Meeting *Marshall Massey*
- R6-21 Questions and Guidelines for Becoming a Monthly Meeting *Mountain View (CO) MM*

### **Section R7: Membership**

- R7-1 One Meeting's Process for Setting Membership Procedures *Tallahassee (FL) MM*
- R7-2 Membership Minute
- R7-3 Guidance to Clearness Committees for Membership
- R7-4 Clearness Queries for Membership
- R7-5 Membership Procedures *Chapel Hill (NC) MM*
- R7-7 Membership Questions and Queries

## **Section R8: Religious Diversity**

- R8-1 Renewing the Covenant: Can Our Branches Be Olive Branches? *Douglas Gwyn*
- R8-4 Silence and Preaching *Janey O'Shea*
- R8-5 A Quaker Theology? *Kenneth Lawton*
- R8-7 Workshop: The Boundaries of Quakerism *Janey O'Shea*
- R8-8 The Unity of Paradoxical Quaker Extremes *Bill Taber*
- R8-9 Paradoxical Understandings to Hold in Creative Tension *Frances Irene Taber*
- R8-11 Workshop: Community in Diversity *Jan Greene*
- R8-12 Discussion Questions on Unity and Diversity "Who We Are"
- R8-12 Discussion Starter on Quaker Tradition *Anne Thomas*
- R8-13 The Divided Inheritance *Leonard S. Kenworthy*
- R8-14 Where Is the Hope for the Future of Quakerism? *Elizabeth Claggett-Borne*

## **Section R9: Overcoming Racism and Bias**

- R9-1 A Call for Racial Justice among Friends *Paul Ricketts*
- R9-3 The View from Here: Friends and Racism *Joan Broadfield*
- R9-5 Our Role as Individuals in America's Racial History: Atlanta Meeting Looks at Racism  
*Bert Skellie and Adelaide Solomon-Jordan*
- R9-7 How to Facilitate Frank Discussions of Hard Issues by Diverse Participants  
*Future Leaders, Future Changes Program*
- R9-9 Resources for Working on Racism and Bias *(various)*
- R9-11 Anti Bias and Anti Racism Programs *Joan Broadfield*
- R9-13 Inclusivity Race and Class: What Are the Quaker Barriers? *Joan Broadfield and Bill Frysinger*
- R9-14 Queries from Young Friends at FGC Gathering 1997

## **Section R10: Friends Look at the Bible**

- R10-1 Workshops on Children and the Bible *Anne Thomas*
- R10-3 Getting Adults Excited about the Hebrew Scriptures
- R10-5 Selected Stories from the Hebrew Scriptures
- R10-7 Bible Study: Luke 5:17-26 (Handout)
- R10-9 Adults Teaching the New Testament to Children
- R10-13 When a Child Asks for a Bible
- R10-15 Biblical Readiness *Joanne Spears*
- R10-17 Friendly Bible Study Method *Joanne Spears*
- R10-21 Swords into Plowshares: A Bible Study *Ruth Kinsey*
- R10-23 The Good, the Bad, the Uncomfortable Book *Adam Corson-Finnerty*
- R10-24 A Bible Study Method *FGC Religious Education Committee*

## **Section R11: Quaker Process**

- R11-1 The Purpose of Meetings for Worship and for Business *Paul Lacey*
- R11-1 On Meeting for Business *Bill Taber*
- R11-2 Patient Waiting *Douglas Bishop and Bonnie Deutsch*
- R11-3 Absent Friends and the Quaker Process *Phil Oliver*
- R11-5 Some Thoughts on Quaker Process *Paul Lacey*

- R11-6 Queries on the Meeting for Business *San Francisco (CA) MM*
- R11-7 A Nominating Committee Process *Eleanor Warnock*
- R11-8 Guidelines for Preparing a Committee Report *Margallen Fichter*
- R11-9 Workshop on Clerking *Anne Thomas*
- R11-11 Handout: Notes on Clerking
- R11-13 Handout: Minutes: Getting Them into Friends Hands
- R11-17 Workshop: A Consideration of Our Quaker Business Process *Jan Greene*

## **Section R12: Stewardship**

- R12-1 About Yearly Meeting Finances and Related Matters  
*Ad Hoc Committee on the Financial Health of New England YM*
- R12-7 Some Thoughts on Money and Stewardship *RE Committee, Phila. YM*
- R12-8 Discussion Starter: Helping a Meeting Consider Finances *Jan Greene*

## **Section R13: Working with Groups**

- R13-1 Guidelines for Small Group Facilitators *Steve Smith*
- R13-2 Needs Present in Groups *Patsy Hayes Myers and Edward Myers Hayes*
- R13-3 Group Dynamics and Games Leadership *Patsy Hayes Myers and Edward Myers Hayes*
- R13-5 The Nitty-Gritty Conference Planning Checklist *Philadelphia YM*

## **Section R14: Young Friends**

- R14-1 Some Thoughts on Teaching Teenagers *Luther Conant*
- R14-5 Queries on Relating with Youth *Betsy Kenworthy*
- R14-7 Organizing Programs for Quaker Teenagers *Marsha Holliday*
- R14-17 Some Observations and Suggestions Regarding the Status of Young Friends *Doris Blossom*
- R14-19 Betrayed by the Quaker Community *Bruce Yarnall*
- R14-21 How Quakers Can Regain Their Youth *Anthony Manousos*
- R14-23 A Beginning Proposal for Seventh Day Schools *Anne Thomas*
- R14-26 Notes about Working with Young Friends *Jan Greene*
- R14-27 Preventing Burnout *Lissa Field*
- R14-29 Healing the Teenager Within *Judith Randall*
- R14-32 Needs of Young Friends *Cynthia Taylor*
- R14-32 Being a “Significant Other Adult” in the Life of a Young Friend *Jan Greene*
- R14-33 A Young Friends’ Guide to Worship Sharing *Phila. YM Young Friends*
- R14-35 Setting Priorities for Meeting Support of Quaker Youth *Sandy Parker*

## **Section R15: Workshops, Programs and Activities**

- R15-1 Nurturing the Spiritual Life of Friends *Jan Greene*
- R15-5 Meeting Renewal *Jan Greene*
- R15-7 Some Characteristics of Vital Friends Meetings *Leonard S. Kenworthy*
- R15-9 “Envisioning Our Future” Workshop *Buffalo (NY) MM*
- R15-10 Observing Our Meeting *(source unknown)*
- R15-10 On Membership *Nancy Middleton*
- R15-10 How Do We Express Our Faith to Others? *Adam Corson-Finnerty*
- R15-10 So, You’ve Been Asked to Speak about the Religious Society of Friends? *Bob and Susie Fetter*

- R15-11 The Fishbowl: A Program to Help Groups Work Through Conflict *Lynne Woehlie*  
 R15-13 Sharing about One's Spiritual Journey *Anne Thomas, CYM*  
 R15-14 Another Activity on Sharing Our Spiritual Journey *PYM Quaker Studies*  
 R15-15 Creative Sharing Questions *London Grove (PA) MM*  
 R15-17 Paradigms of Calls and Discoveries of Gifts *Philadelphia Gifts Group*  
 R15-18 Worship Seeing: Drawing Out Gifts (multi-session) *(source unknown)*  
 R15-19 Exercise on Drawing Out Gifts (one session) *(source unknown)*  
 R15-21 Journaling Workshop *Marsha Holliday*  
 R15-25 Peacemaking with Your Religious Past (five sessions) *Jan Greene*  
 R15-26 Your Spiritual Journey  
 R15-28 The Haunting Church  
 R15-30 Companions on the Way  
 R15-31 From the Past to the Present  
 R15-32 The Growing Edges  
 R15-33 Handouts for above workshop *Jan Greene*  
 R15-35 Owing Our Religious Past and Present (one session) *Anne Thomas*  
 R15-38 Spiritual Development Through Play *FGC Religious Education Committee*

***Intergenerational Activities***

- R15-39 Introductory Activity *(source unknown)*  
 R15-39 People Hunt *(source unknown)*  
 R15-39 Quaker Fruits and Nuts Treasure Hunt *Betsy Muench*  
 R15-40 Yarn Toss Group Builder *Shirley Dodson*  
 R15-40 Listening and Decision-Making Activity *Chris Jorgensen*  
 R15-41 Meeting Quiz: A Light and Lively *(source unknown)*  
 R15-42 Recipe for a Nurture Workshop in Your Home Meeting *Anita Baker*  
 R15-43 The Great Valentines' Day Race *(source unknown)*  
 R15-44 Toss a Feeling *Winston Press*  
 R15-45 Tetrahedral Kites *Daryl Bergquist*

***Meetings for Learning***

- R15-47 Four Doors to Meeting for Worship *Anne Thomas*  
 R15-48 Gifts and Ministries *Anne Thomas*  
 R15-49 We're Going to Meeting for Worship *Anne Thomas*  
 R15-50 The Quaker Meeting for Worship *Anne Thomas*  
 R15-51 Answering That of God in Our Children *Anne Thomas*  
 R15-52 Addressing Sexual Abuse in Friends' Meetings *Anne Thomas*  
 R15-53 Testimonies and Traditions: Some Aspects of Quaker Spirituality *Anne Thomas*  
 R15-54 The Wounded Meeting *Anne Thomas*  
 R15-55 Questions of Integrity: A Quaker Perspective *Anne Thomas*  
 R15-56 God is Silence *Anne Thomas*  
 R15-57 Guide to Quaker Practice *Anne Thomas*  
 R15-58 Meeting Needs *Anne Thomas*  
 R15-59 Friends and Worship *Anne Thomas*  
 R15-61 The Mission of Religious Education *Jan Greene*

- R15-62 Planning an Adult Religious Education Program for Your Meeting *Shirley Dodson*
- R15-63 Meeting Expectations: “Our Classroom Covenant” *Anne Thomas*
- R15-64 A Christmas Program: Echo Pantomime—“We Found Him” *Anne Thomas*

## **Section R16: Queries and Quotes that Might Be Used in a Program or Workshop**

- R16-1 On Faith (*see Queries for sources*)
- R16-1 On Prayer
- R16-2 On the Spiritual Journey
- R16-3 On Discernment
- R16-4 On Spiritual Gifts
- R16-5 On Pastoral Care
- R16-5 On Caring for Our Youth
- R16-6 On Meetings Serving Families
- R16-6 On Conflict
- R16-7 On Meeting for Worship
- R16-7 On Meeting for Worship With a Concern for Business
- R16-7 On Work as a Committee Member
- R16-8 On the Wholeness of the Monthly Meeting
- R16-9 On Meeting Renewal and Outreach
- R16-11 On Quaker Diversity
- R16-12 On Witness
- R16-13 On the Use of Language
- R16-13 On the Environment

## **Section R17: Reading Lists**

- R17-1 A Brief Reading List for Attenders *Philadelphia YM*
- R17-3 Meeting for Reading: A Beginning List *Anne Thomas*
- R17-5 Spiritual Nurture in the Religious Society of Friends *Spiritual Nurture Conf.*
- R17-11 Resources for Spiritual Friendship *FGC Religious Education Committee*
- R17-12 Keeping A Spiritual Journal: Some Suggested Readings (*source unknown*)
- R17-13 A Selected Bibliography for Quaker Families *Philadelphia YM*
- R17-16 The Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business (*source unknown*)

# Introduction to Resources for Working with Quaker Meetings

Every Quaker field worker needs a filing cabinet filled with materials on a variety of topics and a collection of successful and effective workshops, activities and programs. Providing a beginning “filing system” of resources is the purpose of Part Two of *Fostering Vital Friends Meetings*. We hope that these materials will be a useful aid to the ministry of field work among Friends.

From *Resources for Working with Quaker Meetings*, information and ideas can be reviewed and papers or articles can be copied and sent to Friends requesting information on particular topics. Workshops and programs can be used, adapted, and augmented with the field worker's own ideas and inspirations, or they can be used as a catalyst to spark ideas for new programs. We encourage the duplication and use of these resources for work with Quaker meetings, groups, and organizations. Please give credit to authors. For permission to use resources for other purposes, write FGC at 1216 Arch St., 2B, Philadelphia, PA 19107. In addition the *Resources* will be on-line in 1999 and can be downloaded individually or in sections. Please check the FGC web site at <http://www.quaker/fgc/> for the latest information.

A variety of materials on a number of topics has been included. Some sections contain more items than others because of the nature of field work. A field worker is focused on nurturing meetings; therefore, a wide selection of resources on ministry and counsel concerns has been included. A frequent request from meetings is for assistance with working through conflict within the meeting. Again, a number of articles and programs on conflict management and resolution are provided. There are materials in several areas that challenge Friends, such as dealing with our Quaker diversity and the love-hate relationship Friends seem to have with the need for leadership within our Religious Society. Materials about acknowledging and responding to the “shadow side” of human nature are included in the *Resources*, as are articles on outreach and membership. We have provided as varied a selection of workshops, programs and activities as we could pull together without duplicating materials published elsewhere, such as in Religious Education manuals.

For the resources we have collected, where the identity of the author is known, we have requested and been granted permission to include their work. In some cases, good materials have been passed from person to person and from Yearly Meeting to Yearly Meeting, and the identity of the author has been lost. In a couple of instances, a name was known, but not the address or meeting, so that we could not locate the person. If you can identify the original source of uncredited items or the present address of writers whose location was unknown, please let us know, so that appropriate credit may be given.

As indicated in the Introduction to *Fostering Vital Friends Meetings: A Handbook for Working with Quaker Meetings*, the *Resources for Working with Quaker Meetings* is a work-in-progress. The loose-leaf format was chosen to allow people to individualize their collection of resources by adding their own pages of useful information. Please consider sending us copies of other materials you find helpful or that you create yourself. These will be considered for inclusion in a future collection of additional resources. Send them and any other suggestions to “Fostering Vital Friends Meetings,” Attn: Publications, Friends General Conference, 1216 Arch Street 2-B, Philadelphia, PA 19107.



# Fostering *Vital Friends Meetings*

Part Two:  
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## **Section R1: Field Work as Ministry**

- R1-1 Preparation for Traveling in the Ministry *Bill Taber*
- R1-2 The Use of Queries in One's Work *Meryl Reis Louis*
- R1-3 When You Find Yourself in Charge Without a Plan *Paul Schobernd*
- R1-5 Not Only Do We Struggle with a Dependence upon Things,  
We Struggle with a Dependence upon Activity *Bruce Bishop*
- R1-7 Time and Ministry *Nadine Hoover*
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# Preparation for Traveling in the Ministry

by Bill Taber, Ohio Yearly Meeting (Conservative)

“Growing into the Fellowship of the Prophets: the Growth of Ministers Then and Now”  
Key Terms— “Accountability” and “Mothers and Fathers in Truth”

1. For daily Bible readings please read these predictions of the New Covenant which became so important to early Friends:  
Jeremiah 31: 33–34 and Ezekiel 36: 24–27.  
I would suggest that you alternate them, reading one each day.
2. From Samuel Bownas’ *Qualifications Necessary to a Traveling Minister*, read:  
Chapter 3. Advices to Ministers in a State of Infancy (p. 49)  
Chapter 4. Advices as to the Matter and Manner of Expression (p. 65)  
Chapter 5. Advices to a Cautious Conduct and Department in their Travels in the Work of the Ministry (p. 80)
3. Things to ponder during the week:  
How is it with me?  
Where have I been nurtured in my spiritual journey and in my growth in the ministry?

Chapter 4 makes clear how much the Bible story and Bible texts were a part of ministry during earlier centuries of Quakerism. As you read this chapter, which parts strike you as especially important for contemporary Quakerism? If you were called to re-write this chapter out of your experience of modern Quakerism, what would you add or alter?

Chapters 3 and 5 were clearly written out of a Quaker culture in which traveling inspired ministry was not only expected but welcomed. Can you, in imagination, sense what that culture felt like to the infant or young minister, to the ordinary Friend, and to the elder? How did it differ from the Quakerism you have experienced? What were the strengths and limitations of the accountability of former days? To whom or what is a minister accountable today? Are there, or might there be, appropriate modern forms of accountability for those who are called into vocal ministry today?

# The Use of Queries In One's Work

by Meryl Reis Louis, *New England Yearly Meeting*

These sample queries are particularly relevant to creating conditions that support collective safe havens (in a work place). They are adapted from an article focusing on the relevance of Quaker practices for organizational renewal (Louis, 1994). Queries include supporting queries that describe what I must *do* to support how I want to *be* in my life roles.

- *Am I patient and genuinely present in my dealings with others?* Do I refrain from over scheduling myself, maintaining the boundaries necessary for me to be on time, to be patient and present in my interaction and activities?
- *Am I open to the benefits of a moment of silence to restore myself during and around the edges of a task?* Do I open up the space in my week to be quiet and attentive to an inner voice?
- *Do I invite others to be fully present when I am the convener or facilitator of a group?* Do I monitor the boundaries of our time together, beginning and ending a meeting's work on time? At the beginning of a meeting, do I give people a chance to arrive physically and mentally, to set aside business they have recently left and prepare for the present session? During a session, do I encourage a pace of discussion that allows us to take in and consider what has been said, to listen before forming responses?
- *Do I create opportunities for all to share responsibility for the tasks?* Do I recognize that shared responsibility may foster skill development, sense of ownership, and connection among us? Do I recognize that a sense of community fosters task accomplishment and the way the task is accomplished influences the sense of community that arises?
- *Do I seek to strengthen the ties among people working together,* recognizing that we can tolerate a greater measure of differences on issues in the context of a reservoir of respect and acceptance and that out of differences can come innovation?

These queries may be most pertinent to managers, assuming that they have a relatively high level of autonomy in their dealings with others at work. In contrast, queries for the "managed" and those experiencing deliberate oppression, inadvertent chaos, and/or powerlessness in the workplace might include the following:

- *Do I speak what is true for me even in the face of pressure to do otherwise?* Do I seek guidance from within and beyond myself on how to proceed when I am facing a dilemma? Do I seek the courage to stand publicly behind what I feel led to support?
- *Do I test my assumptions about the unalterability of what I experience as dysfunctional practices on the part of those in power?* Do I support the efforts of those in power to improve their effectiveness as designers and directors of the organization's work?

In summary, two points about queries should be underscored. The key is first to craft queries appropriate to the situation that one is experiencing and second to monitor the match between one's current set of queries and the value-based challenges one experiences at work.

— Meryl Reis Louis, "Creating Safe Havens at Work," pp. 231–32,  
*The Career is Dead: Long Live the Career*, D. T. Hall (editor), Jossey-Bass, 1996

# When You Find Yourself In Charge Without a Plan

by Paul Schobernd, *Illinois Yearly Meeting*

Illinois Yearly Meeting historically has been very non-hierarchical. Exactly what that meant became very obvious to me as the first IYM-hired Field Secretary in recent history when I finally figured out, with the exception of my primary contact person with Ministry and Advancement, that I was essentially on my own. I was giddy with the thought of unbridled freedom! At least I was as free as a two-fifth's time agreement would allow.

The position was never intended to be an ecclesiastical loose cannon roaming the four state area which comprises IYM. The intent, I believe, was to have rather loose oversight by IYM with a specific oversight/support committee and a primary liaison person. That lasted about as long as the first meeting of the oversight group.

That group was made up of members of M&A and interested persons. Most were seasoned Friends and excellent resources. What should have been a resource turned out to be a vehicle for overload. Because the mandate for the Field Secretary was primarily support for the smaller/weaker Meetings with little direction beyond that, virtually anything was possible to be included in the Field Secretary's work responsibilities—and it was. When it became obvious that one person could not begin to touch on all the suggestions, I started the process of limiting my direction-talking to my M&A support person, my spiritual mentors and the clerk of M&A. That gave me a manageable group with which to work.

I continued to keep M&A officially informed and made the necessary reports to the Yearly Meeting, but on a week-to-week basis I took my readings and tested them as necessary with my unofficial support group. That was a satisfying way to work in many ways. I had maximum freedom while remaining anchored in the call set forth by the Yearly Meeting.

In a Yearly Meeting that has not had a “hireling minister” or at least one that they paid directly, the Field Secretary position was an odd entity. There were individual Friends and one Meeting that thoroughly rejected the notion, but they were in the minority. Most Friends were very supportive. The biggest issue with Meetings was the question of exactly what were they supposed to do with this new person. Helping Meetings with intimate problems was out of the question until trust was established. Small Meetings very often just did not have a perceived need. Then, of course, there were the limitations of the Field Secretary himself.

In a geographically far-flung Yearly Meeting, communication and contact can be very difficult. Many people never see each other or have any sort of primary contact. In short, if it were not for the communications of the Yearly Meeting, many smaller isolated groups would have little reason to know each other exists. The Field Secretary was and is a primary interpreter among the various Meetings and worship groups. That channel of communication was very helpful in breaking down the barriers of isolation. It could not necessarily make everyone happy about our diversity, but it surely helped get the word spread that diversity is out there.

Being the only employee of a Yearly Meeting can be a lonesome job at times. You run up large telephone bills keeping touch with your contacts, but even they have a different relationship to the Yearly Meeting. You alone are the “hireling” who experiences the peculiar angst that goes with the job, the lifestyle and the different way of relating to the Yearly Meeting. Without a good support network of trusted Friends and the opportunity to touch base with other Quaker “hirelings” it can be stressful. You can also find yourself becoming synonymous with the minutes from the Yearly Meeting which may mean you stop being you and become the big YOU who represents all that is either right or wrong with the Yearly Meeting depending upon the topic. Sainthood is an even more dangerous mantle than its opposite. Perhaps the greatest danger is believing either polarity or your press clippings!

## When You Find Yourself In Charge Without a Plan, page 2

The joy of traveling among Friends is perhaps the most sublime of activities. Many times you travel to be among Friends for no other reason than the sheer joy of shared fellowship. There is no imminent crisis for which an outside expert is needed, only the very human need of being together. That alone makes any negatives pale in comparison. And, if some need arises, so much the better. You have then fulfilled not only the need for spiritual companionship, but the very human compulsion to help.

Working alone or in a non-hierarchical setting simply means being creative with time, energy and relationships. If something has not been done before, it is difficult to do it wrong! Also, there is wonderful freedom to listen to the Spirit if you do not make yourself overly busy or drive yourself crazy with a lot of “oughts.” It is the best of worlds when you go with the flow rather than trying to re-direct or channel all the information that comes your way.

Trust is an inherent part of the relationship with the Yearly Meeting. Since there is no paid oversight, the Yearly Meeting is placing their trust in you in a very elemental way. On a day-to-day basis what you do is not scrutinized. They trust that you will heed the Spirit that called you forth and that you will maintain “gospel order” in your work. This tempers that freedom with humility. You have a unique perspective that most Friends will never have the privilege of experiencing first hand. It is heady and hearty stuff that makes spiritual self-discipline a necessity. You also come to know what “ministry” really means among unprogrammed Friends.

I do not wish to white-wash all the potentially painful problems that can arrive. They are legion and many of them are inherent in the structure or lack thereof of Friends. You need F/friends with whom you get grounded, you need F/friends with whom you soar and you need to find F/friends who you can simply walk beside and be guided by their plain and forthright speech. Always speak Truth and always listen for Truth. It will keep you from stepping on the land-mines of Quakerdom. It is also easier than trying to figure out what you “ought” to say.

Open lines of communication are necessary and that is an overused, but under-utilized cliché. Like goblins under the bed, problems get bigger the longer they are kept in the dark. Use the pen, the phone and the fax to keep the lines open and information and feelings flowing. It does not prevent conflict, but it keeps it honest and in the open.

# Not Only Do We Struggle With a Dependence Upon Things, We Struggle With a Dependence Upon Activity

by Bruce Bishop, from Northwest Yearly Meeting's YouthWorkers' Newsletter, Vol. 8, No. 3, January 1995.

I'm not sure if you noticed or not, but Missy (Bullock) and I were pretty busy this last Fall. We had every weekend booked with a major retreat or event from Labor Day through Thanksgiving. Yes, we were pretty busy all right. In fact, we were inappropriately busy.

I got to feeling pretty exhausted during that stretch, but I also felt some other things too; I felt distracted, I felt distanced from God and from life-giving friendships, and I felt guilty for reinforcing a negative example.

We are daily inundated with examples of people who work their lives away. And we are inundated with a myriad voices that tell us we should be working our lives away. "We're not working hard enough." "We're being poor stewards of our time." "We'll never be able to afford that item or that experience." "There are still so many good things to do, so many right things to do."

Perhaps this is especially difficult for us as Christians. Not only do we suffer under the Puritan work ethic and the idea that "everything we do should be done as though unto God," but we also struggle under the "tyranny of the good." So many important ministry opportunities tug at us. How could we ever say "no" to something that would glorify God?

Yet my own busy season causes me to stop and ask how much of that tyrannical good, how much of that "activity" is really in God's best interest.

Sure, just about every event we had this Fall was a success and provided spiritual insight or encouragement, but at what cost? What did it cost Missy and me in our friendships and our own relationships with Christ? What did it cost in poor examples to others who either felt guilt in comparison to our "ministry schedule" or who were encouraged to go and do likewise?

As I look at the results of this Fall on my life, I see that my friendships lost some of their richness. I see that my relationship with God lost some of its intimacy. I see that the integrity of my life, the idea that being in relationship with the Creator can make a difference, suffered.

Our society teaches me to find much of my personal value in the things I do. I complain about my busy schedule in a way that allows me to brag just a little. I list the many things I am involved in with a heavy sigh, but also with a grasp at personal value. I hide my insecurities behind my busyness. This keeps me from

honesty as well as from a vulnerable relationship with Christ. Without confronting this, I keep the cycle and model it to you.

The Quaker Testimony of Simplicity used to provide a powerful expression of God as sufficient for all our needs. We need to recapture this Testimony in a way that will provide an equally powerful expression of God for our day. Not only do we struggle with a dependence upon "things," I believe we struggle with a dependence upon "activity."

It is time for us to live as though we actually do find our worth in God, and not in our position or our important schedule.

## **Not Only Do We Struggle With a Dependence Upon Things, We Struggle With a Dependence Upon Activity, page 2**

It is time for us to live as though we actually do value our relationship with Christ, and believe this relationship can have deep intimacy, given the appropriate investment of our time.

It is time for us to model to our youth, our faith community, and our society that God can effectively guide us through the shoals of the tyranny of the good and lead us into centered, focused living.

I apologize for my poor example this Fall and commit to you all to not let it happen again. Keep me to it!

# Time and Ministry

by Nadine Hoover, Southeastern Yearly Meeting

## REFLECTIONS ON TIME

Field workers in the Religious Society of Friends have somewhat high expectations of themselves and others. Hopefully our high hopes grow out of our faith to be in and move from that Living Spirit among us rather than the high hopes growing out of a crisis of faith in which life should be holy and good so we get up every morning to do the good works that “earn” our value and “save” a dying world. In a crisis of faith, no degree of orderliness will keep us from burning out. Turn inward. Moving from a place of faith and degrees of orderliness in our daily lives release us to do the work we are called to with serenity, freshness, and openness. God never asks more of us than we are able. If I am exhausted, I must ask, “Whose work am I doing?”

Time counted on the clock may be organized, but it’s a minor measure in our experience of time. Time is fuller or emptier, longer or shorter, richer or poorer depending on the state in which we live it. All ministers must challenge themselves to live in the fullness of faithfulness—to test and rededicate continuously.

Whenever my grandfather heard one of us say, “I just didn’t have enough time,” he would reply, “Time? All you have is time! You mean you didn’t take the time?!” We each have a few God-given gifts: environment, time, talent, and health. These things are precious and should be used with care. That is the spirit in which the tools below are offered. Being conscious and conscientious about my use and commitments of time opens the opportunity to reflect on my faith, on what God wants of me really, and on how to develop integrity. Producing an orderly, outward record of how my time is spent also allows me to share it with other Friends or with an oversight or clearness committee to seek spiritual discernment and accountability in the use of my time together with others.

Time is infinite and time is bounded. The boundaries of time are a great gift. We must reflect, make priorities, simplify, cut, and focus to reap the greatest fruits of our time—fruits that may be much greater than the time we put in. It’s the interplay between the fullness and the limitation that makes time such a creative force. It is like a guitar string pulled between greatness and limitedness to just the right balance that creates the beautiful notes of music.

## TIME: BUDGET AND EXPENSE REPORTS

One day I sat down, exhausted, and thought, “How could I be doing so well and yet feel like I must quit because I just can’t keep up with it?” Everyone loved the work I was doing, but I was running ragged. I was going to lose it. So I sat and wrote down all the things I’d promised everyone I would do and approximately how long it would take and in what period of time it had to be done. I’d promised myself 250%! After that, I began the following system that has been very important to my being able to work independently, effectively, and not burn out.

*Annual Time Budget:* I make an annual budget exactly like a financial budget. It has line items like: mail, YM gathering, Half YM gathering, Rep Meeting and Executive Committee, newsletter support, youth program support, directory, finances, meeting visitation, Field Secretary’s Gathering, publications support, contingency, and so forth. For each line item I put in approximately how many hours I plan to spend on each of these. A full-time year has 1,800 working hours (see calculation below). Just like a financial budget, when you start you have to make the best educated, calculated guess you can, after which experience kicks in and you adjust to experience and planning.

*Daily Time Budget:* I get a small MONTH-AT-A-GLANCE planning calendar. For everything I plan to do, I estimate how much time I need to do it and I write IN PENCIL on the calendar “appointments” to do the work; not just meetings with other people, but also meetings with myself at my desk. Therefore, the sit-at-the-desk-and-get-it-done work is as apparent on the calendar as the scheduled appointments with other people. If I agree to meet someone at a given time that has work scheduled into it, I have to move that work somewhere else. Finding a time for it is sometimes harder than I think, so I’m immediately cued that I really don’t have time, even for this small thing, given all the other things I’ve promised. The longer I do this, the better I get at estimating the number of hours it takes to do something.

## Time and Ministry, page 2

I count the days in each month I plan to work and multiply by eight. In the upper right-hand corner I write the number of working hours in that month, subtracting out the already planned hours, so that at a glance I can see how many hours I have available for new promises. When someone asks, can you do such-and-such in next month, we talk about how many hours it'll take and look. If I agree, I write the number of hours I expect to spend that month on that thing and subtract it out.

*Daily Time Expense Report:* I keep a second WEEK-AT-A-GLANCE calendar to write down how I actually spent my time each day. For periods in my life I have written down all 24 hours a day to see how many hours I was actually sleeping, cooking, eating, bathing, playing with the kids, and so forth. For other periods in my life I have just written down what I've done in the working hours. I try to schedule something physical, social, mental, spiritual, and aesthetic each week.

*Monthly and Annual Time Expense Report:* At the end of each month, I write down how much time was spent on each line item. This is done up against the budget for twelve months and then the total. This shows exactly where the time went. It is only from looking at this view that I have gotten better at estimating the actual time needed for specific tasks and that I have any idea how much time I'm spending on what.

### BALANCE IN WORKING HOURS

The 1,800 working hours is calculated from counting five days per week for every week of the year. There are about 260 working days in one year or 2,080 hours counting eight hours a day for each of those days, then deducting 88 hours for the 11 national recognized holidays; 96 hours for 12 vacation days; and 96 hours for 12 sick, mental health, or otherwise unproductive days. This leaves 1,800 working hours in the year, or about 150–180 hours per month.

This calculation is a traditional, standard, full-time job. I am the sole support and primary care giver for two children. When the kids were in elementary school, I found that if I routinely worked 35 hours a week, I felt like I hardly worked. I felt I had a lot of time with the kids and I always felt fresh, energetic and rested. If I worked 40–45 hours per week, I kept on top of things, but always felt slightly stretched, cranky at times, and crashed at night. If I worked more than 45 hours, it doesn't seem to matter how many hours I worked—50, 80, 110—I have spent long periods working L-O-N-G hours. This is probably very different with different family compositions and stresses, personal constitutions and health, and times and stages in life. Deciding what basic routine pattern you want changes the calculation above.

I am continually amazed at the fact that I have a tendency to obligate just above the level in which I stay fresh and alive. When 35 hours a week would keep me fresh, I work just over 40; when 45 would do it I work 50. Not a lot over, but just enough over that I'm pushing (myself and others). I wonder why this is. It is clearly not God's desire for me. I remember the words of the hymn, "Take from our souls the strain and stress; and let our ordered lives confess, the beauty of thy peace." I'm addicted to the strain and stress. It's a hard addiction to give up; but a necessary one for a Friend.

When one can find that level of working that is refreshing, keep the obligations within that level. This restricts the obligations one can make. It requires reflection on what to say yes to and what to say no to. The easy way out is to say yes to everything we can and no when life is totally impossible or we're sick. In this we are just abdicating responsibility for discernment on what is really important for us to be doing and what are good works that are not ours to be doing. This activity requires that we witness to others in saying no to good works that are not called for. This is a difficult step in integrity.

This discipline pushes us to be discerning about what we promise to do and ensures we have a scheduled time to do it. I have heard long-time Friends whom I respect greatly express concern that Friends are losing our reputation for integrity—the centerpiece of our Society. We need to be limited and discerning in what we choose to do and then truly DO IT and do it well.

Finally, this discipline limits what we plan and obligate ourselves to, which leaves time and energy for things that just come up. We are available to God in the long-term commitments of our lives, but also available to God in the day-to-day opportunities and needs that arise. We are available in a fresh way with a glad heart, not in an oh, I-have-to-but-God-I'm-so-tired way.

## Time and Ministry, page 3

All this hinges on physically:

- budgeting time annually and monthly
- tracking of how time is spend daily and monthly
- summarizing time budgeted and spent monthly and annual basis
- praying for discernment daily and weekly
- asking other Friends for testing one's discernment monthly & quarterly
- showing other Friends for simple accountability monthly & quarterly (we tend not to do this if we're not showing someone else monthly)

This should be a familiar process. It is the same as we do with our financial budgets and expenses. I like doing them, both time and money, in the same spirit. God gives us environment, time, talent, and health. We trade these things for money. Therefore, money is just a proxy for the gifts of God and should be treated as sacred, with the reverence, integrity, and compassion that gifts of God deserve. Our time is the same. Our time is not ours, it is a gift of God, one contribution that goes into the glory of God, Heaven on Earth. Our use of time should be done with care.

# Queries on Our Work in Ministry

*generated at the '96 NEYM / NYYM Quaker Pastors' Retreat*

- Do I take on the responsibilities appropriate to my circumstances, neither expecting others to carry all the load nor taking on more than is appropriate to my circumstances and abilities?
- Am I using all of the spiritual gifts God has given me? Do I seek ways to discover and nourish my gifts and the gifts of others, encouraging us all for the benefit of the meeting?
- Am I careful to distinguish between the urgent and the important, and focus on the important? Do I take time to give attention to the important, even at the expense of the urgent? Do I listen quietly for the Spirit to help me identify that which is important?
- As I do my ministry, am I excited and expecting something good to happen? Is there joy in ministry?
- How am I seeking to change that with which I am dissatisfied?
- Have I surprised myself today? Do I allow adequate time to do those things for myself that are renewing, joyous, and nurturing?
- Do I schedule carefully and prayerfully, so that I arrive rested, prepared and centered, ready to be present for those gathered?
- Have I sought and found a spiritual community that will provide regular spiritual nurture and the support I need? Do I take time for personal study, meditation, and retreat, in addition to that required to prepare for work responsibilities?
- Am I careful to recognize the presence of God when I am talking with a difficult person? Am I careful to be gracious, especially to those I find it most difficult to treat graciously?
- Does my “comfort level” prevent me from hearing and obeying God’s prompting?

# Fostering Vital Friends Meetings

Part Two:

*Resources for Working with Quaker Meetings*

by Jan Greene and Marty Walton

## Section R2: Concerns of Ministry and Counsel

- R2-1 Strengthening Our Meetings as Caring Communities *Arlene Kelly*
- R2-5 Inner Work *Marty Grundy*
- R2-7 Spiritual Friendships *Liz Yeats*
- R2-8 Covenant Groups *Carole Treadway and Liz Yeats*
- R2-9 Processing Leading Through Friends' Community Structures *Rosa Packard*
- R2-10 What Monthly Meetings Can Do and Teach Friends to Do  
in Support of Leadings and Peacemaking Efforts *Rosa Packard*
- R2-11 Clearness Committees, Committees of Care, and Committees of Oversight *Canadian YM*
- R2-15 Clearness Committees and Their Use in Personal Discernment *Jan Hoffman*
- R2-17 Responding to Calls to Ministry *Central Philadelphia MM*
- R2-21 Support Groups *Mary Lou Leavitt*
- R2-24 What is Ministry? *Virginia Schurman*
- R2-25 The Ministry of Pastoral Care *Arlene Kelly*
- R2-28 Tips on Eldering *Leanna Goerlich and Carol Holmes*
- R2-28 Queries on Eldering *Bill Warters*
- R2-29 Setting Limits *Gospel Order Sub-Committee, NYYM*
- R2-30 Signals and Actions *Gospel Order Sub-Committee, NYYM*
- R2-33 Friends and Conflict *Jan Greene*
- R2-35 Sense of the Meeting, Sense of the Parking Lot *Jan Greene*
- R2-36 Compassionate Use of Information *Portland (ME) Meeting, NEYM*
- R2-37 Addressing Conflict *Ad Hoc Committee to Address Conflict, NYYM*
- R2-40 The Steps Involved in Following Gospel Order *Steven Davidson*
- R2-41 Strife in the Meeting *Outreach Committee, NPYM*
- R2-42 Confrontation *Bruce Bishop*
- R2-43 Workshop: Meeting Problem-Solving Process *Jan Greene*
- R2-44 Workshop: Identifying Your Meeting's Conflict Norms and Sanctions *Jan Greene*
- R2-45 Meeting for Reconciliation *Steven Davidson*
- R2-47 A Guide for Conducting the Meeting for Reconciliation *Steven Davidson*
- R2-51 Suggestions for Leading a Worship Sharing Group *Shirley Dodson*
- R2-53 Spiritual Assessment Guidelines *Marcia A. Schnorr*
- R2-55 Towards a Gathered Friends Community *Leanna Goerlich*



# Strengthening Our Meetings as Caring Communities

*by Arlene Kelly, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting*

The monthly meeting, for many of us, is our spiritual home. I state this with some qualification, because I know that this home at times feels as though it were built on a shaky foundation or sometimes feels unwelcoming or in need of repair. As Quakerism is structured, however, the meeting, at the very least, should be a place to get our spiritual batteries recharged, a refuge in which we can relax in the knowledge that we are with people who share our deepest values, and a place in which people care what happens to us in our individual and family lives.

My vision of the monthly meeting as a caring community is based on a belief I assume to be shared by all Friends: the existence of a living God, a Presence which is accessible to us moment by moment, whether or not we open ourselves to that Presence. A logical extension of that belief is that one of Friends' central individual and corporate goals is the living of a God-led life. This is certainly a goal we set for ourselves in our decision-making process in meeting for business, as we attempt to put aside our individual human will and to be open to the will of God. That principle has applicability far beyond the business meeting; indeed, it permeates all human interactions, large or small.

It is important that we fully absorb the implications of belief in this Presence, because that belief determines the focus of our efforts as we work to strengthen our meetings and to make them increasingly effective as caring communities. We are called to be instruments for the work of the living God; we are called to be channels through which the Spirit can move. We are not responsible for determining what the outcome will be; we are not responsible for making the "right" thing happen. Harold Loukes put it well when he said, "An act of love that fails is just as much a part of the divine life as an act of love that succeeds, for love is measured by its own fullness, not by its reception."

A meeting that stays grounded in the shared belief in the working of the Spirit, that stays grounded in the belief that Friends are intended to be God-led, has turned loose a tremendous amount of creative energy. This energy grows, I believe, in direct proportion to the diminution of fear, the fear that causes us to deny our gifts, that causes us to say, "I could never do that, I'm not good enough." Indeed there are limits to our capabilities, but all too often it is our fear of failure, our fear that we cannot make it turn out "right," that causes us to deny our gifts. I believe there is no sin in failure. Sin is in turning our backs on the possibility of our being a channel for the Spirit to work. We are not called to be perfect; we are called to be present.

That creative energy in our meeting also grows with the diminution of the fear of conflict. When the issue ceases being whether you are right or I am right, we can stop being afraid about who is going to win and who is going to lose. Our energy is freed to seek together, and we know that, as we engage fully and impersonally around our different perspectives, there is a possibility that a third, higher way will open.

When we relax into owning our talents as gifts from God to be used in making the Spirit manifest in our daily interactions, and let go of the notion that we are responsible for making everything turn out right, then we are more comfortable in saying both yes and no. We are more open to responding to the pain, turmoil, or anger that we see and hear in the eyes and voice and actions of another. When we are able to let go of our fear of conflict, we open ourselves to those who are different and build a community that is enriched by diversity.

Friends, the raw materials are there. We are the instruments, and the Spirit is ever present. How, then, do we develop our meetings into effective communities so that individuals and families know deep within themselves that this is their spiritual home, so that they experience the meeting as nurturing and helping them during both the usual and the extraordinary times in their lives?

In beginning to seek the answer to that question, it is necessary to identify the different factors that affect what becomes "the meeting." We are each ministers and, thus, have a responsibility for the life and health of the meeting community. The meeting is each of us, yet it is more than all of us combined. If we are truly to

## Strengthening Our Meetings as Caring Communities, page 2

understand how a strong and effective community is built, we must recognize and attend to both individual and corporate dimensions.

Further, in medium and large meetings there are likely to be both institutional caring and nurture of individuals and families, as well as informal, more personal, and spontaneous caring. Both are important and complementary. Either, by itself, is likely to be incomplete. The institutional caring is the corporate life at work and the informal caring is usually the individual at work, though that individual also may be an overseer.

Meetings are much more accustomed to relating to the lives of individuals and families within their midst than they are accustomed to attending to the meeting's corporate life. Yet, it is this corporate life that provides the context for all of the care of individuals and families. Over and over I have heard the question posed in many different meetings, "Why won't people speak up when they're having difficulties? Why, for example, do we only hear of the marital problems when a couple is breaking up?" The answer to this question, I suggest, is that we have failed to create a context that makes it natural and acceptable for that sharing of difficulties to occur.

Attention to the corporate life of the meeting involves answering queries such as the following:

- Who are we as a meeting? How do we wish to be perceived by our members, by visitors? Do we feel satisfied that people's impressions are consistent with our wishes for perception? If not, why not? How might we work toward a greater consistency?
- What does it mean to be a member of this meeting? What is the responsibility of the meeting to its members? What does an individual or family have a right to expect of their meeting? What is the responsibility of the member to the meeting? When there is disappointment of expectation on either side, what is a creative way to deal with this?
- What does it mean to be married under the care of the meeting? What is the role of the meeting and specifically of the clearness committee? What is expected of the couple? Does the meeting, through its clearness committee or some other means, consider itself to have an ongoing relationship, to which attends, with couples it marries?
- How do we wish to be perceived as a community in regard to relationships among different generations? Do the young people enjoy friendships with the adults? Are ways found to call on the gifts of all people regardless of age? Are we mindful of and responsive to the particular needs of each age group?

The meeting's articulation of its corporate answer to queries such as these is important for several reasons. First, a sense of community is not fully possible without a sense of common identity, a sense of what binds it together. Certainly, in many instances this is developed intuitively; yet that intuitive development of a sense of identity usually has much more to do with our identity as Quakers rather than how we want to corporately live out our Quakerism in a particular monthly meeting. Second, the articulation of its corporate answers, at the very least, identifies common expectations for behavior that can be supportive to individuals as they try to find ways to contribute to the building of a caring community, and at most serves as a mandate for people acting on behalf of the meeting.

Clearness for marriage committees are one example of this latter point. If the meeting has not explored in-depth and come to consensus on what it means to be married under the care of the meeting, a given clearness committee has no guidelines on how thorough or superficial it should be. If the committee encounters an unusual or difficult situation, it often finds itself in uncharted waters in regard to not only having little experience with the situation but also in knowing what the meeting expects of the committee. It is the committee's lack of clarity about the expectation of the meeting that is often more immobilizing than the situation itself. That immobilization can keep the response from being full and caring.

Finally, the articulation of the meeting's response to queries such as these can help different committees identify how they can work to strengthen different aspects of the meeting's corporate life that may fall under its aegis.

## Strengthening Our Meetings as Caring Communities, page 3

All of us go through periods in which we need some extra care and support (if we allow ourselves to acknowledge that). These occur at times of illness, loss, job change, or just when we're overloaded. While caring certainly can be, and appropriately is, intensified at such periods, there has to have been some context already established if we expect to hear from a person or family about their need.

That context is created first by our getting to know individuals outside of their roles on meeting committees. Meeting weekends, creative listening groups, or small weekday worship groups are but a few of the things that can bring us together outside our roles. Second, that context is created by the meeting's taking seriously its responsibility to individuals and families during significant transitions. If the clearness committee is casual in interviewing the applicant for membership, don't be surprised when that member doesn't turn to the meeting later when she or he is experiencing some crisis of conscience. If the clearness for marriage committee makes the clearness process totally a social occasion with little substance, don't be surprised when that couple does not later seek the support of the meeting in a time of strain or crisis.

Last, and perhaps most important, that context is created by each of us being as willing to acknowledge our need for help as we are to give it. Several years ago I participated in conducting a survey to identify the needs of a particular segment of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Practically all, in response to a particular question, said they saw their monthly meeting as a potential support to them. Their response to the next question, "Would you turn to your meeting for support and help?" was as unanimous. No, they would not, but they were glad it was there for others. As long as each of us is unwilling to reveal our own human frailties, to be vulnerable to others who make up our spiritual community, we need not expect different behavior from them.

It may be too threatening and scary for any of us, on our own, to decide to be more open in our meeting if this is not the general mode. Here again, however, is an example of a query from which the meeting could benefit through discussion:

Are we satisfied with how we are there for each other in times of need? Does each of us feel comfortable in sharing his or her need for help and support with the meeting community? If not, why not? How can we as a community grow toward greater trust in dropping our masks and in sharing our vulnerabilities?

It is easier for us to try to grow toward this if we feel others share that as a goal and also are working toward it.

I am convinced that a great deal more caring exists in the hearts of meeting members than ever gets expressed. I know this to be true because over and over people participating in workshops led by our Family Relations Committee's Counseling Service have said, "I sensed that something was the matter with Friend X, but I didn't want to intrude." Evidence of a real failure, the failure to build caring communities that witness to God's love at work in our lives, emerges when we put that comment next to one that is heard with equal frequency. In the same workshops, Friends who acknowledge having gone through marital problems, loss, or some other dark period in their lives will say, "I couldn't ask for help, but people must have noticed. I cried easily, I attended meeting less frequently. I wish someone would have reached out to me. I would have appreciated it so."

If we are to build our caring community, we must risk reaching out and touching the other. It may be easier if we remember that we are instruments for the Spirit to work among us. We are required only to do the best we can, to know our limits, and to be comfortable in saying when those limits are reached. There are many ways to help, and each of us needs to know our own style and gifts. Some of us help by listening, some by doing concrete tasks without many words, some by praying, and I suggest that some could help by helping the helper. If the gifts of a particular person are needed in a given situation, what might you do to lighten some of that person's family responsibilities or other responsibilities for a time?

When helping, we need to be sensitive to the style of the person to whom we're reaching out, but if we get in the habit of asking this person more specifically what she or he finds to be helpful, we can be fairly certain that we will not inadvertently be intrusive. To say "What can I do to help?" probably won't be enough. A positive response to our offer of help is more likely to come if we state our desire to help, name several things that occur to us as possibly helpful, and then ask what would be most useful.

## Strengthening Our Meetings as Caring Communities, page 4

Building a caring community, like building a healthy, mature, committee relationship, or building a healthy, loving family, requires conscious attention. It seldom, if ever, just happens. In my opinion it is a task to which we are called if we are ever to fully reach our potential as the “Religious Society of Friends.”

— Arlene Kelly is a member of Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting  
This article was printed in the October 1, 1984 issue of *Friends Journal*.

# Inner Work

by Marty Grundy, Lake Erie Yearly Meeting

Friends believe there is that of God in each person. Early Friends assumed that this divine principle, this Christ Within, would teach and guide us. How might this work today? I am reminded of the metaphor used by Quentin Quereau, clerk of Cleveland Meeting's Ministry and Oversight Committee. He suggested we look at the whole world as a huge Montessori classroom. In such a classroom, all the equipment and materials are carefully constructed so that as the child manipulates them, if it is done correctly, the child will learn a lesson. So it is with the world. But some of us just play randomly with the equipment. Some even destroy it. Others master one piece and repeat it over and over and over again. But some students move from piece to piece, learning what is there for the learning. In the world, all the equipment is designed to reinforce two basic lessons: God is in charge, and love is the way it works. If we consider our meeting, our family, or our work situation as such a classroom, then might it be that our real business is to learn how to love each other and how to enable each other's gifts to be identified and rightly used? When there are undercurrents of discontent, when people notice all is not well, that things could be better, there is room for God's Spirit to move, teach, and perhaps even transform us.

If we want to take this seriously, I would like to suggest the following homework assignment:

The first step is to immediately begin to pray for each other, especially those who annoy you the most. "God, give her what she needs." As soon as you are able, you can enlarge it to ". . . what she needs to be whole, healed inside and out, joyful . . ." and so on. Notice, one does not presume to tell God what is wrong with this person! One can also begin to use this prayer on oneself, and on the ones one loves the most. The important thing is to use this prayer (or something similar) each time a person floats into one's consciousness trailing negative thoughts with her.

The crucial second step is the personal, inner work each of us must do: why does this person, this issue, push my buttons? Why am I so upset? What is the root cause *IN ME*? Why do I feel the need to be needed, or loved, or in control, or right, in order to justify myself? What is God's response to this? What is the Light showing me about myself? Is it desire to control? Fear of unQuakerly stuff creeping in (and I want to define what is Quakerly)? Past history having to do with issues of lack of love, security, or power? What is going on *IN ME*? Each person needs to ask the Light to help him or her see what is really going on, internally. I have found it very helpful to ask a small group (2 or 3, perhaps) of those with whom I feel comfortable, to meet together and say out loud what I have discovered these issues are for me-to name them. This is very scary stuff, which is why I recommend it be done in very small groups with people you trust. There is a power to naming these fears that helps shrink them. God is waiting to meet us where we are, help us with these burdens, and shower us with unconditional love. Ask!

It is helpful to remember, in a stressful situation, that God is present, here, now. A powerful tool in a situation of confrontation or anger or merely annoyance is to imagine yourself with God's loving arm around you. Then picture God's other arm drawing in the other person and holding you both in a loving embrace. When we are aware of the reality that God is holding both of us and the person/s who are annoying us, together, everything changes. Try it! Experiment. See what happens when you remember the reality of God being right here, now.

## Inner Work, page 2

As we practice turning our attention to God, as we remember that God is actively present all the time, as our intention becomes more and more clearly focused on God, we become increasingly able to hear God's voice. Our longing to devote ourselves to God, to be in God's loving presence, to respond to the unconditional love God graciously pours out on us, makes us want to change from the inside out. We want to become more loving, more teachable, more in tune with God's will for us. We long to be less willful, less arrogant, less self-righteous, less fearful, less obsessed with ourselves. We will find the gift of discernment enlarging, so that our *knowing* what God wants for us in a specific instance becomes clear. And, as early Friends discovered, Christ will also give us the power to follow God's lead in that moment.

— Marty Grundy is a member of Cleveland Meeting

# Spiritual Friendships

*Liz Yeats, Friends General Conference*

During the past few years, a number of Friends serving on the Religious Education Committee of Friends General Conference have discussed the importance of spiritual friendships. In their work with faith development, they have come to know and emphasize the value of sharing one's experience of spiritual growth with one particular Friend who is also strengthening his or her faith. As an encouragement to Friends and meetings to explore spiritual friendships at a deeper level, a few guidelines are offered here. They have also collected important resources that describe the purpose of spiritual friendships, how to go about finding a spiritual friend, and different ways spiritual friends can work together. These are included in the Reading List section at the back of these Resources for Quaker Meetings.

## Guidelines for Spiritual Friendship

- Spiritual friendships most commonly involve two people who invite God's working in their lives; who make an intentional commitment to hold each other in the Light, and to share with each other their experiences, doubts, ponderings, and prayer times as their spiritual lives unfold.
- Spiritual friendships can exist for any length of time, from a weekend at a workshop to a spiritual partnership lasting many years. Ideally, spiritual friends can meet face to face on a regular basis, but if circumstances don't allow that closeness, a spiritual friendship can be conducted by means of letters, phone calls, or even email! What is important is that there be an intentionality about the relationship.
- Meetings can be structured in a number of ways. Usually a session begins with a time of worship. Then one friend listens while the other shares her/his spiritual progress through the period that has elapsed between sessions. Sections from personal journaling are often shared, as well as efforts at maintaining a regular discipline, or areas in which one is especially focusing. One of the purposes for sharing is to name out loud how one experiences God's presence.
- The listener pays supportive attention to what is shared, at times reflecting back to the speaker something that is noticed. More listening than reflecting usually takes place. It is important to remember that this is not a co-counseling or a therapy session, but a time to allow God into the relationship.
- After a set period of time, the roles are reversed. Silent worship should conclude the session. Many friends allow a time for informal sharing about non-spiritual matters before the beginning or at the end of the session.
- Spiritual friends may choose to engage in a planned discipline between meetings, such as meditating or praying at the same time each day, journaling, reading a predetermined passage or book, or fasting. These shared practices can deepen the spiritual relationship between friends by serving as a constant reminder of each other's commitment and support.
- Spiritual friendship, though it may arise between individuals who begin with a casual relationship, is a commitment that requires hard work and a level of trust that takes time to build. Yet if the commitment is strong, having a spiritual friendship is one of the best ways to nurture personal faith development.

— First published in the February, 1992 issue of *FGC Focus*.

# Covenant Groups

*Adapted by Carole Treadway (Piedmont Friends Fellowship)  
and Liz Yeats (Friends General Conference)*

An increasing phenomenon in meetings and worship groups in recent years has been the establishment of covenant groups, as Friends have been seeking ways to offer and receive specific support within the body of their local faith community. These guidelines are offered for the use of meetings and worship groups that may be considering how they can better nurture their members and attenders.

**Definition and Purpose:** A covenant group is a small intentional community within a meeting in which members and attenders may find support, encouragement, and mutual accountability in their growth toward fullness of life in the Spirit. Covenant groups provide a place where questions and doubts can be raised in an environment of acceptance and trust, and where experiences and insights can be shared in such a way that new aspects of faith, belief, and obedience to the Light within each person may be revealed. The presence of a covenant group within the larger meeting can contribute to the spiritual vigor of the entire meeting as well as to that of the participants. Care must be taken, however, that the group not become separated from the whole meeting community, or seem to others to be exclusive or judgmental.

**Principal Features:** A group of four to ten people agree to meet together regularly for a stated period of time, usually three to four sessions, and then decide whether or not to continue meeting as a group. They then covenant together for a longer period of time, usually a number of months. At the conclusion of each covenant period, a new period of commitment may be negotiated and others may be welcomed into the group.

Participants share life experiences and how their faith is developing. They agree to study together and discuss matters of faith, and to nurture and support each other. They pledge to help each other grow spiritually through honest, loving communication. Groups are characterized by openness and confidentiality, although no one would be urged to be more open than he or she wished to be.

**Format:** Covenant groups often meet in participants' homes, but the meeting house could be used if it is available. Refreshments and fellowship may be shared at the opening, perhaps occasionally a full potluck meal, though care needs to be maintained that the provision of food not become burdensome or interfere with the primary purpose of the group. The group gathers for silent waiting, long enough that centering can occur. The group may then move into a time of serious study, reflection, and sharing. Prayer for the group and for one another may conclude the time together.

**Leadership:** Leadership should rotate. Always, the unseen director is God; the goal is to discover in one's self and in each other the Self that God has formed, and to learn to recognize and to let die that self that is separated from God.

**Matter for Study:** Groups can use sections of the Bible or other literature that all agree would be helpful to study together.

**Disciplines:** An important part of the covenant experience can be the undertaking of spiritual disciplines by all participants. Regular times for prayer, meditation, contemplation, or study are frequently used disciplines. Participants are accountable to the group for maintaining them. The group may decide to undertake other disciplines on a regular or experimental basis such as fasting or keeping a journal.

**Special Service:** The covenant group may want to consider if it has a special service to offer which would be discovered through a process of discerning God's will for the group. These might include spiritual healing, prison visitation, work with the homeless, visiting members of the meeting who are unable to attend meeting, or any number of other possibilities.

— Originally printed in *FGC Focus*, November 1992. Based on "Where Two or Three Are Gathered: Spiritual Growth through Covenant Groups," by John S. Mogabgab, in *Weavings*, March-April, 1988.

# Processing Leadings Through Friends Community Structure: Mind Your Call, That's All in All

by Rosa Covington Packard

Membership in the Religious Society of Friends is in the Monthly Meeting. We meet there for worship with a concern for God's work, sometimes as a whole and sometimes in committees. As we struggle with a leading, a yearning will develop to test that leading with our community of faith. The spiritual benefit of this testing is mutual. Both the meeting and the individual seek what God wants of them in a specific matter. And if spiritual clarity and joyful obedience to God are experienced in deciding to take a particular step together, spiritual connection is mutually deepened. In minding our call, our faith and practice can become integrated. As we seek, in the Spirit, to mend the world, we find that we ourselves are mended. As we seek to be mended we find ourselves required to mend the world. The experience of being in the grasp of the divine and willingly being used by God for God's work unfolds.

But in those moments of depression, my father's words flashed back into my memory. 'He who knows the good and refrains from doing it, commits a sin.' Then all doubts were lifted from me; and as our work grew and the challenges became harder, I was increasingly aware of a persistent turn of events that I at first took to be luck. It was as if we were guided and carried forward by invisible hands. Whenever we helped, help was given to us.

— Zassenhaus, Hitgunt, *Walls: Resisting the Third Reich: One Woman's Story*

As we are clear and our monthly meeting is clear about a leading, support may include minuted decisions by the Meeting for Business variously called a minute of support, a minute of service, a minute of travel, a minute releasing the Friend to follow their leading. These minutes may be brought to the quarterly or regional meeting and thence to the Yearly Meeting for endorsement. For travel outside the Yearly Meeting, the Yearly Meeting's endorsement is required.

For some concerns, often involving requests for practical support or for publishing a witness, the Monthly Meeting may bring a leading to a Yearly Meeting committee for discernment and then, if needed, the committee may bring the concerns to its coordinating committee for further discernment. If the matter needs early Meeting consideration, the coordinating committee may recommend that it be brought to the Yearly Meeting Business session. This movement from local to wider groups allows the concern or witness to be seasoned and strengthened by resources beyond the local meeting and encompasses both calls to come to Christ and calls to serve our neighbors. Both are understood as ministry.

The visiting or serving Friend receiving a minute carries it with them and obtains endorsements from Friends and Friends' bodies they have visited or served. This and the practice of keeping a spiritual journal help provide accountability. A clearness committee for decision making, an oversight committee or support committee to ground the work in spiritual community, or a companion for the work or for the travel may be named. The committees and companion are helpful when difficulties or misunderstanding arise and to balance the gifts of the individual Friend under the concern. We can expect to experience that when two or three are gathered in the power of the Spirit of Christ, requests will be answered and that the gifts necessary for God's plan will be provided.

A Friend under the burden of a concern may need to be released from other duties to perform what God requires. When Friends are in unity they find God helps them provide what is needed. This may involve collecting money and holding it for the expenses of the work, providing domestic help, educational experiences, practical assistance, hospitality or travel aid. Assistance may be needed to relieve sufferings arising from the witness. Friends at home thus experience being one in the Spirit with those who go out.

In a recent seminar on how to prepare Friends for work with Peace Teams, John Lampen reminded us that John Woolman, in his *Essays on Ministry*, speaks of his progress as like walking through a muddy place stepping on stepping stones and that he had to get on to each stone before he could see where the next stone lay. When we proceed as way opens we also learn that God can guide us through way closing. Friends discern our next step together in waiting worship.

The meeting for worship and the meeting for business exemplify pacifist technique applied to the relations among individuals in a small group. Such meetings are training grounds in pacific methods. They are to the Society of Friends what the drill ground is to an army, though nothing could be further removed from a military procedure. The meeting for worship requires a large measure of love, tolerance, mutual understanding and high expectation.

— Howard Brinton, *The Peace Testimony of the Society of Friends*, AFSC, 1966

## **What Monthly Meetings Can Do and Teach Friends To Do In Support of Leadings and Peacemaking Efforts** *by Rosa Covington Packard, 1966*

meeting for worship, prayer, worship sharing

providing clearness, oversight, support;  
clerking meetings to seek unity in the Spirit;  
taking minutes to record decisions, sufferings, reports;  
accounting for contributions and expenses

naming and nurturing gifts of the Spirit and leadings;  
providing letters of travel and minutes of service;  
providing spiritual companionship;  
releasing Friends to follow leadings and ministry

relationship with the media; relationship with authorities;  
hospitality to traveling Friends and Friends groups;  
computer check-in and networking for traveling Friends

organizing workshops, conferences; organizing vigils;  
organizing offices and peace centers; organizing delegations;  
organizing study groups; organizing coalitions

prison visits, material aid programs;  
unarmed visible presence, patrols, and accompaniment;  
mediation, negotiation, off the record meetings;  
listening and dialogue in times of grief and conflict;  
alternatives to violence programs (AVP, CCRC, HIPP);  
counseling those troubled in conscience by participation in war;  
listening project community surveys;  
education and service programs, including specific skills training.

# Clearness Committees, Committees of Care, and Committees of Oversight

*from Organization and Procedure of Canadian Yearly Meeting, 1990*

## Introduction

Faced with difficult decisions or imperative concerns, Friends have often asked others to help them to discern the will of God and the leading of the Spirit in their lives. Friends in difficult situations have also asked others for help and encouragement to enable them to carry out their tasks rightly. Sometimes these arrangements are informal; sometimes the Meeting itself takes the initiative. Friends are then found who will meet those in need and offer their presence, prayer, love and support.

There are three types of committees on which Friends may draw. These are: Clearness Committees, Committees of Care, and Oversight Committees. In the work of all of these committees, the qualities of clearness and discernment are paramount.

Historically, Friends come to Meeting for help in discerning whether their concerns were spiritually based leadings or based on their own will. The following paragraphs stem from such a background. They are relevant to the work of today's committees, which often must struggle through the more profane world of day-to-day life and its personal problems, which Friends still seek to illumine with a spark of the Divine.

. . . Concerns and the process of discernment require further scrutiny to understand their central place in Quaker practice. The Book of Acts in the New Testament sparkles with vivid concerns and the following of divine guidance, no matter at what cost. Believing that we are still in the Apostolic age and that we do not work alone, Quakers have experienced in their corporate Meetings for Worship and in their private devotions leadings to which they have sought to be attentive. The small inner nudges . . . may be swiftly cared for, but concerns that may involve changes of career or that involve others in their unfolding call for more deliberate care. How such guidance is to be regarded and how it is to be followed raises the whole question of discernment. In what ways may individual Friends be helped to test the authenticity of a concern and how may they be assisted in what this may demand of them? Here again the strong corporate side of Quakerism . . . has been able to furnish spiritual assistance. . . . The traditional procedure is to call together a small committee of clearness.

— Steere, Douglas, *Introduction to Quaker Spirituality*, pp. 42–43, Paulist Press, 1984

## Discernment and Clearness

Some individuals are blessed with a gift for discernment—they seem to know what to do. Others must come to this skill with more effort. The key to this in the religious area is prayer. In doing this we bring ourselves into the Light; we also bring our understandings and our confusions; we bring our hopes and fears, our ambitions and desires. With divine help we may lay them all down and be left with clarity and thanksgiving. Getting from here to there requires testing our thought and our feelings by the Light. We may be granted a vision of clarity directly; but more often we must look for examples of discernment reflected in the lives and decisions of others. The Bible being a record of the work of the Spirit through history is a most valuable source for such vicarious experiences. Friends may also make use of the Journals kept by the great ministers of our Society—George Fox, John Woolman, Elizabeth Fry, Stephen Grellet, Elias Hicks, et al. We may also look to more recent records and the experience of those we know, and should not neglect our own journals. It is all too easy to forget an experience of divine guidance that we may have been blessed with in the past when we are overwhelmed with a dilemma in the present. The practice of thanksgiving helps to banish forgetfulness and allows us to grow throughout our lives. Prayer and study usefully undergird the work of committees as well as individuals if they are to discern *way forward*. Where individuals feel too inexperienced to feel that they can rightly discern God's will alone in prayer, they may consult more experienced Friends—not to make their decision for them but to help them with the process of discerning it. The most commonly used consultative process, and often the best, is for the perplexed individual to go to a number of people informally and hear

## Clearness Committees, Committees of Care, and Committees of Oversight, page 2

what they have to say on the matter—to personal friends, colleagues, professionals and members of the Meeting—then to meditate over what they have learned and act as the way opens.

Clearness is a deep inner certainty based on spiritual discernment. Clearness takes time. It cannot be achieved for a Meeting or an individual while there is an impediment or stop in the mind. Friends' testimony is that with Divine assistance and others' help, the liberation and assurance of true clearness will come.

### General Guidelines for all Three Committees

- a. These committees are *under the care* of Monthly, Half-Yearly, or Yearly Meetings, or their Meetings of Ministry and Counsel. Their initiation, however, differs.

*Clearness Committees* are initiated by the individual, who approaches the relevant Meeting with a concern/problem that necessitates a decision. When the decision is reached, the work of the Committee ceases.

*Committees of Oversight* are initiated by Meetings, which feel that *right ordering* in carrying out something must be safeguarded.

*Committees of Care* may be initiated by either the individual or the Meeting to give continuing support to the person in an undertaking, or because the person needs help.

The latter two kinds of Committees last much longer than a Clearness Committee.

- b. *Committees of Care and Clearness Committees are concerned primarily with people; Committees of Oversight are concerned primarily with tasks.* Thus, those Friend serving Meetings may have both an Oversight Committee to which they are accountable and a Committee of Care which supports them personally.

- c. *Committees should not change their functions* without reference to the authorizing body. For example, Committees of Clearness should not allow themselves to become ongoing Committees of Care, and Oversight Committees should not allow themselves to become Committees of Care while still functioning as Oversight Committees.

- d. *Membership:* A membership of 2 to 4 persons is recommended. In the case of Clearness Committees, and Committees of Care, the person concerned is consulted about the choice of members. In the case of Committees of Oversight, the person is not consulted.

Service on these committees can be very demanding; Meetings should be mindful that they cannot always supply the right members for such committees. If that is so, they should be prepared to reach out to other Meetings or refer to appropriate resources in the community.

It is essential that members work as a team, and do not work as individuals with the Friend concerned, without the knowledge and approval of the other members.

- e. *Clerk:* The first choice for Clerk would be a Committee member who is also a member of the Meeting's Ministry and Counsel. The Clerk is responsible to see that all members are clear as to their duties, their terms of reference, and the length of service expected of them. The Clerk should oversee the sharing of expectations of one another on the part of all participants, including the Friend(s) asking assistance.

The Clerk either is, or appoints, a recorder. It is the Clerk's responsibility to see that any notes are disposed of properly, according to the type of Committee. This is particularly important because documents may, on occasion, be subpoenaed by a court of law.

The Clerk should consult with the Friend concerned as to how the Committee can best work with the Friend. For example, does the Friend function best in a structured, or informal situation?

- f. *Resources:* Committee members will find it useful to know of helpful agencies and support services, groups and individuals outside the Meeting community.

Time given to reading and prayerful preparation in advance will help to generate an atmosphere of trust and care. Only rarely will a committee have only one meeting. A reasonable interval between meetings allow for reflection, prayer, and growth for all concerned.

## Clearness Committees, Committees of Care, and Committees of Oversight, page 3

g. *Meetings Conducted in the Manner of Friends*: The location of meetings is important; there needs to be an atmosphere of privacy, comfort, and concern for the reputations of others. In all cases, the committees will maintain careful sensitivity to the privacy of the Friend(s) concerned.

In an atmosphere of support and caring, the person(s) will be free to say what they think and feel. To listen creatively involves faith in Friends' patience, a desire to understand, and help to clarify problems and needs. During meetings, the committee will raise questions, suggest options and share experiences where appropriate. Time should be allowed for prayer.

An immediate solution is not always possible in the situations which come before us, and the seeking for Divine guidance may bear fruit much later in the lives of all concerned. These committees are one way of providing friendship and assistance within the Meeting family. In all exchanges based on love we are both givers and receivers of Divine blessings. The use/operation of these committees helps not only the Friends involved, but greatly strengthens the Meeting as a whole.

h. *Notes*: The recorder may make notes of the discussion and decisions. These confidential notes should be read back and copies given to the concerned Friend(s) and Clerk of the committee. Because notes could be evidence in a court of law, when the committee is laid down, all notes and minutes should be handed over to the concerned Friend(s), to be kept or destroyed as desired. No copies should be retained by the Meeting. The committee should report to the Meeting that it has met, and, if appropriate, its decisions.

### Special Guidelines for Clearness Committees, Committees of Care, and Committees of Oversight

#### 1. *Clearness Committees*

##### *Purpose and Function*

- a. To help Friend(s) discern the will of God as well as herself/himself in making a difficult decision.
- b. To help Friend(s) test the genuineness and ramifications of a concern that involves the Meeting.

The Friends with whom they consult will not make their decisions for them, but will help them in the process of discerning God's will.

Clearness Committees are set up for a limited time only, until the purpose is completed. They report to their appointing Meeting at least the dates of their meetings, and when their task is completed, so that the committee can be laid down.

##### *Appointment*

Suitability of committee members should be considered with care by the Meeting concerned, as often sensitive issues are being considered. The acceptability of suggested members should first be cleared with the Friend(s) concerned, before final appointment.

#### 2. *Committees of Care*

##### *Purpose and Function*

- a. To provide help, both practical and spiritual, during times of stress in the lives of members of the Meeting, e.g. bereavement, separation, illness, career changes, etc.
- b. To sustain Friend(s) engaged in demanding Meeting work over a long period.

Care must be taken not to create a dependency, but to enable Friends to be independent, and to make their own choices.

##### *Appointment*

A wider choice of people is needed for Committees of Care than for Clearness Committees, as the life of the Committee is so much longer and the people may need to be rotated. The choice of members should be approved by the Friend(s) in need. The need for the Committee should be reviewed periodically by the Meeting and the Committee should be laid down when its job is done.

#### 3. *Oversight Committees*

##### *Purpose and Function*

An Oversight Committee is accountable to its appointing Meeting for the execution of the responsibilities of the Friend being overseen; the oversight is of the proper fulfillment of the task, and not of the person

## Clearness Committees, Committees of Care, and Committees of Oversight, page 4

concerned. Care for the person, if necessary, is the responsibility of a Committee of Care. Membership in the two, if needed, should not overlap.

The Oversight Committee and the designated Friend(s) should meet with the Clerk of the appointing Meeting to clarify expectations, including terms of reference, responsibilities, and a clear job description, at the outset. The terms of reference should be reviewed periodically, as well as the need for the programme, task, or office itself.

It is essential that an Oversight Committee function as a whole, and that its members not work independently. The Oversight Committee serves the Meeting as a two way channel for messages and comments on the programme, task or office being supervised. This procedure avoids the creation of tensions in the Meeting. Otherwise, a hardworking Friend serves too many masters.

### *Appointment*

The person overseen need not be consulted on membership of the Committee. The members should have skills appropriate to what is overseen. Membership may be changed periodically by the appointing Meeting, because this committee's duration tends to be long.

# Clearness Committees and Their Use in Personal Discernment

by Jan Hoffman, *New England Yearly Meeting*

A clearness committee meets with a person who is unclear on how to proceed in a keenly felt concern or dilemma, hoping that it can help this person to reach clarity. It assumes that each of us has an Inner Teacher who can guide us and therefore that the answers sought are within the person seeking clearness. It also assumes that a group of caring friends can serve as channels of divine guidance in drawing out that Inner Teacher. The purpose of the committee members is not to criticize or to offer their collective wisdom; they are there to listen without prejudice or judgment, to help clarify alternatives, to help communication if necessary, and to provide emotional support as an individual seeks to find “truth and the right course of action.” The committee must remember that people are capable of growth and change. They must not become absorbed with historical excuses or reasons for present problems, but rather focus on what is happening now and explore what could be done to resolve it.

In a monthly meeting, persons may ask Ministry and Counsel (Worship and Ministry, Overseers) to form a clearness committee. The focus person may also choose her/his committee, gathering five or six trusted friends with as much diversity among them as possible. In either case, formation should be under a discipline of worship, taking care that people are chosen not just because they are friends, but through some discernment process. Note that the process is always initiated by the person seeking clearness, though a friend may ask, “Would a clearness committee be helpful?”

A clerk and recorder should be appointed. The *clerk* opens the meeting, closes it, and keeps a sense of right order in between, making sure that the rules are followed, that everyone who wants to speak may do so, and that there is a common understanding of the degree of confidentiality about the meeting. The clerk also sees to physical details which will nurture an atmosphere of seeking silence: seeing that everyone has a comfortable chair, taking any telephones off the hook, and making sure the space is enclosed and a “do not disturb” sign is up if interruptions are likely. The *recorder* writes down the questions asked and perhaps some of the responses, and gives this record to the focus person after the meeting.

The person seeking clearness should write up his/her question in advance of the meeting and make it available to committee members. The concern should be identified as precisely as possible: relevant background factors should be mentioned; and clues, if any, about what lies ahead should be offered. The exercise is valuable not only for the committee members, but especially for the focus person. When the committee meets it should be for two to three hours with the understanding that there may be a second, and even third, meeting.

A meeting begins with the clerk inviting the committee to prepare for its work, reminding everyone of the disciplines to be followed. After this, all settle into a period of centering silence. When the focus person is ready, s/he begins with a brief summary of the question or concern. The rules for committee members are very simple-but very difficult to follow: members may not speak in any way except to ask the focus person a question, an honest question. That means no presenting solutions, no advice, no “Why don’t you . . . ?,” no “My uncle had the same problem and he . . . ,” no “I know a good diet that would help you a lot.” Nothing is allowed except honest, probing, caring, challenging, open, unloaded questions! And it is crucial that these questions be asked not for the sake of the questioner’s curiosity but for the sake of the focus person’s clarity. Caring, not curiosity, is the rule for questioners. Remember that your task is to serve as a channel for the Light to help the focus person deal with the problem or make a decision; neither you nor the committee deals directly with the problem or makes the decision.

Committee members should try to ask questions briefly and to the point rather than larding them with a lot of background and qualifications. Not only does this help guard against turning questions into speeches, but it may also help open the focus person to some insight that gets obscured when the questions wander.

## Clearness Committees and Their Use in Personal Discernment, page 2

Committee members should also trust their intuitions. Even if a question seems off the wall, if it feels insistent, ask it.

The focus person normally answers the questions in front of the group—and the answer generates more questions. But it is always the focus person's absolute right not to answer—either because s/he does not know the answer, or because the answer is too personal or painful to be revealed in the group. The more often a focus person can answer aloud, the more s/he and the committee has to go on. But this should never be done at the expense of the focus person's privacy or need to protect vulnerable feelings. When answering, the focus person would do well to keep her/his responses relatively brief so time remains for more and more questions. Some questions seem to require one's whole life story in response: resist the temptation to tell it!

Do not be afraid of silence in the group. In fact, value it, treasure it. The pacing of questioning and answering should be gentle, relaxed, humane. A machine-gun pace of questioning or answering destroys reflectiveness. If there is silence in the group, it does not mean nothing is happening. It may very well mean the most important thing of all is happening, inside of people.

Well before the end of the session, following at least an hour of questioning, the clerk should ask for a pause and ask the focus person how s/he wishes to proceed. This is an opportunity for the focus person to choose a mode of seeking clarity other than questions, which have characterized the rest of the session. The recorder continues to record during this time. Possibilities are:

- silence out of which anyone can speak under the same discipline as that in other meetings for worship;
- silence out of which people share images which come to them as they focus on the focus person (this process is often helped if everyone is physically touching the focus person);
- the committee continues with more questions;
- the committee is asked to give advice.

Before the session ends any clarity reached can be shared, if the focus person wishes to do so. S/he and the committee should agree on next steps. If another meeting seems right, it should be scheduled at this time. It may be that the focus person will reach clarity and no further action is necessary. Or it may be clear that a support committee or an oversight committee should be appointed to aid the person in keeping clear and/or in being accountable to his/her initial clarity. Members of the clearness committee are free to release themselves from further commitment or to offer to serve on such committees.

The clearness committee works best when everyone approaches it in a prayerful mood (which does not exclude playful!), inwardly affirming the reality of each person's inner guidance and truth. We must give up the notion that we can know what another's truth is and simply try, through our own human experience, to ask questions that may help remove anything that obscures the other's inner light.

# Responding to Calls to Ministry

## *Excerpts of a publication by Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting*

A central facet of our religious lives is discernment of what we are called to do with our lives. Every meeting for worship is an occasion for opening ourselves to the leading of the Spirit and seeking ways to follow the guidance that we receive. As we deepen our spiritual lives we discover a path in the outward life to conform to our spiritual journeys—perhaps we recognize the work we have been doing as our calling or we may find ourselves led to new and different ways of living. Ideally the meeting nurtures this process by providing a setting in which to seek God's guidance and by holding us in the Light as we seek to live as we are led.

In some few cases there is a need or desire on the part of a member to have formal recognition or support from the meeting in pursuing a specific ministry or religious service. In these cases the meeting not only must assist the member in achieving clearness about his or her leading, but also must enter into a process of discerning the meeting's appropriate role.

Sometimes a project will be proposed by a meeting committee or other group as a “meeting project” rather than a ministry of an individual. Before undertaking consideration of a proposal for a meeting project, care should be taken as to whether the project might be more appropriately regarded as a ministry to which an individual or small group are called, which should be tested in the regular process of discernment of a call to ministry.

### **The Clearness Committee**

The clearness committee is a major tool of the meeting for business in discerning the strength and validity of a leading that has arisen out of the spiritual life. Using this procedure, the meeting for business can both test a leading and empower it to be carried forward.

Clearness for the meeting to support a ministry is not a simple agreement or consensus. We must seek a sense of that deep, interior unity which is a sign that the members are consciously gathered together in God. When this unity is found within the meeting, the ministry is carried out with the united strength of the gathered meeting.

The clearness committee has two responsibilities: assisting the individual in seeking clearness and discerning the meeting's appropriate role. Below are suggestions of issues to reflect on in seeking clearness. *Clearness, however, is not found in the correct answers to a set of questions, but in the collective sense of having discerned the leading of the Spirit.*

1. *The nature of the call:* What is its nature? How has the person come to feel that she or he is being called to this service? How does this call fit into his or her personal and spiritual life?
2. *Potential benefits of the proposed ministry:* What are the potential benefits to the person's spiritual development? What are the potential benefits to the life of the meeting? What are the potential benefits to the wider community?
3. *Readiness to undertake the ministry:* Is the person prepared to undertake this ministry at this time? How does it fit into other obligations such as family, work, or community? Does the person have the skills and resources to carry out this call? What steps might be taken to become better prepared for undertaking the ministry? What are the risks and how will they be borne?
4. *Financial readiness:* How will the person support her- or himself while carrying out this ministry? Is she or he prepared to go forward even if the level of funds available may require living on significantly reduced means?
5. *Rightness of seeking support:* Is it appropriate to ask others to join in this ministry by providing practical or financial support? (Sometimes there may be clearness that this is something the individual is called to bear him- or herself.) Should the ministry proceed even if others do not feel called to provide support? Is the person prepared to engage prayerfully with others in the meeting without resentment and disruption of his or her relationship to the meeting community?

## Responding to Calls to Ministry, page 2

If the individual concludes that there is not a call to religious service, or that this is not the right time to act on the call, the clearness committee would report this to the meeting for business and, its work ended, the clearness committee would be laid down. Similarly, if there is clearness for the individual to proceed without seeking further support from the meeting, the clearness committee would report this outcome and be laid down.

### Discerning the meeting's role

If the individual has become clear that she or he is called to a particular ministry and is seeking recognition or support from the meeting, the clearness committee moves on to assist the meeting in discerning the meeting's role in relationship to this ministry by preparing recommendations based on the following guidelines.

It is the meeting's responsibility to discern whether and in what ways the meeting is led to support a ministry. Faith and Practice points out that concerns should be regarded as primarily matters of individual responsibility. *It should not be taken for granted that because an individual is called to a specific ministry that other members, or the meeting corporately, are necessarily called in involvement in that ministry.*

The following queries may be helpful in discerning the course of action that is appropriate for the meeting.

1. Is it a concern with which the meeting can unite? Is it grounded in Friends' beliefs and practices?
2. Would it be beneficial to the person undertaking the ministry or to the ministry itself for the meeting to play a role? Would it benefit the life of the meeting to be involved with this ministry?
3. Is the proposed action well focused on the concern? Is the method of responding to the call one in which the meeting has confidence? How would this ministry relate to others addressing this concern?
4. Are the costs in terms of time, energy, money, and other resources reasonable? Is there a well developed budget for the ministry? Has care been taken to be thorough in predicting expenses and identifying sources of funds? Is the person prepared to bear part or all of the costs of the ministry? Is she or he prepared to live on reduced means while carrying out the ministry? Are the recipients of the service able to cover all or part of the costs of the ministry?
5. Are there sources of spiritual, practical, and financial support outside the meeting? What would be the meeting's relationship with those sources? Are there other sources available for funding this ministry? (As a general rule, solicitations to these sources should be in the name of the individual, with the meeting's support, rather than in the name of the meeting. A solicitation to a specific source may be made in the meeting's name at the recommendation of the clearness or oversight committee and with approval of the meeting for business. Solicitations in the name of the meeting should be signed by the clerk of the meeting.)
6. Considering the above sources, what level of funding from the meeting does the clearness committee think is appropriate? Are the resources asked of the meeting available and/or is the concern sufficiently important to the meeting for the meeting to dig deep to find the resources? Is the level of available funding adequate to meet at least the minimal needs of the ministry and the minister? If all of these sources total less than the anticipated need, what implications does this have for clearness to proceed?
7. Some ministries may need or desire practical support in order to move forward. Would a working committee...be useful or even necessary in the right ordering of the ministry? If this kind of support is seen as necessary, its membership should be identified and structure organized before the ministry is found clear to proceed.

## Responding to Calls to Ministry, page 3

### Report of the clearness committee to the meeting

After careful reflection on the meeting's right response to the proposed ministry the clearness committee is asked to develop recommendations for the meeting's consideration. Options for the meeting's involvement might include:

- Discourage the Friend from undertaking the action. (If at the end of the clearness process the individual feels clear but the meeting is not in unity on supporting the ministry, the individual should reconsider carefully. He or she may concur with the meeting's negative judgment or may seek a process of continued discernment and mutual education. If s/he feels called on to continue with the concern despite the meeting's reservations, care should be taken to avoid bitterness and division.)
- Encourage the Friend to go forward if she or he feels clear, but recommend no active role for the meeting
- Endorse the action as one supported by the meeting with an appropriate minute from the meeting
- Provide financial support
- Adopt the project as a meeting project
- Other recommendations as the clearness committee is led.

At the conclusion of the clearness process the committee will report to the meeting for business. The report should include:

1. Description of the call and of the request to the meeting
2. Clarity in the individual as to the nature and genuineness of the call
3. Clarity as to the timeliness of the call: is now the time for this person to undertake this ministry?
4. Recommendations to the meeting for business regarding the meeting's relationship to the ministry
5. Details regarding recommended actions of the meeting (if any):
  - a. Wording of a minute, often called a minute for religious service
  - b. Names of those undertaking spiritual or practical support
  - c. Duration of the ministry if it is viewed as time limited; if it is not viewed as time limited, time when clearness will be reviewed
  - d. Recommendation regarding financial support from the meeting: This recommendation should include any meeting support that may be required at a later time as in fines, etc., resulting from tax resistance. Recommendation for financial support should include information about other sources of financial support and the meeting's relationship to that support. It should also include a recommendation about the amount of support that should be outright grant, the amount matching member contributions, and the ratio of the match.
  - e. All solicitation of funds in the meeting's name must be reviewed by the oversight committee.
  - f. Criteria, if appropriate, for evaluation whether to continue the project at the end of the proposed period.
  - g. Recommendation of persons for the oversight committee.

### Consideration of the Report in Meeting for Business

In considering the recommendations of a clearness committee, Friends have a particular responsibility for discernment. We are undertaking what may be a long term commitment, and in approving a ministry we are saying that we hold this ministry to be Spirit-led and responsibly carried forward. We are asking the community to receive the minister with openness because of our testimony to the right ordering of the ministry.

## Responding to Calls to Ministry, page 4

*Some queries for individuals to keep in mind in considering support of a ministry:*

1. Can I unite with supporting this ministry? Will it do a work of importance for our world? Do I see its importance to the spiritual life of the minister? Will it benefit my spiritual life or that of the meeting to support this work?
2. Do I feel called to participate in this ministry by providing spiritual, practical or financial support? If I do not feel called to support this ministry, does it represent reservations about the ministry that should be raised with the meeting? Am I called elsewhere? Am I resisting God's call?
3. Am I able to support this special project, financially and practically, while continuing to fulfill my obligation to serve on meeting committees and to contribute to this meeting's budget? Is the meeting in a position to fulfill a commitment to supporting this ministry without sacrificing other important commitments?

— Copies of the full report, "Responding to Calls to Ministry," which includes Discernment of Calls, Oversight and Support of Ministries, and Funding Guidelines are available from Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting.

# Support Groups

by Mary Lou Leavitt, Britain Yearly Meeting

Asking for a personal support group, like asking for a meeting for clearness, is a way of recognizing and validating the interdependence of an individual and a community, be it at work, in one's Meeting, or elsewhere. A group of this kind embodies and can make explicit the theology of networking—that we can make God real for each other by giving and receiving loving attention.

I give here two examples of support groups from my personal experience. The first is formally constituted, connected with my paid employment (by London Yearly Meeting as Peace Secretary working at Friends House); members are reimbursed for expenses incurred in participating. It could be adapted to the needs of a paid worker such as a warden or an unpaid office-holder such as a Clerk. The second is a much looser web or network, geographically dispersed and completely voluntary. There are many other variants, especially of this last model.

## I—Support Group focused on a single employee at work

### **Purpose:**

- To give loving attention to the focus person, as a whole person but with particular reference to their job.
- To meet regularly and listen to how it is with that person and that job.
- To ask questions both challenging and supportive to help the focus person clarify any feelings, thoughts or choices they may have in relation to their work.
- To be available as sympathetic listeners in a crisis.
- To help generate practical options when the focus person feels panicky or stuck. (My support group has been known to force me to open my diary and write my holidays, in ink!)
- NOT to make policy about the job itself but to help the focus person think clearly about priorities.

### **Time:**

The group meets four or five times a year, usually for about three hours on an afternoon in the members' or focus person's homes. Occasionally, we have a 'special'—an all day meeting with a specific focus, e.g. evaluation of the first three years in the job, dreams and visions, etc. Once the group met in the focus person's office to see and feel the work environment, and then went out to dinner.

### **Size:**

The group was originally four, now three. Three's fine, but it puts quite an obligation on each member not to miss a meeting. Members of the group were nominated by the focus person in consultation with the office-bearers of her Management Committee and confirmed by the Committee; one is a Committee member.

### **Method:**

One key is that the focus person has no responsibility for convening the group, or determining its agenda. This responsibility rotates among the other members of the group; one to convene, suggest an agenda and facilitate, a second to take notes (the third resting this time). The person whose turn it is to convene usually rings round the other members for ideas for an agenda, which is formally agreed at the start of the meeting (but never adhered to very strictly!). If we're sharing a meal, the convener also sorts out who will bring what, so that the host (and especially the focus person) never has to provide.

## Support Groups, page 2

Each meeting starts with a brief settling time for worship. The core of the meeting is often simply time for the focus person to say what's been happening over the last three months. Members of the group listen, question and comment. "Is the balance right for you in the job?" "What do you do for relaxation?" "What has been particularly difficult?" "What do you feel you've done well?" Just being given space to speak helps the focus person to step back for a moment and clarify thoughts and feelings. Sometimes there is a particular aspect of the job the group chooses to focus on: time management, developing a specific strength in the work, planning for a difficult time ahead.

Towards the end of the meeting a date is set for the next one and possible items for the agenda are discussed.

People take their own notes during the meeting of things which strike them as important, but one member of the group also writes formal notes "for the record." These are filed as part of the focus person's Committee work and simply record what topics were discussed rather than a detailed account of what was said. We see ourselves as leaving a record for future generations about our pioneering work! The note-taker sends a draft to the focus person, who may amend it before having it typed and copies sent to the group. Confidentiality is extremely important and needs to be meticulously respected.

On several occasions the focus person has asked for special meetings with one or two members of the group to thrash out a particular problem. We also use the telephone a lot, to check in with the focus person and for the focus person to share some particular crisis or triumph. Often a listening ear is enough!

## II—Mutual Support Group

Here there is no focus person or focus team for whom the group exists to give attention and support. Instead there is a mutual and reciprocal commitment of friendship between all members, and support is given and received by each in equal measure. Some guidelines and suggestions:

### **Size:**

Seven or eight seems a good number, since there will then always be some feeling stronger, when others are in need. Having too many in the group inhibits sharing and stretches the attention.

### **Commitment:**

Often there is a common bond of activity (e.g. non-violent action in a particular cause) or circumstance (all young parents, all in similar stressful jobs). Geographical proximity helps but is not essential. The commitment needs to be a conscious choice and requires continuing effort and attention—it doesn't just happen. It can be helpful to give the group a name, and thus an identity—although boundaries need to remain flexible enough to include partners or family (preexisting or newly acquired) from time to time.

### **Regular contact:**

This can be achieved by meeting for an evening, day or weekend. One group I know of meets on the thirteenth of every month, whatever day of the week that is. Another rarely meets at all as a whole, but different pairings and triplings happen often (with some care that no one is left too far out on a limb too long) and regular contact is maintained by phone and postcard.

### **Active care for one another:**

A mixture of cards, phone calls, flowers and prayer, for example, will develop as appropriate. Members of one group have a practice of remembering and upholding one of their number by lighting candles in their homes when they know that that person is going through a rough or challenging time: job interviews, illnesses, exams. When one member of this group changed jobs, the others gathered round, took her to a beautiful place, named the strengths they saw in her which she would carry from one job to the next, offered their

## Support Groups, page 3

own strengths in support, and made a solemn, laughter-filled and prayerful occasion for her to lay down the old tasks and move forward towards new ones.

### ***Share on many levels:***

Include time to do something or go somewhere together (an outing, a walk, all helping someone paint or move or put something together), time to share food, time for each person to share what's important at the moment in their lives, time to relax, time to reflect on the group and renew commitment, time to laugh together. Responsibility for planning and providing needs to shift around the group, so it's not always the same one or two people pushing to make things happen; if this doesn't seem to occur naturally, the group may need to adopt a structure which ensures a regular rotation of tasks.

— This material is from the publication *Meeting Needs*, available from Friends General Conference

# What Is Ministry?

by Virginia Schurman, Baltimore Yearly Meeting

Often among Friends, we think first of vocal ministry in Meeting for Worship. Yet in addition to this ministry are many other forms of ministry among Friends. All of us are called to a variety of ministries and, at different times to different ministries. *“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service but the same God. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all people. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”* (I Corinthians 12)

1. *The ministry of “being.”* This is the ministry of those in our Meetings who are called to be a faithful person to God and to others, and whose lives quietly radiate that centeredness on God. All of us share in this ministry: to be a “ground” or “anchor” for the Meeting in Meeting for Worship, Meeting for Business, and at other times. Those called to this ministry help to deepen and center the worship just by their very presence. Their gift is one of love and faithfulness, and a life grounded in the Spirit. They may also be led to nurture others in the spiritual life.
2. *The ministry of prophesying.* This is the ministry of those who are led by the Spirit to be an instrument to say or to do what God wishes for this particular time and situation. Giving a message in Meeting for Worship is part of the vocal prophetic ministry. There is also a social prophetic ministry, being led by God to bring God’s justice, peace, and righteousness to the world situation—for example, to the poor and hungry, the homeless, the battered, the lonely and forgotten. These are Friends who are led to be an instrument of God’s love and justice to others in work for peace, prison work, and many other forms of “social” ministry.
3. *The ministry of serving and contributing to the needs of others.* There are those in our Meeting communities who are led to express the compassion of God by serving the needy, both physically and spiritually. They are sensitive to the needs of others and responsive to them. They provide support in many ways (large and small) to others—for example, bringing a casserole to someone who is ill, or baby-sitting for busy parents.
4. *The ministry of teaching.* This is the ministry of those who know the Quaker tradition and are led to help the community appreciate who they are, where they came from, and where God is leading them now. Those called to this ministry rely, like all of us, on the Inward Teacher. This ministry is important today, when Friends no longer come from a tight-knit community who worked and lived together, where “teaching” was done by “osmosis.”
5. *The ministry of encouraging.* This is the ministry of those led to provide care and nurture by helping others in their spiritual lives, and those in spiritual torment and difficulty. Their gift is one of truly listening to others, and to help them discern where God is leading them. This ministry goes beyond individualism to a shared experience of God.
6. *The ministry of leadership.* This is the ministry of those led to be a facilitator—our clerks, those on Ministry and Counsel, and other Friends. There is a different kind of leadership among Friends, where the leader takes on a servant role. We are reminded of when Jesus washed the feet of the disciples. These Friends are given the gift of helping the Meeting’s discernment of God’s direction for the Meeting community at this time.

Perhaps there are other ministries in your Meeting. It seems that we are given different ministries at different times, and are sometimes called to ministries that stretch us beyond what we perceive as our gifts, which can help us to grow.

— Adapted from an article in Baltimore Yearly Meeting “Interchange,” September, 1992.

# The Ministry of Pastoral Care

by Arlene Kelly, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

The term “pastoral care” is not as common as some other Quaker language. Nevertheless, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting’s *Faith and Practice* states that, “Pastoral care and counseling are the special responsibility of Overseers.” What is it that that phrase encompasses? Certainly it is the carrying out, on behalf of the meeting, of responsibilities in relation to membership and marriage. And still it is more. Pastoral care is the way in which we journey with each other in times of celebration, sadness, turmoil, transitions and along the quiet stretches. Together with our shared worship experience, it is the main glue which holds our meeting community together.

As Overseers Committees work to be more faithful and skillful in carrying out the ministry of pastoral care, I have heard the following three questions to be lifted up with regularity. Let us consider them as a starting point:

**Question #1: How can I be of help in a difficult situation when I have no experience in it? Doesn’t this require help from someone with more experience or training than myself?**

It is indeed, challenging to consider how to enter the lives of others at a time of crisis in a way that is caring and helpful. How do we journey with someone through the terminal illness or death of a loved one? How do we enter a marital crisis? What do we have to offer in situations of mental illness or substance abuse?

I have come to know that one essential ingredient is to recognize that we are not responsible for fixing the situation. Except for those few situations in which provisions of some material aid is needed, we are not likely to be able to resolve the situation, but rather to be with the person or family in the midst of it. Our belief in the possibility of the Spirit being at work in this moment can be tremendously liberating if we allow ourselves to live into it. We are called to be instruments for the work of the living God; we are called to be channels through which the Spirit can move. We are not responsible for determining what the outcome will be, for making the “right” thing happen any more than we are called to make a gathered meeting happen on Sunday morning. We are not called to be perfect; we are called to be present. How do we, in our Overseers meetings, corporately ground ourselves in that awareness?

It is also important for individual Overseers to be aware of their particular gifts. We are all gifted in different ways. More energy needs to be put into naming what it is we have to offer and less into feeling inadequate because we are not as good at something as another. Praying, accompanying, listening, problem solving and offering relief on concrete things are all ways of caring. A lovely story I heard many years ago was told by a woman who earlier in her family life had gone through the crisis of having one of her three young children hospitalized with a critical illness over several weeks. One day a meeting member arrived at her door and told her she was there to pick up the family’s laundry. She took it, washed it, ironed it and returned it. There were no words about the sick child, but there was love and caring. How do we support each other in our Overseers Committees in naming and claiming our gifts?

**Question #2: What right do I have to butt into someone else’s business: Won’t they tell us if they want us to know there’s a problem?**

Whenever I hear this question I think of the question which I have heard a multitude of times on the opposite side. “*Why, when I was having so much difficulty did the meeting not reach out to me? Someone must have noticed that I was not coming to meeting. When I was there I would cry in worship. I couldn’t ask for help. I felt so alone. Why didn’t someone let me know they cared?*”

We need to consider seriously who we are truly protecting when we have an overly strong caution about intruding. Very often, I think, we are protecting ourselves. Because we do not feel confident of our ability to express our caring well, we hold back and tell ourselves that the other person would not want us bothering them.

## The Ministry of Pastoral Care, page 2

An act of true caring is never intrusive. It may be awkward. It may not be fully received by the other at the time. But it is never intrusive. Admittedly, true caring, i.e., love, is something which needs to be nurtured within us. It can only flow fully when we suspend our judgment and leave judgment in God's hands. Erich Fromm put it well when he said, "It is not enough to 'love,' it is not enough 'to want the best' for another living being . . . (U)nless I can let go of my wish to control, my love becomes destructive. Love is always an active concern for the growth and aliveness of the one we love."

How does each of us come to know ourselves and to heal our own woundedness, in order that we can approach another in the time of their need, by being fully present to them? How do we witness to our trust that the Spirit can work in a healing way in their life? Our role is to be a channel for that work rather than to control the outcome. What do we do as an Overseers Committee to ensure that all we do in pastoral care springs from this place of centeredness? What are the ways in which we work to develop some of the skills in listening, opening hard subjects etc., which will give us more confidence to enter a situation of need?

### **Question #3: Why don't people let us know when they're having difficulty? Why do we so often find out after the fact?**

This question is related to the previous one, but it lifts up different facets of the issue of how to discern and respond to the need for help. This question leads into another question—one which I seldom hear asked, but which I feel we need to address with a great deal more intentionality. That is: How can we deepen and strengthen our meeting as a community?

If we do not have a sense of community in our meeting—then we can be pretty sure that we have not developed a climate of trust and safety which will allow people to acknowledge the vulnerability they feel in times of need. Pastoral care involves finding ways to nurture vital authentic relationships among our members and attenders so that when problems arise the relationships are already in place to provide a context for exploring the problems. A meeting's attention to queries such as the following may be helpful.

#### **Queries related to the sense of community in the meeting:**

- How do we wish to be perceived by our members, by visitors? Do we feel satisfied that people's impressions are consistent with the way we wish to be perceived? If not, why not? How might we work toward a greater consistency?
- What does it mean to be a member of this meeting? What is the responsibility of the meeting to its members? What does an individual or family have a right to expect of their meeting? What is the responsibility of the member to the meeting? When there is disappointment of expectation on either side, what is a creative way to deal with this?
- What does it mean to be married under the care of the meeting? What is the role of the meeting and specifically of the clearness committee? What is expected of the couple? Does the meeting, through its clearness committee or some other means consider itself to have an ongoing relationship, to which it attends, with couples it marries?

It is important for Overseers to provide leadership in enabling the meeting to address queries such as these. To begin with, a sense of community is not possible without a sense of common identity, a sense of what bonds us together. The meeting's answers to these queries can, at the very least, identify common expectations for behavior that can help individuals in exercising their gifts within the life of the community. At most, the meeting's answers to these queries can serve as a mandate for those who act on behalf of the meeting. For example, if the meeting has not developed a shared understanding of what it means to be married under the care of the meeting, then a given clearness committee does not know how thorough or superficial a clearness process to undertake. Then, when a particular committee encounters an unusual or difficult situation, it will be operating in uncharted waters. In addition to the lack of experience with the particular problem, the committee will not know what the meeting expects of it. In my experience, it is the committee's lack of clarity about the expectation of the meeting which is often more immobilizing than the situation itself. That immobilization can keep the response from being full and caring. Such situations of lack of clarity often are the cause of tremendous hurt in the meeting.

### The Ministry of Pastoral Care, page 3

Developing a sense of community within the meeting does not occur simply as a result of our working together on committees nor, indeed, simply as a result of worshipping together. If a sense of community is to be developed there must be opportunities to come to know each other outside the roles which we usually play within the meeting, and there must be opportunities for sharing in some depth. . . . *What are the ways which your meeting has found to be effective in developing a sense of community?*

In conclusion, in this article I have described pastoral care as a ministry offering care and support to all persons who are part of the meeting family, as well as a ministry which considers the well being of the meeting collectively. How that ministry is best carried out will vary according to factors such as the meeting size, the range and concentration of age groups, the transiency or permanency of the meeting constituency, the amount of diversity, whether the meeting is in a time of transition, a spurt of growth, etc. There is no one right way to carry out the ministry of pastoral care.

Arlene Kelly has served as an Overseer in Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting for more than twenty-five years. This article was printed in the *Pastoral Care Newsletter*, PYM Family Relations Committee, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102. Friends may write for subscription information and to purchase back issues.

# Tips on Eldering

by *Leanna Goerlich and Carol Holmes, New York Yearly Meeting*

Eldering is the responsibility of ministry and counsel, and is undertaken by two or more members who are appointed by the committee to meet with the person needing eldering.

1. Create a spirit of worship together.
2. Hold the troubled person in the Light.
3. Seek to be a channel for the Holy Spirit.
4. Be empathetic with the person, even if you disagree with the behavior.
5. Be calm, concerned and loving. Avoid anger and accusations.
6. Give the person(s) a chance to explain the behavior.
7. Be a good listener.
8. Try to be non-judgmental of the person; separate the person from the behavior.
9. Ask clarifying and appropriate questions.
10. Be willing to speak truth clearly with kindness.
11. Assess your own motivation for wanting to elder.
12. Avoid projections of your own bias or problems on the other.
13. Avoid heavy advice.
14. Stop the discussion at an appropriate time.
15. Schedule another meeting if necessary.
16. Honor confidentiality.
17. Don't allow yourself to be manipulated. Know your own limitations and the limitations of your meeting to deal with emotional problems.
18. Know the resources of the meeting and the community which might be helpful.

# Queries on Eldering

by *Bill Warters, New York Yearly Meeting*

1. When we think of eldering, do we seek to bring out the gifts of others as well as offer correction at times of destructive behavior?
2. Are we prepared to listen as well as bring a message to another?
3. How do we inform and educate people new to our meeting? How does one learn what is appropriate and what is not?
4. What is the agreed upon procedure when you have a concern about someone? Is Ministry and Counsel prepared to respond?
5. When is it appropriate to elder? Do we have clarity on our values and expectations at meeting for worship?
6. Are we prepared to be elderd as well as to elder others? How would we respond to someone with a concern about us?
7. Do we mistake doing nothing (avoiding conflict) with being loving and accepting when more direct approaches are required?
8. Is our system, our meeting, unhealthy in ways that precipitate "outbreaks" in meeting for worship? Are there ways we can improve the body as a whole to prevent unnecessary eldering later?

— Bill Warters is a member of Syracuse Monthly Meeting

# Setting Limits

## A Checklist of Questionable Behaviors in Meeting

*by the Gospel Order Sub-committee,  
Ministry and Counsel of New York Yearly Meeting*

### *Meeting for worship*

- Speaking too early in the meeting
- Leaving too little silence between messages
- Dialog, or answering another's message
- Speaking too long, "running past the guide"
- Speaking too often
- Speaking more than once
- Harangues, threats and other assaults on the worship
- Eldering a speaker without the inward or outward authority to do so
- Tardiness
- Conversation, reading or writing, moving about, and other disturbances to the silence

### *Fellowship*

- Sexual harassment
- Assault and/or battery
- Deceit and theft
- Refusal to work in good faith toward resolution of conflicts
- Tale bearing, backbiting and rumor-mongering, "sense of the parking lot"
- Civil suit between members

### *Quaker process and meeting for business in worship*

- Knowingly and consistently violating Quaker process
- Holding the meeting hostage: "if you do 'X', I will do 'Y'," withholding financial contributions in protest
- Forming political alliances
- Blackballing or stacking nominations
- Biased or forceful clerking; ignorant clerking
- Secret or improperly publicized meetings
- Failing to record minutes or changing the minutes without meeting approval
- Presuming to speak or act for the meeting on weighty matters without the approval of the meeting

### *The Testimonies*

- Civil suit between members
- Joining the armed forces
- Gambling
- The use of dangerous or addictive drugs, including alcohol, caffeine, cigarettes and television
- Improper sexual conduct
- Unrepentant prejudice

# Signals and Actions: A sequence of signals and actions to consider to restore order in the meeting.

*by the Gospel Order Sub-committee,  
Ministry and Counsel of New York Yearly Meeting*

## Introduction to the Sequence of Signals and Actions

This “Sequence of Signals and Actions” has two purposes: to help meetings identify problems and conflicts with some clarity and in a timely fashion, and to provide some options for action. Experience with conflicts in the Yearly Meeting and the testimony of state of the meeting reports to queries on conflict indicate that many meetings regret having waited until too late to address their problems and that meetings sometimes are not clear about an order of response to problems. We seek on the one hand to protect other Friends and the worship and fellowship of the meeting from disturbance and conflict; on the other hand, we want to express compassion for all parties involved. We offer this sequence as a place to start.

*It is only a place to start.* We recognize that this is a very sensitive issue for Friends and we offer it as a set of suggestions only. We encourage and expect meetings to make their own connections and to revise them as their experience indicates. We do, however, strongly recommend that you decide ahead of time on some guidelines for when you will begin to act in response to a perceived problem; experience has made the value of such preparation very clear.

We use the phrase “bringing gospel order” several times. It may feel archaic or technical to some Friends; it may be uncomfortable to Friends for whom the “gospel” has no relevance or even has negative associations. We use it out of an interest in recovering our tradition, because it may contribute to deeper understanding of the term, but mostly because we believe it is rich in meaning; it would be difficult to say as much as this phrase does with so few words. For the purpose of this resource, we would clarify our meaning of gospel order with this concise description:

*Gospel order* is used here to denote a process in which a person or persons bring their concerns directly to the person with whom they have a difficulty, in a spirit of love, with the intention of:

- a. *listening* to the other person’s needs, feelings and concerns in the situation
- b. *sharing* their own needs, feelings and concerns, and
- c. *seeking some agreement* as to how the conflict might be resolved. In some cases, those bringing gospel order may be authorized to speak for M & C or for the meeting.

A note about Ministry and Counsel’s log. Friends may feel uncomfortable with the prospect of someone keeping a record of who said what in the meeting. We recommend such a practice because we have seen repeatedly in actual conflict situations that Friends contradict each other in their claims and great confusion arises because no one knows what has really happened. Eventually, meetings often seek to recover and even to document for themselves some agreed-upon description of

what has happened so that the meeting can make decisions in clarity and understanding. It is also useful to see how long a problem is lasting, how big it is getting over time, and what measures have and have not worked. To this end we recommend that the clerk of Ministry and Counsel keep a strictly confidential, dated record of complaints brought specifically to M & C and a record of whatever actions the body has taken and other informal notes which might be useful should such confusion arise, and that this log be deleted of material which is no longer current.

We realize that some Friends will consider such a practice to be very unFriendly, even if it remains in the hands of the most trustworthy clerk and is kept in the strictest confidence. We hope that you can find some alternative method of retaining perspective and corporate memory in the midst of long-standing, complex difficulties.

### A SEQUENCE OF SIGNALS AND ACTIONS

<i>Signals</i>	<i>Actions</i>
When someone on M & C hears of trouble	Confer informally with other members of M & C
When the first person brings a concern to M & C if is, person & C.	Make a note in M & C's Log (see note above) Ask s/he has brought gospel order, if appropriate (that have they themselves spoken directly to the concerned?). Consider bringing the matter to M & C.
When the 2nd or 3rd person brings the concern to M & C	Bring the matter to M & C. Ask if they have brought gospel order, if appropriate.
When all the members of M & C agree there is a problem.	Confer with the meeting's clerk. Prayerfully determine what is to be done and then appoint someone to bring gospel order to the situation
If this initial attempt at restoring gospel order fails to	Try again, appointing 2 or 3 to bring gospel order to the situation. Consider holding a meeting for reconciliation.
Second gospel order fails; or Meeting for Reconciliation fails or is rejected.	Consider some stronger intermediate action. Consider bringing the matter before the meeting.
When the first person leaves meeting.	Minister to the person who has left. Consider seeking outside help. Take some strong intermediate action. Consider bringing the matter before the meeting.

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Intermediate action fails.	Consider asking the person to leave the meeting.
When the 2nd or 3rd person leaves meeting.	
When the problem has persisted 1 year.	Consider terminating membership.
When the problem has persisted for a time equal to 1 term of service on M & C	

# Friends and Conflict

by Jan Greene, New York Yearly Meeting

I have been considering Friends and the difficulties we often have facing conflict. Recently I was given a copy of the October 1989 *Friends Bulletin*, which focused on this. In it was the text of an address by Jan Hoffman (New England Yearly Meeting) to North Pacific Yearly Meeting, "On Marriage: No Safe Dallying with Truth." There are three statements in that address that seem to be of particular importance for Friends as we consider some of the concerns over which we have conflict.

" . . . I found myself being present with the pain there is on all sides of this question. Notice, I say all sides; to say 'both sides' seems to be inaccurate. There aren't two parallel sides opposing each other. It's really like a circle. If we could just see ourselves on the circumference of a circle we might be better off, even if it's not a perfectly shaped circle. This contrasts with the 'war model' thinking where there are two opposing sides, one of which has to 'win.' If we're thinking in that configuration, right away, we're in the wrong frame of mind to see a whole. So I say all sides, since there are many sides to this question." (p. 26)

"There is a phrase that has bothered me over the years; it makes me want to cry or scream. That's the phrase, 'This is a divisive issue.' If we define something as divisive, it is divisive. I think we are all one. The Spirit that holds us is One. It is a powerful Spirit. And we say we are divided because we are afraid of the power of God transforming us. If we say, 'It's divisive,' maybe we can think that people on 'the other side' will change and we will be comfortable again. But how many of us want to think that *everybody*, including us, will change. There is a Spirit that can transform *everybody!*" (p. 32)

We can't go away from encounters with the Divine unchanged. "While stating a false unity in a meeting is dishonest, I think that stating a false division is also dishonest. It is too easy to say, 'We're divided' instead of stating the points of unity we *do* have on which further unity could be built. To state only our division also can remove us further from the Spirit, the source of our transformation." (p. 32)

In the same publication, there was a report on a workshop, "Digging Deeper Spiritually through Conflict in our Meetings." Friends were reminded that, in conflict, we must be more open to the Spirit which will allow us to be "more directly and intensely open, imaginative, vulnerable, and flexible." One of the outcomes of the workshop were two sets of queries.

## Personal Queries

- Am I dealing with reality in my view of this conflict?
- Am I willing to walk a mile in the other person's shoes?
- Am I answering that of God in the person with whom I'm in conflict?
- Am I tender toward the persons with whom I'm in conflict?
- What is it about my personality which contributes to this conflict?
- What is it about my behavior in this conflict which contributes to it?
- Am I acting with enough or too much constraint?
- Am I acting in retaliation?
- Am I acting with profound respect for the other person?
- Am I seeking the relationship which might emerge beyond the conflict?
- Is there anything in my past to make it difficult for me to be flexible in this conflict?
- Does the conflict bring into the open some area of ambivalence on which I need to seek personal clarity?
- Am I being too judgmental?
- Do I trust the Spirit to work in this conflict?
- Am I willing to admit I am wrong?
- Am I using the transformational tools including process we have as Friends?
- Are there issues I am avoiding?  
Am I communicating honestly with other people?

## Friends and Conflict, page 2

- Do I use process to avoid conflict?
- Am I willing to undergo the discipline of process?

### *Queries for our Meeting*

- Are we using the transformational tools available in Friends' tradition?
- Are we working to build trust for one another?
- Are we approaching this conflict in expectant waiting for the promptings of the Divine Spirit? Is there a living silence in which we are drawn together by the power of God as we understand it?
- What is our essential spiritual unity?

In *Friends Journal*, January 1990, p. 22, Chel Avery writes that "all conflicts are uncomfortable, sometimes painful. Yet they all carry the promise of greater growth in the depth of our community and in the answers we discover when we share our searching in the Spirit. Mennonite mediator Ron Krabill speaks of conflict as a 'gift from God,' since it is through our struggles and seekings at times of controversy that new guidance comes to us."

All Yearly Meetings and Friends' organizations have areas of conflict. Are we going to accept this as a gift for growth and transformation, or are we going to use it as a barricade? The choice is ours to make.

# Sense of the Meeting—Sense of the Parking Lot

by Jan Greene, *New York Yearly Meeting*

Some years ago, I had the experience of attending, for a period of time, a Meeting that was in the midst of a controversy over a related organization which was housed in the Meeting House. A number of the older Friends were active in this worthy organization. However, many of the newer members were disturbed by the fact that Meeting programs were limited by inadequate space and limited money, caused, they felt, by this organization. The situation was never acknowledged in any official gathering. However, it was frequently discussed outside with others who agreed on the issue. After several years of listening, I stated at a Meeting for Business that I thought the Meeting needed to address the conflict and the feelings about this organization. The response was dramatic. There was a long, fraught silence. Friends sat motionless. Then the Meeting went on as if nothing at all had happened! There was an interesting follow-up. Before this meeting, I had listened at length to many Friends' frustrations about the situation. Afterward, no one ever again spoke to me about the organization and the Meetings' relationship to it.

I really didn't understand the dynamics of what had happened until later. I was reading about conflict management in church communities in order to understand how to be present for several meetings in our Yearly Meeting that are having difficulties with unresolved conflicts. I learned that all communities have conflict norms: powerful, unwritten rules about the ways members of the community are allowed to respond to any conflict. And all communities have sanctions, or punishments, for those who break the norms. I had come up against a common conflict norm in Quaker Meetings—the "sense of the parking lot." This norm states that one may not identify a conflict in an official meeting, but that one may talk about it in the parking lot with others who agree. When I broke the norm, I was punished by being eliminated from all discussions about the situation.

Many of our meetings have difficulty with conflict management. They need to be helped to understand and accept the fact that any meeting that is a vital, active, spiritual community is going to have conflict. They need to work at reacting to that conflict in healthy ways that will lead to growth and a deepening sense of community. Ignoring a conflict and hoping that it will go away doesn't work. Allowing a person who is behaving in a manner that is destructive to the worshipping community to continue to be abusive is not loving to the individual or to the community. Having a "sense of the meeting" that differs from the "sense of the parking lot" is not part of a wholesome spiritual community.

I would like to urge meetings to take the time to identify and examine their conflict norms and sanctions during a time that they aren't dealing with a specific problem. (If Friends answer quickly that they aren't aware of any, ask them what would happen if the Clerk of the Meeting and the Clerk of Ministry and Counsel had a fist-fight in the Meeting parking lot over a disagreement. How would they react? Very quickly, one norm and its sanction will be identified.) After norms are identified, Friends can identify which ones are helpful to conflict management and should be maintained, which ones are not helpful and should be discarded, and what norms should replace them.

What would our meetings be like if we did address our difficulties with conflict and risked enough to become engaged with each other and with the world around us?

# Compassionate Use of Information-Confidentiality vs. Disclosure

## *Portland (Maine) Friends Meeting, NEYM*

Difficult questions of confidentiality arise whenever conflict or abuse occurs within a community. Who needs to know what? Who has the right to privacy that should be honored? How do we strike a balance between the need of various individuals or groups for privacy and others' need for disclosure? Most cases of conflict will require an evaluation of these questions—a process which is related to but also beyond the consideration of the conflict itself.

When a question of confidentiality versus disclosure arises, Friends might consider, at a minimum, the following:

- Is anyone's safety at risk? If so, how is his/her safety best insured-by what degree of confidentiality and what degree of disclosure?
- Is anyone's psychological well-being at risk? If so, by what degree of confidentiality or disclosure is her/his well-being best protected?
- What is the need of any individual or part of the community to know certain information? Is that need of greater importance than the need for confidentiality that some other individual or group has?
- If there is a need for the community as a whole sometime to know something of the matter, how it's processed, or its ultimate resolution, can publication of what needs to be known be done in a way that respects the individual's need for confidentiality?
- Is there a need to contact the police, a government agency, an outside psychotherapist, mediator, lawyer or other professional, perhaps because of a legal requirement, a concern for safety, or a felt need for bringing to bear of professional services from beyond the Meeting? If so, and if that outsider might feel compelled by the facts and applicable law to commence legal action against a participant in the Meeting or in some way involve outside agencies in the lives of a Meeting participant, are we as Friends ready for this step and how do we need to adjust or maintain our Quaker processes in the face of such developments?

# Addressing Conflict

## *Report from the Ad Hoc Committee to Address a Conflict Within New York Yearly Meeting*

### **Introduction**

In the past decade, New York Yearly Meeting has experienced several conflicts that have tested our bonds of fellowship. The Coordinating Committee of Ministry and Counsel has been asked to intervene on several of these occasions—disputes about Faith and Practice, Goddess Spirituality, and other conflicts at the monthly meeting level. Most recently we met with the parties in the dispute (over the disposition of the assets of a former Quaker institution). As we have met with the parties in this most recent conflict, we have found ourselves asking what lessons was God trying to communicate through these painful experiences? We offer these points as our best understanding of what we have learned in hopes that this will begin a process of further learning.

### **Conflict as a Necessary and Healthy Part of Truth Seeking**

As a people dedicated to peaceful resolution of conflict with a long history of active work in the world to help others reconcile their differences, it is tempting to believe that we ourselves should not have conflicts. This history of our Society and certainly recent events in New York Yearly Meeting shows the illusion of this belief. What the Apostle Paul noted with the meeting in Corinth, applies to us: “When you assemble as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and I partly believe it, for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.” (I Cor.11:18-19). Conflict is a necessary part of truth seeking. When we avoid dealing with conflict in our meetings, it festers and becomes more disruptive. When we began meeting with Friends about the (recent) conflict, we heard a wish from all sides that this had been done earlier. We are called to communion, not unity of opinion. We live up to our heritage as peacemakers in how we deal with conflict, not by avoiding it.

### **Seeing the Evil in Ourselves as Well as Others**

It is always tempting to see ourselves as good and holy and our opponents, shortsighted or even evil. To this end, we have been troubled by the tendency of some on one side of this conflict to go beyond the facts and ascribe a conspiracy theory of economic greed to their opponents. At the same time we have heard the concerns of those on the other side dismissed as proceeding from the wounded psyches and psychological hangups of its leaders. In earlier conflicts over issues of faith, we have noted the tendency towards political correctness in which the concerns of Christians have been dismissed as furthering the oppression of women, gays, lesbians, and other minority groups, twisting the discernment of truth into a contest to see who is the greater victim. Even white male Christians have been tempted to play games, claiming that among liberal Friends, they were the truly oppressed minority, denied access to important committees of influence in the yearly meeting.

Again the wisdom of our tradition cautions us against these temptations when it reminds us that, “We are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities and powers . . . against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in high places. (Eph. 6:12) Early Friends remind us that there is a spiritual force of darkness that contends with the Light of God in this world and within us. This is our true enemy, not our flesh and blood opponents. When we demonize our opponents, we avoid a discernment process that often needs conflict to nudge us further towards the truth. We deny the light and give power to the darkness.

## Addressing Conflict, page 2

### Gospel Order

Because of these temptations, Friends have always believed that individuals needed help in learning to discern the Light from the Darkness, that of God from that which is not God. To this end, they worked hard to set up what was called Gospel Order. This includes the system of monthly, regional, and yearly meeting structures as well as advices and queries that were all designed to help in this discernment process. We believe that Friends need to be reminded of certain aspects of Gospel Order when dealing with conflict.

Although each person must ultimately follow his own leading as to truth and duty, experience has demonstrated that the spiritual discernment, knowledge, and judgment of a group are usually superior to the resources of an individual. Do we test our leadings with our monthly meeting before proceeding?

— NYYM *Faith and Practice*

If your brother sins against you, go and point out what was wrong. But do it in private, just between the two of you. If that person listens, you have won back a follower. But if that one refuses to listen, take along one or two others. The Scriptures teach that every complaint must be proven true by two or more witnesses. If the follower refuses to listen to them, report the matter to the church. Anyone who refuses to listen to the church must be treated like an unbeliever or a tax collector.”

— Matthew 18:15-17

So if you are about to place your gift on the altar and remember that someone is angry with you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. Make peace with that person, then come back and offer your gift to God.

— Matthew 5:23-24

All are especially cautioned against any harshness of tone or manner when administering counsel or reproof, either privately or in meetings. Friends should speak truth with love, remembering that if they would do God's work, they must abide in God's love. Even a seeming harshness may check the beginnings of true repentance, and lack of sympathy may cause harm where only good was intended.

— Advice 15, NYYM *Faith and Practice*

Are love and unity fostered among us? If differences arise, do we endeavor to reconcile them in a spirit of love and truth? Are we careful not to manipulate and exploit one another? Do we avoid tale bearing, and are we careful of the reputation of others?

— Query 5, NYYM *Faith and Practice*

### Eldering

We believe that the function of eldery implied in the Matthew 18 quote needs to be recovered. Friends have been reluctant to openly elder, but it has been our observation that this has not prevented us from exerting an unhealthy form of discipline and censor. Rather than following Matthew 18, we have tended to observe the following pattern: A Friend has a conflict with another Friend. Rather than going to that person, he or she begins a process of tale-bearing and detraction by speaking of the conflict to a sympathetic ear who often in turn spreads the talk further, reenacting an adult version of the children's game of "Telephone," until a particular version of the story is widely circulated and believed. The opponent can find herself or himself judged, shunned, and in some cases even denied yearly meeting appointments without ever having the chance to see the wrong that he/she might have done or defend themselves. Open eldery and discipline, done by the bodies constituted to do this work, is more healthy.

### Using the Law Courts to Settle Conflict

“Can it be that there is no man among you wise enough to decide between members of the brotherhood, but brother goes to law against brother, and that before the unbelievers?” (I Cor.6:5) While it is clear that using the courts departs from Gospel Order, it is also clear from this quote that we should have institutional structures in place that can be appealed to and trusted to decide between members without going to the law courts. It is not clear that we have such structures and thus tempt Friends to go to court as their only option.

### Addressing Conflict, page 3

While there is no doubt more to be said on the lessons to be learned from our past conflicts, these are the major points that have occurred to us. We offer these in the hopes that this will be helpful in reconciling our past mistakes and in avoiding future mistakes as we deal with the inevitable conflict in our midst.

What actions can Ministry and Counsel offer as aids to working through conflict within the Yearly Meeting in the future? It has struck this Committee that there are similarities in many of the conflicts that arise as Quakers come together and form a community in which decisions are made. We suggest that these similarities are:

- a. that many Quaker conflicted situations on almost any issue have a similar pattern and can be attributed to the community not following Quaker process or Gospel Order.
- b. that it is possible to loosely chart the “steps” in Quaker process.
- c. that it is possible to use these steps to evaluate the troubled situation.
- d. that Friends can develop possible queries and suggest actions for each step in an effort to begin to design and eventually offer more creative help for stressful situations within Quaker communities.

We offer a beginning list of steps in Quaker process. Friends are cautioned not to view these attempts to be helpful as techniques but rather as spiritual disciplines that can facilitate the inbreaking of the Spirit’s transforming love and guidance.

# The Steps Involved in Following Gospel Order

*Steven Davidson, for the Gospel Order Packet, New York Yearly Meeting*

1. Each Friend will seek to be guided by the Inward Light, The Christ Within, both inwardly and in others through worship and participation in the corporate life of a monthly meeting. For many Friends there is an individual process in which an individual faces “the darkness within and without” as part of the Quaker worship experience within the Friends’ community. This experience leads many to a personal sense of being opened and cleansed. One can experience a Holy Presence in which one sees life anew and one is “convinced.”
2. Each person will be treated as a child of God regardless of opinions, leadings or behavior.
3. Each Friend will patiently test personal leadings through worship, Quaker Christian traditions, spiritual counsel, clearness committees, and by honoring the structure and practices of the monthly, quarterly or half-yearly and yearly meeting.
4. Business meeting and committee meetings will be held in a spirit of worship. All decision making will be handled openly, with all participating in good faith and fellowship.
5. Minutes from business and committee meetings will be carefully constructed to reflect the sense of the meeting. Minutes will be distributed regularly to all appropriate parties.
6. Ministry and Counsel Committees or other appropriate bodies within a given situation, will reach out in troubled situations to offer creative assistance. Responsible eldering can be of help, offering support and guidance.
7. When differences arise, Friends will be given an early opportunity to air these differences in a safe worshipful format such as the clearness committee, Quaker dialogue, worship sharing session and threshing session. Tale bearing, back biting, slander, gossip, and manipulative behavior will be avoided.
8. The Holy Spirit will be placed at the heart of decision making. Every person has a piece of the truth though some Friends may reflect great truth over time by virtue of their spiritual authority. Friends are called to reach a higher unifying truth through worship.
9. Conflict will be viewed as a possibility for growth rather than a situation to be feared and avoided.

# Strife in the Meeting

*From Survival Sourcebook: the Care and Maintenance of Small Meetings and Worship Groups, North Pacific Yearly Meeting Outreach Committee, pp. 22–23.*

When divorce or major disagreement over direction occurs in a group, the pain is real and can lead, in extreme cases, to a split or the demise of the meeting.

Those who have participated in divisive Business Meetings are thoroughly aware of how poorly we listen to each other at times, even when we are attempting to worship together. Practice in attempting to truly hear what others are saying and stepping back from our own concerns can be valuable. Practical techniques can help, particularly when emotions are stretched, as one meeting found as part of a retreat on “Spiritual Listening.”

A Friend brought to the group techniques of active listening developed for the Neighborhood Mediation Centers in Portland and focused on how these “worldly techniques” reached unanticipated spiritual depths. Active listening techniques which may be useful in small group discussion are to:

1. agree that all participants will empathize with each other
2. acknowledge the validity of each person’s feelings and position
3. clarify assumptions and suspicions
4. summarize or restate the discussion periodically, checking that all present are in agreement.

Some common blocks to hearing others accurately—things you’ll want to catch yourself doing and reject—are:

1. comparing
2. mind reading
3. rehearsing your position
4. filtering
5. judging
6. advising
7. sparring, being right,
8. placating and derailing
9. changing the subject.

The meeting put these ideas into practice in a series of small groups consisting of equal numbers of people who held strong positions on a controversial issue, plus a member of Worship and Ministry Committee to occasionally remind Friends when they were clearly not listening. For at least some, it was the first time they understood the basis of others’ concerns after a year or more of struggling. The groups purposely were convened only for the purpose of increased understanding with no attempt to reach agreement.

# Confrontation

by Bruce Bishop, Northwest Yearly Meeting

I'm not sure why my thoughts tend to drag me back to unpleasant musings. I've mentioned . . . before my distaste for confrontation. Confronting people has never been a strength of mine. And as I acknowledged in an earlier article, I believe part of that comes from an erroneous extrapolation of my Quaker upbringing. Somehow, it has crept into our theology that good Quakers never argue or confront. We just mumble "approved" at the appropriate times and then talk about what we really wanted to say in the parking lot. But that is a dangerous way to seek God's will for us as individuals or as a community. And when we see someone who is erring, or removing themselves from the accountability of the community, it is important that we are willing to be confrontive.

In fact, I've been toying with the idea that confrontation creates community. The degree to which I am willing to confront someone depends upon how much I care about that person and want to be involved with them in the future. If I have a strong sense of community and want to continue in a healthy relationship, if I value them as a person, then I am more willing to take the risk to confront them. If I do not care much about them, or figure that they will move out of my life with little pain, then it is easier to let it go. The pain of confrontation is not worth the relationship.

And when we are willing to confront someone, we are actually expressing care and concern for them. We are building community with them. Our relationship will be deeper and more honest, IF it has been done out of love. Looking at confrontation in this light makes it a little more bearable. To be willing to confront someone is perhaps a high form of praise for how you feel about them. It expresses a willingness to enter into community with them. Confrontation breeds community.

It is also probably as true that community breeds confrontation. When individuals begin to trust one another, letting each other into their lives, there are bound to be points of friction and irritation, as well as greater accountability.

So what does this say about your youth group, your church body, or about your yearly meeting? Are we breathing life into relationships with the people in the pew next to us, giving us a desire to go out on a limb in confronting them? Are we letting people into our lives so they can know us well enough to risk confronting us?

Christianity often seems so sterile these days. We hardly even touch each other, we barely overlap our lives into the life of the brother or sister that we worship with. We have stepped into private comfort zones that insulate us from the pains of confrontation and relationship. But I can hardly feel like Christ intended His church to be so "safe."

I'm beginning to think that a loving community should be full of loving confrontation. It is the healthiest way to live, being truthful and caring. Quakers have had a reputation of being committed to the Truth and to one another. I hope that we can rise out of our lukewarm politeness, "not wanting to offend anybody," and begin to care for one another and for the Truth once again. Much harm can be covered up in the name of "niceness."

— from *Youthworkers' Newsletter*, 6:920

# Workshop: Meeting Problem-Solving Process

*“We need to be able to look at conflict as positive.”*

*by Jan Greene, New York Yearly Meeting*

## IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

- a. A meeting which decides to do this workshop must agree to complete the process, which will take about 6 hours, in one day. Do not try to break the workshop into two or three sections on differing days.
- b. All participants must be present from the beginning of the process.
- c. It is helpful to remind participants that powerful conflict norms will be broken during the workshop, and tension will increase until Step 8 is reached.

## WORKSHOP

Begin the workshop by reading aloud “Confrontation” by Bruce Bishop, followed by silent worship.

### 1. Whole Group: Introductions and Community Building In a Go-around.

Share your name and *briefly* share how you came to this Meeting.

The leader will need to stress “*briefly*,” and remind Friends who want to share at length.

### 2. Whole Group: In a Go-around.

Without discussion, each person share a strength and a struggle in her or his relation to the Meeting community. List answers on a piece of newsprint that has been divided horizontally, with headings ‘Strength’ and ‘Struggle.’ Place newsprint on the wall.

The leader may need to remind attenders that what is a strength for one person may be a struggle for another, and that this is acceptable.

### 3. Small Groups:

Each person shares her or his personal history in dealing with conflict. “What is your usual response to conflict? How well does this work to resolve conflict? Do you view conflict as positive or negative?”

### 4. Small Groups:

After an introduction to “conflict norms” and “sanctions” by the leader, consider, “What are the Meeting’s norms (unwritten rules) about conflict? What are the sanctions (consequences) that are brought to bear for noncompliance? Which ones are helpful to conflict management and which ones are not helpful?” (List these on newsprint.)

Leaders: In introducing this activity, it is helpful to define conflict norms and sanctions, and to give an example that you have experienced. One common response of F/friends is to state that their meeting has none. If this happens, ask what would happen if the meeting clerk and clerk of ministry and counsel had a fist fight over a disagreement in meeting. How would Friends respond? Very quickly, one norm and sanction will be identified. (See: *Sense of the Meeting*, *Sense of the Parking Lot* for more information.)

### 5. Whole Group:

Report lists from small groups. When finished, consider: “Which non-helpful norms in this Meeting should be changed immediately? What should the new norms be? What should the sanctions for noncompliance be?” List on newsprint.

### 6. Small Groups:

“What is being said outside of meetings about the conflict in this Meeting? What are you afraid to say in meetings? Who, if anyone, is interrupted? Who, if anyone, is silenced? Whose, if anyone’s, ideas are passed over?”

## Workshop: Meeting Problem Solving Process, page 2

**7. Whole Group:** In a Go-around, without discussion:

“Looking at this situation, how would *you* define the conflict in terms of *your* needs and *your* desired results?”

Leaders should be aware that stress levels are high at this point, and unconscious resistance may appear at this time in the form of one or more individuals wanting to talk at great length or wanting to discuss others' responses. Be firm about sharing time and about no discussions.

**8. Whole Group:**

Brainstorm solutions. List on newsprint. Afterwards, look for common themes and interests. Ask the group to decide, “Are there one or more that we would like to recommend to meeting for business?”

**9. Whole Group:**

“Are there any other next steps that should be taken?”

**10. Whole Group:** Closing and Community Building: In a Go-around:

“Share one thing that you treasure/value about this Meeting.”

End the workshop with a time of silent worship.

## Workshop: Identifying Your Meeting's Conflict Norms and Sanctions

Identifying Conflict Norms and Sanctions is much easier for a meeting if it is done at a time when the meeting is not dealing with a specific conflict. In fact, identifying the norms and sanctions that the meeting does embrace, and agreeing to change those that are not helpful for healthy conflict management may prevent a group from getting stuck in conflict.

Steps 3, 4, and 5 in “Meeting Problem-solving Process” will allow a Friends group to do this. As always, workshops should start and end with a time of worship.

# Meeting for Reconciliation

*by Steven Davidson, New York Yearly Meeting,  
for the Gospel Order Packet*

## **An Introduction**

The Meeting for Reconciliation was developed as a tool for intervening in conflict situations when more informal and personal approaches have failed or do not seem appropriate. Ideally, when a difficult situation arises, those involved will seek each other out in a spirit of reconciliation, hoping to understand each other better and to build a new relationship on that understanding. This face-to-face approach is the first of three steps in the Quaker tradition of “gospel order” as early Friends modeled it on the recommendations of Jesus in Matthew 18: 15–20.

Sometimes, however, this personal approach doesn’t work, or is inappropriate for other reasons. In such cases, the more formal approach of the Meeting for Reconciliation may be useful. We recommend it especially in cases where one or more of the parties request it, when private contact between them may feel too risky for one or both of them, and/or when the situation has already escalated to a point of crisis or of chronic disturbance to the welfare of the meeting. The Meeting for Reconciliation can thus be seen as an approach to the second step of traditional “gospel order,” that is, meeting as a small group. If such labor in a small group fails to restore peace, the situation may then have to be brought before the meeting as a whole.

We developed this process from two sources. One is the approach used by Mennonites (and some Friends) in their restorative justice for mediating agreements between victims and offenders in certain kinds of minor criminal cases. The other more important source is the actual experience of meetings. First we inquired into the successful experiments of several meetings in resolving their conflicts. There were a number of common elements. These we distilled and modified into the outline presented here. From both sources, we “know experimentally” that the general approach can be helpful. In this specific form, however, the outline for the Meeting for Reconciliation is new among Friends, and therefore untested.

Thus the Meeting for Reconciliation approach is intended as a loose framework only. We hope and expect that each meeting will adapt it according to your needs and style, and for each unique circumstance. We see the basic elements as including, first, meeting with each party separately, and then meeting together as a small group in worship, to provide opportunities both for sharing in safety and for mediating an agreement.

Following are two documents: the first is a brief outline of the process for intervention and reconciliation. The second is companion resource, entitled “A Guide for Conducting the Meeting for Reconciliation,” which provides some more extensive background material and further suggestions for how to adapt the process for use in serious and extreme situations, where good order will need to be protected in order to maintain openness to the movement of the Spirit.

## **Outline of a Process for Conflict Resolution in Meetings**

The meeting for reconciliation is a process for intervention and reconciliation in cases of conflict in Quaker meetings. This information sheet serves as a brief outline for a process which has already been used by some meetings in various forms and with varying degrees of success. We hope meetings will continue to adapt this basic outline to suit their particular needs.

### *Step One*

Ministry and Counsel names two people to speak separately to the parties involved, in order to:

1. listen to their views and grievances;
2. determine (and encourage) their willingness to proceed further.

## Meeting for Reconciliation, page 2

### *Step Two*

1. The two visitors named above confer with each other, and perhaps also with Ministry & Counsel, to prepare for the next step.
2. A meeting for reconciliation is arranged, loosely organized as follows:
  - a. A period of worship.
  - b. Rounds of Quaker dialog, in which the parties share what has happened from their perspective, and how they feel.
  - c. Another period of worship, opening into . . .
  - d. A period for exchange between the parties aimed at reconciliation and conducted in a spirit of worship. This might include a combination of formats, such as meeting for business in worship, worship sharing, or Quaker dialog, as need arises. The meeting concludes with a minute expressing the sense of the meeting.

### *Step Three*

The visitors report to Ministry and Counsel. M & C follows through in whatever ways seem appropriate.

# A Guide for Conducting the Meeting for Reconciliation

by Steven Davidson, *New York Yearly Meeting, for the Gospel Order Packet*

The following is a companion resource for use with the outline for the Meeting for Reconciliation. It consists of two parts. The first offers an introduction and overview of the process and the second provides a range of suggestions for adapting it to specific and especially to extreme situations.

## **When to use the process:**

Ideally, the meeting for reconciliation would only be used after other less formal approaches had been tried and had not proved successful. Specifically, it is offered as one way to conduct the second step in the three-step process of “gospel order” as traditionally practiced by Friends on the model of Matthew 18: 15–20. This process of “gospel order” calls for a first step of personal, private labor between the parties in conflict towards reconciliation. The process described below is one approach to step two, in which a small group meets with the parties involved, as in intermediate measure before bringing the matter before the whole meeting (step three). It is not intended to replace a more informal approach, which seems preferable when it is possible.

The following short summary of conditions might help Ministry & Counsel to decide if the meeting for reconciliation is the proper response to a given conflict situation.

- When one or both parties request it.
- When other more informal attempts at reconciliation have not been successful.
- When personal contact between the parties may feel too risky for one or both parties or it seems otherwise inappropriate; for example, in cases of sexual harassment or potential violence, either emotional or physical; or between youth or new attenders and older or respected Friends.
- When the situation has already escalated to a point of crisis or of chronic disturbance to the welfare of the meeting.

## **Goals of the process:**

- To provide a safe opportunity for each person involved to describe how they experience the incident/problem—both to facts and feelings. Here, the goal is both clarity and understanding, assurance that both parties know what has motivated the other to act as they have and how their actions have affected the other.
- To provide a format in which the parties can work out a resolution of their problems themselves in an environment that maintains a spirit of worship and of good order.
- To reach a conclusion, which hopefully includes true reconciliation between the parties, or at least, a sense of clarity about the issues and needs of those involved. This might be expressed in a minute approved by those present. It might include agreements reached between the parties as to their future relationship and conduct; those agreements might include terms for an ongoing process or follow through.

## **The importance of worship:**

There is a “peace which passes all understanding.” We find this peace when we come into the presence of God. From our experience of the gathered meeting, we know that sometimes God brings to situations a unity and wholeness that are unlooked-for or even miraculous, and by paths that no one person sees clearly beforehand. In extreme situations of conflict, it is especially important to try to maintain a spirit of worship in all stages of the process of reconciliation, inviting God through silent expectation and prayer.

## A Guide for Conducting the Meeting for Reconciliation, page 2

### Steps in the process

#### Step One:

The first question is: when should Ministry and Counsel intervene? We try to balance our respect for privacy with our need to protect the meeting. This task of spiritual discernment is never easy, nor is acting on it, even when the need is clear. Our observation is that meetings much more often regret waiting until it is too late, than having acted too soon.

In extreme situations, the parties involved may feel safer if they have someone accompany them to the meeting for reconciliation. These should be persons whom they trust and who will honestly work as partisans of reconciliation rather than of the parties themselves.

#### Step Two:

1. At the beginning the meeting, explain the process to everybody and emphasize the role of worship.
2. Quaker dialog
  - a. Set a time limit for this part of the meeting.
  - b. It might be useful in extreme situations to have two clearly defined rounds of Quaker dialog, one for clearness about events, and another for venting feelings. If one of the parties is clearly the aggrieved person in the situation, perhaps s/he should speak first. In the round for clearness, the parties describe in turn what happened in the conflict situation; they are encouraged to keep this round *factual*. After both have finished, the clerk might invite questions for clarification and correction. In the “feelings” round, the parties express how they have felt in the situation. Questions about motives and other concerns might follow. Call for worship if emotions become violent, but free expression should be allowed.
  - c. A break might be useful between the Quaker dialog and the next part of the meeting.
3. Reconciliation
  - a. It might be useful to make sure, before beginning worship, that no one is too stuck back in their feelings, that everyone is ready to go on. If not, more time might be needed for this sharing and a later meeting set up for laboring toward resolution.
  - b. It might seem appropriate to start with a short worship sharing in which participants express (only positive) feelings about the process or the future.
  - c. Make a clear choice about what format you will use during the next part of the meeting; options include (but are not limited to) meeting for business in worship, in which the clerk recognizes speakers, open discussion, Quaker dialog. It might be useful to mention the other options as alternatives you might use if the situation indicates.
  - d. In some conflict situations, it might feel safer for the participants if the beginning of “negotiations” were held in Quaker dialog. If one of the parties is clearly the aggravator in the situation, perhaps s/he should speak first. These might include opportunities to freely offer something toward reconciliation (for example, a promise to change, forgiveness, an offer of a second chance) and/or opportunities to express what they still feel they need and are not getting (for example, a promise to change, forgiveness, an offer of a second chance acknowledgment of wrongdoing not yet offered, a promise to change, restitutions).
  - e. The minute of reconciliation: defining your goal. The minute might include: a general declaration of intent by the parties involved; specific promises of future behavior or actions to be taken by the participants, including any terms of restitution; terms of a monitoring process, including the time of its termination; other aspects of an agreed-upon follow-through process.
  - f. If there is no resolution to the conflict, you might consider trying to approve a minute to this effect, expressing why no resolution was reached and how the relationship will be conducted in the future.

## A Guide for Conducting the Meeting for Reconciliation, page 3

### *Step Three:*

1. You might want to consider holding a “meeting for closure,” a final meeting after a period of time has elapsed or the monitoring period has ended, in which everyone checks in on how they feel and what else might be helpful in maintaining the relationship. Ideas for this might include worship, opening into worship sharing, approving a final minute of closure, evaluation by the participants.
2. The report to Ministry and Counsel might include the following:
  - a. All matters of fact: names, dates, etc.
  - b. A copy of the minute approved at the meeting.
  - c. An evaluation.

— This information is included in the NYYM Gospel Order Packet



# Suggestions for Leading a Worship Sharing Group

by Shirley Dodson, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

There is no single “right way” to lead a worship sharing group. The suggestions below have been gleaned from the experience of several Friends. Feel free to organize the time you have in a way that is comfortable to you and to other group members.

1. Start by sharing briefly with your group some guidelines for worship sharing. You might say that worship sharing is an opportunity for people to communicate more deeply with each other than is normally possible in everyday conversation. To help participants feel safe and comfortable, some guidelines are helpful:
  - a. Speak from your own personal experience. This is not the place for intellectual discussion or abstract analysis (however useful these are in other settings!). It works well when participants start their sharing with “I” and use I-statements throughout.
  - b. Try to listen in an open and accepting way to the statements of others in your group. This is not the time for critical judgments.
2. Leave space and time so that everyone has a chance to share. There’s no obligation to speak, but a worship sharing group is a place where everyone who wants to speak can do so.
3. Briefly state the topic. It’s good to leave a few minutes for quiet worship or reflection after you’ve described the topic. This allows people to center in the Spirit and reflect on what they feel, rather than just responding to someone else. It’s okay if there is silence between speakers.
4. As leader, you may want to be the first to share following the period of quiet. Be brief, speak in the first person, and describe your personal experience. Your contribution then provides a model for the group.
5. Let others speak as they feel comfortable. You may want to encourage quieter participants to share.
6. There’s no need to come to conclusions or provide a summary. The experience of a worship sharing group is complete in itself. At the end, you might want to hold hands around the circle.

## Possible focuses for worship sharing

1. Questions (queries)
  - a. *On spiritual life:*
    - What was your first experience of God?
    - How have you experienced the leading of the Spirit in your life?
    - Assuming all Friends are ministers, what is your ministry to the Meeting?
    - If a close friend asked you to describe God, what would you say?
    - What was the most meaningful Meeting for Worship you’ve attended?
    - If the spiritual life is made up of seeking and finding, what are you seeking? What have you found?
  - b. *On living our faith as individuals and as a Meeting:*
    - How might we share our faith with others in this community?
    - Are we being called to greater service in the community or world? If so, to what are we being led?
    - What does the Lord require of us?
    - Recognizing that we are stewards of the property we possess, are there additional ways this property can be used in God’s service?
  - c. *On Quaker service or witness*
    - What makes you do what you do in Quaker service?
    - What conviction sustains you in your commitment to Quaker service or witness?
    - Have you had an experience that is particularly important in confirming or challenging your religious or spiritual commitments?

## Suggestions for Leading a Worship Sharing Group, page 2

### 2. Quotations

“. . . we are all at the same stage-the beginning every time we come into God's presence" (John Punshon, *Encounter with Silence*, p. 31)

“. . . Live up to the light thou hast, and more will be granted thee." (Caroline Fox)

### 3. Objects for meditation (stone, candle, plant, pair of sandals, picture). Object evokes sharing.

Where people in the Meeting feel a hunger for more opportunities together, it is ideal to set aside an hour or so at another time during the week. How about holding your worship sharing group on a weekday evening, or early Sunday a.m.?

# Spiritual Assessment Guidelines

by Marcia A. Schnorr, R.N., Ed.D.

## 1. Source of Spiritual Strength

- a. Who or what is your source of spiritual strength?
- b. If your source of spiritual strength is God, how do you describe God? What does God mean to you?
- c. If your source of spiritual strength is someone or something other than God, how do you describe this source? What does this source mean to you?
- d. What objects and/or activities do you use to maintain your relationship with your source of spiritual strength?
- e. Are there other objects and/or activities that you could use to improve your relationship with your source of spiritual strength?

## 2. Meaning and Purpose

- a. What do you believe is the meaning and purpose for your life?
- b. What activities help you to accomplish your purpose in life?
- c. What purpose, if any, do you believe is served by suffering?
- d. What do you believe is the meaning of death?

## 3. Love and Relatedness

- a. What is (are) your most significant relationship(s)?
- b. How would you describe these relationships?
- c. How do you perceive that you are loved by others?
- d. What are your main support systems?
- e. Do you have a significant relationship with God? If so, consider the following questions. If not, would you like to have a relationship with God? (If a relationship is desired, serve as a resource and/or make an appropriate referral).
- f. How has your relationship with God been a source of help or hindrance in your life?
- g. How do you feel about your relationship with God?
- h. Has your relationship with God changed over the years?
- i. Does your relationship with God have any effect on the quality of your life?
- j. What person(s) has (have) had the most influence in helping you establish (maintain) your relationship with God?
- k. What activities do you participate in to help you maintain (grow) in your relationship with God?
- l. What effect, if any, does your relationship with God have on your relationship with others?

## 4. Forgiveness

- a. Have you ever experienced feelings of guilt, anger, resentment, and/or bitterness?
- b. If so, what effect do these feelings have on your sense of wellness?
- c. How do you handle these feelings?
- d. Is there a difference between your feelings when you are forgiving others vs. when you are forgiven?
- e. Do you have more difficulty in experiencing the forgiveness from God, forgiveness from others or forgiveness from yourself?
- f. What resources do you use to help you accept forgiveness?
- g. What other resources might be available for you to experience forgiveness?
- h. What prompts you to forgive others?

## Spiritual Assessment Guidelines, page 2

### 5. Hope

- a. Would you describe yourself as hopeful?
- b. Is your “hope” realistic? Or, is it more like “wishful thinking?”
- c. Does your relationship with God have an effect on your sense of hopefulness?
- d. Have you ever felt hopeless? If so, describe the situation.
- e. What resources do you use to obtain (maintain) a sense of hope?
- f. Are there other resources that you could use to obtain (maintain) a sense of hope?

### 6. Effects of Illness

- a. Would being sick (injured) make any difference in the perception you have of yourself and God?
- b. In what way, if any, do you perceive that your relationship to God is related to your present state of disease or dis-ease?
- c. What resources do you use to relieve any spiritual distress related to your disease or dis-ease?
- d. What other resources, if any, could you use to relieve your spiritual distress?

### 7. Religious Affiliation

- a. Are you affiliated with a particular religion? If so, which one?
- b. What was the main factor in your choice of religious affiliation?
- c. Is there any part of your religious life that may be influencing your feelings of wellness (distress)? (The interviewer may need to make an objective appraisal after further interactions and observations.)
- d. What individual(s) has (have) had the most influence in your present religious practice (or lack of religious practice)?
- e. Has any religious experience had an influence (positive or negative) on your present religious attitudes and practices?
- f. What Bible character (story) do you most identify with at the present time?
- g. What activities are most meaningful to you in your present religious life?
- h. Are there any religious activities that you used find meaningful? Would you like to resume these activities?
- i. How would you describe your sense of religious well-being?

# Toward a Gathered Friends Community Seven Queries Asking, “Is Your Friends Community Following Gospel Order?”

by *Leanna Goerlich, New York Yearly Meeting,  
for the Gospel Order Packet*

“Toward a Gathered Friends Community” is an assessment tool. It is intended to enable meetings to evaluate the degree to which good Quaker order is being practiced, to assess meeting strengths and weaknesses and to implement helpful change. There are seven sets of queries which help a community probe deeply into community life and find out what aspects are operating in good gospel order, and also find out where there may be conflicts and blocks to unity and harmony.

It is formatted so that the facilitator or designated recorder can write directly on the resource itself the key points shared in the group, and suggestions for future action.

These queries can be presented in a variety of ways. They will work best when conducted with thoughtful guidance by persons respected by the meeting for their gifts in facilitating worship-filled groups. Here are a few scheduling suggestions:

- Present the queries in seven separate one and a half hour sessions held monthly, weekly or twice monthly.
- Arrange the sessions in workshop segments of either one day with lunch, or Friday evening and Saturday segments, or a weekend retreat.
- Use the queries separately if there is a special concern in one of the areas.
- Select persons from outside the meeting to facilitate the sessions.
- Ask your Yearly Meeting Ministry & Counsel for guidance and/or leadership.
- Create a safe and prayerful environment in which truth can be spoken.

## **Definition of Quaker good order:**

The guiding principles and procedures which enable a Friends community to be centered in God.

## **Hypothesis:**

That recognized and unrecognized conflicts and unmet or unexpressed needs within a Friends community can be a major cause of apathy and unrest in community life and result in a lack of vitality and new growth.

## **Procedure:**

1. Thoughtfully and worshipfully consider and answer the following seven sets of queries as fully as possible.
2. Give thanks for your strengths and recognize them as building blocks for the future.
3. Consider any weaknesses with a view to seeking solutions. Suggestions are given under Possible Solutions. Consider other creative solutions which the group suggests.
4. Take into account community motivation, energy and gifts in making plans which will facilitate needed change.

QUERY I: Spiritual Development Within Community			
Queries	Group Assessment	Possible Solution	Plan for Action
<p><b>A</b> Are Friends in your community on a recognized spiritual journey in which inspirational experiences (nature study, art, prayer, reading, meditation, etc.) are necessary pursuits and practices?</p> <p><b>B</b> Do your members nurture one another spiritually?</p> <p><b>C</b> Are spiritual gifts called forth among you?</p>		<p><b>A</b> Offer study groups on the Bible, Quaker journals, spiritual journey, Quaker history, Faith and Practice, Quaker testimonies and other subjects.</p> <p><b>B</b> Encourage Ministry &amp; Counsel or a group focused on creative eldership to develop spiritual leadership.</p> <p><b>C</b> Develop leadership for facilitating worship sharing and clearness committees.</p> <p><b>D</b> Hold worship sharing and one-to-one spiritual sharing opportunities and dialogues for sharing personal stories, journalizing, prayer, the gathered meeting and other related topics.</p> <p><b>E</b> Encourage long term in-depth study at Pendle Hill, School of the Spirit, etc.</p> <p><b>F</b> Develop opportunities for spiritual direction, spiritual friendship or a spiritual formation group.</p>	

QUERY II: Meeting for Worship as Central to Community Life			
Queries	Group Assessment	Possible Solution	Plan for Action
<p><b>A</b> Is your meeting clear as to the focus of authority recognized in your meeting for worship?</p> <p><b>B</b> How does your community recognize the Christian message inherent in Quaker life?</p> <p><b>C</b> Has your community explored the issues of faith that unify and those that divide?</p> <p><b>D</b> When divisions of faith arise, does Ministry &amp; Counsel offer opportunities for dialogue which would lead to greater understanding among you?</p> <p><b>E</b> Does an appropriate committee regularly assess the quality of meeting for worship and offer guidance as needed?</p>		<p><b>A</b> Hold sharing meetings in which members explore their personal and corporate faith.</p> <p><b>B</b> Share and discuss as a meeting the spiritual focus in your meeting.</p> <p><b>C</b> Hold discussions, workshops, sharing times on various aspects of meeting for worship.</p> <p><b>D</b> Consider training members in eldering which includes both nurture of gifts of ministry and exercising oversight over vocal ministry and other areas connected with meeting for worship.</p>	

QUERY III: Recognizing God in All Community Members			
Queries	Group Assessment	Possible Solution	Plan for Action
<p><b>A</b> Are all persons in your meeting treated as children of God, regardless of gender, age, race, culture, economic and educational background, personal opinions, lifestyles, leading or behavior?</p> <p><b>B</b> When diversity causes problems for the meeting community, does the meeting process differences according to practices which follow the principles cited in <b>A</b>?</p>		<p><b>A</b> Through active committee work, hold worship sharing or Quaker dialogues concerned with enhancing interaction among children, the elderly, minorities, or any person or group who may feel outside community life.</p> <p><b>B</b> Identify community members with particular gifts of leadership or representation in multi-cultural, intergenerational areas.</p> <p><b>C</b> In the Spirit of love and fellowship, sponsor meetings and social gathering in which all members are encouraged to interact and enjoy one another.</p> <p><b>D</b> Bring outside specialists who can be helpful in mediation, promoting creative interaction and healing.</p>	

QUERY IV: Discernment Of Leadings Among Community Members			
Queries	Group Assessment	Possible Solution	Plan for Action
<p><b>A</b> Do Friends in your community encourage members to test personal leadings by considering Quaker and Biblical traditions?</p> <p><b>B</b> Are community members encouraged to request one-to-one consultations, clearness committees from local and larger Quaker bodies in order to seek personal clarity on personal and corporate concerns before pursuing action?</p> <p><b>C</b> Are community members encouraged to use the structure of Friends business meetings and to process leadings in good order from monthly to yearly meeting levels?</p>		<p><b>A</b> Hold Sharing meetings in which members can explore their personal and corporate faiths.</p> <p><b>B</b> Hold educational sessions on the Bible, Quakerism 101, Friends Faith &amp; Practice, Friends history, business meeting procedures.</p> <p><b>C</b> Build a library and encourage outside reading on issues pertaining to Quaker history, community structure, discernment of leadings.</p> <p><b>D</b> Seek outside sources to lead discussions on above listed topics.</p>	

QUERY V: Pastoral Care of Community Members			
Queries	Group Assesment	Possible Solution	Plan for Action
<p><b>A</b> Does your Ministry &amp; Counsel or other appropriate body reach out to offer early assistance to troubled individuals or in areas where conflict has developed within the community?</p>		<p><b>A</b> Promote a sense of community among members by planning social events, refreshments after meeting, intergenerational events, potlucks, holiday celebrations, in an effort to help all members to know one another.</p> <p><b>B</b> Through committee effort develop an appropriate policy and procedure for eldering. If necessary, ask for outside help from Friends resources.</p> <p><b>C</b> Through committee planning, develop plans or dealing with troubled individuals and conflicted situations. Consider what help the community can reasonably offer when outside resources should be suggested.</p> <p><b>D</b> When conflict emerges, through committee assessment, offer appropriate assistance early.</p>	

QUERY VI: Responsible Structure and Process for Friends Community			
Queries	Group Assesment	Possible Solution	Plan for Action
<p><b>A</b> Are your committee meetings and your meeting for business held in the spirit of worship?</p> <p><b>B</b> Are decisions made with due regard for seeking divine assistance and the sense of the meeting?</p> <p><b>C</b> Is decision making handled openly with all members participating in good faith and fellowship?</p> <p><b>D</b> Are minutes of committee meetings and meetings for business carefully constructed to reflect the sense of the meeting and are minutes regularly distributed to all members?</p>		<p><b>A</b> Consider nominations for leadership carefully and prayerfully as a recognition of the gifts of members.</p> <p><b>B</b> As a community, study Faith and Practice and other Quaker resources concerned with business practices.</p> <p><b>C</b> Attend outside workshops on Quaker business procedures.</p> <p><b>D</b> Hold sharing meetings on how to improve participation in committee and business procedures.</p> <p><b>E</b> Sponsor meetings with outside Quaker resources knowledgeable and experienced in Quaker business practices.</p> <p><b>F</b> Take steps to make attendance at business meeting important and meaningful to members. (change of time, inclusion of potluck meal, alter agenda, etc.)</p>	

QUERY VII: Fruits of the Spirit — Living the Quaker Testimonies			
Queries	Group Assessment	Possible Solution	Plan for Action
<p><b>A</b> Does the life of your meeting reflect the fruits of the Spirit as defined in Galatians 5:22: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity and self control?</p> <p><b>B</b> Does your meeting nurture an understanding and practice of the Quaker testimonies among members: community harmony, equality and simplicity?</p> <p><b>C</b> Does your meeting know and use the traditional forms of Quaker ministry: corporate discernment of leadings, minutes for travel or service under a concern, committees for support and oversight?</p>		<p><b>A</b> Educational programs on areas of appropriate social witness.</p> <p><b>B</b> Promotion and support for appropriate social witness.</p> <p><b>C</b> Sponsor Quaker related social witness as religious education projects.</p> <p><b>D</b> Offer guidance in the discernment of members' leadings to social witness.</p>	



# Fostering *Vital Friends Meetings*

Part Two:

*Resources for Working with Quaker Meetings*

by Jan Greene and Marty Walton

## **Section R3: Quakers and the Shadow Side**

R3-1 Quakers and the Inner Dark *Jo Farrow*

R3-8 The Shadow: A Definition *Rita Varley*

R3-9 Merciful Jesus *Anne Thomas*

R3-11 Policy on Sexual Harassment *Canadian YM Personnel Committee*

R3-13 Dealing with a Child Abuser in the Meeting Community *Rochester (NY) MM*

R3-19 The Agony and the Ecstasy *Richard Foster*

R3-21 Workshop: Beginning to Explore Violence *Anne Thomas*



# Quakers and the Inner Dark

by Jo Farrow, *Britain Yearly Meeting, Gifts and Discoveries, Phase 2A, Unit 2, Background Paper 1*

. . . We must admit, firstly, that there is all too much evidence to suggest that human nature is flawed by violence and aggression and that these are fueled by such emotions as greed, vanity, pride, envy and fear. . . . But does the fact that we so often behave badly mean that we have built-in biological characteristics of violence and destructiveness? . . .

I should like to try and identify some of the roots of violence. These must be eradicated if peace is more widely to prevail. Not only are such responses completely inadequate ways of behaving towards other human beings, but the more automatic or unconscious, the more likely to be based on old hurts and confusions and so to be irrational or reactively violent. . . . These memory traces of fear, rejection, humiliation, loneliness and other painful feelings not only warp our human relations but evoke actions that range from being inappropriate or self-damaging to being in varying degrees destructive, which of course further distorts our relations.

The greed and selfishness that are so sadly prevalent and taint so much of human existence develop, at least in part, from the need to compensate for what is dimly felt to be wrong with us. This is a spiritual want, but we seldom see it like this—if we did, everything would be different. As it is, the more uneasy we feel, the more, in our anxiety, do we become automatic and so further estranged from our true nature. The more machine-like our behavior, the more we are torn by largely unconscious conflicts, the more we experience a feeling of worthlessness, a flawed identity—and the more desperate our efforts to make up for these lacks. . . . Such are the roots of violence in ourselves and our society. I firmly deny that they are intrinsic to our nature, but they are deep and all pervasive. . . . We must learn to love ourselves. Not to pamper, but also not to berate or belittle—that would be disparaging God’s handiwork. Indeed to love ourselves rightly is the precondition of loving others. . . . We have somehow forgotten who we are; and this is the source of all our errors.”

— Adam Curle, “True Justice.” Swarthmore Lecture, 1981

Friends have often been uneasy about any undue emphasis on sin or evil and in some respects their reticence is easy to understand. Early Friends were in revolt against thirteen hundred years of Augustine theology with its obsessional preoccupation with original sin, the depravity of humanity, Fall and Atonement, the Wrath of God and the eternal damnation of a largely sinful human race. The darkness of this kind of theology was shot through with some shafts of grace and glory but in this life it held out little hope of healing the wounds in the human heart. It was the kind of theology to drive sensitive people to despair and it brought George Fox to the point of longing for death.

His discovery that there is something more profound in the human heart than a propensity for evil, an inward light, a capacity for responding to the spirit of truth and life, a God within rather than a devil, marks the beginning of the Quaker movement. There were of course many more sensitive seekers who were also in revolt against a theology of despair and were daring to trust their own experience. They were waiting for a new movement of the spirit which would lead them into a world of hope and promise. We can understand that the invitation to “walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone” was a liberation from the process of sitting in miserable contemplation of your own depravity, or that of others.

Without being aware of it, Friends had joined themselves to the pre-Augustinian tradition of Creation-centered spirituality, in which the experience of original blessing, rather than original sin, was the dominant theme. They were in the business of reclaiming part of a much older Judaeo-Christian tradition in which creation, including human beings, is seen as good and full of blessing. Early Quaker spirituality, though it never entirely lost some of the darker undertones of Puritan piety,

## Quakers and the Inner Dark, page 2

was a joyful re-discovery of the Hebrew affirmation of life, its zestful relish of the glory of the created world and the role of human beings as co-creators with God in caring for the earth and making it a just and peaceable place.

Yet there is no doubt that early Friends were also deeply aware of the sickness of their own society, and the darkness of it, nor that they experienced institutional Christianity as having added to that darkness and oppression. Their experience of walking in the light of a transformed world in which creation seemed fresh and new to them did not blind them to the reality of evil, but rather gave them a sharper sense of the darkness in which so many still lived.

Nor did early Friends trivialize sin or salvation by imagining that their individual healing was more important than the healing of society or nations. They had rejected the idea of cheap grace, the notion that an individual could buy God's favor with pious practice or ritual observances. They had reclaimed the territory of prophetic judgment on the injustice of social structures and the spoiling of creation. They knew that they had to work out their new experience of being "alive in a new world" in a society in which human beings exploited one another and oppressed those who were poor and without power. Their awareness of living in the light threw into even sharper relief the darkness within, and also the dark powers at work in the age in which they lived. Being open to the spirit involved them in a process of sensitization to all that was basically wrong with the social structure and institutions of their time, and made them even more keenly aware of the difference between truth and falsehood, what was good and holy and what was otherwise. It was said of George Fox, to whom "all creation gave a new smell," so that he felt himself walking in the paradise of God, that he had an equally keen sense of smell where evil was concerned.

That heightened sensitivity was not restricted to awareness of the darkness in others. It had begun with his own experience of discovering the darkness within himself. "The natures of dogs, swine, vipers, of Sodom and Egypt, Pharaoh and Caine, Ishmael, Esau etc. The natures of these I saw within. And I cried to the Lord 'Why should I be thus, seeing I was never addicted to commit these evils?' And the Lord answered that it was needful that I should have a sense of all conditions, how else should I speak to all conditions; and in this I saw also that there was an ocean of darkness and death, but an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness." It was an intuition of profound importance at a time when many of his contemporaries projected the blame for human evil on dark forces beyond their control, extra-terrestrials, demons and satanic messengers. Indeed Fox himself was never able to work through all the implications of his moment of insight. He continued to believe in witches and allowed the established church to stand as a personification of demonic darkness in a way that would strike us today as distinctly paranoid.

The themes of darkness and light, truth and falsehood, light and death, occupy a large proportion of Fox's writing. Today, however, we are ill at ease with vocabulary which refers so explicitly to sin and evil or the darker side of human nature. That may be because we are very sharply aware of corporate insanity and the disorders in society and international affairs. Our awareness of evil on a cosmic scale has the effect of increasing our own sense of anxiety and powerlessness, but not necessarily of enabling us to be aware of our own participation in what is so obviously evil.

We find it easier to talk of neurosis and personality disorders and transmute our unease about our own darkness into a more paralyzing fear about the things which lie hidden in our unconscious life. But we are rather more reticent about identifying in ourselves, or others, the attitudes and behaviors that are life-denying and destructive.

## Quakers and the Inner Dark, page 3

Perhaps we are wise to be more reticent about risking the truth where others are concerned. We may recall the words of Jesus to the religious leaders of his day that those who are over-zealous to spot the dust in the eyes of others had better be sure that there is not a whole plank of wood obstructing their own vision. "Judge not that you are not judged" seems like good advice to those who are anxious to set the world straight by starting on the behavior of others. It is equally good advice to ourselves when we discover our own unfinished humanity in what appears to be its darker aspects. Yet at a time when the issues of life and death have such appalling implications it seems strange that Friends have little to say about evil or the inner darkness in the human heart. Christian Faith and Practice (Britain Yearly Meeting) contains 29 references to the Inward Light and only 7 which refer to darkness and dryness. There are no references at all to either Evil or Good. In a century which has known the holocaust and Hiroshima these are strange omissions and may compel us to ask ourselves some difficult questions.

1. Have Friends, with their emphasis on the Inward Light, failed to wrestle adequately with its opposite?
2. In our insistence on a belief about "that of God in everyone" have we taken sufficient account of the human capacity for evil or the demons by which we may be driven?
3. In writing extensively about the experience of walking and waiting in the light have we ignored a necessary examination of the darker routes that the human spirit may travel? Do we need to spend more time in understanding the psychology of evil?
4. In our concern to be architects of a peaceable Kingdom/Queendom, have we properly assessed the strength of the opposition or understood the roots of violence in ourselves which might wreck that vision before we could set one foot within the Promised Land?
5. In reclaiming a place in the tradition of Creation-centered spirituality and endeavoring to see the whole of life as sacramental, have we failed to take seriously the unholy and horrifying aspects of our world?
6. Have we been open to the light which twentieth century psychologists have shed on the problem of human evil and our inner darkness?

We do not have to be in sympathy with the traditional Atonement/Fall theologies of institutional Christianity, or at ease with its vocabulary, to be aware of what seems like a dark perversity or flaw at the center of human existence. Eric Fromm, a wise and humane explorer of the territory of the human psyche, was continually puzzled by our fear of life, our fear of freedom and of taking real responsibility for ourselves. When he was dying he turned to his friend Robert Fox and asked, "Why is it, Bob, that the human race prefers necrophilia to biophilia?" Why indeed should the human race, with all its splendid achievements, its genius and imagination, its technological ability to bring an end to poverty, prefer death to life.

Sigmund Freud, having rejected the religious language of his Jewish inheritance, was unable to avoid the conclusion that human beings are in a state of continual tension between their love of life (Eros) and their love of death (Thanatos). Having dispensed with what seemed to him the outworn trappings of conventional religious belief, he was still unable to account for this internal civil war which had been expressed so clearly by his Hebrew ancestors as a stark choice between life and death.

M. Scott Peck is an American psychiatrist who was, for a period, a consultant to the Surgeon General of the United States army. In that capacity he was involved in studying in detail the case histories of the army officers involved in the MyLai massacre. His work in uncovering some of the underlying causes of that horrifying episode, as well as his experiences in helping troubled people,

have led him to a point of view unpalatable to many of his fellow psychiatrists. He sees an obligation to examine human maladjustment and its destructive effects and to do so in terms of research into the problem of evil.

*The People of the Lie* is his first attempt to explore the psychology of evil. It is a disturbing and provocative book. He begins by examining the unquestioned assumptions which human beings make about the world in which they live. One assumption, shared by most of the so-called higher religions, is that it is a good world that has somehow become contaminated. In other words, he suggests that a theistic religion makes it impossible for people to separate the problem of evil from the existence of goodness. He observes that whilst many people ask the question, "Why is there so much evil in the world?" they seldom ask, "Why is there so much goodness in the world?" He concludes that for a religious person the problem of evil is inextricably linked with the fact of good and that the mystery of goodness is, if anything, even greater than the mystery of evil.

In spite of the enormous mystery of the subject, Scott Peck is surprised that there is no generally accepted definition of evil, though in our experience we all have some understanding of its nature. In an effort to formulate a provisional definition he starts with the observation of his eight year old son: "Daddy, evil is 'live' spelt backwards." He goes on to define evil as that which is in opposition to life. Evil is that which kills life. And by that he does not mean merely physical murder. Evil is whatever quenches the human spirit, that which prevents growth or breaks the will to live. It is possible, he points out, to "break" a child or a horse without so much as harming a hair of its head. We know that it is possible to destroy the will or stunt the growth of others in an infinite variety of ways. "Evil . . . is that force residing inside or outside of human beings that seeks to kill life or liveliness. And goodness is its opposite. Goodness is that which promotes life and liveliness."

He has some acute observations about the people who are potentially the most destructive in their effect on others. The "people of the lie" are not generally those we might readily associate with sadistic or murderous impulses. He is not talking about the more obvious forms of human destructiveness. They are those whose level of proper self love is so fragile, that they are compelled to maintain a self-image that dares not entertain the idea of their own possible imperfection. And in order to sustain that image of themselves as perfect they are willing to destroy whatever or whoever challenges it. Those who are the most likely to puncture the idea of their perfection are likely to be those closest to them. He observes that religious people with impossibly high standards for their own behavior are very vulnerable at this point. The "lie" is that such human beings are persistent in their belief that there is nothing wrong with them. *They* are well-adjusted, sane, healthy-minded, decent respectable. It is others, their children, partners or colleagues, who are sick or maladjusted. Their own imperfection or inner darkness which they cannot bear to acknowledge is therefore projected onto others rather than face the truth about their own unfinished human nature.

It is to Carl Gustav Jung that we owe perhaps the greatest debt for his attempt to shed light on the problem of evil and the ways in which we shift the burden of our inner darkness by projecting it onto others. It was one of Jung's complaints against Christian theologians that they did not take evil seriously enough. Like early Friends he found himself in opposition to Augustinian theology and in particular the idea that evil is nothing more than the absence of good, just as darkness is the absence of light. Living in Europe during the days of the Third Reich, Jung saw collective evil as a powerful fact and it seemed to him that his Christian contemporaries had failed to come to terms with its terrifying reality.

Jung coined the term "collective unconscious" in an attempt to express the fact that we carry within us memories and images which have their origin in far distant events and probably reach back

to the beginning of human history. Without our more recent knowledge about genetic codes he was forced to find some way of explaining the recurrence in dreams, in religious ritual, and paintings from many cultures, of the same symbols. He called these powerful and universal symbols “archetypes.” Examples of archetypes appear . . . in Quaker thought. Light and Dark, Seed, Spirit, the Mountain of Vision, the Return to Paradise, and all the strange imagery of the Book of Revelation (and other Apocalyptic Books) do not belong only to the Biblical tradition from which Fox borrowed them. They occur again and again in other religious traditions.

Other archetypes include the God-man, the myths of resurrection and renewal, the hero, the wise-man, the great Mother, the Tree of Life, the androgynous being, one who includes (as we know we all do) elements of both masculine and feminine, the serpent, the child, etc.

Archetypes are very powerful symbols, Their energy touches us at deeper levels than those of our conscious life. Jung had observed, for example, the way in which the Nazis made use of these archetypes and used versions of Teutonic myths to rally Germany to their cause, as well as the deep anti-Semitic feelings which the Christian church had fostered over hundreds of years.

In addition to his exploration of archetypal symbols and their energy to motivate us at unconscious levels Jung also used the idea of the “shadow” to explain some of the potentially destructive elements in human behavior. In some ways his use of the term is unfortunate since he was not suggesting that the dark side of our unconscious life is in itself a destructive thing. What he did suggest was that each of us needs to make the inward journey and bring the invisible into the light. His own experience, and his work with those who come to him for help, had shown him that as soon as we are able to recognize and accept our “shadow” aspect it loses its power to disrupt our lives.

The shadow or dark self is not the whole of our inward and often hidden life. As Friends we are aware that this deep area is also the place of enlightenment, of an intuitive awareness of the direction we must take. It is the place we enter when we have become truly centered and listening and the place where we become aware of the God within. But for Jung the shadow part of us is also the repository of our unfulfilled life. It represents the unknown or little known qualities and attributes, and equally those aspects which we prefer not to acknowledge.

For Jung the meaning of human life was best expressed in what he called the process of individuation and the quest for wholeness, which is only another way of saying that our life work is to become what we are, to fulfill our potential and become complete and mature human beings. Some Christian theologian and psychologists have thought that this was a rather sharp diversion from the goal of perfection as the church has often expounded it. But in fact it is not far from what Jesus probably meant when he is recorded as saying, “You must be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.” The Greek word “telcos” which is used in Matthew’s Gospel means finished or complete, fulfilled. Wholeness is only another way of saying it.

Unfortunately much of Christian spirituality has seen perfection in terms of a narrow righteousness or moral perfection rather than in terms of living out life completely and acknowledging the less acceptable aspects of our humanity which are undeniably part of us. It is difficult for those who have grown up in a conventional religious home or who are ardent idealists to come to terms with feelings which their religious home or background or personal value system encourages them to think of as less desirable.

If we were each of us to make a list of the attributes or feelings which we most dislike in others (e.g. greed, envy, ambition, lust, egotism, hostility, anger, bossiness, bullying, laziness, boastings, cruelty, etc.) we should probably find that we have made a list of the things that we find unacceptable in

ourselves. Since we are ordinary as well as extraordinary human beings we are liable to find each of those undesirable aspects in ourselves, but if we cannot bear to acknowledge them as belonging to us we suppress the impulse or feeling as swiftly as we can. In fact we may even manage to deceive ourselves into thinking that the feeling was never there. But the suppressed material does not evaporate simply because we refuse to own it as ours. It lies beneath the surface of our conscious thought and is likely to erupt in more irrational ways.

In fact, if we feel an overwhelming rage when someone else rebukes us for a fault or we are irrationally annoyed about some quite trivial matter we can be fairly sure that we have seen the dark edge of what Jung calls our “shadow” self—the part of ourselves we find it most difficult to accept and be compassionate about.

Our “shadow” aspect does not consist simply of unrecognized or shameful aspects which we prefer to suppress. It shows up just as often in impulsive or inadvertent acts. We find ourselves doing or saying things we never intended at a conscious level. Or it may include what Elisabeth Kübler Ross calls “unfinished business” . . . old resentments, ambivalent attitudes to our parents or partners, secret hurts magnified or desires for the kind of life we have never had an opportunity to enjoy.

Jung found that most of those who came to him for help were needing to find a religious outlook and also a way of exploring areas of their lives which needed to find expression. Most of those who came to him were in what we now call “mid-life” crisis. Having established themselves in a career, brought up children or followed a particular vocation they found that there were other parts of themselves that seemed to be clamoring for attention. Often women felt a need to develop the masculine qualities which had been dormant during the child-rearing period of their lives, or men felt a need to explore the more feminine and intuitive side of their personalities. People who had chosen an academic career became aware of a need to develop and understand the more creative and intuitive side of themselves, etc.

Until the forgotten feelings, neglected areas, or unacknowledged qualities have been brought out into the light, the real danger is that they are likely to surface through a process of projection which may confuse and hurt other people. No doubt most of us have had the experience of hearing a rather bossy friend or colleague lamenting or protesting about the over-bearing ways of another colleague, or a possessive parent pouring scorn on those who cling to their children for far too long. We can be fairly sure that we are guilty of the same kind of projecting when we complain bitterly about attitudes in others which our friends, if they dared or cared enough, could tell us they had observed in us.

Whenever we catch ourselves out in a twinge of envy, a catty remark or a rush of anger we can try to uncover the unacknowledged need or aspect of our own behavior that we are failing to take responsibility for in a constructive way.

Most of us no doubt have some experience of the shadow side of Quaker Meetings, the conflict that we lack the courage to bring out into the open, the simmering resentments that can erupt in quite irrational ways in heated arguments about the color to use when repainting the Meeting House walls. No doubt many of us have been involved in attempts to enable the two most domineering members to come to terms with each other, and respect that of God in themselves and the other.

The most destructive power of the “shadow” can be seen in the conflict between groups of people of different ethnic cultures or ideological persuasion. For if we cannot bear to bring our unacknowledged fears or feeling into the light of consciousness we shall continue to need “enemies” onto which we can off-load the suppressed self-hate or fear of being overwhelmed which is simmering below the surface of our lives. Just as the power of our corporate silence in Quaker Meetings is far more vital

than the sum total of our individual silence so the power of the “shadow” when it operates at a collective level is much more overwhelming than the individual fears and hostilities which are represented within it.

At a rational level we may find it totally incomprehensible that an individual like Klaus Barber should have done the things he is accused of doing. But a nation driven by its collective “shadow” is capable of sweeping individuals into a massive projection of self-hate and irrational violence in ways that are beyond our understanding if we have never dared to explore our own “unlived” life.

Evil remains a mystery even when we have used whatever insights are available to help us towards an understanding of it. Fortunately we do not have to solve the mystery before we decide whether to relieve some of the suffering that it causes . . . for although Friends have been reticent about using traditional Christian language to describe the problem of evil they have often understood what to *do* about it. . . . Jesus, through his stories about the Kingdom, tried to startle people into seeing for themselves both the roots of their own foolish or destructive behavior and also their true nature as human beings, as dearly loved off-spring of the eternal God.

# The Shadow: A Definition

by Rita Varley, *Philadelphia Yearly Meeting*,  
from *Testimony of Our Daily Lives*

Have you ever found yourself doing things you wish you wouldn't do, feeling things that make you do such things as mess up a good conversation? Lose your temper and scream when you meant to be gentle, or squirm in fear and silence when you meant to scream?

I've found some terms I've encountered in reading to be helpful in describing this often confusing inner world. In Jungian psychology, one term is "the shadow." The shadow self is a self which rises up in us, a self which ought to be a functioning integrated piece, but which in fact has been cut off by our judgmental lack of love. We have somehow decided that it is bad, we want to be free of it, not to admit its existence. In retaliation, it turns evil and haunts us in an effort to force our conscious self—or even *any* other person outside ourselves—to give it love and acceptance. Its activities taint every relationship we have whether outwardly visible or not, and in extreme, it stands between ourselves and others, forcing us to sin its sin, to experience its life. If another person who lives this self visibly crosses our path or attacks us in any way, we find ourselves doubly vulnerable, being attacked from outside as well as inside and we are likely to battle violently against the outward manifestation of it.

How does this relate to hearing the Spirit? We are given the information we need. Then the Spirit frames us into revealing our sin, or failure to love fully. We are presented with people outside of us who illustrate our inward selves to help us comprehend—if we are willing to examine our feelings fully. God reaches to us through our dreams to nudge us toward consciousness of our condition. And when we grow in our understanding and love, God helps us to become strong in it by giving us work to do to help other people grow the same way. The Spirit is always reaching toward us from the inside and the outside simultaneously.

# Merciful Jesus

by Anne Thomas, Canadian Yearly Meeting

*Merciful Jesus, Pie Jesu*

*Merciful Jesus, who takes away the sins of the world, grant them rest.*

*Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grant them eternal rest.*

Several years ago I agreed to lead morning Bible sessions for a Friends conference. I was led to look at some of the stories of women in the Bible for one of the sessions. One of the stories I told was that of the unnamed daughter of Jephthah from Judges 11. Jephthah made a vow to God that if he were successful in battle he would sacrifice the first living thing he saw on returning home. Jephthah's daughter, his only child, ran out of the house to greet him. She affirmed his vow but asked to spend two months with her friends in the hills. On her return he killed her. "*My God, why have You forsaken her?*"

Most of us know the other story in which a parent is put in a position of killing his only child; the story of Abraham and Isaac in Genesis 22. In *that* story the child is saved. Why is *this* story so little known? I ended the session by playing the Pie Jesu (Merciful Jesus), part of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Requiem Mass*, sung by a soprano and boy soprano. Lloyd Webber was inspired by a photograph of a Cambodian boy who had the choice of killing his mutilated sister or being killed himself. Many Friends remained seated at the end of the session. As I left the platform a Friend grasped my hand and tearfully thanked me for speaking about the abuse of women. She had been abused as a child, and this was the first time she had felt that Friends cared. It later became clear that, in that session, several Friends found a few threads on which to build a web of healing.

Since the conference described above, I have noticed the frighteningly large number of cases of sexual harassment and abuse that are occurring in our Friends' communities.

At first, little was heard about abuse among Friends, especially in Canada, where newspapers were full of stories of abuse of boys by Roman Catholic priests. "*My God, why did You forsake them?*"

As Canadian Yearly Meeting's representative on the Interfaith Committee on Chaplaincy and the Correctional Service of Canada, I visited several federal penitentiaries. One of these housed many inmates convicted of sexual crimes, including a group of priests. I met them and heard their stories. They had been encouraged to enter the priesthood in their early teens. Entering pre-seminary training at the age of 15 or 16, they had never had the opportunity of getting to know women as equals. Their lack of ease with women and the ideal with which they had grown up—Mary, depicted as a prepubescent girl, a mother yet still a virgin, set on a pedestal—initiated dreadful consequences when boundaries were broken. In their pain, altar boys were the only objects over which they felt they had power. The guilt and pain may not have equaled that of their victims, but they were suffering deeply and receiving little pastoral support. I thought, "This could never happen among Friends."

The phone began to ring. Victims and perpetrators contacted me. The phone calls found me in the office, at home and at various Friends gatherings. I heard more than I wanted to know. Each story caused me more pain and I grieved again with the unnamed daughter of Jephthah and her friends. The phone still rings and I listen and weep. Sometimes I curse. Calls come from men and women, young Friends, parents, pastors, members of both programmed and unprogrammed meetings.

Rumors began to spread about some yearly meeting staff in the United States. These rumors related to heterosexual and homosexual indiscretions. Some of these situations seem to have been handled less than adequately, leaving anger, pain, destroyed faith and broken community. "*My God, why have You forsaken us?*" Some monthly and yearly meetings began to look deeply at the pain caused.

I circulated a letter to the secretaries and superintendents of North American yearly meetings several years ago, asking that we look at the situation. I was thinking about the need to look at our own areas of weakness as well as seeking ways in which we might support ourselves and others. Most of the recipients were not ready to address this. Perhaps the timing was wrong. "*My God, why did we forsake each other?*"

## Merciful Jesus, page 2

And then in 1991, it came to Canadian Yearly Meeting. “*My God, why have we forsaken You?*” Serving as a yearly meeting staff member I had no choice but to be involved. I heard from Young Friends of their lack of trust towards certain “weighty Friends.” Other Friends spoke of an earlier time when a parent always kept an eye on a particular person following meeting for worship, to be sure he was not left unsupervised when children were in the meeting house. A courageous group of women met during yearly meeting sessions, shared their stories, and presented a report, which has still not been fully addressed, to the meeting for business.

I sit here with tears, questions and no answer. *Pie Jesu . . .*

— This article was first printed in *Quaker Life*, May, 1994

# Policy on Sexual Harassment

## *Canadian Yearly Meeting Personnel Committee*

Because of our deep conviction that there is that of God in every person, Friends affirm the basic dignity of all humankind. We seek to be a community of trust and mutual concern which challenges all forms of violence and oppression, a community in which faith and principles find appropriate expression in action. Sexual harassment and abuse profoundly violates both the individual and that community of love and trust for which we yearn. When such abuse has occurred, Friends are called to assist in support and healing.

Canadian Yearly Meeting is committed to providing a work environment for its employees and volunteers that is free from discrimination and harassment. This includes those forms of discrimination and harassment that are unlawful. Actions, words, jokes, comments based on an individual's sex, sexual orientation, race, disability, ethnicity, age or religious beliefs will not be tolerated.

In particular, sexual harassment, both overt and subtle, is a form of misconduct that is demeaning to another person and undermines trust and respect. Anyone engaging in such behaviour will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, termination of committee appointment or exclusion from a gathering, project or office premises.

A man, woman or child may be the victim of sexual harassment, and a woman, man or child may be the harasser.

### **Definition:**

Sexual harassment usually falls into one of three categories, but is not limited to:

1. Verbal: sexual innuendo, suggestive comments, threats, insults, jokes about gender-specific traits, sexual propositions.
2. Nonverbal: making suggestive or insulting noises, obscene gestures, whistling, leering.
3. Physical: touching, brushing body, pinching, attempted or actual sexual intercourse, assault.

Often there are differences in power or influence between parties. There may also be explicit or implied threats or promises of favour toward a person who is subjected to sexual harassment. Persons who depend on an employed position for their means of livelihood are particularly vulnerable to differences in power.

In addition, certain behaviour that is not directed at a particular person may nevertheless contribute to a "hostile work environment" and constitute sexual harassment. Examples include the posting of pornographic or suggestive art in offices or public areas, or sexually explicit discussions which may be acceptable to the participants but not to others within hearing.

Incidents of sexual or other unlawful harassment include (among others) the experience of being sexually harassed, an unjust accusation of sexual harassment, the observation of acts of sexual harassment or the presence of a hostile work environment.

In unclear or borderline cases, those who are made uncomfortable by any behaviour may make their views known to the appropriate person (see below) and the matter will be investigated fairly and without punitive intent so that the legitimate concerns of all parties may be respected.

### **Procedure:**

This policy applies to employees, committee members, programme participants and volunteers.

Anyone who discovers potential criminal behaviour especially involving minors must immediately contact the police.

Any person who wants to report an incident of sexual or other unlawful harassment has the responsibility of reporting the matter promptly to the clerk of the employee's Yearly Meeting committee. If the clerk of the Yearly Meeting committee that employs the staff person is unavailable or if the person believes it would be

## Policy on Sexual Harassment, page 2

inappropriate to contact that individual, the person should contact the clerk of Personnel Policy Committee or another member of that committee in a timely manner. If the person who is making a complaint conscientiously feels that contacting these individuals would not be appropriate, s/he may contact the clerk of Representative Meeting.

Any clerk who becomes aware of possible sexual or other unlawful harassment should promptly initiate an investigation and immediately advise the clerk of the Personnel Policy Committee that such an investigation is being carried out. The clerk of the Yearly Meeting committee that employs the staff person ensures that the investigation is carried out by a person trained and experienced in such investigations. The clerk of the Personnel Policy Committee has a responsibility to ensure that all investigations of sexual or other unlawful harassment are conducted in a timely and appropriate manner. S/he is also responsible for ensuring that any individual involved in such an investigation has personal support when such is requested. This applies equally to all parties in such circumstances. It is essential that every complaint be handled in a confidential manner consistent with the need to investigate it promptly, thoroughly and impartially. All parties involved will be interviewed individually and asked to submit written, signed statements. The involved parties will be informed in writing of the findings of the investigation and/or corrective actions, if any. Involved parties have the right to lodge a complaint with the police or to engage legal counsel, as appropriate, but need to know that this may hinder or prevent this policy from proceeding.

We seek to protect each person. We ask persons who are not involved in the investigation to understand the importance of confidentiality and not to circulate rumours or seek to gain information to which they are not entitled. Inappropriate sharing of information may endanger the integrity of the investigation and may subject those involved to possible lawsuits for defamation of character.

Incidents of concern or complaints involving persons not covered by this policy may be reported to persons designated by Yearly Meeting of Ministry and Counsel or to persons designated by local Meetings for this purpose.

# Dealing With A Child Abuser in the Meeting Community: The Experience at Rochester (NY) Meeting

The following is the entire minute on child sexual abuse that was approved at Rochester, NY Meeting on 14th day, 5th month, 1995. This was the result of many years of struggle in the Meeting over how the meeting should respond to the presence of a known child abuser in its midst. It is important for Friends to be aware that this situation is not foreign to other Meetings, and is potentially present in all Meetings.

## Minute on the Meeting's Response to Child Sexual Abuse

The members and attenders of Rochester Friends Meeting have struggled with the issue of child sexual abuse. This endeavor was prompted by the presence, in Meeting, of an attender with a past history of child molestation. The experience brought to light a complex mix of strongly held, conflicting, and seemingly irreconcilable personal concerns. This minute is an attempt to resolve the conflict and find a sense of the Meeting derived from principles of Quaker spirituality.

For the purposes of brevity within this Minute, persons with a history of sexually abusing children will be called "offenders." Persons who suffered sexual abuse during childhood will be called "survivors." Meeting members and attenders will be denoted by the inclusive term "attenders." We use these labels with caution, knowing that they cannot adequately describe a person's experience, that offenders may also be survivors, and vice-versa, and that dependence upon labels can be a barrier to seeing the Light in another.

## Queries

1. Do we affirm that we will use Quaker practices to resolve conflicts, and to find and express a witness on the issue of child sexual abuse?
2. Do we place a high value on the rights, safety, and loving guidance of children in the Meeting? How do we structure our communal life to best ensure the well-being of the children?
3. Can we learn to love and forgive and change?
4. Do we provide effective witness and ministry to adult survivors in the Meeting?
5. Do we affirm the dignity of offenders and provide effective witness and ministry to them?
6. Do we strive to move beyond labels to recognize that of God in each other?
7. Are we open to the Light that can be found in the testimony of offenders and survivors?
8. Are we grounded in the spirit of true Listening which arises from peace, faith, and love?

## **Testimony**

Child sexual abuse, and physical and emotional abuse and neglect of children, are forms of violence directed against children. These wrongs occur in secrecy, and can be contained neither by ignoring the occurrence of abuse, nor by secrecy on the part of the Meeting in keeping the identity of an offender confidential. While we can never ensure complete safety for our children, open truthfulness provides the most basic requisite for children's safety. Because disclosure of child sexual abuse is traumatic for the offender, survivors, and the entire meeting community, Meeting mechanisms for such disclosure must be imbued with extraordinary compassion or they will backfire, possibly driving abusive behavior deeper into secrecy, reopening wounds for survivors and leaving the Meeting community to deal with a profound sense of failure.

After an inward repentance, an offender's recovery within the Meeting depends on self-disclosure and placing him or herself under the care of the Meeting. Self-disclosure requires courage and can be viewed as a form of the Quaker virtues of truth-telling and plain-speaking. Placing oneself under the care of the Meeting is an acknowledgment of a need for help, a commitment to Quaker principles and practices, and most importantly, a commitment to live in community with the Meeting.

We are reminded that the Meeting should not be an agent of punishment, either through intention or insensitivity. Yet we must balance our concern for inclusion with a concern for the welfare of the Meeting's children, for survivors of child sexual abuse, for the offender and for the Meeting community as a whole. A decision to welcome an offender into the care of the Meeting is a response of love, and requires a commitment by the Meeting to care for the entire Meeting community. We offer the following affirmations for consideration by Business Meeting in its seeking.

Quakers have traditionally placed high value on the rights and nurturing of children. The Quaker family and Quaker school are based upon the ideal of cultivating "the seed of God" within each child. In March 1993, the Meeting first came to unity around child sexual abuse when it agreed "to undertake general mutual care of each other and of the children." Caring for each other is our loving task, our safety, and our spiritual sustenance. It is the basis of a Quaker community response to child sexual abuse.

We affirm loving relationships among mutually responsible and consenting people. We oppose sexual relations between adults and children, which by their nature cannot be mutually responsible and consenting, and which are necessarily harmful.

A fundamental Quaker precept recognizes that each person is a Child of God and repository of the Inner Light. Currently the larger society is pessimistic about the recovery of sex offenders. Clinical literature cites high recidivism rates and a personality profile that includes deceit of self and others. Some adult offenders have greatly suffered from child sexual abuse, resulting in emotional difficulties extending over many years. While we cannot provide a comprehensive therapeutic setting for offenders or survivors, we can affirm that survivors can recover and offenders can control their behavior. Quakers have always affirmed the possibility of change based upon the promptings of the Inner Light.

## Dealing With a Child Abuser in the Meeting Community, page 3

The Meeting can provide support to an offender seeking to make restitution to those he or she has wronged. The concept of restorative justice is based on the possibility of righting relationships between persons within a community. Offenders have an especially heavy burden to carry in meeting the common human need to periodically restore and make right their relationships with others. By welcoming an offender into the care of the Meeting, we remind ourselves of our own needs to make right relationships, and provide a witness to the possibility of restoration and its healing power.

Survivors and offenders need the support of a spiritual community. The Meeting can provide a spiritual framework for recovery through worship, listening, truth, love and forgiveness.

- We are a community of ordinary people, each of whom has a special relationship with God. Our worship grounds us individually and as a community, and is the basis for Friends' testimonies and practices.
- Committed listening to survivors and offenders is crucial. For the survivors it can be seen as a development of the Quaker tradition of bearing witness to suffering and oppression. Behind the witness is a faith that strength, wisdom and compassion can arise from the experience of unchosen and undeserved suffering. For the offender, true listening allows us to learn to know the complex person behind the label, to recognize their strengths as well as their weaknesses, and to value their struggles to recover.
- Because child sexual abuse is so threatening on so many levels, we, attenders, survivors and offenders, need to express our fears and emotions, and often cannot truly listen or worship until we have worked through our feelings. We need to feel that we will be heard, and that we will be held in the Light. Yet, in speaking out of our fears, we may hurt another in the process. We rely on the Meeting for a strength of spiritual support which includes lovingly speaking truth to us about our actions. As a Meeting, and as individuals, we need practice giving and receiving such messages in an attentive spirit of love and forgiveness. One spiritual pattern for community mutual accountability may be found in Quaker interpretation of gospel order (Matt. 18).

Engagement with the issue of child sexual abuse provides rich opportunities for spiritual growth and community building. It ties to our commitment to the care and nurturing of our children and to our treatment of one another. It challenges our understanding of Quaker principles and practices and challenges us in our daily expression of our faith. We undertake this witness in hopes that we may joyfully observe miraculous processes of healing: healing of old wounds by survivors, the repentance and restoration of offenders who want to be guided by the Spirit, healing of relationships and spiritual growth among us all.

### Practice

Living with the commitment to take an offender under the care of Meeting is the responsibility of the entire Meeting community. The Meeting's Committee for Oversight and Support of the Minute on Child Sexual Abuse (hereafter shortened to Child Sexual Abuse Committee) is charged with concern for the Meeting's response to this issue. Committee

## Dealing With a Child Abuser in the Meeting Community, page 4

members are nominated by the Nominating Committee, and appointed by Meeting for Business. Members will serve three-year terms. One member will serve concurrently on Ministry and Oversight; another on Religious Education and Child Care. Committee responsibilities include:

1. Functioning as a clearness committee for offenders planning disclosure and, with the offender, formulating recovery plans dealing with behavior within the Meeting and larger Society of Friends;
2. Overseeing the behavior of offenders in Meeting until disclosure to the entire Meeting community has occurred;
3. Determining effective, prompt, yet compassionate mechanisms for disclosure to ensure that the entire Meeting community is informed, and overseeing such mechanisms;
4. Maintaining an information and referral resource base for survivors, offenders, and families in crisis;
5. Maintaining an active concern, including listening, serving as a support group, etc. for the healing of adult survivors in a safe environment within the Meeting;
6. Maintaining an active concern for recovering offenders, including advocacy if they are subjected to societal injustice;
7. Maintaining an active concern for families in crisis due to child sexual abuse;
8. Maintaining an active concern for individuals accused of child sexual abuse and their families;
9. Working with Ministry and Oversight to formulate truth seeking, disciplinary and contingency plans if children are felt to be endangered;
10. Working with parents, attenders and other committees to promote values of loving and responsible sexuality in Meeting youth;
11. Working with other committees, broader Quaker groups, etc. to promote opportunities for further education relating to child sexual abuse and outwardly representing a Quaker witness on child sexual abuse.

Offenders are directed to contact the Child Sexual Abuse Committee for assistance in preparing for self-disclosure, listening for clearness of repentance, personal strategies to prevent relapse, and understanding of Quaker principles. Business Meeting should be informed by the offender of the offender's history, inward repentance, commitment to Quaker principles and wish to live under the care of the Meeting. Clearness session findings and recommendations will be presented to Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business. Business Meeting will decide whether and under what conditions it can welcome an individual offender into the care of the Meeting.

If an offender is taken under the care of the Meeting the Meeting community will be informed of the name of the offender through personal contacts by members of the committees on Child Sexual Abuse, Religious Education and Child Care, and Ministry and Oversight. A statement in the newsletter and in the welcoming statement will indicate only that an offender has been taken under the care of the Meeting. Regional and Yearly Meeting will be informed of these proceedings, and told the name of the offender by a letter sent by the Clerk. Ongoing disclosure to new attenders will be the responsibility of members of

## Dealing With a Child Abuser in the Meeting Community, page 5

Ministry and Oversight and Religious Education and Child care. As often the first to meet new parents, First day school teachers will be asked, when welcoming new parents, to inform them of offenders taken under the care of the Meeting. All of the above methods of disclosure will direct attenders to the Committee on Child Sexual Abuse for more information.

Recovery plans, though individualized, will be based on two general principles. First: offenders will avoid formal contact with Meeting children through functions such as Religious Education, Child Care, Ministry, or Family Support. Second: informal or spontaneous contacts with children will be based on the informed consent of parents. Needs for ongoing contacts between offenders and members of the Committee on Child Sexual Abuse will be determined, and will be included in the recovery plan. Recovery plans will also include openings for offenders to engage in service, fellowship and support within the Meeting.

If Meeting attenders have concerns about the actions of recovering offenders as they relate to the safety of the children, they should inform the Clerk, members of Ministry and Oversight, Religious Education and/or the Child Sexual Abuse Committee. Whoever is first informed of concerns will contact the Child Sexual Abuse committee, which will meet with attenders and offenders to address the concerns raised. If necessary for the immediate safety of the children, a called Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business will be convened.

The Committee will report to Business Meeting, bringing disclosure and recovery guidelines for approval, as well as other information regarding Committee activities.

— Approved by Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business, 14 May, 1995  
and revised slightly at a Meeting for Business, 9 July, 1995, Rochester (NY) Friends Monthly Meeting



# The Agony and the Ecstasy

by *Richard Foster, Northwest Yearly Meeting*

Any group of disciples who becomes serious about loving and caring has to deal with hurting and forgiving. This is the agony and the ecstasy of any real group experience. Human beings are such that life together always involves them in hurting one another in some way. People may want to disbelieve this, but even a brief exposure to real vulnerability will testify that it is so.

In a desperate scramble to avoid this fact of life, people will remain distant and superficial with everyone. They will run to other churches or groups at the first sign of differences. They will clam up in a tight little shell that does not know how to cry...or laugh. Such a flight from reality is not life but death.

In another attempt to dodge this truth of human existence, some feel that if they could just become good enough, they would not hurt people any more. Yet in this world our very goodness will hurt people. Witness Jesus: his rectitude, by its very nature, threw the religious establishment into a tailspin.

If we want life, we must be prepared to hurt and be hurt. We simply must make peace with this fact. Once we accept this as a true perception into "life together," we can exert our energies learning how to deal with it, rather than attempting to avoid it.

Having once understood and accepted hurt as a fact of life, we are set free to see that it is all right to be hurt. Hurting is a normal and acceptable human experience.

Because people refuse to believe this, they have developed the religion of the stiff upper lip. Outwardly, they appear to be in complete control, fully able to handle all contingencies. They do not hurt; not them! They just develop ulcers, have heart attacks, and die of cancer.

Spiritual persons are especially hurt and hurtful. This is because they are more free than others to risk vulnerability. Caring and loving for them is not an option but a necessity, a vocation. Jesus hurt, hurt deeply. The stiff upper lip is not a sign of spirituality, but arrogance. The "great stone face" does not depict godliness, but pride.

## **Forgiving**

Forgiving is essential in a community of hurt and hurtful persons. There is, however, such a total cultural confusion about what constitutes forgiveness that we must dispel our fallacious notions before we can ever come to view forgiveness as a good thing. Four things are often mistaken for forgiveness.

First, we tend to confuse forgiveness with a spirit of indifference, the pretense that it does not matter. "Oh. That's all right; it really did not hurt me anyway!" That is not forgiving, it is lying. The truth is that these things matter a great deal and it does not help to avoid the issue.

Secondly, there is the mistaken idea that to forgive is to cease from hurting. Some feel that if they continue to hurt they have not really forgiven the other person. And they will condemn and flagellate themselves for their hardheartedness. It is simply not true that the act of forgiving necessarily erases the hurt. Hurting is not evil. We may hurt for a long time to come.

Third, many would have us believe that in order to forgive we must forget. But this is not the case. To erase the memory would do violence to the human personality. We will remember but we will no longer need or desire to use the memory against others. The memory remains, the vindictiveness leaves.

Fourth, we trick ourselves into believing that to forgive means that the relationship can be just the same as before the offense. We might just as well make peace with the fact that the relationship will never be the same again. By the grace of God, it can be a hundred times better, but it will never be the same. We destroy ourselves and all those around us when we pretend that things are just the same as before.

## The Agony and the Ecstasy, page 2

### The Rule of Christ

Jesus set forth the way by which genuine forgiveness can come into the community without destroying it. The key principle is found in the heart of that memorable chapter on forgiveness, Matthew 18. First, we are urged to go directly to the offended or offending party. But we cannot seem to do this. We play a little game by saying, "I don't want to hurt their feelings, so out of love I will not speak to them. Nothing really happened anyway." That is a lie. Love and lies do not mix.

And what is the purpose of our going to them? Is it not to accuse or to correct, but to care for the person as a member of the body of Christ? To fail to confront is to fail to care. To care is to have feelings, to be angry, to be hurt, to experience pain. It is not wrong to have tough feelings nor to express them.

If the issue is not settled, we are urged to take two or three disciples with us who can be trusted and who are known for their discernment and empathy. When done in compassion, there is hardly a case where the problem is not resolved.

In the rarest situation, one further step is needed. We are to come with our concern to the entire community. Now, we will never be able to believe that this is a good thing until we understand that Jesus was referring to a kind of community which is seldom found in churches today. He was speaking of a community built on and saturated with a deep sense of trust. It is the kind of trust that knows that when we have opened our hearts before this group, we have reached out to the highest expression of God's grace. There is no other place to go, there is no higher court of appeal.

The high adventure of loving and caring will plunge us into the agony and sweep us into the ecstasy. If we choose life, there is no other way. He whose wounds signal both hurt and forgiveness will go with us through the depths as well as the heights.

— Richard Foster is the founder of Renovare and is a Quaker author. He has served as a youth minister and as a pastor. He has taught biblical, theological, and spiritual formation classes at two of our Quaker colleges.

### Recommended Reading:

*Leading From Within: Reflections on Spirituality and Leadership*, a pamphlet by Parker J. Palmer from Indiana Office for Campus Ministries, 1100 W. 42nd Street, Room 300, Indianapolis, IN 46208

# Workshop: Beginning to Explore Violence

by Anne Thomas, *Canadian Yearly Meeting*

Because this is a difficult topic, Friends may feel more comfortable if each receives a handout which details the process of the workshop. Allow about 90 minutes altogether.

**Open with a time of worship** (10–15 min.)

**Introduction:** (5 min)

Many of us have experienced relationships or families which have been destructive because of elements of abuse and violence. As Friends, we are called to face up to our woundedness and our violence if we really experience God as love. The journey to wholeness will not be easy. Not all members will be ready to begin their own journey and some may feel the need to hinder others.

Any such journey needs to incorporate the following elements (write on a flip chart beforehand):

- respecting the wisdom and opinions of others which are different from our own
- not dismissing issues we do not understand or which make us feel uncomfortable
- not blaming others for differences
- allowing others to express their discomfort
- speaking from our own experience, rather than insisting there is only one right way
- appreciating that it takes time to understand other people
- becoming a supportive presence in times of discomfort
- agreeing to disagree
- avoiding manipulation and power plays
- assuming that everyone has something unique to offer
- learning to listen to oneself and others
- respecting the confidentiality of the group

## The violence around us

- a. Using a flip chart, respond to the following: (large group, 10 min)
  - How do you distinguish between peace and violence:
    - there is violence when . . .
    - there is peace when . . .
  - Violence is mainly present:
    - in society because . . .
    - in personal relationships because . . .
- b. Divide in pairs to share the following: (10 min)
  - Identify four situations of violence in the world. Were any of these acts justified? If “yes,” why?
  - Identify three situations of violence in the community in which you grew up. Were any of these acts justified? If “yes,” why?
  - Identify two acts of violence you know of in your family or among acquaintances. Were either of these justified? If “yes,” why?
- c. In the large group, using a flip chart, ask” (10 min)
  - What are the different types of violence? (Identify the following if the group does not introduce them: physical, sexual, verbal or emotional, psychological, financial, spiritual)
  - Give examples of each of the above types of violence.

## **Workshop: Beginning to Explore Violence, page 2**

- d. Divide in pairs and share personal experiences of each type of violence: (10 min)
- e. In the large group, move into worship-sharing in response to the following query: (20 min)
  - Are you prepared to begin a process of exploring abuse and healing in this Meeting?

### **Close with silent worship. (10 min)**

This workshop is based in part on the resource *Fire in the Rose: churches exploring abuse and healing*, prepared by the Church Council on Justice and Corrections. Available from: CCJC, 507 Bank Street, Ottawa ON K2P 1Z5 phone: (613) 563-1688

# Fostering *Vital Friends Meetings*

Part Two:  
*Resources for Working with Quaker Meetings*

by Jan Greene and Marty Walton

## **Section R4: Friends and Leadership**

- R4-1 Our Long Night of Preparation: Leadership Among  
Unprogrammed Friends in North America *Anne Thomas*
- R4-4 The Dilemmas of Organizational Leadership  
in the Religious Society of Friends *Bruce Birchard*



# Our Long Night of Preparation: Leadership Among Unprogrammed Friends in North America

by Anne Thomas, *Canadian Yearly Meeting, 1991*

Effective leadership comes from the marriage of vision with practical skills of organization and personal eloquence; respect for persons and responsibility for the group with the ability to assess the consequence of actions; decisiveness with patience; the capacity to take satisfaction in the accomplishment of others with a willingness to be held accountable for one's decisions and actions.

— Paul Lacey, *Quakers and the Use of Power*, p. 27

In his 1909 Swarthmore Lecture William Charles Braithwaite identified several organizational phases in the history of the Society of Friends: “The early Friends believed in leaders, but not in a system; the Friends of the second period in leaders and a system; the Friends of a later period were content to have a system without leaders.” Where do Quakers stand today?

“And all will teach, and learn, and our long night of preparation shudder into light,” wrote Kenneth Boulding during a workshop in 1979 on *Friends as Leaders: the vision, instrument and methods*. The traditional vision of Friends was reaffirmed ending in “a Society that can call and attract a new generation of leadership to raise a new standard of righteousness and to respond and live by God’s way of truth and love.”

In examining leadership, the group addressed the paradox of leading and being led, in recognition that true leaders are not initiators, but responders to the Divine Will: “the chief determinant of authentic leadership is not human talent but availability to the divine. The only authentic leadership is divine fellowship . . . a high degree of interdependence and mutuality is required between leaders and the community of faith.” They suggested various directions of implementing this, including meeting present leadership needs and creating an atmosphere in which the ministry of all Friends at the monthly meeting level could be discerned and nurtured, the creation of internships, youth programs and service opportunities, the development of a leadership pool and an enlargement of our understanding of stewardship.

A recent job advertisement recognizes the tension involved in seeking appropriate Quaker leadership when it states “demonstrated miracles are preferred, but not required.” In small yearly meetings the employed staff may need to be able to pull off occasional miracles, for the expectations laid on them are vast. When Friends are not clear about their organizational needs, administrative and charismatic expectations are unreasonably high, and burnout occurs.

Leadership comes not from the administrative staff but from all Friends within the yearly meeting. My own Yearly Meeting has not been able to move forward on a full examination of what are appropriate forms of ministry for this time. An experiment with Peace Elders has now ended in some bitterness, and it took a decade to come to clearness on the service of Friends as federal penitentiary chaplains. Until we nurture all our gifts, we will not move out of our long night.

Are the recommendations of 1979 being heeded? That is, the clear definition of the roles of all involved in a committee or organization; mechanisms to evaluate expectations and performance honestly, discreetly and regularly; and significant priority to the discovery, nurture and development of the gifts of leadership.

Paul Lacey continued the examination of leadership among *Friends in Quakers and the Use of Power*. As I read this, I recognize over and over again the traps into which Friends still fall.

## Our Long Night of Preparation, page 2

an invitation to serve . . . seems increasingly like an invitation to waste substance and break one's heart in dedication to illusory Quaker ideas of participation in and responsibility for decision-making.

. . . boards, committees and constituents do everything they can to neutralize those leaders' abilities to act, while evading responsibility themselves for unpopular decisions.

. . . deep and unexamined ambivalence about the exercise of power.

At various times in the life of the Society of Friends concerns have arisen which have taken time before the Society could respond with one voice. The issue of slavery comes to mind. Now we are seeking direction on several concerns including homosexuality and abortion. These "pelvic issues" have the potential to divide us, but under God's guidance we will be brought to clarity. The Holy Experiment continues.

Robert K. Greenleaf worked for AT&T, becoming Director of Management Research. As a life-long student of organization, he distilled these observations into a series of essays on the theme of "Servant as Leader." This idea came from reading Herman Hesse's *Journey to the East*, which tells of a band of men on a journey. The central figure of the story is Leo who accompanies the party as servant but also sustains them with his spirit. Leo disappears and the group falls into chaos. Eventually, one of the party finds Leo and is taken into the Order that had sponsored the journey. There he discovers that Leo, whom he had first known as servant, is the leader of the Order. While this may seem idealistic, especially in terms of for-profit organizations, Greenleaf's vision is now being promoted by a Center named for him, and several major corporations have adopted his principles. Greenleaf's vision is strongly affected by his Quaker experience.

In *Servant: retrospect and prospect*, Greenleaf notes that many church leaders are more concerned with maintaining than with leading, and calls on leaders to bring into being a contemporary theology of institutions which will be regenerative and enable them to grow in their capacity to serve.

A quotation from Roger Wilson's 1949 Swarthmore Lecture on *Authority, Leadership and Concern* states: "A pure-bred pedigree flock looks well; and it feels good to be a member. But imaginative cross-breeding may be what is required of us." Wilson identified four interlocking responsible elements relating to the Friends Relief Service: the Society of Friends, the relief workers, the committees and the administrators. Today, these elements are still present, and we need to uphold all elements of leadership and discern the appropriate role for each. Too often we assume committees and administrators are leaders, and objectify these individuals and the Yearly Meeting itself. Distinction between moral and administrative responsibility is needed, with moral responsibility being found through the Sense of the Meeting and administrative responsibility being the translation of this into action. In practice, the confusion between leadership and administration remains. We seem to try to resolve our spiritual quandaries by naming the "right" person to leadership. The individual is then set up in a "messiah" situation and is often sacrificed when the necessary changes are not made.

Friends Relief Service found it necessary to develop a Representative Conference. Members from all four groups met to look at the overview of the service, but these gatherings did not have executive authority, being purely advisory:

There was a freedom and quality of participation that could not have existed had we remained conscious of our difference of age, function and experience. . . . It was primarily in our Representative Conferences that we came to have this sense of being sharers of the whole Body, having a joint Fellowship and Communion with all. It was in so far as the whole Society is a working, waiting and worshipping fellowship that it could gather up its own shortcomings and those of its relief workers and set the whole under the guidance of God.

## Our Long Night of Preparation, page 3

So often we come to our gatherings wearing particular hats and are unable to let go. We are concerned with schedules and budgets and relate not at all to the divine economy—the Kingdom of God. I am told by clergy friends that their training suggested that at least two working hours a day are to be spent in quiet time, reading, praying and meditating. Initially most ignore this, yet come to recognize its necessity. Friends do not always maintain a healthy balance between worship, recreation and business and rarely encourage administrators to pace their lives appropriately.

*Management for Productivity* focuses on the leader's use of power, and sources of rewards, coercion, legitimacy, expertise and reference. Aspects such as “don't be afraid to create a sense of obligation” and “create feelings of dependence” illustrate the divergence between the ideals of Friends' leadership and regular business practice. In the Quaker context a leader must function in a democratic, motivational, participative and transformational manner, which is both task and relationship oriented, and maintain open communication in a situation of low control.

Each generation of Friends needs to experience for itself the unity of faith and works, but today we seem to pay too little heed to the experiences of Friends who have gone before. Experiencing afresh does not mean reinventing the wheel, and the resources of history and experienced individuals are there for our guidance. Is it not time to move from “our long night of preparation and shudder into light?”

# The Dilemmas of Organizational Leadership in the Religious Society of Friends

by Bruce Birchard, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

When Herbert Hadley referred to “Quaker Leaders” in his book on the history of Friends World Committee for Consultation, several British Friends objected to this phrase, insisting that Friends don’t have leaders. Herbert didn’t agree with this sentiment, and neither do I. I believe Quaker institutions, including monthly and yearly meetings, need leadership if they are to serve Friends and Friends’ principles in an ever-changing world.

Early Friends refused to acknowledge the authority of kings and magistrates. They would quake only before God. They tried to recognize God’s message in the speaking or actions of any spirit-centered person, regardless of her or his station in life. The gift of leadership was recognized in those who seemed best able to discern God’s leadings for the group. Leadership was first and foremost a spiritual matter.

Today, Friends still seem more comfortable with spiritual leadership than with appointed organizational leadership. Though controversy may surround spiritual leaders, it is clear that we respond to these Friends, recognizing their spiritual gifts and according them a measure of authority.

Though the call to respond to the leadings of the spirit is in one sense a call to lead, Friends decided early in their history that restraints on individual leadings were also necessary. Early Friends established the primacy of the meetings as the testing place for individual leadings. No Friend was to act on an important personal leading unless and until that Friend’s meeting felt in unity with such action. (For an excellent analysis of how Friends developed this process and how it actually works today, see Michael J. Sheeran, *Beyond Majority Rule: Voteless Decisions in the Religious Society of Friends*, especially Chapter II on “The Growth of Central Decision-Making.”)

Two firm principles concerning leadership can be deduced from these basic Quaker beliefs. First, since all can be led by the divine, all people are (at least potentially) leaders. And secondly, no one stands above the group; all “leadings” must be tested and confirmed through a Spirit-guided group process. These beliefs underlie Friends’ resistance to personal authority, particularly when exercised by people within formal positions of power.

I believe that this distrust of power and authority undermines Quaker leadership to such an extent that Quaker institutions—from monthly meetings to large, national organizations—suffer. In order for institutions to grow and adapt to the changing world around them, something more than mere management is necessary. That something is leadership, which involves developing a vision of where to go and articulating that vision in a way which motivates others to work for it.

I have worked for Friends’ organizations since 1974 and, during a 3-month sabbatical from AFSC in 1991, I did a study of leadership in Quaker organizations. I have observed good leadership, poor leadership, and a lot that’s in between. I’ve seen no perfect leaders, and I know that every leader, no matter how skilled, makes mistakes. I’ve watched good people make modest mistakes which were blown up into major catastrophes by others.

I’ve heard Friends complain about a lack of leadership within the Religious Society of Friends, often without understanding the qualities of leadership required within our religious culture. Some insist that the problem lies with the quality of people in leadership positions—that there just aren’t many “strong Quakers leaders any more.” Others argue that the problem is based in the resistance to leadership characteristic of Friends and their organizations. Few speak of the spiritual qualities required for Quaker leadership.

## Quaker Values and the “Clerk Style” of Leadership

No amount of work or wishing is going to make Friends into willing followers of hierarchical leaders, but we Friends have developed a type of formal leader within our meetings—the clerk. The clerk is truly the servant of the group and of the divine Spirit. The clerk labors to create an environment in which the leadings of

## The Dilemmas of Organizational Leadership in the Religious Society of Friends, page 2

the Spirit can best be discerned, in part by careful attention to the agenda, by establishing a worshipful tone, and by providing a guiding hand during consideration of each issue. As the servant of the Spirit and of the group, the clerk is not the servant of any individual. Firmness in dealing with individuals who obstruct the process or pursue their own agendas is required.

When I interviewed administrators and executives of Quaker organizations, I was struck by how their descriptions of their roles resembled the role of the clerk. They said:

- Quaker leadership is uniquely inspired to recognize the many gifts that different people bring.
- Quaker leadership can empower people to exercise leadership in many large and small ways.
- My style of leadership involves a consultative approach to new ideas.
- New ideas are hammered out by the group, but the head must articulate them in a dynamic and clear way, conveying to others what ought to be done.

Every style of leadership has its strengths and weaknesses. The great strength of the clerk style, and of many Quaker organizations, is the strength that comes from shared leadership. New ideas and initiatives come from many staff and committee people. These people develop a strong commitment to the work they are doing; motivation is seldom a problem.

But there are other problems. The difficulty comes when people involved in the decision-making process are divided or confused about how to proceed. When a meeting for business is unable to discern a sense of the meeting, Friends wait for a time when the leading is clear. Meetings spend years seeking to understand the Spirit's guidance on controversial issues. Most Quaker organizations, however, must make certain critical decisions in a timely manner. For example, if a Quaker organization has insufficient funds to continue all programs and staff, but the board or committee cannot find unity on which to cut, it is left to the clerk and the executive to make these difficult decisions. When this happens, they frequently are criticized for not following Quaker process.

Another problem with a highly decentralized decision-making process and the clerk style of leadership involves developing a single, clear vision for the organization. There is a tendency for clerk-type leaders to become little more than managers. An AFSC Board member said, "We sometimes suffer from a lack of visionaries in the Society of Friends. I've been in many Friends' organizations, and there is often a need to reassess directions. But there is frequently a lot of groping and not much clarity."

### What is Leadership?

First of all, leadership involves vision, formulating a sense of direction for the organization. Institutions require leadership in order to change, to grow in response to new problems, new challenges, and new opportunities. In order to grow in positive ways, key leaders must understand the organization itself and the evolving environment in which it functions. They need ideas about how the organization should change in response to these factors. Leaders do not have to generate these ideas by themselves, but they need to provide some process for developing a sense of organizational direction. At all times, leaders need to be focused on the outcomes (i.e. results-oriented), though in Quaker organizations, they must be very sensitive to the process as well.

Even the "indirect" type of leader must have, or know how to develop, a clear vision for the organization; that is the essence of leadership. This has to do with an ability to articulate clearly the central values of the organization and to give a general sense of direction and coherence to the whole. One Quaker leader said, "It is important for leaders to be able to articulate a vision. But it need not necessarily be the leader's vision alone. In fact, it's much better if the leader can articulate the vision of the group, understanding where people are, and moving the group along towards it."

The leadership of an organization must be able to communicate its vision to the major stake holders. ("Stake holders" refers to all those who "have a stake" in the organization. For example, members, staff, volunteers, committee members, members of the Board and Corporation, contributors, and the people who are served by or involved in programs.) Leaders must communicate their sense of direction for the organization in a way which catches their attention and inspires them to strive for that vision as well. "Communication

## The Dilemmas of Organizational Leadership in the Religious Society of Friends, page 3

creates meaning for people . . . It's the only way any group, small or large, can become aligned behind the overarching goals of an organization." (Bennis and Nanus, 1958)

Leaders help others to develop and use their own power for the good of the organization and the achievement of its goals. This begins with a willingness to accept others, which requires a tolerance for imperfection. It would be easy to serve as a leader of perfect people—if there were any. While leaders have in mind the big picture, the long-range vision and major goals of the organization, they must find ways to help others to learn and grow and work *for their own good* as well as the good of the organization. . . . People in the organization will want to work for its goals if they feel themselves to be a significant part of the organization, if they feel good about it, and if they see their work as important.

Finally, leadership can be distinguished from management. "Managers do things right; leaders do the right things." Good management is certainly essential to any organization. Managers see to it that things run smoothly. In some situations, and with a little luck, organizations can survive for some time without leadership if they have good management. But leaders are responsible for anticipating the future—the big issues or problems—and developing some way of formulating solutions and general directions.

### Leadership and Inner Strength

Inner strength is required in a true leader. Appointment to a top administrative post in a Quaker organization does not automatically confer authority, power, or even legitimacy. Those who would lead must earn the trust and respect of both staff and committee members, and they must go on earning it throughout their tenures. To begin with, they must have excellent judgment and great integrity. Friends sometimes say, "The best leader is s/he who is led." This speaks to the integrity and wisdom of the leader. One Friends' executive spoke of times when she felt truly led, saying, "When I've felt that clearness, the authority has been there. That sense of leading communicated to others."

Those who serve in leadership capacities should not depend upon getting a lot of strokes for their good work. Even the best leaders get a lot of heat for unpopular decisions, tough calls, and yes, serious mistakes. One Friends' executive commented, "I've survived as well as I have because I have a lot of tolerance for ambiguity, a lot of resilience, a strong ego, and a good sense of the ridiculous." Another person spoke at length about this inner strength. Too many people in Quaker organizations want approval. Their sense of their own value comes from being valued. To that extent they behave in ways that will get them approval. Everyone likes praise. Everyone's sense of self needs reinforcement. But those whose sense of self is weak . . . need a steady stream of approval to hold themselves together.

Real ego strength (involves) a sense of self confidence and a sense of self worth. A sense of self confidence means you think you can do things well; a sense of self worth means you think you are a good person. . . . Such a person will have a healthy need for approval and praise, but their actions in specific circumstances will not be guided by that need. They'll be able to tolerate conflict, disapproval and risk . . . and postpone gratification in the service of something they think is right...

People without that ego strength will go to great lengths to avoid criticism; they lack courage because it means sacrificing. . . . Somebody who wants to be a leader has to be willing to work on themselves. Every time you get a new level of responsibility and exposure, the stresses increase. . . . I've often felt that my own weaknesses prevented me from being a good leader, and I've worked on those things.

Good leaders can admit their mistakes, but they do not wallow in guilt or self-recrimination. As one person told me, "A good leader makes as many mistakes as anyone else, but s/he always needs to have integrity." Some administrators refuse to acknowledge the power they have, claiming weakness in an attempt to shield themselves from criticism. This tactic undermines respect and can in fact be oppressive to those who would challenge the administrator on a decision or policy. As for the criticism leaders must endure, one who had experienced plenty said, "It's not just having a thick skin, though that helps. One must be able to feel the pain, but not let that be all of it."

### Confronting Others and Making Tough Decisions

Confronting others and making unpopular decisions is among the toughest aspects of leadership in any organization. However, the Quaker emphasis on the "godliness" of each person and the antipathy to authority

## The Dilemmas of Organizational Leadership in the Religious Society of Friends, page 4

and power make this especially difficult for leaders of Quaker organizations. As noted earlier, such leaders must constantly earn the respect of colleagues and subordinates; authority does not simply come with the formal position.

Nevertheless, despite the resistance to authority and power, some leaders in Quaker organizations have the seasoned judgment, the inner strength, and the open style which earns them considerable trust and respect from their colleagues. They are able to confront others and make tough decisions without provoking major conflicts or a collapse of trust. One executive who works at being extremely open and consultative also recognized, "When time doesn't allow for the process, I go ahead, make the decision, and agree to accept the consequences."

Strong leaders are not afraid to confront others. Many Friends shy away from this. They rationalize it by saying, "There is that of God in every person." One Quaker executive stressed that Friends' biggest problem is their inability to recognize and deal with "sin," or, as another put it, with fallibility. By stressing the positive and the potential for good, Quakers blind themselves to the negative. "One of the vulnerabilities of liberal Friends is their overly optimistic view of human nature," said one Friend. "It's always hard to deal with people whose pride or lust for power gets in the way."

One executive told me how he occasionally confronted people who were constantly obstructing a committee and asked them to get off the committee. "As an administrator, my ministry was not to individuals, but to the group," he explained. A woman executive stressed that this can be particularly difficult for women: "We fall into a nurturing mode and think, 'We're not doing our job unless everyone feels good.'"

Establishing clear policies, procedures and structures in advance helps administrators to confront people or problems. One AFSC Regional Executive Secretary talked about how important it was to have developed a process for making decisions about laying down programs before a serious budget crunch required that step. Friends tend not to develop clear processes and structures, asserting that they need to remain open to the Spirit in each situation. Among the larger, more complex Quaker organizations, however, clear procedures are needed to deal with difficult situations. One observer noted, "Clear structures and policies are less flexible, but they're more just."

The very best leaders are able to provide strong leadership while respecting the democratic or Spirit-led decision-making processes which are at the very core of Quaker practice. They work continually to formulate and articulate a vision while maintaining a commitment to the organization's animating values. Like the best clerks of Quaker meetings, they have a gift for drawing out the finest contributions from many different people, then providing a clear and persuasive description of what the final decision is. They are very committed to, and skilled at facilitating the processes of consultation and building a sense of unity or consensus. They are people who generally exercise good judgment and exhibit considerable integrity. They respect others and value their work and ideas. Such leaders earn the trust and respect of others, and they go on earning it.

Bruce Birchard is General Secretary of Friends General Conference



# Fostering *Vital Friends Meetings*

Part Two:  
*Resources for Working with Quaker Meetings*

by Jan Greene and Marty Walton

## **Section R5: The Ministry of Visitation**

- R5-1 Report of a Visitation Preparation Weekend  
*NYYM Ministry and Counsel*
- R5-5 Travel Procedure for Members of the Religious Education Committee  
*FGC Religious Education Committee*



# Report of a Visitation Preparation Weekend

*Sponsored by New York Yearly Meeting Ministry and Counsel*

God knows how continually I make mention of you in my prayers, and am always asking that by his will I may, somehow or other, succeed at long last in coming to visit you. For I long to see you; I want to bring you some spiritual gift to make you strong; or rather, I want to be among you to be myself encouraged by your faith as well as you by mine.

— Romans 1: 9–12

The fruits of visitation are manifold, but perhaps the most impressive of all is the mutual encouragement of both the visited and the visitor. Personal contact and relationship lie at the heart of religious community. The more contact, the more possibilities for deepening relationships and hence, building up the fellowship.

The Religious Society of Friends depends, perhaps more than most other religious bodies, on visitation, simply because there is no hierarchy or powerful structure which will keep things running. It all depends on the individual members to see that the vitality of the Society continues.

A Friend who wishes to make a visit should consider the following: Am I the right person to visit? Is there a specific concern that I am led to bring to this group of Friends? It is important to be led by the Spirit in our visits. Some individuals might find that they are specifically led not to visit, and they should be sensitive to such a leading. However, Friends should not let fear or timidity keep us from such a meaningful task as visiting among Friends. When we see visitation as a mutual sharing of faith and life, then we are less prone to think of ourselves as not fit to visit. There is much to be gained as well as to share, and we will be given what we need by the Spirit. In its simplest form, a visit is a sharing of personal and religious experience in a mutual relationship. If we think of the Realm of God as being primarily God's responsibility, then we can relax in the knowledge that we shall be effective visitors.

## WHERE AND WHEN TO VISIT

The list of types of visits breaks down into a sort of continuum, with two distinct types of visits on either end. On one end of the continuum is the visit which is by specific invitation to come and be a listener or problem-solver. A Meeting that senses a need for someone to come in from the outside to provide specific ministry will make that clear in the invitation. This type of visit carries with it the responsibility to be extremely sensitive to the Spirit. The details of the visit will come from the inviting Meeting, and one will want to tailor the visit to the needs expressed in the invitation.

On the other end of the continuum is the "drop-in" visit, where one feels a desire to get acquainted with others and simply comes to another Meeting, usually for a Sunday morning Meeting for Worship. Although it is good to make arrangements, if possible, the drop-in type of visit is the most informal and does not really require any advance notice.

Our understanding of the impetus for this Visitation Preparation weekend was to develop a systematic approach to visitation in the Yearly Meeting. We had in mind visits which fall between the two ends of the continuum. Namely, we were concerned with visitations which would be over a two or three day period of time, and would involve meeting for worship and visits in homes. We were interested in strengthening connections between Meetings and individuals. Such visits may not

## Report of a Visitation Preparation Weekend, page 2

come by specific invitation, and then the question of how to arrange for the visits comes up. We need to be sensitive at this point because, on the one hand we do not want to impose on Meetings' hospitality, while on the other hand we do see the importance of visitation for the life of the Yearly Meeting. Dependence on the leading of the Spirit will make matters simpler.

If we know someone in the Meeting we wish to visit, it would be helpful to explore with that person the feasibility of the visit. What kind of schedule does the Meeting have, how busy are members, would the Meeting welcome a visit, etc.? No one individual can speak for the Meeting, of course, but an informal exploration will give some clues to the success of a visit. Early on in the process of sounding out a Meeting on the possibility of a visit, it would be good to check with the Clerk. This is not only simple protocol; it recognizes the integrity of Friends' delegating certain responsibilities to its members.

Once one has found that a visit would be welcomed, there are arrangements which need to be made. Throughout our weekend we stressed the importance of good preparation for a visit. What are some of these arrangements?

### ADVANCE ARRANGEMENTS

We agreed that arrangements should be kept as simple as possible. Some of the very obvious things we identified were:

- clear travel directions
- contact person's address and phone number
- schedule to be followed during visit
- names of hosts so we can confirm ahead of time with them that we plan to stay with them
- any advance information about the Meeting which would be helpful to know; perhaps some copies of newsletters
- are there specific things that the visitor can do?
- are there persons who would enjoy personal visits, i.e., shut-ins, those in hospitals, etc.?

It might be helpful if one's own Meeting were to give a traveling minute to the visitor. Thus the Meeting which is visited can endorse the minute, and express any comments about the visit. When a person travels under endorsement of her/his Meeting there is an explicit reaching out on the part of that Meeting to make contact with the ones being visited.

If the visit is carried out by a team rather than an individual, it would be appropriate for the Ministry & Counsel or Advancement Committee to give a letter of endorsement.

### INDIVIDUAL OR TEAM VISITS?

Individuals are encouraged to visit as they are led, and such visits need not necessarily come under the Ministry & Counsel or Advancement Committee's program. On occasions individuals might be "sent out" by Ministry & Counsel or Advancement to do specific tasks requested by Meetings.

Team visits could be either by specific invitation of Meetings or when there is an apparent need for a visit which will be explored by Ministry & Council or Advancement Committee to generate an invitation. Team visits seem to lie at the heart of an active Ministry & Council program of visitation.

## Report of a Visitation Preparation Weekend, page 3

A team should not be larger than three Friends. Too large a team could be overwhelming to the Meeting being visited.

The wisdom of team visits goes all the way back to the New Testament, when Jesus sent his disciples out in two's or when the apostles traveled in pairs. Friends, throughout our history, have made visits in teams. When we think of traveling Friends, such as John Woolman or Elias Hicks, we often forget that they frequently had traveling companions.

Having for some time past felt a sympathizing in my mind with Friends eastward, I opened my concern in our Monthly Meeting, and obtaining a certificate, set forward 17th day, 4th month, 1760, joining in company by a previous agreement with my beloved friend Samuel Eastburn.

— John Woolman in his *Journal*

As soon as New York Yearly Meeting ended—the last held on Long Island—Elias crossed to the mainland. Here he met James Mott of Mamaroneck, member of a family devoted to him, and Hugh Judge of New Rochelle, from now on a constant correspondent. The three Friends reached Rhode Island in time for the Yearly Meeting at Newport. . . . The New York visitors were hospitably received as they made their way through Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine.

— *Elias Hicks* by Bliss Forbush, p. 84

Teams could be made up of persons from the same Meeting or from different Meetings. There are advantages in either system. If a team comes from the same Meeting the persons will likely be familiar with each other and be able to get together after the visit to reflect together on its effectiveness. If a team comes from different Meetings then the benefits of a visit will be spread out as the visitors return to their respective Meetings.

### GUIDELINES FOR VISITATION

- obtain an invitation
- get an endorsement from your local Meeting
- go with a listening, prayerful attitude
- be responsive to what the Meeting needs
- have a supportive, loving spirit
- expect to learn
- get background (as much as possible)
- get different points of view
- allow for time by oneself
- follow leading of the Spirit—THIS IS CENTRAL
- consider a team visitation
- be sensitive to the leadership in Meeting
- have a sense of humor

This list is not exhaustive, only suggestive of areas in which we should be sensitive as visitors.

### VISITATION AND MINISTRY

One of the words which Friends use often is “ministry,” and by that word we include the concept that each Friend is a minister, with gifts and callings which are tailor-made by the Spirit to suit the individual. Our various ministries blend together to keep the Society of Friends vital. It is not

## **Report of a Visitation Preparation Weekend, page 4**

presumptuous, therefore, for us to consider visitation as a valid ministry among Friends. There are areas in the Yearly Meeting which desperately need ministry, especially in the way of encouragement and revitalization. As Friends are led by the Spirit to visit and share their gifts, we shall see renewal of both faith and witness throughout the Yearly Meeting.

# Travel Procedure for Members of the Religious Education Committee

## *Friends General Conference Religious Education Committee*

Although not all of us do formal visits or present workshops, we agree that all of us, as we speak with others about religious education, are in a sense doing the work of this committee.

### **Process for filing requests for visitors and workshops**

1. When a request comes to the office, often the staff and clerk can determine who should be sent. In the past, Committee members wrote what topics they felt comfortable facilitating. We need to keep an updated list.
2. When a Committee member receives a request to make a visit and/or give a workshop and will need financial assistance, the member should take it to the clerk and staff. If no financial support is needed, the clerk and staff should still be notified because the Religious Education Committee offers a variety of support including a travel minute sent by the clerk, printed materials to give as a gift to the host meeting, prayer support, and the names of other FGC representative who may be present. If the member is unclear whether or not she or he is the right person to respond to this request, and there is time, it should be put in the agenda of the next Religious Education Committee meeting. If there is inadequate time the clerk and staff, and others they ask, should help discern who should be sent.
3. In any event, when a member of the Religious Education Committee makes a visit or gives a presentation or workshop, there should be a travel minute sent by the Committee clerk, a written report to the Committee after the visit, and the travel minute with its written comments/endorsement by those visited should be returned to the clerk at our next meeting.
4. It is useful to have a companion on a visit, either another member of the Religious Education Committee, someone from FGC, a person from the place being visited, or some other suitable Friend.

(We have not yet built into this situation a way to discern if the person is doing the work of the Religious Education Committee in a way we feel comfortable with having it done.)

### **Process for Dealing with a Leading to Visit Certain Friends or Meetings.**

1. Although a leading may arise at any time or place, there are several things to bear in mind.
  - a true leading will persist over time
  - it will bring joy
  - the one led will be able to let go of the ultimate outcome (i.e. lack of ego involvement)
  - way will open
2. We assume that unless there are mitigating circumstances, the leading should be tested in the member's home monthly meeting, and ongoing clearness and support should be provided there.
3. A member who feels she or he has a leading to travel should test it in her or his local meeting. She would then send to the clerk and staff a written account of the leading and how it has been discerned thus far.
4. A small clearness committee is named by the Religious Education committee to work with the person who has a leading. (It is helpful to explore how the person understands God at work within her or him.)
5. The clearness committee reports back to the Religious Education Committee by the First Month meeting so funds can budgeted for the following fiscal year. The clearness committee should bring the request for funding to the Religious Education Committee. Fortunately, now our budget is generous enough and flexible enough that, for unusual circumstances, money may be available in a current year.
6. If it seems right to proceed, a support committee is named to continue working with the individual as the leading becomes clearer and way begins to open.

## **Travel Procedures for Members of the Religious Education Committee, page 2**

7. It is helpful for the support committee and others on the Religious Education Committee to encourage local Friends to attend workshops or meetings planned by the visitor, to invite and encourage local Friends to attend workshops or meetings planned by the visitor, to invite additional invitations while the visitor is in the area, and so on. Additional support is given by the Religious Education Committee in the form of prayers, printed materials to give as a gift to the host meeting(s), and other ways as might become apparent.
8. The clerk will prepare a traveling minute in advance for approval at the meeting of the Religious Education Committee preceding the travel, if time allows. The minute shall be carried with the visitor, who should request that comments be written on it at each place visited. It shall be returned to the clerk of the Religious Education Committee to be read and minuted at the next meeting.
9. After the visit, the visitor shall prepare a written report and also make an oral report if such is requested by the Religious Education Committee.

# Fostering *Vital Friends Meetings*

Part Two:

*Resources for Working with Quaker Meetings*

by Jan Greene and Marty Walton

## **Section R6: Advancement and Outreach**

- R6-1 Twentieth Century Organizations Founded by Friends *Sally Rickerman*
- R6-5 Friends for 300 Years: It's a Good Life! *Max L. Carter*
- R6-9 There is Still a Great People to Be Gathered: A Collection of Thoughts about Outreach  
*Jan Greene*
- R6-11 Evangelism: A Four-Letter Word? *Jan Greene*
- R6-12 Annual Monthly Meeting A and O Checklist *1977 Outreach Conference*
- R6-13 Notes for the Guidance of Speakers at Quaker Home Service Enquirers Weekend *Harvey Gillman*
- R6-17 Workshop on Outreach *Anne Thomas*
- R6-19 When a Worship Group Wishes to Become a New Monthly Meeting *Marshall Massey*
- R6-21 Questions and Guidelines for Becoming a Monthly Meeting *Mountain View (CO) MM*



# Twentieth Century Organizations Founded By Individual Quakers or Groups of Quakers or Quakers in Other Groups

by Sally Rickerman, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

1. (?) = Thought but not checked. Blank = Quaker, but no name yet.
2. Access: Mary Lord (data based on international issues)
3. Action Aid: (British)
4. AIDS Quilt Project: Cleve Jones
5. Allotment Movement: (British)
6. Alternative to Violence Program: NYYM
7. American Association of Marriage Councilors: David & Vera Mace
8. American Civil Liberties Union: Alan Olmsted & Roger Baldwin
9. American Field Service: (?)
10. Amigos Construction & Community Development Corp.: Miami Friends
11. Amnesty International: Peter Bennison or Eric Baker
12. AQUAG (A Quaker Action Group): George Lakey & many others
13. Back to the Land Movement: Helen & Scott Nearing
14. Bail Bond Program: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting members
15. Belgian-American Foundation: Herbert Hoover
16. Black Americans to Support Israel: Bayard Rustin
17. Bosnian Peace Center: Ted Herman
18. Care: Paul Comly French
19. Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors: Jim Bristol
20. Child Poverty Action Group: (British)
21. Childrens' Creative Response to Conflict: NY Quaker Project on Community Skills
22. Christian Aid: (British)
23. Christmas Peace Walk: Robert C. Euler
24. Co-op America: Movement for a New Society
25. Community Dispute Settlement Program: Jennie Beer, Eileen Stief & Charlie Walker
26. Concerts for Humanity: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting members
27. CORE: (Founded in the Watson's living room at the U of Chicago)
28. CRUSE: (British Women's support group): Margaret Torrie
29. Delaware Valley Land Trust: Lillian & George Willoughby
30. Despair Workshops: Joanna Macy
31. Doctors Against Nuclear War: Doctors Without Borders: Canadian Yearly Meeting members
32. Educating Children for Parenting: Sally Scattergood
33. Employment Research Associates: Marion Anderson
34. Equal Rights Amendment: Alice Paul
35. Experiment in International Living: (?)
36. Fellowship Farm: Helen Bryan, Helen Tomkins & Grace Waring
37. Fellowship of Reconciliation: Henry Joel Cadbury, Rufus Jones & Henry Hodgkin
38. Fihankra Project, Inc.: Deborah Saunders
39. Findhorn: Dorothy McLean
40. Finnish-American Scholarship Fund: David Hinshaw

## Twentieth Century Organizations Founded by Quakers, page 2

41. Friendly Centers Of India: P. V. Chandy
42. Girl Scout Cookies: Lou Henry Hoover
43. Grandmothers for Peace: Marybeth Webster
44. Green Circle: Gladys Rawfim & Margaret Thomforde
45. Greenpeace: Irving Stowe
46. Grey Panthers: Polly Cuthbertson
47. Help the Aged: (British)
48. Hiroshima Maidens: Eleanor Taber
49. Institute for the Study of Movement: Joan Baez
50. International Peace Research Institute: Elise Boulding
51. International Women's Suffrage Alliance: Carrie Chapman Catt
52. Jobs for Peace: George Lakey
53. Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation: Dutch Friends
54. Law of the Seas Treaty: Sam & Miriam Levering
55. League of Women Voters: Alice Paul
56. LEAP-Leaveners Experimental Art Project: (British)
57. Life Care Communities: Alan White. Lloyd Lewis
58. Listening Project: Herb Walters
59. London Bach Society: Peter Steinitz 1910–1988
60. Love Makes a Family, Inc.: Bonnie Tinker
61. Mort Frank's Newsletter: Mort Frank
62. Mothers for Peace: Lucy Behenna & Marion Mansergh
63. Movement for New Society: George Lakey, Lillian & George Willoughby
64. NAACP: Hollingsworth Wood
65. National Association of Religious Liberals: Henry Miller
66. National Baseball Association: Fran Martinson
67. National Fan Club: Mary Rhodes
68. National Farmers Alliance: Milton George
69. National Peace Academy: Elise Boulding
70. Never Again Campaign: Marion & Dick Lathrop
71. Nuclear Dialogue: Princeton Monthly Meeting members
72. Nuclear Freeze Movement: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting members
73. Over Ground Railway: Quaker Women at a FGC Gathering
74. Ovum Pacis-Women's Peace University: Alice Wisner & Marcia Mason
75. OXFAM: Cecil Jackson-Cole
76. Pacific Oaks College: John & Alice Way; Clarence & Margaret Yarrow; William & Jean Taylor Robert & Asenath Young and Philip & Marguerite Wells
77. Peace Brigades International: George Willoughby
78. Peace Corps: Herbert Hoover
79. Peace Council: Elise Boulding
80. Peace Grows: John Looney
81. Peace History Society: Merle Curtis, Paul Lauter, Edwin Bronner & Frederick Tolles
82. Peace Institute Research Group: Marion Anderson
83. Peace Now Movement: Dorothy Hutchinson
84. Peaceable Kingdom Inc.: Robert J. McAfee
85. Pennsylvania Freeze: Jessie Cox
86. Prison Visitation Society: Fay Honey Knapp
87. Prisoner Visitation & Support: Bob & Kay Horton
88. Pro-Nica: Bob Barnes
89. QSF (Quaker Spiritual Friends for Prisoners: Gene Hillman & Sally Rickerman

## Twentieth Century Organizations Founded by Quakers, page 3

90. RASP—Remarkable Aging Smart People: Ruth Jacobs
91. Renovaré: Richard Foster
92. Rural Southern Voice for Peace: Herb Walters
93. Sanctuary Movement: Jim Corbett
94. SANE: Robert Gilmore
95. Save the Children Federation: Clarence Pickett
96. School of the Spirit: Sandra Cronk & Kathryn Damiano
97. SEICUS—Sex Education Information Council US: Mary Calderone
98. Servant Leadership: Robert Greenleaf
99. Servas: Bob Luitweiler & Danish Quakers
100. Service Civile Internationale: Pierre Cerresole
101. Single Booklovers: Robert and Ruth Leach
102. Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children: John D. Wright
103. Southern Christian Leadership Conference: Bayard Rustin
104. Southern Institute for Appropriate Technology: Bill O'Connor
105. Southern Institute of Applied Technology: Bill O'Connor
106. Status of Women: (Canadian) Ursula Frank & Nancy Pocock
107. Teaching in a Nuclear Age: Margaret Lippencott
108. UNIPAL (University Help for Palestinians): Eleanor Aitken
109. United States Committee on Africa: Bayard Rustin
110. United States Ecumenical Church Center: Miriam Levering
111. United States Indochina Reconciliation Project: John Meauliff
112. Urban League: Hollingsworth Wood
113. US/USSR Committee: Anthony Manousos
114. Voluntary & Christian Service: (British)
115. Voluntary Service Overseas: Pierre Cerrisole
116. Washington Peace Center: Gellston McNeil
117. WILPF—Women's International League for Peace & Freedom: Jane Addams
118. Witness for Peace: George & Lillian Willoughby
119. Women Historians of the Midwest (WHOM): Rhoda Gilman
120. Women Organized Against Rape: Berit Lakey
121. Women's Political Caucus: Kay Camp
122. Women's Political Party: Alice Paul
123. Women's Way: Margaret Hope Bacon & S. Allan Bacon
124. World in Need: (British)
125. Yokefellow Institute: Elton Trueblood
126. Youth Hostels: Jack Catchpool

### FOR THOSE FRIENDS WHO WONDER WHY THIS LIST HAS BEEN COMPILED

Friends have an opportunity to share their unique and world changing message with others as we and the world ready ourselves for the 21st Century.

Early Friends were under the weight of sharing their understanding of their relationship to the Divine. They were so under this weight that they willingly spent long periods of time in prison, where almost 500 of them lost their lives because prison conditions were so horrible. They accepted the loss of their property and livelihood. They allowed their families to suffer from their extended absences (for prison or for the ministry) and consequential financial losses. They did not hesitate because they believed this commitment was required of them in order to bring the Kingdom of Heaven to Earth.

Are we, in this last decade of the 20th Century, able to look at the Religious Society of Friends and its necessary place in the world, with vision? Or are we only able to look at Quakerism as a comforting refuge for ourselves—a safe place where it is possible for us to heal our individual society-wounded psyches?

## Twentieth Century Organizations Founded by Quakers, page 4

Have we realized that if Quakerism were better known, less inaccessible and more readily available to those seeking it, our world might be changed? Are we less committed today to this earth shaking challenge than were the early Friends?

The purpose of this list is not to pat ourselves on the back to say well done and rest on the laurels of the past. The hope is it will help Friends to comprehend what a precious jewel of empowerment we have and to inspire and enable us to sacrifice to share it with those in the world who do not know the name of Quakerism and where to find it.

If we become more public about our Quakerism, those with whom we come in contact will be able to become aware that it is a viable choice in the world of today. This becoming more public may entail sacrifices. The sacrifice for us may be our being more open about Quakerism in an environment which does not share our values. The sacrifice may be to take the risk of changing the "mix" of our meeting. The sacrifice may be in becoming more involved with meetings from unstructured worship groups through monthly, quarterly, yearly meetings and even FGC (FUM and EFI)! The sacrifice may be for each one of us not to lose sight of the need to balance the spiritual life and the one of action.

This list of 100 organizations does not include the myriad number of local watershed associations, food coops, coop nurseries and the like. It concentrates only on those with widespread effect. The fact is that, because the nature of our religion is built on trust and respect, we are liberated to go out into the world in disproportionate numbers and improve the lot of our fellow human beings. Friends are only .02 of 1% of the world's Christians! Think of the changes that could take place if we were more!

Does this, then, not mean that we are called to share this wealth of love and trust and growth with those who seek it?

— Sally Rickerman

# Friends for 300 Years: It's A Good Life!

*An address by Max L. Carter, Guilford College, August 1997 on the occasion of celebrating the 300th anniversary of Quakers in North Carolina*

300 years! That's longer than Dean Smith has been at UNC! Almost as long as Strom Thurmond has been in the Senate! 300 years ago! Pssst-don't tell anyone, Virginia, but Thomas Jefferson wasn't even *alive* then!

300 years of North Carolina Yearly Meeting—a common heritage leading to two distinct and vibrant communities of Friends by that name. Quakerism itself has an even longer history in the South. It has been a storied saga, one that will be celebrated in many ways during this climactic week of the five-year Tercentenary observance.

Yet many Friends are hesitant to trumpet our own triumphs as a religious society—consistent with the Quaker virtues of meekness, humility, and understatement—if *not of honesty and integrity!* But this is a week to be proud and tell our story, not only to each other, to the world as well. As the scripture enjoins: time to take the light out from under the bushel. As my mother was wont to say, “She who tooteth not her own horn, the same shall not be tooted!”

Think of what the world might be like without Quakers! Without the likes of religious visionaries: Margaret Fell, George Fox, Hannah Whitall Smith, Thomas Kelly, Elton Trueblood; social and political reformers: William Penn, John Woolman, Elizabeth Fry, Lucretia Mott, Susan B. Anthony; writers and poets: Jessamyn West, John Greenleaf Whittier, James Michener, Jan de Hartog; musicians and artists: Edward Hicks, Bonnie Raitt, Donald Swann, Fritz Eichenberg, Dave Matthews; business and industry—steel, railroads, Barclays Bank, Lloyd's of London, Macy's; or beloved products like the Slinky, Monopoly, the Flexible Flyer sled, Cadbury's Chocolates, and Hires Root Beer! What untold human tragedies would there be without the American Friends Service Committee?

As true as this is for the world at large, it is also true for the region encompassed by the bound of the North Carolina Yearly Meetings. Imagine life in this vale of humility had Friends never arrived! In a summer that has seen the passing of Jimmy Stewart (not that he was a Friend, mind you!), we are reminded of an artifice by which we can contemplate such a Tarheel world, a world without Quakers.

With apologies, then, to the late actor and his character in, *It's A Wonderful Life*, let's envision this region—and the wider world—had Carolina Quakers never existed.

To start our fantasy, we must return to the 1660's, when a few isolated settlers were filtering into the area of the Great Dismal Swamp in southeastern Virginia and northwestern North Carolina. Without Quakers and their testimony of peace and experience of finding the Light of Christ in all people, would early settlers' relationship with the Native Americans have been as peaceful? Quaker-vacant central Virginia experienced devastating Indian wars in the 1670's, as did Puritan Massachusetts—also devoid of Quakers! The only Quakers hanging around in Massachusetts back then were, literally, hanging around!

Would the absence of Indian-European strife in Carolina have persisted had their not been a Quaker governor, John Archdale, guaranteeing that Indians would not be enslaved and would serve in equal numbers with whites on juries when their rights were in question? Hey! This is our fantasy—we can say no, that this could have been a “dark and bloody ground” too!

To carry our Quaker-free territory on into the 1700's, it would have been left to others to erect the first school in Carolina, to introduce the first organized Christian religious system—for contrary to popular notion, there weren't even *Southern Baptists* here then!

Without Quakers in southern Virginia and in the Carolinas in the mid-1700's, John Woolman would not have visited the states, urging abolition of slave-holding, and his clarion-call for loving all children of God would not have been heard in these parts. And without that, a powerful abolition movement would not have started in Belvidere, NC in the 1770's when conscience-stricken slave owners freed those held in human

bondage. Without that vision, thousands of slaves would have toiled under cruel masters and died without ever having tasted freedom.

Had Friends not migrated into the piedmont in the mid-1700's, forming communities such as Cane Creek, New Garden, Deep River, and Centre, other untold suffering would have occurred: scores of dead and dying from the Revolutionary War battles of New Garden and Guilford Court House would not have been ministered to, given loving burial, or nursed back to health by the women of the Quaker community.

There would have been no stirring story—worth retelling through the ages—of Jamestown's Matthew Osborn, a gunsmith, buying back the precision rifles he had sold and bending the barrels so they could not be used in the Revolutionary War battles in Guilford County. For that matter, there would have been no "Jamestown Rifles," a.k.a. "Kentucky Rifles" for old ex-Quaker Daniel Boone to carry into Kentucky and "kill him a b'ar" and a few other living creatures! There would have been no Beard's Hat Shoppe in Jamestown, either, and thus no popular children's book *Benji's Hat* many years later.

Come the 19th century, the Carolina landscape would have looked much different without the tidy Quaker farms stretching from Randolph County to Rockingham County and Pasquotank and Perquimans to Surry and Yadkin. And the political landscape would look much different, too! No First Lady in the Madison White House, because there would have been no Dolley Payne born into the North Carolina Quaker community and later married to James Madison—no snack cakes bearing her name, either, lending reality to the name, *Washington!*

No 16th president of the United States, for Nancy Hanks would not have been born into a Surry Quarter Quaker family and birthed Abraham Lincoln (no cheering from the hard-core Confederate Quaker gallery!)/ In fact, a severe bite would have been taken out of the national Republican Party! No Speaker of the House Joseph Gurney Cannon, and hence no Cannon Office Building in D.C., for young Iron Joe wouldn't have been raised north of here and moved to Illinois to serve in the Congress. No Herbert Hoover, for there would have been no Hoovers in Randolph County leaving to settle Richmond, IN and then moving on to West Branch, Iowa. No David Worth Dennis or Howard Coble, Congressmen of Carolina Quaker lineage and education.

But let Democrats feel left out—no Clinton White House Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles—whose family is just across the road in New Garden Friends cemetery. Not to feel sorry for Bill and Hillary, though, their daughter would still have been able to attend the District's Sidwell Friends School.

Imagine a 19th century South without the conscience-saving presence of an active Underground Railroad and Negro Schools, begun in this region by Quakers such as the Coffins and operated in conjunction with the black community of Friends. We hardly have to imagine such an absence, for most paid the price of their gospel fidelity by having to emigrate from the South. The only Coffins left in the region now are those in numerous Quaker graveyards!

Had there been no Quakers here, obeying the simple dictates of the Sermon of the Mount, the *geographical* landscape of the United States would be markedly different. No mass migration of Friends into the free soil of Ohio and Indiana; no Orange County, Randolph County, Henry County, or Wayne County, IN. No New Garden, Rich Square, or Greensboro, IN, either. Without the migration of NC Quakers, there would have been no Earlham College in Indiana, and possibly no ex-president Landrum Bolling to speak to a non-existent gathering of Quakers tomorrow, or even former Earlham student (and descendant of NC Quakers) Don McNemar to welcome that excised community to the campus of a Guilford College that wouldn't be here!

Had the good Quaker Timothy Nicholson from Belvidere never existed or moved to Indiana and established a human Reformatory for Boys near Plainfield last century, the boxer Mike Tyson would have had no Correctional Facility to stay in for his 4-year incarceration: he would have had to sit in a central Indiana cornfield, chomping on ears other than Evander Holyfield's!

Imagine a North Carolina without a Quaker remnant remaining after the Civil War, attracting the care and concern of northern Friends—especially that of the Baltimore Association to Advise and Assist Southern Friends. No Allen Jay to bring spiritual refreshment to a parched region. His absence would leave a Springfield Baptist Church without a name! The loss of his quietist Quaker perspective in the revivals of the 1860's and 70's would have tipped the balance in favor of pulpit-pounding dogmatists too quick to run rough-shod over congregations with "new measures."

No Baltimore Association, no Model Farm to rejuvenate Southern agriculture; no 29 schools established to educate freed slaves and no Winston-Salem State University or NC A&T State University developing, in

part, from that concern. No 40+ Quaker monthly meeting schools, academies, and normal institutes—leading in the 1880's directly to NC's first system of public education. No Friends, no Guilford College—or Duke, for that matter—a combined Quaker/Methodist institution when it was in Trinity, NC and headed by a New Garden Boarding School graduate, Baritone Craven. Imagine a state with three fewer national basketball championships (one for Guilford, two for Duke!)—and countless thousands fewer teachers, coaches, doctors, attorneys, engineers, and business people.

Nor would there have been a Woman's College, now UNCLOG, apart from the efforts of May Mendenhall Hobbs.

And what of the 20th century? NC might still be “first in flight”—there would have been Orville and Wilbur (but without Conservative Yearly Meeting, no Wilburites!). However, there would be no Lindley Field carved out of Quaker farmland in the 1920's to become Piedmont Triad Airport today. The first baseball all-star game in the 1930's would have been an embarrassment to the American League. Without starting catcher and future Hall of Famer Rick Ferrell—a Quaker farm boy and Guilford College grad—the pitchers would have been plunking the chest protector of the home plate umpire with their deliveries until Bill Dickey and Mickey Cochrane could be summoned to don the “tools of ignorance.”

For that matter, the Boston Celtics would have been coachless the last two years (not that it would have made any difference!), since without Guilford College, there would have been no M. L. Carr. No college, no Dave Odom to restore Wake Forest's basketball glory. Nor would today's Pittsburgh Pirates be able to keep opponents from hitting up the middle, since starting 2nd-baseman Tony Womack wouldn't have graduated from Guilford, either!

No Quakers in this century and we wouldn't have seen the milk of human kindness from Yardley Warner's concern for adequate housing for freed slaves develop into Greensboro's Warnerville. Nor would we have the Carnation Milk Co., begun by a Quaker from High Point.

How much additional human suffering without the development of the MRI by Waldo Hinshaw, or the dedication of NC Friends Disaster Service in putting people's lives back together after tragedy strikes. How many chronologically challenged people would be left with lives far less rich and fulfilling without Friends Homes and other retirement villages sponsored by Friends?

What tragedies of human origin might have emanated from national greed without the long, patient efforts of our own Sam and Miriam Levering to bring about a Law of the Seas Treaty? How many communities wouldn't have taken a stand for peaceful integration without the concern and work for reconciliation of Quaker activists, school board members, and common citizens? How many would have to stand, since without Quakers much of High Point's furniture industry would be non-existent.

Would we have a place to walk and drive along the Blue Ridge Parkway without Quaker Civilian Public Service work camp labor during W.W. II?

Would the Cones have chosen NC over other cotton-producing states in the South for their textile empire had there been no Quaker community here, signaling the presence of a tolerant and open people among whom Jews might live with respect?

Indeed, the Carolinas, southern Virginia, and the wide world would be a significantly different place had only *these* Quaker men and women of the past 300 years never materialized. Imagine the difference without *all* the Friends who have lived and loved, worked and ministered here for three centuries, striving, in George Fox's words, to be patterns and examples, letting their lives preach, living in fidelity to the Quaker testimonies of peace, integrity, simplicity, and equality; bearing witness to God's loving ministrations to the heart and soul of each and every one of God's children.

Remove all the Quaker missionaries and ministers, teachers and physicians, farmers and parents, along with the distinctive outlook on life Friends possess—how does one measure the difference in the quality of life that would result for the rest of the community? No James Childress serving on the President's commission on medical ethics? No Carolina Friends School, Virginia Beach Friends School, Wilmington Friends School, New Garden Friends School?

Remove Friends' insistence on the efficacy of an inward and unmediated relationship with the Light of Christ; the importance of quiet, obedient waiting on the Lord; the witness to men's and women's equality in ministry; the focus on *living* one's faith rather than merely *professing* it—remove all these Quaker distinctives and the body of Christ is weakened. No writings and ministries of Set and Mary Edith Hinshaw, Algie and Eva

Newlin, Louise Wilson? No ministry of Fayetteville and Norfolk Quaker House, United Society of Friends Women, Quaker Men, the mission in Matamoros?

But we don't have to imagine such a world. We can awaken from our reverie of a Quaker-deprived North Carolina. We are here, and though we number fewer than 15,000 in NC and southern VA, with proper Quaker integrity and less than characteristic humility, we can say that 300 years and counting has meant a good life, a *wonderful* life—for us and the communities we live in.

Not that we don't have our issues. We are now a mixed lot—some six different Quaker affiliations and lack of affiliations in NC alone! We are plain as well as fancy; pastoral as well as traditionally unprogrammed. There was that little matter of an honest difference of opinion over the nature of local Meeting versus Five Years Meeting authority and the degree to which ancient Quaker worship practices should be conserved—a difference that led to a parting of the ways in 1903-04. Now, though, we are within the two resulting bodies politically and theologically both liberal and conservative; we are of mixed opinion on the “red button” social issues of the day. Readers of local papers' Letters to the Editor are left scratching their heads over *the* Quaker position on an issue being expressed this week, only to be contradicted by the Quaker position expressed the following week.

Today one is tempted to say that if there are 3 Quakers in a community, there will be 4 Meetinghouses!

But *this week* is one for us to focus on our commonalities, revel in our heritage, and draw from that strength to minister to a hurting world for the next several centuries. When Friends gather at Guilford College in 2197 to celebrate our quincentennial (hah! you thought *tercentenary* was tough!) and play the Jimmy Stewart “What If?!” game, the resolve of those of us assembled here will have given a speaker at that occasion ample opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of a vital Quaker community in all walks of life.

We *do* have a bridge into the 21st century, President Bill! And it is not the bridge from which Jimmy Stewart hallucinated in the movie—not even that *first* iron bridge built by Quakers in England—it is the strength that comes from our bridging our differences, maximizing our distinctive strengths as Quakers, and walking cheerfully over that bridge, answering that of God in everyone!

# There is Still a Great People to be Gathered! A Collection of Thoughts about Outreach

by Jan Greene, *New York Yearly Meeting*

How well do we understand the origins, evolution and current state of Quakerism, and its relationships to other faiths? How well can we articulate our understanding? Is joy the missing ingredient in modern Quakerism? Are our meetings a climate where people can grow spiritually? Does our faith touch our lives daily in a process of continuous conversion? Or have we gotten stuck, enjoying meeting as a cozy place where we are not bothered by the forgotten persons of the wider society?

Why have we been reluctant to share our faith? Has our message lost its value? Certainly not. How is it then that Friends retreated from a very active, prophetic kind of outreach, making their beliefs public at the risk of life, limb, and liberty, to our current position where outreach is low on our list of priorities, even actively opposed by some? For when we place a low priority on outreach we suggest either that our message isn't that important, or that somehow the rest of the world couldn't appreciate it, or that Quakerism is only for the select few.

— Outreach Handbook of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

## What Do We Mean By Outreach?

Outreach is the natural result of the second great commandment that we love our neighbors as ourselves. It grows out of the spiritual attitude of caring and can take many forms, limited only by our imagination. It results from the actions of individuals and of meetings.

Outreach is the relationship with a neighbor which makes that neighbor want to visit 'the church from which you get your friendliness'-it is the sign Gwynedd Meeting puts out on the highway inviting passersby to an upcoming Visitors' Day; it is the ads which State College Meeting puts in local papers telling something of what Friends believe; it is the invitation to a meal extended to a meeting visitor; and it is the attractively displayed pamphlets on the table in the meetinghouse. It is also the social action of the American Friends Service Committee; the political action of the Friends Committee on National Legislation, the conflict resolution of the Friends Suburban Project, and the peace education program of a Monthly Meeting.

Outreach can be the unconscious result of a radiant spirit and it can also be the result of carefully planned strategy and actions. It represents a concern of Friends which has been growing in our consciousness in recent years and many meetings are calling for guidance in strengthening their outreach."

— Howard Bartram

"There are people who could breathe new life into our meetings and, when they do find us, this is exactly what happens. But for every one who finds Friends, there are ten (a hundred? a thousand?) who drive past our meetinghouses, talk with us in our workplaces, save their Susan B. Anthony dollars, and still don't realize that Quakers are still around."

Mary Glenn Hadley, from Friends United Meeting, advises Meetings that are concerned with growth to study their communities. What outreach programs do you presently have? What other churches are present and what services and programs do they provide? Are there needs in the community that are not being addressed that your Meeting could respond to? Are there non-spiritual interests (e.g. sports activities, classes in arts, crafts, gardening, music, etc.) that could bring unchurched people into your meetinghouse, who might, therefore, become interested in Quakerism? Are there other activities that will highlight Quakers and your Meeting so that people in your community will become aware that they have an alive and welcoming meeting in their midst?

Mary Glenn also advises Friends to take a look at our Meeting as though we are discovering it for the first time. How hard is it to find your meetinghouse? Are there signs on the roads around that show the way? Is there a clear sign at the meetinghouse that identifies it, shows the time of services, and lets people know that

## There is Still a Great People to be Gathered, page 2

visitors are welcome? How does it look—clean and cared for, as though it is an important place for members and attenders? Is there adequate parking and/or public transportation? Is it clear where to park, and what door one should enter? Are visitors warmly welcomed? Mary Glenn suggested that the most important person for outreach may be the Greeter, and the best person for that position is probably your newest regular attender, who best remembers what it is like to be a new person in your meeting. One study suggests that most visitors to churches decide within the first 15 minutes whether or not they will return to that church. Do you have a guest book which has space for addresses and telephone numbers of visitors? Is there a procedure in your meeting for visitor follow-up, i.e. a timely card or letter or call, letting them know that the meeting hopes they will return? Ben Frisch suggests making a “visit” to your own Meeting, and reporting to your Meeting your observations.

Friends have always emphasized the ministry of all members and the social concerns aspect of the gospel. It is very good that many of (our) attenders are already active in a number of outreach ministries. There are, however, two major questions which we, as Friends, have not always answered well.

The first is whether our outreach is done as charity in the social work sense, or is it done as part of an invitation to join us in the community of faith? Even when we say that we would like to be invitational, are we willing to make the changes necessary in how we “do church” for newcomers (who may be educationally or economically different from us) to feel a sense of ownership?

The second is whether, once our members have felt impelled by God to give of themselves in service, they are upheld in their ministry by the church? Our many committees and lack of focus (may) drain energy away from ministry, and add additional management burdens onto the shoulders of those who should be in the business of ministry. Is there a process by which these outreach ministries can be authorized and blessed by the Meeting in a manner which is not stifling to the ministry or draining to the Meeting?

— Mary Glenn Hadley

# Evangelism: A Four-Letter Word?

*by Jan Greene, New York Yearly Meeting*

According to studies done by Fuller Evangelistic Association (FEA), the following rules of thumb for churches in America apply to churches that encourages growth:

1. The average church will have a ratio of approximately 50% adults to children, but in a growing church the ratio is likely to be 60% adults and 40% children.
2. Of the total adult membership
  - a. 50% will be relatively inactive. They might be considered consumers.
  - b. 40% will be involved in serving the needs of church members and attenders.
  - c. 10% will be involved in service to the unchurched and other outreach ministries.

How full is your meetinghouse on First Days? An FEA study indicated that a church felt comfortably full if an urban church's seating capacity is 80% filled, & 60% filled in rural churches. A church feels comfortably empty if its seating capacity is 60% filled in an urban area, 40% filled in a rural area. Churches feel uncomfortably empty in cities when 40% of seats are filled, 20% filled in rural areas. Using this scale, how does your Meeting rate? If you are uncomfortably empty, would it help to move some of extra benches to another room until more attenders are present?

- Are we willing to make substantial changes to meet the needs of new people?
- Are we willing to fail and make mistakes and have some conflicts, if this is necessary for growth?

Suggestion: Meetings should look at their attenders for the last three years. Who has come in? Why have they come in? If there are those who have gone, why have they gone? Are there any changes that should be considered?

Once a person begins attending Meeting, it is important that the work of the Meeting be shared with that person. How well does your Meeting do this? How appropriately? (Having a new person take over the First Day School is not a good idea, though this too often happens. New attenders need to be in meeting for worship and other programs that will help them nurture their own spiritual journey and learn more about Quakerism, and our Quaker children need the love, care, and teaching of seasoned Friends.)

What are the stumbling blocks to outreach in ourselves and our Meetings? Can we attract, welcome, and nurture newcomers to our Meetings? Is our Quaker faith so important to us that we are willing to share it with others? If necessary, are we willing to step outside our personal comfort zone to let others know about Quakerism? Are we willing to take "evangelism" off our Yearly Meeting's "four-letter-word" list?

# Annual Monthly Meeting Advancement &/or Outreach Checklist

*(Adapted from a list originating at an Outreach Conference in 1977)*

- Does the Meeting have an Advancement &/or Outreach Committee?
- Does it have an outreach contact person for better networking?
- Are First day School and Meeting attendance actively nurtured?
- Are all the young people and associate members encouraged to be active members of the Meeting?
- When members are away at school, does the Meeting notify nearby meetings and arrange to send Quaker journals at its expense?
- Does the Meeting have a newsletter? If so, is it sent not only to those away at school but to all others who are unable to attend the Meeting regularly?
- Is someone appointed by the Meeting to greet visitors and ask if they wish to note their name in the Guest Book?
- Is literature attractively displayed and easily available?
- Are visitors regularly invited to introduce themselves at the close of meeting?
- Are recently-joined Friends given opportunities and assignments which will encourage them as they apply their new-found faith?
- Is there a Meeting plan to encourage its members to visit other Meetings and/or invite other Meetings to visit you?
- Is the Meeting fully and widely known in the area it serves? (Road signs, Yellow Pages, newspaper church listings, regular news items, Welcome Wagon, hotel and motel directories, posters etc.)
- Are there nearby colleges and, if so, is there a plan to communicate with both the faculty and the students?
- Does the Meeting cooperate with and help sponsor local events which could help to carry the message of Quakerism in that local community?
- Has the Meeting or any of its members and committees made use of the Yearly Meeting's Outreach Committee? (Speakers, workshops, literature, ideas, cooperation in arranging an outreach program etc.).
- Does the Meeting keep the Yearly Meeting Outreach Committee's clerk up to date on:
  - its outreach contact person?
  - its outreach activities and visitations?
  - its needs?

# Notes For The Guidance of Speakers At Quaker Home Service Enquirers' Weekends

by Harvey Gillman, January 1995, Britain Yearly Meeting

Each year Quaker Home Service Outreach Section organizes three or four residential weekend enquirers gatherings. Two of these take place at Charney Manor and the other two are movable feasts. The geographical spread of these is such that over a number of years it will be possible for most enquirers to Britain Yearly Meeting to attend one of these gatherings. The Charney Manor invitations go out to all people who have enquired in the last two years from Western General Meeting through to Derby, Lines and Notts, to Kent and down to Devon and Cornwall. In some years, Devon and Cornish Friends organize their own gatherings.

Each of these gatherings may have up to 30 or so participants. Some of them will be entirely new to Quakerism and have, perhaps, simply read the enquirers packet. Some of them will not even have done this but would have heard about Quakers and are intrigued. Others will have attended meetings for 25 years or so and have just begun to think about membership. The range is anything between these two extremes. On the other hand, we do feel it is important to assume as speakers that most of the participants are new to the Society.

The programme takes the following pattern:

1. *Friday evening after dinner we introduce ourselves and the general philosophy* of the weekend is presented; that is, the seeking nature of the gathering, the listening to each other and the non-judgmentalism.
2. *On Saturday morning, we start with what we call the foundations or basic convictions:* this is a way of responding to the question, "Well, what do Quakers believe?" Sometimes some Friends introduce this in an historical manner, talking about development of Quakerism from early Friends, but not in an academic way which would be quite off-putting for some of the participants. Others may start with some readings from "Advices and Queries" and reflect on those with the group. It is very important to bear in mind that Quakers have a very wide jargon and that if jargon words or abbreviations were used, we might end by alienating the participants. If jargon or abbreviations are used it is important to explain them immediately. Some people wish to explore exactly what we mean by God and often ask for explanations of Quaker views on the Bible, Jesus Christ, sin, redemption and why we don't have sacraments, so any group leader needs to have thought about these issues. The introduction to the session lasts about half an hour, after which there is time for questions for about a quarter of an hour. We aim to split into groups as soon as possible, as over the years the comments and assessment forms have urged us to bring in more group work and fewer plenary conversations. We tend to split the gathering up into groups of three. Each of the gatherings will have experienced Friends leading them and so each Friend goes to one group; sometimes the Resident Friends will join in and help facilitate groups.
3. *The second session in the morning is often on worship,* both a Quaker understanding of what worship is all about and a personal exploration of what worship means to the speaker. It is important in any gathering for people not to take for granted the word "worship" and not to exclude the concept of prayer but possibly redefine it. The session on worship should contain very practical helps for participants; some will never have been to Meeting for Worship before: helpful tips on how to

sit, breathe, etc. have been very useful in the past. The business meeting should also be referred to in the session on Meeting as very few of the participants will ever have been to a Meeting for Business. (I do not advise at this point that we look at the structure of the Society, although there could be a brief session on structure, if people want to have one.) After the session on Meeting for Worship we split up into groups until lunch time. The afternoon is free: this allows a lot of informal conversation to go on and one of the points about any weekend is that information is exchanged over the dinner table and during walks.

4. *In the afternoon, after tea, there may follow a session on the Quaker Testimonies.* It is important at this point to explain exactly what we mean by Testimonies, possibly to enumerate some of them to give people an idea of the diversity. I suggest that we do not plunge straight into a discussion of the Peace Testimony, but leave that to the end of the session, just before question time. The Peace Testimony can prove to be the most contentious aspect of the weekend and it is well for the group leader to have considered what the Peace Testimony means for him- or herself. It is not always helpful simply to quote George Fox in the middle of the 17th century as an example of the whole of the Peace Testimony today.
5. *After dinner we have a look at the Philadelphia video* or any other video which may be appropriate and have a short discussion group on that together. And then we may have some sort of social. Friends will have been encouraged to bring material for sharing in one of the letters they will have received before the conference. Many people do worry about having to be "jolly" during the weekend and it is very important to be sensitive in how the social evening is actually advertised and organized. We do ask one of the participants to be the person of ceremonies on this occasion.
6. *Sunday morning we spend going to different Meetings* and on the Saturday night we look at the different possibilities for Meeting for Worship and organize lifts and so forth.
7. *After lunch on Sunday there is a session on "How was it for you at Meeting?"* It ends with a general assessment about the weekend itself and how we can go on from here.

Friends do ask me, how is it possible in such a Society as ours to answer a question such as, "What do Quakers believe about God or sin or peace?" when there is obviously such a wide variety of response. I think it is very important to consider the whole range of responses that Friends make to these question. It is not altogether unusual that you will hear people saying, well, some Quakers believe this, some Quakers believe that and some believe the other. What I think is very important is to try to find an underlying pattern so that, for example, one might reply to "What do Quakers think about God?" by mentioning that Quakerism has always stressed an immediate relationship between the individual and that which we call God-force, Spirit, Christ, whatever. In other words, however we respond to this question, we can point to an underlying Quaker insight.

I do not think it is wrong if, having said all that, the individual Friend says, "I myself believe this particular thing." The session leader might bring other members of the Society into the discussion. And so, for example, he or she might say, "Well this is what I believe about God, but, X, how would you respond to that question? And Y, How might you respond?" In this way, we are not giving an abstract list of possibilities but are showing the real diversity of Friends.

It is important that the group leaders are warm, welcoming and not afraid to explore issues with the participants. No Friend is an expert but what we can do is to create an atmosphere which will allow the participants to open up and discover things for themselves. I do not think also that we should censor ourselves. If we are comfortable using Christian language I think it behooves us to use it, otherwise we are actually not being authentic to our own experience. By the same token, if we feel

## Notes for the Guidance of Speakers at Quaker Home Service Enquirers' Weekends, page 3

that Christian language is not appropriate for us, we should be honest enough to say so. This will give the enquirers real experience of the Society. Conviction and sensitivity are required.

I have also discovered that trust, openness and honesty in talking about the Peace Testimony has changed people who have come to the weekend expecting an almost creedal statement about pacifism. It is important for the group leaders to realize that they themselves are enquirers and might be changed by the experience also.

### Questions on the foundation, or theology, of Friends might include:

- “What do Quakers mean by God?”
- “Do you think all people are good?”
- “Why is Quakerism so middle-class?”
- “Why don't many people know about Quakers?”
- “What do Quakers think about Jesus?”
- “Why don't Quakers have Holy Communion?”
- “Can you be a Buddhist and a Quaker?”
- “Do you have to be a Christian to be a Quaker?”
- “Where do you stand on sin?”

### Questions about worship might be:

- “What do Quakers think about prayer?”
- “Why don't you have music?”
- “Can you sing in Meeting for Worship?”
- “What do you do with thoughts that get in the way?”
- “If you don't believe in a hierarchy, what do Elders do in Meeting for Worship?”
- “What do you do with someone who interrupts Meeting for Worship every week, or now and again?”
- “How, if Meeting for Worship is silent, do people ever learn anything about Quakers?”

### Questions about Testimony might include:

- “Do you have to be a pacifist to be a Quaker?”
- “Why are so many Quakers left-wing?”
- “What would you do if someone threatened your daughter?”
- “Do you believe in the police force?”
- “Why aren't all Quakers members of CND?”
- “What part does simplicity have in Quakerism?”
- “What are Quakers doing to make the world a better place?”

## Notes for the Guidance of Speakers at Quaker Home Service Enquirers' Weekends, page 4

“Are there any Quaker MPs?”

“Can Quakers join political parties?”

“What do Quakers think about drugs, alcohol and cigarettes?” and so on.

I hope these guidelines will be helpful. The fact remains that sincerity, conviction, and warmth are the basic ingredients.

— Harvey Gillman

# Workshop on Outreach

by Anne Thomas, Canadian Yearly Meeting

There are two prevalent attitudes about outreach in Canadian Yearly Meeting:

- a. it's proselytisation and Friends don't do this
- b. it's all about notices, phone books and leaflets.

While both these approaches need challenging, the following workshop seeks to centre the idea of outreach in people's own experience of coming to Friends.

**Time:** about two hours

## Opening:

- open with a time of worship
- if not all Friends know each other, go round the room sharing names

## Format:

The format of the workshop is worship sharing. This aims at giving each person an opportunity to respond to a question, or to pass. The response will not be questioned, but will be carefully heard, with time allowed before the next person responds. The length of individual responses depends on the number in the group. A gentle reminder that all Friends need the opportunity to speak, or to begin to focus on the particular question asked may enable Friends to be reasonably concise in their answers. Some information from England is interspersed which can be shared with the group on a flip chart, if possible, leading to informal discussion before the next question is asked.

## First question:

### How did you get to your first Quaker Meeting?

In *Caring, Conviction and Commitment, a survey of ten years' worth of attenders in Britain Yearly Meeting*, Alastair Heron found the following breakdown among attenders:

- contact with a member or an attender 37%
- came with parents, family involvement 21%
- miscellaneous 15%
- reading about Quakers 9%
- advertisement 6%
- saw the Meetinghouse 6%
- peace activities 4%
- attended a Friends' school 3%

Is this similar to the local experience?

Do any of these figures surprise anyone (peace, for example)?

## Second question:

### Why did you go to your second Quaker Meeting?

Heron found that attenders returned because of:

- acceptance 25%
- tolerance 17%

## Workshop on Outreach, page 2

- manner of worship 16%
- silence 9%
- pacifism 9%
- social concerns 6%
- structure 5%

### Second question:

#### What brings you back to Meeting now?

The variety of responses may indicate the ways in which outreach has been effective for particular Friends. Does the Meeting respond to the sort of enquirers that those present in the room were?

### Closing:

The technicalities of advertising and providing leaflets are easy to achieve, but these do not make effective outreach. **People** are the outreach programme. In *Making New Friends: Spiritual Hospitality: proceedings of a conference on outreach*, Harvey Gillman suggests our house must be in order if we are to be welcoming to seekers:

- Do we notice when new people come to Meeting?
- Do we want new people to come to Meeting?
- Do we look for that of God in new people or expect them to see it in us?
- Do we recognise that we too are seekers and that outreach is a lifelong part of our growth?

### Print resources:

Harvey Gillman, ed., *Outreach Manual*, QHS, 1990\*

Harvey Gillman et al., *Making New Friends: Spiritual Hospitality*, Quaker Universalist Fellowship, 1994\*

Alastair Heron, *Caring, Conviction, Commitment*, QHS, 1992\*

*Information Kit for Enquirers*, HMAc\*

North Pacific YM, *Survival Sourcebook*, 1990\*\*

Pat Patterson, *A New Friends Gathering*, FGC, 1986\*\*

Philadelphia YM, *Outreach Ideabook*, 1986\*\*

\* Quaker Book Service

\*\* Friends General Conference

# When a Worship Group Wishes to Become a New Monthly Meeting

by *Marshall Massey, Intermountain Yearly Meeting*

Intermountain Yearly Meeting has a reputation for being the fastest-growing yearly meeting in any branch of Quakerism in North America. Here in Colorado, the impact of that growth has been enormous. Mountain View Monthly Meeting (in Denver) is bursting at the seams, and there have been threshing session discussions as to whether it should divide into smaller meetings. Meanwhile, Colorado gained its third Monthly Meeting recently. And the worship group in Colorado Springs has already begun meeting with a Clearness Committee from Mountain View, to prepare for advancement to Monthly Meeting status.

This growth has spurred Colorado Friends to inquire deeply into what is needed to make a new Monthly Meeting succeed. In particular, the Mountain View Clearness Committee working with the Colorado Springs worship group felt led to draw up a list of Queries.

As far as anyone here knows, these “Questions and Guidelines” are something new. They were drawn up with reference to the Disciplines of Pacific and Philadelphia Yearly Meetings. In an era when great uncertainties exist as to what, precisely, it means to be a Friend, these questions challenge us at a very deep level, in every dimension of our corporate life, to find a way of being Friends without denying the uncertainties. We hear the working of the Spirit in such a challenge. And it doesn’t surprise any of us when we hear Clearness Committee members say that the process of developing this list was “powerful”—and is “still ongoing.”

The Questions were submitted for review to Mountain View Monthly Meeting and accepted for use by the Meeting with only minor revision. Mountain View presented the Questions as revised to Colorado General Meeting (our equivalent of a Quarterly Meeting), which received them with many favorable comments.

Meanwhile, the Clearness Committee also submitted these Questions to Colorado Springs Worship Group to work with. Like all Queries, they were not offered as test, but as a basis for self-examination. The Worship Group, after internal discussion, produced a written answer to each and every question on the list; their answers then became the basis for further discussion with the Clearness Committee.

Everyone involved seems to have felt that the Questions were enormously helpful. In fact, Question 16, concerning the group’s ability to care for its members, ultimately prompted the Worship Group to ask for continuing support from Mountain View, even after Colorado Springs becomes a Monthly Meeting.

Martha Barrett, Convener of the Clearness Committee, hopes Friends will take the list with “a very large caveat—a warning—that these questions aren’t engraved in stone. I’d hate to see these Queries written down so that everybody says, ‘Now we have these Queries and we don’t have to work up our own.’”

## When a Worship Group Wishes to Become a New Monthly Meeting, page 2

Only part of this caveat stems from the fact that the Questions are still new and imperfectly tested. Beyond all the flaws these Questions may still contain, what weighs most on Friend Barrett's mind is a sense that such Queries, like the sunrise, cannot merely be summoned from a Book of Discipline when their hour comes round, but must be freshly discovered in the skies of participants' hearts. The meaning is all in the process of discovery, she says—and I agree.

— Marshall Massey is a member of Mountain View Meeting in Denver.  
This article and the following questions and guidelines were printed in *Friends Bulletin*, January, 1987

# Questions and Guidelines for a Worship Group Which Wishes to Become a Friends Meeting

## *Mountain View Meeting, Intermountain Yearly Meeting*

In these queries, the term, “attenders,” refers to all those who attend your worship group, even those who may hold membership in other Monthly Meetings of the Religious Society of Friends.

1. What draws your worship group to become a Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends? Why do you feel ready to do so?
2. How long has your worship group been meeting? How often and where do you meet for worship? How many adults attend? How many children attend? How many of your attenders are Friends? What geographical area does your group include?
3. Do your attenders believe that the presence of God is usually felt in your meetings for worship? How will you nurture the Spiritual growth in your members and attenders?
4. Do your attenders understand the Quaker business process, especially in the search for a sense of unity? Do your attenders participate in business meetings? Are your business meetings held in a spirit of worship?
5. Do your attenders have sufficient knowledge of Quaker history and Quaker thought for them to use in testing whether a leading is of the Spirit and should be followed?
6. What experience do your attenders have with the Society of Friends outside your worship group, with other Monthly Meetings, Regional Meetings, Yearly Meetings?
7. With which Disciplines (Faith and Practice) are your attenders familiar? Which do you rely on for guidance?
8. Does your group embrace the historic Quaker testimonies and witness, especially the peace testimony, the testimony of simplicity and the Quaker commitment to social justice?
9. Is your group aware of the spiritual diversity within various branches of the Society of Friends? Are your group’s understanding of the nature of the Society of Friends and its beliefs consistent with that of Friends in Colorado General Meeting and Intermountain Yearly Meeting?
10. Will the Monthly Meeting have a stable enough membership that it can be expected to continue to exist for a substantial period of time?
11. Does your worship group have enough members to fill the positions of clerk, recording clerk, and major committees? Are there enough members with sufficient skill and experience that these responsibilities can be rotated, so that no Friend carries too much of the burden? How will you choose your “officers”?
12. Are your attenders familiar with the process of seeking “clearness” when attenders apply for membership, when attenders apply to be married under the care of the Meeting, or when attenders wish assistance in making decisions? What will be your guidelines and procedures for those seeking membership, once you become a Monthly Meeting and for those seeking to marry under the care of your Meeting?
13. Are your attenders familiar with Quaker weddings and Quaker memorial services and how they are carried out?
14. Are your attenders ready to undertake the financial obligations of a Monthly Meeting? Have you developed a budget?

**Questions and Guidelines for a Worship Group Which Wishes to Become a Friends Meeting, page 2**

15. How are records kept? What is your plan for keeping minutes and keeping membership records?
16. Are you prepared as a community to undertake care for your members, their personal and material needs?  
How will the responsibilities of Ministry and Oversight/Counsel be met?

# Fostering *Vital Friends Meetings*

Part Two:  
*Resources for Working with Quaker Meetings*

by Jan Greene and Marty Walton

## **Section R7: Membership**

- R7-1 One Meeting's Process for Setting Membership Procedures *Tallahassee (FL) MM*
- R7-2 Membership Minute
- R7-3 Guidance to Clearness Committees for Membership
- R7-4 Clearness Queries for Membership
- R7-5 Membership Procedures *Chapel Hill (NC) MM*
- R7-7 Membership Questions and Queries



# One Meeting's Process for Setting Membership Procedures

*by Tallahassee Monthly Meeting, Southeastern Yearly Meeting*

## *Invitation Sent to Meeting Members*

Oversight Committee request for a Meeting of Members for Guidance on Membership Issues, 18 Ninth Month 1:30–3:30.

The Oversight Committee is struggling with issues such as:

- criteria of membership
- responsibilities of membership
- members commitment to the corporate development of the Meeting
- process of membership
- maintaining membership
- laying down and transferring membership.

We will address these concerns by responding in worship to three queries.

For the first query we will go around the group asking each person to speak or pass.

For the last two queries, Friends may speak as they are moved.

Please remember the worship-sharing format:

- Open and close with silence and allow silence between speakers.
- Share from your personal condition and experience of God's Will.
- Listen in worship to others, do not respond.
- Allow everyone a chance to share before speaking again.

The queries are:

1. What does it mean to be a member of my meeting?
2. What is the responsibility of the meeting to its members, and of the members to the meeting?
3. What is the difference, in my meeting, between being an attender and being a member?

Please note: The following proposed minute grew out of a concern raised in the Oversight Committee and several subsequent After-Meeting discussions. Both Oversight and Worship and Ministry have prayerfully considered several drafts of the minute. It will be presented for approval in Twelfth Month Meeting for Business. Friends should be aware that the two committees also plan to draft materials intended to acquaint new attenders with who we are and what we bear witness to.

(The next two sections were approved by Tallahassee Meeting following this meeting.)

# Membership Minute of Tallahassee Monthly Meeting

## **What does it mean to be a member of our Meeting?**

Membership is the outward sign of an inner experience of the Living God, the Inner Light, and of unity with the other members of a living body. Membership expresses that this Friend stands in solidarity with Friend's historic testimonies and constitutes a commitment to enter wholeheartedly into the spiritual and corporate activities of the Meeting and to assume responsibility for both service and support, as way opens. Membership is a commitment on the part of the member to strive to follow God's leadings as they are revealed through individual worship and corporate discernment and of the Meeting to support the member on his or her spiritual and personal journey. Membership does not imply the achievement of a certain standard of goodness. We are all learners and seekers.

## **What is the responsibility of the Meeting to its members, and of the members to the Meeting?**

Membership in the Society is both a privilege and a responsibility. Since early Friends rejected the distinction between clergy and laity, responsibility for the full range of Meeting activities rests with the membership. Members are expected to participate in communal worship, to share in the work and service of the Society, and to live in harmony with its basic beliefs and practices. Membership entails readiness to live as part of the Monthly, Half Yearly and Yearly Meeting. Specifically, this means participation in meeting for worship, meeting for business, committee work, and giving time, skills, and financial support to Meeting activities such as religious education, pastoral care, and witness to the broader community.

## **What is the difference, in our Meeting, between being an attender and being a member?**

Members are those for whom the Religious Society of Friends is their primary spiritual home and who feel a deep commitment to the life of the Meeting and to the wider Society of Friends. People who have attended Meeting for Worship regularly for about a year, participated actively in the life of the Meeting, and have become familiar with Friends' historic testimonies and Quaker process, may be ready for membership. These testimonies include: Peace, Equality, Simplicity, and Integrity.

Attendees are welcome at all Meeting functions, including for meetings for business. Attendees are encouraged to be part of the discernment process at Meeting for Business but may not block Meeting members reaching unity. Attendees are welcome to serve on the Religious Education, Peace and Social Concerns, Library, and House and Grounds Committees. The following committees are restricted to members: Oversight, Worship and Ministry, and Nominations.

## Guidance to Clearness Committees on Membership

Membership establishes a commitment. It means that for each member the Religious Society of Friends provides the most promising home for spiritual enlightenment and growth. It commits a person to the daily pursuit of truth after the manner of Friends and commits the Meeting to support the member in that pursuit. Membership includes a willingness to live in spiritual unity with other members of the Religious Society of Friends.

— Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, revised *Faith and Practice*

Ideally, membership is the outward sign of an inner experience of the Living God and of unity with the other members of a living body. It implies a commitment to enter wholeheartedly into the spiritual and corporate activities of the Society and to assume responsibility for both service and support, as way opens.”

— New England Yearly Meeting *Faith and Practice*

We none of us are members because we have attained a certain standard of goodness, but rather because, in this matter, we still are humble learners in the school of Christ. . . . Our membership of the Society of Friends should commit us to the discipleship of the living Christ. When we have made that choice and come under that high compulsion, our membership will have endorsed it.

— Edgar G. Dunston, 1956. *London Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice*, #370

The test for membership should not be doctrinal agreement, nor adherence to certain testimonies, but evidence of sincere seeking and striving for the Truth, together with an understanding of the lines along which Friends are seeking that Truth.

— Friends World Conference, 1952

Quaker service springs from the roots of our faith. It grows out of the inner experience of that deep compassion and sense of oneness with all mankind which Jesus Christ revealed as the eternal love of God for man. We must seek to live our whole lives in the awareness of the presence of the love of God, giving time gladly to meditation and worship, to the outreach of preaching from the heart, and to the compassionate sharing of the burdens of our neighbors.

— Friends World Conference, 1952

## Clearness Queries for Membership

These are questions which your Clearness Committee for Membership would like to explore with you in order to learn more about you and seek clearness together. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers to these questions; they are intended only to guide our conversations. Feel free to ask members of the committee about aspects of the Society of Friends which are not clear to you.

1. How would you describe the spiritual journey which has led you to seek membership in the Society of Friends?
2. Are you familiar with the way in which Friends conduct their Meetings for Business? What has been your experience with business meeting?
3. Are you entirely comfortable with an unprogrammed Meeting for Worship based on expectant waiting? Are you familiar with the source of vocal ministry? Have you experienced messages which are intended for yourself as opposed to messages which are meant for the Meeting as a whole? What kinds of messages do you need for your continued spiritual growth?
4. Are you familiar with the various testimonies of Friends? In particular, what are your feelings in relation to the peace testimony? Have you considered other Friends' testimonies including those on simplicity, integrity, stewardship of our means, social justice, and temperance and moderation?
5. Are you aware of the historical roots of Quakerism and the diversity of Friends practice today?
6. Have you had the opportunity to explore books and articles on the subject of Quakerism? Which of these have been most beneficial to you?
7. Are you familiar with some of the language used by Friends: discerning community, listening to that of God within, yielding to the Spirit, coming to unity with Friends, seeking inward peace?
8. Are you aware of the responsibilities of members in a community without hierarchy or hired staff? Do you have special gifts that you can contribute to enrich the life of the Meeting? Have you considered other ways that you might be able to contribute to the work of the meeting, financially or in other ways?
9. Are you currently a member of any other religious organization?
10. One question which you do NOT need to ask yourself is: “Am I good enough to be a Quaker?” The Society of Friends is not a body of ultra-virtuous people; it is important to recognize that we all have our weaknesses as well as special gifts. And in any case who among us is to judge “who is good enough?”

# Membership Procedures of Chapel Hill, NC Meeting

## Guidelines for Membership Clearness Procedures

A person who feels ready to become a member of the Chapel Hill Friends Meeting begins by writing a brief letter stating the reasons for feeling drawn to take this step. The letter is addressed to the Clerk, who will then refer it to the Overseers committee. Overseers will in turn appoint a clearness committee for membership. The committee will be composed of four or more members of the Meeting, at least two of whom are members of Overseers.

Members of the clearness committee usually meet once without the applicant to clarify with one another their perceptions of clearness, the meaning of membership, and any concerns they might want to pursue in some depth. This is sometimes done just prior to the first meeting with the person requesting membership.

The clearness committee will meet several times with the person requesting membership to explore the meaning of membership, the commitments involved, and any other issues which may seem relevant.

The clearness committee may benefit by having one or more meetings without the applicant present to reflect with one another, share possible reservations and consider any need for further meetings with the person requesting membership.

When clearness is found, the committee brings the matter to Business Meeting, presenting the letter of request as well as its own written recommendation.

Should clearness not be reached, the person requesting membership is encouraged to explore the unresolved issues alone, with help from the clearness committee or other Meeting and non-Meeting resources.

Upon approval for membership by the Business Meeting, a welcoming committee will be formed from the Meeting at large to welcome and become better acquainted with the new member.

The convener of the clearness committee is responsible for presenting a short biography of the new member for publication in the newsletter and introducing him or her to the next convenient meeting for worship. The Clerk is responsible for ensuring that tokens of acceptance/recognition (e.g., subscription to Friends Journal) are presented to the new member.

Members of both the clearness and welcoming committees generally have a continuing responsibility for keeping in touch with the new member, reflecting the Meeting's ongoing concern for his or her welfare.



# Membership Questions and Queries

## *Chapel Hill Friends Meeting*

1. What does the phrase “there is that of God in everyone” mean to you? How does this find expression in your life and in your relationships with other people?
2. Where are you now in your spiritual journey? What are you seeking? What are you leaving behind? How do you relate to other current or former religious affiliations?
3. Are you comfortable with the thought of relying on your own inner light as a guide on your spiritual journey, finding continual revelation within rather than relying on external authority? Do you find the collective experience and insights of Friends helpful in reaching your own understandings?
4. Do the teachings of Jesus and traditional Christian views of Jesus have a place in your religious life? Are you comfortable with the wide range of views in this regard among Friends?
5. Do you find the emphasis on the living silence in Friends worship helpful to your religious life? Do you find the messages in the spoken ministry of Friends helpful to you?
6. Do you understand the distinction between a programmed and an unprogrammed Friends meeting? Are you comfortable with the view that all participants in the Meeting are ministers who, through their words or actions, serve the spiritual needs of one another?
7. How does your family feel about your seeking membership in Friends Meeting? Does this present any problems for you?
8. Are you familiar with the historic testimonies of Friends, and to what extent do you try to exemplify them in your life?
  - The testimony of peace or non-violence
  - The testimony of respect for individuality
  - The testimony of community
  - The testimony of simplicity
  - The testimony of honesty
  - The testimony of equality
9. Does the idea of integrating your inner spiritual life to the outer world of your everyday life appeal to you? Does meditation play a part in joining inner and outer?
10. What does it mean that Friends Meetings for Business are conducted in a spirit of worship, and that decisions are reached by active search for unity?
11. What contributions and talents do you feel you can bring the Meeting community through membership? What gifts might you receive from others?
12. How would you characterize a vital meeting? What responsibilities do you feel the Meeting has towards its children? What are the greatest strengths and weaknesses of the Society of Friends as it faces the future?
13. What are your interests in the wider family of Friends as represented by such organizations as Piedmont Friends Fellowship, Yearly Meetings, Friends General Conference, American Friends Service Committee, Friends World Committee for Consultation, Friends Committee on National Legislation, Quaker House, Carolina Friends School and the like?

## Membership Queries, Chapel Hill Friends Meeting, page 2

14. Are you familiar with Quaker publications such as the Friends Journal, Pendle Hill Pamphlet Series, etc.? Are you aware of the Meeting's own resources (e.g., the library, various funds, clearness committees, adult and children's religious education programs)?
15. What are your expectations of membership in the Meeting? How can the Meeting facilitate your integration into its membership?
16. What reservations, doubts, or unanswered questions do you have concerning membership in a Friends Meeting?

— Chapel Hill (NC) Meeting

# Fostering Vital Friends Meetings

Part Two:

*Resources for Working with Quaker Meetings*

by Jan Greene and Marty Walton

## **Section R8: Religious Diversity**

- R8-1 Renewing the Covenant: Can Our Branches Be Olive Branches? *Douglas Gwyn*
- R8-4 Silence and Preaching *Janey O'Shea*
- R8-5 A Quaker Theology? *Kenneth Lawton*
- R8-7 Workshop: The Boundaries of Quakerism *Janey O'Shea*
- R8-8 The Unity of Paradoxical Quaker Extremes *Bill Taber*
- R8-9 Paradoxical Understandings to Hold in Creative Tension *Frances Irene Taber*
- R8-11 Workshop: Community in Diversity *Jan Greene*
- R8-12 Discussion Questions on Unity and Diversity *"Who We Are"*
- R8-12 Discussion Starter on Quaker Tradition *Anne Thomas*
- R8-13 The Divided Inheritance *Leonard S. Kenworthy*
- R8-14 Where Is the Hope for the Future of Quakerism? *Elizabeth Claggett-Borne*



# Renewing Our Covenant: Can Our Branches Be Olive Branches?

by Douglas Gwyn (Excerpt from his address to the Western Gathering of Friends, Portland, Oregon July 6, 1992)

Can we as Western Friends discover a shared future? The answer to that question is already present in our midst.

From Denver to Portland, from Mexico to Alaska, we represent many different trajectories, histories, traditions of Quaker faith and practice. Our present-day churches and meetings are the fruit of different movements: westward migration, missions, peace and justice activism, church-planting, seeker quests. We share—often we are—the faith that makes us alive, and the hopes we hold dearest. May the riches of our many Quaker traditions become real, living treasures to us all.

(It) is clear that we represent overall two major streams of Quaker tradition, what we call liberal and evangelical, or Universalist and Christ-centered. I ought to allow right away that perhaps few of us would categorize ourselves pure, as one of these or the other. Especially at a conference that brings different kinds of Friends together, we can expect to find many who would not fit the pure types of evangelical or liberal. But these are the streams that generally tend to draw us along with their flow, to some degree or another.

Recent events in Friends United Meeting suggest that the forces that first polarized us into these diverging Streams in the nineteenth century are pulling at us with renewed force. We may be on the threshold of new schisms and separations among the people who call themselves “Friends.” So it is not a facile or naive expectation that brings us together this evening. There is some risk in bringing together the far-flung elements we represent. Together we form a volatile chemistry. Perhaps that is why we are also called “Quakers.”

But it is not as if we have come up with these differences all by ourselves. In our own idiomatic way, our diverging Quaker streams embody the same polarization that has reached crisis proportions in our culture today. Sociologist James Davison Hunter portrays this conflict in his recent book, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (New York: Basic Books, 1991). Hunter defines the two opposing forces in American culture today as *orthodox* and *progressive*. These cultural forces are at war today over a wide variety of issues: abortion, homosexuality, women’s roles, the family, education, the arts. I do not wish to deny or minimize other important conflicts in American society today—racial conflicts and class conflicts, for example. But the cultural conflicts described by Hunter are those that most routinely divide American Friends today.

Hunter’s main thesis is that we misunderstand these conflicts if we view them as primarily political, and especially if we trust the media to portray them adequately and fairly. At root these conflicts are between two fundamentally different world views, different understandings of moral authority and its sources. In portraying these world views, Hunter maintains a balanced, sympathetic perspective.

In the *orthodox*, Hunter sees the commitment to an external, transcendent, definable source of authority, most often the Bible. In various ways, the orthodox impulse is rooted in the conviction that there is an authority that lies somewhere beyond the marketplace of ideas, where religions are bought and sold, where beliefs are broken down and analyzed, where values rise and fall like the stock market. This authority lies with God who transcends this world, whose thoughts are not our thoughts, and whose Scriptures contain Truth beyond our social norms and cultural fashions. That appeals to me.

For the *progressive*, moral authority lies most centrally in immanent, personal experience, in a progressive unfolding of truth. There is a sense that Truth is an evolving process, a continuing revelation, from ancient times down to the present. In traditional faith communities, the progressive impulse manifests itself in many energetic efforts to reshape the language and symbols of centuries-old traditions. For example, we see the exploration of feminine images of God as a supplement or as an alternative to traditional, patriarchal images of God. This revisioning of God is seen as appropriate to the changing roles between men and women today. That appeals to me too.

In America, these two world views, orthodox and progressive, represent the two historic watersheds that have shaped our culture—the *Reformation* of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the *Enlightenment* of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Hunter notes that until the middle of our twentieth century, a great deal of American cultural conflict was generated *between* different faith communities. There was competition between Protestant denominations, and there was more serious hostility between the Protestant majority and religious minorities, as Catholics and Jews began to arrive in larger numbers.

But during this century, the lines of conflict have shifted. Conflict now generates less between Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, which are all based in a shared Scriptural tradition. Conflict now generates in a parallel fashion *within* each of these traditions. In a wide variety of faiths today, we find orthodox elements seeking to *stabilize* traditional norms of faith and morality, and we see progressive elements working to *redefine* those norms in response to new social conditions. Both elements operate out of very serious, but very different forms of moral commitment. Compromise often seems out of the question to both sides, because *the sacred itself* is at stake. For example, the *repression* of homosexuality is as unacceptable to the progressive as the *expression* of homosexuality is to the orthodox. As a result, warring activists tend to *talk past* each other, often seeking to deny the very grounds of the other's concern. Pro-life and pro-choice proponents will rarely admit to the heart-felt reality of each other's commitments.

Hunter writes that what is at stake here is the power to define America, as we move into a new millennium. Orthodox and progressive are willing to co-exist, but become very defensive when they believe they are losing ground to each other in numbers and influence in American society. Therefore, both camps seek to define the founding vision and ultimate destiny of America in terms that reflect their own world view. For one group, the roots and destiny of America are overwhelmingly Christian. For the other group, the thread of coherence in American history is the realization of universal human rights in progressively widening perspectives. Again, as we have already noted, the Reformation and Enlightenment watersheds that shaped American beginnings continue to exert a profound cultural pull upon us all.

Meanwhile, particular denominations also revise their own faith traditions in the same diverging ways. Among Friends, it is sometimes astonishing to hear the different versions of Quaker beginnings we offer. To liberals, early Friends were the first of the moderns, pioneers in democratic process, human rights, and the dignity of the individual. Thus, the destiny of Friends is to be the *avant garde* of progress, of continuing revelation. To evangelicals, early Friends were the ultimate Protestant, the most stripped-down version of Christian worship and ministry, the renewal of New Testament Christian simplicity. Thus, the destiny of Friends is to exemplify the most starkly Christ-centered faith on the Christian landscape. Both of these interpretations have their truth, make important claims on the legacy of Quaker tradition, and guide our energies for renewal.

With our origins in mid-seventeenth century England, the Quaker birth movement is right at the *cusp* between the late Protestant Reformation and the early liberal Enlightenment. We are strongly imprinted with *both* identities. Our position is epitomized by the early Quaker preaching of the light within, the spiritual presence of Christ, abiding with every woman, man, and child, wherever they are,

whatever they may believe. At heart, the Quaker witness to the light is *neither* Protestant *nor* liberal—but it easily shifts in either direction. It is strongly centered in Christian *understanding*, but it is also open-ended, universalist in its *implications*. Thus, in relation to its cultural environment, the Quaker faith is strongly *paradoxical*. As Friends, we are called to be *living paradoxes*—never an easy vocation. It is my conviction that if we abide in that light as the light abides in us, we will make peace with that vocation, and find peace among ourselves. And when we find that peace among ourselves, our hearts will be guided and our minds will be informed (to also) extend a reconciling ministry to our American society at large.

# Silence and Preaching

by Janey O'Shea, Australia Yearly Meeting

I gained an insight into my own preconceptions about the “truest” form of Quakerism in my first term at Woodbrooke. A Burundi Friend asked me one day, “Why are you all so silent when George Fox preached so much? When did English Quakers start having silent meetings?” I started to explain that it wasn't like that at all, and really the silence was the earliest form of worship. Then I began to do what all compulsive field workers do—I counted: how many times does Fox refer to silence of meetings and how many times to preaching?

Our Friend was right—the early Fox preached and preached and preached. There are many fewer references to the silence of the meetings that he held. We are part of a religious tradition which is broader than our own experience of it. Some of the traditions may well not be to our taste. Yet different kinds of Quakers from different parts of the world think of themselves as the inheritors of the message of a George Fox. We are all keen to claim him as our founding father (and Margaret Fell as founding mother); we are often somewhat less keen to claim one another as close kin. Given that the content of Quaker Studies should represent the diversity of Quaker life across the world, how do we find a thread of unity?

It is axiomatic among Friends that religious experience is the foundation of faith. Without experience, the content and structures of faith are “empty notions.” But is experience sufficient? Are the meanings or structures through which we express Quakerism optional forms which can vary from a Yearly Meeting to Yearly Meeting? If so, can they also vary from Friend to Friend within a local Meeting? Varieties of expressions of Quaker experience require from us hard thinking about Quaker identity—our corporate as well as individual identity as Friends.

We know from our local meetings, whatever part of the world we come from, that a Quaker unity is not found in an easy recipe of outward agreement. The unity of the group grows from the inside out—the inward experience of individuals draws the group together in God. If we seek unity, not uniformity, we may be able to sustain great diversity of expression. But only, I suggest, if we do not preempt that unity by the “culture of silence” to avoid conflict. If someone will be offended by my experience, my own measure of the Light, do I stay silent to preserve outward agreement or do I speak in trust that real unity is possible?

— from “Searching for the Role of a Quaker Studies Tutor,” *Woodbrooke Journal*, Summer 1993, p 15.

# A Quaker Theology?

*Kenneth and Joan Lawton of Westminster Monthly Meeting, talked with Friends in Britain and the USA. Kenneth Lawton reports in the 19 January, 1996 issue of The Friend:*

I confess to an insatiable curiosity about what people think and why. However, the leading to travel in the ministry to discover what Quakers believe and experience goes deeper than this. There is, Joan Lawton and I believe, a valid, life-changing experience of “living in the Light” which could unite Friends everywhere and, if we more fully understood it, give us an experiential theology different from traditional systematic theologies. This could take Quakers forward with confidence into the twenty-first century, enabling us to grow in numbers and extend our influence.

With the support of our Preparative and Monthly Meetings and following a pilot questionnaire in the area around our Monthly Meeting, we spent most of October traveling in Philadelphia and New England Yearly Meetings. We shared our concern and considered “eight questions for Quakers.” The sample of beliefs and experience we now quote is based on 100 replies obtained in America and about 50 answers to the pilot in Britain. This enquiry needs to be extended before many conclusions are drawn from it. Nevertheless, it does suggest that such a wider study would be of value.

## 1. What do we believe to be the distinctive elements of Quakerism?

Among American Friends, 73 per cent replied “Direct contact with God” and “the inner light and our belief that God is in everyone.” 24 per cent cited the peace testimony, 18 per cent our lack of creeds and 6 per cent tolerance. In contrast, 27 per cent of the British replies referred to our way of worship, without specific details, 26 per cent the peace testimony, 21 per cent our way of life (which respondents defined in a variety of ways—from ways of worship and business method brought into daily life, through real action caring for others, to ability to think for yourself, working together in a common search for moral solutions), 18 per cent the lack of creeds and 12 per cent tolerance. Perhaps predictably, given Quaker reservations about institutions, on both sides of the Atlantic there were expressions of an underlying unease within the Society. This takes varying forms.

*From the USA:* “As I meet other faiths I’m feeling that Quakerism is quite similar to other faiths.” “Peace witness, an emphasis at least in words, of loving one another—almost all other elements which were once distinctive are now missing from at least some branch of Quakerism.” Two attenders referred to “a charming but I think naive conviction in the essential goodness of everyone—pacifism without concern for the consequences.”

*Four British Friends* expressed their views strongly: “In Britain Yearly Meeting we are becoming less Christian. We are a diverse collection of non-judgmental individualists finding it difficult if not impossible to say “no” to applicants for membership.” Without explaining the reasons, one birthright Friend commented, “I’m glad to be in membership but I would not currently feel able to join if I was not a member now.” “Our non-credal stance and business method are honored as much in the breach as in the observance in the Society of Friends today,” commented another. “More emphasis is given to right action than to right belief.”

All these comments were given anonymously.

Though we approached some 200 Friends, only two—both from the same meeting—objected to being asked such personal questions, on the ground that a Quaker’s beliefs are personal and private. Despite the misgiving about corporate life, the majority were sure of their own faith. Personal convictions, “spiritual” and “social,” were stated with conviction.

2. Living in the Light—Mystical Experience

The much-used phrase “living in the Light” is interpreted by individual Friends in a variety of ways. The majority of both British and Americans (57 and 60 per cent) said that they were able to describe the experience of living in the Light. However, approximately 33 per cent said they could not, whilst a number admitted to attempting it with difficulty.

Although we found problems with the word “mysticism,” especially in the USA, reported experiences and our extensive reading encouraged us to believe that there is a specifically Quaker mysticism to be explored—the potential basis for an experiential Quaker theology. In our British sample, 57 per cent said that they had had one or more mystical or life-changing experiences. In the USA the percentage rose to 63 per cent.

3. The importance of Jesus

We did not use the word “Christ,” both to avoid theological differences in the use of the title, and to ensure that those who think of Jesus as merely one of the great prophets were included. Only 22 per cent of the American sample see Jesus as primarily an historic character, compared with 40 per cent in Britain. 31 and 33 percent respectively thought him rather more than this, whilst 47 and 40 per cent believed him to be a living reality. “Does Jesus affect our lives today?” we asked. In the USA, among liberal Friends, 77 percent said yes, comparing with 55 percent of the British replies.

There was a marked tendency to give parity to attenders and Friends when making appointments to committees in Preparative and Monthly Meetings. One American attender’s reply would appear to illustrate some potential dangers with this: “I came to Meeting and committees because I admire Quakers enormously. I do not consider myself a Christian and am not a Quaker by birth or conviction.”

I have not personally yet found my answer to the question, “What are the essential elements of Quakerism?” It is, though, a question which seemed to strike a chord with our American Friends.

Respondents were:

<i>Ages:</i>	<i>US and British</i>		<i>Status:</i>	<i>US and British</i>	
over 60:	47%;	52%	by conviction	60%;	68%
41–60	36%;	34%	birthright	8%;	9%
25–40	13%;	14%	birthright and conviction	12%;	9%
under 25	5%;	0%	attenders	15%;	14%
			not stated	5%;	0%

# Workshop: The Boundaries of Quakerism

*by Janey O'Shea, Australia Yearly Meeting*

**Aim:** to call a group to chart the boundaries of Quakerism

**Materials:** shapes of colored paper, wool or string to “draw” a circle

**Process:**

1. Determine the depth and focus of this exercise, e.g. single session on core Quaker belief or a series of sessions dealing with the complexity of Quakerism
2. List:
  - a. ask participants to list aspects of Quakerism which are “core” for them: one aspect per piece of colored paper
  - b. alternative: list some items as “core” some as “peripheral”
  - c. alternative: break aspects into 3 categories-Quaker belief, Quaker structures (or processes), Quaker life (behavior)
3. Profile of Quakerism for this group:

Within “boundary” of Quakerism marked on the floor in yarn, ask participants to choose their first item and place it where they feel it belongs. Worshipful listening—no discussion; one item each until the group has been around—then begin again.
4. Observation:

Exercise can stop at this point with the group observing and reflecting on what is their diversity and what it means in their faith community
5. Exploration:

If the group seems ready for it they can move to “negotiation” about the placement of various aspects of the tradition—e.g. Why do you think it core? Could it be more peripheral under these circumstances? etc.

At this point the group needs loving, fair firm facilitation to “hear” one another. (I try to do it slowly and with worship as seems needed, reminding everyone to speak from their experience of the tradition and the Spirit in their lives and not from principles and book learning.)
6. Review:

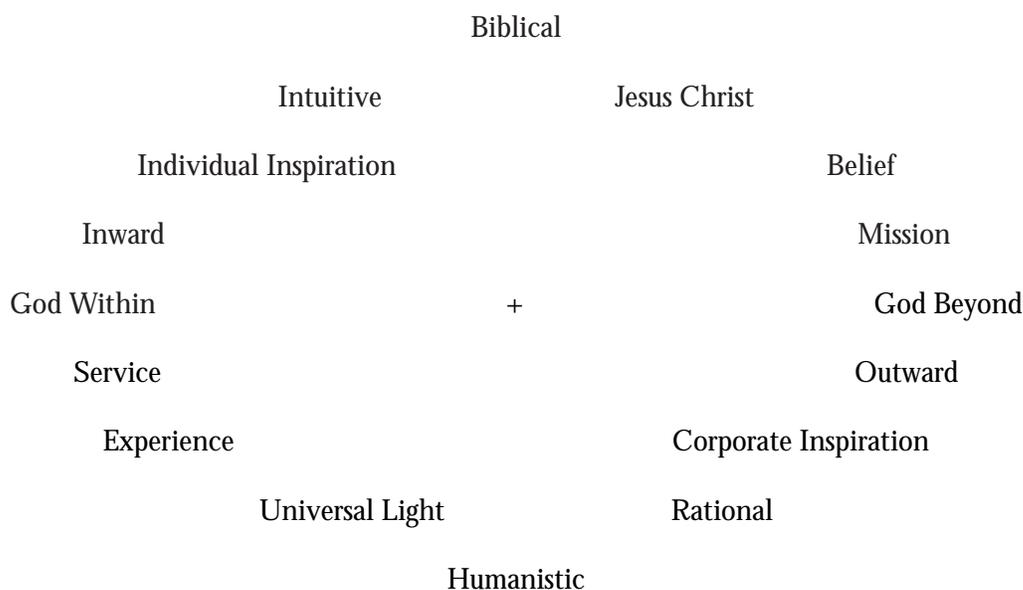
At the end of a course or after a year it is often interesting to reconstruct the model and ask them to re-order it in the light of their present clearness.

# The Unity of Paradoxical Quaker Extremes

by Bill Taber, Ohio Yearly Meeting, Conservative. Adapted from an article in FGC Focus, Feb. 1992, Friends General Conference

A careful reading of early Quaker writings up through the early 19th century shows that earlier Friends were able to combine, in dynamic, creative tension, the paradoxical extremes (both ends of the arrows radiating from the center), while later Quakers, as we have become more acculturated and intellectual, have tended to separate into “camps” or “parties.” Once we have separated and lost frequent contact with one another, the tendency is to take one end only of a paradoxical truth, and thus gradually become more extreme. It is as if there is something in the human, analytical mind which wants to reach the security of a point of philosophical certainty rather than staying in the seemingly less comfortable and more dynamic flux which keeps the paradoxical extremes in some sort of creative tension.

The circle in the center represents that place, in the heart of each tradition, where there is unity, and that it is possible to look beyond the boundaries and polarization and recognize one another as sisters and brothers in the faith, even beyond differences of theology, language, and culture.



Is it possible that the unquestioned power of earlier Quakerism lay in its ability to stay with the dancing, living Spirit in a place beyond the limitations of linear thinking, in a wideness of heart beyond the limitations of words and ideologies and systems?

# Paradoxical Understandings to Hold in Creative Tension

*by Frances Irene Taber, Ohio Yearly Meeting Conservative. Adapted from an article in FGC Focus, Feb. 1992, Friends General Conference*

The chart on the other side of this page elaborates on the elements from Bill Taber's circle chart. It can be considered as another way of looking at the elements found on the wheel; it goes into more detail and in addition names what often happens when we allow our faith to fracture out of that center in which paradoxes can be held in creative tension. It illustrates the implications of allowing ourselves to fly out of the living center of Quakerism.

Our view is that a whole Quaker-Christian faith includes some element of both central columns. A complete absence of either is likely to lead to a distortion in the element which is retained. Thus, a person whose faith is best described by the left center column, and who does not resonate at all with the elements in the right-center column, may find without that balance that the reality of experience moves towards its spin-off extreme in the far left column. If this distortion does not occur in the life of a given Friend, it is likely to happen in the faith experience and expressions of his or her spiritual descendants. The equivalent pattern is likely to hold for a faith experience described primarily by the right-center column, without counter-balancing from the left-center.

The chart also illustrates how people have trouble understanding one another's religious language. One's viewpoint—far left or far right—has a tendency to create a distortion in perspective, making it difficult to distinguish between the two degrees on the opposite side. As either central viewpoint fails to be balanced by an element of the other, the person with that perspective tends to assume that the viewpoint represented by the opposite central column includes its aberration.

It would be an unusual Friend whose faith and life experience is a perfect balance of the two central columns. Most of us experience one side more fully than the other, at least at a given period of our lives. It is our understanding that a living growing faith experience which starts out heavily on either left or right, will often, when it remains vital, expand in time to include some understanding of the opposite side of the paradox.

In reflecting on this chart, it is useful to take a long-term view. Although it may appear so at a given point in history, neither side represents an intrinsically "conservative" or "progressive" view. That depends on historic context. It has flipped twice since 1800. Also, neither side is intellectually more respectable in a long-range view. That, like the question of which one is conservative, is a matter of current fashion.

The chart is neither definitive nor infallible. It is merely a description of tendencies we have noticed among Friends, intended to simulate reflection on our own spiritual journeys and on the way we communicate with other Friends and hear them.

**Paradoxical Understandings to Hold in Creative Tension, by Frances Irene Taber, 1992, page 2**

*(Of the center two columns, people can be both/and, rather than either/or)*

<i>SPIN-OFF or ABERRATION</i>	<i>UNIVERSAL</i>	<i>JESUS CHRIST-CENTERED</i>	<i>SPIN-OFF or ABERRATION</i>
Liberal, vague intellectualism	<b>Affirmation of truth experienced by others</b>	<b>Affirmation of truth as I've experienced it in the context of Christian history</b>	Fundamentalist, exclusive intellectualism
Powerlessness, hopelessness, fatigue (the tired liberal)	<b>Seeking to embody and express the love of God</b>	<b>Being empowered by God</b>	Misuse of power, apparent lack of love
Limiting God from powerful action in time	<b>Affirmation of God as inhabitant of a space unconfined by time</b>	<b>Affirmation of God as acting in time</b>	Limiting God's actions to a particular context
Limitation of God's actual transformation of our lives	<b>Immanent—God as expressed in creation</b>	<b>Transcendent—God as greater than any expression we can know</b>	Limitation of God's actual transformation of our lives
Focus on psychic	<b>Intuitive</b>	<b>Intellectual system of theology</b>	Association of psychic with demonic
Inability to put experience in words with any strength	<b>Felt, sensed, experienced, uncontainable in words</b>	<b>Verbally explained</b>	Rigid, exclusive creed
Lack of clear relation to God	<b>God understood as beyond personhood</b>	<b>God understood as personal</b>	Limited nature of relation to God
Relationship confined by the limitations of my own viewpoint	<b>"Spiritual" relationship to God. Inward Light as impersonal presence.</b>	<b>"Personal" relationship to God</b>	Relationship confined by the limitations of my own viewpoint
Life of Jesus Christ is without power for me	<b>Life of Jesus Christ as example, model, source of teaching</b>	<b>Life of Jesus Christ as unique, and essentially relevant to me</b>	Those who don't know Jesus Christ are benighted
There is nothing intrinsically unique about the Jesus of history	<b>Jesus as God-filled or inspired revealer</b>	<b>Jesus Christ as Son of God and redeemer</b>	Those who do not connect with the Jesus of history are lost
God's action so generalized as to lose force	<b>God acts everywhere, at all times, whether we are aware of it or not</b>	<b>God acts in this specific time, in this specific way</b>	God's action in other ways is not perceived
Tendency to have a fuzzy, ineffective concept of God	<b>Mystical—experiencing God</b>	<b>Theological—thinking about God</b>	Tendency to confine God to the ways we have described God
Hope diffuse, ungrounded	<b>Hope</b>	<b>Faith</b>	Faith narrowly focused, brittle
I'm OK, you're OK, we're all OK	<b>Appreciation of other's viewpoints</b>	<b>Concern for other's spiritual welfare</b>	Judgment and control of others
Religious experience so ineffectively communicated its reality seems unclear	<b>Religious experience as ultimately indescribable</b>	<b>Religious experience described</b>	Religious experience prescribed
Equalizing all experience—all of same value—no sense or criteria of maturing	<b>Appreciation of others' experience</b>	<b>Evaluation of others' experience</b>	Discounting of others' experience
Emphasis on proclamation equated with underestimating importance of material needs	<b>Social action</b>	<b>Proclamation</b>	Emphasis on social action equated with lack of essential grounding in faith
Failure to communicate the ground out of which action comes	<b>Social action</b>	<b>Proclamation</b>	Failure to translate faith into action

# Workshop: Community in Diversity

by Jan Greene, New York Yearly Meeting (Uses Frances Taber's Chart "Paradoxical Understandings.")

## 1. Large Group Community Building

**A. Go-around:** Introductions and brief sharing of personal histories of what brought each person to Quakerism AND with what group of Quakers (FGC, FUM, EFI, Independent) did you first have contact?.

**B. Open sharing from Large Group:** Have you had any history of dealing with THE OTHERS (Friends from other branches of Quakerism)? What was your experience? What were your feelings? What, if anything, did you learn?

## 2. In Small Groups: Look at Frances Taber's Chart "Paradoxical Understandings."

1. What is your "profile" on the chart of paradoxes?
2. Are you comfortable with your profile?
3. What, if any, pressures do you feel to have a different profile?
4. If there are any changes you would consider making in your profile, how would you change?
5. What would be your Meeting's profile on the chart of paradoxes?
6. Has your Meeting experienced pressures to change its profile?
7. How has it responded?
8. Read Douglas Steere's Quote below, then describe trends in your Meeting which, if followed, would mean that the Quaker future would be:
  - a. a mystical sect within Christianity OR
  - b. a bridge between western religion and eastern religions OR
  - c. a new religion that tries to learn from all, but intends to stay separate OR
  - d. any other

## 3. Question on bridging.

(Please ask someone in your group to take notes on responses to this question.) Does your small group have any recommendations or thoughts on how to bridge the gaps in our understanding of other groups of Quakers, and how to overcome any fear and prejudice that exists in our own Yearly Meeting about our differences?

## 4. Large Group Summary of Responses to Question 3, and any general sharing.

Christianity in its relations with the great world religions has four obvious alternatives. Its first relation could be that of attempting to collapse or to destroy the rival religion in the territory where it is working, or at least to be on hand with a good deal of satisfaction at its burial. The second is to merge with it in some form of syncretism. The third is a relationship of co-existence in which each religion agrees to honor the other and so respects its integrity that it will make no attempt whatever to challenge it or to seek to alter the allegiance of its members. The fourth is a relationship of what I would call "mutual irradiation" in which each is willing to expose itself with great openness to the inward message of the other, as well as to share its own experience, and to trust that whatever is the truth in each experience will irradiate and deepen the experience of the other.

— Douglas V. Steere, "Mutual Irradiation: A Quaker View of Ecumenism," Pendle Hill Pamphlet 175, p.7

# Discussion Questions on Unity and Diversity

*(A variation of Questions from Who We Are, p. 121)*

## Questions for Individuals:

Is there a diversity of belief within your own Meeting? If yes, how does your meeting respond to it? What things help your group not to be destroyed by its own differences?

How do you react to the differences among Friends worldwide? What do you think about the fact that unprogrammed Quakers are a minority of Friends worldwide? Are there any issues here for you? If so, what are they?

Have you experienced the feeling that “divisions are not as important as our love for each other?” When? How easy is it to hold on to that vision?

## Questions for the Group:

What are the limits of our tolerance? Is difference in worship-style more or less important than any difference in belief?

Do we want our Quakerism to be safe or risky? What risks are we prepared to take? Does the diversity of Friends worldwide feel risky?

How can we best stand side by side with Friends who differ from ourselves? Do we want to? Why?

What is our vision of the Quaker future? Is it a vision for all Friends? What is the vision based on? How do we best move, as first steps, in getting from here towards our vision.

# Discussion starter on Quaker Tradition

*by Anne Thomas, Canadian Yearly Meeting*

**moss on a rock**

**a ladder**

**a bush**

What model of Quaker Tradition described above feels most comfortable to you?

What use do you make of Quaker tradition?

Does it evolve?

What role do you have in shaping the tradition?

Is there an “essential nature” of Quakerism?

# The Divided Inheritance

by Leonard S. Kenworthy

Charts have their faults, but they can sometimes clarify an idea or ideas better than words alone. . . . (T)he following chart . . . illustrates the ways in which the Quakers over a long period have divided the total message of 17th century Friends, with each group in the United States concentrating on certain aspects of that many-sided message. The greatest loss has probably been in the division of the original testimony of the Inward Christ and The Historic Christ into two separate testimonies as indicated in this chart:

## Dividing Our Inheritance—Friends in the United States

Rationalism + Social Concern	+ Simplicity	+ The Inward Christ	+ The Historic Christ	+ Equality	+ The Bible and Education	+ Evangelism and Mission
Wilburites HICKSITE			Gurneyites			Evangelicals ORTHODOX

Writing about this fragmentation in *Friends Search for Wholeness*, Jack Kirk said: “Each group has thought that it carried the full Quaker banner, while in actuality each has tightly clasped only a tattered shred of the rich tapestry that was the original Quaker movement.”

Gurneyites, Hicksites, and Wilburites, Five Years Meeting (now Friends United Meeting), General Conference Friends, Evangelical Friends, and Independents. Birthright Friends, Convinced Friends and Overconvinced Friends. It makes one’s head ache to try to understand the many Quaker groups, and one’s heart bleed to realize such divisions exist.

Quakerism today is like a good-sized plot of ground which has been divided among several sons and daughters, each inheriting a small section of the original plot. These strips are too small to cultivate properly alone, and yet people do not seem to be able to farm them cooperatively.

What a Society we would have if we could work together, learning from each other and using the talents of each group. In such a Society we would utilize the zeal, sacrificial giving, and concern for the spreading of the Gospel of Evangelical Friends. We would profit from the mission work, the concern for children and young people, the talents of many pastors, the network of colleges, and the broad base of membership of Five Years Meeting (now FUM) Friends. And we would all gain from the highly educated, upper middle class membership of Friends General Conference and of Independent Friends, with their emphasis upon worship on the basis of silence and their interest in social service.

What a Society of Friends that combination would make.

— L. Kenworthy, *Quakerism: A Study Guide on the Religious Society of Friends*, pp. 39–40

# Where is the Hope for the Future of Quakerism?

by *Elizabeth Claggett-Borne, New England Yearly Meeting*

**Have we tried to make Quakerism such a safe faith that it holds no risks?**

- Are we giving major energy and support to our youth?
- If we were all in prison (as were entire meetings of Friends in the 1600's), would our children know enough or have enough conviction to carry on the Quaker faith?
- Do we show our children through the example of our love that faith requires taking risks?
- Friends, are we too comfortable? If so, what should we do about it?

**Look around your meetings:**

- Who is living the life of the Spirit so vividly that you want to follow them?
- Where is the fire?
- Who is living in that Spirit?
- Are we still quaking?
- Are we living with the same strength of conviction as the early Friends?
- What needs to happen?

**Without a unified message, where is the hope for the Religious Society of Friends?**

# Fostering *Vital Friends Meetings*

Part Two:

*Resources for Working with Quaker Meetings*

by Jan Greene and Marty Walton

## **Section R9: Overcoming Racism and Bias**

- R9-1 A Call for Racial Justice among Friends *Paul Ricketts*
- R9-3 The View from Here: Friends and Racism *Joan Broadfield*
- R9-5 Our Role as Individuals in America's Racial History: Atlanta Meeting Looks at Racism  
*Bert Skellie and Adelaide Solomon-Jordan*
- R9-7 How to Facilitate Frank Discussions of Hard Issues by Diverse Participants  
*Future Leaders, Future Changes Program*
- R9-9 Resources for Working on Racism and Bias *(various)*
- R9-11 Anti Bias and Anti Racism Programs *Joan Broadfield*
- R9-13 Inclusivity Race and Class: What Are the Quaker Barriers? *Joan Broadfield and Bill Frysinger*
- R9-14 Queries from Young Friends at FGC Gathering 1997



# A Call for Racial Justice Among Friends

## *Paul Ricketts, Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting*

As I prepared to attend my fourth Friends General Conference Gathering in Hamilton, Ontario, in July of 1996, I was full of excitement. Just thinking about building new friendships and rekindling old ones and worshipping with the lesbian/gay/bisexual community and allies brought a joy to my soul. I remembered past Gatherings—late night discussions and Friends sharing their stories with each other and singing songs of faith.

I experienced joy in being in community with Friends at previous Gatherings but also pain when Friends did not have a clue that their behavior was often hurtful and racist. Many times Friends' behavior was not a reflection of the values they held so deeply in their hearts.

Let me share some of my experiences at past Gatherings.

- Many times at Gatherings, white Friends have explained to me why African Americans need music, music, music—and lots of emotion—in “their” worship. When I asked them what color I was, they looked puzzled and mumbled, “But, Paul, you’re different.” At that moment I became invisible to them as a person of color.
- I feel frustrated when I must justify the Friends of Color Center each year to white Quakers who believe that separatism for any reason is wrong, and when I must explain that Friends of Color Center provides safe space for us. The goal of having a safe space for people of color is not to exclude white Quakers, but it is where our souls as people of color can find rest, which will enable us to go back into the Gathering with spirits renewed.
- The most painful experience yet for me happened in 1996 when I had to explain to young children—mostly white children—why the Underground Railroad is not a game to be played but was a life and death struggle for thousands of Africans who sought freedom from slavery.

I realize that by sharing my experiences among white Quakers I am doing something that women, gays and lesbians, and people of color must do often. That is, not only do we assert our pride in our identities, but we also have to justify the oppression in communities that are supposed to affirm us.

My experiences at Gatherings have become threads of stories that other people of color have shared, and we have woven these threads into a quilt. Like the AIDS quilt, it represents both pain and healing.

In sharing our stories, people of color have found that we are not alone—that this Quaker faith is our faith, too. Coming into our own power is important because it calls us to speak truth about who we are. When that truth is marginalized and devalued, we turn to our Inner Teacher to give us strength and grace and to help us speak our truth a little louder.

Jesus witnessed his own truth by staying centered when he was pushed to the edge. He listened to the Inner Teacher, where he too found strength and grace to carry out his work.

I think this has been the faith of Friends of color: to stay centered in the Light and then move forward and speak our truth on issues of racism within the Religious Society of Friends.

But the work toward racial justice in the Religious Society of Friends is not the work of Friends of color only. White Quakers have to come out of their own guilt and shame of our history around issues of racism in the Religious Society of Friends. The racism that existed at the time of George Fox, Margaret Fell, Levi Coffin, Lucretia Mott and Rufus Jones exists today. White Friends should not allow that history to paralyze them. They should use that history as a springboard to move forward on issues of racism.

The work for racial justice among Friends should be spirit-led and begin in our monthly meetings. I led a workshop focusing on outreach to people of color in 1995. As I stated then, I believe that central to our faith as Quakers is the belief that inward life will call us to outward actions.

I believe monthly meetings should focus their work toward healing racism and becoming a multiracial meeting in two areas: pastoral work and prophetic work.

## A Call for Racial Justice Among Friends, page 2

The pastoral work is to help meetings begin defining and exposing racism in the lives of Friends and in our meetings. It simply means cleansing our temples so that the Spirit can move us and guide us in creating inclusive communities of faith. I suggest that pastoral work can be done in “Friendly Eights,” peace and social concerns committees, or other small groups in the meeting.

I also suggest queries to help Friends’ meetings in their discernment on building a multiracial community of faith. Sample queries could include (but are not limited to):

1. What is your relationship to people of color as Quakers and as members of the dominant culture? For example, where do you live, where do you work, and where do your children go to school?
2. What is the relationship of your meeting to communities of color now?
3. Why do you want to be a multicultural and multiracial meeting?
4. What is your history as a meeting with communities of color?
5. What has been your meeting’s experience with diversity on spirituality, classism, and homophobia?

Each meeting can continue to add to this list of queries to help Friends find guidance as we move forward on issues of racial diversity.

The prophetic work builds on the pastoral work, as it calls white Friends out of their meetings to start building partnerships with communities of color. Examples of partnerships:

1. Locating your meetinghouse in a community of color.
2. Developing a working relationship with the neighborhood association of the community you are in.
3. Creating a racially diverse First-day school curriculum.
4. Building low-income housing in collaboration with another minority congregation.
5. Volunteering with a minority AIDS project.

Meetings can add to this list as they gain experience in building partnerships with communities of color.

In my experience it is not about the number of people of color in our meetings or how much good work white Quakers are doing, but about trust and building healthy relationships among Quakers and people of color.

Our work toward diversity cannot just happen at Friends General Conference Gatherings or a workshop at Yearly Meeting; it has to be at the core of everything we do as Friends.

I hope that someday Friends will acknowledge that in worship everybody has different needs—not because of their race but because some people just need silence—or music—or holy communion—to experience the spirit.

I believe that if white Quakers commit themselves to continue working on issues of racism and building partnerships with communities of color, then the Quaker faith will take root and grow and provide all of us with the tools and resources to speak our truth and celebrate the good work that God has begun in us.

— This article has been reprinted from *Friends Journal*, July, 1997

# The View From Here—Friends and Racism

by Joan Broadfield, *Philadelphia Yearly Meeting*

I have often heard Friends articulate the hope for an inclusive, diverse community of Friends who were hospitable and visible, who lived their beliefs. Can we be that community without considering how we respond to racism?

Some Friends, usually white, say: “Why do we have to notice race? Why can’t we stop talking about it?” I have sympathy with these statements, because I know that race is a human construct. However, that construct is now so imbedded in the way we interact, if you will in the ‘systems’ in which we operate, that we cannot simply ignore it. Also, the reality of the differences we all have seems to have required humankind to create the construct of race in the first place. We can resist the pseudoscience that the construct attempted to feed into. We cannot resist the pain that has resulted for people of color—and for people of European descent.

Prejudice is hatred or dislike directed against a racial, religious or national group. We need to talk more about prejudice. Racism is more than simple prejudice. Yet, more often than not, even in the dictionary it is given as a synonym for ‘prejudice.’ In a more ironic sign of racism, even dictionaries do not seem to want to acknowledge the definition that social activists and people of color have been working with for decades: racism is prejudice that is projected into action through power or privilege. Racism is institutionally driven by privilege and bias that simply exists. The bias and prejudice of privilege is so integrated it is hard to see clearly. Sometimes we do not know what we are assuming.

Do all Friends acknowledge the pain that many honored historical Friends owned slaves? How do we deal with the pain this knowledge causes in us and the pain it causes those whose ancestors were enslaved? Is there a shared sense of wanting to move forward beyond the pain? Do we recognize that our world and our riches have grown with the fruits of the labors of oppressed and enslaved people?

Too often, when those of us who are white hear the word ‘racism,’ our defenses spring to action. We want it to all go away. We know some of the past, but often this includes just the parts we are proud of—and sometimes we have even exaggerated that. We need to learn a more complete version of the past reality.

So what can we do?

First, learn what racism really is. It requires intentional awareness to recognize, face, and work through its implications. Accept that if you are white, especially if you are also middle class, you have privilege you never asked for. Your life is circumscribed differently from people of color.

Second, recognize that all of us, all colors, are affected by racism. If we are people of color we are very aware of it. If we are white, we may not know what the effects are, perhaps because we are denying the reality of it. But we can begin to notice intentionally the ways we are deprived of equal relationship. It may be the awkwardness we feel around each other, particularly if words we have said suddenly seem to hang in the air. It can be the defensiveness we feel around race issues.

Third, and most important, racism can be addressed through learning about ourselves. We must learn about our own biases and prejudices intentionally. We can look at cultural differences and the assumptions that drive behaviors in ourselves and in our Quaker culture. In the end, we all will require humility, compassion, forgiveness, and transformation. The ultimate resolution of racism will be through use of our spiritual gifts.

Fourth, we white people need to talk with ourselves about us. We need to notice with each other the aspects of privilege, bias, and prejudice and the pain they cause. And we need to celebrate what our ancestors did right, in appropriate ways.

## **The View From Here—Friends and Racism, page 2**

How do we confess our racism? How can we create the space of trust that allows us to open all our wounds? Hurt runs deep and is very personal. No one can truly feel another's hurt. To believe one can is to show an arrogance that makes the hurt run deeper. We can be grateful that God loves us, that we are being brought to awareness. For with our awareness, we can begin to transform ourselves. In all our differences and separateness, the place of unity where we can meet and be connected despite our unhappy differences is in the love of God and one another.

Remember that guilt is not helpful if all we do is feel the shame and do nothing, or deny the shame. Remember, too, that the peaceable kingdom is not the place where we are all perfect; rather, it is the place where we live out the love of God, and where we are working on the problems in our everyday lives as best we can.

# Our Role as Individuals in America's Racial History: Atlanta Meeting Looks at Racism

by Bert Skellie and Adelaide Solomon-Jordan,  
*Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association*

Atlanta Friends Meeting began a discussion group on the topic, "Our Role as Individuals in America's Racial History," in November 1997. Through discussions of readings, videos and other personal sharing, we have sought to understand our part in racial history and to support each other in individual and possible group actions against racism. An important concern is to address the work necessary to effect a change in racial sensitivity and attitude, and to effect life-altering behavioral change. An important goal is to make our Meeting more welcoming to everyone.

The title of our group was intended to be non-threatening and indeed inviting. It was intended to convey the personal nature of the work to be done. It was also intended to focus on just our American racial history. Our group's "sense of the Meeting" that we wanted to meet twice a month is also important, showing a significant investment of time. We have evolved toward having planning meetings in weeks in between group meetings. This encourages members to commit even more time to the work, and makes it easier to incorporate individuals' concerns into the work of the group and more specifically into the work of each individual.

African American participants have had the unique role of keeping the focus on racism. The desire and need to discuss class, economic impact, gender, etc., is often central for those who have never discussed the issue of "white privilege." It is not unheard of that in their racial identity development some African Americans may also want to address racism from an economic, class or gender perspective. It is imperative, however, that the group keep its focus on "our role in America's racial history."

We have used a number of resources listed in the next section. In addition, we have purchased small bound composition books with black and white covers for recording and reflection or personal sharing about racial bias incidents, actions or questions related to racism. The small size (4-1/2 by 3-1/4 inches) was selected to make it convenient to carry these emotionally weighty notes around. The black and white cover is symbolic of our focus on Black and White America. The books are bound so that any ripped out pages would be noticed by the owner and would eventually result in the book's falling apart, a sign to the owner that he or she had torn away some of his or her personal racial history. The composition books also allow one to be part of the group when one is "not able" to attend for work, family or race related emotional reasons. Through using these books, a group member can have permission to be absent and yet continue to work.

Publicity for this program was done through the Atlanta Friends Meeting Newsletter as follows:

## **10/97 Newsletter: SOCIAL CONCERNS DISCUSSION GROUP**

For many, indeed most of us, the lessons we learned in history and social studies are somewhat different than the lessons our children and grandchildren are learning. It is not a revision of history to look at history again, but a wonderful opportunity to see our America more completely. One example is that so often we begin looking at the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. and have no knowledge of the generations before, the legacy he inherited that molded the man he became.

Did you know that Southern states paid for African American students to attend such schools as New York University and the University of Chicago in order to avoid integration and/or the cost of setting up a separate law school or other professional school? Are you confused by the attendance, indeed the enthusiastic participation, of your African American male friends in the Million Man March? When looking for a home, have you found yourself comfortable only in neighborhoods where people look like you? In your everyday conversation, what do you mean when you say "lower socioeconomic?" What do you mean when you say "middle class?" What picture comes to mind when you hear the word "criminal?" What kinds of choices do you find

## **Our Role as Individuals in America's Racial History, page 2**

yourself making when attending arts or cultural performances or activities? Did you know that a study, including only healthy women from the class of 1973 at Agnes Scott College and Spelman College, showed that the Spelman graduate mom faced an infant mortality rate equivalent to that of an eighth-grade-educated white woman?

If you're interested in the possibility of a forum or discussion group on the history of how we as Americans got where we are today racially and the role each of us plays in the racial current of American history, please contact the Social Concerns Committee. We would like to form a discussion group to consider these issues.

Contact: (four names and telephone numbers were included here).

### **11/97 Newsletter:**

An organizing meeting of those interested in a discussion group on "Our Role as Individuals in America's Racial History" will be held on November 12 at 7:30 p.m. at the Meetinghouse. Members and attenders are encouraged to take part in this organizational meeting.

### **12/97 Newsletter:**

The Social Concerns discussion group, "Our Role as Individuals in America's Racial History," will initially continue to meet every two weeks, on Wednesdays from 7:15–9:00 p.m. at the Meetinghouse. . . . All members and attenders are invited and encouraged to attend. Questions may be addressed to (four names and phone numbers were listed here).

### **1/98 Newsletter:**

The Social Concerns discussion group, "Our Role as Individuals in America's Racial History," meets every two weeks on Wednesdays from 7:15–9:00 p.m. and will meet again January 14. This change from the previously announced date allows time for those interested to view "Amistad" before the January 14th discussion of the film. There will also be time for diary sharing. Those attending the January 27 meeting will view a 20-minute video on white privilege, "Free Indeed." The study guide questions will be used to facilitate a group discussion. Individual group members are also reading books by three African American men and discussions are planned for future meetings. The books are *Maggie's American Dream*, by James Comer; *Once Upon a Time When We were Colored*, by Clifton Taubert; and *Colored People*, by Henry Louis Gates. The focus in each of these nonfiction books is the supportiveness and cohesion of the African American family. All are invited and encouraged to attend.

# How to Facilitate Frank Discussions of Hard Issues by Diverse Participants

*by the adult and youth leaders of the Future Leaders, Future Changes program of the North Carolina Racial Justice Program*

- Be sensitive to issues of time, place, and display of affluence at meetings. For example, poor people will be hindered from participating if meetings are held when they are at work, if there is no child care, if transportation to the site is difficult for those without cars, if the site is too plush.
- To best encourage participation, facilitators/group leaders in homogeneous groups should have the same identities as the group, i.e. race, class, gender, age, etc. In diverse groups, facilitators/group leaders should be drawn from the groups least likely to participate (usually the groups with least power). Thus mixed groups will have the widest participation if they are led by women, people of color, poor people, young people, sexual minorities, etc.
- Generate a tone of openness and relaxation, without physical barriers like tables between people. Arrange people in circles; provide a site where people can sit on the floor instead of chairs if they choose; have leaders dress informally. (Note: this sends an unspoken message of equality and may create some unease among people in the traditionally dominant groups who are more comfortable in hierarchical settings.)
- To begin the discussion, the facilitators should model whatever they would like the participants to do: revealing themselves if they want others to do that, talking frankly about hard issues, talking about times when they were confused and didn't "have it all together" if they want to move people away from hard-line positions to exploring new possibilities, telling about mistakes they've made if they want people to take risks. These stories must be relatively brief or the discussion will become facilitator-dominated, rather than participatory.
- Having small group discussions prior to large group discussions will sometimes allow people who don't tend to speak in large groups to organize their thoughts and more actively participate.
- Information about traditionally oppressed groups has often been used against them. Ask people's permission to take notes, record, or tape, explaining how that information will be used and who will have access to it. Record notes on flip charts so everyone can see the process, and encourage speakers to make any corrections of meaning and wording.
- When taking notes, respect people's exact words. Remember that people's words grow out of their culture and experiences, and any time we paraphrase, filtering/editorializing by the note-taker creeps in.
- Be sensitive to the existence of a majority or predominant point of view—there almost always is one—and don't let that point of view set the parameters of the discussion (defining the issue, excluding related issues, defining "success"). Try to arrange that the minority or traditionally oppressed group's point of view is heard first, and is not silenced during the discussion.
- To encourage authentic discussion, propose a definition of a "safe space" which is NOT defined as a place where no one is challenged or where no one says anything that will hurt anyone's feelings. Propose instead a safe space where anyone can bring anything to the table and there is a group commitment to understanding and engaging issues, listening to people's experiences, and validating diverse points of view.
- Propose to the group that at times it may be useful to leave space for silence between speakers so that everyone can absorb and reflect on what has been said.

## How to Facilitate Frank Discussions of Hard Issues by Diverse Participants, page 2

- Suggest up front to participants from traditionally dominant groups that they may have to think twice about their first reaction to information coming from oppressed groups, that they should try listening again, and going past their initial responses to further engagement and understanding.
- In difficult discussions, the facilitator's primary challenge may be how to affirm participants and their common interests without squelching frank discussion of differences.
- In many of the most successful discussions among diverse participants, the struggles and conflicts over issues, history, tactics, etc. are productively sustained by an explicitly stated underlying commitment to relationship and community building.

— Editor's Note: The Future Leaders, Future Changes program, operated by the North Carolina Racial Justice Program, directed by Terry Austin, Piedmont Friends Fellowship, is a group of middle school youth, college mentors and adult leaders who meet weekly to discuss issues of social concern. This list was compiled collaboratively by members of that weekly group.  
(This material was used by Atlanta Meeting in their work on looking at racism.)

# Resources for Working on Racism and Bias

*Joan Broadfield, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Bert Skellie, Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association and others*

## Films and Videos

*Amistad*, a feature-length film. (Used by Atlanta MM)

*Free Indeed*, a 23 minute video on white privilege produced by the Mennonite Central Committee, 1995. Good discussion starter for considering issues of privilege as whites in North America.\*\*

*The Color of Fear*, a 90 minute video by Stir Fry Seminars “on the state of race relations in America as seen through the eyes of eight men of various ethnicities.” Unscripted dialogue among diverse men confronting their struggles with racism, their emotions and insights. Usable for long term exploration of racism/diversity issues.\* (Also available directly from Stir Fry Seminars & Consulting, 470 Third St., Oakland, CA 94607, 510-419-3930, fax 510-419-3934.) (Used by Atlanta MM)

## Books

*Colored People*—Henry Louis Gates, a Harvard University professor (Used by Atlanta MM)

*Once Upon a Time When We Were Colored*—Clifton Taubert (Used by Atlanta MM)

*Maggie’s American Dream*—James Comer, an educator and psychologist (Used by Atlanta MM)

*Race Matters*—Cornel West, Beacon Press, 1993: essays on perspectives of important issues in the African American community. It will not tell you what to do.\*

*The Nature of Prejudice*—Gordon W. Allport. Addison Wesley, 1993: a complete look at prejudice.\*

*Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice*—Paul Kivel, New Society Publishers, 1995: simple, thorough, can be used as text in learning situations or as a reference. Specifically written for white people, but usable for anyone.\*/\*\* (Used by Atlanta MM)

## Pamphlets and Other Readings

*For Emancipation and Education: Some Black and Quaker Efforts 1680–1900*: essays from lecture series 1994, Awbury Arboretum Association, Philadelphia.\*/\*\*

*Loving the Distances Between: Racism, culture and spirituality*—Jillian Wychel and David James, Backhouse Lecture. An unfolding of understanding emerging from work Friends in New Zealand were doing with the original people, the Maori. Inspirational.\*

*A Partial Bibliography for White People on Whiteness, White Supremacy, Race and Racism*—compiled by Brian Kammer, an attorney with the Federal Defender Program, a member of a white anti-racism group, (Used by Atlanta MM)

*White Privilege: Unpacking the Knapsack* (abridged from *White Privilege & Male Privilege*)—Peg McIntosh, Wellesley College 1988: A sobering exploration of what racism looks like. Can be used to inform those who may not be familiar with day to day racism. Peace and Freedom, July Aug 1989. (Used by Atlanta MM)

*Skin Deep*—U. of MD sophomore Joshua Solomon, 1996, reporting his attempt to replicate the “Black Like Me” experience. (Used by Atlanta MM)

## Resources for Working on Racism and Bias, page 2

### Programs and workshops

*Quaker Treasure*—Adult RE, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting: provides a seven session model for discovering what unites us as Friends. Helpful to conversations about what we value and what we fear changing in our Meetings. \*/\*\*

*Traveling Teachers and Retreat Leaders List*—Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Adult Religious Education. Undergoing revision.

*Training for Change*: facilitations and workshops on various social change issues. 215/729-7458.

*Healing Racism*: understanding the cycle of racial conditioning. A 12 week program given several times a year by Pacem in Terris, Wilmington, Delaware. Call Sally Milbury Steen 302/656-2721.

*Weaving the Fabric of Diversity: An Anti-Bias Program for Adults*, by Jacqui James and Judith A. Frediana. Based on the belief that all oppressions are linked, this eight-session program devotes individual sessions to the problems of ableism, racism, heterosexism, ageism, and classism. Available from Unitarian Universalist Association Bookstore, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108

*Study Circles Resource Center*: Resources for community dialogue, discussion. Contact them in Pomfret Connecticut, 860/928-2616.

\* indicates available at Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Library

\*\* indicates publication is carried by FGC, phone 800-966-4556

For more complete information on resources, Joan Broadfield can be reached at the offices of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, (800) 2200-PYM x7230, or email joanb@pym.org

# Anti Bias and Anti Racism Programs

by Joan Broadfield, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

## Preparation for Doing Programs on Overcoming Racism:

- It's important to have a clear explication of 'racism' and 'privilege'.
- I recommend training or consultation with someone who does training on working in the field of Overcoming Racism and Bias. (Friends need quality programs that will help transform people. It's important to avoid having well meaning people provide unhelpful or badly done programs.) My formal training in this field has been with CCRC (Children's Creative Response to Conflict). I've also had sessions with trainers from MCBI and with Paul Kivel. (Paul Kivel, the author of *Uprooting Racism*, which is an excellent resource, works on issues of racism and anti-Semitism.)

## Description of Two Workshops

### *Goals of the Programs:*

Start with the goals of the group you are working with in the areas of bias and racism.

To those, add (if not already mentioned):

- to recognize bias and/or racism, how it affects us and how it determines actions we take
- to find ways to interrupt harmful behavior appropriately

## I: Transforming Barriers of Bias: Looking at 'isms and the Role of Bias

- Through an elicit approach, participants are invited to explore their own biases in general by sharing, examining experiences and specific situations, and taking the chance to practice and take risks.
- Participants are offered opportunities for private revelations through journaling, checking things out confidentially with another person, and elective sharing in the larger group.
- Information is provided about different ways of experiencing communication, anger, fear, shame and the impact these have on our relationship with others. We also look at prejudice and 'isms in general, all in the context of culture.
- Participants are urged to set some goals for themselves as they leave, and find ways to check on their progress.
- Some group exercises that are used include:
  - concentric circles
  - fruit basket
  - visualization of what you wish to see
  - listening exercises

## II: What is Racism?

### *Understanding our History of Racism and its Invisible Impact*

The facilitator begins by sharing observations and definitions, and reviewing some basic information including:

- racism, prejudice, and the differences
- lifting up the heroes and truths Friends have witnessed

## Anti Bias and Anti Racism Programs, page 2

- looking at some areas where Friends have been disappointed in their history
- Quaker culture vs. Quaker faith issues

Participants consider some issues in one of several ways of sharing

*Issues:*

- White Privilege
- Visualizing 'my baggage'
- The role guilt plays

*Possible ways of sharing:*

- "fish bowl"
- small group sharing
- full group sharing.
- journaling,

Participants visualize what it would take to make the changes necessary and journal some next steps for themselves.

# Inclusivity-Race and Class: What Are the Quaker Barriers?

*by Joan Broadfield & Bill Frysinger, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting*

This list of queries was prepared for use in a workshop held during the 1997 sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Much of the material used here was generated in the 1997 FGC Gathering workshop on 'Creating a racially diverse Religious Society of Friends,' led by Jonathan Snipes, either as queries developed during the week-long workshop or from ensuing discussions.

1. What do we do as Friends in our worship, faith and practice (or witness) that are barriers to inclusivity across racial, cultural and class 'lines'? (Another way to say this: What about our practice creates 'lines?')
2. Do I examine constantly and consistently what I think and do, to compare with what I say I believe?
- 3a. What would I like to change? Who would I like to include?
- b. What are we afraid of? What would I fear about change? (What gets in the way?)
- c. What risks am I willing to take bring about change? What would it take for me to decide the concern is real and I wish to act on it?

## **Additional queries:**

- Do Friends really care?
- Does the problem start with me? (And what am I willing to do?)
- How do I let Light shine in a way that invites people of like minds (in other words, ALL people called to be FRIENDS) to be included, regardless of race and class? (or, What does current dis-inclusivity say about what Light is shining to others?)

## **From the group discussion:**

- Are there some common threads about what we fear or what we could change?
- What are some common values that seem unchangeable?
- Consider what to you is unchangeable about being a Friend. Journal what these are. Are these elements of Quaker faith or Quaker culture?

## **Additional queries for use by individuals, generated by Jonathan Snipes, our FGC facilitator:**

- What is good about who you are in relation to working on issues of race, class, ethnicity in the Religious Society of Friends?
- What is hard about who you are in relation to working on issues of race, class, ethnicity in the Religious Society of Friends?
- What needs to change in you to free you to be more powerful in confronting racism and exclusivity?

# Queries from Young Friends at FGC Gathering 1997

*From participants in FGC Workshop: “Diverse Young Friends?”  
As they appeared in the Gathering newsletter Daily Bulletin,  
July 4, 1997 © Friends General Conference Young Friends, 1997*

As we have discussed this in the Gathering setting, diversity includes sexual orientation, race, class, economic circumstance, gender, beliefs, all aspects of age, culture, background, faith, education, physical and mental condition, and political views. Diversity cannot be expressed as one definition—there are many more. The gifts of diversity are many, but there is one Spirit.

- Do you embrace diversity?
- To what extent have you confronted your prejudices and privileges?
- Do you consider whiteness part of your cultural identity?
- Does equality mean a homogenous society? Why or why not?
- Is there a need to become more diverse within the Religious Society of Friends? Why or why not?
- What are you willing to do to aid diversity within the Religious Society of Friends?
- Is diversity something that can be achieved through direct action, or is it something that just happens?
- Are you willing to share or give up power?
- As an individual do you seek power?
- Is empowerment part of diversity?
- In what ways do you empower Young Friends in your Meeting?
- Is the Religious Society of Friends diverse? Do Friends hold true to our testimony of equality through our diversity?
- Is diversity something that can be achieved?

# Fostering *Vital Friends Meetings*

Part Two:

*Resources for Working with Quaker Meetings*

by Jan Greene and Marty Walton

## **Section R10: Friends Look at the Bible**

- R10-1 Workshops on Children and the Bible *Anne Thomas*
- R10-3 Getting Adults Excited about the Hebrew Scriptures
- R10-5 Selected Stories from the Hebrew Scriptures
- R10-7 Bible Study: Luke 5:17-26 (Handout)
- R10-9 Adults Teaching the New Testament to Children
- R10-13 When a Child Asks for a Bible
- R10-15 Biblical Readiness *Joanne Spears*
- R10-17 Friendly Bible Study Method *Joanne Spears*
- R10-21 Swords into Plowshares: A Bible Study *Ruth Kinsey*
- R10-23 The Good, the Bad, the Uncomfortable Book *Adam Corson-Finnerty*
- R10-24 A Bible Study Method *FGC Religious Education Committee*



# Workshops on Children and the Bible

by Anne Thomas, *Canadian Yearly Meeting*

I am regularly asked to lead workshops on children and the Bible, and bring to this some long time involvement and concern. The workshops vary depending on the group that gathers, but the following **hand-outs** have been used several times in various ways:

- Getting Adults Excited About the Hebrew Scriptures So They Want to Share These With Children
- Selected Stories from the Hebrew Scriptures
- Adults Teaching the New Testament to Children (Luke 5:17–26)
- When a Child Asks for a Bible . . .

The workshops are not described in great detail as they have not been worked out to that extent. I tend to let them flow, admitting honestly when I do not have answers to questions. They are not intended to provide adults with all the answers, rather to get them started on their own journey, into which they may then invite children. Hence, I feel that a vast amount of Biblical knowledge is not needed to lead these workshops.

I usually open with worship, then go round the circle for name-sharing with the question “Why are you here?” (Other times I have opened by asking each person to briefly share a favorite Bible story from childhood.)

Often adults have little knowledge of the Bible but feel children OUGHT to be taught it. I emphasize that teaching must come out of a desire to share the Bible, not out of a sense of obligation, and that it may be better not to teach the Bible to children if no one is ready to do so.

I also stress that the Bible is an adult book, and that the stories stripped of theological meaning do not stand alone in any way that has meaning. Therefore, in choosing stories to share the adult needs to relate to the theological purpose of the story. This can be shared with children; it will help them hold onto the power of the story when they may otherwise reject it as meaningless.

For example: Naming the animals in Genesis 2:

- What are the children’s own names?
- What do the names mean?
- Why did their parents choose the names?
- Have they ever named a pet?
- What difference does it make to know someone’s name?

In naming the animals, Adam began to take responsibility and to see each one as an individual with its own life and value.

**Three particular workshops may be held using these handouts:**

## 1. Hebrew Scriptures:

- Take a copy of the Bible in Hebrew for the adults to see and handle. Have enough copies of the Bible in English to hand round.
  - What stories do they remember?
  - What feelings do they have about stories they learned as children?
- Share the handout: *Selected Stories from the Hebrew Scriptures*.
  - What other stories do they remember?
  - Of these stories, which have value to be shared with children?
- Work through some of the stories:
  - e.g. Jonah and its meaning to all ages: God is always with us even when we are in places where we believe God does not go, such as the bottom of the sea.
  - The Daniel stories have a similar theology.

## Workshops on Children and the Bible, page 2

- Where are the adults going to go from here?
  - They may want to look through old curricula and see if this meets their needs, or do some work on their own, etc.

### 2. New Testament:

Included is a handout for an exercise which involves adults in a biblical text:

**Luke 5: 17–26.** This is laid out so that if it is folded twice only one part shows at a time.

The group is given Bibles and the passage is read aloud. Individuals reread the passage and then begin to fill in the sheet, one section at a time. The exercise moves the participants through deeper levels of involvement. They may be asked to comment on their experience at the end of the exercise.

Later in the workshop they may work in groups of three or four on a different passage, setting up questions appropriate for a particular group of children.

The gospel of Luke is included here as a potential curriculum for a class of 5–11 year olds, and is recommended as a basic text for a group which is ready to undertake a thorough Bible study.

### 3. Children's Bibles:

I usually have a box full of materials for browsing through—good and bad examples of materials on the New Testament for children, collected over the years. I personally have mixed views about children's Bibles but often get asked about them. I feel it gives an opportunity for adults to get in touch with their own feelings about the Bible and let it go from there.

# Getting Adults Excited About The Hebrew Scriptures So They Want To Share These With Children

*A workshop handout by Anne Thomas*

In reading books about scripture, one of the aspects I look for is the involvement of the writer with the text. Often Jewish writers seem to be more immersed in the text, infusing old and new insights into a seamless whole, while Christian writers seem to be more analytical and detached. George Fox asked “What canst thou say?,” and for Friends the text is still being written in our lives and spiritual experience; indeed we are the text.

The Hebrew scriptures are a record of how God’s activity in creation was perceived by one people over many years. The “heroes” and “heroines” are very human, and through their imperfections we can move across time and culture and relate to the human feelings and experiences recorded in this text.

The scriptures are divided into three main sections:

law            Torah  
prophets    Nebiim  
writings    Ketubim, hence **Tanakh** as an acronym.

The Torah, the first five books, traditionally understood to be written by Moses, cover the primeval history of all peoples and the foundational events of the Hebrews. The prophets cover socially concerned individuals over several centuries who felt they were calling the Jews back to a closer relationship with God. The writings included history, poetry and wisdom literature. The great majority of the Tanakh is written in Hebrew, with the exception of a few verses of Daniel, written in Aramaic. The Torah was put together in the form we have following the experience of exile in Babylon, and after this time, the people of the book took the name “Jews.” The Protestant Apocrypha includes books which are not part of the Hebrew canon.

This book of books is not written for children, and often stories are taken out of context, which children later reject as they question their relevance. One cannot secularize these stories, as the theology is totally integrated into them. The hardest part is for adults to relate to the Hebrew scriptures, making links with their own lives. Sharing them with children is then easy. Dealing with violence and sexual inequality is a challenge to all modern interpreters.

To speak of creation without God’s affirmation that “it was good,” of Noah without the promise of the rainbow and Jonah without the recognition that God is always there with us, destroys the truth and power of this record.

## **Some print resources:**

### *Which version of the Bible?*

Bible Society outlets have a variety of translations and paraphrases.

A new and easy to read translation is the *Contemporary English Version*, (CEV) which comes in various editions. *The New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV) has inclusive language for humans.

*Brave Believers* is a story book using the original text from the CEV, covering people such as Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Ruth, Samuel, David, Elijah, Esther, and Daniel, plus New Testament characters.

Joanne Spears, a Friend from North Dakota, is translating the Bible for children using inclusive language. An annual subscription to her newsletter *Word of Mouth*, can be obtained for \$15.00 U.S., from RES Corporation, 1824 Catherine Drive, Bismarck ND 58501.

## Getting Adults Excited About the Hebrew Scriptures, page 2

FGC is recommending *The Beginners Bible: Timeless Children's Stories*, a paraphrase for beginning readers, but look out for a fundamentalist bias in the creation stories. FGC also stocks the curriculum piece *Timeless Themes* for grades 3–4 which has stories from the whole Bible.

*The Toddlers Bible* has 415 pages of 4 page, illustrated stories. Similar to *The Beginners Bible*, but seems to miss some of the pitfalls.

Because children grow so quickly, a “children’s Bible” quickly becomes dated. Most are paraphrased or edited and so the theological interests of the author/editor may radically change the text.

*Adam's New Friend*, David and Carol Bartlett, Judson, 1980, is a good example of retaining the truth behind the stories for 6–10 year olds, as is Tomie de Paola's *Noah and the Ark*, Winston, which includes a puppet show.

A personal favorite by a master story teller is *Bible Stories*, retold by David Kossoff, Fontana, 1968.

A series of booklets including *Sometimes I Get Lonely*, *Sometimes I Have to Cry*, *Sometimes I Need to be Hugged*, is based on the Psalms, published by Chariot.

*Moses' Ark: stories from the Bible*, Alice Bach and J. Cheryl Exum, Delacorte, 1989, has several stories told from a feminist perspective, with additional background information for adults.

Some adult books which show a love of the text and an ability to share this with others are:

\**Ladder of Angels*, Madeleine L'Engle, Seabury, 1979

*Congregation: Jewish Writers Read the Hebrew Bible*, ed. David Rosenberg, Viking Sagas and Dreamers, Elie Weisel, Simon and Shuster, 1991

\**Creation*, Ernst Haas, Penguin, reissued 1988, wonderful photographs illustrating Genesis chapter 1.

\* for children too.

# Selected Stories from the Hebrew Scriptures

*A workshop handout by Anne Thomas*

Genesis 1	Priestly account of creation
Genesis 2–3	Epic account of human “fall”
Genesis 6–9	The flood
Genesis 12–22	Abraham, founder of Israel, son Isaac
Genesis 24	Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah
Genesis 25–27	Esau and Jacob
Genesis 28	Jacob’s dream of ladder
Genesis 32	Jacob wrestles with stranger, given name Israel
Genesis 37–50	Joseph stories
Exodus 1	Fate of descendants of Jacob
Exodus 2–6	Moses’ call, faces Pharaoh
Exodus 7–12	Plagues and Passover
Exodus 13–14	Red Sea
Exodus 16	Manna and quails
Exodus 19–20	Sinai and Law
Exodus 32	Golden calf
Numbers 11	People complain in wilderness to elders
Numbers 13–14	Spies to Canaan, 40 years punishment for lack of faith;
Joshua 1	After Moses’ death, Joshua new leader
Joshua 2	Spies to Jericho
Joshua 3–4	Crossing the Jordan
Joshua 6	Taking Jericho
Judges 6–7	Gideon
Judges 13–16	Samson
Ruth	
I Samuel 1	Birth of Samuel
I Samuel 9–10	Saul made first king
I Samuel 16–17	David, David and Goliath
I Samuel 18	David as outlaw
2 Samuel 11–12	David and Bathsheba
2 Samuel 13–19	Absalom
I Kings 1–2	Death of David
I Kings 3	Solomon is granted wisdom
I Kings 7–8	Temple built
I Kings 10	Queen of Sheba, Solomon’s wealth
I Kings 12	Nation split north and south
I Kings 13–19	Ahab and Elijah, Elisha
I Kings 21	Naboth’s vineyard
2 Kings 2	Elisha
2 Kings 18–20	Assyrians invade Judah

## Selected Stories from the Hebrew Scriptures, page 2

Ezra 3-6	Rebuilding of Temple after exile
Nehemiah 1-2	Nehemiah allowed to return to rebuild Jerusalem
Nehemiah 4	Samaritans laugh at building
Nehemiah 6-7	Wall finished
Tobit	Sent on quest to restore family fortune
Esther	Bravery of Esther during Babylonian exile
I Maccabees 2	Beginning of Maccabean rebellion
I Maccabees 4	Hanukkah
Job	Job's friends let him down and he confronts God
Isaiah 36-38	Jerusalem saved by God from Assyrians
Jeremiah 11	Jeremiah preaches doom
Jeremiah 12-36	Symbolic actions of Jeremiah to dramatize word of God
Daniel 1	Maintains traditions despite temptations to compromise
Daniel 2-6	Interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dreams, fiery furnace, writing on wall, lions' den
Daniel 13, 14	Daniel and the priests of Bel, Susanna
Jonah	God is more persistent than Jonah, kinder too

# Bible Study on Luke 5: 17–26

*A workshop handout by Anne Thomas*

- Read the passage several times. 1.
- Think about the meanings 2.
- Use your imagination to sense sights, sounds, smells, feelings 3.
- List six facts of the story: 4.
- 5.
- 6.

*If Jesus came to my house, I'd . . .*

- \_\_\_\_\_ make room
- \_\_\_\_\_ invite my friends
- \_\_\_\_\_ be embarrassed
- \_\_\_\_\_ not answer the door

*If a friend asked me to carry another friend, I'd . . .*

- \_\_\_\_\_ have a backache
- \_\_\_\_\_ gladly help
- \_\_\_\_\_ put it off until tomorrow
- \_\_\_\_\_ think of a way to get through the crowd

*If someone tore up my roof, I'd . . .*

- \_\_\_\_\_ be glad the person got in
- \_\_\_\_\_ be upset at the mess
- \_\_\_\_\_ demand payment for the damages
- \_\_\_\_\_ be afraid to protest

*Am I . . .*

- paralyzed? \_\_\_\_\_ unable to decide on some issue?  
\_\_\_\_\_ unable to change a relationship?  
\_\_\_\_\_ feeling powerless?
- a friend? \_\_\_\_\_ helping someone find Jesus?  
\_\_\_\_\_ using my talents?  
\_\_\_\_\_ actively working to bring healing?

## Bible Study on Luke 5: 17-26, page 2

in the crowd, blocking someone else's work?

\_\_\_\_\_ jealous of someone?

\_\_\_\_\_ just standing around?

\_\_\_\_\_ a scribe, skeptical of Jesus's power?

\_\_\_\_\_ standing back, waiting for someone to make a mistake?

\_\_\_\_\_ judging others by my standards?

*Pray for your own healing and forgiveness. Try being a friend to someone who needs help.*

# Adults Teaching the New Testament to Children

## *A workshop handout by Anne Thomas*

“**What canst thou say?**” is the primary question to ask ourselves. How do we relate to the text? Without a personal engagement with the text, the spiritual values and truths will not be able to be shared. If the New Testament is just history to you, or brings up painful memories of Christian abuse, think again about sharing it with children.

We may see Jesus in very different ways, but to be true to the text, we need to recognize the tremendous impact this man had on the lives of many who knew him. They were often confused about who he was during his ministry, and fled at his death, but something happened to them after his death which made them unafraid and drove them to share this good news (gospel) with all who would listen.

The New Testament has four main sections.

- The **gospels** focus on the life of Jesus: Matthew, Mark and Luke are similar, John is more of a theological reflection on a few episodes in Jesus’s ministry.
- **Acts** tells of the growth of the early church, especially through the lives of Peter and Paul.
- The **Epistles** (letters) seek more to bring individuals and communities into the experience of the living Spirit, Jesus Christ, than to use his life as an example for others. The Epistles are one side of sets of correspondence between local congregations and church leaders. They are arranged in order of their length, with the longest first.
- The final book of the New Testament is **Revelation**, a vision of John, which portrays a cosmic end to this world. Fed by the persecution experienced by John, it ends with the heavenly Jerusalem, which balances Eden in having a tree at its center, this one with leaves for the healing of the nations.

For very young children, under four years, *The Toddlers Bible*<sup>1</sup>, although somewhat evangelical in perspective, is quite good, with illustrated stories of four pages each, one sentence per page.

The gospels are especially accessible to children, and it is good if they can get accustomed to using the Bible directly rather than hearing a re-written story. Highly recommended for early readers (ages 5 to 9) is *Luke Tells the Good News about Jesus*<sup>2</sup>. This is an accurate translation of the gospel of Luke, well illustrated and clearly divided into short sections. Using this as a primary text gives the advantage of absorbing how one evangelist interpreted the life of Jesus, often missed if one takes stories from different gospels.

“What stories do I teach?” Think about maintaining a balance between the “popular” parts and the overall content of the book. In his ministry, Jesus exercised healing miracles more than any other miracles, for example.

## The Gospel of Luke

Ch. 2: birth, shepherds, presentation in the Temple, growth, Jesus at 12

3: John, Jesus is baptized (to verse 22)

4: Jesus and the Devil, preaching, man with evil spirit, Jesus heals

5: Jesus chooses his first followers, Jesus heals, Jesus chooses Levi (to verse 32)

7: Jesus heals a servant and a widow's only son

8: women who helped Jesus, stories of a farmer and light, mother and brothers, storm, man with demons, dying girl and sick woman

9: feeding 5,000 (verses 10–17)

10: (verse 25 on) good Samaritan, Martha and Mary

11: prayer (to verse 4)

15: one sheep, one coin, two brothers. This chapter has been called “the gospel in the gospel”

18: Jesus blesses children (verses 15–17), Jesus tells of his death (verses 31–34)

19: Zacchaeus (omit verses 11–27) Jesus enters Jerusalem, Jesus in the Temple

20: paying taxes (verses 20–26)

22: a plot to kill Jesus, preparing for Passover, the Lord's supper (omit verses 24–38), Jesus prays, is arrested, Peter's denial, Jesus is brought before the council

23: Jesus brought before Pilate and Herod, Jesus is condemned, nailed to a cross, dies and is buried

24: Jesus is alive, seen, appears to his followers, returns to heaven

*Good News Travels Fast*<sup>3</sup> is Luke's continuing story of the early church, focusing on Peter and Paul.

For 4 to 8 years olds, the curriculum *The Jesus Story*<sup>4</sup> sets up a context for the course with music, activities, etc., then has a story with handout for each of thirty weeks.

*Timeless Themes*<sup>5</sup> covers Old and New Testament stories for 8–11 year olds and is accompanied by a song book and audiotape.

*Teaching Children About Jesus I and II*<sup>6</sup>, gives ideas for stories with Quaker-related activities for ages 5 to 12. Especially recommended is the opening idea sheet, How to Teach Children about Jesus.

For 10–14 year olds, *Jesus, Who Was He?* and *The Spiritual Quest*<sup>7</sup>, are Quaker curricula. There are other, more inventive ways to cover the New Testament with teens, but these need a whole approach on their own.

## Adults Teaching the New Testament to Children, page 3

After the core story is shared, there are other approaches to its interpretation. One is to see how competent authors have interpreted the life of Jesus to make this accessible to children. Browse through Christian book stores, which have interesting activity books among some appalling “Jesus junk.”<sup>9</sup>

More adventurous approaches include looking at movies, picking the “best” scenes from several to edit into a life of Jesus; dressing up and acting out stories; asking adults for their favorite story, and the reasons for this, etc.

References cited by Anne Thomas in handout for: *Adults Teaching the New Testament to Children*

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- 1 *The Toddlers Bible*, V. Gilbert Beers, Victor/Scripture Press, 1992. From the Canadian Bible Society. Better than *The Beginners Bible*.
  - 2 *Luke Tells the Good News about Jesus*, American Bible Society, 1987. Available from the Canadian Bible Society.
  - 3 *Good News Travels Fast: the Acts of the Apostles*, American Bible Society, 1988. Available from the Canadian Bible Society
  - 4 *The Jesus Story*, Mary and Herb Montgomery, Winston, 1974. Teacher’s manual and 30 handouts for children. From various Christian book stores.
  - 5 *Timeless Themes*, Naneene Gowdy, Mary Anne Moore, Marjorie Skwire, Unitarian Universalist Association, 1991, available from FGC.
  - 6 *Teaching Children about Jesus, Part I and II*, Barbara Henderson, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Each is \$8.50 US, and can be ordered toll free from FGC at 1-800-966-4556, or by mail from FGC Publication, #1216 Arch Street 2B, Philadelphia, PA 19107.
  - 7 *Jesus, who was He?* Mary Snyder, Friends General Conference, 1991, from above address. The Spiritual Quest, Meg Chignell, Quaker Home Service, 1983.
  - 8 *The Christmas Pageant*, Tomie de Paola, Winston, 1981. Christmas story told through a children’s pageant with cut-out stick puppets and ideas for a puppet show. Ages 4–8.  
*The Christmas Birthday Story*, Margaret Lawrence, McLelland and Stewart, 1980. Stylized illustrations and a flowing text.  
*Dance in the Desert*, Madeleine L’Engle, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1969. Uses the flight to Egypt to build a myth of light in darkness. May be frightening for very young children.  
*A Northern Nativity*, William Kurelek, Tundra, 1976. Nativity representation of the holy family as Inuit, street people, Mennonite, etc. Ages 4–adult.  
*Jesus Stops a Storm*, in Signed English, American Bible Society, from Canadian Bible Society.
  - 9 *The Palestinian Herald*, William Coleman, Chariot, 1985. Four volumes of newspaper format mixing humorous reports of daily life with reports relating to gospel incidents. Opportunity to write your own articles. Ages 9–14.  
*Bible Story Hidden Pictures*, Rebecca Daniel, Shining Star, 1988. Ages 5–10. Shining Star has several publications of activities for children—watch for its theological bent.  
There are various cut out books which build into biblical times villages, etc.



# When A Child Asks For A Bible

*A workshop handout by Anne Thomas*

When children ask for a Bible, most of us thrust the first available one in their hands. It may not be quite that bad, but too often we think of a Bible as a gift for a particular age—moving from grade school, etc.—and do not think beyond this.

Let's back up a little. If children visited your house, or lived there, how would they observe adults relating to books in general? How would they observe adults relating to the Bible? If there is not a Bible around that is used naturally by the adults, why should they have one? How should they use it! My ideal scenario is that in our homes, the Bible is treated as a book to be picked up frequently, and used in a very unselfconscious manner. (It might even join *Faith and Practice* in the bathroom!) The ideal way to introduce children to the Bible is out of such a context. Think about it.

The Bible was written for adults, many of whom find its language and concepts difficult to understand. Some adults feel that children “should” be told Bible stories. When I am asked to prepare a list of Bible resources for children, I want to know why the adult want to share these stories. Is it out of a sincere love for the child and the biblical heritage, or is there an element of “should” in there? I would rather children not be taught these stories out of a sense of adult obligation.

For the youngest children, a Bible story book might be the initial introduction. Again, ideally this (these) should be treated as any other reading book(s) and selected with equal care.

Some questions to consider:

- is the *typeface* large enough for young readers?
- does the *layout* recognize the need to “turn over now”?
- are the *illustrations* appropriate?
- is the *paper* sturdy?
- is it an appropriate size for the child?
- is it of the *quality* we would choose for ourselves?
- does the story *trivialize* the Bible or people's struggles to respond to God?
- is the story told so that its “*truth value*” is integral to the tale or does it focus on action for its own sake?
- will the reader (as appropriate) be able to link God's action to *his/her life in the present* or is this treated as a “long ago and far away” story?
- is there a *moralizing tone* to the story that distorts it?

“Which Bible do you recommend for children?” is a question I am asked quite regularly. I think it an important first step that the family has a version which they use! To buy a child a Bible outside the context in which it is used in the family does not make a lot of sense. For adults, I recommend the *New Revised Standard Version*—God is described in masculine terms, but inclusive language is used for people. The Canadian Bible Society has just released various editions of the *Contemporary English Version*, for example, *The Bible for Today's Family*, which is highly recommended by some Friends. For favorite passages, e.g. Psalm 23, the King James Version (Authorized) invokes a real sense of the beauty of the English language. For a sense of the Hebrew scriptures, try *Tanakh: the Holy Scriptures*, Jewish Publication Society, 1985. Browse through a translation, looking at Genesis 1, Psalm 23, Matthew 4 (Beatitudes), Luke 1–2 (infancy narrative), or other passages you know, to see if the “fit” is good. There are many single story books, mostly inexpensive. When you see a good one, BUY it, as they go out of print quickly.

## When a Child Asks for a Bible, page 2

*The Beginners Bible: timeless children's stories.* FGC. Karen Henley, Questar, Oregon, 1989. Ninety-five stories for beginning readers. A thick, hard-cover book with large print and many illustrations. Good approach, but some problems: for Genesis 1, "God Made Man," not man and woman as in the text. I prefer *The Toddlers Bible*, CBS, which has fewer problems.

*The Good News Children's Bible.* CBS. Large hard-back, illustrated with "old fashioned" pictures. Selected, condensed passages from the Good News Version, with introductory passages.

*Good News Travels Fast and Luke Tells the Good News About Jesus.* CBS. Soft-back, beautifully illustrated books from the Translation for Early Youth. Accurate translations of Acts and Luke at a Grade 1 to 2 level. Highly recommended, especially Luke as a "text" for grade school ages.

*How the Bible came to us.* FGC. Meryl Donley, Lion, Batavia, 1985. A large, thin book, with lots of pictures, giving a history of the Bible, the world out of which it came, its languages, printing, translations, Bible societies, etc. A good resource for 8–12 year olds.

*Ladder of Angels,* Madeleine L'Engle, Seabury, New York, 1979. Hard-back and paper-back, illustrated by children. The author is a children's writer and poet. Retelling of stories in prose and verse. An excellent immersion to the spirit of the Hebrew scriptures, but may need adult explanation for young children.

*Word of Mouth,* RES Corporation, 1824 Catherine Drive, Bismarck, ND 59501, subscription \$15 per year. Joanna Spears is a Quaker scholar committed to making the Bible accessible to children, using inclusive language. *Word of Mouth* is a quarterly magazine which includes several chapters of the Bible, with glossary, and an essay on specific themes. An excellent resource. Joanna's *Friendly Bible Study*, FGC, describes a Quaker method of Bible study with suggestions for its use by children.

FGC—Friends General Conference Publications, 1216 Arch Street 2B, Philadelphia PA 19107. See their catalog sent to all Friends, or phone 1-800-966-4556.

CBS—Canadian Bible Society, through its outlets: see your phone book. Catalog from Canadian Bible Society, #100-10 Carnforth Road, Toronto, Ontario M4A 2S4,

Further suggestions or comments on particular Bibles?  
Please send them to Anne Thomas, Box 51, Kars, Ontario KOA 2E0.

# Biblical Readiness

by Joanne Spears, Northern Yearly Meeting

As a parent and teacher, I am always searching for ways to help people use the Bible as a guide for their spiritual journeys. I started learning Hebrew and Greek so I could translate parts of the Bible for children using inclusive language. The more I translated, the more I realized that it is not just the language, it is the concepts which are outside children's experience. I came to the conclusion that the Bible should not be used as a children's story book—it is an important book, written for adults, requiring adequate preparedness to understand it.

I do not use the Bible directly with children for several reasons. The Bible needs to be used at the appropriate developmental stages of faith. The ideas in the Bible are abstract and children learn concretely. The vocabulary of the Bible is technical and the ideas expressed are beyond the ability of children to understand. The Bible needs to be taught when people have had adequate experiences to understand the concepts. Adult modeling of Bible study in the physical presence of children and the quiet application of the Bible to daily life are the natural ways for children to gain an appreciation of the Bible as a life-long guide for their life journey in the spirit.

Young children are literalists. They distort all symbols and metaphors into concrete images corresponding to the narrow reality of their lives. A child who was taught the account of Jesus' temptation too early assumed that "Not by bread alone," meant Jesus did not want to eat bread without peanut butter and jam. Children taught the "Good Samaritan" story learn that society expects them to be nice to the children around them. Then, throughout their lives, when they hear the story line again, they think, "That's the 'be nice' story." Seldom will they be able to understand the deeper meaning that people who show compassion are the ones we least believe will show compassion. People will eventually correct such errors as the bread and peanut butter idea, but I am often surprised at how long even some of these ideas last.

The change from concrete to abstract thinking is rarely possible until a person is the age of 12 or 13. Too often, important religious ideas and words are taught in formal instruction long before then. Because of this disregard for readiness, people retain the immature understanding of concepts as *they first learned them*. Adolescents and adults who have acquired the idea that the Bible is a children's story book find it difficult, if not impossible, to understand the authors' ideas about God and human relations. They assume that the Bible is a book of historical facts and morals, because that idea was all they were capable of understanding when the Bible was first given to them. Therefore, they do not read or study the Bible to guide their relationship with that of God in themselves, in all other people, and in all of creation.

With adolescence comes an awareness of what it means to be an adult. Intellectually and emotionally, adolescence creates a readiness for a more mature, adult, kind of religion. Adolescents who learned only the story lines grow to dislike the Bible as irrelevant to their daily lives. When they could for the first time begin to understand it, teachers and parents, recognizing the adolescents' dislike for the Bible and their rebellion against it, start using materials other than the Bible. With this, we inadvertently reinforce the idea that the Bible is for children, not maturing adults who are seeking ways to understand their changing lives.

Careful, sequential preparation is necessary. Without it, children may only acquire church vocabulary. Too often, the goal of the educational ministry of the church is learned content and information, such as Biblical names, places, events, dates, geography, and story lines. Children can learn to repeat all of the stories and may be praised if they play Bible trivia, yet those facts are valuable only when a person can use them to inform their own spiritual journey. Children crystallize ideas too soon to do that. Although I may mean well by teaching Bible stories to children while they are still thinking concretely, I am unintentionally either guiding children into being premature fundamentalists or sowing the seeds of Bible rejection.

Self-concept is the most important concept a child makes in preparing to use the Bible. The way people regard themselves and their relation to others in their world, and the general way they assess their own worth is the starting point for most of the important religious concepts people need in order to understand Biblical faith.

## Biblical Readiness, page 2

The reality of being loved is the single most important theme throughout the Bible. It is the most important concept we can ever teach children. “You are my child. I love you very much. You please me greatly.” (Luke 3:21.) This is all that young children need to experience in order to understand the Bible. To understand God’s love, everyone needs to experience this kind of love at all times, not just at special set-aside times like birthdays and Christmas and the first ten minutes of Meeting. Our biggest job in the educational ministry of Meetings is to help parents and all members of the Meeting be the kinds of role models that will provide a spiritual direction for all children. Teaching children to have Jesus as a role model is futile and sets the concept that Jesus is irrelevant to daily life. Children will not be able to follow the role model of some unseen person from an unknown culture, time, and dress. When we want a role model for our children, we need to act on our knowledge that the people in our families and Meetings are the role models children do follow.

In thinking about an ordered way to present the concepts in the Bible appropriately for the developmental stages of faith, beginning with the adolescent years, I have been impressed by Brueggemann’s ideas. We begin with the Torah and the comfortable security of the priests and the sacraments. It is the kind of security that every child, every person needs. We can sing, “God has the whole world in God’s hands,” when we study the Torah. We know that concept to be completely and absolutely true.

Then we introduce the prophets, who challenge the comfortable security and say, “Yes, but look at the evidence. We are not living up to our end of the bargain. There is security only when we walk with God.” The prophets look around and announce that it is not such a secure world. They call for repentance, a turning back to God. The concept of the whole world being in God’s hands is in fact not the whole story. God has the whole world in our hands.

Then the Wisdom writers come along and add their own, “Yes, but...” They call for people to accept their own responsibility for the world. Unless we develop an understanding of all three—Torah, Prophets, and Wisdom—we are not giving people a complete picture. Then we can introduce Jesus who does the synthesis of all three. Only then can we understand what the New Testament writers were synthesizing unless we have first understood it in the Hebrew scriptures.

All important questions will arise naturally at some time during the life of each person, if that person has not been taught to expect and accept answers without questions. The material on the next pages are a summary of a method of adult Bible study that assumes each person is capable of coming to his or her own conclusions about what is written in the Bible and its meaning for that person at that particular time.

# Friendly Bible Study Method

by Joanne and Larry Spears, Northern Yearly Meeting

Among Friends today there is a wide range of views of the Bible, from those who see it as an interesting historical document to those who see it as God's Word. An increasing number of Friends feel the need for study of the Bible. They seek an effective study method which reflects Quaker values and tradition and draws them to the core of the Bible message.

Many people remember Bible studies as occasions which encouraged sermonizing and authoritarian statements and discouraged questions. For these people, time spent in Bible study is remembered as fruitless for their spiritual lives and frustrating to the integrity of their own search for truth. It is for those people who have been away from Bible study and who sense a need to turn in its direction that the following method for a Friendly Bible study is shared.

A small group of three to six people reflecting a diversity of viewpoints provides a stimulating variety of spiritual experience and understanding. No prior study of the Bible is needed by anyone. A person with extensive biblical background can be helpful to the Bible study process, but should not be seen as an authority figure. The only leadership needed by the group is one person to determine the time to begin sharing and maintain the movement around the circle so that everyone has a chance to answer every question in sequence.

## **Four important aspects of Quaker tradition underlie this Bible study method:**

- It recognizes personal experience as a central part of our spiritual lives.
- It recognizes the equality of all believers in the study process and removes the centrality of an authority figure as leader.
- It recognizes the availability of God's continuing revelation in our spiritual lives.
- It affirms the connection of the Biblical witness to our lives in our present world.

## **An eight-step process for establishing a Bible study group:**

*Step 1. Gather up to six interested people* with any religious or spiritual background who are willing to commit one hour each week for a period of at least six weeks. Each person should bring a Bible, a notebook or paper, and a pencil or pen. A variety of translations is helpful to group understanding, but don't bring other references as they distract from the Bible itself during the group study.

*Step 2. Decide as a group which book of the Bible to use to begin the study.* One of the first three gospels—Matthew, Mark or Luke—or a letter of Paul, like I or II Corinthians or Philippians, is a good choice. In the Old Testament, the Psalms or one of the prophets—Jonah, Amos, or Hosea—is a good starting point.

*Step 3. Study only a few verses* at the beginning of the book the group has chosen, and each week follow with the next few verses. One paragraph, or one stanza of a Psalm, will usually be three to six verses. Resist the temptation to cover a lot of material each week just to get through the book—people won't respond to the same verses which can be confusing. A common focus on a small section provides the stimulus for deeper insights. It is also very important not to skip around among favorite passages. As the Bible study continues through the weeks, discussion will develop as themes emerge which link each session to the discussion in previous sessions.

*Step 4. Review the five questions listed below.* They will be answered in the silent period each time you meet. (see Step 6.) At the beginning of the first few sessions each person may need to write down the five questions, or at least the key word, in order to remember the questions. Assure everyone that there are no single answers which capture the totality of any passage. Bible study is like the group of blind people describing an elephant, each from a separate viewpoint of experience. Stress the value of hearing each person's views and seeing the passage through each person's eyes. This will enhance the group's understanding of a common reality.

*Step 5. Read the passage aloud.* After being sure each person has understood the five questions, ask one person to read aloud the passage to be studied. Let all ears hear the sound of the passage. Have all members follow

the text in their translations. If translations differ substantially, ask that a contrasting translation of the passage be read aloud. This will often stimulate thinking and insight if the passage seems particularly difficult or without significant meaning.

*Step 6. Move into group silence and write.* After several minutes of quiet, individuals may begin at their own pace to reread the passage silently and to write answers to each question. Allow 15 or 20 minutes for group members to complete their written answers.

*Step 7. Share the answers.* As soon as everyone seems to be ready or nearly ready with written notes, each person in turn around the circle reads aloud their response to one question at a time. After each person's response to the first question has been shared, pause for a moment of silence. Then move around the circle again sharing the responses to the second question and so on until everyone has responded to each question. At all times, in all groups, the movement around the circle should be preserved. Everyone must have opportunity and time to speak to every question in turn so that the combining wisdom and insights are absorbed by the group.

Remind everyone that all answers are accepted and helpful. Each person may "pass" at any time on any question, with only the caution that something that seems like the obvious or the trivial to one person can be a wonderful new insight to another.

*8. End the study with a short period of silence.* It may be the occasion for breaking silence with a message or simply provide a stillpoint with which the Bible study began.

At the end of the six weeks, the group can decide whether it would like to keep on meeting. Each person is free to discontinue or continue the Bible study at that point. It has been our experience that after six studies of one hour per week, most people find the study so helpful they want to continue.

#### **The five questions addressed in each Bible study are:**

- 1. What is the author's main point in this passage? (MAIN POINT)* This question helps each member focus on what the author says. It often helps to state the question again in another form: "What is the author saying about God?" Each person must address the text directly in a relationship formed between reader and author.
- 2. What new light do I find in this particular reading of this passage of the text? (NEW LIGHT)* This question provides opportunity for the working of the Spirit in our silence. This question reminds us of the continuing revelation in our lives from both unfamiliar and familiar passages. The focus here is on each member's new insight, observation, or understanding during this particular reading of this passage on this particular occasion.
- 3. Is this passage true to my experience? (TRUTH)* The focus here is on comparing the message of the Bible passage with each person's experience in life. Our spiritual journeys are "experimental" as we search toward fuller understanding. Our personal experience and our community experience are sources of authority which we bring to the study to understand and supplement the Biblical text.
- 4. What are the implications of this passage for my life? (IMPLICATIONS)* The answer to this question may provide implications for living at any of several levels of spiritual life. The center of the question is, "What difference, if any, does the passage make for my life?" There is a reaching from the text back to our lives in this question. It brings the role of ethics and daily living practices to our attention. This holding together of faith and action is central to our Quaker tradition.
- 5. What problems do I have with this passage? (PROBLEMS)* Here we identify problems of language in the text, of interpretation, of meaning, or of applying the text to our lives. These problems may generate interest in seeking answers from other sources during the days before the next Bible study.

With experience using this Bible study method, the group members will see that insights will grow during the sharing. People who join the Bible study with no feeling of insight will find the passage opening to their understanding through the insights shared by others. An apparently superficial comment can be the key to great openings for others in the group. As the discussion proceeds, new insights will occur which far exceed the sum of the initial individual insights.

This presentation is a condensation of Joanne & Larry Spears' FGC publication, *Friendly Bible Study*. See that pamphlet for a fuller explanation of how to go about setting up a Bible study group and the rationale for each of the steps of group process and the five questions. To contact the Spears directly, write: Joanne and Larry Spears, RES Corporation, 1824 Catherine Drive, Bismarck, North Dakota 58501 (701) 258-1899. Email: [Spears1@aol.com](mailto:Spears1@aol.com)

## ***Friendly Bible Study***

Open with silence.

Read the verse aloud.

Write or reflect on individual responses.

Share responses giving each person an opportunity.

Close with silence.

1. What is the author's *main point* in this passage?
2. What *new light* do I find in this particular reading of this passage?
3. Is this passage true to my experience of *truth*?
4. What are *implications* of this passage for my life?
5. What *problems* do I have with this passage?

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# Swords Into Plowshares: A Bible Study

by Ruth Kinsey, Pastor, Farmington Friends Meeting, NYYM

In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised up above the hills. Peoples shall stream to it, and many nations shall come and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.

For all the peoples walk, each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever.

— Micah 4: 1–5

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— Isaiah 2: 2–5

These texts (Micah 4: 1–5 and Isaiah 2: 2–5) are about taking implements of destruction (swords and spears) and turning them into implements of agriculture (plows and pruning hooks), implements for the production of food for the nourishment of the creatures of God's creation. In this light, consider the following questions in any order you like.

1. a. At the national level, what do you think are the most destructive "swords and spears?"  
b. If these are beaten into "plows and pruning hooks," how might they look? How might they help nourish the creation?
2. a. Within the Religious Society of Friends, what do you think are our "swords and spears?" How do we use them? How willing do you think we are to beat them into "plows and pruning hooks?"  
b. If these are beaten into "plows and pruning hooks," how might they look? How might Friends be nourished by them?
3. a. In your personal arsenal, what are your "swords and spears?" How do you use them? How willing are you to beat them into "plows and pruning hooks?"  
b. If these are beaten into "plows and pruning hooks," how might they look? How might you and those around you be nourished by them?
4. Verse 4 is a vision in which "they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid..."
  - a. What do you think the world be like if this were true for nations?
  - b. What do you think our denomination would look like if this were true for the Religious Society of Friends?
  - c. How do you think your life would be different if this were true for your personal life?

## **Swords Into Plowshares, page 2**

5. Verse 5 is a declaration that “we will walk in the name of the Lord our God.” That is, we resolve to do something to help bring about the beating of “swords and spears” into “plows and pruning hooks.”
  - a. What can you do at the personal level?
  - b. What can you do within the Religious Society of Friends?
  - c. What can you do at the national level?
  - d. How can we help each other?

# The Good, The Bad, and the Uncomfortable Book

## *A Bible Study by Adam Corson-Finnerty, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting*

Adam Corson-Finnerty introduced this Bible Study by pointing out the variety of Bibles that he had provided and by sharing the fact that most people find in the Bible passages that make them feel nurtured and inspired, passages that make them angry which they reject, and passages they make them uncomfortable. He divided the participants into small groups. Every person had a copy of the list below and a Bible. The small groups were asked to focus in turn on each of the sections, looking at the passages Adam provided as possible examples of each category, and then providing time for each person to share a passage she/he felt would exemplify that category, and the reason she/he choose it.

### *Passages to Consider*

#### The “GOOD”

Psalms 23:	The Lord is my shepherd . . .
Isaiah 58: 6–7	What I require of you as a fast . . .
I Corinthians 13: 4–7	Love is patient . . .
Matthew 5: 1–10	How blessed are those . . .
Genesis 45: 1–15	Joseph wept over his brothers . . .
Psalms 131:	I submit myself . . .
Proverbs 3: 13–20	Wisdom is more profitable than silver . . .
John 15: II–17	Love one another . . .

#### The “BAD”

I Samuel 15: 1–9	Saul put them to the sword . . .
Leviticus 12: 1–5	On a woman’s impurity after giving birth . . .
Numbers 31: 1–20	They burnt all their cities . . .
Psalms 59:	Have no mercy on villains and traitors . . .
Ecclesiasticus 33: 19–2	Whatever you are doing, keep the upper hand . . .
Ecclesiasticus 25: 13–26	Any spite but a woman’s . . .
I Timothy 2: 8 and II–14	I do not permit a woman . . .
Acts 4: 5–12	No other name . . .
Revelations 16: 1–7	Pour out the seven bowls of God’s wrath . . .

#### The “UNCOMFORTABLE”

Isaiah 58: 6–11	What I require of you as a fast . . .
Psalms 139: 1–14	Where can I escape from thy spirit? . . .
Wisdom 7: 22–30	Herself unchanging, she makes all things new . . .
Luke 6: 28–31	Love your enemies . . .
Romans 12: 1–2	The new mind . . .
John 13: 12–17	Wash one another’s feet . . .
Luke 16: 18–30	Sell everything you have . . .

# A Bible Story Method

*from an FGC RE Weekend: “Religious Education in Meeting and Families”*

1. Establish context of story
2. Ask: What this story might have meant to people then?
3. Ask: What the story might mean to people now?
4. Ask: What is behind the literal story? (As George Fox asked, “But what canst thou say?”)

**Bible study questions can be approached on four levels:**

1. What does the Bible say about this?
2. What did Fox and early Friends think about this?
3. What have more recent Friends thought about this?
4. What do you think about this?

# Fostering *Vital Friends Meetings*

Part Two:

*Resources for Working with Quaker Meetings*

by Jan Greene and Marty Walton

## **Section R11: Quaker Process**

- R11-1 The Purpose of Meetings for Worship and for Business *Paul Lacey*
- R11-1 On Meeting for Business *Bill Taber*
- R11-2 Patient Waiting *Douglas Bishop and Bonnie Deutsch*
- R11-3 Absent Friends and the Quaker Process *Phil Oliver*
- R11-5 Some Thoughts on Quaker Process *Paul Lacey*
- R11-6 Queries on the Meeting for Business *San Francisco (CA) MM*
- R11-7 A Nominating Committee Process *Eleanor Warnock*
- R11-8 Guidelines for Preparing a Committee Report *Margallen Fichter*
- R11-9 Workshop on Clerking *Anne Thomas*
- R11-11 Handout: Notes on Clerking
- R11-13 Handout: Minutes: Getting Them into Friends Hands
- R11-17 Workshop: A Consideration of Our Quaker Business Process *Jan Greene*



# The Purpose of Meetings for Worship and for Business

by *Paul Lacey and Bill Taber*

**The purpose of a Meeting for Worship is:** To turn our attention to the source of all love and joy and truth, to be led by that source in the tasks of life, to know one another in the fellowship of those seeking to turn to that ultimate source to learn to love one another, to take joy in one another, and to do the truth in mutual support. (Robert Barclay says that we need the joint and visible fellowship to be sustained in our faith.)

**The purpose of a Meeting for Business is:** Exactly the same as that of the meeting for worship.

— Paul Lacey

## On Meeting for Business

I want to emphasize the importance of the Friends business meeting in the life of the faithful Friend. One could argue that the business meeting is at least as important as the meeting for worship, for it is the actual demonstration of the New Testament vision of a fellowship guided by, and obeying, the Spirit. The meeting for worship alone can be (though it should not be) a matter of private salvation or private experience without significant changes in life, behavior, commitment, or sacrifice. On the other hand, the meeting for business, if it be Spirit-filled and properly understood, is a hands-on, laboratory-filled experience in which the whole fellowship comes face to face with the Spirit's demands for the sacrifice of time, treasure, convenience, and prejudice. When opinions differ widely and the need for spiritual discernment becomes crucial, the best are driven, as never in a meeting for worship, to seek that Spirit which can sustain harmony while waiting for the right leading. Thus, God's work among us becomes more real and faith is both tested and strengthened in the business meeting.

We can be severely tested by two ever present and very real hazards in the Friends business method; impatience and a vacuous boredom. The Friend who recognizes that these hazards can be a spiritual call to go deeper into worship brings great power to the work of the church as well as an opening of his or her own spiritual gifts, including discernment. Thus the Friends business meeting cannot be described as just the peculiar Quaker form of getting things done; rather it should be seen as an essential part of the spiritual formation and the spiritual growth of every seasoned Friend, for it is that place through which we learn to walk hand in hand with each other and the Spirit out into the world to do the work of committed and obedient disciples.

— William Taber, Jr. "Friends Consultation on Discernment"

# Patient Waiting

by Douglas Bishop and Bonnie Deutsch, Woolman Hill Newsletter

There is a lesson for us as we go about trying to clarify our vision of Quakerism. It has to do with the fundamental Quaker value of listening to every individual, yet seeking a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. This is what Friends mean when we talk about “the sense of the meeting.” When we say we want to do business in the manner of worship, we mean a discipline whereby each person is expected to listen deeply not only to his or her own inner guide, but also to the collective guide of the group.

Paul Lacey, in his Pendle Hill pamphlet, “Leading and Being Led,” wrote about John Woolman’s process of discernment: “*It begins inwardly, as a process or motion of caring whose direction and object are unclear, so a time of waiting must occur, during which Woolman rigorously examines himself, learns his limitations and frailties but also his strengths, and achieves patience and perseverance. From that patient waiting a concern arises and becomes clarified and directed until it leads to an action on behalf of others.*” We need to be in this place of “patient waiting” when we are not really clear about what the best next steps are, but it is not an easy place to be. Waiting in uncertainty requires a certain painful openness.

Although we talk about such waiting, Quakers are not really any better at it than anyone else. We should know that “way will open,” if we give the group enough time and space to move through a careful discernment process, but we often forget. The wish to find a solution, to get out of that painful place, is so strong that the tendency is to rush toward the first available suggestion, even before it has been carefully considered. This is when it seems that consensus is too slow, the sense of the meeting too cumbersome, when those people who continue to stand in the way seem most obstreperous. However, it is precisely at this time that we have to trust in our collective wisdom—and also trust in that which is more than the sum of its parts, which we find so hard to name, but which often comes upon us in the gathered silence.

In this light we wish John Woolman’s patient waiting for all Friends. May we be examples for each other.

# Absent Friends and the Quaker Process

by Phil Oliver, Pacific Yearly Meeting

As my understanding of what it means to be Quaker grows and evolves, I am ever more of a mind that Quakerism is a process, a way of living, acting, and thinking rather than just a “religion.”

I encountered a reference in a newsletter from another meeting to an action taken at Meeting for Worship for Business that later encountered disapproval from some who were absent. They felt the matter should be reexamined. This is an issue at my meeting as well. We made a very major change in our meeting, choosing to temporarily meet in a new place. We knew when we took this step that there were some who were not present who might be unhappy with this choice. It made some members quite uneasy to proceed. Interestingly, those who raised this issue did not feel that they themselves should stand in the way and chose to stand aside.

In my view it is untenable for a meeting to stay its hand because others not present might object. I base this conclusion on a particular view that Quaker process is a deep, communal searching for guidance from God as to right action. If the process, on the other hand, is a finding of consensus rather than Truth, a satisfying of individual desires or readings, my conclusion may not hold. I feel that the latter view is an unworkable one; if a meeting is sufficiently large and diverse there will never be consensus.

The Quaker process is an inherently inactive one; Unity evolves from the speaking of each individual's perceptions of Truth and the Inner Light; these ministries must be heard; we must open ourselves to them, and be willing to re-examine our own leanings as we listen.

An evolution occurs as we corporately examine each offering on a subject, and separate that which is personal preference and prejudice from that which is God's Word. As we do so, we develop a deeper and clearer understanding of God's leading.

Those who are absent cannot participate in this process. One who is absent is not merely unable to *speak*, but likewise unable to *hear* and ultimately unable to *evolve with the Meeting*. To suggest that I know so well what another might say or feel is to deny that other the right to grow, evolve or change as the process proceeds. It seems to be in conflict with our testimonies about the dignity and worth of the individual, though this issue is usually cast as being in support of them.

A second concern arises. When only the absent person can speak to a particular view, and we are certain we know that view and have not been moved by it, aren't we saying that view has not resonated within anyone? To my thinking that is the hallmark of individual desire, rather than of transcending leading.

A third, and possibly more important concern is the implication that the process itself is invalid without this person's presence. It is presumed that God's will and right action cannot be discerned without the absent party. I think that's a step toward cultism. If God has a leading only for that person or those people to bring to us, then God will surely see to it that they be present. Or, far more likely, God will offer it to many of those present.

I would not regard it as a sign of health if a meeting thought that right action could not be discerned solely because specific individuals were not present, with perhaps the exception that they might have special experience or knowledge to bring to our search for Truth. But it surely is not Quaker process to suggest that Truth is undiscoverable, unavailable to the meeting at large.

A fourth concern has to do with power. Quaker testimonies seek to empower and recognize the unique character of each person. However, empowering an individual to block a meeting is a more controversial interpretation of Quaker process to which some would not agree. The idea that a meeting is blocked because some individuals are *absent* goes far beyond that and is far more difficult to accept because of the way it deals with empowerment. This conveys absolute power through the choice to be absent. It empowers one to block the meeting without requiring any corresponding responsibility from that party to be involved in the process. Power without corresponding responsibility is dangerous. It is corrupting. It is the basis of dictatorial practice and it specifically denies and renders impotent all others. How can blocking others without being engaged in the process be Quaker process?

## Absent Friends and the Quaker Process, page 2

This idea is particularly contrary to my understanding of Quakerism because it empowers only the vocal member, the one whose views are well known. It does not likewise empower the quiet member and it implies that quiet members' absences don't matter.

Applying our testimonies on equality to this concept yields the logical consequence that a meeting could only act when every member, attender, and even potential attender is present. That's not our tradition or practice, nor does it seem viable to me.

Finally, and most importantly, it requires a meeting to ignore God's will, a leading discerned, light received, a Unity achieved. If we do not feel some certainty that we have found God's leading, we should not act. But if we feel we have, it seems untenable to fail to follow it because another might not see it, were he or she only present.

There is a positive way to consider absences from the process. If someone is absent, perhaps it is their choice to stand aside in this way. Or perhaps it is that God has somewhere else for them to be that day. When someone is absent, we should regard that as God's leading for that person.

I think it is very valid and important to consider the views known to us from absent members; we must consider their feelings; and we must ask ourselves if their condition speaks to us. But, ultimately, having considered them as individuals, we must trust that the Inner Light, present in us and in our meeting, will lead us. We can, after all, speak only what is in our hearts.

— Phil Oliver, San Francisco Meeting, *Friends Bulletin*, March, 1995

# Some Thoughts on Quaker Process

Paul Lacey, Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting (from an address at Powell House—notes taken by Jan Greene, NYYM)

## Principles of the Quaker Business Procedure:

1. Integrity of community is more important than quick, or efficient, or right decisions.
2. There is no rush to decide things, since the process is in God's hands.
3. Coming into a business meeting with one's mind made up, *even if one is right*, is unfaithfulness to the process.
4. The primary aim of the business meeting is to deepen the spiritual life of the community, rather than getting things done.

When a meeting for business departs from good order, the clerk may point out that the meeting is so far out of order that it is over until we can return to good order. This may lead to charges of abuse of power by the clerk, but the clerk has no power. She or he does have the responsibility to discern how the meeting is going, including going downhill.

When the meeting feels 'stuck', silence is an option. Another option may be 10 minutes of small group talking about the issue to those seated nearby.

## Comments from a clerk that may appropriately be heard in a meeting:

- "We have to let this one ripen."
- "We know that you feel strongly about this issue. We also know that X, Y, and Z need to talk with you for understanding."
- To one who has been appointed to a committee to work out divergent views: "You are not allowed to be only a nay sayer if you accept being on this committee. Your work is part of the work of the committee."
- "You must sufficiently respond to the integrity of others."
- "Your contribution to our meeting is valuable. Now you must contribute more by listening better."
- "It seems to me that what we have been saying is \_\_\_\_\_, but some haven't spoken to it yet. Can we focus on these issues?"
- "This is what I perceive is going on and this is how I understand Quaker process." (It is important that the clerk be very explicit about the process.)

"Sense of the Meeting" does not necessarily mean unity. No Friend has veto power over the meeting, though some have tried to misuse "standing in the way" to effect this. When someone does want to "stand in the way," we are under a strong obligation to think more carefully about this because we don't want to break fellowship. The individual must also think about breaking fellowship.

The times in history when Friends were concerned about absolute unity or purity were the times of the splits.

# Queries on Meeting for Business

## *San Francisco Monthly Meeting*

- Are your meetings for business held in a spirit of love, understanding and forbearance? Do you seek the right course of action with a patient search for unity and a willingness to accept the authority of the truth?
- Do you come to meeting eager to search for God's will rather than to try to win acceptance for a previously formed opinion of your own? Are you prepared to assist by silent, prayerful consideration, speaking only if you feel you have a helpful contribution to make?
- Do you give each member credit for purity of motive, notwithstanding differences of opinion? Is your love for your neighbor so strong that you are as eager to understand as to be understood?
- When your clerk is searching for the sense of the meeting, do you overcome diffidence and express your view without undue delay? Do you maintain silence while the minute is being composed?
- Do you avoid bringing to the meeting matters that should first be considered by a committee? Do you allow unimportant matters to be disposed of quickly? When a decision is being reached with which you disagree, do you accept your responsibility to speak at that time rather than later?
- Do you refrain from pressing your own views unduly, if the judgment of the meeting obviously inclines to some other view?
- When the meeting has come to a decision, do you accept it as "our" decision, rather than "theirs"?

# A Nominating Committee Process

*begun at Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting (CA) with Eleanor Warnock*

1. Focus on the position (such as clerk) or the committee to be considered. Nominating Committee members remind each other first of the functions of the position or committee, then on the personal qualities necessary to fulfill those functions. If no one present is clear on these functions, DO NOT PROCEED until the next Nominating Committee meeting when the relevant information will have been found. When focusing on a committee to be appointed, questions of age and gender balance are relevant. (In the following steps, I will assume an individual is being sought, say for clerk. When a whole committee is being sought, the process changes somewhat in number of names presented and number which rise to the top. This process can also be adapted for finding Yearly Meeting themes and speakers.)
2. When all committee members feel they understand what is being sought, the committee goes into silence out of which people name whatever names occur to them, without commenting on the name. (Comments wait until step #3.) One person is responsible for writing down all these names, though other committee members may also write them down.
3. When it seems clear that no more names are forthcoming, questions may be asked about names which are unfamiliar to some on the committee. When all are clear that they know enough about each name, the committee enters into silence again. (NOTE: Comments like “I don’t think she’ll do it,” are not relevant here—only descriptive comments should be shared.)
4. One person slowly reads all the names that have been suggested. Out of the silence which follows, each committee member names the one name which rises to the top for them. Again, no comment is given on any name. Sometimes the clerk will need to stop someone who begins to comment. If no name rises to the top for someone, s/he can simply state that.
5. When all committee members have shared who rose to the top for them, there may be only one name, and the clerk can call a sense of the meeting on that name. If one name seems to dominate, the clerk can ask if the committee is clear on that name or wishes to continue.
6. If the clerk feels there is no sense of the meeting, committee members then share why they think a given name rose to the top for them. After this sharing, committee members go back into silence and once again name the one name that rises to the top for them.
7. Usually the clerk will be able to call a sense of the meeting after this second period of worship. If not, the committee needs to discern its next step.

## **Strengths of this Procedure:**

1. The person to be asked to serve is chosen out of worship and out of a sense of their gifts for a particular task, so that these gifts and sense of call can be shared with the person when s/he is asked to serve. Also, since the Nominating Committee’s members have reviewed the functions of the position under consideration, the person asking the chosen person can also be articulate about the responsibilities of the position in which s/he is being asked to serve.
2. The process doesn’t focus on what gifts people *don’t* have. There are perfectly fine names who are just not right for a given position. In worship, these names will just drop away without any comment on what they *can’t* do.
3. The person to be asked to serve is not chosen by elimination—i.e. when a name is given, a committee member can’t say, “They are too busy,” or “They don’t get along with so and so,” or “They are disruptive on a committee.” If these things are true and if they are relevant, that person’s name will not rise to the top and no negative stuff need be said.

# Guidelines for Preparing a Committee Report

by Margallen Fichter, *New York Yearly Meeting*

Frequently a committee or task group is asked to consider important matters to help a larger group make decisions. Once the committee has met and decided what to propose, someone, usually the clerk or chair, is responsible to make a report to the larger group. When a report is done carefully, the decision process is made much easier.

Here are some of the questions the report writer might take into account in preparing a report. The first one concerns what has happened in the past that brought the matter to this point. An historical review may be one sentence or ten sentences, because some matters have a longer history than others. Also, the background of the current need for action is more relevant in some issues. Certainly, the committee making the report should be aware of historical factors that led to the present situation. This may involve some digging in old minutes, or conversation with others who remember what happened because they were present and part of past actions.

A second question the report writer should address is the context of the report. The context might include financial considerations, personnel issues, critical timing requirements, and short or long term consequences of any action being recommended by the committee. Sometimes the committee may feel it important to consult with other individuals or committees whose work will be impacted by the recommendation, or who may have relevant information. It is wise to schedule such consultation in time to allow the other committee(s) to consider the consequences of the proposal before the meeting at which the proposal is to be made. Otherwise all action may be delayed while others weigh the recommendations of your committee.

The third component of the report is to make clear the process by which the committee arrived at their decisions. Recommendations that arise out of a series of lengthy meetings may carry more weight than those that were decided in a brief gathering. It is helpful to the group to learn something about who was consulted and how the committee arrived at its conclusions.

Information in a committee report about background, context and process will aid in the acceptance of the committee's recommendations. Everyone in the larger group will appreciate this information, but it is especially vital to anyone who is new to the group or who has missed meetings where the issue was discussed.

— Margallen Fichter is a member of Albany Meeting

# Workshop on Clerking

by Anne Thomas, *Canadian Yearly Meeting*

This workshop is for a one evening session, and was originally prepared in response to a small meeting whose clerk needed to resign, but where no other Friend felt able to take over the task. This has since been used with other meetings. It does not address all the issues around clerking, rather seeks to help members identify the shared role of the whole meeting in the process of clerking. Nor does it address recording, though a handout developed to help yearly meeting committees prepare minutes is included.

## Equipment needed:

### Handouts:

*Notes on clerking*

*Taking minutes*

**Large sheets of flip chart paper, felt pens, masking tape**

### Selection of books and leaflets on clerking

- *Being Together: our corporate life in the Religious Society of Friends*, Margaret Heathfield, Quaker Home Service, 1994, 121 pages.
- *Beyond Consensus: Salvaging the Sense of the Meeting*, by Barry Morley, Pendle Hill Pamphlet #307, 1993, 32 pages.
- *Beyond Majority Rule*, Michael J. Sheeran, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1983, 153 pages.
- *A Handbook for the Presiding Clerk*, David O. Stanfield, North Carolina Yearly Meeting, 1989, 20 pages.
- *Guide to Quaker Practice*, Howard H. Brinton, Pendle Hill Pamphlet #20, 2nd edition 1993, 64 pages.
- *Servant of the Meeting*, Cecil W. Sharman, Quaker Home Service, 1983, 47 pages.
- *Unforeseen Joy*, Damon D. Hickey, North Carolina Yearly Meeting, 1987, 35 pages.

## Outline of workshop on Clerking:

**a. Open with a time of silent worship.** [10–15 minutes]

**b. Names are shared and the purpose of the workshop is described**—to help the meeting look at the role of the clerk and the meeting. [5 minutes]

**c. Brainstorm:** [15–20 minutes]

Friends are asked to indicate the elements which contribute towards Meeting for Worship for Business. These are listed, without comment on the paper. These include good and bad aspects—everything is written up, including problems the meeting has faced.

**d. Discernment:** [10–15 minutes]

With two other felt pens of different color (or underline, asterisk, etc.), the list is gone through in response to the question: “Whose responsibility is this aspect of Meeting for Worship for business?,” using one color for the clerk, another color for the meeting.

(The result often surprises meetings who discover that the clerk’s role is much smaller than they thought and the meeting’s role much larger)

## Workshop on Clerking, page 2

**e. Handout:** [50–60 minutes]

*Notes on Clerking* is passed out. The handout indicates the elements that are to be worked through in an informal way, each of which is affected by the results of the brainstorming. The focus may shift to one area, with Friends being involved who made comments during the brainstorming, etc. The handout covers broad areas, and I find it helpful to me to keep the discussion on track. The sheet on Minute-taking may be handed out if useful, or left as further resource.

**f. Evaluation:** [5 minutes]

Flip chart paper with three columns:

- what was good?
- what was bad?
- suggestions for improvement

**g. Next steps:** [5 minutes]

Where does the meeting go from here?

**h. Closing worship** [5–10 minutes]

(Later evaluation with the leaders of the meeting may be done on what follow up the meeting might want to undertake, for example, to repeat the brainstorming after 3 months, focusing on specific experiences in the recent Meeting for Worship for Business, no blame being placed, more to see that responsibility is shared and the clerk is supported.)

# Handout: Notes on Clerking

by Anne Thomas, Canadian Yearly Meeting

## Worship

### Purpose of workshop:

to identify the role of the meeting in the Meeting for Worship for Business

### Brainstorming:

- what are the elements-good or bad-which contribute towards Meeting for Worship for Business?
- whose responsibility is each of these elements?

### Elements integral to Quaker decision-making:

- all bring a common understanding of faith in and commitment to the Quaker process
- community exists in the group
- all participants bring skills and abilities

### Process of Meeting for Worship for Business:

- worship
- presentation of business—by clerk, committee or individual
- discussion—each contributing toward the whole
- sense of the meeting—discerned by the clerk and vocalized
- writing the minute—group process with group supporting recording clerk in silent worship

### Role of the Clerk:

#### a. Preparation:

*Agenda*—traditional order:

Worship

(Approval of agenda)

Previous minutes—correction and approval as printed

Matters arising

Reports

Correspondence

New concerns

Membership—in closed session

Worship

(Clerk can draft rough agenda ahead and test out with Friends on the previous Sunday. Check matters arising to see if follow up has been done—if not carry over to next meeting. May want to send correspondence on to a committee for preliminary work. Make copies of agenda or put on flip chart)

#### b. During the meeting:

*Timing*—the meeting needs to take responsibility for this. Do they want to finish by a particular time? do they want times by each item? to prioritize the agenda? to drop items?

- Part way through the time suggest another agenda review: some reports might be put directly in minutes, others laid over, etc.
- If an item bogs down, consider setting up a mid-week meeting, post-meeting discussion group, etc., so this can be discussed and allowed to germinate.

## Handout: Notes on Clerking, page 2

*Use of worship*—before, during and after Meeting for Worship for Business.

- Have brief worship between each item, just long enough for group to settle and focus. If item becomes contentious, call for worship.

*Ensure all participate and none dominate*—some may need to speak more than once in the discussion/clarification part of each item.

- Once the meeting moves towards a minute, Friends only speak once.
- If a Friend has not spoken at all, clerk might invite him/her to contribute.

*Keep discussion on track*

*Sense unity*—body language, sense of the meeting, etc.

- Sometimes very quickly reached and can be lost.
- Clerk can summarize and ask if that is what the meeting has heard—“test for unity and test often.”

*Handle it Lightly!*

### c. After the meeting:

- check minutes for necessary follow up as soon as possible—send highlighted copies to involved individuals
- label and file documents
- write letters (one Friend may serve as Correspondence Clerk)
- note items as they arise for the next meeting
- a week before the next meeting—start again!

Be rational and not too self-critical—everyone was part of the process not the clerk alone.

### d. Over time:

- relationship with the meeting develops and personal needs can be expressed: tell the meeting what support is needed: tired tonight, find particular items difficult and really need a focused meeting to deal with them, need people to think before speaking so they only speak once and do not repeat what others have said . . .
- as trust grows, the clerk may be able to prepare “factual” minutes ahead of time—still needs great care.

### Does the Clerk have other roles outside Meeting for Worship for Business?

- varies between meetings-helpful if each meeting is clear on their expectations of the clerk

# Handout: Minutes— Getting Them into Friends’ Hands

by Anne Thomas, *Canadian Yearly Meeting*

Several Friends have asked for some guidance on producing minutes for committees. This paper will focus on technicalities, not the real service to the committee. For information on such matters please consult *Unforeseen Joy: Serving a Friends Meeting as Recording Clerk* by Damon D. Hickey and *Servant of the Meeting: Quaker Business Meetings and Their Clerks* by Cecil W. Sharman, both of which are available from Quaker Book Service or Friends General Conference Bookstore.

Historically, the only set of minutes was the original minutes taken during a meeting and entered directly in a bound minute book. At the beginning of the next meeting, the minutes would be read aloud. At that time any necessary changes were made after which the clerk signed the minutes. With the advent of typewriters and photocopiers, copies of minutes began to be circulated.

It is helpful if minutes can be produced soon after a meeting and circulated to appropriate persons. This is usually the full committee, any ex officio members and the Canadian Yearly Meeting office (which prepares a set of minutes on acid free paper and sends them to the archives).

The original “rough” minutes, written during the meeting, should be retained until the minutes as printed are approved at the next meeting. “Rough” minutes have priority if contents are questioned. A recording clerk should only make grammatical changes and changes of fact (e.g.: membership of an individual) to such minutes. Minutes should be single spaced.

- a. **Include:** (subcommittee name), committee name, date and place, in bold or underlined print.  
e.g.: Minutes of a meeting of Finance Sub Committee of Home Mission and Advancement Committee, January 1, 1994, at Friends House, Toronto.
- b. **Pagination:** Pages should be numbered. If possible a footer indicating the meeting is helpful;  
eg: HMAC-Finance minutes, 94-01 1
- c. **Opening:** Indicate members of committee present, those who sent regrets, those absent and guests/visitors. If Friends are representing various groups (as at Representative Meeting), or are serving in a particular capacity, the designation may be included in parentheses. If Friends are present for only one session this may be indicated in the listing.  
e.g.: Present: Jane Brown, John Green, Mary Orange (Treasurer), George Scarlet  
Regrets: Peter Grey  
Absent: Andrew Pink  
Visitor: Joan Black (Saturday morning)
- d. **Numbering and titles:** To help in referencing for matters arising or other purposes, it helps to use the year and month as part of the minute number. Minutes need not be numbered during the meeting (though pages should be numbered as the meeting progresses). Number all minutes. Sub sections within a minute may be handled in various ways: usually a) b) c) is enough. If the minutes are complex the following order of subheadings may be useful:

A B C    a) b) c)    I II III    i ii iii

## Minutes—Getting Them into Friends’ Hands, page 2

Using “margin release” or an indentation makes the minute numbering stand out more clearly. Indentation can also help distinguish subsections of minutes. It may be better to have several minutes rather than a few complex ones. Giving titles to minutes is helpful.

e.g.: 94-01-01 Worship: The meeting opened with a period of worship

94-01-02 Approval of minutes: We approved the minutes of September 1993 as printed with one correction, that in 93-09-07 the membership of Red Smith be indicated as being held by Halifax Monthly Meeting.

94-01-03

a. 93-09-09 This matter has now been laid down.

b. 93-09-10 In view of Andrew Pink’s absence, we agreed to consider this matter at our next meeting.

In referring to a minutes from yearly meeting sessions the following designation is sufficient: CYM 1993 minute #34

**e. Agenda:** The agenda is prepared ahead of the meeting to indicate the matters to be covered by a committee. Usually, after opening worship, the clerk asks for approval of the agenda, at which time new matters may be added, matters dropped or the suggested order of business changed. This agenda review is usually not minuted, and the numbers on the agenda not followed in numbering the minutes, as some agenda items may need several minutes.

**f. Names:** Traditionally, full names are used in minutes. If full names are given in the “Friends present” listing, shortened names may be used. Some minute preparers capitalize or use bold print for names of Friends who take on particular tasks:

e.g.: 94-01-04: Budget

a. JANE BROWN agreed to contact Peter Grey about . . .

If no person is named to follow through on a matter, the clerk deals with this, or delegates the task to a member of the committee.

If a minute refers to a Friend within the Yearly Meeting, it may be appropriate to list that Friend’s Monthly Meeting membership. For Friends outside the yearly meeting, the yearly meeting membership may be sufficient.

e.g.: 94-01-05: Grants

We approve a Quaker education grant of \$1,000 to Mary Gold of Montreal Monthly Meeting for a time of study at Pendle Hill.

In minuting matters to do with membership, special care should be taken in recording full name and location(s) of membership.

**g. There is no standard way** of indicating that a meeting broke for lunch or overnight.

e.g.: 94-01-12: After a brief period of worship the meeting was adjourned until the following morning when we opened with a time of worship.

94-01-12: The meeting closed with a period of worship.

94-01-13: The meeting reconvened the next morning with a time of worship.

Some minutes make no indication of breaks, others add the information in parentheses, without numbering it.

**h. Documentation:** All documentation referred to in the minutes should be circulated with the minutes.

e.g.: 94-01-04: Budget:

The budget for 1994 was approved (attached).

## Minutes—Getting Them into Friends' Hands, page 3

- i. **Closing:** Final minutes usually indicate the worship, the date, time and place of the next meeting and the information that all minutes were approved. Following the minutes the names of the clerk and recording clerk are added.

e.g.: 94-01-20 Next meeting

The next meeting of the Finance Sub Committee will be held April 1, 1994 at Friends House, 60 Lowther Avenue, Toronto at 9:00 am.

94-01-21 All minutes were approved.

94-01-22 The meeting closed in worship

Jane Brown, clerk John Green, recording clerk

Traditionally, the clerks signed the original minute book but this is now rarely done.

- j. **Miscellaneous:** Sufficient minutes should be produced so that newcomers to a committee may receive a set of the minutes from the previous meeting. Clerks may ask to receive two sets of minutes—one for the file and another for writing personal comments and reminders on. Some clerks use two further sets of minutes to cut and paste minutes under sub headings by subject matter so that information on a particular concern is easily accessible.

## SAMPLE MINUTES

Minutes of a meeting of Finance Sub Committee of Home and Advancement Committee, January 1–2, 1994, at Friends House, Toronto.

Present: Jane Brown, John Green, Mary Orange (Treasurer), George Scarlett

Regrets: Peter Grey

Absent: Andrew Pink

Visitor: Joan Black (Saturday morning)

94-01-01: Worship:

The meeting opened with a period of worship.

94-01-02: Approval of minutes:

We approved the minutes of September 1993 as printed, with one correction, that in 93-09-07 the membership of Red Smith be indicated as being held by Halifax Monthly Meeting.

94-01-03: Matters arising :

a. 93-09-09: This matter has now been laid down.

b. 93-09-10: In view of Andrew Pink's absence, we agreed to consider this matter at our next meeting.

94-01-04: Budget:

a. JANE BROWN agreed to contact Peter Grey about . . .

b. The budget for 1994 was approved (attached).

**Minutes—Getting Them into Friends' Hands, page 4**

94-01-05: Grants:

We approve a Quaker education grant of \$1,000 to Mary Gold of Montreal Monthly Meeting for a time of study at Pendle Hill.

94-01-12: After a brief period of worship the meeting was adjourned until the following morning when we opened with a time of worship.

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94-01-20: Next meeting:

The next meeting of the Finance Sub Committee will be held April 1, 1994 at Friends House, 60 Lowther Avenue, Toronto at 9:00 am.

94-01-21: All minutes were approved.

94-01-22: The meeting closed in worship.

Jane Brown clerk  
John Green, recording clerk

# Workshop: A Consideration of Our Quaker Business Process

by Jan Greene, New York Yearly Meeting

Time: 2 hours

Purpose: To help a meeting consider how well it is using Quaker business process

Preparation: It is helpful if participants have read *Beyond Consensus*, a Pendle Hill Pamphlet by Barry Morley.

## 1. Opening Worship (time: 10–15 minutes)

2. **Ask Friends to divide into groups of 3.** Then ask them to take time to remember a successful meeting for worship with a concern for business that they have attended. In the small groups, each person describes that meeting and identifies what it was that made that meeting successful. (time: about 15 minutes)

3. **In large group:** Give Friends a few minutes to share any reactions to the last activity plus any new learnings or insights. Then ask, “What are the steps that you, as an individual, can take to help make the meetings for worship with a concern for business that you attend be successful?” (time: about 30 minutes)

## 4. Introduction to next section: Share the following and other appropriate observations:

- that the Quaker business process is one of the treasures held in common by all Friends groups
- that the Quaker business process is a mystical process in which our function is to find what God wants for us—to find the answer that is waiting for us.
- that the Quaker business process is paradoxical. It is at once very strong, yet fragile. It requires the cooperation and commitment of everyone present to succeed, and it can be destroyed by the unfaithfulness of a single person.
- that a sense of urgency will make the process impossible.
- that no decision is more important than the process. (time: about 5 minutes)

## In Large Group: Consider: (time: 30 to 40 minutes)

- At this Monthly Meeting, what kind of concerns or issues does the meeting have the most difficulty with? (Note: Emphasize to Friends that the *length of time it takes* to reach Sense of the Meeting is not the same as *having the most difficulty*.)
- Are there decisions that you are unwilling or unable to turn over to seeking the Sense of the Meeting? Are there kinds of decisions that do not need to be turned over to seeking the Sense of the Meeting?

## 5. Ending: Read Paul Lacey’s Quote and follow this with a closing time of silent worship.

“*The purpose of the meeting for worship is:* To turn our attention to the source of all love and joy and truth, to be led by that source in the tasks of life, to know one another in the fellowship of those seeking to turn to that ultimate source to learn to love one another, to take joy in one another, and to do the truth in mutual support. *The purpose of the meeting for business is:* exactly the same as that of the meeting for worship.”



# Fostering *Vital Friends Meetings*

Part Two:  
*Resources for Working with Quaker Meetings*

by Jan Greene and Marty Walton

## **Section R12: Stewardship**

- R12-1 About Yearly Meeting Finances and Related Matters  
*Ad Hoc Committee on the Financial Health of New England YM*
- R12-7 Some Thoughts on Money and Stewardship *RE Committee, Phila. YM*
- R12-8 Discussion Starter: Helping a Meeting Consider Finances *Jan Greene*



# About Yearly Meeting Finances and Related Matters: A Report from an Ad Hoc Committee on the Financial Health of New England Yearly Meeting

*Anne Kriebel (Clerk), Cliff Harrison, Bruce Hawkins, Sylvia Perry*

The financial health of our yearly meetings is an ongoing concern for Friends. At one Field Secretary's Gathering, Jonathan Vogel-Borne reported on the work of a New England Yearly Meeting sub-committee that was charged with addressing a concern about adequate financing of the Yearly Meeting. This concern had arisen following actions to increase staff support for the work of the yearly meeting and the Yearly Meeting's camp, increase staff salaries and benefits to above-subsistence levels, and increase support for the Yearly Meeting camp. At the same time other Yearly Meeting costs had been rising due to inflation. The efforts of the sub-committee were overwhelmingly successful, raising all the money that was needed for the budget, plus much more. This continues and NEYM is now studying how this money should be used to support the new program ideas identified by Friends at the local level. The following are excerpts from the final report of this sub-committee.

— Jan Greene

## **From the Introduction to the Report**

During the past twenty-five years New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) has grown gradually and steadily. In many ways the Yearly Meeting seems spiritually healthy and organizationally vital. We begin our report with those comments because when financial problems are discussed, we may have a tendency to forget that such difficulties only partly describe our condition as a religious society.

It became clear that if operating reserves declined below about \$15,000 there could be at least one time during the year when NEYM would not have the cash flow necessary to pay its expenses on a timely basis. It also became recognized that such a low operating reserve could lead to a painful financial crisis (in which decisions would have to be made so quickly that clear process might not be possible). It was also generally acknowledged that it is not a healthy condition for the Yearly Meeting to have to inform Friends of financial difficulty each year. It was affirmed by many that more money had to be intentionally raised (not just hoped for) and/or expenses had to be surely cut.

## **What has been done in response to the decrease in operating reserves?**

1. Modest attempts were made to raise additional money. Each year during the fall or early winter, financial appeal letters went out to Monthly Meetings and to individuals throughout the Yearly Meeting. During the past two years a second letter was sent to Monthly Meetings reporting that a large budget deficit was probable and requesting that additional contributions be considered.
2. During each of the two past years, extra efforts were made to be careful about spending money. Many committees underspent their budgets and the NEYM Administrative Secretary succeeded in her effort to underspend the office budget by \$3-4000 each year.

## About Yearly Meeting Finances and Related Matters, page 2

3. The NEYM Finance Committee and others recommended that future operating budgets be based on conservative expectations of actual income.

### The Ad Hoc Committee's mission

In May 1993, the Permanent Board appointed the Ad Hoc Committee on the Financial Health of Yearly Meeting and charged it with two tasks:

1. to raise enough money to restore operating reserves to a prudent level
2. to search at a deeper level with Monthly and Quarterly Meetings for what the Yearly Meeting's work should be and how that ought to be adequately financed.

### What issues will be discussed when the Ad Hoc Committee visits Monthly Meetings?

Some of the questions that have been identified for possible discernment are:

- How relevant is the Yearly Meeting to each of its Monthly Meetings?
- Are there areas in which the Yearly Meeting might improve its relationship with Monthly Meetings?
- What should the Yearly Meeting be doing? How important is a vital Yearly Meeting to the healthy maintenance and growth of the Religious Society of Friends in New England?
- How should we understand the very different levels of support that Yearly Meeting receives from its Monthly Meetings? Is there a "right amount" for Monthly Meetings to contribute to Yearly Meeting? How should the significant differences of average income and Meeting obligations be properly accounted for (i.e., Monthly Meeting staff or not, building owned or not, etc.)?
- Is it possible that some Monthly Meetings are contributing too much money to the Yearly Meeting (suffering therefore a loss of local vitality)?
- Should the Yearly Meeting budget be supported entirely by contributions from Monthly Meetings? Should contributions from individuals be accepted? Should grant money be sought?
- Should the Yearly Meeting have a greatly expanded, decreased, or level budget? How should inflation levels be factored into such consideration?
- Are there alternative methods of organizing NEYM administration that would maintain present budget levels or decrease the budget and that would also facilitate maintaining, or increasing, the vitality of the Yearly Meeting?
- Can Friends be confident that the operating reserves will not be spent down again?

While NEYM is a corporate body in which we can change our sense of what is proper at any time, two Finance Committee minutes seem relevant.

- (One) minute—indicates that future budgets will be based on conservative expectations of what income for the Yearly Meeting will be.
- (A) second minute—states that working capital should be kept at no less than three months of working costs and so should be increased a proportionate amount as the overall budget increases.

## About Yearly Meeting Finances and Related Matters, page 3

### Where does NEYM money come from and how is it spent?

Detailed information is available each year in the NEYM Minute Book. Approximate percentage figures for 1993 are:

#### *Income:*

From Meetings	89.5%
From individuals	7.8%
From interest	2.7%

#### *Budgeted Expenditures:*

Office Expenses	12.9%
Employees	53.3%
Committees	4.7%
Friends Organizations	13.9%
Travel	2.8%
Publications	4.9%
Other	7.4%

### New England Yearly Meeting:

- Serves as a unifying body that facilitates spiritual relationship between Monthly Meetings and between geographically, culturally, and theologically separated Friends.
- Facilitates a Friends presence and identity in the larger society.
- Responds to needs and concerns of Monthly Meetings (First Day School assistance, informational services, financial help, pastoral care, etc.).
- Witnesses in the wider society in support of Friends testimonies. Fosters cooperative ministry by like-minded individuals.
- Provides administrative aid to the entire NEYM membership and committee structure from the central office in Worcester.
- Provides a youth program serving more than 300 children during Yearly Meeting Sessions and throughout the year at youth retreats.
- Administers and insures property and other corporate assets owned by the Religious Society of Friends in New England.
- Plans and implements annual Yearly Meeting Sessions.

### The Ad Hoc Committee Final Report, August 5, 1995

#### Introduction to this Report

The Ad Hoc Committee on the Financial Health of Yearly Meeting was formed in May 1993 by the Permanent Board.

During the past year almost all NEYM Monthly Meetings have been visited by at least one member of the Ad Hoc Committee in an effort to search at a deeper level for what the Yearly Meeting's work should be.

## About Yearly Meeting Finances and Related Matters, page 4

The individual members of the Ad Hoc Committee are thankful for the opportunity to visit so many Monthly Meetings—it was an enriching experience for each of us. We are thankful for how welcome we were made to feel throughout NEYM.

We tried to listen carefully.

### Two Recommendations

1. Almost every Monthly Meeting we visited expressed interest in being visited more often by involved Yearly Meeting Friends. Monthly Meetings repeatedly expressed the conviction that visitation results in increased local and regional spiritual vitality. Smaller and more distant meetings expressed the greatest interest in increased visitation. We came to think of “send us more people, not more paper” as a fair shorthand for what we were hearing. Appreciation was also repeatedly expressed for the extensive visitation that NEYM Field Secretary, Jonathan Vogel-Borne, undertakes in an ongoing way.

*Recommendation:* We recommend that the Yearly Meeting find a way to significantly expand visitation by involved Yearly Meeting Friends to Monthly Meetings, especially to our more geographically separated and smaller Monthly Meetings. We acknowledge that ultimately visitation depends on individual Friends responding to a call to visit. We would envision that many NEYM Committees would be asked to participate in increased visitation. We recommend that an adequately sized travel budget be a part of such a visitation program.

2. Almost every Monthly Meeting we visited expressed appreciation and support for the Yearly Meeting Youth Program. Concern was expressed about the waiting lists that have become common for youth retreats. Over and over again we heard conviction that the spiritual needs of our children should be a very high priority among us. A few Friends expressed conviction that greater oversight about the content of the Young Friends Newsletter would be appropriate.

We heard general support for expanding the youth program (though support for expanding more local youth programming was what we heard from several of our more geographically distant Meetings). We heard what seemed to us a “cautious openness” to intentionally consider modest levels of additional funding of the Youth Program by some Monthly Meetings and a disinclination to do so by other Monthly Meetings. We understood that most Monthly Meetings do not feel that funds raised by their individual Monthly Meetings can be significantly expanded at this time.

*Recommendation:* We recommend that the NEYM Youth Program be expanded and that special consideration be given to how the Yearly Meeting might be helpful to Quarterly Meetings in expanding Youth Programs. We believe that dedicating accumulated surplus funds during the next five years for this purpose (probably about \$6000 per year could be available) would be an appropriately cautious manner of financing a modest expansion of youth programming in New England. We would envision that Monthly Meetings would be asked after three years to make an intentional decision about whether to increase their contribution level enough to continue the expanded part of the Youth Program.

### Some of the Rest of What we Heard

- We felt that there was general support for New England Yearly Meeting's present overall budgeting level. Support for continuing our present policy of basing budgets on conservative expectations of income seemed quite general. Monthly Meetings often expressed understanding that budgets do need to be increased at least enough each year to account for the effects of inflation.
- Several Monthly Meetings expressed hope that Administrative costs of the Yearly Meeting will be reduced. Most Monthly Meetings seemed to believe that Administrative costs are largely appropriate. No Monthly Meeting expressed any enthusiasm for increasing the Administrative budget of the Yearly Meeting.
- Many Meetings, particularly smaller and more geographically distant Meetings, expressed hope that the Yearly Meeting might find a way to be helpful in facilitating the growth of quality adult religious education.
- Some Friends expressed hope that the Yearly Meeting might find a way to be helpful in providing additional guidance about effective local outreach and by providing appropriate outreach resources.
- Some Friends expressed belief that staffing salary levels are too low and some that salary levels are too high. The prevalence of each opinion seemed proportionally related to urban-rural location. Friends expressing views about such matters seem largely content with current salary levels as an appropriate compromise level.
- Many Friends expressed appreciation for the consistent usefulness of New England Yearly Meeting's current edition of Faith and Practice.
- Many Friends expressed the view that Annual Sessions are an important centering event that helps us keep and deepen our ties to our Religious Society.
- Two Meetings questioned whether the process of preparing State of the Society reports might not have become an empty form that could be properly laid down.
- A number of Meetings expressed conviction that making a carefully intentional decision about contribution levels toward the Yearly Meeting is an important and constructive discipline.
- Appreciation was expressed by several Meetings for the vital support given to their Clerk by the New England Yearly Meeting Field Secretary. Help in Clerking and help at times of personality and theological conflict within Meetings was characterized as having been very useful.
- We heard appreciation expressed for the single parent retreats sponsored and facilitated by NEYM Ministry and Counsel and for other special retreats that have been held by NEYM (especially women's retreats).
- A suggestion was made that New England Friends could benefit by the creation of a NEYM library so that Monthly Meetings would then have additional accessible resources to devote to both adult and First Day School religious education.
- The value of the *NE Friend* was affirmed often by individual Friends. A few Friends wondered whether it might include more content of a spiritually challenging nature or more specifically focus on current NEYM issues in order to give Friends the opportunity to think about things in advance of Sessions.

## About Yearly Meeting Finances and Related Matters, page 6

- Recurrently, conviction was expressed that it would be proper for the Yearly Meeting to increase its efforts to help facilitate deeper discernment throughout New England about the issues that divide us. Some Monthly Meetings expressed the view that the Yearly Meeting requests a lot from Monthly Meetings already regarding both reporting and discernment.
- Some Maine and Cape Cod Meetings noted that Yearly Meeting Sessions take place during the season of the year in which a substantial proportion of their incomes are made. These Friends generally wondered whether it would be possible to hold a major Yearly Meeting event each winter in addition to the Annual Sessions in August.
- Some support of the larger Quaker organizations was expressed. We heard very little criticism of current overall levels of support by the Yearly Meeting for those organizations. We heard recurrent discomfort about NEYM contributing a larger amount to Friends United Meeting than to Friends General Conference. We heard general appreciation for the concept that NEYM properly participates and funds both Quaker organizations as a healthy expression of our diversity.

### Our Conclusion

There seems a general sense throughout the Yearly Meeting, especially in our smaller and more geographically distant Monthly Meetings, that NEYM could and should do more to nurture the vitality, educational needs, and outreach efforts of its local Monthly Meetings.

In general, however, Friends seem quite supportive of New England Yearly Meeting and seem to believe that it is largely true that the Yearly Meeting size, program, and funding levels are basically as they should be.

# Some Thoughts on Money and Stewardship

*From Spiritual Disciplines for Busy Friends,  
A Study Guide for Adults by the Religious Education Committee  
of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1990–1991*

The three subdivisions of stewardship are: *time*, *money* and *talent*. We are faithful when we use all three appropriately and entirely.

What happens in your Monthly and Yearly Meeting as regards stewardship of money. Is it well or ill with us?

On October 24, 1991, 119 Friends from 52 Meetings came together for a Finance Conference. Writing that conference's report, Kingdom Swayne opined that the financial health of our Monthly Meetings "depends ultimately on our spiritual vigor. To put it another way: if God wants us to do something, She'll provide the money for it—maybe by telling us to do, or refrain from doing, something." People of faith, we all know, live by this. *Do we?*

Within Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, one-third of the adult and able members (leaving out the kids, the elderly poor, and the plain poor) give neither to the Yearly Meeting nor to their Monthly Meetings. Half our Yearly Meeting money comes from dead Quakers, plus canny investments. How do Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Quakers stack up with other spiritual groups? *Friends in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting probably have one of the lowest levels of giving of American churches.*

The *1990 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* reports that the highest givers belonged to the Reformed Episcopal Church (\$1,205.41 annually per giving unit), and the lowest to the American Baptist Churches, USA (\$224.25). Friends United Meeting's figure was \$369.30 (p. 66). Philadelphia Yearly Meeting does not release its figures, fearing a decrease in giving.

Are we asking the Holy Spirit what precisely to give and then giving it? The *Philadelphia Inquirer* (4/4/91) told of a survey taken by the Lifetime T.V. Network. It seems that "40% of respondents said they valued their relationship with God above all else... followed by good health and a happy marriage. . . ." "Only 2% said a job that pays well was the most important thing in their life."

*Assuming that Friends in your Yearly Meeting might give similar answers that 40% value our relationship with God above all else, does the Yearly Meeting look like this is the case? Does your Monthly Meeting?*

# Discussion Starter: Helping a Meeting Consider Finances

*Jan Greene, New York Yearly Meeting*

Being aware of the fact that our western society discourages the open discussion of financial means, Friends in Schenectady, NY, Meeting decided to focus on the problems this presented in understanding the ability and willingness of members and attenders to support the meeting's work and expected expenses.

As a way to open this discussion, the facilitator of the program asked Friends to remain silent while they arranged themselves in a line according to what they thought their annual income/financial resources was in comparison to others in the meeting. Friends were then asked to observe where others had placed themselves, and then to return to their seats.

Schenectady Friends reported that the observations, reflections and comments which were offered in the following silence were illuminating and helpful to Friends' understanding of each other and to the support of the financial needs of the meeting.

# Fostering *Vital Friends Meetings*

Part Two:

*Resources for Working with Quaker Meetings*

by Jan Greene and Marty Walton

## **Section R13: Working with Groups**

R13-1 Guidelines for Small Group Facilitators *Steve Smith*

R13-2 Needs Present in Groups *Patsy Hayes Myers and Edward Myers Hayes*

R13-3 Group Dynamics and Games Leadership *Patsy Hayes Myers and Edward Myers Hayes*

R13-5 The Nitty-Gritty Conference Planning Checklist *Philadelphia YM*



# Guidelines For Small Group Facilitators

by Steve Smith, *Pacific Yearly Meeting, 1993*

## 1. The Small Group Experience

*Purposes:* Getting to know each other better; understanding the rich diversity of group participants; nurturing spiritual growth and discovering our spiritual journeys.

*Process:* Each participant has an opportunity to speak. Sharing focuses upon one's personal experience—including incidents in one's own religious, spiritual or psychological growth—rather than upon others' experiences or upon abstract ideas and theories.

*Procedures:* Begin with introductions, either as a first round of sharing or as a brief preface to a fuller round of sharing. Participation may occur in sequence around the circle, or in no particular order, as each feels moved to speak. Persons may pass; if so, they should later be given opportunity (but not pressed) to speak before a new round begins.

*Confidentiality:* Sharing may be deeper and more personal if participants explicitly agree at the outset that what is said by others will not be communicated outside of the group.

*Silence:* Brief periods of silent worship at the beginning and end of the group and following each contribution help to maintain a centered focus and depth.

*Listening:* As each person speaks, others are encouraged to practice full, empathic listening, rather than merely using the sharing to trigger their own thoughts.

*Speaking to the whole group:* Addressing comments to the entire group (rather than to the facilitator or another individual) promotes deeper group connection.

## 2. Specific Concerns of Facilitators

*Getting started:* Arrange seating in a circle, close enough to allow for intimacy and ease of hearing. Briefly state conference and small group themes. Outline procedures summarized above. Establish a group understanding of confidentiality and trust. It is often comforting to the participants for the facilitator to begin the sharing.

*Full participation:* Make space for participation by all. Monitor time, and alert participants to the average amount of time available, as appropriate. Persons who have not spoken may be courteously asked if they wish to share. Do not pressure persons to speak; some gain as much from listening as from speaking. Talkative members may need loving reminders of limited time available. Suggestions for worship help the group to re-enter.

These suggestions are not fixed guidelines. Use your own creative ideas; be guided by the Spirit.

— Steve Smith is a member of Claremont Monthly Meeting, California

# Needs Present In Groups

by Patsy Hayes Myers and Edward Myers Hayes,  
New York Yearly Meeting

There are two kinds of behavior which are needed in a group in order for it to get its work done efficiently:

1. **Task behavior:** behavior which helps the group make progress on the task or problem.
2. **Group maintenance behavior:** behavior which helps the group work more effectively as a group, improves communication, interpersonal relations, etc.—the oil which keeps the machinery running more smoothly.

A third kind of behavior which occurs in groups is called individual-need-oriented behavior—behavior which primarily meets the need of the individual rather than making a contribution to the task or maintenance of the group.

If people are to give their interest and energy to a group, they must get some kind of satisfaction out of it. As they get more satisfaction they will be more willing to work with the group. If people are only marginal members in a group, their membership may still be meaningful to them. Sometimes people are in a group which is not satisfying to them but they feel they cannot leave. Under these conditions they will stay as near the edge of the group as they can, but will do what they have to do in order to remain in the group.

Friends General Conference has a poster created by the Friends Home Service Committee, London, with a paragraph that communicates the caring, celebration, non-threatening feeling that can be present in a play session:

If you are wondering what God may be,  
Looking for a purpose in life,  
Craving company, or seeking solitude,  
Come to our Meeting for Worship.  
We shall not ask (make) you speak or sing  
We shall not ask you what you believe.  
We shall simply offer you our friendship,  
And a chance to sit quietly and think  
And perhaps somebody will speak.  
And perhaps somebody will pray,  
And perhaps you will find here  
That which you are seeking . . .  
We are not saints  
We are not cranks  
We are not different  
Except that we believe that God's Light is in all . . .  
Waiting to be discovered.

# Group Dynamics and Games Leadership

by Patsy Hayes Myers and Edward Myers Hayes,  
New York Yearly Meeting

When explaining a game to a group, do it as simply as possible, starting by getting players in position to play immediately (in circle, on teams, standing sitting). Explain in an imaginative, zesty, visual, attention-getting way. Explain rules fully before asking for volunteers. Stop the game, or alter it, before the group tires of it.

Since you have so many different kinds of games available to you, *pick the game* you play to suit the energy, physical activity and attention level of your group. Balance the rhythm of games to suit the group's needs—use appropriate games to spark up a group as it gets sluggish, to let loose some bubbling up energy, to get folks involved, to get a reticent group to the point of physical contact, to calm down a rowdy group and always to have FUN. Use games to spark imagination or to promote listening to each other (e.g. “telephone”) or faith in each other (trust games). Use activities to center the group (Guided Fantasies) or focus values and discussions. Balance the structuring of the games between flexibility, spontaneity and control of the group—for example, when you're in the process of gathering a group together, play a game . . . that draws the group physically together and also focuses their attention. Play games that scatter and excite the group, such as, “Everybody's It” Tag, only when you have the time and space for it.

In *facilitating games*, the most important thing is to think it through and to actually practice organizing it out loud ahead of time. Rehearse it out loud to yourself before a mirror. Know your game and what you are trying to do with it well enough so that you can present it clearly without confusion and so that you feel strong enough to be flexible to the input and changing needs of the group.

*Change games* or make them more intricate to keep them interesting, but don't change rules without everyone who is playing feeling good about its change. Change a game by changing the boundaries (more open or more tight), by making it feel more fantastical (“Rock, Paper, Scissors” becoming “Elves, Giants, Wizards”), by adding safety zones, or changing equipment (from a NERF ball to an earth ball. What a different game it becomes!).

*Have all your equipment organized* in a smooth manner. Bear in mind, at all times, SAFETY. Check the physical area for any possible hazards. Ensure the physical and emotional caring of players for each other. If at times you think players may get carried away in a game, move to a different level game or build in safeguards, such as handicapping the stronger players or focusing them, i.e. in “Rock, Paper, Scissors,” say that the center of the lines are for those players who are most into it while those at the end can play a little more laid back.

Remind people often that *the fun is in playing the best you can*, rather than in beating your “opponent.” Remind folks in tagging they don't have to run each other over. If you make a mistake, don't feel you have to hide it from the group, but have faith in them—add the rule you forgot or ask for a new idea to help patch up a mess, or just let a game drop if it isn't working. If you can be a leader who in facilitating can present positive qualities, you'll nurture these in your group: flexibility, caring, imagination, inventiveness, energy and vulnerability.

*Be careful to challenge folks without pushing them beyond their personal limits* of physical or emotional comfort. Always present passing as a viable option for an individual, or being an observer. Try to keep the observer as involved as possible by asking for help refereeing or boundary keeping. Two ways to avoid threatening situations are: 1) cut out elimination of players in a game, and 2) instead of one “it,” have a pair or a team of “its.”

*In working with someone else*, it is a good idea to have one person be primary for each game, with the other person in a supportive role: gathering equipment, providing demonstration and participation, giving feedback and asking for clarification, and gathering up folks on the sidelines. Never undermine the other leader by correcting them before the group or cracking jokes or chattering during the other's presentation. As you work with another person, you'll develop trust and ways of communication (a raised eyebrow can be a whole sentence) and you'll probably stimulate each other's reactivity and enthusiasm.

## Group Dynamics and Games Leadership, page 2

*Some good ways to focus attention and to gather folks:*

- the scouts signal for quiet (one hand raised, the other on your lips) which is picked up by others as they notice it
- huddles or “huggles for sharing rules”
- suddenly starting up a game that everyone can instantly plug into—“SIMON SAYS HANDS ON YOUR MOUTH”
- dramatically holding up an attention-getting prop—a balloon, a bell or a blindfold
- cueing into a group’s imagination such as by quickly signifying a space as a life boat and all the space surrounding it as the shark-infested waters—“haul each on board.”

*Some ways to pick teams or “its”*

- shuffle and distribute cards (all the black or red are teams or the Queen of Hearts is “it”)
- have everyone shut their eyes, think quickly if they are “lions” or “lambs” and find each other by sounds—all the baas on one side—all the roars on the other.
- everyone born in the summer on one team, the winter on the other. (pick delineators that don’t denote differences in strengths or value judgments.)
- everyone put a thumb into the circle and shut their eyes. You squeeze one thumb once, and that hand squeezes another thumb twice. Twice is “it.”
- everyone in a circle, eyes shut, you walk around and discreetly squeeze or tap one “it.”
- pick an “it” for a particular game discreetly before a session.
- resort to counting off (1-2-3-4) if you need equal divisions of teams.

*Evaluation* by your group is really valuable; it nurtures their feeling of ownership of the process and truly helps you better your skills and style. You evaluate in a low-key way with just asking for verbal feedback. However, if you ask for something in writing it will often be a more focused input from the group; also, they’ll be freer to say things. Ask for “pluses”—things that were highlights and positive and for “changes”—things that could have been better. Urge folks, if they can, to say specifically how it could be better. Another evaluation technique that centers more on the group’s role in an activity or exercise is “feeling cards”—pass out a sheet of paper and a pencil to each person. Ask them—anonously—to briefly write how they are feeling, the emotions primarily in their minds at this instant; and to complete the statement: “I wish that . . .” Gather the cards, shuffle, and redeal, asking each person to read aloud the one he or she got.

In loving Friendship, Patsy Hayes Myers and Edward Myers Hayes (former Youth Program leaders at Powell House)

# The Nitty-Gritty Conference Planning Checklist

*developed by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and Regional Programs*

Name of Conference \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Conference \_\_\_\_\_

## Six to eighteen months before the conference:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Approve concept, theme, and sponsorship
- \_\_\_\_\_ Set date; consider timing in view of other events, how it will be publicized, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reserve facilities; consider attributes needed including location, handicap accessibility, needed space including workshop rooms, kitchen, assembly rooms, areas for children, hallways and display areas, catering and janitorial services, parking, and how early access can be gained on the conference day and the day before
- \_\_\_\_\_ Plan costs and funding, including registration fee, honoraria, etc. Don't forget details such as who needs to register, who doesn't need to pay the fee (e.g., workshop leaders), who gets free lunches (if any), etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Assign task of site liaison to one person who will be involved in planning from beginning to end. (Note: throughout the planning, all persons with site requirements should contact this one person, *not* the site administrators.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Decide on major speakers and contact them
- \_\_\_\_\_ Plan publicity, prepare general poster

## Six to eight months before the conference:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Finalize timetable for the day
- \_\_\_\_\_ Put a form in newsletters for people to request workshop topics and to request a registration form to be sent when available.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Send letter to constituent groups inviting:
  1. \_\_\_\_\_ workshop proposals (include clear guidelines about the nature of desired workshops),
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ proposals for interest group meetings, and
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ requests to display literature.

*A full 10 weeks should be allowed for responses.*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Plan children's program and child care
- \_\_\_\_\_ Plan food arrangements
- \_\_\_\_\_ Plan conference registration processes
- \_\_\_\_\_ Confirm financial arrangements and account numbers with the Accounting Office
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reserve all available audio-visual machines
- \_\_\_\_\_ Check with related nearby facilities that may be open to conference-goers

## The Nitty-Gritty Conference Planning Checklist, page 2

### Three months before the conference:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Decide on workshop titles and leaders; notify them and send instructions; ask about resources needed (audiovisual equipment, easels/newsprint, etc.) or ask to arrange for own resources; notify and thank those whose suggestions were not included
- \_\_\_\_\_ Maintain a list of addresses and phone numbers of all people involved (this will also be useful for post-conference thank-yous)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Put together directions, public transportation, and parking information for brochure
- \_\_\_\_\_ Decide which mailing lists to use for brochure mailing, and how many brochures to print
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prepare, print, and mail brochure
- \_\_\_\_\_ Locate or prepare any needed diagrams and floor plans for use on the conference day

### One month before the conference:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Reconfirm site arrangements, including janitorial service, and when the building will be opened in the morning
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prepare participant and leader evaluation forms (design as self-mailers for those who don't get around to filling them out on the conference day)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Assign tasks:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ troubleshooter on the conference day (this is a key person, and this should be the only task assigned to this person)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ keeping track of announcements to make at the conference plenary session
  - \_\_\_\_\_ making signs
  - \_\_\_\_\_ information and registration table (plan so as to avoid long lines)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ person to verify which workshops, etc., actually took place and who led them, and to give workshop report forms to leaders
  - \_\_\_\_\_ food set-up
  - \_\_\_\_\_ overseeing flow of people at meals (this is critical)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ clean-up (a good task for local hosts, if any)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ prepare schedule for the day (leaving a blank column for room assignments)

### One week before the conference:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Based on registrations received, decide on possible cancellation of workshops, assign rooms to the remaining workshops, and finish preparation of the schedule for the day
- \_\_\_\_\_ Send schedule for the day, sign-up sheets for participants, and leader evaluation forms to workshop leaders
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prepare packets for registrants, nametags, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prepare any checks needed for reimbursement at the conference
- \_\_\_\_\_ Buy nonperishable supplies
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make copies of schedule for the day, participant evaluation forms, and other hand-outs needed on the conference day

## The Nitty-Gritty Conference Planning Checklist, page 2

### Day before the conference:

- Move tables
- Put up signs
- Get change for cash box
- Buy food for lunch, refreshments, and children's snacks
- Put out box for return of evaluation sheets
- Attend to building temperature

### Day of the conference:

- Worry not! Everything is already organized.

### One week after the conference:

- Hold an evaluation meeting
- Send thank-you letters
- Write up any needed reports
- Finish all paperwork and clean out the file
- Commence planning for next conference



# Fostering *Vital Friends Meetings*

Part Two:

*Resources for Working with Quaker Meetings*

by Jan Greene and Marty Walton

## **Section R14: Young Friends**

- R14-1 Some Thoughts on Teaching Teenagers *Luther Conant*
- R14-5 Queries on Relating with Youth *Betsy Kenworthy*
- R14-7 Organizing Programs for Quaker Teenagers *Marsha Holliday*
- R14-17 Some Observations and Suggestions Regarding the Status of Young Friends *Doris Blossom*
- R14-19 Betrayed by the Quaker Community *Bruce Yarnall*
- R14-21 How Quakers Can Regain Their Youth *Anthony Manousos*
- R14-23 A Beginning Proposal for Seventh Day Schools *Anne Thomas*
- R14-26 Notes about Working with Young Friends *Jan Greene*
- R14-27 Preventing Burnout *Lissa Field*
- R14-29 Healing the Teenager Within *Judith Randall*
- R14-32 Needs of Young Friends *Cynthia Taylor*
- R14-32 Being a “Significant Other Adult” in the Life of a Young Friend *Jan Greene*
- R14-33 A Young Friends’ Guide to Worship Sharing *Phila. YM Young Friends*
- R14-35 Setting Priorities for Meeting Support of Quaker Youth *Sandy Parker*



# Some Thoughts on Teaching Teenagers

by Luther Conant, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

*(Stuff that you probably know, but that I feel needs repeating.)*

First of all, adolescents are human beings. I'm sure that most of you know that, but I just thought I'd point it out anyway. Our culture tends to view them as hormone-crazed-anarchic-barbarians with the common sense of an end table, but they're not, they're just human beings caught up in a difficult period of their lives.

For roughly a million years, there was no such thing as an adolescent. There were children who then became adults at roughly 13 to 17 years of age. It was only with the rise of the industrial revolution that society felt it was necessary to construct a middle category to put off the young adult's entry into the work force. (Otherwise they ended up competing for their parents' jobs at lower wages, which proved to be a problem.)

And so Presto-Chango the adolescent was created. And suddenly young men and women found themselves genetically ready to find mates, get jobs, and move out on their own, only to be told that it wasn't possible. They were all dressed up with no place to go.

The reason I mention this is that many adults think that relating to teenagers requires special communication skills, somewhat akin to using sign language to talk to gorillas. Whatever difficulties may arise in communicating with teenagers come from the fact that they live in their own insular culture, not that they are semi-human. But Quaker culture is not the culture of the society at large, so you will find that you have a large leg up in relating to the culture of teens. In fact, you may even find that the best aspects of Quaker culture are very similar to the best aspects of the adolescent culture. So, when dealing with teenagers, it's best to treat them as you would any intelligent creative group of people whose norms only partially overlap with your own.

One of the areas of overlap is learning.

Both teenagers and adults usually prefer to learn in the same ways. (Unless, of course, you are an academic junkie with a fondness for dreary dissertations, in which case you'd better learn how to relate to other adults before you try to dive into the teenage milieu.)

So, how do you like to learn? (Really think about this for a moment, not learning how to run Windows 95, but to learn about something of real importance to you.)

Most people answer that they like to learn by asking questions and having them answered. This is an important idea, because it presupposes that the learner is setting both the content and the pace of the learning experience. This is exactly opposite of the normal curriculum-based student/teacher relationship.

An important consideration is: Where do you prefer to be when you ask important questions? Certainly not in an environment where you're likely to be ridiculed for asking something dumb. And not in a place where you feel that you will be judged by the questions you ask. Nobody likes that. People need a safe place to ask questions, a place where they feel secure. This takes time and leadership (not to mention a comfortable physical environment where interruptions will be minimal).

## Some Thoughts on Teaching Teenagers, page 2

One important method I found for establishing such a place is to have the group agree that whatever is discussed will not go beyond the group. This needs to be agreed to specifically and reinforced often. And it means some soul-searching for you as the “teacher.” You need to decide in advance what topics you can handle and what topics you will feel obliged to speak to parents about. These limits must be clearly stated. In my class, the only limitation I place is on the subject of suicide. The class knows that if I think someone is potentially suicidal, I will immediately do something about it. (This actually happened once and I arranged a discussion between parent and child, with a professional person who specializes in conflict resolution, within the hour. The need for psychiatric help was eventually agreed to by both parties.)

If you have conflicts about sexual activity or drug use, your class needs to know that. Personally, I would rather have them feel free to talk to me about such things, where I can provide an adult perspective, than have them only discussed with their peers. This has led to awkward situations where I know things about the sons and daughters of friends which I think the parents would probably like to know, but I can’t tell them.

I encourage the group members to talk with their parents, but with only partial success. The kids generally know what their parent’s responses will be better than I do. And no one talks willingly with people who will scream at them and ground them for life. This is indeed a large responsibility, but I often find that other members of the group are more effective in their words of caution that I could ever be.

So, once you are in a place where you feel comfortable and feel that your confidentiality is assured, the question becomes, “Who do you want to ask questions of?”

The answer for most people is, “I want to question someone whom I respect.” This is a scary thought, and I oftentimes simplify it to: “people whose opinions I respect.” But, and this is a really big but, it still comes down to the question of how you get people to respect you—and that’s a question on the order of, “If God is loving, then how come there’s so much pain in the world,”—in short, one of the biggies.

One authority whose opinion I infinitely value said, “Judge not, that ye be not judged,” which seems to me to be a great place to start. When people feel that they are going to be judged, they tend to clam up, rather than ask questions which are important to them. Even more important, when people feel judged, they tend to become judgmental in return. People who are treated with respect, however, tend to repay the compliment. So to gain respect, you must give it.

One of the easiest ways to show respect is to listen carefully when someone is talking, and then to ask questions, both to show that you were listening and to demonstrate that you really want to understand what the other person is saying. (This has the added benefit of helping the person speaking to clarify their own thoughts, and you will learn something, too, oftentimes something invaluable.) Attentive listening is the cornerstone of respect. Needless to say, responses such as, “I can’t believe you asked that!” or “Oh, you’ll learn all about that once you grow up,” tend to be counter-productive.

In addition, because you are dealing with the teenage sub-culture, you may find that you have to demand respect in return. For me, this was best achieved by a knife edge combination of firmness and gentleness. A friend said, “There is nothing quite so powerful as real gentleness, and nothing quite so gentle as genuine power.”

## Some Thoughts on Teaching Teenagers, page 3

Being firm means standing up for yourself, and most likely for other members of the group who aren't yet ready to do it for themselves, making sure that they and you are receiving the respect you all deserve. This can usually be achieved by such simple phrases as, "S'cuse me folks, but Karen has the floor," or "If you two need to have a private conversation, maybe it could wait, or you could step outside."

As a rule of thumb, the less parental you come across, the greater your effectiveness will be. If you're unsure how to pull this off, watch your groups and see how they handle disrespect, and use the most effective of their methods. This can also be a great discussion to have when the day seems rowdy and heading out of control. Throw the issue back to them and ask how they want things to be handled. Nine times out of ten you will learn something that is far better than anything you would have come up with on your own.

Another important thing to remember is that people are like dogs. (Bear with me, there may be a point here.) Aside from a few simple commands such as "Food," "Walk," or "Down,," most of what dogs get from our communications with them comes not from word content, but voice tone, facial expression, and body posture. This is unfortunately true of people, too.

A study found that body posture and facial expressions carry 55% of the message and voice tone carried 38%. Isn't that something? You're at 93% already and you haven't even said a word! The words only count for 7% of the communication. Seven per cent. So you have to remember that we all teach almost entirely by example. The idea that learners should "do as I say, not as I do," is about as worthless as trickle-down economics. It just doesn't work.

Now, the idea that your class is going to use you as an example may fill you with the kind of terror usually reserved for stumbling over the edge of the Empire State Building. (In fact, if it doesn't, then you probably want to seriously reconsider your impulse to lead a First-Day class.) If you find yourself asking, "How can I possibly hold myself up as an example for teenagers to follow?" the answer is quite simple: YOU CAN'T. Not by yourself.

Fortunately, none of us is ever alone with our classes. We can be more than ably assisted by the Inward Teacher. In fact, I would go so far as to say that without God's help, no one should ever attempt to instruct anyone, least of all children. (Read Matthew 18:6, if you're not faint of heart.) So your ability to lead a group of adolescents must be based on your own relationship with the Inner Christ, the Light Within, God, or whatever your personal terminology is. I heartily recommend large amounts of prayer in strong doses, taken before every First-day session. Be open to follow God's leadings, and make certain that He/She is the one who sets the curriculum, whether the leading comes through you or your "students." Never be afraid to ask for divine assistance, especially in front of your class. In fact, this could probably be the most effective lesson you will ever share with them. For leading them to the inward teacher is what it's all about anyway, isn't it?

In summary, having a vital First-day school for teenagers means providing them with a safe place where they can question and discuss the things that are most important in their lives; being listened to and responded to with respect, maintaining confidentiality and respect within the group, and trusting in the Lord to make it all work out right.

## **Some Thoughts on Teaching Teenagers, page 4**

At any rate, this is what worked for me. For you the path may take other directions, but I think it's a good way to start.

May God bless you, for the job of leading a First-day class is a sacred trust.

# Queries on Relating with Youth

by Betsey Kenworthy, North Pacific Yearly Meeting

Thoughts and memories flood through my mind as I reflect on the young persons in our meetings. There are many with whom I have shared experiences and thoughts for over a decade. They are a precious part of my circle of friends. It is difficult to imagine losing the bonds of love I feel with individual young Friends, whether they are with us physically or not. But it is a sadness to find many faces in my memories who are no longer active among us, and it is important to ask ourselves why. Here are some queries I find myself considering:

**1. Do we recognize, celebrate, and know each other as individuals, not just as part of a specific age group? Do we cultivate friendships between “youngers” and elders?**

- How many children, junior Friends (teens) and Young Friends’ (young adults) names do you know in your meeting and quarterly meeting?
- Have you found a child or young person with interests or spirit or temperament similar to your own—a writer, dancer, story teller, activist, musician, environmentalist?
- Which of your young people are struggling with status, job or money, major area of study, how to deal with a high school that isn’t serving them?
- When have you talked personally about struggles you’ve had with injustice, violence, despair, uncertainty?
- When have you shared your joy, clarity, and gratitude for moments when Grace and Truth have flooded your life?
- Have you recently written to, or talked with, a college student from your meeting? What book or pamphlet would you recommend or send to them as they explore various faiths?
- Do we recognize and acknowledge the steps and passages in the lives of our young people and validate their feelings and experiences as they move into adolescence and then into adulthood?

*Similar queries could be posed for young people in their outreach toward those older (and younger) as well.*

**2. Are we specifically and continually teaching (as well as practicing) Quakerism—our history, beliefs, testimonies, and process?**

- Have you prayed or meditated with a young person recently?
- Have you explored with them the difference between consensus and “sense of the meeting?”
- How do we approach problem areas as we meet together? Do we consistently use Quaker process and clearly, lovingly use the vocabulary and steps before and during our quest together?
- Have you or your meeting seriously asked a teenager’s advice on large issues affecting the Meeting?
- In your meeting, how many calls has Oversight Committee made this year to young people who are 16, 17, or 18, and quite possibly about to be dropped from the rolls? Does each know the procedure for joining your meeting?

**3. Do we respect the integrity and abilities of our young people—recognizing and supporting their leadership, listening to their ideas and dreams and offering support in their spiritual journeys?**

**4. In the name of freedom and/or sensitivity have we neglected to provide the tools and discipline needed to live out that freedom fully?**

As I ask myself these and other queries, I find some to which I respond with an affirmative, some more tentatively, and others where I feel I’ve failed, come too late to an understanding, or not relied on the Source of Truth and Love to inform my actions and give me the needed clarity, compassion, and strength.

## Queries on Relating with Youth, page 2

There are many clubs and gatherings in a young person's life—in all of our lives—which are based on service or fellowship. Friends are unique only when we are based in the Spirit, when we move and act and have our reason for being evident in our faith.

We are founded as a people called to be transformed by the Light of the Eternal. That we fall short so often is a great stumbling block to those who would join us, especially those new to our path. We are seekers, but there is also a sense in which we are found. For me, the sense of the abiding Presence of Grace and Truth is what enables me to get up after I've stumbled and find a way to continue walking on the path. Stumble we will, but as long as we are seeking God's way for us with gusto, joy, grace, and integrity, our young people will help us in that quest.

— Betsey Kenworthy, a member of Multnomah Meeting, was Junior Friends (teens) Advisor at the monthly, quarterly and yearly meeting levels for the past ten years. She teaches third grade. Reprinted from *Friends Bulletin*.

At a recent workshop for students and teacher at Friends Schools entitled, "Developing the Spiritual Life of Your School," Elizabeth Watson asked these questions: "What do you believe? How do you live that?" Her message was that living what you believe is central to spiritual life and that we can aid spiritual growth by helping students examine what they believe and in what ways they are living those beliefs.

# Organizing Programs for Quaker Teenagers

*by Marsha Holliday, Baltimore Yearly Meeting*

Organizing programs for Quaker teenagers is remarkably easy. It is easy because Friends want youth programs to work and are willing to make them work. Your most enthusiastic backers in your organizational efforts are your teenagers. They crave the opportunity to get together with other Quaker teens. Their parents come in a close second. Parents are eager for their sons and daughters to experience the (typically) safe society of other Quaker youth and Friendly Adult Presences (FAPs). Finally, monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings are eager to see youth programs work, and are willing to help with financial support (if they are asked). They see the future of Quakerism at stake. As a youthworker, “you’ve got it made.”

**The organizer of Quaker youth programs has the following tasks:**

- Make the initial contact, calling the first planning committee meeting together.
- Delegate all responsibilities for the programs to the planning committee.
- Decide if you wish to be a member of the planning committee.

**The planning committee has the following tasks:**

- Include both youth and adults in all aspects of planning and in the writing of clear expectations.
- Find friendly, responsible, flexible, Spirit-centered adults—including parents—to serve as Friendly Adult Presences.
- Recruit youth from as many monthly, quarterly, or yearly meetings as possible.
- Delegate everything.
- Attend to health and safety issues.
- Provide training for your youthworkers.
- Pray that your planning process and your programs will provide spiritual nurturing and growth for everyone involved.

## THE ORGANIZER’S TASKS

### **I. Make the initial contacts, calling the first planning committee meeting together.**

To call the first planning committee meeting together, contact parents and youthworkers in other monthly, quarterly, or yearly meetings. Monthly and yearly meeting religious education clerks are good sources for names of adults who may be interested in youthwork. Including youth from outside your monthly meeting is vitally important.

As youth emerge from childhood, they crave and seek new adventures. Their monthly meetings, like their immediate families, begin to seem dull and uninteresting. Their extended Quaker family, however, is intriguing. Youth enjoy meeting other Quaker youth and visiting other Quaker meetings.

## Organizing Programs for Quaker Teenagers, page 2

Experiencing the wider Quaker world is age-appropriate for teenagers. By involving youth from other monthly, quarterly, or yearly meetings, you will be offering your youth the adventure and novelty they crave.

At a convenient time and place, meet with both youth and adults from various meetings to plan your event. Five to eight members is a good-sized planning committee. Youth will eagerly attend planning meetings if other teenagers will be there. Provide food which teenagers enjoy. Most meetings have a budget for expenses involved in organizing and administering youth programs. If yours does not, ask your meeting to add youth work to their budget. Assure that all youth have transportation and arrange for their transportation, if they do not. Limit your planning meeting to an hour.

### **II. Delegate all responsibilities for the programs to the planning committee.**

As the organizer, you *only* organize the first meeting. At the first planning committee meeting delegate everything to the planning committee. *Your task in organizing is to create a situation in which the planning committee can function without you.*

### **III. Decide if you wish to be a member of the planning committee.**

This decision is crucial. Having delegated everything to the planning committee, you are free to move on to organize something else. If, however, you become a member of the planning committee, it is extremely important that you, as the organizer, *empower the committee to make all further decisions and accept all authority and responsibility.*

## THE PLANNING COMMITTEE'S TASKS

### **I. Include both youth and adults in all aspects of planning and in the writing of clear expectations.**

In Quaker events, the meeting is where everything important happens. In terms of Quaker process, the event is almost incidental.

**At your planning meetings, with both youth and adults in attendance,**

- choose co-clerks—one adult and one youth
- choose assistant co-clerks
- choose a recording clerk who will record and read back all decisions
- write a mission statement
- brainstorm activities which the youth would enjoy
- write brief and concise expectations for youth and adults and give the reasons for each expectation (see sample below)
- write a statement concerning the qualifications for being a Friendly Adult Presence (see sample below)
- write a statement concerning the consequences of failing to comply with the expectations (see sample below)
- prepare chores charts for longer events and overnights

## Organizing Programs for Quaker Teenagers, page 3

*To assure that the planning committee has the authority to carry out the event, the planning committee reports regularly to the Quaker meeting whose care it is under.* Present for approval your mission statement and expectations to the Quaker meeting and bring these documents with you to all youth events and planning committee meetings.

To assist in carrying out our testimony on equality, have your planning committee prepare a chores chart for longer events and overnights.

If you have young Friendly Adult Presences (FAPs) volunteering (under 21 years of age for junior high events and under 25 years of age for senior high events), you might try a FAPs-In-Training (FIT) program. To participate in a youth event, the FAP-In-Training (the FIT) must have the prior approval of the clerk of the planning committee for each event in which he or she participates. The FIT is responsible to the clerk and is trained and mentored by the clerk or by a FAP appointed by the clerk.

Take all decisions that need to be made to the planning committee. If a particular decision cannot wait until the next scheduled meeting, the co-clerks can call and poll the committee members for advice.

### **II. Find friendly, responsible, flexible Spirit-Centered adults—including parents—to serve as Friendly Adult Presences.**

Loving, caring Friendly Adult Presences (FAPs) come in a variety of styles. Look for authenticity. Get suggestions for FAPs from the youth. Youth have a good “eye” for spotting good FAPs. Including parents as FAPs is a good idea. A goal might be to ask every parent to serve at least once. Parents should be personally involved in their daughter’s and son’s youth programs. Moreover, having parents serve as FAPs decreases the number of adults you will need to recruit. Rotating FAPs prevents burnout and encourages a wider participation of adults.

Because their age is closer to the ages of the youth, young parents with small children often work well with teenagers. Many teenagers look to young parents as mentors. In some cases, parents with small children could bring their children to youth events. Children of FAPs who are within two or three years of the age of the youth participating in the program should not come with the parents who are serving as FAPs. The planning committee could offer to pay child care expenses to release the parents to serve.

*Of utmost importance, the planning committee must approve the list of names of the FAPs and report those names to the sponsoring meeting.*

### **III. Recruit youth from as many monthly, quarterly, or yearly meetings as possible.**

In the section on the organizer’s tasks, we said that involving youth from other monthly, quarterly, or yearly meetings nurtures youthful needs for adventure and novelty and is age-appropriate. However, it is not just the youth who benefit from visitation. The entire Religious Society of Friends benefits. Through visitation, we all grow and share more deeply in the Spirit.

#### IV. Delegate everything

The secret to effective delegating is to divide each task into manageable pieces, and then recruit a volunteer for each of those pieces. Quakers expect to volunteer—we are a lay ministry. Wisely, however, Quaker volunteers tend to be cautious about committing to more than their time, energy, or expertise allows them to handle. Therefore, dividing the work into small, manageable tasks is essential. One volunteer, for example, might make telephone calls, another might write a leaflet advertising the program, another might mail copies of the leaflet, another might shop for snacks, others might provide transportation, and still others might serve as Friendly Adult Presences.

It is important to identify your volunteers' gifts. Some Friends enjoy preparing leaflets, while others despise it. Some enjoy planning and purchasing snacks, while others detest grocery stores. When events are successful, volunteers feel they have had a meaningful, manageable, and enjoyable part to play. If your volunteers feel they have made positive contributions, they will be more confident about future volunteer commitments and less likely to burn out over time. They will come to enjoy working with youth and youth programs.

Finding volunteers requires the planning committee to recruit broadly. Committee members should cast a wide net and anticipate that they will be turned down frequently. They should always be gracious when they are turned down. Committee members can tell Friends who turn them down that they understand how busy those Friends are and will ask them again on another occasion. Volunteers may say “no” a second time, but rarely a third time, so keep asking! And always remember that your committee is *offering* volunteers an opportunity to participate in youth ministry—to make a spiritual difference in the world.

When recruiting, your committee members should use a personal touch. Requests during announcements after meeting for worship are nice—the whole meeting gets to learn what is going on—but to *really* find volunteers, approach Friends in person or by telephone and ask them to do a *specific* job. Sometimes it helps to provide a list of possible tasks from which volunteers may choose.

Finally, anything that cannot be delegated does not happen. If there are not enough volunteers, cut back on the activities the committee offers to make the event manageable with the volunteers you have. Spread the responsibility and authority for events as broadly as possible. The planning committee should have both a clerk and an assistant clerk. That way, if the clerk is ill or absent, there will be a ready-made back-up.

#### V. Attend to health and safety issues.

The optimum environment for spiritual growth is one in which both youth and adults feel they are physically and mentally safe. Assuring a safe and healthy environment for teenagers can be challenging. The information in this section is intended to prepare youthworkers for the seriousness of youth work. If we are prepared, we can be present in the energy, the joys, the concerns, and the distresses of youth with the knowledge that we will do our best for them.

**The following are basics for health and safety:**

- a knowledge of first aid and CPR
- a first aid kit
- the emergency number for the area in which the event is held
- directions to the nearest hospital
- a car and a driver ready to drive to the hospital in case of emergency
- adequate medical release forms (see below)
- a knowledge of what is and is not appropriate adult behavior with youth

*Because law suits may occur at any time, keep all medical release forms and accident reports on file virtually forever.* In the event of an accident or injury, have the adult who attends to the injured youth write a statement describing what happened and what the treatment was. Have the adult sign and date the statement. Add witnesses' signatures in the more serious cases, and keep those statements on file virtually forever.

A critical aspect of health and safety is assuring appropriate adult behavior. We Quakers tend to hug each other a lot. It is appropriate for adults and youth to openly show affection and hug each other. *Always avoid private situations.* If, by accident, you find yourself alone with a youth, go with the youth immediately to a public place. Because youth need adults to confide in, private or confidential conversations occurring, for example, in a corner of an *open and public building* or at a *bench in a public park* can be appropriate.

Remember that your promise of confidentiality to a youth is binding *unless* the information you have received from the youth may endanger someone's life, health, or safety, or if the information reveals the *possibility* of sexual abuse. In the event of the possibility of sexual abuse, *you must report that information immediately to the Child Protective Services Agency.* In some jurisdictions, it is illegal for an adult to not report, within 24 hours, the knowledge of the *possibility* of sexual abuse of a minor (a youth less than 18 years of age).

Working with youth can get adults into difficult situations. Always talk over difficult or questionable situations with the other adult youthworkers. If you anticipate that your behavior in a particular situation could be in question, tell the other youthworkers the details of what occurred. Write a description of the incident, date and sign it, give a copy to the adult clerk of the planning committee, and keep a copy for your records.

When talking with a troubled youth, it is appropriate to be sympathetic. Do not, however, do anything that would suggest you are providing mental health treatment. If it feels to you that therapy may be necessary, immediately contact a credentialed counselor.

Be especially alert to highly emotional youth, as their behavior may indicate a serious problem. Similarly, be alert to unusually withdrawn youth. Be alert to youth who continually seek you out, who stare at you and expect or request a disproportionate amount of your time. Such behavior may indicate a sexual attraction. If you suspect that is the case, kindly but firmly discourage the youth.

## Organizing Programs for Quaker Teenagers, page 6

Be alert for hints of suicide including verbal bequeathing of possessions to others, suggestions that the youth may not be around at some point, suggestions that people will not have to worry about him or her, and sudden cheerfulness after long depression. (She or he may have set a date and determined a means of committing suicide, which has relieved his or her depression.) After hearing a hint of suicide, ask *directly* if the youth is feeling suicidal. This will *not* encourage suicide if he or she is not suicidal. Say, for example, "I'm concerned about you. I need to know if you have ever thought about suicide or if you have ever had thoughts about harming yourself in any way?" (Some youth do not *intend* to kill themselves, but want attention or help.)

If you suspect suicidal behavior, contact a counselor immediately and keep the youth under 24-hour watch until help arrives. Inform the parents of your suspicion. *Failure to inform the parents of any hints of suicide could put you at liability risk.*

Document any unusual behavior. Describe what the youth did and what you did. List witnesses' names. Sign and date the document. Send a copy to the clerk of your planning committee and keep a copy. In serious cases, have witnesses sign and date the document.

Be alert to the possibility that other adults may not be familiar with the standards for appropriate adult behavior and coach them or find training for them if they seem unaware.

### **VI. Provide training for youthworkers.**

Youthworkers need to keep their first aid and CPR training up to date. Ask your monthly, quarterly, or yearly meeting to provide funds for youthworkers to attend training programs.

An ongoing training and retreat program, funded by the meeting which has oversight, is critical for both the education and the morale of your youthworkers. Try to find a convenient time and location at least once a year for a youthworkers gathering, such as a catered luncheon, an overnight retreat, or a day-long training. Recruit or hire good facilitators. Possible topics to address include, "Teaching peace/Quaker history/bible/meditation," "Evolving a Quaker way of discipline," "Implementing Quaker values," "Helping troubled youth," and "Staying centered while working with youth."

Some of your most helpful trainings may occur during times of sharing experiences among youthworkers.

### **VII. Pray that your planning process and your programs will provide spiritual nurturing and growth for everyone involved.**

Make prayer a part of youthwork. (You will feel a lot better.) Pray that you find the right youthworkers to work with your youth. Pray for guidance in guiding the youth. Pray for courage and faith and fun. Pray for the spiritual growth of everyone involved. Pray that you may see everything that happens as material for our spiritual education. Pray for the health and happiness and the peace and joy of all involved.

Prayer is recognizing that we are not alone. We are with God, and God is with us. The word “enthusiasm” connects the root, “theo,” which means “God” and “en” meaning “in.” We can be enthusiastic about our work with youth because we are in God, and God is in us. Great Spirit-filled youth events will happen.

## **ACTIVITIES YOUTH ENJOY**

### **1. Traveling Teens First Day School**

Everyone benefits from the Traveling Teens First Day School. The adults who drive are able to visit other meetings, and monthly meetings benefit from the influx of Quaker visitors. But foremost, the youth, who routinely do not want to get out of bed on Sunday morning to go to their own meeting, will be ready before the rest of the family to attend *another* meeting where they may *possibly* see some of their camp or yearly meeting Friends.

Traveling Teens visit a different monthly meeting each month. The visiting teens attend First Day School with the junior and senior high host class, and meeting for worship with the children, youth, and adults of the meeting. On the occasions when the Traveling First Day School visits your meeting, your junior and senior high classes will be larger than normal and may require a special program. However, during those First Days when your youth visit other meetings, your junior and senior high teachers will have a day off. (If nonparticipating teens attend your meeting on the day that your teens are visiting another meeting, those nonparticipating teens may attend meeting for worship.)

One planning meeting a year should suffice to organize a Traveling Teens First Day School. Set up a calendar for the year. Notify newsletter editors of the participating monthly meetings. Send out one mailing to all of the youth in your region with dates, times, and directions to participating meetinghouses. (Mailing labels for teens in your area could be obtained from the yearly meeting.) Each participating monthly meeting may appoint a driver. The driver can meet the youth at their own meetinghouse and return them there afterwards.

### **2. Overnights at meetinghouses**

Youth come to feel at home in a meetinghouse by sleeping on its floors, cooking in its kitchen, cleaning its bathrooms, and taking out the trash. Use meetinghouses as often as you can for youth gatherings. If members of your monthly meeting are overly fussy about the tidiness of the meetinghouse, educate them about the value of youth work and the importance of the use of the meetinghouse. For their own spiritual growth and for the growth of the Religious Society of Friends, we want our youth to feel at home in our meetinghouses.

### **3. Videos or game nights at meetinghouses**

Once again, make use of the meetinghouse whenever possible. Bring videos or game boards.

**4. Service projects**

Service projects come in many varieties—from helping the elderly of your meeting with their gardening to building homes for the impoverished. Helping at soup kitchens is especially beneficial and easy to organize. All you usually need to do is set a date and call the soup kitchen in advance.

**5. Outings: ice skating, roller skating, pumpkin picking, hay rides, bowling, attending the movies together . . .**

Be sure to keep it cheap and offer financial aid. If you see a movie together, discuss it afterward as a group.

**6. Pizza-making and make-your-own-sundae parties**

These can be combined with service projects or other outings for a day-long event.

**7. Mystery trips**

A mystery trip is arranged for a certain date and starting time, but the youth do not know where they will be going or what they will be doing. This could be as simple as a trip to a movie theater or as complicated as a weekend to a distant place. (On one weekend mystery trip, the parents were told the destination and asked to pack and deliver a suitcase, unbeknownst to their teenager.)

**8. Topical workshops**

These can be one hour, half-day, full-day, weekend, or week-long events and can include speakers on a variety of topics which interest youth such as analyzing your dreams, personality assessment, stress reduction, coping with parents, meditation techniques, Bible study, Quakerism, and world religions.

**9. Visiting committee meetings or Business Meetings**

The class or group attend together to observe and then meet afterwards to critique the meeting. This is an especially age-appropriate activity.

**10. Discussions with conscientious objectors**

This can develop into a powerful exchange.

**11. Youth events at quarterly meetings**

Sightseeing events work especially well for quarterly meetings. Have the local youth serve as guides for the visiting youth.

**12. Visit other religious services**

Be sure to talk with your participating youth and drivers before visiting another worship service. They need to know what they might expect to experience, what behavior would be expected of them, and what the dress standards are. Discuss your visit afterwards.

**BRIEF AND CONCISE EXPECTATIONS FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS**

- No tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs. (For health reasons.)
- No visitation in cabins. No guys in girl cabins; no girls in guy cabins. (For privacy.)
- Dark and quiet at midnight. (So we will be awake for the program the next day.)
- Buddy up at night. (For safety.)
- No coupling up. (So we can build community.)
- Don't leave the general camp area. (For safety.)
- Swim with a buddy. (For safety.)
- Arrive on time for programs. (To keep things going smoothly.)

**A SIMPLE STATEMENT CONCERNING THE CONSEQUENCES OF FAILING TO COMPLY WITH THE EXPECTATIONS**

At all youth gatherings, youth and adults are expected to comply with the gathering expectations. The planning committee will ask those unable to comply with the expectations to leave the gathering. In the event that the person asked to leave the gathering is under 18 years of age, his or her parents or guardians will be telephoned.

Anyone asked to leave a gathering must meet with the planning committee to discuss his or her behavior before he or she may attend another gathering.

**QUALIFICATIONS FOR BEING A BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING FRIENDLY ADULT PRESENCE**

**(Excerpts from "Interim Guidelines for Baltimore Yearly Meeting Youth Gatherings")**

"The adult who is primarily responsible at Baltimore Yearly Meeting youth gatherings must be at least 25 years old...

At least two of the FAPs, one male and one female, who work with high school age youth gatherings should be at least 25 years of age, and at least two of the FAPs, one male and one female, who work with junior high or middle school age youth should be at least 21 years of age. . . . In addition to the adult who is primarily responsible for the gathering, two other FAPs should be present at each youth gathering. If the number of youth exceeds 30, one additional FAP should be added for each additional 10 youth. All adults who work with youth will be asked to take a Yearly Meeting sponsored workshop which will address the discernment of appropriate and inappropriate relationships with youth, and the danger signs of youth who are potentially harmful to himself or herself or others. If the above conditions are not met, the adult who is primarily responsible will cancel the gathering."

## **Organizing Programs for Quaker Teenagers, page 10**

The planning committee for the youth event should “provide an orientation for adults who are serving as FAPs for the first time and help them integrate into the gathering.” The planning committee will “communicate the goals of the gathering to the FAPs and hold the FAPs responsible for carrying out the goals and for complying with the gathering expectations for healthy interactions of FAPs and youth.”

### **(Excerpt from “Responsibilities of the Young Friends Conferences Subcommittee”)**

“Maintain a list of Friendly Adult Presences (FAPs) and report any changes in the list to the Youth Programs Committee for approval.”

# Some Observations and Suggestions Regarding the Status of Young Friends

*by Doris Blossom, New York Yearly Meeting (These observations come from the knowledge gained through several years of visiting meetings on behalf of the Advancement Committee of New York Yearly Meeting.)*

## Observations

1. Meetings consider the welfare of young Friends to be the concern of Religious Education only.
2. Young Friends do not know the names of older Friends causing a sense of division and sometimes embarrassment. The reverse is also true; the older Friends do not know the children.
3. First Day classes are often arranged according to the availability of teachers, with the curriculum determined by the teachers' choice. With all due respect to the struggles of Religious Education committees, this can result in inadequate and sometimes inappropriate education of the students.
4. Some young Friends come to Meeting because they are brought, but they do not feel they have a place or importance of their own.
5. Friends in their early teens see classmates of different religions given special recognition by their religious community while they feel unnoticed.
6. Friends often fade from Meeting during High School or College.
7. Some Meetings send an annual letter to Friends away about the time of budget consideration. This letter is sometimes written to serve two purposes: to question the member's welfare, and to discuss the budget and assessment per member. This letter has caused hurt, even outrage, to some. As a young former Friend read it, the letter said "pay up or get out."
8. Life can get confusing, but not to know the status of your membership is an unnecessary complication. Individual Meetings have their own forms of membership, birthright, associate, etc. Growing up in a Meeting is no guarantee you are a member or will remain so.

## Suggestions

1. The welfare of all members should be the concern of Ministry & Counsel and religious education should be available to all. An intergenerational awareness day or statement could heighten our sensitivity.
2. Young Friends are not the only ones who have trouble learning names. Meetings could have a project or "Friendly Day" during which they could make name tags or buttons for other Friends and attenders. There could be a treasure hunt to find your mystery Friend and ask them how they would like to be named on their button. They in turn would ask and make a button for you. This could lead to discussion of why you want to be called by a certain name and help Friends get to know one another. (Please have a young Friend help in planning)
3. On entering First Day school a folder could be set up for each person with an entry made yearly, giving subject covered and activity used. This need not be elaborate but could prevent the experience of one boy who had four years of knitting but little knowledge of Friends' process.

## Some Observations and Suggestions Regarding the Status of Young Friends, page 2

4. Many Meetings have gained strength, joy, and growth through the contributions of their younger members, though these often remain unrecognized. Nominating committees could have a special time to explain opportunities available and then guide members and attenders in choosing the work they would share with and for the Meeting. In one meeting, a six year old girl offered to be on the nominating committee and found an excellent clerk for her Meeting.
5. The early teens are an important time in a person's life when affirmation is needed for healthy growth. Each young Friend, or class, could choose a seasoned Friend to work with them in planning a day of recognition. The recognition could be of a simple presentation of book (some Meetings have given copies of *Faith and Practice* or the *Bible*) or certificate at rise of Meeting for Worship, or it could be a more elaborate affair.
6. The high-school years are a good time for Ministry and Counsel to meet with individuals to be sure they understand the meaning and process of membership in our Society. A clearness committee or individual could meet with the young Friend, not to pursue membership, but to clarify understanding and plans for the future.
7. Some Meetings send *Friends' Journal* or *Quaker Life* to college bound members, but let's not forget those who must go directly to work. They may need it even more. No magazine can take the place of a personal communication, however. Surely Meetings can find one person per graduate to keep in touch through letter, phone call, or visit.
8. M&C should be sure to consult with each person on the status of their membership. Some of the suggestions in 5, 6, & 7 can help with this. It is unfortunate that some Meetings have dropped members without their knowledge.

# Betrayed by the Quaker Community

by Bruce Yarnall, *North Pacific Yearly Meeting.*

*Printed in the June, 1994 issue of Friends Bulletin*

The Quakers I have experienced were all relatively secure, owning a house, holding a steady job, and quite often part of a family. They desired a peaceful world, where every individual could be free of violence and hunger and the other diseases of inequality. This world manifested itself first inside the ring of chairs on Sunday morning, then radiated out into the immediate community and families.

When this desire for peace encountered the real world, there were problems. How can violence be wrong when one is defending a family? What is the fault of sentencing an inhumane killer to die? What is the crime in alcohol if it can raise a person's spirits? Why shun the benefits of technology in pursuit of simplicity? As in any intellectual community, there was much discussion and pondering, but the Quaker community couldn't achieve consensus on how to deal with the non-Quaker world. And so there were two options: ignore it or fix the whole mess.

Those who chose to ignore the non-Quaker world spent their time bolstering the walls of the community by defining the differences between the outside world and the one within. These people celebrated the uniqueness and tranquility of Quaker life, thus developing a sense of superiority over those who were not Friends. Those who tried to fix the whole mess were seduced by grand causes: Stop the Nukes, Free South Africa, Stop the Contras, End Human Suffering, Save the Whales, etc.

When I began to look at my life I found myself sitting on the wall between the Quaker community and the outside world. I had many acquaintances who had never known the security of owning a home or a community where everything they said was respected. And I could empathize with them. To hear a Quaker tell a child "violence is bad," when violence was the only way to keep from being hurt more, seemed insulting and condescending. Yet I wanted to live in that world where violence was bad. It became painfully apparent that the world I was raised to believe in, filled with respect and responsibility, was impossible.

The community that I wanted to expand and fill the world was instead fortifying its current position and exerting itself everywhere except at home. The people that I hoped would lead me to create this world were either isolating themselves from the truth or more willing to help a person ten thousand miles away than the hungry runaway sleeping in their back yard.

I felt betrayed by the Quaker community. The people who said they wanted to help were ignoring the people who needed it. The security of being inside the community made them forget the pain and fear outside it. I don't blame anyone personally because I can empathize. Why seek out horror and bring it into your life day after day? Why should any one person have to deal with the problems of the world; it's enough to deal with one's own.

My answer to the question, "Why are Quakers losing their youth?" is that the youth still have fresh eyes. We're seeing the homeless, the poverty, the rotten jobs, the inequalities of American life for the first time and we're wondering why nobody does anything about it. Our parents and elders don't seem to see it and the Meetings don't seem frightened by it. We, the youth, are walking away to

## **Betrayed By The Quaker Community, page 2**

form our own communities, networks of people who support and strengthen each other. We feed each other; we provide shelter when we can, and we define life by what we accomplish each day. Soon we'll strike it rich, maybe buy a house and be able to buy what we want at the grocery store, and then we'll tell other people how to live. But until then we just accept each other and try not to go nuts.

Maybe a more appropriate query would be, "Why are Quaker youth losing their parents and elders?"

— Bruce Yarnall, a member of Corvallis Meeting in Oregon,  
graduated from The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington.

# How Quakers Can Regain Their Youth

by Anthony Manousos, *Pacific Yearly Meeting*,  
*Friends Bulletin*, June, 1994

Clearly much more than weekend programs are required if we are to regain our youth and make them an integral part of Quaker life. We also need to initiate youth activities at the local meeting level. Since many Friends have questions about how this can be accomplished, I have tried to respond, based upon my own experience working with youth. I also hope that we will thereby gain (or regain) the sense of joy and vitality that comes when children, youth, and adults feel empowered and affirmed in the life of our meetings.

## **We just don't have enough youth!**

You can easily start a group with only 3 or 4 teens. If you meet regularly and plan activities that are stimulating and fun, this core group will bring their friends, and you will soon find you have more teens than you can handle. (5 to 10 teens are an ideal number.)

When only one or two teens are present you might decide to join forces with a nearby meeting. In any event, you'll do well to encourage "intervisitation" among neighboring youth groups. The more, the friendlier!

## **What does it take to start a youth group?**

In a word, commitment! It takes at least two committed adults willing to devote their time on a weekly basis, and it takes committed parents willing to offer financial and moral support when the occasion arises. It is also crucial to have the support of the meeting as a whole.

## **Why do you need two adults?**

Given the stresses and difficulties of working with teens, it is advisable to have two adults working together, preferably a male and a female. This should be a requirement if the youth group goes on outings or "overnights."

## **How do we begin?**

Adults who feel led to start a youth program should get together and brainstorm. It is helpful to invite someone who has worked with youth. Highly recommended are the following curriculum guides from the Religious Education Committee of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, each of which can be purchased for around \$7.00.

- *Just Do It. How to Plan and Staff a Youth Gathering.* Ralph "Cookie" Caldwell and Margaret "Peg" Bernstein.
- *Growing in the Light: Towards a Better Understanding of Quakerism Today, Nine Lessons for Adult and Senior Highs.* Dorothy Reichardt and Barbara Henderson.
- *Quakers Answer the Call: Lessons Drawn from Quaker Lives. Ideas for All Ages.* Edited by Lynne Brick and Barbara Henderson.
- *Working with Middle Schoolers: Ideas and Resources for Young Friends Groups and First-day Teachers.* Prepared by Lynne Brick and Barbara Henderson.
- *Growing in the Light: Towards a Better Understanding of Quakerism Today. Nine Lessons for Grades 6-8.* Dorothy Reichardt and Barbara Henderson.

## How Quakers Can Regain Their Youth, page 2

The next step is to call a “threshing session” for parents and teens. It is important to call them personally and invite them to attend. Most teens (and many adults) do not respond to the written word. The threshing session should be casual and friendly with refreshments and beverages available. An icebreaker activity should be planned so that people can loosen up and feel relaxed.

Before presenting any ideas of your own, ask teens and parents what kind of program *they* would like. List their responses on a black board or a large piece of newsprint.

1. How often would you like to meet? What time?
2. What kind of activities are you interested in?
3. What should the goals and objectives be?

Once you have a clear idea of the needs and concerns of teens and adults, share your own ideas. Decide together on goals and expectations. This will be your mission statement for the first year.

The next step is to call a threshing session for the entire meeting. Explain the goals and objectives of the program and ask for input. Once the meeting is in unity and feels ready to proceed, it's time to begin!

### How can the Meeting help?

**First**, it can offer financial support. Meetings should provide funds for educational materials as well as for film rentals, gas, travel expenses, phone calls, mailings, etc. Scholarships should be established so that junior Friends can go to quarterly and yearly meetings, youth service projects and other youth-related Quaker activities.

**Second**, the meeting should involve teens in worship sharing and decision-making. Friends should invite a youth representative to be part of the meeting's decision-making process. Worship-sharing activities should be planned with teens and children in mind. Intergenerational worship sharing is facilitated by activities such as drawing, clay-sculpting, singing, or games.

**Third**, Friends can volunteer to help. Those with energy and time can serve as chaperones (or “adult presences”), especially for youth outings. Older adults may be led to become spiritual “mentors” for teens. As several young friends indicated during Pacific Yearly Meeting, many teens like to interact with older people who are not their parents. They enjoy hearing about their life experiences and imbibing the gentle wisdom of the elderly. Teens also like to be listened to and taken seriously. Older Friends are often particularly adept at such creative listening. These interactions enable teens and adults to get to know each other better. Such acquaintanceships may evolve into deep and meaningful spiritual friendships.

These are just a few suggestions for enabling Quakers to reach out to and regain their youth. The possibilities for growth, renewal, and, yes, rejuvenation, are limitless.

— Anthony Manousos, a college professor and member of Claremont Meeting, is the Youth Program Coordinator for the Youth Service Project of Southern California Quarterly Meeting.

# A Beginning Proposal for Seventh Day Schools by Anne Thomas, Canadian Yearly Meeting

I have long had a concern for the development and education (used in their widest senses) of the children in our Meetings, expressed through many years' service in First Day School, on Home Mission and Advancement Committee and later on Religious Education Committee, during which time I initiated the Traveling Libraries for children and adults and the now defunct binders of ideas for First Day Schools. While serving on Friends United Meeting, I was often a member of its Christian Education Committee. I have written and/or edited various curricula, both Quaker and ecumenical. In recent years my time has been directed to other areas of Friends' life, but this primary interest has stayed with me and I am still asked to conduct workshops on children's spirituality in Canada and further afield.

A recent request by a member of Ottawa Monthly Meeting for a Committee of Clearness for her leading to open a "Friendly" school has encouraged me to prepare this document. The amount of energy required to begin and sustain a school is immense. If such a school has any links with a local Meeting, the energy drain on the Meeting will be significant. This does not reduce my sense that there will be great benefit to all involved, but this is stated in this particular way to give some context out of which the Seventh Day School concept might be initiated, either in its own right or as a stepping stone while the establishment of a Friendly school is in process.

If we look seriously at the words we use as Friends, "Meeting" is a focal term, and I believe this is not an accident. While usually used as part of phrases such as Monthly Meeting, Half Yearly Meeting, Meeting for Worship, Meeting for Business, etc., the commonality of these uses of "meeting" is based on the sense of the gathered community experiencing the presence of the divine. Less traditional terms such as Meeting for Learning, Meeting for Clearness, Meeting for Healing or Meeting for Eating continue this understanding. There are both "horizontal," i.e. person to person, and "vertical," person to divine, dimensions to "Meeting" in Quaker experience, with an overlap between the two.

Most Quaker children and young people in Canadian Yearly Meeting may be in Quaker community for a maximum of 1 1/2 hours per week. Considering the major blocks of time spent in other activities in children's lives and their influence on growing minds, this clearly places a heavy burden on the 1 1/2 hours. Community does not always happen in 1 1/2 hours and some children do not want to repeat unsatisfactory experiences.

If "Meeting" is so central to our life as Friends, why are we not taking it more seriously, especially in the lives of our children and young people? Why do we not seek to enhance both the quality and the quantity of time we spend together in Quaker community? If we consider how other "minority groups" maintain their culture, we will observe that they commit personal time toward building and maintaining community.

I want to explore the idea of Seventh Day School, and instead of leaving it general, will try and describe how this might look in practice, to give Friends a concrete model for consideration, recognizing that this is still a very preliminary proposal.

## **Premises:**

- that many parents investigate the Society of Friends as a way of linking their family to a spiritual community. (The in/out movement of young families is high. What are we failing to offer them?)
- that adult members and attenders may not have experienced Quaker community as children.
- that Friends hold a concern that children and young people regularly experience Quaker community as part of their formation.

## A Beginning Proposal for Seventh Day Schools, page 2

- that First Day School does not provide enough time to build community and effectively transmit the values we hope our children will choose in their lives.
- that if there is a concern for such community, parents and other adults in a Meeting will make a commitment of time and money to achieve it.
- that without the establishment of active “horizontal” relationships, establishment of the “vertical” relationship is weakened.

### Practicalities:

- that one Saturday per month, for most months of the year, medium-sized and large Meetings in Canadian Yearly Meeting will consider holding Seventh Day School. The active months (following the academic year) will be: September, November, December, January, February, March, April, June. The following
  - Quaker activities occur during the other months:
  - October and May: Half Yearly Meeting/Regional Gathering
  - July and August: Camp NeeKauNis, Canadian Yearly Meeting, family vacations.
- that Seventh Day School will start at 10:30 am and continue overnight into Meeting for Worship on the Sunday morning. Preschoolers will be accompanied by parents and stay as long as practical. Children aged 5 + will stay overnight, once comfortable with the group.
- that families will make a commitment to be part of this School for as many sessions as possible. This will mean looking seriously at family time, swimming, skating, music lessons, etc. Families will sign up for the season and will let organizers know if they cannot be present for a particular session. Once Seventh Day School is running, some parents might get 24 hours off from active parenting!
- that families from small Meetings or those living at a distance from a Meeting will make the effort to come, as a family, to some of these schools, with parents being hosted by the Meeting.
- that leadership will come from the whole Quaker community, not from parents alone. Ideally, a commitment from a team for one year will be sought. Not all members need to be present every time, but enough overlap is encouraged to maintain ongoing links.
- that the time together will be based on community, living together and respecting each other and each other's needs. Out of this sense of community, active learning will take place, but the First Day School class may be the time when “formal” lessons are undertaken.
- that activities will begin with worship, the length of which will depend on those present.
  - name-sharing games and songs will help establish community.
  - in the time before lunch age-linked activities can take place. One group might prepare lunch. Clean up could be undertaken by another group.
  - afternoon activities could be on site or could incorporate visits to museums, local sites of interest, etc.
  - community service for Meeting members or in the wider community could be an option. The option to be quiet and stay at the Meetinghouse should be respected.
  - supper could be another shared preparation meal or could be brought as a pot luck meal. Clean up would be shared.
  - evening sessions might be the showing of videos, or family entertainment by those present.
  - a time of quiet reflection before bed would signal the approved bed time, after which only quiet activities would continue.
  - Sunday morning could incorporate a brisk walk before breakfast and preparation for Meeting for Worship.
  - summer sessions might be held under canvas or at a Friend's farm or cottage.
- that there are enough resources/curricula in print to prepare a work book with many ideas for this time spent together. A group of interested people can borrow a large selection from the CYM Traveling Library and prepare loose-leaf resource books.

## **A Beginning Proposal for Seventh Day Schools, page 3**

- that the Meeting will finance the purchase of appropriate equipment and supplies, rentals of mini-buses, etc., with some financial support coming from parents who are able to do so.
- that if formal learning happens to break out—rejoice! (One Friend has challenged this seeming indifference to formal learning. People who know me, know that I do value each opportunity in community as one in which learning can occur, but in this context I am trying to emphasize the sense of community rather than the narrow interpretation of school.)

### **Some dreams:**

- that multi-generational links will be established which will continue over time and distance.
- that children and teens will bring schoolroom and schoolyard concerns about violence, sexism, racism, values, etc. to Seventh Day School to be discussed and Quaker values reinforced.
- that participants will look forward to this monthly event and seek further connections through Camp, Half Yearly/Regional Gatherings or Yearly Meeting sessions.
- that parents will want to learn more about Quaker styles of parenting, conflict resolution, etc., and how to share these with the local school system.
- that children and teens will encourage their parents to attend Meeting regularly.
- that there is a recognition this is not an energy drain on a Meeting but is an energizing experience.

# Notes About Working with Young Friends

by Jan Greene, New York Yearly Meeting

## Qualities of a Good Youth Leader:

- a healthy emotional and spiritual life
- a genuine belief in, respect for, and liking for young people
- a quality of presence in *being with* the young people
- a tolerance for noise and confusion
- the ability to listen deeply
- the ability to share one's one faith experience
- the potential of establishing a relationship as a "Significant Other Adult" in the life of a young person.

## Role of a "Significant Other Adult" (SOA) or "Friendly Adult Presence" (FAP):

- a SOA or FAP is an adult friend who cares deeply for the well-being of the young person.
- a SOA or FAP has adult experience youth can "try ideas on."
- a SOA or FAP is an additional model of healthy adult behavior.
- a SOA or FAP is one to confide in without the same fear of worrying or hurting that may be present with one's family.

## A Well Rounded Youth Program will Include:

- fun
- group/community building
- individual growth
- religious/spiritual growth
- social/witness concerns

## The Most Important Quality of a Youth Group:

- It's safe—safe enough to share what each individual truly believes.

## A Good Youth Leader Is:

- an enabler, in the positive sense of enabling gifts
- an advocate
- a guarantor

## David Stone's "Four Step Program for Training New Youth/Adult Leaders":

- I do it.
- I do it, you help.
- You do it, I help.
- You do it

# Preventing Burnout

by *Lissa Field, Northern Yearly Meeting,*  
*from the FGC Counselors' Manual*

We usually think of burnout as a process that happens over a long period of time—certainly not in one week at the FGC Gathering!! But if we can avoid even a little burnout our process with the teens will be improved, and we will leave with better feelings about the program. Our dedication to the high school program must not be measured merely as quantity service, but also as quality service, including quality care for ourselves as counselors.

First, a few things about burnout:

## **Burnout is:**

- recurring anxious stress and progressive loss of energy, idealism, and purpose because of working conditions.

## **Burnout symptoms are:**

- exhaustion, fatigue, being run down
- headaches, stomach aches
- weight loss
- sleeplessness
- depression
- shortness of breath

## **Burnout behavior changes are:**

- instability of mood
- flattening of affect in emotional responses or a quickness to anger
- diminished frustration tolerance
- suspiciousness which makes for unrealistic fears and concern
- feelings of helplessness
- increased levels of risk-taking

## **Burnout may happen because:**

- the job is never finished
- you cannot tell if your work is having any results
- the work is repetitive
- because we are dealing constantly with people's expectations (stated and unstated)
- because we are working with people in need so there is a constant drain of energy
- because we are feeding people strokes
- because we have to approach our task with a "persona"—a helpful, caring "mask" to provide the teens with the care they need even when we may not feel like giving it

## Preventing Burnout, page 2

- because we may encounter failure
- because we are in an unfamiliar environment (stressful)
- because lots of emotional energy is getting spent in other aspects of the conference—seeing old friends, excitement and hubbub, etc.

I suggest that we each think about the things we know we can do for ourselves during the Gathering to build “conference stamina” so we can survive the Gathering in good spiritual, emotional, and physical health, and also model for the teens a good balance of caring for ourselves and caring for others. I have found some of the following things helpful to maintain my conference stamina:

- eating nutritious foods and eating as I normally do
- getting physical exercise every day—jogging, tennis, swimming . . .
- keeping some free time alone each day to do nothing
- keeping in touch with my inner feelings—asking what the young Lissa inside is thinking and feeling and wishing—and expressing that
- keeping in touch with my usual spiritual disciplines—prayer for me
- prioritizing the things I want to participate in at the Gathering, then reviewing the list and choosing what to skip this year
- saying no to some opportunities
- getting messages from high schoolers or other friends
- spending time outside the High School Program to keep a balance of perspective

# Healing the Teenager Within

by *Judith Randall, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting*

Often when I ask friends about their teenage years, they roll their eyes, groan, and brush off my question with a wave of their hand: “Worst years of my life . . . glad when they were over . . . a horrible time.” It seems that most of us would like to cut those years out of our memories, like some diseased organ in our bodies. And yet, just as with an organ that is diseased, in order to be whole and healthy, we need to pay attention to the illness, get help, and do what we find necessary in order to heal. I believe this is true of our attitudes towards our own adolescence as well. This unfinished business seems to be the source of my feeling of incompleteness about my years (as a teacher) at The Meeting School.

For teachers of teenagers, it is important for the healthy teaching of young people that we adults take care of our adolescent business ourselves, and not try to work it out by unconsciously projecting it onto the young people in our lives. Furthermore, a teacher and a young person can EACH grow spiritually if they see their relationship as a shared journey toward wholeness. It is true that the teenage years, because they are full of rapid growth and change, are not easy. Growth is occurring in body, mind and spirit, and the emotional feelings that accompany growth are unfamiliar and disconcerting.

For the teenager, nothing is certain anymore—all the learning and trusting of childhood must be tested, all the values and guidance and control that adults have offered is questionable, the society and culture are holding up so many mores and ways of being that choices must be made. The threat of nuclear destruction or the slow death of the natural environment foster feelings of powerlessness. “I feel the earth move under my feet,” sings Carole King, and surely this is how the teenage years feel. Stress results from rapid change and pressure to decide; the teenage years are almost never without stress. Some young people don’t make it through—the teenage suicide rate is staggering. Others try to leap over the teenage years and into adulthood via such things as early pregnancy, excessive consumerism, and drug and alcohol use. Others simply “drop out,” abandoning their creative selves, turning toward whatever pleasures and possibilities present themselves in the next moment.

But by its very nature, this period of rapid growth and change, this stressful time, can be an opportunity for deep spiritual learning. I have come to experience such chaotic times in my own life as signals that a new phase of spiritual growth is taking place. This perspective on adolescence is not widely held, and for good reason: the body changes, the changes in abilities in learning, the emotional swings, the intense focus on relationships, all fill the days and hours of teenagers’ lives. And adults who have not explored and embraced their own adolescence are busy just keeping up with these outward changes.

There ARE adults who have moved through many of the growth tasks that adolescence offers and are able to “be with” teenagers in a clear way. And there are adults—many more—who know they have “unfinished business” from their adolescent years, yet who are willing and able to live and work alongside their teenage students, getting support from other adults as they do so, and reaching insights which free them from repeating self-defeating behavior and behavior which is growth-inhibiting for their teenage students.

However, for many teachers, the years are just too painful to look back on, or they have no notion that to do so would benefit them and their students. It is not an easy task, but completing unfinished work from any age can help us as we seek to live a whole and holy life, serving God and one another. To ignore our teenage years, to put them behind us as if they were finished, means that the issues will rise again and again throughout our adult lives until we pay attention, get some help, and do what we find necessary in order to heal.

## Healing the Teenager Within, page 2

### How to Nurture a Teenager

As the process of writing this paper has unfolded over the weeks, I have understood new things about teenage spiritual development. I have learned how I WAS helping to nurture the spiritual life of teenagers at The Meeting School, and how I might better have done so. I have relived some of the events of my own teen years, and have seen them in a new light in the context of working with teenagers and as stepping stones to my own spiritual and emotional growth. A sense of completion is near.

Now I offer straight advice from the years of teaching and learning that The Meeting School provided, and from the subsequent reflection on that experience that a year at Pendle Hill has provided.

**Listen.** Spend time, one to one. It doesn't have to be a LOT of time—maybe walking down the hall between classes, or during a break while working together one-to-one on a project, or driving a student somewhere in the car. If your school life doesn't provide for these occasional one-to-one encounters, consider the reasons why, and how they might be built into the life of the school, or into your own life as a teacher there. Parents have more opportunities for these encounters—doing the dishes, driving to the myriad places that teenagers need to be taken, or during that once-in-awhile moment after a meal when the teenager isn't for some reason rushing off to do something else. Parents, too, however, need to watch for these moments and take the opportunities for such listening when they arise. Just listen. She may not SAY anything. But listening with the Spirit's ear is a kind of listening prayer that invites a person to think or speak or mull over. It provides a quiet space for that to happen in. If she does talk, continue to listen—both to her and to your own Inward Guide, so that when you speak IF you speak—and it's not necessary to speak—you are speaking from your center, from your heart, from the Spirit's voice, no matter how mundane or “adolescent” the topic.

**Share.** Listen for your own feelings and thoughts rising from within in response to what's being said and share them AS YOUR FEELINGS AND THOUGHTS, not as the way things are or pronouncements of fact. Listen for what YOU have to learn from what's being said, and share what you've learned with the person. Let him know that he is adding value to your life, just by being with you and saying what's on his mind. You may not always feel contributed to, but keep asking within to be shown what you can learn from this person and this situation.

**Reflect.** If you hear, in your close listening, a pattern or thread through what's being said, reflect it to her. “It sounds like you might be saying . . .” And let that settle. Let it go. She may not accept it. YOU let it go. Reflect her questions and decisions back to her and encourage her to look within.

**Express.** If you feel angry or frustrated or preoccupied, SAY SO. You don't have to go into a lot of detail. Just let him know the feeling and that you're working on something and that you don't want him to think that you're angry (for example) with him. Express your joy. And your contentment. Spread it all around.

**Let them know what to expect—and that it may change.** Whether in the classroom or at home or in a youth group of any kind, letting young people know what's about to happen AND reminding them at the same time that “anything can happen” helps prepare them for all possibilities.

**Nurture yourself.** If you wish to help nurture teenagers, you must nurture yourself. Give yourself time and space and aloneness and playful, joyful experiences and community and continuing learning opportunities. Receive from others. Receive from young people. Without nurture, you will burn out. With nurture, you can grow in love and joy.

**Consciously explore and re-encounter your own teenage years.** Otherwise you will re-enact the “stuck” places with students over and over again until you see that it's your stuff, not theirs. (This) results in a lot of pain for everyone. It may be painful for you to re-connect with your teenage years, but in that kind of pain, growth can come.

**Remember they are recently children, not yet adults.** They'll show both child and adult, even from one minute to the next. Take a deep breath and let them be where they are.

## Healing the Teenager Within, page 3

**When the conversation moves in that direction, talk to them about sex.** And drugs. And relationships. And the thing they show the most zest for—be it rock music, math, a relationship, or clothes. Take it in and let it go. And keep listening for the lessons for you in the situation.

**Provide empowering opportunities.** Create opportunities for them to engage in real work toward a peaceful world, in the family, at school, in the community.

**Seek nurturing adults.** Do you recall nurturing adults or “spirit” teachers who were part of your teenage world? How and when did that nurturing take place? Encourage young people to spend time with the nurturing adults in their lives, and guide them toward such persons all their lives.

**Attend to your own spiritual growth.** If you wish to nurture spiritual growth, you must be growing spiritually yourself. Consider joining or creating a small group of people who share your wish to grow spiritually. Consider finding a spiritual friend or spiritual director. Discover your spiritual gifts, and uncover your response-ability to use them. Exercise them. Look deeply into the religion you feel most drawn to. Find a place of retreat and go there as often as you feel you can. Develop your relationship with God or the Inward Guide or the Inward Teacher or Nature or whatever you choose to call that which is greater than yourself.

# Needs of Young Friends

by Cynthia Taylor from “Ministering To our Meetings,”  
*Philadelphia Yearly Meeting*

## Introduction:

My concern for young Friends is two-fold:

1. Sometimes it looks as though the young people are leaving the Monthly Meeting, and I don't know where they are going. But I do know they are in search of something. They are seeking as strenuously as we are, perhaps even more.
2. Those who do hang around don't feel that they are heard. We need to *stop, look, listen* and *wait*, to pay attention to our young people. We must suspend judgment when we are in relationship with the youth in our Meeting. . . .

Young Friends are seekers. They have . . . (as) you and I have, a voice within, a homing instinct of the soul which whispers within us . . . the call of Eternity for our souls. Our children are laboring under some terrific pressures. . . . They are keenly aware our values aren't rampant, not even in Quaker schools. We can't set their feet on any given path though we wish we could. Can we *trust them* to choose their own path? Are we willing to believe that the Spirit is moving in them, that they have wisdom and something to teach us?"

## Questions to Consider:

- Think about (what it was like) when you were 16: What were you doing, where were you, who were your friends, what was your life like?
- With a partner, spend about ten minutes together considering these two questions:
  - When you were 16, what important decision did you make that has affected your life and who you are now?
  - What did you most want from your parents and adults in your life?
    - In home life
    - In community of faith (Meeting, church, or synagogue.)

— Cynthia Taylor is currently a member of Intermountain Yearly Meeting

# Being a “Significant Other Adult” in the Life of a Young Friend

by Jan Greene, *New York Yearly Meeting*

Bob and Sue Turner, Alfred, NY, Meeting, have a long history of being “Significant Other Adults” for the young people in their meeting. When a member of the meeting was asked what they did that was so successful, she responded, “They are good listeners. They never judge what the teens tell them; they respond with thought-provoking questions such as ‘What was good in that?’ ‘How might we do that differently next time?’ They listen to the story of the young person, and tell a little of their own story.”

# A Young Friends Guide to Worship Sharing

## Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Young Friends

Worship Sharing is part of most Young Friends' Retreats. The following directions will help you lead this activity successfully.

Why do worship sharing? To quote William Stringfield, "Listening is a primitive act of love. . . ." It is rare to have the opportunity either to receive that love or to give it. Worship sharing is a good way of building a sense of community within a group. Worship sharing also can have a positive impact on Meeting for Worship. As people become more comfortable with sharing the important issues and events of their lives, they also become more comfortable sharing their spiritual journey and God's movement in their lives.

### About Worship Sharing

Worship sharing is not weighted with all the baggage of Meeting for Worship. There is no one right way to do it. In fact there are several 'right' ways, and you may think up more.

1. In its simplest form, a worship sharing group may gather in silence, much like a meeting for worship, but without the expectation that God is speaking through each speaker. Participants share whatever is on their mind.
2. A variation of 1: Someone might read a short inspirational passage, a poem, or play some music. The group may center their attention on a work of art, a photograph, etc. One group of mothers had a worship sharing session focused on their infants that were crawling on the floor in the center of the group.
3. Another style uses a series of three or four questions related to a single topic. The first question usually asks people to share an early memory or experience. The follow-up questions bring the subject into the present. *Creative Listening*, from Claremont Friends Meeting, is an excellent resource.
4. "The Ungame" provides a simple structure for worship sharing. This is a commercial board game complete with dice, markers, directions, and several wonderful decks of question cards. The question categories are "Light-hearted," "Deep Understanding," "Christian Belief," and "Questions for Couples." This game is good with kids and/or adults.

Among Young Friends in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, we just use the decks of cards. The group settles into silence. The person holding the deck takes a card from the top of the deck and reads the question to the group. That person then answers the question. When finished, the card is put on the bottom of the deck and the deck is passed on to the next person to take a card. A new variation on this has been to ask each person in silence to think of a new UNquestion. 3x5 cards and pencils are circulated, the questions written down, cards collected and shuffled. We then continue as above.

### Advice for Leaders

Worship sharing is not a therapy group. No one is required to share anything. No one needs to explain a response. People say only as much as they feel comfortable sharing. If a person does not want to share they may just say that they want to pass.

*Risk Taking:* Let the group know that you only get out of this what you are willing to risk putting in. If you don't share anything important, if you censor your thoughts because they are painful or too revealing, then no one will know any more about you when the worship sharing is over than when it began. As the leader, you can't expect that anyone else will risk more than you are willing to risk with the group.

## **A Young Friends Guide to Worship Sharing, page 2**

*Confidentiality:* Remind the group that whatever people say within the group stays within the group. Do not tell other people what someone else has shared. That person felt safe at that particular moment, with these particular people. In reality, they may or may not mind your spreading the information, but you don't know and it's not your choice.

*Humor:* Acknowledge that sometimes people say things that are funny. However, the group needs to be mindful that too much laughter can make people afraid to share. It can also create a mood of frivolity and people won't share anything important. Most importantly, humor is sometimes used to cover up something that actually is very painful.

*Follow-up Questions:* People will share what they want you to hear. Your "job" is to listen and give the speaker your complete attention. The question you ask out of concern may well feel like interrogation, if not to the person you are directing the question to, then to one of the other people. It means that you might "interrogate" them when their turn comes around. They may feel it unsafe to share anything important.

# Setting Priorities for Meeting Support of Quaker Youth

*Based on an activity devised by Tony Gibson and John Berridge.*

*Adapted by Sandy Parker, Britain Yearly Meeting*

## **Resources:**

- Large sheets of paper (one for each working group) with central area marked PRIORITY, an area around this marked IMPORTANT, and the outer area marked OTHER.
- Envelopes containing statements on small cards about the aims of Quaker youth work. (All envelope should have identical sets of statements.)
- Pencils, newsprint, felt pens, masking tape.
- Ideally, each working group can sit around a table.

## **Procedure:** Working groups of 5 or 6 are best.

1. Give each group the sheets of paper and an envelope containing the statements. One member of each group deals out the statements face side down, so that each person has approximately the same number of statements. A short time is allowed for everyone to read their statements without showing them to anyone else. (2 min.)
2. In silence, participants place the statements face up in the PRIORITY, IMPORTANT, or OTHER sections of the large sheet. People should be encouraged to do this fairly quickly, relying on first impressions, rather than a considered judgment. There will be an opportunity to move them, or to alter their wording later. (3 min.)
3. Still in silence, everyone look at the statements, and turn over any that anyone disagrees with, whether because of its wording or its position. (3 min.)
4. Discuss the disagreements, to reach agreement about both wording and position. Change as necessary, or discard altogether. Additional statements may also be added. (20 min.)
5. Choose one person to explain and defend your group's choices. (1 min.)
6. Other members of the group visit the other groups to challenge or question their choices. (5–10 min., depending on number of groups.)
7. Return to your original groups, suggest and discuss any changes. (5 min.)
8. Choose 10 of the most important priorities, and make a poster of them. (10 min.)
9. Place posters on wall, compare, discuss, and debrief. (10–15 min.)

## **Potential:**

This activity can be adapted to a wide range of issues or topics. With appropriately chosen statements, it can be used with any age group. It is intended to enable a group to focus on and reach agreement about the important priorities for any issue. The statements will become modified over time if it is used with different groups, and this gives a valuable refinement of the activity.

Silence for stages 2 and 3 is important, as it provides the opportunity for individual reflection and consideration without having to justify choices. The turning over of the statements in stage 3 provides a quick way of identifying the areas of agreement where no discussion is needed, and those of disagreement that require discussion. The defending of group choices, or challenging of other group choices, provides useful further refinement.

## Setting Priorities for Meeting Support of Quaker Youth, page 2

### Variations:

1. A number of blank 'statements' can be included in the envelopes to encourage participants to add their own.
2. Statements can be color coded according to some useful classification—e.g. skills (pink); knowledge (yellow); attitudes (blue); concepts (green). This can be revealed and discussed during the debriefing.
3. A structure can be suggested for the final poster to reflect particular concerns—e.g. to distinguish between the aims that would be priorities for young people, for parents, for monthly meeting. Additional time would probably be needed for this.
4. Instead of preparing posters, sheets can be prepared with appropriate headings, and groups asked to write up their chosen statements before proceeding to the final discussion and debriefing.

### Examples of statements:

- A warm welcome
- Plentiful supplies of creative materials
- A soundproof room used only by young Friends
- Up-to-date-resources
- Continuity/preplanning of program material
- Adequate storage and display facilities
- History of Quakerism through the lives of Friends
- A regular nucleus of participating youth
- A knowledge of other religious groups and their beliefs
- Knowledge of the Bible
- Awareness of the environment
- Quakerism in practice today
- Quaker values for everyday living
- The chance to learn, worship and work with adults in the Meeting
- Sessions on peace—world peace, conflict resolution and its place in our daily lives
- A knowledge of Quaker beliefs and practices
- A chance to explore one's own feelings and beliefs in a safe context
- Being part of the Quaker community
- Contact with other Quaker youth
- Beginning to "know each other in the things that are eternal"
- Contact with F/friendly loving adults other than parents
- A chance to learn and experience in a different context than school
- A good Religious Education committee
- The cooperation and support of the whole Meeting
- A valuable and useful contribution to the functioning of the Monthly Meeting—e.g. helping with coffee hours, flowers, door-keeping, etc.
- Information about events for Quaker young people in a wider context
- An adequate budget
- Opportunities for getting together other than on Sundays
- Family weekends/Quaker camps
- Opportunities for spiritual growth through the arts—dance, drama, music, poetry crafts
- Age-graded classes
- Help with transportation and/or finances for children to attend wider Quaker gatherings
- Intergenerational opportunities
- Enabling and nurturing gifted adults to work with children and young people
- Growing appreciation of "The Amazing Fact of Quaker Worship"
- Fun
- Consistent adult presences
- A plentiful supply of eager seeking adults who are willing to work with our youth.

# Fostering Vital Friends Meetings

Part Two:

*Resources for Working with Quaker Meetings*

by Jan Greene and Marty Walton

## **Section R15: Workshops, Programs and Activities**

- R15-1 Nurturing the Spiritual Life of Friends *Jan Greene*
  - R15-5 Meeting Renewal *Jan Greene*
  - R15-7 Some Characteristics of Vital Friends Meetings *Leonard S. Kenworthy*
  - R15-9 "Envisioning Our Future" Workshop *Buffalo (NY) MM*
  - R15-10 Observing Our Meeting *(source unknown)*
  - R15-10 On Membership *Nancy Middleton*
  - R15-10 How Do We Express Our Faith to Others? *Adam Corson-Finnerty*
  - R15-10 So, You've Been Asked to Speak about the Religious Society of Friends? *Bob and Susie Fetter*
  - R15-11 The Fishbowl: A Program to Help Groups Work Through Conflict *Lynne Woehlie*
  - R15-13 Sharing about One's Spiritual Journey *Anne Thomas, CYM*
  - R15-14 Another Activity on Sharing Our Spiritual Journey *PYM Quaker Studies*
  - R15-15 Creative Sharing Questions *London Grove (PA) MM*
  - R15-17 Paradigms of Calls and Discoveries of Gifts *Philadelphia Gifts Group*
  - R15-18 Worship Seeing: Drawing Out Gifts (multi-session) *(source unknown)*
  - R15-19 Exercise on Drawing Out Gifts (one session) *(source unknown)*
  - R15-21 Journaling Workshop *Marsha Holliday*
  - R15-25 Peacemaking with Your Religious Past (five sessions) *Jan Greene*
  - R15-26 Your Spiritual Journey
  - R15-28 The Haunting Church
  - R15-30 Companions on the Way
  - R15-31 From the Past to the Present
  - R15-32 The Growing Edges
  - R15-33 Handouts for above workshop *Jan Greene*
  - R15-35 Owning Our Religious Past and Present (one session) *Anne Thomas*
  - R15-38 Spiritual Development Through Play *FGC Religious Education Committee*
- Intergenerational Activities***
- R15-39 Introductory Activity *(source unknown)*
  - R15-39 People Hunt *(source unknown)*
  - R15-39 Quaker Fruits and Nuts Treasure Hunt *Betsy Muench*
  - R15-40 Yarn Toss Group Builder *Shirley Dodson*
  - R15-40 Listening and Decision-Making Activity *Chris Jorgensen*
  - R15-41 Meeting Quiz: A Light and Lively *(source unknown)*

- R15-42 Recipe for a Nurture Workshop in Your Home Meeting *Anita Baker*
- R15-43 The Great Valentines' Day Race (*source unknown*)
- R15-44 Toss a Feeling *Winston Press*
- R15-45 Tetrahedral Kites *Daryl Bergquist*
- Meetings for Learning***
- R15-47 Four Doors to Meeting for Worship *Anne Thomas*
- R15-48 Gifts and Ministries *Anne Thomas*
- R15-49 We're Going to Meeting for Worship *Anne Thomas*
- R15-50 The Quaker Meeting for Worship *Anne Thomas*
- R15-51 Answering That of God in Our Children *Anne Thomas*
- R15-52 Addressing Sexual Abuse in Friends' Meetings *Anne Thomas*
- R15-53 Testimonies and Traditions: Some Aspects of Quaker Spirituality *Anne Thomas*
- R15-54 The Wounded Meeting *Anne Thomas*
- R15-55 Questions of Integrity: A Quaker Perspective *Anne Thomas*
- R15-56 God is Silence *Anne Thomas*
- R15-57 Guide to Quaker Practice *Anne Thomas*
- R15-58 Meeting Needs *Anne Thomas*
- R15-59 Friends and Worship *Anne Thomas*
- R15-61 The Mission of Religious Education *Jan Greene*
- R15-62 Planning an Adult Religious Education Program for Your Meeting *Shirley Dodson*
- R15-63 Meeting Expectations: "Our Classroom Covenant" *Anne Thomas*
- R15-64 A Christmas Program: Echo Pantomime—"We Found Him" *Anne Thomas*

# Nurturing the Spiritual Life of Friends

by Jan Greene, New York Yearly Meeting

Time required: approximately 6 hours, including an hour for a lunch break

**Focus of workshop:** (Write these queries on newsprint and post them in the meeting room.)

- What is it I need to do to “provide care” for my soul?
- How could I provide space and time to respond to these needs?
- How could my Meeting support my spiritual growth and how can I support others in my Meeting?

## Schedule:

1. **Worship:** Open with the reading of Isaiah 40:31, followed by a period of silent worship.

But those who trust in God for help;

They will find their strength renewed.

They will rise on wings like eagles;

They will run and not get weary; they will walk and not grow weak.

2. **Introductions:**

Invite Friends to introduce themselves according to the length of time it took each person to travel to the meeting spot here today. (Or use another question that is non-threatening and will allow each Friend to speak and hear each other Friend present.)

3. **Sharing in Dyads:** (change partner for each question)

- a. What have you needed to leave behind in order to be here today?
- b. Has there ever been a place where you felt especially close to God?
- c. Have you ever known a person who has impressed you with the awareness that this person lives close to God?
- d. Has there ever been a time in your life when you felt especially aware of God's presence? What were the circumstances?

## Nurturing the Spiritual Life of Friends, page 2

**4. Introduce some common spiritual disciplines.** These might include:

- silent time alone
- meditation
- prayer
- journaling
- reading the Bible or other inspirational materials
- fasting
- spiritual friendship

Hand out information on papers. If you have books Friends might like to look over, point them out for later reference.

**5. Exercise: “Changing Stumbling Blocks into Stepping Stones:”** (This exercise was done in a workshop led by Rebecca Mays at an FGC Gathering)

*Directions:*

- a. Draw a large circle on a piece of paper. Write your name in the center of the circle.
- b. Inside the circle, list things that support you:
  1. physically,
  2. emotionally
  3. spiritually
- c. Outside the circle, list things that hinder you:
  1. physically
  2. emotionally
  3. spiritually
- d. After this is complete, invite Friends to consider the following query and share with a partner of their choosing when ready:

“Is there any way that you could change any of the items outside the circle to the inside-to make it nurturing, including ‘letting it go?’”

**6. Journaling Exercise on Reordering Priorities:** (Suggestion from Marty Grundy, who used this during her visit to Central Alaska Friends Conference.)

- a. Introduction: Just as an athlete must practice, one who is concerned with “care of the soul” must nurture silence and stillness; one must sit and exercise patience to open ourselves to opportunities for God’s grace. Grace is God’s doing, not ours. We can only make an opportunity.

## Nurturing the Spiritual Life of Friends, page 3

- b. Hand each participant a piece of paper that has two circles. Small ticks at the edge of each circle can indicate 6 hour segments of a day.
- c. Directions to participants:
  1. Label first circle “typical day.” Block in the activities of a typical day, e.g. last Tuesday.
  2. Then, if you were to re-order your priorities so as to make more space for “Care of your Soul,” what might a typical day look like? Be realistic. Include what would speak to your condition at this time. Remember, we have more choices that we think—radical choice is possible. Block in the activities of such a day on the second circle.
  3. Take time to mediate about: “What, if anything is this showing me?”
  4. Share as led with two or three other Friends.

### 7. “Scientific” Experiment: Testing George Fox’s hypothesis that the Inward Teacher is present to teach us himself: (Shared by John Punshon at Lake Erie Yearly Meeting, taken to Juneau Alaska Monthly Meeting via Marty Grundy, who then shared it with Long Island, NY, Quarterly Meeting)

- A. An opportunity to consider how I use silence:
- a. “still” the body (physically): 3–4 minutes
  - b. add mental stillness: 3–4 minutes
  - c. be conscious of hearing things but don’t get tangled in them: 3–4 min.
  - d. add a word you silently repeat (e.g. ‘Gloria’): 3–4 minutes

After each segment, give participants a brief time to talk about their experience.

#### B. Living into a Bible Verse/Story

Participants will pair up for sharing afterwards. This will be an experience of Francis De Sales’ “Spiritual Nosegay.” (During the Middle Ages, persons walking a city street often carried a fragrant nosegay held to their nose to help them deal with the odors of the open sewers.)

#### *Directions:*

- a. Take a few moments to center.
- b. Choose a Bible verse or story or a Quaker story or quotation.
- c. Think yourself back into it: feel, hear, and smell it. Pay attention to whether you are an observer or a participant.
- d. Pay attention to any piece that seems to be held up to YOU. (This can be your Spiritual Nosegay.)

## Nurturing the Spiritual Life of Friends, page 4

- e. When you are ready, share with a partner.
- f. Final Directions for this exercise: If it feels right to do so, carry this with you for the next few days. Pay attention to any special message(s) that may be coming to you.

### 8. Final Sharing: in large group:

We are individuals, and we nurture our Souls as individuals. However, we are also part of a meeting, part of a community that is committed to support each participant. In today's shattering world, what support for my own spiritual growth do I need from my Meeting community, and how can I contribute to spiritual growth in other F/friends in my Meeting?

### 9. Ending:

End with quote from Caroline Fox: (LYM's *Christian Faith and Practice*, p. 75, paragraphs 2 & 3.) "Walk in the Light Thou Hast, and More Shall be Granted Thee," followed by worship.

# Meeting Renewal

by Jan Greene, New York Yearly Meeting

Time: 6 to 7 hours, including an hour lunch break.

## MORNING

### 1. Worship and Gathering Time

- A. Begin with silent worship
- B. In the large group, go around the circle giving each person a chance to introduce her/self, and to share briefly: “Tell about someone who influenced you when you were young spiritually.” Alternate Question: “What brought you to Quakerism?”

### 2. Focused Meditation and Sharing in groups of two on “Remembering Church”

Ask Friends to choose a partner with whom they would feel comfortable sharing. Ask Friends to take time to silently consider the questions below, and then share with their partner as they are led. (Any questions that are not relevant for any individual should be skipped.)

- What does the word “Church” and/or “Meeting” mean to you? Does the word have the same meaning for you now that it did when you were a child? Where and how are the meanings different? Where and how are they the same?
- Do you remember any changes that happened in your church or meeting when you were a child? If so, do you remember any of your own reactions to these changes? Do you remember any of your parents’ reactions to these changes? Were your mother’s and father’s reactions different? Were they happy or disturbed by them? Are your reactions the same now as they were when you were a child?
- Do any of your present values and beliefs date back to your childhood church/synagogue/meeting experiences?
- At the present time, are there any people who demonstrate a good meaning of “church” or “meeting” for you by the way they live? If so, can you say why?
- Do you think of *yourself* as demonstrating a meaning of church or meeting?

— Questions based on *The Faith of Parents* by Maria Harris.

### 3. Claremont Dialogue in Large Group

Using Claremont Dialogue (or Worship Sharing) guidelines, go around the circle. Each Friend is asked to list a personal strength and a personal struggle in relation to this meeting as it nurtures the spiritual life of the individual speaking. No one is to comment on anyone else’s sharing. List responses on newsprint under the headings “Strengths and Struggles.” Post newsprint on wall.

## AFTERNOON:

### 4. Worship Time to Re-center

### 5. Looking at Individual Expectations: With one other person, share:

- A. What it is that you expect to receive from your Meeting?
- B. Why you keep coming to your Meeting?

List answers to A & B on newsprint that is posted in the room.

## Meeting Renewal, page 2

### 6. Looking at the Future of the Meeting and Individual Commitments:

Hand out “Characteristics of a Vital Friends Meeting” and copies of the Meeting’s State of Society Report from this year, and a State of Society Report from 5 or 6 years ago. In groups of five, do the following assignment: (Each group will need to name a recorder.)

- A. You are on a committee writing the State of Society Report for your Meeting in the year \_\_\_\_\_ (a date 5 or 6 years in the future.) What would you like to be able to report?
- B. How do you imagine you have been able to arrive at this state?
- C. Going around the circle, give each person a chance to share the commitment she or he is personally willing to make to help bring that State of Society Report a reality.

### 7. Small Groups Report Back to Large Group

### 8. Follow-up

Give lists on newsprint and reports to Ministry and Counsel Committee. Ask M&C to study them and bring any recommendations that may arise to Meeting for Business for consideration.

### 9. Evaluation of Workshop

Ask Friends for feedback on workshop. One method that is useful is to ask Friends to list first those things that they liked. Then ask them to list those things they didn’t like. (Remind them that what one person likes, another may dislike, so the same item may appear on both lists.) Finally ask Friends what might be done differently next time.

### 10. End with a period of worship.

## SESSION FOR MEETING’S CHILDREN

During the weekend when the Meeting is considering Renewal, gather the children of the meeting and let them know that the adults are considering the future of the Meeting. Remind them that they are an important part of the meeting community and that their ideas and leadings are important. Ask them to share about the following: (Name someone to record their answers.) Let the children know that their responses will be sent to Ministry and Counsel for consideration.

1. What do you like about your Meeting?
2. If your Meeting could do something different, what would you like it to do?

# Some Characteristics of Vital Friends Meetings

by Leonard S. Kenworthy, *Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, from Quakerism: A Study Guide on the Religious Society of Friends*

What can you say about your Meeting—is it an “experimental station of the spiritual life?” Is it a laboratory of Christian living? Is it an oasis in the spiritual desert of our times? Is it a training ground for committed and concerned Friends? Is it a sample of what the Religious Society of Friends, at its best, preaches and practices? In short, is it a vital Friends Meeting?

## Ten Possible Marks of a Vital Friends Meeting

### 1. A Place of Spiritual Power and Impact

What happens to your members and attenders as a result of their participation in your Meeting and in the other activities of your group? Are their lives modified, changed, radically altered? Are their values reexamined? Are their expectations stretched? Is their faith strengthened? Are their family and/or job relationships improved? Is their faith strengthened? Do they care more, love more? . . . are several of your members and attenders more disturbed now than they were a few months ago about conditions in your community, our nation or in the wider world—and are they finding ways in which they can do something about their concerns, individually and/or collectively? Have they discovered or rediscovered the horizontal as well as the vertical relationships in religion—specifically Quakerism?

### 2. With the Meeting for Worship Central

Is your Meeting one to which seekers should be sent, with the assurance that they will find a true spirit of worship in it? Is your Meeting one in which there is a healing and transforming ministry?

### 3. Composed of a Diversity of Seekers, but with some Shared Values and Goals

Is your Meeting composed largely of people of the same background racially, religiously, occupationally, class-wise? Or does it represent a diversity of backgrounds? What are you doing to draw persons of different backgrounds to your group? What else could you do? If you are already a diverse group, are you growing together? Are the tensions easing and the gaps between individuals and groups narrowing? What gains in this respect have you made in recent months or years? What else could you do to weld your group together?

### 4. Cultivating Pride in Its Quaker Past but Fostering a Pioneering Spirit

Is Your Meeting fostering pride in the past? How? What else needs to be done in this regard? Is your Meeting concerned about the present and future of the Religious Society of Friends? How successful have you been in this respect? What else should you be doing?

### 5. Providing a Broad and Diversified Program for People of All Ages

Does your Meeting plan its programs (to serve all age groups)? What groups does it serve best? What groups least? What could you do as a group to improve your aid to those whom you are now reaching least?

### 6. Promoting Fun and Fellowship

Does your meeting have times of fun and fellowship? Does it need more such occasions together? Does it need some new activities to add to or replace current programs? Does such fellowship in fun add to the creation of a caring community?

## **Some Characteristics of Vital Friends Meetings, page 2**

### **7. Serving as a Launching Pad for Spiritually Motivated Social Action**

Does your Meeting have...group concerns? Are they too few? Are they too many? Are they spiritually motivated social actions or are they "creaturely activities?" What might be done to improve this aspect of your Meeting?

### **8. Fostering Broad Participation and Shared Leadership**

Are all or almost all of your members involved somewhere in the work of your Meeting? What can be done to involve more of them? Is the leadership in your Meeting fairly widely shared? If not, can you make suggestions to improve that situation?

### **9. Reaching Out to Other Groups Locally and in Wider Geographical Areas**

Does your Meeting collaborate closely with other Quaker groups? Does it have some contact with other religious groups? Does it maintain relations with a few humanitarian and social action organizations? Does it have too many contacts? Too few? What suggestions do you have for improvement in this regard?

### **10. Adequately Housed and Financed**

Is your Meeting adequately housed? What could be done to increase and/or improve its facilities? Is the work of your Meeting adequately, even generously financed? If not, what could be done to increase the amounts given, the number of contributors, and the regularity of giving?

### **Additional Queries**

1. What other characteristics of a vital Friends Meeting would you add?
2. Which of the ten characteristics of a vital Meeting...would you eliminate? Why?
3. On which of the ten attributes of a dynamic Meeting would you rate your local group highest? Why?
4. On which of the ten attributes of a dynamic Meeting would you rate your local group lowest? Why? What suggestions would you make to improve your Meeting on these points?
5. What is your judgment about the size of a vital Friends Meeting?

# “Envisioning Our Future” — Workshop for a Monthly Meeting

by *Buffalo Monthly Meeting, New York Yearly Meeting*

In the fall of 1993, Buffalo, NY, Monthly Meeting held a weekend retreat, under the care of their Ministry and Counsel, to follow through on concerns about future plans for the meeting. Members and attenders were invited to attend. This retreat followed a year during which F/friends focused on their spiritual journeys. The meeting newsletter, Plain Speech, reported both the description of the program and those things shared by the participants.

— Jan G.reene

## **Introduction:**

What we shared (last year) helps lay the groundwork for decisions the Meeting will need to make in the near future. We hope our selections, paraphrasings and summaries will be useful not only in keeping ideas fresh in the minds of those who attended but also in conveying to those who were not there some sense of the thought and spirit of the weekend.

## **Description:**

Some thirty-six members, attenders and associates filled Finn’s Inn at Chautauqua Point for the Columbus Day week-end, some arriving on Friday evening, others on Saturday. The theme had been introduced as follows: “Our Meeting: Its Past and Its Future.” Last year we explored our individual spiritual journeys. This year Ministry and Counsel invites us to consider the spiritual journey of the Meeting-as-a-Whole, asking ourselves not only about inspired turns and the missed opportunities in the past but especially about our ideas and wishes for the near future.

## **Working Sessions:**

### *Session 1:*

After a period of worship and a brief welcome Saturday morning, a Claremont Dialogue opened with Question 1. *Looking back to the first time you entered the front door of the Meetinghouse, what was it you were seeking?*

### *Session 2:*

After a break, the second dialogue opened with Question 2. *Looking back on your experience in the Meeting, what to you is the most memorable occasion, episode or happening—whether it was a high point or a low point?*

### *Session 3:*

Sunday morning: Following Elise Boulding’s design for imagining the future (guided imagery of possible future events) each person was asked to *imagine life in the Meeting ten years from now*, being assisted with questions from “picturing yourself approaching the Meetinghouse on a Sunday morning in the year two thousand and three” to “what is the spiritual life of the Meeting?”

### *Session 4:*

After a break, a modified Claremont Dialogue opened with Question 3: *Over the next ten years, what is most important for the Meeting? What is God’s will for the Meeting? What are the first steps?* After responses and discussion, we met in silent worship.

# Four Simple Exercises for Your Meeting

## 1. Observing our Meeting (*source unknown*)

Each person is given 5 sheets of paper and asked to write the answers to the following five questions, one question per sheet:

1. I came to Meeting the first time because \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The one thing I like most about my meeting is \_\_\_\_\_.
3. During the past year, the program/activity that meant the most to me was \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Our meeting is weak in \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Our meeting is strong in \_\_\_\_\_.

Divide into 5 groups. Each group collects the answers to one of the questions and considers them. List responses, check duplicates. Return to the whole group and report. After all groups have reported, consider, "What does this have to say about our meeting?"

## 2. On Membership by *Nancy Middleton, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting*

In a meeting, ask Friends to silently form a line in order as to how long they have been a member. Indicate one side of the room as the minimum time, the other as the longest time. When the line is formed, ask Friends to observe it. Afterward, ask the whole group to share about what the spectrum is telling the Meeting.

## 3. How Do We Express Our Faith to Others?

*by Adam Corson-Finnerty, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting*

### Worship Sharing Questions:

- What is most important about Quakerism to you?
- When was the last time you spoke to a non-Quaker about your beliefs?
- What are your hesitations/resistances to sharing about Quakerism?

Follow Worship Sharing with Role Plays about answering questions about Quakerism.

## 4. So, You've been asked to speak about the Religious Society of Friends?

*Bob and Susie Fetter's 3 x 5 card Workshop (Baltimore Yearly Meeting)*

Give each participant a 3 x 5 inch card. Ask the following questions: "Why am I a Quaker?" "What is unique about the Religious Society of Friends?" Time is allowed for Friends to write the answers on the card, one answer on a side. Then, in worship sharing, each Friend answers one question or the other. When you're done, you'll have plenty to speak about!

# The Fishbowl: A Program to Help Groups Work Through Conflict

by *Lynne Woehlie*

## **Purpose:**

A fishbowl is a means for providing structure to a discussion. It places people in two distinctly defined and separate roles. One role is as speaker. The other role is as listener. By intervening in normal conversational patterns where the focus is the exchange, the fish bowl separates the elements of the exchange. The intent of the fishbowl is to provide a forum for people to say things that might otherwise be difficult to share and to listen to things that might otherwise be difficult to hear said. Fishbowls can be useful in a process of conflict resolution to elicit information that is the basis for future dialog and conversation. Using peers with which one is comfortable talking it is possible to say things that one might not be comfortable saying directly to the on-lookers for a variety of reasons. A major goal in the fishbowl is for the groups to be able to listen in on what it is like to be a member of the other group.

## **Process:**

Determine what is the problem or issue that is so difficult for the group to address. Divide the group into two groups. One way to think about how to divide is that it is often issues of power in groups that underlie the most difficult problems. So try determining groups on the basis of those who appear to have power or be the status quo, and those who feel that they do not share equally in the group. Another way to create the division is to look for differences of opinion on how to solve the problem that has been identified, or even differences over what seems to be the problem in the group.

Once the groups are defined ask one group to sit in a small circle in the middle. Ask the rest of the participants to sit outside and to be prepared to listen closely to what is said in the middle. Determine an amount of time for the people in the inner circle to speak and inform the entire group of that time. (The limit may be in terms of minutes or in terms of when everyone has had a chance to speak.) Ask the inner circle to begin speaking.

After the inner circle is finished, ask them to exchange places with the outer circle and to begin to act as conscious listeners. Ask the outer circle to move inside and to talk about what they just heard and what they understood it to mean. Encourage them to respond directly to what they heard.

After the group has finished speaking. Return to one large circle and spend some time debriefing the participants about the experience. Then encourage them to move towards defining the problems that exist and thinking about how to solve them.

## **Membership on a Meeting's Ministry & Counsel**

(Fishbowl Example, Used in Addressing a Meeting Conflict)

### **1. Introductions**

Try to gauge what brings each person and how much current and historical knowledge they have of conflicts that are the context of the problems being discussed.

### **2. Introduction to and Explanation of the Fishbowl Process**

The Fishbowl can be very similar to worship sharing or Claremont dialogue, except that only those in the inner circle at any given point are allowed to speak.

## The Fishbowl: A Program to Help Groups Work Through Conflict, page 2

### 3. Divide into groups

- a. Those who have a concern about the way that people are selected to serve on committees, in particular Ministry and Counsel
- b. Those who feel that the process for selection is basically sound and that Ministry and Counsel has a good and fair representation
- c. Those who feel new to the idea that there might be a problem in the selection process

*Explain that:* Group one will begin as the inner circle, the speakers. Groups two and three will begin as the outer circle, the listeners.

*Define the amount of time* that will be spent on each group.

### 4. Fishbowl

### 5. Debrief the fishbowl

### 6. Work for a group outcome

Work as a group to define the problems that were illuminated through the fishbowl and to discuss ways to address them. If the mood is right and there is adequate time, encourage people to think of ideas for solving these problems and implementing them. If time is up make an agreement for a next meeting or a next step.

# Sharing About One's Spiritual Journey

*from Anne Thomas, Canadian Yearly Meeting*

This is an exercise using the drawing of little figures in, on, and around a tree. Give a copy of the drawing to each participant. Invite each person to take a few minutes in silence to study the drawing, and consider the following questions:

- If this drawing represents my spiritual journey, which character represents me at the present time?
- Which one would represent me in the past?
- Which one would represent where I hope to be in the future?

When ready, pair up with another Friend, and share your choices and the reasons for them, as you feel led to share.



# Another Activity on Sharing Our Spiritual Journeys

*from the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Quaker Studies Program*

## **Materials needed:**

- Chairs arranged in a circle
- Many brightly colored crayons (put in a bowl on the floor)
- Large sheets of paper (one for each person, plus extra sheets)

## **Question for sharing:**

- If you were to symbolize your present religious life or spiritual journey by color and shape, what would you choose?

## **Suggestions for leader:**

Let the group know that this is not an art project, but a “prop” for personal expression and group sharing. Urge them to let the Spirit guide them. You might say, “Before you begin to draw, center down, meditate on the question, and take a look inside at what you see. Remain silent while you draw.” Repeat the question. Allow 20 minutes for people to work in silence. Then go around the circle, with each person sharing her or his drawing and saying something about it.

# Creative Sharing Questions

*from London Grove Friends Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting*

## **The Meeting as a Loving Community**

1. Give a general picture of your family when you were a child. How well did you fit into it? What was your relationship with other members of your family?
2. As you were growing up how much of a sense of community did you feel among your family members?
3. To what extent do you feel a sense of a genuine loving community with your Meeting?

## **The Meeting for Worship**

1. What was the place of prayers and/or family worship in your childhood?
2. How do you picture your personal religious growth as you were growing up?
3. How important is silent group worship in your present relationship to God? What experience have you had in silent individual worship?

## **Authority and Discipline**

1. What place did authority have in your early family life?
2. How did you react to authority and discipline as a teenager?
3. What are the present sources of authority in your life? Do you feel that your life is well controlled by self-discipline?

## **The Bible and Jesus**

1. How was the Bible used in your home when you were very young?
2. As you grew older how did the place of the Bible in your life change? What other religious literature had an important part in your life?
3. How do you regard the place of Jesus in your life now?

## **Dealing with Frustration**

1. What were you most afraid of as a child?
2. How were you able to overcome some of your early fears or frustrations?
3. How well are you able to work through frustrations now? What talents do you feel you have which need more adequate expression?

## **Dealing with Hostility**

1. What early memory do you have of a personal experience involving anger or violence?
2. Can you recall a case of having overcome hostility with kindness or understanding?
3. How do you try to deal with hostility now? How do you feel about the use of non-violence to solve problems?

## **Interest in Quakerism**

1. What was the nature of your earliest experience in a religious group?
2. What types of group worship have you experienced? How were you drawn to an interest in Friends?
3. What aspects of Friends' activities are of great interest to you now?

## **Creative Sharing Questions, page 2**

### **Personal Accomplishment**

1. What hero or heroes did you have as a young child? What made them stand out in your mind?
2. What were some of your early aspirations in life?
3. How satisfying are your present accomplishments? To what extent is your time and energy devoted to what you feel is most worthwhile?

*Additional queries by Ralph (Cookie) Caldwell, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Religious Education Committee:*

### **Racial Discrimination/Religious Discrimination**

1. What are some of your early memories of a person or a race (religion) other than your own?
2. Do you remember the first time you were aware of someone being discriminated against because of race (religion)? How did that feel?
3. Can you remember a time when you acted to interrupt discrimination?

### **Male/Female Awareness**

1. Recall your early awareness of being male or female.
2. How did that awareness change as you grew up.
3. What is it like now for you as a man or woman?

### **The Opposite Sex**

1. What was your early awareness of people of the opposite sex?
2. How did that awareness change as you grew up?
3. What is your awareness of people of the opposite sex now? What are your feelings?

# Paradigms of Calls and Discoveries of Gifts

## *from the Philadelphia Gifts Group*

### **1. The first paradigm is an unexpected call for which a person may feel inadequate or unprepared (Moses in Ex. 3):**

Yahweh speaks to Moses out of the burning bush and says to him, “Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring forth my people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt.” (Ex. 3:10) Moses basically thinks this idea is crazy—he replies, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt? (Ex. 3:11) He feels quite inadequate. Moses raises one objection after another; he says, “Oh My Lord, I am not eloquent, either heretofore or since thou hast spoken to thy servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.” (Ex. 4:13) Finally Moses says, “Oh my Lord, send, I pray, some other person.” (Ex. 4:13)

As you know, Yahweh prevails in the end, and Moses does lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses is a paradigm/example for the sort of person who feels strongly called to do something which may seem crazy or impractical, or something for which she or he feels unprepared. The call seems to come from outside and may bear little relation to a person’s own self-concept. Here the challenge a person faces isn’t so much, “What am I going to do?” as “How in the world am I going to do *this*?”

### **2. The second paradigm of calling is one in which the awareness of what one should do comes first from the depths of oneself, as if it were an imprint on one’s being; “Calling” here means a strong interest, a special gift to do something particular.**

Elizabeth O’Connor in *Eighth Day of Creation* tells the story of Michelangelo pushing a large block of stone along a street. A neighbor asks why in the world he is struggling so hard over a mere piece of rock. Michelangelo is said to reply, “Because there is an angel in that rock that wants to come out.”

In the second paradigm of calling we are each rough rocks like that, each with an angel striving to take shape within us. Here, God’s will for us is experienced as already inside of us, printed into our very being. We don’t need to look outside. To know what we are to do, we need to ask, “Who *am I*, really?” This is like taking apart a motor or another piece of equipment to see what’s there. We know there’s something to discover.

### **3. A third paradigm involves finding our calling simply while doing it.**

This is serendipitous. We do something and we realize that what we did came together just right. And we note that when we do this again, the same sense emerges. It came together, as Friends would say, in good order. Or we might notice that there is an ease or a comfort in our doing it. There is also the possibility that what we are doing has a positive impact on other people. This may be something we’ve always done, but seen from our perspective now, we can claim this *something* as a gift. We discover that gifts are embedded in our everyday lives.

### **4. Then there is the call which comes in the form of desire:**

We strongly desire a certain gift (Paul: *Cor. 12:31; 14:1; 12: 39*). In addition, envy of another person may point to a gift in ourselves that we’ve neglected; it is crying out to be developed.

*We become aware of our gifts in many ways. Have you had experiences like these?*

# Worship Seeing-Drawing Out Gifts (one or more sessions)

*(source unknown)*

1. Gather a group of 4 to 8 people in a room with movable furniture. Each group will need one pad of paper and writing implements.
2. Each person will be the focus of the worship seeing, and at least 15 minutes per person is needed to get a sense of the exercise. You can either decide that you will divide the time so that each person gets a turn in one session, or decide to take more than one session and divide the time accordingly. Some groups have taken an hour per person and done two in an evening and some have divided two hours among 6 people.
3. One person offers to be the first focus person. This person chooses two people, one to function as scribe and one as caller of the Spirit or evoker. The scribe writes down the images which come through people. The evoker stands behind the focus person with hands resting gently on the focus person's shoulders for the whole exercise with that person. S/he also begins the worship seeing by asking the Spirit to be present. My experience is that even those who feel they do not know how to pray aloud find words for bringing a Divine Presence into the process. Also choose a timekeeper to keep you faithful to the time decisions you have made.
4. Once the focus person has chosen these people, the group moves so that everyone is physically touching the focus person in some way. Since the scribe will be writing and will need two hands free, the scribe may touch the person's foot or knee; others may rest a hand on an arm or knee. The evoker stands behind the focus person as indicated above.
5. The group becomes silent and simply focuses on the focus person until the evoker asks the Spirit to come in. The job of the focus person is to receive images, not to speak. All others, including the scribe and the evoker, speak the images that come to them as they focus on the focus person. An image need not necessarily be a single static visual image; it can be music or images moving into a short story. Do not worry if an image seems silly to you or doesn't make any sense. Be faithful to what you "see" and speak it.
6. Silence is needed after each image both to enable the scribe to write it down and for everyone to absorb it. The scribe may stop a person who begins to speak before the scribe has finished writing the last image.
7. When the time keeper announces that the time is up, a short closing silence may be taken. The scribe gives the notes to the focus person. People then move around to allow the next focus person to sit in that place and the process begins again with the new focus person choosing his/her scribe and evoker.
8. If desired, an additional step may be added, either in a single session or a later one. Everyone may have some time to spend alone journaling or pondering the meaning for themselves of the images that have come out. After this solitude, the group may gather again and anyone may share as led, either with insights gained or questions or images. This last step can be enriching, but it is not necessary to the process of bringing a person's gifts into the light.

# Exercise on Drawing Out Gifts (one session)

*(source unknown)*

For groups of 4 to 8 people who know each other fairly well (more than 8 people usually takes more time than can be done in one session).

Needed: 3 x 5 cards, pens & pencils

1. Give each person one 3 x 5 card for each person in the exercise.
2. Divide the total time available between the number of people present. This is the total amount of time for each person to be the focus person.
3. Ask someone to be time-keeper so that each person gets equal time.
4. Each person will have a turn to answer the key question:  
“Take xx minutes (1/3 of the allotted time per person) to describe doing something which gives you joy.”
5. Start with a reflective silence. Out of this silence, one person may begin the sharing.
6. After a person has described what gives her/him joy, others in the group take xx minutes (1/3 of the allotted time per person) to write on a 3 x 5 card what gifts they see in that person based on what has been shared. The focus person may also do this.
7. People then articulate to the focus person the gifts they wrote about. (This is the final third of the allotted time per person).
8. Cards with gifts written are given to the focus person.
9. If there is time after everyone has had a turn, people may share their feelings about the exercise.
10. Close with silence.



# Journaling Workshop

by Marsha Holliday, Baltimore Yearly Meeting

- I. Please give your name, meeting affiliation, and either/or
  - A. What your experience of journal keeping is
  - B. What you hope to learn in this workshop
- II. A smidgen of history
  - A. Howard Brinton says that there have been at least 1000 Quaker journals published. Luella Wright in *Literary Life of Early Friends* says 3,000 were published by official bodies of the Society of Friends before 1725. Whichever one is right, it is certain that journaling is a Quaker tradition.
  - B. Puritans, having abolished oral confession to Priests, began using journals as daily confession. Journals served to check Puritans' progress along their spiritual path and setbacks in their struggle with sin.
  - C. For the Society of Friends, journaling has additional meaning. As practical mystics, we Friends lead double lives—the inner and the outer—and we feel that both are equally important. We struggle to keep a balance between the inner and outer. We want both parts to be in harmony. Moreover, because we attempt to follow the leading of God's Spirit, it is important for us to differentiate between self-will and genuine leading. A reviewable record of our lives helps us examine the source of our words and actions and recognize dissonance.
  - D. The function of journals among early Friends was to proselytize. Young Friends were encouraged to read journals. Consequently, early journals were heavily edited.
  - E. For today's Friends, our journal records our inner journey. Webster defines "journal" as a daily record of a journey. Webster defines "journey" as the distance traveled during a day, a portion of a trip under taken at one time, a passage from one place to another (as from birth to death).
- III. Marsha Holliday's philosophy of journal keeping
  - A. My journal is where my actions and reflections meet. It helps me:
    1. Check my intuitions
    2. Keep track of what's important to me
    3. Keep track of spiritual treasures
    4. Chronicle my inner journey
    5. Practice "plain speech." I can be honest with others when I can be honest with God and with me.
  - B. My journal is my story told my way
    1. For me alone
    2. My spiritual realities
    3. My relationship with God
  - C. Through my journal, I am reaching for That of God in me,
    1. Asking God to help me see it straight
    2. Deepening the quality of consciousness
    3. Corresponding and conversing with God
  - D. Through it, I define my personal reality
    1. It literally lets me see what I'm thinking
      - a. Sometimes we don't know what we are thinking.
      - b. Sometimes we don't know what to think.
    2. Lets me get to know myself better.
    3. Lets me see the themes in my life and their repetitiveness.
    4. Gives me a map for my spiritual journey.
    5. Gives me a way of comparing myself with myself.

## Journaling Workshop, page 2

- E. Journaling gives us a time and a place for new ideas and insights to germinate before we share them.
    - 1. Our insights become clearer, having written them.
    - 2. Provides a record of the progress of our thinking.
    - 3. Records ideas as we encounter them or as they come to us—a personal history of our ideas.
  - F. Writing about our pain helps us work on our problems by giving the experience of our pain form and meaning.
    - 1. Getting the pain outside of us.
    - 2. Giving us something tangible to work with.
    - 3. When we've been misunderstood, allows us to set the record straight—to write it like it really was for us.
    - 4. We can write about an experience many times (thus saving our friends from having to hear the same problems over and over again).
  - G. Helps us deal with our dark side
    - 1. Helps us separate true guilt from false guilt.
    - 2. Helps us name our experiences—naming what things are of God and what things are not.
    - 3. Jan Johnson in *Journaling: Breathing Space in the Spiritual Journey*: “A journal is a place to lay out secrets and be free of their tyranny over us.”
- IV. Techniques: How to? (Pick and Choose)
- A. Philosophy
    - 1. The act of writing involves learning through touch—a form of learning that is basically non-visual, non-audible.
    - 2. Stimulates the inner process.
    - 3. Gets the heart and head working together.
    - 4. A painless way to improve your writing style.
  - B. Logistics—where?
    - 1. Carry a small pad in your purse or pocket.
      - a. To record entries in order to transfer to journal
      - b. To make a note to yourself about something you want to write about later
    - 2. When traveling, always take your journal with you. Take it on vacations. Some of the most helpful insights come to me when I get out of my routine.
    - 3. When possible, write in a quiet, comfortable place. Choose one or two chairs in your home. An orderly place helps.
    - 4. Keep your journal in a private place.
  - C. Logistics—what with?
    - 1. Types of notebooks: loose leaf, spiral, steno pads, large, small, plain paper, lined
    - 2. Types of pens (not pencils—it helps to see what you have crossed out): fine, medium, thick, black ink, blue, green, red, or a variety for different moods or subjects
    - 3. Try computer entries.
    - 4. Number your journals—make covers for them, perhaps with a picture on the cover that reminds you of that period in your life.
    - 5. Use the complete date for each entry.
    - 6. Try having different sections, perhaps in the back of your journal, or several journals going at the same time for
      - a. dreams
      - b. fantasies
      - c. messages from God
      - d. messages spoken in Meeting for Worship
      - e. poetry
      - f. neat ideas
      - g. quotes from books
      - h. prayer journals

## Journaling Workshop, page 3

- D. Employ art (uses the other side of the brain)
  - 1. Color pages
  - 2. Doodle
  - 3. Sketch
  - 4. Circle or underline important words
  - 5. Include: photographs, Chinese fortunes, wedding invitations, newspaper clippings
- E. Additional aids
  - 1. Include quotes from books you are reading.
  - 2. Dialogues: with yourself, with your soul, with your body, with God, your spouse, your best friend, a deceased friend, a former teacher . . .
  - 3. Write unsent letters to your boss, your neighbor, your mother . . .
  - 4. Make lists. Things I'm afraid of, ways I've changed, things I'm thankful for, people I'm praying for, questions I want to ask my best friend . . .
  - 5. Write schedules: what I have to do to get out of the house on time, how I will get this project done . . .
  - 6. For difficult subjects, write in the third person: "Marsha had a hard day today."
  - 7. Compose poetry in your journal.
  - 8. Write in stream-unconscious style. Don't correct spelling, grammar.
  - 9. Choose a subject to write about, such as:
    - a. If I were a color, an animal, another person, what would I be?
    - b. A bright spot on my spiritual journey
    - c. Where my monsters are
    - d. Where I am right now. Where I want to be.
  - 10. Paraphrase the Psalms.
  - 11. Be experimental.
  - 12. Plagiarize.
  - 13. Record events in your journal that you want to remember, to look back on.
- F. Logistics—when?
  - 1. Try integrating journaling with other disciplines: 20 minutes of spiritual reading, 20 minutes of prayer or meditation, 20 minutes of journaling.
  - 2. Try writing at the same time every day.
  - 3. Try writing when you feel like it.
- V. Journaling Problems
  - A. Fear of having journals read
    - 1. Having the wrong person read it could hurt them and oneself unnecessarily.
    - 2. Having it subpoenaed in court.
  - B. Because we try, through journaling, to work out our problems, our journals tend to emphasize our dark side. For others to read our journals could misrepresent us.
  - C. How to handle
    - 1. Make symbols
    - 2. Make a pact with a friend or relative to destroy it upon your death.
    - 3. Put disclaimers in the front of each journal.
    - 4. Tear certain pages out and destroy.
    - 5. Have a dumping journal. Burn it when you're done.
  - D. Big question: When is it important to take responsibility for our words? Answer: When we write for others to read. We should not, however, censor our journals. They are raw, uncensored spiritual data. Our journals are our spiritual, not our legal, responsibility. Writing journals is worth the risk of being misunderstood.
- VI. Rereading
  - A. Philosophy
    - 1. A form of reliving in which we can clarify and deepen our knowledge of God and ourselves

## Journaling Workshop, page 4

2. A form of new seeing: we see problems differently from a different point of view and a different point in time
3. See a synthesis of the various truths we have encountered—can ruminate on the truths we have discovered
4. Our path becomes more visible, our history more sensible
5. We see that problems which previously seemed insurmountable have sorted themselves out
6. We cannot borrow wisdom from others. We must create our own. Rereading our journals helps us create our own wisdom.
7. See how God has been working in our lives.
8. Celebrate our accomplishments.
9. Helps us remember the important moments in our spiritual life.

### B. How to

1. Two ways to read
  - a. Ritualistically: Go to Pendle Hill with all of your journals for a sojourn; spend your birthday or New Years Day rereading your journals each year . . .
  - b. Spontaneously
2. Color, underline, circle as you reread. (List dates of messages from God, insights . . .)

## VII. Journals as gifts

### A. Give a gift to a friend

1. Give a beautiful journal to a child
2. To help others through difficult times, read a part of your journal to them to demonstrate what you had struggled with. (To a struggling new mother, read a passage about your difficulties when your children were small.)
3. For spiritual friendships, read from your journal to each other. Or hand a friend your journal opened to a certain page. It is best not to loan your journal to a friend. You will start writing for your reader, not for yourself.
4. Encourage others to try journaling.

### B. Your journal will be a gift to you: a gift of comfort and companionship, of insight and inspiration.

# Peacemaking With Your Religious Past (five sessions)

by Jan Greene, New York Yearly Meeting

This adult study program is adapted from *Owning Your Religious Past: The Haunting Church* by Connie H. Stauffacher. (Available from the Unitarian Universalist Association, 25 Beacon Street, Boston MA 02108. Telephone: (617) 742-2100) Quotations and page numbers in the program refer to this book. Ann Miller from Earlham School of Religion and Anne Thomas, General Secretary of Canadian Yearly Meeting, offered advice and information for the adaptation of this program.

**Description:** The Religious Society of Friends includes a number of persons who have been wounded by the misuse of religion as they passed through several stops on the way to Quakerism. It also includes life-long Friends who have been wounded by our wider culture for following their Quaker beliefs. Some of us still have angry and unresolved feelings about our past experiences. Others have begun the process of reconciliation. We need to understand, acknowledge, and address the varying needs of Friends and attenders regarding this process since we can be most whole and fully in our religious identity when we understand our religious journey as a continuum, rather than a series of unrelated events.

Through worship, group-sharing and private exploration, this workshop will offer steps toward reconciliation with our religious past, and tools that may be used for continuing work on establishing connections, bridges and resonances between our religious past and present.

**Schedule:** This program may be done as an adult study program of 5 evening sessions, or it could be done as a weekend workshop. If the weekend schedule is chosen, less time for journaling will be available, though exercises should be described so that Friends could complete them at a later date. Each session will take about 2 hours to complete.

**Leadership:** It is helpful to have co-leaders for this program. Leaders should be skilled in group facilitation and work easily with each other. It is essential that leaders are comfortable with issues from their own religious past so that they will be able to respect and affirm whatever kinds of religious experiences may be encountered. They are responsible for setting the tone of the program and for ensuring that safe boundaries are maintained by the group.

**Supplies that will be needed:** Newsprint, felt-tip pens, masking tape, a variety of pens, crayons and markers, notebook paper, and large sheets of manila paper for time lines.

**Participant is asked to bring:**

- a. writing materials with which they feel especially comfortable for journaling.
- b. a memento of their past religious affiliation for the last session. This may be an actual object or it may be as simple as a word or a symbol on a piece of paper.

**Handouts**

- a. Guidelines for This Workshop
- b. "Religious Memories" from the Quaker Studies Program

# First Session: Your Spiritual Journey

## Worship:

(Starting each session with adequate time for worship so that Friends can center and be ready to focus on the topic at hand is important for the success of the program.)

## Introductions:

1. Each person introduces themselves and shares what brought them to this workshop. (Facilitators should take note of expectations mentioned.)
2. Remind Friends of the purpose of the sessions. Point out that the exercises are starting points, tools for exploration.
3. Hand out copies of the Guidelines for this workshop and ask Friends if they are comfortable abiding by them during the workshop. If necessary, make adjustments as requested and approved by the participants.
4. Hand out “Religious Memories” and any additional resources that may be used during the workshop if an individual Friend needs to focus on an alternate topic during part of a session. These also may be used in the future to continue work on peacemaking with their past. (Feel free to augment or to substitute better resources than the ones provided.)
5. Introduce journal writing. Though pens and paper will be provided, it’s better for Friends to bring the materials for journaling with which they feel most comfortable. Emphasize the fact that journal writing is a private activity. Sharing what one has written will be entirely optional. If a Friend chooses to share, there will be no discussion or questions, other than the facilitator’s inquiry as to how it felt to read the selection. Introduce the use of mementos.
6. Friends are asked to bring a memento of a past religious affiliation to the last session. This may be an actual object, or it may be as simple as a drawing, a word, or a symbol on a piece of paper. Assure Friends that if they aren’t now sure what to bring, it will become clear by the last session. It is important that they do have an *object* at the last session.

## Major Exercise of the First Session: Religious History Time Line:

1. Each person will need a large sheet of paper (12” by 18” or more), pens and a marker. Instructions for the time line are: Make a line lengthwise across the middle of the paper. Mark off 5 to 10 year segments along this line from your birth to your present age. Then place along the line the major events in your formal and informal religious/spiritual life. (e.g. confirmation, baptism, bar mitzvah, church camps, books, people, conversations, retreats, first visit to a Friends’ meeting, etc. Include events or causes that you dedicated yourself to because of religious conviction.) Use any personal shorthand you wish, since this will be read only by you.
2. After Friends have had some time to work on their time lines, ask them to mark with another color any points on the line where there is a sharp change, breaking away or turning point.
3. When Friends have finished, ask them to form pairs and share their time lines with each other. (Remind Friends about the guidelines on listening. Friends may have difficulty refraining from questioning each other, thus making deep sharing less safe.)
4. Inform Friends that the time line is a rich tool for self examination. Ask that they bring it with them to each session. Suggest that they keep adding to it as memories beget memories.

## Peacemaking With Your Religious Past, page 3

### Final Exercise: Journal Writing:

Topics for journaling: (If time is short, this can be offered as an assignment to be done at home. It is helpful to have questions written and posted in the workshop room.)

1. Choose one item from your time line to examine in greater detail. Begin with the phrase, "It was a time when . . ."
2. Look at the areas of break and change. What else was happening in your life at the time? Do you see a pattern? What might you learn about how and why future change points might occur? ("Change has brought us from other places to this one. We have no reason to assume these processes will not continue." pp. 12-13)
3. Have you marked changes and turning points on your line since you became a Quaker?

**End with a time of worship.**

## Second Session: The Haunting Church

### Worship:

### Sharing:

- Referring to the time line and the topic of the workshop, ask if anyone has a further insight or reflection from the first session's activity.
- Ask if anyone has a journal entry she or he would be willing to share with the group. (Remember that the only response is a question from the leader. "How did it feel to read that selection?")

### Major Exercise: A Guided Imagery on "The Haunting Church":

(It may be helpful to let Friends know that they will be asked to explore memories of a church building they attended as a child. If someone's religious experiences didn't occur in a building, assure Friends that other places may be substituted.)

1. Everyone is asked to get comfortable and close their eyes. Using Guided Imagery, invite Friends to visualize these memories. Allow sufficient time for visualization.
  - a. Choose a church where most of your religious experiences occurred before you were sixteen.
  - b. Picture the neighborhood the church is in. Visualize yourself traveling slowly towards the church. When you get there, walk around the building. Note the landscaping—the trees, the grass, any bushes and flowers, the parking area, the sign. Is there a playground? A cemetery? How many entrances are there? When you are ready, choose one and go inside.
  - c. Take time to walk all around the building. Use your senses. Note the smells, the sounds, the temperature, dark and light areas, places where people gather, places where you are not supposed to go. How do you feel when you travel through various places. Do you have a favorite place? Choose a place and sit in a seat. What do you see and hear? How do you feel?
  - d. When you have completed your visit, without losing the memories and the feelings, choose paper and marking tools. Draw a floor plan of the church. Indicate the places that have special meaning for you. Include the grounds and/or neighborhood if they have special meaning for you. Include as much or as little detail as you wish.
2. Everyone in the room should maintain silence until all have had ample time to work on their floor plans. Then invite Friends to gather in groups of three and share their plans with one another. (It is helpful to let Friends know when it is time to move to the next person in the group so that no one will be short-changed.)
3. Gather back into the large group. Post a large sheet of newsprint that has "I Learned . . ." written across the top. Ask Friends to reflect on and share any learnings that this exercise produced. Record responses.

### Journaling: (This may be done now, if time permits, or at home.)

1. Expand on any of the statements listed on the "I Learned . . ." sheets or/and . . .
2. Choose one place in the church you visited that your attention was especially drawn to or/and . . .
3. Write about the process of revisiting in memory your childhood church. How did this feel?

## **Peacemaking With Your Religious Past, page 5**

4. Linda Chidsey, a Friend from Croton Valley, NY, Meeting, reported on her leading to visit her childhood church when she made the decision to join Friends. She found that this was a healing act. Write about how you feel about really revisiting your childhood church.

**End with Worship.**

## Third Session: Companions on the Way

### Worship:

### Worship-Sharing:

- Have the “Learnings” list from Session Two posted. Give Friends a chance to add to the list and to share any insights or reflections from the last session.
- Ask if anyone is willing to read from their journal. As always, the only response is the leader’s question to the reader about how it felt to read that section.

### Major Exercise: “Companions on the Way”:

(It is important that the following exercise be done in complete silence until everyone is finished. Having extra chairs will be helpful for some.)

1. Ask Friends to take out their time lines and their journals. Give the following instructions: “Look over your time line with the people in mind who have been present along your spiritual journey. Choose a person who stands out for you, someone from before a change or a turning point. The person may still be alive or dead. You are going to have a dialogue with that person about the break point—the line that separates the two of you. When you have chosen the person, take time to get comfortable and close your eyes. Picture the person in your mind. Take time to notice how they are dressed, how they move, where they are. When you are ready, greet them, and listen to their response. You may have a question to ask, or a statement to make. Have a conversation with the person. If you have difficulty getting started, it may make it easier to place two chairs facing each other. Sit in one chair when you are speaking for yourself, and the other when you are responding for the other person. Record your experience in your journal when you are ready.” (If it is time to move on and one or two folks are still working, suggest that they find a temporary stopping place and plan to continue the journaling later.)
2. Whole group:
  - a. Ask if anyone is willing to read from their journal. As always, there is no discussion or questions except for the facilitator’s question about how it felt to read the selection.
  - b. Give Friends an opportunity to speak to the process. How did it feel to do this exercise?
  - c. Ask Friends to consider whether, if the person is still alive, they would like to actually have a dialogue with this or another person.

### “Concerns We Hope to Address” List:

Post a large sheet of newsprint entitled “Concerns We Hope To Address” and list topics Friends hope to have touched upon by the end of the workshop. There will be some time to do this in sessions 4 and 5, though there may not be time to cover all topics listed. Note that this list will be available and Friends may add to it during the next session.

### End with Worship.

## Fourth Session: From the Past to the Present

### Worship:

### Worship-Sharing:

Ask if anyone would like to share any learnings or speak to the process of the last session.

### Major Exercise:

1. Tape up a sheet of newsprint. (Be ready to add other sheets quickly.) Entitle the first sheet “Negative Aspects of Past Religion.” Ask Friends to call out words or phrases that are appropriate from the experience. Emphasize the fact that agreement of the group is not asked for, that this is the individual’s experience and, in fact, what one person may have found negative, another may have found positive. List items exactly as worded by the person offering it; if you need to shorten or summarize, make sure that the wording is completely acceptable to the person. List items even if they are very similar to others already on the list. Add as many sheets of paper as needed. Continue until Friends are satisfied that the list is complete.
2. Next to the first list, tape up another sheet of newsprint entitled “Positive Aspects of Past Religion.” Make this list in the same manner as the first. It may be necessary to remind Friends that it is acceptable for the same items to appear on both lists. When Friends are satisfied that this list is complete, *remove or cover both lists so that they are out of sight.*
3. The third list is entitled “Negative Aspects of Quakerism.” Proceed as before.
4. The fourth and last list is entitled “Positive Aspects of Quakerism.” Again, complete as before.
5. Put all lists up and invite *observations*. (“Observations” is much better than “Comparisons.”) Allow as much as 15 to 20 minutes for this discussion, if needed.
6. Post another sheet of paper entitled “Still Seeking.” Record anything anyone in the group wants to list under this category. This may lead you quite naturally to some items on the “Concerns We Hope to Address List.”

### Journal Writing Exercise:

(It is helpful to have questions posted on newsprint. If there is not enough time now, ask Friends to do this at home.)

Choose one or more of the items from the “Still Seeking List” and explore it. What do I seek? How might I get it? What changes would have to occur in my monthly meeting for me to find what I need? What changes in myself?

**Reminder:** Remind everyone to bring a memento to the last session.

**End with Worship.**

## Fifth Session: The Growing Edges

### Worship:

### Worship-Sharing:

- Have all lists from the last session posted. Invite any further additions, observations, and learnings and record them on the lists as appropriate. Invite any responses to the process of the last session.
- Invite those who are willing to read a journal entry. As before, the only response is from the leader who asks how it felt to read the selection.

### Addressing Concerns:

Saving adequate time for a short break and the closing worship sharing, spend time addressing remaining items on the “Concerns We Still Hope to Address” list.

### Short Break:

Ask Friends to prepare for closing Worship Sharing by collecting their religious mementos and gathering in a circle.

### Final Worship Sharing:

(The goal of this closing worship is to provide a closure for the group and, at the same time, to affirm the growing edge of each person’s spiritual self, which is grounded in all that came before in the life of the person. It will be helpful to share this goal with the group. Put seats in a circle and provide a table to place mementos on in the center. Some groups may wish to place a lighted candle in the center as a symbol of the Light, of God’s presence, in everyone.)

Out of the silence of worship, when led to do so, each Friend is invited to show her or his memento, and tell why this item, whether an actual object or something written on a piece of paper, is important to her or his spiritual life. The object is passed around the circle, and then, when it returns to the owner, it is placed on the table in the center of the group.

## Handout—Guidelines For This Workshop

**Respecting Confidentiality:** In order to free ourselves to explore and share deeply, Friends are asked to respect confidentiality. Anything shared within this group stays within the group.

**The Gift of Listening:** A major gift we can give each other is really listening to each other. This means that we don't interrupt or question what is being shared. We do not probe or question. We lay aside judgment and criticism, suggestions and advice, the desire to correct or control, and the need to "take care of" or comfort. We simply accept what is being said, and in this way affirm the experience of the person who is speaking. In order to do this, we need to agree that while we are listening, we will lay aside our own "trigger" words (religious terms that trouble us because of our own past experiences) while we are listening to another. This will allow the speaker to focus on her or his own experience without being distracted by the need to "take care of" the listener.

**Journal Writing:** Journal writing is a private activity. Sharing what one has written will be entirely optional. If someone chooses to read an entry to the group, there will be no questions or discussion other than the leader's inquiry of how it felt to read the selection.

**Supporting One Another:** Plan to attend all sessions and arrive on time. In this workshop, we will be sharing both positive and negative aspects of our past religious experiences. It is important to recognize that unhealed memories need to be shared before healing can begin to happen. We can support one another by an accepting, prayerful quality of listening, without trying to rescue or otherwise "take care of" the person sharing. After the speaker finishes, listeners are asked to hold that person in the Light for a few minutes. This both surrounds the person with the Creator's healing presence and allows that person a few more minutes for transition before another person shares. Ann Miller says, "I'm convinced from experience that when we do this for one another, we are incarnating *God's Love* and that this is the true source for spiritual healing."

**Freedom to Participate in Group Activities:** If at any time a participant feels uncomfortable with any activity, she or he is free to "pass" and rejoin the group in their next activity. It might be helpful for that Friend to examine her or his discomfort. This may come from a sense that now is not the right time for this individual to examine a particular issue or from the fact that differing personalities respond differently to activities. On the other hand, this may be a subject that the person especially needs to examine, and the discomfort is resistance to doing so. Take time to discern what your particular situation is, and respect your own needs.

## Handout—Religious Memories

Center down before reflecting on the following questions. Then, as you slowly read through them and answer them in your mind, try to image as vividly as possible some of the scenes from your childhood which they bring forth. As you do this, recollect sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations as well as sights. If a particularly strong memory arises, meditatively stay with it for 10-15 minutes to see what the Spirit bring forth within you. Don't hurry through it. Let it develop fully. You may want to write down some of your memories—especially your feelings and any insights connected with them.

### **I. Are there memories connected with early religious activities that are especially vivid to you?**

- What sorts of religious activities, if any, took place in your home? Were there prayers at bedtime, at mealtime, or family prayers at other times? Was there Bible reading? Were special holidays with religious significance celebrated in you family? How did you participate?
- Were you influenced in the development of your early understanding of God by religious instruction in your family, from an older friend or neighbor, by instruction in a Meeting/ Church or school, by readings from the Bible?

### **II. Can you recall memories of early times when you came to have religious experiences of your own?**

- Were there experiences of nature that were especially meaningful to you?
- Were there times of solitude when you came to feel in touch with the heartbeat of the universe, to feel at one with God?
- Did the death of a pet or a person lead you to ask religious questions?
- What were your first prayers?
- Did you ever feel alienated and separated from “life,” from God and other?
- Were there times when you experienced an overflowing sense of compassion toward others? Times of deep peace and joy in your early life?

### **III. What do you recall about the religious language you learned as a child?**

- What words, terms, images were prominent? How, if at all, did you conceive of God and God's relationship to you?
- How do you feel about the religious language you learned as a child? As you grew, did you have to find new ways, ideas and words in which to express your changing religious understanding? Have you been able to recover the meaning of some of the religious language that at an earlier time gave you difficulty?

### **IV. When you were young were there any persons, real or fictional, to whom you looked as models of how life should be lived?**

- If so, what about them seemed especially significant to you then? Do you feel the same way about them now?

# Owning Our Religious Past and Present (one session)

by Anne Thomas, *Canadian Yearly Meeting*

This workshop was developed from the much longer format *The Haunting Church*, developed by the Unitarian Universalists. I originally pulled this into a one evening workshop for a meeting which had little identity as a community. Many longer term members were active in concerns beyond the meeting, but Friends did little together other than worship. They asked to focus on positive rather than negative aspects when this was proposed as a topic. This sheet was not handed out, but was used as my guideline for the evening.

## Equipment:

- Flip chart paper, felt pens, masking tape
- One piece of paper per person with black line down length of paper, to be used sideways as time line, and one pen per person.
- Four flip chart sheets, prepared before the workshop and attached on top of one another so they are ready for use:
  - a blank sheet on top
  - second sheet headed “Positive aspects of past religion”
  - third sheet “Positive aspects of present religion”
  - bottom sheet “Still seeking . . .”

## Workshop:

a. Worship: [10 minutes]

b. Introduction:

Most Friends today are “convinced Friends” who may have taken very different paths to become part of our meetings. Some have angry and unresolved feelings about past experiences in other religious traditions, others have good memories. Often Friends forget that we are still growing and changing since arriving in this community.

We can be most fully and completely present in our religious identity when we see ourselves on a continuum rather than experiencing a series of unrelated episodes. Because we are usually more certain of why we left another tradition rather than being able to identify positive elements we carry with us, this time together is planned to bring our journeys into the Light.

Not everything can be covered in one evening and ideas will be left with you which can be explored later by individuals or in a group. We will try to examine and retrieve aspects of our past religious connections using group sharing and private exploration, with journaling for those ready to make an extra time commitment.

c. Let’s go round the group, sharing our names and listing the religious labels we may have applied to ourselves as our lives progressed: [10 minutes]

d. Now we will look in more detail at our life experiences:

- You have each been given a piece of paper with a line down its middle. Turn it sideways so the line goes across the paper. Mark it off into 10 year segments from 0 to your present age.
- Then fill in some of the major “religious” events in your life: baptism, confirmation, bar mitzvah, argument with minister or priest, youth club, marriage, funerals, the first time you remember a sense of the holy, your first Quaker meeting . . .

## Owning Our Religious Past and Present, page 2

- If you consider some political activity to have religious meaning, include this too.
  - Only you will see this, so use your own shorthand.
  - If you feel there was a sharp break or opening, mark this with an asterisk\* [10 minutes]
- e. We will move into groups of 3 or 4. Each of you is asked to pick one incident you have marked on your line and describe it to the group [20 minutes]
- f. Let's do some quiet reflection on our lives:
- Look at areas of break or change: What else was happening in your life at that time? Do you see a pattern? Have you marked changes on the line since you became a Friend? Change continues throughout life—do you need support during change? Do you have friends to turn to? [10 minutes]
  - You may want to carry this sheet around with you and keep working on it, adding and thinking about some of these consideration. If you have done some journal writing, you may find it helpful to put your thoughts on paper.
- g. Close your eyes and be prepared to move into an area of your past life.
- Remember a church or camp you were involved with as a teenager, or younger if there was no teenage affiliation:
    - What was the neighborhood like? Move around the church and let yourself feel this: are there flowers? trees? cars? a sign? what does it say?
    - Move inside and walk around: are there special smells? sounds? an organ? How do the pews feel? Is it warm or cold? Dark or light?
    - Are there areas which are off limits? Where are your eyes drawn? [5 minutes]
- h. In your small group, share some of the feelings you remember about this place [15 minutes]
- i. In the large group, respond to the following: "As I thought back, I learnt..." [10 minutes]
- j. We will move on to an area that may be more helpful to some Friends than others. If you do not wish to participate, please sit quietly and continue your thoughts on your life and places of the past.
- Look at your time line again and choose someone who was important to you at one time during your life. You are going to have a private dialogue with that person.
  - Choose the person. It could be a Sunday School teacher, friend, relative, clergy person . . .
  - Close your eyes and visualize them: how are they dressed? Do you remember their voice? Perfume or aftershave? Did they give strong handshakes, hugs?
  - Think of a question you want to ask them: Is there anything you wish you had asked? Will they respond?
  - You may wish to recall a real conversation, or create one you wish you had had. [10 minutes]
- k. If anyone feels they want to do so, this may be shared with your small group, otherwise sit quietly and let your mind work through relationships you have experienced. [10 minutes]
- l. Closing: We have begun to reflect on our religious pasts. For some people this may be painful, others may have identified areas that they had forgotten which are still important. Before we end, let us briefly move towards some present experiences as a large group: We will brainstorm—just call out information, with no comments from other people, and these will be written down
- First let's look at "positive aspects of our past religious experiences":
  - Now "positive aspects of our present religious experiences":
  - What are we "still seeking"? [10 minutes]
- This is an ongoing process, and we have only just touched on and shared a very few of our individual experiences. This sharing can go on and on. If you feel led to do so, use your experiences from this workshop and continue your journeys.
- m. Assessment: Let's briefly assess what we got out of this time together on the flip chart paper: good, weak, ways of improving the workshop, where do we go from here. [5 min]

## Owning Our Religious Past and Present, page 3

n. End with Worship

### **Results:**

I have done this workshop with two meetings. In neither case did I cover the whole workshop, each time omitting section j] and k] because of timing. Some Friends began to cover this in section g] places. One meeting has repeated the workshop twice using its own resources, looking at g] at a different age and adding j] and k]. They found they discovered things about themselves and others which has begun to help them know each other more deeply. This meeting has also led the workshop at its regional gathering. One group in a meeting has continued to meet to develop the life line and to share journaling experiences based on this.

Flip chart sheets were left with the meeting for them to look over—one meeting decided to begin singing on a regular basis as many Friends indicated they missed music.

# Spiritual Development Through Play

*by the FGC Religious Education Committee*

At one of their weekend gatherings, the FGC Religious Education Committee spent time in renewal through play and reflection. Their invitation described the weekend as follows:

## **Purpose:**

To enable committee members and their guests to have a time together for spiritual renewal, fellowship, and revitalizing of selves through play and reflection.

## **Program: SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PLAY**

- We believe in play. In each session we will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of play activities and energetic movement alternating with periods of calm and quiet. Time will be allotted for reflection and for writing in a journal feelings evoked, recollections from one's own childhood, and observations about the differences between childhood and adult play. There will also be time for verbal sharing as desired.
- Each person will be asked to recall a favorite game, story or other play activity from childhood, and to lead the group in this during the weekend.
- Each will also be asked to remember at least one occasion when you have had an impulse to do something playful and failed to follow it. Or, if you generally follow all your playful impulses, observe one time when you did and wish you hadn't.

## **Please bring with you:**

- Any equipment you need for leading your favorite childhood play activity.
- Costumes—especially colorful (and crazy) hats, scarves, pieces of cloth, and props that might be used in skits or charades
- Musical instruments
- Anything else you think of that might contribute to the fun.

# Intergenerational Activities

## Introductory Activity:

1. Ask participants to bring:
  - one of their baby pictures OR
  - one thing with their favorite color in it OR
  - something that they have created or made—a poem, drawing, carving, piece of woodwork, metalwork, etc. tagged with their name. (This will be placed on display.)
2. Give Friends time to share about the things they brought with them.

## People Hunt (*source unknown*)

*Find someone who:*

- was born when Eisenhower was president
- has the same color eyes as you
- has been coming to meeting for more than 15 years
- has been coming to Quarterly Meeting for more than 10 years
- has more than 3 siblings
- was born after 1975
- has two or more earrings in at least one ear
- has traveled to at least five different countries
- has been to at least two Yearly Meeting sessions
- plays a musical instrument
- was born in the same month as you
- goes swimming before breakfast when at a place they can swim
- has seen a movie in the last two weeks
- has more than two pets
- is wearing the same color underwear as you
- has the same favorite flavor of ice-cream as you
- is someone you have not met before

## Quaker Fruits and Nuts Treasure Hunt

*from Betsy Muench, New England Yearly Meeting*

This can be done in any meeting as a community builder, and is also an excellent intergenerational ice-breaker for a residential conference or yearly meeting session where there will be long lines. It does require advance preparation, but that's part of the fun, in that you have to talk to people and ask them to reveal a hidden facet of themselves.

Create a one page list of things about people in the meeting or group that are not generally known—the more unexpected, the better. The page will be a list saying, “Find a Friend who \_\_\_\_\_” with a space to write in who that person is. The activity, of course, is for people to find all those Friends.

# Yarn Toss Group Builder

*from Shirley Dodson, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting*

I first experienced this at Providence Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. It works well for intergenerational groups within Meetings as well as adult groups. Participants will need some familiarity with each other.

**Materials needed:** Large ball of yarn (tie several together if you need to.)

- Have everyone stand in a circle.
- The first person holds the ball of yarn, names someone across the circle, says one reason why he or she is glad that person is part of the group, then tosses the ball of yarn to that person, while holding onto the end of the yarn.
- The other person catches the ball of yarn, names someone else, says one reason, etc.
- At the end, everyone has been affirmed, and the group has created a wonderful web of yarn which illustrates the group's interconnectedness.

# Listening and Decision-Making Activity

*described by Chris Jorgensen, New England Yearly Meeting*

- The group is provided with four cards, each a different color. Each card has one of the following letters written on one side: L, O, V, E.
- One person from the group leaves the room before the cards are given to the group. While she or he is out, the cards are mixed up and placed face down on a table.
- The remaining persons in each group are divided into 2 groups; one group is instructed to give incorrect instructions, the other correct instructions, on how to arrange the cards so that the word "LOVE" will be spelled when the cards are upright.
- The person who left the room returns, and, leaving the cards face-down on the table, arranges the letters with the help of the two groups. When she or he feels that the task is completed, turn the cards over to see the results.
- When the exercise has been completed, ask Friends to consider the following questions:
  - How did doing this feel?
  - How did you listen to Friends?
  - How did you decide who to listen to?
  - What tactics do you use to get people to listen to you?
  - Who do you listen to? Why?

# Meeting Quiz: A Light and Lively *(source unknown)*

Divide into groups of twos or threes, with varying ages in each group. If you have small children in your meeting, ask each child to choose one or two adults who are not their parents first, then ask others to form groups. Give each group a paper with the following, or similar, questions to find the answers to.

1. Name an outreach your Meeting sponsors.
2. What is the middle name of the clerk of your Monthly Meeting?
3. What is the middle name of the recording clerk of your Monthly Meeting?
4. What is the name of your Monthly Meeting newsletter?
5. Who edits it? Who mails it out?
6. In what year was your Meeting founded?
7. In 25 words or less, summarize the last vocal message you heard in meeting for worship.
8. Who in your meeting has been a member the longest?
9. Who is the newest member of your meeting?
10. If the children in your meeting were asked to choose their favorite meeting activity/program, what do you think they would choose?

# Recipe for a Nurture Workshop in Your Home Meeting

## by Anita Baker, New York Yearly Meeting

This is an instant workshop or retreat for any meeting. It is easy to prepare for, works for a wide age group and doesn't take a lot of preparation.

- Time: 2 1/2 hours—or longer if you wish.
- Ages: 8 years and up
- How many: at least 7 people, but the only limitation to more is the size of your room. If more than 20, divide into smaller groups of 5 to 8 for sharing.
- Equipment and Supplies: Pens, scrap paper, masking tape, newsprint, rubber cement or Elmer's glue, old magazines, paper cups, 6 foot lengths of string or yarn, crayons.

### Possible Activities:

These activities can be done in any combination as time permits. I suggest starting with # 1 or # 5; choose only one out of #2 to #4, choose either # 6 or # 7 and either # 9 or #10, and close with #10.

1. Each person brings an object that is significant to them and tells why.
2. In silence, each person writes, "What have been the stepping stones in my spiritual journey lately." Share with one other person, or the whole group can share out of the silence. (Option: Add the question, "What is the next step for me?")
3. Worship Sharing question: "What I need from the Meeting is\_\_\_\_\_."
4. Worship Sharing question: "How has being a Quaker influenced a decision I made lately?"
5. Attach a strip of paper on each person's back and everyone writes a positive word that describes that person. (Afterwards, in the whole group, in a go-around, each person shares the word that they find most surprising.)
6. Give each group of four people 6 feet of yarn, a cup and a large piece of paper. They are to create and present to the whole group a representation of "A Caring Quaker Community" using these objects.
7. Give each group of four people a piece of paper and 4 crayons. In silence, they are asked to draw a representation of the Meeting, taking turns and adding one line at a time.
8. Put the names of all present in a container. Each person draws a name of another person, and finds an object that represents what she or he wishes for that person in 10 minutes. (Gifts are shared in the whole group, with an explanation of what the object means.)
9. Using a large piece of paper, each group of four people creates a flag for their meeting. (The instructions can be open or refined-e.g. the flag should show a strength, a gift that is hidden, and a success.)
10. Using lots of magazines, paper, glue, scissors, individuals or groups creates a collage in 4 parts: a) What I get from Meeting; b) What I need from Meeting; c) What I can give to my Meeting; d) What I can't do for my meeting.

# The Great Valentine's Day Race *(source unknown)*

(Note: This may be done at other times of the year than Feb. 14.) Each person is given a list of the following 10 items to complete (in any order), 2 candy fire balls and 1 piece of bubble gum. Tell participants not to use the candy or gum until instructed to do so!

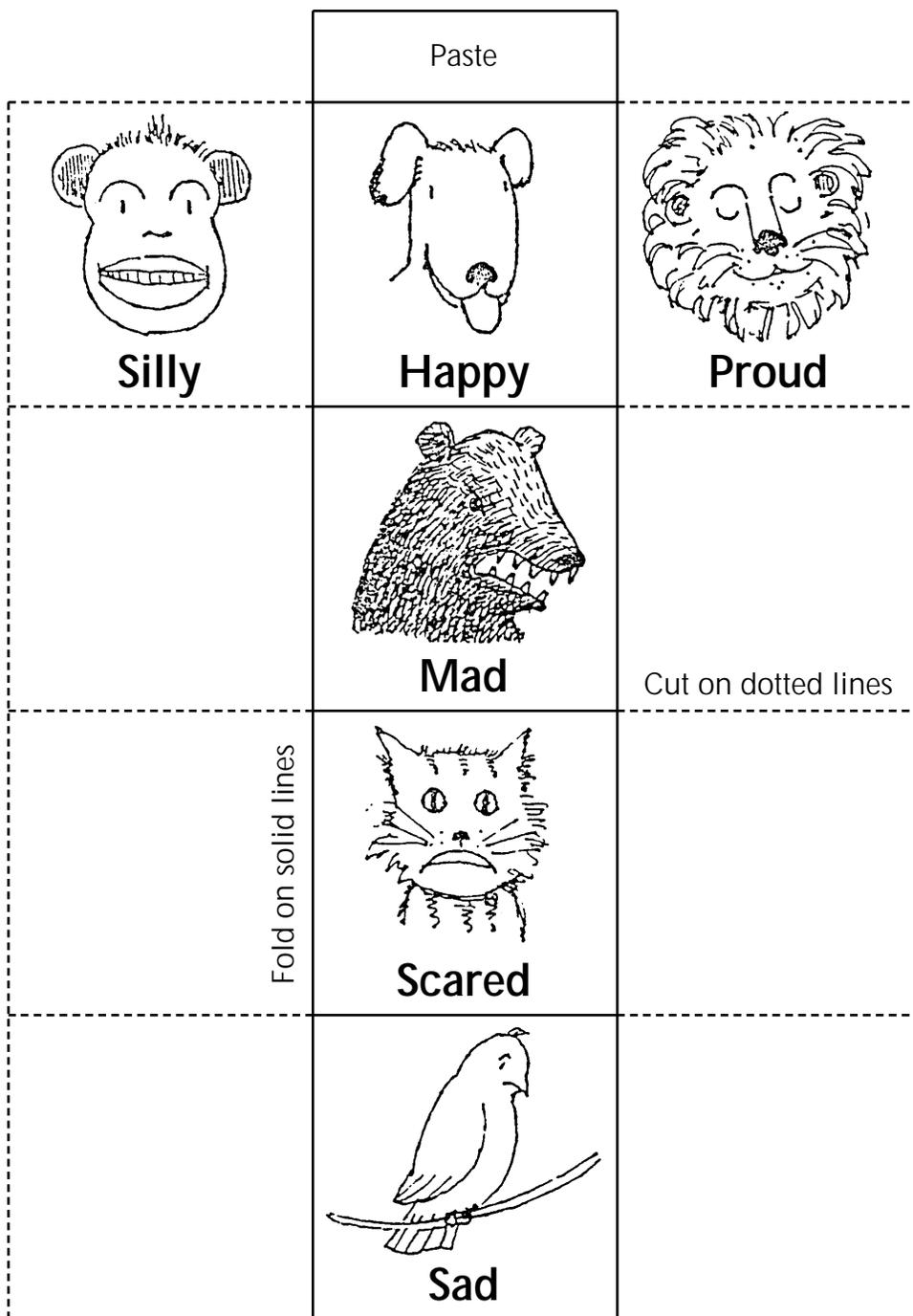
1. Get 10 different autographs, first, middle and last names.
2. Unlace someone's shoe, lace it, and tie it again.
3. Find 2 other people and the three of you form a heart-shape lying on the floor. If health reasons prevent you from doing this, find someone to take your place and sign here.
4. Get a friend to kiss this paper 5 times and sign her or his name here.
5. Propose to someone, romantically—on one knee! Have that person sign her or his name. (All promises are off at the end of the program.)
6. Eat two fire balls. Show your red tongue to someone you do not know well. Have them sign here. (Note: If health concerns prevent you from eating candy, find someone who will do this task for you.)
7. Recite this poem as loudly as you can, with feeling.

How do I love thee?  
Let me count the ways.  
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height my soul can reach . . .  
I love thee to the level of every day's most quiet need . . .  
I love thee with the breath, smiles, tears, of all my life—and, if God choose,  
I shall but love thee better after death.

8. Ask 10 people to be your valentine, and record your score:  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
9. Leap-frog over someone 5 times. If health reasons prevent this, ask someone to do this for you and sign here.
10. You were given a piece of bubble gum at the beginning of this race. Find someone who will watch you chew it and blow a bubble and sign here when you finish.

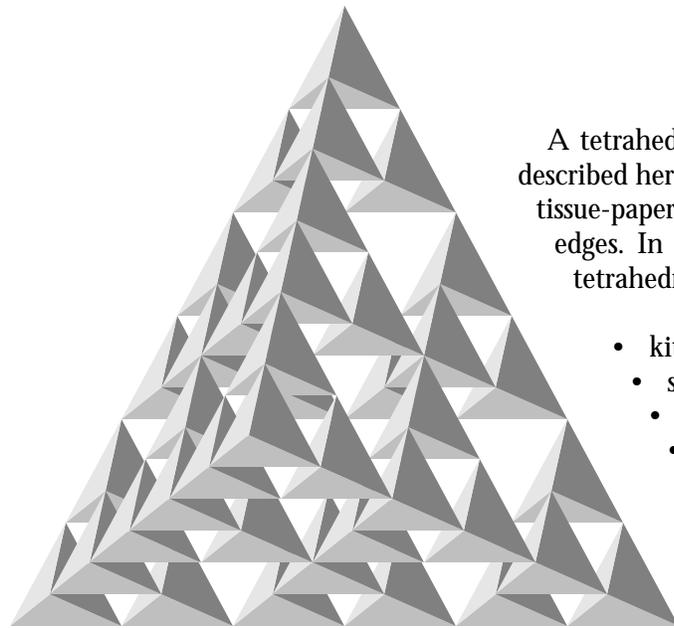
# Toss A Feeling *(Self-Esteem: A Classroom Affair, Winston Press, Inc. Permission is given to reproduce this page for student use.)*

Use the die pattern below and make a tagboard die. During a Toss-a-Feeling circle, have each child toss the die, think about the feeling word that lands face up, and tell about a time when he or she had that feeling.



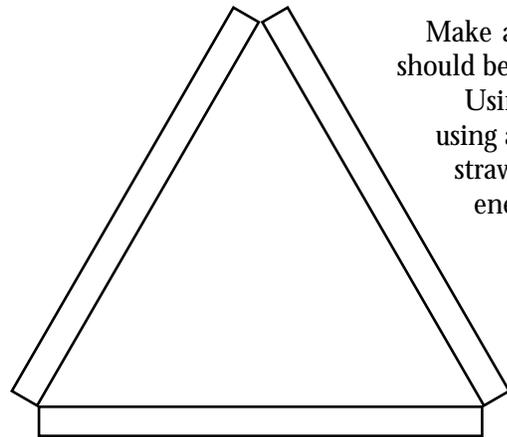
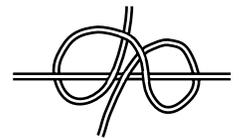
# Tetrahedral Kites

*Daryl Bergquist, Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association*



A tetrahedron is a solid with four triangular surfaces. The kites described here are made of 4, 16, or 40 hollow tetrahedrons, having tissue-paper surfaces and plastic non-flexible drinking straw edges. In addition to the paper and straws (6 straws for each tetrahedron), you will need:

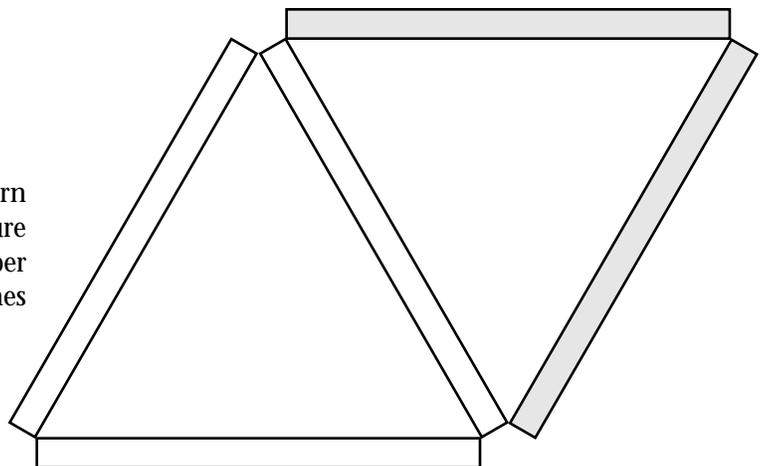
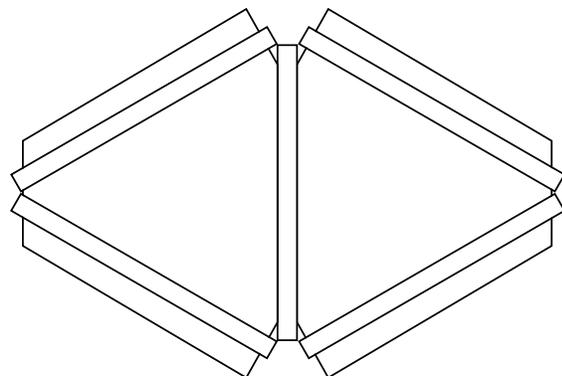
- kite string
- scissors (for cutting string)
- glue stick
- thin wire for needles
- cardboard or masonite for pattern
- exacto knife



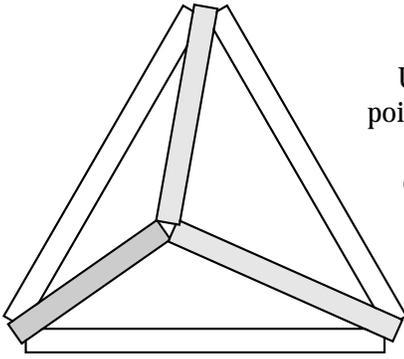
Make a needle by making a loop at one end of a length of wire. Needles should be longer than a straw.

Using the wire needle, draw kite string through three straws and tie, using a clove hitch (above, right). The clove hitch knot will slip, allowing straws to be tightened after the knot is tied. Later, the knot can be tightened one loop at a time in order to snugly secure the end of the string. Add two more straws and tie again.

Lay the resulting diamond on the pattern material. Draw around it as shown in the figure below to create the outline for the tissue paper covers. The paper should extend two inches beyond the diamond. Cut out the pattern.

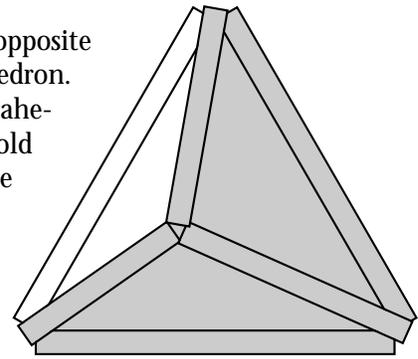


Make stacks of tissue paper approximately 13 by 20 inches and lay them on another piece of masonite. Place the masonite pattern on top of this stack. Use the exacto knife to cut around the pattern making stacks of tissue paper for kite covers. You will need one of these pieces of tissue paper for each tetrahedral module.



Use the last straw to connect the two opposite points of the diamond, creating the tetrahedron.

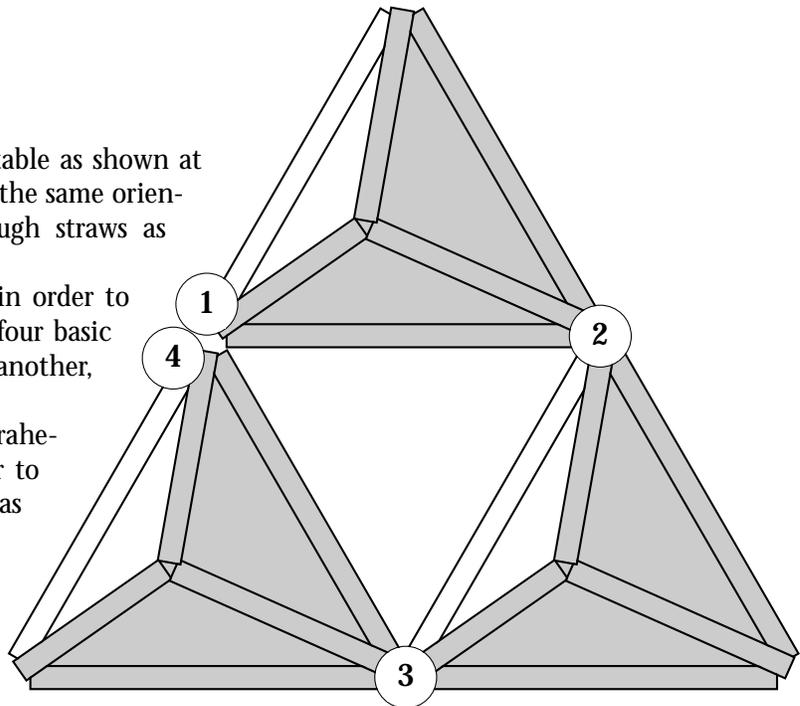
Cover two adjacent faces of the tetrahedron with one piece of tissue paper. Fold the extra paper on each edge around the straws, securing the paper flap to itself using glue stick.



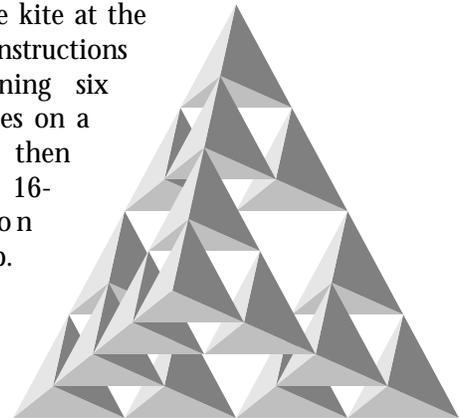
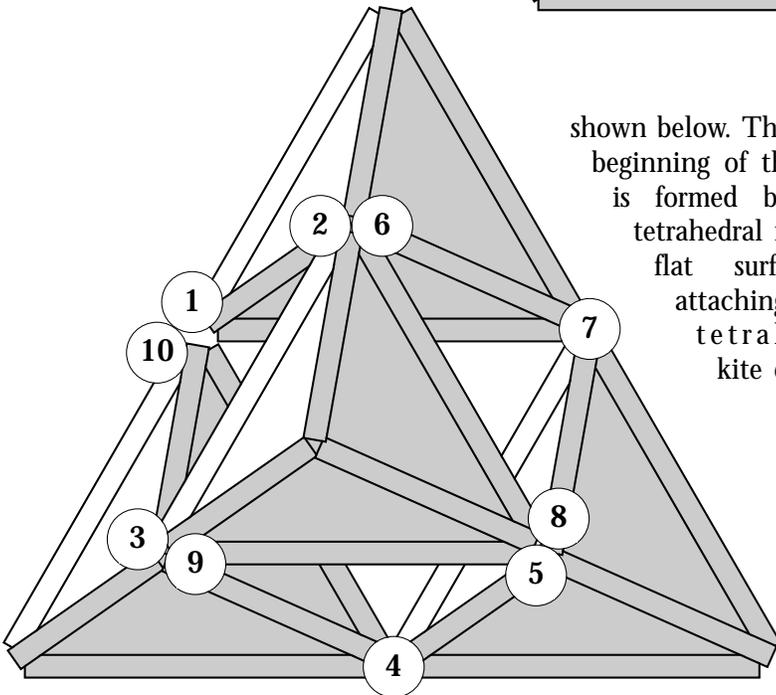
Arrange three basic tetrahedrons on table as shown at right. Make sure all have covered faces in the same orientation. Attach by threading string through straws as shown, securing snugly with square knot.

Attach string to upper point of kite in order to fly. Note that the kite formed by joining four basic tetrahedrons in this fashion creates another, larger, tetrahedron.

You may form four of these larger tetrahedrons and join them in the same manner to create kits made of 16 basic tetrahedrons, as



shown below. The large kite at the beginning of these instructions is formed by joining six tetrahedral modules on a flat surface, then attaching the 16-tetrahedron kite on top.



These kites have been used with great success by Daryl Bergquist in his work as FGC Field Secretary.

# Meeting for Learning

## Four Doors to Meeting for Worship

by Anne Thomas, *Canadian Yearly Meeting*, for *The Canadian Friend*

*Four Doors to Meeting for Worship*, William Taber, Pendle Hill Pamphlet #304, 1992, 30 pp.

Bill Taber, long time teacher at Pendle Hill, uses the metaphor of the four doors as a contemporary explanation of “what happens” in a Quaker meeting for worship.

1. Ask members to read the pamphlet before they come to meeting for learning.\*
2. Open with a time of worship.
3. Ask each person to give their name and briefly share one insight they have received from their reading.
4. Using a pace which is comfortable to the group, respond to your choice of the following questions:
  - a. What experiences have you had of the Door Before? When did these occur?
  - b. When does meeting begin for you?
  - c. Do you find the approaches to entering meeting (pages 14–16) helpful? Do you have other approaches to share?
  - d. What experience have you had of a gathered meeting? Have you been led to face unpleasant situations? If so, how did you respond? Does “absorbing” vocal ministry rather than “reacting” help you better accept the minister and ministry?
  - e. How are you accountable in your vocal ministry? Have you considered that silent ministry is also a faithful response?
  - f. How do you carry your experience of meeting into the following week? Are there “tokens” you take with you?
  - g. Are there other aspects of meeting you wish to share?
5. End with a time of worship.

Following the meeting: some Friends may wish to take on the spiritual discipline of the Door Before (pages 8–10) and support each other in this.

\*Some groups may prefer to read parts of the text together. The following excerpts are suggested:

pages 4–5	The first gathered meeting.
pages 8–10	Yes it does more easily.
pages 10–11	Now that we beginning the meeting.
pages 12–13	Once we are settled . . . consciousness to another.
page 17	Some Friends flow of prayer
pages 21–22	As the meeting love and light.
pages 26–27	Sometimes . . . about this shift.

# Meeting for Learning: Gifts and Ministries

by Anne Thomas, *Canadian Yearly Meeting, for The Canadian Friend*

*Gifts and Ministries: a discussion paper on eldership*, by Alastair Heron, Quaker Home Service, 1987, 22 pages, \$1.00 (CDN) from Quaker Book Services.

The functions of overseers and elders are combined into Ministry and Counsel in Canadian Yearly Meeting and this paper is an encouragement to look at the particular area of eldering. After a brief history of elders in London Yearly Meeting, Heron looks at our current needs and how these can be matched. The challenge of freedom, authority and leadership is also addressed. An appendix includes relevant paragraphs from *Church Government*.

1. Ask members to read the pamphlet before they come to Meeting for Learning. (Some groups may prefer to read parts of the text together. The following excerpts are suggested:
  - page 4 quotation in center of page and following paragraph
  - page 5 quotation at bottom of page through to middle of page 6
  - page 12 conclusion through to page 14
2. Open with a time of worship.
3. Ask each person to give their name and briefly share one insight they have received from their reading.
4. Using a pace which is comfortable to the group, respond to your choice of the following questions:
  - a. What Canadian (or U.S.) elements can be added to the history of elders as described by Heron ? (pages 3–4)
  - b. Less corporate discipleship and witness, less certainty, greater diversity and less unity, more split families, greater variety of faith—Does this describe your meeting? (page 4)
  - c. How can we all be humble learners in the school of Christ? (page 4)
  - d. What are the marks of a radical spiritual community? Does your Meeting have these characteristics? (pages 5–6)
  - e. How does your Meeting respond to the “duties” of elders? (pages 6–10)
  - f. How are freedom, authority and leadership balanced in your Meeting? (pages 11–12)
5. End with a time of worship.

# Meeting for Learning: We're Going to Meeting for Worship

by Anne Thomas, *Canadian Yearly Meeting, for The Canadian Friend*

*We're Going to Meeting for Worship*, by Abby A. Hadley, FGC, 1972, reprinted 1996. A view of the Meeting from a child's perspective, illustrated. 28 pages.

This resource can become the foundation for a multi-generational learning opportunity.

1. Open with a brief time of worship.
2. Have everyone share their name.
3. Ask them to share one good thing about Meeting for Worship, then something they do not like about Meeting for Worship.
4. Have one person read the book clearly. Some Friends may like to gather round to see the illustrations.
5. Have those who wish answer the following questions:
  - a. How is the Meeting described like your Meeting?
  - b. How is it different?
  - c. How do you get ready to listen in Meeting?
6. Using materials gathered ahead of time, make a model of your Meeting space:

You need a large sheet of stiff paper for the floor; more paper to cut up for a table, chairs, and people; glue, scissors, felt pens, etc. Have some people make a table and chairs that stand up, while others make people, plants, etc, which will sit on the chairs and table. What other things can be added which are in your Meeting room? When this is finished, place it on the meeting room table.
7. Close with a time of worship.

# Meeting for Learning: The Quaker Meeting for Worship

by Anne Thomas, *Canadian Yearly Meeting, for The Canadian Friend*

*The Quaker Meeting for Worship*, Jack Dobbs, Bristol & Frenchay Meeting, 1993, 8 pages. Available from Quaker Book Service, Box 4652 Station E, Ottawa, Ont. K1S 5H8 for \$1.25, postage 90c.

A personal description of Meeting for Worship which evidences the author's long involvement with and love of this special experience.

1. Open with a time of worship and share the names of all present.
2. Ask Friends to briefly describe the first time they experienced a Quaker Meeting for Worship.
3. If Friends have not read the leaflet ahead of the meeting, the following extracts are recommended for reading aloud:
  - page 1: first three paragraphs
  - page 5: paragraph starting "I have just used a word . . .
  - page 7: paragraph beginning "You may now be thinking . . .
4. Some or all of the following questions may be addressed by the group:
  - a. The author quotes William Temple's definition of worship, "the submission of all our nature to God." How would you define worship?
  - b. How is the silence of Meeting for Worship different from "a silence from which sound is absent?"
  - c. How do you deal with your preoccupations from the previous/coming week in Meeting?
  - d. Where does prayer fit in your experience of Meeting for Worship?
  - e. For people coming from other religious traditions: what elements of that form of worship do you miss? How do you resolve this?
  - f. Is the use of the expression "Jesus Christ" one which is heard in your Meeting? Are you comfortable/uncomfortable with its use/absence?
5. Are there ways in which your local Meeting for Worship can benefit from the insights shared?
6. Close with a time of worship.

# Meeting for Learning: Answering That of God in our Children

by Anne Thomas, *Canadian Yearly Meeting, for The Canadian Friend*

*Answering That of God in our Children*, Harriet Heath, Pendle Hill Pamphlet #315, 1994, 39 pages.

Written by a grandmother, this pamphlet explores how Quaker values can guide the daily lives of parents and care givers, and encourages the ongoing search by the community for greater understanding in how to answer that of God in children.

## Suggestions for use:

- A. Open with a time of worship. Then share names of those present.
- B. If Friends have not been asked to read this pamphlet ahead of the meeting, begin with these readings:
  - page 4: whole page
  - page 5: two paragraphs: “The Puritans . . . work with children”
- C. Share individual responses to either of the questions, “Is the ‘Inner Light’ in our children as well as in every person? And what are the implications of such a belief for how we live and work with children?” (page 5).
- D. Much of the pamphlet is a series of examples from the author’s experiences with children and grandchildren. One or two may be read as examples. Encourage group members to share their experiences.
- E. Ten elements for creating an environment that nurtures wonder are described on pages 26–35. Are these elements the group would choose? Are there other suggestions for adding to the list?
  1. Believing there is order in the universe.
  2. Working from a value system.
  3. Recognizing the Thou in our children.
  4. Considering the developmental level of the child.
  5. Loving them unconditionally.
  6. Trusting our children.
  7. Providing them with accurate information and skills.
  8. Listening.
  9. Giving them time—time to marvel, time to search, and time to seek.
  10. Encouraging the searching and the seeking.
- F. Close with worship.

# Meeting for Learning: Addressing Sexual Abuse in Friends Meetings

by Anne Thomas, *Canadian Yearly Meeting, for The Canadian Friend*

*Addressing Sexual Abuse in Friends Meetings*, New England Yearly Meeting, 1994, 55 pages, available from FGC or \$8.00 from Quaker Book Service.

The document includes questions and quotations to aid our understanding of sexual abuse, and provides suggestions for responding to incidents of sexual abuse in Meetings.

## Suggestions for use:

This booklet is in the form of a study guide, so few further suggestions are needed.

We do need to recognize that the range of backgrounds of Friends who may discuss sexual abuse is very broad. Some may not recognize the presence of sexual abuse in our Friends' community while others may be victims or perpetrators. Therefore, sensitivity is needed when undertaking such a study.

The group needs to incorporate silence between speakers.

Questions on pages 5, 7, 9, 12, 14, 17, 18 and 19 are each followed by quotations. The group may choose to respond in a worshipful manner to some of these questions, using the quotations where helpful in clarifying the depth of the concern.

Wolfville Monthly Meeting's experience, *A Meeting's Process: report on discussing sexual harassment and abuse with our children* may be a useful resource; see *The Canadian Friend*, September-October 1994, pages 24-28.

# Meeting for Learning: Testimony and Tradition: Some Aspects of Quaker Spirituality

by Anne Thomas, *Canadian Yearly Meeting, for The Canadian Friend*

*Testimony and Tradition: Some Aspects of Quaker Spirituality* by John Punshon, Swarthmore Lecture 1990, 94 pp.

John Punshon, then tutor at Woodbrooke, now teaching at Earlham School of Religion, examines the link between the ethical and political principles of contemporary Quakerism and the spiritual tradition from which they spring.

You may wish to study this booklet in five sessions, or to choose selected passages so that one session will be sufficient.

1. Ask members to read the pamphlet before they come to meeting for learning.
2. Open with a time of worship.
3. Ask each person to give their name and briefly share one insight they have received from their reading.
4. Using a pace which is comfortable to the group, respond to your choice of the following questions:

## Chapter 1. Christianity and Politics

- a. What is your experience of “the desert”? (page 6)
- b. How is God present in evil and defeat? (page 9)
- c. How do you make sense of the demands of politics and the claims of the gospel? (page 12)
- d. Does this description of faith speak to your experience?

“Faith . . . is understanding the dark as it really is, and taking one’s place in the forces that are ranged against it.”

## Chapter 2. Testimony and the Tradition

- a. Three different uses of the word “testimonies” by Friends are described. Which of these have you experienced? (pages 18-19)
- b. Testimonies cover both doctrinal and ethical matters. Do we give more weight to the ethical testimonies today? (page 23)
- c. As “participants in a trial of strength” which they called the Lamb’s War, early Friends used military and apocalyptic imagery. In avoiding such language today, do we also avoid confronting the struggle between good and evil? (page 24)
- d. How does this relate to “the offense of the cross”? (page 28)
- e. What differentiates the principles of Friends from those of many alternative or counter-culture groups? (page 27)

## Chapter 3. Inward Obedience

- a. John Punshon states that dropping written responses to the queries and the recording of ministers has changed Quakerism, as has the intellectual climate of our century. Do you agree? (page 41)
- b. Is contemporary Quakerism a needs-centered movement? (page 42)
- c. How do you interpret the story of Adam and Eve? (page 42)

# Meeting for Learning: The Wounded Meeting

by Anne Thomas, *Canadian Yearly Meeting, for The Canadian Friend*

*The Wounded Meeting: dealing with difficult behavior in the meeting for worship; meeting the needs of the many while responding to the needs of the few, Friends General Conference, 1993, 32 pages*

This booklet describes some scenarios all too familiar to some meetings in Canadian Yearly Meeting. Beginning with a concern that arose in Ann Arbor Monthly Meeting regarding Friends' responses to troubled and repeatedly disruptive attenders (and members), a task group from FGC's Ministry and Nurture Committee has assembled advices, queries, examples and cautionary notes from meetings across FGC.

Sub-headings in the text are: Advices by early Friends, Situations most easily addressed, More difficult situations, Exceptionally difficult situations, Summary. These are followed by Queries from FGC Ministry and Nurture Committee and Queries approved by Lake Erie Yearly Meeting.

1. Ask members to read the booklet before they come to meeting for learning.
2. Open with a time of worship.
3. Ask each person to give their name and briefly (if they wish) share one insight they have received from their reading.
4. Using the queries on pages 28-30, respond to those which will be of help to your own meeting, e.g.
  - a. How do you help new attenders learn the disciplines of vocal ministry?
  - b. How do you receive messages that deal with secular subjects?
  - c. How do you receive messages from members or attenders who speak at length in nearly every meeting for worship?
5. End with a time of worship.

If you find that more clearness is needed, contact Continuing Meeting of Ministry and Counsel.

# Meeting for Learning: Questions of Integrity: a Quaker Perspective

by Anne Thomas, *Canadian Yearly Meeting, for The Canadian Friend*

*Questions of Integrity: a Quaker perspective*, Committee for Truth and Integrity in Public Affairs, London Yearly Meeting, 1993, 211 pages, \$11.25 (CD) from Quaker Book Service.

This is an anthology of article on various topics which are of concern to Friends today. Under Government, Business, the Professions and Non-Profit-making organizations, 21 different facets are explored. The longest article is 15 pages in length.

A group choosing to use this as a resource might ask a couple of Friends to each choose one essay to read ahead of time and introduce its main ideas to the group and then lead a short discussion on the particular topic. Two such topics could be covered in one evening.

- For example:  
Steven Burkman's essay on Truth and Integrity in voluntary organizations, pp. 177–186.
- Overview:  
Burkman challenges the assumption that truth and secrecy are antithetical and suggests that in all relationships there are elements of untruth. For example to the question, "How do you feel?," "Fine," is a polite response even when one feels less than fine. He poses the question, "Is truth a higher value than love?" to move the debate forward. As a staff member of a Quaker grant-making trust, he is aware of the tendency by applicants to exaggerate and by staff to be less than direct in their responses, especially when refusing an application. The author feels that truth needs to be compromised to enable the large volume of work to be accomplished.
- Questions for the group:
  - a. How do truth, secrecy and confidentiality interweave? Can you give an example of a situation in your own life in which you have struggled with the balance?
  - b. Do you agree that love is an important element in disclosing truth? Are there any personal experiences in this area you can share?
  - c. How do you deal with work pressures, especially when people are asking for more than you have time or resources to give?

# Meeting for Learning: God is Silence

by Anne Thomas, *Canadian Yearly Meeting, for The Canadian Friend*

*God is Silence*, Pierre Lacout, Quaker Home Service, (1969) 1993, 43 pages, \$3.63 (CDN) from Quaker Book Service.

Pierre Lacout joined Switzerland Yearly Meeting after earlier being a member of a Carmelite order. This small classic of mysticism is divided into short sections which can be easily read and used as a basis for worship-sharing.

As Friends we value silence, but do not always know how to use it. These readings give some practical paths Friends can use to better access silence as a spiritual resource.

The following titles are given to the sections, which range from 300 to 1000 words in length:

- God is Silence
- Give us this day our daily Silence
- Preparation for Silence
- The Psychology of Silence
- Obstacles to Silence
- The Art of Making Use of Obstacles
- The Silence of Jesus
- Silence and Pacifism

It is recommended that members of a group read the passages before the group meets.

The group might choose to address one to three sections in a meeting, depending on the size of the group and the depth of sharing that emerges.

Out of the silence, the leader might read one section, opening a time of Claremont dialogue when other members of the group add brief statements about their own experience or their response to the reading.

Individuals can pass if they are not led to speak.

There needs to be silence between contributions. A second and third “round” may occur as appropriate.

The group may wish to end with silence or enter into a less formal time of evaluation of the sharing which has occurred.

# Meeting for Learning: Guide to Quaker Practice

by Anne Thomas, *Canadian Yearly Meeting, for The Canadian Friend*

*Guide to Quaker Practice*, Howard H. Brinton

Originally written in 1942, the demand for this booklet has continued and this new edition responds to current needs, including the use of inclusive language.

- *Practice and belief*, pages 11–14 is a brief overview which emphasizes the unity of Quaker experiences, and should be read by participants. Out of this the following chapters emerge, and one might be addressed each week for a series of studies:
- *Meeting for Worship*, pages 14–33.
  - a. Do the spiritual exercises, pages 17–18, help in centering in meeting?
  - b. Have you considered the preparations for worship suggested on pages 21–22?
  - c. Are the characteristics of a spoken message on pages 23–26 consistent with your experience?
  - d. How is the role of eldership, page 21–33, incorporated in your Meeting's life?
- *Meeting for Business, Business before the Meeting*, pages 37–52.
  - a. Share examples from your experience of how a clerk can gather the sense of the Meeting, pages 38–41.
  - b. How can we address the difficulties of Friends business procedure, pages 41–43?
  - c. A variety of forms for business are described, pages 43–52. Does your Meeting take each of these seriously (record-keeping, for example).
- (*The Queries*, pages 52–57, might be better addressed in another format.)
- *The Ministry of Teaching*, pages 58–64
  - a. Does your Meeting take seriously its responsibilities in teaching Friends of all ages?
- *Social Testimonies*, pages 64–74
  - a. Community, harmony, equality and simplicity are the four areas covered by Brinton. Do all the testimonies find a place in this scheme?

# Meeting for Learning: Meeting Needs

by Anne Thomas, *Canadian Yearly Meeting, for The Canadian Friend*

*Meeting Needs: a handbook for Quaker groups and Meetings*, editor Stuart Randall, Quaker Networks Project, Quaker Home Service, London, 1992, 88 pages. Available from FGC.

This handbook was written to respond to the following needs:

- working together more effectively
- knowing one another better
- greater confidence in facing daily challenge
- imaginative ways of tackling problems
- greater sharing of skills and needs in Meetings.

To achieve these goals, eight workshops with full agendas are described in detail. These include visioning the future of the Meeting House, Swimming against the tide, Who is my network?, Exploring gifts and resources, etc.

Additionally, a number of other processes are shared which can easily become further workshops: Young people—apart or a part?, Working across Meeting boundaries, Listening skills, Creative listening groups, Caring for ourselves, Affirmation and self esteem, Support groups, Meetings for clearness.

The book ends with a few pages of information on the theory of networks and a comprehensive bibliography.

As the editor admits, nothing here is totally new. What this book does present is a well thought out and rounded program which is based on the best of Quaker process. It will be a useful resource for a Meeting which is wondering how to meet its needs, and could provide many mid-week meeting ideas for such a group.

# Meeting for Learning: Friends and Worship

by Anne Thomas, *Canadian Yearly Meeting, for The Canadian Friend*

*Friends and Worship*, by Douglas Steere, Friends General Conference, 11 pages.

This leaflet gives a very personal interpretation of Quaker worship and offers the opportunity for Friends to share their own experiences of worship.

Following a time of opening silence, Friends might read the pamphlet aloud, pausing at appropriate points in the text to share the questions listed below. Each Friend should be allowed to respond or pass. There should be a short time of silence between responses and Friends should not comment on others' contributions.

Douglas Steere reminisces about being asked about the Quaker approach to life. As he was describing Quaker beliefs, the inquirer stated she wanted to know what Quakers *do*. (page 3)

- **What do you do in Quaker worship?**

Douglas Steere asks about interruptions and disturbances during worship. (page 6)

- **How do you deal with disturbances and interruptions during Meeting for Worship?**

"I quietly resign myself to complete listening." (page 6)

- **Is listening part of your worship experience? If so, what or for what do you listen?**

"One never brings anything to meeting with the certainty of giving it there, but one tries not to come empty." (page 8)

- **(How) do you achieve this balance?**

"One of our members leaves directly . . . she says she is so filled at meeting that she is not quite fit to talk about things in general at this point. . . ." (page 10)

- **How do you move from the experience of worship into the "social" time following? Are there things the Meeting can do to help this transition?**

End with a time of silent worship.



# The Mission of Religious Education

*by Jan Greene, New York Yearly Meeting*

In my experience, most Friends assume that the purpose and mission of religious education programs, especially those for the children, are understood and agreed upon by everyone. In fact, if one asks 10 Friends what it is, one often gets 10 different answers. I think that it is possible that a good measure of the lack of cooperation that Friends sometimes show religious education committees may come from this lack of a clearly understood purpose for their programs.

It has been my experience that the following program, which has been done with individual Meetings and Regional/Quarterly Meetings, has helped clarify the desires of Friends groups for their religious education program, and at the same time has helped deepen a sense of community within the Meeting. It has encouraged some additional Friends to become involved. It's also fun.

Invite everyone in the Meeting who has a special interest in children or a concern for the Meeting's RE programs, or who is still a child, or who ever was once a child to participate. Ask participants to plan to stay for 1 1/2 to 2 hours for the program. Let them know that you will honor the agreement to end within the 2 hour limit.

A. With the whole group, using the Claremont Dialogue method, each person shares an early, vivid memory of First Day School, Sunday School, or other religious education experience. (Purpose: to build a sense of community, and to get in touch again with what it was like to be a child in a religious education program.)

B. Ask Friends to hold the child that they were and the children who are presently part of your Meeting in mind as they respond to the question, "What is it that you would like to give your Meeting's children in their religious education program?" List these answers on newsprint. (My experience is that Friends give deeper, more thoughtful and meaningful answers to this question after sharing about their own experiences.) Give responses on newsprint to Religious Education Committee. Often they have been helpful in terms of planning and evaluating programs.

C. Brainstorm ways that the responses from B can be implemented in this meeting. (If the meeting has had difficulty providing for the needs of children and adults at the same time, pay attention to how the needs of both groups can be met.) List responses on newsprint. Give to Religious Education Committee.

D. If there is a concern that you look at needs of adults, I would suggest that you add the following: "Keeping in mind the children we were, and the adults we now are, what Religious Education Programs would we like to provide for the adult members of this Meeting?" Again, list responses on newsprint and give to the Religious Education Committee for evaluation and response.

# Planning an Adult Religious Education Program for Your Meeting

by Shirley Dodson, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

(This is a model a Meeting can use. Ideally, a Meeting does this in the spring. Some Meetings have trouble with the recommendation that a minimum of six weeks be spent on any given theme, but in my experience, where this has been tried, it worked well.)

## Materials needed:

- several 3 x 5 cards and a pen or pencil for each person
- newsprint sheets
- calendar for September-June

1. What do you see as the purpose of an adult program? What do you hope to gain by taking part in your Meeting's program for adults? (Have everyone write this down on cards, then collect them, and write the responses briefly on newsprint. Go over the responses and note connections.)
2. If we were planning a 5-year adult RE program for this Meeting, what themes and what sorts of activities would you like to see included? (Again, have people write their responses on cards, then note them in concise form on newsprint on the wall. Make sure people can read what you're writing on the newsprint.)
3. Suggestions on setting up a program:
  - a. Plan a full year's program in the spring, publicize it to the Meeting in September
  - b. Choose themes first, then develop programs, select materials & speakers, etc.
  - c. Nurture a strong committee to plan and oversee the adult program
  - d. Plan to spend at least six weeks on any theme for continuity and depth
4. Choosing themes for next year's adult class: (Use the themes suggested by the group. Select the five or six mentioned most often. Note that any themes not selected for the coming year could be used in subsequent years. Put the five or six themes, in six-week segments, on the calendar. Do 30 weeks of sessions (or the number of weeks your Meeting has or wants to have for adult classes and First Day School). Be sure to check your Meeting's official calendar for special events that would pre-empt the adult class. You may want to reserve some sessions for special programs that members might want to bring as a result of a trip taken or a course completed, for example.)
5. Leaders and resources: (Find someone interested in coordinating each of the themes. Have the group brainstorm resources and other ideas for each theme. Consider curricula and other written resources (see the FGC catalog), speakers and group facilitators from within the Meeting as well as from outside, videos, music, etc.)
6. Plan to meet again in a year to evaluate and plan the next year's program.

Shirley Dodson, a religious education staff person for Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, has had long experience working with adult Religious Education programs for Friends. She would be willing to consult with Friends for suggestions concerning their Meeting's adult RE Program. Call her at 215-241-7182.

# Meeting Expectations: “Our Classroom Covenant”

by Anne Thomas, *Canadian Yearly Meeting*

Hand out copies of “Our Classroom Covenant.” For a multi-generational group, focus on the words given, letting each person respond to a particular verse which speaks to negative or positive experiences they had had. For adults only, ask how this could be rephrased to give a statement which reflected what they would like to see provided by the meeting. These ideas can be developed in small groups, then shared with the whole group.

## Our Classroom Covenant

I have a right to be happy, and to be treated with kindness in this room;  
This means that no one will  
Laugh at me, ignore me, or hurt my feelings.

I have a right to be myself in this room;  
This means that no one will  
Treat me unfairly because I am  
Fat or thin;  
Fast or slow,  
Boy or girl.

I have a right to be safe in this room;  
This means that no one will  
Hit me, kick me,  
Push me, or pinch me.

I have a right to hear and be heard in this room;  
This means that no one will  
Yell—scream—or shout.  
And my opinions and desires will be considered  
In any plans we make.

I have a right to learn about myself in this room;  
This means that I will be  
Free to express my feelings  
And opinions without being  
Interrupted or punished.

— from “Church Teachers” vol. 3, no 2, Sept. 1975, page 18

# Echo Pantomime: We Found Him

*(An echo action drama based on the Christmas story)*

*by Anne Thomas, Canadian Yearly Meeting*

I am a shepherd boy. I guard my sheep all day.	(Stand tall)
I do not let wild animals come near my lambs.	(Hold arm up, as if with shepherd's rod.)
I try to be brave and strong.	(Shoulders back.)
At night, my sheep come together and sleep.	
I rest, too.	(Slump down, relaxed.)
I rest here.	(Point down to ground)
My sheep are out there on the hillside.	(Point forward on ground.)
Tonight, the sky is clear and bright.	(Point upward)
My friends and I will build a campfire to keep warm.	(Press arms against chest, shiver.)
Oh, the fire is warm!	(Hold hands out to fire.)
The heat feels good. I'm sleepy.	(Yawn, drop head to chest.)
Hey! What's that bright light?	(Put arm across eyes.)
Listen! Someone said: "Do not be afraid."	(Peek around crook of raised arm.)
But, wow! I'm scared!	(Hide head in arm.)
Listen! The voice says:	(Cup hand to ear and pause to listen.)
"Christ the Lord is born in Bethlehem."	
Some of the shepherds say, "Nonsense!	(Shake head back and forth vigorously.)
It can't be the Christ!"	
Others say, "Shall we go?" I want to go, too!	(Shake head up and down eagerly.)
We run down the hill toward Bethlehem.	(Run, standing in place.)
We run down the quiet streets.	(Continue running in place.)
Everyone is asleep. The lamps are out.	(Gradually-slow down to a walk.)
Where is the baby? Where is everybody?	(Walk slowly-look in all directions.)
Hey! There's a light!	(Point-quicken steps.)
But it's in a stable. That's no place for Christ!	(Slow steps-almost stop.)
Well, let's ask inside. They may know.	(Begin a slow walk again.)
Wait! There IS a new baby! Look at that!	(Tiptoe slowly forward.)
Oh! Isn't he tiny! Isn't he cute!	(Stop-smile-look down-pause.)
You ARE the Christ child!	(Lift arms wide and high.)
This is really the Savior.	(Look at one another, nod yes.)
This is really the Messiah that God promised.	(Continue nodding yes.)
Come! Let's tell the others what we have found!	(Run in place.)
Come! Let's tell them it's the Savior, the Messiah.	(Continue to run.)
We found the baby! We found the Christ child!	(Put hands around mouth as if shouting.)

# Fostering *Vital Friends Meetings*

Part Two:  
*Resources for Working with Quaker Meetings*

by Jan Greene and Marty Walton

## **Section R16: Queries and Quotes that Might Be Used in a Program or Workshop**

- R16-1 On Faith (*see Queries for sources*)
- R16-1 On Prayer
- R16-2 On the Spiritual Journey
- R16-3 On Discernment
- R16-4 On Spiritual Gifts
- R16-5 On Pastoral Care
- R16-5 On Caring for Our Youth
- R16-6 On Meetings Serving Families
- R16-6 On Conflict
- R16-7 On Meeting for Worship
- R16-7 On Meeting for Worship With a Concern for Business
- R16-7 On Work as a Committee Member
- R16-8 On the Wholeness of the Monthly Meeting
- R16-9 On Meeting Renewal and Outreach
- R16-11 On Quaker Diversity
- R16-12 On Witness
- R16-13 On the Use of Language
- R16-13 On the Environment



# Queries and Quotations that Might be Used in a Program or Workshop

## On Faith:

1. What is faith?
2. What or who do I believe in?
3. Why do I believe?
4. Where was my faith shaped?
5. Who or what has influenced my faith?
6. Is my faith visible to others?
7. How can I live my faith for others to see?

— Adirondack (NY) Meeting

## On Prayer:

Prayer has been described as the soul's sincere desire—an instinctive reaching out of the Spirit. It may take the form of petition, confession, adoration, forgiveness, thanksgiving, or profound silence.

What does prayer mean to you? What has been your experience?

1. Do you have a special place where you go to pray, or a special bodily posture?
2. Are your prayers spontaneous or learned? Silent or vocal?
3. What has been your experience of healing prayer?
4. What would you most like to pray for?
5. What keeps you from prayer?
6. Has your prayer ever been answered? What about unanswered prayer?
7. Have you ever experienced yourself as having been prayed through?

— Linda Chidsey, Croton Valley (NY) Meeting

## On the Spiritual Journey:

1. What is coming to life in you now?
2. What soil do you grow best in? (read the Parable of the Talents, Matt 25: 14–30)
3. How can your Meeting be of help to you?
4. Is there an area in your life where you feel a “flow” between your efforts and the Spirit? Can you describe how it feels?
5. Have you ever experienced a call from God? What form did it take?

— From *Ministering to Our Meetings*: RE Committee of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

1. We say we are a “do it yourself” religion but *do we*?
2. Are we functional atheists?
3. Do we talk a good game but fail to trust in the reality of God, to follow leadings?
4. Where are you most willing to let God in? What is it that makes you want to keep God out?
5. Do you find that, except for specific times of worship, you tend to keep God on the periphery?
6. Are you sometimes tempted by the idea of walking closer with God?

— unknown

“When you’re really talking about essential topics, you’re bound to take some people to places where they’re uncomfortable. A little squirm now and then can be a wonderful thing!”

— Beth Zeulke

“At birth one is given the gift of a seed of oneself, and our job is to nurture and develop that self until, at the end of our journey, it is worthy to give back to the creator.”

- What periods in your life were you most and least yourself? How come?
- If there was one thing in your life you would change, what would it be?
- Can you refuse an unwanted favor?”

— Lawrence Le Shan

“Our bodies are disposable, biodegradable containers for the Spirit.”

— Francis Hall

“God is the Beyond in our midst.”

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer

## On Discernment:

Our understanding on discernment is closely related to our beliefs about God, so it is there that perhaps our reflection should begin.

1. What is God's relationship to us? Does God really care about us?
2. What, in general terms, do we believe that God wants us to do with our lives?
3. If God cares about us, and has a purpose in mind for our lives, why doesn't God just step in and make it happen? Why depend on our laborious process of discernment?
4. How much of the discernment process is a conscious act of rational thinking, and how much is God's work, to which we must open ourselves and let it happen?
5. What are the best ways of opening ourselves to God and letting God's will be done through us?
6. What "tests" do you use on our own leadings—and those of others—to decide whether or not they are truly God's will?
7. What is our attitude toward those who disagree with us in the discernment process—those who have tested their leadings as we have tested ours, and have come out on the opposite side?
8. How do we go about maintaining a coherent faith community while there are disagreements among us about beliefs and practices?
9. How was the process of discernment different for Quakers in the 17th and 18th century than it is for Friends today?

— unknown

"To be doing something good can be the greatest obstacle to doing something even better."

— from "Listening Hearts," page 13

1. "Just when you think you have it all figured out, life sends you lab practice; God helps with the assignment." What kind of "lab practice" have you been sent lately?
2. What have been some of the unexpected turns in your spiritual life?
3. What does the term "leading" mean to you?
4. Did you ever have a leading? How did you discern it? How did you act on it?
5. Have you ever said to God, "You want me to do what?!!!"
6. Have you ever said "no" to a leading? Why? How did it feel? What happened?
7. Have you ever had a false leading?
8. Have you ever outrun a leading?
9. What are the voices that discourage you when you try to live a life "In the Spirit?"
10. What are the "plagues on your house" that you have experienced?
11. Have you seen God take something horrible and use it for something good?
12. What are your sins (anything that separates you from God)?
13. Why are you a Quaker?

— William Kreidler, New England Yearly Meeting

## On Spiritual Gifts:

1. Can you remember a time when you undertook a task you felt unable to do and yet found the strength to do it? What contributed to that success?
2. What are you good at? How did you first become interested in it? Were you always good at it? How did you become good at it? What sort of satisfaction does it give you?
3. Are you satisfied with your service in the Religious Society of Friends?
4. Why do you do the things you do for the Society? Is it because you're good at it, no one else would do it, or you were asked to do it (perhaps to your surprise)?
5. Are there tasks you would be willing to do if you had training and experience? If so, what tasks would attract you?
6. Are there any other people you know in your meeting whom you think might have similar responses to you? How will you check to see if you discerned their feelings rightly?

— From *Gifts and Discoveries*, Britain Yearly Meeting

1. What is it that is uniquely mine to give?
2. What may have been put into my hands that I may not have been honoring?
3. What is the specific place that God wants me to work in my faith community? in the world?

— unknown

- How can each individual be helped to develop his or her spiritual gifts, within the Meeting and beyond? Can you think of occasions when you yourself received such help?
- How can each individual be helped to develop his or her spiritual gifts, within the Meeting and beyond? Can you think of occasions when you yourself received such help?

— Rosalind Priestman, Britain Yearly Meeting

“When you have named your talents or gifts, list the risks that you will have to take in order to actualize them. What will you have to give up if you are to develop these gifts? What are the obstacles that you foresee?”

— From *Eight Days of Creation* by Elizabeth O'Connor

When we turn our hearts to God, we experience a reorientation of values deep within us. Either we become increasingly astute and wise as we live out our new orientation—we walk in the Spirit—or, if we are not true to the new life that is rising within us, if we deny, repress or live in contradiction to it, we invite internal havoc and trigger war within ourselves. Our lives may take on a frantic quality.

— Paraphrase of a quote by Jan Wood, Wilmington Yearly Meeting

## On Pastoral Care:

1. Why are we uncomfortable about letting our needs be known, about allowing others to help us?
2. Can you recall a time when you expressed a need and it was met? How did that feel?
3. Can you recall a time when you expressed a need and it was not met? How did that feel?
4. Do you recall a time of need and you did not speak of it? How was that?
5. What needs are easy for you to talk about?
6. What needs are difficult for you to express?
7. What needs can we as individuals and as a meeting hope to be able to meet?
8. What at present do you need?

— Croton Valley (NY) Meeting

1. (In your Meeting,) do you know each other well to be aware of the spiritual, emotional, and practical needs of your members? How do you endeavor to meet these needs?
2. How do you respond when one or two Friends of long-standing seem to make it difficult for other voices to be heard?
3. What encouragement do you give newcomers? Would it be likely some of them turn away, feeling unwelcome and that there has been no opportunity to talk in depth about matters of faith?
4. Is it possible to make space in our busy lives to meet the spiritual needs of others?

— Rosalind Priestman, Britain Yearly Meeting

## On Caring for our Youth:

1. When you were a child, what was one of your best memories of an adult sharing with you?
2. If you were a child now, what would you like to do or learn with an adult?
3. Is there something you think that children are missing now?
4. What can we learn from children today?
5. What are some of your favorite activities or talents that you could share with the children?

— Davis (CA) Friends Meeting Newsletter

## On Meetings Serving Families:

1. What are the special pressures and needs for support from their Meeting of families that are concerned with care-giving responsibilities; i.e. families with children, with elderly relatives, with handicapped or ill members?
2. How well do we do in supporting all the families that are part of the Meeting?
3. What are the attitudes and “rules” that stand in the way of our Meeting being present for families?
4. Would our Meeting be able and willing to identify and respond to an abusive situation in one or more of our families? Would there be positive and loving support for both the victim and the abusive Friend? Would we be able and willing to protect the abused Friend?
5. What could our Meeting do so that we can become more supportive of our families?
6. How well is our Meeting serving as our “Faith Family”—a place that supports and nurtures us in our spiritual lives? Are there ways that we could be more supportive?

— unknown

1. When you were growing up, what gave you a sense in your family life of a higher power or Spirit beyond yourself?
2. You probably are doing more than you realize to nurture the spiritual life in your family. List what is happening *now* in your family that *is* affirming the spiritual life. (Remember that a family can be a couple or a single with a close friend.)
3. Having reached back into your spiritual background, and having affirmed what is happening now, how can your spiritual life be deepened?
4. What part does meeting play in the spiritual life in your home? Are there ways in which meeting could help deepen your family’s spiritual life?

— an adaptation of a worksheet from the FGC Religious Education Committee

## On Conflict:

- How does being a Quaker affect my thoughts and actions about conflict?
- What conflict or conflicts have I dealt with recently or am I currently dealing with?
- What has my experience been with conflict in my monthly, quarterly, yearly meeting?
- What resources have I found among Friends, in our history and structure (meeting for worship, ministry and counsel, peace and social concerns, clearness/support committees, prayer groups) for responding to conflict between individuals, in my community and meeting?
- What part does my spiritual practice play in my ability to resolve conflict?
- What have I found in particular that Friends offer to inform the way in which I respond to conflict in broader contexts (locally, regionally or abroad)?
- What can we as Friends do better?

— from a Powell House (NYYM Conference Center) flyer

## On Meeting for Worship:

1. What are my/our expectations for meeting for worship?
2. What do I like in meeting for worship? What don't I like? Why?
3. What do I personally do to prepare heart and mind for corporate worship? If I find that a difficult question, why? How could elders or ministry and counsel help?
4. How do I center into worship?
5. What are some of the things that Friends and attenders may use to keep the meeting for worship from deepening if they are feeling threatened by the possibility of a gathered meeting? e.g. cough, opening or closing window, etc.
6. What is the difference between meditation, worship, and prayer?

— Patsy Hayes Myers and Jan Greene

## On Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business:

1. What needs to be present for a good meeting for business?
2. Whose responsibility is each of the items named in question 1?

— Patsy Hayes Myers and Jan Greene

## On Work as a Committee Member:

1. Why did I feel led to serve on this committee?
2. What can I bring to this committee and its work? What are my burning concerns, my skills, my leadings? And how can I blend these into the work of the committee as a whole?

— Patsy Hayes Myers and Jan Greene

## On the Wholeness of the Monthly Meeting

### 1. Health

- How does the Meeting process conflict/problems?
- Is there a place for everyone? Is anyone shut out?
- Does everyone have a reasonable amount of power and of ownership?

### 2. Identity

- Who are we?
- Who are we talking to? (Knowing this is essential; however, too often, Friends want to skip answering these questions.)

### 3. Leadership

In a healthy Meeting, all will know who the leaders are. An unhealthy Meeting will leave some wondering where leadership lies for some time.

- How does your Meeting rate on this?

### 4. Vision

- What is our unique contribution to the realm of God?
- What is God calling us to do?
- Having been led, what do we do with those visions? Friends tend to be good at the first step—discernment, but bad at the second step—taking our leadings and turning them into action.

— Beth Zeulke

1. Is your Monthly Meeting a place where people can grow spiritually?
2. How do you feel about your Meeting?
3. What do you want from your Meeting? What is your Meeting doing in this direction? What would you like from your Meeting that you are not getting?
4. What are you willing to give to your Meeting?
5. What makes you feel cared for in your Meeting?
6. What kind of response or lack of response is disappointing?
7. Are you willing to risk opening yourself to ask for help from your meeting?
8. How do you, individually, and as a meeting, a) be, b) speak, and c) walk your Quaker way

— Rosalind Priestman, Britain Yearly Meeting

“. . . Everything about spiritual nourishment is intertwined or circular: What opens the heart to others opens the heart to God which opens that heart to others still more. What builds trust in one another builds trust in the community which builds more trust in God which builds more trust in one another. If I work on my own personal spiritual life it nourishes the Meeting which in turn nourishes me more . . . [as someone else in my meeting said,] ‘We are all the answers to each other’s prayers.’ ”

— Alison Erikson, New England Yearly Meeting

## On Meeting Renewal and Outreach:

We need first to attend to the inward health and wholeness of our meeting. If we're not caring for each other (inward health), we have nothing to reach out with. Then, we need to share the spiritual wealth that we have been given. When we do that, our monthly meetings will grow.

1. What is God calling us to do?
2. Why are we here?
3. What in the group is not healthy? What is not working?
4. How do we work together and resolve conflict?
5. What are we supposed to be doing? "If we are people of faith and if we know what we are supposed to be doing, we can do those things."
6. How easy is it for young families to come to our meetings?
7. How comfortable/adaptable/pleasant are our meeting rooms? Does the room say, "You are welcome here."
8. Do we ask newcomers, "What is it that you are looking for in a spiritual home?"
9. Do we look at the population around our meeting houses and seek discernment about how we can address their spiritual needs? This is part of good stewardship.
10. Studies show that individuals need to hear about your meeting/church between seven and twenty-seven times before they first walk in your door. How would folks in your community hear about your meeting? How often would this be possible?
11. People, even new people, need to be needed. We need to be honestly welcoming enough to need their help. How easy is it for new attenders at your meeting to get involved in the life and work of the meeting? (Consider having a meeting brochure entitled: "If You Would Like to Get Something Done in This Meeting, Here is How You Go About It." i.e. here's how you get into the mix. This brochure would contain an introduction to the committees.)

— Beth Zeulke

1. How did you learn about Quakerism?
2. What do you value about the Religious Society of Friends? What qualities do you see in yourself that you value in the Religious Society of Friends?
3. How many of your friends, acquaintances, and co-workers know that you are a Friend?
4. What images come to mind when you think of evangelism? What are your personal feelings about sharing your faith? If there is discomfort, what training, support, and encouragement would be helpful? Would you be willing to step outside of your personal comfort zone to let another person know about Quakerism?
5. What outreach work is happening in your Meeting now? How many people are you touching? Are any of these people finding their way into your Meeting fellowship?
6. How welcome do visitors to your Meeting feel? What obstacles to assimilation do newcomers to your Meeting encounter?

— unknown

## Queries and Quotations that Might Be Used in a Program or Workshop, page 10

Have you ever . . .

- told a Friend, “I am a Quaker?”
- invited a ‘likely Friend’ to join you at meeting for worship?
- offered to share your Quaker literature with a friend?
- sought publicity about Quaker-related activities?
- exposed others to the fact that Quakerism is alive and present?
- invited your friends into your home for an evening of discussion on the ethical, philosophical and religious values of today?
- thought through your own beliefs so that you can articulate them if asked?
- shared appropriate Quaker literature with a friend in a life crisis?
- sensitized yourself to become aware of the readiness of attenders to become members of Meeting?

— Outreach Committee of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting

“If we have experienced the transformation God works in the souls of the faithful, if we are alive to the fellowship of the Holy Spirit within, what steps do we take to bring others to the same experience?”

— query in an FWCC publication

## On Quaker Diversity:

“What we have is too precious to fight about. What we have is too precious not to share.”

— Marlene Pedigo, Chicago Fellowship of Friends

1. Do we love and accept diversity as a gift of God?
2. Do we want to listen to each other?
3. Are we careful to speak to each other from the Light?

— William Kreidler, New England Yearly Meeting

1. Do we really take seriously the belief that there is that of God in every person?
2. Do we find ourselves unable to agree on “unknowables?”
3. Do we, in general agree on “do-ables?”

— Janey O’Shea, Australian Yearly Meeting

1. When it comes to human relationships, are we guided by our underlying convictions and respect for each other? What part do our emotions play? What do we mean by “forgiveness”? How do we care for those in pain and need?
2. Where is it that we are wounded? How can dialogue be facilitated among those of us who are wounded—psychologically, spiritually, physically?
3. How can we better emphasize in our prayers the universality of the God of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims?
4. What are we afraid of? How can we eliminate fear of one another?

— Rosalind Priestman, Britain Yearly Meeting

1. How does your meeting respond to diversity of belief within its members and attenders?
2. What are the limits of our tolerance for diversity in our meeting?
3. How can we best work and worship with Friends who differ from ourselves? Do we want to? Why or why not?

— unknown

1. Is it what we do or who we are that makes our monthly meetings unwelcome places for cultural diversity?
2. What attitudes and behaviors get in the way of our making personal friends with people of different ethnic backgrounds?
3. What makes us less trustful towards strangers of different ethnic backgrounds than our own?
4. What work am I called to do that will challenge me personally and make a difference?

— Sept. 1995 *Friends Bulletin*

## On Witness:

If we want to address the world's pain, we must include our own. Yet, as Thomas Kelly said, "You cannot die on every cross."

- Do you sometimes feel that we pay too much attention to the inward journey at the expense of involving ourselves in wider issues?
- Are there challenges in society or matters of principle where we as Friends might have something to say?
- Why do we underestimate the influence we might have on others if we did speak out?
- Can you share an experience where you yourself did or did not challenge the assumptions of others?
- What were the consequences?

— Rosalind Priestman, Britain Yearly Meeting

1. What aspects of our culture do we feel like celebrating ? Why?
2. What aspects of our culture are we uncomfortable with? Why?
3. Do our traditional testimonies have meaning today?
4. Which testimonies do we feel most challenged by as Friends?
5. How can we integrate our traditional testimonies into one vision for social change?
6. How can we as Friends deepen our awareness of the connections between the attitudes of those early European discoverers/invasers (of the Americas) toward indigenous people and the earth and our own 20th century values and attitudes?
7. Do we honor the unique and valuable contributions of...indigenous peoples from the past and now seek to work together on the problems that beset our communities and our planet?
8. How do we educate ourselves so that we may be better prepared to respond to our families, neighbors, schools, communities and political leaders?
9. Do those of us who have inherited the privileges of the dominant culture recognize how these privileges have affected our attitude toward ourselves and towards others?

— from the 1993 New York Yearly Meeting Peace Institute

We don't need to do James Naylor again. We aren't an "anything goes" religion. We need to help meetings learn and relearn discernment, Quaker process, etc. Our roots lie in Christianity as a missionary church. We need to know who we are, what we represent, and be willing to live that life and, in that way, be examples to others.

— unknown

## On the Use of Language:

1. What examples in your experience have shown the power of language to help or harm?
2. What safeguards have you developed to counteract ingrained cultural acceptance of inhibiting language?
3. Share examples of affirming language that has inspired you from other religions? other times? younger or older people? other cultures?
4. Share examples of inhibiting language that has done harm in your life or examples of affirming language that has helped.
5. What insights have you had about Biblical language that have clarified for you the spiritual meaning and changed it from a turn-off to a turn-on?
6. How can we recognize and deal with humor which is demeaning and disempowering?
7. What is the influence on our lives of the words we say to ourselves in our inner conversation?
8. Jack Willcuts said, "Let it never be said again that 'Friends love everyone except each other.' How can we deal with F/friends who make statements with which we strongly disagree?"

— unknown

## On The Environment:

"Before we can heal the earth, we must cure the psychic split in ourselves that lets us think hierarchically."

1. What was the landscape where you grew up? How did you relate to it? What is your landscape now? Have you ever had a sense of "oneness"—of the earth as Gaia?
2. Have you ever had a healing/learning experience of some non-human member of creation?

"Humility is the willingness to become teachable"

— Elizabeth Watson



# Fostering *Vital Friends Meetings*

Part Two:

*Resources for Working with Quaker Meetings*

by Jan Greene and Marty Walton

## **Section R17: Reading Lists**

- R17-1 A Brief Reading List for Attenders *Philadelphia YM*
- R17-3 Meeting for Reading: A Beginning List *Anne Thomas*
- R17-5 Spiritual Nurture in the Religious Society of Friends *Spiritual Nurture Conf.*
- R17-11 Resources for Spiritual Friendship *FGC Religious Education Committee*
- R17-12 Keeping A Spiritual Journal: Some Suggested Readings *(source unknown)*
- R17-13 A Selected Bibliography for Quaker Families *Philadelphia YM*
- R17-16 The Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business *(source unknown)*



# A Brief Reading List for Attenders

## *Philadelphia Yearly Meeting*

Some books have been of particular value in explaining Quakerism. This list is based partly on a survey of what new members have found most useful and partly on recommendations from persons in our Meeting. The list is not complete and every Friend will have favorites not on this list.

1. A survey of new members found their Yearly Meeting's *Faith and Practice* to be the most useful single reference by far.
2. Howard Brinton's *Friends for 300 Years* (1952), a general introduction, was voted second in overall helpfulness and remains a classic.
3. *Friends Journal* was third on the list. It is available by subscription. (215) 241-7277.
4. *Pendle Hill Pamphlets*. Pendle Hill, the Quaker study center in Wallingford, Pennsylvania, has been publishing pamphlets since 1934. Some of these have become classics. Taken together, they cover a wide range of Friends' topics and concerns. Write to Pendle Hill Publications, Wallingford, Pa, 19086.
5. John Woolman, *The Journal of John Woolman*. Among American Friends, Woolman ranks in influence with George Fox. His journal is a compelling testament. You might also want to visit his home in Mount Holly, New Jersey.
6. George Fox's *Journal* is obviously a classic, though long and weighty. You might consider starting with *Wait in the Light: The Spirituality of George Fox*, edited by John Lampen, which is a briefer compilation of Fox's writings.
7. Thomas R. Kelly's *A Testament of Devotion* and his *Reality of the Spiritual World* were written after he was "literally melted down by the love of God" when traveling in the ministry in Germany in 1938. These have become religious classics with influence far beyond Quaker circles.
8. Leonard S. Kenworthy has written *Quakerism: A Study Guide* (1981) which covers the history of Friends, and their main concerns, and describes the structure of Friends both here and in other countries. His book has gained recent popularity as a study guide in Meetings.
9. Michael J. Sheeran's *Beyond Majority Rule* (1982) is an insightful analysis of how we Friends conduct business. Sheeran is a Jesuit who studied us to illuminate communal discernment, a decision making process the Jesuits used when they were founded in 1540, but lost within a generation.
10. Margaret Bacon's *The Quiet Rebels: The Story of Quakers in America* (1969) is a particular favorite of many in our Meeting.



# Meeting for Reading: A Beginning List

*Suggested by Anne Thomas in 1995,  
and expanded by other field workers since then.*

This is a list of “Quaker classics” which could form the basis of a personal library or be a resource for a group to meet and discuss individual discoveries from reading such books. This list is not complete and does not imply that any books not listed are not worth reading or that all listed should be read!

## **General Introductions:**

- Introducing Quakers* by George Gorman (QHS 1978)
- Meeting* by Deborah Haight (Argenta 1987)
- Quaker By Convincement* by Geoffrey Hubbard (QHS 1985, rev)
- Quaker Meeting: A Risky Business* by Eric W. Johnson (Dorrance 1991)

## **Meeting for Worship:**

- The Amazing Fact of Quaker Worship* by George Gorman (QHS 1979)
- Four Doors to Meeting for Worship* by William Taber (PHP #306, 1992)

## **Spirituality:**

- Advices and Queries* (Britain YM 1995)
- Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster (Harper 1978)
- The Holy Bible*
- Introduction from Quaker Spirituality* by Douglas V. Steere (Philadelphia YM 1988)
- Living with Oneself and Others* (New England YM 1978)
- Quaker Faith and Practice* (Britain YM 1995)
- A Testament of Devotion* by Thomas Kelly (Harper 1992/QHS 1979)
- Fresh Winds of the Spirit* by Alan Kolp (Friends United Press, 1990)
- 20 Questions About Jesus* by John Lampen (London, Quaker Home Service)

## **Quakerism and Quaker History:**

- The Discovery of Quakerism* by Harold Loukes (QHS 1982)
- The Faith and Practice of Quakers* by Rufus M. Jones (FUP)
- Friends for 300 Years* by Howard H. Brinton (PH 1965)
- A Living Faith: an historical study of Quaker beliefs* by Wilmer A. Cooper (FUP 1990)
- Portrait in Grey* by John Punshon (QHS 1984)
- A Procession of Friends* by Daisy Newman (FUP 1972)
- Quaker Crosscurrents: three hundred years of Quakers in the New York Yearly Meetings* editors H. Barbour et al (Syracuse UP 1995)
- The Quaker Reader* selected and introduced by Jessamyn West (PH 1992, reprint of 1962 edition)
- The Quaker Tapestry Guide in Colour* (Quaker Tapestry Scheme 1992)
- The Story of Quakerism* by Elfrida Vipont (FUP 3rd ed. 1977)
- The World Turned Upside Down* by Christopher Hill (Penguin 1975)
- Testimony and Tradition* by John Punshon (QHS, London, 1990)

## Meeting for Reading-A Beginning List, page 2

### Quaker Journals:

*Journal and Major Essays of John Woolman* edited by Phillips P. Moulton (FUP 1989)

*The Journal of George Fox* edited by John Nickalls (London YM 1975)

### Meeting for Worship for Business:

*Beyond Consensus: salvaging the sense of the meeting* by Barry Morley (PHP #307, 1993)

*Guide to Quaker Practice* by Howard H. Brinton (PHP #20, 1955)

*Faith and Practice of New York Yearly Meeting 1995–6*

*Impossible Decisions: Making decisions when no way seems right*, by Doreen Padfield (London: Triangle, 1993) Available through Friends Bookstore in London, £4.99.

### The Meeting Community:

*Meeting Needs*, Britain Yearly Meeting.

*Essays on the Quaker Vision of Gospel Order* by Lloyd Lee Wilson (Pendle Hill Publications, 1993)

*Mending Hurts*, by John Lampen (QHS, London, 1987).

### Diversity Among Friends:

*An Experiment in Faith*, by Margery Post Abbott (PHP #323, Oct. 1995)

*A Certain Kind of Perfection: An Anthology of Evangelical and Liberal Quaker Writers*, by Margery Post Abbott (Pendle Hill Publications, 1997)

### Directories of Friends:

*Quakers Around the World* (FWCC 1994)

*Friends Directory and Resource Guide* (FWCC 1996)

# Spiritual Nurture in the Religious Society of Friends

*(Handed out at a “Spiritual Nurture” Conference at Pendle Hill)*

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- Brinton, Howard. 1950. *Prophetic Ministry.* Pendle Hill Pamphlet 54. Wallingford, PA
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- Collier, Howard. 1944. *The Quaker Meeting: a personal experience and method described and analyzed.* Pendle Hill Pamphlet 26. Wallingford, PA
- Cook, Chris and Brenda Heales. 1992. *Images and Silence.* Swarthmore Lecture. Britain Yearly Meeting: Quaker Home Service.

## Spiritual Nurture In the Religious Society of Friends, page 2

- Corbett, Jim. 1991. *Goatwalking: a Guide to Wildland Living: a Quest for the Peaceable Kingdom*. NY: Viking (community, social action, spirituality)
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- Crom, Scott. 1974. *Quaker Worship and Techniques of Meditation*, Pendle Hill Pamphlet 195. Wallingford, PA
- Cronk, Sandra. 1991. *Dark Night Journey. inward re-patterning toward a life centered in God*. Wallingford, PA
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- Crosby, Harriet (ed) *The Psychology of a Fairy Tale* by David Hart. Pendle Hill Pamphlet 210. Wallingford, PA
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- Grubb, Mollie. A mystical tradition in *The Friend*. 4th November 1994 p 1420 (held article)
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- Yungblut, John. 1983. *Speaking as One Friend to Another: on the mystical way forward*. Pendle Hill Pamphlet 249. Wallingford, PA



# Resources for Spiritual Friendship

## *Friends General Conference Religious Education Committee*

Bankson, Marjory Zoet. *Seasons of Friendship: Naomi and Ruth as a Pattern*. (LuraMedia, 1987)

Bankson uses the changing relationship between these Biblical women to discuss different kinds of friendship. She shares a great deal from her experience. Contains wonderful journaling questions and could serve as an exercise book for a spiritual friendship between women.

Devers, Dorothy. *Faithful Friendship*. (Faithful Friends Mission Group, The Church of the Saviour, Washington, DC)

A handbook setting out many readings and exercises that might be taken up in the course of a spiritual friendship. Some Friends may find the heavily traditional Christian language hard to get through, but it is still a valuable book for Friends. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find.

Edwards, Tilden. *Spiritual Friends: Reclaiming the Gift of Spiritual Direction*. (Paulist Press, 1980)

A practical discussion of the why, what and how of spiritual friendships. Grows out of his work with the Shalem community and their use and promotion of spiritual friendship as a means of faith development.

*Friendly Woman*. Volume 8 Number 2 "Friendship." (Spring, 1987)

A set of articles about all kinds of friendship including one about spiritual friendships among early Quaker women and several about contemporary spiritual friends.

Hobday, Teresa. *Rediscovering Prayer*. (Quaker Home Service, 1992)

Traces an allegorical friendship between two women that opens up the way to prayer.

Jones, Alan. *Exploring Spiritual Direction: An Essay on Christian Friendship*. (Seabury, 1982)

Jones discusses the need for companionship on the spiritual journey and the very special role played by the spiritual director.

*Weavings*, Volume 8 Number 4. "Spiritual Friendship" (July/August 1987)

Articles about contemporary spiritual friendships.

Yungblut, John. *The Gentle Art of Spiritual Guidance*. (Amity House, 1988)

Yungblut writes about the spiritual guide from a Quaker and Jungian perspective.

"A faithful friend is a sure shelter. Whoever finds one has a rare treasure."

— Ecclesiasticus 6:14 (Jerusalem Bible)

# Keeping a Spiritual Journal: Some Suggested Reading

(source unknown)

## Aids to Writing and Journal Keeping

<i>Write to Discover Yourself</i> Ruth Vaughan	<i>One to One</i> Christina Baldwin	<i>A Life of One's Own</i> Joanna Field
<i>Keeping Your Personal Journal</i> George Simons	<i>At a Journal Workshop</i> Ira Progoff	<i>Telling Your Own Story</i> Sam Keen & Ann Fox
<i>Adventure Inward</i> Morton Kelsey	<i>The New Diary</i> Tristine Rainer	<i>The Creative Journal</i> Lucia Capacchione
<i>Becoming a Writer</i> Dorothea Brande	<i>The Journal &amp; the Journey</i> Mary Morrison (Pendle Hill Pamphlet)	

## Examples of Personal Journals

<i>Diary of a Country Priest</i> George Bernanos	<i>Journal of a Solitude</i> May Sarton	<i>Quaker Journals</i> ed. Howard Brinton
<i>The Measure of My Days</i> Maxwell	<i>Recovering</i> May Sarton	<i>Men Without Masks</i> Florida Scott, ed. Michael Rubin
<i>Markings</i> Dag Hammarskold	<i>Anais Nin Journals</i> (six volumes)	<i>Revelations: Diaries of Women</i> ed. Mary Jane Moffatt
<i>Flute Solo</i> Matthew Kelty	<i>Genesee Diary</i> Henri Nouwen	<i>By Little and By Little</i> Dorothy Day
<i>Gift From the Sea</i> Anne Morrow Lindbergh	<i>Gracias</i> Henri Nouwen	<i>An Interrupted Life: Diaries of ETTY HILLESUM</i>
<i>The Heart of Thoreau's Journals</i> ed. Shepard	<i>The Heritage Journals</i> John Howard Griffin	<i>An Unknown Woman</i> Alice Koller

## Other Helpful Reading

<i>The Other Side of Silence</i> Morton Kelsey	<i>Pilgrim at Tinker Creek</i> Annie Dillard	<i>Our Many Selves</i> Elizabeth O'Connor
<i>Dreams: A Way to Listen to God</i> Morton Kelsey	<i>Chuang Tsu</i> hos. Merton, trans.	<i>Centering</i> M. C. Richards
<i>The Kingdom Within</i> John Sanford	<i>Practise of the Presence of God</i> — Brother Lawrence	<i>The Choice is Always Ours</i> ed. Phillips, Howes, Nixon
<i>The Miracle of Mindfulness</i> Thich Nhat Hanh	<i>Not Without Parables</i> Catherine deHueck	<i>Magic Monastery</i> Theophanus Monk
<i>Healing and Wholeness</i> John Sanford	Scripture, Hasidic Tales, Sayings of Desert Fathers, Poetry, Music	Add your own discoveries. Create your own list.

“The wise person reads his/her own book. One's own experience makes a better book than a shelf full of spiritual literature.”

— Yogi Satchidananda

# A Selected Bibliography for Quaker Families

## *Philadelphia Yearly Meeting*

*And a Little Child Shall Lead Them* by Parker Palmer. (Cadbury Lecture, 1978) 24 pages.

A beautifully written appeal to Friends to grow as an extended, spiritual, loving family. Helps us recognize the qualities in children which meetings may nurture and follow.

*Alternative Celebrations Catalog* (Alternatives, 1924 E. Third, Bloomington, IN 47401) 242 pages.

A great resource for Friends who are rethinking their relationship with materialistic holidays. Produced periodically, the catalog is really an idea exchange. Excellent for groups as well as individual families who want to celebrate both traditional holidays and those of their own making in ways that are good for all people and the earth.

*Becoming a Beatitude People: How to Live Faithfully at Home and in the Meeting* by Judy Brutz. (Friends Family Service, 1987) 23 pages

Judy Brutz delves deeply into our human relationships and our potential for healing against a background of carefully researched data on violence in Quaker families. In this published speech she asks tough questions, links family and spiritual realities, and adds insight into our search for wholeness.

*Children and Quakerism* by Walter J. Homan. (Billick Press, 1939) 143 pages.

This scholarly and well documented book has a great deal of general Quaker history and includes thorough descriptions of practices which remain in use today; it is an excellent overview of the place of children in the Society of Friends.

*Finding God at Home: Family Life as a Spiritual Discipline* by Ernest Boyer Jr. (Harper and Row, 1988) 189 pages.

Boyer leads us to think about the mutual interdependence of monastic life—what he terms “the spirituality of the desert” and the spirituality of every day concerns. Beautiful anecdotal stories. A practical, uplifting book.

*Finding Intimacy* by Herbert G. Zerof. (Winston Press, 1978) 206 pages.

Zerof gives practical and realistic suggestions for couples who wish to improve their relationship. Very clear and readable. Helps define phrases of a marriage.

*Finding the Trail of Life* by Rufus Jones. (The Macmillan Company, 1926).

This often quoted book brings to life the remembered boyhood experiences and vividly illustrates the influences of a solid, Quaker family on their son. Entertaining and lively, this book invites family reading and discussion.

*Meditating with Children: The Art of Concentration and Centering* by Deborah Rozman. (University of the Trees Press, 1977) 151 pages.

Families may wish to do some of the guided meditations at home. Although of a more Eastern orientation, these meditations may also be used for junior meeting.

*Nurturing the Spiritual Life in the Home*, a taped talk by Fran and Bill Taber (FGC, 1986)

In a moving, personal dialogue, the Tabers share specific practices which may be a great help to families searching for ways to deepen spiritual life in their own homes. A discussion guide is included with the tape.

## A Selected Bibliography for Quaker Families, page 2

*One Small Plot of Heaven: Reflections on Family Life* by a Quaker Sociologist, by Elise Boulding. (Pendle Hill, 1989) 220 pages.

No matter what your stage of life, this collection of twelve essays speak to your condition. The essays are an inspiring combination of scholarly and personal experience.

*The Other Way to Listen* by Byrd Baylor and Peter Parnall (Scribners, 1976) 28 pages.

This picture book is a natural lead into a discussion about how to listen during meeting for worship. The beautifully poetic text would be appropriate for junior meeting or family meeting for worship.

**Parable and Transforming Power Among Friends** by Judy Brutz. (Illinois Yearly Meeting, 1986) 13 pages.

Judy Brutz brings the life of the Spirit into family conflicts and examines the promise for us to become healed peacemakers. Her consideration of the continuing development of a pacifist and how this development might be nurtured is important for all Friends who are sometimes parents, teachers, and nurturers.

*Parenting for Peace and Justice* by Kathleen and James McGinnis. (Orbis Books, 1981) 142 pages.

This book puts family activities into a larger perspective integrating social consciousness, family, ministry, and spiritual life. Although written by Catholics, many Quaker quotes and concepts are included. The authors seem least secure in their chapter on 'Prayer and Parenting', an important dimension to this whole process. Good sections dealing with nonviolence, stewardship, racism, and sexism. Best for parents of children from birth through elementary school age.

*Religious Education in the Home and Small Meeting* by Mary Snyder et al. (FGC)

This collection of articles contains several excellent selections for parents including an outline of James Fowler's stages of faith, timely observations from other Quaker parents, suggestions of what may be done to help create an atmosphere of faith in the home, how to resolve holiday tensions, and a brief history of children and Quakerism.

*The Religious Potential of the Child: The Description of an Experience with Children Ages 3 to 6* by Sofia Cavalletti. (Paulist Press, 1983) 187+ pages

The Catholic outward expressions of faith described in this book are sometimes jarringly different from those of Friends. But the discovery approach (based on Montessori principles) to learning religion is extremely appealing. Manipulating concrete objects, leaving space for silence, letting the text speak to children are all methods Friends could adapt for introducing young children to Quakerly concepts. This book may influence what you give your child for play and the kind of prayer you initiate in your home.

*Stages of Faith* by James Fowler. (Harper and Row, 1981)

The author interrelates the works of Kohlberg, Piaget, Bettelheim, and Erickson with his own theories. The chapters which deal directly with stages of faith and applications of these stages are probably most interesting to a lay person. His example of a "stage 5" person is a woman whose search brought her to Quakerism.

*Thoughts from a Quaker Home* by Emily B. H. Phillips. (Friends General Conference Religious Education Committee, 1968)

Snippets of life in a Quaker family. Lovingly written from a mother's point of view.

*Traits of a Healthy Family* by Dolores Curran. (Ballantine Books, 1984) 322 pages

Invites readers "to focus upon their own family's health by becoming aware of the traits commonly found in the healthy family . . ." Every one of the healthy traits has a spiritual connection. Contains an outstanding chapter on 'Sharing Religion.' Many readable and sometimes entertaining examples. Incorporates the opinions of familiar experts.

## A Selected Bibliography for Quaker Families, page 3

*Try This: Family Adventures Toward Shalom* created by The Ecumenical Task Force on Christian Education for World Peace. (Discipleship Resources, 1979) 69 pages.

The clear, attractive format invites us to social action and stewardship. Excellent activities for intergenerational groups as well as for individual families. Could be used for elementary and secondary First Day School classes.

*We're Going To Meeting for Worship* by Abby Hadley. (Friends General Conference, 1972) 24 pages.

Reading and discussing this picture book is one excellent way to help young children adjust to meeting for worship. It makes a good gift for families new to Friends.

*Whole Child, Whole Parent* by Polly Berrien Berends. (Harper and Row, 1987) 345 pages

Spiritual principles and practical parenting jump from this unique book. A cornucopia of quotes to live by are interspersed with practical advice.

*Will Our Children Have Faith?* by John H. Westerhoff III. (Seabury Press, 1976) 126 pages.

Westerhoff makes a strong case for expanding our concept of religious education. His emphasis on community is familiar to Friends. Thinking about Westerhoff's styles of faith may help parents and teachers. Joanne Spears develops Westerhoff's concept of "our story" throughout her 1-2 grade *Discipleship Alive* curriculum.

NOTE: Most of these books are available from the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM) Library. Friends who are not members of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting are encouraged to borrow materials from the PYM Library for \$15 per year plus postage. Call or write: (212) 241-7220 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Library, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102

# The Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business

(source unknown)

## Books

*Faith and Practice* of your own Yearly Meeting, chapters on Meetings for Business.

The books of *Faith and Practice* of other Yearly Meetings give further perspective.

Halliday, Robert, *Mind the Oneness: the Foundation of Good Quaker Business Method* (London: Quaker Home Service, 1991)

Jones, Rufus M., "The Sense of the Meeting" in *A Quaker Reader*, Jessamyn West, ed.

Kenworthy, Leonard S, Chapter 6: "The Quaker Meeting for Business" in *Quakerism: A Study Guide* (Quaker Publications, 1981)

London Yearly Meeting, *Church Government 1968* SEE: Chapter 17

Punshon, John, Chapter 12: "Making Decisions" in *Encounter with Silence* (Friends United Press, 1987)

Sheeran Michael J., *Beyond Majority Rule: Voteless Decisions in the Society of Friends* (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1985)

## Pamphlets

Brinton, Howard, *Guide to Quaker Practice* (Pendle Hill Pamphlet #20)

Brinton, Howard, *Reaching Decisions: The Quaker Method* (Pendle Hill Pamphlet #65)

Brown, Thomas S, *When Friends Attend to Business* (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting)

Hickey, Damon, *Unforeseen Joy: Serving a Friends Meeting as Recording Clerk* (North Carolina Yearly Meeting, 1987)

Lacey, Paul A., *Quakers and the Use of Power* (Pendle Hill Pamphlet #241)

Lacey, Paul A., *Leading and Being Led* (Pendle Hill Pamphlet #264)

Selleck, George, *Principles of the Quaker Business Meeting* (Friends United Press)

Stanfield, David O., *A Handbook for the Presiding Clerk* (North Carolina Yearly Meeting, 1989)

## Articles

Drake, Matthias, "Beyond Consensus: The Quaker Search for God's Leading for the Group," and William Taber's response in *Friends Consultation on Discernment*, report of 1985 consultation at Quaker Hill Conference Center (pp. 20–39)

Foster, Ellie, "The Spiritual Basis of Friends Meeting for Business," *Friends Bulletin*, April, 1987 (pp. 118–120)

Steere, Douglas V. "Some Dimensions of the Quaker Decision-making Process," *Friends Journal*, May 15, 1982 (pp. 5–9)

Taber, Bill. "On Ministering to the Meeting for Business," *Friends Journal*, March, 1988 (pp. 12–13)

# Minute of Purpose & Major Goals of Friends General Conference

*Approved by FGC Central Committee 10/21/95*

## Minute of Purpose

Friends General Conference is a Quaker organization in the unprogrammed tradition of the Religious Society of Friends which primarily serves affiliated yearly and monthly meetings. It is our experience that:

- Faith is based on direct experience of God.
- Our lives witness this experience individually and corporately.
- By answering that of God in everyone, we build and sustain inclusive community.

Friends General Conference provides resources and opportunities that educate and invite members and attenders to experience, individually and corporately, God's living presence, and to discern and follow God's leadings. Friends General Conference reaches out to seekers and to other religious bodies inside and outside the wider Religious Society of Friends.

## Major Goals

God willing, in the next five years, Friends General Conference will:

1. Provide, and help its affiliated yearly and monthly meetings to offer, opportunities for worship and spiritual nurture to people ranging from the most seasoned Friends to the newest seekers.
2. Nurture the small and isolated monthly meetings and worship groups, particularly in areas where little support is available.
3. Build and sustain an extended, loving community of Friends, a community which embraces and respects great diversity but which is nevertheless based on the experience of unity in God's spirit.
4. Articulate, communicate and model core experiences, values and principles of Friends, such as the direct experience of God, the miracle of the gathered meeting, the meeting for worship for business, the balancing of individual leadings with corporate discernment, and the call to live and witness to our faith.



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