

Lives That Speak: Stories of Twentieth-Century Quakers

reviewed by Ian Graham, Hamilton Monthly Meeting, Canadian Yearly Meeting

[*Lives That Speak: Stories of Twentieth-Century Quakers*](#) (by the RE Committee of FGC, edited by Marnie Clark) was published in 2004 with little fanfare or notice. Perhaps that is an oversight, which I would like to rectify with this brief review. Have you ever wondered about who the modern day larger-than-life Quakers might be? It seems we are preoccupied with the ancient ones, like Fox, Woolman, Mott and Frye, to name a few. Wonder no longer; here is a good list of sixteen modern Friends, twelve from the United States, two from Canada, one from Norway and one from Palestine who have lived lives that speak powerfully to the urge in all of us to build a better world. The list includes an equal number of men and women.

Friends' Lives Highlighted in Lives That Speak:

Steve Angell, Alternatives to Violence Project.

Elise Boulding, world peacemaker.

Calhoun Geiger, conscientious objection to war.

Gordon Hirabayashi, resisting martial law in the United States.

Fay Honey Knopp, racial integration and service.

Bill Kreidler, gay rights, education.

Sigrid Lund, Nazi war resistance.

Marlene/Steve Pedigo, urban ministry, anti-racism.

Barbara Reynolds, protesting nuclear war.

David Ritchie, work camps.

Bayard Rustin, civil rights in the United States.

Floyd Schmoie, peace activism and service.

Carol Reilley Urner, local development.

Gilbert White, Quaker diplomacy, ecology.

Signe Wilkinson, cartoon as commentary.

Violet Zaru, Palestinian / Israeli peace process.

Quaker Nobel Prize winners **Emily Balch** (peace prize), **Philip Noel-Baker** (peace prize) **William Vickrey** (economic science prize).

One can pick up this 168-page book and start anywhere; each story stands on its own merits, including pictures of the hero/heroine at various stages of life. If you are wondering about the civil rights movement turn to Bayard Rustin, the African-American who first went to prison for refusing to sign his draft card. He went on to advise and support Martin Luther King, Jr. , in Alabama. If you are wondering about nonviolent change look up Steve Angell, or Gordon Hirabayashi, or Phillip Noel-Baker, all powerful exemplars of putting their lives on the line for matters of conscience. If

third world development is your passion, read about Carol Reilley or Barbara Reynolds. Perhaps you or your meeting are focusing on urban poverty and renewal? Read about Marlene and Steve Pedigo in Chicago. Are you an artist? Read about cartoonist Signe Wilkinson.

Each chapter has a short study guide, with questions and activities. Some chapters include links to websites for further research and information. Some have crossword puzzles with words from the text.

This book is intended for a middle school and early high school audience, but I did not find my attention lagging as I read it. The language is simple and direct, the pictures bring the people alive, the thread of conscience from childhood experiences is fully evident. I found myself wondering how they become the people they were, and voila, the text usually lead me to the answer. (As though an adequate answer to what leads us in life is ever fully possible?)

I would like to see the scope of this book expanded as a series. There are many daring, courageous, inspiring human stories going on, lives being lived in the face of injustice to other humans, to the natural world, to the earth. These lives are not lived for the inspiration they may provide to others, they are lived in the service of the mission they are called to. This does not, however, restrict their value as examples to us, especially our children. Humanity has always been inspired by the greats among us, perhaps especially the unsung heroes and heroines who labor in obscurity.

Lives That Speak is not theologically doctrinaire. The brief vibrant biographical accounts in this volume speak to That which gives forth the Word. It is an inspiring book for that reason alone.

To order this or other publications contact QuakerBooks of FGC: 1-800-966-4556; e-mail bookstore@fgcquaker.org; or you can [order Lives that Speak online](#).

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