

FRIENDS IN SAN ANTONIO

7052 North Vandiver at Eisenhower

April 2016

Believing and Belonging

From Philip Gulley

Read Matthew 7:21-22: “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

Today I would like us to think about the difference between believing in God, believing in Jesus, and belonging to God, belonging to Jesus.

And I would like to suggest that if there is a God, and if the essence of that God was somehow captured in the life and priorities of Jesus, as we Christians believe, then that God isn’t going to jump up and down and do cartwheels just because I say, “I believe in God.” That God isn’t going to say, “Oh, I am so happy. Philip believes in me now. What an honor! My life is now complete!”

Do we really think God is sitting up in heaven, stewing about whether or not we believe, saying, “I’ve almost got him. I’ve almost convinced her. I’ll let them win the lottery today so they’ll believe in me.” So when I was having lunch with that man a few months ago and he said, “I heard you don’t believe in God,” maybe I should have asked him why belief is so important. After all what or whom people believed in didn’t seem to be of primary importance to Jesus. Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven.

So while the church has historically emphasized the importance of believing in God, I’m not persuaded that matters much to God.

Perhaps Phil Gulley was more intent on these words of Jesus:

“Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or

Calendar

- 3. Sunday**
Potluck lunch at 11.30 a.m..

- 10. Sunday**
Meeting for Business, 11.30-.

- 17. Sunday.....**
Forum – to be determined

- 24, Sunday**
Forum – to be determined.

- 27. Wednesday**
Midweek Meeting, 7.00, Gary’s home.

- May 8, Sunday**
Public Meeting, 7 p.m.- 8p.m. Maxine Kaufman-Lacusta, Refusing to be Enemies

variety of contexts and is currently an associate member of the Canadian Friends Service Committee for Middle East projects and an adviser to the newly constituted Israel/Palestine Working Group of CFSC, will present her book, *Refusing to be Enemies: Palestinian and Israeli Nonviolent Resistance to the Israeli Occupation* on May 8, 7-9pm at the Friends Meeting House, 7052 N. Vandiver (at Eisenhower.) This event is co-sponsored by Jewish Voice for Peace.

Friends Music Camp

This message goes out to many Meetings:

“My name is Pam Wilkinson and I am on the faculty of Friends Music Camp, a Quaker-run music camp which takes place at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana. We are actively seeking campers for this summer July 10 - August 7, 2016. Your meeting has hopefully received a FMC poster and brochure in the mail and I just wanted to get in touch to offer a little more information!

FMC is open to campers from 10 to 18 years old at all musical levels. Younger students have the option of staying for just the first two weeks of camp, while campers over 13 typically attend for the entire month. We ask that prospective campers have had lessons for at least one year on their chosen instrument, or that they have participated in a school orchestra, band or choral program for at least one year. During the summer, campers attend lessons, sing in the chorus, play in large and small ensembles, act in musical theater, take classes, and, of course, have ample time for hanging out and having fun. Evening activities include capture the flag, a dance, outside speakers, visits to the local pool, and other fun activities. Both students and staff perform at weekly recitals and on weekend concerts.

This is a wonderful experience for any young music student. There is a great deal of information about FMC on our website, www.friendsmusiccamp.org <https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__www.friendsmusiccamp.org__&d=BQMFaQ&c=8hUWFZcyzZ-Za5rBPlktOQ&r=rDtwRJBVUp7tmHs7IEULKw2ZG-s_IYDPwXbSHEmhRoA&m=g-ctlitmESPki8JUOUqPNhfCIFPNpkLJk9bDMS3W4_8&s=BeHNecImFDWCseyYR38ibi7MvN7VZEBacupc5GkJhk8&e=>. Please feel free to take a look and pass this information along to anyone who might be interested in FMC! If you have any questions about FMC, feel free to contact me at any time!

Sincerely, Pam Wilkinson”

We know that our Jocelyn and Pam have found it a wonderful experience.

Business Meeting

Meeting for Business commenced with an advice:

To benefit from oppression is to be responsible for changing it

Jim Wallis: *America's Original Sin*

After silence, Bill, our treasurer gave his report for February. Income was robust, Friends who give once annually, did so this month A new organization, Insight Meditation, is now using our premises, RCG paid up to date, and there was income from book sales. The cost of our insurance was reduced, a pleasant surprise Everything else was as usual.

The Meeting Workday on the 19th was very successful, with a lot of help from Other groups who use the meetinghouse. (See below.) A new exterior noticeboard has been put up, above the drinking fountain. Gretchen spoke of the next Quaker Fair on May 14. There is a possibility of a Petting zoo and Ponyriding which Suzanne will subsidize.

There was discussion about the “mentoring” of new attenders, no ecision being made. Frstday School planning was discussed. Liz Yeats FGC Suzanne There was discussion of what answer meeting should take about the new Open Carry gun laws in Texas. Three websites were

recommended for information:

<https://www.texaslawshield.com/open-carry-in-texas-begins-january-1st/>,

<https://www.wyattbrand.com/no-guns/>,

and

<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/mar/15/so-america-this-is-how-you-do-gun-control>.

Carol, our clerk, drafted a statement to be placed at the entrance (see below.) A suggestion as made to say only “We do not carry guns,” or alternatively to place this as a heading for the longer statement. No decision was made.

Meeting closed in silence.

Open Carry Gun Law

Carol gave the following notice for the entrance:

FRIENDS MEETING OF SAN ANTONIO (QUAKERS)

We ask that everyone coming into our community's space respect our commitment to nonviolence by not bringing a weapon here.

You are welcome to join us as we help each other learn how to live together in peace and harmony without violence.

No guns please!

A handout will be available with similar wording.

Women and Peace

International Women’s Day last month was an opportunity to celebrate the role that women have played in shaping the world. Peace Direct tells us, “ Often conflict disproportionately affects women, as they are targets for sexual violence or are left without support if their families are killed. But this is not the only story.

Women are also powerful promoters of peace. Their voices and actions are driving peaceful solutions to conflict all around the world. Today, on International Women’s Day, we take a look at how women are building peace in their communities, and how we can support them.

Female-led community groups in Zimbabwe are having an impact stopping violence and achieving gender equality.

In Zimbabwe we work to establish female-led community groups. These groups, in turn, train local leaders and the police force to resolve conflict peacefully in order to reduce violence in their communities. For largely female-led groups to gain the respect of local figures of authority and educate them on the benefits of peace is an incredible achievement. An achievement which is making a real difference to the lives of women and men in the villages. Through this female-led and community-based approach we are making strides not only in reducing and stopping violence, but in ensuring gender equality.

In Sri Lanka, Dishani and a group of school girls, together are working to secure a peaceful future for the next generation. For over ten years, Dishani Jayaweera has been overcoming the inter-religious divides that have previously led to war in Sri Lanka. She has been gathering priests and monks from the divided Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Christian communities, getting

them to face each other and recognise their common humanity. In doing so Dishani and her team have built trust and peace between previously divided communities. She has also set up multi-faith groups across Sri Lanka and works with women and youth to secure a more peaceful future. From small beginnings, Dishani has worked with determination and perseverance to build successful projects. Her tireless work is emblematic of what one female can achieve.” *Peace Direct* is a London-led organization working for peace through local leadership around the world.

Miscellany

We have been informed of “ a timely opportunity with Herb Lape for a May 13-15 weekend at Friends Center in Barnesville on *The Discerning Community: Recovering our Tradition of Communal Discernment.*”

Herb expresses his hopes for the weekend in these words:

“What I'm most interested in right now is how we as Quakers can help heal the tremendous factional polarization in our midst and in the country/world as a whole.

I believe that our tradition of communal discernment rooted in humble, fallible witness that embraces the tension of multiple witness within a patient loving communal discernment is the best way to heal the factional fears and anger and work towards peace.”

If you are interested, contact Katharine Jacobsen at 262)728-6048, kenkatharine@earthlink.net , (or 3000 North Shore Drive, Delavan, Wisconsin, 53115.)

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We see that the Gathering of Friends General Conference has a category “People of Color.” We’re reminded of (white) Friends in Singapore many decades ago, who, applying for their radio licence, had to say exactly that, were they people of color. The intention was so that the radio programs could be in appropriate Singapore languages. But, yes, they said, and when faced with specifying, they said “flesh-colored.” Spelled “coloured,” of course.

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Suzanne was not well on the Workparty Day and had to go home. We had help from Crosspoint??? But she says, “It was a great group of hardworking men and women. They joyfully hopped to do everything on our lists. I was really pleased by all the cooperation and problem solving. One man cleaned and organized the housekeepers closet and hung the new broom handle holder that I had not gotten around to (being a shorty). Bill's team and James's team got their jobs done and we just kept people working. Then I was starting to feel overwhelmed so I went home. I was so grateful that Alice and Gretchen could take over and thank everyone & I’m sorry I missed it. I went straight to bed, where I remain! It's wonderful!”

“We had 17 people from Crosspoint (see below). Marian and I were foremen. Bill was team leader for the mailbox project. James was team leader for the bulletin board project. The Goddesses and the Yellow Dog Sangha also sent lots of folks.”

Crosspoint is one of the organizations meeting supports. It’s part of their mission to do community service. They really enjoyed working with us and they have the most muscle, to climb on the roof and do the heavy lifting.

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“We envision a world where people who offend are not caged, exiled, and stigmatized for life, where public school children aren’t fodder for the school-to-prison pipeline, and where historic intergenerational wounds are acknowledged and healed.

Such a world is already in the making and looking for our support.

‘Restorative justice is a process to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offence and to collectively identify and address harms, needs and obligations, in order

to heal and put things as right as possible.’ —Howard Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*”  
This is the introduction to a Pendle Hill program in March.

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And this is one to a PeaceCenter program in March: “In this current presidential election cycle we have seen religion drawn into the conversation on so many important societal issues, from healthcare to immigration reform to national security. While the primaries in Texas have now past, we still are left with the uneasiness of navigating a volatile arena with faith in the public square.

An active conversation between civic and faith leaders within San Antonio can help us move beyond the current polarization and derogatory commentary. As it is said, all politics are local! The conversation starts with us!

Questions we hope to explore during our morning gathering include:

‘How do we live our faith in the public square with respect and dignity for all? Can interfaith relations be a civic practice? Can civic relations be an interfaith practice?’”

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“There is a saying in Arabic ‘Even heaven, without people, is unbearable’” by Laila, in the *NYTimes*. Such a challenging thought.. Does English possess any such native statement?

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Jewish Quakers? We read that Haredi, the Jewish term for ultra-orthodox, means one who trembles before God.

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We wrote above that many Crosspoint residents came to help us on our Workparty Day. Crosspoint is an organization which provides residential care and rehabilitation for people who have fallen on hard times – drug addicts, homeless veterans, both men and women, people with emotional and psychological problems.

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What a nostalgic and rewarding PBS program on the music of Peter, Paul, and Mary. Yet, a sad memory for Friends. From the stage the words “There must be a sizeable proportion of Nixon’s Enemies List here tonight!” Greeted with laughter and cheers.

A Quaker President with an “Enemies List”?

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Seven years ago the refugees who were attracting worldwide attention were not suffering from religious adversaries but racial. The African, Negroid, people of Darfur were being oppressed by the Arab (though possibly mixed race) rulers of Sudan. This prejudice seems not often found among Muslims and may be due to past fears of population dominance of other race.

In South Africa there is an area where the residents are of mixed race but believe themselves to be of pure Afrikaner descent. Many years ago we knew a Sudanese Arab with negroid characteristics. A sad prejudice. Born of fear?

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Beyt Tikkun Synagogue Without Walls has circulated a message urging Jews to be cautious in celebrating Purim, the celebration of Jewish Queen Esther using her access to King Ahashueras to stop the evil Haman from carrying out his intention to wipe out the Jewish people in Persia, the country of their exile.

It pleads with Jews to recognize the difference between Hitler and his massive armed forces on the one hand, and the individual acts of desperation as a handful of Palestinians strike out against random Israelis, deplorable though this may be. They must recognize that Israel is now strong and dominant, not subjected to oppression. Purim, it says, encourages Israelis to oppress

Palestinians.

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We received this message: "This is big news: yesterday, private "security" conglomerate G4S announced that they were selling off their Israeli subsidiary, and getting out of the U.S. and U.K. youth prison businesses within the next two years. Who will buy? And what effect will it have on commercial prisons?"  
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A visiting Friend will be in San Antonio this month for an Innocence Project conference. Two years ago the Project celebrated the freeing of four San Antonio women sentenced for child abuse when they were young. The evidence was eventually overturned and their sentences revoked. The women refused to accept plea bargains because they insisted they had not committed the crimes. The chief counsel of the Project says that the cases blaze a new trail in Texas for reviewing old cases.

Jonathan Plummer

Elizabeth Warren, a member of Lake Forest Meeting, has recently published his biography in her book titled *Jonathan Wright Plummer: Quaker Philanthropy*.

Jonathan Plummer was praised as one of the pioneers of the renaissance of the Society of Friends at the end of the 19th Century. He thought people should act on their faith, a venerated Quaker principle. He brought together seven yearly meetings from Illinois to Philadelphia and New York to devise ways to carry out Quaker testimonies. These included urging peaceful relations among men, giving aid and comfort to the poor and those in prison, helping working women, children, and those needing education. The Quaker opposition to the death penalty for convicted criminals was also on the agenda of the organization he founded, the Friends' Union for Philanthropic Labor. The Union evolved into the Friends General Conference whose work continues today.

Who was Jonathan Plummer? He founded Friends General Conference and co-founded the World Parliament of Religions. He is someone you should know. To purchase a copy of Betsy's book, contact her at e.c.warren@comcast.net.

"He was not a pronounced religious mystic, as were many earlier Quakers. He listened to the 'still, small voice,' and this prompted both charity and vocal ministry." (IYM minute.) Illinois YM has an annual talk, the Plummer Lecture. Do our SPICES testimonies adequately cover Jonathan Plummer's concerns?

Queries from Val

Val has written these queries, (in italics), arising from words of ML King:

"Our lives begin to end the day when we become silent about things that matter."

What are the things that matter on which we may not be speaking/acting enough?

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

What injustices do we see or experience on a regular basis? If they do not directly harm us, how do they threaten us?

"In the end, we will not remember the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."

How are we speaking (with words or our lives) for an end to racism and White supremacy in the US?

And here is one which arises from Val's:

What queries should we be addressing to ourselves, arising from what we see, or hear of?

Rufus Jones, in *Inner Life*(1916), said:

The history of religion through the ages reveals the fact that there have been multitudinous ways of worshipping God, all of them yielding real returns of life and joy and power to large groups of people. At its best and truest, however, worship seems to me to be *direct, vital, joyous, personal experience and practice of the presence of God.*

The very fact that such a mighty experience as this is possible means that there is some inner meeting place between the soul and God; in other words, that the divine and human...are not wholly sundered. In an earlier time God was conceived as remote and transcendent. God dwelt in the citadel of the sky, was worshiped with ascending incense and communicated divine will to beings beneath through celestial messengers or by mysterious oracles. We have now more ground than ever before for conceiving God as transcendent; that is, as above and beyond any revelation or self-disclosure, and as more than any finite experience can apprehend. But at the same time, our experience and our ever-growing knowledge of the outer and inner universe confirm our faith that God is also immanent, a real presence, a spiritual reality, immediately to be felt and known, a vital, life-giving environment of the soul. God is a Being who can pour divine life and energy into human souls, even as the sun can flood the world with light and resident forces, or as the sea can send its refreshing tides into all the bays and inlets of the coast, or as the atmosphere can pour its life-giving supplies into the fountains of the blood in the meeting place of the lungs; or, better still, as the mother fuses her spirit into the spirit of her responsive child.

Query for April

As Nature begins its yearly cycle of regeneration, how are we working to nurture ourselves, and our relationships with family, friends, and community?

Meeting for Worship is held on Sunday at 10 a.m., followed by refreshments and a Forum discussion at 11.30, usually lasting until about 12.45. Children are invited to join worship for the first fifteen minutes, after which they may go to join with the Young Friends program. Child care is available during Forum.

Clerk: Carol Balliet; e-mail: clerk@saquakers.org.

Newsletter Editor: Ken Southwood, (210)828-1513; e-mail: jksouthwood@grandecom.net

Website: <http://www.sanantonioquakers.org>

Donations may be made to Friends Meeting of San Antonio, P.O. Box 6127, San Antonio TX78209.

Meeting telephone for meeting times or to ask for other information: (210) 945-8456