

FRIENDS IN SAN ANTONIO

7052 North Vandiver at Eisenhower

January 2018

THE INNER LIGHT

Quaker testimonies are important aspects of Quaker witness. But witness to what? Every testimony is rooted in “the Inner Light”, or “the Indwelling Spirit”, “that of God in everyone.” This Spirit within each person provided early Friends with immediate and unmediated access to God’s will, an “Inner Guide” to faith and action. This is not unique to Friends but its centrality to Friends’ every action may be. Yet, as stated, it is insufficient. One of the key features of early Quakerism lay in their belief that this access led them to Truth, to which they were required to witness. They even took the name of “Friends of the Truth.”

Charles Kimball, in *When Religion Becomes Evil*, identifies five characteristics which may lead members of a religious community to commit evil acts. The first of these is the claim to know absolute Truth. Early Friends may then be regarded as having been in danger of doing evil, of imposing their truth on others. An example of this risk can be found in the excesses of James Nayler’s followers. Claiming access to a Truth not possessed by other groups could clearly have led Friends into dangerous channels. They might easily have accused others of ignoring, even suppressing, that of God within them, and perhaps joined in the witch hunts which took thousands of lives in Europe.. Why did this not happen? Why did George Fox’s question to each individual Friend, “What canst *thou* say?” not lead to chaotic conflict and evil?

Four features of Quaker experience of the Inner Light may be crucial. The first is that it was clearly from its beginning a light of love. Nayler’s final deathbed statement has become a classic statement of Quaker experience of a loving Indwelling Spirit. Attention to it took two forms, the first looking to the Light within oneself to lead to right (loving) action, as John Woolman did in urging Friends to reject slavery.

The second feature lies in the Light existing in every one. It was not, and is not, a Quaker, nor even a Christian, monopoly. This leads to the second form of attention, looking to the Light in others, as Woolman did in visiting an Indian tribe, “if haply I might receive some instruction from them. . .”

The third feature is that it took precedence over book-learning. Fox’s question is a guide. A factor in Kimball’s examples of religions turning evil lies in the ability of anyone to find in the Bible, and focus mightily on,

Calendar

3. Wednesday, 3 Support Group, 6:00 in Library

7. Sunday Potluck lunch at 11.30 a.m.

11. Thursday, 11 Mid-Week Worship, soup 6:00, worship 7:00

14. Sunday Forum –.

15, Monday, Martin Luther King March.

21. Sunday..... 9.00 Quaker Questions. Meeting for Business, 11.30.

26 & 27, Fri, Sat, SOL Center Women’s Group Retreat

28, Sunday Forum –State of the Meeting Report Preparation..

31. Wednesday Midweek Meeting, 7.00, Gary’s home.

statements which may justify almost any action. Charismatic leaders may tend to emphasize some passages and downplay others, while insisting that the text consists of absolute truth. By being led to an authoritative loving Inward Spirit, Friends were led away from Armageddon, Old Testament massacres, the Anti-Christ, the wrath of God, and so on, and directed to act out of love in this world. Friends had made their biblical choice as to where Truth was to be found and ironically it led them away from strict attention to, and justification by, the book.

The fourth feature lies in the emphasis among Friends to seek the Light quietly together in equality and unity rather than to be swayed by charismatic oratory. Fox was a first among equals. So was Nayler, despite his temporary poor judgment. The Bristol Friends avoided his entry into the city “in a miserable parody of the entry of Christ into Jerusalem”. *

*Geoffrey Hubbard, *Quaker By Convincement*,” p29



Personal News

There was welcome seasonal friendship in December. On December 24 a meeting for worship was held in the evening, followed by a tamale supper.

Pat and Bill’s little grandson, at a church, was baby Jesus in the manger last year. This year he was too big, so he was a sheep. Jim has returned from a sojourn in Australia. James’s mother is not well but is cheerful. Marian visited with her. Next month’s newsletter will be by a new editor, Friends. We wish her, or him, well.

Catherine S visited Meeting in November and reported that she has adjusted to her new home in Michigan, though still misses much about San Antonio. She has a garden with vegetables and a veritable orchard. Gary and Vivian are a proud grandpa and grandma.

Carol R tells us, “Crystal is required to a science fair project at her high school. She created what project to do, thinking about my expertise in educational computer gaming, of course, as well as a project potentially with Joe. But, she designed and developed the idea and game through our conversations. I mostly directed her in her thinking and implementation. Often, I had to bring her down to earth about what she could actually make and do with the game in the time frame that has had to work with. She did all the typing in of her game and her reports. She gave out and graded all the pre- and post-test. We discuss what she is writing and including. I help with proofing and

formatting.

And, she has seen Neil do a science project for many years.” Crystal is in 10th grade. She just got 2nd grand prize at her school fair. .

Business Meeting

Meeting opened with the Advice, from Britain Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice: “We have a common purpose in seeking God’s will through writing and listening, believing that every activity of life should be subject to divine guidance,”

The Treasurer reported that monthly expenses in November were typical but for a “timing issue” in cleaning costs. The proposed 2018 budget is slightly smaller and can be met if 40 members donate \$710 a year or 30 give \$940 on average. The HVAC repair exceeded the 2017 budget. The 2018 budget will be seasoned and considered for approval in January.

The M&O reports arranging for Jim to give a forum on Jan 28 on a topic within Quaker/spiritual matters. P&SC reported the possibility that we might host a concert by Annie Patterson and Peter Blood before or after SCYM. The committee is inquiring into the group SA Climate Action to decide whether to recommend that Meeting join it. It includes social justice organizations and Meredith M.

Property Committee reported that costs of repair to the roof eave were being investigated, that the water fountain had been replaced, that snow had broken branches and these had been cleared, that the HVAC in the

original building was repaired, and that a key cabinet has been installed to maintain control over key organization and security. The second reading of the Nominating Committee report was made. The final will be in January.

Meeting closed in silence.

Sanctuary

A woman with two young children, one a citizen, is under deportation order. She is appealing. She may move into sanctuary in January, in a local church if one offers itself. Volunteers are needed to prepare food or accompany her to an ICE check-in or stay with her in the church. Training will be provided. If so led, get in touch with Gretchen.

Rival Religions

The Interreligious Council will hold its monthly meeting on Monday Jan 8 at 6.30 at the Jewish Center at 12500 NW Military Drive. There will be a discussion led by Jan Puckett on "God is not one: Eight rival religions that run the world." This is taken from the book by Stephen Prothero and the central focus of discussion will be on Christianity.

The Refugee Crisis

Rabbi Bemporad and Pope Francis discuss refugee crisis:

Today, so many around the world are suffering fear, victimization, and attacks, which force thousands to become refugees and migrants. Established in 1992, the Center for Interreligious Understanding (CIU) organizes initiatives that repair lives, such as at the international conference on Migrants and Refugees in Rome this past November, co-sponsored by the CIU. This provided educational opportunities and scholarships for college-age refugees; programs that break the barriers between religions and ethnic groups, such as "Imams to Auschwitz," "Sharing Sacred Spaces," and of course, "Scriptural Resources for Peace."

Imagine! Kosovo, a Muslim majority nation that lost many youths to ISIS recruiters in the past, is joining with the CIU to host a Scriptural Resources for Peace© forum this fall. Leading Kosovar Imams and scholars will teach inspired

and proper interpretations of Koranic verses to the youth, countering claims of extremist groups.
<emailedxler@yahoo.com@ccsend.com>

Festivals

In India, Christmas Day is a governmental holiday since British rule despite only 2.3% being Christian. It has been just a fun day, complains a Muslim woman, but now the Hindu extremists are entwining it with religion. As Quakers, we hold that all days are sacred, none more than another. But Christmas is a special time of joyful gift-giving and tree-decoration, when we are celebrating the birthday of Jesus, our teacher and example. Are we entwining Christmas and religion?

Numbers of upperclass Indian Hindus celebrate Christmas. We should share festivals? Join in Jews' Hannukah, Muslims' Eid-al-Fitr, Hindus' Diwali, Sikhs' Parkash Utsav Dasveh Patshah, and Buddhists' Vesak Day? We would have a lot to celebrate and be hardpressed to feel as joyful as those religious celebrants who have a single day.

Bouldings and the Peace Research Movement

The peace research movement is a kind of interface between the peace movement and general social science re-search. Its positive motivation, like that of the peace movement, comes from a social concern to see the devastation of war eliminated from man's experience. Its practitioners, however, and its tools and methods come directly from the social sciences.

It works with sample surveys, content analysis, simulation, statistical treatments of past wars, intercultural comparisons of belief systems, images and behaviors. It uses theoretical models drawn from economics, social psychology, sociology, psychology, political science, game theory and operational research. (Cynthia Kerman)

The origin of this book in my own mind can be traced back to a passionate conviction of my youth that war was the

major moral and intellectual problem of our age. If the years have made this conviction less passionate, they have made it no less intense

In particular, this work [*Conflict and Defense: A General Theory*] is the result of a conviction that the intellectual chassis of the broad movement for the abolition of war has not been adequate to support the powerful moral engine which drives it and that the frequent breakdowns which interrupt the progress of the movement are due essentially to a deficiency in its social theory.

Kenneth Boulding, Preface (New York, 1962)

“A series of four volumes honors the lifetime achievements of the distinguished activist and scholar Elise Boulding (1920–2010) on the occasion of her 95th birthday. The first anthology documents the breadth of Elise Boulding’s contributions to Peace Research, Peacemaking, Feminism, Future Studies, and Sociology of the Family. Known as the “matriarch” of the twentieth century peace research movement, she made significant contributions in the fields of peace education, future studies, feminism, and sociology of the family, and as a prominent leader in the peace movement and the Society of Friends.” Kindle Books, editor Russell Boulding, their son

The Bouldings and Cynthia were members of Ann Arbor Meeting, where Kenneth was a professor of Economics. Elise was Kenneth’s wife, obtaining her Ph.D in Sociology relatively late in life after raising a family. Kenneth was, he thought because of his Liverpool accent, refused a fellowship at Oxford and came to the USA.

Miscellany

The Martin Luther King march will be **January 15**, and Friends Meeting will be on hand with our banner and Quaker tee-shirts. We will meet at St. Philips college parking lot. The day before, **Jan 14**, an interfaith service will be held at San Fernando Cathedral, starting at 4:00.

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The annual silent retreat at Lebh

Shomea drew a dozen friends, including Bo Tep, our Buddhist friend from California. He and Gary held a dialog each evening followed by worship sharing around the theme, How do we sustain our seeking for the Spirit in trying times. Buzzards, wild turkeys, and deer also attended.

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It’s not too soon to put the Friends’ Festival on your calendar: **Saturday, May 19**. We’ll fill the parking lot with books, jumble sale items, hot food and home-baked goods. More than a fund-raising event, this is our chance for community-building

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Make America Greet Again – that’s the call of the Interfaith Welcome Coalition. Emma Lazarus said, and the Statue of Liberty took up, “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free. . .” But it seems we don’t need them any more, just educated people who could otherwise help their native countries. Though, do we not? The US birth rate has dropped to the point at which it no longer replaces the number of deaths and the population size is supported by immigration. Perhaps we still need the huddled masses. Will they need visas?

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Long before President Trump’s election the U.S. was deep in the throes of militarism, what the Quaker Philip Noel Baker called, “a deep-rooted and malignant disease.” In the United States military force is equated with effectiveness, while talking, engagements, diplomacy, and cooperation are seen as “soft.” FCNL Washington Newsletter.

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AFSC said, in December, “May your holiday season be filled with love and light and a renewed sense of hope for the year ahead. From all of us at the American Friends Service Committee, I wish you happy holidays and a fruitful new year.”

This after saying, “With a new U.S. administration, we saw the swift erosion of human rights and social justice—but we heeded the call, to further our mission to build peace with justice, to confront hate and oppression, to

better organize to provide much-needed resources to targeted communities, to stand together to create stronger movements and networks of support.”

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“Five-year-old Buthaina used to have five brothers and sisters to play with. Now she has none.

In August, the Saudi Arabia-led coalition dropped a bomb on her home in Sana’a, Yemen. Our team at Amnesty confirmed that the bomb that killed Buthaina’s parents, siblings and other civilians was made in the United States.

The United States has supplied weapons and military equipment to Saudi Arabia, which is leading the military coalition in Yemen. Weapons supplied by the United States have been used to commit war crimes and devastate the lives of Yemeni civilians.” (AI)

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“Austin Tan Cerca de la Frontera celebrated it’s 14th year hosting the Women & Fair Trade Festival, & had huge success, thanks to our wonderful Austin Community! From the "Speak Out Against Free Trade", to the live music, to the beautiful crafts, all of our ATCFistas extend our gratitude.”

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Storytelling is the most powerful ways to communicate an idea, share an experience, or highlight a revelation. Stories can enable understanding and empathy between two opposing groups; and they can strengthen bonds between those with like minds. Quakers have been telling stories for hundreds of years in order to connect with each other and the wider world about their beliefs and experiences. Many of the most memorable Quaker stories involve our testimonies of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and stewardship. (Student Voices Project, Friends Journal)

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FCNL said in mid-December, “This decision [to move the US embassy to Jerusalem] will make negotiating peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians more difficult, and it could foment instability throughout the Middle East. FCNL strongly opposes President Trump’s proclamation to indefinitely ban nearly all travel from

seven nations, including six Muslim-majority countries. And FCNL and our partners brought thousands of voices together calling for protections for Dreamers – the young immigrants who grew up in the U.S. without documentation.” And it urged Congress to “stop sending bombs to Saudi Arabia until the Saudi government ends its indiscriminate bombing of civilians in Yemen and lifts the blockade that has plunged millions to the verge of starvation.”

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Marjorie Herbert, in FJ, speaks of “what led me to become a Quaker: I’ve always believed in ongoing revelation. I’ve always believed that women were equal to men. I’ve always believed that consensus decision making is much healthier than hierarchical, top-down decisions. And I’ve always had an extremely keen and passionate interest in social justice. . . .

All of my life I’ve had some form of a devotional spiritual practice, and it just came to where I could no longer feel it was a reality for me to quote “pray to a God.” The issue of prayer was something of a great crisis for me because I had always prayed. . . .When I go into Quaker meeting, I do not do or attempt Buddhist meditation, but I have learned what it is like to be quiet. I believe that quietness is opening myself to the mystery of being, and that mystery of being is a place where I can be healed and receive guidance and develop compassion. . . .”

She joined the Society of Friends at 77 after a lifetime of seminaries and the Methodist church.. .

Love

Love, again. It is so divided a word. These days we hear repeatedly of people having “lovers.” Mothers love their babies. Spouses love their spouses. Children love their parents. Yet none of these is what is meant by Christian love (agape in the original Greek.)

It is a strange word to apply to a Christian’s concern and, perhaps, care by donation, for a poor black African living in a shantytown on the outskirts of Nairobi, or toiling on his smallholding (usually with his wife.) They are quite alien and unknown to the Christian, unlike the “lovers,” babies, husbands, and wives. Yet our responsibility, following the teaching of Jesus, is to “love” hun-

dreds of billions of people known to us only by heresay, or “herewrite.” Jesus attempted to demonstrate, for instance, by talking to the Samaritan woman, Samaritans being much disliked by Isareli-tes. But she was before him and they spoke face to face. Can we do that for a man in the mountains of New Guinea? Jesus was speaking to us in today’s world in which we, at least, know in the abstract of his existence.

“For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; 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, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me’” (Matthew 25:35-40 NASB) The capital Ms are the translation’s.

A worthwhile quotation from a nun in the TV series *Call the Midwife*: “Sometimes we forget that the hand of the Almighty is at the end of our arm.”

Making It Right

Making It Right is a very practical book on everyday peacemaking for children and teens. It wouldn’t hurt adults to read it, too. Canadian author Marilee Peters tells real-life stories of injury, damage, and anger becoming stories of listening, reparation, cooperation, and friendship. Along the way, she shows the steps of restorative justice with easy-to-understand examples from diverse cultures around the world, including a community of chimpanzees.

She tells us the major shortcomings of many criminal justice systems and offers a grassroots problem-solving method that can help people avoid juvenile detention and jail while learning how to take responsibility for working things out. The role of mediator is clearly shown as instrumental in reaching

agreements that settle conflicts. The net effect is empowering the victims, the perpetrators, the bystanders, and the community. *FJ*, Tom and Sandy Farley.

Tying up the cat

“Tying up the cat” – apparently means “becoming tangled up in trivia, giving certain practices a significance never intended by the originator.” It grew from an old Zen master’s tying up a cat which interrupted meditation. This became a continuing custom, fetching a cat when no cat was any longer a nuisance. Donna Gayden, in *FH* suggests the “tying up the cat” around the language of Friends’ original theology can make us wary of speaking truthfully about spiritual matters and can inhibit ministry. And that lengthy quotations from the bible are no longer easily digested by Friends who do not read it as often. And also that we claim early Friends’ “first-hand experience as our own, getting bogged down in the letter of their law, instead of seeking the spirit behind those laws.” That spirit, not the words, being still the same.

And she quotes George Fox’s advice: “Dwelling all in the Light, which is unchangeable, you come to judge all the changeable ways and worships by that which comes from God.” Although she acknowledges that early Friends used biblical language and that now, “some who most adamantly insist they are the only true Quakers—are offended by the words “God” and “Jesus.” We must worship in the Spirit, in the Light, knowing that, among us, Friends differ in their understanding of the words. The Twentieth Century brought great changes.

The Death of Jesus

The execution of Jesus a fortunate event? This sad question is not a reference to his sacrifice, but to its timing. Prophet Mohamed of Islam lived a life long enough and did enough that his word catalyzed into Sharia laws. We are fortunate that early Christians did not write laws derived, by their reasoning, from Jesus’s words. Though he did not dictate punishments but love. Like the Sharia, laws interpreted by those early

Christians would likely have reflected legal precepts of their time and location. Thus, punishments such as stoning, beheading, burning, or removal of a hand. We would now have ancient and unchangeable laws ordained by God. Our Christian behavior is closer to the love ordained by Jesus, though still not close enough for Quakers.

What was the interpretation of Jesus's sacrifice among those early Christians? Was it to appease God, to avert his anger? But why would God send his son for such painful sacrifice? He had tested Abraham's obedience but without the intention that Isaac would actually die. It seems possible that early Christians, bereft of their savior, conceived, in current terms, that he was a sacrifice, but surely for their sins, not his, as Jesus himself was sinless.

Weird Quaker Tweets

My name is Mackenzie Morgan, I'm a member of Adelphi Friends Meeting and I'm one of the hosts of "Quaker Faith and Podcast".

So here are a few of the kinds of tweets that I come across.

"Lo! He had a gun. This is Texas, everybody has a gun. My florist has a gun. I don't have a gun. My ancestors were Quakers. . . ."

"Using a candle for light to guide me to the next room. I feel like a Quaker. I think. What's a Quaker? . . ."

"It was the Quakers who helped the slaves, not the Christians. So how come you never see black Quakers? . . ."

"My ancestors were F-ing Quakers. The only thing they were enslaving was oats. . . ."

Here's a tweet from a Quaker :
"If I had a nickel for each time I was asked about my Quaker upbringing and 'not believing in sex or electricity', I'd have \$\$\$. . ."

That's this other group called the Shakers . . . – they are celibate.

The electricity one, well, we're not

Amish.

"What religion was followed by the Frys, Cadburys, and Roundtrees [sic], who set up Britain's chocolate industry? . . ."

To which someone replied,
"This is why I consider eating chocolate daily to be a religious tradition."

[Extracted from *FJ*.]

Hershey was a Friend, too. Perhaps we should serve chocolate after Meeting for Worship?

The Death of Bonnie

The morning after my little sister died, I found my mom sobbing in her bed. She was turned to one side, her back to me, crumpled atop the blanket on her old, uneven mattress. She wore street clothes, a blouse and soft slacks. I could see her face was red and wet.

Now in addition to my own pain was the helplessness of seeing my unselfish, ever-believing mother that way. It didn't seem right, and I immediately began to cry too. I hadn't felt angry about Bonnie's passing til that moment, and it ignited me, like a hot ember seeking to scald.

"We trusted God! We trusted Him," I wailed, tears pouring from my eyes. "How could He let this happen? We believed! He was supposed to heal Bonnie! We believed!" . . . Where was God now?

My mother's eyes grew wide, and she sat straight up in bed, her whole countenance suddenly clean and bright.

"God did heal Bonnie," she said with absolute calm. "Just not in the way we expected."

My anger extinguished as soon as it had sparked. I collapsed into bed with her for the first time since I was a child. Now at age 17, I soaked her shirt with the salt of my tears.

Betsy Blake, *Friends Journal*.

Advice or Query

How do I nurture peace for myself as I work for peace in the world?

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.

Co-Clerks: Gretchen Haynes & Val Liveoak; e-mail: clerk@saquakers.org.

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

Meeting website: <http://www.sanantonioquakers.org>

Donations may be made to Friends Meeting of San Antonio, 7052 N. Vandiver, San Antonio TX78209.

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