

## Quakers of Orlando

# Quaker Commons

Volume 2011, Issue 5

July/Seventh Month



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### Contributors to This Issue

Dean Engstrom  
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**Thank You!**

## Quakerly Thoughts

The solitary life, being silent, clears away the smoke-screen of words that man has laid down between his mind and things. In solitude we remain face to face with the naked being of things. And yet we find that the nakedness of reality which we have feared, is neither a matter of terror nor for shame. It is clothed in the friendly communion of silence, and this silence is related to love. The world our words have attempted to classify, to control and even to despise (because they could not contain it) comes close to us, for silence teaches us to know reality by respecting it where words have defiled it.

When we have lived long enough alone with the reality around us, our veneration will learn how to bring forth a few good words about it from the silence which is the mother of Truth.

Words stand between silence and silence: between the silence of things and the silence of our own being. Between the silence of the world and the silence of God. When we have really met and known the world in silence, words do not separate us from the world nor from other men, nor from God, nor from ourselves because we no longer trust entirely in

language to contain reality.

— Thomas Merton

### Thoughts in Solitude

first published in 1958 by Farrar, Strauss, Giroux in early editions, pages 85-6, in more recent editions pages 82-3

## Calendar for July

**July 3, 10, 17, 24, 31**

*Meeting for Worship 10am*

**July 3, 17, 24, 31**

*Conversation to Explore 11:30*

**July 9**

*Meeting for Healing 11am*

*Meeting of the Peace and Social  
Concerns Committee 1pm*

**July 10**

*Meeting for Business 11:30*  
*Box Lunch after Meeting for  
Business*

**Remember:** Lunch Bunch gets  
together after each Meeting for  
Worship

**Submit information to**

bhumphrey2@earthlink.net

## Giving Reminder

Please remember that the Meeting needs the financial help of its members and attenders to continue to pursue the purposes of the Meeting. Donation envelopes are available on the information tables near the Meetinghouse door.

While donations as of March were only 60% of Meeting expenses, as of the end of June donations for the fiscal year to date were at 114% of expenses.

# May Meeting for Business Minutes

The meeting opened with a period of silent worship.

Minutes of Meeting for Business, Fourth Month, 2011 were reviewed and approved.

The committee to assist with the marriage of Friends April Hunt and Tammy Foley met this morning and has offered assistance and suggested resources as they plan details accordingly. A specific date has not been set but is anticipated to be in August 2011. The Meeting will be kept apprised.

After review of previous month minutes, there was a renewed discussion among Friends on the topic of SEYM apportionment. Friends reiterated their desire to increase voluntary contributions to OMM to offset the increase in apportionment expenses currently paid to SEYM. Friends agreed that it was not best practice to rely solely on the transfer of funds from the meeting endowment to meet the

annual operating expenses of the meeting itself as has been done in recent years. It was the sense of the meeting to agree with \$10,000 as a goal of total financial support from members and attenders for the year.

Per inquiry from Friends, Dean Engstrom gave a report on the current financial state of the meeting since Treasurer John Gatti was not present. Dean clarified that, to date, transfer of aforementioned funds had only come from interest on the endowment account and has never been drawn from the principle itself.

Friends discussed ways that the meeting might encourage members and attenders to increase their voluntary contributions to the meeting. Among those mentioned were: making weekly reminder announcement at break of worship meeting that donation box is available, including a regular reminder in the newsletter, having the Clerk make mention at each

monthly Meeting for Business, and having pre-addressed envelopes available by the donation box.

Friends approved a recommendation that Ministry & Clearness assist the membership recorder (Judy Schmalstig) in identifying the most accurate list of current members and attenders of OMM. It was the sense of Friends that this must then be reconciled in a timely manner with the SEYM's officially recorded list of 56 members and 16 attenders. Friends noted that an accurate head count was necessary to calculate appropriate apportionment to SEYM at current rate of \$103.65 per person. It was noted that the result of such a count may actually result in an increase of dues that OMM pays to SEYM. Friends concurred that communication efforts should be made to reach out to those on the official OMM membership roll who are no longer active in the meeting to discern their intentions.

## Quaker Tapestry: "Firbank Fell: George Fox preaching" by Mary Ellen Meagher

In 1652, as George Fox was traveling towards the north-west of England. On Pendle Hill <http://www.quakerinfo.com/pendle.shtml>, he had a vision of "a great people to be gathered" and he found these people and preached in the areas of Sedbergh, Firbank Fell, and Preston Patrick, where a huge gathering, who called themselves Seekers, came from long distances to worship monthly.

In June of that year, he began to preach outside Sedbergh church. When asked why he would not go into the church as a fit place to

preach in, he stated that the ground and house were no holier than another place, the house was not the church but it is where the people are. The next Sunday, he



preached on nearby Firbank Fell, known as "Fox's Pulpit" <http://www.quakerinfo.com/firbank.shtml>, for some three hours to a thousand people on the open hillside.

Fox also began preaching at Brigflatts Friends meeting house near Sedbergh. <http://www.brigflatts.org>

See Panel B1: The panel can be viewed at: <http://www.quaker-tapestry.co.uk/about-the-tapestry/photo-gallery/>

**Image to left copyright The Quaker Tapestry Scheme.**

# “Whither Quakerism?” Transcript Continued

## 2011 SEYM Michener Lecture (part 3)

Luckily, you don't have to depend on Christians or Christian doctrine to know about Christ and to know about God--you can encounter and abide with God directly. In fact, it is essential that you do so. As James Nayler declared, "If I cannot witness Christ nearer than Jerusalem, I shall have no benefit of him." Like early Friends, our deepest knowledge of Christ should come from our conversations with Christ and interactions with Christ in our own life, not from Christian institutions, Christian pastors, other people who profess Christianity, or from the words and deed of self-identified Christians over the past 2,000 years.

The direct guidance experienced by Friends was unusual if not unique among Christians of that era. The *method* of divine guidance Fox and early Friends experienced was also remarkable: they experienced God who shows rather than God who tells. The inward Light of Christ, they came to realize, is first of all a light that illuminates the truth about my life--a sight that often I would rather not see, but which in the Light of Christ I cannot deny. God shows me the Truth, both pleasant and unpleasant. Then, when I admit what I see in the Light, God shows me what to do about it.

This is the unchanging core experiential truth which demands that everything else about the Religious Society of Friends be changeable, subject to divine amendment in God's own time. Our lived experience is that God speaks to and teaches each person directly, and shows us the Truth about our lives and the world around us. This

experiential insight shapes every facet of Quaker life--all of Quaker faith and practice. In North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative) we express this as the immediate and perceptible guidance of the Holy Spirit--the one thing that is essential to our self-understanding as Conservative Friends.

As Friends we have a shared religious experience that God will teach us, immediately and perceptibly. We have witnessed how God's guidance may be perceived even more clearly and powerfully in times of corporate seeking, when the entire faith community gathers to discern the divine will. We experience this teaching as God showing us the Truth, rather than declaring it through intermediaries who express God's will with words. The reality of ongoing divine guidance opens up the possibility that as we mature individually and corporately, we may see what God is showing us ever more clearly and understand its implications ever more fully. So there is room for growth and development--not because God is changing, but because God reveals more to us, about God and about ourselves, as we mature and our understanding deepens, even as our outward worldly context is changing.

One term Friends have used for this process is "continuing revelation". Continuing revelation means that God continues to reveal the Truth to us--the revealing process did not stop at some point in history, so that God's will is accessible to us now only through some written

document. In order for revelation to continue, though, there are certain prior conditions: we must be continually listening for God's guidance, and we must be willing to accept it and incorporate it into our daily lives--to be teachable.

Continuing revelation has a goal: It invites us into a fuller participation in the life of God. Revelation is always beneficial, even when it feels painful. When one accepts revelation and its fruits, its positive effects are clear to the recipient and to the observer. As we are willing to learn what the Holy Spirit is showing us now, we become more able to see what the Holy Spirit is about to show us next, and so we come ever more fully into the Gospel Order for which we were created--the Kingdom of God. As thee lives up to the Light thee has, the old Quaker saying goes, more will be given thee.

And so as soon as one has truly seen what God is teaching now, and incorporated that into one's life, there is a new lesson to learn and new amendments to make in one's spiritual life. We may never arrive at a final destination, at least in this life, but we do come continually nearer the source of our true joy and the source of true Life. We are all merely beginners in the School of Christ, because each one of us is just beginning to learn the most recent lesson we have received.

**This is the third installment of a serialization of Lloyd Lee Wilson's Michener Lecture. The rest will appear in following issues.**

# May Peace and Social Concerns Committee Minutes

The Committee addressed 4 topics:

1. The \$30K funding request by AFSC (Mike Gillum, AFSC Staff)
2. The August 6, 2011 Interfaith Prayer Service—Abolition 2020—part of the **Mayors for Peace** initiative to abolish nuclear weapons by the year 2020. (Steve Phalan, Mary Ellen Meagher and Nelson Betancourt, formed part of the group that convinced the City of Orlando to become a member of this initiative on February 10, 2011.) (Nelson Betancourt)
3. Exploration of Quakers participation in a potential community garden initiative in East Orlando (Nelson Betancourt)
4. Discussion on a potential Wellness initiative by the Meeting. (Rebekah Qualls)

Advice to the Orlando Meeting to be taken up during our Meeting for Business, second week in June:

1. PSCC advises that we do not fund the request by AFSC at this

time as there is no process in place to evaluate or commit such an amount.

2. That PSCC have a budget item in the annual budget to deal with these kinds of requests in the future.

3. That the Meeting undertake to discover the priorities to be funded by PSCC, through a Meeting for Learning and by sending a survey to all Meeting Members and Attenders.

4. That final decisions on funding of projects or events be done by PSCC once priorities by the Meeting as a Whole have been set and a budget item in the annual budget is in place.

5. PSCC agreed to move ahead with the Interfaith Prayer Service on August 6, 2011. (The Committee has communicated its decision to Stephanie Preston who is helping coordinate a wedding in the Meeting House, although it appears that the wedding date has not been set, the wedding should it occur in August 6, would be during the

morning. The intention is to hold the interfaith service from 6:30 p.m. until 8:00 p.m., with 30-45 minutes of coffee and fellowship afterwards.)

6. Both the community garden and wellness initiative are only in the beginning stages. No specific advice on them at this time.

7. PSCC has agreed to continue meeting on the second Saturday of each month at 1:00 p.m. in the Meeting House. (Meeting for Healing meets on the same day from 11 to 12 noon, allowing those who wish to stay for PSCC meeting and enabling PSCC to be posted in the newsletter on an exact date every month.)

## Reminder

### Lunch Bunch

Everyone is warmly invited to join "Lunch Bunch" after our Conversation to Explore each First Day. We go to local restaurants that feature menus that include many vegetarian choices. We often continue the conversation, but also touch on many other topics. Old timers and first timers all enjoy the fellowship and a chance to deepen friendships.

Here we are at one of our favorite destinations - Viet Garden.



## Interfaith Prayer Service in August

**Abolition 2020** is an interfaith prayer service to abolish nuclear weapons by August 6, 2020—the 75th anniversary of the dropping of the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima. It will be held at the Quaker Meeting House at 6:30pm on August 6th. Go to <http://event.pingg.com/Abolition2020> to register.

## August "My Hobby" Art Show

Laura Trotter, long time Meeting attender, will participate in the new feature activity "My Hobby."

Her presentation will be a showing of her painting and sculpture works on August 7th.

The showing will take place during the social hour.