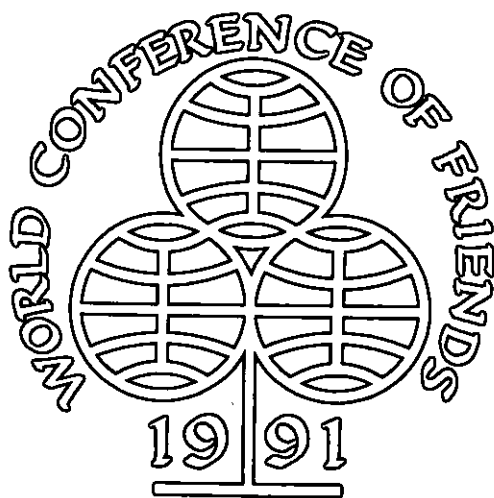


In Spirit and In Truth



*Studies in Preparation for
The Fifth World Conference
of Friends*

**Friends World Committee
for Consultation**

In Spirit and in Truth: Faith in Action



Studies in preparation for The Fifth World Conference of Friends

on three sites in 1991:

Elspeet, The Netherlands, 22–30 June

Tela, Honduras, 16–24 July

Chavakali, Kenya, 14–23 August

*Friends World Committee
for Consultation*

World Office—London

Section of the Americas—Philadelphia

European & Near East Section—Luxembourg

Africa Section—Nairobi

Asia—West Pacific Section—Hobart



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AN INVITATION TO ALL FRIENDS

Dear friends,

This booklet is an invitation—

to participate in the 5th World Conference of Friends, 1991. This Conference, called out of the Triennial Meeting of the Friends World Committee for Consultation in 1988, has been given the theme *In Spirit and in Truth: Faith in Action*. This is perhaps the essence of Friends' testimony throughout the world: how to live in the Spirit and Truth until we are so "in-formed" that all our actions promote justice and peace among peoples and are in harmony with the whole of creation.

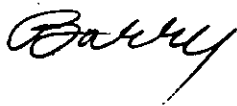
to share in the in-forming process of worshipping with Friends from other traditions and cultures, sharing experiences and perspectives, and perhaps joining with those others in planning new action.

to support those from your Yearly Meeting who have been chosen as representatives to attend the World Conference, or who are attending in any other capacity, by forming study and worship groups, projects or seminars with the Conference theme so that each Friend attending will be able to take to the Conference the pooled insights of your group. Offer prayerful support for these Friends before and during the Conference.

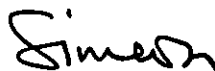
We hope this booklet will be of help in the informing process and will be used as a starter study guide. In it you will find some information about the host countries for the Conference and the Friends Groups there, a major article on the theme of the Conference, a set of Bible studies and recommended reading material from a great variety of traditions.

It is hoped that Friends will study the materials in this booklet during the year leading up to the 1991 Conference on three sites, that further writings will flow and be shared, and that all will thereby feel they are participants in this expression of the World Family of Friends.

Yours in Spirit and in Truth,



Barry Hollister, Clerk,
International Planning Committee for
Fifth World Conference of Friends



Simeon Shitemi, Clerk,
Friends World Committee for
Consultation

A WORLD CONFERENCE

Earlier World Conferences

The Friends World Committee for Consultation was born of two world gatherings, in 1920 and 1937. From its inception it was envisaged that one of FWCC's primary tasks would be to organise similar world conferences at intervals of about 15 years, each involving some 1,000 Friends. The third conference was held in 1952 at Oxford, England.

That experience was not an easy one. "We have travelled together in this Conference", read the final message to All Friends, "and are profoundly dissatisfied with ourselves, realising as we do the discrepancies between our professions and our practice". Indeed, it was in one of the sessions in this Conference that Barrow Cadbury offered his much-quoted prayer, "Oh God, we are in a fix; please help us out of it". Asking for forgiveness for failure and to be filled anew with the power of God's loving Spirit, Friends went on to say: "With George Fox, we declare that 'Christ has come to teach His people Himself'. As Fox did, we see today a great people to be gathered, many of them in desperate need—suffering, starving, homeless, at war, unloved, underprivileged, afraid, cut off from the knowledge of God's love, or indifferent to it; all needing His peace and power in their lives though they may not know it. We believe God has a message for them, to be given through us in a variety of ways—through practical service and loving fellowship, as well as in what we can say of our faith".

A new generation of Friends gathered at Greensboro, North Carolina, USA, in 1967 for the Fourth World Conference of Friends. With wider representation came a wider diversity. As in 1952 "there were moments of despair and agony in the face of the lowering barriers which separated us from peace and justice in a world full of hatred and cruelty, and moments of despair because of differences in our religious outlook".

Yet the Conference Message begins "With joy we proclaim that we have been led at this Conference in a creative encounter to the place that is beyond words, where God has entered our human fellowship and pressed the signet of eternity on these moments of our lives. In the midst of our diversities, we have found ourselves a family of Friends, members one of another; each of us with something to bring to our understanding of God and his purpose, to our vision of Christ and His message, and to the way in which the Holy Spirit can work in the world today".

Friends at the Fourth World Conference, 1967: Blanche Shaffer, William Eves, Heinrich Carstens, HAM Sok Hon, Douglas Steere, Oh Churl.



The Fifth World Conference

Those who have attended world conferences and similar events have told of the unifying effect these gatherings have had. They have transformed many lives, brought sharpness of focus to Friends' international activities and facilitated the development of personal relationships worldwide. Yet there has been reluctance to hold another world conference. Friends have questioned whether it is right to spend so much money on our internal activities. It has also been clear to many Friends that future world conferences should truly represent the membership of the Religious Society of Friends worldwide rather than involving a majority of Friends from the richer "North".



1967 World Conference:
Herberto Sein
(Mexico)
interprets for
Juan Sierra
(Cuba).

God's call has come to us at Oxford as our Society enters upon the fourth century of its existence to commit ourselves afresh to His will and purpose and to follow the way of Jesus Christ. We see that what we need today is not a new message but new lives.

Friends World Conference, 1952

"As we grew together in the spirit of love and fellowship Friends found a way to overcome through the power of inward prayer. We were drawn together in our singing, with a thousand voices, of that stirring Welsh melody and those memorable words: "God of grace and God of Glory".

Hans Schuppli—Switzerland (1967).

Believing in the benefits of worldwide Quaker encounters, young adult Friends organised a world gathering of their own in 1985. Reports of that meeting inspired Friends gathered at the FWCC Triennial Meeting at Mexico to decide that a small group should be nominated "to make recommendations concerning the possibilities of both a world conference and/or regional conferences". Through worship and working together that small group became united in its sense that special global events were timely. The plan they developed was novel—a world conference on three sites. This would enable the gathering to be cost-conscious, keeping true to our testimony of simplicity, yet more fully representative than previous world gatherings of Friends. Extensive preparations would involve local and yearly meetings. There would be interpretation through travelling ministry before and after the event and opportunities for Friends worldwide to work and learn together, enabling wide participation and giving another dimension to Quaker action.

An Invitation to be Involved

This pre-Conference book is part of the process of bringing the Conference to all Friends. Some may want to write on the Conference theme; meetings are encouraged to use the Bible studies in study groups and Sunday school classes. Friends may wish to support those who will be attending through discussion groups based on the recommended reading; meetings might decide to hold pre- or post-Conference events involving Friends from other parts of the world on their way to or from one of the gatherings.

Three sites—but a unity of experience. Through the Conference theme—"In Spirit and in Truth: Faith in Action"—we pray that Friends will be led by God's Spirit in this historic undertaking. Let us be God's hands in each part of the world.

While seeking to interpret our Christian faith in the language of today, we must remember that there is one worse thing than failure to practise what we profess, and that is to water down our professions to match our practice. It is a slow task to re-establish men's confidence in Christianity and in Jesus himself; but we have faith that men can respond to sheer goodness and to genuine loving fellowship.

Friends World Conference, 1952

"I felt that the Oxford Conference had a very personal message which will be carried more in the hearts of those who shared its inspiration and experiences than in any printed word. We are the message. It is only when we accept our responsibility for the world's suffering and ourselves share in it so that we can feel the pain and tension of both sides that our service can be truly redemptive to others".

Ruth M Darby—Australia (1952)

The Three Sites for 1991— each a global event.

22–30 June

Elspeet, The Netherlands

***Friends in the
Netherlands***



Friends in the Region

The connection of Friends with the Netherlands began about 1653, Holland being the nearest field for the "spread of Truth" outside the British Isles. In 1677 a deputation of Friends, among them George Fox, William Penn and Robert Barclay, visited the Netherlands in order to organise, at Amsterdam, a Yearly Meeting for the continent of Europe, with quarterly meetings in different countries. This Yearly Meeting was discontinued in 1710. In its present form the Quaker movement in the Netherlands arose about 1928, greatly influenced by Woodbrooke College, England. Dutch persons who studied at Woodbrooke became familiar with Quaker worship and practice, and found therein their spiritual home. The Yearly Meeting was founded in 1931 and now numbers about 150 Friends.

As racial persecution developed in neighbouring countries, work for refugees was undertaken in collaboration with American and British Friends. Dutch Friends shared with German and British Friends in founding an International Quaker School in 1934. The Quaker Centre, founded with the cooperation of British and American Friends in 1939 is now carried on by Dutch Friends.

Netherlands Friends shared responsibility for the service project of FWCC, European & Near East Section, in the Middle East. They also take an active interest in the Quaker Council for European Affairs, the Netherlands Council of Churches, the Interchurch Peace Council, and the Dutch Interchurch Aid and Service to Refugees.

The FWCC European & Near East Section consists of eleven yearly meetings in addition to several smaller national groups. The majority of Friends in the Section are in London Yearly Meeting, with many of the other groups consisting of just a handful of people, most with their own national language or languages. ENES Friends welcome the opportunity for contact and exchange of ideas and experiences. Events, such as annual and family gather-



*Mennonite Broederschapshuis, Elspeet—
16 km NW of Apeldoorn—venue for the
June World Conference gathering of
Friends from all over the world.*



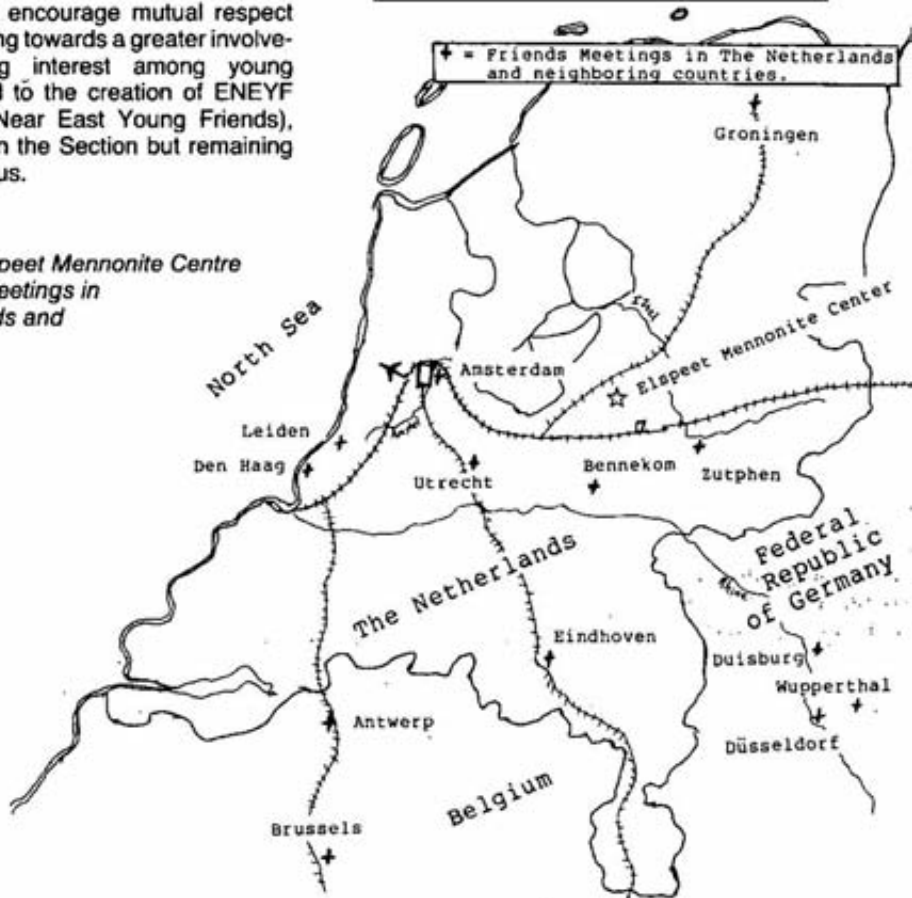
European & Near East Section Planning Committee discuss section-wide involvement in the Conference. (l. to r.) Franco Perna (ENES staff), Simon Lamb (Ireland), Anne Macpherson (Switzerland), Marianne IJspeert (Netherlands), Christel Wieding (Pyrmont), David Birmingham (London), Anita Welton (London).

For our Peace Testimony is much more than our special attitude to world affairs; it expresses our vision of the whole Christian way of life; it is our way of living in this world, of looking at this world and of changing this world. Only when the seeds of war—pride, love of prestige and the lust for power and possessions—have been purged from our personal and corporate ways of living; only when we can meet all men as their friends in a spirit of caring and sharing, can we call upon others to tread the same path.

Friends World Conference, 1952

ings, border meetings, seminars, peace and service consultations, youth pilgrimages (in cooperation with other FWCC Sections) and other activities encourage mutual respect and trust, leading towards a greater involvement. Growing interest among young people has led to the creation of ENEFYF (European & Near East Young Friends), operating within the Section but remaining fully autonomous.

Location of Elspeet Mennonite Centre and Friends Meetings in The Netherlands and neighboring countries.



are in rural areas, and thus most Honduran Friends are "campesinos" or farmers, raising coffee, cattle and basic grains.

The Yearly Meeting formed a Social Action Committee (*Comisión de Acción Social de los Amigos*) in 1988, concerned with helping in development projects in the small rural communities in which most churches in the Yearly Meeting are located. These are in such areas as primary health care, preventative medicine, child nutrition, literacy, and cooperative agriculture projects. The Committee is in the beginning stages, assessing the needs of each Friends community and seeing where they are led to work first.

Honduras Yearly Meeting welcomes this opportunity to host Friends from around the World at a site of its own choosing. Several Honduran Friends have attended conferences at Tela on previous occasions.

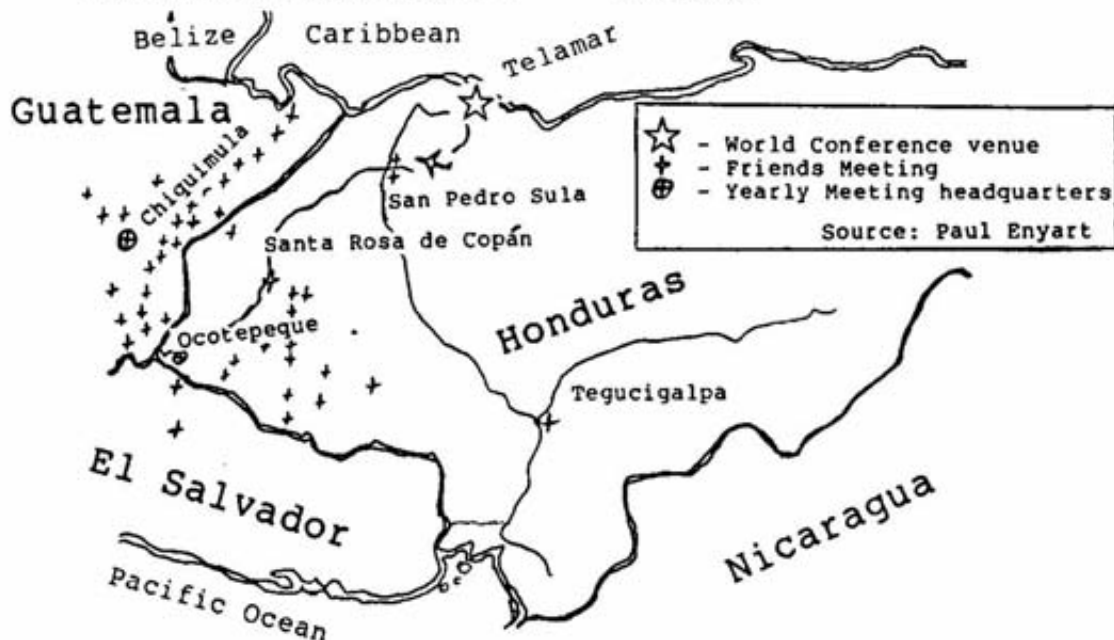


A group of Honduran Friends meet in Pan Pedro Sula to discuss local arrangements for the World Conference.

Friends in the Region

Recognised Friends bodies exist in over a dozen nations in South America, Central America, the Caribbean and North America. These are concentrated in the United States, where more than half the Quakers of the world live. A primary role of the FWCC Section of the Americas is to provide opportunity for communication, consultation and cooperation among Friends in the rich diver-

sity and tradition which characterises these some 40 Yearly Meetings and groups. In this service it sponsors a variety of programs, most with an international outreach. Through *Comité de Los Amigos Latino-americanos* (COAL), a Section program, Spanish-speaking Friends have their own newsletter, other publications, fellowship and visitation.



16-24 July Tela, Honduras

Friends in Honduras

Quakerism came to Honduras first at the beginning of this century when Friends missionaries from California, who had started a center in Chiquimula, Guatemala, continued their travelling ministry into nearby Honduras. The work started there was at first supported by Californian Friends, but a special effort was made in the early years to train and use national leaders. There was frequent interchange of missionary personnel between Chiquimula and the developing churches in Honduras, with the Beria Bible Institute in Chiquimula offering training to church leaders in the whole area. In 1934 the Friends Bible Training Institute at Tegucigalpa in Honduras was opened. In spite of this there has been a shortage of trained pastors in the Meetings and to rectify this in 1980 the *Colegio Jorge Fox*, a Bible school for the training of pastors, was founded at the *Centro Evangelico de los Amigos* at San Marcos, Ocotepeque in the very western corner of the country. In this center, other educational and recreational activities are provided for all ages.

There has always been a strong reliance on *encargados* or lay preachers in Honduran meetings as most meetings have not had a trained pastor. One such untrained leader was Pedro Leiva, a sweet and saintly man who was responsible for starting 22 of the early Friends churches. Another was Fernando Martinez. His conversion and work is described in Paul Enyart's *Friends in Central America*, paraphrased as follows:

An Indian villager, Fernando Martinez heard that some foreign *senoritas* were preaching a doctrine of devils; that in their meetings they blew out the lights and the devil appeared. (The missionaries showed slides of Bible stories with a kerosene projector). Fernando and a companion made a momentous decision. They



Main auditorium at Hotel Telamar, Tela, Honduras, where Friends from most yearly meetings and Quaker groups will meet in plenary session.

prepared their sharp *machetes* and went to the meeting prepared to kill the devil. They watched picture after picture explaining the way of salvation and when the lights came on Fernando said "If this story is true, who could refuse to accept Him?" Later God visited him and called him to work in Honduras. He and his wife spent thirty years in Honduras, walking many miles among remote mountain villages, he with Bibles on his back, while his wife Isidra carried their food in a basket on her head.

Fernando and Isidra Martinez walked as much as 100 miles over difficult terrain to attend the Annual Conference in Chiquimula. However, although Honduran Friends still travel across the mountains to the Quaker Center at Chiquimula for visitation and study, the wisdom of setting off the Honduran Meetings as a separate yearly meeting from Central America Yearly Meeting became clear. This was accomplished in 1983 with the founding of Honduras Yearly Meeting.

Meetings are now spread across the western half of Honduras, with the main concentration between San Pedro Sula and San Marcos. There is also an active meeting in Tegucigalpa. In all there are approximately 2,000 Friends in Honduras, spread among 31 Monthly Meetings and 31 worship groups. These are grouped into seven districts.

Pastoral ministry is guided by 14 men and nine women pastors. Most of the churches

14-23 August Chavakali High School, Kenya

Friends in Kenya

The Christian missionary work started by American Friends at Kaimosi in 1902 developed into the largest yearly meeting in the family of world Quakerism. East Africa Yearly Meeting became self governing in 1946, became responsible for all property and projects in 1964 and was reorganised into nine regions (spread all over Kenya) in 1973.

The numerical strength of EAYM was mainly in the Western Province (Kakamega and Bungoma districts), but there were many outlying churches in Nyanza Province, in Rift Valley Province and in the large towns of Nairobi and Mombasa. The Central Office of EAYM was in Kaimosi.

The educational, medical, industrial and social work initiated by Friends Africa Mission and its devoted servants, both from Africa and elsewhere, matured and modified over thirty years. Since Kenya became independent in 1963, the Government took over responsibility for primary schools, some of the secondary schools and the Friends Teachers Training College at Kaimosi. Friends remain "sponsors" of these schools and institutions, and local meetings have close relationships with the primary and unaided secondary schools in particular.

Following a period of reorganisation, three autonomous yearly meetings were set off—*East Africa Yearly Meeting of Friends (South)*, *Elgon Religious Society of Friends* and *East Africa Yearly Meeting of Friends* (also known as "Central"). These three yearly meetings collaborate under the auspices of the Friends Church in Kenya, which they founded in 1984. Since then a fourth yearly meeting—*Nairobi Yearly Meeting*—has been formally established and the setting up of other yearly meetings is under consideration.



Friends Church in Kenya is managed by a Central Council of members from each of the constituent yearly meetings. The Central Council is a co-ordinating link for the yearly meetings.

Chavakali High School

Chavakali has existed as a place of Quaker education since the 1920s when a school for young children was founded. This later grew into a Friends intermediate school. The need for students to be able to go on from this to secondary education became more and more pressing and in the 1950s local people looked for funds to start a secondary school. Funding was not at first available from official sources so the community decided to raise what was needed through individual subscriptions. Each household was asked to contribute a special rate, called the "Chavakali Rate", of 12 shillings and 50 cents for four years. With this foundation and help from some overseas sources, Chavakali Secondary School was started in 1963 as the first non-boarding secondary school in Kenya, with just 36 students and two teachers. It now serves over 800 students, most of them staying in the dormitories during school terms.

Right from the start Chavakali School has enriched its academic courses with the addition of industrial arts and agricultural courses. The school has governmental support for some of its programs, but is governed by a local board consisting mostly of Quakers.

Friends in the Region

The establishment of the FWCC Africa Section in 1971 represented an important new development for communication and cooperation among Friends on the African continent. The Section, with an office located in Nairobi, Kenya, maintains links with Friends in Western Africa, mainly Ghana and Nigeria, in Central and Southern Africa as well as with the yearly meetings in Kenya, Pemba and Burundi. Communication within such a wide area is difficult but the Section Newsletters in English and Swahili make a valuable contribution. The Section is involved with several peace and service projects and the work of the United Nations and HABITAT programmes. Intervisitation is encouraged and plans are being explored for regular gatherings of Friends from different parts of the continent.



A group from the Local Arrangements Committee tours Chavakali School and discusses plans for the World Conference with school staff.



Bridging Cultural Barriers Among Friends

by Felicity Kelcourse

The Fifth World Conference of Friends will be a novel undertaking. What are your hopes, expectations and dreams for this world gathering? What might this Conference on three sites accomplish? What effect will it have on the lives of individuals and the Religious Society of Friends as a whole?

As you consider these questions for yourself, you may join me in hoping that the 1991 World Conference will be an opportunity to celebrate the rich diversity of culture, faith and practice that exists among us. Diversity can easily be a source of division. If we are to come together in spite of our diversity, even celebrate it, we will need to reach towards a unity that can balance and transcend the differences that sometimes threaten to draw us apart. Finding a unity we can celebrate amidst our diversity is easier said than done.

Whenever Friends travel great distances to come together, even the most experienced world travellers among us cannot afford to underestimate the impact of culture shock. When people who arrive physically exhausted find themselves in an unfamiliar environment their normal reservoir of goodwill can be replaced with irritability. We are all most at ease in our own "cocoons", the familiar culture and world view with which we were raised. It can be uncomfortable to discover that there are people in the world with world views very different from our own, people who, even if they speak the same language we do, seem to be using a different vocabulary. The logistics of the World Conference will be complex since, in the interest of decreasing cost and broadening participation, three different groups of Friends will be meeting consecutively in different parts of the world. English-speaking Friends who travel to Honduras will have an opportunity to learn first hand what it's like to be a linguistic minority, as Spanish will be the primary language.

Perhaps even more difficult to live with than differences of language and national

Felicity Kelcourse serves the World Conference as a member of the International Planning Committee.



culture are the differences in faith and practice that exist among us, influencing both the form and content of our various expressions of faith. Friends accustomed to unprogrammed worship may be uncomfortable participating in programmed worship. Friends who emphasise the importance of a personal relationship with Jesus may feel they have little in common with Friends whose most urgent concerns relate to social action. Friends who believe that an actively homosexual life-style is incompatible with the Judeo-Christian traditions from which Quakerism has sprung may find themselves ill at ease with Friends that disagree with this view. These are just a few of the thornier cultural barriers that exist among us; the list goes on. The question is will the "Berlin walls" dividing one group of Quakers from another be dismantled? Should they be? If so, how?

Ignoring our differences to maintain a facade of unity, crying "Peace, peace!" where there is no peace, is both cowardly and ineffective. I know how costly conflict-avoidance can be. Still, I would not dare to raise the painful question of our differences if I did not firmly believe there is a Center we can reach

towards. The force of this Center is such that if we but reach towards it, touching it only briefly, its strength of purpose will keep us from flying apart. How this Center may be found, both within us and among us, is something each of us must discover for ourselves. It can give us the strength to be ourselves, clear in our beliefs, without feeling threatened or defensive. Only as we reach towards the Center are we able to see beneath the surface of another's words, disquieting though they may be, to meet them at the heart of their concern.

How do we find this Center that can draw us into deep and abiding unity? One place to begin would be to study the passage from John's gospel in which the World Conference theme "In Spirit and in Truth: Faith and Action" is based. Consider John 4:1-34 and ask yourself "What did the woman mean when she said 'Sir, give me this water.'? What did Jesus mean when he said to his disciples 'I have food to eat of which you do not know'?" How was it possible for Jesus and the woman at the well to communicate at all, given the barriers of race, religion, sex, morality and social status that stood between them?

Another place to look for the Center of which I speak would begin with considering what George Fox meant when he enjoined Friends to "walk cheerfully over the earth, answering that of God in everyone". The Religious Society of Friends was born in a period of strife and civil war. What did it mean to "answer that of God in everyone" when the consequences of civil disobedience could be imprisonment or worse? As I understand it, answering that of God in everyone has to do with an attitude of respect for persons and a willingness to accept, even love another just as they are. To do this one must have a strong sense of self, an integrity that holds fast to its own values while allowing others to hold theirs. What would "answering that of God" in everyone at the Fifth World Conference of Friends look like to you?

There are some practical ways we can offer each other support and encouragement as we attempt to bridge the barriers culture can erect. Although the suggestions below focus on Friends who are going to one of the Conference sites, other Friends are encouraged to become actively involved in a

variety of ways—for instance by hosting Friends on their way to the Conference, participating in study groups and workshops, praying for the Conference and offering financial support to help make it a success.

1. Organise a study group which includes those in your area who will be attending the World Conference. Meet for at least one all day session or several evening sessions during the months before the gathering.

2. Resolve to learn all you can about the country you will be visiting and the variety of Friends you may encounter there. Invite Friends or others from the country as well as those familiar with the region to speak to your group.

3. Keep a journal before, during and after the Conference to anticipate, observe and reflect on your experience.

4. Meet with your study group after the gathering to compare reflections. How has this experience affected you individually and as a group?

5. Plan to share what you have learned. Pool your best photographs and stories from the gathering so that those who could not attend may be touched through you. In this way the transforming effects of the Conference will live on in you and in the lives of those you encounter. The slightest degree of openness to the persons and experiences that contribute to this World Conference must leave us transformed.

How do we find the Center that can hold us all? By centering ourselves in silence and in prayer we can find at last the Self, the Christ, the Inner Light, the "still, small voice" of God, always present with us in the eternity of the present moment. We need not fear conflict or disagreement if we know in the core of our being that a greater love will hold us.

Finally, as you prepare for the Conference, consider these queries or write your own on the subject of bridging cultural barriers among Friends:

1. Am I able to receive the thoughts and feelings of others, even if it means momentarily putting aside my own sense of what is relevant or "right"?

2. Am I able to answer "that of God in everyone" in word and deed? If not, what would it take to make this possible?

3. Am I committed to remain open to the guidance available to me through silent waiting and in prayer, especially in trying times?

The Grammar of Change

by Mary Garman

I spend a lot of my time with people who sincerely desire to change the world. Some of these people are college students, who envision their adult lives in terms of making the world a better place, where justice is available to all, and where human suffering is a subject for history courses. I feel fortunate to teach and live among such hopeful people, and I try to nurture their visions of the future and also assist them in their educational process. They need to know about the world's realities—including the painful facts of history and politics and sociology—as well as the joys of literature, art, mathematics and science. So I try to make the world better by teaching and learning among these young people.

I also interact with seminary students, whose desire to bring about change comes from their religious commitments. They yearn to be leaders in religious communities where change is motivated and shaped by faith. In their seminary educations they begin to thrill to the power and relevancy of the Hebrew scriptures and the teachings and life of Jesus of Nazareth. They learn about the heroisms and betrayals of church history, the intricacies and power of theological analysis, and the dynamics of ethical systems. They begin to understand their own stories in the context of these disciplines. They discover that the church's history is their story too, and that the future of the church depends on them.

Mary Van Vleck Garman has been a Friends Minister in Indianapolis and Richmond, Indiana. Having earned her PhD from Northwestern University and Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in 1989, she is Assistant Professor of Religion at Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana. She acknowledges the ideas and help of Steve Heiny, Professor of Classics at Earlham College in the preparation of this paper.

Most of the seminary students I teach are Quaker. Some are headed for pastoral ministry among Friends, and others intend to serve among unprogrammed Friends in a variety of ways: as teachers, administrators, social activists, spiritual directors. Still others expect to finish their degrees and return to their former professions with new and deeper insights made possible by theological education. For them, theology is not abstract and ethereal, but is the systematic and conscious expression of religious encounters. Many of them develop a vibrant faith which is sturdy and resilient. As they live out their commitments among Friends, they continue to ask with more urgency: how does change happen? How can I empower, initiate, and undergird change? How can I help bring about the biblical vision of a reconciled world? How can I be faithful to the history and teachings of Quakerism and also be a lively and effective Quaker in the contemporary world? Teaching and learning with such people is an honour, and I seek to listen to their questions, to learn from them about the process of change.

I also encounter another group: active adult participants in worshipping communities. Like college and seminary students, many of them wish to live out their faithfulness to God by working for social change. At the same time, these believers are frequently engaged in full time responsibilities of employment and home management, which often includes nurturing children and caring for aging parents.

In my Meeting many of these faithful people feel despair over the current state of their religious lives. Many of them, like me, were drawn to the Society of Friends in early adulthood. The Society of Friends offered me an hospitable home where I could combine my impulse toward social action with my hunger for the sacred. Since that initial period of involvement and nurture, like many

convinced Friends I have come to fear that I have grown complacent. I hunger to rekindle that earlier enthusiasm in the midst of my changed life circumstances. I am haunted by questions: Have I "sold out" my former idealism? Can I still work for peace and justice while attending to routine family needs?

Those who grew up in Quaker families and attended Quaker schools have similar doubts. Although they continue to value their early religious training, they, too, ask: Can one person make a difference in the face of the complex and horrifying realities? Is Quakerism still able to speak a word of comfort and motivation to today's world?

All these people yearn to discover ways to participate in changes that will be faithful, just and loving. All feel thwarted in these efforts, and feel powerless, confused, exhausted, and isolated. For Quakers these are particularly painful longings, because our religious tradition emphasizes individual responsibility for religious development and for social involvements. We are taught to believe that empowerment for lasting and authentic change is offered to us from the presence of God. Our sense of acceptability as faithful Quakers is often tied to our assessment of our effectiveness as change agents. Because we want to be "good Quakers", we want to give structure and meaning to our passion, to address the world's brokenness in comprehensive ways, and to transform the world as it is into the world as we envision it.

One way to describe these yearnings is to speak of a desire to translate faith into action. As I consider the word "translate", I remember studying foreign languages. Although some of it is drudgery, such study also gives me moments of delight. In language study, grammar provides me with structure and rules. From them come transparent moments of insight, as the meanings of words expand and realities are re-described. To learn how to move from faith to action, we need a new grammar: a "grammar of change" which makes possible the recognition of "translation points" between our present reality and the world we imagine.

In a language, grammar provides the rules of structure and order. Comprehensive applications of these rules offer us a sort of transparency between two language

systems. We can move from one to another and discover the meanings of both. In order to develop a "grammar of change" we need to seek out "points of translation" where passion is transformed into action.

Central to any "grammar of change" are the dynamics of persuasion. Persuasion happens at many levels of human interaction: we argue and change each others' minds; we teach each other new skills and concepts; we convert one another to new beliefs and viewpoints; we fall in love. In all of these encounters we rely on persuasive words and deeds to accomplish our goals.

To discover a "grammar of change", then, I suggest that we look into stories which describe change. One excellent source of stories is the New Testament, which tells of the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. These stories can be studied in many ways; here I am suggesting that we listen to the words of persuasion in one story to see if there are some "grammar lessons" for us.

The story of the Samaritan woman who encounters Jesus at the well is told in the fourth chapter of John's gospel. Four moments which have the potential for persuasion occur in this story. In three of them, changes occur, and in a fourth no persuasion happens. Together, they show how a grammar of change works. First, the Samaritan woman is persuaded by Jesus that he is the Christ; second, many others are persuaded by the woman that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, and finally an additional group of Samaritans come to believe in Jesus as the Christ through his persuasive teachings. In the middle of the episodes of persuasion is an encounter between Jesus and the disciples, when a chance at change is missed. I will explore these four events, looking for clues about the grammar of change and the power of the gospel.

First persuasive event: Jesus and the woman

In verses 7-26 of chapter four Jesus of Nazareth asks a Samaritan woman for a drink of water. On one level this is a simple request: he is tired, he is a stranger, he has no water jar. All the customs of the times teach that she, as a local person, a woman, and a water-carrier, should offer Jesus hospitality. But the writer of John introduces several factors which make this scene more complex.

First, we are reminded that this woman is a Samaritan, and that "Jews have no dealings with Samaritans". Although they were originally considered members of the same religious group, by the time of this encounter Samaritans and Jews were bitter enemies, differing on a wide range of crucial religious doctrines. The exact nature of the origin of their dispute is not fully known, what is clear is that the rivalry between the two groups was profound. Second, it was a violation of social custom for a man to converse with a woman in public. Both Jesus' disciples (in verse 29) and the woman express their amazement at Jesus' action. Not only does he speak with her, but later he offers her religious instruction. Finally, in verses 16-18, we discover another factor which makes the setting extraordinary: this Samaritan woman lives in a way that violates the Jewish teachings on sexual propriety and faithfulness. She has had five husbands, and is not even married to her current male partner!

These factors provide the setting for the encounter between Jesus and the woman, Jesus speaks with her about water, which appears to be a logical topic under the circumstances. Quickly, however, it is clear Jesus is not talking in an ordinary way. He introduces a figure of speech—living water—which points to a new reality. The woman persists in the conversation to speak about water in the ways she can understand: water from wells, water for people, water for animals. This encounter becomes persuasive because the woman persists in her misunderstanding and questioning, and Jesus responds with a poetic re-definition of a common substance. Grammatically, he offers her a point of translation between her understanding of water, and his re-definition. The point of translation hinges on the disclosure of his true identity. In verse 10 he hints that there is a mystery hidden in his

identity, and in verses 13 and 14 he makes it clear that the water he is talking about is still water, but is also something more.

With his figure of speech Jesus begins to describe a transformed world. He offers the symbol of water as a translation point. He presents himself as a common, thirsty Jew who, like the water, is also something more. He suggests that the experience of thirst is both part of the common reality, and also is linked to the eternal. His invitation is compelling, because it suggests the possibility that she is both a water-carrying Samaritan woman, and also something more. Jesus' words invite the woman into the new world.



She is invited to learn the language there, and become one of its inhabitants.

In verse 15, the woman shows that she is open to the possibility of transformation. She begs Jesus for the water, but it is not clear whether she fully understands what he means. Her words suggest that she thinks the water he is describing is a magical substance that will end her toil. If this were so, then Jesus would be a magician, and his words a series of incantations that could instantly relieve her suffering and meet her needs.

At this point Jesus asks her to call her husband and bring him there. This is an intense moment in their encounter. It is a turning point in the process of persuasion. At first, the woman tries to deceive Jesus with her claim that she "has no husband". This is not really a lie, but is also not the whole truth. Jesus responds by showing her that he knows who she is and what the truth of her situation is. He uses two different words to describe her words to him. He says that she is "right" in her statement, and then, in verse 18, he says that she has spoken "truly". The word in Greek means that she has spoken "beautifully". What does Jesus mean here? How can her description of herself be both "true" and "beautiful" and yet also deceptive?

What Jesus does here is to give her a "grammar lesson" in the language of the new land which he has come to describe and bring into being. Once again, he offers her a translation point between her former way of speaking and the new way of speech. He acknowledges that her original self-description has been beautiful, and then shows that it has not been fully disclosive. Her artful words contain a lie, which he confronts. As before, the disclosure of identity becomes the means for speaking truth. The woman declares in verse 19, that she now knows who Jesus really is: "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet". She has taken one more step toward being persuaded, and toward the world that Jesus describes.

In the next section, verses 21–26, the persuasion is completed. Jesus offers the woman religious instruction. She asks him about the differences between the Jews and the Samaritans, and he responds with another re-definition. True worship, he teaches, is something that is not related to disputes about where one worships. Rather, worship has to do with truth, because God is spirit. Here is the center of his persuasion of her: the new world which he describes is not characterized by artful or deceptive speech, but by the spirit of truth. This new land which Jesus describes is both coming—for those

on the way to persuasion, and presently true—for those who have become convinced!

Jesus' words about truth ignite a spark. The woman's response is a declaration of faith in the coming Messiah. She indicates that she can now imagine the new world that Jesus has been describing. He answers her with a clear self-disclosure in verse 26: I who speak to you am he! The interchange here shows that the "translation" has been accomplished: the woman now knows the language of the new land, because she recognizes the true identity of Jesus.



Second moment of persuasion: The woman and the Samaritans

Out of this extraordinary encounter comes the second persuasive event. It is described in verses 27–30. The Samaritan woman leaves her water jar, and goes to the city to tell what has happened to her. She invites the people there to come and meet Jesus. The basis of her invitation, in verse 29, is that he "told me all that I ever did". Someone who could do that, according to prevailing thought, would surely be a prophet and perhaps even the Messiah.

What has she learned about the grammar of the new land where water is both a thirst-quencher and a well-spring for the soul,

where true eloquence can be accomplished without artfulness or deceit? First, we notice that her question is curiously phrased. It is not straightforward, but is posed in a negative way. In the literal Greek translation of verse 29 she asks: "Surely it cannot be that this is the Christ?" Her words are effective, because they bring people out of the city to encounter Jesus, and in verse 39 we learn that "many people believed in him because of the woman's testimony". The woman's testimony about Jesus has become a "translation point" between the "land of Christ" and her current reality. She is artful—just as she had been with Jesus in verse 17—and yet also fully truthful. She is cautious, as any marginal figure in a society must be when claiming to have knowledge, and yet she is also eloquent. The power of the translation comes from its link with her acknowledgement of her identity: she can testify to the presence of the Christ because he has shown herself to herself, and she has been changed.

Moment of non-persuasion

Before focusing on the last moment of persuasion, it is worth noting that in this story, Jesus and his disciples also have a conversation, but here no persuasion appears to take place. The disciples return in verse 27, in time to see Jesus talking with the woman. She leaves her water jar, and goes off on a mission to the city. The disciples and Jesus remain behind, and have a conversation which has in it misunderstandings similar to those between Jesus and the woman in verses 11–15. The disciples, however, do not learn the grammar which Jesus is offering. Unlike the woman, they do not grasp the redefined concept of food which Jesus offers in verse 34.

Although the disciples are curious about Jesus' breach of social and religious manners by speaking with a Samaritan and a woman in verse 27, it is interesting to note that they keep their questions to themselves. In contrast with the woman, they don't receive direct religious instruction from Jesus. Instead, he continues to offer them lessons which are poetic, which require translation. He speaks of food, of harvests, of reaping and sowing in verses 34–38. The disciples remain confused, and wonder if he has gotten some literal food on his own.

They never proclaim that they know who Jesus really is, and never show that they have been persuaded.

Third moment of persuasion—Jesus and the other Samaritans

Finally, we learn, in verses 41 and 42, that many more Samaritans were persuaded by Jesus that he was Christ. They learned this for themselves after encountering him. What was begun by the woman was completed by Jesus himself. Thus the Samaritans fulfill the proverb that Jesus tried to teach his disciples in verses 37 and 38, "One sows and another reaps". We do not hear Jesus' persuasion of the Samaritans, but perhaps we can assume that he taught them much the same as he did the woman in verses 21–24.

The grammar of change, as seen in this story, suggests a number of ways to translate faith into action. First, it is important to recognize what this grammar is *not*. It is not a reasonable argument that persuades by using the logic of the world. If it were, it would not be found in this story, which tells how a person with three strikes against her—woman, Samaritan and sinner—becomes an effective apostle of the Jesus as the Christ. The grammar of change is also not an incantation that brings about magical changes with no effort or consequences. If it were, the Samaritan woman would be instantly transformed into a powerful eloquent figure with social prestige. The grammar of change, which is central to the gospel, defies both logic and magic. It proclaims that a lowly Jewish baby was God's Chosen One; that a humiliated and crucified carpenter's son was resurrected from the dead; that an itinerant rabbi meant it when he taught that "the first shall be last, and the last shall be first". It is preached by people like the Samaritan woman, who continues to be who she has always been, but with a difference. She is changed because she learns to use her artful powers of speech for the cause of Christ, the cause of truth.

What do these four events teach about the nature of a grammar of change? How do

they offer comfort and inspiration to us when we yearn to move from faith to action? First, we learn here about imagination in the midst of the ordinary. Jesus, by transforming water into a symbol of an eternal well-spring of hope, reveals himself as both a thirsty lonely Jew and a prophet with a momentous mission. In response, the woman "drinks the water" and ceases to thirst. She remains herself, and yet also becomes a missionary. The disciples miss the moment of translation. They can't imagine the bread, or the harvest, or the labour that Jesus speaks about.

We can see here that all deeds, events, and objects have sacramental potential, and can become the source of empowerment for truthful living. Students who long to master their chosen subjects can perceive their books as food, their classrooms as water fountains, their libraries as sanctuaries. Their scholarly work can become missionary efforts as they re-describe their world.

From this first lesson we learn another: *that the sacramental potential of all deeds, events and objects also applies to ourselves. We are also potential "points of translation" for the grammar of change.* The word of a sinning Samaritan woman was considered untrustworthy and suspect in her day, and yet in this story the woman did not wait until she was perfect to become a missionary. Likewise we do not have to wait until we are perfect before we launch into trying to change the world. Like the woman, we can be infused with the spirit of truth and that changes us. How often we all face evaluation in a variety of ways. It is easy to lose confidence in our ability to know the truth.

There is a third lesson about the grammar of change in this story. The Samaritan woman becomes a preacher of Christ and an apostle of his cause when Jesus names her true identity, and she recognizes his. When she hears who *she* is, and sees who *he* is, her faith is immediately turned into action. She speaks the truth about his identity from the center of her identity. The fact about Jesus that the woman teaches to the other Samaritans is that *he is there*. She urges them to come, and to see for themselves. Jesus becomes her translation point because he teaches her about the difference between her socially-assigned identity and her true identity. He redefines her reality, and makes her into an apostle. That

re-definition empowers her to speak, and her speaking is effective.

Faithful adults who are working, raising children and caring for family concerns need to be reassured that our experiences of emotional and physical limit do not have to be a judgement on our character. Rather, recognizing our limit and our true identity can be translated into lessons about the nature of God's love. We come to realize that we are known and loved and accepted as we are. When we refuse to be bound by others' definitions of us, we are freed to discover what we long for: the strength to imagine and bring about a better world.

This story teaches that the labels that might have excluded people from society's acceptance are no longer ultimately powerful when redefined by the presence of Christ. These labels can come in many forms, depending on our particular life circumstances. Like the Samaritan woman, we may feel bound by society's definition of us. Sometimes it is based on gender, or race, or social status and sometimes it is based on judgements which label our behaviour as transgression. In her encounter with Jesus the Samaritan woman was transformed, and yet also remained where she was and who she was. She stepped into and claimed her new role in life, and also continued to have the same history and personality. Whoever we are and whatever we have done, this story suggests that the power of God is present in all situations persuading us gently toward new life. Claiming that power as our own begins a process which honours us as we are, while also changing us as we go.

The gospel stories do not speak so much of God as they speak about what it looks like to become followers of God. They generate a grammar of change by showing what change looks like. This story invites us to persist in our questioning until we begin to see the full holiness of our circumstances. We are challenged to be brave enough to acknowledge our true identities even when they appear to be unacceptable or to place limits on our potential, and to make ourselves available to God for transformation.

In the center of this story is a teaching from Jesus about the true nature of God. That nature is revealed through the identity of Jesus as the Christ, who shines as a point of translation between the world as it is and



the world as it might be. Jesus points to himself and beyond himself toward God. He teaches what God desires: true worshippers, who are committed to relating to God in spirit and in truth. Jesus is the one who offers to be with us wholly as we venture into the world that we imagine.

We who yearn to change the world want more than a persuasive argument of comfort and reassurance about ourselves and our efforts. We want to have hope that we will not be alone in our efforts. As we look for ways to move from faith toward action, we want to persuade others to join us in persevering, even when circumstances are difficult and frightening. As we imagine possibilities for change in the 21st century, we realize that the Society of Friends now extends all around the world. We *all* must think about literal translations of our stories about God's activities in our lives, and as we do that we will be enriched by an emerging sense of community.

As Friends we believe that it is *our lives* that must "speak" of our faith commitments. Developing a "grammar of change" means that our daily activities can become transparent translations of who God is and how God's presence is empowering. The stories of brave women and men—from the Bible,

from Quaker history, and from contemporary Friends' ministries—give us comfort in the midst of the horrors of life's reality. These stories invite us to live our own stories with humility and confidence and a sense of solidarity.

When we desire to bring about change in the world, we are ultimately longing to be in the presence of God. In the presence of God we find love and acceptance, and with it the power to become fully present to one another. Like the Samaritan woman, we can step beyond the definitions that society has set for us. As a result of Jesus' persuasion, she left her water jar and became a missionary for Christ. She persuaded others of his true identity, and in the process her own identity was transformed. It became possible for others to learn of Christ for themselves.

The structure of our lives changes when we are in the presence of God. We speak and act in new ways, as we apply the rules taught by the grammar of change. Our lives take on renewed focus and purpose, and we *become* the grammar of change. We discover that we are not alone—that God is with us—and we are transformed into the agents of change that God desires for the redemption of creation. □

There is in this Conference a wide variety of Christian experience for which we must seek to find language that will be understood by the men and women of our generation. At the same time we must always be ready ourselves to learn from those to whom we reach out.

Friends World Conference, 1952



We believe the responsibility is laid upon each individual Friend in our world family, to make a new "holy experiment" in practical living. Our vocation may find its chief emphasis in our meetings for worship; in living a better family life; in rethinking our personal standards of comfort and possessions; in working for peace in the political sphere or in the fields of economic or racial conflict; or in the day-to-day contacts of all of us. We must each begin just where we are.

Friends World Conference, 1952

In our common worship may we catch the fire of Christ's spirit, driving us forth in his service. If that fire is burning in our hearts, there is no place for tired resignation on the one hand, or for a contentious spirit, even in a good cause, on the other. We Friends are called to reaffirm our testimony for peace and to work for the abolition of the sin of war in every possible way open to us.

Friends World Conference, 1952

BIBLE STUDIES

The following Bible studies have been prepared for our use by Friends from several different yearly meetings, representing a variety of cultures and streams of Quaker tradition. As preparation for the World Conference of Friends in 1991 it is hoped that Friends' study groups and Sunday School classes will undertake to study them.

In some of the material each of us is likely to find phrases, concepts or ideas which are new, possibly uncongenial, to us. This is the beginning of our cross-cultural journey towards 1991. In this ministry of other Friends to us may we seek to "feel where the words come from".

In order to see the message, the relevance, behind the words, "translation" of various sorts may be necessary. Bible study is a learning process. The learning takes place, as in worship, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We try to hear what God is telling us through the scriptures. We listen tenderly to the experience of others. We share our own experience.

The questions following each of the studies (some of which are proposed by the authors) are many and varied. It will probably not be wise for everyone to attempt to discuss them all. You are encouraged, however, to use the first question suggested after each passage before proceeding to some of the others. This is usually in the form of a group exercise involving your imagination in story-telling, reflection, drawing, worship-sharing.

Worship-sharing.

Where this is proposed we suggest that Friends sit in a circle. The question or activity is read aloud. After a period of quiet worship Friends should feel free to speak, in any order, out of their own experience. Friends need not speak if they do not feel led to do so, but should not contribute for a second time till everyone has had a chance to speak. (You may find it useful to set a time-limit in advance for contributions if some are likely to have much more to say than others). It is helpful to allow time for prayerful silence between each speaker. As in a Meeting for Worship each should respect the experience of the other, so there should be no interruptions nor hurtful criticism.

God Gives New Life

Ezekiel 37: 1-14

Empty, hopeless, joyless living seems to describe many people. "What's the use?" is a question that must be answered to find a purpose in life. The pursuits of material security, of lustful relationships, possessions, pleasure—these leave a valley of inner "dry" bones. Only the infilling of the Spirit of God who created us for Himself brings meaning and fulfillment for us.

Is it possible to draw parallels in this passage with different conditions found in the church today? (1) Emptiness, few involved, a "valley" that is quiet and lifeless. No one there! (2) With urgent effort by a leader with vision, a "prophesying, there was noise, a rattling sound, and bones came together" (v.7). A church may become a place filled with lots of activity. (3) The rattling sounds of a busy church are reassuring, but still hollow without the next, most important part of a recreation effort. (4) Big crowds, great activity, busyness without the breath of spiritual life, is still an empty situation. The undiscerning may not be able to tell the difference. It is not the number of bodies, but the life within that counts. There is no merit, of course, in smallness or bigness; it is the spiritual vitality that puts a church on its feet.

In verse 14 we read the essential step to

bringing dead bones to a healthy state. "I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you" It is one thing to have an empty valley of dry, dusty bones, another to see them rattle and bounce about growing tendons, flesh and skin. But it is something really great to see them start breathing, alive, standing, and moving about. The finished product of God's restoration of any people is when they have His Spirit within. May these successive phases of Ezekiel's strategy and formula be experienced in our generation as well!

Jack L Willcuts

Northwest YM

(Excerpted from *The Teacher's Friend*,
EFA, Newberg, Oregon, USA)

For reflection and discussion:

1. Put yourself in the position of Ezekiel and describe what you see. Can some of you tell the story as a parable with a modern setting?
2. What ingredient is necessary before a mystery can be accepted?
3. How do you describe the miracle of God's grace in your life?
4. Are there times when you know that you are full of "busyness" without the breath of spiritual life? How do you try to change this? Is this a characteristic of your meeting/church too?





Hearing our Calling

Mark 10: 17–23
Matthew 19: 16–22
Luke 18: 18–23

The rich man was excited; action was urgent. He was dissatisfied with goodness according to the rules. He was asking Jesus for something more. In response, Jesus challenged him in three ways:

- (1) Goodness is not easy—"no one is good but God alone".
- (2) Keep the everyday moral commandments—perhaps a test, "what do you really want?"
- (3) Abandon everything upon which you have relied.

For reflection and discussion:

1. Compare the three versions of the story. The accounts of both Luke and Matthew have parts unique to each. What are these? What extra information does Mark give us? Try telling the story in your own words. In what ways does this help to bring the story to life?
2. Why did Jesus respond so warmly to this man? Did he recognise a real yearning for spiritual depth and commitment?
Can we recognise in ourselves and in our meetings and churches such a spiritual hunger? How can we distinguish this from simple restlessness, or from a self-centred craving to be noticed? Can we learn to advise one another, and to ask for and accept advice when offered in humility? Do we challenge one another enough?
3. Jesus did not ask all his friends and followers to abandon material possessions (the women in Luke 8: 2–3 helped to support him).
Can we recognise God calling us both in clear-cut sacrificial actions, and in everyday unnoticed duties and commitments? How can we learn what love is asking us to do: In prayer and worship, by reflection, by the writings and example of others, by trying to live each moment aware of God?
4. Does the present state of the world call upon Friends generally to act lovingly in ways we have not yet recognised?

Elizabeth Duke
Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa/New Zealand

Turning Life Around—The Journey Back to Jerusalem

Luke 13: 13–53.

This is a long passage about events along the road to Emmaus which the disciples took after the crucifixion in Jerusalem. It forms the end of the Gospel according to St Luke and in many ways parallels our own spiritual journeys as we begin to discern how our faith might be called to action.

Elements in the Journey to Emmaus:

1. There is disillusionment, a sense of failure, depression, as the disciples walk along. Terrible things have happened in Jerusalem; Jesus was killed.

2. A stranger overtakes them and asks what concerns them.

3. They are amazed that he should not have heard of the tumultuous events in Jerusalem during Passover.

4. The man listens, and then interprets these events to them in light of the scriptures (Old Testament). They are surprised. He sounds oddly familiar.

5. It's getting late, the disciples decide to stop to catch some fish for supper. While they are gone the stranger makes a fire and puts together a meal for them all.

6. Again the disciples are surprised. When he breaks the bread and hands them each a piece they recognize Jesus. This is the *kyros* moment of recognition (and conversion). Only Jesus has ever shared food thus with them.

7. They are overjoyed that the person Jesus whom they had believed to be dead was there among them, as he had promised.

8. No sooner did they recognize Jesus than he disappears.

9. The disciples, jubilant, are eager to share the news with their people left behind in Jerusalem.

10. They turn around and go back to the place of danger, persecution, death; they return to Jerusalem.

In this dramatic turn of events with which Luke closes his Life of Jesus, we encounter a pattern that recurs many times in other Gospel stories: The spiritual journey, that seems to lead out of the place of dilemma, ambiguity, pain and death reaches a "clearing" (an "opening" as George Fox called his moments of revelation), but then leads right back to the home turf of dilemma, ambiguity, pain etc.

Look up some of the healing stories (Luke 7:11–23), the story of the Prodigal Son, of the Good Samaritan, of people restored to life (Jairus's daughter, Lazarus), the "far journey" (Mark 13:34ff), and trace the movement away from and back to the old familiar territory.

This tells us something about how we might expect the course of our spiritual journeys to move; how and where we might expect to live out our faith in action; put our beliefs on the line; be faithful. The all-important *Kyros* or "Now" moment is an unearned gift. We do not remain in that moment of ecstasy. The road leads back to the mess left behind, the unfinished business, the matters untended. The new is the old that has been baptised and converted by the Spirit.

In time the disciples do go out into all the world to spread the Good News.

Other reading: *Unexpected News* by Robert McAfee Brown.

Candida Palmer
New England YM

For reflection and discussion:

1. Meditate on this story. Put yourself in the position of one of the people and tell what happened to you that day.
2. At what point might you be on your journey of living your faith? What act of faithfulness does that call for?
3. Our Quaker Disciplines (note the same root word as "disciple") are often called "Faith and Practice". Why do the two always go hand-in-hand?

A Spiritual Communion

John 4: 23,24

The context of these verses speaks to us of the interesting conversation with the Samaritan woman, with its cultural, moral, and religious background.

As the woman spoke to Jesus she referred to her people the Samaritans, and said, "Our parents worshipped on this mountain, you say that Jerusalem is the place where we must worship". She was referring to Mount Gerizim, which was their place of worship.

The Samaritans had some basic points in their teachings: Faith in Jehovah as the only God, the belief in Moses as the Supreme Apostle of God, the conviction that the Torah was the only sacred book, the recognition of Mount Gerizim as the sacred place chosen by God, the hope that there would be a day of reparation and punishment and that there will be a restorer (prophet) who will appear to announce the new era (Deut.18:18).

As Jesus spoke to the woman, he gave a very profound declaration with regard to the nature of true worship and his mission. Jesus to her, "Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem". When Jesus said "the hour is coming" it is understood that he is referring to his complete sacrifice which would make true worship possible (John 2:4, 7:30; 8:20; 12:23; 13:1; 17:1). We also see that Jesus elevated worship to the Supreme Being, who is God the Father, who was not (nor is) limited by space nor by time.

Adoration in spirit and in truth is (according to verses 20, 21) not determined by circumstances of place, or time, of acts of exterior ceremonies. Their belief that ceremonies, rites or sacraments, in reality get in the way of true worship, was one of the reasons why Friends from the time of George Fox, did not concern themselves with outward rituals and ceremonies.

True worship takes place in the most intimate regions of our spirit and soul (John 4:24; Rom 3:9). It consists of true commun-

ion with God who is the Spirit . . . this adoration is in accordance with the nature of the God that we adore. God is Spirit, that is to say, "full of all spiritual perfections, power, wisdom, love, holiness, and our adoration should be in agreement with its nature. We must adore God with the true spiritual adoration of faith, love, and holiness, animating all our emotions, temperaments, thoughts, words and actions". (Wesley)

In order to adore God as the only true God, it is necessary to become God's children. How? It is necessary to be born again, to be made new creatures through the works of the Holy Spirit (John 1:12; 3:5-7; Rom. 8:14-16; II Cor. 5:17). Only in this way can we adore in a relationship of true spirituality. Otherwise our profession of the gospels would be empty, insipid, similar to any purely human religion.

The worship of God is something very special for us. "Worship of God constitutes the most sublime experience that a person may have, an experience which provides the opportunity for a spiritual and sacred communion. Friends believe that worship is composed of an attitude as well as a fact, and we know that it is a spiritual relation between the believer and God which strengthens us, edifies us and consoles us". (Jack Willcuts)

Ruben Gálvez L.
Guatemala and El Salvador YM
(translated by Soledad McIntire)

For reflection and discussion:

1. What does our Quaker testimony concerning outward forms of the sacraments mean to you? Imagine you are trying to explain it to people who value greatly their participation in the eucharist/communion service. Can you explain your own understanding without belittling their experience?
2. What have been your most profound experiences of "true worship"?
3. How do you understand the words "born again"? What experiences have you had in your life which have been channels for renewed or extended understandings of God?

Living Water

John 4:24

"God is Spirit: and they that worship must worship in Spirit and in Truth."

This describes the nature of God and the desired nature of worship. The English word worship was spelled 'worthship' and was taken to mean to acknowledge the worth of the object worshipped. Truth is here referred to worship in contrast to the false worship that was practiced by the Samaritans. Christ was pointing forward to the time when man was going to worship God in a new and satisfying way.

The Object of Our Worship

The Messiah is the object of our worship. We can meet Him in worship individually and collectively. We should meet Him with openness of mind and reciprocity of heart. We should acknowledge His very nature as the foundation of our worship.

The Nature of our Worship

By worshipping God in the Spirit, we are acknowledging the very nature of God. He is Spirit, and therefore not limited in knowledge, power, and in movement. We remain bare and exposed before Him. What can we hide from Him?

Hindrances to our Worship

What can hinder us from worshipping God in the Spirit, and Truth? Living in the flesh and the sensations of the present life. In other words, living as if God has no part in our daily living; living as if God is not aware of what we are doing. We should be conscious of God's presence in our lives each passing day.

Results of Worship

True worship leads us to God honouring and glorifying lives. Out of our lives shall spring out rivers of the living water. Flowing to a thirsty world.

Elizabeth Yano
Friends Bible Institute, Kenya

For reflection and discussion:

1. What hinders the "Living water" from flowing through our lives? Try the exercise of dividing a sheet of paper into two columns. Head one "Events which bring me to life" and the other "Events which deaden me". Afterwards you may wish to share with your group what you have discovered.
2. Are you always sustained by your meeting's/church's worship?
3. What do you do if you experience "dry times" in your faith?
4. What steps can we take to help deepen the worship in our meetings/churches, helping it to flow more "in the Life".



Simple Faith in Ulster

John 4: 1-42

Recently a story appeared in my local paper which both cheered and saddened me. The article told how a Protestant teenager had found his way over the wall which divided his part of Belfast from the neighbouring Roman Catholic community in order to save a Catholic child from drowning in a pond. Interviewed in the paper the teenager said he did not know the child's name and would be unlikely to get to meet him again because of the way religion and culture divides in that city. The saddest part of it is that he suggested that he felt quite comfortable with such division.

The story epitomises the hopeless state my community is in. But it also makes me ask questions about people's actions and motives. It is well known that the Irish community, both North and South, give more per head of population to charity (particularly in aiding famine etc.) than any other nation on earth, yet there is a good number of Protestants who will not buy a loaf of bread from

a shop owned by a Catholic and vice versa. In being so selective about who receives their kindness, some of Northern Ireland's people are also selective in accepting the teachings of Christ.

Christ makes it very clear in his contacts with Gentiles, and in particular the Samaritans, that Christian action must not discriminate (see also Luke 10: 25–37). In the case of the Samaritan woman, all life's experiences had not prepared her for how Jesus would respond to her. As a Samaritan and a woman the last thing she had expected was for a Jewish male to ask her to give him water. Such action was culturally inappropriate. Yet Christ broke with tradition and ignored the possible consequences of his actions because he deeply cared about the clear spiritual needs of this woman.

In verses 19–26 Christ showed her that the Jewish and Samaritan ideas which placed emphasis on the outward, the structures, laws and traditions of the religious community at that time would be replaced by an inward personal and primarily spiritual faith, where the relationship between God and humankind would be direct. What developed from the situation was the woman's realisation of her own sin, and that the message Christ had for her was real and relevant not only to her but to all the other Samaritans around her; and she went and brought them to him.

Throughout the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament we find a strong emphasis on the connection between the spiritual faith which Christ was describing and action in the physical world. Regularly we hear Christ say "Your faith has healed you". We even have an account in Mark 5: 25–34, of power being taken from Christ's body by the faith of a woman who touched him in order to be healed. In reading details of Christ's miracles it is so easy to wonder at the evidence of Christ's power and yet miss the simple faith of some ordinary human beings that made it possible for Christ to heal in such a way. Sadly today it is just as easy in our liberal, secular world to emphasise the kind act and ignore the faith of the Christian who performed it.

I remember as a child being bullied at school. Knowing that Quakers were supposed to be pacifists, I felt it right not to fight back; but I asked my mum when I got home why I should not just fight. I suspect that any

mother could have tried to explain with great logic why fighting was wrong and how violence only breeds violence. Yet perhaps because I was still very young she answered me by saying, "You should not fight because you believe in Jesus and because you love him". It was a simple answer yet it got to the core of the issue. My faith and relationship with Christ is what should motivate me in showing love to others. In hurting others I hurt Christ.

Faith without works is dead, as James says in Chapter 2, verse 26, but the reverse is also true. In the Religious Society of Friends, yearly meetings and groups have in many cases tended to polarise themselves in emphasising either faith or action, yet I pray that the title of the 1991 World Conference—"In Spirit and in Truth: Faith in Action"—may challenge us to examine the vital relationship between the two. We might find together, as early Friends clearly did, that if we live obedient to the Holy Spirit and seek to be messengers of Truth we will be impelled to act.

And what of the teenagers and the children on either side of the wall in Belfast? In response I am left praying and simply asking God "and what do you want me to do?"

Simon Lamb
Ireland Yearly Meeting

For reflection and discussion:

1. In a time of quiet worship "hold in the light" someone you love. Now draw into your pool of light someone you don't know well. After a time reach out in your mind to draw in someone with whom you feel a little angry or resentful. If and when you can, stretch out even further to reach someone from whom you feel very divided.
2. What are some of the divisions between people in your own community? What do we do consciously or unconsciously to keep these in place? On a blackboard or large sheet of paper write up together what you might do as a church/meeting and as individuals to build bridges?
3. How can we recognise the valuable qualities of faith in people whose beliefs are different from our own?
4. What does it mean to "hurt Christ"?

True Worship

John 4:24

The word "worship" means to honor him, serve him, and praise him. Therefore when we study this we are letting God guide us to honor and serve him better. May this study help us to deepen our understanding of the sublime truth that God is Spirit. I firmly believe that God guided the International Conference Planning Committee to select this beautiful truth as the central theme for the Fifth World Conference. As we "Friends" of different races, cultures, and Quaker traditions gather together in Honduras, the Netherlands and Kenya in 1991 we may by the action of the Holy Spirit in our lives worship Him in unity as He asks. May this experience deepen in each place with the testimony of each participant.

1. To worship Him in Spirit means:
 - (a) to be spiritual because God is Spirit (John 4:24).
 - (b) to be in sincere communion because He knows us (2 Timothy 2:19).
 - (c) it is offered to God by the faithful (Psalm 30:4).
2. To worship Him in Truth implies:
 - (a) our lives are given totally to Him (1 Peter 5:6).
 - (b) we are free from sin (Romans 6:11-13).

(c) we should be sincere of heart because God does not accept appearances (Hebrews 10:22).

3. True worship is required:
 - (a) we achieve this when the human being under the influence of the Holy Spirit brings all his or her affections, appetites and desires to the throne of God and then worships Him in Truth.
 - (b) when each act of worship is guided by the Word of God (1) we worship Him for His holiness (Psalm 96:9); (2) we worship Him because it is what He asks (John 4:23); (3) for His mercy and for His works (Psalm 95:6-7); all the families of the earth should praise God (Psalm 22:27).

It is my wish that the Holy Spirit may flood each life through the word, so that we may render the rational worship God expects, and that wherever He may send us we may be light and salt of the earth to the honour of his name. Amen.

Juan García Muñoz
Honduras YM

For reflection and discussion:

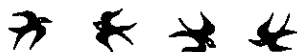
1. Place a lighted candle and some salt in the middle of your group, and after a time of quiet worship share your reflections on "light" and "salt".
2. In the light of God's word and your own experience do you believe you are offering God "true worship"? What aspects of your life do you believe are obstacles to worship?
3. What is your dedication in the light of Romans 12:1?
4. In the life of your church/meeting what part is played by family worship; individual worship; congregational worship; spoken worship; worship in work?

Juan García Muñoz and his wife, Francisca Ventura de García at their home in Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras.



Living in Worship

John 4:24



The words of the World Conference theme are taken from the dialogue between Jesus and a Samaritan woman as related in the Gospel of John. This woman was the person to whom Jesus chose to reveal himself as Christ the Saviour—someone especially lowly in the society of the day, discriminated against by Jews and despised by all for her association with a man outside the bonds of marriage. So alienated that she tried to avoid people's eyes by going to the well in the heat of the day instead of at dawn when other women would gather there. But this woman not only listens to Jesus but responds to the call to "worship in spirit and in truth" and is enabled to encourage others to come and see him and experience him for themselves.

God created us as beings capable of responding to the breath of life, God as Spirit, the personified God so that to worship God in Spirit is natural to us. Because God seeks us first and gives us the blessing of knowledge of our spiritual nature, we are able to worship that which we know and which we can seek.

The foundation of human life is to worship God in truth, this true worship addressed to God in Spirit, with absolute trust in doing God's will rather than looking for wisdom and power from a human source. Such worship is the source of power, showing us truth and giving us courage for right action. Once the shy Samaritan woman understood what Jesus had to tell her, she was given the courage to go and encourage others to come and see, to act themselves, to know by experience.

And we who call ourselves "Friends" of Jesus must attempt to live in truthful, spiritual worship in order to be able to say "come and see" as the Samaritan woman did. Our source of life and power is in true spiritual worship. What efforts do we make to live as truthful persons together with those who are discriminated against, alienated and weak

according to the world's way, as did Jesus?

George Fox heard God's voice saying "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition". He listened to God's voice and gained the courage to witness to his faith in the way he lived his life. Compared to this early Quaker how often we Quakers today compromise and try to separate faith from our way of life! Thus we lose the possibility of being strengthened by the Holy Spirit. Let us live our daily life as a living prayer and together gather under full power of the Spirit for the coming World Conference in 1991.

Yoshiko Tanaka

Japan YM

(translated by Susumu Ishitani)

For reflection and discussion:

1. Spend some time in quiet reflection on the phrase:
"Daily life as living prayer".
After ten minutes or so, Friends might offer their thoughts in a time of worship-sharing.
2. What do you do as individuals and Meetings to work "in Truth" with those who are discriminated against, alienated or weak?
3. What (Who) is the Christ?
4. What Truth awaits you at the well? What is your "condition"? Does it contain compromise?

Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation

John 4:24

The words we are to reflect upon here are to be found in a chapter of the Gospel according to John titled in my Bible "Christ the Giver of Life". Notice that this particular account of faith is embedded in action: the turning of water into wine at Cana, driving the traders out of the Temple, curing the lame and giving life to those who died.

Worship in spirit and in truth. When assembled in worship "the great work of all ought to be to wait upon God . . . and to know a gathering into his Name . . . where he is in the midst, according to his promise. And . . . thus gathered, the . . . pure motions and breathings of God's Spirit are felt to arise". (Barclay's *Apology* pp.351-352). Our Friend Barclay continues to point out that our silent waiting upon God, the secret turning of our mind towards God, this "be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10) which Friends call Meeting for Worship, does not mean we shut out praying or preaching "as our Worship consists not in words, so neither in silence, but in an holy dependence upon God." (Barclay p.360) "The worship, preaching, praying and singing which we (Quakers) plead for, is such as proceeds from the Spirit of God and is always . . . begun by its motion and carried on by the . . . strength thereof . . . and so is a worship purely spiritual." (Barclay p.408) Strengthened by such a meeting for worship our "service" starts and (again and again) we are called to witness to our faith in God in both words and action; action aimed at a liberating love for "Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation" put into practice. Are our lives a testimony to this God of Love we worship, who motions us on into the "Light that breaks through the Darkness, which always, always it will do if the soul give not its strength to the Darkness"? (Barclay p.358)

And so, John writes of really worshipping God in spirit and in truth. Barclay tells us from his experience that this means seeking the "pure law and Light of God, so as both to forsake the Evil and be found in the practice of those perpetual and moral precepts of

Righteousness and Equity" (p.344).

Do we ever query ourselves whether we do worship God in truth? After all we are not to worship other gods next to God! Is our yes still yes, is our simplicity still simplicity, is Jesus' example of unconditional love and non-violence still our peace testimony, put into practice? Do we surrender ourselves sufficiently to God to become instruments of his peace and contribute our share to the liberation of our societies from the forces of evil and darkness?

We have to liberate ourselves and our societies from these expansive forces that know of no limits to growth, thereby treating the (slow) destruction of God's creation as a risk to be taken! We have to join those who, in obedience to God, struggle to transform themselves and their societies. Such transformation starts when we are worshipping God in spirit and truth. But it does not end there. It is continued in witness, however small its effects may seem at the time.

Kees Nieuwerth
Netherlands YM

For reflection and discussion:

1. Start with a time (c.15 min) of programmed worship (hymns, reading of this study or other JPIC material, a prayer, etc). centred on the theme "Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation". Then, ask each Friend to make two lists—one headed "Ways in which I am part of the problem", and the other "Ways in which I am part of the solution". Conclude either by going around the circle, each person reading out one item from each list, or with a period of silence, inviting Friends to name one thing they have learnt from the session or one thing they are going to do as a result of it.
2. How do you seek to promote the welfare of those in any kind of need, and a just distribution of the resources of the world?
3. How do you faithfully maintain our witness against all war, and all preparation for it, as inconsistent with the spirit and teaching of Christ?
4. How do you consider respecting God's continuing creation when making economic decisions and using resources?
5. How does our testimony to simplicity have a place in your life?

Marks of a Spirit-filled community

Acts 2: 42-47

These verses of Acts follow directly after the experience of Pentecost, Acts 2:1-4, the time when the small group of Jesus' followers received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Jewish tradition held that Moses received the Law at Pentecost. Now the Law is replaced by the Holy Spirit.

What were the marks of this spirit-filled group?

1. A Learning community

While recognising the power of the Holy Spirit, the early church also realised its need to learn and study, to learn about the Spirit of Truth as revealed through Jesus.

2. Fellowship

Koinonia is the Greek term for fellowship and its first use in the Bible is here. The early church had this characteristic, a gift of Pentecost. In Greek, the word "generous" comes from the same root. This group of men and women not only received, but gave, using their possessions in the service of God.

3. Worship

Worship was both formal—in the Temple, and informal—in each other's homes. They did not immediately reject the old, but worked towards patient reform rather than impatient rejection. There was a balance of reverence ("fear") and joy in their worship experience.

4. Evangelism

They grew in numbers, not by their own will, but by their witness and through the power of Jesus Christ.

There was a balance in the relationships—right relationships—within that early community:

- a link with the tradition
- a link with each other—loving, caring and generous
- a link with God—in joyful, reverent worship
- a link to the world—through both evangelism and service to others.



For reflection and discussion:

1. The early Quaker movement has been described as "primitive Christianity rediscovered".

Share with each other ways in which early Friends paralleled each of the four characteristics/relationships of the early church listed above.

(*Christian Faith and Practice* of most Yearly Meetings are good resources for this study. Study-group leaders, please note the possibility of making this a "homework" exercise, and the usefulness of having Friends bring various sources of early Quaker writings to the group session.)

2. Look at your own meeting/church. Which of these characteristics are present? Which are absent?
3. During a time of quiet, write down some of the gifts you bring to share with your church/meeting. Then, list some of the things you receive (or long to receive) from others. You may wish to pool these (anonymously) in two bowls and have a member of your group list them briefly on a wall chart or blackboard while the group continues in quiet worship.

And/or—toward the end of the quiet time, turn to the Friends on either side of you and thank them for some joys or gifts they give you.

Anne Thomas
Canadian YM

Towards a Just, Warless World

Revelation 4:8-11 and
Revelation 5:9-13

I believe that God created us in His image primarily to worship and praise Him. The book of Revelation, 4:8-11 shows how we should worship and praise our God. This has to be done all the time by loving one another without ceasing. There is no other way we can glorify God apart from exuberant, effervescent, and radiant love rooted deep in our hearts towards all our fellow men and women. This love should strive for greater church unity, and even better for church union "that they may be one, even as we are one" (John 17:11).

This is a true love which means being open to one another; love which should make secular leaders accommodate dissent. Dissent, when looked upon as a source of enrichment, brings God's blessings. Although we are constantly rebelling against God, he is always ready to forgive us upon confession. It is this forgiving spirit we have to emulate and let dwell in us, being constant in prayer for deliverance from evil and temptations.

Jesus Christ was honoured in heaven and on earth and on the sea for symbolising the love, the humility, the simplicity and the forgiveness that is required of us by God (Rev 5: 9-13). And in like manner, we should give God's love to others and thus glorify Him. This is the narrow path to establishing God's kingdom on earth. Hate and all forms of discrimination derogate God; they are challenges to God's wisdom in creation and therefore devilish acts. Truly Christian action is loving action.

Thus all wars are disgusting to God, from family rows to national and international conflicts. These are acts which put self before God, thus driving humans away from God. God wants His realm to be here in our present day, today! Isaiah 2:4 prophesies about when we will learn war no more and our artillery will be turned into plowshares.



Arthur Litu, a member of the International Planning Committee of the World Conference, shown here with his family in front of the original thatched house on their shamba in Mbale, near Chavakali.

It is amazing to me how the USSR, a society which declares itself to be atheistic seems in recent days to lead the way in the quest for a warless world. The world has witnessed the beginning of the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy when Russia and the USA decommissioned at least some of their missiles, and continue to press for further reduction of arms. We look to a world without war where we may worship our God in Spirit and in Truth; with Faith in Action as our guiding star while Jesus Christ leads the way.

Arthur Litu
East Africa YM (South)

For reflection and discussion:

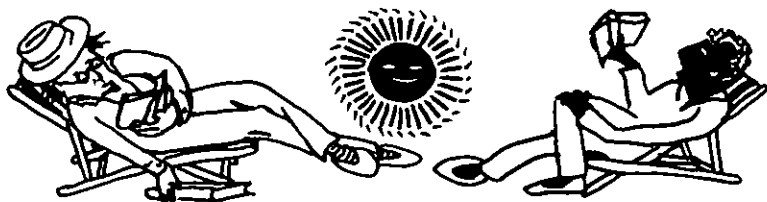
1. Members of your group might each spend 10 minutes either drawing their picture of the "warless world" or listing ways in which the "warless world" will differ from the world we know today. Then share your pictures and perceptions with each other in a time of worship-sharing.
2. Do I always try to get even if I feel I've been badly treated?
3. Is there a role for fasting today?
4. What factors hinder greater church unity?
5. "Forgive us . . . as we forgive others". Spend some time in quiet worship thinking about those whom you find it difficult to forgive for something, and asking for God's grace.

READINGS



A number of Friends have responded to the International Planning Committee's request that they choose readings related to the main theme or one or more sub-themes of the World Conference. A selection of the brief reviews which resulted are presented here as a means of highlighting some of the principal themes with the hope that they will encourage Friends to select for themselves and read at least some of the recommended material. The reviews are organized into two groups according to the two parts of the Conference theme: **In Spirit and in Truth** and **Faith in Action**.

All of the literature recommended herein is currently available and the list has been given to the major Friends bookstores. As Friends study groups and Sunday school classes think of how they might prepare for the year of the World Conference, we suggest they consider the study of one or more of these recommended readings. It is a way of participating whether or not one actually goes to one of the Conference sites.



In Spirit and in Truth



Beyond Majority Rule

by Michael Sheeran
(Philadelphia YM, 1963)

Perhaps the best study of the Quaker business meeting process now available, this book reminds us not only that *faith* often moves *into action* through our meetings for business, but also that our business meetings and conferences can become profound religious experiences. It is also a prophetic

reminder that the effectiveness of "Quaker process" depends on our being so dedicated to *listening together for communal discernment* that we can transcend the "atomic individualism" so common today.

William Taber
Ohio YM

Creeds and the Search for Unity: A Quaker View

by Rex Ambler
(QHS/Committee for Christian Relationships of London YM, 1989)

Friends have generally been opposed to creeds as restricting personal spiritual experience, denying the validity of other faiths, and a form of words used as a basis for church membership.

Rex Ambler does us a service by reminding us of the long history of Christianity before the invention of printing and especially before the publication of the Bible in the vernacular. It was essential to define faith in words easily memorised, expressing unity and a public identity. Later, with increasing literacy came increased questioning and tighter definitions of belief. Friends may well be thankful for the freedom to "receive fresh light from whatever quarter it may come".

This does not help the tender consciences of those who, for example, represent Quakers at World Council of Churches meetings. We are anxious to help promote peace and love between all people of goodwill, but does describing the following statement of the WCC in its amended constitution of 1961 as a "basis" rather than a creed allow us to endorse such phrases on behalf of Friends in general?

"The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of Churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to

the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit".

There are those among us who would disclaim the label 'Christian', yet none could deny their manifest actions and service as being "under the ordering of the Spirit of Christ".

This is a thought-provoking book, clearly stating the issues to be faced.

Elizabeth Godfrey
Australia YM
(reprinted from the Australian Friend)



Credo

by Joyce Neil

(*Quaker Home Service*, 1986)

Credo or "I believe", is a personal statement by Joyce Neil, a retired doctor and Elder of South Belfast Meeting, Northern Ireland. "Rejection of creed is not inconsistent with being possessed by a living belief" (Arthur Eddington—quoted in *LYM Christian Faith and Practice*)—and this is what Joyce Neil shares with us in 16 pages. "I know there is something to which I respond and which can support and sustain and inspire me, and this Something is there for everyone of us to encounter". This is how she sums up her belief after a lifetime postulating the existence of God as a possible explanation of life's experiences.

She tells of her undogmatic Christian background and how, after an agnostic period in her teens, her mother set her "Back on The Way" telling her "one must try it out". So she begins by admitting the possibility that there is 'Something Other'. She comes

to view Creation not as a preconceived Plan but as a possible original empowerment, and this leads to what is for me a challenging statement that "things happen through the use or neglect of this mysterious delegated power".

Through the traditional and overlapping activities of prayer and worship, she knows that the spiritual power tapped for herself and others "works", but the means remain mysterious. She writes both about that which, like George Fox, she knows experimentally, but also taking account of the experiences and beliefs of others through the ages. She recognises that we neither need nor can hope to find all the answers, but she ends by saying "somewhere along the way, perhaps only after death, the seeker and the sought can become one".

Jean Strachan
London YM

God of Surprises

Gerard W Hughes

(*Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 1985*)

The author says that this is a guide book for the journey in which we are all engaged, which began at our conception and ends with our death. Christ said "the Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field which someone has found . . ." Matt 13:44. "The purpose of the book is to suggest some ways of detecting the hidden treasure in what you may consider a most unlikely field yourself.

I am particularly indebted to this author for

the chapter on "Knowing Christ" and for many of the practical exercises to be found at the ends of the chapters. When I share this book with others I find my life-giving bits are very often not the same as theirs, but we all find a new spirit of direction and guidance to help us to worship in spirit and in truth and to translate more freely our faith into action.

Edna Caddick
Southern Africa YM

Leading and Being Led

by Paul A Lacey

Pendle Hill Pamphlet No. 264

Attending a world conference gives many opportunities for experiencing leading and being led. Some of these opportunities occur during preparation, travel, and in the follow-up work we do afterwards; but most occur at the gathering itself, for the heart of any gathering of Friends lies in our being open to the leadings of God moment by moment during the conference, even during

the more relaxed social times. Reading and prayerfully discussing this pamphlet may be a good way for prospective attenders and their supporters to approach the level of alertness required of those who would heed and follow leadings.

William Taber
Ohio YM

"On listening to Another" Parts I and II

from *Gleanings* by Douglas Steere

(*The Upper Room* 1986—was 1955 *Swarthmore Lecture*)

No world conference can succeed without practiced and devoted listeners—Friends who listen so attentively and lovingly that our human and spiritual oneness can be felt through all surface differences. We need such listening skill now so that we can discern—out of our many languages and worship styles—the prophetic word for this critical time for our planet. These essays

emphasize the kinds of listening needed for a prophetic world gathering: deep listening to each other (with God as the Third Listener between us), to God as our own inward teacher, and to God speaking through another in worship and business.

William Taber
Ohio YM

Recognition of Reality: reflections and prose poems

by Adam Curle

(*Hawthorn Press*, 1987)

Adam Curle's work and writing will be known to many Friends. His many and lengthy forays into situations of conflict, tension and danger, to act as mediator and to seek to make peace are a living testimony to faith in action. His earlier writings have given factual accounts or discursive reflections on this work; this book is of a different kind. These short pieces, sixty-seven of them, are very personal meditations on themes of pain, joy, conflict, love, enemies, friends (and Friends), peace, politics, humanity and God.

The joy and strength of this book for me is that the deep spiritual wisdom is presented along with the crucible that has formed it. The raw experience of the world's pain and grief can be seen in the process of being transformed by a perception that puts it in

the context of the true reality, the reality to be recognised, that is indicated in the book's title.

For anyone engaged in peacemaking, in social change, in any kind of action for a better world, this is a book to be cherished. It is especially to be valued in those dark hours when failure seems to be all around, when action seems futile when the misery in the world seems overwhelming. It is a reminder of, and pointer to, that Reality the author seeks to recognise through all the variety of experiences alluded to in his meditations.

This is one of those few books which has, for me, become a companion: a companion in my work, and a companion on the Journey.

Pam Lunn
London YM

Rediscovering Prayer

By John R Jungblut

(*Seabury Press*, New York)

A very good help for conversation with "God" of the "unsure" believer or unbeliever of our time:

John Jungblut reveals old and new obstacles to prayer and goes on "establishing the Ground for Confidence" and "assimilating Prayer in our World View". For this we must "expand the Dimensions of Prayer" in "Becoming attentive to the Spirit", "celebrate the *Continuing Creation*", "sense the Gratuitous in Life", "strive to be a man for Others",

"work for interior Wholeness" and come "to Terms with Death".

If we could follow the lines of thought of John Jungblut, Quakerism would perhaps have more of a message for the seeker of today even if it comes very near to "New Age" Thinking. The neglected "mystic" way of life would get its proper place.

Georg Schnetzer
Pymont YM

Thomas R Kelly: As I remember him

by T. Canby Jones

(*Pendle Hill Pamphlet No. 284*)

This is a fine introduction on the "spiritual" theme of the coming World Conference of Friends. I was once more reminded by this old friend of the Quaker mystic what Thomas Kelly said about the "inner sanctuary of the Soul, the Holy Place, the Divine Centre, the Speaking Voice deep within us all, the Slumbering Christ" . . . stirring to be awakened. "God can be found", says Kelly, "this holy place, the inner sanctuary of the Soul, not only exists in all human beings, but is a place where God can be met and constantly communed with". To this is added his affir-

mation that "we can learn to live our lives on two levels at once".

The heart of his message is his "Call to a Holy Obedience" and the description of the way to it. What he says about "The Fruits" of this obedience is not less revealing; especially "of the entrance into Suffering", which belongs to the important spiritual laws. The second part of the pamphlet shows clearly that "Mystics" can be men of "practice", that faith flowers into action.

Georg Schnetzer
Pymont YM

The Way Out is the Way In

By Damaris Parker-Rhodes

(*Quaker Home Service, London, 1985*)

Born into a Cornish Anglo Catholic family, Damaris Parker-Rhodes arrived in the Society of Friends via a brief period in the Communist Party. During her full and active life, she did secretarial work for an insurance firm, brought up a family, entered politics and was a County Councillor, was an active peace-worker, helped form the Cyrene organisation which takes care of the homeless in Cambridge, and was the first woman secretary to the Cambridge Council of Churches among other things.

There are of course other women who have led active lives, but the value of this book for me was Damaris' account of her own spiritual journey, a journey through life in which, to quote her own words, she "consciously offered myself to life as a guinea-pig". Throughout, one is deeply moved by her openness to drink deep of life's experience and continue to reinterpret it even in tragic circumstances. Here is a woman who knew how to live, whose life was a testimony to the power of the spirit to translate faith into action.

I never met Damaris Parker-Rhodes, but her book makes me feel as if I did. I feel richer for it, for whilst her experiences are inevitably unique at the personal level, they will strike a chord with us all, particularly women. Her journey involves joy and tragedy, experiment and vision—from all

she learns, accepts and moves forward spiritually. Embracing life more fully than many are capable of, risking danger at times and certainly no heeder of convention, she is most certainly human, no plaster saint. But one is tempted to think saints have no need of God when she writes. "If I am very aware that I do not love much, the way is not to try to love more, so much as to spend more time in trying to open myself to receive the love of God. The rest takes care of itself".

One is left very much with a feeling of a life which was in God's hands in the least sanctimonious sense. She accepted the way prepared for her, she explored it avidly and for her, 'the process of becoming has to continue until the last'. In her final chapter, written when she was already facing cancer, we find that she held fast to this belief—she is brought full circle to her spiritual beginnings, and her underlying belief that her own spiritual journey and search for a new paradigm are shared by others. It is a courageous spirit who can write "I certainly would not have missed the cancer experience, since these past months have been the most valuable of my life". I would not presume to explain why, for that you must read the account for yourselves.

Ruth Serner
London YM

Why Friends Are Friends

by Jack L. Willcuts
(Barclay Press, 1984)

Jack Willcuts has performed a valuable service for evangelical Friends, calling them to cultivate the strengths of their Quaker heritage rather than distancing themselves from that ancestry for fear they might be associated with some with whom they differ theologically. He has also been one of a few contemporary evangelical Friends who has spent enough time with those from other Quaker traditions to be able to understand how to communicate effectively with these Quakers. This ambassadorial role is important if Quakers are to continue to bear the

same name and learn from one another.

Jack's chapter on power departs from the usual repertoire of Quaker distinctives and takes on in a positive way the characteristic of power Richard Foster warned about in *Money, Sex and Power*. Jack's power has been modelled in his intense, caring, determined life, along with his effectiveness in cultivating Quaker values within, not outside Christianity.

Lon Fendall
Northwest YM

Faith in Action



"Ain't Gonna Study War No More: On Education, Peacemaking and the Mind of Christ"

by Parker J. Palmer
(in *Pendle Hill Bulletin* No. 339, March 1984)

This essay is one way of opening to the conference theme and of preparing ourselves for the prophetic word and work we trust will flow from it. To dwell "in Spirit and in Truth" still seems to require what Parker calls "the conversion of our knowledge", the conversion of the way we see the world and one another. He suggests ways in which we

as individuals, teachers or institutions can allow this conversion to take us beyond the violence underlying civilisation and help us move toward a world of peace, justice and ecological harmony.

William Taber
Ohio YM

The Art of the Everyday. A Quaker Theology of Pastoral Care

By Zoe White
(*Pendle Hill Pamphlet* No. 281)

"Theology is what happens when I allow God's Word of creation to be spoken through me in the everyday events of my life. I approach theology and pastoral care, therefore, as a creative process—as the Art of Everyday.

Broadly, I define pastoral care as the work of mediating God's love to others and to the world . . ."

These are the themes which Zoe White explores in this *Pendle Hill* pamphlet. It was written after study and experience of pas-

toral care during her years at Earlham School of Religion. In a most open, vulnerable way she shares with us experiences from her time spent in an intensive Hospital Chaplaincy programme, as recorded in her journal. She goes on to discuss theology as an art, not likely to be very systematic but nevertheless disciplined. One of the disciplines is journal-writing a place of listening and story-telling: "Insofar as one's work in the journal reflects an attitude of listening and relinquishment of self to Spirit, insofar

as it is a place of listening and home-making, I believe it to represent an artful theology which will be a primary resource for our care of others".

Brief and lucid, this pamphlet at once challenges my integrity and encourages me to go on working at "those disciplines of the artist, those disciplines of self-opening and deep self-knowing" which can help me mediate God's love in the world.

G. Emily Dale
London YM

Chipko and Appiko: How People Save Trees

by Pandurang Hegde

(Quaker Peace and Service, London, 1989)

Through this pamphlet I have learned that one can save trees by hugging. I suppose that this form of non-violent life saving is only possible in India and may be far more difficult in Central America. The success of this method depends greatly on a responsive attitude on the part of a government. This is the moving report of the modern Hugging Movements fight in the Himalayan regions

of India. It gives the history and expresses the modern day courage of Indian women in their fight against the indolence of their husbands, the forestry departments and the dubious machinations of the wood contractors who push for "development of the country".

Georg Schnetzer
Pyrmont YM



The Epistle of James

(Your Bible—try a variety of translations)

It seems to me that the Epistle of James is in itself a wonderful preparation for a gathering with the theme of "In Spirit and in Truth: Faith in Action". Participating Friends are encouraged to get a good modern commen-

tary and work through the five chapters, either alone or preferably in the company of a small group.

Edna Caddick
Southern Africa YM

Healing Life's Hurts

By Dennis and Matthew Linn

(Paulist Press, NY, 1977)

The subtitle of this book is "Healing memories through the five stages of forgiveness", and it has been a life-giver for me. In order to translate our faith into works, we need to allow the Holy Spirit to fill us with love and to tell us the next step to take and to empower us so that we can take it. If our lives are cluttered up with old resentments, hurts, bitterness and arrogance, we will not leave much space for the Holy Spirit to fill. Or to see it another way, if the ground of our hearts is so full of weeds, there is no space for the seed to take root. As these old hurts are healed we are set free to worship more fully in spirit and in truth.

The book sets out five stages in healing a

memory. These are (1) Denial—I don't admit I was ever hurt; (2) Anger—I blame others for hurting and destroying me; (3) Bargaining, I set up conditions to be fulfilled before I'm ready to forgive; (4) Depression, I blame myself for letting hurt destroy me; (5) Acceptance—I look forward to growth from hurt. Not all the book is helpful to everyone, and the authors recognise this when they say "Use the steps that help you, this is not a rigid method". I took that advice and the Lord healed me and I believe made me more able to obey and turn my faith into action.

Edna Caddick
(Southern Africa YM)



Edna Caddick (top) with other members of the Bulawayo (Zimbabwe) Friends Meeting.

The Journal of John Woolman

Philips Moulton, ed.

(Friends United Press paper reprint 1990)

One good way to prepare for our world conference is to re-experience the soul struggle of John Woolman's *Journal*. Here we see a vigorous "liberation theology" arising from his Biblical, Christian roots which forshadow our current concern for peace, justice, and the integrity of creation. He is also an excellent model in another way

as we prepare for a world conference, for a study of his *Journal* suggests how many hours this Quaker activist spent in Friends business and committee meetings, listening tenderly to others as well as to the inner voice—speaking only as he felt led.

William Taber
Ohio YM

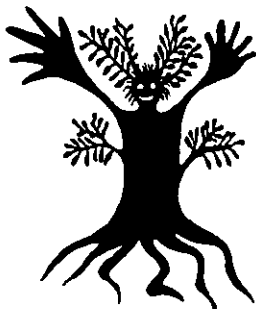
Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation

by Anne Thomas

(Wider Quaker Fellowship, 1989)

This short pamphlet is an excellent introduction to a rising concern which will no doubt be present at our World Conference. It is especially useful because its approach can be grasped by most of our diverse Quaker groups, yet most readers will find some ideas or "paradigm shifts" which stretch them to new levels of vision and spiritual growth. The footnote references also provide an open door to further reading choices appropriate for various Quaker traditions.

William Taber
Ohio YM



Mending Hurts

by John Lampen

(Quaker Home Service, 1987)

Each time I've been able to visit John and Diana Lampen in Northern Ireland I've learned more about reconciliation—not just from their words, but from their example. *Mending Hurts* deals very little with their experiences in Derry (Londonderry), probably because their work would be jeopardized if they were to speak and write openly about it.

The book does reveal a great deal of the effectiveness of the Lampens' work as peacemakers, by setting forth the broad framework in which they function. They struggle with reconciliation by living in the midst of bitter conflict, befriending people on all sides of the struggle, looking for creative

ways for enemies to see the humanity in one another.

During a recent visit to Derry, the Lampens took our group to see a musical drama in a local community theatre. The space age musical portrayed some of the dynamics of civil conflict still flourishing in Northern Ireland after three centuries. The performance may not have been a great drama, but was a creative and significant way to deal with the bitterness prevalent in Northern Ireland. The Lampens are great teachers and this book merits careful study.

Lon Fendall
Northwest YM

Money, Sex and Power

by Richard J Foster

(*Hodder and Stoughton paper reprint, 1987*)

Richard Foster's first and best-known book, *Celebration of Discipline* dealt largely with the inward disciplines of prayer, meditation, fasting and silence and draws its inspiration from an array of Christian classics. *Money, Sex and Power* is a very different book. Foster was accused of trying to attract readers with a sensational title, but he insisted his selection of both the title and theme were appropriate. He was, in effect, using Quakerly directness in specifying three dimensions of human experience that are so interrelated and have such a great potential for good or evil.

Foster is not an advocate of a new monasticism, but he borrows from that tradition the ideas of vows, adapting them to fit contem-

porary needs. In dealing with money he proposes the vow of simplicity, with regard to sex the vow of fidelity and in dealing with power the vow of service. He even suggests these be the basis for membership in meetings and churches.

Like one of his mentors, Elton Trueblood, Foster draws from the wells of his Quakerism, but speaks to readers far outside the Friends movement. For example, he speaks at one point of being overwhelmed by an "ocean of darkness" as he attempted to write about such heavy subjects, until through prayer the evil was displaced by the light of Christ.

Lon Fendall
Northwest YM

Unmasking the Idols: A Journey among Friends

by Douglas Gwyn

(*Friends United Press, 1989*)

Friends pride themselves in not worshipping idols. This book pricks that pride by showing us how the imagery of our lives and our beliefs can become rigid and lifeless: that is, idolatrous. Using the sweep of biblical history which underlies our Quaker Christian/Universalist culture, Douglas Gwyn takes us through the struggles that resulted in the dilemma of Quaker separation into evangelical and liberal. Many of the idols he unmasks should make us feel uncomfortable, wherever we find ourselves along the Friendly spectrum. "Through the evangelical emphasis on personal salvation and the liberal insistence upon religious truth as a private matter of choice, we have lost touch with Christ in history." As liberals, we "attempt to whittle God down to our size through cool-headed rationalism". As evangelicals, we are "too busy praising God to

stop and listen for God's direction in our lives". Even the Bible itself becomes an idol for some, (I learned a new word: bibliolatry) "forcing Jesus into a fixed image from the past" rather than being open to "experiencing Christ in disturbing, unfamiliar ways."

"Thus, two opposing camps of Quakers have emerged, embodying the same mutual distrust and disrespect that Jews and Samaritans harboured in Jesus' day." Douglas Gwyn points the way out of this dilemma: to soften our hearts and breathe life into the dry bones; to once again wait upon the Lord expectantly, in humility and in truth. He challenges us to a "more complete Christian pacifism". The way never was meant to be easy.

Thomas F. Taylor
FWCC World Office

Violence and Nonviolence in South Africa

by Walter Wink

(*New Society Publishers, 1987*)

Theologians like Walter Wink have much to offer the activists who struggle to apply the teachings of Christ, Gandhi and King in a violent world. Were it not for Wink's intimate knowledge of South African conflict, his discussion of nonviolence might not be very well received. Those on the front lines of struggle against oppression in various parts of the world have become weary of the advocates of nonviolence who are not personally familiar with the starkness of human evil as it is expressed in so many places.

Wink offers alternatives to passive pacifism, based in part on a careless reading of the Sermon on the Mount. Turning the other cheek, Wink convincingly demonstrates, means something very different from cheer-

fully and helplessly accepting abuse. That kind of nonviolence would find little support in South Africa or in any other conflict area. Turning the other cheek in Roman days meant forcing the attacker to strike with the fist instead of the back of the hand. In doing so the Roman oppressor would have to treat the victim as an equal, which they had no intention of doing.

Wink's careful Biblical exegesis, coupled with his keen understanding of contemporary struggles, makes the book an important one for Quakers, who must never let their pacifism keep them at a safe distance from violent political and social systems.

Lon Fendall
Northwest YM

Your Money or Your Life: A New Look at Jesus' View of Wealth and Poverty

by John Alexander

(*Harper and Row, 1986*)

"... Most of us need to be jarred out of our easy acceptance of the vile social order that surrounds us". Alexander does his best, with urgency, humor and some anger. A thoughtful, humorous sourcebook on right sharing in an evangelical perspective—not just theology and politics, but the day-to-day challenges of discipleship. Maybe his dedication is the best short summary: "To my father,

Fred Alexander. His sermons on discipleship (Luke 14:25-33), preached when I was a kid, are the basis of this book. He is an unusual fundamentalist; for he believes that inerrancy extends to the teachings of Jesus".

Johan Maurer
Indiana YM



FRIENDS WORLD COMMITTEE FOR CONSULTATION

With Friends in some 56 countries, world membership in the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) is more than 240,000. We differ not only in language, culture and national allegiance—but also in the emphases we place on different aspects of Quakerism. We seek to work together in many practical ways and also meet to share our experience at the deepest level.

The second World Conference of Friends, held in 1937, recognised the need for a formal body which could meet the need for communication between Friends and which would in future be responsible for organising international conferences and gatherings. So Friends World Committee for Consultation was born.

Aims and Purposes

FWCC has, over the years of its existence, naturally been concerned with defining its aims and purposes. The two outstanding resolutions in this regard are those quoted below—and it should be noted that the Committee has been careful to insist that its creation would not infringe in any way upon the autonomy of individual yearly meetings.

From the 1937 World Conference:

The purpose of the Friends World Committee for Consultation is “to act in a consultative capacity to promote better understanding among Friends the world over, particularly by the encouragement of joint conferences and intervisitation, the collection and circulation of information about Quaker literature, and other activities directed towards that end”.

From the Thirteenth Triennial (1976)—part of the revised Aims, Purposes and Rules (Constitution)

1. To encourage and strengthen the spiritual life within the Religious Society of Friends, and its outreach in the world, through such measures as worship, intervisitation, study, conferences and a wide sharing of experience on the deepest level.
2. To help Friends to gain a better understanding of the world-wide character of the Religious Society of Friends and its vocation in the world.
3. To promote consultation amongst Friends of all cultures, countries and languages. To bring the different groups of Friends into intimate touch with one another, seeking their common Quaker heritage, sharing experiences, and coming to some measure of agreement in regard to their attitude to world issues.
4. To promote understanding between Friends everywhere and members of other branches of the Christian Church and also of other religious faiths, and to interpret the specific Quaker message to those who seek further religious experience.
5. To keep under review the Quaker contribution in world affairs and to the world Christian mission; to facilitate the examination and presentation of Quaker thinking and concern in these fields; and to encourage Friends to cooperate as far as possible in joint action with other groups having similar objectives.

Committee representatives (about 175 in all) are appointed by the yearly meetings and groups affiliated with FWCC and all meet together once every three years in different parts of the world. The 17th Triennial Meeting was held in 1988 in Japan. This 1991 World Conference of Friends replaces the usual triennial meeting.

The World Office serves as a centre of worldwide communication for FWCC and its affiliate groups, aiming to provide links between Friends as we seek to perceive God's will more clearly, so that we may more effectively act in the world. By means of staff travel, correspondence and publications, the office seeks to help Friends gain a better understanding and knowledge of the worldwide character of the Society of Friends and its vocation in the world.

Contact is maintained with the work of four autonomous FWCC "Section" offices: the Africa Section located in Nairobi; the office of the Section of the Americas, located in Philadelphia; the Asia-West Pacific Section, located in Tasmania; and the European & Near East Section, located in Luxembourg.

FWCC enables Friends to work cooperatively through:

- Encouraging intervisitation and travel under religious concern.
- Arranging conferences and gatherings
- Facilitating mutual understanding and cooperation between mission and service bodies of Friends worldwide
- Publications in several languages
- Acting as Friends' official voice at the United Nations and its agencies (having consultative status as a Non-Governmental Organization)
- Forwarding Friends' concerns—such as peace and disarmament, abolition of torture, women's issues, racial equality and the right sharing of the world's resources, including a World Quaker Aid Program
- Cherishing isolated Friends and meetings through the International Membership Committee
- Participation at international meetings, including ecumenical and inter-faith occasions.



Selected FWCC Publications

Finding Friends around the world The Handbook of the Religious Society of Friends, containing brief descriptions of all yearly meetings, lists of Quaker schools, colleges, study centres, periodicals, and reference libraries.

Calendar of yearly meetings A leaflet published annually, giving dates and locations of all yearly meetings.

Friends World News Articles and news, illustrated with photographs, from Friends all around the world. Published twice a year.

Quaker Information Network Calendar, brief news-notes regarding activities, concerns, publications, etc., of Friends worldwide. Published six times a year.

Cheerfully over the World: Handbook for Isolated Friends A booklet designed to help Friends living in areas where there is no Friends meeting.

Tape-slide presentations on FWCC gatherings of 1982 and 1985.

Enquiries about prices and availability of all the above from FWCC World Office.

Section publications The FWCC Sections also produce their own publications including Section Newsletters, obtained from the Section addresses overleaf.

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