

TOWARDS WHOLENESS

No. 148 SUMMER 2017

£2.50



The **Friends Fellowship of Healing** is an informal group of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). (*Registered Charity number 284459.*)

Since its foundation in 1935, it has sought to uphold the cause of a healing ministry, and seeks to be a channel to help people towards health and harmony of body, mind and spirit, which it believes is God's purpose for everyone.

It has prayer groups attached to many Meetings, and also postal groups to enable isolated people, and those who may be unable to join a local group, to co-operate with others in the service of healing prayer.

The Fellowship holds conferences, retreats and workshops held either in its residential centre (*Claridge House, Dormans Road, Dormansland, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6QH*) or elsewhere.

All members annually receive three issues of ***TOWARDS WHOLENESS***, the journal of the Fellowship, published in March, July and November.

The minimum subscription is £15 per calendar year for the UK. For Europe and all overseas countries it is £21 (Sterling only). Cheques, payable to Friends Fellowship of Healing, should be sent to The FFH Membership Secretary, 6 Ferris Place, Bournemouth, BH8 0AU

Letters, articles, news items and other contributions for ***Towards Wholeness*** should be sent to the editor, Rosalind Smith, 4 The Walks, Stanton, Nr. Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, IP31 2BX, 01359 252248.

E-mail: RosSmith@btinternet.com

Deadlines: February 1st, June 1st and October 1st.

For further information about the **FFH** please contact the Clerk: David Mason, 2 Fir Avenue, New Milton, Hants. BH25 6EX. Tel: 01425 626112.

Email: david.mason1948@gmail.com

Donations for the work of the Fellowship are most welcome.

The Fellowship is a registered charity (number 284459)

CONTENTS

- | | | |
|-----|--|-------------------------|
| 2. | HELP IN THE FUTURE – PLEASE | |
| 3. | Spontaneous Writing | <i>Judy Clinton</i> |
| 5. | Psalm of Rosie Semple | <i>Sheila Semple</i> |
| 6. | Quaker Day of Healing – Reports | |
| 9. | Poem: <i>The Flame</i> | <i>Anne Smith</i> |
| 10. | At the First Stroke | <i>Peter Wilson</i> |
| 11. | Prayer for Healing | <i>Peter Horsfield</i> |
| 12. | A Woman's Place? | <i>Robin Goodman</i> |
| 15. | Claridge House programme | |
| 19. | Quaker Spiritual Healers' News and Events | |
| 20. | Love in Action | <i>David Mason</i> |
| 21. | Muslim Friday Prayers at our Meeting House | <i>Germaine Hanbury</i> |
| 23. | Just another Wounded Healer | <i>Michael Len</i> |
| 26. | Book Reviews | |

If any FFH members, or full healer members of QSH, would like to offer help at Britain Yearly Meeting Gathering – 29th July/5th August, at University of Warwick, please contact the Clerk, David Mason. Contact details on inside cover. Thank you.

September 29 – Oct 1 Friends Fellowship of Healing and Quaker Fellowship for Afterlife Studies joint Autumn conference at Woodbrooke.

This conference will offer the opportunity to look more deeply at the interaction between the spiritual, mental, emotional and physical levels of our being. Participants will have the time and space to explore and deepen their understanding, and share experiences. The conference will explore topics of interest to both FFH and QFAS members through talks by invited speakers and discussion in large and small groups. Previous conferences have been much valued by those who participated.

Ensuite bedroom fee: £238.00 Standard bedroom fee: £218.00.

All administration and bookings will take place through Woodbrooke: Tel: 0121 472 5171, email: enquiries@woodbrooke.org.uk

Bursary help may be available from your Local or Area Meeting, or from FFH if you are a member. Woodbrooke does have a bursary fund that you can apply to:

<http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/pages/financial-help.html>

Woodbrooke's Bursary Scheme provides financial help to anyone, Quaker or non-Quaker, who needs it to cover course fees at Woodbrooke. Please indicate on your booking form or contact the administration team. Enquiries are treated confidentially.

FUTURE HELP NEEDED !!!

DEAR FRIENDS,

THOSE OF US ON THE FFH COMMITTEE ARE CONCERNED THAT AS TIME GOES BY WE ARE NOT GETTING ANY YOUNGER! AND WE DO NEED TO KNOW THAT OUR POSITIONS CAN BE REPLACED BY OTHER MEMBERS. ALL THE WORK DONE BY THE COMMITTEE IS SHARED OUT, AND NO-ONE IS REQUIRED TO TAKE ON MORE THAN THEY CAN.

WE HOPE FFH WILL CONTINUE TO EXPAND AND CARRY ON WITH ITS HEALING WORK WHICH HAS BEEN STEADILY AND QUIETLY HAPPENING FOR AROUND 80 YEARS.

PLEASE GIVE SOME THOUGHT TO THIS REQUEST AND CONTACT THE CLERK, DAVID MASON (details on inside back cover of TW) IF YOU ARE INTERESTED. THANK YOU.

PLEASE NOTE THAT WE URGENTLY NEED SOMEONE WILLING TO TAKE OVER THE PACKING AND POSTING OUT OF TOWARDS WHOLENESS – A JOB WHICH TAKES AROUND 10 HOURS FOR ONE PERSON, LESS IF IT'S SHARED. ALL EXPENSES ARE PAID AND THERE IS A SMALL REMUNERATION.

The Postal and Phone Link Groups give prayer support to people seeking reassurance and healing. Some members have joined these groups because they are physically isolated by handicap, age or geography. Others may already belong to a local healing group and are able to give additional commitment by also belonging to one of the postal or phone link groups, or are simply committed to the power of prayer.

All are welcome to join. If you would like to help in this way, please write to one of the Postal Co-ordinators (***Robin Goodman and Muriel Robertson, contact details on inside cover***) with a few details about yourself. Your letter will be passed on to one of the group secretaries who will then contact you direct and give you the names of two or three people to uphold in prayer regularly.

SPONTANEOUS WRITING – a way through to the Inner Teacher

Judy Clinton

Over the past three years I've been struggling my way through chronic back pain of a fibromyalgic nature. Life has been restricted greatly by this and I have become depressed of heart and mind as well. Both of these conditions have come at the end of a period of multiple losses, and many years of intense stress. It has been a period of breakdown at all levels of my being and it's been, and still is to a lesser degree, hard to cope with.

As anyone who has experienced depression knows, the mind can become obsessively negative and will gnaw away at troubling situations and unsolvable existential questions, ever taking the sufferer deeper into a pit of hopelessness. What makes this worse (and this has been my experience - it may not be so for others) is that I am fully aware of what my mind is doing, but seem completely powerless to do anything about it.

It is at times like this when people turn to drink, drugs and other potentially addictive substances or activities in an attempt to escape, if only for a short while, from the painful circling of mental and emotional anguish. As someone I knew once said of himself, when deliberately drinking himself into a mindless state, 'I had to have some head-rest'. Others turn to anti-depressants, sleeping-pills and other medical interventions. We hang on to whatever we can while we ride out the turbulence that is within us.

I've never wanted to go the medical route of medication, Nor have I found drugs, alcohol and other commonly used means effective. There have been times when I have envied those who could have reprieve through these methods, but I am also profoundly grateful that I haven't been tempted into ways from which I could have been trapped into an even darker place.

But writing, thank God (and I mean that most sincerely) has been, and is, my life-line. Writing can be used in so many different ways to help the over-active and troubled mind to find some kind of order amongst its chaos. Writing 'unsent' letters to people with whom I may have difficulty, dialoguing with different aspects of myself, lists of pros and cons of actions, lists of things not to be forgotten, timetables to be created, records to be kept to chart progress or relapse. All of these, and more, are of immense value, but the one I want to address now is that of spontaneous writing.

Spontaneous writing can simply be a means of 'dumping' a muddle of thoughts and feelings; a way of disgorging confusion and pain; a relief from too much thinking; and an opportunity to vent feelings without the guilt of burdening others. All of that is invaluable. But it can be much more than that. It can be a way of communing with God/Universal Spirit/Inner Wisdom/deepest self.

One night, over a couple of years ago now, I went to bed troubled. I was tired and physically pained from busyness which I had imposed upon myself as a way of escaping my dark feelings. I prayed for help, for understanding, for direction and eventually went to sleep. I slept fitfully, with many bad dreams and woke, glad to be awake, but far from refreshed. I took out my journal, dated the page and, instead of plunging straight in with yet another moan and angst, I waited. I waited until this piece started to write itself:

Journal entry 29th January 2015

Do things with intense care and attention. As you do that your mind will be absorbed, and then your deeper self can become available to you. It is your deeper self that has access to all wisdom, the wisdom of the very Universe itself. Your thinking mind is very limited and because it has been so determined by the emotional impact of others upon you, it is also, not only partial, but distorted. There is no peace to be found in the thinking mind because it is fragmented and at odds within itself. Your emotional feelings are also very unreliable because they are so connected to your conflicted thinking mind. Only when you truly accept that your feelings and your intellectual thoughts will not give you the answers, nor the peace, that you seek, will you begin to tap into universal wisdom which courses through you, but is so overlaid by all your thinking and feeling.

This is why it is important to occupy both your thoughts and your feelings, not so that they will render answers, but so that they will be kept busy in order that wisdom can be known within you.

You know from experience that when 'knowing' comes to you, it is without emotional feeling, has total clarity and is without conflict. You also know from experience that these moments of knowing come to you, not when you are feverishly thinking things out, but when you are occupied with something else.

Giving your full attention to what you are doing – be it producing attractive writing, making jewellery, a card, or simply doing the washing-up– is preparing the way for inner sustenance and guidance. Start with using full attention in whatever you do as a spiritual practice, whether you 'want' to do it or not, and in that full attention you'll come to find that anything and everything can become beautiful because wisdom and love is able to flow into and through it.

As I wrote this piece, I knew that I was writing from the deepest part of myself and that this wasn't the creation of just my own thinking. Clearly the earlier paragraphs were very much influenced by the amount of study I have been doing recently about the mind, spirituality and mental and physical health (through people such as Eckhart Tolle, Krishnamurti, Byron Katie and others)

but it was the sheer practicality of what I wrote that was so specific to my own condition and significantly different from any former thoughts on the matter that I had entertained. This was my Inner Teacher communicating directly to me. It gave me a different motivation in my doing. Activities need not now be merely a frantic distraction, an avoidance from my troubled state, (as I had been using them, hence the tiredness) but a meditational practice which prepares the way for healing to happen deep within me. And writing spontaneously can give me the next step on the journey.

(This piece was published in the April 2015 Painswick Meeting Newsletter.)

Prolong not the past; invite not the future.

C G Jung

Psalm of Rosie Semple, dog

The Lord is my owner, I lack for nothing
He takes me on long walks with interesting smells
He lets me chase squirrels (but not catch them)
He finds a warm spot in the sun for me to lie down

He lets me be a complete dog
He shows me how to behave with humans and dogs
He forgives me when I bark at other terriers
 or chase cats, foxes, deer and Highland cattle
He leads me in the right paths

When I walk past plastic sheeting blowing in the wind, or pneumatic drills
Or am lifted up on to the vet's table, I will try not to tremble
 For his lead holds me and his hand is on my head
Even when there are fireworks or thunder and lightning
I will not fear, for my muzzle is under his oxter, and his arm around me

He feeds me good food with chicken, lamb or beef
 and gives me chews and treats
He throws a ball for me to chase
 and plays tug with squeaky toys

He combs my coat and scratches my tummy
He loves and cares for me
 and always will
I will sleep in peace on God's hearth for ever.

Sheila Semple

REPORT ON THE FFH NATIONWIDE QUAKER DAY OF HEALING

18th. March 2017

In planning this event, our vision was that it should be a 'memorable event', a landmark event, and our belief is that the day was successful for a variety of reasons. The 'known number' of meetings that took part were 44, and there may well have been more. Our conservative estimate puts the number of F(f)riends that participated in this Day of Healing to be in excess of 1,000.

It was helpful having Stephen Feltham and David Mason as part of the planning team, in that we live within a short distance of each other and could meet whenever it seemed necessary. March seemed to be a good time of the year for the event, though with hindsight we should have given Area Meetings much more notice than we did. If repeated, we need to notify Area Meetings nearly a year ahead, before areas fix their own monthly meeting days.

One major difficulty experienced was in accessing a database for communicating with areas and meetings. We eventually used the Claridge House database, but even this was not always up to date. In time, most Area Meetings were finally circulated..

In terms of planning and communication, an article was prepared for *The Friend*, and published on 20/1/17, once the editor became convinced that this was a newsworthy event and not just an extended 'free advert.' I believe the article was well received, but we cannot assume publication of future articles as and when we want them.

We had a considerable number of enquiries from different meetings, many asking for additional guidance. Optional guidance notes were prepared and issued. We were careful to stress that although a procedural pattern was proposed, Meetings who already had their own pattern or who wanted to follow a slightly different procedure were encouraged to do so. In fact, on the day, there were several variations noted ranging from a continuous 5 hour Meeting for Worship for Healing to a 30 minute MfW on the hour and every hour, to one meeting who wondered whether or not they could bring in their 'chanting group.' The important common factor was that we were all focused on our healing concerns. Several people commented on the depth of the silence arising from an extended Meeting for Worship for Healing.

In terms of planning for the day itself, welcomers' notes and elders' notes were produced for Bournemouth Coastal Area, along with a 'Simple Guide to Healing'. This simple guide (developed too late for general circulation) was handed to visitors unfamiliar with the concept of 'distance' healing. This proved helpful and could well be used in future situations. The use of 'post-it' notes on a white board was also helpful for those wishing to share their

concerns without expressing them vocally. Healing concerns in our local meeting ranged from healing for the individual, the homeless, the NHS, education, our divided nation, the starving millions in East Africa, and our damaged environment - no doubt this pattern was expressed by other meetings.

A final comment from an outside visitor hopefully and neatly summed up the day for many of us.

"Thanks Peter, it was a lovely day and you have a special meeting place, the peace, love and healing was palpable. Thanks to all the team for making Gill and I so welcome. Peace, light and healing to my new friends in Poole.
Ian Knight" (Reiki Spiritual Healer)

Peter Wilson

MORE REPORTS FROM MEETINGS ON THE NATIONWIDE DAY OF HEALING:

The three **YORK Meetings** combined together to hold a Day of Healing at Acomb Meeting House.

Prior to the event we circulated all the Meetings in the AM and advertised in the AM Newsletter. There was a planning group of four Friends, eldering and door-keeping were shared, drinks and biscuits were available all day in an adjoining room, and tea and homemade cake was served at 4 pm.

A total of 21 Friends attended representing the York Meetings. Acomb was chosen as the venue because there were no other users that day and the quiet space was appreciated by those who attended. There was little spoken ministry.

We asked for comments and amongst the points made were:

- appreciation of the flexible and uncomplicated format;
- welcoming warmth, peaceful and reflective atmosphere, feeling of peace and healing;
- opportunity to share silence over a longer period than usual;
- hopes for another similar event

Jill Bowcock

A little feedback on a very successful day in **Poole Meeting**.

Attendance for the day - 28.

We achieved a deep stillness throughout the day from 11.00am to 4.00pm.

Visitors were from the Catholic Church, the Church of England, the Methodist Church, the United Reform Church, and the Salvation Army. Good support from Wimborne Quakers and the Poole Hospital Chaplaincy team. 2 visitors were from DWA Reiki and Spiritual Healers.

Healing concerns ranged from healing for individuals, the homeless in Poole, people suffering from addictions, the NHS, Education, refugees, the starving millions in East Africa, and our damaged environment.

Peter Wilson

The **Reading** prayer group for healing is now in its 16th year, meeting monthly on the first Tuesday at Reading FMH. The group has a core of 6 regular attenders with occasional visits from other Friends and is facilitated by two members of FFH, both of whom have done the Quaker healers course. Our Meetings for Worship for Healing have a structure with introductions, preparation in the form of a relaxation, then a meditation leading into a silent MFW of about 20 minutes. We then have a period of time to name those on our minds, either out loud or hold them silently in our minds. We use the affirmation, "My mind and body is renewed by the Spirit of God within me" before a closing prayer.

We were prompted to respond to the call for a Quaker day of healing and were fortunate to have use of three interlinking rooms at the FMH. One as a quiet room, one in which we set up a simple labyrinth to walk and reflect, and the third as a general gathering, chat and refreshments room.

We were able to co create a space of peace and quiet to link with the network of groups around the country and felt it was an altogether very worthwhile exercise. About 10 Friends attended, and we were thankful that some were drawn to stay for the duration of the day..

A couple of feedback points. Publicity. We had hoped that publicity in the form of articles would appear in *The Friend* and also the intention to produce flyer inserts as mentioned in *Towards Wholeness* would have greatly helped. For our prayer group for healing in a religious society which doesn't generally do prayer or healing something in *The Friend* would, it is felt, have greatly raised Friends' awareness of this event, as well as validated the groups who quietly, month after month, get on with creating a sacred space of reflection to hold in the Light our community, family and friends and issues of concern. And not least to nurture ourselves in our daily lives.

Jenny Cuff, John Colquhoun

On Saturday 18th March, in **Keswick Meeting House**, we held our first “day of healing”. This initiative from the Friends Fellowship of Healing encouraged Extended Meetings of Worship in as many Meeting Houses as possible. We based our day on a similar event that took place in Yealand Meeting and used their planning ideas. The five hours of Meeting for Worship were divided into different sections as follows (the numbers present appear in brackets): 11am to 11.45, 'the individual'(17); 12 noon to 12.45, 'family and friends'(13); 1pm to 1.45, 'our Quaker community'(7); 2pm to 2.45, 'society and its conflicts'(13); 3pm to 3.45, 'our world and our environment'(14). Each section was introduced by a different elder and separated by a shuffle break of 15 minutes.

Quakers from Carlisle (6), Cockermouth (10), Keswick (10) and Penrith (2) were involved and non-Quakers from the Keswick Area (7). People were free to come and go. Keswick Meeting and others provided delicious nourishment throughout the day. Those present felt the Meetings for Worship were gathered and that the whole day itself was very loving.

Dinah Handley, Jane Holmes & Marion Rooke

It is hoped to hold a second Nationwide Quaker Day of Healing on the first Saturday in March 2018.

THE FLAME

*Without a flame
the candle could not burn;
and there would be no light
for us to find in our dark time;
and the wisdom of reflecting
and projecting the lighted candle's glow
to all those we know need the healing
warmth of the flame,
to light the candles in their hearts.*

Anne Smith

I’m in my 10th year now as a Quaker lay chaplain, and part of an ecumenical chaplaincy team based at Poole Hospital in Dorset. This has been the foundation stone of my ministry of healing, and has also been the most satisfying and fulfilling of my activities since early retirement. Without question, my response to this calling was a prompt to that ‘inner voice’, and it has given rise to many opportunities for healing and outreach within the hospital setting.

My main responsibility has been a generic role visiting the stroke wards and ‘being there’ for patients of all faiths and none. The tendency these days is for hospital stays to be shorter, but stroke victims buck that trend and can frequently be inpatients often for many weeks and sometimes months. This means that I can sometimes build up a relationship over time, and hopefully work on a basis of trust. The other advantage to staying with the same wards is that I’m also there for the staff, who from time to time need support as well as the patients. As I enter the wards, and if I remember, I usually whisper, ‘I greet you with a smile, and I will leave you with a blessing.’

Experiencing a stroke means that patients can be debilitated in so many different ways from loss of limb function to loss of language, comprehension and speech production. Facial changes may mean poor eye function and difficulty in smiling. Memory function is also often impaired along with significant personality changes and mood swings. In short, the overall effect is sometimes a loss of identity in that the patient is suddenly no longer the person that they used to be. This can be devastating and a real journey ‘into the darkness’ of mind, body and spirit. While ‘holding them in the Light’, I try to embrace the darkness with them (but at the same time maintain a little distance for my own protection), share their tears and frustration, allow them to rage against that darkness and then attempt to journey with them in moving back towards the Light, where hope and love may be found.

Behind all the listening, the verbal and non-verbal communication, there is that over-riding conscious awareness that ‘that of God within me’ is reaching out to ‘that of God in the other person’, so that in that moment of spiritual connection, healing can begin to take place. In that I ‘let go and let God’, I cannot know what that healing will be, other than pray it will be for the highest good of the patient. Often the only visible sign I might see is a relaxation in the body of the patient and a sense of peace and acceptance. It’s important to remember that not all strokes will have beneficial physical cures, though building up a level of acceptance as well as hope will often help a patient work towards a new though very different future. My aim at the end of a visit is to leave them with a sense of hope and a smile on their face (if that is possible). That simple smile can be such a wonderful and instant force for healing in that moment of ‘now-ness’.

Where communication is not possible, I must trust that just 'being there' may be all I can do at that time.

The other part of the story of course is that I have my own demons to contend with and not all visits go easily. I don't always 'get it right.' There are days when I struggle 'to do the right thing', and lack the energy and 'wellness' to do the sort of job I should be doing. In these moments, I have to find a quiet corner, allow myself to be 'held in the Light' and to once again 'let go and let God.' At these times, I have to be kind to myself, and accept with gratitude the healing that I too am given.

Let me finish with a lovely story about a very elderly lady I met some years ago, called Doreen. 'Hello,' she said to me, 'Gordon said you were coming.' (Who's Gordon?) 'It's good to see you,' I replied. I listened and she talked for a good 15 minutes. It transpired that she was back in 1945/46 and was telling me that the lads from her village, especially Johnnie, would soon be home from the war. She was worried that some of her girl-friends had their eye on Johnnie as well. I stayed with her back in the 1940s and we talked about love and friendship. At the end of my visit and with a smile on her face, she said she would tell Gordon I'd been, thanked me for visiting and said she felt 'much loved.' That was a good visit.

P.S. I never did find out who Gordon was!

Prayer for healing

May I be a channel of Love,
To help where needed.
Comfort and compassion to give,
For growth be seeded.

Let me be an instrument of Peace,
To shed all tension,
Harmony encouraging to place;
Balance dimension.

May I be a channel to heal,
Through all life's illness.
Day by day dynamic to feel,
Sharing from stillness.

Peter Horsfield

After reading Jan Etchell's interesting article. (TW Spring No. 147 – 'Morocco beyond the Surface') – Robin Goodman has contributed the following illuminating article on the desperate state of many women in the world!

My husband, John, and I were staying in a Nepali hotel in a hill-top village. Our room door opened onto a courtyard, the roof of the rooms downstairs. When we went outside for afternoon tea all the other rooms had been taken by a group of men, teachers, lecturers and professors from Kathmandu. We or rather, John, was the centre of attention, every one of them trying to set a date for English language practice and other things related to their subject. Like Jan I was becoming irritated with being 'not there'. When the geography professor asked John for a discussion about European geography, John replied, 'ask my wife, she is a professor of geography too', (immediately giving me a promotion I did not warrant). The Nepali man quite literally turned his back to me. I lost it a bit and complained to them bitterly about their attitude to women. John gently whispered to go easy, culture shock and all that.

Then one said to John, 'you should beat your wife'. I do not know who got the greater shock, John being told to beat me or them, in a country where it is not done to show affection in public. John's arm shot around my shoulders as if to protect me from a beating, while he answered indignantly, 'I do not beat my wife!'. That night we were invited to join them at the meal after which they played a version of 'Just a Minute', each having to talk for one minute on a given topic, in a given different language. I lost count of the number of different languages. My presence was tolerated because John had made it clear it was both of us or neither. John was asked to speak, in English. I was ignored. I would have liked to have told them, yes, in one minute, of women's right to equality.

Another time, on my own in Kathmandu, I was taken to a children's home where I met a vibrant, energetic young woman who had a mission. She was from the countryside and had seen what her elder sisters' lives were like: arranged marriages, many children and hard slog in the fields. At the age of 13 she ran away to Kathmandu having rejected the arranged marriage. Her parents disowned her. She worked in a carpet factory to pay her way through university. Although she had had no official schooling, she had taught herself by doing her brother's homework for him. She took a degree in social work and, as research for her thesis, she visited a women's prison where she was horrified at the appalling conditions. These women had had no justice as we understand it; were disowned by their families and had their children thrown into prison with them. After this experience she (to my shame I cannot remember her name, let's call her Anna) set about raising funds to open a

children's home, (she now has three), and invited the women to allow her to have the children, give them a roof over their heads, food and most importantly, an education. Simultaneously she set up classes for the imprisoned women. I was taken to a sewing workshop where you could ask for anything to be made and I was measured for a pair of pyjamas, this was amid much laughter and giggling, mostly at how big I am! Well, yes I was compared to them, but as a Westerner I am actually quite small. The cook at the home was smiling and obviously very happy. Her story was that she had murdered her husband. He had killed 10 of her children, all in fits of rage and beat her badly. When he went to kill the youngest she lost the plot and a knife was in her hand; she did not intend to kill him, only to prevent him killing this crying baby. The children's home lady asked a male solicitor friend to appeal and the lady was freed. The mother had learned to cook in prison and was offered the job of cooking for the children. She was so happy: she had a roof over her head, and she could see her child every day and see him go off to school. Other classes were in things like IT, paper making and bee-keeping .

All of these women would be able to find employment after leaving prison and so be free and not controlled by criminals, begging and prostitution. The last time I saw and spoke to Anna, she was taking a degree in law so she could become a lawyer to defend these otherwise undefended women.

Wandering the streets of Kathmandu I came across a shop, all too common, catering for the tourists. This one was selling speciality teas and incense sticks. I was looking for small gifts to bring home so I went in. This lady's story was similar. She too was a country girl who had run away from an arranged marriage. She too worked to pay her way through university. She had taken a business management degree and set up two businesses, one a travel company providing transport and guides for tourists wanting to explore more of Nepal, and the other a small string of shops. She tried to buy products made by women to support women on their own.

Then she found a boyfriend who asked her to marry him. She said yes, and then discovered what he expected of her after their marriage: no more running businesses, staying at home and looking after him and bringing up their many children. She told him words to the effect of 'no thank you' and turned her back on the proposed marriage, at which point her family then disowned her.

I am not at all sure that we have any right to change others' cultures from our own perspective. Change has to come from within, like from these two brave women. Anna has been given a big international award for her work, visits many countries though is not at all recognised in her own. Through these meetings she has widened her experience and raised a great deal of money for the women and children of Nepal. The shop owner meets many people from all over the world, and so she too is part of the movement for change. It is only

through women like these, who reject the life that their families designed for them, that change can truly come about. We can, however, stand on the sidelines and give support.

And further thoughts on the inequality and poor treatment of women which still pertains worldwide, the following is from **Marianne Griffiths**:

‘This is a *huge* topic. What I have witnessed during my life shows that women are quite regularly deemed as inferior in all walks of life, in just about every country I have lived in... Some men in the supposedly “equal” western world stop their wives, daughters, girl-friends, female employees and even female neighbours from fulfilling their potential as unique human beings... What really impressed me, a few years ago, was listening to a very old Baha’i leader who then gave me some books about the Baha’i faith. Right from the first page I read that they treat women as equals. I had not seen that in the literature of any other religion...

‘Among the last words of my father to me were “Make this world ecumenical” and as a disillusioned Catholic he said “If two people don’t get on, it’s better that they divorce.” Is that part of the inequality problem – that many religious groups still control women? I think so!

The humble, meek, merciful, just, pious and devout souls are everywhere of one religion; and when death has taken off the masks they will know one another; though the divers liveries they wear here make them strangers.

William Penn

THE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF VEGETARIANISM:-

VEGANS do not eat dairy products, eggs or any other products derived from animals;

LACTO-OVO-VEGETARIANS eat dairy products and eggs;

LACTO-VEGETARIANS eat dairy products but avoid eggs;

OVO-VEGETARIANS eat eggs but not dairy products;

PESCATARIANS eat fish but not meat;

FLEXITARIAN is a term coined in the 1990s for when someone is vegetarian most of the time with just the occasional meat or fish!

CLARIDGE HOUSE NEWS AND PROGRAMME

Bursary assistance available, depending on individual personal circumstances

Please enquire when booking.

For booking details –, and other tariff, including daily rates and special breaks –

please contact The Manager, Claridge House, Dormans Road, Lingfield, Surrey,

RH7 6QH. Tel: 01342 832150. E-mail: welcome@claridgehousequaker.org.uk

website www.claridgehousequaker.org.uk

CLARIDGE HOUSE PROGRAMME

DAY RETREATS:

all £50.00

Wednesday 5th July...Meditation on the Chakras..Led by **Lina Newstead**

Wednesday 2nd August...Meditation on Summer...**Lina Newstead**

Wednesday 6th September...Meditation on the Essence of Being...**Lina Newstead**

Thursday 7th September...Flower Power...painting in Claridge House garden
William de Wilde

Wednesday 4th October...Meditation on Autumn...**Lina Newstead**

Wednesday 1 October .Meditation with Mandala and Yantra..**Lina Newstead**

Wednesday 6th December..Meditation on Light,Sound & Breath..**L Newstead**

Thursday 2nd November...Face: The Facts – capture a sitter's likeness
William de Wilde

JULY 10 – 12 SOUL WALKING RETREAT (6 places)

Silent walking is a means of becoming more aware of ourselves and our surroundings – a return to our most basic self – simultaneously explore our inner selves. With **Charlotte Standish**. **£210**

JULY 11 - 13 MASSAGE RETREAT (6 places)

When you hurt yourself you instinctively use your hands to rub the affected area; Massage is an extension of this technique. The soothing massages will relax you in both mind and body – includes two full-body massages. Tuesday 10 am to Thursday 4 pm
With **Andrei Illes**. **£275**

JULY 14 – 16 KNITTING TO SOOTHE THE SOUL (6 places)

A 'get away from it all' break to knit heart, soul and mind back together. New to knitting? Forgotten how to? Keen to update your skills? Welcome all. With **Hilary Grundy**. **£260**

- JULY 21 – 23 MEDITATION RETREAT (11 places)**
Share different meditation techniques together. Mindfulness will be integrated into the practices. With **Lina Newstead.** **(£260)**
- July 28 – 30 ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE (10 places)**
A learned skill which improves health, balance and co-ordination and is medically proven as a long term solution to back pain. A gently-paced course using explanation, lying down, guided activities, hands-on work and discussion. Please bring comfortable clothing.
With **Jill Payne** **(£245)**
- AUGUST 4 – 8 VAJRASATI YOGA (9 places)**
Gentle traditional yoga suitable for all levels, focusing on the breath to deepen and extend body, mind and spirit. Working meditatively, listening to our bodies and breath – this style of yoga is also suitable for more mature and less able students. With **Rosie Waters** **(£260)**
- AUGUST 18 – 20 CALLIGRAPHY (9 places)**
For all levels – beginner to advanced – learning, improving, experimenting with one or more scripts. Scripts include: italic, foundational hand, uncial, Carolingian, italic capitals, Roman capitals, copperplate, blackletter, versals, etc. With **Gaynor Goffe** **(£260)**
- AUGUST 25 – 27 FLIGHT AND FLAMES: the fall of Icarus (9 places)**
Enter the mythic world of Icarus, fire up your imagination, discover a rich source of inspiration for creative writing. For anyone who writes.
With **Rebecca Hubbard** **(£260)**
- SEPT 1 – 3 HEDGE SHAMANISM (11 places)**
A safe cross-cultural shamanism which is used to work with mother earth – Pachamama, and move towards becoming whole. Working with some of the universal shamanic techniques and learning, create a Mesa (a Shamanic altar) and work with plants, fire ceremony and journeying.
With **Sarah Fox** , Quaker and Shamanic Practitioner. **(£260)**
- SEPT 5 – 7 MESSAGE RETREAT (6 places)**
As July 11-13 With **Andrei Illes** **(£275)**

SEPT 11 – 15 QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS' TRAINING WEEK

(10 places)

Training in practical healing for those interested in becoming members of the Quaker Spiritual Healers, enabling exploration of potential in a safe and supportive atmosphere. Experience unnecessary, only a desire to help. Applicants should be sympathetic to Quaker values, attending a Quaker Meeting for over a year. Does not necessarily lead to full membership. **(Prices: see page 19)**

With **Cherry Simpkin** and **Kay Horsfield**.

SEPT 15 – 17

ONENESS

(11 places)

We need to learn from a universe that models connectedness and mutuality, and respond with love. In small groups, alone, and in plenary, we will explore how we connect with each other, and with the rest of creation. With **Jennifer Kavanagh**. **(£245)**

SEPT 18 – 20

SOUL WALKING RETREAT

(6 places)

See July 10 – 12 With **Charlotte Standish** **(£210)**

SEPT 19 – 21

MASSAGE RETREAT

(6 places)

As July 11 - 13 & Sept 5 - 7 With **Andrei Illes** **(£275)**

SEPT 22 – 24

YOGA WEEKEND

(9 places)

Come and practise Yoga from a mindful perspective – giving more time and attention to your postures, breathing practices and deep relaxation techniques. We will also practise hand mudras gestures, mantras, positive affirmations and meditation. With **Lina Newstead** **(£260)**

SEPT 26 – 28

TAI CHI

(9 places)

Benefits people of all ages – improving breathing, overall body flexibility, balance, reducing stress. Suitable for all – beginners and those seeking a deeper understanding of Tai Chi. No experience required. With **Andrei Illes** **(£245)**

SEPT 29 – OCT 1

SINGING IN HARMONY

(10 places)

Drawing on rich traditions of music and chanting from many eras, there will be fun warm-ups, simple songs and more complex part songs taught by ear in a friendly relaxed atmosphere. No experience needed.

With **Suyra Cooper** and **Ryan O’Riordan** (£260)

OCTOBER 3 – 5 **MASSAGE RETREAT** **(6 places)**
As July 11 – 13 With **Andrei Illes** **(£275)**

OCTOBER 6 – 8 ADVANCED KNITTING (6 places)
This course is for those who have previously attended a knitting course at Claridge House, or who are very skilled knitters. The programme is challenging, fast and friendly – entrelac, intarsia, double-sided knitting, Kitchener stitch, and a lace refresher are all on the menu. With **Hilary Grundy** **(£260)**

OCTOBER 13 – 15 WELL-BEING RETREAT (11 places)
Do you need a digital detox? Enjoy a weekend to enhance your well-being with practices from Yoga and mindfulness meditation. Learn how to deal with insomnia and stressful lifestyles. Massage available at an extra cost. With **Lina Newstead** **(£260)**

OCTOBER 20 – 22 **YOGA AND THE BREATH (9 places)**

A weekend devoted to yoga practice, learning how to harness the breath and connect with the subtle body for a more profound experience. With **Ceri Lee** **(£280)**

OCTOBER 27 – 29 **GENTLE YOGA – INNER BALANCE**
AND SANTOSHA **(9 places)**
 Using meditation, Hatha yoga practices, breathing techniques and
 Yoga Nidra – balancing Sun/Moon energy and finding a centred space
 from which you can expand and grow. With **Nikki Tuke** **(£280)**

NOVEMBER 3 – 5 QSH SUPPORT WEEKEND (10 places)
Only open to QSH full healers or probationers. With QSH tutors
(£220)

NOVEMBER 7 – 9 MASSAGE RETREAT (6 places)
As July 11 – 13 With **Andrei Illes** (275)

Please note: Claridge House reserves the right to cancel any course or event should circumstances dictate, and fully refund any associated payments made to the House.

QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS' NEWS and EVENTS

QSH TRAINING COURSE

There will be a **Quaker Spiritual Healer Training Course on 11th-15th September** at Claridge House. If you want to book a place please contact Claridge House directly. Telephone number 01342 832150 or email welcome@claridgehousequaker.org.uk.

The tutors will be Cherry Simpkin and Kay Horsfield.

The cost of the course will be £350 en suite, £310 not en suite. There will be bursaries available in case of hardship. If you have any questions about the course or want to ask about bursaries please contact Kay Horsfield 01923 675671 or email horsfield.k@gmail.com

If you are a full Quaker healer or probationer there will be an opportunity to make contact with other healers and share experiences as there is going to be a **Healer Support Weekend at Claridge House - the weekend 3rd-5th November.** Price £220. Again, please contact Claridge House directly.

If any full healers are thinking they may want to become tutors for the QSH Training Course please contact Kay Horsfield horsfield.k@gmail.com.

THE QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS' NEWSLETTER will no longer exist as a separate publication, for various reasons, but mainly due to the lack of contributions. However, as before, any news which pertains particularly to QSH events will still be published within *Towards Wholeness* and any contributions – articles, poems, etc. which readers would like to send in for the QSH section should still be sent to Ed Warne, stating that they are for that section. His contact details are on the back inside cover of *TW*.

It has also been decided not to send out renewal annual membership cards for QSH members. All new probationers and full healer members will receive a card initially. However, in the event of a member losing their card they can contact Kay Horsfield who will send them a replacement card.

LOVE IN ACTION

David Mason

A good Friend of mine once said that Healing is love in action. I think as a healer myself that beautifully sums up where I aspire to be.

In the run up to our FFH Spring Committee Meeting, at Friends House, another Friend undertook a survey to get a feel for how many of our QSH healers could be relied on to respond to Healing requests (I routinely receive these as your Clerk).

As these requests come from up and down the country it is impossible to determine easily how best to respond to them. An innovative solution was to have an electronic map of Britain with electronic pins in it representing healers. The plan was to locate the closest healer and direct the requesting patient to the healer and coordinate the logistics of arranging a contact healing appointment. Sadly insufficient healers responded positively to this request so your Committee is no further forward into providing a working system.

My wife and I regularly visit patients who like to receive contact healing and it is a real privilege to be used as a channel for the benefit of others.

Several years ago I thought my knees were failing, I had arthroscopy in both knees and received steroid injections and even contemplated knee replacement treatment. Now some ten or more years on they are fine. I can only put it down to acting as a servant to Spirit by being used as a channel for healing. A very good healing friend of mine once said healers receive 10% - sadly she has gone 'home' now, but I think my freedom from pain in my knees is an indirect benefit of serving others.

If you, as a healer, are unable to travel we would arrange for a patient to come to you, but if you can travel we will happily refund your travel expenses (e.g. train journey or mileage) if you go to see a patient at our request.

So please give requests for contact healing more consideration. It is truly a gift and one that if used will benefit healers and patients alike physically and spiritually.

*Forsooth, brothers, fellowship is heaven and lack of fellowship is hell:
fellowship is life, and lack of fellowship is death: and the deeds ye do upon the
earth, it is for fellowship's sake that ye do them.*

William Morris

MUSLIM FRIDAY PRAYERS AT OUR MEETING HOUSE

Germaine Hanbury

I have been conflicted around the use of our Meeting House by the local Muslim community for Friday prayers. Issues of equality have clashed with a desire to be hospitable, inclusive and non-judgemental. The struggle continues, but I am mindful that I might not be here without the intervention of a courageous and kind Sudanese Muslim called Hufez.

My 90 year-old mother has written the story for me at some length and with moments of humour attached to the horror. I will concentrate on the former, paraphrase and condense. When I was two my parents and I were caught up in the anti-British riots in Cairo of January 1952. My father was there with Barclays DCO and we lived in a Pension on Gezira Island.

Hufez worked at the Pension and he and I formed a deep attachment. One day there was the sound of an army of feet and menacing chants coming over the bridge to the Island. My mother fled with me back to the Pension to be met by an anxious Hufez who grabbed me, ordered mother [servant turned commander] to follow him up a ladder and on to the roof of the building where he covered us with a filthy sheet, put his finger to his lips for silence and left. After blessed quiet resumed downstairs, Hufez returned and escorted us to our rooms which had been totally ransacked, all possessions gone, bed and cot trashed. This was minor compared to what had happened to other women, two of whom had been murdered.

My father who was bilingual in French and English was trapped in the Bank which had been set on fire. He wanted to speak to the crowd in French since the riots were anti-British, but was prevented by his colleague who announced that if he was about to die, he would die an Englishman! This interested my father, but the timing was not conducive to further examination.

Another colleague, Graham, who had escaped, knew that my father was trapped. He and an ex-Fleet Air Arm comrade, John, ran to the British Embassy and purloined a war-surviving tank kept for ceremonial purposes. With haphazard manhandling of the controls, the tank was brought to life and lurched off, stopping and starting, to the rear of the Bank. The tank was in control of its handlers rather than the other way round. The sight of this beast scattered the rioters sufficiently for a rescue of my father and his colleague. My father had sustained a serious head wound.

Four people were now crammed into this lump of metal together with a bottle of VAT 69 whisky stashed by whoever had control of the thing during ceremonial occasions. Pain from the head wound receded nicely by this discovery and the inside of the tank began to feel quite homely my father later reported. On this occasion he was willing to drink it without soda. Graham

and John were grappling with the controls in an effort to direct the tank to the British hospital, then run by the surgeon father of Clarissa Dickson-Wright. This produced some interesting new expletives which my father tried to commit to memory against the possible day when his own, relatively pedestrian, stock should prove insufficiently satisfying in the face of an extreme exigency. (He was not a Quaker!)

The whisky had the effect of making my father chuckle and burst into song which he was impolitely requested to quench. The tank progressed darting to one side and another, turning a full circle at one point and demolishing a small wall together with other irritating impediments. At last the hospital came into view complete with fortifications of trees, trolleys and benches. The staff, aware of the riot, looked out horrified at the sight of a tank. They were unable to hear the comforting English accents being shouted from the vehicle. My father had an inebriated brainwave. 'Sing the National Anthem', he said. This seemed as good an idea as any. So the hospital staff witnessed the unexpected sight of men standing to attention as best they could with hands to the forehead in salute, bellowing out over and over again, the first few lines of the anthem. Since shirts had been removed to act as bandages, they were somewhat under-dressed for the occasion. It was additionally strange that from below was being added an enthusiastic, alcohol fortified, rendering of the Marseillaise, with which my father was equally familiar. This did the trick and tank passengers were welcomed into the comparative safety of the hospital together with their transport which, it was thought, might come in useful.

Back to Hufez. In gratitude for his actions, my father was able, with the assistance of the Bank, to obtain a much sought after and lucrative kiosk for him in one of the main streets in Cairo, the licence to operate it and necessary start up items.

My conflict remains unresolved, but I will contain it in honour of my true Muslim friend, and the events we shared sixty-five years ago.

A Sunday school teacher asked her children as they
were on the way to church service,
'And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?'
One bright little girl replied,
'Because people are sleeping.'

I intended and planned to simply turn the tables on my UK and US residences three years ago. I would in 2014 live in Seattle, in the States' Pacific Northwest, known for rain and billionaires. And I would visit Bristol at least annually.

I left Oahu, Hawaii after 40 years [and 4 in Army on Mainland] and spent 2 in Christchurch with the Methodist Conference of New Zealand in psychogeriatrics and chaplaincy. Following were 21 years in Bristol – 5 in a residential spiritual retreat community, 10 as psychotherapist with persons with cancer, and throughout the 2 decades with hospice and hospitals, prison and cellblock visitation, county education appeals, Sidcot School Governor, and adult residence evaluations.

That was the plan – to go back to the other home again. But we know the cliché about plans, don't we? My intentions followed that crash pattern. Two months after moving, I got whacked with cumulative diagnoses of Multiple Myeloma, Congestive Heart Failure, Kidney Failure, Liver Failure, Spinal Compression Fracture – have I left out anything?

In Bristol I succeeded fairly well refraining from NHS visits. I am a naturalized Briton, and did not want to be considered a scrounger. Perhaps if I took advantage of the preventive services and proffered examinations I would not be in this [un]healthy position today. Hindsight, again.

Taoists and Quaker Spiritual Healing

I do count my blessings; I am very pleased to be where I am for my treatment. Knowing how easy it is to go bankrupt as an American, I forever felt it was foolish whenever I heard the NHS being disparaged. I do not feel guilt as I would were I being treated in the UK. One qualifies for US Medicare “insurance” coverage at age 65 and having paid into the program sufficiently while employed. And I even had a Plan B – the Veterans Administration's full medical coverage due to my four years soldiering.

Yet Medicare is not free, as is the NHS; co-payments can be upwards of thousands of dollars. But it is wonderful, as without precious insurance or Medicare, one here would not pay just \$5K – but easily \$300K for a procedure. One might pay in the \$80 – 90K range for simple hip or knee replacements. I could have been paying \$14K per month for one daily chemotherapy tablet. But Medicare is as close to free insurance as one can imagine, and politicians tend not to tamper with this entitlement thanks to the strength of the gray power of we senior recipients.

There is irony: I had two cataracts for co-pay of \$400 each... which itself might be a gift. But now I also do not have to use glasses. Amazing. How's that for the Taoist: "gain being had from loss", the remedy for the failing sight bringing such an improvement in eyesight – as well as practicality.

Not only did the prodigal return to the promised land at the right old age, but having recce'd this city annually for the five years before the move, I did buy into the idea of retiring into a comprehensive continuing care retirement community before my time – one whose policy was to never expel regardless of the residents' financial deterioration. Now, where else in capitalism can that be found – a real lifetime guarantee, a free lunch? As my very fit neighbors sarcastically say, while vigorously inhabiting the gym or swimming pool or exercise classes: "I have come here to die", or "This is my last move".

Another twist is our conventional wisdom that costs are so high because medics do so much testing and retesting, fearful of malpractice suits if they did not. Over-55 residences are booming here, but liability litigation has been an industry here forever. For my time under care, and under Medicare protection, I marvel – and selfishly celebrate – the prolific testing to which I have access. It is immediate, in the same building, at any hour if an in-patient. "You need a thyroid test, can you go now?"; "You need a blood draw soon...you choose 6 Floor Lab or 8 Floor Lab, anytime; I'll just write the order now."

And what is this about a "wait list"? Americans are perplexed at that. Wait list, or what list... if I or my insurance company has the money, why ever would I need to wait, I ask you?

Speaking of the "building" – how synchronistic is it that in the two months in 2014 after moving to my retirement community of 550 souls, the UK Secretary of Health visited my Medical Center and Hospital building. He extolled its openness and transparency under the management style: "The Toyota Way 2001", in light of the Mid-Staffordshire public inquiry. I almost bumped into him, as I live smack dab across the street. In fact, we have wheelchair service between home and hospital. And, though this is really the First Hill district in downtown Seattle, we call it "Pill Hill", as there are three full medical-hospital centers within just three blocks of each other.

And about the Spiritual...

With all this synchronistic phenom, is it time to touch on the accompanying spiritual – the ethereal, incorporeal, metaphysical? That the Higher Power – Holy Spirit – God/Goddess within gifts and accompanies us. Some Friends in the Fellowship of Healing have that comfortable mindset. It informs my spiritual way, without doubt. How else would I be awakening daily were it

not for these beliefs and truths. How will they affect my life post-2014 years to come?

My wife Vera died following breast cancer 22 years ago in Lancashire. I was privileged to be at her side. I practiced as an oncology psychotherapist in the last decade of my career, in Bristol. Hospitals and hospices in Hawaii and Christchurch were my professional haunts.

I was at a distance; it was “others” presenting situations. But I am deferential enough to have been constantly aware it would not be “if”, but “when” my turn would materialize. Acceptance, to accept ... is another of my Taoist targets. My number came up; no hard feelings, it was simply my turn to be one with those with whom I had been gifted time and confidentiality. A privilege; why expect not to have fire and rain in a lifetime?

By the way, it is only as I draft this that I wonder: why, oh, why, Lord, give me the other ailments as well as blood cancer? Given my belief in next lives, I give in to wonderful thoughts about how all these maladies now will or will not impact me “on the other side”, in next lives. Is there a definite demarcation between this life, and the “next”, or are we already into our progression, with each “passing” not always detectable?

Oh... and does being wounded make me a “better” healer? I always egotistically thought I was quite competent as an allopathic as well as spiritual healer in the first place. A more empathetic or sympathetic healer due to now being a survivor? No... I must admit there are still folks I just cannot abide, even given their own diagnosis. I must practice more being a nicer guy; and mitigate having such a heavy shadow side. This was a resolution when first diagnosed. But we know what happens to “plans”, do we not?

In Approaching Death

Oh ... and does being wounded, critically, after experience as a healer make my healing – medical or spiritual – more effectual? Well, I held my own in 2015 with a pacemaker, but I was admitted 6 times in the first 5 months of 2016 – three for pneumonia. During each of those respiratory distresses I thought I had “bought the ranch”; so suffocating is pneumonia, I had wanted to.

There was none of the soft, come hither “toward the light”, white fluffy affair. No, it was dark and terrifying, seemingly endless nightmares of underground sub-humans – toward this outsider waiting for their ax to befall him. It made me want to just accept going, sooner the better, were that going to happen anyway.

So, why was I spared, and put on the road to healing? Three times!... that I am aware of. Was it my doing cumulatively? [I am a strong believer in karma, too]. I aim to be mystical, spiritual, and healing – but I admit to being ignorant

of prophecy. Was recovery due to a “knowing” – reinforced by “doing” healing – that I still had contributions to make?

It could have been in any of the six in-patients last year, or in the prior two years, that my fatality might have materialized – not just for medical reasons, but in the dozens of times I literally crossed the street for treatment – the “hit-by-a-truck” event.

Do I Owe as a Survivor? The Least Way for OneSelf

I delightfully surmise that I was spared and set to healing for weighty reasons. Nothing piddling in these bonus sunset years. So I am seeking causes sufficiently large to repay my many deliverances – limited only by medication side effects such as fatigue and shortness of breath.

These are exhaustively, politically, problematic days – to be accepted and ideally conjoined with the blessings of Spiritual Healing.

I advise and suggest:

BE ever smiling, hospitable, Friendly ... as you can possibly be each day – especially to yourself.

BE as close and as communicative as you can to that Spirit, Angel, Guide, Goddess, Prophet who is within – the Friendly way.

DO strive for wisdom – cultivate and grow uplifting thoughts as you would during an MfW.

SHARE your wisdom; what goes around comes around.

ACCEPT that which you cannot change, choosing your campaigns judiciously.

ACCEPT acceptance, and we shall find that this, too, will pass.

BOOK REVIEWS



The Naked God – Wrestling for a Grace-ful Humanity by Vincent Strudwick with Jane Shaw. Darton-Longman-Todd, 2017. ISBN: 978-0-232-53256-2. 192pp. £12.99.

Rowan Williams describes *The Naked God* as a ‘tremendously engaging and positive book’, and indeed it is just that. The author, Vincent Strudwick, must be at least 84 years old but he writes with the fire, passion and conviction of a man half his age. And the book is a strange amalgam of autobiography, twentieth century Church history, radical polemic, and *cri de coeur* for a better

world, a better Church, and a better outcome for all, especially the dispossessed, the poor and the suffering.

What is his book about then? Essentially, it is about the re-imagining of the role of the Church, specifically the Anglican community (but his principles extend to all churches), in the modern world. Citing the ideas of Christopher Dawson that the Church has had six different and distinctive ages – the Apostolic, the Fathers, the Carolingian, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and Reformation, and the Enlightenment – but that a seventh and very different age is now upon us. And, Strudwick argues, this new age is revealing the very real inadequacies of contemporary Anglican practices and beliefs both during the twentieth century and in the present. In the final part of the book Strudwick does present some glimmers of hope, although I must say I did not personally find them very hopeful, as they appeared to me patchy in that he describes small, isolated activities, and also patchy in that commendably they cover a problem, but sadly only in a piecemeal way.

The essence of what is wrong with the Church is summed up in diagram in the chapter, *Towards A Very Odd Church Indeed*. Here we have three types of response to Christianity: the traditional, the liberal and the radical. There is little doubt where Strudwick's loyalties are: the radical. So, for example, in the series of contrasts he draws, under the heading 'Power', the traditional wants 'authority ...mediated through a hierarchy'; whereas the liberal position is 'about management'; and finally the radical wants 'all contribute through participation and challenge'. Or take the topic of Ideology: the traditional want 'Divine right: it is all ordained'; whereas the liberal sees 'the market leads'; and the radical says, 'conflict must be recognised and worked at'.

It is all very admirable and I especially like his exhaustive and extremely interesting notes that consistently punctuate the text. Strudwick is well-versed in not only the history and traditions of the Anglican Church, but also of other denominations, especially Catholics, too. Even the Quakers get a mention (though not in the Index, bizarrely). When near the end of his very long – and life-time-tether with the Anglican Church and its intransigent refusal to embrace radicalism, it is to the Quakers that he, via Richard Holloway, turns: 'Quakers believed in the authority of the Inner Light ... and if the Bible said otherwise, then the Bible was wrong'. On top of that Strudwick likes and cites frequently too the poets and literature. Wonderful – a small cornucopia of heaven for someone like me.

But that said, there are some less pleasing aspects of this narrative. The autobiographical weave reveals someone who has been at the centre of things for a long time, but possibly too obsessed with the centre. First, there is a slightly wearisome sense of name-dropping, especially of all the Archbishops of Canterbury over the decades but of other luminaries too. Then he also seems

to think that re-hashing his notes or ideas from conferences held decades ago is going to prove useful or interesting. In his mind, clearly, he is still fighting those fights, but what I think we need is more core summaries and moving on to where we are now. A good example of this is where he repeats the ‘guidelines’ for the 1997 Quebec Conference where the ‘Anglican Bishop of Quebec, the Rt Rev. Bruce Stavert invited’ him to lead with the title ‘Models for a Changing Church’ – and then half a page of guidelines. The whole thing is too micro-orientated and the big picture is somewhat blurred by all this detail; though I do not doubt Strudwick was very pleased to be invited to speak, as is clear in other examples.

Perhaps my biggest criticism, however, would be that for all his energy and enthusiasm for his Church, I am not sure he really empathises with those who disagree, or sees accurately the nature of what he is debunking. As the book progresses, we sense more and more how in tune with John Robinson’s *Honest to God* position he is, and this position, of course, de-mythologises Christianity. It becomes apparent that Strudwick does not believe in miracles or in other core aspects of the Creeds as traditionally understood, and there are consequences of this which I think are important.

First, whilst he genuinely wants to help the poor, he seems not to realise that the de-mythologised version of Christianity he is advocating is not something the under-educated – often the poor – often readily ‘understand’ or ‘get’; and what – despite his assertion about the personhood of Christ being central – this comes down to is why bother with Christianity at all? We just need to love people and have plenty of soup-kitchens? But the problem with that, it seems for Strudwick, is that he’d miss his cathedrals! Behind the radical, perhaps, a traditionalist in some profound and uneasy ways.

Moreover, he writes, ‘Many were horrified by the sight of the bishops lining up in the House of Lords to vote against equal marriage, which had so much support in society at large, especially amongst the younger population that the Church so desperately wanted to attract.’ This is a complex issue, but one thing I think is certainly true: Christianity, and no other religion I know of, has its policies and beliefs dictated by popular vote or plebiscite. Indeed, the Bible wisely advises us not to conform to the thinking of this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. For all the analysis and learning, I suspect Strudwick is simply a partisan: even his phrase ‘equal marriage’ begs the question in advance of determining if such a thing is right or wrong, or good or bad. The early Christians went to their deaths because they did not conform to what society thought right and proper, but that doesn’t seem to have occurred to Strudwick as even a spiritual possibility, so fixated is he on getting people into Church and thereby re-vitalising it.

There is a lot to commend in this book, and it is certainly an interesting read: I did not want to put it down, although I found plenty in it which I thought undigested, naïve and – yes – desperate. But for an overview of the Anglican Church in the twentieth century this is a useful and gripping story, despite getting overloaded at times with finicky details.

James Sale

Living in Godless Times: Tales of Spiritual Travellers by **Alison Leonard**. Floris Books. 2001. ISBN: 0-86315-341-0. £9.99.

I found this a fascinating book. It isn't for everyone, but for those who are still seeking to evolve their religious thoughts and beliefs over time, it gives some wonderful insights. It consists of a series of interviews with 16 independently-minded people including Jocelyn Bell Burnell and Adam Curle, two well-known Quakers.

In the introduction Alison Leonard, who is a Quaker, describes the process of how she selected her interviewees. Naomi Gryn says in answer to her invitation to be interviewed 'The search for meaning is lifelong and I prefer company on the journey. I'm inspired by the concept of collaborating with a collection of God-questioners from such diverse backgrounds on a contemporary search for a spiritual centre'

In the Endnotes Alison analyses the effect the process has on her, and in between are 16 very interesting interviews.

Alison Le Brun

Creative Journey: Five minute meditations for Transformation, compiled by **Brian Hay** and **Joanne Klassen**. Available from Quaker Bookshop at Friends House in London, £11.50. (bookshop@quaker.org.uk; tel: 020 7663 1030) Also available on Kindle.

This is a book of eighty reflections, alphabetically arranged, written by thirty-one people, (some of them Quakers), aged fifteen to eighty, from seven countries.

Each piece was written as a five-minute clearing exercise (i.e. spontaneous writing to release that which is going on in one's head at the time), as part of the Transformative Life Writing process developed by Joanne Klassen in Canada in 1998. <http://www.writeaway.net/docs/pp/pp.pdf> Joanne. Joanne felt that there was so much wisdom within these pieces of writing that she and Brian Hay brought together a selection of them into this book.

The headings include Change, Decide, Honour, Ponder, Whisper. Each is followed by a personal experience which relates to that subject and is opened

and closed by a quote from many different sources. There are also small, attractive black-and-white photographs connected to the subject matter that accompany many of the pieces.

This is a book to dip into, providing stimulus to thinking and feeling. The content is varied and rich, but because of its origins, each piece is undeveloped and short – which I found frustrating. However, for facilitators and participants in this kind of therapeutic process, or for someone wanting an idea to contemplate (alone or in groups), it would be a valuable resource.

Judy Clinton

The Stormy Search for the Self by **Christina and Stanislav Grof**. Perigee Books. 1992. 274pp. ISBN: 0-87477-649-X. US\$ 12.95, (but available from Amazon).

The Stormy Search for the Self is subtitled ‘A Guide to Personal Growth through Transformational Crisis’. Basically the book suggests that the next stage of evolution for *Homo Sapiens* is one of unfolding consciousness. It discusses human evolutionary growth as a journey experiencing different levels of being through physical, emotional and cognitive levels toward spiritual opening and transcendence. The journey can include altered states of consciousness when a different and greater reality breaks through.

The authors begin by telling their own stories. Stanislav discusses how with an atheistic worldview and the early influence of Sigmund Freud’s work, he applied to medical school with the eventual aim of becoming a psychoanalyst. His outlook began to change and later, following appointment to a research post studying the effects of LSD by a pharmaceutical company, his studies and experiences triggered a radical shift in his understanding of the nature of consciousness. He writes (p.26): ‘I now believe that consciousness and the human psyche are much more than accidental products of the physiological processes in the brain; they are reflections of the cosmic intelligence that permeates all of creation. We are not just biological machines and highly developed animals, but also fields of consciousness without limits, transcending space and time.’

Grof suggests that awareness of spirituality is an important and desirable development in life. However, while usually a natural yet transformative process, sometimes sudden growth of consciousness can precipitate crises that in the past have been understood as psychoses and in our culture necessitating medical intervention.

Christina Grof describes her own transformative, and traumatic journey which ultimately were to lead her to found the Spiritual Emergence Network, a worldwide fellowship which aims to help individuals struggling with sudden and difficult personal transformational crises. This book describes Spiritual

Emergence/Emergency and its relationship to Western culture and medicine and modern maps of consciousness: there is also a discussion about strategies that have helped individuals in crisis and those close to them.

Later in the book spirituality is defined thus: “the term ‘spirituality’ should be reserved for situations that involve personal experiences of certain dimensions of reality that give one’s life and existence in general a numinous quality; C.G. Jung used the word, ‘numinous’ as ‘Holy’, ‘Sacred’ or ‘out of the ordinary’”. Of interest was the suggestion that “spirituality is something that characterizes the relationship of an individual to the universe and does not necessarily require a formal structure, collective ritual of mediation of a priest”.

The Epilogue also touches on this and I found the discussion about Spiritual Emergence and the Current Global Crises particularly interesting. Grof begins by citing the appalling threats to survival to all species on the planet and points out that some of these have indeed potential to be solved by advanced technologies. However he suggests that the underlying causes in humanity can be tracked back to the single underlying condition of the emotional, moral and spiritual state of mankind.

My own interest relates to the growing incidence of so called mental illness – especially in the West. Has the full extent of the crisis been fully realised? People of all ages are being affected and my particular concern is with our young people. Children as young as ten years old and even younger are becoming addicted to alcohol and drugs, stress leading to anxiety and depression is pervasive especially amongst teenagers and Autism Spectrum Disorder seems to be a burgeoning problem with all the attendant challenges it incurs to parents, family and friends. The question seems to be whether a mental health diagnosis for everyone in crisis is appropriate or whether spiritual crisis needs to be considered. What do we understand by mind, and while many mental illnesses do indeed have their roots in physical dysfunction, is this always the case?

This book was published some years ago and since then Stanislav Grof and Christina have written many other books. However, hopefully this book does serve as a helpful introduction to their work. Other areas of interest are his development of ‘Holotropic Breathwork’, his study of the birth process as it impacts on the psychology of the baby. Christina has written *The Thirst for Wholeness* which is about Attachment, Addiction and the Spiritual Path. The medicalisation of all mental health problems may create boundaries which block deeper awareness and it’s encouraging that the work of Stanislav Grof offers a wider perspective. Above all there seems to be a huge need for greater understanding and increased awareness of the nature of psychological/soul* and spiritual health in our world today.

Maggie Jeffery

*the Ancient Greeks used the terms Soul and Psyche interchangeably.

Falling Upward: a spirituality for the two halves of life, by Richard Rohr, SPCK 2012. 198pp. ISBN: 978-0-281-06891-3 Available from Amazon £10.68).

Father Richard Rohr is a Franciscan priest of the New Mexico province, an author of many books and an international speaker.

In this book he explores what he sees as the two halves of life. These halves are not simply chronological: some people enter the second stage of life at a young age, whilst others never get as far as the second stage, however old they become.

The first half of life Rohr sees as the time when, quite rightly in his view, we are naturally preoccupied with establishing our identities, our egos, whilst the second half is about a further journey. This second journey involves challenges, mistakes, loss of control, broader horizons and what Rohr calls necessary suffering — painful facing of the truths of reality — that can shock us out of our comfort zones. This can lead to our seeing ourselves in a different and more life-giving way. This is ‘falling down’ in order to move ‘upwards’ in spiritual life. Rohr says that it is those who have fallen (failed or ‘gone down’) who understand what ‘up’ is.

This book is radical and progressive in its thinking. For me it has proved both disturbing and enormously liberating. Rohr is not afraid to challenge immature thinking on the part of the individual or the church. He is equally clear that inclusion of the first half of life within the second is of great importance: it is not a rejection of what has gone before, but a development as a result of it.

Having been aware of major changes going on within myself over many years, I have found this book enormously helpful in giving me a context in which to understand what has been happening to me. Rohr opens up the possibility that our physical and mental capacities may diminish as a potential awakening and development of our spiritual selves. He does not pull his punches. The second journey is tough and requires great awareness of hard truths, effort, and willingness to change. For me it is a demanding book to read: each chapter is packed with a complexity of ideas and calls for difficult, radical thinking. It needs many readings as more and more truth unfolds from it. I found it overall a book of challenge and hope.

Judy Clinton

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