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TOWARDS WHOLENESS

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FRIENDS FELLOWSHIP OF HEALING
(A QUAKER GROUP)

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.

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Donations for the work of the Fellowship are most welcome.

Front cover photo: Winter in the Peak District (Editor's photo)

Back cover photo: Magnolia in Korean mountains (Nicholas Rawlence)

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IF YOU ARE THINKING OF MAKING A WILL...

Have you considered leaving something to the FFH?

A specimen form of words could be:

"I give and bequeath (*state what...*) to the Friends Fellowship of Healing (being a Charity registered under the Charities Act, No. 284459), to the registered address of the Charity as recorded with the Charity Commission at the time that this bequest comes into effect, AND I DECLARE that the receipt of this legacy by the then proper officer for the Fellowship, shall be a complete discharge to my Trustee(s) for that legacy."

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The **FFH Spring Gathering** will take place over the weekend of 6-8th May 2011, at Abbey House, Chilkwell St, Glastonbury, Somerset BA6 8DH. www.abbeyhouse.org

Abbey House was built in the 1830s and is situated in the original grounds of Glastonbury Abbey to the east of the Abbey. With the dissolution of the Abbey by Henry VIII the grounds fell into disrepair, but have remained one property and provide an oasis of calm within the town. Abbey House guests enjoy the privilege of access to the Abbey from the house gardens.

Cost per person is £130. Please book with Margaret Western, Tel: 01460 74182, and then send her a deposit of £30 – cheques to the Friends Fellowship of Healing.

FRIENDLY REMINDER

May I remind FFH members that if they pay by **CHEQUE** their membership renewal is due by 01-01-2011, and, as usual, we do ask you to consider paying by standing order, as it helps tremendously. If already paying by **STANDING ORDER** and there has been any change in your banking arrangements during the last year then a member's standing order may need updating. It will be of great help to me to receive payments as early as possible so that I can have some time off during the Holiday Season.

(If you have forgotten how you pay, then please ring me on 07761 534730 – or email sandi.ffh@btinternet.com to find out.) With thanks, in advance, for all your help.

In Friendship, **Sandra Kirk** – Membership Secretary.

A DEEP JOURNEY INTO HEALING

Michael Lewin

Yesterday was fierce and troubling – my emotions stripped back exposing me to an intensity of feelings that disturbed me all day. Involuntary feelings descending and sweeping across a vulnerable landscape creating a storm cloud disturbance that affected me deeply – but not today. Sitting here, looking out on the garden bathing in the afternoon's sun, I'm engulfed by a presence of silence and peace. A stillness has settled in my life, a peaceful calm and I feel extraordinarily at ease, relaxed in a space of security and refuge – a shelter from the maelstroms of life.

Why are we taken through these different terrains of emotions and feelings? Where do they come from? Where do they go? Do we really have any real control over their presence? If we are so solid and powerful why do we allow them to affect us in such fundamental ways? Thoughts on oscillation and the possibility of eventual transformation dwell in my mind today...

An entry in Thomas Merton's journal mentions a novice monk at Gethsemani Monastery who increasingly laughed until he reached a point where he could not stop. *"I am told that once, before one of the singing classes, he laughed so much he rolled on the floor."* This may seem an extreme case to many, but I can tell you I spent many months, on and off, weeping. It just welled up inside me and spilt all over the place. The accumulation of so much emotional charge – built up over an exceptionally traumatic year – that had to find release. There were tears of grief and loss, tears of joy and celebration and tears of gratitude and deep appreciation for all that I had been given. A defining period in my life that helped to shape me for a better future. A supreme reconciliation of shifting and contrasting life forces that led to a profound healing of all that had gone before.

It's good to feel these emotions and feelings, to let them course through our bodies to find eventual release because if they are blocked in any way, denied access then we will undoubtedly suffer. I've often thought about the laughing novice; what had happened to him? Where he is now? Is he OK? Why he laughed so much? I can't help but think he knew something special, that he had gained some insight which he couldn't express to others; that his laughing was close to enlightenment – I like to think so anyway.

Jung once stated that our emotional problems: "...can never be solved, but only outgrown", and I think these are wise, thoughtful words. They counteract the more mechanistic views of some schools of psychology which see the inner energy of emotions and feelings as a 'problem' that needs to be 'fixed'. Good psychotherapeutic practice recognizes the energy force within us and seeks, through a process of inquiry (engagement and listening) to work with it. Thus, gradually we can start to move forward, to outgrow our current difficulties. But

not too quickly because it takes time to heal. We can't be too hasty in our need to bring a reconciliation to our plight. Modern life-coaching language about closure and finality are too simplistic – “Get over it” we are told, “Move on”, we are advised but what is the point in trying to be too dismissive, too soon, when our deep seated feelings tell us of something quite different – a full narrative that needs our undivided attention before we can acquiesce into a mutual, curative holding.

My period of weeping did come to an end, but it took time... time to be quiet, time to listen, time to accept, time to reconcile...

A profound learning came to me soon after this healing when I suddenly realized that I wasn't in charge! Not in charge of my life, not in charge of the universe! Up to this time I think I secretly harboured the notion that what I did was of vital importance, that the universe should somehow order itself around my desires and aspirations (however noble they may have been). Plans, objectives, aims and goals were laid out in regimental fashion awaiting final inspection, implementation and completion. Feeling that nothing would stand in their way I assumed all would be done – how deluded I was! Life just isn't like that. All the best laid plans can go wrong. We just simply do not have control over the external forces / circumstances that can dramatically shape our lives. Terrible things happen in our world, tragic, heart breaking events that can affect so many lives in so many undeserving ways and all we can do is tend to the wounded – ourselves and others.

Another lesson that crept into my life, quietly and un-noticed but still needing my attention, was that of service. I suddenly and quite dramatically realized that something outside of myself had to be served and that something was other people, which reinforced the biblical imperative that states: “Let him who is greatest among you be your servant.” We are not here to serve ourselves exclusively, although many may believe this to be so. A full, inspiring, noble life always reflects the ability and willingness to help others, especially those less fortunate than ourselves. This is at the core of Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu teachings. We are all an integral part of an interconnected human family and we must never allow that to fade from our individual and collective memories.

Many years ago I met a psychiatric nurse who told me that in his professional work he had encountered many difficult and disturbed patients – individuals who, at times, displayed severe, traumatized behaviour. He was philosophical about his work and didn't bring any apparent judgement to bear on it. He was just a professional carer, in a difficult job, trying to look after people's pain. After he spoke for twenty minutes or so he paused in silence. Then, turning around to face me fully, so that I would not miss a word, he told me that the

psychiatrist who had been in post at the regional psychiatric hospital was himself admitted as a patient....We *all* suffer. No one is exempt from the pain that accompanies life. It is like an encircling shadow that descends to spread its darkness upon us. And all we can do at these challenging times is seek refuge in the healing light of a spiritual practice which will ground us in understanding and compassion.

Despite all the chaos, fragmentation, erosion and disintegration that pain can bring there still remains, surprisingly enough, a holding that we can seek out. A very gentle and tentative gathering up of our hurt. There is a reason why pain has come to visit us and we need to understand this. We just cannot go chasing off, trying to avoid what it is trying to say because it will come after us, hunt us down with its full presence and voice. The pain is requiring our attention and so we must listen deeply, like we have never done before, in a space of acknowledgement and acceptance. Then, at this point of stillness, we can start to be transformed; we can open up to healing...

We must remember that healing can only come to a mind that is able to release its built up anxieties and fears, resentments and illusions in order to clear a space of receptivity. We must also remember the important point that healing isn't something outside of us, a 'treatment' externally given to alleviate our suffering. On the contrary, it's very much an internal process, an inner practice of listening, evaluating and reconciling. At its very heart, healing is simply changing ourselves, our perception and attitudes in a continuous process of attentive living.

*"Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers, but to be fearless in facing them.
Let me not beg for the stilling of my pain, but for the heart to conquer it."*

Rabindranath Tagore

If life went exactly as we wanted, pain free, there would be little scope for learning. For the reality is, we can grow through our pain if we make a commitment to open up and allow its presence to speak to us. It can liberate us, take us away from a life spent half asleep and make us stronger, more alive, more aware and appreciative of what is happening in our collective world. To experience life fully is to experience pain. Everything, absolutely everything, that arrives in our lives is here for a reason and our journey of adventure is to discover what that reason is. Paying attention, witnessing and reporting on the vicissitudes of life is our mission. Not shying away, ignoring or denying them. They are our spiritual masters here so that we can experience the full, far reaching dynamics of what it is to be human, and so we must commit to engaging with them in the full and vital knowledge that we will be allowed to grow – to develop the deepest powers within us.



WHERE can I go?

*If this is not a place where **tears** are understood,
where can I go **to cry**?*

*If this is not a place where my **spirit** can take wing,
where can I go **to fly**?*

*If this is not a place where **questions** can be asked,
where do I go **to seek**?*

*If this is not a place where my **feelings** can be heard,
where can I go **to speak**?*

*If this is not a place where you'll **accept** me as I am,
where can I go **to be**?*

*If this is not a place where I can **love** and **grow** and **learn**,
where can I be **just me**?*

Anon – (found in a church)

If you bring forth what is within you, it will heal you. And if you do not bring forth what is within you, it will destroy you.

(from the *Gospel of St. Thomas*)

As I sit at my desk to write this article I am in North Wales presiding at the Llangollen International Music Festival. Each year I make my way to this lovely little Welsh town where, since the end of World War Two, the local people have brought together musicians from across the world to both compete and perform in what is a marvellous week of music. Wales of course is a natural for this kind of event as the people are steeped in the love of music and erudite in the use of language. I often say that music along with language has the capacity to breathe a certain harmony into the soul and inner harmony is, to my mind at least, a healing.

In the years of my confinement as a hostage I spent hours alone without books or papers or companionship of any kind. Frequently I was in the dark, sitting on the floor with only my thoughts for company.

As I witnessed my physical body begin to grow old rather more quickly than I hoped, I wondered if that disintegration would extend to my mind. When I was a boy I had read of individuals who had been kept in solitary confinement for years and on their release had emerged into the light of day unable to string two words together and with their reason quite gone. Naturally, I wondered if this was to be my fate.

It did not take me long to realise that what I needed to do in such circumstances was to develop a strong inner life. Any physical activity was quite out of the question as I was chained and confined to a very small cell. In many respects I was most fortunate as I had been brought up with a love of music and language. It is considered rather old fashioned today to learn by rote but that was what I had to do when I was young, often against my will! Years later I was grateful for that discipline, for in solitary confinement, I could recall what I had committed to memory many years earlier. I attempted to compose music, but that was beyond me, but I could remember and frequently played music 'in my head' so to speak.

Although medical science has made such remarkable developments in recent years and life for many of us has been extended beyond the proverbial three score years and ten, we still live in a body that one day will wear out and die. That is a simple fact which we can't deny. Having said that, I think it is true to say that there are certain physical afflictions which affect us as a result of a mind that lacks a certain harmony and can be either alleviated or indeed dismissed by drawing closer to inner harmony. Forgive me will you if I am

totally frank, but I do question some prayers of petition where we pray for God to intervene in what is a natural process. 'Thy will be done' is surely the heart of all true prayer which does not mean that we sit back in simple resignation but that we actively seek to be in union with the will of God which enables us to be in harmony with ourselves and with our neighbours.

Of course we have to live with the fact that we do live in a far from perfect world which in many instances seems quite unfair. Only yesterday I was told of a young mother with a baby of six months. This young woman had been given six months to live. Obviously she feels the pain of that fact but rather than sit in a corner and feel sorry for herself she is getting out determined to live life as fully as possible whilst she still has it. In her case that means doing a lot for people whom she regards as being worse off than herself!

It is puzzling that life should be so unfair but that is how things are. We live with what is, and in the midst of tragedy live out a miracle of transformation.

I never underestimate suffering. It is bitter and always painful but it need not destroy. Often in quite unexpected ways something creative can, and frequently does, emerge from the most painful of experiences. We don't have to look for suffering *of course*. It will find us sure enough. When it does come, take heart. It is not the end.



Elected Silence, sing to me
And beat upon my whorled ear,
Pipe me to pastures still and be
The music that I care to hear.

Gerard Manley Hopkins

Thoughts from a member of a postal link group.

Prayer has been described as ‘*communion with Ultimate Reality, whether this is regarded as personal, impersonal, or beyond them both.*’ Knowing that someone else is praying for you can be immensely helpful and comforting. There are so many people wanting help, that as an individual I find it possible to concentrate on only a few names at a time.

Our prayer postal group secretary invited us to share comments on what we do as individuals when we uphold others in the Light. *In the Silence I imagine all those named standing In the Light in perfect health.* Then I name each person vocally, in groups according to their needs. I think of those who are suffering from specific illnesses, such as arthritis, cancer, mental health problems, drug, alcohol and other addictive conditions. I then remember those who are in abusive relationships, those who have no sense of self-worth, and those who self-harm and may even be contemplating suicide. The prayer spoken by Angela Tilby, broadcaster and Anglican priest is relevant for us all when we also consider our own fears and shortcomings.

*Bring us from the unreal to the real – from despair to hope
From darkness to light – from death to eternal life.*

Time is then spent upholding those who are living with long-term and debilitating illnesses at home, hospital or in residential care, and also those who look after them. Then I pray for healing for all unknown to us who have similar conditions. God knows their specific needs. Parents, families and all who care and suffer as they stand by and try to support others need upholding too.

For parents awaiting the birth of their child, and of those souls coming to earth, I remember them. Birth and death, the two gateways we all go through, remind us of the quotation, ‘*Birth is the death of the life you have known; Death is the birth of the life yet to come.*’ (Anon.)

In the Silence at this time I often think of the saying by Rabindranath Tagore, a Hindu, ‘*Death is not extinguishing the light: it is putting out the lamp because dawn has come.*’ I then uphold those who have been bereaved, and pray that they may find comfort in the emptiness of their lives in the knowledge that the constant Divine Presence bridges the gap between life and death, and that the love we shared with our loved ones cannot be broken.

I am a great believer in ‘quick arrow prayers’ throughout the day, and this can be done when sitting in the car at traffic lights, waiting in queues, looking at a lovely sunset, or listening to good music. These times can be used to uphold

certain individual people in need – or I just say ‘*God bless all those on our list for healing.*’ We have many opportunities throughout the day to continue to support our friends in this way. Like Brother Lawrence we are ‘*Practising the Presence of God.*’

Having been very ill myself on several occasions, both in hospital and at home, at times even unable to say the Lord’s Prayer, this can best be described as experiencing the ‘*dark night of the soul*’. Since then, every night when up obeying the call of nature I always pray for those on our healing list and for others known to me. My friends know when they are ill that this is happening, and say that they find reassurance that, wherever they are, they are not forgotten in the dark hours when all fears are magnified.

Just before falling asleep, and on wakening, when still in the ‘twilight’ zone, is a time when the spiritual world seems very near. I always try to uphold those in need then, and believe that those who have gone before us are nearest to us and that they also help us.

My main quiet time is mostly in the morning after breakfast, when the rest of the household are getting up and before the phone and other activities intrude. This is usually between 8.00 - 8.30 am. It is the best time for silence, spiritual reading and prayer.

For several years we had a local group of the Friends Fellowship of Healing in Aberdeen, and we all tried to tune in at 9.00 pm.

I love the story of the snowdrop. Do you know its secret? Do you understand how such a fragile little flower can stand up to the snow and frosts of winter?

Every evening, just as dusk begins to fall, the snowdrop’s head droops a little lower, and its petals close. In doing so it imprisons within its bell some of the daytime warmth; and the amazing thing is that, even in the hour just before dawn, when the night is at its coldest, the air cradled in the snowdrop’s petals can be several degrees warmer than the air surrounding it. This is why the snowdrop can survive the bitterest winter nights and the coldest frosts.

It is a parable of life too. For surely it is when life is at its coldest and darkest that we must cling to the warmth of blessings that have been, and believe in the promise of sunshine yet to be. A prayer for us all, based on one by Miriam Therese Winter, a hospital chaplain:

‘May the blessing of God go before you, may grace and peace abound.

May God’s spirit live within you, may His love wrap you ’round.

May God’s blessing remain with you always. May you walk on holy ground.’

WINTER GEESE

*Two geese are swimming on the pond,
Behind them a majestic wake,
Between them an unspoken bond
Of nature, harmony to make.*

*Soft winter light, bare trees reflect,
Ripples on water blur image stark;
Cold and sombre, thoughts connect,
Year's lowest ebb the aura mark.*

*The geese so calmly glide along,
Adapted perfectly to life,
In habitat their bearing strong,
Though wind has cutting edge like knife.*

*Majestic, too, across the sky,
In habitat alternate go;
The geese in echelon will fly,
Such freedom, close formation so.*

*After-glow, a fiery pink,
Of winter sunset; silhouettes grey
Scud overhead; the moon does wink;
Geese back to water make their way.*

*Thus does the daily cycle end,
A part of seasons' flux and flow.
The geese no thought for morrow spend;
Serene throughout the year to grow.*

Peter Horsfield



In 1942 my friend Penny and I felt we had to leave our nursing training in a London hospital. Another friend in our 'intake' had committed suicide because she had failed her first-year exams. She was thirty-five and this had been her last chance of becoming qualified, having worked for years as an assistant nurse. She had left school at fourteen and found the academic part of the training difficult. Having worked with her on the wards, I knew her to be an excellent practical nurse. She should have had some coaching from the training team and Penny and I felt she had been treated very unfairly, and so we didn't want to stay there.

I had never heard of the Friends Relief Service but Penny had done some voluntary work with them. We were interviewed at Friends House and accepted instantly, although we were not Friends and had no religious affiliation. As the FRS was filling a gap in government provision by housing bombed-out elderly people they had quite a lot of invalids to care for, so I guess we partly-trained nurses were very welcome. I have always had great admiration for the efficient way in which Quakers organised and funded this scheme. Mostly they acquired large houses set in their own grounds, although I got a surprise when I arrived at my first assignment in 'Coniston Towers'. I was expecting an imposing mansion, but it was a typical boarding house in Bournemouth. Facilities were very Spartan: for instance there were no showers and our old ladies had to be given sponge-downs. I was peripatetic for several months and had to do all kinds of jobs. On one occasion I arrived at a hostel where the warden's wife was ill. I had never cooked a meal in my life but suddenly found I was responsible for feeding about thirty people. I did it with the help of a cookbook and a daily consultation with the poorly wife. I shudder to think what my meals must have been like!

Then I was sent to 'The Woodlands', a beautiful house on the outskirts of Wolverhampton. I was there for fifteen months, so formed quite strong bonds with some of the residents. It was run in an enlightened way: the residents were invited to help with the running of the hostel so we avoided the worst aspects of institutions. The downside of becoming fond of some of the old people was the distress I felt when we had four deaths within a week or so.

One of these deaths involved an apparently telepathic experience. Ninety-three year-old 'Auntie' was a very nervous lady and very near her end. Although I was not on night duty I was asked to visit her every two hours. I woke suddenly about half-an-hour before the alarm went feeling sure that 'Auntie' needed me. She did indeed. I sat and held her hand until she breathed her last. 'The Woodlands' is still an elderly people's home, now greatly enlarged.

When the war ended I went to London on a training course for overseas relief work. Because I was deemed too 'frivolous' to represent FRS in Quaker grey I joined the Friends Ambulance Unit, vouched for by Corder Catchpool. But that's another story!

'...I believe that only spiritual influence will avail to free the world at last from war...'

Corder Catchpool

ABOUT LOVE

Jan Etchells

Thirty years ago my stepmother sent me a cutting from *The Times*. It was entitled 'St Benedict's rule and the all-pervasive nature of prayer'. But when I read it I thought it was all about love. Indeed although I have re-read it many times over the years I haven't changed my view. Perhaps it is because I always feel close to my stepmother when I do; she has been dead for a long time.

Prayer, says St Benedict, who went on to found a monastic way of life which is all prayer, is something that if you want to do it you should get on and do it without interference from other people. He says we pray because we love, and we love because God loves us first. So prayer is not an elitist activity, it is open to all.

Benedict tells us to listen with an open mind and heart to God's word. This word is to be found in the scriptures, and also in people, in events and in ourselves. The Word of God is given through Jesus Christ and shares our inward experiences. If we can accept ourselves and others lovingly we are accepting him. God may judge us, but that can be a cleansing experience. If we are ready to hear we will grow in truth and love.

Prayer he says is a relationship of love. It shapes our lives and therefore is a growing relationship. There's nothing instant in this. The change has to come from within and we have to surrender ourselves to God's love. It may very well be painful, but we must not try and avoid that pain. All our ordinary experiences of work and living with people are in the field of obedience to God. And through this we learn to obey him and receive his love and give an answering love from ourselves.

St Paul said that we cannot pray, but God takes over and does it for us himself. His spirit is alive in us and guiding and shaping the way we pray, so we really only have to accept that the process is going on anyway and tune in.

THE TRAUMA OF MOVING A PARENT INTO A NURSING HOME.

Judy Clinton

Deep feelings can make clarity and appropriate action very difficult indeed. My brother and I experienced this a few years ago when we were faced with having to assist our mother with the process of moving into a nursing home. I hope that some of the lessons that we learnt along the way may be of value to others.

The parent/child dynamic is full of deep feelings, and has an even more complex mix of emotions when the roles have to be reversed. Our mother, then eighty-six, had always been a fiercely independent and strong person, who had been able to pilot her way through life with sheer hard effort and determination. However, her physical state had deteriorated and she was no longer coping with the large house and garden where she had chosen to remain after Dad's death some ten years earlier. She was having increasingly serious falls, was becoming ever frailer, but was still determined to go on as she had done for the past forty years.

This was a worrying situation for my brother and me to see unfolding over the years, especially as both of us lived at a distance and had our own commitments. We saw Mum's neediness, we saw how her gritty determination was now counterproductive to her welfare, but we were not heeded by her when we urged her to move or to make some radically different choice. The fact of it was that she'd left it too late, and we all knew it.

Mum was angry and distressed by the state that she was in, and had no resources mentally or physically to consider the major kind of changes that were necessary for her to go on living independently. We, as her 'children', did not feel that we had the authority, or the right, to dictate what should happen, and she wouldn't consider the more radical options that we suggested. We saw calamity coming and were rendered powerless to do anything about it. The more we 'interfered', the more angry she got – and the more upset we became.

As time went on, things deteriorated, with Mum becoming more and more tired and poorly as she attempted to keep on top of things in the house. She had some extra care from her home help and others, but it was clearly not enough.

Eventually she had to go into hospital repeatedly, following falls and on-going problems with ulcerating legs. She now conceded needing to have respite care in a nursing home. Once there, she acknowledged that she couldn't cope at home, and that – most reluctantly – she was prepared to stay where she was. We then all had the desperately stressful and painful job of clearing and selling the house. Mum wanted to be in charge of how this was done; she couldn't do much of it physically herself; and she put what we felt to be unreasonable expectations on

us, and others, for how things were to be done.

This was a period in our lives when our deep love for each other was taxed to its very limits. None of us had wanted this to happen: our home of so many years suddenly lost to us all, our mother forced to be in a position of dependency, and ourselves being obliged to act on her behalf, but with our hands largely tied when it came to actioning it all. But the main problem was not the tasks: it was the conflicting feelings.

So where are we all now? The house is now sold. Mum is as settled as we could have hoped for in the nursing home; we are hugely relieved to know that she is safe and well cared for by people who know what they are doing; and good feeling has been largely restored.

We had to accept that Mum's way of doing things was her choice, and to accept that there were limits to what we could do – and what we could cope with emotionally. Because of her character, we had to be prepared to stand back and let her find her own limitations: we were burning up our time and energy trying to prevent the inevitable – and standing in the way of her piloting herself through this life experience. We wanted to protect and 'save' her, but it was not appropriate in her case: she had to do it her way.

We had to make very clear what we were able to offer, within the context of our own lives, and stick to it. As we became clearer over that, she seemed to become clearer about what it was that she needed.

We enlisted help from a whole variety of professionals within social services and the NHS, and from neighbours and friends. Mum would often listen to others when she wouldn't listen to us. These relationships did not carry such intense emotional charge, which helped us all enormously. We learnt that whilst we definitely had an overall responsibility for Mum's welfare, we did not carry the responsibility of attempting to do everything ourselves. Mum was still very mentally alert and capable; it was essential that we did not stand in the way of her organising and relating to the people most involved in her care. Our concern and love for her constantly needed to be directed at ways and means that suited all our different personalities and aptitudes. This was painful, difficult, stressful, but ultimately satisfying, as we moved through the multiple problems that arose.

In summary: we had to face the realities of the situation and the characters of the people involved. We asked for help from many different directions (and made sure it was given appropriately). We held on to the fact that all three of us loved one other despite the altercations – and we kept a sense of humour!

CLARIDGE HOUSE 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 David Huxley, Claridge House, Dormans Road, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6QH. Email: welcome@claridgehousequaker.org.uk

Website: www.claridgehousequaker.org.uk Tel: 01342 832150.

Nov 19-21 HEALING WITH SOUND AND MEDITATION (£175)

The voice is the perfect instrument, in the form of toning and natural sounds and mantras, to stimulate our energy field and lead into healing meditation. No previous experience necessary, only the deep intent for transformation. James is a leading authority on sound healing and author of *The Healing Power of the Human Voice*. *James D'Angelo, who has been leading successful Soundspirit workshops since 1994.*

Nov 22-26 CELEBRATE AUTUMN WITH A CHINESE BRUSH (£295)

This course will focus on colour with an emphasis on the glorious hues of autumn. After completing some simple colour theory and exercises in colour mixing, you will develop your skills to paint trees, flowers, birds and small creatures. Techniques will include freestyle and the more detailed meticulous style on paper and silk. Suitable for all levels of ability. *Maggie Cross, who learned the art of Chinese painting in Hong Kong, where she grew up. Materials may be available at a small cost.*

Nov 26-28 AUTUMN PERSONAL RETREAT (£126)

Come for a personal retreat in the beauty of autumn at Claridge House to refresh yourself before the winter and the Christmas rush. Consider the leadings of the spirit in your life with time for individual reflection, House Quiet Times and a chance to explore with others at a daily shared gathering.

Dec 6-10 CARERS' BREAK (£170)

A time set aside for carers, for rest and relaxation with the opportunity for some shared activities.

Dec 10-12 HEALING WITH HERBS (£175)

Explore how herbs can help balance and harmonise mind, body and spirit. Find out about the healing properties of herbs. Experiment with making your own herbal teas and simple home remedies. *Amber Callafiore, an experienced herbalist with a BSc in Herbal Medicine, who runs her own practice.*

Dec 17-19 WINTER SOLSTICE (£175)

As we witness the sun returning from the darkest still point of winter, you are invited to engage in the healing power of imagination and metaphor, through painting, stories, movement, meditation and ritual – to explore how this turning point of Light may illuminate you and your path towards spring. *Deborah Kelly, an experienced Arts Psychotherapist and Shiatsu practitioner, particularly interested in working with nature and the cycles of the year.*

Dec 24-28 CHRISTMAS BREAK (£450)

Enjoy a quiet Christmas in our Quaker House, away from the normal pressures of this time of year. Relax, go for walks or play games. Gather for our daily Quiet Times. Come together to share favourite music, poetry and writings.

Dec 31-Jan 4 NEW YEAR RETREAT (£250)

Come on a New Year Retreat to celebrate the change in the year in the spiritual serenity of Claridge House. Contemplate what change means in our lives and the challenges and opportunities it brings. The retreat will be partly structured with some led sessions, but with plenty of time for individual personal reflection. *Led by Cherry Simpkin, a spiritual director and a healer and trainer with Quaker Spiritual Healers.*

Jan 7-9 GENTLE YOGA TO BOOST HEALTH AND STAMINA (£175)

During the weekend Tim will be encouraging alignment, balance and concentration through gentle yoga postures, meditation and mantra (sound) and also a little philosophy. The focus will be on physical and emotional balance to boost energy and stamina. Suitable all ages and abilities, especially those with ME or other health problems. *Tim Frances, trained and subsequently taught at Ickwell Bury, and currently teaches in hospitals.*

Jan 10-14 BACH FLOWER REMEDIES (£295)

Find out how these natural remedies can help balance your emotions and realise your true spiritual potential. Learn how to choose appropriate remedies for your own needs in this introductory course. *Angela Davies, a registered Bach Practitioner/Teacher, a Quaker and trained counsellor.*

Jan 14-16 RETREAT – ‘Closer than breathing...’ (£175)

Tennyson expressed so well his knowledge of the ever-present force and power that creates, maintains and sustains us, and which many think of as God. Mystics and healers have always been aware of this presence and, during this reflective retreat, with reference to some of their writings and teachings (especially those of George Fox, Evelyn Underhill and Joel Goldsmith) we can also become more aware.

Rosalind Smith, FFH/QSH healer and counsellor, and experienced facilitator.

Jan 17-21 MINI-MEMOIR WRITING (295)

The group will share memories and anecdotes, and then encapsulate them in short, separate pieces of writing. With different themes every day, the course will provide structure for experienced writers, and gentle encouragement to beginners. There will be plenty of ideas to take away for future memoir writing. *Karen Hoy and Alan Summers, whose work is in promoting the enjoyment of words.*

Jan 21-23 TAI CHI / CHI KUNG (£175)

Experience relaxation of mind and body and the rejuvenation of attitude by practising movements from the Tai Chi form. Arouse the chi energy with Chi Kung. Find the peace of meditation.

Barbara Gordon, an experienced teacher of Tai Chi and Chi Kung.

Jan 28-30 THE PRACTICE OF HAPPINESS (£175)

Silence or sociability? Work or family? Helping others or helping yourself? It isn't always easy to work out which activities will bring us the most happiness. But this weekend will give you the help you need to discover where your real happiness lies.

Jo Eadie, an experienced workshop facilitator, who leads courses around the country exploring laughter, happiness and wellbeing.

Jan 31-Feb 4 PAINTING THE SOUL: for those living with cancer (£295)

With watercolour on wet paper, express yourself through the elements of colour, light and darkness. Within a supportive space, explore a creative way of reaching the quietness and simplicity of the soul.

Katriina Grant, a therapeutic art and holistic healing practitioner, who trained at the Tobias School of Art.

Feb 4-6 REIKI I (£175)

Reiki has become known around the world for its ability to channel healing energy, both to those who practise it and those who are recipients. An introductory weekend course in a popular form of healing.

Anna Moore, a Reiki Master who has been teaching for over ten years.

Feb 11-13 WORDHOARDS AND WORDSCAPES (£175)

Spend some time finding the words to describe the world you and your many fictions inhabit. We all tell stories. Share some in the comfort of good company and good food. All are welcome, including beginners in the writing process.

Ted Walter, a poet and creative writing tutor for over twenty-five years.

Feb 14-18 LIGHT IN OUR LIVES (£295)

How can we bring light into the way we live our daily lives? Our starting point will be Quaker ways of peace, equality and community, care for the environment, simplicity and integrity. Together we will explore our expression of our inner spirituality, from whatever source it may come, in the external world.

Alison Green, an experienced group facilitator.

Feb 25-27 HEALING WEEKEND (£175)

A peaceful space in which to gently explore and experience some ways to heal the self. The weekend will include Meditation, Reiki, Emotional Freedom Technique, Crystals, Flower Essences and Circle Dancing. No previous experience necessary. *Jill Cooper, an Usui/Karuna Master Reiki teacher, EFT practitioner, crystal healer and has worked in the field of healing for over fifteen years.*

Feb 28-Mar 4 YOGA TO BEAT FATIGUE (£295)

A gentle yoga course suitable for all abilities. We will include fatigue-busting methods such as special breathing techniques, meditation and health boosting yoga postures. Also suitable for those with moderate ME/CFS. *Fiona Agombar, author of Beat Fatigue with Yoga, and trained in yoga therapy with the Yoga for Health Foundation and in India.*

Mar 4-6 YOGA TO BEAT FATIGUE (£175)

A weekend course. For details see February 28th

Mar 7-11 VOLUNTEER MAINTENANCE WEEK (£80)

Enjoy the fellowship of working, relaxing and of shared Quiet Times, whilst helping the House. Please phone us for details on 01342 832 150.

Mar 21-25 PAINT SPRING WITH A CHINESE BRUSH (£295)

Spring is a joyful time of new beginnings. Using traditional Chinese materials and freestyle techniques you will paint spring in its various aspects – flowers, birds and small creatures. Maggie will also talk about the symbolism attached to each subject. Course suitable for any level of ability. *Maggie Cross, who learned the art of Chinese painting in Hong Kong, where she grew up.*

Mar 25-27 RELEASING STRESS AND NEGATIVE ENERGY (£175)

Let go of long held stress and trauma, and balance your energy systems. We will work with the idea of the new moon enabling this process. Suitable for anyone working in a healing environment or on their own healing. Bring one or two changes that you would like to set in motion.

Anne Simpson, an experienced course facilitator, Homeopath and Healer.

QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS EVENTS

QSH 'Training courses': (Monday - Friday)

April 4-8th 2011 **at Woodbrooke** £290
(Please book through Ros Smith – Tel: 01359 252248. A deposit of £40 will be required.)

September 5-9th 2011 **at Glenthorne** £280
(Please book directly with Glenthorne Tel: 01539 435389)

These training courses provide a safe and friendly opportunity for those who feel themselves drawn towards the field of spiritual healing, to experience their own potential. If appropriate they can then go on to become fully insured probationer healers, and eventually full healer members of QSH. All courses are facilitated by tutors from the QSH team of tutors.
(Please ring Ros Smith on 01359 252248 for details of course content.)

QSH Support Weekend:

Sept 30th-Oct 2nd 2011 **at Claridge House** £tba
(Please do not book until Jan/Feb 2011)

WHO DOES WHAT?

A man and his wife were having an argument about who should brew the coffee each morning.

The wife said, "You should do it, because you get up first, and then we don't have to wait as long to get our coffee."



The husband said, "You are in charge of cooking around here and you should do it, because that is your job, and I can just wait for my coffee."

Wife replies, "No, you should do it, and besides, it is in the Bible that the man should do the coffee."

Husband replies, "I can't believe that, show me."

So she fetched the Bible, and opened the *New Testament* and showed him at the top of several pages, that it indeed says... 'HEBREWS'

Anon

A GOLDEN RAIN MEDITATION

(For possible use by Distant Healing Groups.)

Make yourself comfortable and relaxed in your chair. As you close your eyes let the cares and concerns of your life fade into the background. You don't need them just now.

Try to visualise a cloud of golden light above your head. It is soft and gentle, and pulsates with healing energy.

As it gently descends upon you, and surrounds you, you will see that it is actually a fine golden rain.

This golden rain gently covers you from your head to your feet, and, as it falls, it gently washes through you, entering into all the parts of you that need healing and cleansing.

It fills your whole being ... your heart and mind ... your body and soul. There is no part of you that cannot receive this healing, and as you open your self more and more into it, you will begin to feel much lighter, and more energised.

For a few moments just absorb this healing energy and peace. And let the golden rain wash away, through your feet and into the ground, all the things you do not want, and do not need.

Now, bring to mind anyone who you are particularly concerned about at the moment. Visualise them also being washed in their own cloud of golden rain – and let this happen for a few moments.

Then bring to mind another – and do the same.

And, perhaps, another...

(Allow some time to pass)

Now, bringing your awareness back to yourself, still being cleansed and energised by the golden rain, see that it gently eases off, leaving you feeling much lighter and more at peace than you were before.

Your problems may now seem much less, and much easier to cope with.

Rosalind Smith

“Go and tell John what you see and hear: the blind recover their sight, the lame walk, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, the poor are hearing the good news.” This is how Jesus saw his ministry in Galilee, a ministry of healing as well as teaching. It is the preaching ministry that the church in the west has taken on wholeheartedly. The healing ministry, which embraces the meaning of true community, of love in its deepest sense, and of a faith that can move mountains, as well as actual acts of physical healing, has been abandoned for acts of palliative care.

In a book entitled *A Faith that Rebels*, written in 1928, the author D.C.Cairns had passed through a period of agonising doubt about Christianity. After only a few years of marriage his wife had died. He was driven to face the problem of the meaning of suffering and its conquest which is so prominent in the *New Testament*. He was deeply interested in the development of science. “What,” asks Cairns, “has come over religion that it has allowed science to get ahead of it? What scientist, inspired by the true spirit of enquiry will set a boundary to his aspirations to discover the secrets of earth and heaven?” Cairns points out that religion accepts all too readily limits to the power and love of God and the possibilities of prayer. We are afraid of the power of the words of Jesus and try to tone them down, but Christ’s fear was not that people would believe too much but that they would believe too little in the power over evil.

Our perception of the place of healing is related to the social conditions pertaining at the time. The emergence of disease in any society, the meaning that is revealed in any particular instance of sickness, what that person is experiencing in their pain and anguish, is bound to have a social setting. There is a direct relationship between disease and poverty. Mental illness is common among poorer people, the unemployed, the racially disadvantaged, and to some extent among women who are frequently demeaned. Judgemental attitudes of the healthy may come into play so that some illnesses are more ‘respectable’ than others. Today, as in Jesus’ day, ‘unclean’ still has meaning, as in attitudes to AIDS or mental illness.

The Church in the west is in decline. That is generally agreed. Is it because only part of Christ’s commands are obeyed? The Word is preached regularly, but fewer and fewer people come to hear it or find it relevant. The emphasis on the spoken word has led to emphasis on doctrinal differences and a fragmented church. “That ye may be one,” which is at the root of true community and the desire of Christ, is not what the Church demonstrates. The healing Gospel which embraces the social gospel, takes a secondary role. This is not to ignore the work of many Christians in the community but to regret the lack of dynamism and

awareness of its centrality in the individualism of much Christian preaching. The actual ministry of physical healing has been almost completely abandoned to science. It is to the pharmaceutical companies, not to God, that we look for an answer to as yet incurable illnesses. Rather than face this lack of belief we say that God is working through science, but is that an opt out?

In the new China, in Africa and South America amongst a young and poor people, there are communities that are alive with new life and a ministry of healing which is widely practised. Is it there that in humility we have to look for new life in the west?

The healing ministry of the Church was discussed during the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches under Issue Group No. 4, Healing and Sharing Life in the Community. In the Issue Group meeting it was affirmed that the Church's sharing and healing ministry originates from the very life and mission of Christ Himself. It demands right and direct relationships based on love and justice with self, with neighbour and with God.

REPORTS

One Water, Many Streams; Spiritual Healing as a Fruit of our Spiritual Practice.

A retreat led by Jim Pym at Scottish Churches House, Dunblane. 17-20th May 2010.

The homely welcome which I received on my arrival at Scottish Churches House was a relief after my four hour train journey, followed by pulling my case over uneven pavement surfaces. Nothing was too much trouble and the cooks provided very well, including for special dietary needs.

Jim's sensitive and so very knowledgeable approach provided depth of guidance suited to each of us, leading us in contemplation and prayer to sense the Divine more fully. Deepening the foundation of spiritual attunement as the source from which spiritual healing can flow became our focus and we learnt various meditative methods to help us. Memorable 'sound bites' flowed thick and fast. Vibrant phrases such as 'the presence of God is the ceasing of everything else'; 'only that of God in us can see that of God in others', and, the notion of relaxing into the space beyond opposites provided clear guidance for me. (I hope these quotations are correct, Jim.) In the healing session I became unbearably hot and I feel that the results of that will only become clear to me in due course.

For my first experience in a FFH gathering I was accepted with welcoming companionship from a group, mostly of Scottish ladies who already knew each other. This was a very enriching time so I wait to see if further opportunity comes my way.

Marion Rooke

In the early 1950s the Fellowship felt that there was a need for a place where in an atmosphere of prayer and loving concern people could go for rest and renewal.

A group of Friends was appointed to search for a suitable property within a reasonable distance of London. Jean Campbell, a Friend in East Grinstead knew an estate agent whose wife had been healed of tuberculosis. He told her about Claridge House in nearby Dormansland that was coming onto the market. He felt that the owners, a doctor and his wife, would be in sympathy with the aims of the Fellowship. The result was that the House was sold to the Fellowship for £6,500 instead of the intended £8,000. Gifts and loans of money and furniture enabled the purchase to be completed in September 1953. The House was opened in February 1954. The first guests paid £6 a week to stay there! There are twelve guest bedrooms, but twin beds in some rooms enable more than twelve to be accommodated.

For legal reasons the House became a separate charity, but has always maintained a close link with the Fellowship.

I have known all the wardens (now called managers) since the opening of the House, but my first visit and close association with it did not begin until 1971.

About twenty years ago for financial reasons some retreats and courses were introduced. These proved so popular that they have become a major feature of the life of the House. There are now over fifty events a year nearly all related directly or indirectly to healing. The trustees are concerned, however, that the original purpose is not lost and that it does not become just a course centre. They are trying to redress the balance.

Finance has been a problem periodically. To maintain a large old House and to staff it adequately is expensive. In 1972 some land was sold to build a bungalow for the managers and to help establish a sister house in the north, Lattendales – now sadly closed. In 1984 additional land was sold to help carry out improvements, including the conversion of out buildings to provide special provision for people with disabilities. There are still about two acres of beautiful grounds with many magnificent trees, most with preservation orders.

Through the years there has been an increasing number of regulations to which the House must comply relating to health and safety, employment and fire. The fire authorities have now required that all the doors in the House should be replaced to meet new safety regulations. As nearly all the doors are of a different size their replacement is proving a very expensive operation.

In spite of the many challenges the trustees feel that the House has a continuing and important role to play. It is unique as the only Quaker healing centre.

For the Fellowship it provides a venue for its committee meetings, a place for training healers and a place where healers can gather for support.

For people in need it provides a place for rest and renewal. This may be experienced by simply enjoying the facilities or through an organised retreat or a course. During my frequent visits to garden I notice how often even after a couple of days guests benefit.

For the Society of Friends it is a place of outreach. About sixty per cent of the guests are not Quakers. For some it may be the first opportunity to experience Quaker worship through the twice daily Quiet Times and the Sunday Meeting. Many visitors have gone on to visit their local Meeting and some to enter into membership of the Society

There are many ways in which readers can support the work of the House. You can make a visit. You can tell others about it. You can help by making a donation. There are so many good causes asking for support, but for those who have a particular interest in healing it might become a priority.

Finally there is prayerful support for all those working to help the House to continue and develop. The daily Quiet times are at 9.45 am and 4.45 pm. Linking in during these times can be particularly valuable.



LETTERS

From Rosemary Bartlett, Wilmslow, Cheshire

During our fortnightly discussion group a member read a paper on the many meanings of the word Love. We then put forward our views on what the word meant to us individually. The definition of the word Love which perhaps we found hardest to describe was when love is given in the form of compassion and is given unconditionally. It was suggested that this is a form of healing, and in this form it was more likely to generate thanks and to be reciprocated. This healing power of Love is sent where it is needed by the power of thought which, to me, is a form of energy. Energy can be transformed but cannot be destroyed. Thoughts can be changed into words and the energy in thoughts is passed on to the words used. The words used become a form of creative energy. In a moment of silent contemplation which sometimes happens in our discussions, the words of St John's Gospel came vividly into my mind as it is written in *The New English Bible*.

“When all things began, the Word already was, and the Word dwelt with God, and what God was, the Word was. The Word then was with God, and what God was, the Word was. The Word then was with God at the beginning and through him all things came to be; no single thing was created without him. All that came to be was alive with his life and that life was the life of men. The light shines on in the darkness and the darkness has never mastered it.”

The author and/or the translator of this gospel seems to be saying that somehow the world began from a source of energy – possibly God is the name we give to this energy. But I must not allow the strength of my convictions to betray me into making statements or allegations that are unfair or untrue. I must think it possible that I may be mistaken.

Brother Ramon once wrote “God is the name we have for the life-giving dynamic spirit which flows throughout creation, imparting meaning, beauty, love and compassion wherever there are those who are open to those creative impulses and powers”.



THE BOOKS THAT CHANGED ME

Jan Etchells

I am a one-to-one tutor with junior age children. Mostly we work towards passing the SATS tests well, or catch up with something missed, but when the holidays come round and parents want me to continue teaching through the holidays I always search for something different to do with the children. One of my favourite exercises is called My Secret Life. This consists of a series of statements which the child fills in about themselves.

Some of the statements are easily dealt with, some are more challenging. It gives us both time to talk, rather than just work our way through a series of test papers. There are no right or wrong answers to this paper.

It starts with ‘my favourite sport is’ which is always easily answered. It progresses to ‘you may not know it but I’m very good at...’ and alternatively, ‘you may not know it but I am very bad at...’ and ‘I enjoy eating...’ But this morning the stumbling block was, ‘a book that changed me.’ What book, asked my pupil, has changed you? I am not usually on the receiving end of such questions, but I felt I had to answer him honestly.

There are two books I have on my shelves which have changed me. One I re-read every few years especially when I think complacency is setting in, either

with me or with people in general. It is called *Empty Cradles* by Margaret Humphreys. It tells the tragic true stories of children taken from children's homes and put on a boat and deported to Australia by the British government during the 1940s/50s and even the 1960s. Many of the children were told their parents were dead, when in reality they were very much alive. The parents too were deceived and told their children had been adopted in Britain. The children were told they were going to a new country and it would be an adventure for them. For many it was a new life of abuse, both physical and sexual in various institutions in Australia and elsewhere.

Margaret Humphreys is a Nottinghamshire social worker who eventually established the Child Migrants Trust. She works tirelessly to reunite the children, now adults, with their families in Britain.

The other book is fiction based on fact. It is called *Sarah's Key* by Tatiana de Rosnay. It tells the story of a ten year old Jewish girl and her family arrested by the French police in Paris in the middle of the night and ultimately deported to a camp. Sarah has a younger brother and, desperate to protect him, she locks him into their secret hiding place, promising to come back for him as soon as they are released. By the time she returns, not only are new people living in her home, but her brother is dead and decaying in the cupboard. Alongside the story of the girl Sarah is the story of a journalist sixty years later investigating the round up of the Jews in Paris to the Vélodrome d'Hiver. The two stories run side by side.

I began to describe the content of both books to my pupil. He's ten and has learned about the Second World War at school this year and has been excited by the knowledge. I was concerned that his comprehension of the war was one of excitement with little or no understanding of the long term pain war brings to people. Suddenly as I talked about *Sarah's Key* I could see understanding set in.

It occurred to me that both of my chosen books were ones which have at various times reduced me to tears. Why wasn't I describing a book that made me happy? Books that change you are usually demanding books to read. If I want to be happy I turn to other arts, painting, music, poetry. Perhaps they also change me, but their impact is less powerful than that of the written word.

(It would be interesting to read about more books that have changed readers' lives. Do please write in with your thoughts on this, especially if a book has had a healing effect. Editor.)

Not so long ago, a member of our Meeting stood up and said that she had been feeling really 'out of tune' recently. She said that, although quite well physically, she had been feeling irritable with everyone and even more irritable with herself; she felt frustrated, unsure of where she was going; she felt 'jangled'.

In *Chambers Dictionary* the verb 'to jangle' is described as 'to sound with an unpleasant irritating tone, such as a harsh dissonant metallic or ringing noise...'. No wonder she felt herself to be out of tune!

Surely all except the calmest of people do experience this feeling sometimes. We live in a world which is far from stress-free, and this is why so many therapies have been developed, including stress-management courses, to help combat this tendency.

People who meditate are in a minority and, as we know, the quiet calm of Quaker meetings is only experienced by a few. And yet, all that is needed to bring us back into alignment with the Source is this intention to return to our own inner stillness. This is where we place ourselves back into alignment, where we find ourselves re-attuned, or, we could say, 'in tune' again.

We are failing to make use of our own inner healing power if we do not recognise that we each hold our own key to unlocking the inner wisdom and guidance that can bring harmony back into our life.

Sometimes it is because too many material things obsess us in one way or another; or we take on too many responsibilities which become burdensome and which, in fact, could be delegated to others. Sometimes we allow ourselves to be 'hassled' by events of our own making. At other times we take on board other people's problems, which it might be more pertinent to allow them to resolve. For whatever reason, the feeling of being overwhelmed, frustrated, stressed or having just too much to do, can lead directly to not letting 'our ordered lives confess the beauty of Thy peace'.

Peace is there all the time (despite personal as well as world concerns), and it is we, ourselves, that become disconnected and therefore out-of-tune. When we learn to de-clutter our lives, both materially and mentally, we find that there is ample space for an inflow of peace and calm, and a feeling that we do have the ability to cope with whatever comes along. We find ourselves in tune again. And this brings the knowledge that a Power mightier than we can comprehend lives and moves and has its being in and as us; that it is the Life that lives through us.



Neither Here nor There, but Everywhere Darkness to Light by Margaret Davis and illustrated by Joy Simpson. 2010. 72pp. £6.99. Privately published and obtainable from Friends House Bookshop, and all proceeds go to Britain Yearly Meeting.

This short book of illustrated poetry has sprung from the hearts of Joy and Margaret, who are members of Gloucestershire Area Meeting. Together they have produced a beautiful, thought-provoking collection of deep thoughts and inspirations woven into powerfully reflective verse by Margaret and beautifully illustrated by Joy. Many are deeply philosophic, others less so, but every one of them needs to be read and pondered over, not because their deeper meaning is not clear but rather for the reader to allow themselves to resonate with the ideas presented

I tried to find a favourite one that I could quote from but quickly realised that different pieces would appeal at different times, and a lot would depend on the mood and circumstances of the reader. However, I have chosen just one to reproduce here:

*When I contemplate the soul
A perilous path in shadowland twists and turns,
Questing to find a whole in its inner depth.
With a shearing away of ego to the brilliance
Illuminating, shining the inexplicable radiance
Into the dark valley of fathomless night.
The shining whole breaking through all consciousness,
Lifting the path to oneness of existence;
To infinite wondering awe.
Life's mirror now reflects soul's image;
A leaping, dancing, singing soul;
A yes to the very depths of all.*

Rosalind Smith

Work for God's Sake: Christian Ethics in the Workplace by Esther D Reed. Darton-Longman-Todd. 2010. 111 pp. ISBN 978-0-232-52761-2 £12.95.

Sometimes, reviewing a book can be quite a boring process. One looks at the ease with which the fundamental method is got across, the structure and flow of the writing and the general topics that may or may not be of personal

interest. If one remains disinterested in the book then the review is methodical and fairly quick to conduct.

Work for God's Sake was not a quick book to review. Although only 111 pages of A5 format, I found myself taking a lot longer to review than I anticipated. The reason: it was so absorbing. In simple terms, this is a very good read and gives much for a discerning reader to identify with.

The book is well structured with serious points made but where appropriate and in a light hearted manner e.g. the section on 'Thank God it's Friday'.

The book is well researched with many notes and references supporting the observations and comments within the general body of its text. There are indexes of names and biblical references that permit this book to serve as a very useful reference if ever one is to research the subject of Christian ethics in the workplace.

Exploring such issues as 'Work is a spiritual topic' and 'The accursed nature of Work Today' Esther Reed has produced both an interesting and thought provoking book. So much so, that this reviewer constantly found himself pursuing thought-trains stimulated by Esther's words. For this reason, although the book is short on pages it is long on stimulation and the writer is to be congratulated for combining such issues as human, civil and political rights alongside that of liturgical reasoning.

Although written by and for the avowed Christian, there is much of inspiration and guidance for those of different persuasion, such as the comment that until the day of resurrection there is nothing in all of creation, including the most cruel of workplaces, that is devoid of the presence of God

Stephen Feltham

Anticancer: a new way of life by Dr David Servan-Schreiber.

Penguin Health. 2007. 293 pp. ISBN 978-0-78-15429-5 £14.99

I found this book informative, inspirational, moving and remarkably hopeful. It is an unusual mix of scientific facts and personal story which, unexpectedly, I found exciting to read. I did not anticipate a book about cancer (which does not pull its punches about the ghastly aspects of it) to leave me feeling so positive and uplifted.

Dr David Servan-Schreiber, a dedicated scientist and doctor, was diagnosed with brain cancer at the age of thirty-one. He confronted what medicine knows about illness and the little-known workings of his body's natural cancer fighting capacities. He marshalled his own will to live and found himself on

a journey from disease and relapse into scientific exploration and, finally, to health. He tells his story with remarkable candour, leaving me feeling that I was connecting with a fully human person, not simply a clinical doctor.

His book tells us:

Why the traditional Western diet creates the conditions for disease and how to develop a science-based anticancer diet.

How and why sugar and stress feed cancer and ways to achieve life balance and good nutrition to combat it.

Why the effects of helplessness and unhealed wounds affect our ability to restore health.

How to reap the benefits of exercise, yoga and meditation.

How to minimise environmental toxins.

How to find the right blend of traditional and alternative health care.

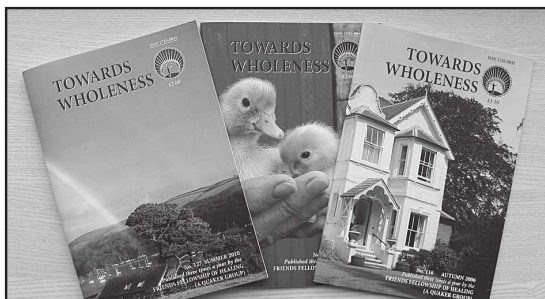
Whilst this book is about cancer, my feeling is that the principles within it could be profitably used by all of us to become, and to remain, happier and healthier.

Judy Clinton

THE BREATH OF PRAYER

The breath of prayer
may take your mind to see
the tops of trees
moving in the breeze;
or lead you to walk beside
the sea's incoming tide.
The breath of prayer
may take you anywhere
you need to be
to meet those who care
and share the healing
of your prayer.

Anne Smith



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All are welcome to join. If you would like to help in this way, please write to one of the Postal Co-ordinators (*Maureen Anderson* and *Muriel Robertson* – addresses on next page) 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.