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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.

The minimum subscription is £10 per calendar year for UK, Europe and all overseas countries (£10 Sterling only). Cheques, payable to Friends Fellowship of Healing, should be sent to the membership secretary, Sandra Kirk, 17 Southfields, Glastonbury, Somerset BA6 8DW. Tel: 07761 534730 Email: sandi.ffh@btinternet.com

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

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Donations for the work of the Fellowship are most welcome.

FFH / QSH website: [www.quaker-healing.org.uk](http://www.quaker-healing.org.uk)

*Front cover photo: Emerson Valley Park, Milton Keynes – by Nicholas Rawlence*

*Back cover photo: Winter Walk, Berkshire – by Nicholas Rawlence*

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*The Fellowship is a registered charity (number 284459)*

#### **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 be held at Glenthorne, 11/13 May 2012.

It will be led by Jim Pym. Total cost is £150 pp, and those wanting to come are asked to book directly with Glenthorne – (Tel: 01539 435389). Information can be obtained from Kay Horsfield (Tel: 01923-675671).

**And please also see page 19 for the weekend's content.**

**THE FFH AGM WILL ALSO BE HELD AT THIS WEEKEND GATHERING, AT 5.15 pm ON FRIDAY 11th MAY.**

## FRIENDLY REMINDER

May I remind FFH members that if they pay by **CHEQUE** their membership renewal is due by 01-01-2012, 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.)

Also, if you have been receiving your copy of **TW** as a result of a Friend's **XMAS GIFT** from last year, you may like to now consider joining FFH and taking out your own subscription. (There will be a 'G' by your name on the envelope.) With thanks, in advance, for all your help.

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

## In Memory of Christina Pumphrey 1916-2011

Our Friend Christina Pumphrey died on Saturday 28th May 2011 after a short illness. To the end, she was planting out roses, looking after herself in her own home and keeping track of her own affairs. She had been finding life more difficult and her passing can be seen as a blessed release.

Christina Wenham was born into a Quaker family on 6th July 1916. She was introduced into the Coventry Meeting for Worship as a babe-in-arms. Apart from a short period during her first difficult marriage, Christina continued in the Quaker way of worship throughout her life, returning to Coventry Meeting with her second husband, Bill Pumphrey, in 1989 and continuing to attend Meeting for Worship until late last year.



*This photograph was taken on  
Mothering Sunday 2011.*

Christina was a member of the Friends Fellowship of Healing for many years including being Secretary of a Postal Group. She contributed editorials and many a heartfelt “thought for the day” to the Postal Group newsletters as well as publishing a book of Meditations which some of you may still have.\*

Members of the Postal Group have expressed their appreciation of Christina’s prayers and support during difficult times and Committee members have also been glad of her dedicated support.

Christina’s prayer life was also much appreciated by those of us who knew her through Coventry Meeting. We will all miss her very much, particularly for her heartfelt friendship and support. Let us be grateful for the time that we had her in our lives, whether personally or over the phone or through the written word.

*Lesley Butterwick*

\* Christina’s booklet *Meditations* is still available. Please see page 32.

*“...the Quaker position is really summed up in the words, ‘John indeed baptised with water, but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit’. It is the inward change, the inward purification, the spiritual fact and not the outward symbol that belongs in truth to the Kingdom of God.”*

**John Wilhelm Rowntree, 1902 *Quaker Faith and Practice* 27.37**

*“...Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and then all else, including healing and other spiritual gifts, will become clear. Spiritual healing is one of the fruits of our worship, meditation and prayer life, not merely the physical. Seen from the outside, release from pain and suffering can often border on the miraculous, but even more amazing is the inner fruitage, as lives are changed, and peace and harmony take the place of inner turmoil. The key to it all is meditation and prayer...”*

**Jim Pym, *What kind of God? What kind of Healing?* FFH publication**

Three hundred and sixty years ago men and women flocked to Pardshaw Craggs to hear George Fox preach. Such was the power of his preaching that many came to know God. At his death in 1691, in spite of the most frightful persecution, there were about 50,000 Quakers in England and Ireland, out of a population of about five million: about one per cent.

It was in 1647 that his ministry started when he gave up trying to find a faith ready made at the hands of other people. He had consulted ministers and independent preachers; he had discussed his problems and doubts with members of the established religious sects of his day; he had found fellowship with small groups of people who were as muddled and baffled as himself, racked by the civil and religious turmoil of that warring time. His life changed with a mystical experience. ‘And when my hopes in them and in all men were gone,’ he wrote in his *Journal*, ‘so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, oh then, I heard a voice which said, “There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition,” and when I heard it, my heart did leap for joy.’ This firsthand experience of the living Christ set the pattern for all that followed. Henceforth, for him, there would be no intermediary between man and God.

In his journal he reports several direct revelations through visions. During a bout of depression at thoughts of the evil at work in the world, he had a blinding vision of the age-old warfare between the forces of light and darkness. ‘I saw also that there was an ocean of darkness and death, but an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness,’ he wrote. ‘And in that I saw the infinite love of God.’ This was to be the recurring vision for George Fox and those who came after him. He had another vision on Pendle

Hill. 'And there atop of the hill, I was moved to sound the day of the Lord: and the Lord did let me see atop of the hill in which places He had a great people gathered.' And 'a great people in white raiment by a riverside coming to the Lord'. Within a short period of time many, especially those who were Westmorland Seekers, came to hear him preach and became his followers.

Although I have never seen a vision, two close friends of mine have and they call them interior pictures. At Pentecost, Peter spoke to the crowd. 'These men are not drunk as you suppose, it is after all only nine o'clock in the morning of this great feast day. No this is something which was predicted by Joel:'

*And it shall be in the last days, saith God,  
I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh.  
And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
And your young men shall see visions...  
And your old men shall dream dreams...*

In 2003 at a Cockermouth Churches Together joint service, the then Bishop of Carlisle, Bishop Graham, shared his own experience of God and called it 'baptism of the Spirit'. It is a term that George Fox used in his *Journal*.

I believe these days it is often called being 'filled with the Spirit.' The name does not matter. How it happens doesn't matter. Whether it happens without help from others, or with help, doesn't matter. What does matter is to 'personally experience God' and His 'ocean of love'. It turns uncertainty into inner conviction that there is a God and He is at work in the world. This is the heart of the Quaker message.

*Personal Testimony. In 1964 as a trained scientist I was a seeker after scientific truth and also since a young lad wondered if there was a God. On the 29th June of that year through the ministry of Fred Smith, a sergeant of police at Abingdon where I lived, I was gripped by a strange and benevolent power that filled me with an unspeakable sense of happiness. I was also given the gift of tongues. Fred called it the baptism of the Spirit. At least twelve more friends in the church where I worshipped had similar experiences and all were given tongues. I am still in touch with five of them. It was several years later that I realised that I had also been given the spiritual gift of healing and have used it for some forty years. I have seen lives change and have kept testimonies and records in 'My Spiritual Healing Journal.' Since coming to Quakers twenty years ago I realise that the gift of discernment is central to ministry during worship. I became a Quaker Spiritual Healer in 2005.*

*Cancer is NOT a battle but an opportunity for transformation and growth. The tumour in my body is my teacher and my friend and I will always be grateful for it to help me get back onto the right path.*

Every morning when I wake up, I put a smile on my face and open my heart to connect with the unconditional love of the divine that is all around us. I breathe slowly and deeply enjoying the lovely feeling of this healing connection for a few minutes. When I go to bed, I do this again flooding my body with feelings of love and gratitude.

I did not always think this way. When I was first diagnosed with cancer in 2006, all I could think of was to get rid of this thing, this alien in my body. The following years were very difficult. I had two major operations, radiotherapy, terrible side effects and a deep fear that I would die soon and leave my friends and family behind.

When the third tumour was found in 2009, I started to realise that what I was doing, what conventional medicine was doing to me, was wrong. I started to explore natural treatments and found a dietary approach called 'The Budwig Protocol' which gave me new hope. I immediately put the diet into action while I was waiting for the third operation but only a few days later I ended up in A&E due to excruciating abdominal pain. My only kidney had gone into complete failure and although a urologist in London got it working again by inserting a ureteral stent, my oncologist visited me on the ward and told me that a third operation would be too risky and that he had cancelled it. I was upset but I still had the hope that the Budwig Protocol would make me better.

Over the previous years I had become angry and bitter at God for various reasons and I disliked myself a lot, too. I gradually lost my spiritual beliefs and with them my life lost its meaning. I believed that the cancer was a punishment from God for not believing and that I did not deserve to be saved. It was a terrible time, life was just a struggle and full of fear.

On the day when the surgeon told me that I had inoperable cancer, something shifted inside me ever so slightly; it was a miracle I think. I embarked on my journey still believing that it was necessary to destroy the tumour but then I started to read books and articles written by people who had healed from cancer completely. I learnt that cancer was a dis-ease affecting the whole person and that a tumour was only a symptom of underlying trauma to the soul. I learnt about techniques for healing the trauma and changing the false beliefs we all hold in our subconscious minds like, for example, believing that we are not good enough, that we don't deserve good things, etc.



I read and read and listened and listened and learnt that the world is full of miracles and wonderful people, too. I learnt, through science in fact, that there is a divine intelligence driving our evolution and that everyone has access to the divine unconditional love.

Without cancer I would not have known about the miracles, I would not have experienced that faith really does move mountains, I would not have found my way back to a spiritual life. For this reason I am deeply grateful to the tumour. We have an agreement with each other that it may stay in my body as long as it needs to and as long as I need it.

My life is still full of ups and downs, I have my anxieties and obsessions, but I know techniques that help me get over them when they surface. Most of the time though I am a happy person enjoying life very much.

My wish is that people read my story and feel inspired and less fearful. Whatever you think is 'wrong' in your life, there is always hope. Miracles do happen – all the time!

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## THE WORSHIPPING GROUP

*The silence deepens as  
The circled group  
Relaxes into quiet meditation.*

*Will some find peace?  
Some joy?  
Others the answer to their quest?  
We wait in quiet expectancy  
As our souls rest.*

*Yet all may feel the Spirit  
Move among them  
With love and health to bless.  
Life, and Light to overcome all darkness,  
Peace comes – a soft caress.*

*Beatrice Watson*



## AN EXERCISE IN FORGIVENESS

(from *Unconditional Love and Forgiveness* by Edith Stauffer)

*This could well be used as a meditation.*

**Step 1.** Say to yourself: ‘I choose to stop punishing myself and feeling bad for what (*name of person*) has done/is doing.

**Step 2.** Close your eyes and imagine that the person you need to forgive is in front of you. Holding the image of this person in front of you, say, either aloud or in your own mind: ‘I would have preferred you to have said (or done)... Or, ‘I would have preferred you not to have said (or done)...

**Step 3.** Say: ‘But you didn’t do that, so I will now release this incident. I choose to let it go and be free of it.’

**Step 4.** Say: ‘Therefore I cancel all demands, expectations, and conditions that you do/say/be...in the past and now. I cancel the demand that you be (*any certain way*). You are totally responsible for your actions and deeds, and I release you to your own good.’

**Step 5.** Begin to feel and connect with the centre of your being – your Higher Self – your Inner Voice. Let it enable you to release all expectations and demands towards the other person, or situation. *Feel* its deep love for you.

**Step 6.** Still feeling the love and compassion of the Inner Voice, say to the person that you are forgiving that you are sending them this love just as they are and have been. Try to really feel this love flowing out from you to the other person.

**Step 7.** Become aware of your own body and how it feels. See if you are still feeling any resentment – or are still holding on to any demands that this person change in any way.

If you do not feel release, then perhaps you will need to repeat the process. Also, you may need to do this with every specific feeling of resentment you hold.

And – if we cannot feel release after doing this exercise, we need to examine our willingness to really let go.

Forgiveness is a gift we make first and foremost to ourselves. We allow ourselves to be free, and at peace.

I have been interested in Spiritual Healing now for nearly half a century. I was fortunate to come across it when I was still young, and, while I do not claim to know many of the answers – or even the questions – I feel I have discovered a few things. I would like to share a few of them.

There seems to be a lot of confusion these days as to what spiritual healing actually is. For me, it is the Stream of Infinite Goodness which flows freely from the Divine to all beings. All we have to do is to let it flow in, to and through us. However, this little word “all” makes it sound very simple, but it seems that it is not. Though the simple essence does not change, what has is our ability to accept simplicity without question, just because it is there right before our eyes. Part of the dis-ease of the modern world is our need to always be able to describe what happens in “scientific” terms. We live in an increasingly complex world, where we are not content to allow simple Truths to pass without attempting to analyse them. We find it hard to accept that there are areas in which this may not be possible. It is possible when we are dealing with the finite and time-bound, where the senses rule supreme (though even in the world of the senses we have to accept that there are limitations and the evidence of the senses is not always true). However, with spiritual healing we are dealing with the infinite and eternal, with an essentially mystical experience, and in the last resort there are no words or concepts that are adequate.

Anyone who looks at the healing scene today, and compares it with that of the sixties and seventies must notice some real differences. It was truly a “Golden Age” of spiritual healing. In this golden age, spiritual healing was highly newsworthy. Hardly a week would go by without stories of “miraculous” cures in the local and national press. Healers like Harry Edwards could fill the Festival Hall in London, while others like Brother Mandus of the World Healing Crusade could fill big churches for a healing service. Such spiritual healing was seen as a gift and a vocation, to which people were called. People like Harry Edwards and Phil and Kath Wyndham evolved their gifts within the Spiritualist movement, which taught that, although the healing comes from God, it is administered by spirit guides who know how to apply the spiritual power involved. Others such as Brother Mandus, Dorothy Kerin and Elsie Salmon had their roots in mainstream Christianity (even though the religious establishment mostly resisted spiritual healing within the churches). There was also the metaphysical tradition, typified by Christian Science and Unity, which was basically Christian but had its own theology, and healers within the Jewish, Moslem and Hindu faiths, though they mainly served their own communities. The main thing about spiritual healing was that it was recognised as a “Gift of

the Spirit” emerging from genuine and deep spiritual belief and practice.

No matter what tradition a healer came from, he or she expected – from their experience – actual healings to take place. The mind-set of the time is summed up by a card that was distributed by the World Healing Crusade, encouraging all to “Expect a Miracle!”. I can truthfully say that I have personally witnessed most of the miracles mentioned in the New Testament. I know that prayer and meditation “work” and I have observed and researched their effects. They not only bring wholeness to the one who prays, but also, in addition to their inner fruits, they can – often instantaneously – change physical conditions for the better.

The other significant factor about that time lay in the recognition that prayer healing – also known as absent or distant healing – was as important, and as effective, as personal one-to-one treatment. The healing ministries mentioned above were actually built on this practice, with many thousands of people being helped each month. Some healers worked alone (with help in typing replies etc.) while others evolved a practice of group healing. Several healers reported receiving hundreds and even thousands of letters each week, many of them reporting betterment or even cures. Many healers made these reports available to independent researchers who verified them as true reports. However, all this has slowly changed, and the personal (contact) healing practice has become seen as the most important, with distant healing a sort of “back-up”.

Spiritual healing had a place within Quakerism from the earliest time. Members of the “Valiant Sixty” such as George Fox and James Nayler were known for their gifts of healing. The late 17th century was also a Golden Age of healing. Fox even wrote a *Book of Miracles* telling of these practices, and left money in his will for its publication. However, the manuscript was “lost”, largely due to the fact that Friends feared being caught up in the witchcraft persecutions which were around at the time. The manuscript was later reconstructed by Henry Cadbury, and was re-published a few years ago by Quakers Uniting in Publications.

The Stream of Healing is still flowing, and it is up to us to make the intention to be more positive in acceptance of its blessings. With our practice of silent waiting on God, Quakers are ideally placed to do this, if we can remember our testimony to simplicity. We can re-affirm our testimony to spiritual healing as a gift of the spirit, and once more become immersed in the Divine Stream of Healing which flows from a deep awareness of the Living Presence of God and acceptance of the unconditional nature of God’s Love. In this way, peace and harmony can be restored to body and mind, and to the very earth itself. If we



can do this, we will not have to worry about decreasing membership, about obscure theological differences of belief, and many of the other problems which beset our Society – and our society – at the present time. It is possible, indeed, more than that, it must happen if we are to survive.

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**EVERY DAY BE THANKFUL –  
FOR WHAT YOU HAVE AND WHO YOU ARE.**

Even though I clutch my blanket and growl when the alarm rings – thank you, Lord, that I can hear. There are many who are deaf.

Even though I keep my eyes closed against the morning light as long as possible – thank you, Lord, that I can see. Many are blind.

Even though I huddle in my bed and put off rising – thank you, Lord, that I have the strength to rise. There are many who are bedridden.

Even though the first hour of my day is hectic, when socks are lost, toast is burned, tempers are short, and my children are so loud – thank you, Lord, for my family. There are many who are lonely.

Even though our breakfast table never looks like the picture in magazines and the menu is at times unbalanced – thank you, Lord, for the food we have. There are many who are hungry.

Even though the routine of my job often is monotonous – thank you, Lord, for the opportunity to work. There are many who have no job.

Even though I grumble and bemoan my fate from day to day and wish my circumstances were not so modest – thank you, Lord, for life.

*Anon*

What is this light we hear so much about in Quakerism? Is it a flash of lightning? Is it a rosy glow?

I often remember the television news item where a reporter was speaking outside No. 10 Downing Street. In the background, a rat scuttled across the door, shown up by the camera lighting. Shortly afterwards Larry the cat took up residence. His title is Chief Mouser to the Cabinet Office.

So, a solution to a problem was found.

Diagnosis is vital in dealing with physical illness. 'Before a wound can heal, it must be seen.' \*

We are none of us completely whole, but before we can put right some of the things that are wrong with us, we need to be aware just what dis-ease we are experiencing and why. Sometimes the problem lies in the past: lack of encouragement, lack of nurturing, which leads us to have a very low opinion of ourselves and can bring about real physical maladies. We can be burdened with guilt, so are reluctant to seek counselling help, because of what we might discover about ourselves.

We like to think that we grow by learning or by success in our achievements.

Theodore Roethke wrote "In a dark time, the eye begins to see." It is sometimes when we experience great disappointment or grief that we begin to become more rounded people, able to empathise with others who are suffering in some way.

It is in these moments that, paradoxically, we begin to see the Light.

\* Julia Cameron *The Artist's Way*.

Perhaps the most neglected of all the Advices is that we should live adventurously. If there is one wish I would pray the Spirit to put into my Christmas stocking, it is warmth, openness, passion, a bit of emotion that doesn't mind making a fool of itself occasionally.

*Gerald Priestland*

*"It is more important to know what sort of patient has the disease than to know what sort of disease the patient has."* Sir William Osler.

It is extremely painful to watch a parent who has been there for you all your life slowly lose touch with your version of reality. My mother began to show signs of dementia just after her ninetieth birthday. She was diagnosed with the condition four months later. I took my mother to her appointment with the consultant and was told by him what would happen to her. He told me that dementia sufferers often became violent, had frequent mood changes, and would eventually lose the ability to read, write and care for themselves. It was an upsetting interview and I went home with a heavy heart. I told my close family about the diagnosis and prognosis which saddened them too.

However, we wanted our mother to live at home for as long as she was able. Fortunately my brother and niece lived nearby and with the support of paid carers she was able to stay in her home for a while. I lived a distance away and was working full-time but was in constant touch with everyone involved in her care on a daily basis. I was also able to visit every other weekend. As quoted above, I believe that each person with whatever disease they suffer from should be treated in a loving and respectful way. I have come to believe that as each person is unique, so the form the illness takes will be unique to them. My mother was a strong woman, matriarch of her family and respected and loved. She was also a Christian who was very involved with her chapel.

She was one of ten children, eight of whom survived childhood. She was very close to her siblings especially one sister. I realised that when my mother did not recognise me she was thinking I was her sister. She asked me about my two 'girls' and when I remonstrated and told her I was not married she became very anxious and upset. When I realised what she thought I answered her questions as if I was her sister and she was happy. One night, when we were watching the television, my mother began to talk about the lady in the front room. She said that she was being a nuisance making a noise. When I remonstrated that there was no-one but us in the house she became frustrated. Then the penny dropped. When my mother was first married my parents had a woman lodger who rented the front room and bedroom. My mother was remembering her lodger, so I said I would ask her to be quiet and my mother was happy once more.

One of the first changes I noticed was that she lost her sense of the passing of time. I bought her a clock with large hands which helped a little, but she began getting up earlier and earlier. Sadly, one morning she got up early, and left the



house to go shopping. When the carer arrived at eight she was nowhere to be seen. Everyone began looking for her. Fortunately she had been picked up by the police and taken to hospital. She was not able to return to her home after this. My brother and I were able to find a care home not too far away which specialised in dementia care. We visited regularly and I would still carry on our usual routines of taking her to a service in her chapel and visiting the garden centre. My mother loved singing the hymns and for a while was able to read the words. We bought birthday cards for family members at the garden centre, which she was able to sign. She was happy at the care home and they treated her with respect. They encouraged her to read and write, to join in with activities and trips out. Some days when I visited she seemed low and when I asked her why she told me that she had to work too hard. When I asked her what she meant she said the cook was strict, and never satisfied with her. It took me a few minutes to puzzle this out. Then I remembered that when she left school my mother went into service. She had to get up early to prepare the vegetables for the meals. One cook was very strict with her and my mother was unhappy away from her family. I think she was reliving that experience.

There were many other instances of my mother's change of behaviour, but she was never violent, and many of her mood changes could be explained. She did not display all the symptoms listed by the consultant! Eventually she did lose the ability to read and write but she could still sing the hymns she loved as we drove back from the garden centre on a Saturday afternoon.

I was prompted to write this article as a way of sharing with you my own experience of coming to terms with how dementia affected my mother and the way we lived with it.

*In her accompanying letter Anne says: I would like other people to know that it is no good trying to remonstrate because that will not help. The only way is to 'go with the flow' and keep on loving.*

The mind is its own place,  
and of itself can make a heaven of hell,  
and a hell of heaven.

*John Milton*

*Positive expectancy is the foundation upon which healing starts.*

*Healing means giving up the combat; the fighting against our pain so that we may firmly start on the path of recovery.*

*Healing could be considered an adventure, a deep journey that could reveal who we really are and what inner strengths we contain.*

*Healing involves a deep commitment ( one we may have never made before ) if we are to recover and improve our health.*

*Hold on to what is positive in your life even if it's just a few kind words from a friend.*

*Healing is just being quiet, in our own space, in our own time, without judgement and opinions, without projections and concerns. Allowing an inner calm and tranquillity to surface within us.*

*Things change – that's inevitable but we do not always recognize and appreciate this.*

*Getting well, recovering our health is what the healing process is all about but this cannot be achieved without a certain discipline of mind that says: "I'm dedicated to this end."*

*There are no special guarantees when we engage with the healing process but what other alternative is there for us to seek well being?*

*Thoughts of self worth, self value and self protection should, by their nature, help us to seek out a healing – one that will cultivate health giving, health enhancing qualities.*

*Healing can't be rushed – it needs time and patience to undertake its work. We must go at its pace, not ours.*

*The story, the narrative of our pain has an ending that we can decide upon if we can make a full-hearted commitment to the healing process.*

*Healing is a gift we must honour for ourselves to secure a fullness of well-being.*

GOOD LUCK FOR YOUR JOURNEY

## 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](mailto:welcome@claridgehousequaker.org.uk) Website: [www.claridgehousequaker.org.uk](http://www.claridgehousequaker.org.uk) Tel: 01342 832150.*

### **Nov 18 - 20 THE HEALING DRUM** (£175)

Native American hoop drums have been traditionally used for healing spirit and emotions. Using sound healing with the drum and rattle, we will intuitively explore the human energy field. Learn techniques to balance spirit, mind and body, gaining confidence and sensitivity in using these remarkable sound-healing tools. **Steven Ash**, drum tutor for the College of Sound Healing and the principal authority in drum healing in the UK and Europe.

### **Nov 25 - 27 MINDFULNESS MEDITATION RETREAT** (£175)

Mindfulness meditation is a way of learning how to experience life fully, moment to moment, which may help to transform your relationship with your problems, fear, pain and stress. It can bring calm, clarity and creativity to your life. Beginners to meditation welcome as practices are accessible to all.

**Lina Newstead**, a Diploma Course Tutor who runs regular private classes, retreat weekends, and longer Yoga courses.

### **Nov 28 - Dec 2 CHINESE BRUSH PAINTING** (£295)

Pine, bamboo and plum blossom are the three friends in winter, the main theme of the week. Additional complementary subjects will also be covered. Traditional Chinese and more innovative styles will be demonstrated and developed into paintings and cards. The history and symbolism of this fascinating art will be explained.

**Maggie Cross**, who learned the art of Chinese painting in Hong Kong, where she grew up. Her third book on the subject is about to be published.

### **Dec 9 - 11 ANGELS** (£175)

Angels are beautiful, caring beings of light, just waiting to be asked to bring love and light into our lives. Meditate with them and learn of their healing and helping qualities. **Anna Moore**, a Reiki Master and teacher for over ten years, who loves working with angels.

### **Dec 16 - 18 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 6 - 8 GENTLE YOGA TO BOOST HEALTH AND STAMINA** (£180)

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 20 - 22 TAI CHI / CHI KUNG** (£180)

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.

**Feb 1, March 7, April 4, May 2 LED DAY RETREATS** (£35)

Non-residential day retreats. Arrival 9.45am for Quiet Time, retreat 10.30am until 5pm. Lunch and refreshments will be provided. To find out the topic of the month and to book a place, please phone David or Cathy on 01342 832150.

Led by **Cherry Simpkin**, a spiritual director and a healer and trainer with Quaker Spiritual Healers.

**Feb 3 - 5 UNALLOCATED WEEKEND**  
**FRIENDS FELLOWSHIP WEEKEND BREAK**  
**- HOUSE AVAILABLE FOR HIRE**

We have nothing programmed this weekend. If you feel your local or area meeting is in need of renewal and its members need refreshing, why not come to Claridge House for a two night, full board, residential break?

No administrative overheads for your meeting, as those coming book directly with us. Only **£126** per person for a two-night stay.

With advance notice we may be able to provide a facilitator to help your meeting make the most of their weekend.

Contact **David** or **Cathy** on 01342 832150 for further details.

**Feb 10 - 12 FAIR MAID OF FEBRUARY** (£180)

Do you know her? This will be a weekend of finding positive answers as we begin to leave Winter behind. In the secure and comfortable environment of Claridge House we will dare to write of our dreams and memories...or anything else that might come to mind.

*Ted Walter, a poet and creative writing tutor for over 25 years.*

**Feb 17 - 19 LIFE IS CHANGE** (£180)

A universal truth in the Eastern philosophies is that *Life is Change*; yet the human condition hates uncertainty, so stress and dis-ease can be precipitated by the unexpected. Using meditation and visualisation to cope with changes in our life – past, present and future, we will see how change helps us to grow.

*Anne Simpson, a Quaker Healer, Registered Homoeopath and facilitator of Meditation Courses.*

**Feb 20 - 24 FRIENDS FELLOWSHIP MIDWEEK BREAK for** (£185)  
**Luton and Leighton area meeting**

Those from the Luton and Leighton area meeting will be coming to Claridge House to refresh and renew themselves and their meetings. This will be the fifth year that they have spent a week here in each others' company.

*They keep coming back for more, so we must be doing something right. If your meeting would like a midweek break please talk to **David** or **Cathy** T. 01342 832150*

**Feb 24 - 26 HEALING WEEKEND** (£180)

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. Learn how to utilise these powerful healing tools for yourself and others. 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.*

**March 2 - 4 SACRED CLOWNING FROM THE HEART** (£180)

Embracing the heart through mindfulness and presence, an open workshop for beginners and those who have attended previous workshops. Fun and interactive with soft gentle exercises, using the breath, voice and movement. We will spend time listening to the quiet space inside and explore dance, mime, improvisation, clowning and the red nose.

**Reuben Kay** (PGCEE), *a teacher and performer of Sacred Clowning.*

**March 7 - 11 VOLUNTEER MAINTENANCE WEEK** (£100)

Enjoy the fellowship of working, relaxing and of shared Quiet Times, whilst helping the House. Please phone us for details on 01342 832150

**March 9 - 11 WORLD CIRCLE DANCE** (£180)

Dances from many cultures, a rich diversity of flavour, mood and beautiful evocative music to kindle our innate expansiveness, lift our spirits and open our hearts. Some experience of circle dancing is necessary.

**Eve Corrin**, *an experienced teacher of circle dance with a gentle, straightforward and relaxed style of teaching.*

**March 12 - 16 YOGA TO BEAT FATIGUE** (£300)

A gentle yoga course suitable for all abilities. We will include energy enhancing methods such as special breathing techniques, meditation and nurturing 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, in India and with the KHYF.*

**March 16 - 18 YOGA TO BEAT FATIGUE** (£180)

A weekend course. For details see March 12th

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## **3** easy steps to feeling better:

*A quick way to improve your well-being is to breathe deeply. It will bring more oxygen to the blood and help you feel less tense.*

**1. Inhale slowly, feel your chest and ribcage expand.**

**2. Keep your shoulders down and back while your abdomen expands as much as you feel is comfortable.**

**3. Do this for a few minutes each day to feel calmer and brighter.**

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## QUAKER SPIRITUAL HEALERS EVENTS

**QSH ‘Training courses’:** (Monday - Friday)

**Claridge House – March 26-30th 2012**

£255

Facilitated by Stephen Feltham and Margaret Western.

*(Please book directly with Claridge House – 01342 832150)*

**Glenthorne – September 3-7th 2012**

£296

Facilitated by Cherry Simpkin and Elizabeth Angas.

*(Please book directly with Glenthorne – 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:**

**Woodbrooke – July 6-8th 2012**

£160

Facilitated by Jan Etchells.

*(all rooms ensuite)*

To book a place at this event, which is open to both full and probationer QSH healers, please ring Ros Smith on 01359 252248 –

or email: [Rossmith@btinternet.com](mailto:Rossmith@btinternet.com) A deposit of £40 will be required.

The **FFH SPRING GATHERING** will be held at **Glenthorne, May 11-13 2012**  
It will be led by Jim Pym.

For Quakers, spiritual healing can be seen as an aspect of ministry arising from a gathered meeting. This is true whether it takes the form of prayer healing groups, or the one-to-one ministry.

For this weekend we will explore together the ways in which this understanding is relevant to spiritual healing as practical today.

Total cost is £150 pp, and those wanting to come are asked to book directly with Glenthorne – (Tel: 01539 435389).

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE FFH AGM WILL BE HELD BEFORE  
THIS WEEKEND STARTS, AT 5.15 pm on FRIDAY 11th MAY.**

## THE LISTENING QUAKERS

*One lonely Quaker*

*Meeting someone new,*

*Had a lovely thought,*

*Then there were two*

*Three happy Quakers*

*Opened up their door,*

*Took a little waif inside,*

*Then there were four.*

*Five puzzled Quakers,*

*Questions and council in a mix,*

*Sought a Friend's advice,*

*Then there were six.*

*Seven hungry Quakers*

*Putting on some weight,*

*After picnic lunch*

*Found they numbered eight*

*Nine silent Quakers*

*Centring in a den;*

*God was surely there,*

*Then there were ten.*

*Two loving Quakers*

*In each other's eyes could see*

*The need for a family;*

*Then there were three.*

*Four working Quakers*

*Invested in a hive,*

*Decided to expand*

*Then there were five.*

*Six tired Quakers,*

*Holidaying in Devon;*

*Met an old friend,*

*Then there were seven.*

*Eight lively Quakers*

*Standing in a line,*

*Another formed a circle;*

*Then there were nine.*

*Ten listening spirits*

*Searching for the Truth,*

*Each one seeking, found*

*Within, was certain proof.*

*Rosemary Bartlett*



My holiday this year (May 2011) was an unusual, and ultimately magical one, spent on a residential intensive “Healing Voice” workshop run by Jill Purce, at a retreat called the **Earth Spirit Centre**, near Glastonbury, in Somerset. We were a group of over fifty people, with diverse backgrounds, experience and skills, aged between about 20 and 70 plus, and from many countries, who spoke between us at least twelve different languages. We did a great deal of chanting, including the specialised technique of Mongolian overtone chanting, in which the note used is split into its pure higher harmonics, and gives a spectrum of bell-like sounds – analogous to producing a rainbow by passing white light through a prism. There is evidence that this practice has healing properties; the vibrations arising from it are particularly beneficial to the brain, and can, for example, aid rehabilitation in stroke victims – there was one such person on the course, who had apparently made a miraculous recovery.

Most of the week was spent performing a complex and beautiful Tibetan Buddhist mandala ritual, which Jill has developed over many years, and choreographed, she says, from eight distinct spiritual practices. To explain this in detail would take many pages, and one really needs to experience it at first hand to access the deeper meaning: it becomes deeper the more one is immersed in it, and I initially found that layers of “resistance” had to be overcome. (There is a lot of repetition involved, and quite a bit of stamina required.) To an unfamiliar outsider, some of our activities might seem completely crazy! Certainly a very special feeling developed in the group. The mandala is seen as a pilgrimage (a manifestation of consciousness, and the inner journey towards enlightenment), where the group eventually becomes the mandala – a sort of prayer of union.

Jill has the philosophy that the best way to learn something new, paradoxically, is by doing something else, e.g. voice work directly confronting the desired end product of singing beautifully and freely may lead to tensions and negative mindsets of the “I can’t do this” variety; far better to approach it obliquely, and persuade the brain to take on the new skill without conscious effort; hence our use of the voice became an indirect consequence of performing the mandala ceremony. (This seems a good principle to apply in many areas of our lives.)

A major part of the ceremony was “Healing the Ancestors”: our parents are a fundamental influence on who we become, and patterns of behaviour, psychological traits and problems, can persist from one generation to another.

Letting go of attachment / aversion dualism, and embracing both “good” and “bad” as blessings, is a vital way to move on in conflict resolution. Here, as in all forms of spiritual healing, the intent has greater importance than the precise detail of what is being said or done. (The non-judgemental aspects resonate with the Quaker approach.) A lot of role-play was involved, and we all had a chance to be someone else’s “Mum” or “Dad” in different positive and negative situations. The ultimate aim of the ever-changing spiral of movement is to attain enlightenment, and there was a deeply beautiful and meditative “re-birth” ritual (repeated for each one of us, at the end of each turn of the wheel), where the individual emerged like a butterfly from the chrysalis, then went back into the “world”, and repeated the cycle, sharing it with the others.

In our chanting and ritual we also worked upon the illusory nature of our perceived “reality”, and the tenuousness of its boundary with the dream state (and the before birth and after death parts of the cycle), and it became both transforming and liberating.

The dismantling of the mandala, the day after the course ended, was an important closure of the ritual. (The big hall in the converted barn, our abode for the week, had been adorned as a sacred temple.) So, too, was the fire ceremony, in which we cleansed and purified all the emotional “stuff” which had come up, and sent healing to where it was needed. The weather let us perform this outside, in an adjacent field, and appropriately, a couple of hours after we had finished, the remains were washed away by heavy rain.

Will I have a re-visit? I think most certainly, at some point. There is a “tip of the iceberg” feeling to this practice, and it takes time to assimilate. Also, the energy of the whole Glastonbury area is most profound, and there is a great deal more to explore. The retreat centre is a wonderful place, the food is great, the staff are friendly and accommodating, and there was a very special richness of sharing and new friendships made.

I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good, I shall do his work; I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it, if I do but keep his commandments and serve him in my calling.

*John Henry Newman*

## When Friendship Fades

When friendship fades  
It does not do so equally  
One person is left wondering  
If it was something they did or did not do.  
The truth lies somewhere in between,  
The path has divided  
And each has taken a different fork,  
Yet for a while you did not realise  
As each still had sight of the other,  
But the one looking ahead,  
Eager for the journey,  
Did not notice the other looking back,  
Loathe leaving behind  
The things that seemed to matter.  
It is only when you stop to draw breath,  
To reflect on your progress so far,  
That you notice the other so far away.  
In view but no longer listening to your plans.  
Then you have to decide  
Whether to risk all to go back for them

*Jan Etchells*

### A little more clarification...

During Yearly Meeting at Canterbury this year it became obvious that there are still some members of the **Friends Fellowship of Healing** who are unsure about the role of the **Quaker Spiritual Healers**, and the difference (and connection) between the two groups.

So, just to clarify things a little – while we have a very large membership who belong to the **FFH**, and who often take part in our Distant Healing groups, we also have, *within that membership*, a lesser number of those who wished to become fully insured spiritual healers able to offer hands-on healing to the general public, and decided to take the QSH ‘training course’ that has been on offer for just over ten years. Having taken that course, and feeling drawn towards an active role in the healing field, these people applied to become fully qualified and insured healers (because these days this is a legal requirement), and now belong to both the **FFH** and the **QSH**. One of the requirements for **QSH** membership is that they must belong to **FFH** anyway.

In short, the **Friends Fellowship of Healing** came into existence during the late 1930s, whereas the **Quaker Spiritual Healers** was formed, as an affiliated group, just over ten years ago. But they are *all* **FFH** members.



**Desert Wells** by *Alice Bates* Darton Longman Todd 2011 160pp.  
ISBN 978-0-232-52790-2 £8.99

This is an inspiring book of ten short stories and as such it invites the reader to dip in and out. However, once I started reading I found the content so intriguing and the narratives so accessible, I didn't put it down until I got to the end. A few days later I picked the book up again to re-visit some of the stories, only to discover they asked for a second, or even more, considered readings.

Alice Bates is able to write about the profound very simply, and in this book she uses the art of storytelling to remind us of hope. Her stories demonstrate how it is possible to look beyond the obvious for what might be extraordinary in situations that are commonplace, or even uninspiring. Themes of transformation, healing, and compassion are subtly woven into each of these stories whose subject matter is not particularly pleasant or even uplifting. There is a moment in each story where a difficulty is seen from a different angle which creates an opportunity for growth. Bates sets her stories in a variety of contexts, ranging from a disabled residential unit to a waste ground on a run down estate. Her format style changes too. One story, for example, is written as a daily journal, another as an internal conversation.

After the title, each story has a phrase or single word in parentheses to direct the reader to look for the angle, its real message. The stories are also prefaced by a quote from the Bible which the author describes as her 'point of departure for the story'. Yet these are not always well known or even obvious on first reading, but each provides an opportunity to guide the reader further into the story's message and illuminate the content for further insights.

Alice Bates is a Church of England Reader and an Oblate at St Mary's Abbey West Malling, and while none of the stories are religious or scriptural, she has included a 'Notes and Queries' section at the end of the book where the biblical references are developed and explored for the individual reader (seeker) or as a study by a Church Group. As with the rest of the book this section has a lightness of touch.

I found these stories of discovering hope in seemingly hopeless situations, stayed with me for a time after I read them. I also found that as time went by I started to dip in and out of the book and was reminded in many challenging situations to look beyond the obvious.

*Anne Simpson*

**An Aspect of Fear – (A journey from anxiety to Peace)** by *Grace Sheppard*  
Darton-Longman-Todd 2011 111 pp. ISBN: 978-0-232-528695 £10.99

*An Aspect of Fear* is Grace Sheppard's very courageous account of her struggles with anxiety and agoraphobia – a disabling fear of open spaces and public occasions. As the high-profile wife of David Sheppard: former test cricketer and Bishop of Liverpool, she found life in the public eye annihilating and difficult and felt like a prisoner in her own body, unable to leave the comfort of her own home or trust other people for very long. Indeed for many years, believing that all Christians should be free from fear she felt unable to accept that it was alright to be afraid, thinking that her deep fears were signs of disobedience and sin and that she deserved punishment.

Living in the grip of fear can make us feel very alone and it's easy to believe that no-one else can possibly understand our difficulties. As well as giving a lucid account of her fears, Grace also gives practical advice about how to combat a deeper sort of loneliness that is different from just being alone, where we are so troubled that we shut ourselves away from sharing our problems with anyone, afraid of further hurt. She found that from the fear of illness or abandonment, and indeed of death itself, to "little deaths" where we feel forgotten, abandoned or criticised or where others fail to respond to our invitations or offers of friendship – all these can be dealt with by admitting that we're angry and upset and talking about how we feel. With professional help she eventually managed to face and accept her fears, and instead of resorting to angry, defensive behaviour she found a wholeness that was distinct from the independent perfection she'd hitherto been seeking.

This is not a "preachy" book. Grace certainly affirms her own faith, writing of being sustained by a deep and deepening faith in Jesus Christ whom she eventually felt was "with her all the way" but people of other faiths or none can find encouragement from her practical advice and the valiant honesty with which she has written about her own dark places and the inner strength she found to journey into them and through them into the Light.

*Anthea Lee*

**The World is our Cloister; a guide to the modern religious life** by *Jennifer Kavanagh*  
O Books 223 pp. £11.99 paperback ISBN 978-1-84694-049-1

This is a book about the lives and inspiration of people who feel they have to make a deeper commitment to living their faith – whatever that faith may be – and yet do not feel called to enter a monastery or convent. To be "in the world but not of it" was one of the founding testimonies of early Friends, and today it is the preferred way for most people who feel what might be called a "sense of vocation".



The book consists of interviews that Jennifer Kavanagh held with people of many different spiritual traditions, and it is fascinating to observe the degree of harmony in their accounts, no matter what labels they use. In fact, it is noticeable that those we are talking about have an increasing tendency to avoid labels, and any sense of judgement that comes with them.

The interviews also reveal that there is a harmony at the deep mystical heart of all religions. This sense of awareness of Something Other – which some religions call God, while others, such as Buddhism, are content to leave unnamed – is most often found in the tradition of silence which is the same as that we find at the heart of our Quaker worship. However, this book clearly reveals that it has always been a part of the contemplative traditions of all faiths. Another term for this essence is “The Devotional Life”, used in the same way that Thomas Kelly used it in the title of his book, *Testament of Devotion*.

Though traditionally it was sought within the structure of religion, often within religious orders, there has always been a hidden stream of those who sought to live their ordinary lives in this extraordinary manner. It was this stream that Rufus Jones wrote about so eloquently, identifying its influence on early Friends. Today, while some still find it within the monastery or convent, many more seek it within everyday existence, allowing this deep emotion to permeate every aspect of their lives.

This is not a book about theology, though an understanding of a person's relationship with the Divine is an essential part of the spiritual life. It is about experience, and this experience embraces healing, the healing that flows from spiritual experience, and which is expressed in simplicity of lifestyle and obedience to the Still Small Voice within. The more I read, the more I became convinced that their common experience is all about healing in its widest and deepest sense – the healing of individuals, of society and of our whole approach to life.

This again has been a significant part of the Quaker message throughout our history. As I read, I found myself wondering if all this partly explains why our numbers are not increasing. As Alan Watts used to say, “When you get the message, hang up the phone”, and while it is clear that while the Quaker message has spread, people who want this way of life now have many more choices.

I have only read this book once, but I want to read it again. This is the best recommendation I can give. It contains such a rich tapestry of personal and spiritual experience that I know I will get more from it with a second reading. But, whether you read it once, twice or many more times, do read it.

*Jim Pym*

**Prayer** by *Michael Mayne* Darton-Longman-Todd 2011 80pp.  
ISBN: 978-232-528626 £9.99

*Michael Mayne was head of Religious programmes, BBC Radio, Vicar of Great St Mary's (the University Church), Cambridge, and Dean of Westminster.*

In this little book we are told that prayer is not something one does, but something that is. Prayer is a forged relationship, a disciplined reminder that we live our lives in the presence of God.

To contemplate is literally to give attention, to look, to gaze upon something with your whole being, be it a work of art, music, some wonder of nature. This is the commonest, wisest and safest way to God. Contemplation allows us to empathise with God.

There are three different ways to prayer. You can use words in which to speak to God, you can use a passage of scripture or some spiritual text as a base for meditation, or you can use silence – be still before God. Contemplation begins and ends with stillness. Stillness of body and mind. There is real value in silence.

We should remember that we are loved by God more than we can ever understand. Unless our creator is within us in some way we have no desire to explore further. My capacity for a relationship with God is only mine because I am unique. I have to learn and relearn that I am a uniquely valued child of God. I am loved because I am me.

The basic ingredients of our prayer life should be, I love you, I thank you, I am sorry, and I trust you. We need to create stillness for prayer in ourselves so that we can listen to what God has to say to us.

Prayer is a way not to change God, but to change ourselves and if possible, to change those for whom we pray. Prayer is about our inward journey, something understood, the cornerstone of our life.

*Jan Etchells*

**Sounds of the Trumpet; spiritual power for daily living** by *Allen White*.  
Big Sur Publishing, 212 Piccadilly, London W1V 9ED. 285 pp. £9.97  
paperback. ISBN 978-0-9561258-3-5

Those who regularly read the columns of *The Friend* can be in no doubt that the Society of Friends is going through something of a crisis in its understanding of God. Who or what is God? Is God within us, or outside us? Is God personal or impersonal – or even both?

Those of us who practise healing prayer, either on a one-to-one basis or in prayer groups may even be going through the same difficulties. Perhaps we feel that we need a voice to tell us – not what to think, but to suggest ways in which we might start to build our own theology of healing.

Here is such a book. Not that Allen White has anything to do with theology; he is quite scathing of its processes and conclusions. He has no doubts; he will not have anything to do with duality in any form. For him the answer is very simple; GOD IS ALL! (I use the capitals quite deliberately, as he does throughout the book.)

Obviously such direct and outspoken views are not by themselves going to convince anyone, but this is OK. He repeatedly states that he does not want to. His aim is to encourage us to ask our God-Self (what Quakers would call ‘That of God Within’) and allow That to unfold the answers that we need. And this proves to be more challenging than trying to convert us to his point of view. The approach is the same as George Fox when he asked us the eternal question, “What canst thou say?”

This book is a work-book; that is to say, it is in the form of short chapters, with empty pages for us to write our own contemplations. The language is fairly orthodox, but the interpretation is not. Each chapter poses one or more questions, and while the author is quite clear that for him God is the answer, being All, One, Omnipotent, Omnipresent etc., he wants us to discover our own answers from this Essential Oneness. The questions include how to find God, our relationship with the body, how to deal with reports of disasters, working with a practitioner (his name for a healer) and new and surprising interpretations of Scripture. He also looks at relationships, health and wealth, growing old and most of the other problems of everyday life.

If you want to read yet another standard approach to healing and the spiritual life, then I cannot recommend this book. If, however, you want to be really challenged, then here is a book that is worth infinitely more than its weight in gold. Even if you are fed up with the God Question, this book may nudge you to think again. It’s up to you.

*Jim Pym*

**Faith** by *Margaret Silf* Darton-Longman-Todd 2011 64pp.

ISBN: 978-0-232-52794-0 and **Friends** by *Clare Catford* Darton-Longman-Todd 2011 64pp. ISBN: 978-0-232-52860-2 £4.99 each.

These two titles form part of the *Simple Faith* series of small pocket-sized books on a number of spiritual subjects. Although linked to Christianity, they are

written in a way that would appeal to those of other paths.

In *Faith* Margaret Silf speaks of faith in terms of trust. We are called to become like little children but with the benefit of adult wisdom and experience. The spiritual journey is about learning through the challenges of life to return full circle to the simple trust of a child.

She calls on us to discard any unhelpful images of God, for example as strict parent, demanding task master, enemy destroyer, rescuer, or Santa Claus, and learn to trust the divine mystery in which we exist and which exists in us. Faith should be a journey of discovery. We should not look for certainty but should be open to the risk and adventure of following God as a mystery.

The author looks at various tools that can help us to keep our lives centred on this divine mystery. e.g. reading the gospels, lectio divina, meditation, being in a faith community, having a soul friend or spiritual director.

She stresses that being centred in God does not mean neglecting ourselves. It means following the Golden Rule of treating others as we would have them treat us. In this way we can play our part in planting the seed of God's kingdom as a contribution to human growth.

She gives Jesus as a supreme example of one who followed this way of faith. He is the blue-print for what humanity is intended to be. For her, his life, death and resurrection are not about taking the punishment for our sins but about love transcending the darkness. It is not believing dogmas about Jesus that matters but following in his way and being in the light of his Spirit.

In *Friends*, Clare Catford examines what it means to be friends with God, with other people and with oneself.

Learning to trust God as a friend, she suggests, can help us to trust others. She dismisses the belief of some faith groups that bad things happen to us because we do not have enough faith. Being with such groups can stop us being authentic as we cannot admit our doubts.

Henry Nouwen said that it is through accepting our weaknesses that we can open up to other people and form true, authentic relationships. By accepting ourselves 'warts and all', we can learn to accept others. 'Love your neighbour as yourself' means acknowledging your own worth first so that we can then trust our relationships with others and with God.

Finding friendship is not like a shopping trip. It is not about collecting friends like commodities for the use they can be to us. A small group of true friends is better than a wide circle of superficial acquaintances – something to remember in this age of ‘virtual friendships’.

The author examines many types of friendships. She looks at how friends can become like second families in our modern society where blood families are often widely dispersed. She writes about the role of our family as friends and how this means accepting each other and allowing each member to be the person he or she feels called to be. She writes about lovers as friends, being friends with children and with the elderly. In all cases, true friendship, she suggests, is about respecting others and allowing them to be themselves.

She says, too, that we may also need to learn to lose friends. Sometimes it's time to move on and we need to let friends go in order for both parties to grow. If they are meant to come back into our lives, they will. She concludes by thanking God for those friends who have travelled alongside her life's journey, sharing challenges and successes. Friendship is a divine gift.

I found both these books thought-provoking while easy to read. I look forward to reading others in the series.

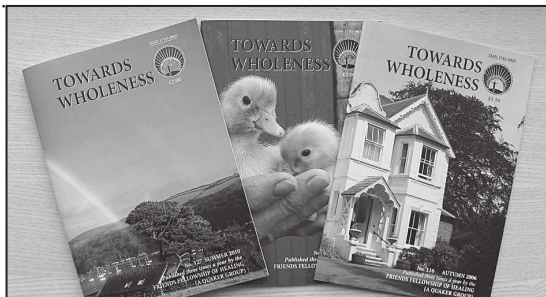
*Cherry Simpkin*



Lord, I offer what I am to what you are,  
I stretch up to you in desire,  
my attention only on you alone,  
I cannot grasp you, explain you, describe you:  
only cast myself into the depth of your mystery;  
only let your love pierce the cloud of my unknowing.

*(From 'First Light' BBC 1, May 28th 1995)*





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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.