

TOWARDS WHOLENESS



No. 169 Summer 2024

£2.50

The **Friends Fellowship of Healing** is a Quaker Recognised Body in the Religious Society of Friends. (*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 either at a 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.

ANNUAL FEES

(which include all necessary insurance/materials/newsletters etc.)

UK FFH Member	£15
Overseas FFH Member	£21
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QSH- Probationer	£35 (inc FFH Membership)
QSH - Full Healer/Probationer insured elsewhere	£21 (inc FFH Membership)

Cheques, payable to Friends Fellowship of Healing, should be sent to The FFH Membership Secretary, 52 Ridge Road, Middlestown, Wakefield, W Yorks. WF4 4QP

Letters, articles, news items and other contributions for Towards Wholeness should be sent to the editor, Gervais Frykman, 52 Ridge Road, Middlestown, Wakefield, W.Yorks. WF4 4QP, 01924 264180. gervais153@talktalk.net

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

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Donations for the work of the Fellowship are most welcome.

Cover picture: Nicholas Rawlence

FFH/QSH Web-site: www.quaker-healing.org.uk

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Talking Friends holds recordings of Towards Wholeness.

Anne Brewer records them and sends to Talking Friends for distribution to Friends with visual impairment. The subscription for one year is £3 for TW publications.

www.talkingfriends.org.uk

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Distant Healing From Home

Please see our website www.quaker-healing.org.uk for current intentions.

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We are pleased to announce that Barnstaple Quakers have re-introduced their Meetings for Healing.

Newark Quakers will be starting a healing meeting on the first Wednesday of the month, 12 – 12:30.

FFH Thursday Group

This meets on zoom on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at 2:30 pm. It is an experience of giving distant healing in the context of a healing meditation and silence. Please contact Gervais for the link.

This TW is almost entirely made up of new articles. Thank you for responding so well to the request for articles. The next TW is currently 32 blank pages.

Clerk to Friends Fellowship of Healing

There is a vacancy for the Clerk to FFH to take up the position at the AGM on 16 November. Expressions of interest please to Gervais.

Healer Support Weekend

There will be Healer Support Weekend on Friday 30th August -Sunday 1st September at Claridge House.

The weekend will give Probationers and full Quaker Healers the opportunity to practice and receive healing in a friendly and supportive environment. The programme will be given when you arrive.

There will be a 40 minute Zoom session included Saturday afternoon for QSH Healers to discuss aspects of healing. (Details of link and time will be circulated nearer the time).

If you want to book please contact Cherry Simpkin 020 8852 6735

QSH Training Course

Training in practical healing for those interested in becoming a Quaker Spiritual Healer, enabling exploration of healing potential in a safe, supportive atmosphere. Experience is unnecessary, only a desire to help. Applicants should be sympathetic to Quaker values and attending a Quaker meeting regularly. Completion of the course is the first step towards a healing qualification and does not itself lead to full membership.

The next training course will take place on 26th to 30th August 2024 at Claridge House, cost £550.

Please book directly with Claridge House. Please contact Cherry Simpkin regarding bursaries.

It is true I have taken so many happenings in my life for granted. Those sudden clear insights, the softer nudges that are inconvenient, often against the grain and sometimes defy common logic. Usually I have gratefully thanked, used and moved on.

Each had a meaning and use for that moment, a few I have noted but some are imprinted into my being with a freshness easily recalled.

Perhaps childhood circumstances meant I have had a toe and sometimes a foot in the 'Other' since very small.

I faced a world that often made no sense, a world plunged into conflict, we sheltered in cellars and I escaped in dreams. Adults were preoccupied.

This inner world, similar to a Tardis, expands and expands and manifests in dreams, unlikely thoughts and intuitions. Perhaps intuition is a muscle, use or lose?

It is the source of unexpected knowing, of strong clear thoughts that go against the common ideas, of inconvenient nudges that I learned to follow implicitly.

Once I was asked if it could be wishful thinking: my truth is that these nudges were so often against my convenience and self interest, sometimes extremely so.

I do question, then I let go and wait. The answers come in unexpected ways, sometimes teaching, sometimes confirming what I have tentatively concluded.

This ethereal gift I never take for granted, I have no ownership.

So in the extreme heat of the 2020 summer, the freezer failed on a Saturday. The shops were closed by the time I cooked what food I could and I had discarded the rest

I thought I could just order a straight replacement on line. John Lewis was out of stock, there were others but the delivery date was weeks ahead or unknown.

I trawled the internet; there was nothing suitable immediately available.

On Monday I rang the local supplier who explained that lock down had caused a run on freezers. Supplies were now allocated with no guarantee of what or when.

I asked for advice, I was told doubtfully about one on the shop floor, and she would ask the manager whether he would release it or not. They needed a display.

It was not on the website but I checked the manufacturer's site.

It fulfilled my requirements perfectly, it was installed the following day.

I gave thanks to the Other and kindness of people.

So to last Monday, the 20yr old fridge was not over full but the door popped open repeatedly. I put a 7lb. weight in front as I had something urgent to do.

I had experienced teasing electrical events in early bereavement that had made me laugh. I said impatiently I had no time for such things, so stop.

I moved the weight and tried again, this time the door swung open about a foot or so. I checked the level and contents. Again the door swung open.

Now I took serious notice, again our usual suppliers had nothing listed on web.

I rang the local store. I was told supply issues continued but and a big BUT, just what I needed was not yet entered on website. Ground-hog Day!

I ordered, our daughter sent a message asking me about progress, I typed 'I decided to buy'. As I sent the word Dad inserted itself. So it read 'I Dad decided to buy'.

It made us both laugh. She said dad is being naughty again.

I reviewed the day as usual that evening, saying aloud that we still worked well together.

A pithy male thought came into my relaxed mind. Well I did!

Typical of Brian's dry remarks. Well perhaps I was slow to get the point.

Ideally, if I had the right space, I would keep the present fridge, observe how long it lasted. Whether it was losing capacity. However who would observe the observer?

The spirit is robust enough to be tested but the observer influences the result.

Catch 22.

HEALING AND SPIRITUAL WHOLENESS

David Hay-Edie

We hear and read so much today about health. The internet carries innumerable voices of medical, semi-medical and various other commentators, advising us how to improve our health or repair our bodies. This deluge of information reflects our universal preoccupation with how to keep our bodies functioning well. There is now a new term "wellness" and a plethora of its practitioners.

This is all concentrated on the body. Health is seen as essentially physical, though the mind is taking a growing part of our discourse. Mental illness and its treatment is moving up the scale in importance. It is less and less a taboo subject. So there is a growing awareness that the mind must be seen as an important element in our bodies. At the same time spiritual matters take a lesser and lesser part in

public conversation. Our societies are becoming increasingly materialistic and consumer driven. Talk of our spiritual dimension is on the way to becoming a taboo. Attendance at churches (including Quaker Meetings) continues its steady decline. There is growing spiritual hunger as a consequence. More and more people practice yoga and mindfulness.

This decline in the idea of spirit takes place alongside a deterioration in health of many people - despite the advances in medical technology. Yet humanity's nature in most spiritual traditions, including the pagan and animistic ones, is seen as spiritual as well as physical and mental. The French word for Spirit and Mind - Esprit - is even the same. We need to restore the recognition and awareness of Spirit, and its importance for physical and mental health. And also to see Wholeness as part of this restoration. Our journal recognizes this in its title "Towards Wholeness." In the Oxford English Dictionary the meaning of the word "whole" is given as "full, complete, not broken or damaged." In my daily spiritual Notes, there are the words "I do all I can to maintain my health. I also have my healing by remembering my wholeness." Jesus in his miracles said to those whom he healed "Thy faith hath made thee whole."

There is another dimension to this, the need to see the even greater Whole, and our nature in it as human beings. Our spiritual lives, as many religions and spiritualities recognise, are not just limited to each physical lifetime. The recognition of an afterlife is implicit or explicit in many traditions. Part of this is often faith in reincarnation of the spirit in successive lives. Our past, present and future lives are part of a whole.

The growing awareness of ecology and the health of our planet Gaia extends this awareness to the whole of life on earth, including the animals, plants etc. All living life forms are coming to be seen as sharing in spiritual as well as physical life. This lessens our obsession with human life alone, and forces us to consider our lives within the natural world and creation, as well as the relation of this to our destiny after our own physical world.

We in the Western world are at a spiritual turning point. There is a saying “Crisis is Opportunity.” Let’s hope we can see our materialistic crisis as an opportunity to see our need for a deeper healing inherent in seeing ourselves as part of a spiritual and material Whole.

PERFECTION

Lorna Jones

The trick about perfection is to perceive it, not in absolute terms, but in relative ones. This means that everything is already perfect – perfectly as it is. Is a rose bud less perfect than the full bloom? Or that flower less perfect than the fruit which follows it? Or the fruit less perfect than the new growth of the following spring?

Is the cycle of seasons imperfect?

Each form of the plant is perfect in its own right and perfectly fulfils its function. So with the parts between, as each phase of the complete cycle comes to its fullness and gives way to the next.

Is life a flow of imperfections which need to be condemned – or many relative perfections which lead in perfect order towards its conclusion?

What then is imperfect about any form of life or living? Each form contains within its beginning the completed span, and to think of one part as imperfect, or less perfect than any other would be to deny the whole.

This is the way of the fourth dimension, time and the way of life, a continuous procession of forms providing new vessels within which to express myriad variations, and creating a wonderful pageant to view from far or near, as the spirit wills.

Reprinted from TW 119

SANCTUARY

Elizabeth Mills

Step slowly
Into the sanctuary
Of stillness

Walk with reverence
Into the room
Where the Spirit dwells

Sit quietly
By the heart
Of the Living Flame

Rest gently
In the warmth
And the Love

For it is always present
And always ready
To welcome us

This day and every day
Amen

Children are often uncomfortably aware of people hurting but feel powerless to help. Some years ago I did an 'introduction to healing' for a Children's Meeting of half a dozen, aged 3-12.

I don't know how much the three-year-old understood but he seemed interested and engaged throughout. The twelve year old ran around the room, laughing (embarrassed?), and shouting he was going to heal his hamster, which was fine - the others didn't seem distracted and a captive hamster could use some Light. The rest were *deeply* interested. Having introduced the subject, I could feel their urgency to 'get' this. A girl of about 8 said she wanted to use it for a school friend whose parents had recently broken up. Another had a chronically ill sibling. It made me realise how much they were 'suffering with' (compassion is 'suffering with') their peers.

Below is my lesson plan, pretty tight on time, especially if it were with a larger group. I overran by a few minutes and we went into meeting late, but were able to say what we'd done, after Notices. I teach professionally, but not under 16s, and I didn't know most of these children. Before I try this again, I'd be interested to hear if anyone else has done anything on healing with their Children's Meeting, how they presented it and how it went. [*Answers to the editor*]

Lesson plan, 'healing' for Children's Meeting, 50 minutes, mixed age group. Equipment: Tibetan cymbals or bell for timing. Other helper available to make up numbers in one-to-one discussion sessions, if necessary. [t-s= teacher to students, s-s= students to students, s-t = students to teacher]

10.40-10.45 Introductions, names, anything we want to share about how we feel today.

10.45-10.47 t-s Topic intro: healing, wholeness. hello=whole be thou/you. Wholeness is when we feel connected to godde, to nature, to the world. 'At one'. Usefulness of healing for them. With any friends, fellow students, family who have a problem, an illness. No need to tell, can just send them healing and support to help them be 'whole'.

10.47-10.50 s-s. Discuss with person next to you, does this sound like healing, could this be useful?

10.50-10.53 s-t Group feedback

10.53-10.55 t-s To start with we need to bring ourselves close to godde, the divine, the source. In MfW Qs try to quiet the inner dialogue, the voice in our heads (check understanding). The younger people are, the better they are at this. Try now for two mins, to sit quietly ('turn the volume down') and let the voice in our heads become slower and calmer

10.55 -10.57 Sitting quietly.

10.57-11.00 s-t How was that? Feedback

11.00-11.01 Walk or run around and come back to sit next to a different person. Children and adults run around for 30 secs or so, until facilitator rings bell.

11.01-11.03 t-s That of godde in everyone including us. When we are quiet inside is when we can come close to godde inside us, we can feel the divine. Try sitting quietly again and see if you can sense your own beingness and any connection to a wider something. (Check understanding.)

11.03-11.06 sitting in silence.

11.06-11.09 s-s Turn to a new student and discuss how this felt

11.09-11.12 s-t Group feedback

11.12-11.14 t-s When we make contact with the divine, we can bring the person we want to heal into that contact. Like a group hug? (Check understanding). Think of someone you know who might need some wholeness, maybe someone who is ill, or hurting. Missing someone they love. Could be a pet, or a schoolfriend or a family member. Has each of you got a person in mind? Now we're going to sit in silence, find that connection to godde and invite the other person into that

connection, into that group hug with godde, to bring them wholeness and healing. (Check understanding).

11.14-11.17 Sitting in silence.

11.17- 11.21 s-s Turn to the person on the other side and discuss how that went.

11.21-11.26 s-t Feedback to group. How did that go? Do they think they might use it?

11.26-11.30 t-s Anyone want to tell Meeting about this? Final run around (group hug if group can stand it!), questions, observations as appropriate.

KNITTING FOR HEALING

Jan Etchells

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/11/learning/film-club-visible-mending.html>

I am not a knitter but I was so enchanted by this little film which is made in Shropshire I thought I'd have a go myself. It was entered for a BAFTA award but I don't know if they won anything. Originally a weaver for many years, when I gave up, I gave away most of my wools to a knitting group! I thought I had a pair of needles tucked away somewhere, but I couldn't lay hands on them so I went to our local knitting shop and bought a pack of six balls of wool and a pair of needles designed for children and got stuck in!

I have never thought of knitting as a healing exercise, but heard that when you have lost everything knitting remains as an activity most people can still do, and having taken it on I can see why. There's something very soothing and healing about knitting, I did it while watching TV, I did it in the waiting room at the hospital I was attending, it didn't take much to actually do it as an activity to pass the time. Nobody commented that I had lost a stitch or made a mistake. I was my own critic.

The first thing I knitted was a square, folded it in half to create a triangle shape, sewed up two sides and stuffed the shape, then I sewed up the side remaining. I then added a tail, wings and an eye and voila, I had the basic bird shape only mine looked far more like a fish! Spurred on by the minor success I quickly started the next square in bright pink wool. I went through the finishing process of stuffing it rather differently and it turned out into a better shape. This time it was clearly chicken shaped. With the addition of an eye, wattles and a comb and a bunch of tail feathers it was done and just looked like a bright chicken, the pink teaming up with orange and blue as finishing touches.

I would like to make a mouse as featured in the film, but I'm not at all sure that my skills are enough for the design of a little animal. I have worked out the head shape and how I could make the point of the nose, but beyond that I'm fairly stuck. I guess really, I have just got to try it and if it fails turn it into something else.

In the film is a pretty patchwork blanket which a lady knitted while her son was hospitalized for several months following a cycle accident. Another knitter said she wanted to knit while her mother retained her memory of how to, as she was rapidly losing it through Alzheimer's. The little bit of knitting I have achieved gave me much pleasure and has proved a worthy successor to weaving. I think I will continue. At least knitting has shown me that even the most mundane activity can be healing.

LIVING IN EPPING FOREST

Christine Downes-Grainger

We came here in 2008
Too busy learning the traffic flow
And which lane we had to be in
To notice the Forest much
Beside the road

2009, I had to be places on time
Helping mind the grandchildren
But a stag with full antlers
Crossed the Epping New Road in front of me
At eleven one morning

In 2010 I was too distraught
To look at what I was going past

But in the fourth year, 2011
When the bracken was down
And the leaves had fallen from the trees
And the brambles were dead above the ground
I was amazed at how far I could see
Through to places I did not know existed

Death, though painfully unwelcome, brings clarity
To aspects that I did not even know were there

And now I love the reveal
When the bustling busyness of the leaves falls away
And the green cloaks turn orange and gold
Strong, sinewy branches snake through the trees
The dark supportive framework shows

The Angel Card said, *Someone you have lost
Loves you very much and is watching over you
A robin or a butterfly, that will be their sign*

The day is cold and wet
But a full red leaf floats gently and precisely
Onto the handlebars of a grandchild's scooter
As we walk home from school

They want you to be happy
I am

November 2013



My mother, Margaret Cross, known as Magda, who has died aged 99, was a committed teacher, peace campaigner and Quaker, who for decades devoted much of her energy to the pursuit of social justice and disarmament.

Magda trained as a primary school teacher at Whitelands College (now part of the University of Roehampton), taking up her first teaching post at Tudor Road school in Southall, west London, in 1944. Wartime conditions meant balancing the lure of dances at the Hammersmith Palais against the need to honour the night-time fire-watch rota at the school.

Soon after celebrating VE Day, Magda and her friend Grace secured teaching jobs at Spryfield school in Halifax, Canada. At a local dance hall there she met my Canadian father, Donald Cross. They were married in 1950, both accepting appointments to teach English at

secondary modern schools in the West Midlands; my mother at Prestwood Road school in Wolverhampton.

Magda's political outlook began to move leftwards from her parents' conservatism. As the abhorrent nature of Thatcherism became clear to her, my mother bristled at the thought that (as a greengrocer's daughter herself) others might suggest an affinity between her and this other Margaret. In response, she adopted the moniker Magda thereafter. She had been born in Shropshire to Olive (nee Green) and Stephen Jones, who, as well as running their greengrocery business, instilled in their three children the importance of hard work and civic virtue.

In the early 80s, as Conservative funding cuts hit school budgets, Magda volunteered to take early retirement. Donald did likewise and, still in their 50s, they began decades of active non-working life. Committed Quakers, they became the first resident friends at the Charney Manor Quaker retreat in Oxfordshire, later moving to Dundee and then Brighton to remain close to my sister, Jenny, and her family.

As the cold war intensified, Magda grew frustrated at the unwillingness of politicians east and west to grasp the opportunities for de-escalation. She became a passionate advocate for citizen-based peace-making. Through the Mothers for Peace group (later Women to Women for Peace), Magda sought out direct contacts with like-minded individuals in other countries, becoming a fluent Russian speaker in the process.

Bypassing official state bodies, she joined numerous peace-making visits to both Russia and Ukraine, staying with ordinary families whom she would then invite to visit the UK. These endeavours later encompassed exchanges with peace-seeking activists in the US, Cuba, Israel, Palestine and elsewhere.

In her mid-70s, Magda began studying with the Open University, addressing the qualification gap that had capped her teaching career at deputy head at Montgomery school, Exeter. Her delight at graduating with a BA Honours in the social sciences was enhanced when, in 2017, her Whitelands certification was also upgraded to degree level by Roehampton University.

As her health declined, Magda continued her activism online, showing impressive IT skills for a ninety-something. She displayed characteristic resilience when Donald died in 2005, and then Jenny in 2012.

Magda is survived by two children, Jonathan and me, and her granddaughter, Jessica.

First published in the Other Lives section of The Guardian.

WHAT DID IT ALL MEAN?

Sue Glover Frykman

“We’ve just got the results of your X-rays and would like you to come back so that we can take more and also do ultra-sound tests, this time with a doctor present. Can you come first thing on Monday morning? You can? Good! I’ll book you in for 9 am.”

She put the telephone receiver back in its cradle. It had been a routine, a bi-annual call to a mammography. The processing had been quick. The phone call had taken her off guard. Thoughts and questions came in rapid succession. X-rays taken on Thursday, phone call at 8.30 am on Friday, new appointment made for Monday at 9 am... there must cause for concern. The receptionist had said that the X-rays on both breasts needed taking again, not just one or the other, and that an ultra-sound was necessary. With a doctor present? Did that mean they’d found something and a doctor needed to explain all the consequences carefully?

She couldn't concentrate on work. Her husband was understanding, and his immediate "Of course I'll come with you darling" so supportive. But no matter how hard she tried to keep them at bay, all manner of thoughts and fears persisted on welling and swelling into worst scenarios. She started to look at her breasts differently. They seemed so small and vulnerable. She couldn't feel any lumps, though, and they didn't look swollen or anything. Perhaps it was all a terrible mistake. Wouldn't she know, deep down, if there was anything wrong with her own body?

Would her husband still love and cherish her if she had to have her breasts removed? How would she react to such news, and how would she face the operation and its consequences? What if she had to have chemotherapy? And what kind of face would she show to people? What if she died?

Friday stretched into Saturday like a piece of elastic being pulled away from her. It was as if tears were gathering; damming up and waiting to spill over. She felt as though a strange melancholy was pulling and shaping itself over her form and preventing her from falling apart. That night, in sleep, a black panic took hold of her insides and squeezed. This must be the hand of death, she thought, and started to feel cheated of the biblical promise of threescore years and ten.

On Saturday she rehearsed how she would behave on hearing bad news. She would be calm, smiling, accepting. "It must be harder for the doctor to tell you this than for you to hear it," whispered a voice inside her head. She would be a serene fifty-two year old, she decided. And the minutes turned to hours and Sunday dawned.

She emailed three close women friends, asking for their prayerful support on the morrow. One, who had already experienced cancer and had a breast removed, replied to offer love and understanding and said that if they wanted to see her so quickly it either meant that there was nothing wrong and they just wanted to be sure, or that there was a chance of treatment before any real damage was done. In any case she was in caring hands. Such quick action equalled a fantastic service.

The second knew other people who had gone through the operation, and survived. She knew those people too, but had no idea of their suffering. They hadn't talked about it. The third promised to meditate and hold her close in her thoughts and in the light.

On Monday morning she was nervous. Very nervous. Before she knew where she was she was sitting in the hospital waiting room, waiting her turn. After following the nurse to the X-ray room she went through the motions of undressing and responding to instructions. This time she hardly noticed as the X-ray machine pressed her breasts as flat as pancakes. "Wait here please. The doctor will see you in a moment", said the operator when the photo-session was over. Waiting, she flicked mindlessly through a magazine specially placed for people in her situation. The doctor ushered her into the ultra-sound room. "The X-rays on both breasts are clear, but we'll do an ultra-sound just to be sure," he said. As he spread the gel over her chest, she only felt relief.

Riding home on the bus she felt strangely distanced from her body. She couldn't help but look at other people and wonder whether they were nursing good or bad news; whether they were sad or happy. She not only felt close to them, but to everyone and everything on the planet and beyond.

In the days that followed she felt subdued, unable to fully enter into Christmas preparations. She was grateful, of course, but hardly jubilant. It was as though she was slowly finding her way back to a body that had somehow changed. The snow fell and she stopped to inspect the gathering flakes. She listened to the crunching-cornflake sound underneath her boots. She watched the sky change from grey to blue. What did it all mean, she wondered?

Reprinted from TW 119.

MEDITATION FOR A QUIET WET AFTERNOON

Rosalind Smith

(Please leave some time for reflection where you see the following)

Please relax and take a few deep breaths. This meditation can be done at any time of the year, but it is written in Springtime, when in the woods 'there live the dearest freshness deep down things.' *

Look down at yourself and see that you are wearing clothes suitable for a wet day, including wellie boots!

You are walking a well-worn path through some woodland. The trees are thick with Spring foliage above and about you. It is quiet and you are aware of the beautiful smell of rich damp undergrowth.

Consciously breathe in that deep down freshness for a few moments and feel it clearing your lungs.....

Turning slightly, you find yourself leaving the main path and pushing through the undergrowth, through ferns – damp and richly green – beautiful.

You can now hear birdsong as they sing joyfully to each other. Listen awhile.....

Looking down at the ground what can you see? There are all the woodland plants that like to remain hidden from view – but as you look you can see them in their own glory. Snowdrops – aconites – celandines – the smallest of daffodils – violets - all living amongst the ferns.....

Now you find yourself coming to the edge of that part of the woodland and suddenly you are assailed by blueness, a great swathe of intensely deep bluebells, that almost takes your breath away. So rest here a little and accept the healing into your soul. And be aware too of the strength and beauty of the silver birch trees amongst which the

bluebells thrive. You too can absorb some of that strength.

.....

Understand now that you are at one with the earth in all its nameless beauty, strength and perfection. And this is all part of you, and you of it.....

Some of you may find yourselves quite alone there. And some of you will be aware of a figure coming towards you. It is not immediately easy to see this figure as it is surrounded in a gentle mist. But it brings a feeling of peace and well-being, and you know that it is a guiding figure of Light – a guardian angel perhaps – coming now to meet you. It is a welcoming healing presence – someone you feel you know and who knows you better than you know yourself. You can trust it with your life.

Listen to what the presence has to say to you – though you may not actually hear spoken words. Just rest in this comfortable, friendly loving presence.....

Now become aware that this Being of Light is slowly withdrawing from you – very slowly fading into the trees, leaving you with a feeling of deep healing, and the profound Peace that passes all understanding.....

Know that you are never alone, you are always loved and cared for - and if you but knew it, you always walk in the Light.....

Now bring yourself slowly back to the place from where you started, and feel yourself back in your chair and at peace with everyone around you.

- From *God's Grandeur* - Gerard Manley Hopkins

MOURNING SONG

James Wood

When I was young I celebrated life.
Each morning shrill my voice would echo
Like bird song.
I touched Lady Slippers among the ferns
In the shadow of the pines,
Smelled the pungent Skunk Cabbage
In the mire beside the brook,
Tasted bright red raspberries;
Felt the hornet's angry sting.

When evening came I heard the frogs
Croaking in the swamp,
And the Whip-poor-will's lamenting call.
These two were my mourning song.
For they meant that bedtime was upon me,
And I would have to climb
That steep and narrow stairway
Frightened, fearful; crying.
For deep inside I've always known
That sleeping is like dying.
But that was many years ago
I am no longer shaken.
I've died ten thousand times since then,
And always I've awakened.

QUAKER NATIONWIDE DAY OF HEALING, 2ND MARCH 2024.

Yealand Prayer Group for Healing and Wholeness marked the Quaker Nationwide Day of Healing again this year by inviting Friends from across the Area Meeting as well as residents of Yealand village (via the village newsletter) to a silent Meeting for Worship for Healing at Yealand Meeting House from 11am to 1pm on Saturday 2nd March. The Group felt that this year it was particularly important to uphold not only those known to us but also our broken and suffering world with all its conflicts.

Eight F/friends attended the Meeting and stayed for the whole two hours or the majority of it. Some ministry was offered and the Meeting felt deeply gathered. A local resident who came told us afterwards that her grandfather had been a Quaker and a conscientious objector. We trust that our reaching out with healing intention has beneficial consequences well beyond our immediate knowledge.

Lesley McCourt

Yealand Prayer Group for Healing and Wholeness

THERE IS THAT OF GOD IN EVERYONE - SO WHAT? Chris Tonge

There is a widespread understanding amongst Quakers that there is that of God in everyone. It is very helpful in encouraging us to treat others well. An implication of this statement is that there is that of God in me. I can't remember ever being encouraged to reflect on what that really means. It isn't something that I have ever heard Quakers talk about but it is vitally important and really challenging. God isn't just up there, or out there. God is within me. God is available 24/7 – all we have to do is remember.

By the series of synchronicities that I have encountered over the past few years through my interest in dowsing I have been led to the

Sanctuary of Healing at Langho near Blackburn. The healing work of the Sanctuary, and its founder Tony Clarkson, is very strongly influenced by what is referred to as the Joseph Communications. Joseph is the name used by a highly evolved spirit who has been communicating through the medium Michael G. Reccia for many years. In this time eight books have been brought to us through Michael by Joseph and his spiritual soul group. Since reading the first of these books, 'Revelation', my spirituality has been given a real kick up the proverbial backside.

Joseph gives a view of life on earth as seen from the point of the angelic realm. Despite the efforts of many amazing spiritual leaders over the millennia humanity is still locked into a life of war, killing, torture, injustice, poverty, etc. There is little sign that we are learning from our mistakes. On top of this we are destroying the planet on which we live. Joseph puts all this down to the fact that we have lost touch with that of God within. Essentially we are spiritual beings, angels, who have forgotten that in our soul or heart was planted a seed of God. For reasons that Joseph elaborates in his books we have become embedded in physical bodies and surrounded by a materialistic world. We have forgotten that we are spiritual beings – angels – and are still linked to the angelic realm.

Thankfully Joseph explains that there is a way out of our current situation. It is a way that appealed to my Quaker way of thinking. It starts with silent meditation in which I can move my being from my head-brain to my heart-brain. The head-brain is locked into the field of physicality that engulfs us and our ego. It is what we experience as the monkey-chatter that plagues us as we are trying to centre-down in Meeting. By visualising our consciousness taking that short journey down from our head-brain to our heart, and asking to be reunited with the seed of God that we all carry, we can be empowered to make a real difference in this dying world of ours. I envisage the seed in my heart as a fragment of a hologram of God. Just as a fragment of a

hologram contains all the information of the original image, the seed of God gives us all the knowledge of God that we need.

Remembering that of God within in us gives us access to the power of God. We can become a channel through which the healing Love and Light of God can flow to the world. For the past year I have been a part of a meditation group at the Sanctuary of Healing that is led by Tony Clarkson each Friday afternoon to channel divine light and healing to Mother/Father Earth. Being a part of this meditation makes me feel that I am contributing to a very valuable service. I have encouraged several other Quakers and dowsers from around the country to join the group. Others are doing the same so the group is growing and rapidly becoming a global movement.

Heart-focussed meditation has the potential for helping to improve our decision making. By deliberately saying 'no' to the monkey chatter of the head-mind and moving to the quiet of the heart we are brought closer to the mind of God. It prepares and helps us to listen to God within. As part of this process it is useful to focus on the qualities that flow from the heart-mind – concern and wanting the best for others, care, support, sympathy, empathy, giving and sharing. These specific qualities seem to be more effective than using the rather vague word 'love.' Short periods of heart-mind meditation combined with slow steady breathing have been found by researchers such as Dr. Rollin McCraty of the HeartMath Institute, to be very beneficial for the human physiology. With practice the heart rate tends to synchronise with the breathing in something that they call heart-coherence. The pulse increases slightly as you breath in and slows as you breath out in a way that calms body and mind. It is an aspect of heart-rate variability that has been found to be very beneficial.

According to Joseph the most valuable spiritual action that we can take is to become a channel through which God's Love and Light are present in Mother/Father Earth. It reminds me of the hymn we used to sing back in my RC days – 'Make me a channel of your peace'. I have now made heart-focussed meditation and channelling Love and

Light to the world a regular part of my spiritual practice. I believe it helps the Earth and I know it is helping me.

<https://6ju0q.r.a.d.sendibm1.com/mk/cl/f/sh/6rqJfgq8dISIVCOMTj30BVCqbdj/8RFOgRMIXF2M>

Further information:

The Sanctuary of Healing, Langho

<https://thesanctuaryofhealing.co.uk/>

To join the Tuesday and Friday ‘healing the earth’ meditation register at: <https://www.worldmeditationalliance.org/join/united-kingdom/>

Joseph Communications

Find details of the eight books (including ebooks) brought by the medium Michael G. Reccia from Joseph at

<https://thejosephcommunications.co.uk/> The web site also includes links to many excellent videos to help you get into heart-focussed meditation and build up your spiritual life.

HeartMath Institute <https://www.heartmath.org/>

The HeartMath web site has a lot of useful information and you can also search for YouTube videos by Dr. Rollin MacCraty. I have found these sources helpful but some scientists have criticised them for making unfounded scientific claims.

BOOK NOTICES AND ARTICLES BASED ON BOOKS



'The Golden Thread in My Life - a Spiritual Journey with Quakers' by Moira Fitt

This is a collection of writings by Moira Fitt, a Quaker by conviction who died in Penzance at the end of 2022. An active member of The Friends Fellowship of Healing as well as devoted mother to Penny and Adrian, wife to Tony, grandmother and F/friend, Moira also lived in the souls of those who frequented she and Tony's home for over sixty years. As an only child Moira was hospitalised for many months with tuberculosis. The loneliness for a young girl was overwhelming, but perhaps it gave her an early sense of people's 'condition' that made her the energetic, homely and healing presence she became. Moira was one of life's practical mystics committing herself to 'what love required of her.' Hers was a life that could be said, after one of Cornwall's most beloved of meeting houses, to have indeed 'Come to Good.'

I knew Moira from the time I was born in 1960 until she died when I was 62. She held me as I learned to 'swim' in the Cornish sea, and later with equal assurance as I rediscovered my parents' 'sea of faith'. Throughout that time both the world and our circumstances changed enormously, but Moira's spirit remained simultaneously both down to earth and yet oceanic. Sonorous in both voice and presence her life balanced 'great busyness' of witness with the 'great business' of worship and contemplation. From re-seeding a dwindling Marazion meeting for worship and Friends Fellowship of Healing group to growing local playgroups and a women's return to work project, she helped make the world most welcome.

In mid-life Moira was increasingly released and travelled further afield when she and Tony visited grandchildren in New Zealand and also in healing and pastoral ministry in Philadelphia. Her journeying abroad

was thus both external and internal. That pilgrimage of courage and exploration led her to reflective formation at Woodbrooke's two year 'Equipping for Ministry' course. Moira remained an open spirit, responding not only to 'what love required' of her in the everyday physical life, but also to wrestling with the angel, the unconscious and particularly what Jung called the 'shadow.' In that sense Moira's questing followed the female predecessors of all faiths of whom she wrote, including the fourteenth century mystic Julian of Norwich and our own Quaker seventeenth century practical mystic, Margaret Fell. Throughout, Moira returned to the centre of meeting for worship, whether in Marazion Meeting in Cornwall or Pendle Hill Meeting, Pennsylvania. This Shaker-like dance, from 'turning in' to the centre of gathered Quaker worship and then out to practical witness, trailed the golden thread between and remained the constancy of Moira's presence. Her life episodes recorded in this book express that movement, the stirrings in contemplation and in meeting for worship: living rock-pools, openings through which to view the whole ocean and so are never the same twice. The lives of the mystics themselves are the better for not being over-edited, into linearity or singularity, because such fixing to the board would belie the circular, ever deepening nature of the journey on which I am convinced Moira remains and now shares with us here.

'We live in one another still'.

The Golden Thread in My Life - a Spiritual Journey with Quakers by Moira Fitt. Moira Fitt Estate, 2023.

pbk.67pp. £7.00 plus p&p. Available from Quaker Centre Bookshop, Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ . Tel: 020 7663 1030/1031. email: quakercentre@quaker.org.uk

Nicola James Maharg

19 June 2024

I make no apologies for appropriating this title directly from the book by Richard Holloway, which someone very kindly gave me a few months ago. It's a most apt description of the state that many of us of a certain age find ourselves in, whether we like to think of it or not.

Waiting for the Last Bus: Reflections on Life and Death, by Richard Holloway, is helpful to read at any time, opening the often closed door in our minds behind which is the universal enigma of what happens to us, not only when we die, but also just when that event is going to happen and how.

In the time of Covid with the many extra deaths it has caused, as well as those which, in the nature of things, would have happened anyway, we have been forced to face the one sure fact of our own existence – that we do eventually have to 'shed our mortal coil' and move on. So, as most of us don't actually know when that is going to happen, how should we conduct our remaining years, possibly many or perhaps only a few?

In addition, should we not contemplate too, while we still can, our relationship with other people, both family and friends? When one with whom we have been close dies, then, as the author of the book says, 'No other loss prepares us for the loss of death because there is no loss like it'. When a beloved person is involved that's often when a feeling of guilt sets in. Could I have done anything differently? Could I have insisted on being with him/her at the end, in spite of the government restrictions? Could I have done this? Should I have done that?

And again, when there has been very little familial communication with someone else who has passed on, where it could be expected that such a relationship *should* exist, but hasn't, the guilty feeling

creeps in as well. That is when it hits us that we could have behaved differently to that person; we could have been the first to offer to heal our relationship, we could have been the first to extend a hand – perhaps of friendship, perhaps of reconciliation or kindness. We could, or should, have tried to breach that invisible barrier. Now we find ourselves thinking sad thoughts: Why didn't I make more effort to keep in contact over the years? Why didn't I respect his/her personal life decisions? Why wasn't I more generous in my thoughts? Why? When it's too late to change things now!

In 2021, within the space of about two months, I lost two family members – for one, my husband of over sixty years, the 'last bus' was expected, and to him, even welcome. One never knows the hour it will happen. The other was my only sibling, a brother, who died in hospital in a Covid-ridden country on the other side of the world, and whose whereabouts I had been unsure of for quite a while. There is always a lot to deal with after a death, but these both necessitated an unusual amount of 'after-work' on my part, though I must say that all the authorities I had to deal with were most helpful.

Grieving for both, in different ways, has brought home to me the fact that 'somebody was here and the next minute there is nobody here at all'. We should be ever mindful of how that 'last bus' can come so suddenly to each of us taking us completely unawares. 'Waiting for the last bus,' it behoves us to... *Approach old age with courage and hope. As far as possible make arrangements for your care in good time, so that an undue burden does not fall on others. Although old age may bring increasing disability and loneliness, it can also bring serenity, detachment and wisdom. (Advices and Queries No.29)*

Waiting for the Last Bus: by Richard Holloway. 2018. Published by Canongate Books Ltd., ISBN 978-1-78689-021-4, £14.99, (or less from Amazon).

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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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Available from Anne Mason, annemason1958@gmail.com,
01425 626112, 2 Fir Avenue, New Milton, Hants, BH256EX.

Please email or write to Anne with your order. She will post the books to you with an invoice which will include postage.

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