



## HADDONFIELD MONTHLY MEETING RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

# NEWSLETTER

Volume 54, No. 9 ~ May, 2008

**Meeting for worship**

**10 am Sunday ~ 9:15 am Wednesday**

## From Worship and Ministry

### The Gathered Meeting

#### Part 2

Thomas R. Kelly

Our interest in the gathered meeting is not in such striking side-phenomena as lift the eyebrows of the doubting Thomases, but the central fact of the overshadowing presence of the Eternal One. For it is God Himself who graciously reveals himself in such holy times. The gathered meeting, as group mysticism, shows all the four characteristics which William James applies to mystic states, namely, indescribability, a knowledge-quality, transiency, passivity.

The experience is ineffable; it is not completely describable in words. We live through such hours of expanded vision, yet never can we communicate to another all that wonder and power and life and re-creation which we knew when swept along in the immediacy of the Divine Presence. To an absent friend we can only say what Philip said to Nathaniel about Jesus; "Come and see." And such must always be the report of any experience of God, by individuals or in groups. "He is wonder and joy, judgment and power. And He is more than all these. Come and see."

The experience has a knowledge quality. The covering by God in the gathered meeting carries with it the sense of insight, of knowledge. We know Him as we have not known Him before. The secrets of this amazing world have been in

some degree laid bare. We know life, and the world, and ourselves, from within, anew. And lo, there we have seen God. We may not issue from a gathered meeting with a single crisp sentence or judgment of capsuled knowledge, yet we are infinitely more certain of the dynamic, living, working Life, for we have experienced a touch of that persuading Power that disquiets us until we find our home in Him. And, in the old phrase, we have directly known the healing which drops from beneath his wings. We have been re-energized with that Power and re-sensitized by that tenderness, to meet the daily world of men with new pangs and new steadiness.

It is transient. The sense of Divine covering in a group is rarely sustained more than three quarters of an hour or an hour. One need not seize hold upon it and restrain it from fading; or restore it the next Sunday at will. Each such meeting is a gracious gift of the Eternal Goodness, and the eyes of all must wait upon Him who gives us meat in due season.

It carries a sense of passivity within it. We seem to be acted upon by a More-than-ourselves, who stills our time-torn spirits and breathes into us, as on Creation's day, the breath of life. When one rises to speak in such a meeting, one has a sense of being used, of being played upon, of being spoken through. It is as amazing an experience as that of being prayed through, when we, the praying ones, are no longer the initiators of the supplication, but seem to be transmitters, who second and impulse welling

up from the depths of the soul. In such an experience the brittle bounds of our selfhood seem softened; and instead of saying "I pray" or "he prays," it becomes better to say, "Prayer is taking place." So in a truly covered meeting an individual who speaks takes no credit to himself for the part he played in the unfolding of the worship. In fact he deeply regrets it if any anyone, after the service, speaks in complimentary fashion to him. For the feeling of being a pliant instrument of the Divine Will characterizes true speaking true speaking "in the Life." Under such a covering an individual emerges into vocal utterance, frequently without fear and trembling, and subsides without self-consciousness into silence when his part is played. For One who is greater than all individuals has become the meeting place for the group, and He becomes the Leader and Director of worship. With wonder one hears the next speaker, if there be more; take another aspect of the theme of the meeting. No jealousy, no regrets the he didn't think of saying that, but only gratitude that the angel has come and troubled he waters and that many are finding healing through the one Life. A gathered meeting is no place for the enhancement of private reputations, but for self-effacing pliancy and obedience to the whispers of the Leader.

A fifth trait of mystical experience may well be added to James' list - the sense of unity, a unity with the Divine Life who has graciously allowed us to touch the hem of His garment, unity with our fellow worshippers, for He has broken down the middle wall of partition between our separate personalities and has flooded us with a sense of fellowship. This unity with our fellow-worshippers, such that we are "written in one another's hearts," is in one sense created and instituted in the hour of worship. But in a deeper sense it is discovered in that hour that we are together in one body, which is the true and invisible church. And in a fashion the vividness of our unity fades, is transient, and grows weaker after the rise of meeting. But the fact disclosed in the meeting, namely, that we are one body, hid with Christy in God, remains, secure from the flow of feelings and emotion.

## **Tuesday is Prison Day**

*by Michele Tarter*

Each Tuesday, I pick up my two college students and we head to Trenton State Prison. As I drive there, I think of the centuries of Friends who have traveled to prisons before me. I feel their spirit gather around me and give me strength and Light. Approaching that most appalling monstrosity of a building, with its watch towers, barbed wire, and massive brick walls without windows, I nevertheless feel spirit radiating all around me. It never fails: my skin literally begins to tingle, and I can feel the deepest, most grounding and calming energy hold me, lift me, carry me forward. It is a gift to be in the midst of such spirit and to be walking with such blessed company into this darkest of places.

Trenton State Prison is just that: surely the darkest place I have ever encountered. It is not just the physical sense of barrenness and emptiness; it is the energy that swirls in there. At times, it feels like nothing less than a vortex, pulling everyone down into its frightening force. But in we walk, my students and I, radiating Light and love at every step. We know well that the key is to emanate love and not fear: never fear, lest we be pulled into that darkening magnetic field.

We were assured by the administration that, upon entering the prison each week, we would be heavily guarded with escorts, and that every male inmate would be in lockdown before we moved through the prison to get to the women inmates. Yet, each week, there he is, our escort: none other than the prison barber, Erle. A tiny man with a perky step, he waits for us with a smile when we arrive at noon. And he is our fearless leader, smiling and moving steadily and quickly through every corridor, locked door, gate, hallway, and tunnel. Navigating our way in and out of that prison is most certainly the most excruciating part of this work. It is filled with anguish, hopelessness, and pain. With every door that slams, every cage that closes, my heart just shakes with the horror of what we, as humankind, have made of ourselves in this world. But Erle has become immune to this; he

probably doesn't even see the locks anymore.

On our first day, he led us through tunnels and a maze of hallways. In one tunnel, we walked literally right through a large group of male prisoners, lined up on the left and the right of us. My students and I just scurried through them, trying to catch up with the barber. He is now Erle the Pearl.

But all of this, ALL of this, is worth it when we get to the women. They weep with joy and delight that we have been able to get in. No volunteers have been given permission to get into the prison to see them before us. The women have been so very distraught. Many have attempted to commit suicide over these past months. They are living in appalling conditions and have absolutely nothing. They spend most of their day, every day, in a room without windows. They have no classes besides ours, no programs, and no books. Their "library" is one tiny bookshelf with only a few novels sitting on it. Yet, just this week, one of the "wise women" (that is what I call them: we don't use the word "prisoner" in the class) said to us, "Pessimism is not an option." She is surely our teacher. Quite prophetically, she also declared, "I believe in words. Words can create meaning, and power, and reality." She speaks only positive words.

When my students and I arrive and gather with the wise women, we read together, write together, breathe and talk and process everything. We take the women as much as we are allowed: most importantly, books and writing paper. We take them composition books, pens, poetry, and at every turn we try to inspire them to write and create. My students are gaining an education that far surpasses anything they have ever learned in a classroom. We are all deepening, strengthening, growing.

Completely inspired, my students recently held a fundraiser on the college campus and collected enough money to order eight magazine subscriptions (the women chose the titles, including "Oprah," "Newsweek," and "Architectural Digest"). We are thrilled that the education administrators granted us permission to purchase these. Our next goal is to do a book drive and provide the women with a library –

but we will need to get the administration's permission before doing so, and that could take years (I say this because it did indeed take years – three years – at the previous women's prison where I volunteered, but our goal was ultimately accomplished.) My students will end their school year, and this independent study prison work with me, on [May 8th](#), but I have decided that I want to keep going to work with the women, even if I am alone. I will go every Tuesday, "Prison Day," until I leave for England in mid-July. How could I not? Please hold us in the Light every Tuesday, from noon until 2:30 pm.



## Upcoming Events

### **May 1 - A Village to Reinvent the World**

**Lecture:** The sustainable community of Gaviotas, Colombia, is 22,000 acres of rainforest where people once said "nothing could grow." Lauded by the United Nations as "A Village to Reinvent the World," it is thriving and providing jobs for the poor. PYM's Earthcare Working Group Clerk Hollister Knowlton visited there in June 2005, one of only a handful of North Americans ever to see it. Now, Gaviotas founder Paolo Lugari is coming to Philadelphia. The 6 p.m. lecture will be held at the School of the Future, 4021 Parkside Ave, Philadelphia. For registration information, contact: [greenvillagephiladelphia@att.net](mailto:greenvillagephiladelphia@att.net)

**May 10 - Education Fund Yard Sale:** The Education Fund Committee will be having a yard sale at Haddonfield Monthly Meeting House from 9am to 3 pm. Meeting members are encouraged to donate items especially: non-upholstered furniture, toys, children's clothes, antiques and electronics. For more information, call Veronica Salaam (856) 489-7214 or Mary Ann Gaffney (856) 795-1375.

**May 20 and 28, June 4 and 12 - Fun-O-Thon:** Our recent PYM Annual Fund Phonothons have been so enjoyable that the volunteers renamed them "Fun-O-Thons"! We need additional volunteers for this important work. You will get the chance to talk directly to other Quakers and

ask them to share your joy in your faith community by making a contribution to the PYM Annual Fund. We gather at 6 p.m. at Friends Center, 15th and Cherry streets in Philadelphia, and are finished by 9 p.m. Training will be conducted while you enjoy a catered meal. In addition, parking and transit expenses will be reimbursed. Please call Wright Horne at (215) 241-7115 or e-mail [wright@pym.org](mailto:wright@pym.org)

**May 23-26 Collective Wisdom: Group Alchemy for a New Consciousness:** Friends Conference on Religion and Psychology, the oldest conference in the U.S. dedicated to individual spiritual exploration focused on Jungian psychology, will be held at Lebanon Valley College in Annville, PA. The conference includes sessions on dreams, forgiveness as spiritual practice, body and movement wisdom and befriending our many selves through Jungian psychology. For more information, visit: <http://fcrp.quaker.org/>

**May 30 - June 1 - Alternatives to Violence Training at Pendle Hill:** Develop communication, cooperation and conflict resolution skills at this workshop facilitated by Nancy Diaz, youth development specialist for the Southeast Philadelphia Collaborative and John Meyer, coordinator of extended education programs for Pendle Hill and workshop facilitator at Graterford Correctional Institution in PA. For registration information on the workshop, visit: [http://www.pendlehill.org/programs/spring\\_2008\\_course\\_workshop\\_retreat\\_descriptions.php#0530](http://www.pendlehill.org/programs/spring_2008_course_workshop_retreat_descriptions.php#0530)



## **Haddonfield Monthly Meeting Meeting for Worship for Business April 13**

33 Friends were in attendance.

The meeting began with a period of worship. The clerk read extract 228 from p. 156 of "Faith & Practice."

Held over from last month, the Meeting approved membership for Patience Dodgson as

recommended by Care Committee. Patience, an Attender since birth, was welcomed warmly by the Meeting and will be visited by Ty and Helene Drago, Bill Patterson and members of the Youth Committee.

Diane Werner reported on the continuing Deepening & Strengthening Project. The first Retreat will be held at Radnor (PA) Meeting on Fri, Sat, Sun, Apr 18-20. The Representatives from Haddonfield were asked to bring desserts. Contact person is Diane Werner, 428- 0901

Friends appreciate Diane's commitment to this important process.

Connie Brookes gave a report on the PYM Annual Fund progress. \$272,000 has been raised. This includes a large one-time gift. It is hoped that all members of the Yearly Meeting will contribute something. Please send your donation by June 30. Connie asked for someone to do a Meeting phone-a-thon. Diane Werner volunteered.

Foster Doan, Clerk of School Committee reported that School Committee is feeling pressured to add another unit to the Early Childhood Section.

School Committee has brought a proposal from the School which will be brought back to the Meeting next month for discussion. The School has volunteered to do all the janitorial work, during the school week, in the classrooms and restrooms and in other rooms, such as the auditorium, when they have been used for School activities.

School Committee will meet with Property Committee to discuss the School's proposal.

Pam Perry offered the preliminary Finance Committee report (attached) and made recommendations for corporate giving.

Pam will contact Priscilla Adams as to the current status of Friends Transitional Services.

Finance Committee has sent acknowledgements for contributions received. If you have not yet sent a contribution to Meeting, there is still time to do so. Our fiscal year is from July 1 to June 30. To balance the budget, the Meeting needs an

average contribution of \$500.00 / year from each member.

A reminder: Finance Committee is no longer looking at the School's finances; the Independent Audit Committee for the School will handle this.

The Meeting's Tuition Assistance fund is almost to the point where the income can be drawn on for tuition aid.

All Meeting committees need to contact Finance Committee with their request for fiscal year 2008-2009 (We are now in fiscal year 2007-2008.) Friends accepted Pam's report with a special note of appreciation for her clear and understandable presentation.

Connie Brookes informed us that The Friends Center Green Renovation project needs donations for their capital campaign.

Lisa Boyell reported for Nominating Committee. The proposed committee list, attached, was presented to Meeting for approval next month. We still need a representative for the Council of Churches.

The Education Committee name change was approved.

Lou Tomasetti reported for the Property Committee on two items of concern. Lou advised that the meeting have an evacuation plan should a fire occur during Meeting for Worship. In particular, there is a concern that parents would try to reach the childcare/First Day School rooms by exiting the Meeting Room through the foyer door. A better, safer way for all would be for everyone to exit through the nearest door and meet outside of the building. Friends were agreed that such a plan would be an excellent idea. We were advised that the School already has an evacuation plan and that this would be a good place for us to start in developing one for us. Lou recommended, also, that we have fire drills on a regular basis. The Meeting approved Property Committee will be following up on these suggestions and developing a plan for us.

Additionally, Property Committee asked that all children be closely watched by their parents during the coffee period immediately following Meeting for Worship. The Committee has asked

that children not run in the auditorium, nor should any child try to scale the support pillars. Friends seemed to be in general agreement that, although the primary responsibility is the parents', anyone observing any child engaged in unsafe behavior should feel free to intervene. It was suggested and approved that the Children's Inclusion and the Youth Committees find a way to engage the children in discussions of appropriate behavior and, perhaps, come up with some rules for inside the building.

Cecilia McFadden gave the Annual Report for Care Committee.

Friends approved a Minute of Support for Care Committee

Meeting for Worship for Business closed with a period of silent worship.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne R. Heizer, Recording Clerk

Friends and regular Attenders may request copies of the complete minutes from the Recording Clerk at [Joanne@synchcorp.com](mailto:Joanne@synchcorp.com) or (856) 429-9186.



## Plans Advance for 2009 Peace Gathering

The recent PYM meeting in March featured a report on plans for the January 2009 peace gathering. The planning committee includes local Quakers and representatives from the Church of the Brethren and the Mennonites. Due to size limits at the Arch Street Meeting House, about 170 Quakers are expected to attend, as well as 100 Brethren, 100 Mennonites and 300 of other Christian denominations or other faiths. Yearly meetings will each send a representative for each 1,000 members. PYM is expected to send at least 10 additional seats. Although there was some discussion of defining the gathering as an ecumenical event, planners hope to include Jews, Muslims and others. The four-day gathering will be followed by a public session at a larger venue.



## Hymn Singing

*By Deedy Roberts*

We rarely sing in Friends Meeting. So many of us miss it. Years ago we had all learned to sing through the spirited direction of Susan Wallace, using the old red hymnal. It was actually maroon. The new blue hymnal is teal, but red and blue they remain. The red one had fine classic pieces that I deeply love. The new one I more than love. It makes me want to dance.

The first hymn that comes to mind from the blue hymnal is "Lady of the Season's Laughter." Our blue hymnal is definitely new age. It brings to mind nymphs dancing among spring flowers, rather than some of the poignant, sad, central images of Christianity. Our God is the God that is just out there, everywhere, so why not with the spring flowers, and with laughter.

Do I, do any of us, take personal responsibility to bring music back to Haddonfield Friends Meeting? How lovely it would be if a small group of us could find time together to belt out the chorus of Julian of Norwich, "Ring out, bells of Norwich, and let the people come and go. All will be well again. I know." That hymn contains the most beautiful words, "Love, like a yellow daffodil, is dancing in the snow." Perhaps this is misquoted, but so be it. And we'd look for the old classic favorites from the red hymnal. There the hymns are listed by the composer, by type, and even by country. You can research the Welsh hymns, the spirituals, the hymns by Bach, Handel and Haydn.

Quakers are really good at are Christmas carols. We "do" Christmas carols. Every year at Christmas, we gather with the church escapees, and have an uninhibited sing-along where we belt out every carol in the book. Our time begins with worship and ends with coffee and far too many cookies. And then the children start edging their parents home. It's Christmas after all.

And then the hymn books get closed and the yearning begins again, the yearning to open them, to sing in all the wonderful seasons of music: the spirituals, Easter, Spring. Oh how I

would love to get back to this, and to sing with my friends : "Love like a yellow daffodil is dancing in the snow.."

## Religious Education

May 4: Meeting for Worship for Business

May 11: Mother's Day: Extended Hospitality

May 18: Cleanup Day

May 25: TBA

June 3: Year-end closing program



## William Penn Online

On the heels of John Sheffield's First Day School presentation on William Penn, Friends may wish to read more. It's not necessary to buy or borrow a copy of Penn's famous discourse: "No Cross, No Crown." It's available online at:

<http://www.gospeltruth.net/Penn/nocrossnocrownIndex.htm>



## Among Friends

Congratulations are due to Hiltrude and Art Dodge, who celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary with a wonderful trip to Arizona.

Bonnie Drago celebrated her 80th birthday with family. Happy happy birthday and many more.

Drew Biehl and his partner Ken Jones will both be performing in Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Oklahoma!" this summer at Longwood Gardens. While Ken has appeared in many productions of the Brandywiners, Ltd. this will be Drew's first onstage appearance. Tickets are \$25 and are good for entrance into the gardens the day of the performance. You can enjoy the gardens all day, leave for dinner (or eat in the restaurant on site) and return for the performance at 8:30pm. Show dates are July 24, 25, 26, 31, & August 1 & 2. You may order tickets by calling 800-338-6965 or visiting Brandywiners.org web site. Order soon, they go pretty fast.

