

Friday with Friends Friday with Friends

A Newsletter of Klamath Falls Friends Church
1819 Oregon Ave.
Klamath Falls, OR 97601
541-363-6885

May 3, 2024

Zoom link for Sunday Worship, May 5, 2024:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85381127592?pwd=Z01JTTFXNVdzeTZqTUUpwS1dmSFVxZz09>

Way to Go, New Food Pantry!!!!

“What an amazingly successful launch of Klamath Interfaith Food Pantry! Our first two pantries were April 23 and 30; we served 80 families, a total of 226 people--116 adults and 110 children. We had 34 volunteers who put in a total of 270 hours stocking food shelves, serving clients, and of course, setting up the pantry. What a fantastic group of kind and giving people have assembled to do this very important work! Our food pantry impacts the lives of many people. We are now collecting extra items that the Food Bank doesn't provide -- women's and men's toiletries, toilet tissue and feminine hygiene. You may take these items to the church, and we'll arrange for someone to bring them to the pantry on stocking day. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Linda Warner at 541-281-5535. Stay tuned for information about our Klamath Interfaith Food Pantry Open House!”

Linda Warner

Financial News

Donations for April \$1240 Pledged \$2618

Year to date \$22,515 Pledged \$10,472

We appreciate and need your ongoing financial support!

The meeting asks every member and regular attendee to consider giving, according to one's ability, as a spiritual practice. It is not the size of the donation that matters, but the heart from which it is given. You may drop your tax-deductible gift in the box located at the back corner of our meeting room.

Financial giving is a concrete way in which we ALL can share in the ministry and outreach of Friends. Thank you to all who faithfully contribute! May we continue to trust God to enable us to give with generous and open hearts!

Please pledge for 2024. Forms are near the entry table.

Quieting your life --- How Quaker quietism encourages us to distance ourselves from our egos and embrace the still small voice within.

Active Quaker quietists not a paradox

Bryan Drayton

<https://amorvincat.wordpress.com/2019/01/31/active-quaker-quietists-not-a-paradox>

01/31/2019 § [Leave a comment](#)

“Quietism” has been the commonest label applied to Quakerism between about 1700 and about 1800 (with tails both before and after those times). The basic idea can be summed up in the phrase “God is most where Man is least” — that is, Quietism assumes that the initiative for spiritual growth or reconciliation is on God’s side, and we humans should strive to remove our egos, our needs & hopes, and otherwise clear away anything “worldly” that hinders our perception of The Pure. Isaac Pennington speaks from this place:

Give over thine own willing; give over thine own running; give over thine own desiring to know or to be any thing, and sink down to the seed which God sows in the heart, and let that grow in thee, and be in thee, and breathe in thee, and act in thee, and thou shalt find by sweet experience that the Lord knows that, and loves and owns that, and will lead it to the inheritance of life, which is his portion. And as thou

takest up the cross to thyself, and sufferest that to overspread and become a yoke over thee, thou shalt become renewed, and enjoy life, and the everlasting inheritance in that.

There are plenty of Quakers (and others, of course) for whom this speaks their mind, and in very many contemplative and meditative practices, there are disciplines for stilling the mind, the shouting ego voice, the needs and anxieties of the flesh and the self, so that at least for a time we are able to feel, relatively unobstructed, the presence of the divine. Indeed, in roughly the same era as the “quietist period” in Quakerism, there was a strong quietist movement in continental Catholicism. Friends were very aware of this, and some Catholic quietist classics were kept in print for many years by Quaker publishers.

This movement in Quakerism was seen as a response to the achievement of religious toleration and the gradual cessation of the intense persecutions of the Restoration era in England. Friends were grateful for the relief, and turned their energies to the elaboration and protection of a Quaker culture, and the building and maintaining of a “hedge” against the Outer World. As the current book of Faith and Practice of New England Yearly Meeting has it,

During this period a “Quietist” spirit dominated Friends’ worship. Friends were less concerned with evangelism or making converts than with preserving good internal order. Quaker ministers stressed introspection, silent waiting, obedience to the Divine, and avoidance of “creaturely activity” or actions based purely in human will or desire.

This condition of Friends is in stark contrast, in the usual narratives, to the heroic, prophetic, turbulent First Publishing of Truth in the period roughly 1648–1689. It is also contrasted with the energetic, also turbulent period following, when Friends got increasingly involved with the Outside World, and under the influence of Evangelicalism or The Enlightenment, they split into factions, and each group, one way or ‘t other, climbed over or removed the hedge, until we arrived at Modern or even PostModern Quakerism.

Yet the reflective historian will often remark that during this Quietist period, Friends were very active in many ways — in business and industry, for example, in advocacy for various causes, in the building of Quaker institutions, and even (to some degree) in science (thanks, John Dalton!). This activity is seen as somehow presenting a paradox. How could Friends square all this outward activity (both the self-interested and the philanthropic) with all that retirement and stillness?

I have never thought there was a paradox, myself. In the first place you can find lots of very Quietist statements about suppressing the self and making way for God's initiative, in the writings of some of the original band of Quaker pioneers. Here is Nayler (from a 1653 epistle to Friends around Holderness):

And now, dear Friends, here is your peace and blessedness, that you silence all flesh, and cease from your own wisdom, and give over your imaginations about the things of God... And now stand in the light, that a separation may be made in you, the precious from the vile, that a new Saviour may arise...sink down into the sufferings and death, that you may find the door whereat to enter; for there is a vale of tears to pass through. You shall find your wellsprings in him, where you shall drink of the water of life, and find refreshment, and grow from strength to strength, till you come up to Sion.

Much similar might be found in this first generation's writings. Reading this kind of thing, you might be surprised at the prophetic strenuousness of Nayler and his companions (male and female) from this early time — and yet they were anything but passive.

Now, while there are important historical and cultural differences between the rugged northern pioneers of the 1650s, and the settled Friends of the early 1700s, it's not as though the theology was completely different. The Light they followed, the Seed into which they were exhorted to sink, were the same: Christ, alive and about the ministry of reconciliation.

And this, I think, is something that modern Friends forget, when they think about the Friends of the so-called Quietist time, and compare them to the syncretist contemplative practices many of us follow today.

Modern Friends tend to think that when we sink below our selves, “give over our own willing,” and move past words, we are coming to encounter some Divine Principle that is universal, not particular — and sometimes it seems, rather featureless, indeed.

By contrast, Early Friends, and even the Friends of Woolman’s time, humble and retiring and self-abnegating as they might be in their devotions — they were opening themselves to an active, working Someone, Christ alive, whose imperatives for us now are those of the Gospel, which is the power of God to liberation:

Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. (Mt. 20:42–45)

and recognizably in line with the challenge of the prophets of Israel:

Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow...(Is. 1:11–17).

If in your worship you encounter that Living One, you are in the way of being transformed as Christ is formed in you, and then sent, in your measure and at God’s pleasure, about God’s work, which is the Lamb’s War against the Man of Sin in all its forms and disguises. When we ‘center down,’ there is in that

center the swirling, fecund stillness of creation. Some quietist practice may lead to withdrawal and non-action. Quaker quietism, at least (and it has been true of at least some other kinds of quietists as well) cannot do that and be faithful to its Lord.

<https://letthesilencering.wordpress.com/2014/09/11/quakers-ego-driven-or-spirit-led/>

Quakers: ego-driven or Spirit-led?

Posted on September 11, 2014 by [Gordon Matthews](#)

From “Let the Silence Ring: Reflections of an English Quaker”

A couple of weeks ago I went along to the Sunday morning “parish eucharist” at the Anglican church where my brother is the church warden. The eucharist nourished me spiritually, as I hoped it might. The homily did not.

The main point that the visiting priest made, without any real theological justification, so far as I could tell, was that a church has to have a hierarchical structure to ensure unity and prevent corruption. Quite how a hierarchical structure would prevent corruption within the church was not clear to me. Indeed, I’m inclined to think that hierarchical structures are more prone to corruption than non-hierarchical ones.

Anyway, I’m thankful that I belong to a church which does not have a hierarchy of clergy. We (Quakers) find unity not in our beliefs, which are multifarious, but in our practice – of listening to the promptings of love and truth in our hearts and being led by the Spirit as individuals and as worshipping communities. At least, this is the ideal to which we aspire.

We don’t always get it right, of course. Too often we are ego-driven rather than Spirit-led. Quaker Meetings and Quaker organisations then become battlegrounds, instead of peaceable and peace-making communities. We each push our own priorities and insist on things being done as we think fit. We can end up tearing each other and the meeting or organisation apart.

This is a long way away from discerning ways forward which are in harmony with the loving purposes of God. We each need to recognise that we may be mistaken in our perceptions or in our analysis. And we each need to submit ourselves to the discernment process of the Meeting as a whole.

This applies especially to the clerk of a Meeting or a committee. The clerk serves as a facilitator, not as a leader or a decision-maker. Decisions need to be arrived at by the Meeting or committee as a whole, through a discernment process involving all those concerned. Our egos need to be set aside. If a clerk cannot set his or her ego aside when a particular issue is under discussion, he/she needs to step aside from the role of clerk during that particular discussion. Serving as the clerk of a Meeting or a committee requires a considerable degree of spiritual maturity.

Local, area, regional, and yearly Quaker Meetings are, ideally, non-hierarchical churches. Quaker organisations, on the other hand, and this may include the administration of a yearly meeting, are necessarily hierarchical, when it comes to day-to-day operations. It just doesn't work to have day-to-day decisions about the operation of an organisation made either by individuals according to their own whims or by a committee meeting for worship. Whilst overall strategy needs to be discerned by governing bodies according to Quaker practice, the day-to-day management and administrative decision-making needs to be left to an individual who has both an overview and detailed knowledge of the workings of the organisation.

The role of a governing body is not only to discern a broad strategy for the organisation but also to ensure that the head of the organisation has the support that he or she needs to perform the complex task of leading (giving administrative direction to) the organisation. The role of members of a governing body is one of facilitation rather than leadership.

I have found it especially helpful to read Roger C. Wilson's 1949 Swarthmore Lecture, *Authority, Leadership and Concern*, in which he draws on his experience in the Friends Relief Service. One paragraph is particularly instructive:

A distinction must be made between moral and administrative responsibility. To determine what shall be done and the quality of spirit in which ends shall be pursued, is a moral responsibility; to determine how that shall be done and to see that it is done, is an administrative responsibility within the moral framework.

*Moral responsibility is found by Friends through “the sense of the Meeting”.
Administrative responsibility in complex matters is taken by individuals given the task of translating the “sense of the Meeting” into action, being guided all along by the moral obligation to remain true to the “sense of the Meeting”.*

Within a Quaker organisation we all share moral responsibility. A few individual Friends take on administrative responsibility. They deserve our respect and need our support.

<https://youtu.be/9WI5bwBoKXU?si=0koB1V7VohGN6kVb>

“Soul Quake: Exploring the Work of Spirit”

The thoughts of some friendly Pennsylvania Quakers