

Worship and witness in a time of war

Erbin Crowell, Providence (RI) Monthly Meeting

I HAVE OFTEN NOTICED THAT IN TIMES OF CONFLICT OR THE threat of war, the benches in our meetinghouse become more crowded than usual. On some occasions, there is only standing room left and people stretch along the walls, standing quietly or sitting on the floor. Many of the faces are familiar; periodic attenders or activists I know from other settings. Others I don't recognize as easily. Perhaps they are new to our meeting, drawn by what they know of Quakers. Some feel the need to speak, but most seem comforted by the silence.

At these times, I am thankful for the witness of our meeting in the wider community. It is a blessing to us that Friends are known for our commitment to peace, for trying another road in times of tension and conflict, and as sanctuaries, welcoming people who are uneasy with the events of the world.

From the earliest days of our religious society, we've held the peace testimony central to our faith, springing from the call upon Friends to answer to the inward light of each person. But this call reaches beyond mere opposition to a particular war or conflict. When offered a position in Oliver Cromwell's army, George Fox (1624-1691) did not declare his opposition to that civil war, but to all war, responding that he "lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars." One of the gifts of our witness in the world is the recognition that war is not an isolated event or incident. Rather, open violence often springs from more hidden sources, from the imbalances and injustices of everyday conditions, relationships, and interactions. These seeds of conflict require nourishment, and Friends often speak to seeking out these seeds before they are allowed to grow.

Individually and communally, Friends have wrestled with how best to respond to this testimony. John Woolman (1720-1772), a New Jersey Friend active in the abolitionist movement, located the roots of war in places where few had looked before: in our daily acts of consumption. Recognizing that the slave trade was fueled by the consumption of familiar products, he refused to purchase rum or molasses, and shunned dyed clothing. Examining the horrors of war, Jonathan Dymond (1798-1828), a British Friend, found that beyond the reality of death was a deeper destruction: "Slaughter and devastation are sufficiently terrible, but their collateral evils are their greatest. It is the *immoral feeling* that War diffuses—it is the *deprivation of Principle* which forms the mass of its mischief."

In the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001, Friends joined with others in praying and advocating for restraint and reconciliation. Instead we face the challenge of

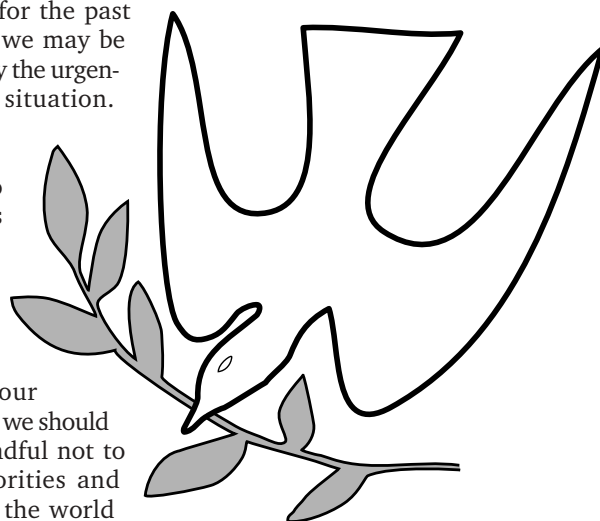
a government asserting a permanent state of war. We feel the impact of this stance not just in death and destruction, but in the diminishment of civil liberties, the siphoning of resources from human need to military readiness, and the distraction of our souls and minds from light to darkness.

Faced with the threat of open war with Iraq (a more discrete war having been conducted for the past ten years), we may be overtaken by the urgency of this situation.

Surely we are called to respond to the drums of war, to speak and act in a manner consistent with our

witness. But we should also be mindful not to let the priorities and currents of the world overtake us. We should not be distracted from the more timeless work of peace: building community, fostering understanding, creating economic alternatives, and responding to the suffering around us. Making our meetings vital places of worship and witness is central to this work, as is our participation in some of our more tangible tools of peace such as the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL). Perhaps most importantly, we should not be discouraged, remembering Jesus' words, "Peace is my parting gift to you, my own peace, such the world cannot give" (John 14:27).

Many times in meeting for worship I have been struck by the incredible event taking place around me. After all, what could be more radical in this day and age than a group of people coming together to sit in silence. Amid the din of commercialism, contention, and an entertainment economy, we choose to gather together just to listen for that still, small voice. Sometimes this act seems the greatest challenge to war that I can imagine.



Living the peace testimony

Renewing inner light, peace, hope amidst darkness and despair

Mary Louisa Gray, Midcoast (ME) Monthly Meeting

Although attempting to bring about world peace through the inner transformation of individuals is difficult, it is the only way.

—the Dalai Lama

LATE IN 2002 I REALIZED I HAD NO PEACE in my heart. I felt I had lost hope in my life-long dream of a better world of love, joy, cooperation, peace, and justice for all—a Peaceable Kingdom—the Promised Land. This romantic and idealistic vision reflected my deepest longing. After months of outer efforts to express my utter opposition to the build-up toward war against Iraq and our leaders' blatant disregard for domestic and foreign policies I cherish, I felt I had carried out all the outer activities within my power to do. The letters, petitions and phone calls, the steady witness for peace in marches, rallies, and vigils throughout this part of Maine—none of these activities seemed effective enough, despite our ardent, dedicated concern. Added to these frustrations I experienced a moral indignation and deep shame for our country's unbridled nationalism and pro-war stance clearly communicating disaster to the world, not democracy. As a Quaker, I experienced an uncomfortable feeling that I was not doing enough. I reminded myself that our numbers are small even with other peace churches. The corporate peace witness I envisioned, created with other mainline churches joining us in active prayerful, nonviolent protest against war, was not happening. All my life I have revered the early Quaker prophets—those “shock troops” so often punished, persecuted, or banished for their unceasing witness—that all life is sacred.

How could I renew that “affirming flame,”

of God within me, and live it out more fully? The query asking if I live in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars brought me to a stop. I was in a turbulent, fearful, unquiet, off-centered state of being. Words from that beautiful song “Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me...” returned to my consciousness reminding me of my most needful task.

The late peace activist, Philip Berrigan, said, “God slumbers in us as a fire in ashes.” He, like many great spiritual leaders, urged us to tend to our inner life—that light of God that Quakers hold so dear—and to let it direct our actions. Thus I was reminded of my vibrant spiritual heritage and my evolutionary potential for higher mystical consciousness through solitary and corporate silent worship.

As a Friend committed to our Christian roots, and a devout believer in contemplative prayer and Christian mysticism, I became painfully aware of my need for more quiet, prayerful time to revive those essential missing ingredients of inner light and peace and hope. Indeed, this is the most radical activity I can engage in! Despite remaining outwardly convinced that “staying within the present moment” was part of the highest spiritual discipline to engage in, I was blocking loving responses with fear and despair, reflecting both the past and the future. I began eliminating TV and most newspapers and magazines, cutting down on my outer activities to take long walks alone, slowly growing in my awareness of “peace in every step.” Most essentially, I reincorporated longer periods of silent prayer every day surrendering to expectant waiting for “God’s

small voice” to teach and direct me. Peace began growing within me again. I also reflected and gathered thoughts on hope. By studying the inspired, yet realistic and candid thoughts of others—including world leaders and in particular several contemplative Catholic mystics—I am reassured that hope, in dangerous and disillusioning times, no matter how seemingly impossible, is not “just foolishly romantic,” but is based on the fact that human history is “a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness... and if we act now, in however small a way, we don’t have to wait for some grand utopian future”—to quote Howard Zinn in *You Can’t Be Neutral on a Moving Train*. I began to deduce that to live in a prophetic vision of hope is the bravest choice. I now have the tender, reassuring vision of a divine flow of ever present prayer and mystical hope deep within us to which we can always return for peaceful reassurance of God’s love and encouragement.

In a paper I wrote, “Living into a New Creation—Becoming a Contemplative for the Sake of the World,” I quoted Nikos Kazantzakis exclaiming that he “believed in a world which does not exist, but believing in it, he created it!” We are called to live as if the New Creation is already here. We have the inspiration of Quakers in every age, the great mystics in every living faith, and world leaders such as Gandhi and the Dalai Lama to guide us and sustain us as we strengthen our own inner life and convictions as “Children of the Light”—compassionate, vulnerable, trusting—with great power, passion, and fresh vigor within us—and new, imaginative vision and ideas for action!

Small miracles and positive solutions

Connie Littlefield, Quaker City–Unity (NH) Monthly Meeting

AFTER SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 AND OUR government’s quick military retribution, there was a desire to do something dramatic to counter the darkness. Those urges led my Meeting to sponsor public protest against military action. However

that protest, rather than leading our neighbors to question our government’s response, inflicted hurt and pain on those concerned about family members in the military. As is often the case with hurt feelings, this led to more anger, not less. As the Meeting con-

templated the unintended results of our actions, we decide that the best way to work for peace and outreach in our community was to model it. We held a series of public Meetings for Worship for Peace. These Meetings were successful. They did not cause

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more harm, and they encouraged those that saw or joined us to consider why we prayed. We also successfully joined the American Friends Service Committee's (AFSC) campaign to collect and ship blankets for Afghan refugees. One committed participant in the project has a son in the military. By focusing on caring for people and not demonstrating our own anger and frustration, we came together in acts of loving concern.

This experience of role-modeling peace has led me to resist the temptation to use anger to alleviate my fears. I am reminded to work on peace within my own home and myself first. Sometimes it seems selfish to work on inner peace when such large world issues are pressing. I found reassurance in a letter from Paul Lacey (clerk of the national AFSC Board) reminding us that, "we cannot let our commitments to restorative justice, community building and empowering minority communities become 'collateral damage' of war." These are roads to peace that we were already traveling, and we need to maintain the foundations already laid. I extend Paul Lacey's reminder to my commitment to my spiritual and personal growth and that of my family. I cannot let our growth falter as a result of fear.

That said, the temptations to be fearful

and angry, both on a personal and worldwide level, continues to plague me. I often think of the lines in a hymn by Esther Greenleaf Murer, "Can I face the stranger's rage and pain and hate, But I must confront my own internal night, And from that dark send forth a tiny beam of light?" Who said anything about strangers? Can I face anyone's rage, pain, and hate and return light? Sometimes trying to live out the peace testimony is as successful as nailing Jell-O to a tree.

In *Faith and Practice*, another Paul Lacey quote, though written in a different context, spoke to me. "And, by the grace of God, we are able to learn from our failings to speak to others' conditions out of the sorrow of our own lives. God grant that we may be able to sustain each other in overcoming temptation because we realize how much alike we are in being tempted."

I have discovered that when I allow myself to fully acknowledge my own fears and anger, and stop denying them, I become more peaceful. When I am not fearful, I can freely recognize and have compassion for others' fears and discuss the world situation or the family dilemma peacefully. Others, in turn, seem more peaceful.

It is then we see small miracles happen and seek positive solutions. Inner peace leads

to a proactive attempt to take away the occasions of war or family strife. It was at such a moment when

one of my accounting clients agreed to explore the feasibility of using an alternative to diesel fuel in his trucks. While this is exhilarating, it is not dramatic. I'm sure in the weeks to come when the burden of many obligations feels heavy, I'll question my sanity at suggesting the feasibility study, and I know that my

Meeting will be there with help and encouragement. Today, however, I enjoy this reminder that what Nelson Mandela once said is true, "As we are liberated from our own fears, our presence automatically liberates others." And the result is full of wonderful possibilities.



"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you..."

Steven Terrell, Dartmouth at Smith Neck (MA) Monthly Meeting

AS MINISTERS OF CHRIST WE HAVE before us an opening in the hearts of men and women. People are searching for stability and security in these times of global, political, and military uncertainty. It is now that we as Friends must witness to peace, the peace that comes from knowing Jesus Christ.

The practice of living out my faith in God has not changed with the growing possibility of war with Iraq. I continue to do the work that Jesus calls us to, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:15). It is through people hearing about Jesus, beginning a relationship with Him, and growing in that relationship that they will discover God's peace. For the peace that I work to spread can only come to others by knowing Jesus. It was He who said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace

I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27). Christ Jesus is the foundation upon which Quakerism was built and it is through Him that the world can find peace.

Bombs continue to take lives in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While threats and accusations are made weekly by our government, Iraq, and the UN, it is futile for us to believe that we can teach lasting, non-violent conflict resolution techniques to the world. Coping techniques like these help deal with the problems, but they don't fix the problems. These world problems are created by the dominant power reigning in each country. Until Christ Jesus becomes the reigning power of every nation, the world will continue to see conflict. Only the power of the Holy Spirit can heal these problems.

Paul wrote in Hebrews 12:2, "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith." There are times when the world's distractions cause me to look at things other than Christ himself. It is through living and worshiping in community that I find encouragement and accountability returning my focus to God. The renewal and baptism of my spirit happens through Christ in our midst as we worship Him. It is here that Jesus' call on my life is made clear. "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). These words spoken by Jesus are not just for me but for all who love and follow him. Let them be your call and start by sharing Jesus with your neighbor and watch His peace spread.

A beaming light

Roger Catlin, Hartford (CT) Monthly Meeting

MORE AND MORE NEW PEOPLE HAVE come to our meetinghouse in the past year or so. Some from the neighborhood, drawn to a place of worship at a time of crisis. Others, from longer distances, seem like they long to pray with those for whom peace is not an odd and unpopular a notion as it is made out to be in the mass media.

Not only is the Meeting a place of solace for the peace-minded, it's a well-organized and effective clearinghouse for action.

The latest national compulsion to attack Iraq (a notion aimed at finishing Daddy's scores as much as to divert attention from the utterly failed war on terrorism) found

quick response from local peace coalitions. But more than that, the plight of Iraq took on more immediacy in our Meeting as one of our members, John Humphries, traveled there on an AFSC peace mission.

Peace rallies are held weekly in well-posted locations, including one at noontime each Saturday at my town green, so convenient to me I couldn't find any excuse not to go this fall. The vigil was set at about the same time my older daughter went to dance class on the green. As she danced, my youngest daughter and I went and held signs with a group of familiar reliable peaceniks, as well as variable throngs from local campuses, whose numbers would swell and ebb as

school schedules allowed.

To point a sign at the traffic and passerby in the busy intersection felt like beaming a light in the darkness. And while there were a couple of negative reactions, what surprised me most was how many people honked and waved support. So much so that it made you question those polls that suggested all of America was lockstep behind the President.

No, it's those people on the green who honk and wave, the newcomers finding their way to Meeting, and the reluctance of other nations in the world that have solidified my hope that no matter what the politicians want, people love peace too much to allow this war.

Lives are in the balance

Tom Antonik, Portland (ME) Monthly Meeting

THERE ARE TIMES THAT I WONDER, HOW is it that a tree prays? Are the chirps of frogs in the night and whippoorwills perfect songs of peace or are they just chirps and whistles in the night? To some, musings such as these might be casual thoughts to play with, but for myself, drawn to the contemplative, they are the sorts of questions I am called to ponder time and time again. When war looms close, should I redouble and intensify my life of contemplative prayer, or should I rise from my place of meditation and be on the streets protesting? Is a time of war a time for the prayers of the birds of the sky and the lilies of the field, or is it a time to say that I am neither lily nor bird?

Our nation, however, is poised at the edge of war. As I am now asked to reflect on how it is I live my peace testimony, it is no longer hypothetical. And for me, that difficulty of weighing the value of the manner of prayer, to which I am most drawn, becomes more immediate. Lives are in the balance.

For anyone who thinks that contemplation is not hard work, I invite you to attempt an intensive silent retreat of a week (or more). Facing the fears and prejudices of the world is noble work, but I offer that fac-

ing one's own fears and secret recesses of the heart is no less challenging. And yet when lives are in the balance, I too, sometimes question if I might better be used in a more active manner.

I have met some people who are mistrustful of the power of prayer, and a few who are blatantly hostile to those of us drawn to a contemplative life, especially those of us drawn to variations of monastic life. Yet for those who are skeptical of the possibility of how any of us can effect change for the better, I would ask, "when is it that you have been changed for the better?" For the most part, when I ask myself that question, I come upon a series of Mysteries. One piece of the Mystery I can point to, however, is that my heart was open to being changed, and that the change was effected by the result of someone living authentically in the life of the Spirit. Even though it might be the smallest of gestures, even if for only a moment, I know that there are actions, when performed out of an answer to a Call or out of love, that have changed me as much as the larger, grander sweeps of individual lives such as Gandhi or the Berrigans.

Some years ago, when I was losing one friend after the other to AIDS while struggling with my own diagnosis, I found myself

going to grieving workshops whenever they were available. Most of them were well intentioned, but when I invariably raised my hand and asked, "so what do you do when you have one loss after the other on top of another?" One facilitator responded by pointing to the flip chart outlining the workshop's key points saying, "this is what you do, you just do more of it." I was not satisfied. Finally I attended a workshop where the woman who led it said "I don't know." For me, there was great power in not being alone in that "I don't know," of knowing that someone else's heart was tender and confused with these assaults one after the other. But there was another part to her response that also forever changed me. She said, "I do know how to counsel someone who has lost several people at once, say in a car accident, and that is to treat each death individually." I was no longer alone in the "I don't know" challenges of my grief. I was changed by that brief encounter. I was more at peace in the process, touched by the work of a woman who was answering an authentic Call to work with those touched by death and dying.

When asked how I live the peace testimony at a time of impending war, there is that of me that thinks of pointing to *all* the testimonies saying, "this is what I try to do—

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I just try to do more of it.” And while that is true, there is also a paradoxical comfort in the companionship of “I don’t know.” Peace, however, in the sense of the word “shalom” means being in right relationship with that of God, within myself, and in relationship to the communities where I live. For me it is living as authentically as I can, in answer to what I am called to do. My part

is to pay prayerful attention to, as best I can, each individual moment, each individual relationship, and to be in right relationship with God. It is true that I am neither tree nor lily of the field nor bird of the sky. My prayer life—and my active life—will differ, and my particular Call to be at a theological school and to the contemplative life may differ from others drawn to the front lines

of protests and civil disobedience. There are many instruments to peace, and I am but one. I must pay constant and prayerful attention to how God wants to use me. I must listen and be faithful to the vow of being peace. I may never know the results of my prayers nor just how my being as God calls me to be touches others. There is, however, one thing I do know. Lives are in the balance.



Around the Yearly Meeting

Compiled from monthly meeting newsletters and correspondence by the Editors, Delia Windwalker and Jonathan Vogel-Borne

• **Parsonsfield (ME) Monthly Meeting (MM)** was laid down by action of Falmouth Quarterly Meeting on 7/27/02.

• **Mt Toby (MA) MM** Overseers committee recommended to monthly meeting that their committee name be changed. The concern is widespread among Friends Meetings as reported by the *Philadelphia YM News* last summer. The term ‘overseer’ is associated with enslavement of African Americans and is offensive to many people longing to heal racial tensions. The monthly meeting approved the recommendation and invites proposals for a name that reflects the committee’s pastoral care function. Two suggestions for the new name are “Ministry and Pastoral Care,” and “Pastoral Care and Oversight.” Other monthly meetings have chosen among these names: Committee for Care and Counsel, Worship and Care, Care and Visiting, Care of Members, Committee of Listening Hearts, Ministry and Counsel, Pastoral Care, and Care and Membership.

• **Providence (RI) MM’s** newsletter reported on Southeastern New England American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) victory in free speech, when the AFSC challenged the *Providence Journal* for refusing to accept a full page advertisement commemorating the victims of September 11th and stating opposition to war abroad and curtailment of civil liberties at home. Several inquiries, on behalf of the AFSC, were made by local community organization leaders. They told the *Journal* editor, Howard Sutton, that the signers of the advertisement expressed an opinion that ought not be cen-

sored. Howard Sutton later apologized and agreed to accept the ad. AFSC collected more than 800 signatures and the advertisement ran in over a dozen area newspapers.

• **Acadia (ME) MM** endorsed a proposal to *Slow Down for Peace, Save Oil—Save Lives*. On the road to work or to a peace witness they suggest a simple, symbolic, and legal action for showing your opposition to war. Obey the posted speed limits—or even go slower. They say, “Driving at posted speed limits respects life and fellow citizens, promotes civility, and saves energy.” While a boycott against mideast oil consumption is nearly impossible, slowing down gas consumption and raising awareness of your commitment to peace—every time you drive—is a positive statement of values and a public action drawing attention directly to issues around energy supply and national security policy. A bumper sticker is available from slowdown4peace@prexar.com

• **Northwest (VT/NH) Quarterly Meeting** minuted the need for a closer relationship between the NEYM Permanent Board and members of the yearly meeting. “As much of the governance of NEYM is too detailed or minor to come to the annual Sessions, Permanent Board makes most decisions in this area. Permanent Board actions are mainly, we believe, on matters of finance, personnel, and administration, but also on the implementation details of general policies as they are set forth by [the annual] Sessions.... Accordingly, we suggest that the min-

utes of Permanent Board should routinely be available to the NEYM membership much as we all get our monthly meeting minutes.” The Quarter suggests distribution by any combination of: mail to monthly meeting clerks, email to any member who asks, and posting on the NEYM website.

• **Midcoast (ME) MM** raised \$5,400 to repair bomb damages and benefit programs at the Ramallah Friends School, 10 miles north of Jerusalem, on the West Bank. Administered by Friends United Meeting for over 100 years, the 900 students of Moslem, Christian, and Jewish backgrounds share a philosophy of peace and non-violent conflict resolution.

• **Northampton (MA) MM** has, at long last, moved into their new meetinghouse at 43 Center Street in downtown Northampton! The Meeting has also united to join multiple faith communities in Massachusetts as a signatory to the Religious Amicus Brief in the appeal of *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health* seeking marriage rights for same-sex couples.



Northampton (MA) Meetinghouse

In other Quaker news

Friends Camp turns 50!

Please see the announcement of their 50th anniversary celebration in the enclosed Friends Camp brochure. In preparation for the event, 6/21/03, the Camp wants to get in touch with as many present and former campers, camper families and staff as they can. Send updated information to Susan Morris, PO Box 84, East Vassalboro, ME 04835 • 207/923-3975 • smorris@pivot.net

Quaker service in postwar Germany

The traveling exhibit, "Quiet Helpers," of the German Historical Museum, presented by the AFSC, continues at the Boston Public Library until 2/26/03. Open: Mon.–Thur., 9am–9pm; Fri.–Sat., 9am–5pm; & Sun., 1–5pm. [See p. 7 in the Fall 2002 NE Friend].

What Canst Thou Say... About F&P?

In September 2002, the *Faith & Practice* (F&P) Revision Committee mailed a questionnaire to each meeting. This is an important opportunity for meetings and individuals to comment and convey concerns to the committee. They hope for seasoned, corporate discernment, but comments from interested individuals are also welcome. The committee has heard from several meetings that careful consideration of these questions needs more time than the original deadline allowed, so they have extended the deadline for responses to 4/15/03.

Meetings report a variety of inspiring approaches to the questionnaire. Some ideas include: consideration of the questions in small groups, meeting over several months in preparation for a meeting-wide response; Ministry & Counsel consideration of selected/individual questions, also spread over several months; revision of some questions for responses from children; publishing the questionnaire in the meeting's newsletter.

The committee is heartened by these responses and trusts that the exercise of examining *Faith and Practice* is spiritually rewarding for both meetings and individuals. Please send initial comments and suggestions by 4/15/03, though the committee will accept responses at any time. The questionnaire and its cover letter are available at the NEYM website www.neym.org. Click on "Other NEYM Links." Return questionnaires, minutes, and any related documents to Jan Hoffman, 343 West St., Amherst, MA 01002 • janhoff@earthlink.net

Second Eldering Retreat

The second Eldering Retreat, co-sponsored by NEYM Ministry & Counsel and Woolman Hill, 5/2-4/03, is designed for those actively engaged in eldering work in their meetings. Every meeting has Friends who are gifted in prayer, discernment, and nurturing faithfulness and spiritual growth. The intent of this retreat is to support Friends with these gifts that sustain our faith community and offer them an opportunity to encourage and strengthen each other in their work. Kenneth Sutton, a member of Central Philadelphia (PA) MM sojourning at Beacon Hill (MA) MM, will facilitate. Upon registering, participants are required to send a letter of support from their monthly meeting's Ministry & Counsel and an autobiographical paragraph that describes their eldering work. Register by 4/11/03. Contact Woolman Hill, 107 Keets Road, Deerfield, MA 01342 • 413/774-3431 • info@woolmanhill.org

FWCC Northeast Regional Gathering

LISTEN! The Peaceable Kingdom Lives. Join Friends from New England, New York, Philadelphia, and Canadian YMs, 4/11-13/03 for a weekend of listening and celebration as spring awakens the earth at Woolman Hill. The Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) gathering will focus on the importance of listening in the peace process; both the building of peace in the world, and personal opening to peace within. Elise Boulding [Wellesley (MA) MM] will facilitate the program on Saturday. Holly Baldwin [Midcoast (ME) MM] will report on FWCC's recent Peace Consultation. Gretchen Baker-Smith [Westport (MA) MM] will lead a children's program. Contact Woolman Hill, 107 Keets Road, Deerfield, MA 01342 • 413/774-3431 • info@woolmanhill.org

2003 BHFH Weed Lecture

The 2003 Beacon Hill Friends House (BHFH) Weed Lecture will be given by Vanessa Juley of Philadelphia YM, on 4/13/03 at 1:30pm, BHFH 6 Chestnut St., Boston, MA. Contact 617/227-9118 • BHFHDirectors@aol.com

BHFH — a great place to live!

Beacon Hill Friends House has vacancies for spring, summer, and fall 2003. Two guest rooms for F/friends seeking short term accommodations for up to 14 days are also available. For applications and reservations,

BHFH 6 Chestnut St., Boston, MA 02108 • 617/227-9118 • BHFHDirectors@aol.com

Upcoming Events at Woolman Hill

Bread of Presence, Gretchen Baker-Smith, 2/7-9/03; *Journaling: Spiritual Autobiography*, Molly Duplisea, 2/21-23; *Jesus, the First Quaker*, Jonathan Vogel-Borne, 3/7-9; *Goodness: A Workshop*, John Calvi, 3/21-23; *New England Friends in Unity with Nature*, Bob Cahalan, 4/4-6; FWCC NE Regional Gathering: *LISTEN! The Peaceable Kingdom Lives*, Elise Boulding & others, 4/11-13; Contact Woolman Hill, 107 Keets Road, Deerfield, MA 01342 • 413/774-3431 • info@woolmanhill.org

Friendly FolkDancers in New England

The Friendly FolkDancers is a group of folk-dancing Quakers who minister through dance and are planning to tour New England 3/15 to 3/24/03. They wish to contact meetings who are interested in hosting them for a presentation, including overnight hospitality. Two tour groups of eight each will be traveling. The Friendly FolkDancers "work toward creating a world community... through international folk dancing." In its 18th year, the group last toured New England in 1988. Contact Mark Helpsmeet, 715/874-6646 • helpsmeet@usa.net or Pat Micks, 508/457-9751 • pmicks@mbl.edu

Kenya service project & visit planned

The Friends of Kakamega [see article, next page], a group of NEYM Friends supporting Quaker women in Kakamega YM who are building an AIDS orphanage, plan a two-week service project in Kenya, late July 2003. The orphans' parents were members of the Friends Church who died of AIDS. The Kakamega YM United Society of Friends Women feeds over 100 children 3 times a week. A kitchen/dining hall is under construction to house the program on the ground floor of the orphanage. The service project will focus on a week-long "Friends camp" with orphan children, doing crafts, music, games, stories, etc. Visiting Friends will also work alongside the the builders of the orphanage. The Friends of Kakamega have a slide show of their December 2002 trip to Kenya and hope NEYM Friends will invite them to their meetings. Contact Sukie Rice, 207/865-3768 • ricesukie@aol.com or Sharon Salmon, 207/968-2902 • loghouse@pivot.net

The NEYM—East African Friends connection

Eden Grace, Beacon Hill (MA) Monthly Meeting

Photo: Lisa Graustein



Lunchtime at the feeding program for AIDS orphans run by women from Kakamega Yearly Meeting

A CONFLUENCE OF RECENT EVENTS HAS led to the sense among some New England Friends that God is calling us to a closer relationship with Friends in East Africa. In May 2002, two Kenyan women traveled in New England to share about their ministry with AIDS orphans. In July 2002 almost 20 New Englanders attended the Friends United Meeting (FUM) Triennial in Nairobi and had opportunities to visit among Kenyan Friends and hear their testimony of faith in action. Many who were touched by these encounters feel God leading them to sustained partnership in ministry. Our own Marian Baker has been a living bridge between New England and Kenya for decades, and now serves as an elder and advisor to many of us who are newly excited about Kenya.

There is much good work to support in Kenya. The women of Kakamega Yearly Meeting are full of energy for a ministry to

AIDS orphans. They have instituted a feeding program, and have ambitious plans for a group home and school. Women from New England's United Society of Friends Women (USFW) and Falmouth Quarterly Meeting are raising money to support this work. The Rural Service Project, based in Kaimosi, has served the rural agricultural community for a long time, and is now venturing into micro-credit lending, with training provided in small business management. Africa Quaker Vision, a small collective of young adult Nairobi-

based Quakers, is running a school in the slums of Nairobi, and has a tremendous vision for Christian renewal through service. Darcy Drayton of Weare (NH) Monthly Meeting (MM) is raising money for both these organizations. South Shore Preparative Meeting in Hingham MA has partnered with Matala MM for several years, empowering Matala MM to achieve its goals for community growth and development. Right Sharing of World Resources is expanding its grant-making in East Africa. Friend United Meeting continues to operate several highly-respected medical, educational, and evangelistic projects in Kenya. New England Friends have long been supporters of this work.

Yet, along with new excitement for these relationships, Friends in New England struggle with old questions. How can we be most faithful to God's leading to partnership, amid the obvious disparities of wealth. Some of us know enough history of the "development industry" in Africa to be wary that our desire to do good often does considerable harm. Can we be "wise as serpents and innocent as doves"? How is God asking us to proceed?

NEYM's FUM and USFW committees co-hosted an "East Africa Summit" on 11/24/2002 to gather all those with an interest in these questions for collective discernment of the way forward. We were held by the prayerful presence of "elders" from YM Ministry & Counsel and Puente de Amigos. Our discussion raised many deep



Dancer greets Friends at a Quaker School

questions about the nature of the relationships we seek with East Africans, and the links between spiritual sharing, intervisitation, fundraising, and accountability. We discussed power and racism in cross-cultural relationships, and noticed that issues of racism are urgently demanding the attention of New England Friends. We raised questions about how to coordinate our various efforts to respond to the needs we see in our East African partners, and how to help our Yearly Meeting clerk respond to the many requests for money that she receives. We reminded ourselves of our historic practices of discernment of leadings, of eldering, and of holding our good works accountable to a right Spirit. We reaffirmed our deep desire for spiritual relationships of equality, centered more on sharing gifts of the Spirit than on financial giving. Our leadings do involve funding of specific projects. Yet we have a deep desire to engage in this funding within the context of mutually accountable relationships.

Those who gathered in November for this initial discussion felt the need to continue this consultative work. We meet next on 3/23/2003 at Dover Meeting for worship, lunch, and worshipful discernment. We invite all who are interested in these questions to join us. Eden Grace and Ann Armstrong, co-coordinators, eastafrika@neym.org.

Photo: Eden Grace



Elders of Kakamega Yearly Meeting amid construction of a dormitory to house and feed AIDS orphans

Photo: Minga Claggett-Borne

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Please send **ALL FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS** to the Yearly Meeting **DIRECTLY** to the Treasurer, Ken Hoffman, 343 West Street, Amherst, MA 01002

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THE NEW ENGLAND FRIEND

YEARLY MEETING CALENDAR

February 2003

- 1 Vassalboro QM – Belfast, ME
- 2 CT Valley QM – Hartford, CT
- 2 NEYM FUM Committee – Dover, NH
- 7–9 Junior High Retreat – Portland, ME
- 8 Committee Day – Amesbury, MA
- 21–23 Young Friends Retreat – Hartford, CT
- 22 Permanent Board – Worcester, MA

March 2003

- 1 Northwest QM – Monadnock, NH
- 8 Ministry & Counsel – Framingham, MA
- 13–16 FWCC/America’s Annual Meeting – Houston, TX
- 22 Sessions Committee – Stonehill College, Easton, MA
- 23 NEYM/East Africa group – Dover, NH [see p. 7]
- 28–30 Junior High Retreat – Wellesley, MA
- 30 Dover QM – Dover, NH

April 2003

- 4–6 Elementary Retreat – Westport, MA
- 11-13 Young Friends Retreat – Westport & Allen’s Neck, MA
- 11-13 FWCC NE Gathering – Woolman Hill, MA [see p. 6]
- 12 Committee Day – Hanover, NH
- 13 BHFH Weed Lecture – Boston, MA [see p. 6]
- 20 RI-Smithfield QM – Providence, RI
- 21–26 Young Friends Service Week – Cambridge, MA
- 26 All Maine Gathering – South China, ME
- 26 Sandwich QM – East Sandwich, MA
- 27 Salem QM – North Shore, MA

May 2003

- 2–4 Young Friends Retreat – Mt. Toby, MA
- 2-4 M&C Eldering Retreat – Woolman Hill, MA [see p. 6]
- 3 Practice of Clerking Workshop – Westerly, RI
- 4 CT Valley QM – Northampton, MA
- 9–11 Elementary Retreat – Woolman Hill, MA
- 10 Permanent Board – Hanover, NH
- 16–18 Young Friends Senior Retreat – Monadnock, NH
- 16–18 Junior High Retreat – Friends Camp, South China, ME
- 17 Ministry & Counsel – Hanover, NH

June 2003

- 7–8 Northwest QM – Farm & Wilderness, Plymouth, VT
- 13-15 YAF Retreat – Mt. Toby
- 14 Committee Day – Providence, RI
- 21 Friends Camp 50th – South China, ME
- 28–7/5 FGC Gathering – Johnstown, PA
- 29 Dover QM – North Sandwich, NH

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 Note: The Faith & Practice Revision Committee generally meets on the last Saturday of each month.

2003 Sessions, August 2-7, at NEW LOCATION!
—Stonehill College in Easton, MA—

Theme: To Build God’s Peaceable World (Isaiah 11:6-9)
Keynote: Mary Lord (Baltimore YM)
Bible Half Hour: Evelyn Gonzales (Cuba YM)