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What Canst Thou Say?

Friends • Mystical Experience • Contemplative Practice

*You will say, Christ saith this, and the apostles say this: but what canst thou say?
Art thou a child of Light and hast thou walked in the Light, and what thou speakest,
is it inwardly from God? —George Fox*

Nudges

A Voice Sings in Me: What Is This Song Nudging Me to Do? Kathy Sidwell White

I do experience nudges—from my spouse, from my world of neighborhood volunteering, and from my Quaker community. But the knowing that a nudge has become My nudge seems to come when I am only in a position to hold that knowing and not immediately act. Sometimes these come in the wee minutes of wakefulness, long before dawn; sometimes while I am walking and focusing only on what I am walking through.

I am so grateful for the many days I awaken with a song in my head, singing me into the day and the tasks of that day. Some might consider these morning songs an ear worm. I find them nourishing, nudging me in how to walk that day and what I can share with others.

Today, there was no morning-specific song singing, but only a need to have some piano time. In these retirement years, piano time is my time to work my way through music both new and familiar, to challenge both mind and hands, and to reinforce memories of music in my life. I began to play where the book opened—it was work that pulled me into playing more new pieces. Then I just needed to find our Messiah score, to familiarize myself again with the chords, the choruses, the words from Isaiah, as Handel sent them out freshly and vibrantly to the world.

The words stopped me, pulled me into them again and again, until my hands stopped and I sat with them, letting them open a new awareness in me, letting the voice from that song wilderness be the voices from our wildernesses today, calling me to new understanding about our responses to the grave issue of climate change, of water scarcity, of human and creature needs.

The voice of Isaiah 40 calls us from the desert to prepare the way for the Lord. In my Midwestern world,

voices are calling from the desert of Standing Rock, reminding us that water is life. More voices are calling for us to seek out the way of the Lord amid so much violence and physical needs.

I find it fascinating that modern day voices, voices living in our deserts, are learning how to live sustainably, and sending positive paths over rugged places.

I am pulled, nudged, sung into listening ...listening for today's voices from our wilderness.

Kathy Sidwell White is a birthright and a convinced Friend. She grew up in Middleton, Ohio, and Madison, Wisconsin, is her home now. She has been married for 55 plus years. She is proud to be part of the Olney Friends School alumni community.

From the Editors:

Sometimes God's nudges are subtle and easily ignored. At other times, nudges may leave one wondering "Is it true that God moves us here and there like marionettes?" Perhaps what seems like an orchestration of our life is God winking and guiding us. Squire Rushnell says that Godwinks are God's way of communicating with us in times of uncertainty.

There was a bit of "holy spirit mischief" in this February 2017 issue on "Nudges". First we learned that a wonderful submission from William Shetter had slipped through the cracks and was not included in the issue. Then we were told that the printer had made a mistake and substituted page 4 from the November 2017 issue, so we are sending a revised February 2018 issue.

Earl Smith and Judy Lumb

WCTS Sponsors

Ministers and Elders Colloquium

Mariellen Gilpin, Judy Lumb, and Mike Resman

What Canst Thou Say? (WCTS) is an independent publication co-operatively produced by Friends with an interest in mystical experience and contemplative practice. It is published in August, November, February, and May. The editorial and production team is Muriel Dimock, Lissa Field, Mariellen Gilpin, Judy Lumb, Grayce Mesner, Mike Resman, Earl Smith, and Eleanor Warnock.

Tell us your stories! **WCTS** is a worship-sharing group in print. We hope to help Friends be tender and open to the Spirit. Articles that best communicate to our readers focus on specific events and are written in the first person. We welcome submissions of articles less than 1500 words and artwork suitable for black and white reproduction.

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In 2012 the editorial team (Mariellen Gilpin, Judy Lumb, and Mike Resman) for What Canst Thou Say? (WCTS) met in person for the first time, at least for this group of editors. On our agenda was how to insure the longevity of WCTS beyond us. We looked at each other and said, "We should have a gathering."

As we planned our first gathering, everything fell together easily. Even though we were quite late, Earlham College was willing and able to host our gathering, "Sharing Our Stories: The First Annual Gathering of Friendly Mystics" the next June. We advertised only through WCTS, and 45 participants from our writers and readers signed up. We had no real program, no facilitators, no committees, no business, only "Sharing our Stories." We split up arbitrarily into small groups for intimate exchanges. We had two time slots for Interest Groups and 15 rooms, so we put out 30 sheets of paper with a room and a time for participants to sign with topics they wanted to lead, and for those who wanted to attend to sign. That worked beautifully. All participants were seasoned Friends and groups proceeded in good order. It was a wonderful reunion with many people meeting for the first time after knowing each other in print for years.

In the midst of that first gathering, one participant had a leading that this group should "name the spiritual condition of the world." As we planned for the next year, we added a day of extended worship to address that leading. By the time of the

second gathering, we had determined we must first name our own spiritual condition, which became the theme of that gathering.

For the second gathering, "A Mystic Call," we advertised more broadly and had 28 participants, some of whom were not seasoned Friends, and the groups did not go so well without assigned facilitators, but we did address the naming of our own spiritual conditions in extended worship.

The third year we offered a Mystics Retreat, "Touching God Together," ably facilitated by Elaine Emily. "I am a child of God, a mystic, and have been called to give voice to my experience" was the mantra of the 18 participants.

From the Epistle: *As we entered extended worship, the "Prayer of the World" continued as a theme in worship with messages describing our human impact upon Earth, including the specific example of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch (thousands of square miles of plastic in the ocean) which led to a lament and a chant to Yemaya, the Yoruba goddess of the ocean. One participant said she felt this heart-felt worship fulfilled that leading to "name the spiritual condition of the world."*

We published proceedings from the first three gatherings of "Friendly Mystics" which are available on our website <whatcanstthousay.org/past-gatherings>.

In 2016 there were only 14 signed up and before the gathering started we planners decided it would be our last. But several of the participants

were adamant that we continue these gatherings, so we looked for a way to continue. Mike had the idea that we could combine with a Traveling Ministers group, so he approached Maurine Pyle about a combination gathering.

The plan was to hold two gatherings in consort, one for the Mystics and one for the Ministers, that we would worship and eat together, but have separate programs. Maurine brought in Pam Richards to help with the planning. The two of them invited selected participants for the Ministers and Elders Colloquium, and at one point 35 had committed to come. We advertised for the Mystics Retreat, but only two registered, so we cancelled the Mystics Retreat. Four of us (including Bill Mueller) attended the Ministers and Elders Colloquium as organizers with responsibility for registration and documentation, including drafting an Epistle for the group to consider, and producing proceedings.

The WCTS editors were disheartened by the dwindling registrations for mystics retreats. Through several rounds of emails after returning home, it was decided that WCTS would no longer host retreats. We invite Friends to organize gatherings of Ministers and Elders as a follow-up to the Colloquium as you are led.



Nudges

Margaret O'Neal

My entire life is one of responding to nudges from God. This lifestyle began in response to an injury to my foot that occurred at a spiritual retreat where I had given my attention over to my search for God. The injury left me with mysterious chronic pain. None of the conventional medical practitioners knew how to help me, so I turned to the vast, unknown world of alternative medicine. They didn't know how to help me either.

Since no one knew how to help me, I had to learn to be still and receive guidance about which therapy to try, which exercises to do, how much to walk. This was excruciating for me, a dyed-in-the-wool rationalist. Not coincidentally, I was also searching for an experience of God.

Slowly, agonizingly, the guidance came in the form of "nudges," and I learned to trust them. I came to call these nudges "God." God was a source of wisdom leading me toward health.

Gradually over the course of 10 years, the pain in my foot abated. But I was left with pain in my neck and back. Now I feel that I will never be pain-free: pain is a reality, a part of life.

In March 2012 I went to a healing ceremony at the local Catholic Church. I had been raised Catholic, but had been away from the church for many years. Surprisingly, the focus of the service was on forgiveness, and just as surprising was the depth of my response. I cried deep, deep tears; I didn't realize how much I longed for forgiveness. God was no longer an impersonal force. I began my relationship with a personal God who could forgive me and give me nudges.

Against that background, I have tried to give my life completely over to nudges: from small and mundane, such as when to brush my teeth or take a shower, to big and consequential, such as where to live. It isn't easy; my fearful will gets in the way. I wonder where God is leading me. Five times people have been healed through my intercessory prayer, so that makes me feel I am on the right track.

My prayer is to become a hollow instrument—a flute—through which the spirit of God can flow.

Margaret O'Neal lives in Las Vegas, NM, and is looking for a home with someone who is like-minded.

WCTS Has Two Blogs

- 1) Quaker Mystics: Gathering for Discernment of God's Guidance <quakermystics.wordpress.com> was created to support gatherings sponsored by *What Canst Thou Say*, but since we are no longer sponsoring gatherings, this blog could be used for other purposes.
- 2) Soon after creating the Quaker Mystics blog, the editors found the need for another blog to support the journal *What Canst Thou Say* <worshipsharinginprint.wordpress.com>, to publish essays between quarterly issues, or those that didn't fit in the journal.

If you would like to contribute to either of these blogs, contact Judy Lumb <judylumb@yahoo.com>.

On Nudges: We Don't Know the End of the Story

Diane Reynolds

I have found that I am not only nudged by God but also shoved and pushed in a certain direction. It's hard to ignore a shove. When I am shoved or nudged along a path, I believe from the outset that I know why God is pushing me this way. I head out with the expectation of a certain outcome.

Often, however, when I arrive at the destination where I have been shoved, I find that the outcome I expected is not what occurs. Sometimes, when I have followed faithfully, I am disappointed when I get to the destination. What is there is not what I thought. I then tend to disbelieve the leading—and even the shoves. I must have misinterpreted. I went where I was led, and yet it has turned out completely different from the way I envisioned it.

This can lead to disorientation, disappointment, depression and distrust of leadings. I thought I was led here (wherever here is) to help the poor: but the poor here don't need my help. I thought I was joining a vibrant community dedicated to peace, but nobody here is interested in social justice causes. I thought you opened the way and pushed me on the path to education so I would get the secure job where I could fully use my gifts. But there is no good job here. Why have you sent me here, just to confront me with a dead end? Was I wrong all along to trust?

I have found, however, that if I wait, more direction inevitably comes, and I begin to realize that what I thought was the reason I was being led in a certain direction (often a very conventional, socially acceptable reason) isn't what God had in mind at all. Yes, I was led here, but for a purpose I never anticipated. Often, once I get my preconceptions out of the way, I recognize that I have been led not only to something different, but also to something better.

Diane Reynolds is an independent scholar of literature and religion, a college instructor, author of The Doubled Life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and a member of Stillwater Meeting in Barnsville, Ohio.

A Milestone Birthday

William Z. Shetter

The poet's words

*"the day is past and gone / the evening shades appear ..."
have just spoken a newly persuasive message to me.*

Who among us,

dear worship-sharing companions,

can observe that ninetieth

without seeing ahead with a fresh clarity

the now foreshortened span of time ahead?

As never before it has become a present part of life,

no longer a distant merely "theoretical" matter

that I can continue to hold at arm's length—

no more is dying just something other people do!

But how to welcome into life that great final conclusion,

and recognize the reality it is announcing?

Yes, let's say it forthrightly: the death that awaits us all?

My words here are directed to thee and to thee, readers,

from one who has just passed this milestone

that many of you will (I hope) eventually pass.

Join me for a moment in pondering this nudge,

and then I'll ask

What canst thou say?

Death sweeps away all attachments,

the final letting go of all the "cumber"

as life transforms itself into a preparation for its end;

with the extraneous fallen away my "real self,"

my "true nature" becomes completely open and known.

The Light shines unobstructed.

*So a question: if I now anticipate that finality
by deliberately letting go of all I've ever been attached to*

—even my most deep and cherished relationships,

even my awe at the beauty around me—

does that mean I'm bringing death into life

by a seemingly contradictory process

of desert-ascetic simplification?

Is my life's day really past and gone, or

should I rather endow these evening shades

with a deeper, newly richer vibrant life,

learning to see with newly open eyes where

the world's mystery breaks through?

What happens at the end of life we can never know,

but that hardly inhibits us from striving to peer

beyond the great threshold, into life's greatest mystery.

A dying friend told me of her conviction

*that her living consciousness, the infinite sweep of emotions,
was about to be "enfolded,"*

perhaps, I thought, into some all-inclusive higher Reality,

the holy Ground that is our origin and our destiny.

...If I didn't feel the firm conviction within me

that some form of spiritual consciousness,

an eternal becoming, goes on uninterrupted

(true, no longer my individual radiance

but adding to the consciousness that pervades

every corner of the enfolding cosmos)
 would death as total extinction of consciousness
 be worth welcoming into life?
 In his *No Man is an Island*, Thomas Merton wrote
 "Our whole life should be a meditation
 of our last and most important decision:
 the choice between life and death. ...
 If, during our life we have chosen life, then in death
 we will pass from death into life.
 Life is a spiritual thing, and spiritual things are silent. ...
 Those who love true life often think about their death.
 Their life is full of a silence
 that is an anticipated victory over death.
 Silence makes death our servant and even our friend."
 "Silence" here refers (wouldn't you agree?)
 not to absence of sound but to a deep listening,
 a whole new higher-order sensing.
 The silence in me is where I find
 the most deeply buried center of myself,
 my "friend," releasing the hidden secrets of my life.
 In the same book Merton says
 "We cannot find ourselves within ourselves,
 but only in others,
 yet at the same time before we can go out to others
 we must find ourselves. ...
 It is therefore of supreme importance
 that we consent to live not for ourselves
 but for others."
 If on death I'm being absorbed
 into that diamond-studded web of relationships
 that have made my life what it is,
 wouldn't bringing death into my life then mean
 bringing in all relationships,
 with the passage of time conceivably ever-deepening ones
 finding the divine in every presence, and in all things,
 listening to creation?
 —with little more to lose and no more ego-self to defend,
 letting go of all and giving up all control,
 being able to listen with complete freedom?
 If I cannot find myself within myself but only in others,
 bringing in others is the finding of my true hidden self,
 closing the circle.
 Aren't you always able to open to me hidden sides of myself
 that I didn't know were there,
 and might you not awaken something
 that lies at the very core of my being?
 Might I not likewise open new vistas in you?
 Every encounter takes on a worship-sharing quality,
 one that (I like to trust) these words may have already begun.
 Thank thee for listening, worship-sharing companion.
 Can thee share with me what we ponder and do,
 nearing my—our common—conclusion?
 What canst thou say?

Drenched

Michael Resman

Oh God who watches every wave
 and is with each blade of grass
 let me know you're here

The world holds me blind and deaf

Let me hear the whisper of your breath
 in the sighing of the wind

Feel the brush of your robe
 as you come to me

I lay my heart in your hands
 and long to throw my body
 in your arms

Gleaming rose
 glowing sunset
 pale before your glory

Focused on your work
 twirling in ecstasy
 drenched in love

Reaching for the time
 when we are one

William Z. Shetter has been a member of Bloomington Meeting (IN) for over fifty years. He writes: "I am considering contributing to the February 2018 issue with the theme "Nudges." Shortly before the November deadline I will have—*deo volente*—passed my 90th birthday. I think of that milestone as a personal turning point, or a "nudge", because age 90 reminds with new clarity of the (very?) short time I have left. I am being nudged to be ever more earnest and focused, faithful, in the great project of bringing death into life, determinedly seeking that place of perfect stillness deep within where all separation from God finally vanishes.

Conundrums

Michael Resman

I have marveled and been frustrated by the divine nudging process. There have been aspects that are comforting, and some that are frightening. I haven't been able to wrap my head around some of the implications.

About 20 years ago, I occasionally found myself thinking about traveling to the South to help volunteers repair homes for people who had few resources. I "happened" upon an article about a number of black churches that are burned by arsonists each year and my thinking switched to helping rebuild a church.

I became more focused several years later when my youngest daughter was in high school. My wife, daughter and I could all go during the school's week-long spring break.

I wrote to a Quaker Work Camp in the fall, and slowly shopped for some basic tools my wife and daughter could take with them. I had been working with Habitat for Humanity for years, and was familiar with basic carpentry and volunteering.

Then I heard that at the time we were available, a church in Alabama could use some volunteers. I got the details, and wrote to the minister to finalize plans and get directions.

We live in Minnesota, so the drive down took several days. We were met at the building site on Monday morning by the minister. The church was in the country and we were charmed by the setting.

The roof was completed and the walls sheathed. Our task would be to install windows, something I'd done before. Monday and Tuesday we worked as a family team, the only ones on the site. On Wednesday my daughter came down with the flu and was quite ill. My wife stayed at the motel

with her on Wednesday and Thursday.

I worked on Wednesday with a crew of men from the church. On Thursday I was alone in the morning, and the pastor came in the afternoon to partner with me.

Talking together, I learned that he had heard the voice of God while in church several years before that told him he was to become a minister. When it happened, the call was so clear that he looked around to see whether those around him had heard it.

His religion didn't include mysticism as a typical occurrence. He had not been able to speak about how God had called him with anyone. During the afternoon, we talked about spirituality, mysticism and God's love. The next morning, my family and I started for home.

It seems like a simple story. But pondering it from different directions, I saw several conundrums.

It absolutely seemed to me that God had brought the minister and me together with no one else around so we could talk about mysticism. I was awestruck by the series of nudges I'd had for years, culminating in a series of decisions that resulted in that conversation.

It appeared that God had brought the minister and me together without our knowledge or more importantly, our permission. Is it true that God

moves us here and there like mari-onettes? What does that say about free will?

Is it possible that God caused my daughter to become ill in order for the minister and me to be alone for that afternoon? What does that say about a loving God?

Being led without my knowledge has caused me concern a number of times since. When I casually think that doing something would be interesting or fun, is that just me, or is it God's idea being planted in me? For years, I've felt drawn to make a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella in Spain. I'm 70 years old with multiple health issues and am terribly out of shape. It would be unlikely that I'd last for more than a few short days.

Where does this yearning come from? Am I being disobedient—or worse yet refusing to participate in an act of mercy God would like me to carry out? I've pleaded for guidance, but so far have none.

I am in a sense on a pilgrimage now, as we all are. Travelers on the spiritual path. Perhaps that's what the yearning is about: understanding that daily life is a pilgrimage.

Michael Resman is a WCTS editor and a member of Rochester (MN) Friends Meeting. He leads an immigration blog: compassionateimmigrationreform.wordpress.com

Friendly Mystic Gathering Proceedings

Thanks to the faithful volunteer work of Janice Stensrude, the proceedings of the first three Gatherings of Friendly Mystics are available at <lulu.com>. Search for "What Canst Thou Say" and you will see the proceedings from the first three gatherings of friendly mystics, both full color hardback and black ink paperback. They are also available for free download on our website <whatcanstthousay.pdf> on the Gathering page. Enjoy!

A Nudge Toward Healing

Mariellen Gilpin

From the beginning, I had a clear sense that God didn't want me to be mentally ill. My sense was that I was called to make all those necessary changes the hard way, to encourage other mental sufferers to know it really was possible to get well, and to give us all a clear sense that the path to mental health is through changing habits of thought that don't work for us.

Most of my years of gainful employment were spent helping design computer-based instruction, and a lot of my journey to good mental health has been shaped by a concept of learning theory described as successive approximations. Successive approximations is a refinement of the concept of trial and error learning: If we observe a puppy learning to sit up and beg in response to an offer of a treat, we quickly notice the puppy excitedly tries everything when we offer the treat. My Nudge was, "You can do more with your life than this treatment with medicine. You can get really well, and you also want to help others get well too. You can. Let me be your Trainer."

Learning by trial and error is not efficient, but it can become an effective strategy if we pay attention to the Trainer. The dog trainer works by withholding the treat until the dog begins to catch on what the trainer wants. God worked that way with me. My Trainer helped me focus on first one strategy and then another, and another.

I remember in particular when my Trainer provided more-than-a-nudge in the right direction. I had been working hard and having some successes, reducing the number of nights spent

hallucinating nonstop. I hadn't figured out that my core problem was not hallucinating, but feeling I was somehow required to take care of people who clearly were not taking care of me. I hadn't noticed yet that some people are very good at seeking empathy but are themselves incapable of empathy for others. As I tried harder and harder to respond kindly, they become more and more oblivious to the harms they cause. This completely wore me out.

Suddenly the pattern was very clear to me. I knew I didn't need or want any further contact. My Trainer helped me understand the most compassionate way to break these relationships was with clear speech. The kindest way was the direct way: I said

Suddenly the pattern was very clear to me. ...

This was the path to complete healing from the mental illness!

I wanted no more contact. This was the path to complete healing from the mental illness!

It took ten more years before I no longer felt any need to think in ways that led to hallucinating. Life was too important and too precious to waste time being kind to people incapable of kindness. It was much later in my healing process that I saw my pattern of responding to the pain of lifelong shaming by being kind to the shamer. My pattern is still there, and I still struggle to set boundaries caringly. But now my pattern is clear to me, thanks be to my Trainer, who left my faulty thinking unrewarded until I saw my pattern.

Over time I have reflected that rewards can be short term or long term:

if I focus on a short term feel-good reward—like peanut butter chocolate chip ice cream—the longer term result will be a new set of problems like weight-gain. If, instead, I decide to focus my efforts on a longer term benefit—like going for a walk in the fresh air when I want to feel better—I do my body as well as my mood a big favor.

The trouble with choosing long term benefit is my original sense of deprivation: why am I out here putting one foot in front of another when I could be enjoying my box of chocolates? Why am I out walking to calm down when I know how calming a good double chocolate brownie would be—and so much faster!

It takes persistence in a new pattern before we notice the side effects of a longer-term benefit: Not only am I calmer as I walk off my frustration, I've had the enjoyment of watching the sun rise while the bunnies cavort on the lawn, and the pleasure of exchanging the time of day with the fellow in the next block.

I recently realized it has now been more than a decade since the last time I hallucinated. That thirty years of trial and error, learning by successive approximations, (Am I a slow learner, or what?) has had its own rewards along the way: finding a kind way to say no to shaming has deepened more than one relationship, for instance. I have become a better, happier person, one successive approximation after another, in the care of my Trainer. Mistakes don't have to be the end of the story—not unless we let our story end there.

Mariellen Gilpin is an editor of WCTS. Much of her healing has been a consequence of sharing her way down in WCTS as a way of encouraging others to choose the way up.

Holy Spirit Mischief

Jennifer Elam

I got the invitation to go to the 2017 Ministers and Elders Colloquium in Chicago months before it happened and decided to go. Then I decided not to go. I was having ups and downs with my health, had been caring for my aging parents and just thought it would be too hard and cost too much money.

The week before the gathering came and on Tuesday morning, I woke up and knew I HAD to go. I said, "Oh, there are no reasonable flights this late." But, there was. I emailed Mike Resman and knew it was too late to get a room. But, he emailed back that there had been a cancellation and there was a room available. I emailed Maurine Pyle and told her I was coming. She said, "Oh, Holy Spirit is up to mischief. I know it for sure now."

I got to the gathering and she was so happy to see me. That was nice. But, there was an agenda too. Some of the leaders had gotten sick and she needed me to lead an Arts and Spirituality activity. In The Art of Eldering session, Paul Buckley agreed to fill in and talk about eldering and I agreed to do the clay activity (with a few changes of my own). With a few minutes of preparation, we did it. And certainly the Holy Spirit was present. Maurine (one of the leaders who had gotten sick) kept saying over and over that God had sent me there. I think she was right and I was glad to be involved in that kind of Holy Spirit mischief!

Jennifer Elam is a member of Berea Monthly Meeting (Kentucky), a sojourner at Swarthmore Monthly Meeting (Pennsylvania), and the author of Dancing With God Through the Storm: Mysticism and Mental Illness.

Nudges Ignored, Nudges Explored

Judy Lumb

For several years I have had nudges toward the Traveling Ministry. It comes up for me every time I am at Friends World Committee on Consultation (FWCC) Gatherings. I even work on my Spanish in preparation.

I imagine traveling among Central American countries, visiting to learn about the lives of Quakers I meet. As they come to know me, I would bring my Quaker tradition of silent worship and concern for care of God's creation, including responding to climate change.

I have spent my whole adult life in cultures not my own. My 18-year academic career was at Atlanta University (now Clark Atlanta University), an African-American graduate school in Atlanta, Georgia.

That career was cut short by chronic fatigue syndrome, which led me to go to Belize for a couple of months' rest in 1987.

I still live in Belize. Working in a developing institution prepared me well for living in a developing country. One component of that is listening a lot without pushing my agenda until I have finally earned their trust and we can work together on common concerns.

I continue to ignore the Traveling Ministry nudge. I had a wonderful opportunity to discuss this nudge at the recent Ministers and Elders Colloquium last month (October

2017) because FWCC's new Director of Traveling Ministry was a participant. She encouraged me to go on and apply because the deadline had been extended, but I still missed it. The problem is that I cannot figure out how it would fit into my life, which is already quite full. I call this a "nudge ignored."

Another nudge has arisen and I have taken steps to explore it. At Quaker Earthcare Witness gathering in October 2017, I heard Pamela Boyce Simms make a presentation. She is both a Buddhist and a Quaker and made a presentation about an "Activists' Community-of-Practice" that uses mysticism to obtain "guidance from the undifferentiated field of consciousness," and involves probability, quantum science, digital physics and neurobiology.

She described it as a practice that leads to the "Non-Duality," which brings in the essence of feminism. I was intrigued with all these aspects of great interest to me pulled together. At the end Pamela sent around a clipboard to sign up for a plan to establish this "community-of-practice," which I think might be small groups to support one another on this path.

Today I got an email from Pamela to initiate this process. I took the next step to explore this nudge, even though I don't know how it will fit into my over-full life.

Judy Lumb worships with Belize City Friends Meeting in Belize, Central America, but is still a member of Atlanta Friends Meeting. She is one of the WCTS Editors.



Grants for the Study or Practice of Christian Mysticism

The Elizabeth Ann Bogert Memorial Fund for the Study or Practice of Christian Mysticism, administered by Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas, makes annual grants of up to \$1000.

A variety of proposals relating to Christian mysticism are given consideration by the Grants Committee. Recently funded projects relating to Christian mysticism have included a study of papers held at the Haverford Quaker Archives for a PhD dissertation on mysticism and science, a grant for the development of online teaching material on the Christian mystical tradition, grants to Pendle Hill and Woolman Hill retreat centers for programs on worship and contemplative prayer, and a grant to a Roman Catholic abbey toward the cost of new cushions and mats for their meditation room.

Individuals wishing to apply for grants in 2018 should submit a copy of their proposal no later than March 1, 2018, to the clerk, Kenneth Woodrow Henke, Princeton Theological Seminary Library, PO Box 821, Princeton, NJ 08542. Email inquiries to kenneth.henke@ptsem.edu. Proposals should be brief (one or two pages). Two or three individuals who know the applicant and are familiar with his or her work should be asked to send letters of reference by this deadline as well. Decisions are made by the Grants Committee in May and grants distributed in June. Recipients are asked to send a progress report within a year.

House for Sale by Clear Creek Meeting

Clear Creek Friends Meeting has a small house for sale in Hennepin, Illinois 20 miles northwest of the Illinois Yearly Meetinghouse near McNabb. The 1500 square-foot wood frame house with aluminum siding has two bedrooms, two bathrooms and a two-car detached garage, all on a small corner lot across from a park. No appliances come with the house. It has an unfinished basement. The asking price is \$40,000. If you or someone you know is interested in living near our Quaker community, contact Grayce at 309-246-8397. We hope to bring Quakers to our community.

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

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May 2018

Other Lives

**Editor: Rhonda Ashurst
with Judy Lumb**

Do you sense you had an earlier life—perhaps a dream set in another time and place, in which you are someone else? Have you met someone, or been in a place or a culture, unfamiliar and yet eerily familiar? Have you experienced yourself in another lifetime, another personality? Is there work in this life that began in an earlier life? Is your work now enhanced (or not) by your sense of an unfinished task from that earlier life?

Deadline: February 15, 2018

August 2018

Angry with God

Editor: Mike Resman

“The arrows of the Almighty find their mark in me, and their poison soaks into my spirit. God’s onslaughts wear me away. ... Oh how shall I find help within myself? The power to help myself is out of my reach.” —Job 6: 4,13

Have you been angry with God? Why did you become angry with God? How was your anger with God resolved? How has your anger with God altered your spiritual experience? Have you been able to let go of your anger with God? What has helped you do that?

Deadline: May 15, 2018

November 2018

Buried Treasure: Insights from My Ancestors

Guest Editor: Betty Brody

A reflection on the lives of our ancestors can help us construct an awareness of the whole fabric of who we are. To be whole is to be healed on a deep level. What spiritual or emotional journeys have been inspired by learning about the lives of your family members who have passed on? Whether you have experienced them as positive or negative, what gifts of healing, awareness, challenge, teaching or inspiration have you received from family members?

Deadline: August 15, 2018

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