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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*

Young Adult Spirituality

Musings of an Aging Young Adult

Greg Woods

This past September, I turned 35 years old, the unofficial cut-off age to be considered a Young Adult Friend, although the 35 is more of an “-ish”. It is a self opt-out situation. No one will give you the boot. On my birthday, I took a walk with an older friend, a Quaker in her 60s. I started off our walk together by asking her, “When will I ever feel like an adult?” She answered, “I wonder that myself most days.”

I have wondered a lot over the years about when I would feel like a real adult.

Growing up I looked up to the Quaker youth leaders I had in my meeting, yearly meeting, and the Friends General Conference High School Gathering. They seemed wise and confident in where they were in life. I felt as if they had all the answers and I could approach them in ways I couldn’t approach my parents. Also, they seemed to be much more hip than my parents. Because of them, I looked forward to becoming an adult because it seemed as if they had it all together. Back then, I imagined adulthood as a time when life would make more sense and my life path would be clearer.

As I started to become a youth leader myself as a college student, I was terrified because I realized that I didn’t have the wisdom that my mentors had. I wondered, “Where did they get it from?” I felt like an imposter. As I entered into new kinds of friendships with my mentors, I learned about their lives in different ways. I learned about the financial and emotional struggles they had faced. I learned about their own feelings of being an imposter and not always having the answers.

As I grew older, I found out how little I knew. For example, when I became a homeowner a couple of years ago, I quickly realized that I didn’t know a lot about taking care of a house, much less how many things can easily

break in a house and cost a lot of money to fix. When my wife Jenn gave birth to our daughter Margaret Rae, we were both quite worried the first night when we were holding her in bed. How do we care for this new human that was literally born only hours before? I felt as if we needed adults in that situation until I quickly realized we were both in our early 30s.

From the Editor:

Young adulthood is a time of growth and change. It signals a time of leaving home and the confines of childhood, and heading out in the unknown, to wade into the Living Waters, to be led by the Divine.

These times can be calm, chaotic, invigorating, and lonely. We are trying to find ourselves as individuals away from the identities that have defined/confined us as children. This journey can lead us far away from our childhood home or just down the block. Sometimes this journey will lead us back to where we started but with a gained wisdom and a new appreciation. We might find ourselves in new places that allow us to be more fully ourselves.

These entries reflect that this time of young adulthood is not static, that the spirituality of young adults in the Religious Society of Friends is diverse, that we are not a monolithic body with the same needs and desires.

May you as the reader join us as we talk about our journeys to find our truth so far.

Greg Woods, Guest Editor

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

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As I look backwards and forwards, still not totally feeling like a bona fide adult, I have noticed that there is a lot of grace in this uncertainty around feeling like an adult. I don't need to know all the answers, I just need to be present and faithful, two things I am still working on. I am a continual work in progress. Maybe that is where the wisdom is.

I am lucky because I have the support of my extended community of family and friends, which I know is a privilege. We lean on each other for help learning about the things we don't know or understand, whether it is home repair, child rearing, or a million other things. Lastly, even when I doubted the presence of God, I could always feel God's presence in my life. Many times I have not known the way to go, but way has opened, thanks to God and my wonderful community. For that I am extremely grateful as I enter a new phase of adulthood.

Greg Woods (he/his/him) is a lifelong Quaker. Over the years he has worked as a campus minister at Guilford College, as a Work Camp Coordinator at William Penn House, and as a founding Board Member of Quaker Voluntary Service. Currently he is the Youth Ministries & Education Coordinator at Friends Meeting at Cambridge in Massachusetts. Greg is passionate about theology, intersectionality, service, diversity, and working to continually understand power and privilege in himself as a disabled cis white man and in his work. He is the Guest Editor of this November 2019 **WCTS**.

Immersed in Prayer: Stories from Lives of Prayer

Immersed in Prayer: Stories from Lives of Prayer is a collection of personal experiences gathered from people who have chosen a life of prayer. The collection is intended to provide support for those seeking to enrich their relationship with God. Contributors tell of struggles and blessings encountered while their praying grew to become the basis of their life. Here are a few tastes:

Allison Randall: "There is a constant outpouring, or at least a fairly steady leaking out, of gratitude for everything in my life."

Virginia Swain: "I learned a new definition of prayer, to be open to intervention by the Holy Spirit."

Jennifer Elam: "Creativity is my connection with my Creator; that of God within me connecting to that of God that is way Bigger than me."

Charlotte Tomaino: "Prayer is without words, a wordless well where no separate self divides and all is Love."

Rachel Barenblat:

You watch over my changes.

I trust you: I am not afraid.

I find strength in your song.

I become more myself.

Immersed in Prayer: Stories from Lives of Prayer is the third book from *What Canst Thou Say*. It was edited by Michael Resman. Jennifer Elam painted a beautiful painting for the cover. It was published in 2017 and is available on Amazon.com.

An Environment of Acceptance and Possibility

Justin Leverett

Faith Like a Lamp

Martial Ndanga

My faith has been like a lamp as I traverse young adulthood. Knowing what was prohibited to me according to my faith has helped me avoid many traps of this life. What surprised me the most was the diversity of beliefs and how everybody lived their own faith.

What I'm seeking in a spiritual community is to meet people with whom we can share about our faith and what we can do to improve our walk. It has been difficult because I felt many people very closed and reluctant.

The diversity of faith has been a challenge. But I have found what I seek. I understand that Faith is not standard. It is applied to each individual. I can say that I bring the spirit of discernment to a spiritual community. From the discernment, we are able to see traps or anticipate something. And it is very important for us.

I was inspired by Martin Luther. He refused to let his faith be corrupted. It has really affected me because I have met many things.

And at every time I was tempted, I strongly refused to my faith to be corrupted too. It has impacted me positively and I'm happy!

Martial Ndanga is from a town called Kumba in Cameroon. He is 32 years old. He is an author, motivational speaker, life coach, translator and primary school teacher. He has degrees in Sociology and in Sign Language. He has a passion for Asian culture and tradition. He has won several prizes and awards from China Radio International (CRI). He speaks French, English, Spanish, beginning Mandarin (Chinese), and many of the 200 local languages in Cameroon.

My first child arrives in two short months, so I find myself thinking about all that I want him to learn, and all that I want to give him. What are the most important principles I wish to share? They seem uncomplicated: humility, acceptance, tenacity, forgiveness, humor, and hope. Success in life, to me, is not a matter of completing the proper rites or mastering the proper prayers, meeting the expected benchmarks, or checking the right boxes, but a matter of meeting life's challenges with flexibility, humor under duress, and awed observation.

My moments of greatest spiritual weight were found lying under the stars with friends on a floating dock at the lake near my hometown, awed by the lights stretching across the night sky like a sparkling sea overhead.

Spirit in its essence means finding God out there wandering in the wild, lost on a hiking trail somewhere, or traveling on a coastal highway, strung out and awe-stricken and confused with little else to call his own but a dog-eared paperback and rattling backpack. He's learned to laugh through despair, sing through the silence, and smile when nobody's watching. He's learned to take things as they come.

I've found it easy these days to feel so distant and removed from my own spirituality, especially when the working world would have me always striving, climbing the ladder, and rushing about. It has become a rare and uncommon gift when I can



take a day and read, or wander my own neighborhood, travel, or play music. More than anything, I feel my spirit crave a sense of patience with my own process. I wish for my child to feel empowered to slow down, to care for himself when needed, and to explore at his own pace. More than anything, I wish for him to feel empowered to explore.

Through young adulthood, I've wrestled to define who I wish to be in the world, and questioned extensively my own strengths and my own values. I grew up with expectations that were high, but which have very often been deeply frustrated by aspects of the world we're inheriting. I've benefited from participation in some very deep and supportive spiritual communities, but I've also been shocked by the ease with which these communities will turn their backs on me when I'm struggling. I seek a world, and a community, that defines us as whole people and not as problems to be solved; one that meaningfully connects with its members and others, and encourages them to express themselves; one that accepts differences when they appear and takes conflict as a chance for growth.

If this child is anything like me, he will question everything, occasionally challenge authority, and may run into situations in the world where it will challenge him right back. This is ok. I want him to feel secure in the knowledge that this is ok, and that he will be ok, and that he will be up to the challenge, and that he will always be loved no matter what unforeseen struggles he may face.

I'm looking forward to welcoming someone so fully new to the world, although I still feel quite young and new to it myself. I am certain I will

re-experience the world through his eyes, full of wonder and surprise and an ever-questioning spirit. I'd like the family that my wife and I build for him to function as a microcosm of a loving, silly, and tender-hearted spiritual community. Our house should be full of books and musical instruments, toys, games, and possibilities, not to mention snuggling pets and delicious meals. This is the time in my life when I get to create the home life that I would have wanted when I was a child, and gift it to my own child as a foundation for his own life. I can't wait.

May this new child feel the same inherited sense of possibility, acceptance, and love for spirit-in-the-world. We'll both be travelers in the wilderness, myself as a young adult entering a new stage of the journey, and my child as a new and wonderful companion.

Above all else, I hope to build an environment of acceptance and possibility. Instead of pressuring him to achieve unreasonably, I want to be the kind of father who nurtures my child's unique perspective, encourages successes when he finds them, and comforts him after failures when they find him. Likewise, I'd like him to experience the beauty of nature and the wide open starswept sky, and accompany him tenderly on this first portion of the hiking trail of life before he is ready to set his own path. Maybe we can wander in the wild for a short while together.

Under the sparkling starlight of a clear night sky, it is difficult not to feel

that you are a small part of something greater. The daily challenges and stresses melt away and you breathe deeply, lost in awed observation. Things don't seem as overwhelming, and matters of urgency in the working world seem less consequential. I look up with admiration to my own father and grandfather, each of whom taught me the importance of getting fully and completely lost in the world, where you may then attempt to find yourself. Both were wanderers in their own right, one a hitchhiker in his young adulthood and the other a hiker on the Appalachian Trail. Both instilled in me a thirst for adventure and an appreciation for grace in nature, and beauty in wide open spaces and forested trails.

May this new child feel the same inherited sense of possibility, acceptance, and love for spirit-in-the-world. We'll both be travelers in the wilderness, myself as a young adult entering a new stage of the journey, and my child as a new and wonderful companion. He may question what he sees, go off the beaten path, or struggle when facing his own unique and difficult setbacks; I expect this from him. And when this happens, the best I can hope from myself is to smile back at him, hold his hand, accept him to the fullest of my ability, and convey to him that he is up to the challenge... That we both are.

Justin Leverett was raised as an unprogrammed Quaker with roots in reform Judaism and is a member of Multnomah Monthly Meeting in Portland, Oregon. He lives in Portland and works as a concierge at the Portland Japanese Garden. Informed by his time in Quaker Voluntary Service as a fellow in Atlanta from 2012-2013, his passions include writing, French language and culture, and music.

Sight

Briana Halliwell

*The mirror cracks
And I see through
the panes of glass
I see through
the pain of the world*

*The image shimmers,
shudders
and shakes,
distorting and revealing
the reflection of God.*

*Never have my eyes
been so wholly peeled
to expose the belly
of the beast of truth*

*I see the world
through a film of color
and abstract form
A maze of reality
where I am lost
in the midst*

*With both eyes closed
I hear the whispers of God
through inhuman ears*

*The eagle soars
high overhead
liberating the current
upon which it flows*

*The owl ducks
and sweeps through the air
Painting invisible portraits
With the brush of its body
Never have I seen
such exquisite beauty*

*The earth reveals
itself to me
I am broken open
And made whole again
In the span of a single
moment*

*Creative, chaotic,
catastrophic and cruel
Clumsy with perfection
dizzy with symmetry*

*And I shudder
and I stutter
and I shake*

*I quake with the enormity
of the simple gift
of Presence*

*With both eyes open
the world reveals
itself to me*

*in its makeshift forms
and algorithms,
squiggles and lines
drawn together*

*by the hand of a child
the talon of the hawk
the curve of a mountain
the claw of the bear
the tangle of a root
the slither of the serpent
the shape of a wave.*

*All etched
On the blank canvas
Of God.*

Briana Halliwell is a Young Adult Friend from Maine who grew up in New England Yearly Meeting. She participated in the Quaker Leadership Scholars Program at Guilford College in North Carolina while she studied Biology and Environmental Studies. Briana has a passion for protecting the environment and connecting people with the outdoors to inspire them to care for the natural world. She practices Buddhist meditation regularly and is currently expanding her understanding of Buddhism in the Plum Village Tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh. She is interested in exploring the mystical aspects of the Quaker faith as well as other faith traditions, in light of her own enigmatic mystical experiences. She currently works as an Editor for a website called The Adventure Junkies and spends her free time going on climbing adventures with her puppy!

Ocean of Darkness and Death Infinite Ocean of Light and Love

Johnny Williams

About a month ago, I was asked by a Friend if I would consider writing a short piece about Young Adult Friend (YAF) spirituality. I must confess that I initially felt some hesitation bubble up inside of me.

One reason is that I'm 24 right now, and haven't written an essay on anything since graduating from college at age 22. While this may not seem like a long amount time to many Friends, I found that my first year of life after college was immensely challenging and passed by slowly and painfully at times.

Another reason for my hesitation is that I have often felt like an outsider in YAF spaces and retreats. I wasn't raised Quaker, or even religious at all, and never attended any religious services in my childhood years, let alone Young Friends programs.

I first came to the Quaker movement voluntarily during my first year of college, much to the surprise of my (mostly) secular family. I attended Meeting infrequently during my first two years of college, and didn't start identifying as Quaker until well into my third year.

After having spent a semester abroad in the fall, I felt a deep aching in my heart for the sense of belonging that my Monthly Meeting provided me. This aching, mixed with the deep existential anguish that I felt in light of the inauguration of the 45th president, led me to begin attending Meeting every week on First Day.

I often found myself reflecting on George Fox's quote, "I saw also that there was an ocean of darkness and death, but an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness." Meeting for Worship has allowed me to perceive a small glimpse of that infinite ocean of light and love, even in the midst of what often feels like the rapidly increasing collapse of the civilization as we know it.

Friends have provided me with an immense amount of solace during these past few years and have ignited a drive within me to "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God" (Micah 6:8).

In closing, I would like to offer a word of caution to my fellow Friends. I caution us to avoid generationally siloing ourselves, and to make efforts to connect with Friends across many different ages. I believe that it is only by embracing the incredible richness of experience that every generation of Friends has to offer that the Quaker movement will continue to thrive well into the next century and beyond.

Johnny Williams is a frequent attendee of Mount Toby Friends Meeting in Leverett, Massachusetts. Johnny is a lifelong musician and has been a convinced Friend for the past several years. Johnny loves autumn, acoustic guitar, and teaching teens about food and music.

All in

Lynette Davis

What does "All in" mean to you? My spiritual accountability sister and I decided that we would each address this question on our next call. We both found each other in the midst of feeling frustrated that we couldn't seem to find people in our local communities who wanted to go deeper in their spiritual walks. While I have friends who attend church or attend regularly to activism work, the day-to-day is the priority and Spirit is another slice of their life balance pie. However, for me, Spirit is and has always been my foundation. My spiritual journey is what sustains me, and now increasingly what motivates me and constantly calls me to transform and innovate.

The seeds of communal religion and a call for personal spiritual relationship were planted in me at a very early age. In addition to occasionally attending Sunday school and church services, I had a friend who was a prayer warrior, and she introduced me to having a personal relationship with a Higher Power. I began having dreams and visions early. But I didn't understand or see the connections of prayer, dreams, and relationship with Spirit. So I walked my path led by a desire to please others, not rock the boat and maintain security, even though I would often be "disobedient" with my constant questions and what ifs.

In 2014 I was startled out of my sleep with a beckoning unlike anything I had ever heard or felt before. My life and consciousness of path began to change. I call it my "burning bush" moment because I will admit at first I was afraid before I found comfort in the Presence and purpose in the Call.

My journey has presented many twists and turns. At one time I had really and truly considered that I may be agnostic. But alas, despite myself, I hear my name called over and over again. The miracle that presented itself was that I had come to a point where I had deeply disappointed myself. I did not live up to my own ideals or standards and felt great shame that I had fallen despairingly from the pedestal of “good girl” I had been placed on. I reached a point from which I didn’t think I could return. As much as therapy helped me to carry on, something in me just couldn’t move forward. I still struggled with feeling irredeemable. The day that burning bush moment happened, my life became transformed. I knew I could no longer linger and waver in the comfort of an identity of victim or villain. I had been given new vision: a call to love, a call to the work of love, a call to rest in the gift of love.

One of the convictions in my heart was that it was time for me to join with others in worship. Love is meant for loving after all. So, “Do not forsake the assembling of ourselves together” and “For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them” took on new meaning for me. I knew that after leaving the contemporary church to find G-d for myself, I wouldn’t feel at home if I went back, but still I desired a community of believers. I had a feeling “home” would be unconventional.

My spiritual accountability sister offered me the phrase “heterogeneous mixture” to wrap my mind around my current spiritual community. It turns out that I have a passion for interspiritual understanding and dialogue and I couple that passion with my background in Abrahamic faith traditions. I have now been

attending a Friends Meeting for worship for three years. Some elders saw in me what I didn’t see in myself. When they asked me to join the worship and ministry committee, I agreed.

I was ordained clergy in my previous church setting, so it seems I can’t run from my call to serve. Now I am partnered with an accountability friend, a spiritual director, and involvement with a nonprofit whose focus is on mysticism, activism, and healing. I’ve found a fellowship within the Quakers that addresses my unique experiences where I just don’t receive that kind of nurture at my main Meeting. All of these have become my spiritual community. It is not the linear road I thought I wanted, but it is the circle of spiritual care toward one sure purpose that I need.

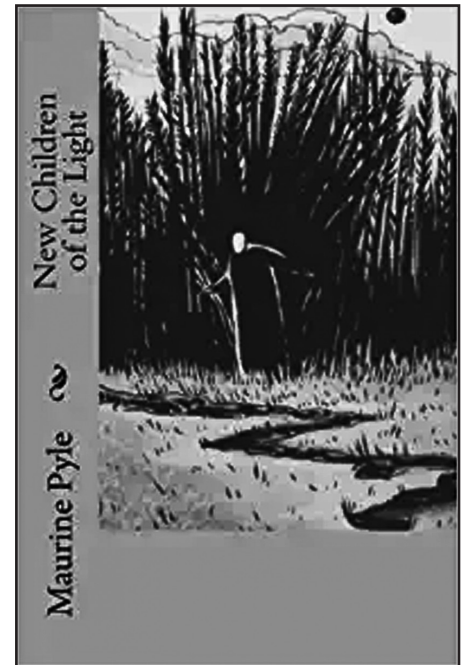
I am constantly being introduced to teachers and utilizing my spiritual gift of discernment to help me hear truth and encompass wisdom to aid me on my journey. And this is great! But it is when I rest in the gift of love that I come to know G-d. To let go and simply dwell in the resting place of G-d’s mysterious Presence is when I find my deepest lessons in love, in life, in healing, and in wholeness. Rest is a well of water overflowing; it is quenching my thirst. It is a garden of fulfillment, the restorative oil to light my lamp. It is remembrance of the One who sent me, and it is the peace of our connectedness that inspires me all the days of my life. So when I say that I’m “All-in” I mean to say that I’m not going anywhere. I journey with and for G-d.

Lynette Davis is an Abrahamic faith-based mystic and love activist. She is an author, blogger, and nonprofit founder. She also regularly attends Haddonfield Monthly Meeting in southern New Jersey.

Metaphor of Simplicity

Karla Moran Jay

The following is an excerpt from *New Children of the Light: Quaker Youth Speak Their Truth to the World* by Maurine Pyle, published in 2017.



Focus On God

Maurine: *How do you feel your ethnicity? Do you feel more American than Guatemalan or more Guatemalan than American?*

“I feel both. I have gone back to Guatemala, and I felt at home. There were a lot of things that I didn’t know, but I felt that I could have fit in easily after a few months of being there. I also feel comfortable with Americans.”

What about your church in Indianapolis? Did your dad start that church?

“Yes, that one started about three years ago. And we had our ups and downs. Right now we are pretty low in average attendance. We share expenses with another Quaker meeting.”

You are not a blended congregation.

“No, we are not. We are actually very, very different theologically. Even if we weren’t theologically different we probably wouldn’t be able to blend it yet because a lot of the people who are attending are first generation immigrants, maybe second generation.”

Just learning English. Your programs are all in Spanish?

“Yeah, we meet in the evening, and they meet in the morning.”

What style of worship do you have?

“We have singing, we have sermons, right now we are starting some sort of dancing for the children so that they can begin getting involved with the worship and give them something active to do.”

Do you have open worship, silent worship at all?

“We don’t. We are trying to start something like that with the teenagers who are the ones asking more for it than the adults.”

Really? They want open worship?

“We have ten to fifteen minutes. They have visited places like Indianapolis First Friends, and they have seen it and they are able to understand and grasp the concept more than the adults.”

So do you feel comfortable using the open worship model?

“It depends on where I am in my life. There was a time when I went to Indianapolis First Friends; they have an open worship on Wednesday nights for one hour. And for about a year and a half I went every week. But then I felt I wasn’t comfortable there anymore.”

“Probably, maybe I needed to move on. I stopped attending. But

right now I feel like I want to go back on Wednesdays and start attending there again.”

So you are really a blend in the way you are worshiping. Maybe more traditional Guatemalan type of service and also open worship. There is more gospel in use than gospel in speech among Liberal Friends, but they are not talking about it anymore. How do you experience the Quaker metaphor of simplicity?

“It is a very important part of who I am. I have seen my dad’s simplicity in his life. Not in the way that most white people do it [like] ‘I drive a Prius.’ Or things like that, but I have seen the difference between him and

. In fact God has blessed us because we don’t go around looking to be better. But at the same time God has blessed us, and he has blessed us a lot. I have been able to travel to Europe, to Africa, to Latin America. I’m still working on college. I feel very blessed. But that doesn’t have to be the focus of our life—to gain things.

other family members. They are very preoccupied with having a career, achieving goals, having this house and a car like this and the latest Smart phone and the latest shoes. My dad is like, ‘It’s okay if you want to have it, but that shouldn’t be our goal, that shouldn’t be our focus.’ We have been actually a little criticized for the things that we are, but at the same time my dad’s thought is that is not what is really important in life.”

Criticized for what? Your materiality or the lack of it?

“The lack of it. We don’t want to achieve anything, to amount to anything. In fact God has blessed us because we don’t go around looking to be better. But at the same time God has blessed us, and he has blessed us a lot. I have been able to travel to Europe, to Africa, to Latin America. I’m still working on college. I feel very blessed. But that doesn’t have to be the focus of our life—to gain things.”

So you say “we” meaning the whole family. This is also something different about Latin Americans; you say “we” and in America we say “I.” It’s the group, it’s the family.

“I am the only one living with my dad right now. I help him with the church. That is mostly why I am still living with him.”

Any other way that simplicity helps you or leads you? Spiritually even?

“Speaking for me, I feel that having goals in life is very important. But at the same time God should be our focus and our family. If we want to get to our goals, it is because we want to share it. That has allowed me to free up.”

You seem very peaceful to me, very happy. You are not driven the way Americans are.

“For me it is more important experiencing with people than having things. It is pretty hard for people to understand in our Latino community, which is mixed. I think because in Latin America we come from really poor backgrounds. When people come here they want to get the American dream, and the American dream is having a house. It is not a bad thing having a house and a big car and being able to spend as much money as you can. That’s the American dream.”

“My relatives came here many decades ago with the same ambitious compulsion to have houses, to have land. They were really driven people. So I think America is a place where a lot of ambitious people end up.

“Yes, they are very ambitious people, and it’s hard because, for example, when I go to Latino communities I feel that sometimes they could even look down on me because I haven’t gained the American dream.”

I loved the communal feeling in Guatemala when I visited there. It is a different feel in the way people are with one another. Whereas here you feel the electric energy of drive, drive, drive. Like the women were down washing clothes in the lake together. There was a feeling of community and oneness. I went to a church one night full to the brim with people there on a Wednesday night. There were these boys who wanted to go to America. ‘I’m going to America. I’m going to have my dream.’ And they do struggle and they do come.

“Their background drives them.”
Poverty does drive people, but somehow you have found a simpler way. It sounds like your father has provided a lot of leadership.

“Yes, yes he has.”

Karla Moran Jay was born in Guatemala and brought by her parents to Los Angeles as a one-year-old child. Her mother died when she was four and a half years old. They attended the second Hispanic Friends Church planted in the U.S. in the 1970s by Guatemalan Quakers, who are evangelical and pastoral. Her father is a pastor who is planting a new church in Indianapolis, and Karla is helping him. Karla is married to Michael Jay, the pastor at Raysville Friends Church. Karla also works as an activist and community organizer advocating for immigrants rights. She enjoys cooking soups on her time off and spending time with her family.

Dear WCTS Editors,

In response to the concerns expressed in the last issue about the decline in submissions, despite the fact that there has been no drop in subscriptions (readership), I offer the following ideas and suggestions.

I think more people might contribute submissions if the newsletter’s content were expanded beyond the present structure of one theme per issue. (Like “Letters to the Editor” or book reviews, or other regular sections of a magazine.)

I would like to suggest three standing themes or sections of the newsletter -- that seem central to the worship-sharing mission of WCTS, as I understand it.

1) Personal mystical experiences: Readers could have a standing invitation to write about their personal mystical experiences, or “intimations of the Divine” -- at any time, for publication in every issue -- whether or not these experiences are related in any way to the special theme of an upcoming issue.

2) Mystical experiences of others, encountered in literature. In addition to a standing or ongoing request for people to write about their personal experiences, I think it would be very interesting for WCTS to invite submissions -- for every issue -- related to mystical experiences that had been experienced by others, which readers had encountered in various books, whether autobiographies or fiction, whether contemporary or long ago. The submission could include perhaps a quotation or excerpt; as well as any thoughts or comments the submitter wanted to share.

3) Afterthoughts: Readers who had not submitted anything for the special theme of an issue might be inspired, after reading that issue of WCTS, to write something on the same theme. These could be published in the next issue.

Thank you for asking for ideas, and for your consideration of my thoughts. And most especially, thank you so much for all the work that you do in editing and publishing WCTS!

Louise Champagne

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Enclosed is a contribution of \$ _____

I cannot afford \$12, enclosed is \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Please write for *What Canst Thou Say?*



February 2020

Healing

Guest Editor: **Susan Greenler**

To heal means “to make sound or whole.” Healing comes in all forms: emotional, physical, spiritual, and most often these are intertwined. Each day we live brings opportunities for healing, growth, wholeness: this is life. We invite stories and poems about an experience or transformation that is foundational to who you have become. How have you healed? What led to an experience of increased wholeness? What have you learned along the way? How has God/Christ been present in your healing journey? What does the concept of “healing” mean to you?

Deadline: November 15, 2019

May 2020

Gratitude

Guest Editor:

Marcia Nelson

The German mystic Meister Eckhart said: *“If the only prayer you say in your life is ‘thank you,’ that would be enough.”*

What are you thankful for? Has gratitude made a difference in your experience? Are there times when gratitude is a challenge for you? Have you experienced any situations that have been transformed by gratitude? Do you have any spiritual practices involving gratitude?

Deadline: February 15, 2020

August 2020

Poetry as Prayer

Guest Editor:

Janice Stensrude

Robert Waldron writes, *“The source of poetry is our deepest inner selves.... Poetry, like the mystical prayer of the saints, plunges us into the spiritual depths where there can be a real encounter with the Divine.”* Have you read a poem or poems that have brought you into that “real encounter with the Divine”? Have you been inspired to write poems as an expression of your “deepest inner self”? How has this experience affected your reflective life?

Deadline: May 15, 2020

What Canst Thou Say?

WCTS c/o Michael Resman
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Rochester MN 55902

Address Service Requested



Young Adult
Spirituality