



February 2014
Number 81 (2)

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*

Spirit-Led Writing (Supplement)

I Need to Stop Now

Rhonda Pfaltzgraff-Carlson

Recently, while writing, I found myself needing to stop. The writing process was becoming too intense. A bit over a year ago, the idea came to me that I should write about God being male and female. I was surprised. I was in the midst of dealing with an unrelated issue, discovering the root of my internal obstacle to realizing God's love. I took down some notes, then returned to my problem.

Some months later, I wrote that paper, found where I thought it should go, and submitted it for publication. I was very excited when it was accepted because it was the first time I'd gotten a paper accepted by a paid editor!

Then, I waited and waited and waited. Months went by. Finally, I learned that it had gotten lost in the shuffle, so I needed to resubmit the paper. By that time, I felt like I should revise the paper before sending it again. The editor was encouraging so I took up the paper again.

While writing the second draft, I found myself changing it in ways that I had not expected. For example, in the first version, I had merely highlighted a couple words in one of the scripture texts to make a point. Now, I felt I needed to include the context to explicate the meaning of the words. That demanded that I understand the text more completely.

It was rough going. I worked slowly through the phrases. I fought the urge to skip to other verses and kept with it. I drew sketches to document the ideas that I was developing. They allowed me to go on, holding the strands I had captured previously while picking up the strands that were coming next. It was like weaving with three hands.

My effort was rewarded. Not only did I end up with an expanded view of the text but of reality itself. While I had time to write more, I felt I should stop. If I wrote more that day, I could become spiritually overwhelmed.

Later, I sensed that I needed to add another scripture. Not knowing what I was looking for, I flipped through the Bible. Within a minute, I tripped onto a verse that seemed to fit..., but it didn't fit..., but it fit.... Clearly, I had some reservations.

Did I really need to add it? Had I found what I needed? I couldn't be sure. I chose to add it, with the trust that I would work through the issues as I had with the previous text.

When I read it through again, I noted a disparity within the text. By including all the seemingly relevant verses, the text contained contradictory endings. I was surprised, but not confused. From my study of the Old Testament, I had learned to appreciate what appeared to be contradiction as inclusivity.

Next, I realized that previous interpretations within the paper had set me up to overcome what didn't seem to fit in the text. They led me to find buried counter-cultural wisdom. I knew that Jesus played with words, especially in parables, to spur his audience to new thinking, so it confirmed for me that I was on the right track.

Working through the implications of the counter-cultural wisdom, I found myself having to stop again! My grappling with the text was not only resulting in new cognitive understandings but also spiritual insight. I was working on multiple levels. My conscious thinking was stirring up super-conscious processes, so much so that I could feel it

From the Editors:

*The WCTS editorial team is very happy to introduce our newest member, **Rhonda Pfaltzgraff-Carlson**, co-editor of this issue on Spirit-led Writing. Her name will be familiar to our readers from her recent contributions to WCTS and her leading at last June's gathering of Friendly Mystics <quakermystics.wordpress.com>.*

Amazing Spirit-led writing was submitted, more than we could fit into our print version, so even more Spirit-led writing awaits you in this web version.

—Judy Lumb

What Canst Thou Say? (WCTS) is an independent publication by and for Quakers with an interest in mystical experience and contemplative practice. It is published in August, November, February, and May. The editorial and production team is Lissa Field, Mariellen Gilpin, Richard Himmer, Judy Lumb, Grayce Mesner, Rhonda Pfaltzgraff-Carlson, 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.

Please send your text submissions in Word or generic text format and artwork in high resolution jpeg files. Photocopied art and typed submissions are also accepted. Send via email to <wctseditors@gmail.com> or hard copy to **WCTS, 818 W. Columbia, Champaign, IL 61820.**

All authors and artists retain copyright to their articles and artwork published in **WCTS**. **WCTS** retains the right to publish initially and to reprint in **WCTS** anthologies. If you want to reprint an article from **WCTS**, please contact us for permission. We will make every effort to contact the author. If that is not possible, we may grant permission and ask that a copy be sent to the Meeting last attended by the author.

Subscriptions are \$10 for one year, \$18 for two years. Back issues are \$1.50 each, \$15 for a partial set (Issues 1-20, 21-40, 41-60, 61-80), and \$60 for a complete set to the current issue. Email subscriptions are \$5 per year. Send subscription correspondence to Richard Himmer <WhatCanstThouSay@verizon.net> or **WCTS, 1035 Hereford Drive, Blue Bell PA 19422-1925.**

physically: pressure in my ears, dizziness in my head. I needed to stop writing to avoid being overwhelmed. These symptoms signified to me that my writing was Spirit-led.

Rhonda Pfaltzgraff-Carlson is co-editor of this issue, the newest member of the WCTS editorial team. She is a member of Community Friends Meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio. Look for her article in Friends Journal soon.

If You Find a Magic Ring ...

Eric Sabelman

Unlike the folk tales handed down from generation to generation transcribed by Brothers Grimm, these stories are new. Not only does every story have a date, it has a time: the hour of Quaker worship in which it was spoken, according to the practice of ministry in a silent meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. I write down the story as soon after Meeting for Worship as I can, in as close to the original words as I can remember. What follows is one of those stories.

If You Find a Magic Ring ...

Once when the world was young, there was a dwarf with magical powers. He dug and delved deep into the earth, and at the bottom of his mineshaft he found a jewel of surpassing beauty. He freed it from the surrounding rock and lifted it up; its light filled the dark tunnel. Every facet of the jewel shone with pure Good; it gleamed with caring, kindness, faithfulness, compassion, service, love, and every other such quality as humans can possess. It was as if the jewel contained the essence of Good.

"Into what kind of setting can I put this marvelous jewel that will show its beauty to best advantage?" thought the dwarf, as he carried it into his workroom. He lit the fire in his forge and got out his tools.

With exquisite craftsmanship, the dwarf made a Ring to hold the precious jewel... a Ring of surpassing

ugliness. Into the metal of the Ring, he put every aspect of Evil that humans are capable of: cruelty, arrogance, greed, deceit, betrayal; nothing Evil did he leave out.

When the dwarf set the jewel into the Ring, its glow was a brilliant contrast to the dark, twisted iron of the Ring. I cannot tell you the long story of the Ring, between the time it was made and the present. But here is how the story continues.

Later today, you will be going about your business: maybe you will be walking your dog, or pushing a cart down the aisle at Safeway, or just pruning roses in your yard, when a raven will fly overhead and drop the Ring right in front of you.

Since it is obviously intended for you, you will pick up the Ring and put it on your finger.

Which are you wearing, the glowing jewel or the twisted iron Ring? When you show it to your friends, what do they see? The jewel? Or the setting?

You try to take the perfect jewel out of its ugly setting, but find that you cannot; they have been welded together by magic.

It seems likely that the Ring has magical power. How will you test it? Which will you test? The jewel? Or the setting? What will you do with it, since however long you live, you cannot keep it forever? Will you hold it up in hope another raven will fly by and take it, and so free you of the conflict between Good and Evil, but at the cost of losing the jewel?

Will you give it to someone who already has power, trusting they will use only the jewel?

Will you give it to a child?

Eric Sabelman is a biomedical engineer working on Deep Brain Stimulation for treatment of Parkinson's Disease. He began attending Quaker meeting in Pasadena in 1969, and became a member of Palo Alto Friends Meeting about 20 years later. He and his wife, MaryAnn, have two grown children and live in Menlo Park, California.

My Friend and My Guide

Patricia McBee

The Spirit or my inner guide—I never quite know how to name it—frequently joins me in writing in my personal journal. My journal is usually a narrative of something I am struggling with in my life or of something I’m sorting out about my relationship with the Divine.

I’ll be writing along in the first person, speaking of myself as “I.” Then through no conscious choice, I’m writing in the second person, and I’m being addressed as “you.” Sometimes it’s a dialogue. I’ll write a question and then I’ll write an answer, an answer from the guide. Then another question; then another answer.

Often the Spirit/guide will break into my struggle with reassurance. I know that some people experience inner voices that are hostile and blaming. Mine never is. At least, not so far.

This summer I was struggling with a break-down in a work-related relationship. It was laced with issues of race and class and economic power. Day after day, page after page, I wrote and sought to understand my contribution to the rift and begged for guidance for what I might do to repair it. Into the midst of this struggle, my guidance dropped the words, “your goodness.” My *goodness*? I was searching for my hidden flaws that potentiated this breach in relationship, and my guide dropped in “goodness.” I resisted that. Jesus resisted being called “good.” “Why dost thou call me good? None is good but God alone.” (Luke 18:19) But here was my guide, wanting me to pay attention to my goodness.

Here is one dialogue from my journal during this time:

Me: Dear God, what would you have me do?

Guide: Remember your commitment to goodness.

Me: Goodness is too high of a standard. I received the message as a compliment, now it is a burden and a demand.

Guide: No. It was not meant as a compliment, but as recognition of your intent to goodness, your manifestations of goodness. Even in this mess, it was in the context of reverence and respect. Your loving heart was in the right place.

This dialogue didn’t completely take me off the hook. It went on for several pages that pointed out my contributions to the rift, not heaping coals on my head but describing ways I could understand and behave differently.

Some weeks later, this was given to me: “It is arrogance and lack of trust in God to beat yourself up and get all wrapped up in guilt and remorse. Stop thinking of yourself as perfect. Of course you will err. Pick yourself up, turn to God/your inward-best-self/your guide and admit your weakness and ask for help. Then rest in trust that guidance will come.”

I am grateful for this reassuring friend. The Spirit/my guidance doesn’t absolve me from responsibility for my behavior, but it is there in my corner, reminding me that I am imperfect but loved just the same.

Patricia McBee is a member of Central Philadelphia Meeting. For several years she was on the WCTS editorial team.

Led to Lead from the Center

Patience A. Schenck

After 14 years in the classroom, I admitted to myself that I needed a different job. I loved teaching, but I was beginning to discover that I preferred working with adults, as I was doing within my meeting. I had gone into teaching school because that was what women like me did before the women's movement. I had given little thought to what I might love to do or what might best use my personal gifts.

An old college classmate suggested I get some professional aptitude testing and another friend and I began exploring the Myers Briggs Type Indicator. This was an exciting quest. I began to think of my interests and aptitudes as gifts of the spirit, uniquely mine to give and meant to be cherished, developed, and used.

I was hired to direct a career service for women at our local YWCA. I loved this job. I got to help women assess their skills and interests and look for jobs based on who they were, not just on what openings were available.

I knew people in my meeting who tried to respond as activists to every crisis—local, national and international—and they seemed to be spinning their wheels and burning out. Others found it overwhelming to even try to tackle the world's problems. It occurred to me that looking at one's God-given gifts and passions, not just responding to need, would be a good idea for activists as well as job seekers. I mentioned this idea to a Friend

who was planning a Quaker leadership program and she asked me to develop a workshop.

I agreed, and the next step was to write a course outline for a workshop to be called "Answering the Call to Heal the World." Participants would assess how God was calling them through their gifts and deep caring, and that would be the starting point to their discernment of how they were being led to work for peace, justice, the environment, or whatever. Then they would trust that God was leading other people in other ways, and they could trust the spirit to cover all the bases and leave them free to follow what was theirs to do.

My daughter was applying to graduate school, and she asked me to go with her when she visited Chapel Hill, NC to be interviewed for admission. While she was on campus, I set myself up in the hotel cafeteria where they offered unlimited refills of coffee.

I had expected to be quite overwhelmed by the task of writing a course outline for such a long workshop—two days. But to my surprise, the outline almost wrote itself. I had a strong sense that I was not writing it alone, that I was being guided, used by the spirit. My energy was high, my concentration total. I felt that I was doing holy work. Furthermore, I saw a pattern in my own life: leaving teaching, the job at the career center, and being led to apply what I learned

there to people who were discerning a ministry in their own lives. This work was *my* ministry. Every time I started to think about a new portion of the workshop, the ideas just came to me, often in ways that surprised me and seemed just right. I felt led to this work and led in it, and it was a privilege.

The workshop succeeded in helping participants discern their own unique ministry to Friends and the larger world. I ultimately offered the workshop three times at FGC Gatherings. Then, after several years, I felt that the leading was no longer alive, and I laid it down. However, before leaving it, I decided to write up the main points of the workshop. The result was a Pendle Hill Pamphlet, also called *Answering the Call to Heal the World*, published in 2006.

Writing the Pamphlet came fairly easily because I just adapted my course outline and wrote up some of the wonderful ideas I had garnered from workshop participants. But I didn't have the same sense of guidance. However, the initial outline I wrote with the help of the spirit that day in Chapel Hill served me well when I wrote the Pamphlet.

I have never doubted that I was chosen for this work and guided as I developed the course outline.

Patience A. Schenck lives in Annapolis, and is a member of Annapolis, Maryland, Friends Meeting. Since laying down the work described in the article, she has followed a leading to antiracism work.

A Soliloquy on Love

In that class, we were required to write a reflection paper on love. I knew it would not be an ordinary academic paper. My inner voice told me this paper had to be written from the heart and the soul. I got an "A" on this paper and in the course.

Pam Melick

Where does love live within us? It matters not whether it lives in our heads or our hearts or our soul, or anywhere else for that matter, as long as we can find that place within us. Yet, most of us have no idea where love lives, much less how it really feels.

Love is an idea, long co-opted by greeting card companies, moviemakers, and romance novelists determined to tell us what love is and what it looks like. Love is hearts and flowers. Love is heart-throbbing excitement. Love is urgent, passionate sex between two stunningly beautiful strangers who have just met and fallen in lust. We have lost our ability to know what love is because media clamors to define and redefine it for us.

Love can be bought and sold, bargained and compromised, attained and lost instantly. It is a commodity purchased for birthdays, Valentine's Day, and Christmas. The more we spend, the more we show we care. Or so the commercials say. Love is no longer a feeling that applies to family, friends, parents, children, people, and favored pets. Love has form. Love has evolved into everything material. Love is a Big Mac, a Mercedes, a diamond ring. If we don't like this week's model, we can upgrade! We can trade it in for the bigger and better model that we will love even more. As the McDonald's slogan says, "I'm lovin' it". Whatever "it" is.

Love is external, something we can find only in someone or something else. We are not complete unless someone loves us back. We spend our lives being Shel Silverstein's incomplete circle, searching endlessly for our missing piece. We have given away our loving selves because we are

convinced that love only comes in the reflection of someone else's eyes. Only they can love us. Only they can make us worthy of love. Only their love can make us whole.

Love is pain. "Love hurts, love scars, love wounds and marks... ooh, ooh, love hurts." How many times have we embraced the Nazareth anthem and sung it with all our heart? We use love to justify man's inhumanity to man. And to woman. Abused spouses stay because they love their mate. They are convinced that he or she will change. Over and over and over again. Parents hit their children because they love them. How many

Love is an idea, long co-opted by greeting card companies, moviemakers, and romance novelists determined to tell us what love is and what it looks like. Love is hearts and flowers. Love is heart-throbbing excitement.

times have we heard "I'm doing this because I love you"? Cruel words. Emotional wounds. Physical violence. All in the name of love. A legacy of painful love passed down from generation to generation, mother to daughter, father to son.

Do I sound like I think love is dysfunctional? Maybe. Sometimes. Do I sound like I'm against love? I'm not. Love can be pure and gentle. But I am saddened that so many of us live according to these interpretations of love. So few of us can live in a truly loving place for very long. Which brings me to another question...

Where does hate live within us? Sadly, many of us can access our place of hatred much more readily than we can access our place of love. Even sadder, the place of hate often lives closer to our surface and occupies more space within us than love. Yet we must know where hate lives if we ever hope to transform it.

Hate lives like a malignant cancer within us. Our anger and rage hurt us most of all. Hate chews us up, bit by bit, destroying all that is within us until our entirety is poisoned by its venom. Hate constricts our blood, corrupts our mind, and deadens our emotions. Hate strips others of their humanity. Worse, it strips us of ours. If left unchecked and untreated, hate creates within us a black hole that obliterates our ability to love.

Hate pits person against person, family against family, nation against nation, religion against religion. Hate wipes out logic and reason, replacing them with raw, seething destructive emotions. Hate removes our self-control, strips us of our sanity, and assures us that whatever we do is sanctioned. Hate gives us power. But at what cost? Hate signifies the de-evolution of mankind.

Hate is a publicly sanctified way of being. Prominent religious orders encourage hating those who do not believe as they do, despite exhortations about loving one another. Leaders throughout history justify it. Wars have been started on hate alone. Hate blames others for our misery and our misfortunes. Gandhi told us that an eye for an eye makes the whole world blind. Hate makes us all blind. Sadly, hate, rather than love, is often the glue that binds us together.

If hate is a blight on humanity, why do we tolerate this overwhelming disease? More importantly, how do we stem hate's rising tide?

Where do understanding, compassion, and forgiveness live within us? Understanding, compassion, and forgiveness are the seeds of love. They are the signposts that take us back to the fertile ground where love can grow. If we can plant them in ourselves, we have hope to plant these seeds in others.

Understanding strips the blindness that hate creates. Understanding develops within us a calm knowing. It lets us appreciate what others think and feel, and creates the capacity to feel empathy. Understanding allows us to transcend our limitations of perception. It lets us see through another's eyes, to walk a mile in their shoes.

Understanding sets the stage for trust. Understanding unites the collective and allows truth to emerge from the whole. Understanding transforms our perceptions. Understanding paints people as honorable, caring, and good. Understanding allows spirit to move within and amongst us. Understanding creates the unspoken bond that links us through our shared knowing. Understanding opens the space to allow us to be who we are without diminishing any. Understanding stirs the compassion in our hearts and invites us to care.

Compassion opens the space in our hearts for us to care. Compassion is the balm that soothes our pains and the salve that heals our wounds. Thomas Merton defines compassion as "the keen awareness of the interdependence of all things." Compassion connects us through our hearts and emotions.

Compassion takes us to the soft, gentle place of loving ourselves, first and foremost. If we cannot love ourselves, how can we shine love on others? Compassion gives us the capacity to forgive our flaws and to strive to

be our ideal. Compassion shows us that which we admire most in others also lives within us. Compassion allows us to see ourselves as whole.

Compassion takes us to the soft, gentle place of loving others. Compassion allows us to see the humanity in others, to see them as friend, not enemy. Compassion allows us to forgive them their flaws and to help them strive to be their ideal. Compassion allows us to see others as whole. The compassion we shine into others amplifies their light, until the brightness of each illuminates and touches all that surround them.

Forgiveness is often the final surrender to love. Forgiveness is the door opened by compassion and understanding. Many mistakenly define

Love is the healer of souls. Love reclaims dignity. Love makes us whole again. Love is where we are all one. Love allows us to touch God and the souls of all living beings on a level deeper than we ever imagined.

forgiveness as forgetting. We imagine that forgiveness requires us to say that everything that has happened is OK. What we fail to remember is that forgiveness is about closure, for us. Forgiving does not require forgetting. Forgiveness merely allows us to cut the ties that bind us to our old pains and wounds. Forgiveness gives us choice again. Forgiveness sets us free. Forgiveness lets our inner light shine more brightly than ever before.

Jesus, Martin Luther King, and many other spiritual leaders have asked us to love our enemies. They asked us to forgive. But it is far easier to hate and kill them than to love them. Killing them allows us to ignore them, to dehumanize them. Loving them

means growth, sacrifice, and, horrors of horrors, realizing that which we despise most in them lives in us also. If we were to love our enemy, we would have to acknowledge our flaws. We would be required also to see their humanity. We would have to acknowledge that we share the same hopes and fears. And worse yet, we would have to acknowledge that they have the capacity to love. Yes, love. How can we hate someone capable of love?

We most often forget to forgive ourselves. We are so busy working on finding understanding and compassion for others that we fail to realize that we need this too. Self-forgiveness is the first step to making us whole again. Self-forgiveness recognizes that we make mistakes and are worthy of the same understanding and compassion that we give to others. Practicing forgiveness for ourselves exponentially increases our capacity to forgive others because we are no longer bumping into the old hurts and wounds that have stood in our way. The more we forgive ourselves, the easier it is to forgive others.

One of the hardest exercises I have ever undertaken was to write a letter of compassion to someone I hated and a letter of forgiveness to someone who hurt me deeply. I wanted to cling to my hatred, to my martyrdom. As I wrote, I forced myself to look from their perspective. I forced myself to imagine their thoughts, pain, life experiences, and beliefs. I forced myself to look for the good, human, and loving parts in them. The more I opened myself up to understanding, the more my heart opened in compassion. By the end of the letters, forgiving came more easily. And, more importantly, forgiving myself followed.

I have come to realize that only understanding, compassion, and forgiveness allow love to flow. Love cannot be demanded. It can only be

released. Only through these seeds can we come back to love. Love for ourselves, love for others.

Where does love live within us? We need to know. Once we truly find this place, we will never want to leave.

Love is the place that comes from evolution. Love is the soft gentle place that comes when we have released the anger and the hate and the pain. Love is the place where we have and are forgiven.

Love is the place that knows no bounds. Love is inclusive. It swallows all that enter in a warm embrace and whispers "Welcome. You are wanted." Love is unencumbered by past and future. It only lives and fills the moment. Love is the eternal Now.

Love is where compassion breathes. We can take the hurt and the pain of the world and transmute it. We can gather the wounded and broken souls in our arms, holding them the way a mother holds a child. We soothe the wounds and kiss the tears away.

Love is the radiant light in the world. Love is where the light of the soul shines, chasing away the darkness of hatred. Imagine individual lights of love joined together, creating a collective brilliance so powerful that no darkness can remain. This is the world bathed in love.

Love is the healer of souls. Love reclaims dignity. Love makes us whole again. Love is where we are all one. Love allows us to touch God and the souls of all living beings on a level deeper than we ever imagined. Love is peace that defies words and wonder. Love creates paradise on earth.

Love is where our heart, our words, and our actions are one. Love is the place where our souls live manifest.

Pam Melick is an attender of both Detroit and Birmingham (Michigan) Friends Meetings.

Writing Spirit-Led Minutes for the BYM Peace Committee

Gene Hillman

In the mid-1980s, I was serving on the Peace Committee of Baltimore Yearly Meeting. One weekend we met for a committee retreat at a Christian Brothers retreat center south of Frederick, Maryland. During the opening session on Friday evening, I was asked to serve as recording clerk. That session was devoted to setting the agenda for the remainder of the time.

As is common among Quaker activists, thoughts were all over the place. After an hour or two, the clerk (some of you may remember Steve Davidson) paused the meeting and asked me to compose a minute. I didn't know what to write. Like the meeting, my notes were all over the place. I sat there staring at the paper not knowing where to begin.

The clerk asked for silence and to hold the recording clerk in prayer. For a few minutes nothing happened, then a few words came to me and I wrote them down. They kept coming, slowly, and I kept writing. It must have been about 20 minutes but it seemed longer.

When I put down my pen, we all just sat there. In a few minutes, the clerk asked me to read what I had written, which I did. Knowing the Quaker penchant for word-smithing, I expected a lot of corrections but I got none. There may have been some crossing of t's and dotting of i's, but I don't remember even much of that.

That by itself would be evidence of the working of the Spirit, but more compelling to me was the presence of the divine spirit feeding me the words. Even then, I might have been skeptical of my subjective sense of the numinous. However, the general acceptance of the minute, which was observable, convinced me that my writing was Spirit-led.

Gene Hillman and his wife Patricia Daly are members of Goshen Monthly Meeting, where Gene is Recording Clerk. He was convinced while working at the U.S. Naval Academy, and joined Annapolis Monthly Meeting. He has worked for both Pendle Hill and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and is now retired.

Discovering God as Companion

In 2007 the WCTS team published *Discovering God as Companion*, an anthology of the first ten years of publishing the meeting for worship in print, *What Canst Thou Say?* In the past five years, over 600 books have been sold. *Discovering God as Companion* is now available as an e-book for Kindles, Nooks, iPads, and other such devices.

Discovering God as Companion: Real Life Stories from What Canst Thou Say? Mariellen Gilpin, Editor, 2007. Published by Authorhouse. Kindle Edition available from <amazon.com>, Book Nook Edition available from <barnesandnoble.com>, Paperback available from FGC Bookstore <quakerbooks.org> (800) 966-4556.

A Way to Pray that Works for Me

Sally Campbell

When I tell people about my spiritual disciplines, they often chuckle at my favorite one I call "horizontal prayer." ... My favorite gift from these actively restful sessions are the songs that come if I am patient and listen them into being, both the words and the music. I have become convinced that beneath the confusion and bustle of the world there is an amazing, subtle but real and loving force that is constantly wanting to work with us if only we will let it. One of my songs says: "Slow down, open your heart, rest in the Light, slow down." Here is another of my gift songs:

Stillness of Stone, a meditation

Sally Campbell

Voice

Am 3 G Am 3 F 3

Still-ness of stone, Flow-ing of wa-ter, Bright-ness of

G Am G F 3 Em G 3

fire, Free-dom of air, Let me be free, Flow-ing and bright, Let me be

C

still.

Sally Campbell has produced a CD of her songs, which she gives to anyone who writes to her <scampfriend@earthlink.net>. She says the songs come to her as gifts, so she never charges for them. She is trying to be an example of the gift economy.

Spiritualism and Channeling by 19th Century Friends

My great-great...uncle Isaac Post was a central figure in a lot of spiritualism in the mid-19th century in upstate New York. He was a strong advocate of the Fox sisters, who "communicated with the dead" using, it was eventually determined, their ability to snap their toes loudly. He and his wife Amy were both Friends—significant actors in anti-slavery and women's rights. There is an entire book of letters he wrote/channeled from people long dead at the time, which I believe is still referred to by some in the modern spiritualist movement—an interesting aspect of our Hicksite heritage. Below and the following three pages are excerpts from Post, Albertson, Hicks: Family Letters, Vol. I, which I edited and published in 2009.

—Margery Post Abbott

Isaac Post was born 1798, in Westbury, New York. Amy Kirby was born December 20, 1802 in Jericho, Long Island, and died January 29, 1889 in Rochester, New York. She was Isaac's second wife. Isaac married her older sister, Hannah (b.1799) in 1822 and moved to Scipio in central New York. At Hannah's request, Amy visited them there soon after the marriage. In 1825, Amy was engaged to marry Charles Willets.... A few months before the wedding was to take place, he died.... In 1827, Hannah Kirby Post died, leaving Isaac with two children, Mary and Henry. Amy cared for the family, then married Isaac in 1829. They moved to Rochester, New York, in 1836.

Amy Kirby, at the time of her marriage in 1829, was a member of the Orthodox Jericho meeting and Isaac was a Hicksite. She was considered to have "married out of the order of Society" and Friends who attended the wedding were also judged to have transgressed the Discipline. She then withdrew from Jericho meeting and joined the Rochester Monthly Meeting, Farmington Quarterly Meeting (Hicksite). This meeting later split off from the Hicksites....

By the 1840s the Posts were active in attempts to establish men and women on an equal footing in all matters within the Friends meeting. They were both also active in the anti-slavery cause. By 1837, Amy had signed a "worldly" anti-slavery petition and became friends with Abby Kelley Foster.

In 1844, Sarah Kirby Hallowell's husband, Jeffrey, died leaving significant debts. Isaac took on the burden and moved to a farm. He managed to retain his drug store while Amy managed the farm. Amy's other sister, Elizabeth Mott, was abandoned by her husband about this time. In 1845, Isaac and Amy withdrew from the Hicksite Friends meeting, which opposed political activism and radical anti-slavery work, as both were very active in the anti-slavery movement and the underground railroad. They both helped found the new Yearly Meeting of Congregational Friends (renamed Friends of Human Progress in 1854) which many other anti-slavery and women's rights activists among Friends founded when they became dissatisfied with the stodginess of the Hicksite meetings.

The Post home was a center for traveling activists such as William Lloyd Garrison, Lucretia Mott, Sojourner Truth, Susan B. Anthony, and Abby Kelley Foster. They were close friends with and actively supported Frederick Douglass, who moved to Rochester in the 1840s, and helped him assist fugitive slaves heading for Canada and start his newspaper, the *North Star*. Their son Joseph worked at the newspaper.

Amy became an active speaker on both anti-slavery and women's rights issues, helping to found the Western New York Anti-Slavery Society in 1842. In 1848, she attended the first Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls and signed the Declaration of Sentiments, then was on the arrangements committee for the next conference, which was held in Rochester. Soon she joined together with two seamstresses to form the Working Women's Protective Union and continued in similar work the rest of her life.

The Posts were also central figures in promoting Spiritualism as an alternative religious faith. They became involved in 1848, when two sisters, Margretta and Kate Fox who lived near Rochester, heard strange rappings which were determined to be communications from the dead. Isaac became a firm believer in this communication and supported the sisters in gaining wide public notice. Many others were convinced of their authenticity, including Horace Greeley. Judge Edwards of the New York Supreme Court investigated, was won over, and in 1853 published a treatise on the subject. The interest remained until the 1860s. The Fox sisters later apparently admitted that the rappings were done by cracking their toe bones. Isaac, however, also became a medium and "channeled" a large number of letters supposedly from the dead, including George Washington and Elias Hicks. Letters from his late sister, Phebe, and from Aden Cory are part of this collection. In 1852, he published a book of these letters, *Voices From the Spirit World*. Spiritualism was a widespread phenomenon in the mid-19th century, comparable to Transcendentalism, and still has many adherents.

Spirit Writing to Isaac Post from his Uncle Isaac Post

July 21, 1857

Editors' Note: The following letter is from Isaac Post's deceased uncle, also named "Isaac Post." This and the letters on the next two pages are documents that are 150 years old. There are some small sections that could not be deciphered. They are indicated by underlines.

My dear nephew Isaac it is with pleasure that I am permitted to take thy hand. It is a privilege I did not anticipate, but my beloved Hannah very kindly offered to propose it to thee and thee was quite willing to gratify me. I am desiring to state some of my experience in my present abode to thee.

Thee recalls me that I was long out of health, that I was long expecting to leave my body. I therefore had much time to reflect upon my probable destiny, but although I had lived what was considered the good life and it was my privilege to enjoy the society of them that were very anxious to do their duty faithfully, I was still without the assurance of what was in store for me. It was only a short time before I left my poor afflicted body that I was permitted to see the wonderful happiness that was in store for me and not until the weakness of my frail tenement was too much exhausted to give to my dear ones such information as I longed to.

I was therefore obliged to close my bodily eyes without uttering my feelings. On shutting my eyes to all that I so much loved, for my bed was surrounded by my dear Father, Mother, Brothers, sisters, nieces and friends, I found was just entering my real life. That my former life had only been an introduction, a preparatory one to the life eternal. That the former, although short, was to determine my present and never-ending one. On my conduct in my former was suspended vast consequences, consequences that cannot be fully measured by the most powerful intellect. Oh the advantages thee had over me. I was groping as it were, in the dark, while thee is permitted to know that what I am telling thee is true. What a privilege.

How can any one look on and not be convinced of these truths. Truth of such vast importance both for the present and future. Now my dear Isaac, as I was saying, I found myself just entering my real life. I at once perceived how I was situated and what a condition my former life was about to place me in. With what joy I was filled when I perceived this. For I had nothing to fear. I had all my life given heed to my monitor within me. I had been accustomed to receive consolation from something within which I believed placed for my instruction for my guide, and would

On shutting my eyes to all that I so much loved, for my bed was surrounded by my dear Father, Mother, Brothers sisters, nieces and friends. I found was just entering my real life. That my former life had only been an introduction, a preparatory one to the life eternal.

land me in happiness at the end of my bodily race. But how or where I knew not. All to me was uncertainty. But having as closely as I well could, followed this my monitor, I had led a life of goodness and of happiness comparatively. I had endeavored to promote peace and goodwill on earth. I had endeavored by example and precept to encourage to temperance, to sobriety and to Godliness as far as I understood. To be sure, I could discover weakness during my sojourn, but they were so overbalanced by the good, they seemed to be remember, remembered not.

Thee may then see with what delight I was filled as I was clothed

with my Spiritual body. It is not in the power of language to give my feelings. I was filled with wonder, love praises and adoration to him that had thus given me such unspeakable favours.

That he had placed within me a guide that by steadily following had introduced me into the society of the good and free, the redeemed. My affinity for the good, for those that in Scripture are called that through great tribulation were assembled giving Glory to God in the highest for his unspeakable favours.

My dear Isaac being now safely on the shores of my new Life, I was not to remain stationary condition. Such a state would not be a state of happiness without progression. I have been steadily advancing ever since I am with the reformer. With him that has no country, the whole brotherhood of man are my countrymen. I am in the field where suffering humanity is and as far as is possible whisper consolation to the sufferer. I delight to help the afflicted bear their burdens and lighten them as far as possible. Thee cannot be fully sensible of the enjoyment it affords to labour thus disinterestedly for my Brother that died. It affords the most happiness of any labour that Spirits are capable of performing. I would state to thee, I have the society of my Parents, Brothers, and Sisters and their Children. We can commune together, yet we are not of the same affinity here. There are affinities that unite more closely than kindred or the flesh. It is my privilege to often visit them. Are but two of us that belong to one circle of commune as we are classed. Thy Sister Phebe is the one that harmonizes with me. Our theme is let us do what we can to enlighten those who are left behind. Let us do what we may to those every hand

From Aden T. Cory To Isaac Post “Spirit Writing”

July 4th 1851

and let the oppressed go free. It is our work to enlighten the ignorant, to encourage the downcast, to cheer them on their way and make them feel that there is a good time coming. Then bear patiently your afflictions instill into the mind that robs cruelty of a great share of its pain.

We also plead with the oppressor to stay his cruel hand and endeavor to show him how much he loses by thus laying waste his better feelings. Those feelings which if motivated would render him happy and those about him for it is a truth that must continue to live that an individual's happiness is always increased in proportion that he increases that of others. I am continually admiring the beauty, the adaption of things to the uses for which they were designed, thus to increase our own happiness we minister to the comfort of others. To be happy ourselves, we must do our duties continually to others hence wars and goodness are incompatible. Love and hatred cannot dwell together in harmony. Purity and sensuality cannot occupy the same beast at the same time. Hence the necessity of cultivating the pure, the good, the lovely and the kindly affections, for these will make happy while in the body and in the Spirit state greatly advance us. Then it is plain that professions will not answer our purpose, but it is the ___ that will entitle to heaven and happiness. I feel to say further that could those in the body realize that what they call death is only a renovation, a realizing, a new birth. And that as they live while in the state of existence, their destiny is to be determined for all time. And who knowing this for a certainty would be so hardy as to delay making a preparation by having their lamps trimmed and burning, and well filled with oil. I will now leave thee with my best wishes for thy prosperity.

Thy uncle Isaac Post
(to his nephew, also Isaac Post)

My Friend Isaac Post. I am very glad to see thee under the present circumstances. It is a favor I do not deserve for my conduct when I last was thee in the flesh was such that I have regretted it ever since. I have been in the Spirit State. Thee remembers how I spoke of Jesus as doubting whither ever such a man lived and that I indicated the Idea of special providences. I now find that Jesus Christ did live and that he lived the good life, that he was governed by the same Spirit that enables me to use the pen in thy hand, that he was indeed the Son & sent of the Father, he was the most perfect man that ever had a being. He was not the son of God after the flesh, but he was the son of God after the Spirit and Power of God.

Now my dear Friend, my earnest desire is that I may make amend for my impropriety. I want to say to everyone that heard me express my doubts about Jesus Christ that I deeply regret the manner that I treated the subject. That I now deeply regret the Spirit in which I suffered my expressions to flow. I deeply regret the light manner that I spoke of these subjects. I was after impressed by the same Spirit that governed him. I was at times permitted to feel the inflowings in no small degree of the same governing power that was so remarkably exemplified in him. I was often to the astonishment of myself filled with the same Spirit that filled his Soul. I was often filled with the same Spirit that he was led by to tell the people of their transgressions. I was often led by the same Spirit to Speak of the goodness of Almighty God. I was often led by the same Spirit to give Glory to God. I was often led by the same Spirit to speak of the goodness of my redeemer always meaning God

in that expression I was right, but how much was lost by not keeping mine eye single as the pure Jesus did to the good Spirit within me that would have ever led me aright. But I lost much to myself by undertaking to reason beyond my power. I could reason to the satisfaction of my own mind that many things believed in by many otherwise goodly people was eronious and they were so. But I undertook to reason and find out such things that my God did not design me to know. There was my greatest error. I was permitted to look into the future by the Spirit that was with me, to speak in the prophetic manner that that was wonderful to myself. Yet at other times I was ready to doubt every thing of a Spirit nature.

Oh what an inconsistent Man I was at then so under the power of the living God I felt myself strong enough to bear any opposition that might come in my way. And I had such inward assurance that I was sustained by a power that was beyond any ___ power that I was possessed of that I was ___ in Wonder, Love, Adoration & Praise to him that was thus carrying on the work through me. Therefor thee readily see by my trying to search into hidden ___ I became a Dwarf as it were. Thee recollects the first time I met thee in thy house I was very feeble in body, how mightily I was clothed with the power of the living God. Altho the body was so prostrated I could ___ set on my seat, yet I was led by my ___ Monitor to trust in God and undertake to go thro seeming impossibilities to get to Meeting. It is fresh on my mind now as at the time. Now the ___ of the living God was manifested through my very ___ frame, the wonder of my Friends to the astonishment of ___ sayers and the wonder of myself.

Had I even _____ as attention to the good guide that had delegated for my direction, how much good would be done and how I should have been advanced in present state. It was given me to have been of the greatest reformers that has ever walked the earth, but what a failure I made _____ of going bodily forth wherever the truth may lead, I became trammeled with sectarian notions yea I may say with cursed _____ Chains and I therefore first in a mean _____ God freedom and undertook to find _____ that God never designed that I should _____. What I lost I cannot now regain, but this testimony go forth that I _____ of accomplishing the great work that I might have done. In great measure I failed to live out the whole life which infinite goodness designed me for but thanks to his great name I am not wholly lost. My _____ is the privilege to often visit those in the body and impress upon them their duty to themselves, there God and there fellow men. I am permitted to encourage the reform, to do what I so failed to do. I see that I can do much in this was to carry on the great work of reforming men. It is my business to impress the minds of those that are engaged in _____ the peaceable Spirit of Jesus. It is my business to impress the mind of those that are engaging in the cause of Antislavery, Temperance, Womens Rights and other reforms. I often inspire them with courage and a determination to persevere through opposition. I see that this manner of communicating by using the hand of our Friends is one of the mightiest instrumentalities that have ever been _____ saved to man for the accomplishment of his happiness and prosperity both temporally and Spiritually. My Friend, I feel to encourage thee to give them as much as possible to the direction of thy Spirit Friends. Such as are actuated by Good motives so as have the advancement of the world at heart, such as joined in Spirit with the good in all ages to promote the best Interests of man and the highest attainments of his nature.

Now my Friend I would advise thee to let no opportunity pass without using is to advance the great work by assisting all that is in thy _____ to do for it is of vast importance. Let men realised that there Spirits do live after their bodies cease to move and pass from sight forever. I feel to give some of my experience relative to my leaving my worn out _____ a wretched house for the Spirit to dwell in _____ it was time to have a new one but I even who had testified so much of the goodness and sufficiency of God felt in doubt about the new house and therefore I show to stop in the old one as long as I could by according to the unchangeable Laws of Nature the old one when it is worn out it must fall. So I was forced to come to it . . . I will now leave thee with my best wishes for thy welfare in every sense of the word.

Thy Friend Aden T. Cory

From Phebe P. Willis To Isaac Post

(Phebe Post Willis Died 1846)

July 8, 1867

My dear Brother Isaac, I have been very anxious in this priviledge for a long time my Spirit is filled with much, very much that I wish to say to thee my dear Brother. I see thee is willing to write for thy friends. I feel from the love that always subsisted between us that we shall both esteem it a favor that is inexpressible to converse in this manner. Now let me refer thee to one circumstance in thy life it is as fresh on my recollection as at the time it occured. It seems to me thee will remember it. I mean the first time thee saw me at Scipio. I then thought I never should forget the circumstance we went to John

Searings and then saw Aden T Cory. He was very talkative and said he did not believe that there ever was a miracle wrought. I then felt astonished at his presumption but I now find it be a truth, a certain fact all that occurs, all that has ever occured has been and is in accordance with the unchangable Laws of God. I mean of course that, that states to circumstances over which man has no controll. He I know is a free agent and can alter the condition of himself but those things that occur that are beyond mans controll. I was alluding to the visit we had a free time together, we differed in sentiment but I always felt a particular regard for him afterward. I now find that even he is enlightened as he has come far short of fulfilling his destined mission for as he said to thee the other day (for I witnessed that communication to thee my brother and was rejoiced that thee gave him the opportunity) he failed to do all that was given him to do. He also said he is in the enjoyment far exceeding his merits, still I regard him as one of the most usefull Spirits. I regard him as a very great promoter of reforms.... [1/2 page more of same]. My Dear Brother, there is much that I would communicate had we the time. Oh, since we have this unspeakable priviledge in conversing in this way, may I not hope to often say a word Except my thanks for this from thy ever dear Sister Phebe P. Willis. Thy Hannah has this delightful privilege to be thy principle _____ at which I rejoice for she is worthy.

Phebe P. Willis



Writing from my Hammock

Judy Lumb

When I first arrived in Belize in June of 1987, I was ill. I had been sick with chronic fatigue syndrome for two years. Just finishing a big push to get through my two sons' high school graduation and the dismantling of my household, I barely made it on the plane. I was headed to the beach of Caye Caulker for two months of total rest.

I thought surely after a full rest I would get well again. There was nothing I had to do but meet my most basic needs: rice and beans for one meal, peanut butter the next, and a nice swim in the Caribbean Sea. I slept a lot and spent most of my time in bed or a hammock, but I didn't get well for 11 years.

One day I received a letter from a friend who was a clinical psychologist working in a prison treatment program for sex offenders. Part of her role was to publish a newsletter that contained parolee's accounts of their continued progress after being released. She wanted me to contribute a column. I wondered what I could say that would be relevant—what would I write?

One morning, I woke up with an idea. I grabbed paper and pen because the words were flowing out as fast as I could write. Before I got sick, I had done a good bit of writing but never like that! It didn't feel as if I was doing the writing; I was just a conduit through which the words came. It wasn't me; it was Spirit-led.

For the next year and a half, writing that monthly column was the full extent of my work. Sometime within each month, I would wake up with next column pouring out. In the first column, I introduced myself as being confined, not in prison, but by my illness. I related my Quaker belief that there was that of God in everyone. Also, I presented my friend Hortense.

She was a rape victim who thought my efforts at writing these columns were wasted because no one ever changed. In the second column, I described Hortense flying into a fit of rage. There had been a rape here on the island which had reminded her of her experience.

The content continued to flow out of me. The third column was titled, "On Getting in Touch with my Inner Self." I wrote about my illness and how my work with dreams had helped me to understand the aspects of my personality and behavior that had contributed to my getting sick. The next column was entitled, "Women are People, Too," in which I wrote of my frustrations about how women are portrayed. In particular, I described how wives were treated as possessions in the Bible. I also discussed my own insecurities, how I tended to sell myself short.

In another column, "The Creatures I Live With," I described the cats that wanted to move in, the geckos that croaked when the weather was going to change, and how the crabs' antics entertained me. I ended with, "These creatures have taught me much about living together in peace and harmony. Hortense said, 'No one need ever dominate another. Even a baby has her/his unique character and place in the world. We must all just live and let live.'"

The monthly columns kept coming to me as long as my friend was publishing her newsletter. My experience with the newsletter led to a career of writing and publishing from my hammock. At first, I published for the environmental and indigenous communities in Belize. Then I got a marvelous opportunity to work on *Friendly Woman*, a Quaker women's magazine that moved every two years

to a new group of women. SAYMA (Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association) women were scattered over Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee and Belize. The only reason we could take on *Friendly Woman* was that email had become available. We were all new at email, so we had to develop methods of decision-making. At times when there were no responses, we said we had to imagine the nodding heads. After two years when it was time for *Friendly Woman* to move to another women's collective, I grieved its absence from my life.

The year before I had encountered *What Canst Thou Say?* at a display at Friends General Conference. I was so intrigued that I ordered all the back issues, but I didn't read them right away. When I did, I saw a request for additional team members. I thought about responding but decided not to because the request was three years old.

A couple of days later I got an email from someone I didn't know asking if I would like to guest edit an issue of *What Canst Thou Say?* I was quite surprised because I had thought about responding to that request, but never did. That was 2002. I have been editing and doing the layout for *What Canst Thou Say?* ever since.

I continue to publish both for Quakers and for people in Belize, keeping my feet in two worlds. Along the way, quite magically, I was healed at an indigenous ceremony, but that is another story. I am grateful to God for a very rich life, clearly Spirit-led!

Judy Lumb is still a member of Atlanta Friends Meeting even though she has lived in Belize since 1987. She is on the editorial teams of WCTS, Quaker Earthcare Witness and Quaker Institute for the Future.

Channeling or Communication?

Alicia Adams

I've been in contact with beings from other realities since I was a very young child. Some of these beings have been other expressions of my greater identity. They live in settings and times distinct from my current one. For example as a child, when I was asked why I didn't wish to walk barefooted in the mud with my siblings, I immediately identified with one of these other-self expressions. I was a woman dressed in a conical straw hat walking barefooted in mud and water tending my rice paddy. Inwardly, I rebelled at my limited life. "I don't like the feel of mud squishing between my toes," I told my siblings.

Did I channel this connection? What is involved in experiences such as these? Why have they been so common with me when they are apparently uncommon with others? Recent research, including that of doctors who resuscitated children who had died but were brought back to life, indicates that near-death experiences are one cause of a wider sense of self. I had a number of these as a child. This may explain some of my other-self experiences. It may also explain my experiences of communication with beings of high consciousness who call themselves our Teachers. They say that in our created state, we were One with them.

When I think of channeling, I think of Edgar Cayce. He was unconscious when he was questioned. He spoke as another identity, one with knowledge not normally available to his conscious mind. When he regained consciousness, he had no memory of what had been said through him. This is not my experience. I am always aware when I communicate with our Teachers. I don't always remember the details of what they reveal to me unless I record this in some way. I'm focused on what they are giving me. I can always ask for

clarification. It's a conversation rather than a one-way flow of information. I used to record our communications in writing and I still communicate with them in this way, but now my partner, Daniel Richards, also records our communications. He normally asks the questions, but when I wish to comment or ask questions, I do so. I am not in a trance.

Who are our Teachers? In their words, "We are your family, Beloveds. You left us long ago to experience life in a realm for which we weren't created. We who remained in our created realm lost you then. We have been trying for eons to awaken you to your true nature and your vast potential."

How do I recognize them? It's through heart resonance with them. I am filled with their powerful love. My heart responds in kind. There's a tremendous uplifting of my spirit. Daniel says he has the same response. It's like a powerful Meeting for Worship. Pure joy! We feel instant relief from the burdens of our life. We seek clarity. What they share with us always helps us see our situations more clearly and begin to unwind old patterns which have trapped us. They offer us all we can absorb and utilize.

I've been in this type of communication with them for over forty years. Now, I regret that my ability to open to and utilize their perspectives has been so limited. It would have saved me a great deal of pain and confusion if I'd consulted with our Teachers before I made life-changing decisions instead of when I was deeply immersed in the consequences!

In 2008, Daniel and I were trailer-camped on a palm plantation in southern Baja California, Mexico. One night, I connected with our Teachers while Daniel slept, intending to write my questions and their answers in a

notebook. Unexpectedly, they began to dictate the story of who we were created to be and how we became humans in our current limited and wounded state. They called this "Horses Count!"

Over the next weeks and months, they dictated what has become volume I of a trilogy. They call this volume "Lost in Space". Daniel and I are sharing this with friends, asking for their comments and questions. We will include these with our Teachers' answers.

Reading this as we edit and shape it, we are beginning to drop negative judgment of ourselves and others. Our Teachers show us it is our self-judgment which has limited us as humans and caused our destructiveness to life. With this new understanding and the powerful help offered to us, we can begin to express our true Selves.

What is the value of such communication? This must be determined individually. For us, it is the most important experience we've ever had. When conditions are right and "way opens," as Friends say, we hope to share this with others. As it has been freely given to us, we will share it the same way with those who are heart-focused and spiritually searching for answers to our need for clarity and a new approach to our lives. After almost 70 years of connection with other realms and beings, I'm finally sharing some of these experiences and their value to me. I trust others will gain courage to do the same with their experiences as I come "out of the closet" with mine.

*Alicia Adams and her partner Daniel live in Mimbres, New Mexico. She has already published **First Light: Flight from Fear** the first volume of an autobiographical trilogy, **Net-Caught: Our Journey to Wholeness**. It is available at online bookstores or contact her <alicia.dan@gmail.com>.*

Proceedings of Sharing Our Stories

As the “First Annual Gathering of Friendly Mystics” was drawing to a close, Janice Sternsruide volunteered to solicit contributions, edit, and publish the Proceedings of this historic gathering. She has now assembled a beautiful document, complete with photos of the participants. You can download it from <<http://whatcanstthousay.org/ProceedingsSharingStories-2013.pdf>>. Those who are not online can request a printed copy.

After looking through the publication, if you are so led, we are accepting additions/corrections until March 1, after which a final revised version will be published. Did you spot an error? Is your contribution to the Art Fair missing? Did you host an Interest Group that needs a description? Is your Open Mic performance missing? Are you motivated to add a paragraph or two about your experience? Is your photo missing from the gallery of attendees? Anything you are willing to add is appreciated. The editors want these Proceedings to be as complete as possible.

Second Gathering: A Mystic Call

*A retreat organized by the editors of What Canst Thou Say
June 6 – 10, 2014, Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana*

Building on the deep and joyful sharing we experienced while gathered last year, we invite Friends to join us in fellowship, worship and expectant waiting. For two days, we will share about our spiritual journeys, attend participant-led interest groups, socialize and worship together. The following two days are scheduled to respond to a leading that arose in the first gathering that we are led to “name the spiritual condition of the world.” We feel we should start by seeking to name our own spiritual condition and that of our religious community. For those who choose to stay, this work will be grounded in worship and worship sharing. For details, check our website <whatcanstthousay.org> and follow the blog we created to prepare for this gathering <quakermystics.wordpress.com>.

Future WCTS Themes

The WCTS editorial team has developed a schedule of themes for the next two years. See our website for queries and deadlines <whatcanstthousay.org>.

May-2014	Holding On and Letting Go	Michael Resman
Aug-2014	Sacred Places	Kathleen Maia Tapp
Nov-2014	Religious Wounding	Mariellen Gilpin and Michael Resman
Feb-2015	Paradigm Shift	Earl Smith and Judy Lumb
May-2015	Liberation from Captivity	Rhonda Pfaltzgraff-Carlson
Aug-2015	Divine Intervention	Bill Mueller with Mariellen Gilpin
Nov-2015	Evil	Michael Resman
Feb-2016	Vibes	Judy Lumb
May-2016	The Gift of Rest	Rhonda Pfaltzgraff-Carlson
Aug-2016	Messages	Mariellen Gilpin
Nov-2016	Conflict in Meetings	Michael Resman

Please write for *What Canst Thou Say?*



May 2014

Holding On and Letting Go

Editor: **Michael Resman**

Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God (Matthew 19:24). When do you hang on and when do you let go of anger, resentment, fear, possessions, past hurts, ideas, relationships, addictions, habits, distractions? What has helped you keep making healthier choices? What has made it more difficult? Share your stories of hanging on and letting go.

Deadline: February 15, 2014

August 2014

Sacred Places

Guest Editor: **Kathleen Maia Tapp with Judy Lumb**

Sacred places each have their own story, presence and energy; yet what they really do is help us access the sacred place within ourselves. They lead us to our connection with God/Spirit/Light. Tell us about that place of comfort, inspiration, healing, whether it be in Assisi or your own backyard, that place where you have gone "on pilgrimage." Why did you go? What was it like? Were you alone, or with others? Has a revelation come to you in your sacred place?

Deadline: May 15, 2014

November 2014

Religious Wounding

Editors: **Mariellen Gilpin and Michael Resman**

Have you been wounded or outraged by religious language, concepts, or institutions? Did that alter your connection with God? Do you still need to insulate yourself from reminders of your religious past? Do you feel safe expressing yourself in your Friends Meeting? Has your language for your spiritual experience been welcomed in your meeting? Or, have you felt censored, disrespected, or shunned? How is such behavior dealt with in your Meeting? Have you reconciled with those who wounded or offended you? What has helped you heal?

Deadline: August 15, 2014

What Canst Thou Say?

WCTS c/o Richard Himmer
1035 Hereford Drive
Blue Bell PA 19422-1925

Address Service Requested



**Spirit-Led
Writing**