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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*

Spirituality in the Workplace

Workplace as Spiritual Classroom

Katherine Coon

In 1975 I had high hopes of starting a career in social work that focused on helping others and building a better world. However, my competition had advanced degrees and ten years of experience. Thinking I couldn't afford graduate school, I broadened my search. I accepted the first job I was offered and became an actuary at an insurance company.

Actuaries construct mathematical models and projections of financial products. While this job wasn't my first choice, I felt good about providing individuals and companies with tools to help them optimize their resources, increase their financial stability, and realize their dreams. Soon I saw that my industry also helped build vast amounts of wealth, often for those who were already wealthy. I wondered whether I could live with my role in fueling this part of the military-industrial complex. This was long before I became a Quaker, but I had at least some concept of sowing the seeds of war.

I sought advice from my meditation teacher, a quiet and serene soul from India. How would I know when I found the right profession? His response: "It doesn't matter." I was stunned. He said the universe would offer the lessons I needed regardless of my choices. I was to receive each lesson with joy.

With this jolt in my thinking, work warranted a different kind of scrutiny. I was certainly helping the rich become richer, but I was also helping many of the not-so-rich. In addition, the rich provide paychecks and benefits to the not-so-rich. The better my clients managed their financial lives, the more of their energy and resources could go toward worthy pursuits. I decided I could stay if I behaved myself. I vowed to keep my eyes open and look for opportunities to do the right thing, whatever that was. If I did my best to make my corner of the business world more humane, I felt justified in infiltrating a powerful organization or two.

I felt no need to hide my true identity. My appearance matched my self-image: embroidered shirts, corduroy skirts, sensible shoes, and waist-length frizzy hair. At twenty-two I looked like I was twelve. Naturally, a Vice-President of Important Matters rarely took me seriously. One day a routine meeting turned shockingly contentious and unruly. Incredulous, I concluded that raving lunatics were masquerading as tasteful businesspeople. I started wearing suits and put my hair in a bun. Not surprisingly, it made my job easier. I felt guilty about the deception until I realized that I was dressing to put others at ease, and *packaging does not change who I am*. A harder lesson was

From the Editor

This issue is not so much about mystical experience as about spiritual practice—our writers share with us how they bring their spiritual insights to the workplace and how the workplace provides spiritual lessons in return. As Kate Coon writes in the lead article, "I spend half my waking hours in the workplace and can't afford to miss half of my lessons." When spirituality meets real life we are tested by awkward situations, people we find difficult, questions of values and principles, our own fears and grumpiness. And, as story after story reveals, we can find grace—grace to persevere, grace that changes the situation, grace to find a better setting for our gifts.

Thanks to guest editor, Fred LaMotte, of Olympia, Washington, Meeting, for his help in putting this issue together.

Patricia McBee, editor for this issue

Discovering God as Companion

A collection of stories from the first
10 years of *What Canst Thou Say?*

Edited by Mariellen Gilpin

The editors of What Canst Thou Say? are delighted to announce the upcoming publication of our new book, Discovering God as Companion. This collection has been a labor of love for more than two years as Mariellen Gilpin selected articles, arranged them in topical sections, and wrote the introduction and afterword. A generous grant from the Bogert Fund, which supports studies in Christian mysticism, has underwritten the final preparation of the manuscript for publication.

Subscribers to What Canst Thou Say? will be able to purchase Discovering God as Companion at a prepublication price. We expect to announce the publication date and price in the April issue. Stay tuned...

that *I was not a spy; I fit right in. There is no Us and Them. We are all one.*

Another early lesson involved a co-worker I found difficult. A lawyer by training, he needed my mathematical contributions to assemble and package marketing programs. I found his

If I felt anger rising, I knew a lesson was being offered. Fear was also a good clue.

schemes repugnant. He found my counter-proposals equally unacceptable. We clashed at every encounter. I had had enough therapy to know I couldn't change him; I could only change myself.

Paying close attention to our next few battles, I noted that he escalated at certain vocabulary of mine, such as "illegal." I vowed to remove negatively loaded terms from my half of our conversations. I tried to focus on facts—what penalties could be levied by which regulatory bodies, whose licenses could be revoked, and how much it could hurt his other sales if certain details were made public. I

offered no suggestions or "improvements," and just waited for his expert opinion. He trotted back to his office exclaiming, "We certainly don't want to do that!" I smugly thought I was teaching him how to be a good person, but I was wrong. *He was teaching me how to be a good person.*

I started to watch for these teaching moments. My best clue was my emotions. If I felt anger rising, I knew a lesson was being offered. Fear was also a good clue. I now ask, "What does God wish me to learn?" When I

clash with someone, I ask, "What has this person been sent to teach me?" When I don't like someone, I see if the person is a mirror to show me what I don't like about myself. When in doubt, I look for That of God and try to connect with That. I keep an eye out for suffering and consider it a privilege to provide soothing, understanding, or humor.

Even though I do not receive all my lessons with joy, I make a point to give thanks. Sometimes the best I can do is *Thank you, God, for this opportunity to learn and improve myself. While I may dread this lesson, I know I will benefit and eventually be truly grateful.*

The world is my classroom. I spend half my waking hours in the workplace and can't afford to miss half of my lessons. My job description from elementary school still applies today: *Pay attention in class. Learn as much as you can.*

Kate Coon is a member of Minneapolis(MN) Monthly Meeting and often attends Twin Cities Meeting as well. In addition to interactions with others and corporate silence, she connects with the Divine through solitary silence, music, walking, knitting, and (occasionally) mathematics.

What Canst Thou Say? is an independent publication by and for Quakers with an interest in mystical experience and contemplative practice. It's published in August, November, February, and May. The editorial and production team is Lissa Field, Mariellen Gilpin, Lieselotte Heil, Richard Himmer, Chris Johns, Joan Johnston, Judy Lumb, Patricia McBee, Grayce Mesner, Kathy Tapp, Eleanor Warnock, and Wayne Yarnall.

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See the WCTS website for a history of WCTS and updated queries for future issues: <whatcanstthousay.org>

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Are You Doing What You Love?

Hector Alvarez

I will tell you two real stories. Two elements blend in each of these stories: my self-management as a human individual that seeks self-realization and my concern over my responsibility as a psychotherapist and self-realization coach.

The first story is about an auto mechanic who formed a group with other mechanics to offer services that none of them could provide all by himself. He had a dream: to form a work-group so well-integrated and well-functioning that it would guarantee all members personal and economic success.

One day his shop was visited by an important industrialist who solicited a special and highly sophisticated type of job. However as he saw the mediocre facilities around him he brusquely started for the door mumbling his disapproval. The mechanic caught up with him and said: "I am disappointed in you, sir. I'd heard you were a self-made man, but if you were you'd certainly know that work is turned out by people, not by buildings."

This shook the industrialist back to his senses. He not only ordered the job,

ListServe Anyone?

There is interest among some WCTS subscribers in having a listserve so that subscribers can be in direct communication with one another about our experiences with the Spirit. Does anyone out there with the requisite skills feel called to be the listserve manager? Contact <info@whatcanstthousay.org>.

but started a long friendship with the mechanic. At the end of his narration I asked the mechanic how had he mustered the courage to express himself as he did, and he said to me: "It is very simple, he was attempting to destroy my dream." I felt deeply moved and encouraged by this anecdote because it corroborated the fact that, in spite of all appearances, power, true power, resides in us.

Unfortunately, as time went by, his inspiring ideal was defeated by a tendency to overvalue the importance of money. I saw him recently at a social event. He looked fatigued, despondent. What a contrast with himself at the beginning of his career when he believed in a dream! I do wish he mustered again the power to fight for his dream.

This experience induced me, periodically, to ask myself and my clients the following question: "*What are life's most important concerns at this*

moment?" Failing to ask this question makes it very easy for us to miss the meaning of our existence.

The second story is about a chemical engineer I met over twenty years ago. She wanted three things from life: success in her work, a love partner, and spiritual development.

On the business side, she has pursued her career in a huge international corporation. I did not altogether agree with her trajectory since I could see how she ignored her feelings in order to obtain results. Besides, I raged about the dehumanizing atmosphere of the organization. Yet, she has kept moving up to better-paid positions. My question is, when someone tramples over her own sensitivity in order to obtain wealth and status, is this well advised?

Her love life has posed tougher hurdles. Three years ago, after an outstanding business success, she cried bitterly to me. She felt that her business successes only made it cruelly evident that she lacked a love partner. Right after that we had a few interviews designed to stimulate her capacity for emotional relations. Soon afterwards she let me know that, finally, she had a partner.

Concerning her spiritual development, she has spared no efforts to attend innumerable seminars, lectures, and courses all over the world. Today she is a completely different person from the one that I met more than twenty years ago. She tells me that she is more "her own woman" than ever before in her life, and she is right!

Instructions for Authors

*We welcome submissions of articles of 350-1500 words and artwork—line drawings or artwork suitable for black and white reproduction—that illustrate the theme of an issue, or that we might retain for use in future issues. 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 <m-gilpin@uiuc.edu> or diskette, or hard copy to **WCTS, 818 W. Columbia, Champaign, IL 61820.***

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Nothing More Serious

By Jeanne Lohman

*Water pours from the spigot, a gift
That hasn't failed. Pulling the length
Of the hose to position the sprinkler
I stand at the edge of discovery
At ease among things as they are.*

*We could have missed each other,
As day after day I miss some chance
To praise clarity that comes
From doing tasks at hand:
Washing grit off the car,
Cutting grass in the yard,
Carrying water to new strawberry plants.*

*Below the surface of each day, a question:
Are we linked and under regard? Am I held,
As I hold the chamois and sponge,
The nozzle, the bucket?*

*Untainted by the thrust of my backward search
Or the forward cast of my hope, in clear
And quiet evening, I attend to weeds, insects,
The closing flowers. And to my breath.*

*That is nothing more serious than being ready,
A lifetime of practice.*

(originally published in *Buffalo Spree* 1998)

Jeanne Lohmann's lifework (vocation) is learning to translate and transform her experience into poetry. She is a member of Olympia (WA) Friends Meeting and joined the Religious Society of Friends in 1948.

Undeniably, hers is a success story. And yet, although her achievements are many, she is tense sometimes and often bothered by gastritis. I do know full well that no one can "make" anybody grow, so I only keep hoping her emotionality will arise once more so that she may align her business and spiritual lives.

My experience with this woman has catalyzed a major change in the focus of my professional activity. Instead of improving the profitability of companies as a business consultant, I now lend support to human individuals in their self-realization efforts.

As I look at my own life, at these cases, and at humanity in general it strikes me that living confronts us with a maze that is indeed puzzling: namely, earning a living, obtaining and giving love, and, hopefully, not deceiving ourselves too seriously. At times we may need some awakening. My spiritual, or universal, consciousness has been sometimes awakened by an accidental encounter with an animal or a tree which seem to say, "C'mon Hector, reality's right in front of you. Just let yourself be one with it!"

I have found a self-discovery formula the hard way: by getting lost in self deception and by striving to regain clarity and connectedness. I have tested it repeatedly on myself and others, so I know well that awareness can be noticeably sharpened by performing these three simple actions:

- *Exploring*: shop around, leaf through books, ask around, consult your dreams...
- *Experimenting*: try alternatives on for size, imitate someone you admire, follow instructions to see what happens, submit seriously to an enlightening discipline...
- *Feeling*: keep a journal of your explorations and experiments emphasizing what you feel, take some time off after doing something important to let feelings emerge, ask sensitive friends to tell you what they think about you, do some meditation or Quaker worship regularly...

If we explore, experiment and feel, fresh motivations and perspectives will begin to emerge. Thus we gradually get more keenly aware of the reality of the process of living, instead of tearing ourselves apart by running after innumerable, ever-elusive results.

Each life intermingles dramatically with the entire history of humanity. Fed by this interaction, our love, work, and self-deception merge in our development process—then we realize that we have been earning the privilege of initiation in the ultimate experience: *Universal Love*.

Hector Alvarez attends Quaker Worship at the Casa de los Amigos in Mexico City. He also does Zen Meditation, and practices and teaches "Quantum T'ai-Chi" Hector seeks to respond to the human needs for meaningful work and connectedness with All.

Creating a Sacred Workplace

Rhonda Ashurst

I'm sitting in my new office, contemplating this workplace I recently created. It is in an historic, red brick building close to a park. There is an elm tree outside my second-story window, green leaves fluttering in a summer breeze. The fountain my friend Denise made for me chitters happily as water spills down the rocks and seashells we found to make it. Paintings created by the hands of my friends and family hang on the walls. My beloved books sit in shelves next to my folding table desk. I draped the table in a Native American motif fabric to hide the cheap plastic. In front of me are two rocking chairs facing each other—one for me, one for my guest.

I'm not entirely sure what I'm doing here. When I tell the other professionals in the building that I have an office upstairs, but I'm not sure what I will offer, they raise their brows and look at me sideways.

I'd like to tell them, "God told me to get an office. So, I did. I'm awaiting further instructions."

I used to be a psychotherapist. I closed my practice three years ago, too burned out to continue. Since then I've had a gnawing sense that I abandoned my life purpose. It is always there lurking in the shadows of my heart. A few months ago it burst forth like water puncturing the wall of a dam.

I remember when it happened. I had been working from home, running the office of a real estate investing company I own with my husband. Working with each other at home was taking over our entire married life. We sat down together and talked about making changes. Out of my mouth came, "I think I want an office again." It had been an unvoiced thought, lying beneath the surface of my conscious

mind. I looked up for his reaction, afraid of what I might see.

He laughed, "What? Isn't making sales brochures and answering the phone giving you a sense of meaning and purpose?" He then proceeded to explore my idea, encouraging me and suggesting I offer my new work as a gift or for a small donation. "Let our company pay for it," he said. "If it is God's will, God will provide a way."

Two months later I'm in the exact office that I envisioned in that moment. It has flowed easily in the way I've come to associate with spirit-driven aspirations. I know that I am supposed to be here, even if I don't know why.

I notice a vision emerging for this workplace. I want it to be a sacred space where the unspoken and tender dreams of individual spirits can be

God told me to get an office. So, I did. I'm awaiting further instructions.

nurtured into reality. This workplace is not about diagnoses, medications, treatment plans, administrative paperwork, government agencies, insurance companies, or expert opinions. This workplace is about supporting possibilities and potentialities, honoring gifts, honing strengths, increasing awareness, sharing truth and facing obstacles with courage.

I struggle to make a brochure explaining this, without placing it in a limiting box of bullet-pointed definitions. I want God's guidance to be able to flow freely through me and this workplace. Too many of my workplaces have been drained of spirit by impossible-to-meet productivity demands, confining rules and restrictions, useless paperwork, and ruthless

risk management policies. I will not allow that to happen here.

So, for now, I sit and wait for the next unfolding and I work on trusting the process of this emerging workplace.

Update—Three Months Later

When I wrote this piece for WCTS, it was an exploration of a nebulous idea. Over the summer my vision has crystallized into a life coaching practice. I've always been intrigued by this approach to helping people create the life they long for deep within themselves. I even bought a book about it when I closed my psychotherapy practice. I'd loaned it to a friend, who found it this summer while she was moving and returned the book to me. I re-read it in a heated rush, suddenly clear this was the path I wanted to take.

This decision helped me to move forward with business cards and brochures. The brochure became a list of open-ended questions rather than bullet-pointed definitions. Then our real estate investments, which we depend on for income, did not sell as expected over the summer. Suddenly, we were faced with a need for income from other sources.

This crisis led me to revisit the original idea of offering my services for donations. I came to see this turn of financial events as an opportunity to examine my beliefs about the value of my work, and issues around charging for it. I increasingly see what I do as an exchange of energy, and part of that exchange involves money (another form of life energy).

I had barely finished my brochures and business cards, when I began receiving calls inquiring about my services. The fascinating part is that I hadn't distributed anything yet, or placed any ads! One man heard about me from a local business owner, whom I don't even know. Another found me through our real estate website. A third

WORKING

Vince Schueller

Worshipfully

Offering

Respect &

Kindness

Is

Naming

God

Vince Schueller has been a member of Olympia Monthly Meeting in Washington State for more than 15 years, serving much of that time as Clerk of Meeting. He says, "This acronym has helped me through more than a few days of work, especially with my new position in the Governor's Office."

"heard through the grapevine" that I might be practicing again. Now I know God has a hand in this!

As I sit with my clients in this sacred workplace, I feel Spirit move through me in the old ways, using me as an instrument. I remember what I love about this work, and I come to it with a renewed commitment to take care of myself, so I don't have to leave it again. I am reminded that the most sacred workplace is within us and it is vital to honor, respect and nurture ourselves.

Rhonda Ashurst is a life coach in Alamosa, Colorado. She is a spiritual universalist and feels closest to God when in nature.

Instant Healing

John Fogarty

A few years back I started to develop something akin to bursitis in my left arm. It crept up slowly—a little twinge when I went to raise that arm—but as the days went by, the pain increased. Soon I couldn't pick up the telephone at work without using my right arm to raise my left to reach for the handset. This was not good. But since we'd been talking about prayer, and particularly Jesus' advice to believe that you have already received what you ask for and you'll have it (Mark 11:24), I decided to give it a try.

I went into the washroom when no one was around and said, "Thank you. Thank you for fixing up my arm." Nothing happened. But then a few hours later I suddenly became aware that I was reaching for things with my left arm and not thinking anything about it! Amazing! Hey, this works! And it did—for a few days. Then the pain began to reappear again, slowly.

I admit it. I went to the clinic and told them my story. The medico was a bit skeptical: said he had heard about these things, but he gave me some pills and I haven't had any trouble since. I guess I just couldn't accept my healing.

The lesson: It works if you work it!

John Fogarty and his wife, Peggy, are retired, living in Friends House in Sandy Spring, MD and members of the Sandy Spring Friends Meeting. Their meeting activities relate to prison ministry. John has had at least one other item in WCTS.

"In the workplace, we are yoked to one another in both a spiritual and practical journey."

—Phillip Hartley Smith, 2001
Quaker Business Ethics

Technology as Portal to a Higher Plane

Tom Hoopes

Recent log-in passwords for me on our computer network have included, "What WOULD Jesus Do?" and "Here I am, Lord!" and "Be Here Now, Okay?" and "Way Is Opening, Right?" An unscientific survey of fellow Quaker white-collar workers has led me to believe I am not the only one actively appropriating this hyper-technological aspect of modern living for this Higher Purpose. Indeed, most people are unaware that you can change passwords as often as you want, within various policy/software parameters. Many of us have so many numbers and passwords and plastic cards and electronic devices in our lives that the last thing we want is something else to *memorize*. Oi. So we default to choosing our pets' names. And then our deceased pets' names. And then our parents' pets' names. And so forth. (Raise your hand if you know what I am talking about.) Well, my experience has been that passwords can actually *enhance* my memory, in that they provide me an opportunity for both mindfulness (presence) and prayer. "What was that password again? Shoot. I know it had something to do with the Gospel of Thomas, or Gnosticism, or the Early Christians, or.... Aha! Yes! 'B-R-I-N-G--F-O-R-T-H--W-H-A-T--I-S--W-I-T-H-I-N'." [ENTER] Yes! I'm in!

Tom Hoopes, is a member of Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting. The computer with the mindful passwords is on his desk as Director of Education for Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. He lives in Wayne, PA, with his wife and two active young boys.

Quaking in Olympia

Alan Mountjoy-Venning

When the Nisqually earthquake struck Puget Sound in February 2001, I was on the fourth floor of a building built on land-fill. My work was in computer programming with Washington State's Energy Policy Division.

The quake struck sharply, leaving no doubt. For forty-five seconds, the building snapped and wavered, toppling bookshelves, pitching equipment, dislodging ceiling panels. Squeezed under my flimsy desk, I heard the roof above. Years before, I'd watched the installation of large air handlers up there, weighing tons. I decided to move and stand in the office doorway. But quake-waves flapped the door back and forth so vigorously, I imagined my fingers crushed, or a concussion. So I dove under a sturdier desk next to a wall.

A seed of personal transformation sprouted in that moment. I'd considered leaving my work, but never had this consideration been crystallized into a raw decisive query. "Do I want to die at this job?"

Once outside, after those long moments, I saw people transformed. Some who were perennially jovial were now anxious for the first time. Some who exuded reason and calm judgment were inexplicably, uncontrollably panicked. Others who had seemed self-absorbed and cynical were the first back in the building to see if others had made it out safely.

That initial query spawned many others; some still emerge. With reflection and discernment, they guide me on the path that temblor initiated. *Does my work manifest my values as a Friend? Does work challenge me in ways that lead to spiritual growth?*

The answers were not clearly "yes" or "no." I had worked with some

of my colleagues more than 15 years, through the heyday of significant energy conservation programs. I deeply respected the changes we had helped to effect. I had the conviction that wasteful energy use was among the worst environmental effects of human society. I felt appreciated and was given significant control over much of my work. Shouldn't that be enough?

Does work challenge me in ways that lead to spiritual growth? Through my Quaker practice, my workplace had become a community. I carted office kitchen scraps to my home worm bin. I chaired drives for charitable giving. I helped my colleagues have fun. Yet I realized that my desire to help was not truly fulfilled through my work. The quake-induced queries brought those reflections forth.

When should mere coping cease, and real change begin? I knew I had to make a change, but what was the next step? Discernment led to guidance. The message I received could be paraphrased: "To take a first step, you do not need to know where the path ends."

I didn't have another job lined up. But a visceral feeling grew daily to reinforce the answer to the query: "Do you want to die at this job?" By early summer, I had made a decision to take a leave of absence. My wife and I had each worked part-time, for periods, since our children arrived. When I consulted her about my dilemma at work, she said plainly and simply, "Well, all we really have is time, and it is important that you spend it well." Like the guidance I had received to my queries, her answer did not do my spiritual work for me, but it let me know that she respected me and would support my decision. She increased her work hours enough to get medical benefits for us, and I ... left ... my ... job.

Every Sound

Stuart Rose

Every sound is You calling.

Waking me up,

To the Silence.

Every sound is You calling.

I should listen intently,

To everything you have to say,

Feeding on every note,

Never satiated.

Every sound is You calling.

Each is the sound of Love,

It cannot be heard,

Except by those with open arms.

Stuart Rose, *108 Meditations on Silence*, Exposure Publishing, an imprint of Diggory Press, Three Rivers, Minions, Liskeard, Cornwall, UK, 2006. Available through Amazon.com.

After my decision to leave work, I returned to lost joys that busy-ness had squeezed out of my life. I baked bread, I biked, I walked more and drove less. I prepared tasty healthy snacks for my kids when they got home from school. I had free time for service to my meeting, for parent involvement at my children's elementary school, for bringing order to a family with four different personal schedules.

Soon, I was asked to serve as the first paid lobbyist with Washington State Friends Committee on Legislation. I felt both honored and obligated. I embarked on three years of Quaker

service that speak volumes to those queries which emerged to help me better manage my time.

Now, five years later, my family and I prepare for six months in Monteverde, Costa Rica. Our plans may not be a direct result of “my earth quake,” but the queries it engendered still guide me, in each new step.

Alan Mountjoy-Venning has been active among Friends since before joining Olympia Monthly Meeting in 1982. Currently he and his wife Jane and their two children are readying for a six-month stay in Monteverde, Costa Rica.

Visualizing Harmony and Compatibility

Zarinea Lee Zolivea

Not too long ago, I was almost unable to work because I experienced two new co-workers as unusually negative and downright mean. Their conversations centered on putting down other teachers and many of the children at the school.

I did not want to complain to my supervisor. In my mind, it seemed that if I just kept on praying, circumstances would improve, but they kept getting worse.

A dear friend of mine had recommended *The Thought Bricks Course*. As things were getting difficult with my colleagues I received another lesson via mail. The new lesson told of a spiritual exercise that would transform difficult working conditions. Basically, the practice requires that you visualize yourself facing the difficult person in a vertical tunnel with a white light beaming from the top to the bottom. Holding this vision, you stay centered

until you feel great peace and joy. The end result is a smile of gratitude.

Joyfully, I did the suggested exercise morning and evening. I visualized compatibility and harmony between myself and the difficult teachers. I pictured myself and them smiling and happy. It was not enough to pray and visualize. It was recommended that actually feeling the results was very important. I practiced in my mind what I wished to happen between myself and the two teachers. I “saw” all of us happy and talking amicably with each other. Knowing that there is no time in Divine mind, I waited with positive expectancy. This is also part of the practice.

Then one day, I noticed a slight change for the better on the part of the two troublesome teachers. Both of them were actually smiling. They began to be more pleasant in their conversation with me. There was less criticism of the children and the staff from them. I felt relief and joy to view the outpouring of a spiritual practice in action.

As the days moved forward, my working conditions were transformed as my attitude changed from a negative state of mind to a positive one. The joy I once had when just thinking about going to work returned to me with greater anticipation than I had experienced before.

A prayer of thanks will always go out to the course I took, the spiritual practices, and most of all, the belief that difficulties can be transformed through faith and practice.

Zarinea Lee Zolivea is an attendee at Claremont (CA) Friends Meeting. She is a retired educator and writes poetry, short articles, and children's stories. To find out more about the The Thought Bricks Course, contact Bernard, Thought Bricks Teaching Centre, Altarnun, Launceston, Cornwall, England.

Books

Soul at Work: Spiritual Leadership in Organizations, by Margaret Benefiel. Seabury Books, New York, 2005, 159 pages, paperback.

As Friend Margaret Benefiel was teaching seminary students about individual spirituality, she realized that they were not being given tools to understand and sustain the souls of the organizations in which they would be working. She set out to learn about the souls of both explicitly spiritual organizations and more secular ones. She met “ordinary saints” who exercised spiritual practices and underwent spiritual transformation in the midst of the nitty-gritty of daily business life. She discovered that the first fruits of soul at work are increased productivity and satisfaction of stakeholders; later fruit emerges as a concern for transformation and a willingness to become the change one is seeking to make in the world.

Ethical Business Relationships: Partnerships in Peace by Lee B. Thomas, Jr. Butler Books, Louisville, KY, 2005, 151 pages, hardback.

Friend Lee Thomas has served as Chairman and CEO of two manufacturing companies. His book is about translating ethical principles into ethical behavior in the workplace, about how we should be striving to be honest and honorable in our dealings, about forming peaceful partnerships so that everyone comes out a winner, and about trying to discern God's will as we face the challenges of doing business.

Quaker Business Ethics: A Plumb Line Guide to Practical Applications in Business and Industry, by Phillip Hartley Smith. American Quaker Business Consortium, 2001, 95 pages, hardback.

This book is a series of advices and queries on business issues. It starts with applying Quaker testimo-

nies to business practices and goes on to provide advices and queries on a wide range of business issues. Phillip Smith affirms a belief that our work in business and our spiritual lives are compatible.

The Diamond Cutter: The Buddha on Managing your Business and Your Life by Geshe Michael Roach. Doubleday, 2000, 229 pages, paperback.

Michael Roach is an American Buddhist monk. His book applies Buddhist teachings to the daily challenges of a life in business ranging from unstable finances to quarrelling co-workers to corruption. His prescriptions are to undertake a series of disciplines of quieting the mind and maintaining a positive and respectful attitude in all that you do.

reviews by Patricia McBee

Letters

The piece by Linda Theresa (WCTS, Nov '06) was particularly filled with the Spirit. Thank you for all you do to bring us these gifts. I trust she is released to soar and grow some more. May happiness fill her spirit.

Janet Means Underhill

WCTS brings to us experiences and information revealed through the Spirit, which underlies the whole of Creation. With these openings, we may know solace, awe, inspiration, sorrow, insight, joy or many other responses. Such sharing enriches us all on the path of life, living in the Spirit. Thank you WCTS.

Yours in transforming power,
Stephen L. Angell

I've been reading the back issues of WCTS at breakfast every morning, one per day, starting with the first issues. I am so moved....I thought that there was very little interest in mystical experiences among Friends.... Now, reading these issues and also noting the referrals to other Friends sources of such sharing, I realize that the same Spirit that has been turning

my life upside down and inside out (for my benefit!) has been working, all along, in similar ways with other Friends. I feel as though a wound in my heart is healing: I felt so alone, with some of these amazing experiences.... I can't thank you enough—all of you who have contributed with work and articles, through the years.

Alicia Adams

In Memoriam

Christine O'Brien

We sadly report the passing of Christine O'Brien, a frequent contributor to *WCTS*. She died peacefully, in the company of her family, after a long illness. To learn more about Christine, her life and her passing, visit her website <lizardhall.org>.

Linda Theresa

In the November issue we told our readers of the death another long time contributor, Linda Theresa. Her friend Rhonda Ashurst has written a lovely story about Linda's courageous passing. You can find Rhonda's story on our website <whatcanstthousay.org>.

Announcement

The Elizabeth Ann Bogert Fund offers grants of up to \$1000 for the study and practice of Christian mysticism. Grant proposals should be no more than two pages and include a statement of the applicant's working definition of mysticism, a description of the project, the specific amount of money requested, the way in which a grant will be used, other sources of funding, and plans for communicating the results to others.

Seven typed copies of the proposal should be mailed to Bogert Fund Secretaries, Vinton and Michelina Deming, 4818 Warrington Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19143. Two or three people familiar with the applicant's work should mail letters of reference directly to the secretaries.

Proposals and references for 2007 grants are due by March 1, 2007. Inquiries may be sent by e-mail to the secretaries at <muccidem@verizon.net>.

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

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August 2007

Hospitality

**Guest Editor: Maurine Pyle
with Mariellen Gilpin**

Do not neglect to show hospitality, for by that means some have entertained angels unaware (Hebrews 13:2). Have you made room in your heart for the other, the one who is different from you? Have you been challenged to shed prejudices and be taught by God through the stranger? What was it like? Did you have second thoughts? How did you make room for the other? In sharing the gift of hospitality, have you entertained angels without knowing it?

Deadline: May 15, 2007

November 2007

Feminine Aspects of the Divine

Editor: Judy Lumb

For in wisdom there is a spirit intelligent and holy ... she pervades and permeates all things because she is so pure. Like a fine mist she rises from the power of God, a pure effluence from the glory of the Almighty. (*The Apocrypha*, Wisdom of Solomon 7:22-5). What is your experience of the feminine in the Divine? Where do we find Her? How does She feed your spiritual life?

Deadline: August 15, 2007

February 2008

Called

Editor: Patricia McBee

The Lord said to Abram, "*Leave your own country, your kinsmen...and go to a country I will show you...I will bless you.*" Sometimes we are called so subtly we hardly notice; other times, like Abram, we are profoundly altered in a moment. How and when and where did you feel a call? How has your mission unfolded in the time since? How do you listen for God's continued guidance for your mission? What supports have you found for discerning and following call? Into what strange lands has your calling led you? How have you been blessed?

Deadline: November 15, 2007

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**Spirituality in
the Workplace**