



ESR Reports
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ESR Reports is published in the fall and spring for alumni/ae and friends of Earlham School of Religion

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Quakers and the Emerging Church

By Scott Wagoner

Sixty years ago, Elton Trueblood uttered these words to those gathered for the 1947 sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting:

"What we then seek, then, is the emergence of the true church, the company of loving souls, exhibiting the mind of Christ. Our fondest hope is that our own modest experiment of a few centuries may facilitate the emergence of this sacred fellowship. We do not seek to make all men (*sic*) Quakers. Quakerism, as we have known it, is not good enough. What we desire is that all men (*sic*) be brought into a far more ideal society than any we have known. If Quakerism ever helps to usher in that larger and more ideal society, it will have done its peculiar work."

These words of Trueblood's may truly give evidence of Quakers having been ahead of their time. Often we have been accused, and at times justifiably so, of being a group that glorifies its past and draws too heavily on its historical spiritual capital. But Trueblood's words raise the possibility that Quakers were, at one time, part of an "emerging church movement," long before the phrase became popularized.

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What is the emerging church? For some, the term evokes feelings of freedom, spontaneity, authentic spiritual experience, non-institutional religion, intense community,

radical discipleship, informal dress, and intense spiritual conversations. For others, "emerging church" evokes feelings of distrust, suspicion, cynicism, lax theology, candles in worship, and arrogant freedom. The emerging church movement

has its proponents and its opponents, followers and detractors. Ultimately, whether you embrace the emerging church or choose to

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Emerging from Church the Way "It's Always Been Done"

By April Baker

A few years ago I was busy with what I believed to be the final "phase" of my ministry—I was working in a traditional church where I thought I'd be for many, many years. Then a funny thing happened. I went to a pastor's convention in Nashville, but instead of attending the convention I signed up for, I went to the convention downstairs called "Emergent Church." I'd never heard of that movement, but I was about to give up everything in order to be a part of it.

What attracted me to the emergent church was, in essence, the very thing I'd been afraid of for so long—small churches, a generous orthodoxy (as Brian McLaren has so beautifully put it), and enough mystery to make it feel like I was trying to nail Jell-O to the wall when discussing it. But perhaps the main attraction was an emphasis on story and postmodern hermeneutics.

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Up Coming @ ESR

Ministry of Writing Colloquium

October 26-27, 2007
Haven Kimmel, keynote speaker

Spirituality Gathering

March 1-2, 2008
Catherine Whitmire,
featured speaker

Willson Lectures

March 7-8, 2008
Dr. Ann Riggs, keynote speaker

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disassociate with it, the fact is that it is making its mark upon the present day church.

Trying to define the emerging church is risky because there are so many perceptions of what it truly is. Numerous books are being published that seek to define and characterize the emerging church and its leaders. Some of these books are written by its adherents; others, by its critics. In reality, both may define the emerging church in the same way. They just have a different idea as to whether the emerging church is a good thing or a bad thing. One of the leaders in the emerging church movement, Tony Jones, even has this to say in the most recent book, *An Emergent Manifesto*:

“Yet, as we searched for ways to identify ourselves, other appellations didn’t fit. We were more than a ‘network’ and we surely weren’t a ‘denomination.’ We didn’t



want to be a ‘club’ or a ‘society.’ Some people have called us a ‘think tank,’ but that doesn’t quite fit either.”

It seems the participants have as much difficulty trying to define themselves as do the opponents. But, as Jones struggles to name their movement, he says, “We just kept coming back to the word ‘friend.’ We wanted to recover that word and to invest it with theological meaning.”

If anything, the emerging church movement is touching a nerve. Rather than seeing the movement as the problem, it is probably more accurate to view it as a symptom—a symptom of a generation that is on a deep spiritual search for something real, something powerful, and something authentic that it can’t seem to find in the institutional church.

Where the institutional church is seen as controlling and power seeking, the emerging church movement connects with people seeking empowerment and a less autocratic approach. Where the institutional church’s theology is seen as highly propositional and layered with principles, doctrine, and creeds, the emerging church connects with a generation seeking to find a Story in which they can locate their personal story. This generation of seekers is looking less for principles and propositions but for a narrative that gives their lives meaning, coherence, and purpose. Where the institutional church is seen as nothing more than religious ceremony and meaningless ritual, the emerging church connects with seekers hungry for a living, real

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[See page 11 for more details]

Friends gather at Hillel Friends Meeting.



EMERGING FROM CHURCH continued from page 1

Story, or narrative, is the starting point for emergent teaching, worship, and even format (although there is very little format to speak of). Wikipedia describes it this way: “Narrative explorations of faith, Scripture, and History are emphasized in emerging churches over exegetical and doctrinal approaches (such as that found in systematic theology and systematic exegesis), which are often viewed as reductionist but

not rejected wholesale.”

For me, postmodern hermeneutics was probably the scariest, but most alluring, part of this new movement. This approach recognizes multiple voices and viewpoints when encountering the narrative of history, in particular, the Biblical narrative. It understands that scripture was written in a particular place and time, and that although we can and should glean lessons from it, we must

not think of it as a “black and white” rulebook for all of time. As such, many in the emergent community have open interpretations of scripture and are unlikely to believe something simply because it has always been taught a certain way. Love and respect for all of creation, honoring a variety of lifestyles and family systems, a concern for true justice, and a “living in God’s kingdom now” mentality are common.

So it was with this new



encounter with the Living God. And, finally, where the institutional church is seen as ingrown and inwardly focused, the emergent church connects with a generation of seekers looking for a movement that is willing to live out its faith in daily practice and action, whether that means feeding the hungry, speaking out for peace, or caring for creation.

Hundreds of years ago, the time was ripe for early Quakers to connect with seekers hungering for something real. Today, the time is ripe for Quakers to connect with a generation of seekers hungering for a faith experience that is authentic, action-oriented, and relational in context. It could be argued that the emergent church movement is not something new and novel, but rather something that arose because groups like Quakers

forgot their original vision and mission!

In his essay, *An Emergent Manifesto*, author and pastor Doug Pagitt writes:

“The Emergent imagination is at its most basic level a call to friendship – friendship with God, with one another, and with the world... The Emergent concept of friendship is more than professional relationships of like-minded peers, it is an invitation to the Jesus way of life as partners with each other and collaborators in the work of God in the world.”

I believe it is significant that Pagitt titles his essay, “A People of Hope,” for that is what we Quakers have been and can become.

“Rather than seeing the movement as the problem, it is probably more accurate to view it as a symptom—a symptom of a generation that is on a deep spiritual search for something real, something powerful, and something authentic that it can’t seem to find in the institutional church.”

Rather than seeing the emergent church movement as having stolen the vision of a call to friendship with God, one another, and the world, let us see those involved with the movement as partners in the Kingdom that God has raised up to remind us who we once were and who we can still

become. We don’t claim to be the true church, we only seek, as Trueblood puts it, “...the emergence of the true church, the company of loving souls, exhibiting the mind of Christ.” Only then can we claim to be a people of hope.



Scott Wagoner is a 1990 graduate of ESR and presently pastoral minister at Deep River Friends Meeting in North Carolina Yearly Meeting (FUM). He has also served in Indiana Yearly Meeting as a pastor and Assistant Superintendent. Along with his duties as pastor, he also serves as President of the North Carolina Yearly Meeting Ministers Association. His wife, Lynda, is a registered nurse. His daughter Erin is a sophomore at Western Carolina University, majoring in film and TV production and his son Chad is a sophomore at Trinity High School.

insight and inspiration that I left my former post and set off to start an emergent Quaker meeting. Several of my friends (with a lowercase and capital F), along with my husband and me, began meeting in a rented space behind our yearly meeting office in the fall of 2004. At the time, we did a lot of experimenting—we tried several formats, had a variety of things to do, like book clubs and social gatherings, and used “tools” such as candles and low light-

ing to aid in our worship time. After a time it became apparent that we still had not found ourselves. This led to a painful journey that challenged us as a community and as individuals. In the end, we realized that if we were to have the intimate, authentic community we were seeking, we must abandon our building and go into our homes. Thus began the “three week Hillel cycle.” For three weeks at a time, we meet in one of our member’s homes for

snacks, “catching up,” and silent worship. We don’t focus on learning through a traditional sermon—I am among the few pastors who can say that’s not a part of my job. Instead, we seek to learn through messages brought in Meeting and through small groups that we call “shepherding groups.” The term small groups is misleading—Hillel only has 7 to 9 attendees, but we get together on a smaller scale in order to read, talk, and learn together about

a subject of our choosing. We also get together frequently for dinner, volunteering, movies, and other things that friends do. Community and a relationship that’s interdependent upon God and each other is the very crux of Hillel’s existence; we don’t have any particular goals for the future—no big budget plans, no plan to move back into a building, no committees that may weigh us down. There is talk of a Hillel intentional

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An Interview with Elaine Heath

By Tim Seid

As this issue of *ESR Reports* was being prepared, Tim Seid had a conversation with Elaine Heath, conference leader at the 10th Annual ESR Pastors' Conference, held September 24-25.

“Evangelism is best carried out in the context of Christian community lived for the sake of the world. The role of authentic community in postmodern ecclesiology cannot be over-emphasized.”

—Elaine Heath

Q *The buzzword around the church in recent years has been the term postmodernity. How would you define that?*

A Defining postmodernity is a tricky business because we are too immersed in its processes to have enough perspective to clearly define what is happening. Basically it is the massive cultural shift that is going on today, driven by communications and information technology and unchecked capitalism. We are in a period of rapid change that affects everything about our lives. If I had to pick a few phrases to begin to describe postmodernity, they would be *speed, images, blurring of boundaries, pluralism, and consumerism*. There are many other important aspects of postmodernity, but these are enough to get us started as we think about the church in North America. Every one of those phrases is connected to a deepening sense of anxiety in much of the church today.

Q *In what ways has the church in North America been successful in the past but finds its programs or methods are no longer effective in a postmodern world?*

A The first thing that comes to mind is the practice of evangelism.

In the past, it was sometimes effective to hold evangelistic rallies in churches, with a visiting evangelist, altar calls, and the like. The people who responded to the invitation were then encouraged to join the church, become involved in Sunday School, and so on. This method emerged from the 19th century revival tradition. Evangelism came to be seen as the specialized ministry of itinerant evangelists, or the practice of handing out tracts inviting people to get saved in order to avoid going to hell, and other practices that most church folk could opt out of because they weren't "called" or didn't feel comfortable with those forms of evangelism. These methods generally do not work well today. In postmodern culture it is clear that evangelism must be a holistic process that is essentially relational, grounded in the non-exploitive, non-coercive, non-violent love of neighbor with the love we receive from God. Evangelism is best carried out in the context of Christian community lived for the sake of the world. The role of authentic community in postmodern ecclesiology cannot be over-emphasized.

Some other aspects of church practices that in the past century seemed to work, but are no longer tenable, are competitive denominationalism (which is seen as sectarian

squabbling by those outside the church), word-centered communication methods (we are in a visually driven, YouTube culture), and rigidly hierarchical church structures (postmoderns generally reject authoritarianism and the other isms associated with it, such as sexism and racism). This means that our practice of church needs to be retooled into an egalitarian and in the best sense of the word, *ecumenical* endeavor.

Q *Some evangelicals have criticized forms of postmodern Christianity for not only changing the method as you describe it but changing the message as well. How do we allay the suspicions of those who fear that advocates of an Emerging Church are slipping into theological and philosophical relativism?*

A I think first of all we should acknowledge that there is indeed a potential for changing the message along with the method. But that is a problem that always exists for the church. We changed the message in modernity, so that many Christians in America came to think of discipleship in ways that are alien to the gospel. Take the prosperity gospel, for example, or the idea that being evangelical

means being a Republican. There is also that little problem of evangelical denominations that ordained women in the early 20th century but now do not. All of those were cultural accommodations that distorted the good news. What we need to do is think about our culture as good missiologists, people who plan to speak the language of the people among whom we live, affirming all within postmodernity that is hospitable and compatible with the gospel, and maintaining a non-violent, prophetic stance toward that which is not. This is a rule we should follow regardless of the culture in which we find ourselves.



You have come to ESR for the Pastors Conference to talk about contemplative prayer as the basis for the type of holistic evangelism you have just described. Could you briefly tell what you mean by this and how we cultivate it in our faith communities?



Contemplative prayer is all about listening to God and soaking in God's love. Quakers have a rich tradition of contemplative prayer as the fountainhead for love of neighbor, including social and environmental justice activism, so I think that what I say makes perfect sense to Quaker pastors. I think of John

Woolman, for example, and how evangelistically attractive his prophetic presence and actions were in his own day, and how relevant his witness is for us today.

*Dr. Elaine A. Heath is the McCreless Assistant Professor of Evangelism at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, and is an Elder in the East Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church. In local church ministry, her special area of interest is leadership development leading to congregational health and evangelistic vitality. Among her research interests are the emergent church, spirituality and evangelism, and gender and evangelism. This fall, Baker Academic will publish her new book, *Out of the Night: A Contemplative Vision for Evangelism*.*

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community, but that could be many years off. We focus instead on the “now,” busying ourselves living in the Kingdom that is already present and at work around us. It’s worked so far, so we probably won’t tweak it too much!

Hillel has had its downsides, too, of course. We received funding for a time, but ultimately felt led to forfeit the money when criticism of our practices and beliefs got to be too loud. Actually, it’s been a good thing—we’ve been self-sustaining for almost two years, and can truly rely on what Christ wants for us instead of the current church-political environment that we

find ourselves in. We have had visitors—some have stayed, but many more have moved on. And we have little money with which to work. From the very start, I have had to be a bi-vocational pastor, earning a living by owning and operating a small pet care business, speaking at another Meeting in town, and teaching. But that’s fine with me—it gives me a chance to spend my days doing a variety of things that I love to do. It also gives me a chance to be what I call a “slacker pastor”—spending my ministry time having meals and conversing with folks and being in their lives, rather than sitting in a church office all week do-

ing “big church” work. It is my plan to attend ESR and earn my M.A. in Quaker studies. I’d like to teach Quakerism in the future as one of my “side” jobs. It is very important to me to help others—in both the school environment and at Hillel—to understand and appreciate our rich Quaker history. I believe it is essential, too. We must know our history in order to make wise decisions about where to go next, regardless of whether we consider ourselves emergent or traditional.

April Baker is the pastor of a semi-programmed meeting in Greensboro, NC, described as Hillel Friends Meeting, an Emergent Quaker Church.

“What we need to do is think about our culture as good missiologists, people who plan to speak the language of the people among whom we live, affirming all within postmodernity that is hospitable and compatible with the gospel, and maintaining a non-violent, prophetic stance toward that which is not.”

—Elaine Heath

ESR People & Places FACULTY NEWS

Steve Angell traveled to Friends General Conference in July 2007 and presented a workshop on “Mysticism into Action: Henry Hodgkin and Rufus Jones.” He also traveled to Baltimore Yearly Meeting where he presented a workshop on “The Light in Early Quaker Understanding and Experience.”

Sue Axtell had the pleasure to travel in June to attend Intermountain Yearly Meeting of Friends at Ghost Ranch, New Mexico. Ghost Ranch is the land that Georgia O-Keefe painted and lived upon. Sue writes, “It was great to have the opportunity to compare some of her paintings with the actual scene. I took a pre-meeting session for the purpose of attending the **Alternatives to Violence** training, which I highly recommend, and then led a Bible worship-sharing group throughout the actual Yearly Meeting. I was delighted not only with the ranch, but with the loving way Intermountain Yearly Meeting worked together on business. Their clerk, Rebecca Henderson, managed the busi-

ness sessions with spirit and grace. Decisions were made to approve a new *Faith and Practice*, migrant and border issues were discussed for seasoning, and an exploration of a possible move to join FGC were part of their business this year. New ventures like the development of a Spiritual Formation program were in the making. Margery Meers Larabee was the plenary speaker and shared wisdom worth repeating on spirit-led relationships. It was an exciting meeting to visit.”

Nancy Bowen was in Oxford, England August 12-21 for the 12th Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies. The theme of the Institute was “Ecclesiology, Mission, and Vocation: The Church in the Present Age.” Nancy presented a paper in the Biblical Studies Working Group on “Scriptural Holiness and Wesleyan Holiness.” She was also the respondent to a plenary paper, “Ecclesiology from the Perspective of Scripture in Wesleyan and Asian Contexts,” by Dr. Lung-Kwong Lo of Hong Kong.

Stephanie Crumley-Effinger, Director of Supervised Ministry (formerly “Field Education”) enjoyed meeting with Friends this summer at Indiana Yearly Meeting Pastors Short Course, the United Society of Friends Women International Triennial, Indiana Yearly Meeting, and Western Yearly Meeting. She also led a workshop at First Friends Meeting in Richmond, “It Takes All Kinds—An Introduction to the Enneagram System of Personality Types.”

David John’s essay, “A People of Unclean Lips: Recovering an Anthropology of Complexity,” appeared in a new book, *Good & Evil: Quaker Perspectives*. Early in the semester he spoke for Earlham’s College Meeting for Worship on the theme, “Teaching Simplicity in Guatemala?” and he continues to preach in local churches and meetings. In October, David traveled to Honduras again (his fifth visit there in two years) to teach a week-long course for the Colégio Bíblico Jorge Fox, entitled “La teología del nuevo testamento.” At its retreat in August, the ESR faculty approved David’s proposed course, “Theology in Context,” which will provide students opportunities to learn cross-culturally. In January he will take his first “Theology in Context” class to Mexico for two weeks.

Jay Marshall led retreats for Gwinnett Preparative Meeting and Atlanta Monthly Meeting, in April. During the summer, he attended Indiana Yearly Meeting, preached at Western Yearly Meeting worship, and spoke at the pastor and spouse’s luncheon in North Carolina Yearly Meeting. He also attended the FWCC Triennial in Dublin, Ireland, as well as their



A Visit to Hillel Friends Meeting

by Craig Fox

70th anniversary celebration in Philadelphia. In October, he offered workshops for clerks and elders in North Carolina Yearly Meeting and preached at Centre Friends' 250th Anniversary celebration.

Tim Seid led the morning Bible study times during the Iowa Yearly Meeting (FUM) sessions. During the summer Tim finished writing a book with the working title *The Second Chance for God's People: Messages from Hebrews* and is in the process of seeking a publisher. In November Tim will be presenting a paper, "The Rhetorical Function of Comparison in Hebrews," for the Rhetoric & the New Testament Group at the Society of Biblical Literature annual meeting in San Diego, CA. He will also give a paper on "The New and Eternal Covenant in Hebrews," at the Quaker Theological Discussion Group, which takes place prior to the SBL conference. Tim's review of *Paul's Necessary Sin: The Experience of Liberation*, by Timothy (Peat) Ashworth, will appear in the next issue of *Quaker Studies* journal.

Lonnie Valentine is on sabbatical this fall and so is exploring his roots in California. This does include contact with Quakers from his old Yearly Meeting, Pacific YM, though mostly relaxing and writing...with some surfing thrown in. Lonnie's revision of his article, "Western Ethical and Religious Traditions," for the second edition of the *Encyclopedia of War, Violence and Conflict Resolution* has been accepted. Also, he has a brief article called "Sanctifying Social Sin: the Gulf Wars Syndrome," accepted by *Peace Review*. Several other articles are under review, so he is hopeful that the sabbatical is productive.

The following article originally appeared as an entry on Craig Fox's Quakerboy blog. We include it here to provide a sense of what it may be like to visit a meeting that is part of the emerging church movement—in this case, Hillel Friends Meeting.

Last night I had the leading to attend worship at a fairly new FUM affiliated Meeting here in town, Hillel Friends. This Meeting is a "house church" modeled after the emerging church movement.

Don't know what I was expecting because, at least in North Carolina, FUM Meetings run the gamut from fundamentalist to those which would be very close to Unitarian Universalism. What a wonderful treat it was! This, Friends, is the way church is supposed to be.

After a common meal (vegetarian provided), we went into waiting worship. Even though this Meeting has a pastor, they are unprogrammed. And while they differ from Conservative Meetings, they have adopted some of the things that initially drew me to Conservative Quakerism.

When I arrived, I looked around the room and the first thing I noticed was that I was the "old" guy (I'm 43). All those in attendance seemed to be under 30. Now THAT is amazing in a Meeting. I also noticed that there were books by Brain McLaren (see previous post) and Walter Wink. When the scripture was read it was read from the Message Bible (my very favorite devotional Bible).

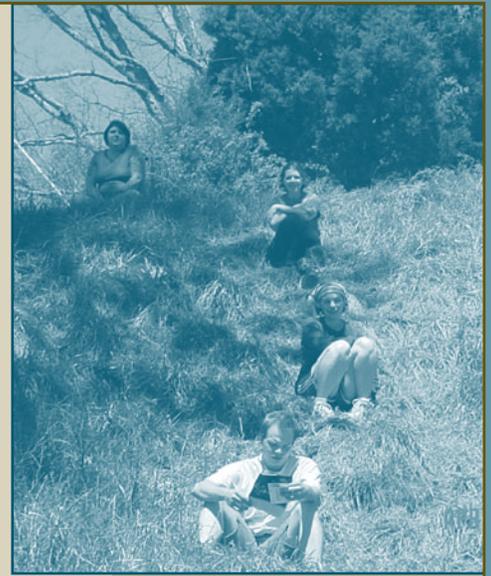
Those in attendance were obviously very connected with each other. There were announcements made about serving the homeless by providing coats and blankets. One woman is on the staff and an advocate for Habitat for Humanity. Several volunteer for animal rescue organizations. And underlying it all was a firm understanding of the Foundation for our faith.

After the Meeting, I couldn't help but think what would happen if FUM openly embraced and advocated for the emerging church movement. The emerging church movement and Quakerism seem like a good marriage. Perhaps this might bring revival and unity to FUM. Perhaps FUM could be in a position to reach out to those who have been burned by fundamentalism and rigid dogmatism. Perhaps this could be the place where those sick of civil and nationalistic religion could be feed on the Bread of Life. Perhaps...

The pastor of Hillel has a blog, check it out: <http://www.hillelfriends.org/blog/index.php>

Craig Fox is an active member of Hillel Friends Meeting (NCYM—Conservative) in Greensboro, NC.

** Originally published as a blog entry on A Poor Wayfaring Stranger [<http://quakerboy.blogspot.com/2006/12/hillel-friends-meeting.html>]. Used with permission.*



Friends on retreat at Hillel Friends Meeting

“If Christians only extend spiritual comfort to each other, but do not demonstrate practical care, then the world will never catch a fuller glimpse of the kingdom of God.”

—Jacques Ellul

Quakers Blogging

Quakers are actively sharing their ideas in the blogging world. Here are a few blogs published by Friends:

A Poor Wayfaring Stranger: quakerboy.blogspot.com

A Silly Poor Gospel: sillypoorgospel.blogspot.com

among Friends: among.wordpress.com/

Blue Gal's Quaker Blog: bluegalsotherblog.blogspot.com

Brooklyn Quaker: brooklynquaker.blogspot.com

Can you believe?: johanpdx.blogspot.com

christian alternative: friendsrenewal.org/christianalternative/2006/04/10/a-new-quaker-blog

Friends in Fellowship: friendsinfellowship.blogspot.com

Gregg's Gambles: www.greggsgambles.com

Growing Together in the Light: gtitl.blogspot.com

Holy Ordinary: holyyordinary.blogspot.com

Nancy's Apology: nancysapology.blogspot.com

Pastor's Corner: www.hillelfriends.org/blog

Quaker 2.0: Living out the contemporary Quaker identity: www.quaker2.org

Quaker Scholar: quaker-scholar.livejournal.com

Quaker Simple Church: quakersimple.blogspot.com

Quaker Street: quakerstreet.blogspot.com

Quaker/Philosophy: quakerphilosophy.blogspot.com

QuakerQuaker: A Guide to the Quaker Conversation: www.quaker-quaker.org

QuakerRanter.org: www.quakerranter.org

R. Scot Miller: rscotmiller.blogspot.com

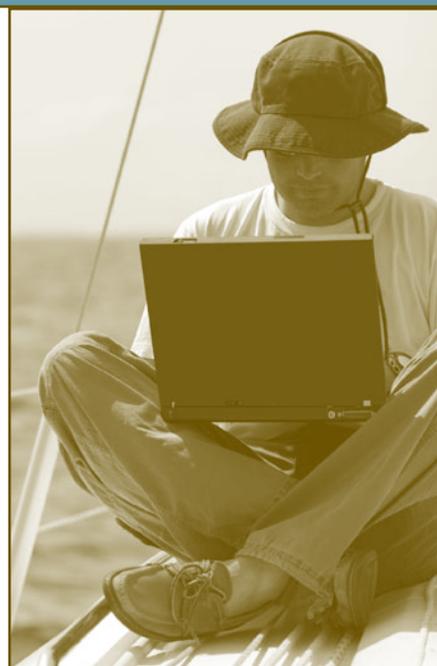
The Good Raised Up: thegoodraisedup.blogspot.com

The Jesus Gospel: thejesusgospel.com

The Lamb's War: lambswar.blogspot.com

The Seed Lifting Up: gaq.quakerism.net

What Canst Thou Say?: robinmsf.blogspot.com



ESR at FWCC

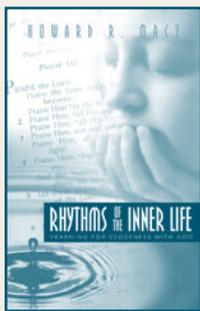


ESR attended the FWCC Section of the Americas 70th Anniversary Celebration in Philadelphia Sept. 14 & 15, 2007.

Photos by Sharon Gunther Photography



Above Photo—Front: Erin McDougall, Betsy Cazden, Hugh Barbour, Dinora Uvalle-Vazquez Back: Jay Marshall, Anne Wood, Dorothy Day, Cathy Habschmidt, Manuel Guzman, Margaret Fraser, Trayce Peterson

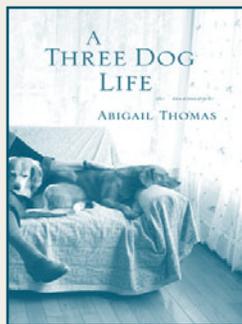


I'm enjoying reading again a book by an ESR grad, **Howard Macy**, on ***Rhythms of the Inner Life: Yearning for Closeness with God*** (Colorado Springs: Chariot Victor Publishing, 1988). This book is Howard's reading of the Psalms, with close attention to the full range of human experience and of our relationship with the divine. Howard includes chapters on "Longing," "Waiting," "Trembling," "Despairing," "Resting," "Conversing," and "Celebrating." If too much of twenty-first century spirituality seems to you to be thin gruel, this book is the perfect antidote. I am always amazed by the Psalms' vivid variety, and Howard is a wonderful interpreter of that. I recommend it highly!

Steve Angell
Leatherock Professor
of Quaker Studies

"Your husband has been hit by a car, 113th and Riverside. Hurry." This unexpected phone call ushered in a new life for Abigail Thomas, author of ***A Three Dog Life: A Memoir***, and her husband Rich when, despite a police accident report listing Rich as "dead, or likely to die," he survived with a traumatic brain injury. Abigail writes of life on both sides of this cataclysmic event, telling of ups and downs in their responses to the accident which left life forever changed. One story tells of an injured brain at work:

As he struggled to make sense of the world, unable to find words, my youngest daughter Catherine, came to visit. "Do you know who I am?" she asked, and he peered at her intently. "Do you eat field mice?" he asked, a strange question we thought, until I realized the first three letters of her name spell "cat."



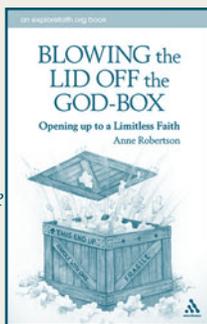
Perhaps this was a glimpse of how the mind pieces things together after an assault, trying to rewire itself.

She writes of the ongoing challenge of adapting to the variability in Rich's experience and abilities:

Sometimes when I arrive Rich is still asleep, his face relaxed, looking so like himself that I can't believe he won't wake up and be all better. Other times he is up, stalled in the middle of whatever he began to do, his back to the door, his arms raised like a conductor, motionless, as if he were playing some cosmic game of statue . . . The nurses say he can stand in front of the bathroom mirror for an hour or more, toothbrush in hand. In brain injury jargon, perhaps this is what is meant by "difficult completing a task."

Through Abigail's sharing of life in light of the accident, the reader is brought intimately into the world of two people who love one another and seek a new norm faithful to that love when everything else changes. The title comes from an Australian aboriginal saying that, since aborigines slept with their dogs for warmth, the coldest night was a "three dog night." Abigail Thomas' sharing of her "three dog life" tells of survival and struggle, of finding ways to cope and, at times, even flourish under terribly difficult circumstances. In a time when new technologies enable people to survive injuries that formerly would have ended their lives, Abigail and Rich's story offers insight into what it can mean to accompany families into such a new world.

Stephanie Crumley-Effinger
Director of Supervised
Ministry



Anne Robertson, author of ***Blowing the Lid Off the God-Box: Opening up to a Limitless Faith***

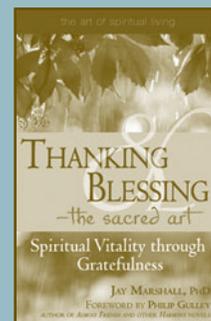
(Harrisburg: Morehouse, 2005), is a United Methodist minister in New Hampshire. "God-box" is her term for one's theology or understanding of God. This little book recounts her own experiences of having God burst open her God-box. While using a great deal of humor, the book is a serious caution against believing that any one view of God contains all that God is or that can be said about God. For those willing to crack open the lids of their God-boxes, this book will be stimulating and thought provoking.

Nancy Bowen
Associate Professor
of Old Testament

RECOMMENDED
reading

Thanking & Blessing—The Sacred Art

Spiritual Vitality through Gratefulness
Jay Marshall, PhD
Foreword by Philip Gulley
5.5 x 8.5, 176 pp, Quality Paperback Original
ISBN-13: 978-1-59473-231-7
ISBN-10: 1-59473-231-0



Jay Marshall's new book, ***Thanking & Blessing—The Sacred Art***, is now available from SkyLight Paths Publishing. Here's a summary from the publisher's Web site (<http://www.skylight-paths.com>): "With ever-increasing pressures building in our lives, we often slip into believing that the world is a burdensome place. As a result, our souls tighten, our hearts become dull, and our joy slowly drains away. Yet it doesn't have to be this way. Through penetrating reflections and practical tips for uncovering the blessed wonder in our lives—even in trying circumstances—Jay Marshall shows you how to recapture the goodness, holiness and abundance that saturate our world. The secret lies in opening yourself to divine blessings, which inspires thankfulness, and responding by sharing that spirit with others in acts of thanking and blessing."

Nowadays

ALUMNI/AE NEWS

Paul Buckley continues writing. *The Quaker Bible Reader* (co-edited with Steve Angell and including contributions from several ESR grads) is a runaway best seller by Quaker standards; that is, more than 500 copies sold! Older books, *21st Century Penn* and *Owning the Lord's Prayer*, also continue to sell well. Paul traveled as an ESR representative to several yearly meetings this summer, offering workshops and giving a plenary address at Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting. His work on Elias Hicks is ongoing. A revised and restored edition of Hicks' memoirs should be out within a year.

After the congress, P.V. and Mary traveled in Germany and Switzerland. P.V. continues his work as a cardiac unit chaplain at Advocate Christ Hospital and Medical Center at Oaklawn, Illinois and Mary teaches high school math in the Chicago city school system.

Steven Cleaver is teaching a staff writing class and a Spiritual Humor class, and says that his book, *Saving Erasmus*, has been released in England, France and Germany and is currently in over 220 library systems. Steven has also been invited to a Southern Kentucky Bookfest (<http://www.sokybookfest.org/>) in April 2008.

Ingrid Fabianson writes, "I have moved back to my home in Friday Harbor, Washington, where I will work for a hospice. I lived in Bend, Oregon for one year prior. I miss my friends at ESR and wish everyone well. I can be reached at 505 Linder Street, Friday Harbor, WA. 98250."

Kathy Leuthje sends this update: "I have just taken a new position as a private couples educator (and am getting a certification as a family life educator) with a grant program out of Pinellas County, FL for five years for strengthening families. I do cou-

ples counseling and also consulting with relationships coaches who run Community Ed groups using the PREP and Christian PREP curriculums (prepare/enrich marriage).

I continue to do some part-time hospital chaplain work (was full time for seven years and did much work in Arts and Medicine, presenting at several international conferences) and I still direct a church choir. I am writing a musical comedy about Hildegard of Bingen, which I hope to have produced in Indianapolis at the Episcopal Cathedral in Sept '08. Jon and I still live in St Pete, Mad Beach, FL. I would love to hear from folks."

Anita Morse says, "I am traveling with my sister, Pat DeVolder, and visiting her daughter and son-in-law, Mari and Gary McStay, in Fairfield, Idaho, just outside of Hailey, Ketchum, and Sun Valley. There is a large forest fire in the Valley, and over 1,000 volunteer firefighters from all over the U.S. are here. It is awesome to watch them and to witness the volunteer spirit of the entire community. We will be moving on to visit our brother and his family in Washington state and then coming back to the Midwest through Canada (Vancouver to Toronto) on the train. I plan to be at

ESR the first weekend in November to give a grant writing and research workshop for interested students."

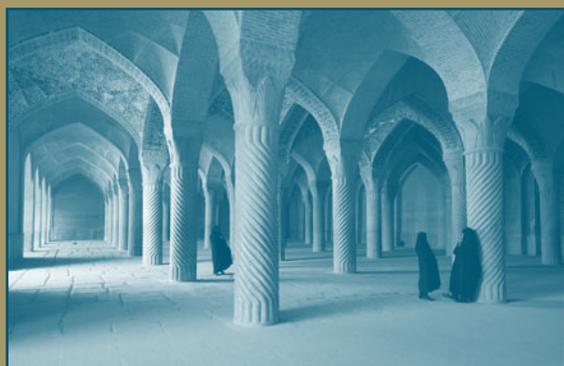
Lisa Lundeen Nagel and her husband Ehren have returned home to Greensboro, North Carolina, where Lisa will begin a year-long CPE residency at Moses Cone Health System. Ehren has just passed his first exam to become an actuary and looks forward to launching his career in applied mathematics and risk assessment.

Trish Roberts writes, "I continue to offer spiritual direction here in Canberra, Australia. This past year I have begun volunteering as one-to-one support in an aged care facility. In November, my son Thomas and his wife Rebecca are expecting their first child, so I will be joyfully entering the next phase of life: grandparenting."

David Wolfe and **Linda Kusse-Wolfe** are participating in a three-year Muslim-Christian exchange program organized by the Mennonite Central Committee. They began their mission in January 2007. In Iran on student visas, they are studying theology, the Quran, and Farsi, the language spoken in Iran, at the Imam Khomeini Research and Education Institute.

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P.V.Chandy and **Mary Chandy** traveled to Poland in August. P.V. represented the Association of Professional Chaplains at the eighth world gathering of the International Congress on Pastoral Care and Counseling at Krzyzowa, Poland. There were over 200 pastoral care teachers and workers from 40 countries representing many groups and organizations. Papers and discussions centered on the theme, "Treasures in Earthen Vessels." At present, P.V. is serving a second term as a Board Member of the Association of Professional Chaplains.



Opening a Door to Iran

Two ESR alums, **David Wolfe** and **Linda Kusse-Wolfe** live in Qom, a city of about 1 million people 60 miles south of Tehran. In a ministry of reconciliation, they share their stories and listen to the stories of the Iranian people. David and Linda were recently featured in an article in the *Wichita Eagle*, which will be available on the Web for a limited time:

<http://www.realcities.com/mld/kansas/living/religion/17606028.htm>

UPCOMING

Conference Opportunities

by Rita Cummins

August always brings a heightened buzz of activity to the corner of National Road and College Avenue in Richmond, Indiana as classes begin again at Earlham School of Religion. What will 2007-2008 bring? Here's a quick look at the conferences ESR is hosting this year.

By the time you read this, the 2007 **Pastors Conference** will have been held with Dr. Elaine Heath as our keynote speaker. Dr. Heath is an Assistant Professor of Evangelism at Perkins School of Theology, at Southern Methodist University. With leadership development through evangelism as her special area of interest, Dr. Heath focused on holistic evangelism through three categories of activity: preaching, teaching, and healing. Workshops on evangelism, church growth, and spirituality rounded out the conference schedule.

October 26-27 ESR will once again host the **Ministry of Writing Colloquium**. Haven Kimmel, an ESR alum and well-known author, returns as the keynote speaker for this year's event. Known to millions of readers as the author of *A Girl Named Zippy*, the #1 *New York Times* bestselling memoir, Kimmel's affection for her character is contagious. We invite you to come be inspired and energized by the humor and wisdom of this gifted storyteller. The event will also

include workshops offering tips and techniques for using humor in writing, writing in a way that touches readers, exploring opportunities for authors to promote their work, and meetings with editors for those who are interested.

The first weekend in March 2008 will bring the 8th annual **Spirituality Gathering**. Instead of the customary robin, this conference is our harbinger of spring! Many look forward to this weekend as an opportunity for renewal after a long winter, a time to reach out for the promise of springtime and spiritual refreshment. Our featured speaker this year will be Catherine Whitmire, Quaker author of *Plain Living, A Quaker Path to Simplicity*. Workshops will support putting this vital Quaker testimony into practice.

On March 7-8, ESR will welcome Ann Riggs as keynote speaker for the annual **Willson**

Lecture. Dr. Riggs, a Quaker, has served the U.S. Roman Catholic bishops in their ecumenical work for the past five years. In February 2007 she was named Director of Faith and Order for the National Council of Churches. She is a recognized expert in the role of visual art and architecture within the ecumenical movement—a melding of her interests in art and theology. Dr. Riggs earned her B.A. in art (1972) from Smith College (Northampton, MA), going on to earn an M.A. in art history (1982) from the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill, NC). She completed her M.Div. (1992) and Th.M. (1995) at Duke Divinity School and her Ph.D. (2001) from the School of Religious Studies, Catholic University of America.

Over the Memorial Day weekend in 2008, Earlham School of Religion and Earlham College will welcome **young adult Friends** from across the United States and Canada as they come together to attend a **three-day conference** on our campus. Organized by young adult Friends from different branches of Quakerism, the theme will be focused on *leadings* and *callings*.

In addition to the numerous opportunities on our local campus, ESR will also be holding the **Philadelphia Vitality Series** on February 16 and on April 12 in 2008. This is the third year for this increasingly popular conference.

DEAN'S WORD

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the opportunity to think about how we present our message, live our values, and engage with others. For some, a “steady-as-she-goes” approach is always the answer—even if the ship seems to be taking on water. For others, this is one of those moments to re-envision or re-invent how we “do Church.” As always, in the midst of making the decision, the jury is out as to which path holds more promise.

One voice that can be heard over the roar of the chaos is that of the “Emerging Church.” Like so many other movements before it, it is trying to interpret the constant message of the church in an ever-changing environment. As you can imagine, some hail it as the answer we need for this moment in time; others are certain it is heretical and useless. Personally, I appreciate the opportunity it gives us to think about how we live and share our faith in meaningful, relevant ways. This issue provides food for thought on the topic. Enjoy!



Haven Kimmel



Relevant Dialogue

Jay Marshall, Dean of ESR

THE DEAN'S word

I am fascinated by the history of the Christian church. I have never considered myself to be a history buff, but I am intrigued at the way communities of faith define, re-envision, and sometimes re-invent themselves. Usually, this renovation is connected to a perceived need for rejuvenation or reform and is described as the fresh move of God's Spirit or a return to "primitive Christianity revived."

The beginning of the Christian church, the Reformation, and the Great Awakening lead the litany of such historical movements in church history. The Enlightenment's influence on how we read the Bible was no less important for the Church.

Renovations like these are not limited to the Christian faith. One memorable presentation from graduate school considered a document called *The Letter of Aristeas*. Part of its purpose was to persuade readers of the inspired nature

of the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, showing that all the so-called "new truths" of Greek culture were, in fact, contained in the wisdom of the Torah. The letter remains with me as a continuing example of how religious traditions, however reluctantly, live in dialogue with new trends and interests.

In retrospect, we are able to critique those movements. We can identify their value as well as their shortcomings. Living in the midst of chaos generated by those movements, though, is challenging.

In a word, the concern addressed by these renovations is "relevance." Short of fear, superstition, or mega-helpings of guilt smothered with obligation, irrelevant faith quickly

"In retrospect, we are able to critique those movements. ... Living in the midst of chaos generated by those movements, though, is challenging."

loses its luster. Most of us who want any faith at all want a meaningful faith that matters; but living in dialogue with the trends of the time is no easy matter. We get caught between being loyal to a trusted tradition or a particular understanding of truth on the one hand, and a need to remain engaged with and relevant to the life of those who embrace the faith or the

larger society. We'd prefer to be faithful rather than trendy, but vibrant rather than stodgy.

We are in another state of chaos at the moment (perhaps we always are!). Postmodern influence on our culture influences society's perception of faith in general and Christianity in particular. It shapes such things as how individuals learn, process, assimilate, and assign value. In response, those of us in ministry have

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

In this issue:
Quakers, Postmodernism, and the Emerging Church