



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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Institutional Accountability

By Jay Marshall, Dean of ESR

In neighborhoods of spiritual discourse and practice, “accountability” is re-emerging as a term and topic of significant interest. Simply put, spiritual accountability expects that in the exercise of faith there will be standards, practices, or aspirations of which one should be mindful during the conduct of life. Self-examination is a vitally important dynamic, ensuring that the spiritual pilgrim stays in dialogue with those standards.

Accountability is not limited to individual spirituality. The phrase “it takes a village to raise a child” could be altered to read “it takes a community to care for a seminary.” Viewed from any number of outposts around the globe, an educational institution can appear to be an autonomous entity that makes random decisions with little regard for anything other than its own aspirations. The truth of the matter, however, is that there are standards and structures which guide a seminary’s work, and many audiences lend a hand, contributing to a school’s operation. Consequently, as ESR operates, it is mindful of multiple layers of accountability.

For an institution like ESR, mission is one of, if not the, most important accountability check. Many organizations work hard to

create pithy statements of mission and purpose. Boiled down to two or three sentences, they live nicely inside framed artwork that become part of the decor but offer little guidance to decisions and processes. When such statements function properly, however, they guide an institution’s decision making. Proposed new initiatives are weighed against the vision of the mission and undertaken only if they support that mission.

ESR’s mission statement reads: *Earlham School of Religion is a Christian graduate theological school in the Quaker tradition. ESR prepares women and men for leadership that empowers and for ministry that serves. This mission grows out of our Christian belief that God*

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calls everyone to ministry. Using a transformative model of education, ESR encourages students to explore the intellectual, spiritual, and practical dimensions of their calls to ministry. This statement plants

ESR deeply in the Christian Quaker tradition, though we define “Christian” more broadly and “Quaker” more religiously than some Friends are prone to do. Within that tradition, ESR exists to prepare individuals for ministry. Anchored within Friends’ commitment to universal ministry, this means our educational program will help students discern their calls to ministry and that the ministries they cover will likely take a variety of forms—including, but not limited to, pastoral ministry. Our mission provides a first level of accountability because all our programming decisions—within and beyond the classroom—need to support the work of preparation for ministry in the manner of Friends.

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Up Coming @ ESR

Spirituality Gathering “Spirituality and Ecology” Saturday, March 4, 2006 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Engaging the theme “Spirituality and Ecology,” ESR’s March 2006 Spirituality Gathering will feature keynote speaker Keith Helmuth, a farmer, writer, community development activist, and member of New Brunswick Friends Meeting. Helmuth seeks to honor the integrity of Creation while exploring the tensions between faith and fatalism, hope and despair. His presentation will examine Friends testimonies and an ecological worldview. Assorted workshops and a shared meal round out the day of fellowship and attention to the intricacies of the natural world.

Willson Lecture April 3-4, 2006

At the Willson Lecture in April, 2006, lecturer Margaret Benefiel will present, “The Soul at Work,” focusing on spirituality within organizations. We hope to see you there!

INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY continued from page 1

A second extremely important source of accountability is lodged in the school’s decision to be a member of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). ATS is the most highly regarded accrediting body for graduate level theological instruction in the United States and Canada, composed of approximately 240 member schools. Together, these schools adopt a set of standards that are then used to evaluate each institution. These standards—10 in all—include such areas as institutional purpose, planning, and evaluation; institutional integrity; and the theological curriculum.

Every 10 years, ATS sends a team of peers to visit and evaluate the work of member schools. This year ESR is in the midst of a grueling process known as a “self-study,” in which we look carefully at all levels of our institution—admissions, development, administration, faculty, curriculum, library, and more—to determine how well we are meeting the standards by which we have agreed to abide. In addition to affirming what we do well, the self-study also provides an opportunity to ask tough questions about where improvement is needed in light of the standards and of our mission.

Over the years, the emphasis of these ATS visits

has shifted. At its origin, a primary concern of such visits sought to assure that institutions had the necessary resources to offer graduate level education—faculty, buildings, and library resources. The next wave of emphasis focused upon the curricula of member schools—was it adequate to prepare students for ministry? A third shift gave greater attention to institutional planning. Currently, as in much of U.S. education, there is strong emphasis on assessment and integration of received data.

Within those standards of accreditation, a school has great leeway in designing policies and processes by which it carries out its mission at a level acceptable to the accreditation standards. Through these, trustees and faculty work to ensure that quality is maintained and that reasonable expectations of faculty and students are met.

The self-study process can feel like jumping through a series of hoops, but it is designed to be more than that. It is also a time of institutional evaluation, growth, and accountability to our mutually adopted standards.

Finally, the school’s constituents—Friends and alumni/ae in particular—provide yet another accountability check. Alumni/ae’s post-graduation experience

in ministry and reflection upon the ESR experience can provide meaningful feedback to the faculty as it seeks to evaluate the success of the educational experience. Likewise, Friends from local meetings have assumptions and expectations, whether acknowledged or not, about qualities and skills they expect to see in seminary graduates. Understanding these expectations alongside those of the faculty is a useful exercise that helps avoid the “ivory tower” syndrome in which the school drifts out of touch with those who receive the ministerial fruits of those whom the school has graduated.

In a self-absorbed society which seems typical in much of the United States, it is easy to assume that one either sets his or her own standards or deviates from them whenever the standards are inconvenient. Healthy communities, particularly those with a faith basis, understand the importance and value of accountability. And so it is for ESR. The vision for an institution like ours is shaped by more than the interests of the administration and faculty, or current student preferences, or demands of denominational loyalty. A much wider network of accountability is in place, with each component fulfilling a role as the extended community cares for this fine seminary.

The Shalom Community: Making Room for Returning Prisoners

By Rob Sambosky, ESR Graduate

There is a first-order scandal in the Land of the Free. After 30 years of the War on Drugs and get-tough-on-crime policies, and with only 6% of the world's population, the U.S. now incarcerates 25% of the world's prisoners in its jails and prisons. Moreover, with African Americans comprising up to 40% of prison populations and most prisoners coming from the lower socio-economic classes, prisons are an "Alice's Restaurant" of social justice issues.

Ninety-seven percent of all prisoners come home. Currently, a wave of nearly 700,000 returning souls per year is flooding communities across the US. As a group, they tend to be unskilled, undereducated, and addicted. In the words of Louis Jones, author of *How to Prepare Your Congregation to Minister to Ex-offenders*, they are "poor, homeless, undereducated, products of broken homes, fatherless, abused, neglected, oppressed, depressed, greedy, and abandoned." Their common fate, in our national community currently possessed by a spirit of retribution, is fear, hate, scapegoating, and vilification. They are outcast, downtrodden, and afflicted. As the self-identified people of God, what is our accountability for this situation and to these returning souls?

Accountability arises from at least two sources: First is the existential fact of our utter dependence on others for our becoming and well-being. Einstein called a person's experience of being separated from the rest of the universe "an optical illusion...of consciousness." Contemporary philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre considers an awareness of mutual dependence a virtue, which he prescribes for the well-lived life. To accept the common fate associated with this dependency is a virtuous attitude and a foundation for personal and social ethics. In a worldview in which interrelatedness and interdependency are seen as irrefutable facts of existence, mutual flourishing is a mutual obligation.

Accountability also arises from the historical fact that Western cultural life is profoundly structured and informed by the grand narrative of the Judeo-Christian scriptures. This is true whether or not one consciously participates in its religious life or thought! But for committed religious

people, this "big story" specifically reveals God's will for God's people, which is to love God and to practice mercy toward others—especially those *particular* others who are downcast and afflicted. Howard Zehr, writing about restorative justice¹, claims that God's intent for God's people is captured by the Hebrew word *shalom*. The usual sense of *shalom* is peace, but Zehr says its meaning is broader and deeper. It means living "in right relationship materially, socially and spiritually." The task for God's people is nothing less than to recognize that ex-prisoners are among such unfortunates and then to respond as *shalom* community to them.

On the part of the soul returning home from prison,

accountability involves a humble and public acknowledgment of responsibility for harm done, an expression of genuine remorse, and a commitment to living in such a way that future harm is avoided. It means abandoning wantonness and becoming a fully human person capable of self-regulation and control. It means remaining transparent and accountable to the community petitioned for aid and acceptance.

On the side of the community, accountability involves being the people through whom God's grace is mediated. This means first, because the condition of the soul is a function of the condition of the body, helping ex-prisoners meet urgent needs for food,

Continued on page 4



This photo was for a fundraiser held by St. Augustine's Catholic parish for their returning prisoner. This parish is by-and-large African American.



This photo is a small group from our first River Walk celebrating the return of these men and women

Companions on the Journey is a ministry of Central UMC in South Bend, Indiana. Central was the first “reconciling” UMC congregation in Indiana. Rob says, “The work is how I attempted to pass on the gift of my ESR education to the world.”

The Companions website is at www.cotjpr.org.
Email: companions@kconline.com.

Prayers, contacts for faith teams and other volunteers, and donations are always appreciated.

A faith team from a local Episcopal parish.

shelter, and clothing. But it also means meeting higher needs by committing to deliberate, authentic relationships with these *particular* human persons and giving them a place in the community life which provides empowering respect from others and self-respect for the individual. The *shalom* community sees with the eyes of God, which by bestowing the gaze of grace rather than the gaze of shame, sees repentant ex-prisoners as new creations. This means the *shalom* community is ultimately able to help the person complete the transformation that incarceration was supposed to achieve.

As in other situations where cultural institutions have become demonic—that is, mediating destruction rather than well-being—or where public opinion is on the side of harshness, the task for the people of God may be to create alternate communities of response. Martin Luther King’s language of “beloved community” is also



useful here. The beloved community bears witness in the suffering and violent world to the Prince of Peace; it exists in relationship to the church, and in fact is the church’s gift of the Kingdom of God to the world. The beloved community reveals the real history behind the apparent history of the world—that God works ceaselessly to redeem all souls and creation. As an alternate community of response, the beloved community lives out its accountability to others by being willing to affect and be affected, to love and be loved in return.

As an aspiring beloved or shalom community, Companions on the Journey has undertaken the work of authentic *reintegration* of souls returning from prison. We’re all about relationships

that will mediate well-being. By building an interfaith and interdenominational network of congregational faith teams who work with particular men and women, we help ex-prisoners overcome the roadblocks put in place by an unforgiving society. We coach, mourn, advocate, pray, hold accountable, and witness to transformation. Finally, we help them regain dignity by asking for *their* help in overcoming local manifestations of the demonic in our community—crime, violence, and drug addiction.

Shalom.

Footnotes

¹ See Howard Zehr, “Justice: Retribution or Restoration” *Peacework, April 1999, pp. 10-11*. Also see Zehr, *Changing Lenses*.

Nowadays

Witness & Learning: Indonesian Tsunami Relief Work

Elizabeth Raid (2002) from Newton, Kansas, left September 6, 2005 to travel to Indonesia to see how a local relief organization is responding to the huge tsunami that hit Asia and Africa last December.

Raid serves as Resource Development Coordinator for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in the Central States region. Raid and the rest of the group will travel to several states in Indonesia. While there, they will visit organizations working with MCC to respond to the needs in central Java where a large population of Mennonites live. In mid-September they will travel some 1,500 miles north of Jakarta to Banda Aceh to meet folks impacted by the tsunami and see how MCC and its partners are helping to rebuild buildings, counsel those who are hurting, and provide opportunities for employment.

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ACCOUNTABLE FRIENDS

The Gift of Clearness Committees

By Andrea Miotto, ESR Student

After years of summarizing, synthesizing, analyzing, and theorizing on hundreds of scholars' beliefs, I have just finished giving birth to my *credo*. The *credo* is the capstone theology paper in which I state *what I believe*.

As I pulled out my hair trying to clarify and render my beliefs in a style that was lucid and reasonable and yet true to my own voice, I almost found myself envying classmates who had a creed to look to for guidance as they thrashed through what they believed about certain doctrines. Yet as difficult as the discernment and writing process was, it was also a blessed opportunity and a sacred responsibility. The *credo* was my chance to hold myself accountable, as a Friend who believes in the ultimacy of the Spirit as the source of divine revelation, to seek out and trust the Spirit's guidance to help me clarify my grounding truths as a Quaker, a Christian, and a minister.

But this business of trusting immediate, inner revelation from the Holy Spirit as my highest guide to theological truths can be a risky business. As a fallible and often sinful child of God, I desperately need checks and guideposts as I fumble toward discernment. God's truth might be shiningly clear, but my eyes are clouded by my own egocen-

tric desires, faults, pains, and passions. We all know horror stories of people who said, "God told me to do it," when they were questioned as to unwise, egocentric, and even evil actions. As I wrote my beliefs about divine revelation, I found myself thinking about how we as Quakers have tried to place safeguards to protect ourselves, our families, and our communities from unclear leadings and misguided discernment of divine revelations and leadings.

Two sources of guidance Quakers use for discerning leadings are reason and Scripture. But, as I see it, there is a third component that really gathers together all other guides to discernment and accountability. As the gathered community of faith, we Quakers lean on the reasoned viewpoints of seasoned friends; the strong sense of the Spirit of elders and mentors; the biblical knowledge of colleagues, and fellow church members.

In my experience, clearness committees, when formed in love and equality and enacted in prayer, are one of the most unique, intense, soul-opening, and Spirit-filled models of communal discernment available to Friends. A Quaker web site on clearness committees I came across states it best: "The result was a powerful sense of commu-



nity and mutual accountability around a shared commitment to faithfulness."

I have met with clearness committees four times: once to help me discern whether I belonged among Friends (it turns out I did!), and three times to help me discern my gifts for ministry and divine the vocational direction God was leading me toward. I had never before felt the Spirit so strongly as during those sessions; and I had never felt so able to abandon myself trustingly and nakedly to the Spirit, sure of my fellow Friends' support and nurture. Fear, ego, past hurts, incomplete information—all of these possible obstacles to clear seeing of the Spirit have been illuminated by my friends' willingness to focus their Inner Light on my dilemma or concern. As a result of honestly struggling to discern God's will in community, and having been affirmed in both my gifts and limitations, I have a much clearer sense of my own spiritual calling to ministry, and a growing sense of my own authority and confidence. I owe all of this to the small groups of friends who have incarnated for me the

Inward Christ, the Body of Christ.

What I don't have is a sense of sureness, or of absolute security in my vocation. I am sure God's path has many twists and turns for me. Scripture guarantees me nothing in life except the presence and love of God as manifested in creation, community, and the eternal Christ. Yet surely this one certainty—the love of God—encapsulates everything else I need, or should. I struggle and stumble daily as I try to let that one truth sustain me more and more. Therefore, while a sense of vocation and accountability are wonderful, the greatest gift I have received from clearness committees is learning to see and trust in the Spirit's sustaining guidance more deeply.

Andrea Miotto is a third-year ESR student who is expecting to graduate with a Master of Divinity Degree in 2006. Her emphasis is pastoral care and counseling. She is currently serving her field education internship at Friends Fellowship Community, a continuing care community for elders in Richmond, IN.



ESR People & Places

F A C U L T Y N E W S

Steve Angell led a workshop on “Rufus Jones and Modern Quakerism” at Friends General Conference in Blacksburg, Virginia, from July 2 through 9, 2005. He also helped to provide leadership for a morning-long discussion of the lives of Thomas Kelly, Rufus Jones, and Douglas Steere and their contributions to Friends, at the annual meeting of the Friends Association for Higher Education, June 16 to 19, 2005. Steve was on a panel with Paul Cates in discussing the work of Rufus Jones.

Stephanie Crumley-Effinger visited New England Yearly Meeting on behalf of ESR in August 2005, where she led a workshop on “Sexuality, Quakerism, and the Bible,” as requested by NEYM Ministry and Counsel and the NEYM Friends United Meeting Committee. The workshop explored Quaker approaches to scripture, examined various biblical passages related to sexuality and its expression, and considered how the wide range of Friends might find more effective means of communicating with one another on these issues.

This summer, **Stephanie Ford** led a group of pastors in North Carolina in a survey of gifts we have received from Catholic and Protestant spiritualities. Then she journeyed north to Wisconsin, where she explored spiritual disciplines with a group of lay and clergy at an Academy for Spiritual Formation (sponsored by the Upper Room). This fall, while Stephanie is on sabbatical, she is working on a book about

spiritual friendship—and excitedly awaiting news of paperwork being finalized for her adoption of little girl from India.

David Johns attended the Midwest Writers’ Workshop this summer and has been taking course work in Ball State University’s creative writing program. He is directing independent studies this year in essay writing and plans to offer a May intensive course on writing the memoir. He continues to speak for churches and meetings in Indiana and Ohio.

David is contributing a chapter to a new book on Quakers and evil and is working on a memoir about his mother and mental illness. David also was guest editor for the November 2004 issue of *Quaker Religious Thought* and in the June edition of *Quaker Life* published his reflections on John Paul II, “My Pope Too.”

Tim Seid served as Acting Dean from October to April and was especially glad to see the Dean return from sabbatical to resume his duties. His summer travels included attending the Friends United Meeting Triennial Sessions in Des Moines, Iowa as one of the Indiana Yearly Meeting representatives and participating in North Carolina Yearly Meeting Sessions in Black Mountain, North Carolina. A great deal of energy went into preparing for a new Bible seminar class he taught in August which compared Paul’s method of personal and community formation with that

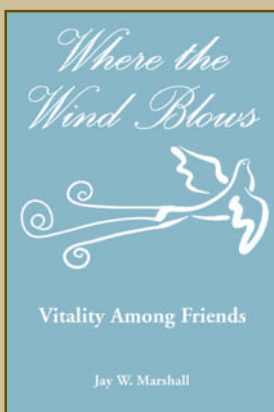
of the Stoics and Epicureans. Tim’s work has now shifted to working in Hebrews as he prepares to teach an exegesis class for second semester and to deliver a short paper at the St. Andrews Conference on Hebrews & Theology in Scotland in July.

This summer, **Lonnie Valentine** returned to his old Yearly Meeting, Pacific YM, to lead a Bible Study. The Bible study, which began at 7:00 AM, was attended by approximately 40 people. By all reports, everyone had a fine time! Lonnie was impressed both with the number of attendees and by hearing about the number of Meetings that have initiated Bible study. As expected, Lonnie also attended a workshop on military counter recruitment and spoke to high school participants about conscientious objection.

Lonnie is currently working on an article about William James’ essay, “The Moral Equivalent of War.” When James presented his thoughts on the issue of war 100 years ago, the U.S. was annexing the Philippines and rumblings of European conflict were beginning. At the end of a long and influential career, this talk and subsequent essay received much attention at the time. It was his most attended talk, and the essay was the one most often reprinted. It is still worth reading, says Lonnie! James once remarked that the decision by the United States government to annex the Philippines and go to war to do so “will set the moral course of U.S. foreign policy for the next 100 years.”

Where the Wind Blows: *A New Study on Friends' Vitality*

Have you ever wondered why one meeting thrives for generations while another languishes? Have you known of a congregation that suddenly explodes with new growth while another one dwindles?



Where the Wind Blows: Vitality Among Friends, by Jay Marshall, is the result of surveys and conversations with nine groups of Friends. This project had two primary goals: share positive news of worship

In 1998, ESR launched a national consultation seeking to identify and understand the variety of factors influencing patterns of growth and vitality. We traveled to listen while Friends discussed their hopes and fears regarding the state of the Religious Society of Friends. On many occasions, we heard reports of vitality that deserved further investigation.

and ministry among Friends; and create a resource for Friends seeking assistance with their own quest for vitality. ESR is pleased to offer this book in service to its constituents and other interested readers.

The cost of the book is \$11.95 plus shipping. For more information, visit www.store.esr.earlham.edu or call 1-800-432-1377.

LOOKING BACK on *ESR Events*

Pastors Conference September 26-27 "Pastoral Spirituality" with Delmer Chilton



Delmer Chilton

This year's conference focused on the spiritual life of the pastor and how to keep it vital and growing. Speaker Delmer Chilton, Coordinator of Spiritual Formation Ministries at the Hinton Rural Life Center in Hayesville, NC, helped participants explore topics ranging from understanding the private life of a public person, creating a time for daily prayer, and keeping the Sabbath and planning personal retreats.

Writers' Colloquium October 21-22



Diane Glancy Lauren Winner

At this year's conference, renowned writers and speakers Diane Glancy and Lauren Winner offered workshops on "Writing, Faith, and Biblical Voices" (Glancy) and "The Delights and Dangers of Writing about People You Know" (Winner). Other workshops focused on practicalities of publishing, belief, poetry, and the spirituality of writing.



Emily Haines Cooper

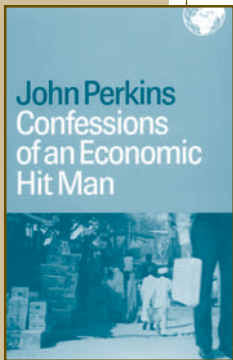
Remembering *Emily Haines Cooper*

Emily Haines Cooper, wife of founding ESR dean Wilmer Cooper and creator of the much loved Peaceable Kingdom Quilt that hangs in the Gathering Area of the ESR Center, died August 21, 2005.

At a memorial service held in that same Gathering Area, Friends remembered Emily's substantial contribution of presence, time, and energy in ESR's formative years. In addition to the important role

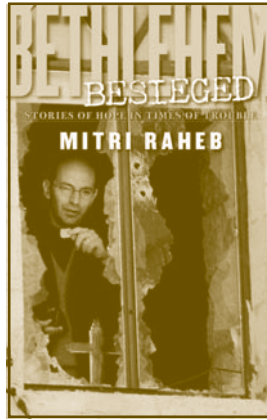
she played alongside Wil at ESR, Emily was instrumental in establishing a WIC Program in Wayne County, Indiana that eventually served three counties and 2,200 women, infants, and children. WIC is a federally funded nutrition supplement and nutrition education program. Upon retirement, she was the initiator of a Mentor Mother program serving first-time young mothers. Beyond those examples of faith in action, Emily is remembered as a lover of all things beautiful, a wonderful cook, an avid gardener, an admirer of the arts, and an ardent quilter.

RECOMMENDED
Reading



John Perkins' memoir, *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2004) provides much evidence that the U.S. government has regularly assassinated leaders in other countries in pursuit of foreign policy objectives. Perkins' story is about his role as what he terms an "economic hit man" for the U.S. government indirectly and multinational corporations. In this role, he was assigned to give overly optimistic economic forecasts to leaders in various counties, thereby establishing control over economic resources and creating debt for the country. Perkins indicates that such behavior was done with the

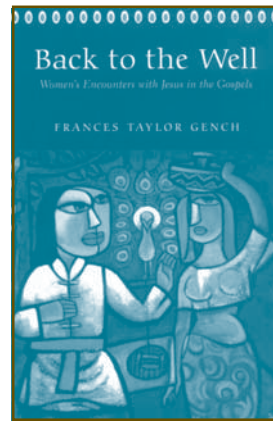
knowledge and support of the U.S. government. According to Perkins, if this economic approach did not work, then the U.S. sent in real hit men to eliminate opposition. These folks, often CIA operatives, were termed "the jackals" by the economic hit men. If economic control could not be established and the assassination attempts failed, then the back up was U.S. invasion. Perkins' experience covers time from the 1960s on, so much of his own work gives insight into the situation the U.S. finds itself in today. He even has a chapter entitled, "Venezuela: Saved by Saddam," that argues the U.S. government has not done something along the lines of Pat Robertson's recommendation simply because we were committed to controlling Iraq first. Current events and recent statements by media personalities such as Pat Robertson



underscore the importance of issues raised by this author.

Lonnie Valentine
Professor of Peace
and Justice Studies

Mitri Raheb is a Christian Palestinian Arab, pastor of the Christmas Lutheran Church (Bethlehem) and founder and Director of the International Center of Bethlehem. *Bethlehem Besieged: Stories of Hope in Times of Trouble* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004) contains Mitri's personal stories of life in Bethlehem during the current Intifada, or "uprising," which began in September of 2000. The stories begin with the Israeli invasion of Bethlehem in April of 2002 and conclude with the building of the separation wall, which will literally enclose Bethlehem, in December of 2003. If your only acquaintance with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is what you see on TV or read in a newspaper, this book may be eye opening. These are stories of how ordinary Palestinians struggle to maintain hope in the midst of despair, dignity in the midst of degradation, and faith in the midst of the unthinkable. Some of the circumstances that Mitri and Bethlehemites faced will make you shudder in horror. You will also cry, both in sadness at what was endured and lost and in joy at the triumph of love. Your own faith in humanity and in the love of Christ will be renewed. If you are an advocate for justice for Palestinians, buy this book and



send it to your congressional

representatives in the hopes that Mitri's words will enable their "ears to hear" the reality of the situation. I am writing this in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Perhaps all those who are in despair at this horror should also read this book. "The hopes and fears of all the years" indeed reside in the "little town of Bethlehem." But those hopes and fears are shared by all persons of faith, and Mitri provides us with a model of faithful witness in the most horrifying of circumstances.

Frances Taylor Gench is Professor of New Testament at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia. In *Back to the Well: Women's Encounters with Jesus in the Gospels* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), she examines six stories of women and Jesus in the gospels: the Canaanite woman (Matt 15:21-28), a hemorrhaging woman and Jairus's daughter (Mark 5:21-43), Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42), a bent woman (Luke 13:10-17), the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-42), and a woman accused of adultery (John 7:53-8:11). With each text, Frances gives attention to matters of language and grammar, structure, form, and literary and historical context. She deals with the history of the interpretation of the text, because often our understanding of these stories is clouded by distorted views. In particular, she addresses the problem of andocentric and anti-Judaic interpretations. She also relates what recent feminist biblical

**Engaging
Scripture:
Reading the Bible
with Early Friends**



scholarship has had to say on these texts.

I recommend this book to anyone who is interested in women's issues and biblical interpretation. This book is suitable for use in adult Bible studies. It is well written in language accessible to non-specialists in biblical studies. Each chapter includes "Questions for Discussion and Reflection" to help readers further engage the text.

This book may take you deeper into these stories than you have ever been. What I appreciate most is Frances' position that does not assume that the biblical women are positive role models for today, though they may be. By providing many angles of vision on these texts, she aims "to teach us about God's way in the world and our own human experience, which does not necessarily mean they are praiseworthy in every respect" (p. xv).

Nancy Bowen
Associate Professor of Old
Testament

ESR alumnus Michael Birkel ('76), Earlham College Religion Department faculty member, has written a gently powerful book entitled, **Engaging Scripture: Reading the Bible with Early Friends** (Richmond: Friends United Press, 2005), that teaches Quakers and others to experience the Bible in new ways. Noting that we come to the Bible with a company of others who affect our experience of it, he encourages us to become aware of who is thus keeping us company and to become

intentional in choosing companions who will be helpful. And for finding mentors in our reading of scripture, Michael particularly recommends early Friends.

He notes, "the relationship that early Friends had with scripture was rich and complex. They read the Bible in terms of their own particular inward experiences, yet they perceived their world in profoundly biblical terms. Their spiritual experiences shaped their reading of the Bible, and the Bible shaped their understanding of their experiences. They did not simply read the scriptures. They lived them. For them, reading the Bible was not just an exercise in information. It was an invitation to transformation" (xxi).

Michael uses two chapters to unpack the incredibly rich treasure trove of scriptural references woven into excerpts of the writings of early Friends George Fox and Dorothy White. One of these is Fox's Epistle 227, written to Friends suffering persecution, which begins "Sing and rejoice, you children of the Day and of the Light." Michael guides his readers first to Zechariah 2:10, "*Sing and rejoice, O daughter Zion! For behold, I will come and dwell in your midst.*" He describes how Fox's reference to this verse would have reminded his readers of the prophet Zechariah's promise of restoration to the people of Jerusalem, who had been captured by Babylon and taken into exile. Michael then moves on to I Thessalonians 5:5, "for you are all *children of light and*

children of the day. We are not of the night or of darkness. So then let us not fall asleep as others do . . ." He notes that those receiving Fox's epistle would have been reminded of the Quaker focus on the Light which illuminates our brokenness and leads us to victory over it.

In such a manner Michael introduces his readers to the scriptural passages to which these Friends' writings point and deepens understanding of the Quaker texts. In later chapters he offers guidance for approaching scripture meditatively, both individually and with others, demonstrating from his experience ways that reflection can proceed from such practices.

The book also includes an appendix with additional readings from early Friends with the scriptural references noted and another with questions for reflection on the various chapters of the book itself. It is an excellent resource for enhancing both personal and corporate reading of scripture.

Stephanie Crumley-Effinger
Director of Field Education

J. Brent Bill's book, **Holy Silence: The Gift of Quaker Spirituality** (Orleans, MA: Paraclete Press, 2005), is a beautiful reflection for weighty and novice Friend alike, as well as readers interested in Quaker spirituality. In the opening chapter, Bill takes the reader into an experience of open worship. The scene is

painted in simple lines: a crisp autumn morning in Vermont, an elegantly plain white meeting-house, a wood stove ticking in the corner. Still, we are not tourists peering into the past; we witness the faithful intention of the small band of gathered worshippers as very much alive and vital. And so the book unfolds, weaving past and present, guiding the reader through scripture, early and medieval monastic practice, and to the powerful story of George Fox's encounter with the inward Teacher and the birth of the Religious Society of Friends. However, Bill does not portray this holy silence in some sentimental vein of niceness. He is honest about the fears that arise when the soul gets quiet. The sifting silence opens us to Jesus' Spirit as inner teacher and guide, calling each of us to hear the continuing revelation that speaks to us *today*. We need not fear, though, for this sacred silence draws the seeker into the heart of Divine love, where as Bill describes "a still, small voice in the depths" may speak with "an inexpressible tenderness, power, and comfort" (p. 53). Bill also conveys internal structure of Quaker worship: those elements of Centering, Welcoming, Deep Worship, Communion, and Sending. Throughout the book are the well-placed "Quietude Queries" as well as further queries at the end for a small group exploring the topic. The perfect gift for a seeker, but also a book for a seasoned Friends' thoughtful self-examination.

Stephanie Ford
Assistant Professor of
Christian Spirituality

A Faith Journey for Peace

By Shelley Newby

Photo by Barbara Mays. Used by permission.



Shelley Newby.

On April 6, 2005, Shelley Newby (ESR 2003) received a vision in which she saw herself walking a long distance.

Over time this vision unfolded as a faith journey on behalf of peace, and on September 3, 2005, Shelley began a long walk to Washington D.C., with each step intended to be a prayer for peace. Shelley wrote the following note to us in the days preceding her departure. You can send Shelley notes of encouragement along the way by sending them to newbysh@earlham.edu.

"I am excited about heading out. So much thinking ahead and planning is not in my nature! I much prefer to be in the moment and on the way! Conditioning takes around 7 hours each day, which doesn't leave much time for other activities—though I realize the importance of being fit. Last week I walked 90 miles and the week before 77. This week and next I will be doing 90. The final week before I leave I will only do about 40.

One of the fantastic things that has happened in my preparing for the journey is that I will be housed by at least seven different types of Christians so far: Quakers (of course), Brethren, Episcopalians, Methodist, Lutherans, Presbyterians, and the Bruderhof Community. I have a few nights left to book. Who

Continued on next sidebar

Nowadays

ALUMNI/AE NEWS

Steve Ackley (2003) and **Maureen McCormick** (2003) passed their certification interviews with the Association of Professional Chaplains on July 19, 2005.

Jane Brown (1985) is carrying her ministry into the educational world. She has developed a new major in Health and Wellness at Antioch University McGregor in Yellow Springs, Ohio. The program will prepare caregivers to understand integrated healthcare that includes the impact of spiritual wellness on the body and mind. Jane's Ph.D. dissertation on "Psycho/Spiritual Openings in Meditating Pain Patients" and her pastoral work at Jeanes Hospital in Philadelphia provided background for developing this program. The Health and Wellness major may be viewed at www.mcgregor.edu.

Michel Clement (2002) was recorded in ministry by Wilmington Yearly Meeting during the Sunday morning worship of the annual meeting on July 10, 2005. Her gift of chaplaincy was recorded specifically. This marks the first time WYM has recognized or recorded chaplaincy in its 114-year history. Cincinnati Friends Meeting recommended Michel's recording to the Yearly Meeting; Michel has been working at Cincinnati Friends as their Pastor for Visitation & Administration since March 2004. In addition to their duties at the Meeting, Michel and her husband Dan Kasztelan (senior Pastor at CFM) have taken on a "ministry" rehabilitating stray cats. "We now

have six cats," she says. "They must mark the mailbox with a sign that says 'Food & Water here.'"

Keith (1966) and **Virginia Esch** (1982) celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on September 3, 2005. They enjoyed a variety of celebrations throughout the year, including a cruise through the Panama Canal and a gathering of far-flung friends and family hosted by their children Brian Esch and Brenda Boggess in State College, PA.

Sabrina Falls' (1995) ministries continue to include itinerant preaching and playing the harp. She has also been increasingly invited to give special programs about her work/ministry as a therapeutic harpist as well as about the burgeoning field of live music at the bedside of the sick and dying. Her current regular work includes playing harp at the bedside of patients at the in-patient hospice unit of Methodist Hospital and the out-patient chemotherapy infusion clinic at Indiana University Cancer Center, both in Indianapolis. The newest news is that her son, Michael, is entering Indiana University Bloomington as a freshman with a special interest in political science.

Marilee Gabriel (2001) accepted a chaplaincy position with VITAS Innovative Hospice Care in Irvine, CA, which means she can finally return home to California after nearly eight years. Prior to accepting this position, Marilee worked as a chaplain in the Twin Cities, working full-time at Woodbury Senior Living and

working on-call at Regions Hospital, a Level I Trauma Center. Marilee also asks that her family be held in the Light as they deal with health crises and transitions that result from them.

Eden and James Grace (1984), and their sons Isaiah and Jesse, are currently living in Kisumu, Kenya, working for Friends United Meeting. Together with a Kenyan colleague, John Muhanji, they have opened an Africa Ministries Office for FUM. In the first few months since the office opened, they have traveled extensively among the 16 FUM Yearly Meetings in East Africa, and have also visited the EFI Friends in Central Africa. Their work entails implementing FUM's four priorities (evangelism, leadership training, global partnerships, and communication) in the African context, supporting FUM mission and project sites in Africa, and coordinating the Yearly Meetings for more effective witness and service. They are thrilled to be working for FUM and to be partnering with African Friends! They can be reached at graces@fum.org.

Tara Lea Hornbacker (1994) received advancement to Associate Professor of Ministry Formation and was granted tenure from Bethany Theological Seminary in March. Tara directs the ministry formation program at Bethany and gives oversight to all field education placements.

Julie Meadows (2000) is entering her final year of Ph.D. work in Ethics at Emory University. She has a fellowship this year in the

undergraduate deans' offices, and is inching her way through a dissertation on music and social justice in which she explores the links between music and justice in Plato, Adam Smith, and Charles Frazier (Cold Mountain), and then makes some suggestions about what contemporary social theory might gain by taking human musicality seriously. She is also entering the job market and asks that any other alumni who hear about openings for Ethics profs send her a note! She asks that she be held in the Light, as she has seen several colleagues reduced to trembling heaps of jello by the academic job search process.

Derek Parker (2004) began a new pair of bi-vocational ministries this past summer. For parts of each week he is Minister for Youth and Children at Irvington Friends Meeting and Administrator of Programs at the Indianapolis headquarters of

National Episcopal Health Ministries. Greenfield, Indiana is Derek's present home.

Sara VanDegrift (2003) graduated from Wake Forest University's Baptist Medical Center after a two-year CPE program and completed the certification process to become a Provisional Board Certified Chaplain with the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC). North Carolina Yearly Meeting also recorded Sara's gifts for ministry at the 2005 yearly meeting sessions. Sara sends a note: "I just wanted to let you (and others) know I've been offered (and plan to accept) a full-time position as a staff chaplain with an end-of-life specialty at Carolinas Medical Center in Charlotte (large teaching hospital and trauma center). Basically, another end-of-life specialist and I will provide pastoral care for all the withdrawals and bereavements at the Medical Center. Yea! It is

full time, with benefits and a real salary, it's in my field and in NC! It doesn't get much better than that."

Scott Wagoner (1990) is in his third year pastoring Deep River Friends Meeting in High Point, North Carolina and has recently been asked to serve on the Yearly Meeting's Visioning Committee to help establish a vision for North Carolina Yearly Meeting. He is also working to establish a network of people that will seek to collaborate and work towards a vigorous renewal among Friends through the Quaker Renewal Forum (www.quakerrenewalforum.blogspot.com). Scott is enjoying opportunities to speak at various gatherings and Friends meetings as well as helping meetings in strategic planning, visioning, and spiritual renewal. He and his wife, Lynda will be celebrating 20 years of marriage this year. Lynda continues her work as a Registered Nurse / Lactation Consultant (celebrating 20 years of marriage this year), their daughter Erin is a Senior in high school, and son Chad is an 8th grader.

Amy Marie Babcock (2002) writes that she is now working at L'Arche DC as an Assistant in the community.

Paul Britner (2004) is the new minister of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Montgomery, in Alabama. You can reach Paul through his Earlham email address or by writing to Paul Britner, 3736 Freeman Court, Montgomery, AL 36109 (334-356-5113).

Continued from previous sidebar

knows, maybe I will connect with yet another type of faith community!

I have many hopes for this trip: that when people see a nearly 50 year old, non-athletic woman walking for peace, they might be stirred to ask themselves what they might do; that I might stimulate prayer and hope for peace and faith that it is even possible through faith; that I might be inspired by the people I meet and their hopes and visions, and then that I might share these with others—even those in our government; that I could be a part of making known another Christian voice than the one that we are hearing so much from lately; and that my personal faith and reliance on God will be deepened and expanded.

There have been times while walking that I have felt full and certain of God's presence with me—before and behind. I have felt a certainty of who I am and what I am called to do like I have never known—and with that, a deep inner peace. My faith has already deepened and expanded. I will be changed by this walk for sure, and have been already. My prayer is that many others will be affected in powerfully positive ways as well."

TSUNAMI continued from page 4

One goal of the group is to return with stories about their time to share with others. Often it is easy for North Americans to forget the scale of this disaster and how long it is taking to rebuild. Raid will return from the trip with stories of how every donation, no matter the size, brought comfort and relief to people around the world who are still struggling with this major crisis.

Raid will be available for interviews and speaking to community and church groups. She will have stories, photos and other visuals available as well. Additional information is available at <http://www.mcc.org/asiaearthquake/>.

Contact information:

Elizabeth Raid

Mennonite Central Committee Central States

316-283-2720

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Jay Marshall, Dean of ESR

THE DEAN'S word

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This issue of *ESR Reports* focuses on the theme of accountability. It is a delicate, perhaps even tricky, subject. Most any day of the week, news broadcasts report stories that remind us of the importance of accountability—that is to say, answering for what one has done. This is a topic that currently weighs heavily upon many hearts. For many, it seems the U.S. government has acted in ways contrary to its own principles and laws. Meanwhile, the judicial process is weighing evidence and issuing judgments to corporate executives who misused power, acted unethically, and defrauded investors of millions of dollars. At the same time, the Church has limited voice in such matters because high profile sex scandals have severely damaged the

Church's credibility and trustworthiness. The Church's own identity crises further muddy the waters. And lest any would get too high and mighty in judging these sins, Jesus' words for "the person without sin to cast the first stone" reminds all who dare to enter the discussion to do so with humility.

At its most basic level, accountability is about checks and balances that promote health and guard against disaster. For accountability to have integrity, all parties involved need to agree upon standards and expectations. Otherwise, what is sometimes lofted as an "accountability issue" is little more than one group trying to impose its values on another group that does not share those values. The discussion gets extremely complicated

when one or both sides appeal to God or to truth as the foundation of their argument. In Quakerese, this is what happens when eldering goes astray, as it sometimes does when a sound understanding of the concept is lacking.

Although this issue of *ESR Reports* won't immediately resolve any of the major dilemmas facing our world today, it does bring ESR and the subject of ministry into conversation with the concept of accountability. We have much to be grateful for—and much with which we have been entrusted. Accountability is important to us—as an institution, as individuals, as faithful Friends. Perhaps our valuing of accountability will encourage others to begin similar conversations in their local communities.

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Faithful Accountability