



Third Haven Friends Meeting

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Easton, Maryland 21601

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JUNE 2006 NEWSLETTER

"Poetry is an orphan of silence. The words never quite equal the experience behind them. We are always at the beginning, eternal apprentices." Charles Simic

Meet a Friend RIDGELY — You can't keep a good painter down.

When surgery on her right shoulder sidelined **Joyce Zeigler** earlier this year, she was none too happy. The stress of being unable to paint caused her to break out in fever blisters. But she resigned herself to spending a few months away from her easel.

Until, that is, Bobbi Seger weighed in. Like Joyce, Bobbi is a member of the Traveling Brushes, a group of half a dozen artists who travel the country to paint on location together and compare notes. Bobbi told her to stop moping about and try painting with her left hand. So about six weeks ago, Joyce took her advice.

"It was a little awkward," said Joyce in a recent interview at her home and studio. "But the beauty of oil is, you just keep pushing it around 'til it's where you want it." And her fever blisters cleared up. Joyce found out in January that being an artist is more dangerous than it looks. She was carrying "a huge painting" into the Academy Art Museum when a gust of wind almost jerked it out of her hands. Instead, it jerked her right arm, and Joyce felt something give.

Not long afterward, while attending a concert at the library in Denton, she reached out to hold an elevator door open for another concertgoer, and the feeling hit her again — harder. The muscles in her shoulder had completely separated from the bone.

"It's just something you don't expect to ever happen," said Joyce last week.

On March 31, orthopedic surgeon Myron J. Szczukowski, Jr. stapled the muscles back in place. Joyce's right arm has been in a sling ever since. She even has to wear it while sleeping, which she does sitting up on the living room sofa.

With her arm in a sling, there are many things Joyce finds difficult or impossible to do. She is "unhandy" in the kitchen. But during the interval between her injury and her operation, she "packed the freezer a little bit." And since her surgery, her fellow Brushes and Quakers have been very generous with food and moral support.

Her doctor has authorized her to try her hand at driving. But dressing and primping are problematic. She allows as how she visits the beauty parlor more often, because she can't do her own hair. Her husband, Frank, teases her about how often she goes. But with a dismissive wave of her good hand, she says, "Oh, don't listen to him!"

“I can get in and out of the car, but it’s very awkward,” she says. “Writing is hard. I can not write with my left hand.”

Nevertheless, she can paint. She paints lefthanded, but her right hand moves, seemingly of its own accord. “It’s like it’s shooting signals to my left hand,” she says.

Joyce has completed half a dozen lefthanded paintings or more, and is confident that she has more up her (left) sleeve. (see painting, left)



“I can’t tell you how happy I was” when she realized she could paint with her left hand. She doesn’t even mind that her lefthanded paintings look different from her earlier work.

“They’re a little more impressionistic,” she says. But she’s proud of them. Proud enough to compete in the 2006 Plein Air—Easton! painting competition in July. And she exhibited both righthanded and lefthanded paintings at last weekend’s Oxford Invitational Fine Arts Fair.

Surgery has cramped Joyce’s style, though. She cancelled a show at

Chincoteague, Va., at Eastertime. And since she normally does a good deal of the driving, the Traveling Brushes nixed their annual painting trip to Block Island, R.I.

Joyce is relieved that she can paint while recuperating, but her shoulder can’t heal too fast for her.

“I look forward to being pain-free,” she said last week. “This pain was right up there with labor pain.”

Joyce says she will “probably” retire her left hand when her right hand is off the disabled list. But she knows that won’t be soon. Her surgeon “just said it would take a while,” she says. “The staples will stay there all my life.”

Joyce can handle not only a paint brush, but also a telephone, with her left hand. So if you’re unable to get up to Ridgely to visit her, give her a call at 410-634-2491. *by Peter Howell*

Friends Afar “I would appreciate being added to your email list. What a small world with our connection to Maryville and Maryland.

My 7th Great grandfather was John Woolcott who arrived in Maryland in 1649. Everyone assumes he arrived by ship from England, however, I can’t find any records of ships to Maryland in the 1640’s because of the civil war in England. By the way he was also a doctor.

I have suspicions that he came from New England because of The Toleration Act. He died in 1669 and all of his overseers were later identified as the beginning members of Betty’s Cove.

What is real interesting is that his will wasn’t filed until 1713 and is stated as the first will filed in Chestertown. This is 44 years after he died. The will was filed by John Pitt who was the Quaker assigned to register wills. So I am and have been interested in all the history of Betty’s Cove, Tred and Third Haven.” *Larry Walcutt, Maryville, TN 37803 walcutt@peoplepc.com*

Third Haven Friends Meeting Minutes of the 5th Month 13th, 2006 Meeting for Business

Attending: Leonard Baynham, Kenneth Carroll, Larny Claggett, Susan Claggett, Joe Davis, Doreen Getsinger, Susan Leibman, Bob Marshall, Beth Mufson, Nancy Mullen, Sumner Parker, Dee Rein, Anne Rouse, Jim Rouse, John Schreiner, Karin Stoker, Norval Thompson, Cathy Thompson, Meredith Watters, Ann Williams, Winslow Womack, Ralph Young, and Frank Zeigler.

Clerk of the Meeting Anne Rouse clerked the Meeting for Business. The meeting opened at 11:35 am with a period of worship.

Query for Fifth Month -- The fifth query, "Education," had been read during Meeting for Worship. A Friend reflected upon his experience sharing the gospels with his daughter, noting that some parts of the gospels are lovely and some parts simply did not speak to him. Another Friend noted distinction between the "technical" aspects of education provided children through formal schooling and the "social" aspects – ethics, values, and morality – which are our responsibility to provide at home and in our religious community.

The Clerk queried Friends about establishing the practice of sharing news of members. Friends were enthusiastic about the proposal, and after some discussion determined to initiate a time for open sharing of news, joys, and concerns at the rise of Meeting for Worship each week, following "afterthoughts." Meredith Watters began the practice by sharing news of Paige Bethke's new position as Director of the Talbot County Economic Development Office.

Approval of Minutes -- The minutes of the 4th Month 2006 Meeting for Business were APPROVED without changes.

Meeting treasurer Joe Davis gave the Treasurer's Report. We received a \$7,000.00 grant from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM) and \$2500.00 from the trustees for replacement of the furnace and oil tank. Payment of back taxes, penalties, and interest for 2002 payroll taxes was made from the contingency fund. Joe reports that this lingering issue should now be fully resolved. For the fiscal year-to-date, the Meeting has had roughly \$49,400.00 of income and \$39,800.00 of expenses. Income stands currently at 91% of budget, overall expenses at 68%. Before the close of the fiscal year, we will make another quarterly payment to PYM, disburse \$1500.00 through donation to various worthy organizations, and pay the end-of-year committee expenses. The balance sheet as of 4th Month 30th shows total assets of roughly \$67,000.00, of which approximately \$62,600.00 is available. The Meeting APPROVED the report with thanks to the treasurer.

Budget & Finance committee clerk Winslow Womack presented the draft budget for fiscal year 2006-2007. The committee has carefully considered the caretakers' compensation, and recommends an increase in salary. The committee also recommends that the caretakers assume financial responsibility for their own utilities and that the meeting split payment of wages between Sam and Vickie so that both may be covered under worker's compensation. Due to savings in health insurance premiums, the total cost to the meeting of the \$5000.00 salary increase and other changes will be approximately \$2900.00. The utilities budget for the meeting is increased in anticipation of rising fuel costs, although the overall amount decreases due to the change in payment of the caretakers' utilities. The communications budget is also decreased, due to decreased mailing costs. Finally, the amounts earmarked for donations to organizations have been moved from the Testimonies & Concerns budget to Donations.

When queried, Winslow reported that the budget anticipates a 35% increase in fuel costs. Ralph Young clarified that the “Marilla’s Lunches” project, funded through Testimonies & Concerns, requires \$250.00 for the upcoming year. This change and others should be communicated to Budget & Finance committee prior to 6th Month 1st 2006 for incorporation into the final budget. A Friend asked about a \$1000.00 per year set-aside for Habitat for Humanity, to fund a donation to an “apostles build” house every two years (requested donation from each faith community of \$2000.00). Friends will revisit this possibility when more details of the proposed schedule are available. A Friend asked whether the caretakers had requested salary review; Winslow reported that the requested increase had come from Property & Grounds committee, after that committee’s evaluation. Regarding the accounting change for donations, it has been suggested that no committee should pay donations or memberships out of the committee budget. Since these are Meeting donations or memberships, and not those of the committee, these commitments should be made by approval of the entire Meeting. It was suggested that Budget & Finance committee draft a minute to the effect for consideration by the Meeting.

Winslow also reported that he had written to PYM to ask for clarification on four items from the PYM budget and received a response, copies of which are available. Finally, the Clerk asked if a decision had been made regarding the budget from which to pay the Quarterly Meeting brochure printing costs. Joe will make a determination when he receives the bill.

Bob Marshall, clerk of Worship & Ministry committee, presented the proposed “Advices Regarding the Meeting for Business” for approval by the Meeting. A Friend proposed a wording change to the fourth item under “advices to committee clerks, Meeting representatives, and committee members:” replace “in a timely way” with “to consider in advance of the next Meeting for Business.” A committee member reflected on the value of committee work, encouraging committees to allow adequate time for deliberation, and noting that lengthy discussions in the Meeting for Business may indicate inadequate seasoning and deliberation within the committee. The Meeting APPROVED the Advices as amended, and further APPROVED printing an abbreviated version (including the “advices to members and attenders” section) on the back of the agenda for Monthly Meeting.

First Day School – Beth Mufson reported on progress of the planned children’s garden. The garden is envisioned as a safe space for the children to be active that retains and reflects the serene character of the property. Meredith Watters has proposed a design, and the layout is currently spray-painted on the ground outside the common room for Friends to explore. Beth explained that the scope of the project exceeds the earmarked funds; it has not been decided if additional fundraising will be undertaken, or if the project will be implemented in stages. Friends were enthusiastic about the concept and the proposed design, finding it to be a welcoming space for all. The committee was encouraged to determine the total cost and develop a budget, and Friends were encouraged to make use of the beautiful donation box crafted by John Hawkinson to donate funds for the project. Friends were comfortable with the committee beginning work.

Susan Claggett reported that Beth Mufson and Codie Chaudoin have been working with the younger children on the theme of what/who/where is God. Paige Bethke has responsibility for a curriculum of Quaker stories and world religions with the older children. A high school group is meeting twice a month. “Moving up” day, celebrating eighth graders and high school graduates, will be held 6th Month 4th, with a picnic on the grounds at the rise of Meeting. Susan has information about a variety of Quaker camp opportunities for children; interested Friends are encouraged to contact her. Susan reflected that the query for 5th Month had spoken to her;

teaching makes us teachable and Friends are encouraged to share with the children during First Day School.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting - Cathy Thompson presented a proposed minute on climate change. A Friend expressed discomfort with the term "overpopulation," suggesting "increased population" instead. Another Friend felt the description of the Meeting's actions with respect to efficiency had a righteousness we are not entitled to claim, and suggested deletion of that sentence. The phrase "estuaries within the Chesapeake Bay" was revised to "Chesapeake Bay." The Meeting APPROVED the minute as amended.

Cathy presented a report from Interim Meeting describing security issues with the homeless living on the grounds of the Arch Street Meetinghouse, approval of a minute from Burlington Quarter urging withdrawal of troops from Iraq, the need for replacement of the Yearly Meeting Clerk following Gretchen Castle's resignation, Residential Yearly Meeting in July, and the ongoing work of the Transition Project Group. More information is available in the common room.

Nancy Mullen reported that Testimonies & Concerns committee is drafting a minute of support of the Friends Committee on National Legislation's work on the issue of torture. An information sheet describing the National Religious Campaign Against Torture is available.

Property & Grounds committee clerk John Schreiner thanked Friends for a successful clean up day. John also reports that funds may be available through the Maryland Historic Trust for completion of our impending roofing projects.

Hospitality committee – Cathy Thompson described, and the Meeting APPROVED, a plan to make each of the committees responsible for one month of hospitality.

No further business appearing, Friends concluded at 1:00 pm with a period of worship, purposing to meet next on 6th Month 11th, 2006, at which time the Meeting will receive the final budget and the annual report of the First Day School committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Hersemann Leibman, Recording Clerk, Third Haven Friends Meeting

Meet a Friend Finder Who's the Quaker about whom you would most like to know more? Who's the Quaker you think is Third Haven's best kept secret? Your fellow Quakers would probably like to know, and your newsletter staff would definitely like to know. So please forward your suggestions for member profiles to Pete Howell at phrasemaker@hotmail.com. If you don't have e-mail, feel free to call him at 410-924-5752.

Third Haven Monthly Meeting Minute on Climate Change

Third Haven Monthly Meeting unites with the Epistle from the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Called Session of June 4th, 2005 concerning global warming and its potentially disastrous ecological and societal implications.

We recognize that increased population (6+ billion humans) has contributed to the problem, as well as generalized disrespect for nature and the earth's resources. We would do well to study and learn from Native Americans' spiritual and cultural beliefs in relation to nature and the environment, as we seem to have strayed from those values.

We see this as a worldwide problem particularly critical to our children and grandchildren. A first step toward a remedy is consciousness-raising, to be followed by specific action at home, at work, and at our Meeting.

The United States has a lifestyle that other countries try to emulate, and we have not signed the Kyoto protocol while we continue to be major polluters and consumers of fossil fuels. We need to petition our government to provide world leadership for strong economic growth through ecologically sound consumption (recycling, solar energy and ethanol fuel pumps).

In our own Meeting House, we intend to implement the advices for responding to the epistle on climate change, (recently distributed to monthly meetings), where possible and appropriate... both individually and collectively.

On a local level, we feel a strong stewardship for the Chesapeake Bay. Our members support a number of groups who are active in trying to clean up the bay.

Response to the development of the Climate Action Network has been very positive at Third Haven, people are tuning in, and members are putting forth new ideas to share and suggestions for local changes.

We at Third Haven will support the efforts of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, its committees, the Climate Action Network, and like-minded groups in this vital concern.

*Anne Rouse, Clerk Cathy Thompson, Climate Action Network Representative
Third Haven Monthly Meeting May 14, 2006*

Moving up day of First Day School

Sara Morgan Watters has graduated from the Severn School and plans to attend St. Mary's College in St. Mary's City, Maryland. She will spend the summer as sailing instructor at the Ida Lewis Yacht Club. Sara just competed for the Interscholastic Sailing Association's National Championship (and the Baker Trophy) sailed in 420's on May 27-28, 2006 at the Vineyard Haven YC, where Severn took first in the qualifying round and second in the championship round of the twelve teams from across the country.

Nicola Green is finishing 8th grade along with her two brothers (triplets) at Easton Middle School. She will be attending her freshman year at Easton High School. Nicola is an excellent student, well-liked by teachers and peers. Each year students vote for superlatives to describe some of the students in their class. In 6th grade, she was voted "most likely to succeed", in 7th, she was voted "friendliest", and this year she was voted, "smartest". She particularly excels in language arts and has always been an avid reader. They attended Homewood Meeting in Baltimore for years prior to moving to the shore after the triplets finished 4th grade. She loved attending First Day School and had her introduction to Quakerism there.

The following were the First Day School teachers for this school year: Kindergarten -Grade 3 class: Beth Mufson and Codie Chaudion; Grades 4-8 class: Susan Claggett; High School: Mary Cotton; Baby room- lead by parents; Godly Play: Candace Shattuck

These were the adult helpers for the year Sept 2005-June 2006: Candace Shattuck, Beth Mufson, Codie Chaudion, Susan Claggett, Tom McCall, Larny Claggett, Paige Bethke, Mary Cotton, Janice Shreve, Ann Womack, Samantha McCall, Alan Girard, Dan Chaudion, Susan Leibman, Byron Crump, Amy Crump, Sally Claggett, Cynthia Browne, Christin Dickey, Lorraine T. Claggett, Greg Leibman.

Here is a current list of the families participating in this most important endeavor of our meeting, First Day School, which had an average attendance of 10 to 20 children each week.

Paige and Brandt Bethke; Al Bond, Christin Dickey, and Lucy and Zadoc Bond; Cynthia Browne and Nicola Green; Robert Burgoyne; Dan, Codie, William, Beatrice, and Dorothy Chaudoin; Sally, Laurence, Maya, and April Claggett; Larny, Lorraine and Laura Claggett; Susan Claggett, Craig Smith, Evan and Katie Claggett; Byron, Amy, Emma and Edgar Crump; Martin, Liddy, Justin and Jacob Garcia-Bunuel; Alan and Justin Girard; Mimi Holt, Dawn, Devin, Cierra and Alexis Lednum; Greg, Emma, Atticus and Susan Leibman; Bob and Emma Marshall; Tom, Samantha and Max McCall; Patrick, Marcie and Sophie Molloy; Carlos Moreno, Susan Holt, Daniel, and Thomas Moreno-Holt; Neil, Beth and Charlie Mufson; Mike, Nancy, Jacob, Sam and Nathan Mullen; Candace Shattuck; Don, Janice and Dylan Shreve; Norval, Cathy, Cassidy, Norval, Jr., and Sarah Thompson; Meredith and Sara Watters.

Spruce Up Day was held May 13 (seventh day) at THF. Cooperative weather and



cooperative Friends and families brought fun, fellowship and productive outdoors activity to breath new life into our buildings and grounds; Thanks go to John Schreiner and his willing crew in the accompanying photos and many more.



Testimonies and Concerns Requests Meeting members and attenders are asked to suggest and advocate organizations for donations. Please send all suggestions to Lorraine Claggett, 410-822-0669; claggett@crosslink.net . The current list includes Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), Friends General Conference (FGC), Friends Journal, National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund, Quaker United Nations Office, Friends Peace Teams, Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, Nonviolent Peaceforce, Quaker Earth Care Witness, Pendle Hill, George School, Women for Afghan Women – Afghan Women’s Fund. Local organizations include P.E.A.C.E., Talbot Association of Clergy and Laity, Partnership for Alcohol and other Drug Abuse Prevention, Habitat for Humanity, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Channel Marker, Inc., Hospice, Maryland Food Bank, Talbot Mentors, and Talbot County Humane Society. Other Requests include The Meeting School, Bolivian Quaker Education Fund (BQEF), Quaker House, George Fox School, and Church World Service.

"Thank You!" to Meeting members for their visits, flowers, food, cards and prayers as I go through the long process of healing and therapy for an extreme muscle tear in my right shoulder. (Yes, it's my painting arm but I have discovered I can paint with my left arm too). I cannot write very well and still not driving. Frank is a wonderful care giver. He helps me dress, ties my shoes and carries my paint box for me, etc. Thanks again. *Joyce Zeigler*

Announcements for Third Haven Monthly Meeting -- week of June 4, 2006

May 31 (fourth day) 5:30pm meeting for worship

June 4 (first day) 10am meeting for worship followed by the annual First Day School Moving Up ceremony. Meeting picnic to follow. Hospitality will provide fried chicken and lemonade, families are asked to bring fresh fruit or salads, and all are welcome to greet summer Contact: Susan Claggett 410-822-5964

Transition Project Group

The Interim Philadelphia Yearly Meeting has chosen a Transition Project Group to review both the job description of General Secretary and administrative structure. This group has scheduled four sessions on different dates and sites to hear from individual Friends. All PYM meetings are encouraged to participate in this process. Two members of the Transition Project Group will be present at each session, expected to run 1 to 2 hours: Directions to any of these sites can be found on the PYM website www.pym.org call Connie Blood at 215-241-7211 with questions.

Comments can be sent via email tpg@pym.org

- June 4 at Burlington Conference Center, 3:00 PM
- June 11 at Plymouth Meeting, 3:00 PM

June 7 (fourth day) 5:30pm meeting for worship

June 11 (first day) 10am meeting for worship and meeting for business. Annual report of the Budget and Finance committee with final proposed budget for 2006-2007. Annual report of the First Day School committee

meeting for worship June 14 (fourth day) 5:30pm

June 21 (fourth day) 5:30pm

June 28 (fourth day) 5:30pm

June 18 (first day) 10am

June 25 (first day) 10am

July 2 (first day) 10am

Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) - Throughout the weekend of June 16 & 17, Third Haven will be hosting an intensive training workshop in the AVP program.

The workshop will be conducted by John Shuford, a certified AVP trainer with years of AVP training experience. AVP transforms those who participate in it. It transforms attitudes and relationships and enhances effective interpersonal skills. Alternatives to violence refers to verbal, emotional, social and physical violence. AVP provides an enjoyable, rich and rewarding experience, which helps improve relationships with family, friends and in daily encounters. The workshop is life changing. It is hoped that participants will leave this experiential workshop with the requisite skills to train others in non-violent conflict resolution techniques. If you wish to attend, please contact Ralph Young (819-0050).

Parents Together: To provide education and support for raising drug free youth, please join parents, grandparents, and other adults concerned about raising children to be alcohol, tobacco and other drug free in this program at St. Mark's United Methodist Church in Easton.

- June 20, pm Empowering Parents Learn strategies for supporting adults who uphold the laws and for confronting those who do not.

Contact: Talbot Partnership 410-819-8067 or info@talbotpartnership.org

Reminders Announcements must reach hawkjm@goeaston.net by Monday afternoon to be sent out Tuesday. Let us know of e-mail and other address changes

New e-mail address: Katie Hawkinson: katiehawkinson@comcast.net

Southern Quarter website for children: <http://www.friendsmedia.org/kidsquake/>

Friendly Eights groups are posted in the common room. This is an opportunity for Friends in groups of eight to meet for 4 pot luck dinners at homes and times chosen by the group between June and December, 2006. Our goal for this round is to encourage intergenerational interaction, to better know each other. (Children's attendance will be at the discretion of the host for each event.)

- Send a contribution payable to: Third Haven Monthly Meeting

Mail to Third Haven Treasurer, PO Box 2379, Easton, MD 21601

The following is an index of coming events listed by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and other major Quaker organizations. Details of these events may be found on the Third Haven Website, <http://www.thirdhaven.org/> by clicking on Complete Text Material on the home page.

INDEX OF EVENTS FOR 2006

GENERAL (undated)

Transition Project Group

Volunteers Needed for Annual Fund Phonothon

0% Interest College Loan Program for Quaker Students

Jeanes Foundation Awards First Nursing Scholarship

WWII CO's Sought for Book Project

Meeting On Worship & Ministry Activities

Using PYM Library materials

Putting faith to action: the Peace Tax Fund Bill

Teachers Workshop on Bullying

Join the PYM Library Services Group

Quaker Parenting Project offers Discussion Series

Friends Counseling Service

JUNE 2006

June 2-4, 2006 Quaker Initiative to End Torture

June 3 Called Session of PYM

June 3 PYM Session for Budget

June 23 African Summer Workcamps 2006

JULY 2006

July 8 Burial Ground Clean-up

Register Now for Residential Yearly Meeting

July 23 Peace and Justice Potluck Picnic

July 25-30, 2006 Residential Yearly Meeting

July 28-30 Basic Quakerism Weekend

AUGUST 2006

The Summer History Project at Camp Onas

SEPTEMBER 2006

Project to Strengthen Meeting Community

September 16 Quaker Arts Conference

September 29, 30 and October 1, 2006 New Jersey Gathering Set for Fall Weekend

FRIENDS EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

American Friends Service Committee: New Hampshire Youth Organizer

Friends Journal seeks Development Officer

PYM Seeks Coordinator of Food Services

Director, Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO)

Call for Licensed Mental Health Professionals

Is Jesus your personal savior?

by Bob Marshall

Is Jesus your personal savior?

Did Jesus die to save you?

Is Jesus the Messiah?

Are you a true believer in the good news as revealed to us by Jesus?

As you read these questions do you feel a sense of both joy and humility, or, do you intellectually distance yourself from the questions and the questioner, or, are you repelled?

Note that the four questions above are not primitive queries. Truly primitive queries reach into the heart and soul of an individual. The reader listens to the question and knows the answer can only come from their quiet place, the place filled with Light that they visit all too infrequently. Rather, the questions above are usually asked by someone who already knows the answer they want to hear -- Jesus better darn well be your personal savior, he certainly did die to save you, of course he is the Messiah, and if you do not believe in the good news as revealed to us by Jesus you are one lost puppy.

For the brief time that you are reading this article let's ask some basic questions and see where we are lead.

First, what exactly are the teachings of Jesus? What is the list?

Teaching #1. Love God.

Teaching #2. Love your neighbor as you love yourself.

Jesus notes that these are foundational. Everything flows from these.

In this light, all other teachings of Jesus are just elaborations on how an individual can love, deepen their love, and exclude no one from their love. So, in a nutshell, Jesus is teaching us about the love of God, our fellow man, and ourselves.

Let's stop right here. How can this cause an adverse reaction in any person? I reject the idea that those who are repelled by the initial four questions, or at least uneasy with them, are repelled by the teaching to love. Let's continue on and look at some of the incremental teachings, the teachings that are corollaries of the first two teachings.

- Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
- Do not judge others.
- Realize that your judgment of others may be rooted in your own failings and harsh judgments of yourself.
- Forgive, both others and yourself.
- Love your enemies. Love those who hate you, love those who speak ill of you, love those who otherwise mistreat you.
- Always tell the truth.
- No adultery.
- Focusing one's energies and thoughts on the pursuit of wealth is contrary to the pursuit of the Kingdom of God.
- Children live in the present moment. They are trusting and forgiving. You must return and become like children to enter the Kingdom of God.
- Do not worry about the future.
- Do not do good deeds in public so that others may see them.

In a nutshell, Jesus teaches us the individual components of how to open our hearts to others, as well as ourselves. What is objectionable in this? Of course, following these teachings is counterintuitive, requires discipline, and thus is hard work. But Jesus did not waste effort teaching the obvious. For example, he did not teach that parents should love their children. This is obvious and intuitive. His teachings were reserved for those things that were counterintuitive, and thus extremely difficult.

The last part of Teaching #2, "as you love yourself", is a wonderful component of the teaching. To me, it tells us that our love for others is bounded by our love for ourselves. Thus, the message is love God, our neighbor, and ourselves, where the last of these defines how much we can do of the first two.

So, getting past the potential implicit judgments of those who ask the four questions above, what else is there that repels rational people, or at least makes them uneasy, when confronting these kinds of questions?

I will offer a few possibilities. First, the assertion that Jesus was a living deity is a source of disquiet. Jesus was the Messiah? Here is my personal perspective. Jesus was a man of remarkable spirituality -- a spiritual genius. If most of us have very clouded windows through which God's Light attempts to reach our souls, the window to Jesus's soul was clean, always. So, the earth was blessed with a man who had unencumbered access at all times to God's Light.

Much has been made of Jesus's death. Did he die to save me? Here is my perspective. Jesus knew that he was a marked man. His teachings and stature were so threatening to those in power and authority that his life was in peril. He knew a critical time would come where he might be spared, or given a quick death, if he renounced his teachings. If he renounced his teachings then his teachings would have been greatly diminished or, more likely, forgotten. After all, who would study and contemplate the teachings of someone who had recanted their own teachings? But he did not do this. He accepted his impending death, however painful and prolonged the

agony might be, rather than renounce his teachings. The fact that Jesus died, and did so in a gruesomely painful way, so that his teachings would not be diminished does not make his teachings better. They are what they are. But for those who have been influenced by his teachings at the core of their beings, they cannot be anything less than grateful that Jesus was willing to accept death so that the pathway to the Light, as described by Jesus, would not be dimmed.

When encountering those who ask the questions above, perhaps we could pause for a moment and recognize that the teachings of Jesus can be overwhelming. Discernment of the personal meaning of the teachings is life-changing. Implicit in this is perhaps one aspect of the teachings that is not often articulated. From a pedagogical viewpoint, the teachings of Jesus constitute masterful instruction. For two thousand years the teachings have revealed themselves as fresh. It is a terrific curriculum with the optimal amount of ambiguity -- students are required to do the hard work to reach an understanding on their own. Each understanding is idiosyncratic to the individual, and yet each individual understanding is tied together with the threads provided by Jesus so that a commonality of understanding emerges from the separate individual discoveries.

Returning to the two primary teachings, the central message is love. If we seek a direct and succinct definition, Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians Chapter 13 contains one. According to Paul, love is 8 things, and it isn't 8 other things. Here is one thing that love is not.

“Love does not insist on its own way.”

If I insist that others follow the spiritual path that I have discovered then I am insisting on my own way. If I insist that Quakerism requires specific beliefs regarding Jesus then I am insisting on my own way, I am not loving, and thus I am in violation of one of Jesus's primary teachings. Hmmmm. So Jesus taught that if you insist that others do what Jesus taught then you are not doing what Jesus taught because to insist is not to love. You can share. You can inform. You can express your own joy of spiritual discovery. But, you cannot insist. Thus, perhaps at the heart of one's disquiet regarding the questions above is that they are often posed in a way, and with a tone, that is internally contradictory to the teachings of Jesus. But the “good news” is quite exciting, and perhaps we should follow the teachings of Jesus when encountering a questioner who is a bit overbearing and judgmental. Namely, we should love them.

Friendly Eights Friends commence this June with a round of four dinners with each group having eight members and attenders, hence "Friendly Eights." The host provides the entrée, calls the rest of the group, and entertains their contributions of delicious dishes and camaraderie. Hosting dinners two, three and four then revolves among group members. Those unable to host at home may sign up to use the Common Room. Group lists are currently posted in the Common Room. The first host will be contacted by an Overseer to get the ball rolling. We hope all involved enjoy the chance to know each other better and that others will sign up in December when we again plan another round of Friendly Eights dinners. Cheers! *Dee Rein on behalf of Overseers*