

Greeting: Ed Snyder, former Executive Secretary of the Friends Committee on National Legislation posited in 1982 that anger, fear, guilt, and even success offer only short bursts of energy or emotional backing for efforts on peace and justice -- not the spiritual resources needed for a lifetime of action and advocacy. He wrote in an essay in *Quaker Life* entitled "Sustaining the Peacemaker": "If motivation based on anger, fear, success, or guilt is dubious, where do we look? It seems to me that the spiritual resources for the long haul must begin with an abiding faith that peace is the will of God, and must be grounded in a belief that the human race is one family."

Our first hymn is in the Green Book, #257, "Take My Life and Let it Be"

Our first reading is from one whose life and moments and hands and will and intellect and love and self were taken fully by the Light of God. At his trial for blasphemy in Bristol, he steadily maintained that he "denied James Naylor to be Christ, but Christ was in him". In 1660, after his release, James Naylor set out on foot for the north, intending to go home to his wife and children. On the way, he was robbed and bound, and found towards evening in a field. He was taken to a Friend's house, where he died at age 44. These were some of his last words:

"There is a spirit which I feel that delights to do no evil, nor to revenge any wrong, but delights to endure all things, in hope to enjoy its own in the end. Its hope is to outlive all wrath and contention, and to weary out all exaltation and cruelty, or whatever is of a nature contrary to itself. It sees to the end of all temptations. As it bears no evil in itself, so it conceives none

in thoughts to any other. If it be betrayed, it bears it, for its ground and spring is the mercies and forgiveness of God. Its crown is meekness, its life is everlasting love unfeigned; it takes its kingdom with entreaty and not with contention, and keeps it by lowliness of mind. In God alone it can rejoice, though none else regard it, or can own its life. It is conceived in sorrow, and brought forth without any to pity it, nor doth it murmur at grief and oppression. It never rejoiceth but through sufferings; for with the world's joy it is murdered. I found it alone, being forsaken. I have fellowship therein with them who lived in dens and desolate places in the earth, who through death obtained this resurrection and eternal holy life."

A second reading was inspired by these words of Naylor, one of the several sonnets Kenneth Boulding published in 1945 as a collective reflection just at the end of the conflagration of World War II. In his academic work Boulding emphasized that human economic and other behavior is embedded in a larger interconnected system. To understand the results of our behavior, economic or otherwise, we must first research and develop a scientific understanding of the ecodynamics of the general system, the global society in which we live, in all its dimensions, spiritual and material. Boulding believed that in the absence of a committed effort to the right kind of social science research and understanding, the human species might well be doomed to extinction. But he died optimistic, believing our evolutionary journey had just begun. This brilliant man nearly always spoke with a stammer, except when he stood to testify in Quaker meetings, and then the Spirit made his speech clear. One of his sonnets inspired by James Naylor's dying words:

- There is a spirit which I feel

“Can I, imprisoned, body-bounded, touch
The starry robe of God, and from my soul
My tiny Part, reach forth to his great Whole
And spread my Little to the infinite Much,
When Truth forever slips from out my clutch,
And what I take indeed, I do but dole
In cupfuls from a rimless ocean-bowl
That holds a million million million such?
And yet, some Thing that moves among the stars,
And holds the cosmos in a web of law,
Moves too in me: a hunger, a quick thaw
Of soul that liquefies the ancient bars,
As I, a member of creation, sing
The burning oneness binding everything.”

Our 2nd hymn is “Come and Go With Me to That Land” no. 285
in the green book reiterates the burning oneness binding
everything, where we’re bound.

Joys and Concerns---then music interlude

Dear Friends—Let us be taken, let us be bound to oneness, let
us eternally seek the greater truth we don’t understand, but
that we know intuitively, mutually, in Love. In our humility, let
us be blessings, consciously known as well as subtly influential.
In our collective Friendship with each other and with the inner
Light of life let us shine, perhaps not in full confidence, but in
faithfulness, and as a community. We reflect that Light in our
daily circumstance, and are sources of that Light in our link to a
heritage, an ongoing procession of testimony. At the edge,
where our wills and personal life end and the transcendent
picks up, begins, continues, let us stand, let us rest, let us be.
When we are beaten and bound, and left in the field, let us be
found, let us be recorded, let us testify, let us Love. Amen.

Our third hymn is green book No. 288, "Mid Canyons Deep of Brick and Stone"

Children may now head downstairs for time with each other.

Message: Dear Friends—Our last hymn closed with the lines "May the embodiments of sin in which we work and dwell become true temples, Lord, wherein your praises we may tell" and here we are in a society so divided, so inconceivable to one another, that we know the public rancor will continue whatever the election outcome. We have sailed on, and swum in, that ocean of darkness and thought the worst of each other. And while we yet may feel and hold faith in the ocean of light--in fact we must--what both oceans have in their image is that far horizon, beyond which it is not us, it is not the particulars, it is abstract, yet it is our direct intuition, it is our experience now, and the eternal oneness toward which we are bound. We must survey the wider field in the foreground by keeping it in view, while looking up and beyond, to the bigger picture, the source, the light, the expanding sky over the depths.

We must be about that long view, a view that is not winning or triumph or proof or even power, but simply Light, simply One, simply Truth. It is the most chaotic times, the most urgent times of action, when we need the still small voice, the time of discernment. This current sense of emergency should also have us at the same time the most calm. What is needed in the storm is the quiet shelter. As we might feel history and time turn, as we are shocked by emotions and attitudes expressed, and disappointed by the leadership of this world, we must follow true leadings and be inspired, and even hopeful. Tremendous change holds within it the demand for the changeless, as in the tempest, we stand on the rock.

Yes, in the world, and yet not of the world, it can be a lonely place if we are not there with Friends. We must be concerned with all that is happening, we must intervene as best we can, so that love is revealed and experienced and extended in the world. And yet, we must also remain connected to the Source, to a well-spring that comes from beyond the worldly, and yet connects us to the contemporary concerns of the times and demands in which we live. This can only be done as a group, as a supportive chain, as a bridge that reaches across domains, for any one person would be stretched apart, would be too distracted by one or the other, too frightened by the virulence, too distracted by argument and emotion. When there are enough of us together, we experience all the gifts of the Spirit, and we also absorb and pay attention to all the demands of our time and place. The details are clear as each of us are drawn to, and express, our particular concerns and leadings, and in our collective experience, we see the broader picture, the further limit, the gathering calm of darkness in this season, that inevitably heralds the coming of Light. Last night was a time change. Let us make that experientially true.

As a group, we not only encounter the varieties of experience and perspective, we also cross the generations and so our sense of time extends, as those here now who remember from long ago share the Light with those who years from now will remember us. And so the beacon on the far horizon is telegraphed from hill to hill, from age to age, from heart to heart. We “weary out all exaltation and cruelty” as Naylor put it partly by endurance, by faithfulness, and by unity.

I do not mean the compelled unity of the emergency that says we do not have time to discuss our differences right now, or the unity of avoidance, of stepping away from internal conflict.

I mean the unity of the common touchstone. We live in a place where the Religious Society of Friends lost unity, where we struggled with each other, disapproved of each other, until there were five or six different meetings. Finding fault is not a way to finding God. The way through conflict is humility and prayer, and sacred conversation, conversation led and inspired by the Spirit and bathed in the glow and knowledge of the inner Light. Come and go with me to that land. Tarry a little while. The Revelations of Divine Love expressed by Julian of Norwich in the depths of the plague years inspire the prisoners of the 17th century like Naylor, and speak to and of the water protectors of Standing Rock. When all the speaking becomes too much and too often, it is time to listen deeply. The noise and chatter cannot dispel the transcendent music of the spheres.

Worship

The final hymn is in the green hymnal, "Julian of Norwich" number 250

Closing: May the peace that passes understanding, the balm in Gilead, the still point in the turning world, keep your hearts and minds in love and Light. Hear the tulips laugh beneath the coming winter snow. May we all "...as members of creation sing the burning oneness binding everything."

Thanks/Introductions/Announcements/Afterthoughts