

Gospel Travel

Throughout Quaker history, one of several types of spiritual practice has nourished thousands of souls, even though this practice does not have a name. For the purpose of this piece, I am calling the practice “gospel travel,” but perhaps someone can send in a better name.

Gospel travel is not the same as travelling in ministry, where one Friend has a calling to visit a specific place or set of places (usually with a minute and with an appointed companion). Gospel travel can be part of travelling in ministry, but it can take place regardless of a specific call to go somewhere.

Gospel travel occurs when two people are going somewhere together on a long trip and use their extended time to delve into their spiritual experience. This is a special type of visitation that can be powerful in the life of each person involved.

This type of spiritual visitation during travel was more common historically than today. In earlier generations, Friends travelled together with some frequency. We know gospel travel took place historically because it is mentioned in multiple journals. For most Friends, the local meeting was where the preparative meeting was held. A large proportion of Friends travelled distances to attend monthly, quarterly, or yearly meetings. It can be easy to drive alone in a car today and miss out on gospel travel.

While travelling with someone, it is easy to let the conversation dwell in trivial things like the weather, sports, or entertainment. On a very long trip, it can be helpful to allow an hour to discuss the next deeper level of items, such as recent happenings, health issues, and what is happening at work before turning the discussion to something deeper. I am not good at chit chat, and I prefer to ride in silence rather than miss the opportunity for a discussion of greater depth.

Gospel travel mostly happens with me during trips to Ohio for the Representative Meeting or other events such as a Friends Center weekend. Although gospel travel can take place between spouses, I don’t usually experience it with Melissa because more often than not we have multiple opportunities in the course of our lives to examine spiritual matters. Travelling with someone I only see sporadically is very different, and I always appreciate the perspective of my companions. On occasion, the Pennsylvanians will take two cars and agree to meet at a halfway point so we can juggle passengers to allow more opportunities for visiting.

I have found that it is important to make a point to direct the conversation into elements of spirituality to have the deepest discussions. I usually initiate deep conversations with a question. I know that other people

do the same thing by sharing and then waiting to see how the other person responds, and if this works I don’t discourage it. The depth of the conversation and the joint experience of the Holy Spirit working during the travel is what is important, not details of the process.

One question that I sometimes use to deepen the visit to ask something like “How has thee been treating the Lord lately?” Often the other person will laugh a little at the question. Although the question is serious, it is also a little playful. The question opens the way for more sharing about what we have been doing lately to nourish our souls or what leadings we are evaluating.

It is important to bear in mind that confrontations should be done in a person’s home or some other safe place, not during travel. Having a discussion about a companion’s actions or beliefs can be useful, but it is too easy for the recipient of the counsel to believe that the travel discussion began as a means of pointing out a person’s problems. In addition, questions that are intended to deepen the conversation can be seen as ways of manipulating the travel companion, which lowers the level of trust rather than increasing trust. I can’t emphasize how important it is to stay away from confrontations during travel.

I don’t consider discussions about someone not present to be a part of gospel travel either. It is too easy to think about problems other people have and lose sight of the nurture that comes from gospel travel. Other people have problems, but dwelling on them only increases our pride. It does not nourish the soul, either.

A major part of gospel travel is considering questions like these: What can I do to deepen my spiritual life? How can I draw closer to Christ Jesus in my daily walk? Am I missing opportunities to share my spiritual gifts with others? Do I need some new ideas for my spiritual life?

I often have three or four questions that I am working through at any given point in time. These general questions sometimes don’t have specific answers, but they can be something to include in a discussion during gospel travel. One recent question was whether God might give a particular person two or three things to choose from, but not as a test of whether the person will pick the true and reject the false. It makes some sense that God might offer a person the gift of choosing between two good things to do. Do we always face the choice only of right versus wrong?

Another question that has come up a lot over the past few years is what we are called to do in the

(continued on page six)

Worship Groups

These groups practice waiting worship in the manner of Conservative Friends. It is best to make contact before making plans, as their schedules need to be adjusted to accommodate their regular participants. For worship at OYM monthly meetings see www.ohioyearlymeeting.org

Meeting	Location	Contact Person	Contact Information
Friends Gathering in Jesus Christ	Evanston, Illinois (near		
Goshen Meeting	Scone, Scotland	Paul Thompson	UK # 01738 620688; Bookseeker @blueyonder.co.uk
Lubbock Friends of Christ	Grace Presbyterian Church Building, Lub-	Sara Scribner	sarabscribner@aol.com meeting is at 4820 W. 19th Street, Lubbock, Texas 79407
Midlands Quakers	Stonebroom, Derbyshire,	Allistair Lomax	UK # 01773-875962 ripleychristianquakers@hotmail.co.uk
Richmond Christ-centered Unprogrammed Friends' Mid-	Richmond, Indiana	John Jeremiah Edminster	835 NW B Street, Richmond IN 47374; meets Third Day (Tuesday) evenings 6:15—7:15 PM; contact john.edminster@gmail.com / text (917)
Tahlequah Worship Group (Allowed Meeting under care of Hominy Monthly Meeting)	Tahlequah, Oklahoma	David Nagle	Fifth Day (Thursday), 7:30 PM 536 Summit Avenue Tahlequah OK 74464 Contact David Nagle at (918) 885-2714
Uxbridge Worship Group	Corner of Routes 98 and 146A, Uxbridge MA (Address for GPS only—no mail to this address: 479 Quaker	Constance Bair-Thompson	First Days, 9:00 AM (from first Sunday in April through October, we meet in the Uxbridge Friends Meetinghouse at above address; the rest of the year, we meet in private home—call 774-481-1212 for meeting location) Website: www.uxbridgefriends.org Please check website for when we are holding meeting for worship as we may not meet every week.
Whittier Worship Group	Whittier, California	Kim Palmer	kimpalmer11@yahoo.com

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The editor welcomes articles for publication, those written recently as well as excerpts from earlier Friends’ writings.

Why Silence?

Why do we at BFS begin our meetings with silence? Some might say it's because that's what Friends do, but even Friends wouldn't think that's a very good reason. In the statement of purpose for the school found at the bottom of many of the emails we receive reference is made to the "Divine Light in everyone." The silence is our way of consciously cleansing our palate, putting our daily and personal distractions aside and allowing ourselves the space to be attentive to that Divine Light in ourselves and in others so we can, for a start, better listen and speak to each other in that Light.

This may seem to some as time consuming when we have so much to do. Interestingly though, it is a common experience among Friends that when there is an especially difficult or large amount of work to be done an increased time in silence before hand often is found to be helpful in allowing business to move along faster than was expected. All of this happening while deepening and strengthening our sense of community as we grow together in the Spirit of that Divine Light.

- Robert Wilber

Member, Stillwater Monthly Meeting

Heavenly Arms

My Uncle Richard Hall was a man of strict belief in the Lord Jesus Christ and was given several opportunities to see some things most of us will probably never be given, this including angels.

This was narrated to me by my cousin, Vangie, who was often called upon, at times with her husband, Bob, to share time with Uncle Richard when he was spending a lot of lonely days by himself after his wife, Beulah, passed away. This is what I recall being told.

One afternoon Uncle Richard gave Vangie a call and asked her if she could come up for a visit. She told him she thought she could and would be there shortly. She didn't say anything to him about her fear of the water. She knew this trip would take her through Seneca Lake where water would be on both sides of the road. She turned to the Lord and asked him in prayer to send his angels to watch over her.

With her faith in God, trusting the one who promised to be there and take care of us, she made the trip to Barnesville with no problems and arrived at Uncle's house. He came out to greet her and smiling said, "Look at all those angels." She asked him, "Where?" Uncle never answered her but just kept on smiling. Her trip had been well guarded by those wonderful hands of the Lord. Oh, how we need to have our faith grounded and rooted in the blessed promises of our heavenly father, knowing with all assurance he will keep us in the palm of his hand.

- Burton Doudna

Member, Chestnut Ridge Monthly Meeting

A Choice

The God of heaven and earth, the great king of kings has spoken and called the people, all people of all nations, to bow at the feet of Jesus. There is no other name given whereby we can be saved. That Jesus who died on the cross at Jerusalem and rose on the third day offers each of us life, abundant life now and forever.

Tell me why anyone would reject such a great offer. I personally have tried this offer for over fifty years and I tell you life gets richer as the days come and go. Let me plead with you to surrender all, ask forgiveness for your sins and start up that path that leads to the gates of heaven. Do not for one moment look back. Travel that highway where you are safe: that highway where the angels are watching by day and by night, that highway where there is love forever and we are never alone.

O the joy, the healing power, the song of victory, the peace and the beauty. Over and over my cup of blessings runs over. Come and let us talk about the roads. Let's take a serious look at the roads and where

they end.

We are all traveling toward our eternal home. O come let's look at the maps and charts. Let's put all on the table and ask, "Which is best? Am I choosing the good? Am I on the road that leads to the end of all pain, all sorrow, all loneliness?"

It is true there is a road that leads to the pits of hell where those who go down that road to the end will be in torment for the countless ages of eternity. Come and take the road that leads up to the gates of heaven, there to be forever at rest, there to have no more pain, no sorrow, just perfect life forever.

Remember life here on earth can suddenly end. We can suddenly be at the end of the road. O how awful for those who find themselves on the wrong road and find themselves falling into the flames of hell.

You may say, "I will not be scared into doing good. A good God will not put any into hell if there is

Continued on page 5

Hearing the Word

They said to him, "Who are you?" Jesus said to them, "Even what I have told you from the beginning. I have much to say about you and much to judge; but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him."

They did not understand that he spoke to them of the Father. So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my authority but speak thus as the Father taught me. And he who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him." As he spoke thus, many believed in him. John 8:25-30

As the apostle proclaimed, this Jesus is at the right hand of God enlightening all who may not only listen but, most importantly obey when the Lord speaks. Although he may not be with us physically, Jesus is always present to enunciate God's Truth Jesus is the word of the Lord who communicates His and our Father's commands.

He informed His first apostles, His disciples who had human contact with Him, that he needed to depart physically from His beloved. But Jesus declared much to His disciples astonishment that He would not only be present for them but for humankind. They, in turn needed to listen to His admonishments as we must do in this day and age, particularly in our meetings for worship.

To hear from our Lord, we must gather in His Spirit and receive His admonitions. Jesus will speak and we will feel His presence as followers of His Word heard Him in their own languages, first at Pentecost and then in early Friends gatherings as well as among Conservative Friends who were anticipating the potency of God's Word.

Early on in Friends History George Fox as well as other first generation Friends sought the word of God. Of course since they were cognizant of Christian history and well acquainted in scriptural truth, these Friends understood that Jesus needed to proclaim God's everlasting Truth inwardly, they waited for God's Word to reveal His Son's presence in them and among them. These Friends prepared themselves to listen to that small voice within to become Jesus' disciples.

As a result, God spoke to George Fox inwardly declaring that there is one, Christ Jesus that would and did speak to his condition. Then George Fox realized that his heart was filled with great joy. This seeker found the Lord and devoted his life gathering a people who were willing to abide in the word.

Our glorious word revealed to George Fox and later to Christian brethren that He is our prophet in our midst who preaches righteousness, our Shepherd who guides us in goodness, our priest who overcomes our

sinful nature, and our King who rules with an iron hand. Of course Fox and His fellow believers were cognizant of other functions of the Word which speak to us. And may we be recipients of those functions and proclaim them when we feel gathered.

Because early Friends were faithful, they were cognizant that the word of the Lord needed to be proclaimed to all people, they traveled in the ministry to establish meetings in the Lord's power to proclaim His everlasting presence. That is why early Friends traveled to many distant lands to establish meetings where our loving God revealed His truths. In obeying Jesus, Friends waited on the Lord in silence to hear Him.

That is why in responding to Jesus, they refused to participate in violent conflicts even though they were imprisoned. These Friends because the Word spoke to them understood that Jesus proclaimed that they needed to love each other in the love that Christ exhibits the Word overcomes our resistance when we abide in the Lord's will.

If we hear the Word, we would understand that it is Jesus who marries us and expects his hearers to recognize the love He provides. In that love our Lord expects men and women to love one another in His holy presence. Marriage was an important aspect in God's rule and is in this day and age, if we wish to be faithful.

God does encourage us to abide in the Word. Small wonder we need to worship as a community of Friends willing to listen and obey. Our Lord has sent us to visit each other to encourage us to care for each other's spiritual and material welfare. That is why He queries us on our willingness to abide in God's word. To facilitate this important work, God has anointed elders to encourage us.

Wonderful ministers have and still do influence Christians to pray together. In our prayers, we feel the Lord's encouragement to recognize our shortcomings. Once that happens, the Lord enables us to be helpmates in His Kingdom.

Because we experience the presence of the Word, the Lord expects us to encourage individuals to enter the Kingdom and becomes servants of Christ. Small wonder we have the wonderful opportunity of visiting Friends no matter where they live for the purpose of encouraging them to meet in the Word's presence. It is joyful to hear that we are encouraging all God's children to wait on the Lord and recognize our need for the Lord's presence. May we joyfully welcome that presence in our midst.

- Arthur Berk
Affiliate Member,
Rockingham Monthly Meeting

Christian Friends Conference - Western Region

Palo Alto (California) Friends Meetinghouse

June 15, 2019

The quarterly meeting of the Christian Friends Conference - Western Region was held on Saturday, June 15, 2019 at Palo Alto Friends Meetinghouse, with 5 Friends present. We heard greetings from some absent Friends; a moving prayer from Kim Palmer was read, "Friends of Jesus . . . Followers of the Christ. Give us the strength to take up our cross and follow You. Help us to walk in Your steps by submitting moment by moment to You;" we had a discussion of the financial needs of our gathering, and a contribution for childcare was gratefully received; then Our Invitation to Worship was read.

Friends gathered for about two hours of waiting worship, commenced as usual with a period of Bible reading in worship. We heard a reading of James 4. Later we heard a message from a Friend pondering James 4, who went on to James 5, to 2 Corinthians 11 and 12, and finally to Micah 6:8 "What does the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Friends then met for fellowship over lunch. We chose a preferred date for our next meeting, September 7, 2019 at Berkeley Friends Church. As some Friends had to leave at this point, we dispersed for the day, grateful for our time together in worship of the Lord.

- Bruce Folsom

Prayer

Lord, when my brothers and sisters in Christ come together on Saturday the 16th in the Name of Jesus to wait on You in worship, may they gather in Your Light, Life, and Power. We ask You to be their strength, guardian and stay.

Father, continually take us all to the cross of Jesus. Help us, Lord to more and more deeply internalize and appreciate Your sacrifice on the cross for all our sins. Jesus, when You were on the cross, we must have been on Your mind. It was, after all, our sin that took You there, our sin that kept You there, and freedom from our sin that You gave us there.

Lord, empower us through Your Spirit to live lives befitting of the name of You, Lord: Friends of Jesus . . . Followers of the Christ. Give us the strength to take up our cross and follow You. Help us to walk in Your steps by submitting moment by moment to You. Correct us when we step off of Your path. Then, Lord, when we stand before You in Heaven, may we hear You speak the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

In Jesus' Name, amen.

- Kim Palmer

Member, Stillwater Monthly Meeting

A Choice *continued from page 3*

such a place." If you are burning an old building and I want to go in and get something out but you tell me not to go in, if I go ahead and go in and fail to get out would you feel you were to blame since you warned me not to go in? If I said I will not be scared into not going and go in would I be using good sense?

To me you are very foolish if you go down the highway that leads to death when life can be so great and so rich that leads to heaven. In fact I firmly believe we can have heaven on earth. Of course we all have storms to pass through but even in the storms there can be peace and joy.

Come one and all. Let's walk together up that road that ends with a crown of life. Come let's make this a better world as we wait to pass over into the promised land.

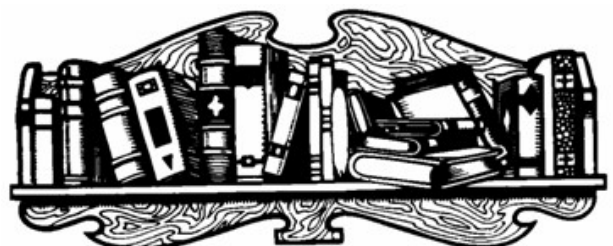
Are you coming? Do you need help to get started? Have you fallen in a ditch and need help getting out? I want to help, but be sure to remember you can call for help from Jesus. The Holy Spirit can teach you and guide you and there are angels working day and night.

"In the presence of the Lord of fullness of joy." Come one and all, come and see the beauty of God's kingdom.

(originally a printed tract)

- Richard Hall

Late member of
Chestnut Ridge Monthly Meeting



Our Meeting

We come together in peace and love.
And share the gifts, sent from God above.
We come together and share God's words.
And the things through the week, we have heard.

We come together but once a week.
And God's truths, we try to seek.
This is truly a meeting of good friends.
And I pray we'll remain friends to the end.

We speak to each other in love and trust.
And allow the spirit of God to move through us.
I'm very grateful for this time we share.
And all the ways we show we care.

We come in faith and stand as one.
I truly thank God for what He has done.
Some people might think Quaker is a strange name.
But in God's eyes, we're all the same.

So thank you God for this meeting of love,
For love is what it's composed of.

Inspired by Our Lord
Recorded by Leonard Turley
Southern State Correctional Facility
Delmont, New Jersey

Gospel Travel

Continued from page one

area of outreach. Many meetings have tried different things, with various degrees of success. Outreach is actually a big and wide topic. It includes welcoming new people to come worship with us as well as planning various types of events, but it also extends into areas such as our attitude towards other people or groups of people.

Gospel travel is a wonderful experience. Having the opportunity to share together about the things of the Lord makes it possible to listen to someone else's perspective, which can be eye-opening sometimes. None of us has all the answers, and on occasion God puts thee in a car with a person who has a piece thee needs to sort out something. Each of us has a limited number of opportunities for gospel visitation during travel, so don't pass up the opportunity to see what blessing awaits thee!

- Seth Hinshaw
Member, Keystone Fellowship Monthly Meeting

Meditation

In this world of strife and turmoil,
In these busy lives of ours,
We lose sight of one thing precious:
Whence cometh thought as pure as flowers?

Is it not through meditation
Every thought does have its life;
Whether joy is intermingled,
Whether dull, or sharp as knife?

Whether love is all-prevailing,
Or whether hate pervades the thought;
Whether God's own peace descending,
Through meditation is wrought.

Was it not through meditation,
Our Quakers founder, pure and true,
Saw the light no man could show him,
And he preached it his life through?

Some may shun the living silence
For fear that God might speak therein,
But they would profit more from prayer
Than from any worldly sin.

So let us shun our own desire,
Keep our thoughts with God above,
Strive to walk with Him in favor,
Meditate upon His love.

- Raymond W. Stanley
Late member of Middleton Monthly Meeting
Written in 1938 for Olney Literary



Is Christ's Light a Common Experience?

When the early Friends spoke of the Light of Jesus Christ teaching us directly, many of their hearers did not understand the experience. If they did, the Light was often so faint from lack of attention that they could mistake it for a "natural" light, that is, some innate psychological faculty, not the voice of God superadded by grace.

If we speak with professing Christians today about Christ's Light—the very heart of the New Covenant—do people understand? Some of them do not, of course. I was talking recently with a very sincere believer about God's promise to write His law in our hearts (Jeremiah 31:33). The simple reply was, why did this never happen? Others may belittle or make sport of the experience even if they do have it, as did some of the decadent Puritans of the Seventeenth Century.

But many people within the Evangelical or Fundamentalist world will nod vigorously if we bring up the operation of Christ's Light—the direct correction we experience at the very moment a temptation is felt. They continue to agree that, if united with, this correction brings the power to overcome the temptation; but if ignored, the Light grows fainter. You will find this acknowledgement even in the Calvinist camp, among people who in theory regard the written Bible as God's only means of communication nowadays. Viewing the world through Trinitarian theology, they may say this is the Holy Spirit, where Friends would also see the person of Jesus Christ at work, in His second coming, establishing a truly New Covenant. However, it appears that the experience of Jesus Christ teaching within is not particularly uncommon today, and perhaps it is more common than in the Seventeenth Century.

The question remains, why do Christians not bear more fruit? Why is there such acceptance of militarism? Of materialism? Of the prevalent spirit of busy-ness which almost precludes any meaningful prayer?



These vast problems of Christendom continue because the faith is rooted in a culture which is corrupt; a fact widely admitted, even while Christians do not realize how much we have imbibed from that culture. But God is not willing that any should perish, and He continues to work with us. Have an occasional or even a fairly frequent experience of God's direct reproof and teaching does not necessarily mean that we have given the entire life to Him. But this is what He wants, and this is the only way to close fellowship with Him.

So the early Friends' message is not only about *hearing* Jesus Christ today—as many apparently do—but also about total dedication to Him, owning Him not just as Prophet and as Priest, but as King also. And how are we to know we are truly following Christ, not some phantom product of our own psychology? Only through perseverance in following Him, and through the gift of discernment. Christ is not making Himself scarce; but we are not diligent enough in listening or in following.

- Joseph D. Conwill
Late member of the former
Navesink Hills Meeting

Welcome

When you enter the Meeting for Worship, you will probably notice people sitting quietly. It may look like nothing is happening, but this is not the case. As we clear our minds and enter the deep stillness, we begin the process of expectant "waiting upon the Lord" where we are fed and nurtured and brought into true communion with God and with each other according to our needs. Sometimes we are given gifts of peace, joy, strength, love and/or refreshment. Sometimes in the midst of the stillness God teaches, corrects, heals, comforts, leads us to prayer or leads us to speak in vocal ministry what God is giving us at that moment. This is available to all of us.

If you enter while someone is speaking, please wait until the person is finished before taking your seat. Meetings for Worship usually, but not always go for an hour. You will know it is over when we shake hands. We hope you will stay after so we can get to know each other better, that you will feel free to ask any questions you may have and will feel welcomed to come and worship with us again.

- Robert Wilber
Member, Stillwater Monthly Meeting

The Conservative Friend #56
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Return Service Requested

Questions and Answers

Q How do we as Friends reach out to others (without giving offense)?

A Reaching out under the Lord's command brings many blessings to the one who reaches out, perhaps even more so than to those who are reached. Conservative Friends do extend an influence beyond our yearly meetings. We need to tend our fire so that others who wish to can warm themselves by it.

Q How do we offer and give our time to the Lord?

A Should we tithe our time? The problem lies not with the particular amount of time or money that we should give, but with our attachment to the time or money. A different perspective acknowledges that all our time is given to us by God. We are told to pray without ceasing. Scripture also tells us that "inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these, you

have done it unto me." Service to others is service to God. All of our life—all of our time—should be for God's purposes.

Q How do we get our motivation from the Lord, and how do we know that it is from the Lord?

A Faithfulness in small things is the beginning of faithfulness in larger things, both hearing and doing. If we wonder if we have heard God's Word right, or whether it has really come from the Lord, we can ask directly. God doesn't mind and will answer, as He confirmed with Ananias His instructions to go to Paul who was waiting blind in Damascus. We learn by doing, by taking a small step and being open to God's feedback afterward, either directly or through the results of our action. We learn to know the Voice of God and to distinguish it from both the spirit of darkness and from our own personal desires.

We are sorry, but our files do not identify the author of these questions and answers.

