
Quaking Post

Baltimore Yearly Meeting RE Newsletter – Spring 2004

A Young Adult Friends Manifesto

Josh Humphries

Young Adult Friends (YAFs), Adult Young Friends (AYFs), or whatever you care to call 'em are the forgotten group in RE. This creates a an R.E. "leak".

If our meetinghouses had such a leak, Friends in concern for the environment would be pulling out the caulking and weatherstripping to save energy. But a "people leak" is more difficult to put into concrete terms. With a lack of RE resources or opportunities for those of "college and career" age, there are few opportunities for those of "college and career" age to become more seasoned, to be welcomed into our Meetings, and to feel welcome in our Meetings.

Of course, this is more than just an RE issue, it's also an A&O issue. But, this being the *Quaking Post*, we'll focus on RE. With the right lesson plans, a weekly or even monthly RE session that is advertised in local college settings, followed by or following worship, would allow an opportunity to welcome college students and college-aged people into the Meeting. Additionally, it provides opportunities for college students and college-aged folks in the Meeting to have opportunities with folks their own age. *Go to p. 2>>>*

From BYM Minutes – 1842:

"The careful bringing up of our children in Christian plainness was felt to be a matter of interesting concern. Parents were encouraged to increased diligence in their endeavors for the preservation of their offspring in the pure principles of truth and righteousness, that when the solemn enquiry shall be made, Where are the tender lambs committed to thy care? they shall be enabled to return an answer that will give peace to their souls."

BYM 2004 Plans Taking Shape

For the third year, the BYM RE Committee will sponsor numerous activities at YM sessions in 2004, all designed to support local religious education work. Last year's program included showing videos, conducting workshops, and delivering another of our now-famous "Teach First Day School" "cakes. But the centerpiece of our work was the presence of our second set of RE Visitors/consultants.

For 2004 we have made arrangements with Kevin Lee to join us as our BYM RE Visitor. Kevin is from New England Yearly Meeting, where he conducts frequents retreats for younger Friends. In his professional life, he is the Youth Advocate for the Dartmouth Youth Commission, Town of Dartmouth, Mass. Kevin works with children, pre-teens and teens in individual, group, and family counseling settings. His work takes him into schools, homes, occasionally the courts, where he supports young people and their families coping with such diverse issues as divorce, substance abuse, survival from physical and sexual trauma, self-esteem, peer relationships, domestic violence and grief/loss issues.



Kevin Lee and some of his young friends

First Day School Idea!

A Little Lesson that Came When Needed . . .

By Sarah Buchanan-Wollaston

Have you ever been in a tight spot on First Day? If so, perhaps my experience will help you out a bit. Recently, I went to Meeting with my family on a First Day that I believed would afford me some time in worship, instead of working with our youngsters. But, another Friend who was scheduled to teach was ill. So, minutes before gathering with the children I tried to center my thoughts on what the group of five 6-8 year olds might focus on for the next hour. They had been asking a lot of questions about the nature of God, and even questioning where God was in their lives. With that as a starting place we gathered in a circle and lit our centering candle. I simply said, "I would like you to take a few minutes this morning to think about what is important to you. Try to empty your mind and let something that seems very meaningful to you rise to the surface of your thoughts. There are no right or wrong thoughts, just what is important to you right now. Try to make a clear picture of it in your mind. After some quiet time, we can share with words and drawings".

After several quiet, if fidgety, minutes we blew out the candle together. I invited the children to draw images, or tell us about their most important thing. Most wanted to draw - and it stayed fairly quiet as they concentrated. One child just wanted to talk, so she spoke about her new blended family being important to her. Another child simply wanted to go and look after the adorable toddler across the room, so she did for awhile, before rejoining us to see the other children's drawings. One boy drew the world, and tried to add everything into it! After talking about it a bit, he decided that it is really how everything is connected in his life that is the most important thing to him. Other children talked and drew their family and friends as their most important things.

Now, I asked the group, "Why do you think I asked what your most important thing is?" They all chimed in with ideas. I explained that often God can be seen and felt by things that go on in our lives. And that, if we take a little time to reflect on what is the most important thing in our lives, we can begin to understand that the Spirit of God is always with us. The love that we feel for our families, friends, animals, and nature are all a part of God's Spirit working among us all!

Their reactions were formed by exclamations of, "Wow!...Cool...Really?... and That' Neat!". They decided to put the drawings together into a book, and have titled it "*Our Most Important Book*".

As we finished up, I couldn't help but reflect on the fact that *sometimes* spontaneous lessons are the best!

Book Reviews By Sarah Buchanan-Wollaston

Old Turtle and the Broken Truth

by Douglas Wood, Illustrations by Jon J. Muth

(Scholastic Press, NY, 2003. ISBN 0-439-32109-3)

Old Turtle, also by Wood, has become a classic tale of peace. *Old Turtle's* second fable, with a focus on the importance of seeking the whole truth, is destined to become a classic as well. The girl seeking the whole truth comes to *Old Turtle*, "And she felt a secret smile somewhere deep inside...and thought that perhaps, she understood." This is an inspiring tale about love, acceptance and the nature of truth that invites readers to look within themselves for the discovery of truth. Simply put, we need to see the whole picture, before we can fully understand the truth in any situation. Beautiful, languid watercolors embellish the poetic text perfectly. Appropriate for ages 6-adult.

My Grandfather's Blessings, Stories of Strength, Refuge and Belonging

by Rachel Naomi Remen, M.D.

(Riverhead Books, NY, 2000. ISBN 1-57322-856-7)

Do you ever need a little reminder to slow down and appreciate the little gifts each day brings? Through brief and simple, yet powerful stories, Remen encourages readers to recognize and celebrate the unexpected blessings in their lives. Sections of the book include stories about *Receiving Your Blessings, Becoming A Blessing, Finding Strength & Taking Refuge, The Web of Blessings, Befriending Life, and Restoring the World*. These are stories that express how interconnected we are through our hearts and spirits. Wonderful to read in solitude or as discussion starters for ages 10-adult.

Young Adult Friends, cont.

Many churches try to set RE time for college students and college-aged folks on Sunday afternoons, or on a day during the week. Many also try to make it interesting, using the Simpsons, or other bits of popular culture as the springboard for the topic. Personally, I recommend using popular music for a Friends setting, as a song can be listened to multiple times, and folks in the class can be asked how that particular recording speaks to them. You can then take time talking about the subject it evokes, and cross-reference what people are getting with religious texts such as the Bible, the Tao Te Ching, and so on (a really fertile one for this would be "Turn Turn Turn"). The basic point is that Meetings need to cater to 18-35 year olds, or there won't be quite as many 40-60 year olds showing up in another 20 years. So come up with something inventive that will not only get the YAFs in your Meeting excited about coming to Meeting, but will attract young people from all over your area to become acquainted with Friends. After all, Meetings in and around college towns are like cities on the hill, and it's a shame to hide the light that they bring forth, simply because we don't know how to let everyone see it.

Back Again: First Day School Teacher Scholarships from the RE Committee Application Deadline: June 21, 2004

In its efforts to support and recognize the important work of First Day School teachers in monthly meetings, the BYM RE Committee has decided to devote up to half of its budget to scholarships of \$100 toward BYM fees again this summer.

The scholarships will be offered to **Friends who have taught First Day School (for adults or children) for at least six sessions during the past twelve months.** Fifteen scholarships will be available, while they last.

TO APPLY: complete the form below and return it by **snailmail** to the BYM office, 17100 Sandy Spring MD 20860.
DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS: JUNE 21, 2004. All applicants will be notified by mail of the RE Committee's action on their applications. We also notify the BYM office, which will apply the scholarship as a credit to your balance.

The Committee has long been under the weight of the expense of attending BYM sessions, especially for families. These scholarships, drawn from our own Committee budget, is a way of putting our money where our mouth is.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting Religious Education Committee First Day School Teachers Yearly Meeting Scholarship Application

<< DEADLINE: June 21, 2004 >>

Each person applying for a scholarship must send in a separate form.
Scholarships will be awarded on a first received, first served basis.

Name _____

Address _____ ZIP _____

E-mail _____ Phone# _____

Monthly Meeting _____

Age group(s) you have taught in the past year (all qualify) _____

How many times have you taught or co-taught FDS in the past year? _____

How many years have you taught FDS? _____

Are your children in the FDS program at your Monthly Meeting? _____

Will you be attending BYM for the first time this year? _____

Do you expect to attend BYM part time? _____ or, full time? _____

Why do you teach FDS? _____

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS: JUNE 21, 2004. All applicants will be notified by mail of the RE Committee's action on their applications.

Thank you for being involved with Quaker Religious Education!

The Quaking Post

Spring 2004

*The Religious Ed. Newsletter of
Baltimore Yearly Meeting*

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Sandy Spring MD 20860

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For Yearly Meeting 2004*

Netbeat/TVbeat--

From Josh Humphries:

So, have you seen that new series "Joan of Arcadia"? Heard the buzz about it in your Meeting?

Give it a shot! It's on at 8 pm on your local CBS affiliate.

Wondering what it's about? Well, I could call it "'Touched By An Angel' for Unitarians", but I suppose that would be unfair. It's set in the fictitious town of Arcadia, Maryland and is home to Joan, her father the Chief of Police, and her mother who works at her school, as well as Adam Rove (son, by the way of Carl, but I don't think it's the same Carl Rove), her friend that calls her "Jane."

In a recent episode Joan was told by God (who speaks through everyday people, from the lunchlady, to a cute guy) not to seek revenge for something girls did to her and another girl. The other girl said she didn't want to seek revenge because...wait for it...she's a Quaker.

That means that, yes, that's right, there is a fictitious Quaker meeting in Arcadia . . . I like to call it "Arcadia Monthly Meeting."

In net-news you can get Prabhupada's "Bhagavad Gita As it Is" at: www.asitis.com Then there's the Belief-O-Matic (<http://tinyurl.com/39kqo>), which has drawn many people to Quakerism, in fact, the new face sitting across from you in Meeting may have found your local Meeting through this quiz.

And from Chuck Fager:

Just recently I discovered a religious bookworm's treasure-trove online, in the site <http://www.religion-online.org/>

It bills itself as archiving "full texts by recognized scholars," and it was started by a professor who taught theology in Bangalore India and found the cost of books there prohibitive. So it has literally thousands of texts, articles and even numerous full books, many by major religious thinkers, all online, all for free, no registration, no annoying popups.. If names like Niebuhr, Ellul, Barth. Bonhoeffer, Tillich and such pique your interest, they and hundreds of lesser lights have work there. (Good grief, there's even one of my pieces back in the pack!) Check it out.