



Gunpowder

ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING

## GUNPOWDER FRIENDS MEETING NEWS, Web Edition for June, 2020



### I/THOU

**Prelude:** The German philosopher, Martin Buber, framed his main ethical proposition in terms of two opposing attitudes of existence: “I/It” and “I/Thou.” I/It suggests an attitude of I towards an It, where the it is an object separate from oneself and there to be used or ignored. I/Thou suggests an attitude of I towards Thou, where I and Thou are not separate, but of a piece and in relationship.

**Queries:** To whom or what are you accountable? (*New England Quakers*)

**Advices:** Trust that the Inner Light can lead us beyond our individual perceptions and desires into action grounded in God’s truth. Examine your leadings through a process of discernment to determine whether or not they are grounded in the Spirit.  
(*New England Quakers*)

**Voices:** There are many voices out there right now. To which will you listen?





## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### GUNPOWDER FRIENDS MEETING

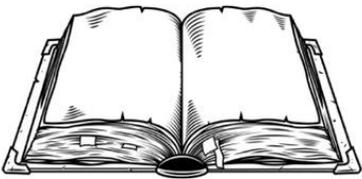
#### **NEXT WORKING GROUP ON STEWARDING OUR VISION (WGSV) MEETING: TUESDAY, JUNE 9<sup>th</sup> 2020, 4:30-6:00 PM VIA ZOOM**



The Working Group on Stewarding our Vision is charged with naming and supporting future Meeting aspirations. The next meeting of the WGSV will be held on Tuesday, June 9th via Zoom, 4:30-6:00pm. We will begin planning to move forward the longstanding query regarding stewardship of the Meetings resources. Friends are most welcome to join us. If you plan to attend please contact Greta

Kirk-Mickey at [greta.mickey@gmail.com](mailto:greta.mickey@gmail.com) or Anita Langford at [amlangfo@verizon.net](mailto:amlangfo@verizon.net)

#### **BIBLE STUDY: SUNDAY JUNE 28th, 9AM: VIA ZOOM**



We invite you to join in our continuing engagement with the Bible, a complex, rich, and challenging compilation of texts that were so formative for our early Quaker ancestors. Using the Spears method, we read aloud a short passage and settle into a time of quiet reflection on five simple prompts: what is the main point of the passage?; what new Light do I encounter in this passage today?; how is the passage true to my experience?; what implications are there in this passage for further thought or action?; what problems

do I have with this passage? After quiet individual reflection on these prompts, we open up for a worshipful discussion in the hope of receiving what wisdom the passage has to offer. Reading for 6/28: John 21: 1-25.

#### **GUNPOWDER FRIENDSHIP NIGHTS**



**EVERY WEDNESDAY  
7-8PM, ONLINE**

#### **GUNPOWDER FRIENDSHIP NIGHTS, WEDNESDAYS, 7-8PM, VIA ZOOM:**

On behalf of the Ministry and Counsel Committee, you are cordially invited to our weekly "Gunpowder Friendship Night," via Zoom every Wednesday evening from 7-8 p.m. These gatherings are a way to stay connected socially and to check in with one another each week. You can drop in for a few minutes or stay the hour. Whatever suits your needs. Members of Ministry and Counsel and, we expect, Care and Oversight will be present to ensure that we are receiving the support we need from Meeting--and that our ministries in support of Meeting continue to be affirmed and nurtured. The Clerk will send out a link each week.



**A NOTE FROM CARE & OVERSIGHT:** Care and Oversight has a list of volunteers ready and willing to help with errands and groceries. Please let us know if you have needs or if you want to add your name to the volunteer list. Contact C&O Clerk, LouAnne Smith at 443-595-8292 or [louannesmith2@gmail.com](mailto:louannesmith2@gmail.com))

### **FOLLOW UP TO MAY'S "WHERE DOES IT HURT?" FORUM:**



At our recent Forum held on May 10<sup>th</sup>, we heard from civil rights icon Ruby Sales whose recorded interview with Krista Tippitt was entitled "Where Does It Hurt?" Twenty-two people attended and many shared responses to the interview. We are sending the following links as recommended reading and listening in follow up to the Forum: The first link is a transcript and audio recording of the full *On Being* interview of Ruby Sales, parts of which were presented at the forum.

<https://onbeing.org/programs/ruby-sales-where-does-it-hurt/>

The next two links are from Friends Journal issues published in the last year: Valerie Brown, "How to be an Inclusive Quaker", Friends Journal, March 1, 2020. The second: Katharine Gerbner, "Slavery in the Quaker World", Friends Journal, September 1, 2019.

<https://www.friendsjournal.org/how-to-be-an-inclusive-quaker/>

<https://www.friendsjournal.org/slavery-in-the-quaker-world/>

The next link is an excellent TED talk from 2018 by Ruby Sales

[https://www.ted.com/talks/ruby\\_sales\\_how\\_we\\_can\\_start\\_to\\_heal\\_the\\_pain\\_of\\_racial\\_division?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/ruby_sales_how_we_can_start_to_heal_the_pain_of_racial_division?language=en)

At the 2017 New England Yearly Meeting Annual Session Ruby Sales gave the plenary message about the struggle for racial justice. This is the link to that talk.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OGrsaP1uL34&t=1068s>

This link presents an interview with Ruby Sales at the Harvard Divinity School

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7fElaln0lj4>

Helen Berkeley was reminded of this poem, shared at the Spiritual Formation Group some months ago, and its ability to insist on both the I and the we.

<https://poets.org/poem/fig-tree-9th-and-christian>



## THE WE ARE NOT AT-RISK CAMPAIGN

From the American Friends Service Committee's *Quaker Action*, Spring 2020, "The Power of Words," by Ronna Bolante, pp. 12-13.

"...AFSC's Youth in Action (YIA) global network [is working] to change perceptions of youth in their respective communities. In 2018, YIA launched the 'We Are Not At-Risk' social-media campaign to transform the words and narrative we use to talk about youth in our everyday conversations: in schools, nonprofits, and other institutions; and in the media.

" 'Historically words have been used to oppress Black and brown people and help those in power maintain their power,' says Nia Eubanks-Dixon, AFSC director of youth programs. 'Today, words like 'at-risk,' 'marginalized' and 'minority' are used for the same purposes. Not only do these terms dehumanize youth, they shift blame to young people instead of to the oppressive racist systems that exploit them, their families, and communities.'

"The 'We Are Not At-Risk' campaign was created to call out and change those linguistic behaviors, urging people to take a pledge to rethink their words, attend local education events, and share what they've learned with others."

### QUERY:

How do I seek connections with other people who live differently from me? What obstacles do I face in seeking connections?

*This column is prepared by the BYM Working Group on Racism (WGR) and sent to the designated liaison at each local Meeting. The BYM WGR meets most months on the third Saturday from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Locations vary to allow access to more Friends. If you would like to attend, on a regular or a drop-in basis, contact clerk David Etheridge, [david.etheridge@verizon.net](mailto:david.etheridge@verizon.net).*



## WORKING GROUP ON STEWARDING OUR VISION: UPDATE

As members of the Working Group for Stewarding our Vision (WGSV) reflect on the “Mission, Vision and Values Statement” and the “Practices Map” generated through our Meeting-wide visioning process, we notice how many ways we are living our values during this time of physical distancing necessitated by the Covid-19 global pandemic. Guided by our value of “providing hospitality, care, and inclusion to all,” we are holding Meetings for Worship virtually via Zoom and have seen an increase in weekly participation (new visitors, Broadmead Friends, and Friends who have moved away but are still connected to Gunpowder). So, too, our Care and Oversight committee is reaching out to Friends in new ways to provide physical and spiritual support. As we explore how we are living our value of being “a Quaker community connected to the wider Quaker world,” we affirm that we have sustained our monthly letter-writing activity with the Friends Committee on National Legislation and are looking for creative ways to support Baltimore Yearly Meeting during a time of unprecedented financial constraint. Our value of “personal and community spiritual deepening and religious practice [as] the core of our reason for being a community” is being lived through ongoing Spiritual Formation gatherings, Richard Rohr discussion, and Bible Study (all via Zoom). We have, during this time of requisite creativity, affirmed that we are not standing still: we are moving boldly in new directions to live our mission, vision, and values as fully as possibly. By noticing where and how we have already directed our energies during this time of transformational change, the WGSV has generated queries to further advance our vision. These queries were shared at Gunpowder’s monthly Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business in May, and Friends approved their being shared via the June newsletter. We encourage Friends to read and reflect on the queries and to notice where our individual and collective energies rise in response. Offering these queries for reflection and response is the WGSV’s next step in honoring the charge approved for us by Gunpowder Friends: to help name, prioritize, support, and organize the resources and energies needed to realize the Meeting’s aspirations toward our vision.

We welcome your participation in our next WGSV meeting (via Zoom) on **Tuesday, June 9th from 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.**; Friends who would like to join can reach out to Anita Langford or Greta Kirk Mickey.

*Greta Kirk Mickey & Anita Langford*  
Co-Clerks

Vision, continued...

## VISION QUERIES:

Queries from April and May, 2020 related to COVID-19 pandemic.

***Value: The practice of providing hospitality, care, and inclusion to all is an essential part of our being.***

Queries offered for discernment:

- Might we contact our neighbors, Bosley Methodist and Stevenson AME churches?
- Might we provide e-mail follow up contact with new visitors at this time?
- Is the current access and use of the building and grounds consistent with our value of hospitality?

***Value: We are a community interested in offering more individual and community action in the wider world.***

Queries offered for discernment:

- How might we respond to urgent needs of members?
- How might we respond to emerging needs of our neighbors?
- How and when might we respond to the larger process of stewarding our Meeting's resources?
- How might we respond to the fact that some agencies we support are closed or canceled, e.g. Crop Walk, UCAN?
- What are some current urgent needs in our county, e.g. food security needs?

***Value: We are a Quaker community connected to the wider Quaker world***

Queries offered for discernment:

- Are there additional opportunities to reach out to Friends at Broadmead?
- Are there opportunities to better inform friends of local BYM (Chesapeake Quarter) activities and events and of any other BYM events (by zoom)?
- Do people know where to find information related to Quaker response to the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Are there opportunities for GFM to share technological insights?

***Value: We appreciate and want to maintain a strong, lasting and secure Gunpowder Meeting.***

Queries for discernment:

- How can we be more present to individuals using the meeting's space? (possible suggestions included providing additional information about Friends and our land including historical data - possibly on the outside bulletin board).
- Should we consider additional signage that welcomes visitors as well as suggests that the grounds be respected?
- Should the meeting Zoom link be more accessible? (Safety concerns?)

*Vision Queries, continued...*

- Should the responsibility for Zoom links and other communications be separated from the role of meeting clerk?
- Might we encourage friends to share their journeys with others via the newsletter or other means?
- Could we consider Zoom coffee social, possibly in small groups?

**Value: *Personal and community spiritual deepening and religious practice are at the core of our reason for being a community.***

Queries for discernment:

- What will memorial services look like in the future? How can we be present to those grieving? What can we offer?
- How do we feel about recording (transcribing) ministry shared in Zoom meetings for worship? Is the practice sustainable over time?



## WHERE HAVE ALL THE POPPIES GONE? (...long time passin')

*Alan Schmaljohn, 2007*

In late October of 2003, on our honeymoon in Scotland, I picked a red plastic poppy – a lapel pin – from a basket in an Edinburgh hotel, leaving a small donation in support of veterans. Mostly it was an act of nostalgia, as I wondered when and where such poppies disappeared in America, where they were once as seasonally ubiquitous as Girl Scout cookies. This year, an article in the Baltimore Sun reminded me how the poppies arose as a fundraising activity in metaphorical alignment with a poem (In Flanders Field) written by a Canadian soldier and physician (LTC John McCrae), who served four years before being killed at Verdun in 1918. It begins poignantly:

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

In the third and final stanza, the poem shifts men and women lost in distant battle,

Take up our quarrel with the foe;  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders field.



We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.

to a perspective that, like the grieving for young is as fresh as today's newspaper:

As timeless as war is the claim that any efforts toward making peace with one's enemy, or anything short of Victory, is an insult and dishonor to those who died in battle before it ceased. Stay the course. Let them not have died in vain. It is in McCrae's poem, we heard it during the Vietnam conflict, we hear it today. In empathy, I cannot disparage the feeling itself as expressed by McCrae, by those thrust into the chaos of war, or by grieving survivors. On the other hand, it is illogical to pursue for the sake of pride and valor (never mind pigheadedness and profit) a course that has already been fully revealed by time and events to have been poorly conceived and poorly executed. Let us see what love will do.

Here, however, I break ranks with many Friends more pure in their pacifism than I. From the beginning, I was conflicted and "stood aside" from the governmental decision to conduct what was fundamentally a law enforcement operation (the rounding up of murderers who were committed to repeating their actions) in Afghanistan. The U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq was a wholly different matter, sold to citizens in the most cynical and disingenuous fashion for purposes not wholly known. The claims of imminent threat to the U.S. were farcical then and more so in hindsight. The heartbreaking sectarian violence of today was forecast by almost everyone who had knowledge and objectivity with respect to Iraq. I joined the march in Washington, DC, in January 2003 to witness for peace and protest the impending rain of death our planes, missiles, and artillery would bring. Now it is done, and after nearly three years a majority of voters has finally given a resounding rebuke, not so clearly to McCrae's third stanza, but to pigheadedness. How then shall we end the killing? I am sympathetic to those who want to withdraw all troops immediately. However, I am also vulnerable to a feeling of great responsibility for what has been done in our name. I reject the perspective of McCrae's final stanza as basis for even one more death, but I am also drawn to Colin Powell's "Pottery Barn" rule: we broke it, we bought it. We have no responsibility to "win", but we have a responsibility to clean up our mess and help others exercise some alternatives to violence. If abrupt departure is the best way for this to be achieved, I'm for it. On this matter, I'm not yet convinced.

*Poppies, continued...*

Oh yes, the poppies. It is still possible to order kits with which to assemble paper poppies, but it appears the practice of fundraising in the U.S. was mostly laid down in recent decades, coincident with improved federal budget support for disabled veterans. Also, the irony of Afghanistan's principal cash crop may not be lost on some. Still, if we continue as a tradition our Memorial Day Meeting for Remembrance, honoring not only military but all who have passed before, don't be surprised if I'm wearing a poppy.

**Footnote, approaching Memorial Day 2020:** *this past year, I came across a UK source of white "Peace Poppies" (<https://www.ppu.org.uk/remembrance-white-poppies>) and bought/donated enough for 25 of them. I had imagined offering them to Friends proximal to our in-person gathering on Memorial Day, but that plan has been waylaid by SARS-CoV2.*





# QUAKER VOICE OF MARYLAND

## 2020 Maryland General Assembly Session shortened by coronavirus

Maryland Friends' inaugural efforts to persuade state legislators towards Quakerly policies found some success but, like so many other plans, were detoured [by coronavirus fears with the sudden, three-weeks-early closure of the legislative Session](#). Quaker Voice of Md. (QVM), after a survey of Friends and Meetings on both sides of the Chesapeake, had [selected four policy-areas to pursue in 2020](#) and we identified [proposed legislation for these policies](#), networked with Friends and other advocates, & offered testimony in support. Some Friends also participated in "lobby day" events to speak truth to individual legislators.

Below is a summary on the Quaker Voice legislative priorities for Maryland's 2020 General Assembly.

### 1. Gun Violence Prevention & Peace-building

**Blueprint for Maryland's Future:** In the Session's final hours this bill, also known as the [Kirwan plan](#), [passed](#) to help end Maryland's "school-to-prison-pipeline" with better schools in poor communities, alternatives to expulsion, and vocational training of at-risk students.

### 2. Immigration Civil Rights

In 2019, the Governor vetoed a bill to expand the **Maryland Dream Act** to allow immigrant students to receive in-state college tuition. [This veto was successfully overridden in January 2020](#).

### 3. Criminal Justice & Prison Reform

Two bills made progress, but the clock ran out before passage was achieved.

**Rewarding Educational Milestones:** This bill would have directed Maryland prisons to incentivize inmates with credits to their time served when they attain major educational milestones such as completion of a job-training certification or achieving a diploma. (Such achievements have been shown to reduce repeat offenses.) This bill was [approved by the Senate but ran out of time in the House](#).

**Changing the Felony-Murder Rule:** This bill would have repealed a legal fiction that now sends all who participated in the felony may be punished for 1st degree murder with life sentences, just like the actual killer, even if other participants didn't kill and didn't intend this. One study has found that women and youth are convicted disproportionately under the felony-murder rule. [This bill also won Senate approval and ran out of time](#).

**Reducing use of Solitary Confinement/Restrictive Housing:** Solitary confinement restrictions for Maryland prison inmates did not pass this session. While there was considerable support especially for [inmates near their time for release](#), other pressing legislation took precedence, negotiating with DPSCS proved untenable due to lack of candor on their part, and the session was cut short. There is strong support from both the Senate and the House leadership to bring back the legislation next year.

### 4. Climate Justice

The **Climate Solutions Act of 2020** passed out of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs with a strong bipartisan vote, and its odds looked good for passage in 2020. Unfortunately, it did not ultimately pass in the Senate or House due to the abbreviated session.

With successful outcomes in half QVM's priority areas, Maryland Friends should be encouraged to continue our efforts to speak truth to our state and local governments and to make the right choices.

While the COVID-19 pandemic constrains public gatherings and resources today, it need not prevent us from organizing for a brighter future. We hope to enlist representatives from all 17 Maryland local meetings and to invite any interested representative to participate in the QVM workgroup's planning. If you have time and inclination to support QVM going forward, please send email to [1mollymitchell@gmail.com](mailto:1mollymitchell@gmail.com).

- Molly Mitchell, QVM workgroup clerk

| [www.quakervoicemd.org](http://www.quakervoicemd.org) |

Note: If you are interested in working with Quaker Voices, please visit the web address listed above.

**The Web Edition of the Newsletter does not include minutes from Gunpowder's Meeting for Business. Personal Information has been redacted. The full newsletter, complete with minutes, is available at the Meetinghouse – attenders may also request the electronic or print edition.**

**Please feel free to inquire with Gunpowder's Clerk at [gunpowderclerk@gmail.com](mailto:gunpowderclerk@gmail.com).**