

Valley Voice

Charles (Buck) Bunner, Pastor
856-4368 (office)
856-7846 (home)

email: pastor@vmfriends.org
web page: www.vmfriends.org



February, 2008 / Volume 16 Number 2

Newsletter of Valley Mills Friends Meeting

Some Thoughts from the Pastor

I talk a lot about the need to question the world we live in. To grow spiritually, we need to question the conventions of our time. Truth is not static. Yes, tradition has its place, but progress has its place as well.

For a Sunday school project at the beginning of the year, I came up with the phrase, "Can't find God? Question Everything?" I believe in this statement. We are called to be seekers, and seekers are always questioning where they are going.

However, there is an aspect of our questioning that still falls short. Our spiritual growth depends on something even deeper. The following is from Victor Frankl's book, The Doctor and the Soul.

Our remarks on the question of the meaning of life come down to a radical criticism of the question as such. To ask the meaning of life in general terms is to put the question falsely because it refers vaguely to "life" and not concretely to "each person's own" existence. Perhaps we ought to go far back and recollect the original structure of experience. In that case, we must perform a kind of Copernican Revolution, and give the question of the meaning of life an entirely new twist. To wit:

It is life itself that asks questions of man. It is not up to man to question; rather he should recognize that he is questioned, questioned by life; he has to respond by being responsible; and he can



answer to life only by answering for his life.

Frankl's philosophy of life can be summed up by these words: **to be human is to be responsible**. Each one of us is being called to take responsibility for our lives. Ultimately, it is we who are being questioned. We must come up with an answer.

Another way to say this is, each one of us has been called by God to take on specific tasks. To fail these tasks, is to fail God, humanity and one's self. No one can avoid being called. No one can avoid giving a response.

Buck

Inside this issue:

Important Dates for February	2
A Note of Interest	2
Retreat with Stan Banker	3
Exploring Quakerism Joint Study Group	3
Notes from Monthly Meeting for Business	4
Notes from Ministry & Counsel	5
Western Yearly Meeting News	5
Calendar	6

It is not up to man to question; rather he should recognize that he is questioned, questioned by life; he has to respond by being responsible.

Broaden Your Horizons

- Interfaith Alliance Indianapolis will sponsor another **Butler Seminar on Religion and World Civilization** Program on **Tuesday, February 26**. The title is "Atheism Resurgent?" It will be at the Krannert Room in Clowes Memorial Hall. Admission is free.
- MSD Decatur Township invites you to a public viewing of a film we all need to see: **Two Million Minutes - The Length of**

a High School Career (A Perspective of Education and Young People in our Country and Other Countries) on Tues., Feb. 5, 2008 from 6:00-7:30 p.m. in the Decatur Middle School LGI Room.

- On **Sat., Mar. 8, J. Brent Bill** will be speaking at the **Mooreville Public Library**. He will be



discussing his thoughts on Quaker spirituality presented in his most recent books **Holy Silence: The Gift of Quaker Spirituality** and **Mind the Light: Learning to See with Spiritual Eyes**. The program lasts from **1:00 - 3:00 pm**.

- There will be an **Alternatives to Violence Basic**

Training Workshop held at the Plainfield Education Re-Entry facility on **Feb. 16-17**. Contact Stan at stanley@zarowin.com to register or for more information. Miriam Bunner has registered and plans to attend.



A Note of Interest

The following comes from the Indianapolis Star (October 1, 2007). It seemed too good to miss, and if you didn't miss it, it is worth reading again. The topic is on relationships between parents and older children.

Advice for parents:

- Learn to communicate not as an all-knowing parent, but as a person who's still learning.
- Be willing to ask questions. Try to listen with a desire to understand, rather than judge.
- Recognize your kids' small accomplishments, which can motivate them to succeed elsewhere.
- Share your thoughts as ideas, rather than dogma, so children see you as helpers, not controllers.
- Communicate boundaries and make expectations clear regarding financial and other support.
- Develop new ways to be together—travel, camping, golf, etc.
- Realize that your kids have their own support systems (spouse, friends) and you may be secondary support.

Advise for adult 'kids:'

- Remember that your parents are adults, no matter how old they get and even if they become dependent.
- Your parents have failings. Accept it so you'll be more tolerant and won't expect perfection from them.
- Realize you are responsible for your own life and decisions. Don't blame Mom and Dad for all your shortcomings.
- If your parents are overstepping boundaries or constantly criticizing your decisions, let them know you don't approve.
- Don't expect your parents to continue to financially support you or bail you out, unless it's a true crisis.
- Learn to say "no" to parents with love. Don't get mad or feel guilty if they ask for something you can't or don't want to do.
- Be able to love and accept your parents even if you don't agree with them.

Hope Is the Thing With Feathers

Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune without the words,
And never stops at all,
And sweetest in the gale is heard;
And sore must be the storm
That could abash the little bird
That kept so many warm.
I've heard it in the chilliest land,
And on the strangest sea;
Yet, never, in extremity,
It asked a crumb of me.
—Emily Dickinson

Pitch-in Dinner

There will be a pitch-in dinner on **Sunday, February 10**. It will follow the Monthly Meeting for Business.

Bring your own place setting.



Your donations of canned goods and personal items for Community Caring and Sharing will be collected again on Sunday, Feb. 10!



Important Dates for February

Wed., Feb. 6 - **Ministry and Counsel** will meet at the meetinghouse at 7 pm.

Sun., Feb. 10 - **Monthly Meeting for Business** will meet at the rise of worship. Afterward, the Financial Committee will host a **pitch-in dinner**. Please bring donations for Community Caring and Sharing

Tues., Feb. 19 - Deadline to submit information to the **Valley Voice**.

Thurs., Feb. 28 - **Exploring Quakerism Study Group** with West Newton Friends at 7:00 pm at West Newton. (See article on next page.)

Coming in March - Retreat with Stan Banker at Quaker Hill Conference Center

An Invitation from Stan Banker. . .

Progressive **Christian** Quaker



"Through the life and teachings of Jesus in the First Century, a new understanding built upon a loving instead of legal relationship with God was communicated.

In some of his final teachings on earth, Jesus spoke of an even greater power to be released in

the lives of his followers. And thus, the message of God's ongoing and immediate presence in our lives was born. Friends have rightly moved beyond the mere re-enactment and worship of the events of that First Century to a faith and practice that this original presence of God is still in our midst. When we enter into unprogrammed worship our major understanding is that 'Christ has come to speak to his people himself.' I invite you to join me to consider an approach to faith that

is clearly Christ-centered and, as such, flavored with the same progressive spirit of truth and life that Jesus introduced originally. With the supporting distinctives of progressive and Quaker faith, let us explore the dynamic nature of our Christian faith and practice today. Instead of being afraid of change, we can be

Instead of being afraid to tackle the tough issues of faith by hiding behind restrictive understandings, we can allow Christ to speak a fresh word spiritually consistent with the original teachings.

those who live bold and empowering lives today. Instead of hiding our light inside our own little bushel, we can enlighten ourselves and others with the present light of Christ. Instead of being afraid to tackle the tough issues of faith by hiding behind restrictive understandings, we can allow Christ to speak a fresh word spiritually consistent with the original teachings."

- Stan Banker, Pastor, Indianapolis First Friends Meeting

Quaker Hill Conference Center in Richmond, Indiana will host a special weekend retreat with **Stan Banker** of First Friends, Indianapolis on **Friday, March 28-29, 2008**. Along with excavating and exploring some new turf, Stan will bring both his sense of humor for a few laughs and his Martin guitars, Beulah Mae and Honey Baby, to sing together some of the Gospel songs of his Southern and Midwestern heritage. Stan joyfully embraces the evangelical Quaker faith of his early years and the liberating messages of faith he is discovering in Christ in the here and now. For additional information contact the QHCC at the mailing address:
Quaker Hill Conference Center
10 Quaker Hill Drive
Richmond, IN 47374
Phone: 765-962-5741
E-mail: quakerhillconferencecenter@verizon.net
Or check out the website at www.qhcc.org.



New Exploring Quakerism Study Group

After a second meeting between Friends from Valley Mills and West Newton, the decision was made to start a new joint study group between the two meetings centered around the topic **Exploring Quakerism**. It will be a monthly gathering, set on the fourth Thursday of each month. The first meeting will be held on **Thurs.,**

Feb. 28 from 7:00 - 8: 00 pm at West Newton Friends Meeting. It was decided to rotate the meetings so that the meeting in March will be held at Valley Mills Friends Meeting. Each time, the meeting that does not host will make a brief presentation of the topic to be discussed and then

facilitate the discussion. It is hoped that this will offer Friends from both meetings an opportunity to get to know each other, and a means to explore our faith and what it means to be Quakers in the world today. Hope to see you all there.

Notes from Monthly Meeting for Business, January 13, 2008

- The Treasurer (Mike McCormick) reported on the General Ledger and the Year to Date Budget Profit and Loss. The Treasurer pointed out that the retirement contribution was the entire year's payment made at once. For the year, some restricted funds, such as the Building Fund, were used for operations, but money from the endowment funds were not used so that those funds could continue to earn more interest. Unrestricted contributions were higher than anticipated and we were just a little short on committed contributions. Our anticipated expenses for programs were a little under but our building and maintenance expenses were a little higher and so we were left with only a small deficit.
- Miriam Bunner (Peace and Social Concerns) talked to the Girls' Club. They are looking for volunteers to be trained in their Allies in Action program, a conflict mediation effort. Volunteers go to schools and into the community to assist people in mediation. To benefit from the program, all the schools have to do is ask. Several members are willing to help and the Chair will continue to explore the opportunity.
- The pastor and his wife have volunteered at Decatur Central High School for the Mentors program that is organized by **Executive Service Corps/ Junior Achievement**. The program provides opportunities for role-modeling and promotes staying in school. The commitment is only two hours a month. If anyone is interested they can talk with Buck.
- Bob Havens (Building and Grounds) has been exploring the enlargement of the parking lot by reconfiguring the lot to go from 25 spaces to 35 spaces. By expanding the lot another 50 feet, we can add another seven cars. A member was concerned about the esthetics of the building front compared to the need of having more space. It was suggested that the issue go back to Ministry and Counsel for further discussion. Some members felt that the look of the grounds was too important to add car parking space.
- Bill Downall (Ministry & Counsel) reported that the committee would like the discussion regarding the definition of "progressive" for describing a Christian church or the meeting to continue, but will wait until after the Irvington Friends threshing meeting to consider it further.
- For the Minister's Report the pastor thanked Jim and Greg Jay for sawing and cleaning up the large fallen tree limb in the front yard. Buck and Miriam attended the Pastors' Christmas dinner, which was nice but small and felt that maybe the small number present was a reflection of the dissension at WYM. The Men's Gathering at Frank & Mary's had two visitors from West Newton Friends. Buck visited Katherine McBride, who is doing well. There were 25-30 people at the Christmas Eve service. The pastor thanked Bill Downall for playing the piano throughout the Christmas season. Those who volunteered at our last meeting with West Newton and formed the committee to identify ways to be together will be meeting again soon.

Chris Morrison,
Recording Clerk

The Way of the Heart by *Henri J. M. Nouwen* (1932-1996)

Henri Nouwen, Ph.D., a Roman Catholic priest, graduated with a doctorate in psychology (1964) and Theology (1971) from the University of Nijmegen in the Netherlands. He authored many books on psychology and theology. Upon invitation, he taught for two years at Notre Dame University and ten years at Yale Divinity School and was a lecturer at Harvard. In the following passage are some of his thoughts taken from **The Way of the Heart**, published by Random House, 1983, ISBN: 0345305302.

"We are being inundated by a torrent of words. They form the floor, the walls, the ceiling of our existence. Television, internet, radio, advertisements, billboards along the main thoroughfares in America. Teachers, preachers,

politicians, the Pope, ayatollahs give speeches and make statements. Words, words, words! Their limitless multiplication has made us lose confidence in words. They are just words. The word no longer offers trustworthy ground on which people can meet each other and build society.

Words can give us the feeling of having stopped too long at one of the little villages that we pass on our journey, of having been motivated more by curiosity than by service. Words often make us forget that we are pilgrims called to invite others to join us on the journey.

When our words are no longer a reflection of the divine Word they lose their grounding and become as seductive and misleading as the words used to sell Geritol. The Word of God is born out of the eternal silence of God, and it is to this Word out of silence that we want to be witnesses."

Submitted by Cor Vanlonden



Notes from Ministry and Council—January 9, 2008

-- The presiding clerk opened the meeting with a reading from David Tacey on spirituality.
-- The Membership committee will recommend ways of increasing visibility to the public. Attendance statistics were reviewed.
-- Bob Havens (Building and Grounds) will call the chimney doctor for the parsonage, study the parking lot for expansion and report to the January monthly meeting, and look at the big copier, which is not working. Sylvia will call Kevin Watkins on the parsonage refrigerator leak repair. Sylvia will ask Murray to look at tub faucet leak, and Chris will ask her friend Mark Andrews to repair it if needed. Bob and Bill will coordinate moving the Internet over to Comcast from Earthlink. The furnace checkups will be skipped this year.
-- M&C approved and recommended to January monthly meeting that \$50 be sent to Farmington Friends. Also, a memorial for all pastors who have served at Valley Mills is being discussed.

-- McCormick's will host the North of Rockville Road Gathering on February 23. Havens will host the Decatur Township Gathering. We still need someone to host the Plainfield-Mooresville Gathering.

-- State of the Meeting report will be discussed during Sunday school.
-- The Chicken BBQ is July 26 & 27, 2008.
-- Some members are planning to attend the March gathering at Irvington Friends, possibly to form an association.
-- Buck will speak at West Newton on January 27; Marshall Gibson will give the message at Valley Mills. West Newton joint activities are being planned.

Mike McCormick, recording clerk



Community Caring and Sharing has an urgent need for volunteers for their **Read to Succeed program**. Their classes begin March 3rd and they have children waiting but not enough volunteers to help them. This is an extremely important program. If you have an extra two hours a week you can spare, please call **Sylvia Denman** at **243-8023!**

Staying in Touch

- **Bill Downall's mother** Mary passed away on Wed., Jan. 16th. She had been living in Indianapolis for the last seven years. A memorial service will be held in Nashville, Tennessee on Feb. 16. Please remember Bill and his family in your prayers.



- Check out West Newton Friends Meeting's new website at www.wnfriends.org!



The Quaker Haven Camp schedule has been set:

Pioneer Camp (grades 5-6): June 8-13
Jr. High Camp (grades 7-8): June 15-20
Sr. High I Camp (grades 9-12): June 22-27
Beginner Camp (grades K-2): June 27-29
George Fox Camp (grades 3-4): July 6-9
Sr. High II Camp (grades 9-12) July 13-18

News from Western Yearly Meeting

- Western Yearly Meeting will be having its annual Winter Retreat on Saturday, February 16, from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. The deadline to register is February 1. There are registration forms in the office. The theme this year is "Healthy Congregations," and it will be led by the Lombard Peace Center.
- The next Friends United Meeting Triennial will be July 9-13, 2008. It will be hosted by the North Carolina Yearly Meeting in High Point, North Carolina.
- FUM has established a "Kenya Relief Fund." Unrestricted gifts to this fund are vital at this time, as they can be allocated where they are most needed. Please visit the FUM website to contribute online: <http://www.fum.org/contributions/index.html>, or send a gift by postal mail today to: Friends United Meeting, 101 Quaker Hill Drive, Richmond, IN 47374-1980. (Mark your gift "Kenya Relief Fund.")
- The Africa Great Lakes Initiative, a program of the Friends Peace Team, is accepting donations for immediate relief/reconciliation work and for the ongoing reconciliation work that will be necessary in Kenya: FPT/AGLI at 1001 Park Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63104 or at www.aglionline.org.

February 2008

Valley Mills Friends Meeting

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6 M & C 7 pm	7	8	9
10 Monthly Mtg for Business Pitch-in Dinner	11	12	13	14 <i>Marsha Jay</i> 	15	16 AVP workshop
17 AVP workshop	18	19 Valley Voice deadline	20	21	22 <i>Derek Mills</i> <i>Jared Mills</i>	23
24	25 <i>Sylvia Mills</i>	26	27	28 Exploring Quakerism Study Group 7:00 pm	29	

Child Care Schedule

- Feb. 3 - Chris Morrison and Trevor Bunner
- Feb. 10 - Morris Mills and Elizabeth Baker
- Feb. 17 - Jim Jay and Chris Mills
- Feb. 24 - Marsha Jay and Johnny Jay