

Hamilton Quaker Newsletter

May 2021



Be honest with yourself. What unpalatable truths might you be evading? When you recognize your shortcomings, do not let that discourage you. In worship together we can find the assurance of God's love and the strength to go on with renewed courage.

Advices and Queries #11

Upcoming Events and Announcements

Meeting for Worship will enter silence at 10:30 a.m. The Clerks will try to open the Zoom space by 10:20 to allow people a time to chat and settle in before worship begins. The province has issued a Stay at Home order. In keeping with the spirit of this order, we are discontinuing outdoor meetings for the time being.

May 16 will see a Zoom-based meeting of the Reading Club. Please email Shirla (shirla766@gmail.com) if you would like to join this group. This meeting will focus on pages 62-92 of Richard Wagamese's book, **One Drum**. The meeting will convene at 3 p.m. A Zoom link will be provided to all those who have expressed interest.

May 20 at 7 p.m. all are invited to join an online Frivol in our Zoom Meeting space.

May 23 at 12:30 p.m. there will be a presentation and discussion on climate change. This discussion is designed to educate Quakers about humanly caused climate change and the role of fossil fuels in it, in advance of a discussion to be held later on the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, and potential advocacy organized around it in which our meeting might participate. All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

May 26 there will be a meeting of the Peace and Social Action Committee on Zoom at 7 p.m. If you would like to be added to the participants' e-list, please contact Paul Dekar (pdekar@cogeco.ca). The following meeting will be June 23.

The Cambridge Worship Group (CWG) will be meeting separately in our own homes at 2 pm on Friday, May 28. At 3 pm we will join together via Zoom for After Word and fellowship. If you would like to participate please let Christina know (cmeedwards64@gmail.com) so that we can send you the Zoom link.

May 30 at 12 noon, the Peace and Social Actions Committee is holding a Brown Bag online discussion around the issue of prison reform / abolition. A number of speakers have been invited.

June 6 will be our next Meeting for Worship for Business. The meeting will be held at 12:30 p.m. in our Zoom Meeting space. Email will be sent inviting members and attenders to this meeting.

Canadian Yearly Meeting has started a monthly newsletter sent by email. You can subscribe at the following link: <https://quaker.ca/news-events/> The submission deadline is the 15th of each month, and the newsletter is sent out towards the end of the month. The newsletter is easy to read, and you can click to read more about topics that interest you without having to wade through a lot of text. The newsletter is a good way to hear about coming events (for example, upcoming discussion groups or speakers organized by other monthly meetings in Canada, or registration for our annual gathering (online again this year)).



Thoughts on Non-Violence

by Sheldon Clark

One of the goals of Non-Violence is to encourage self-examination as each of us attempts to deal with our wrath vis-à-vis injustice, unfairness, imbalance, prejudice, discrimination, disparity, bias, unreasonableness, difference, and other causes of conflict. Non-violence is a way of life, not a destination. The aspiration of living a life of Non-Violence is universal peace.

- 1 Non-Violence within may be instinctive for physical survival.
Harmonious Life.
Do I practice Simple Living so Others may Simply Live?
- 2 Non-Violence within may be instinctive for psychological survival.
Integrated Personal Attributes.
Do I practice Affirmative Self-Care?
- 3 Non-Violence within may be instinctive for spiritual survival.
Respect for a Higher Power.
Do I practice Disciplined Spiritual Reflection?
- 4 Non-Violence within may be instinctive social survival.
Virtuousness is Contagious.
Do I practice Random Acts of Kindness?
- 5 Non-Violence within may be instinctive of defense and of offense.
Creative Balance between Passivity and Anger.
Do I practice Reconciliation as a Matter of Love?
- 6 Non-Violence within may be instinctive as a counter to internal violence.
Preparation for Soul Peace.
Do I practice Contemplative Meditation?
- 7 Non-Violence within may be instinctive in word and deed.
Practice Faith in Action.
Do I practice Being a Person of Integrity?
- 8 Non-Violence within may be instinctive of calmness.
Stillness Stimulates Wisdom.
Do I practice developing Excellence?
- 9 Non-Violence within may be instinctive to dispel anger.
Tranquility Promotes Peace.
Do I practice Magnanimity?

- 10 Non-violence within may be instinctive for the formation of inner peace.
Quietude Awakens Serenity.
Do I practice Equanimity?

The motivation to write this piece for the HMM Newsletter is based on the observation that sometimes Friends, unwittingly, express their points of view rather emphatically. Speaking Truth in a kindhearted way is not a sign of weakness. Debate points are not the objective. Plain speaking requires self-discipline, meticulous habit, and awareness that the other is also a child of God.

(This submission reflects the opinion of its author, and not necessarily that of Hamilton Monthly Meeting.)



New Books by Meeting Members

Thomas Merton: God's Messenger on the Road towards a New World highlights the contribution of the best-selling North American writer between the Second World War and 1968. The Cistercian monk called people to act justly, love kindness, and walk humbly. By his critique of technology, a major impediment for people to follow Jesus; by his writing on contemplative prayer; by his interfaith outreach; and through his witness against racism, war, and degradation of nature, Merton still matters. This book uses Micah 6:8 to organize Merton's focus on justice, lovingkindness, and humility, as well as his dialogue with Rachel Carson, Ernesto Cardinal, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Thich Nhat Hahn, and others

"From his monastic outpost in rural Kentucky, Thomas Merton saw the world around him with stunning clarity. Whether gazing at a nuclear-armed B-52 flying overhead night after night or pondering the racism that infects so many of us, he had insights that help clear the eyes and minds of those fortunate enough to pick up one of his books. For anyone wishing to know Merton better, Paul Dekar is a perceptive guide."

—JIM FOREST, author of *Living with Wisdom: A Biography of Thomas Merton*

"Paul Dekar offers us a timely and compelling book on the writings of Thomas Merton that illumines critical concerns for today on the environment, technology, racial justice, and interfaith relationships. He invites us to weave our inner and outer lives like Merton in practices of silence, solidarity, and nonviolence. As a lifelong peacemaker, Dekar inspires us to walk the road with the prophetic messenger Merton leading us toward a new world of radical love and justice."

—NANCY HASTINGS SEHESTED, pastor and writer, Asheville, North Carolina

"Dekar celebrates the profound influence of Thomas Merton on today's world with a fresh consideration of social change, prayerful contemplation, and personal witness. By touching on his own biographical connections to Merton, Paul invites us to examine anew the seminal moments that awakened Merton's prophetic genius, the persons of influence he encountered, and the possibility of being open to changing patterns that limit or obfuscate our awareness of the road to a new world. Prophetically, Paul invites us to defeat sardonic attitudes that cripple the world by touching the wounds of those with whom we live."

—ALLAN McMILLAN, retired pastor and author of several articles on Thomas Merton

In retirement, **Paul R. Dekar**, Professor Emeritus of Evangelism and Mission, Memphis Theological Seminary, teaches, writes, and volunteers with various organizations including Dundas [Ontario] Community Services and the Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. He is a member of the Canadian Interfaith Reference Group. His recent publications include *Dangerous People: The Fellowship of Reconciliation Building a Nonviolent World of Justice, Peace, and Freedom* (2016); "In an Inescapable Network of Mutuality": *Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Globalization of an Ethical Ideal* (2013); and *Thomas Merton: Twentieth Century Wisdom for Twenty-First Century Living* (2011).

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DEKAR

Thomas Merton: God's Messenger on the Road towards a New World



Paul R. Dekar

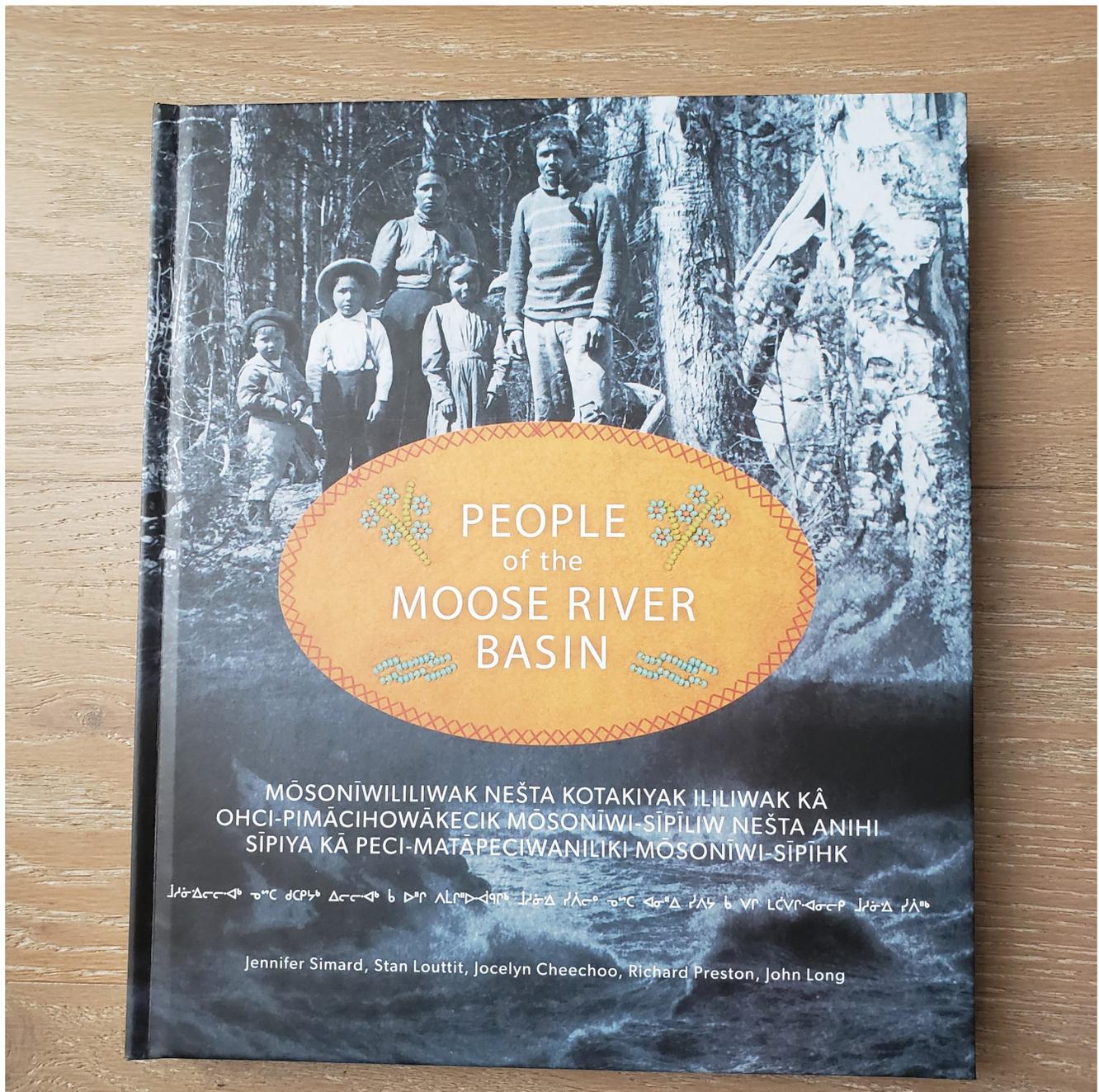
THOMAS MERTON

*God's Messenger on the Road
towards a New World*

Foreword by Christine M. Bochen
Afterword by Mark C. Meade

Thomas Merton: God's Messenger on the Road towards a New World draws on Micah 6:8 that reads, [God] has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to act justly and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God.[NRSV]. Asking, another book on Thomas Merton? I affirm that, more than any other North American writing between the Second World War and 1968, the year he died, Thomas Merton called people to live into the Micah text. By his critique of technology, a major impediment for people to follow Jesus; by his writing on contemplative prayer; by his interfaith outreach, and through his witness against racism, war, and degradation of nature, Merton mattered, and still matters. In several chapters, I explore Merton's engagement with leading spiritual writers and activists of his day, including Martin Luther King, Jr., Thich Nhat Hahn, Dan and Phil Berrigan, Ernesto Cardinal, Dorothy,

Day and Catherine Doherty. I draw not only on my reading of Merton's writings over the course of some sixty years, but also from teaching Merton courses on eight occasions, two month-long forays in the Merton Archives held at Bellarmine University in Louisville, Kentucky, my personal experience with several key figures in Merton's journey (including having studied with Merton's graduate school supervisor) and eight week-long retreats at the Abbey of Gethsemani where I have come to know several monks trained by Merton's during his years as novice master.



People of the Moose River Basin is a peoples' history of a large region, incorporating contributions by over 40 persons, Indigenous and others, who have played a role in that history. Our original hope was to reach Grade 6 or 7 students who have grown up in town, rather than in the bush. In order to compete with the modern visual focus brought about by the screens widely used by this age group, we have lavishly illustrated the text. The result is a general interest book, with an appeal well beyond that of a school text. Members of the writing team come from Moose Factory, Kapuskasing, and further south. We began this project in 1990 and have weathered a large number of time-consuming challenges to produce a fine collaboration that may be used widely for both adult and student readership.



From Christian Scientist to Quaker

by Dick Preston

My dad was, for many years, a reader and a practitioner in the Christian Science church in Raleigh, N.C. He followed quite closely in his mother's footsteps, at least after a few years of university freedoms. So, from childhood, when I was living in his household I went with him on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. The dogma was "Spirit is truth; matter is mortal error." So sickness was the result of wrong thinking, and prayer was the way back to health. I had little success in this, maybe once relieving a stomach ache.

Arriving (1947) at my own university freedom, I tore the pages out of my copy of *Science and Health, with a Key to the Scriptures* and burned them. Six years of indifference followed, first as a failing student and going to Korea as a marine, and then working at a gas station. When I was in first year university for the third time, I fell in love with Sarah and went with her to a non-denominational "Community Church" run by a former Baptist preacher who had been fired for inviting a black family to attend. Charlie Jones, then a campus minister whose good natured sermons appealed to us, married us (1953). A few years later, he gave up poorly paid ministry and took a job as greeter at a good restaurant.

In 1963, Sarah and I made our first sojourn with the Waskaganish Crees. I wasn't much interested in religion, except as a subject of study. Waskaganish was a blend of Anglican Christianity and traditional Cree hunting culture. I became deeply interested in the Cree beliefs and ethics of action. Theirs is a listening culture, and I listened. It became my doctoral dissertation, and more, my sense of my own spirituality. It still is.

Contact with Quakers began in Lancaster, PA, where I followed my daughter Alice to a potluck, and saw this on the wall: *Quakers believe that there is that of God in every man. We do not know that this is true, but we have found that when we act as if it were true, our trust is justified.* Knowing the truth is claimed by many religions, but Quakers were honest believers. I thought that was just right. I still do.

Eight years later, when we moved to Canada, we started attending Hamilton Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, and settled in to being Quakers. Their respect for silence, individual responsibility, and being embedded in the spirituality of the Earth rested comfortably with what I had absorbed from the Crees. It still does.

Sarah died in 1990, after 37 years of marriage and five children, and the Memorial Meetings in Hamilton and Camp NeeKauNis were places of solace and healing.

And in 1992, Betty and I were married under the care of the Meeting. Betty was raised in a Quaker family within a Quaker community. Her personality reflects this, and her life has shown it. Now, for nearly 30 years together, I have been very lucky in love.

Life has been extraordinarily kind to me, and I am grateful.

Quakers are not perfect in living their ideals. Neither are the Crees. But theirs are worthy ideals, and how well we manage to live them has to be good enough.



About this Newsletter / Submission Guidelines

This Newsletter is a monthly publication of news and announcements relevant to Hamilton Quakers.

It is also a venue for members and attenders to share creative works or articles they have written on subjects that may be of interest to our Quaker community. As a general guideline we are looking for submissions that are inspirational and related to Quaker concerns, as well as announcements and news. Members and Attenders are encouraged to submit works for the newsletter.

Requests for newsletter items are announced after Meeting for Worship and/or via email during the week before Meeting for Worship for Business. Submission of materials implies permission to publish. Copyright for original material resides with the author.

If the person submitting the article is unknown to the editor or if there are questions as to whether the article will be appropriate for the Quaker newsletter, the editor will consult with the clerk(s) who will together discern what will be included. Written permission to publish must be obtained from the copyright holder if a submission is not the original work of the submitter, unless the works are in the public domain, or are covered under the creative commons license.

Hamilton Meeting reserves the right to edit submissions for length or content in consultation with the authors. When opinion pieces are included a line will be added indicating "Submissions reflect the opinions of their authors, and not necessarily of Hamilton Monthly Meeting".

Submissions should be directed to the current editor, Síân Reid, daywitch@gmail.com.