

THE IOWA FRIEND

Iowa Yearly Meeting of Friends

Response and Direction... by Tom Showalter

It's been two years...really? I started my service to Iowa Yearly Meeting on October 1, 2015. We have enjoyed the people and places of IAYM. Now that I am a veteran (wink, wink), I would like to share my observations and offer some ideas/challenges for the pursuit of God's agenda. But first let me digress a bit...

Recently I was challenged (probably more like convicted) by an author who stated, "God talks repeatedly about the church as His bride. We know this bride has plenty of blemishes, yet she is still Christ's bride. You cannot love the Bridegroom yet show disrespect for the bride" (Horst, 2014). When people say negative things about our spouse, it invokes immediate reactions within us.

That being said, as we look at statistics across the country, church attendance on average is down considerably. One article, among many, can be found at <http://churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/139575-7-startling-facts-an-up-close-look-at-church-attendance-in-america.html>. **What is the right response and direction?** I do know for sure that more of the same will not fix the problem of decline.

First, we must return to a focus on the mission and purpose of the Church as found in God's Word. From Genesis to Revelation, the intent was to bring people into God's Kingdom. In Genesis and other Old Testament passages, we see "be fruitful and increase in number." In the New Testament, we are instructed to make disciples. We need to lovingly invite people into God's Kingdom.

Second, we are God's ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:11). An ambassador does not speak on his own agenda, but for the one he or she represents. We are God's ambassadors and we speak as representatives of Him. If our platform is our family, our workplaces, a Sunday School class, or a pulpit, we speak God's message, not our own. I often hear a lot of opinions in the pulpit and other places, but we need to speak "Thus saith the Lord..." Our opinions are just our perspective. People need to hear God's message, not our opinion.

Third, Jesus tells the Parable of the Sower found in several places in the New Testament. Jesus explains the parable to the disciples and says the "seed is the Word of God" (Luke 8:11). The problem is not the seed, but the soil. If the problem is not the seed, then is it possible that the problem is with our methods, our motives, or our messengers? The soil needs to be prepared to receive the seed. The way we love, serve, care, pray for, model, etc., etc., will help hearts become prepared to receive the seed. Are we trying to get people into church or is our ultimate goal to invite them into God's Kingdom? Are we sitting in our churches and hoping the fish will jump into the boat? Are we living examples of new creations that model what God can do in a person's life? Simply put, are our lives as followers of Jesus any different than those who do not claim a relationship with Jesus Christ?

Fourth, we need to pray more than we ever have. Are we praying? 2 Corinthians 10:3-5:

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

We are not operating in a business world, but in a spiritual one. The methods, message, messengers, and motives must be God-reliant. We need to be a people of prayer if we expect to see revival in our churches. Our goal is not survival, but revival. Our focus is not how to retain people in the church, but how to invite all the people in Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. We think too small. As we think of decking church numbers, is the glass half empty or half full? With less people going to church, we have more potential to encounter not-yet believers. When we do, what do they see in us?

"Could I, like Paul, insist that an individual and/or a group of people mimic my behavior for a week in order to learn how to follow Jesus? What kind of Christians would you produce if the only way they learned how to walk with the Lord was by following you around and mimicking your actions?" (Wilkes, 2011).

Luke 10:2 "He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Works Cited

- Horst, P. G. (2014). *Mission Drift: The unspoken crisis facing leaders, charities, and churches*. Bloomington, Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers.
- Wilkes, C. G. (2011). *Jesus on Leadership: Timeless wisdom on servant leadership*. Tyndale House Publishers.

GOD at WORK ~ Mary Glenn Hadley

Wycliffe Bible Translators tell about a man who lived in a West Asian country hostile to Christianity. Due to conflict in his country he found himself as a refugee in a neighboring country where he met a Bible translator translating God's Word into his own language. This Bible translator was asking God for the right person to share it with. Because the refugee was anxious to see books published in his mother tongue he agreed to read the first chapter of the Gospel of Luke even though his family and refugee community were antagonistic to Christianity. He read in secret late at night and fell asleep. Through a dream he was told "Don't sleep, wake up and don't stop reading!" The next morning he asked for more Scripture to read. Through another dream he was encouraged to keep reading the rest of the Gospel of Luke. "It is good news," he said. "It is changing me, and is the most important thing I have ever read in my life." In a third dream he was reassured that he should trust the translator and keep learning about Jesus even though he feared he might get caught reading in secret.



{ FEAST }
FELLOWSHIP, EATING AND SHARING TOGETHER

Calling all adults that are both working with teens and young adults in their local church (youth leader, sunday school teacher, small group leader) as well as those that want to **understand more the importance of youth and young adult ministry in thier community.**

The Youth and Young Adult Board will provide food and drinks. Please come to share with those that understand you and what God has called you to do in your ministry.

We are going to look at the pursuit of purpose, the why, of youth and young adult ministry in the local church. Why we do things have got to be front and center to everything we do. We need to be intentional about what we do, as well as who God is calling us to be to those around us

LeGrand, IA – LeGrand Friends Church (LFC) announces that Nick Meling is the recipient of the 2017 Vandervelde Scholarship. Nick graduated from East Marshall on May 14 and plans to attend Wartburg College next fall. He has been active in the LeGrand Friends Youth group and participated in a missions trip to Alaska last summer.

The Vandervelde Scholarship is made possible through LFC by a grant from the late Marjorie Vandervelde and her family in honor of her father, the late Dr. E.M. Mills. Dr. Mills was LeGrand's country doctor in the early 1900s. Recipients of the scholarship are judged on a combination of qualities including educational goals, character, church involvement, and financial need. The scholarship has been awarded annually since 1996.

WANTED

Articles to share in a series called
"Church in Action"

Does your local meeting have an "action" article to share in future newsletters?

Please submit to:

office@iaym.org

Let's encourage each other in sharing the Love of God in our local communities!



Peace and Social Concerns

By: Dale Dorrell

At a well

That is a familiar gospel story from John 4. By all the righteous standards of his day Jesus should not have been there at Jacob's well in Sychar of Samaria and he certainly should not have spoken to this woman, even if she weren't of questionable repute. I am sure there are other interpretations of this story, but I don't see Jesus being hard on her so much as inviting her through the broken stuff of her life to experience what she has really been looking for all along – herself. Jesus meets her, he sees her, he engages her and he invites her into relationship with God and with community.

I am in a position where I am privileged to hear people's stories, but sometimes these are horrendous stories of brokenness. I work with people who struggle with mental health and chemical dependency issues. I won't suggest that I can even begin to explain the physiological realities of the brain but I have it on medical authority that some people are born with brains that are wired differently and others brains have been rewired by trauma and abuse. These are often stories of growing up with degradation and violence. The stories I hear are stories of survival; including sometimes entering bad relationships, and self-medicating; things that though they may offer temporary relief end up compounding the problem.

I have a deep concern about the direction health care is going these days. How easy it is to feel righteous and holy –and judge. How easy it is to justify cutting funding to programs that help those with mental illness and addiction if we can simply judge it as character flaw or moral weakness.

And then there's Jesus. I can imagine the disciples returning from town with lunch, horrified when they find Jesus relating to this woman. It is easy to judge when we don't know the story. It was a lot easier for me to judge before Jesus called me out on my own story; until he met me at the well with grace.

I met him at a well one day.
I had no idea he would say
anything to me, after all
a Jew was far more apt to call
a Samaritan names than pass the time
with one of such a different kind;
and on a woman, was unheard
for Jewish man to waste a word.

As for myself, I also knew
better than speak with snobbish Jew.
But, it was the strangest thing, he ask
of me a simple task:

“Draw me water for a drink.”

What, what was I to think.

His eyes were not those seeking pleasure,
but those that offered different treasure.

What was it he really wanted
'twas strange enough he'd not insulted
me, but after asking me to give
he spoke of water that would live.
His riddle soon caught my attention
and I thought 'twas his intention
to speak religion and it's place;
but when I looked into his face
the walls of prejudice tumbled
the self-defense inside me crumbled.

I thought; “Here is a man,
who see me as I really am.”

I twisted, feeling deepest guilt
but 'twas a loving gaze I felt;
confronting me with who I was
giving new chance at life and love.

Was he a prophet, or perhaps
the long Awaited One at last?

All this I really could not tell
but he who met beside the well
that day a broken person true;
left there this person
whole and new.



October is Clergy Appreciation Month.

With the shepherd doing so much to encourage the flock, wouldn't it be nice if the flock returned the favor? As teachers, counselors, comforters and the ones who unselfishly serve, your pastoral staff and their families could use an extra pat on the back. So go ahead and find your special way to say thanks. You'll be glad you did.

You Don't Know How You Influenced Me But I Want to Thank You

Adora Lynn (Hartman) Davis

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

By the age of two and a-half, my sister and I had become wards of the State of Iowa. Two little blonde-haired, blue-eyed girls who lived in Hesper, Iowa entered the Winneshiek County Social Welfare system in Decorah, Iowa. As benefactors of the system, a variety of living arrangements followed by regular visits from the county's social welfare system and oversight by an assigned Guardian Ad Litem who reported on the status of our mental and physical health.

Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Psalm 82:3 (NIV)

Family situations can result in circumstances that prevent reasonable care for children from both mental and physical harm. Living in a poorly constructed frame house, pumping water from an outside well, and the only facility being an outhouse were not the cause of concerns. Apparently, it had come to the attention of the child welfare system that our parents' own physical and mental health limitations prevented proper child care. Fortunately, in the 1950's Iowa had an established system of care to provide services for children experiencing abuse, neglect or abandonment within their families due to a variety of causes. For five years, my sister and I lived with various family members and in foster care. Eventually, the courts succeeded in keeping my sister and I together with placement in a home with a family--avoiding institutional placement.

"And we...are being transformed into his (the Lord's) likeness with ever-increasing glory...." 2 Corinthians 3:18 (NIV)

As it turns out, our family had attended Hesper Friends Church and worshipped with the congregation. When our father died early in his life, the minister of Hesper Friends Church, Rev. Richard Hartman, presided over the funeral service and members from the church attended. Our father is buried in the public cemetery in Hesper along with other members from the church. Our mother was unable to continue raising us, and was institutionalized.

The Quaker influence continued when legal custody was awarded to the same Quaker pastor, Richard Hartman and his wife, in 1962. Later, another move took us to Pleasant Plain, Iowa. For several years, we grew up in **Iowa Yearly Meeting**. During my middle and high school years, Rev. Hartman accepted a pastorate at Farmington Friends Church in **New York Yearly Meeting** and we moved. Two different yearly meetings but similar beliefs led to more new friends who modeled Quaker Life and the values of simplicity and brotherly love.

Community involvement included numerous activities that helped shape my life:

- Biblical studies through Sunday School classes taught by dedicated faithful teachers
- Memorization competitions of Bible verses followed with small awards
- Sunday services where songs of praise were sung, testimonies spoken during quiet worship, and messages presented for spiritual commitment and renewal
- Social gatherings of Friends and members of the community
- Scheduled events for targeted age groups in the church and community
- Summer Bible School for all children
- Sponsored church activities such as dramas, musicals, etc.
- Summer Camp at Quaker Heights
- Quarterly Meetings
- Yearly Meetings

Informal events included adults who would personally speak to me and through conversation, show their support and acceptance of me. This would always throw me off-guard – being put in a position to account for myself or have a plan of action for the future.

I attended William Penn College and graduated in 1976. My training equipped me with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to succeed in the world and in the workforce. Graduating with honors, I felt prepared to seek employment and be a productive member of society.

Entering the workforce was a new reality but I felt that God was always with me and guiding me. I never felt alone and if I thought that something was just too challenging, I asked for God's help to provide understanding. If I had to deal with difficult personalities, I asked for perseverance and good-judgement. Quakers know how to commune with the Lord!

"...he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." Philippians 1:6b (NIV)

The influence of people in the community had a profound and significant influence in our life. Those directly responsible may never know how their decisions and interventions made it possible for my sister and I to thrive. It is through the work of others, that I have been able to accept my beginnings, and recognize the opportunities that God has bestowed upon me to continue the same challenge of helping others. Never think that your involvement is meaningless or insignificant. You may never know the life that you have touched. Thank you for having touched ours.

God bless you in your outreach challenge efforts!

After forty years in primary and secondary education, Adora recently retired as the grant-writer for Duval County Public Schools in Jacksonville, Florida. Her sister, Damaris, was a registered nurse who focused on pediatric care. She passed away from cancer in 2005.

2017 THANKSGIVING OFFERING FOR CUBA

Cuban Quakers are busy constructing buildings and transforming buildings for their growing ministries. Iowa Yearly Meeting Missions Board would like to encourage their work with a Thanksgiving Offering.

Following is a list of some of their needs and costs of the projects.

- Sanctuary expansion, Asiento de Calderon: \$1500
- Replace doors and windows, Floro Perez: \$1000
- Bathrooms in each of two meetinghouses: Pueblo Nuevo \$600 and Bocas \$600.
- A bicycle for Missionary in Delicia, and work on meetinghouse: \$500.
- Door on Havana Meetinghouse: \$700.
- Pews/benches Las Calabazas: \$150 per bench. They hope for 10 benches.
- Refrigerator, Banes: \$650.

Your Thanksgiving Offering can be sent to:

Dorothy Taylor, 1121 Parkway Drive, Boone, IA 50036-5046.

Please continue to pray for the growing work in Cuba.

Nancy Stevens

IAYM Missions Clerk

Cuba: the first Quaker missionaries to Cuba came from Iowa Yearly Meeting in the early 1900s, and the first Yearly Meeting was established in 1927. Friends established a number of schools in Cuba, which were taken over by the government following the communist revolution in 1958. Today the small Quaker community (around 350 members) is supported by the Friends United Mission (FUM).



Be safe!



Be kind!

Be helpful!

IOWA USFW Fall Retreat

2017-2018 Theme:

***Serving the Lord
With Gladness***

Middle River Friends Church
4057 S23 Hwy
Carlisle, IA

October 7, 2017
9:30 am—registration
10:00 am—2:30 pm

Morning:

Announcements
Praise & Worship
Message Presented by:
Kerry Hadley (the Pretty One)

Luncheon

Afternoon:

Praise & Worship
Missions Highlights
Business Meeting
Closing Prayer

Registration @ 9:30 am
Retreat Cost: \$10
Registration Deadline: October 3

Please mail registration to:

Cathie Zeliadt
4103 SW 5th
Des Moines, IA 50315
Or email info to: dcfz35@gmail.com

Church: _____

Name: _____

Contact # or email:

You do not have to be a member of USFW to attend. Money does not have to be paid in advance. You may pay at the registration table.

THE IOWA FRIEND

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2017

- October 6-8: **Man Camp**
- October 7: **U.S.F.W. Fall Retreat** @ Middle River Friends
- October 13 & 14: Fairfield Friends Battle Ready **Men's Conference**
October 15-17:
Pastor's Conference @ CQH. Details still being worked out.
- October 22: **FEAST** @ College Ave Friends
- October 26-28: **FUM General Board** meeting in Richmond, IN
- October 27-28: **All Boards Retreat** @ CQH

2018

- **January 10-17, 2018: Quaker Men-Friends Response Team Trip to Belize**
- February 17, 2018: **Quaker Men's Winter Banquet**
- **February 9-10: Blizzard Blast**
- March 3, 2018: **Board on Coordination (BOC)** Meeting
- March 24, 2018: **Spring Body Meeting** (Location to be Determined)
- July 18-22, 2018: **Youth and Young Adult Board** sponsored trip to Chicago
- July 25-28th Yearly Meeting Conference



**UPCOMING
EVENTS**