



Lancaster Monthly Meeting The Religious Society of Friends

Newsletter No. 553

January-February 2009

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CALENDAR

First-day - 8:00-8:55 AM – Early Meeting For Worship

- 9:00-9:45 AM – Reading Roundtable. All are welcome.

- 9:00-9:50 AM – Quaker Bible Study. Classroom 2. February and March: The Sermon on the Mount (See below.)

- 9:45 AM – Pray for peace in either the meeting room or community room.

- 10:00 AM – Meeting For Worship. Children worship with us for the first 20 minutes, then go to First-Day School classes.

First and Third First-days – 9:15-9:45 AM – Open hymn-sing in the meeting room

Second First-day – 11:35 or so – Meeting For Worship For Business

Third First-day – Cooperative Meal (see below for special Christmas candlelight dinner tonight)

First First-day – 10:00 AM – Meeting For Worship, Cornwall Worship Group, Paymaster's Building, Cornwall Manor

Last First-day – 10:00 AM - Meeting For Worship, Willow Valley Worship Group (Joyce Collins 464-6363 for more information)

FORUMS

Jan. 25 – Liz Gates: Report on FWCC meeting in India and Quakers in Asia and the western Pacific.

Feb. 1 – Including children in the Meeting (by First-Day School & Worship & Ministry)

Feb. 8 – Meeting for worship for business

Feb. 15 – Social time/Cooperative meal

Feb. 22 – David Smith on equitable funding for Pennsylvania Schools (see below)

Mar. 1 – John Scott on Quaker history

ACTIVITIES

Every Saturday – 11:00-Noon – Vigil For Peace in Lancaster. For more information, call Charles Lane 394-5912

- ACTIVITIES CONTINUED -

Sun. Jan. 25 – 8:45 AM – Social Committee in meetinghouse. All welcome.
 Sun. Jan. 25 – 10:00 AM – Meeting For Worship at Willow Valley
 Mon. Jan. 26 – 7:00 PM – “Show Me the Franklins” play at Bright Side (see below)
 Sat.-Sun. Jan. 31-Feb. 1 – Young Friends Contra Dance and sleepover (see below)
 Sun. Feb. 1 – 9:00 AM – Peace and Social Concerns Committee in meetinghouse
 Sun. Feb. 1 – 9:15-9:45 AM – Open hymn-sing in meetinghouse
 Sun. Feb. 1 – 10:00 AM – Meeting For Worship at Cornwall Worship Group
 Sun. Feb. 1 – 12:50-1:50 PM – Peaceful Families Committee in meetinghouse (see below)
 Sun. Feb. 1 – 2:00-4:30 PM – Shape Note Singing in meetinghouse
 Mon. Feb. 2 – 7:00-8:30 PM – Spiritual Oasis in meetinghouse
 Tue. Feb. 3 – 7:15 PM – Care & Counsel Committee in meetinghouse
 Sun. Feb. 8 – 11:35 AM – Meeting For Business
 Mon. Feb. 9 – 7:00-8:30 PM – Spiritual Oasis in meetinghouse
 Tue. Feb. 10 – Deadline for January-February newsletter
 Sun. Feb. 15 – 9:00 AM – Caln Quarterly winter meeting at Schuylkill Meeting (see below)
 Sun. Feb. 15 – 9:15-9:45 AM – Open hymn-sing in meetinghouse
 Sun. Feb. 15 – 12:00 PM (after Cooperative Meal) – Worship and Ministry
 Mon. Feb. 16 – 7:00-8:30 PM – Spiritual Oasis in meetinghouse
 Tue. Feb. 17 – 7:00 PM – Spirituality & Science in meetinghouse (see below)
 Sun. Feb. 22 – 8:00 AM – Pancake Breakfast for Guatemala AVP in meetinghouse
 Sun. Feb. 22 – 10:00 AM – Meeting For Worship at Willow Valley

**LANCASTER MONTHLY MEETING
 THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS
 HELD AT LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA
 ON FIRST MONTH 11**

At about 11:45 am, after a brief period of silent worship, Clerk Elizabeth Gates took up the business of Meeting. The agenda was reviewed and approved, and minutes for Twelfth Month were read, corrected and approved.

Worship sharing on queries on meeting for worship.

Queries

1. As we worship is there a living silence in which we are drawn together by the power of God in our midst?
2. Is the spirit of our worship together one that nurtures all worshipers?
3. Do I faithfully attend meeting with heart and mind prepared to speak or not to speak, and expecting that worship will be a source of strength and guidance?

Responses:

- “Suffer the little children to come unto me.” Jesus again and again and again refers to the need to be like a child. A very delightful child this morning reminded me what it is to

be a child, to see only the future with everything new and exciting, to be joyful, to express anger at someone who constrains them and then forget it and go back to loving the person. For me, the past is a learning experience, not an encumbrance, and I think approaching worship as a child is what Jesus is saying.

- I’m not sure we’re being totally nurturing in our discussion of the Cool Committee report in the concern about spending a lot of money for a few people for a few days. I don’t think everyone has an equal opportunity.

- For me, meeting for worship is at the core of my experience as a Friend. It’s the most important thing I do weekly in this community. For me, the queries are not so much questions to be answered as challenges or guides pointing to directions in which I can move. I want us all to feel God’s presence in living silence. I want my worship to nurture all who come. What can we as a community do to make sure that happens? I want to attend with my heart and mind prepared. The commitment to come every week is so important, even though some weeks are thin and some are rich. It is the faithfulness of coming every week that matters.

- We’ve all experienced telling a funny story and someone doesn’t laugh. It’s so hard to

explain it to that person. I feel that way about words describing meeting for worship. Words fall flat. It's not the messages but the total experience. I remember that a memorial for a well-known Friend was recorded, and some Friends said, "We can't distribute this." Even in a silent meeting I almost always feel something moving that is too fragile and too gigantic to describe in words.

- I too was very troubled by the idea of why do something for the benefit of a few. I think of the parable of the shepherd with 100 sheep who went looking for the one missing sheep. We can tell what a culture is really like by how they treat the weakest.

Clerk asked us to consider these queries further in our hearts and homes and in talking with one another.

Yearly Meeting concerns for March sessions.

Clerk reported that Philadelphia Yearly Meeting has three issues for meetings to consider and report back to PYM. The issues will be discussed at March sessions. On the first matter, the Governance Project Group's report, Friends suggested that those who are interested can consider it. Clerk said she has not yet received the PYM Priorities Committee document but asked us to think about what should be Yearly Meeting's priorities. On the third issue, PYM would like to hear from Monthly Meetings about their "burning concerns" by a process in which Quarterly Meetings consider Monthly Meetings' burning concerns and then pass on to Yearly Meeting any concerns with which they unite.

Several Friends expressed concerns about Lancaster Meeting's connection with Yearly Meeting and whether we want more connection. Clerk will arrange a time and place for Meeting to discuss this.

Peace & Social Concerns Committee:

Statement on Gaza. Bob Lowing told us that the committee wrote a two-sentence letter about its concerns over the current warfare in Gaza. Bob and Joe DiGarbo would like to present this message, in the name of Lancaster Meeting, at the Gathering for Peace to be held in Philadelphia in the coming week. Several Friends affirmed the spirit of the letter while also suggesting changes and expressing the principle that such letters should include information on what we are doing and sugges-

tions for action. One Friend felt our first priority should be talking with the Lancaster community.

Meeting approved the letter, with some revisions, as follows: The Lancaster Monthly Meeting of Friends affirms its belief that the brutal warfare now taking place between Hamas and Israel in Gaza violates the sacredness of human life. We believe that Friends should take all action possible to bring about an immediate cease-fire and support efforts of our government and the United Nations to seek peaceful resolutions to the complex issues which underlie this conflict.

Meeting also approved the following actions: having Joe DiGarbo and Bob Lowing present the letter at the Peace Gathering and having Clerk send the statement to local newspapers.

Deepening & Strengthening report. Some Friends said they had not received the D&S report. So more copies will be distributed and we will consider this next month.

Summer worship for 2009. Clerk reported that a visitor at last month's business meeting was moved, during our discussion about summer worship, at how willing we were to be honest. He noticed that people didn't feel they couldn't speak and that there was very deep listening. Clerk noted that when there is conflict it can be difficult to say things that are unpopular or not politically correct.

Clerk went on to say that it is clear that there is a desire to explore a possible third way. The Cool Committee is looking into this and will probably report in March. But it is possible that nothing will happen by June so we need to decide what to do this summer if there is no change to the building, keeping in mind the clear recommendation from the Cool Committee that we like to have meeting for worship together. Clerk then invited us to continue in that spirit of deep, deep listening which we started in December.

In the discussion which emerged some Friends spoke of spiritual and other concerns. A Friend reminded us of George Fox's speaking against steeplehouse worship because the church is the people, not the building. Worship is not a sacred place but a sacred process of turning to the Divine for guidance and support. We can worship anywhere. A Friend asked if we could embrace separation as a

recognition of differences and a sign of strength and vitality. We want to ensure the health and safety of all who want to worship with us, and those with health concerns do not want to feel "less than."

Practical suggestions also came forth. 1) We could air condition the library, where some already worship, add more chairs, and open the doors into the meeting room. 2) We could change the time of worship, perhaps to 9 am. 3) We could have just one meeting for worship, that is, combine the 8 and 10 o'clock meetings. 3) Sometimes we could worship outdoors. All these suggestions were received favorably, except for having only one meeting for worship. Several who come to early meeting asked if they couldn't continue to meet at 8, and yes, they are welcome—the building is always open to any who wish to worship at any time. It was also noted that committees which meet in the library would be able to use the air conditioner.

Meeting then approved that the Facilities Committee purchase, at a reasonable cost, a quiet, efficient and adequate air conditioner for the library. The air conditioner is to be in place and ready for use by May 1. Worship & Ministry will also explore the possibility of having several meetings outdoors.

After a brief period of silent worship, Meeting for Business ended at about 1:30 pm. There were 38 present.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Gates, Clerk
Maria Cattell, Recording Clerk

Present: Nancy Bieber, Maria Cattell, Esther Cope, Joseph DiGarbo, Faith d'Urbano, Jean & William Eaton, Philip & Mary Anne Eisemann, Chris Fitz, Elizabeth & Thomas Gates, Albert Geier, Grayfred & Lois Frey Gray, Mark Grimm, Charles & Millicent Holzinger, Cynthia Hummel, James Kalish, Kim Kalish, John & Kay Lahr, Thomas Latus, Patricia Lea, Robert Lowe, Cynthia & Robert Lowing, Anna Moore, Robert Neuhauser, Ernest Nute, Francis Rosch, Joanna & Loren Sadler, Deborah Spence, Anne Wallace DiGarbo, Erma Weaver, Karen Zimmerman.

VERY INTERESTING

SERMON STUDY – Quaker Bible Study will meet again Sunday mornings from 9:00 to 9:50

in Classroom 2. During February and March, we will focus on the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) and use as a study guide Clarence Jordan's *Sermon on the Mount*. Ten copies were ordered and went on sale last Sunday. If there are any left today, you can have one for \$11. Ask Tom Gates (581-3416).

ANOTHER SUNDAY? – Several people have expressed a desire to have a midweek meeting for worship. Now Worship and Ministry Committee would like your input:

- Do you feel led to convene a midweek Meeting for Worship?
- If a midweek Meeting for Worship were arranged would you attend?
- What days and times would suit you best?
- Other ideas?

Please reply to Lois Frey Gray by email (loisf@juno.com) or phone 290-7723

SNACK HOPE – Social Committee, which meets (met) this morning at 8:45, expressed appreciation for the snacks provided for after meeting. Please keep them coming, especially healthy ones. Drop off contributions in the kitchen and label them "for snack."

We have Free Trade Coffee for sale. Call Jean Eaton for details.

BETTER SCHOOLS – At our forum on Feb. 22, David Smith of Good Schools PA, a faith-based lobbying initiative, will tell us about Good Schools PA's efforts to push Pennsylvania to adopt a new funding formula which would make for more equitable funding for public schools. He will also suggest things we can do to help.

MEET PEACE – The Lancaster Interchurch Peace Witness (LIPW) has its annual meeting this afternoon, from 3:00 to 5:00, at the Lancaster Church of the Brethren, 1601 Sunset Avenue. Featured speaker at this meeting, which is open to the public, will be the Rev. Dr. Louis Butcher of Bright Side Baptist Church. He will speak about the Obama election, racial justice and American churches. Come be inspired and challenged by the words of this distinguished religious leader!

Your friendly newsletter editor, Jim Herr, has been elected to serve on the LIPW board.

FUEL LESS – The Environmental Concerns

Committee offers these steps to help you save up to \$600 on your annual energy bill:

- ~ \$60: Replace your 5 most used regular light bulbs with Compact Fluorescent Bulbs
- ~ \$65: Turn off lights and electronic devices when not in use
- ~ \$78: Adjust thermostat to 68 degrees in winter and 78 degrees in summer
- ~ \$85: Upgrade ten-year old or older refrigerator to an Energy Star model
- ~\$137: Improve insulation of your attic, exterior walls, and floors
- ~\$175: Weatherize and seal windows, doors, air ducts, etc.

READY? – At the February meeting for business we will consider the report that the Deepening & Strengthening Committee shared in December. If you have not had a chance to look at it, please ask Tom Latus or Grayfred Gray for a copy.

WEBBED LOG – The Library Committee has been busy putting the catalog of books in the Meeting library online so you can see what we have on the shelves from your computer. Access this by going to www.librarything.com. Our user name is lancastermmlibrary, our password is quaker1lady. We have over 600 books cataloged! Expect to get lost for hours at this website.

When you take a book out of our library, please sign the book card with your name, phone # or e-mail address and the date, including the year. Take a date due slip and write the date due (exactly 1 month from the date on the book card), and put the date due slip in the pocket as a reminder that our books circulate for one month. When you return the book put it in the basket on the floor by the meeting room doors. Please take advantage of the Library Committee's hard work by taking out our books and returning them on time.

SAY SOMETHING – Every year, on the first full weekend in May, Quakers from all over central PA (Caln Quarterly Meeting) get together at Camp Swatara, about an hour north of Lancaster. It's a wonderful opportunity to meet other Quakers, go for walks in beautiful woodlands, participate in a contra dance, and attend a wide variety of workshops. Maybe you want to **present** a workshop. If you do, please contact Debby Spence, 299-3446 or

dlsponce@verizon.net. Please hurry. The program is almost settled and the brochure will be going to the printer soon.

TWEEN FUN – Share your gifts, talents and skills as a Friendly Presence for the Middle School Friends program of PYM! Get to know the fresh and enthusiastic future of Quakerism, and have the precious chance to be that invaluable influence that they will remember in years to come. This volunteer position requires spending the weekend with the MSF community (up to 35 kids and 7 adults), shepherding small group times, being an authority and having fun. Training and quality supervision provided. Professional experience not required. Contact Elizabeth Walmsley, Program Coordinator, 215-241-7171 or elizabethw@pym.org

GODLY STORIES – The Faith & Play Working Group of PYM's Children's Spiritual Life Committee is pleased to make available its first volume of stories, published through QuakerPress of Friends General Conference and available from QuakerBooks of FGC. *Faith & Play: Quaker Stories for Friends Trained in the Godly Play® Method* includes six stories of Friends' faith and witness that are appropriate for children's religious education programs or multigenerational gatherings. Friends interested in learning more can visit the Faith & Play website at www.faithandplay.org for information about training, Faith & Play in the home and in Friends Schools, resources and materials.

FGC is sponsoring a teachers workshop, in cooperation with Pendle Hill, the weekend of May 15-17: *Playing in the Light: A Godly Play® Workshop for Quakers* with Michael Gibson, Caryl Menkhus, and Melinda Wenner Bradley. Learn more about this Montessori-inspired approach to religious education and the Bible that is open-ended and that honors the spiritual lives of children.

Godly Play® is a curriculum for children between the ages of 3 and 12 that offers consistency, meaningful engagement and rich pay-off to both teachers and children. It can be used effectively in multigenerational settings. Be nourished in the relaxed environment of Pendle Hill as you experience Godly Play® for yourselves and get the training and practice you'll need to use it. Co-sponsored by the Religious Education Committee of Friends General Conference.

ON THE CALENDAR

300 YRS LATER – Tomorrow evening, Jan. 26, at 7:00 PM in the Bright Side Opportunities Center, 515 Hershey Ave., Lancaster, Amanda Kemp will present her play “Show Me the Franklins! Remembering the Ancestors, Slavery and Benjamin Franklin.” The play is appropriate for ages 8 and up (6 if accompanied by a parent), and it runs about 45 minutes. It’s free and open to the public.

DANCE! – Meeting’s Young Friends are holding their second annual Contra Dance with live music and an overnight on Jan. 31 to Feb 1. The dance is at St. John's Episcopal Church from 7-10 with the overnight to follow in the meetinghouse. Lasagna, hanging out, DVDs and games are planned for the evening and waffles for breakfast. Joe DiGarbo will present to Young Friends on his work in Israel and his participation in the Peace Gathering in Philadelphia. The event ends at 11:00 AM, Sunday. Please see Anne Wallace-DiGarbo for permission slips for the overnight.

BOOK TOUR – QuakerPress of Friends General Conference (FGC) is publishing a much-anticipated book on racial discrimination in the Religious Society of Friends. Everyone is invited to the Thursday, Feb. 5 kick-off for *Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship: Quakers, African Americans, and the Myth of Racial Justice* by Donna McDaniel and Vanessa Julye. This event is scheduled from 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm at the Fourth and Arch Street Meeting House in Philadelphia. All are welcome for an evening of music with Tribe 1, keynote speaker Charlotte Blake Alston, and book signings by the authors. The book will be sold by QuakerBooks of FGC. For more information on the book, visit www.fgcquaker.org/fit-for-freedom

BIG WORSHIP – On Sat., Feb. 7, Friends will gather at Media Meeting (PA) for a whole morning of worship, followed by fellowship over bag lunches and worship sharing. The extended period of worship is a refreshing opportunity to settle deeply and open up to the work of the Spirit within and among us. It's also a blessed time to connect with Friends seeking to be faithful. All are welcome. Child care will be provided. 9:30 AM to 4 PM, 125 W. 3rd Street,

Media, PA Contact: Marcelle Martin 610-627-0390 FriendMarcelle@aol.com

$\frac{1}{4}$ – The winter meeting of Caln Quarterly Meeting will be held Feb. 15 at Schuylkill Monthly Meeting in Phoenixville, a lovely meetinghouse built in 1807. There will be some sort of program, a brief meeting for business, and a chance to gather with Friends from places outside Lancaster County.

SPIRITED – The Science and Spirituality group will have its next meeting on the third Tuesday of the month, Feb. 17. They will continue the consideration of Ervin Laszlo's book *Science and the Akashic Field*. Everyone is welcome. If you have questions, call Adele Bernardi at 391-8915.

PANCAKES FOR PEACE – Lancaster Monthly Meeting has generously supported the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) in Guatemala for the past 2 years. There are now 9 Guatemalan facilitators in the country. In continuation of that support, there will be a pancake breakfast on Feb. 22 from 8:00 to 9:45 in the Community Room. Donations will be sent to the Friends Peace Team of the Americas, for Guatemala AVP in 2009.

The following is a summary of the report from Val Liveoak, coordinator of Friends Peace Teams (FPT) in Latin America, on Guatemala AVP in 2008:

“Dec. 12-14 we did the first Advanced workshop with Guatemalan co-facilitators (3). It was important to have advanced them in their process of becoming AVP facilitators—two were male pastors who look to become the first male AVP facilitators, and one was a young woman teacher from the Friends Church in Juchitan, Chiquimula. All three could become good facilitators, I think, and the woman and one of the men is under 30, a good sign, too.

“We sponsored 2 Youth AVP workshops in Guatemala. Several other young Friends from Chiquimula Department and Guatemala City attended the Basic workshop given at Ichthus in June, and which FPT co-sponsored.

“For 2009, I hope that FPT has funds to do or sponsor 3 workshops with Center for Pastoral Studies in Central America (CEDEPCA) facilitators, in addition to the ones CEDEPCA itself does. I hope to be able to do a second Basic (the first was in 2007) in San Lucas and

then an Advanced workshop with the people who have taken the Basic. Much of my work in 2009 will be dedicated to development of facilitators of the community-based trauma healing workshops that AVP Colombia experimented with in 2008. My hope is to develop these AVP Advanced level workshops to a point that they may be shared with AVPers in Central America by 2010. CEDEPCA and others in Guatemala are anxious to have these workshops as a resource for their programs.”

YEARLY SPRING – Looking farther forward, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM) will gather March 27-29 at the Fourth and Arch Street meetinghouse in Philly for worship, fellowship, and business. As we explore how to live up to the Light together, we will also engage the following business items:

- The Future Life and Leadership of our Yearly Meeting: Continued discernment and decision on the Interim Meeting Governance report.
- Heeding God’s Call to Action: Report from the 2009 Gathering on Peace and consideration of follow-up actions

We will also be blessed to hear from the following speakers:

Amanda Kemp is the founder of Theatre for Transformation, whose mission is to heal the planet through remembering slavery, forgiving, and creating new possibilities. She also consults with organizations and individuals cultivating wholeness. All generations of our Yearly Meeting will come together Friday evening for Amanda’s opening.

Mary Ellen McNish is the General Secretary of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) with a staff of 500 overseeing programs in 22 countries around the world and 46 cities in the US. AFSC’s work for peace and justice has enabled Mary Ellen to speak out on behalf of human rights, economic justice and conflict transformation. She will address PYM on Saturday evening, March 28.

We will also hear from singer-songwriter Madi Diaz of Central Philadelphia Meeting (formerly of Lancaster Monthly Meeting). With a stunning voice and a gift for poignant melodies and innovative arrangements, Madi performed at PYM Young Friends talent shows in 2001 and 2002. She will perform Saturday evening.

Further details including schedule, regis-

tration, meals, lodging, and youth programs will be available online at www.pym.org/annualsessions or contact Sessions Coordinator Michael Gagné at (215) 241-7238 or michaelg@pym.org

A limited number of rooms for lodging are on reserve at the Historic District Holiday Inn. Call 215-923-8660 (reservation code: PY8)



A Report From Robert Lowing

Lancaster Meeting left an imprint on the 2009 ecumenical Peace Gathering in Philadelphia, “Heeding God’s Call: A Gathering on Peace”. Two Meeting members, Joe DiGarbo and I, were invited to the Gathering from Tuesday through Friday, January 13 – 16. Lancaster Meeting’s “Peace Bus” took 18 Quakers to the Gathering on Saturday, January 17, to participate in workshops and march on a Philadelphia Gun Shop, Colosimo’s.

As a result of the 2007 initiative of Francis Brown, a Friend from Downingtown, representatives from the Mennonite Church USA and the Church of the Brethren joined PYM Quakers to plan the Gathering. They framed a core program for ecumenical worship services and interfaith speakers. They invited social agencies and national church organizations to present peace-building workshops. They scheduled meeting times for reflection and created places for prayer.

As the week progressed, the spirit of the Gathering took on the character of a movement. Speakers drew heavily on the Social Gospel, song leaders raised up Gospel hymns and moans, readings stressed stories from the New Testament, and every day the Gathering was blessed by the words of Dr. Vincent Harding, noted biographer of Dr. King and consultant to the film, “Eyes on the Prize.” The organizers’ goal of “Creating Community and Dealing with Differences and Disruptions” created a movement to speak out for handgun violence prevention in Philadelphia. Other laments would have to wait.

On Friday, Gathering participants chose one of 20 different social issues to discern their calling and witness. Lancaster Meeting’s letter calling for a cease-fire in Gaza had its

moment in one of these Focus Groups, the one called "Struggling with the Palestinian/Israeli Conflict." Each Focus Group was asked to write a brief statement about the topic which would be read that night at the final Plenary Session. Twenty well informed people attended that group; Lancaster Friend Bob Lowing read his Meeting's letter. The group approved it and recommended that it and another statement be read at the final Plenary Session. That evening, the Lancaster letter was not read, but an alternative statement was read aloud. We learned later that the Plenary Program Committee refused to have the letter read because it did not conform to the guidelines. Consequently, neither of the two statements were printed nor distributed. However, the guidelines promise that all of the 20 statements will appear on the website after the Gathering.

The Planners asked us to carry passengers from the Plenary Service at the Church of the Holy Ghost to the site of the Gun Shop Rally and then carry them back again to their re-

spective churches, so the Lancaster Meeting Peace Bus was eventually filled with demonstrators late Saturday afternoon. It made a great picture to see adults and children of all descriptions bundled up riding, at full capacity, in "The Peace Bus." Therefore, the topic of Gun violence in Philadelphia overshadowed other peace topics such as war, global warming, homophobia, torture, peace education and prison reform because the original plan took on a life of its own. The Gathering was an experience in making a faith based, community wide, public witness. Seen there among the swarming marchers down Broad Street and later at the speakers platform near the Spring Garden Street viaduct, stood four Lancaster residents holding an eight foot banner that said, US LEADERSHIP NEEDED TO SECURE GAZA PEACE." Audio transcriptions of all of the Plenary Sessions may be heard on www.peacegathering2009.org/audio and full coverage of the Gathering can be found at www.friendsjournal.org/peace. Robert Lowing