SPIDIR

Spiritual Direction
in and around South London

NEWSLETTER
Summer 2024
Edition 109

Be still and cool in thy own mind and spirit from thy own thoughts, and then thou wilt feel the principle of God to turn thy mind to the Lord God, whereby thou wilt receive his strength and power from whence life comes.

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The quote in the cover is by George Fox (1624 – 1691). He was a prominent figure in the 17th-century religious movement known as Quakerism, and is often regarded as the founder of the Society of Friends. Born on July 1624 in the village of Drayton-in-the-Clay, England, Fox lived during a time of great societal and religious upheaval in Europe.

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John Philpott-Howard

A few weeks ago, something happened to me that caused shock, dismay and a feeling of helplessness. On one of my regular walks through Greenwich Park, I lost my iPhone. The Park covers 74 hectares (182 acres), which translates to about three quarters of million square metres (885,000 square yards); I mention this, just so you have an idea of how unlikely it is to find a little smartphone.

I retraced my steps and went to the Park Office (no luck, not handed in). Eventually a couple of retired teachers out walking offered to use their phone to ring mine… A French woman answered immediately - she didn't speak much English, but we gathered that, because she couldn't find a policeman to give the phone to (!), she had taken it with her - up to North London, St Pancras Station. So I rushed up there on the convenient direct train from Greenwich, and the St Pancras Left Luggage people kindly rang my phone again. Within a couple of minutes Mandy (for that was her name) appeared and gave it back to me. She had waited at the station for me to turn up, rather than going back to her hotel. I was so grateful.

Afterwards, I reflected on the experience: firstly, on the kindness of strangers, and secondly on this odd feeling I had when parted from the phone. It is possible you are not the type to rely on your phone that much, but for a vast

proportion of the world's population it has become an essential item that must be consulted at every opportunity for messages, maps, addresses, news and so on. Back in the 1960s the science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke predicted that, in the future, we would be able to phone anyone in the world, even if you didn't know where they were (some of you may remember booking international calls with the Operator). Mind you, Clarke also predicted that in the future we would be waited on hand and foot by trained monkeys, but even he couldn't get every prediction right.

Losing a phone is nothing really, apart from the inconvenience or, when stolen, potential for mis-use, but perhaps it could serve as a somewhat unusual metaphor for losing our sense of connection to God. It can happen

randomly, or through careless inattention to our relationship, or because of trials and tribulations such as illness and bereavement.

It is interesting how the Psalmists at times proclaim that God seems to be absent - but like the phone, it is our loss of 'connectivity' to God, not God's disappearance. We, and our Directees, may frequently feel somewhat adrift in our relationship with God, and it is of course always important to explore why this has happened. I do sometimes feel that people can get bored with the routine of daily prayer and reading, and we might recommend some stimulus like a walk in the park, taking care not to lose anything, or even a day off from 'spiritual activity'.

Since I retired from the Church of England in April this year, I do have a sense of freedom and choice rather than constant obligation. This has been liberating, and helped me to understand what relationship with God really means.

Just as a coda, about a week after the Great Phone Loss incident I discovered a photograph on my phone. It was a picture of French Mandy's own phone, and on it she had written a little message to me (before we met up at St Pancras): *Dear stranger, I'm glad I helped you find it!* I hope we feel that our role as Directors is to be alongside others to help them in our quest for a deeper connection with God.

John Philpott-Howard
philpotthoward@aol.com

Reverend Charles Lyndon Van der Pump

(10th September 1925 - 9th May 2024)

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of dear Lyndon on 9th May – Ascension Day – this year. It is very hard to believe that we won't see his cheery smile, sparkling blue eyes and witness his wicked sense of humour again on the Spidir circuit.

Lyndon was a much-loved member of Spidir and led many successful spiritual direction training courses as well as serving as Chair for several years. He was always cheerful and upbeat at committee meetings making these a great pleasure rather than a chore!

He was a most dedicated spiritual director with many people coming to talk to him regularly, and he was ready and willing to take on more 'directees' whenever asked. This was music to the ears of the referral team! He was a man of deep faith and felt his ministry as a Spiritual Director was his one, truly, God-given vocation.

Lyndon had a distinguished career as a Lieder recitalist before discovering a talent for teaching. He became Singing Professor at the Royal College of Music from 1971-1994 and taught some of the brightest and best singers in the world.

He decided to follow a long-time religious commitment by becoming an Anglican priest in 1988. He spent his second career as a clergyman at St Mary the Virgin, Primrose Hill, near where he lived with his life-long partner Edward, and where his funeral was held in June.

We shall miss his piercing insights, his humour and his kindness and wisdom. God bless you Lyndon, we shall never forget you.

Biddy Taylor

Spidir Day Course on Spiritual Abuse
by Replenished Life

Friday 27th September 2024
10 am to 4 pm

This full title of this Day Course is ***Spiritual Abuse: Responding, Supporting and Working Safely within Spiritual Direction / accompaniment.***

Replenished Life is an independent Registered Charity that supports those who have experienced abuse and trauma within faith and provides training for both Faith Organisations and Secular Organisations.

Venue: St Hugh's Church Bermondsey, Vintry Court. London, SE1 3PT

Speakers: Replenished Life

Cost: No charge, but donations will be welcome on the day. Please bring your own lunch.

Booking: Email Sue Charles at susanjcharles@aol.com preferably before September 13th.

Report on the Conference 'Psychology and the Other' at Northeastern University London Campus, 13th & 14th July 2024

John Philpott-Howard
philpotthoward@aol.com

Spidir and other Spiritual Direction organisations were first notified of this conference in August 2023, by members of the Faculty at Northeastern University, Boston USA. Although it was principally for academic psychologists, researchers and students, the conference programme had what they call several 'tracks' of topics running concurrently, of which Spiritual Direction was one.

The whole conference was very well organised, and held in a delightful venue near St Katherine Docks next to Tower Bridge. I attended most of the Spiritual Direction track sessions and some of the plenary lectures and discussions in other areas.

The Northeastern University is a global university system of 13 campuses around the world. Founded in 1898, their vision is based on an experiential learning model of high-impact research, deep partnerships, and worldwide reach.

The standard of presentation was very high, with topics ranging from the initially unintelligible (to me anyway) such as `A Gadamerian Hermeneutic for

Interdisciplinary Dialogue' to some more familiar things, for example, a consideration of how we use metaphors in religion, including addressing how different people come to understand bible stories and the Parables of Jesus.

Other sessions included one on contemplative writing (the lecturer organised 'Writing Crawls' - similar to Pub Crawls but encouraging spontaneous spiritual writing, and not drinking!). Then there was interesting research on how hormones and stress responses affect our minds, and consideration of suffering and anxiety from a philosophical viewpoint.

In one session I even managed to ask an 'excellent question' about why Dante's *Divine Comedy* was written in Italian and not Latin (answer: he wanted to write in the vernacular for everyday people, and not just for the religious elite). I do intend to write up my notes, otherwise I will never learn anything; so if you would like a copy then please do ask me via my email address above.

Thomas Keating
Excerpt from *That We May Be One: Christian Non-Duality*

Effortless total receptivity is the best way to be open to God's guidance.

It is like being a container for God. So, for a container to be filled, what is the best response? Emptiness. Openness. It is very simple, but very hard to do. All you have to do is nothing. Try it! But it does not mean you actually do nothing. It means that you are empty of all will proposals but open to God's actions, so that you do what God wants to do.

Emptiness is not total nothingness, but emptiness with an openness to becoming more – by God's will.

One of my favourite gardens is an orchard in the suburbs of Dublin... In the Bible there are several times when God or Jesus is referred to as being present in a garden. In the Old Testament, God was present in the Garden of Eden, where he walked with Adam and Eve. In the New Testament, Jesus suffered in the Garden of Gethsemane before his passion and death. After the resurrection, he was also mistaken for the gardener by Mary of Magdalene.

The garden is a great place to find God in an everyday way. It is strange to think of God as being interested in sowing flowers and vegetables, digging for worms, or just being close to the earth that is often the source of new life. Yet, God is a gardener! Sometimes he is the great 'sower' and at other times he is the great 'mower'. God tends to his garden, and we can find him in ours.

Deirdre M. Powell, *God in Every Day: A Whispered Prayer*

The Diocese of Southwark

The Bishop's Certificate

The Bishop's Certificate is a one-year course for anybody who wants to be more confident about what they believe, read the Bible with more understanding, and reflect on their journey as a Christian. It has six modules: (1) Following – about the New Testament; (2) Remembering – about the Old Testament; (3) Exploring – about the history of the Church and what it means to be Anglican; (4) Believing – about the things Christians believe; (5) Deepening – about living and praying as a follower of Jesus; and, (6) Expecting – about putting your future into God's hands.

https://southwark.anglican.org/mission-ministry/ministry/discipleship-ministry/discipleship/bishops-certificate/

Lay Ministry Zoom Taster Session

Date: Wednesday 9th October, 2024

Time: 7.30 - 8.30 pm — Venue: Online (Zoom) – Cost: Free

To book your place, email learning@southwark.anglican.org

If you are thinking about using your gifts and would like to find out more about how to start to explore a vocation in Lay Ministry, then this Taster session is for you. You can ask questions about the different ministries whether your interest is for Reader, SPA/Pastoral minister, Pioneer, a leader of children and young people, or an Evangelist. This is a chance to hear some stories of people who have experienced these roles and been through training. To enquire further about Lay Ministry and selection please get in contact with Venerable Carol Coslett, Assistant Director of Lay Ministry, on carol.coslett@southwark.anglican.org or 02079399456.

ARCHDIOCESE of SOUTHWARK

Pugin Week 2004

Augustus Welby Pugin is remembered for his pioneering role in the Gothic Revival style of architecture and is arguably ranked among the finest British architects in the 19th Century. The renowned English architect is perhaps most well known for designing the interior of the Palace of Westminster, along with its iconic clock tower, Big Ben. In his early twenties, he converted to Catholicism and was responsible for designing many Catholic and Anglican churches across England, as well as Ireland and Australia.

The National Augustine-Pugin Shrine in Ramsgate, which incorporates the Parish of St Augustine in which Pugin is buried, holds 'Pugin Week' on an annual basis. All events are based around the St Augustine Shrine, St Augustine's Rd, Ramsgate CT11 9NY.

Mini Pilgrimage: Heritage Open Days

Routes - Networks - Connections
Saturday 7th September, 1 - 4 pm, Minster Abbey, CT12 4HF
An easy 5-mile walk from Minster Abbey to the Shrine of St Augustine. Learn about saints, scholars, Vikings and powerful princesses, ending with a tour of Pugin's beautiful Grade 1 Augustine Shrine.

Pugin: A Gothic Passion

Wednesday 11th September, 5 pm
at St Augustine's Church, Ramsgate
30 years on from the Pugin V&A exhibition, Antiques Roadshow's Paul Atterbury discusses the exhibition and how we see Pugin now with Rosemary Hill, author of the definitive Pugin biography 'God's Architect'.

https://www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/news-events/events/pugin-week-2004/?d=638613072000000000

SISTERS OF ST ANDREW

Stations of the Universe
A day of prayer and reflection in the Season of Creation with Sr Regula

Date: Saturday 28th September
Time: 10 am to 4 pm
Cost: Suggested donaton £20 - £30

Please bring a packed lunch. Please book in advance.

Meditative evening prayer with Taize chants.

Date: Every last Tuesday of the month
(24th September, 29th October, 26th November, 10th December)
Time: 7.30 pm to 8.30 pm followed by refreshments.
Cost: Free
Arrive at 7pm if you want to learn the songs.

Contact and bookings: welcome@sisters-of-st-andrew.com
Venue: Sisters of St Andrew, 99 Belmont Hill,
SE13 5DY, Lewisham.
Car park on site. Station: Lewishan or Blackheath. Bus: 54, 89 and 108 - Stop St Margaret's Church/Brandram Road.
www.sisters-of-st-andrew.com

Clergy Retreat 2024*: Heart Speaks to Heart*

Date: 4th -6th June repeated on 8th -10th October 2024

Led by: Fr John-Francis Friendship TSSF

Venue: St Katharine's Retreat House, Parmoor, Bucks (https://www.srpf.org.uk/)

This is a three-day silent Retreat led by Fr John-Francis Friendship TSSF. There will be a daily Eucharist, Addresses and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament which retreatants are welcome, but not expected, to attend. Further details can be found here: https://www.srpf.org.uk/event/heart-speaks-to-heart-a-retreat-for-clergy-with-father-john-francis-friendship/ (the October Retreat detailed in that month's listings). Enquiries should be addressed to: bookings@srpf.org.uk

'Who Do You Think You Are?'

Date: Friday 18th October

Time: 7 pm

Led by: Fr John-Francis Friendship TSSF

Venue: Church of Our Lady Saint Mary, Church Lane, South Creake NR21 9LX

This is a three-day silent Retreat led by Fr John-Francis Friendship TSSF. There will be a daily Eucharist, Addresses and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament which retreatants are welcome, but not expected, to attend

Email John-Francis if you're interested and want to know more (jff2209@yahoo.com)

Sarum College
CATHEDRAL CLOSE, SALISBURY

Sarum College

Sarum Course in Spiritual Direction (2024)

Starts: 26th September 2024

This two-year programme aims to equip those who are called to this ministry to confidently and competently accompany others. This course is delivered via a blend of in-person residential sessions and online support.

It is designed to provide a balanced learning environment by blending personal and spiritual formation with skills development. Alongside the course, there are peer learning opportunities such as Spiritual Directors Forums.

https://www.sarum.ac.uk/short-courses/spiritual-direction-2024-26/

Environment, Art, Theology & Action course

Date: 18th September 2024

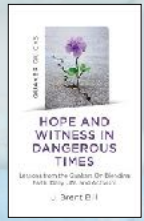
Venue: Sarum College (Salisbury)

Cost: Prices vary. See website for details.

Planet Earth—our home—is under urgent threat from multiple ecological crises, including climate change and biodiversity loss. This day course will explore the challenge these ecological crises present to the church and individual Christians, in conjunction with an exciting and provocative art installation "Our Earth" at Salisbury Cathedral. We will tour the exhibition with the curator, grapple with eco-theology and reflect on the role that art can play in provoking and inspiring us to act.

More information:

sarum.ac.uk | courses@sarum.ac.uk | 01722 424800

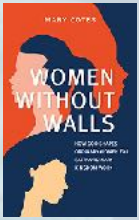


J. Brent Bill
Hope and Witness in Dangerous Times: Lessons from the Quakers on Blending Faith, Daily Life, and Activism
Christian Alternative (Pub.)
88 pages • £6.99

Part of the Quaker Quick series, in this instructive volume, Quaker minister and conservationist Bill, lays out strategies for using prayer and direct action to create change.

The hallmark of Quaker faith, Bill explains, is the belief that, after tragedy strikes, "thoughts and prayers" should work hand in hand with activism to accomplish meaningful change. After a brief introduction to the Quakers' history of fighting injustices such as slavery and gender inequality, Bill presents methods for achieving social and political change. For example, one's activism should be framed in terms of what one is for, as opposed to what one is against.

Also, rather than trying to tackle all the world's problems, it's better to narrow one's scope to a specific issue by considering the question, What am I called to do? Ultimately, the Quaker worldview teaches that, as people do good acts, they must maintain pure spiritual intention: "We are invited to work with God in the redemption of the world in ways that feed our souls while caring for others." Bill's short, practical lessons on incorporating spiritual wisdom with activism will inspire socially conscious spiritualists of any stripe.



Harold D. Weaver Jr., Paul Kriese, and Steven W. Angell (Eds)
Black Fire: African American Quakers on Spirituality and Human Rights
Quaker Press of FGC
251 pages • £25.99

Black Fire - African American Quakers on Spirituality and Human Rights gathers together the voices of 18 remarkable individuals who spoke and wrote as African Americans from within the Quaker community. they testify about their viewpoints on racial justice -- both within the Religious Society of Friends and society at large - and they speak of their life in the Spirit. As a collection, these selections exhibit the vitality and wisdom that three centuries of African American Quakers have contributed to the fight for Human Rights.

Most of this book is about Human Rights, and this is what Quakers are advocating for. So you cannot separate Quakers from Human Rights. This book explain how many learned Quakers are teaching us that oppressing one another is the mindset of both the oppressor and the oppressed. This needs to be corrected by educating one another, so that we can be liberated both physically and mentally.

This book *Black Fire* is a good source of information for everyone young and old, white and black, who desire to educate a new generation how to live as brothers and sisters, with no colour prejudice.

SPIDIR Committee Members

Chair	John Philpott-Howard 0208 480 8703 philpotthoward@aol.com
Committee Secretary & Membership Secretary	Sue Charles 0208 850 0189 susanjcharles@aol.com
Treasurer	Cherry Simpkin cherry.simpkin@btinternet.com
Referrals Secretary	Scilla Wallis spidir.referrals2@gmail.com
Supervision Coordinator	Rosemary Shaw rshaw1983@icloud.com
Newsletter Editor	Antonio García Fuerte a.g.fuerte@gmail.com
Other members	Charlotte Gauthier May Nicol Jacky Sutcliffe John Woodhouse

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