

THE GLANCE

Reedwood Friends | 2901 SE Steele Street | Portland, Oregon

Coming Up

World Café

Sunday, September 13th at
11am

Community BBQ!

Sunday, September 13th

Come celebrate our newly renovated kitchen! Bring a side or dessert if you'd like, but there's no obligation to bring anything.

Next Monthly Meeting

Sunday, September 20th at
11:00am

Fall Forum Series

Starts Sunday, September 27th
at 11:00am



Can We Go Back to the Garden? *A lakeside conversation on George Fox's letters*

by Judy Maurer

A week ago we sat with old friends on the shore of a lake in Maine, my husband and I. We were only a few feet from where my great-grandfather pitched a tent and built a lean-to cook-shack to fish for a month each year.

I've spent time here most every summer since I was a baby. In a profound way, this is home

Our conversation with our friends, Ben and Jody Richmond, that day turned to Ben's new [book](#) on George Fox's epistles. Fox inspired Quakerism back in the seventeenth century,

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September Birthdays

We wish everyone a very happy birthday and wonderful year ahead!

- 1st - Bob Smith
- 2nd - Brenna Condo
- 13th - Penny Layne Thornburg
- 17th - Mary Kate Morse
- 19th - Caleb Nakhabela
- 21st - Dakota Thyken Christopher
- 23rd - Michael Conley
- 23rd - Cameron Landers
- 23rd - Stu Willcuts
- 24th - Jinky Twaddell
- 28th - Patti Kimberly
- 28th - Coleman Weimer
- 30th - Lori Henderson



Contribute to The Glance

Do you have something you'd like to contribute for a future issue of the Glance? We would love to see your articles, pictures, recipes, poems, or anything else you feel would make a great addition. Send your submission to office@reedwood.org.

Please note that submissions are subject to approval and constraints of space and time

during the turmoil of the English Civil War and its aftermath.

Ben had read these epistles deeply and came to recognize a lyrical quality in them. He formatted selections like poetry, so we could hear the cadence, too.

I had brought the book out with me to the shore. My copy was bristling with bookmarks. I picked it up and told him which was my favorite epistle. Jody said, "Read it aloud. It was written to be read aloud."

So I read to them, and to the chipmunks and ducks along the shoreline and the loons farther out, George Fox's Epistle 163, with the line and paragraph breaks Ben had given it:

My dear friends,—

Live
in the life
in which is the unity and peace
one with another,
and lowliness and humbleness
of heart and mind....

And so,
this is the word of the Lord God
to you all:

live
in the power of the Lord God,
in which
is peace, love, unity,
and dominion

in the life
and power of God,
which was before enmity was;

and in the light,
which was before darkness was;



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and in the life,
which was before death was:

and so, in that
feel unity and life
in the power of God.

And so, the seed of God
feel over all that set,
which makes to suffer;

which was before it was,
and will remain
when that is all gone.

And so,
feel the top-stone over all laid,
that his life ye may feel over all,
and in that live.



I asked Ben about the repetition of “was before”, as in “which was before darkness was.”

His answer was fascinating. I asked him to say it all over again, and this time I’d record it. Ben collected himself and began again. I’ve lightly edited his words.

“If you go through Fox’s journal, and you go through the letters, you find that this language of returning to Eden—life before death, light before darkness—is there throughout Fox’s writings.

“Fox is inviting us to experience life before the Fall. I think it’s a real through-line in all of Fox’s writing.

“Over the years, as I’ve looked at it, I’ve found out that the language of entering back into the Garden of Eden, of being in ‘the light before darkness was’—‘which was before enmity was’—is picking up the same theme. It’s a way of understanding salvation that has content for our life today.”

Sitting listening to Ben, part of me was flipping through Genesis 2 and 3 in my mind. God tells Adam and Eve not to eat from the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil; the Snake tempts her; she and Adam eat it; God gets angry, throws them out of the Garden and puts down a flaming sword.

Ben continued: “The whole business about coming back through the flaming sword into the paradise of God, and the possibility of living that life now, struck me as really just powerful and wonderful. And I went around being excited about that for quite a while, and then I realized that I had no idea what it meant!

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"It occurred to me that it'd make a great topic for some biblical workshops. So I did with different groups of Friends an exercise where we would read Genesis 2 and 3 and I would ask them to brainstorm what was characteristic before the Fall and what was characteristic after the Fall.

"Wonderful conversations came out of that. But what was really fun for me was that from that, you could often derive what we call Quaker testimonies.

"The first 'not good' statement is in Genesis 2. It's God saying that it was not good for Adam to be alone. He didn't have someone who could be a real helpmeet for him. After the fall, one of the curses is for Eve —'your desire will be for the man, and He will rule over you.'

"So here is the testimony of women's equality, and also community, because we aren't to live alone, but to live together with others.

"People start talking about these things, and suddenly the picture emerges of a life that is countercultural and we recognize it as being good. Well, that is so amazing!"

At this point Johan brought up his [blog post](#) on Ben's book. He read aloud from Fox's epistle 291 "To All Women's Meetings," as Ben presents it:

Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, were the first preachers of Christ's resurrection to the disciples, and the disciples could not believe their message and testimony that they had from Jesus, as some now-a-days cannot; but they received the command, and being sent preached it.

So is every woman and man to do, that sees him risen, and has the command and message; daughters shall prophesy as well as sons.

So they are to be obedient that have the Spirit poured upon them; women are to prophesy. And prophecy is not to be quenched. They that have the testimony of Jesus are commanded to keep it, whether men or women....

Then Johan skipped down a few paragraphs.

"So both men and women be helpsmeet in the image of God, in the righteousness and holiness, in the restoration."

What we're set on this planet to do

"Adam and Eve do eat of the fruit of the tree—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Ben continued, "It's really important that we remember that it's not just the tree of knowledge, as if being knowledgeable about things was a really bad idea. It's the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil."



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"It's talking about moral knowledge and moral decision-making. It's about who gets to decide what is to be termed *good* and what's to be termed *bad*. In the creation story every day it was 'God looked and saw that it was good.'

"Then God creates humankind, and that's very good. The Man-creature Adam is lonely and that's bad. But God gets to make that decision as to what's good and what's bad.

"Knowledge itself, and creativity and all that, in this story is a good thing. It's what we're set on this planet to do, to till the garden and to name the animals and to do all the kind of stuff that makes life interesting.

"But then there's this interesting phrase about 'in the cool of the evening they heard the sound of the voice walking through the Garden.'

"That proximity to God, to hearing the voice of God, is central. It's also central that the phrase 'in the cool of the evening' can also be

translated 'at the time of the moving of the Spirit.' It's talking about the *ruach*, a Hebrew word for the Spirit. *Ruach* also means the breeze. The 'cool of the evening' is a poetic translation of 'the breeze,' which is Spirit.

"It makes me really happy when I think about that, to say when we return to the Garden, we return to that time, which we experience now as the moving of the Spirit. We have the living voice of God coming into us. Sometimes in our quiet worship and other times in life, we recognize: that's the voice of God.

"And that's the whole point, to get back in touch with that voice of God that makes Eden, Eden.

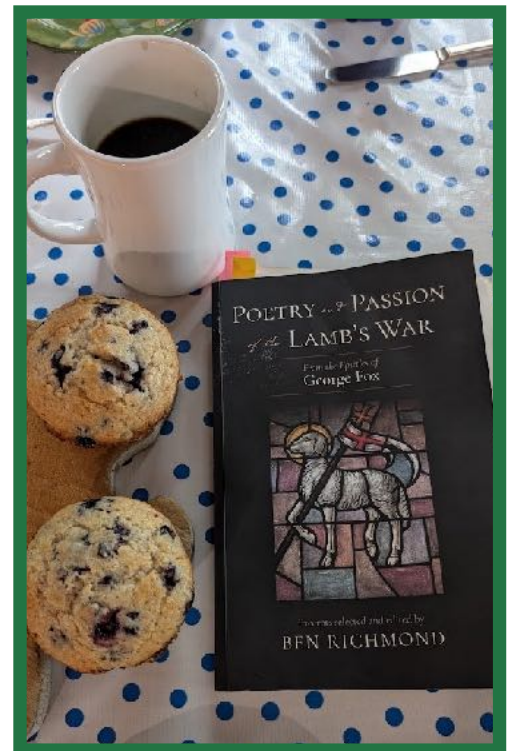
"So in Fox's Journal, the experience of going through the flaming sword into the paradise of God would be available to all who receive or obey Christ."

And I reply, "That's terrific. That's even better the second time. Maybe we should go through this a third time!"

Ben's book, *Poetry and Passion of the Lamb's War: From the Epistles of George Fox*, is available on [Barclay Press](#) and [Amazon](#). Reedwood's own Paul Anderson wrote a preface to the book. Paul's usual clear and enlightening style of writing serves us well here.

Paul wrote, "From poetry to prophecy, as we hear and read some of the most salient missives of George Fox, their meanings then and now produce a 'homecoming festival' within us and among us."

Ben has included for each epistle a short introductory note as well as scriptures that find an echo in the epistle.



Sunday Worship

Every Sunday at 9:30am
In person or via Zoom
Zoom ID: 826 1984 9564

Latino Friends

Every Sunday at 10am
In the Ong Chapel

Tuesday Bible Study

Every Tuesday at 10am
In person or via Zoom
Zoom ID: 559 946 2396

Simple Silence

Every Thursday 3-4pm
In the Ong Chapel

Benevolence

Donations are always welcome.

Mail to:

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Or on our website: reedwood.org

Contact Us

Reedwood Office Hours
Monday-Thursday 9am-4pm

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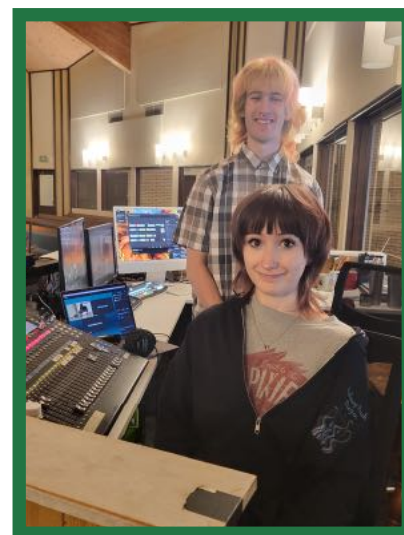
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What we've been up to...



Kevin Robinson gave our resident pianist, Shirley Brendlinger, a well-deserved break.



We said goodbye to A/V assistant Sam Carlisle, and welcomed our new assistant, Anara Riggs!



Cecily Trowbridge read scripture on August 2nd.



Regan Kelsey read scripture on August 23rd.



Mark Condo and Lori Henderson performed a lovely duet.