

LIVE LOVE!

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I recently read a short letter which a boy wrote to his younger sister from summer camp: "Dear Susan, I am having a good time. I miss you very much. I promise not to fight with you any more when I come home. But you must promise not to be a pain in the neck. Love from your big brother, Phil."¹

Phil's simple statement amuses us and touches us because in it we recognize both the majesty of our own capacity for love and our own foibles in limiting love and in misunderstanding what love really is. It raises the question of what it means to love, of how it is that we love other persons, of how it is that God loves us, of how we might love God, and of what is meant by unconditional love. Phil's resolve to love his sister as long as she is not a pain in the neck brings to mind an observation by Meister Johannes Eckhart, the Dominican priest who lived in the thirteenth century. Eckhart addressed the issues of spiritual life at a time when medieval society was rapidly changing: cities were experiencing their first rapid growth, and culture was being infused with the spirit of the new urban classes, with the spirit of people interested in science, in the mechanical arts, in practical affairs, and most especially, in commerce. Meister Eckhart observed that the new spirit of mercantilism was infecting all aspects of life, including spiritual life. He wrote:

(Some people) want to love God in the same way that they love a cow. You love it for the milk and the cheese and for your own profit. So do all people who love God for the sake of outward riches or inward consolation, but they do not love God correctly, for they merely love their own advantage.²

How do we love God? Do we love God only as we would love a cow? How do we love our friends? If one has a friend and loves him or her for the good one wishes

¹The letter from camp, slightly paraphrased here, is taken from *Listen to Love: Reflections on the Seasons of the Year* compiled by Louis M. Savary, S.J. with Thomas J. O'Connor, Ruth M. Cullen and Diane Plummer. (New York: Regina Press, publication date not provided), page 134.

²Quoted from *Breakthrough: Meister Eckhart's Creation Spirituality in New Translation* with Introduction and Commentary by Matthew Fox, O.P. (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1980), page 207.

to come to one's self through the friend, then one would not love the friend but one would merely love one's self. People who are one in God's love do not seek their own interest in God or in persons or things of any kind. They love the Deity alone for its goodness, for the goodness of the divine nature. They love all persons and things as divine utterances. According to Meister Eckhart, this and only this is the right kind of love.

We use the word love so casually in modern life that we have almost drained the word of all meaning. We trivialize it when we speak of loving chocolate bars or certain television programs. At other times we speak of love as a kind of grand passion which robs us of our very sanity. Romantic love in the modern sense is often a kind of enslavement, an enslavement on one level to the wish for union with a loved object, but an enslavement which, when thought about deeply, can often be seen as an elevation of one's own desires to a false plane of transcendent importance. Often we think of love as being a powerful emotion which renders us helpless, something which overcomes us totally. What, then, could Jesus have meant when he told us to love our enemies? I have yet to meet anyone who was pining away over love for his or her enemies. Such misunderstanding of the meaning of the word love sometimes causes people to dismiss Christian ethical teaching as unreasonable or impossible. Clearly, if we are going to understand anything about what living love involves we will have to pause for some clarification of terms.

We must also think of the relationship between love and inner silence. Our common everyday use of the term love, which involves a kind of passionate engagement at least, and often a kind of dementia, would seem to contrast with that sobriety of judgment, with the meekness, coolness and stillness of spirit which as Friends we generally associate with our characteristic spiritual practice of inner silence.

Finally, we must explore the subtle interconnectedness between love and wisdom, for is it not true that the worth of the soul is to be measured by the objects of its love? We see all about us that people can come to love mean and sordid things, and that they then themselves easily slide into the imitation of that which they admire and love, and even before they themselves are aware of it, begin to resemble them. Perceiving this, T.S. Eliot wrote, "I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope for hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love for love would be love of the wrong thing. . ."³ How do we cultivate our capacity for love wisely, so that it is well placed?

To begin to grasp all this we must first acknowledge that faith, hope and love in a scriptural sense have different meanings than faith, hope and love as used in

³The quotation is from one of T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets, "East Coker". It appears in *The Complete Poems and Plays* of T. S. Eliot (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), page 126.

ordinary life. This does not mean that these scriptural virtues have no place in the marketplace, or in ordinary life, for they most certainly do, as I hope we shall see; it only means that we must address a semantic difficulty, and recognize that the scriptural virtues which we seek to practice in all aspects of life are different from the qualities denoted by the same words as they are used in casual daily discourse.

For example, in ordinary life, when we say we have faith in something we mean it has earned our confidence through demonstration, that on the basis of our experience with it, it has proven reliable. Yet the faith which we are exhorted in scripture to practice daily is faith in things unseen, unknown, and unprovable. Similarly with hope. In ordinary life we say a situation is hopeful, and we claim to have hope, when a rational assessment of the probabilities inclines us to believe that things will come out as we would like them to do. Yet the hope which scripture exhorts us to practice as a virtue has nothing to do with the rational assessment of probabilities; rather, it is something commended to us even in situations which hold every rational probability of disaster.

But let us consider love in somewhat more detail. Love too, as Christians understand it, is distinctly different from what most people allude to as love in ordinary parlance; it is different from the worldly love to which the ordinary impulses of our nature lead us.

Everyday love is aroused by certain qualities in the one who is loved, or the thing which is loved. We love a person because of the beauty, intelligence, vitality, thoughtfulness or other such qualities that we see in the person. When we exclaim with despair "What does she see in him?" we are assuming that love ought to be called forth by loveable characteristics, and that if such characteristics are missing the love must be senseless or neurotic. Everyday love also gives expression to certain needs in the one who loves. There is, in short, some sort of payoff, something is supplied by the object of love which is needed and wanted by the one who loves. Everyday love is presumed to be a source of satisfaction or enjoyment. Again, people who cling to each other, even though they bring pain to one another, are assumed to suffer from psychological disorders.

Divine love, in comparison to the worldly love we have just described, is strange. To ask why God loves human beings is to ask a question without an answer. The Godhead loves us in its sovereign freedom. No human attractiveness, but only divine compassion, moves God to enter into history in our behalf. Moreover, God's love did not lead to satisfaction or enjoyment, but to the crucifixion. The mark of divine love is that one can love others without judging them, asking anything of them, or thinking of one's own needs. Obviously, none of us can completely live up to such a standard. It is not a love towards which we are naturally inclined or for which we have natural capacities. Yet neither is it completely beyond us. It is not something exclusively divine, like omnipotence, which human beings would be

presumptuous to emulate. In fact, this divine love is at the core of all Christian morality, and indeed, we see signs of its realization all about us. Parents sacrifice themselves for their children, and children for their parents. Friends often help one another without selfish motives. Occasionally, we encounter morally luminous moments when someone risks her or his life for a total stranger. But this disinterested love as practiced in families, among friends, and even among total strangers is not to be confused with an uncomplaining acceptance of abusive relationships or the passive endurance of oppressive social structures. I will expand on this a little later.⁴

Jesus holds up for us several images of love. His story of the Good Samaritan is probably one of the best known of these. The Samaritan helped someone by the side of the road who was in need. It was not particular person, not a friend, not a member of the same clan or tribe, not a prominent individual, but simply a person. Love, Jesus seems to be saying, involves helping whomever you happen to encounter who is in need, and it involves helping her or him in basic physical necessities. Such basic physical necessities are prior to all others in that we cannot live at all unless they are met.

But it is interesting to reflect that the Samaritan and the roadside victim whom he helps remain strangers to each other, and the Samaritan goes his way without ever really knowing the outcome of his efforts. This way of doing good without seeking to reward the ego with gratifying results is an important aspect of the practice of love. When the American Friends Service Committee and the British Friends Service Council received the Nobel Prize, the Prize Committee cited the help provided "from the nameless to the nameless."

But since the Samaritan and the roadside victim remained strangers to each other, where does the idea of community come in? In other parts of the Gospels, Jesus reminds us that there are other needs, beyond the mere physical necessity for our daily bread, without which we cannot be truly human, even though we may be physically alive. In this sense, there are needs which transcend the most basic physical ones. I am thinking of the one great need we have in our simple humanity, the need to know truth, a kind of truth which takes account of the ultimate issues before us--what it means to be a human being, how we are meant to behave in order to live in a fully human way, what our role is in the unfolding destiny of the creation,

⁴The material in the previous two paragraphs and the following three is summarized from a much more extensive treatment of Christian love given by Glenn Tinder in his book *The Political Meaning of Christianity*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1989). The entire book is well worth careful study by those interested in social activism rooted in a spiritual vision. Tinder's theology differs from that of most unprogrammed Friends in the degree of emphasis he places on original sin and its consequences for the enterprise of building justice. Nevertheless, even where one disagrees with him, Tinder's thought is very illuminating.

what our relationship is to the Creator. Failure to come to grips with truth in relation to these questions is to live a kind of twilight existence; is to perish even while alive.

As Friends, we know that the truth about these ultimate questions is not available to us in a set of sharply etched propositions which we can learn and teach by rote. Certainly, those of us who live and work at Pendle Hill, a Quaker center of spiritual study, are very aware that we would miss the mark if we assumed that these truths can be grasped by some curriculum of merely human contrivance. In fact, this truth often comes to us in the form of mystery. Socrates declared that his wisdom lay only in the realization of his own ignorance. In the ninth chapter of the Gospel of John, Jesus, when speaking with the Pharisees, observes that those who claim truth as a possession are apt to become as blind people.

What we have need of, once urgent physical requirements have been met, is searching dialogue. Love in this sense consists of speaking the truth as we understand it, and in listening to others as they speak from their understanding. When love performs these two offices--speaking and listening--Truth becomes known and community happens. This is what a place like Pendle Hill is all about. This is what our monthly meetings are all about.

Undergirding this loving speaking and loving listening must be the practice of silence. Fox, Barclay and Penington are all quite clear that in order to hear the divine voice we need to be still. Another Friend, Caroline Stephen, has written, "The silence we value is not the mere outward silence of the lips. It is a deep quietness of heart and mind, a laying aside of all preoccupation with passing things--yes even with the workings of our own minds; a resolute fixing of the heart upon that which is unchangeable and eternal." Such inner silence, the calming of the agitations of our hearts and minds of all that is stubborn and grasping, is essentially an expression of the love of Truth. To be dispassionate, not to let one's own needs, emotions or prejudices color one's actions, is essentially to put Truth before everything else. To love Truth in this way is to love God, who is Truth. Thus, the practice of inner silence is the same as the love of God. To practice it successfully, if we can, means that we can participate in political and social life in the fullest sense without demanding anything for ourselves, without there being any narrowness or pettiness of soul to poison our work. It is to establish an inner peace and inner harmony which will allow us authentically to contribute to the establishment of outer peace and outer harmony in the world at large.

Stories like that of the Good Samaritan remind us of our responsibilities to those whom we might encounter directly. But another key question for us in the twentieth century is to develop a sensitivity for our relationship to those we may not see--the people in far off places who are affected by our demanding material consumption, or whose breathing is affected by our pollution. It means being

sensitive to our great-grandchildren, from whom, it has aptly been said, we are borrowing the earth.

As many of you know, I live and work at Pendle Hill, a Quaker center for study and contemplation. Although Pendle Hill is a place of work and worship and study and meditation and silence and peace, it is, paradoxically, at the same time, a kind of gathering place for the Quaker jetset. There is the constant stimulation of the presence of short term sojourners on their way to or from some great adventure in Quaker service or spiritual exploration.

Quite close to Pendle Hill are the settled communities of Amish people in Lancaster County, and some Pendle Hillers, sensing a kinship between the spirituality of the Amish and the Quakers, do occasionally dialogue and worship with them. It is interesting to contemplate the differences between Friends and the Amish. While both are interested in simplicity and peace, the Amish confine themselves to an area which can be encompassed by a carriage ride, a ride in a horse-drawn buggy, while the Friends have been globe-trotters from the very beginning of the Quaker movement. Was it not Mary Fisher who, in the very earliest days of Quakerism, went off to witness to the sultan of Turkey and to his Sublime Porte, or court? What is the essential difference between horse-drawn carriage culture and the "horseless carriage" culture?

The horseless carriage culture, the culture of automobiles, airplanes, space shuttles and satellite television, allows us to conceive of the earth as a global village. This offers intriguing possibilities for the concrete realization by all people of the interrelationship, of the unity, of everyone and everything in the biosphere, a unity of which spiritual sages have sought to convince us from very ancient times.⁵

But it is sobering to realize that this newly apparent global village is the theater wherein function huge centralized governments and multi-national corporations, human expressions of an apparently limitless desire for profit and power, a vast arena for a kind of organized lovelessness. In the culture of the global village, people are apt to be known not by their names and histories, as in a conventional village, but as numbers, or trends, or percentages. While much thought in the culture of the global village is given to the future as projected from statistics, it is also the venue in which the future is often mortgaged or sold out for the convenience or the profit of a few people in the present.

⁵The material in this and the following three paragraphs is summarized from a more extensive treatment of the theme in Wendell Berry's essays "Standing by Words" and "People, Land and Community." They appear in the book *Standing By Words* by Wendell Berry. (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1983).

The culture of horse-drawn carriages, rather than conceiving of the globe as a village, sees the village as a kind of little universe. Such a village is a place of settled households and communities. Innovations come about in response to immediate needs and conditions, rather than from faceless governments and corporations. Generalizations are made, but these are distilled from experience rather than projected from statistics. The *Tao Te Ching*, the scripture which forms the foundation of Chinese civilization, alludes to such a village-as-globe where the people live simply and peacefully, celebrating the blessedness of ordinary things, and where people are so happy with their lot that they feel no need to visit the next village, even though they can hear its dogs barking and its roosters crowing.

People who are rooted in village life usually have a keen sense of the relatedness of the generations. They are aware of the birthright they have inherited, and they expect to leave behind them something of value for people they care about even though they will never meet them. Thus, while it is expected that the mechanized farming such as is practiced in Iowa will turn most of our fertile agricultural territory into a wasteland in about seventy years, the productivity and quality of the Amish farmland near Pendle Hill is constantly increasing.

I think it is right for Friends to jet around the global village in their various travelling ministries, but in order to minister usefully to the culture of the global village it is necessary for us to remain rooted in a real village like Pendle Hill, or like our monthly meetings, which, although we do not use horse-drawn carriages, are communities of horse-drawn carriage dimensions. For what makes the difference between the global village and the village-as-globe is love, the kind of love whose tangible and practical effects can be immediately experienced, the kind of love which arouses the spirit of generosity for those as yet unborn. It is only out of a rootedness in such love that we can bring something of value to our fellow citizens in the culture of the global village, so that they, too, can see beyond trends and percentages, and with joy and generosity fulfill the responsibilities appropriate to that place in which it has been given them to stand in the great chain of being.

In modern times it is customary to think of a community as a group of people who share values, beliefs and ideals or other elements of compatibility. In the horseless carriage culture, community is defined by people who live in a particular village of which everyone is made a member more or less by force of circumstance; in contrast, modern communities are apt to be voluntary associations of one sort or the other.

But a history, a shared story, can also define a community, and in fact most voluntary associations of any enduring nature do have such a shared history or shared story. In preparation for its tricentennial, New York Yearly Meeting, the Yearly Meeting of which I am a member, has engaged the help of Hugh Barbour of Earlham College in developing the history of the Yearly Meeting. New York Yearly

Meeting Friends recently had the opportunity to consider Hugh Barbour's outline for this history, and as I think back on my reading of it, I note that it contained some incidents which were very familiar to me, and others which were not. Nevertheless, I realized that in some sense we in New York Yearly Meeting are a community because we share this story, a story which not only includes events like the "Feathers of Peace" encounter between Native Americans and the Friends of Easton Monthly Meeting during the time of the French and Indian Wars, but the story also incorporates so enduring a phenomenon as our long-drawn separation into Hicksite and Orthodox branches. This is our story; we are a community formed out of this story.

I guess it was about a year ago that I, like many of you, watched a very compelling program about the American Civil War on Educational Television. I was interested to realize that, as an American, this is my story, even though my forebears were still very far from these shores at the time the Civil War was taking place. But one cannot be an American without in some sense owning the Civil War. I may not like the story, I may have very different attitudes about the story than most other Americans, whether they be Northerners or Southerners, black or white. But no matter how unique my attitudes about this story may be, it is in some sense my story, and I am in community with my fellow Americans, at least in part, because we share this story.

My foster son is a Cambodian refugee. He had just received his citizenship when the television broadcast about the Civil War was occurring, and he and some of his young Cambodian refugee friends asked me what the Civil War was, and what it was all about. With that question, I had a sense of the incompleteness of their American-ness in that they did not have a conception of this great and traumatic experience of our communal past.

When I was something of a lone "outsider" at a conference of three hundred Evangelical Friends, I still knew that I was not really an outsider, even though much of their religion as I observed it was quite unfamiliar to me. And the reason I know we were all members of one community, at least in some sense, was that we shared a story. I heard much talk of George Fox and the Valiant Sixty, just as I do here among unprogrammed Friends. True, the "spin" they gave to the story was different. They said that George Fox was a great evangelist. Like we do today, evangelist Fox saw the churches full of baptized people who did not really know Jesus. He and the Valiant Sixty fanned out over the landscape and preached everywhere. They were thrown into prison and otherwise persecuted for their pains. But in ten years they had brought ten thousand souls to Jesus, ten thousand souls into a sense of the immediate presence of Jesus come to teach his people himself. I could recognize the outlines of the story I shared with these evangelical Friends, even though, as is the case with the Civil War, I might give quite a different flavor to its retelling, and might draw somewhat different lessons from it.

I myself have only recently begun to make the Bible my own story, to feel a part of the great communal stream of people who share this story. Up until now, I realize, I have been, with respect to the great stream of commonality we know as Christianity, somewhat like a new American who does not know what the Civil War was all about. But unlike the new Americans, my ignorance of the Bible was not accidental or circumstantial; rather, I deliberately held myself apart from it out of disagreement with the "spin" I saw that most people who were conversant with the story seemed to give to life itself, a spin which they attributed to this shared story. As a result, I did not wish to share this story. But now I am coming to realize that just as the Civil War is my story, even though my attitude towards it need not be like that of another American who collects antique guns and revels in the "glory" of its battles, so too can the Bible story be my story without my necessarily having to subscribe to anything alien in my understanding of it. Sharing these stories connects us to each other, even if our understanding of the meaning these stories hold for us is still different. Perhaps in time our appraisal of meanings will begin to merge, and we will share a way of understanding the story, as well as sharing the story itself. But in the meantime we are a community because we share this story.

Love must be part of the picture if community is to be maintained, for certainly these shared stories contain many disappointments and betrayals. Even today we labor with disagreements about the story as it unfolds in our midst in contemporary times. But love is something which abides in spite of the stories; love transcends the stories. If a person is now poor but once had much money, we can indeed say that that person once was wealthy but now is not. But if a person claims to have loved once, but now no longer loves, can we truly say that what he once felt was really love? Does love evaporate in the face of the unfolding story? Or, if it does, was what we thought to be love really only convenience? True love abides, regardless of the turns the story takes. Thus, even before shared values, beliefs and ideals are possible, we are a community--a community formed out of our stories; a community maintained by the power of love.

Jesus spoke about forgiveness as often as he spoke about love. This is no accident, for where love abides, forgiveness is natural. But such a forgiveness requires the detachment, the lack of self-interest, which is the characteristic of the Christian love about which we spoke earlier. For one cannot practice genuine forgiveness without releasing one's attachment to the ego which has been offended.

But a forgiving spirit, a spirit of self-abandonment, is not the same as a willingness simply to be repeatedly victimized. It does not mean tolerating an abusive relationship, for example. Nor does it mean accepting the oppression of whatever unjust institutional arrangements and societal expectations may happen to be in force.

We recognize that the sort of Christian love which has been traditionally

advanced can make members of oppressed groups of people very uneasy. For example, this kind of Christian love can sound too much like the spectrum of values which secular society has often foisted off on women as their special task, while men were presumed by birthright to have a permanent excuse from having to practice them. In reaction to this, many people nowadays wish to see such things as the ability to control and manipulate, the capacity for aggression, and the accumulation of wealth made available to women on a basis equal to their availability to men, and so they resist the affirmation of traditional Christian virtues. Since the Gulf War, for example, we have been made aware that many people favor assigning women to Air Force combat missions! People want to visualize women as conquerors and transformers, in contrast to their traditional role of accepting and enduring.

Friends' response to this is to seek a genuine spiritually-based experience for both women and men which allows every human being the possibility of freely addressing the dialectical tension between action and non-action, between word and silence, between affirmation and negation, between engagement and withdrawal, and between love and knowledge. The lop-sided collection of so-called traditional manly virtues is an inhuman business. What we are seeking is a new balance, a new truth, in which women and men can participate equally.

So, saying yes to love often means saying no to some accepted system or value in society. But saying yes to love also substantially affects the basis on which, and the spirit with which, we resist oppressive arrangements. There is a difference between confronting oppression out of a centeredness in divine Truth, and a confrontation arising out of a sense of personal outrage, a difference which affects both the life of the resister and the way the oppressor is challenged.

Some time ago I was on Long Island, where I had been invited to bring a message to a gathering sponsored by a local peace group. After I had spoken, during the period of questions and discussions from the floor, one man in the audience said that every worthwhile action he had ever undertaken in the social change field had been motivated by a sense of outrage.

It occurs to me that if what the man on Long Island said is true, either his social change activism must be very intermittent, or he must be endangering his health by being in the state of anger much of the time. One of the problems with anger as a motivating dynamic is that by the time a situation becomes egregious enough to stimulate anger, probably all the really valuable opportunities to do something useful to avert calamity have been allowed to pass by. When we are finally aroused to it, the responses which anger calls forth from us are often designed more for our own catharsis than to address the true needs of the situation of concern. Finally, if we believe that there is any reality to the intangible world of the spirit, we know that the spiritual foundation out of which our actions spring does much to determine the character of the results of what we do. Actions springing from anger

and hostility are apt to produce anger and hostility. Can a truly healing service grow out of perpetual outrage?

While I have used the example of anger, the general point is that we must attend very carefully to the source of our impulses to serve or to act. Anger, fear, the need to feel ourselves powerful or effective, the need to assuage a feeling of guilt, the need to have our own way with the unfolding drama of the Creation, all are examples of spiritual states lost to the sight of love.

Friends are thus very wary of service motivated not by love but rather by anger, by guilt, or by indignation. With a silence of the heart and the mind, we seek to let go of anxieties and fears, of stubborn grasping desires, and of inner conversations and distractions, hoping to see things for what they are so that with simple and quiet dignity, we can carry out whatever duty the situation requires of us.

This inner silence has a quality of "presence," of being present where we are as our bodies and our minds are united upon the release of the imaginings and the wandering thoughts which take our spirits elsewhere. This present centeredness is vital for the non-violent character of Quaker witness. We know that as we sow, so shall we reap, that a better future will be built solely by right action in the present, that means and ends must be kept consistent. This consistency of means and ends with truth and right can only be maintained through present centeredness, through inner silence, since means take place in the present. Gandhi correctly observed that if you take any instance of untruth or of violence and analyze it, you will find at its root a desire to do something distasteful or evil now in order to obtain some cherished aim in the future. Gandhi was not a Christian, yet for him the supreme exemplar of non-violence was Jesus of Nazareth. As framed by Gandhi, non-violence calls not for passivity in the face of evil, but for political action shaped altogether--not merely in its ends but in all of its means--by love. Non-violence seeks the practice of a politics free of vengefulness, resentment and fury.

To live love is to awaken from the illusion of separateness. It is to know that reconciliation is not some final tactic, a way to tie up loose strings. Reconciliation is not a peace treaty signed on a battleship. To live love is to know that reconciliation is a continuous state of consciousness. It is to know that the essential meaning of human life is deeply relational, and involves the recognition that we can live life fully only by going beyond our isolated selves, to touch and be touched by others. In this sense of living love, we love all things and all people, not according to the merely natural delight that they bring to us, but according to the measure of goodness within ourselves. Each of us either serves what coheres and endures in life, or we promote what destroys and disintegrates. To know the difference between these two things is to know good from evil, and to know good from evil is to be prepared to live love.

The true basis of all useful social change activism, of all truly reconciling work

for peace, is a sense of connectedness. What touches our hearts deeply about any single caring act, or about any life given entirely to service, is the way they give expression to the underlying unity of all things.

In the First Letter of John, we are told that God is love; that one who dwells in love, dwells in God and that God dwells in her or him. This is a remarkable affirmation in that it states that the very basis of reality itself is love. It is the great Creative Principle of Love which has summoned all things up from the dust; all error, all disintegration, arises from the lack of such love. We who live in a nation which often seems to be organized around the defense of greed have good reason to know this. We who live in a century where whole nations come to regard the pursuit of their own selfish ends as a sacred duty have more good reason to know this.

Let us learn to serve, to be creative, and to be fruitful out of the very same source from which the Creator utters the Eternal Word. Let us know that it is no use for this Word to have become flesh in Galilee if it is not begotten unceasingly within ourselves. Let us try to make of each present moment the fullness of time, a time when we ourselves, like Mary, the mother of Jesus, become the bearers of the highest and most divine energies of the cosmos. Let us learn to respond easily and immediately whenever there is a human need, whether it be the need of those amongst whom we live, or the need of people half a world away. Whenever a company of people becomes determined to live love, misery and confusion are lessened and even vanquished, and the universal order of reality that is contained within each human being and within the whole cosmos is affirmed.

Jesus called us his friends. In the prayer with which he closes his final discourse in the Gospel of John, Jesus acknowledges that he was sent by the Father "so that they may all be One, even as you and I are One." By living love, we come to know this Oneness of which Jesus spoke. We learn a simple respect for the concrete realities of everyday life, for our work, for our friends, for our surroundings. By learning to love particular things, particular places and particular people, we become healers, giving expression in all that we do to our sense of the underlying solidarity of the entire human race. We find that a passionate engagement with life and a luminous detachment from it, paradoxical as it may sound, somehow interpenetrate each other fully. For to the extent that we can live in the world without a self-centered grasping we are overwhelmed with a feeling that the entire abundance of the Creation is somehow available to be celebrated and enjoyed. As we live love we find that we are taken out of ourselves, swept away, as it were, and united not only with those with whom we live and work, but also with the entire family of the Creation, with its groanings and its joys. Our hearts embrace the earth and the sky and all living creatures. By living love we discover a way of life worthy of our profoundest enthusiasm. So to live is to let our lives pour out teaching life prophecy; so to live is to make of this world something worthy of all its people; so to live is to prepare here a place where future generations can make their home.