

LifeCalls: A Ministry to Foster Faithfulness

LifeCalls, a ministry to foster faithfulness, intends to move people into Spirit-led action. Since 2005, several related projects have featured the common thread of faithfulness to Divine call and the spectra of populations served (beginner to seasoned), contexts (individual to corporate), and spheres of activity (contemplative to active). Brief descriptions follow of the projects undertaken by Viv Hawkins under the care of Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.

Faith to Follow helps participants dip into their definitions and experiences of faithfulness and call, explore stages of call, consider what helps and hinders faithfulness at the various call stages, assist each other in recognizing God-given gifts, and develop a personal covenant with Spirit. Program includes informal and structured modules including:

- workshops to help participants explore faithfulness and their own call,
- board game to facilitate learning and dialogue, and
- informal small group conversations about faithfulness and call.

This curriculum and related materials were developed while Viv was the Kenneth Carroll scholar at Pendle Hill Quaker Study Center in 2005-06. Delivery began in 2006 and has continued to influence LifeCalls programming up to the present.



Spiritual Formation 2 (SF2) follows on the teachings of Spiritual Formation Program (SFP) offered by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. While SFP focuses on individual spiritual disciplines and gifts, SF2 helps participants tease out leadings. Curriculum guides participants to witness that spiritual gifts and leadings are bestowed upon the community and to support and challenge each other to foster the discernment, faith, courage, accountability, and relationships needed to hear and respond faithfully to God's call. Along the way, spiritual journeys become more than merely private experiences and we grow as a people, led by the Spirit, multiplying what is entrusted to us individually and communally. In program of a few hours or through four one-day workshops held over seven months and monthly peer group sessions, participants:

SF2 participants say,
"Two thumbs up! I liked the experiential approach. – speaks to those of us who are practical doers."
"SFTWO's tools will help me live out my call."

- practice on-going accountability and discernment in small groups,
- clarify gifts and engage leadings,
- gain and offer support in carrying out a leading, and
- integrate inner and outer lives.

SF2 was designed by Viv and delivered with two co-facilitators and elders from Oct 2011 – Jun 2012.

The Barna Group, a research and resource company located in Ventura, California, focuses on the intersection of faith and culture. Their report entitled Worship Tops the List of Important Church-Based Experiences reads, "Upon examining the pillars of faith practice, the survey revealed that three-quarters of all adults, and 92% of all churching adults, said that it is very important to them 'to worship God.' What do you think came in second? Next most important to adults were 'the ability to learn about their faith (63%)' What do you think came in third? 'to experience moral and spiritual accountability (59%).'"
-<http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/35-worship-tops-the-list-of-important-church-based-experiences>

Practicing Spiritual Accountability engages people who are more seasoned in responding to call. Meetings for learning with attention to ministry are held during large group sessions (in-person and on-line), in mutual support peer groups, and in home faith communities. Participants learn and use mutual accountability peer group practices, build on their experimental knowledge of ministry in the corporate/collective context, and engage with their home faith communities to strengthen corporate support of ministry. Course content includes theory and practice to increasingly clarify ministry; to whole-heartedly embrace, support, and call forth ministry in a world that may discourage radical faithfulness; and to cultivate sub-groups to fulfill these functions. This 10-week hybrid course was offered Jan – March 2011 by Viv Hawkins with eldership by Laura Melly and assistance from Jim Lyons.



“[We] feel a desire to take hold of every opportunity to lessen the distresses of the afflicted and increase the happiness of the creation. Here we have a prospect of one common interest from which our own is inseparable, that to turn all the treasures we possess in the channel of universal love becomes the business of our lives.”

– John Woolman, *A Plea for the Poor*

Sabbath-Jubilee increases knowledge of and experiences with Sabbath practices and jubilee living in order to more fully manifest the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. Time among poor people in India and the U.S. led to numerous presentations on behalf of Right Sharing of World Resources in 2007-08 and a ten-week course offered in 2009 and again in 2010. Participants 1) explore what the Divine asks of us today in a world in need of healing and 2) act to promote that healing. Scripture, Quaker writings, on-line resources, and real-life experiences aid study and practice of Sabbath-keeping lifestyle changes to help us free our brothers and sisters from injustice and our Mother Earth from exploitation. Using in-person and on-line learning, this course was twice offered in partnership

with Quaker Studies Program of Salem Quarter (NEYM) and later in a hybrid (on-line and in-person) format including Woolman Hill Quaker Study Center.

Called to Action focuses on applied theories of social change and social movements, Quaker approaches to social action, skill building for nonviolent direct action, and the economics and ecology of justice. Through in-person workshops, engagement in action groups, and an on-line component, Called to Action helps participants:

- courageously experiment with spirit-rooted social action,
- experience spiritual and emotional breakthroughs,
- develop a deeper understanding of how to work effectively for right relationship, and
- strengthen relationships with their own call to action, other participants, and people engaged in mass-based social change.

First delivered in six full-day workshops with interim field work, the curriculum was developed and delivered from Jan – Jun 2012 by a team of six people, including Viv, under the sponsorship of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting’s Eco-justice Working Group.



Meeting with Coast practices contemplative science: an inquiry that taps our inner knowledge of our seamless relationship with creation, as well as our skills of observation, analysis, and synthesis. Through pilgrimages to nearby coastal areas and the edges of the Word and silence, participants deepen unity with coastal ecology, each other, and the Eternal, integrating Earth's messages with traditional scripture and bodily knowing. In pairs, small groups, and with the whole intergenerational gathering, participants seek to know, as Parker Palmer wrote, "The power of a fully lived life... comes only as we let go of what we possess and find ourselves possessed by a truth greater than our own." This workshop was extremely well-received co-facilitated by Lisa Greber and Viv Hawkins in five ½ day segments at FGC Gathering 2012.



India Connections is an on-going partnership with Indian Friends and non-governmental organizations allowing various opportunities for travel of Friends from India to the US and from the US to India.

- Several delegations and a few individuals have visited among Friends in India; learned from, taught, and offered service to people in India; and developed long-standing relationships with Indians.
- Indian Friends have been assisted to study at Pendle Hill Quaker Study Center, visit among Friends meetings, and grow personally and professionally.
- Participants in these trips have shared their experiences with their home meetings to multiply the impact of their travels and the relationships formed.

As a founding member of the India Friends Working Group of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Viv facilitated logistics and program for several of these exchanges which occurred from 2005 to present.

Ministry.net is the name currently used to describe a project which, with Divine assistance, will release ministry by maintaining a central internet location where people can learn about, fund, and otherwise resource various ministries. This project intends to leverage economies of scale to simplify publicity, fundraising, logistics of accompaniment, etc. for qualifying ministries. To learn more, interested parties can contact Viv at friendviv@gmail.com.

LifeCalls, a ministry to foster faithfulness, is served by Viv Hawkins who carries a minute of religious service from Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, endorsed by Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. This ministry is under the care of a spiritual accountability group appointed by the meeting for support and supervision. Tax-deductible contributions for LifeCalls are gratefully accepted payable to Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, 1515 Cherry St, Philadelphia, PA 19102.