**Wallingford, Pennsylvania**
**April 19, 1991**

Good evening Friends. I am very happy to be be able to spend some time with you this weekend, and I am looking forward very much to getting to know those of you who serve on the General Board of Pendle Hill whom I have not yet met. It is a singular blessing to be asked to serve as your Executive Secretary. I will do everything I can to merit the trust you are placing in me. Usually my experience of life is that time flies; but suddenly September seems very far off. I am really looking forward to getting down here. What is good about this time frame we are working in, though, is that I will have an excellent opportunity to consult periodically with Margery Walker and to be oriented by her and by other colleagues; and my associates in the New York AFSC, to whom I owe very much, will have a suitable time in which to seek my replacement.

My experience of the Search Process which Oliver Rodgers and Peter Bien so expertly set up remains vivid in my memory, even after the lapse of several weeks. I remember how reassuring it was to meet so many committee members who not only care a lot about Pendle Hill, but who also know a lot about it. I sensed nothing remote or vague about committee people's involvement, and I know that this is surely one of Pendle Hill's great strengths. I also remember the spirit-stretching encounters with members of the staff. I left all these conversations with a great deal to ponder, and with the feeling that I would really love to immerse myself in the life of this community.

People were very sensitive to candidates, and did not intimidate us with noisy boasting about Margery Walker's service here. But anyone with any capacity to listen for the message between the lines would have emerged with the sense that Margery's work has been enormously significant for the Pendle Hill community, and that there is a universal feeling that she has launched us firmly on an upward trajectory. I am honored to be asked to succeed Margery, and am very grateful that circumstances will permit us a good amount of consultation during the transition.

There have been some poignant moments during this last week in the New York AFSC Office, mainly because the phone has been kept ringing by people concerned about the plight of the Kurdish people. One call which I picked up was from a woman, apparently quite elderly, who wanted to know what she could do and where she could send money. As is so frequently the case, it developed that she herself had been a refugee after the First World War and had been helped by the Quakers. And from her anxious tone I could tell that the video images of people scrambling for their survival in the barren and cold mountains had vividly revived the memory of her own refugee experience of so many years ago, and her first thought was: How can I help now.

The situation of so many refugees brings to mind Jesus' well known story of the Good Samaritan. The Samaritan helped someone by the side of the road who was in need. It was no 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 them in basic physical necessities. Such basic physical necessities are prior to all others in that we cannot live at all unless they are met.

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 AFSC and the British Friends Service Council received the Nobel Prize, the prize committee cited the help provided "from the nameless to the nameless." What touches our hearts deeply about any single caring act, or about any life given wholely to service, is that, in spite of the namelessness and anonymity, they give expression to the underlying unity of all things.

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, 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.

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. 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. Study 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--education and community happen. This, it seems to me, is what Pendle Hill is about.

Undergirding this speaking and 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 we might encounter directly. But the 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 the needs of our great grandchildren, from whom, it has aptly been said, we are borrowing the earth.

Here at Pendle Hill we honor this special Twentieth Century challenge to spirituality by nourishing our community with those who may not be on campus every day, but who nevertheless are part of Pendle Hill--the committee members, the contributors, the alumni, and indeed, the entire Society of Friends and the larger company of spiritual seekers whose needs we exist to serve. When Howard Brinton was trying to describe Pendle Hill in one of his essays, he said it was a little like a monastery, a little like an ashram, a little like a school, a little like an intentional community, a little like a Friends meeting--he used a long list of such partially analogous institutions. He never said, though, that Pendle Hill was a little like an ivory tower.

You who are members of the General Board and of the Executive Board have a vital role to play in keeping the searching conversation, the listening and the speaking, the silence which is the love of God, alive with respect to the parts of our community located off campus. We cannot sit here in seclusion and unilaterally decide what ministry might be helpful to the Society of Friends. You are thus an essential link in maintaining the health of this broad and diverse dialogic community. Feminist theologians have enabled us to gain perspective on the importance of these nurturing and connective aspects of sanctity, traditionally thought of as womanly virtues. But now, at the end of the Twentieth Century, it is becoming clear that these are virtues which more and more people must practice, whether they are women or men, if humankind is to survive. This is no less true for Pendle Hill than it is for the world at large. We cannot survive in spiritual isolation. You, the General Board, are our protection against such isolation. I do very much look forward to working with you as--through the practices of dialogic study, of community, of work, and of worship--we support Friends and friends of Friends in their search for truth, so that they may give witness to it.

Daniel A. Seeger