

# Ongoing Revelation

By Ed Abbott

**A** MOST IMPORTANT EXPERIENCE OF OUR FAITH COMMUNITY IS THE DISCOVERY THAT REVELATION IS ONGOING rather than being complete and finished in the first century AD. In this, Quakers are perhaps unique among the descendants of the followers of Jesus.

Over the years since our beginnings we have been given, and continue to receive, new insights: the keeping of slaves, participation in war, incarceration in prisons, right use of resources, homosexuality, and our right relationship with nature, to name but a few.

This concept of ongoing revelation was implied and expressed poetically in 1849 in words of the hymn by James Russell Lowell :

*“New occasions teach new duties;  
time makes ancient good uncouth.  
We must upward still and onward,  
who would keep abreast of truth”.*

I believe we are, at this time, being given new insight into our right relationship with members of other faiths. Some of us have been privileged to work in other cultures, to share in other spiritual understandings, and have been given an appreciation of the truth that underlies other faiths. We are drawn to extend the hand of fellowship to all who seek to

live up to the light given them. The seeds of such fellowship were planted early in Quaker thought as expressed by William Penn:

*“The humble, meek, merciful, just, pious and devout souls are everywhere of one religion, and when death has taken off the mask, they will know one another, though divers liveries they wear here make them strangers.”*

The validity of this concept was attested to by Douglas Steere as he travelled widely to seek discourse with leaders of other faiths in an experience he referred to as Mutual Irradiation. By taking opportunities to participate in interfaith groups we experience this irradiation; the barriers that separate us dissolve; and we can feel with Kahlil Gibran:

*“I love you, my brothers and sisters, Whoever you are. You and I are all children of one faith, For the diverse paths of religion are fingers of the loving hand of one Supreme Being. A hand extended to all Offering completeness of spirit to all. Eager to receive all. You are my brothers and sisters because you are human. And we are all sons and daughters of one Holy Spirit. We are equal and made of the same earth. ✱*

*Ed Abbott is a member of Simcoe-Muskoka Meeting.*

## *Dost Thou Know Thy Bible?*

A new pastor was visiting in the homes of his parishioners. At one house it seemed obvious that someone was at home, but no answer came to his repeated knocks at the door. Therefore, he took out a card and wrote “Revelation 3:20” on the back of it and stuck it in the door.

When the offering was processed the following Sunday, he found that his card had been returned. Added to it was this cryptic message, “Genesis 3:10.”

Reaching for his Bible to check out the citation, he broke into gales of laughter. Revelation 3:20 begins “Behold, I stand at the door and knock.”

And Genesis 3:10 reads, “I heard your voice in the garden and I was afraid for I was naked.”

*- Submitted by Dorothy Janes, a member of Toronto Monthly Meeting.*