

GREEN JESUS: THE MEANING

CHARLES DAVID KLEYMEYER

My good friend Reverend Julia Jarvis, who officiated at the wedding of my wife and me and the baptism of our daughter Lily, contacted me in early 2009. She was reaching out to friends to assist her in finding images and symbols of spring to explain to young people: what is the meaning of Easter?

Julia had entitled her appeal "Green Jesus," so I began to write with that title in mind, and it clearly affected my response. Allowing her question to reverberate in the silence, I wondered what kind of answer I would have loved to hear when I was young.

In order for you to accompany this story's intended listeners and readers, it is useful to know some of the special circumstances they share.

First, picture yourself as young, with one of your parents a practicing Christian, the other from another faith tradition—Rev. Julia pastors a congregation of mixed Christian-Jewish families. (Imagining this may come naturally to you, since at the deepest level, an interfaith and multicultural background forms the very culture we swim in.)

Second, you will want to open your heart and mind fully—as a child unselfconsciously does—to a fusion of nature and the spirit.

Now we can move on to Green Jesus:

Charles David Kleymeyer, a member of Langley Hill Meeting in McLean, Va., is an author, performing storyteller, and international grassroots-development sociologist. He is currently finishing an intergenerational novel about a close friendship that a Galilean boy and his sister have with their neighbor, Jesus.

Alla Podolsky

OF EASTER

In the fall of every year, as each day grows shorter and darkness deepens, the leaves and flowers dry up and are released back down to the Earth by the trees and plants that grew them.

But deep underground, in a place even darker, life goes on, bundled in the roots that reach into the warm heart of the Earth, and hidden under the fallen leaves covering ground that will soon be frozen. There lie the seeds the once-green world has scattered, awaiting their time to germinate. Inside their shells, life survives the biting cold of winter.

At the tips of the tree branches life also crouches, coiled in the buds that thrust out to take in the sun's warmth and energy. The silent humming of these buds survives the wind and the ice.

In springtime, the leaves and flowers of trees and plants throw off the coats that constrained them and open their eyes to the light to grow anew. Humble seeds germinate and send up sprouts shouting their names in quiet joy towards the sun in the heavens. They thrive not only in lush forest and meadow, but in desert and tundra in even stranger, more beautiful forms. And their greenness provides oxygen for our lungs, shade for our skins, fruit for our stomachs, and beauty for our eyes.

We have trust that this rebirth will happen every year, in fulfillment of a long-cherished promise, the knowledge of which has kept us hopeful and alive throughout the harsh, drawn-out winter. In this way, the trees and plants quietly teach us about faith and perseverance.

This revitalization is why Easter comes in the springtime. We know that Jesus, too, is not dead and gone;

we feel his spirit moving, rooted deep in our living hearts.

We know that he, his love, and his message of peace and compassion and forgiveness do not die, but ride the breath of the words we speak. They fill our hope and faith with lessons of how to grow and blossom and to live our lives, even as we weather bleak times. In his example we see how to be good and just and loving to all living beings whose paths we cross on our journey toward the Light. How, as we grow and thrive, we must watch over *all* of Earth's creatures—in accord with God's covenant to provide for us just as we fulfill our obligation to care for the Earth.

So, Easter in the springtime reminds us of life's unending circle—that whatever withers and fades in turn feeds the promise of regeneration of the sprouts and buds and spreading petals. These are the small ones that arrive to take their turn singing out in praise beneath the sun as they prepare for those to follow.

And, yes, there is one more thing to tell you, and it lies at the heart of this message: remember always that you are a sprouting seed, a budding flower, an opening leaf. And know that you give color and beauty to life and to your families. In the awakening of your hearts and souls, *you* are our Easter. You are like flowers pushing through the snow and leaves uncurling their fingers to reach yearning hands to the sky. And it gives us great joy to love and celebrate you.

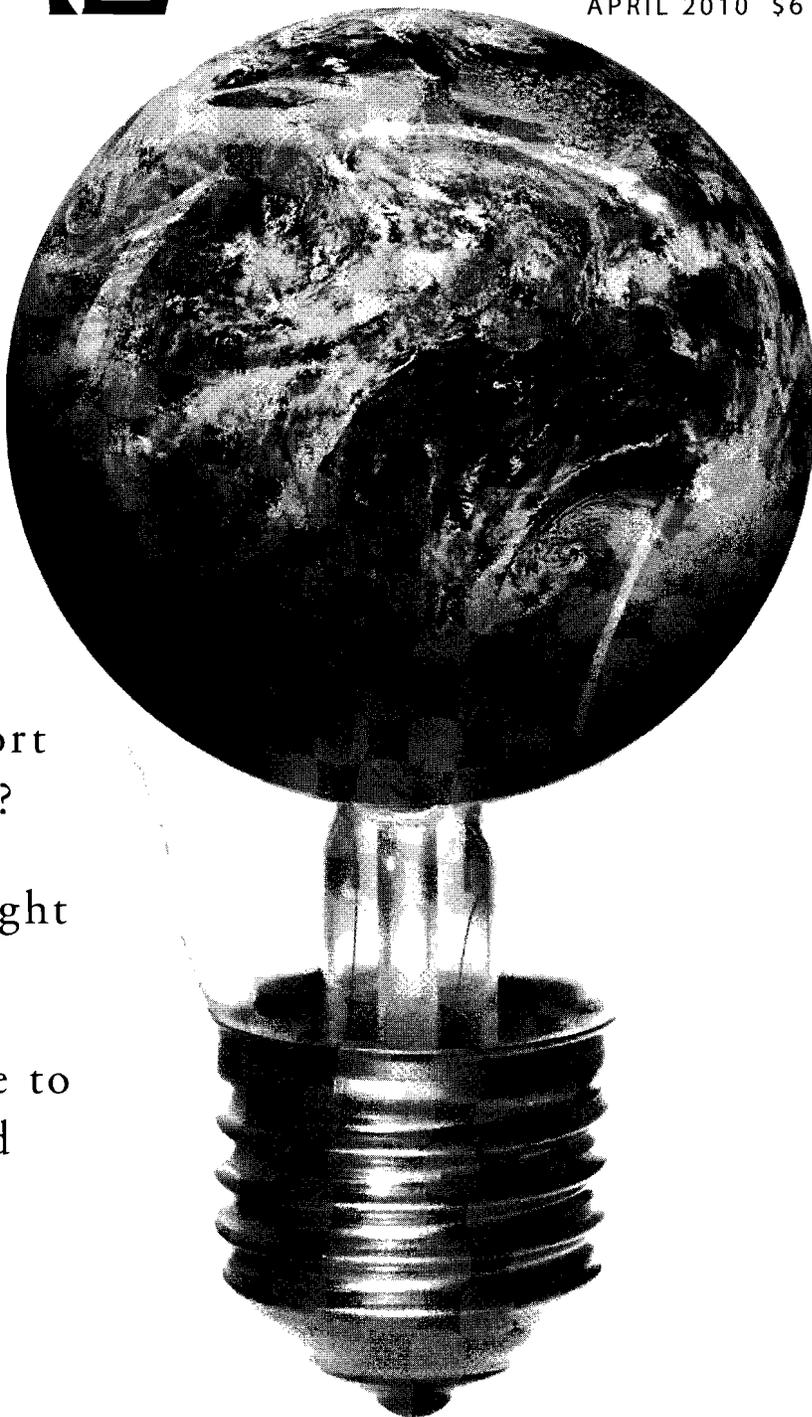
Jesus taught that those who followed him should be like children because a child who touches wonder walks hand in hand with God. In that wonder we are all youthful.

Know that Jesus lives in you—at Easter, and all year round! □

FRIENDS JOURNAL

Quaker Thought and Life Today

APRIL 2010 \$6



Should Quakers Support
Climate Engineering?

Applying Quaker Thought
to Food

One German's Response to
What My Nation Did
in World War II

FRIENDS JOURNAL

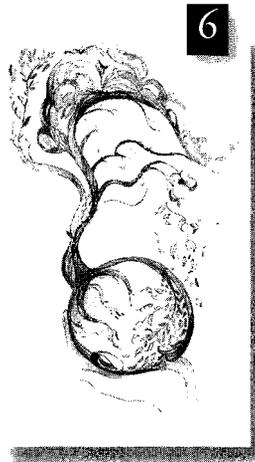
APRIL 2010

VOL. 56, NO. 4

FEATURES

- 6 Green Jesus: The Meaning of Easter**
Charles David Kley Meyer
The author prepares a message to children about the connection between Easter and its time of year.
- 8 Applying Quaker Thought to Food**
Shaun Chavis
A food journalist addresses the broad implications of our choices about what to eat.
- 12 Should Quakers Support Climate Engineering?**
Keith Helmuth
The future struggle over climate engineering could make the disagreements among Friends over nuclear power seem minor in comparison.
- 15 Singing "Lord of the Dance": Reflections on Anti-Semitism and Loving One Another**
Steve Chase, Maxine Kaufman-Lacusta, Janet Minshall, Free Polazzo, and Joy Weaver
A verse of this catchy hymn is deeply offensive to some Friends.
- 18 Quakers in Germany during and after the World Wars**
Henning Mielke, translated by Elborg Forster
Quaker outreach in Germany was significant both before and after the two World Wars.
- 20 One German's Response to What My Nation Did in World War II**
Jochen Strack
The author describes his attempt to cope with Germany's national shame over the Holocaust.

Cover art by Henry Hingst,
adapted by Barbara Benton



DEPARTMENTS

- 2 Among Friends**
- 4 Forum**
- 5 Viewpoint**
What underlies the debate about abortion?
- 26 Reflections**
Who turned on the lights? A reflection from within
The real peace movement
- 29 Books**
- 36 Milestones**
- 49 Classified**

POETRY

- 7 Shagbark above an Oxbow in the Connecticut**
Hugh Ogden
- 23 Loving Kindness/ Liebende Güte**
Norma Fain Pratt