

Book Reviews...Book Reviews...Book Reviews

The Winter Road

Terry Hokenson

Ashville, North Carolina: Front Street, 2006

Reviewed by Barbara Bucknall

This is a first novel, written for a teenage audience. Seventeen-year-old Willa, grieving for the death of her older brother and feeling that her father no longer cares for her, has problems at school that can't be counseled away.

One thing she can do is fly an airplane, and she takes her uncle's plane when her uncle is too drunk to fly it himself, to fetch her mother from an outpost in Northern Ontario. However, she crashes the plane and has to make her way through the frozen wilderness, using all her survival skills, which are described in minute detail.

It takes her three weeks to find a Native community along the winter road of the title. When she calls her father, he is so glad to learn that she is alive that it thaws the frozen emotional tension between them.

Terry Hokenson mentions early on that Willa had attended Quaker Meeting until she was fifteen but he makes so little of it that I wondered why he had mentioned it.

Then I got a clue from the heading of chapter six: "A Way Will Open." In Quaker terms, that is what the whole book is about — waiting for a way to open.

But no passive activity is involved. Rather, it is a question of making progress one step at a time. Each physical step is accompanied by an emotional step, as the memory of

the survival skills their father taught them brings her closer to her father and brother.

At the end, she is a complete survivor. ☞

Barbara Bucknall is a member of Pelham Executive Meeting.

Wrestling with our faith tradition: Collected public witness 1995-2004

Lloyd Lee Wilson

Quaker Press, 2005

Reviewed by Arnold Ranneris

In 1993, a book with the unlikely title of "Essays on the Quaker Vision of Gospel Order" was published, became a modest success, sold out, and was reprinted. Somehow it spoke to the need of Friends to have messages from a "classical Quakerism" viewpoint. Lloyd Lee Wilson is a convinced Friend in the North Carolina (Conservative) Yearly Meeting. He had dedicated himself to "public witness" among Friends from 1995–2004. Now in 2005, we receive this collection of ten addresses, five in the category of "Faith" and five in "Practice."

These essays explore three areas: a listening spirituality based on silence, the direct experience/relationship of the person with God and Christ, and membership in a worshipping community that hears and obeys the voice of God. Lloyd Lee is rooted in the spiritual practice of Bible study. I recall him during his 1982 visit to Canadian Yearly Meeting at Pickering

College with his black Testament ever present with him. This visit, incidentally, gave the title of one of his addresses: "Why Do You Still Read That Old Thing?" He explains: "I was taking a short walk one afternoon during a break in the formal sessions, my Bible under my arm as usual, when a twenty-something Canadian Friend approached me and struck up a conversation. After some preliminary greetings, she got to the point. Pointing to my Bible, she asked, 'Why do you still read that old thing when there is so much more modern material available? ... I've been answering that same question in many forms, for the fourteen years or so since that day. Tonight I can give you a progress report.'

Some chapter titles show the broad scope of titles: A Confession of Faith, Encounter with the Taproot, Biblical Basis for Quaker Peacemaking, Gathered With One Accord, Friends' Testimonies in the Marketplace. They are conversational, yet penetrating in tone, getting to the roots and marrow of Quakerism.

Francis Bacon, in his 16th Century essay "Of Studies" on study and reading, says, "Some books are to be tasted; others are to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested." This book falls into the latter category. It is recommended for those who want this grounding. It makes for good personal reflection and study as a group. ☞

Arnold Ranneris is a member of Victoria Monthly Meeting, and of the CYM Faith & Practice Development Committee.