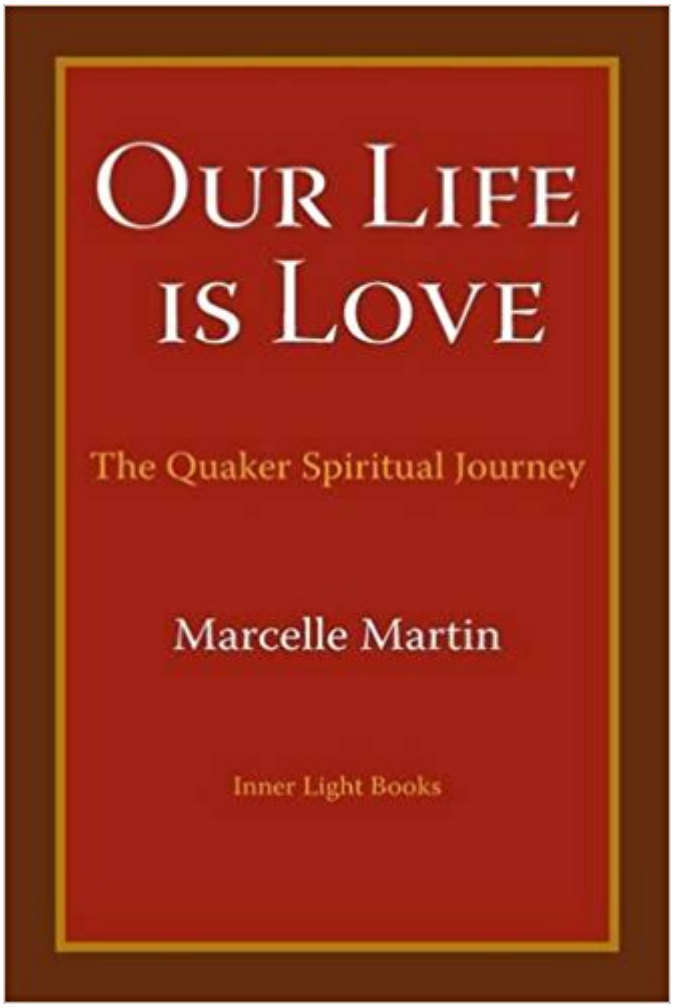
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Our Life Is Love: The Quaker Spiritual Journey



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Synopsis

Our Life is Love describes the transformational spiritual journey of the first Quakers, who turned to the Light of Christ within and allowed it to be their guide. Many Friends today use different language, but are still called to make the same journey. In our time people seeking deeper access to the profound teachings of Christianity want more than just beliefs, they want direct experience. Focusing on ten elements of the spiritual journey, this book is a guide to a Spirit-filled life that affects this world. Quakers in the seventeenth century and today provide examples of people and communities living in the midst of the world whose radical understanding of Christ's teachings led them to become powerful agents of social change. The book offers a simple, clear explanation of the spiritual journey that is suitable not only for Quakers, but for all Christians, and for seekers wanting to better understand our spiritual experience and the fullness of God's call to us. The book would make an excellent focus for study groups. Marcelle Martin has led workshops at retreat centers and Quaker meetings across the United States. She served for four years as the resident Quaker Studies teacher at Pendle Hill and was a core teacher in the School of the Spirit program, The Way of Ministry. She is the author of the Pendle Hill pamphlets Invitation to a Deeper Communion and Holding One Another in the Light. In 2013 she was the Mullen Writing Fellow at Earlham School of Religion while working on this book.

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Customer Reviews

Our Life is LoveThe Quaker Spiritual JourneybyMarcelle MartinReviewed by John CowanSo you

think you are a Quaker, and a pretty good one too? I used to think I was also.Just a couple of weeks ago if you asked me about my practice of our mutual journey if I had my best pharisaical hat on I would have happily thanked God for all the great things I do, think, feel and am. Then I read Marcelle Martin, Our Life is Love.I am a piker! You may be too. I encourage you to read the book. The truth will set you free. For me maybe that will happen next week. Right now I feel not ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“freeÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• but ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“challenged.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•I bought this book on a friend's recommendation although I am wary of people who are described as mystics. Since visions are usually private experiences I wonder how did everyone find out . I suppose that a mystic who brags is not precisely an oxymoron, but its close.In the end, her mysticism is about the only thing I am comfortable with. Well into the book she speaks of extraordinary experiences in her own journey, but they are experiences I have heard before from many people, some in books but also across the breakfast table, in the coffee shop, or in one case over scotch and water with a panicked fellow business man who despite being an atheist had just experienced God while in the shower. (It was he who named the experience: ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“God.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•) I was able to assure him that I had heard this before; that like excrement, God also happens, although not as often.For Marcelle, God happens a lot, but while more often than for most mortals, these are not ascents to the seventh heaven, or mini-transfigurations either, and not out of the ordinary, if I may use the word ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•ordinaryÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• for revelations. She is a Quaker mystic, not much interested in anything that is given her, unless it is something that she will then give others. (I wonder if love is like electricity, it enters only to go out again and if there is no way out, it will not enter.)Marcelle has laid out some elements in the journey to becoming a Quaker. I will give you the ten elements, categories numbered and the elements in parentheses to give you a quick overview of most of the book: 1) Awakening (Longing, Seeking, Turning Within) 2) Convincement (Openings, The RefinerÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s Fire, Community)3) Faithfulness (Leadings, The Cross, Abiding, Perfection)I suspect that you, my Quaker Friend, already have a pretty good idea what she would be saying under each of these headings. So you might ask, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Why is John disturbed by this?ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•Because: Under each heading she tells the stories of Friends who have lived these elements out, a huge number of them from the Seventeenth Century and even more painful for people like me who discount the Seventeenth Century as that was then and this is now, a huge number from the last few decades. What would I do if God ever called me to something like these people endured after their surrender? Worse, maybe God has called me and I have already missed the cue. Maybe this is what it means to be a Quaker and what I am doing is a poor imitation?Should I be more like Tom Fox, who died peacemaking in Iraq? Or like Tom Kelly the man

of the quietly powerful prose? Or like Eva Hermann who was not afraid of the NaziÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s because she could feel the prayers of people praying for her? Or like Linda Caldwell Lee who while recovering from illness felt the doors of her heart opening with love? Or like Barbara Blagdown who barely felt the blows so secure was she in her confidence in the One who called her. (I am not searching the book for these stories, just randomly flipping pages, stopping somewhere and spotting the nearest story on that page or the next one.)So I suggest you buy and read Our Life is Love.Maybe I will never rise to the exemplarsÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ heights but at least I will distribute Meals on Wheels with a better grace than I have in the past. Compared to being beaten, or impoverished, or shunned, or imprisoned, or killed, it is not all that bad. I am a little suspicious of how easy it is. Perhaps you will be too.

This book would make a fine introduction to Quaker spirituality for those new to the Religious Society of Friends or to seekers who want to know more about Quaker faith and practice. I highly recommend it! -Russ Litchfield

Marcelle Martin takes her title from a 1667 quotation from Isaac Penington: "Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing with one another, . . . but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand." Penington is only one of many early Quakers--both male and female--whom she discusses in covering the ten elements of the Quaker--indeed, any--spiritual journey. Not only does Marcelle balance men and women, she also balances early and contemporary Quakers, quoting many of my F/friends. I had the pleasure and privilege to participate in a weeklong retreat with Marcelle in which we presented all ten elements (which, by the way, are: longing, seeking, turning within, openings, the Refiner’s Fire, community, leadings, the Cross, abiding, and perfection). Though the book is Quaker through and through, it serves as a resource for keen reflection for all people of faith, no matter what path one is following.

My Quaker meeting has a book club which been studying this book. This has really helped some of us go deeply within and understand some of the things we have all ready experienced or are experiencing. I would note that people in recovery might appreciate this book, Quaker or not.

An uplifting and readable book that fills the reader with inspiration and spiritual hope.

A special book on Quakerism by a wonderful writer.

A wonderfully beautiful book that offers insight and inspiration as well as a spiritual challenge to the reader.

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