

## **Patricia Hunt Interview**

With Christina Repoley and Oskar Pierre Castro

Recorded at her home at Kendal Crosslands Community in Philadelphia

November 14, 2016

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**Christina Repoley: You ready?**

**Oskar Castro: We are ready.**

**Christina Repoley: You ready, Pat?**

Pat Hunt: Sure.

**Christina Repoley: OK. Are you rolling?**

**Oskar Castro: Yes, rolling.**

**Christina Repoley: Could you start by telling us just your name and a little bit about where you live right now and where you're from.**

Pat Hunt: My name is Patricia Hunt, but I am called Pat by everybody. I live now at Kendal, which is a continuing care retirement community, one of the top-rated communities. We're very fortunate to be here because Quakers 40 years or more ago decided there should be a more creative way for living for people over 65 and pioneered many new concepts which we're benefitting from in Kendal, based very much on a loving community and Quaker principles of dignity and respect for all people and equality. So it's a natural place and a very wonderful place for me to be in my last years.

I was born in Alberta, Canada, a family of four daughters of a pioneer farmer, who really would have been glad to have some sons to carry on. But as it has evolved, we've all one by one come to the United States and now live primarily on the East Coast. I started off through my early years in Seattle, Washington through high school after we left Alberta and ended up at Swarthmore College, which was my first step into becoming connected to Quakers.

**Christina Repoley: How did you end up at Swarthmore? What took you to Swarthmore?**

Pat Hunt: My sister Marian married David Elkinton, who's a longterm Philadelphia Quaker family, and thought therefore that it would be good to have her younger sister – I was eight years younger than Marian – attend a college nearby where she now lived. So I applied and got in. I went first to a year in Mexico. Two years I went to learn Spanish in Mexico, and I ended up with a year first at the University of Mexico. So I arrived at Swarthmore as a sophomore and got through in two years. This was war years, so I could take courses year-round and also five instead of four. But I graduated in February 1945.

**Christina Repoley: And tell me about when was your time in Mexico that you worked with Clarence Pickett? How did that connection happen?**

Pat Hunt: Well, again through my brother-in-law, David, I learned that Clarence, who was then general secretary of the American Friends Service Committee, was in Mexico with his family to consider a possible program to meet the needs of Spanish refugees, who had fled to Mexico because of the civil war in Spain, and needed a translator. So I was happily recruited and got to know the family. As maybe I've said before, I felt I arrived in the AFSC through the front door because Clarence took me under his wing.

When I got back to the Swarthmore College, I was invited to AFSC events and became – actually took some courses that were being run also at Haverford College at that point on relief and rehabilitation in Europe. And quite a number of young people were preparing. They even had a master degree level program to be ready to pick up relief work in Europe when the war ended. So I had the advantage of coming to know some of that whole movement. I was not at the master's level, but I was able to go into some courses.

I was very interested all the way through with those earlier experiences to work in Europe. When I was in Columbia University, where I was doing my master's in social work after college, I was assistant leader of a workcamp in Mexico, which was my first experience. By then of course I was fluent in Spanish. So I was managing the food, but also the communication between these 20 American college kids, girls all of them, and the community, mainly as chaperone to prevent – to oversee, I would say, the very enthusiastic male population of Toluca, where we were located, who were quite fascinated by these beautiful, young women who had suddenly appeared for the summer.

But we were working in villages with recreation programs for youngsters as school was out. And that was my first taste of workcamps. I came away feeling the volunteers had learned a lot, but I wondered how much benefit we'd been to

the community. I think that's always been a challenge in the whole workcamp movement.

**Christina Repoley: You went on after that workcamp to be heavily involved in the American Friends Service Committee. What was your next step after that Mexico workcamp?**

Pat Hunt: When I graduated from Columbia in '47, I went to Finland under AFSC. I expected to spend a summer in the workcamp and come back to a job that I'd been offered as a result of my fieldwork, but the workcamp really I would say was my life-changing moment. At that point Finland, you may know, had suffered severely from the German war. They were caught between Germany and Russia, and they first had Russian invasion. Then they had German invasion.

And on the departure of the German troops in the last days of the war, the policy was a scorched earth policy. And I had heard that term but didn't realize it meant every telephone pole, every well with landmines in it, every field, and the bridges destroyed. And this was in far Lapland. And as a result, the people had fled. To return to their little villages way off in this wild north, or wilderness north, the men coming back to start rebuilding their houses would be blown up by the mines that were in the wells or in the fields. So this was a double blow to a widow who lost even her husband who'd survived the war. It meant that there were women with children who had no place to live.

The AFSC had for three years started and ran very effective workcamps which were constructing houses for widows in the north out of Rovaniemi which is the northern capital, you'd say, of Lapland. And that meant that our group was one of six workcamps. And the composition was half Finnish young people that came to the camp to offer their free labor – that's all they had to offer because of the desperate situation of the whole country – being supported by an international group.

In our group of 22 or so workcampers, I think what impressed me so much was that even though there were maybe two at the most that were actually Friends, the atmosphere was so in keeping with the basic Quaker principles – of respect for each other, of honoring the needs and differences in people, of hard work, of honesty, good humor, and starting every meal with a song in a kind of worshipful way, and on Sundays gathering on our little hillside for quiet meeting for worship using the consensus approach to decision making. We had a bit of orientation ahead of time in Rovaniemi for a day or two with David Richie and

other Quaker gurus, so to speak, in the workcamp world. But it was just so beautifully carried out.

I think the spirit was, for me, very deeply moving and across such differences. With several of the Finns – indeed, one of my best friends turned out to be a woman who spoke no English, and I spoke a tiny bit of Finnish with my book in hand. And yet, we were communicating at another level – and I think that understanding that we do communicate with each other heart-to-heart, you might say, and that good old Quaker principle of finding that goodness or that God in the other person and responding to it. And I certainly saw that in action.

We worked hard, and physically it was a really challenging time. But we had a wonderful time. I think everybody went away feeling lifelong friendships almost. And indeed, I did get a lifelong friend, who is Dutch, a woman, half Jewish. Her mother was Christian, her father Jewish. She had suffered through the war by having to hide because her brother was active in the resistance, was picked up by the Gestapo, ended up in concentration camp, and died. Her father was taken as a hostage, survived, remarkably. But she knew desperately what the war had meant to so many people, and yet here she was volunteering.

And I think the most moving experience I had was the following Christmas, when I was asked to stay on to coordinate the workcamps in Europe. And therefore I was at the Paris headquarters. Anika asked whether we could meet at a German workcamp because she felt after that summer's experience, she really could not live any longer with the hate she felt in her heart and the terror she felt in her heart for Germans. And I met her. She asked me to please meet her at the railroad station, so we would go together to the workcamp in this devastated village where we were clearing rubble from a schoolyard so they could start reconstruction.

And we went to the door, and I walked in and shook hands with the German leader of the workcamp. And Anika followed behind me, and I saw her almost having to lift her hand to shake hands because it was so, so terrifying. She said, "I just kept hearing" – he clicked his heels in a polite, German way and kind of bowed. He was a young man of 25, probably been active in *Hitlerjugend* and everything else, just acting like his culture dictated. And she said she couldn't help but hear the boots marching on the street above her head as she was in her lower part of her house.

But she did shake his hand, and she did enter into it. And again it was about half German workcampers, maybe 10, and the rest of us were mainly at that point Scandinavian. I was the only American, and there were some British. Our work for two weeks over the Christmas holidays was to clear rubble.

We were living on a German diet of course, which was potatoes, potatoes, potatoes and dumplings, which were just water and flour. And we had some powdered milk, hardly any fat in the diet. We began to realize this was the diet that everybody was now having in Germany and what it felt like. I think I gained almost 10 pounds in that just eating, eating, eating and yet not being able to get warm enough and energy enough. You don't realize how a balanced diet is required. And both Anika and I left with empty suitcases because we couldn't tolerate the rags that the poor German volunteers were left living with. Warm pajamas or warm underwear were just a gift of gold. So that was a very compelling experience.

Anika expressed so eloquently how somebody who'd suffered the severity of the Holocaust she felt could not live with the hate and the revenge that you feel, or want to feel, and yet how relieved she felt when she finally was able to face that. It was not for anybody else. It was for herself to relieve herself of that. The reconciliation part of our European workcamps was very important.

Indeed, similar later on in my chronicle is a similar feeling that we had as we worked in our workcamps in Israel, where Arabs who had lost their homes, Palestinians, had that feeling of the Israelis invading their villages and now trying to make peace with their neighbors that they were now required to live with. This experience of working together, singing together, playing, laughing, all the things that you do when you're working together as young people helps to heal some of those wounds on both sides.

**Christina Repoley: You also led workcamps in Africa and Korea. Is that right?**

Pat Hunt: Yes. Just chronologically, after Finland, I was asked by AFSC to become a staff coordinator of the international workcamp program in Europe. I did that from '47, which was the summer I was in Finland, through to '49, two years. And in that period, I was the coordinator with the other peace workcamp organizations in Europe.

The workcamp movement started in Switzerland in between the two world wars by Pierre Ceresole, a pacifist who felt that service—Switzerland has a military draft and I think continues to have. It's always had a draft to require young men

to register at 18 and give two years' service. This was his effort to have an alternative service that was not under the military but equally as disciplined and as hard work and as committed as somebody who had gone to military – instead of under military, under civilian, the *service civil*.

So it was civil service, and their model was *pas des paroles mais des actes*, meaning not words but deeds. This organization had branches in six or eight of the European countries, including England, and already had often had short-term, like one- or two-week, workcamps that coincided with workers' holidays. So they often had working men primarily and *Schwwestern*, or sisters as they called them in the European use of language and position of women that were not out on the workplace so much as in the kitchen providing food behind the scenes.

But this movement had gathered strength before the war and after the war really became much stronger with strong organizations in most of the European countries where AFSC was doing relief work. And so the cooperation was very natural. I was a counterpart to their international staff man from Switzerland. And as a young American woman, he was very puzzled that AFSC would dare appoint a woman to do a job like that. It was my first encounter of sexism, I guess the word is. But anyway, Ralph and I ended up being very good friends and respected each other.

At that point, my job was to place 60 American volunteers every summer in European workcamps. There were 32 workcamps organized by the various peace organizations. AFSC had our own workcamps continuing in Finland and also in Austria, Germany, and Italy. But the others that the volunteers were assigned to were not under AFSC auspices, and there was usually about two Americans at the most in each camp. My happy job in summers was to visit around various camps, so I was able to get out. And I'd usually try to schedule to stay several days, so that I didn't just come in and eat a meal and then leave, but to roll up my sleeves and do some work as well and kind of check out how it was going and help any.

One of the issues because of our eager, young Americans – we're so used to stepping forward whenever we have an opinion, both young men and women. And it was not always accepted in the traditional hierarchies of authority that were in some of these countries. So I was often negotiating, trying to say to our volunteers, "Now, don't quite be so assertive. You're in another person's country." Just sensitivity to culture, and the Americans were a very welcome addition of course. So we had no problem in placements.

That went on for several years after I left in '49, and I switched jobs. The director in Philadelphia came to Paris, and I went to Philadelphia for a year until I met my husband-to-be. Then he and I went to Israel after we were married. Again, I teased him he may have married me because it was the new program in Israel that he was undertaking, and one of them was going to be workcamps. So who better yet to get to organize them? So I was doing that. We did it for two years.

And that was again, as I mentioned earlier, a wonderful opportunity to get Christians, Muslims, and Jews together with an international group. There's something about making it international that adds to the ambiance of acceptance and interest and fun of learning about each other and allowing differences to be celebrated instead of divisive and the opportunity for communication that comes around the table or digging a ditch or clearing – well, in Israel we were working in one very challenging camp, an Orthodox children's camp for Holocaust orphans, and therefore – it happened to be over Passover, so we had to be totally kosher.

I was co-leading a camp with an Orthodox Jewish volunteer, so I learned very respectfully how to make the camp kitchen and accommodations comfortable for Orthodox Jews as well as the Christians and the Muslims and others who had a very different expectation. But there was no reason – and so we all learned a lot. That was quite in itself an experience. And the work was needed. Obviously, they were just setting this up, and the children were just coming. So we had very valid, hard work.

That kept going after we left as a workcamp organization under some of the earlier leaders. And they kept alternating between their villages and Jewish settlements inside the country. So it was a little ongoing relationship. I think it's disappeared now as the communities are finding it harder to communicate with each other.

After that, my work was primarily not related to workcamps, but international development. In Korea, we started the relief program, which was a five-year rehabilitation of a provincial hospital that had been bombed by the U.S. Air Force in its war against the North Koreans. Then our work there was half the hospital work and North Korean refugee women, primarily, and children, widows. And I was working on the refugee side.

Then after that, I stepped out of AFSC to have a family, two wonderful children, and turned my attention to my own local community, which is equally needy in a different way. It was just at the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement in the

1960s when Tim and Jennifer were ready to be left. One year I worked part-time to set up the visa program, 1960 to '61.

The visa program was building on the international workcamps but recognizing the impracticality more and more of young people paying their own way, or alternatively AFSC having enough money to fund travel and expenses – and also recognizing that we were therefore reaching a middle-class, often privileged already community and leaving out what more and more became AFSC's priority of working with the marginalized folks. So it became important to think, "OK. What are service opportunities that are appropriate?"

The international division wanted to continue the opportunities of young people encountering new cultures and adjusting. So I was asked to formulate a program that might cover both the community needs as we were seeing them abroad in other countries – and even in the U.S. it began a little bit – and the opportunity for service for young people. And incidentally just at the same time, the draft was still in place. But AFSC had decided as an organization, they would no longer cooperate with the government and provide civilian public service camps.

But they saw that there might be opportunities for international service accepted by government. So it served a variety of needs. And what became defined as voluntary international service assignments was to assign 12 young people to different countries, 12 in a group, each taking on an individual assignment under the auspices and supervision of a local organization. Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

**Christina Repoley: Yes.**

Pat Hunt: And the group having an overall leader, either a couple or an adult, but the group age probably college graduates or older, and with the recognition that language facility would be very useful although not required. But they would certainly spend time learning the language obviously to whichever country they were assigned. We ended up having five countries where we already had Quaker staff. That was Tanganyika at that point and Guatemala, Haiti, Bangladesh, and India I guess. So that year we sent off 10 or 12 to all those countries in 1961.

This had been a part-time job for me, and so they appointed a full-time director after it got started. And that predated Peace Corps. But even during the time we were working on this as a committee and staff, the same ideas were burgeoning around the Kennedy administration. So we had consultation with them, and the difference with AFSC's program of course was that it had no connection officially

to the U.S. State Department. And that's been very important to keep it apolitical. That program lasted several – I can't remember how many years. You did the research. But anyway, it was a successful program that went through several directors. And I later got onto that committee.

Then my attention turned to Chester, Pennsylvania, which is our neighboring – and under both my professional work through the Family Service of Delaware County and as a committee member of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, I was involved in all kinds of action-oriented programs, mainly organizing tenant councils in public housing and school social work in Chester schools, homemaker service for people who are homemakers, welfare women, who were able to get training and get a salary instead of welfare – various innovative things, public welfare. It was about ten years of intense involvement in Chester, which was to me a very humbling and learning experience – the remarkable strength.

I volunteered later at the end of all this work, in the 1980s and 1990s throughout that, with the grandparent program that was supporting grandparents who were raising their grandkids because of drug addiction and incarceration of the parent and what they were facing now with knives and fists being replaced by guns and heroin and other drugs coming into the country, a devastating situation for them – for all of our small towns and minority populations around the country, as we've kind of learned through this new election we've just been through, a voice we haven't paid attention to enough.

My husband died suddenly after we'd worked together in Korea. He'd stayed on working at AFSC. And in 1971, we were asked as a family – by then we had the two children, who were 12 and 14 – to go to Jerusalem as Quaker International Affairs representatives, which is another program which is reconciliation off-the-record, so to speak. It's a diplomatic gathering of leaders in political positions to be able to hear from each other, but off-the-record so that they can find their own answers, understanding, better each other.

That was very much in keeping with what we'd already been doing before when we were working there. So this was at a different level. And it was a year-long assignment. As we came back and I went back and did regular work in Chester, Frank stayed on the staff and had a major heart attack the following year. So he died in '73. And at that point, I was temporarily asked in AFSC to take on just the responsibility of somebody who was going to be away for a year, and I was just filling in on the Asia/Africa desk.

When Frank died, I was thinking of getting back into public welfare, and all the things I'd been needed an awful lot of support from home when I was not going to be having that. But I had a 90-year-old mother and 14- and 17-year-old children to look after, and I needed backup and support of a loving community. And certainly AFSC was that. I was hired to then take on the Africa program. I had no background as far as personal knowledge of having worked in the program, except I had had knowledge from my one year covering for somebody who had part of that responsibility.

So I jumped into a program, and I had to learn a lot with wonderful colleagues who taught me a lot. We worked out some pretty exciting programs that 14 years I was on a desk. We worked in six different countries with a strong focus on women and development. This was starting long before it got so popular, with the idea of developing cooperatives.

As I showed you the Mali mud cloth at the back of me, that is very much one of our programs of helping people use their own wonderful skills in developing products that they could sell in the country because that is also used as a cloth for men's ceremonial dress or even their practical, everyday dress – and other practical programs like making soap and raising small animals and chickens and things that they can sell locally and gather money in small cooperatives.

Mali particularly and other areas had been so out of the mainstream of concern. USAID and other big organizations were assuming that the men are the farmers, and therefore they were sending in tractors and all these much more mechanized and often requiring fuel – and the whole comment of USAID was requiring 75% of the money being spent in American food and products so that the money was not enhancing, in many cases, and certainly not reaching the level of a village woman.

We ran little workshops of having Mali women go to Ghana and learn from those Ghana women how they made soap and how they ran the markets. They were very much further advanced in their economic activities so that they could teach each other. It was not outsiders necessarily coming in. It was all – we had a very strong Mali staff and director. And so gradually getting that voice heard.

Women earning money and having enough money to buy the medication, put the food on the table, and pay the school fees for the child in their family put a new status in them. The men in the village – it was always the men in charge of women – began to even ask them what the bride price should be. They felt so elated that their voice was – somebody wanted to hear what they had to say.

Gradually getting women themselves to feel that they had self-worth and that they knew what they were talking about and people better listen to them.

It was interesting to watch how that began to work. They were much more able to look at their own circumstance and decide, begin to have a little voice on what happened to them. We even got the government of Mali to send women to the U.N. International Women's Conference in Nairobi, which was in the early '60s, instead of men, which they'd usually done. And they began to think, "It's a bit embarrassing to have every other country have women there, and isn't it kind of odd that you have only a man there?" Just kind of bringing these things to the surface and letting them happen. They were very strong women to step in who'd been trying to get their voices heard.

As an outside organization, it's often a role that seemed to me, at least in the very early days of development in Africa – it's very different now, where there's many more NGOs. And there's much louder voice and much more. But it's exactly the result of these small-scale programs that have enabled people to get the sense that they are worth being heard and to get their voices out into the world. And what they have to say is how their problems are defined and how they see the solutions.

So that was a very exciting time to be an Africa program. The countries were just becoming independent and black or majority rule. We were in Zimbabwe when that began the first time. And all our programs were related in one way or another to community participation and development.

**Christina Repoley: Wow. You've had an incredible lifetime of experiences. And just to shift a little bit, I wonder if – reflecting on all these communities you've been part of and all the Quakers and non-Quakers who have been part of this work, I have a question that I think has two sides of the same coin sort of thing. The first part is how do you think that this level of service and community involvement over all those kinds of projects that you've described – how did participating in those projects impact and influence the Quaker community? I know it transformed your life and many individual lives, but do you have any sense of how did it transform our whole faith community? And how did being part of those experiences change what it meant to be a Quaker?**

Pat Hunt: You mean for the whole Society of Friends, or just in – ?

**Christina Repoley: Yes.**

Pat Hunt: Wow. I certainly don't presume to speak for the whole Society. But as I've come to know Quakers around the world through the Friends World Committee – because committee-wise, I've been active with their Quaker United Nations program and was on the Friends World Committee's executive committee in the Americas section. So I deliberately wanted to stay in touch and increase my connection to larger members of the Society of Friends. And I have been deeply touched by the commitment of Friends in many parts of the world to their neighbors in that "love thy neighbor, care for neighbor, help the stranger," a very strong commitment to caring for their own communities, not only their Quaker community, but schools, hospitals that serve all people.

I think that AFSC as one of the service organizations, along with the British service organization, the Australian, New Zealand – there are many Quaker outlets for this kind of humanitarian concern overlaid with a strong sense of peace. I think it starts with humanitarian and may or may not reach into reconciliation, although that is increasingly the need. And many of these organizations are now working deliberately on alternatives to violence. That's been a very powerful program within the larger Quaker community.

So it seems to me in my limited experience, the interplay between faith and action that has been foundational in Quaker belief from the very beginning takes its shape in many different ways in different – in Bolivia, for example, it's amazing to hear what a little Quaker meeting in the Bolivian Andes is doing about homeless people that are coming their way as refugees and other things that I've heard tales about. It's very exciting to read about the results in Kenya and in the Great Lakes region of central Africa what those peace teams are doing.

So I think the influence of AFSC as one of the Quaker – it's going to be 100 years old this next year – has been a catalyst, and in many cases an enabler by money contributions and by staff contributions, to help some of these developments. I think the precedent – that the communities you work with are broad-based, interfaith, wide range of colors, shapes, backgrounds, ideas, politics has set a precedent – which I don't think AFSC can claim it as their unique precedent, but certainly a precedent that seems to be at work with other Quaker organizations.

I think that the label of being a Friend, and particularly in many countries, is you really are benefiting from a heritage, a legacy, of years and years of Quaker service. I'll never forget sitting in the Quaker Jeep at the port city of Haifa in Israel waiting while Frank was getting some of our supplies off the dock. And through the open window, a hand came in and dropped a lovely orange in my lap. And I looked up, and it was a middle-aged man. And he was in workman's

clothes and obviously a laborer from the dock, and he said, "This is thank you for saving my life when I was in Germany." And then he walked away.

And I realized that he had benefited probably from that *Quäkerspeisung*, as it was called, after World War I. There had been a very large feeding program for German children, which I think was hot cocoa and bread or something. So several times over the years, I've met people who comment, "That was my first knowledge of the word Quaker." And it was a *Quäkerspeisung*. It was Quaker food, and that was kind of symbolic.

I think that caring that we've been required by our faith to provide as part of our belief system – not uniquely to Friends by any means, but it certainly has been central to Friends to love thy neighbor, no exceptions, as I have on my door. And the no exceptions is sometimes a challenge, but that acceptance of people and their potential goodness.

I come away from all of this experience I now reflect on really reassured about the human spirit. It's amazing the strength that you encounter among the poorest and most deprived and suffering people – and that the greatest gift we can share is their acceptance, honoring their humanity, honoring their dignity, recognizing that we have each of us that capacity to rise to the best in ourselves, and speaking to the best in them, bringing it forward and learning, always learning and listening.

**Christina Repoley: Well, one last question from me is just to ask you to reflect on why you are supporting Quaker Voluntary Service and where you see what we're doing fitting into your legacy?**

Pat Hunt: Well, I'm just so tickled that the ideas that we were all working so hard to implement over the years, of engaging young people of all backgrounds in the opportunity of service at the same time as learning and using the energy and enthusiasm in a constructive way in the communities that are so needy and helpful – and yet I think the design that you have come up with in QVS meets so many of the challenges. One, as I said before, useful work, and it is not physical labor now. But it's skill, commitment, dedication, management, organization, things that you kind of grow up with in our society and our education obviously enhances. At the same time, making it practical so that people of all levels of income can participate, if they're not too heavily burdened with their school funds, their student loans.

That these organizations are willing to or need them as staff acknowledges that they're valuable enough to be paid for in a regular way, not full salary but enough at least to enable them to be living together and working. So I think there's a dignity in that on both sides, both the young person knowing that they are needed because they get money. That's kind of the American, Western way of defining whether you're worth anything. And secondly that the organization takes it seriously, that they're here with a regular job to be done and requiring performance and standard of performance, which is important so that you live in this real world of the adult working world. It's a step forward for a person to put on their resume. They've done something very practical and what skills they can exhibit.

But at the same time, the living together in a community of Fellows so that there's a chance for worship together, talking together, listening to each other's experiences, enhancing what you've learned, bringing your problems to each other. I think that in itself is another learning, growing, and, in a way, supportive experience. I think all of that leads to an experience that is enhancing the individuals – and any of them who happen to be also Quakers certainly enhancing the Society of Friends by bringing this kind of leadership in. I'm pleased to learn that some are now being assigned to Quaker organizations.

As we look back over the years with AFSC, you look at the leadership positions. They used to be CPS graduates, men – later, workcampers. And now, I bet if we looked ahead, up will go the hands of the QVS Fellows. We're all in our Religious Society of Friends, and our Philadelphia Yearly Meeting particularly – one of the issues in our own Quaker meeting, before I came to Kendal, was how to reach out to young people, how to let our young members of the meeting have the experience that their parents had as workcampers. That was one of the things everybody would say before I became a Friend, like I just did, it often came out of that kind of an experience.

Now it's the Friends schools, which is another very important service that I think Philadelphia Friends certainly have provided. As we look at meetings, I think that's what the yearly meeting looks towards as one of the sources of new Friends. But now QVS will become known as that, not that that's its purpose. But it's one of the results. And I think bringing in the reality of young people who are facing today's issues is important for us old folks.

Looking at our new administration that's coming up, I think there's a voice there that has now found what they think is their advocate. And I hope it turns out to be that. But it's going to behoove us in the Society of Friends to be ready to stand

on our Quaker principles and not change, and it may take us back to the days of early Friends or Vietnam era, where you had to stand up. You cannot allow basic principles to be stepped on. I think it's going to be an exciting time ahead for us, troubled but exciting.

As I went to meeting last Sunday, I looked at my door and what it has on it. It has "love thy neighbor" from FCNL, and next door to it was a Hillary sticker. And I had proudly put "I voted," that little sign you get stuck on when you vote, here anyway. And as I walked out the door, I thought, that's really very divisive. We're going to have to be together. And I yanked it off the door, thinking, there's a new era ahead. We've got to face the challenge of what's now here. And this is where we need young people with the energy and the insight and the knowledge in our meetings and in our society.

And I think QVS is a hotbed of revolution, I hope constructive revolution because we really need some basic changes. I think it's going to be the millennials that are going to have to help us out of this. You don't need to include this. My goodness, we didn't want to get into politics. But as I look at my own grandchildren – they're both very thoughtful, thinking – this is the kind of things that we talk about, what's ahead and how to get over those barriers that are separating us from so many people.

I live in the most privileged bubble you could possibly live in. Fortunately, we do have a tutoring program with our Mexican neighbors, and there are individuals out in the community, all of us different ways. But even so, the lifestyle is so comfortable. I feel guilty sometimes, but you can't live with guilt.

So that's why I'm enthusiastic about QVS. It's just when you get almost – I'll be 96 in December. I realize looking back to when I was 26 and all these years of in-between what a remarkable life that opened up for me. No merit of mine, just there it is, come bit by bit. And I feel so privileged that I somehow fell into the Quaker family. I thank Marian and David and all those that got me there, my own parents that were so open to each of us becoming the person we needed to be. All four of us, we were all – and education was their primary goal, even though neither my father or mother had been any higher than high school. Hardworking farmers, but that's what they were working for, get their daughters all educated. And we all did.

**Christina Repoley: Well, thank you for a lifetime of work that I think really paved the path for so many of us. We wouldn't be doing what we're doing without all the things that you did, and I'm very grateful to you.**

Pat Hunt: Thank you. That's sweet. Well, this wasn't as bad as I thought it would be.

**Oskar Castro: That's so awesome.**

**Christina Repoley: Thank you. Wow.**

Pat Hunt: You're such an interested face over there. It was wonderful to have two sets of eyes to talk to. How's it going for you?

**Oskar Castro: It's awesome. I think it's funny because as I ponder my time at AFSC – and I've said this a few times. I think I kind of framed it in that Friends Journal piece. They were asking for January submissions for what it's like to be a Quaker in a non-Quaker work environment or a Quaker in a Quaker work environment, et cetera, et cetera. It was a few things.**

Pat Hunt: Is this coming up?

**Oskar Castro: It's coming up in January. I don't know if my piece got picked yet, but my –**

Pat Hunt: I hope so.

**Oskar Castro: My position is that the difference here is that it's so much more about the intentionality of the spirit within the context of the work that we're doing. And I didn't have that much experience, except when I traveled around to Quaker meetings. I would go visit and do what I did, in terms of training or giving presentations to meetings about the work that we did, and then being in worship with those meetings – which is how I ultimately got pulled into making the dive into becoming a member of Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting. So I think that's the one thing I'm latching onto, among other things, is that this is the spirit. I'm being very grounded in my own commitment to Quaker values and principles because I'm living it. I'm modeling it. I'm helping these young ladies understand it as much as I understand it as well. So in the context of doing social justice work, for me it's really the amazing piece.**

Pat Hunt: That's wonderful.

**Oskar Castro: And I didn't get that so much at AFSC on the day-to-day. But in this work, it's on the day-to-day. It's amazing. Even with the conflicts that**

**happen, it's kind of like, "OK. What's our process? What's our values? Why are we here? Intentional community."**

Pat Hunt: I'm glad to hear you say that because one of the things I missed as AFSC moved away – well, the international side of AFSC was much more – not partisan Quaker, but identified itself as part of the international Quaker movement – and therefore was perhaps more intentional in its understanding of Quaker principles and using that in talking to governments and things to kind of explain. Because Quakers were not missionaries, and therefore you've got a lot of saying what they are then.

**Oskar Castro: Why are you here?**

Pat Hunt: And as AFSC chose – and I was 100% behind it – to focus on poverty, alienation, criminal justice, racism, all those American issues and deliberately and correctly hiring people of those communities who could themselves articulate what was needed and define, as we always did overseas – it was no different as far as philosophy. But the voices therefore in the AFSC local communities, the Philadelphia program and domestic program, were not reflecting the Religious Society of Friends as it is in this country.

We had many more black faces, people of various color, particularly the LGBT community. We got the Third World Coalition, the Women's Movement, and those all were very important catalysts to get something changed in AFSC's white structures. I was a part of all that time. Indeed, when I arrived and first took over from Dave Elder for the year in '72 that year, on my desk was a copy from – you'll know Mike Simmons.

**Oskar Castro: Michael Simmons, yeah.**

Pat Hunt: Saying, yet again – this was a copy. In the old days, it was copies, not email. Yet again, AFSC has appointed a white woman when it could well have been an active black American for a job that's only one year. And my head kind of spun because I had – we were just back from Jerusalem. But before that, I'd been working in a totally black community of Chester under totally black management in the public welfare system. And I was the minority always. I just couldn't quite understand what was happening because I hadn't gotten into this race business as such because that wasn't the issue in Chester. It was desperate poverty and lack of services, et cetera, et cetera.

So anyway, I soon began to see what was going on. And Mike and I became good friends, but it was interesting that I realized that people who were not close to AFSC began to see that it was not the same organization. There's no place for a young person in workcamps. You're a Quaker, and that means you won't get hired. All these negative stereotypes began.

And one of the last committee jobs after I left – even when I came here in the '90s, I joined a board committee on personnel that was rewriting the personnel manual and ended up clerking it, trying to bring all the regional policies and international policies in a single manual. Everyone had their own. This was one of the reasons – in the end, looking back over the history of the union in AFSC, that's why it probably occurred because everyone was doing it according to their sites. There was not a common expectation or assumptions or was there even sometimes equity in how it was carried out. Somebody got more favored than others, et cetera, et cetera. Trying to regularize that and make it clear that this is what we stood on and these were the principles, et cetera, was an eight-year job.

I realized in that process that at the point the AFSC union came along, it was very good for AFSC to have to pull up its socks and follow the law and get in affirmative action and all those things that required you to fulfill the law, but that didn't mean be alien at all to the basic principles. There was lots we learned. We had so many conversations on this and the philosophy behind it. Dealing with then a – not white only but – primarily all white Quaker board that sometimes – anyway, we had quite an interesting – it was another whole experience looking in on AFSC.

But I came away again deeply impressed with the quality of our staff and the commitment and the Mikes and the others that are uncomfortable here but deep down – there's a wonder. He had spent four years in prison. During that time, he'd studied Gandhi. And we organized, when I was on the Asia desk – this was back in the '70s. They chose Third World Coalition. Third World at that point was going out of style in the world. And Sally Harrison, who was the secretary on the desk, and I decided we were not going to – that leadership of that coalition better know what really third world means, so we organized by their help and our own finances' help to get a traveling seminar in India to study Gandhian principles.

**Oskar Castro: And Mike was on that?**

Pat Hunt: I beg your pardon?

**Oskar Castro: Mike Simmons was on that?**

Pat Hunt: Mike was one of them. There were two others, one a Latina from the West Coast, another also AFSC staff member who came out to be the treasurer. I've forgotten her name. There were three. And between the coalition and our desk's funds gave them a monthlong traveling seminar under our India program, which was again enhancing seminars related to Gandhi. So we fitted them into the program. And off they went.

And we did an orientation of course at Pendle Hill before they left. Horace Alexander, who was the Quaker closest to Gandhi – British Quaker but who by then was living at Crosslands actually, an older man – was part of our orientation we tried to bring in. I'll never forget the evening when Horace was talking about Gandhi, and Mike was, at his feet almost, listening. And Mike himself had read so much and knew so much about this nonviolent approach, and they were just on the same wavelength.

Then at the end of Horace's presentation, he turned to Mike and said, "Now tell me about Chavez. I need to know what's happening in this country." And there was an equally kind of respectful and excited listening on the part of Horace to hear all that Mike had to say on that side. It was such a moment of two eager, young, black activists and a dignified old –

**Christina Repoley: Old, British white –**

Pat Hunt: 90-year-old Quaker. And such respect going back between them. So I do regret sometimes – although I'm not at all close to AFSC now, so I can't comment. But –

**Oskar Castro: Maybe we can change that.**

Pat Hunt: Whether we're out, whether there is willingness to kind of articulate Quaker values, not necessarily in Quaker terms, but in a way that continues to respect them.

**Christina Repoley: Yeah, Oskar and I were just talking about this this morning that a lot of – my experience with QVS when I talk to people who are older and aren't as in touch with AFSC anymore but used to be, I get one of two reactions usually. On the one hand, people say, "Well, isn't what you're doing what AFSC does?" They don't know that AFSC doesn't do it anymore. Or the other reaction is a lot of anger towards AFSC for not working with Quakers**

anymore. I think there has been – maybe it's getting better – a lack of communication and really conveying what AFSC is doing now. And like you said, I think it's doing great work and went in a direction that's very justified and understandable and important, but maybe didn't communicate it as well to the older Friends community.

**Oskar Castro:** That critique is still sort of alive.

Pat Hunt: I need to excuse myself a minute.

**Oskar Castro:** That was one of the things I heard from David Henkel.

Pat Hunt: I'll try not to stumble over all your paraphernalia. Thank you.

**Oskar Castro:** Sure.

[END OF AUDIO]