

# *The Threshing Floor*

May 2019

**Newsletter of the Guild for Psychological Studies**

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**Guild Vision:** The Guild envisions a world in which the significance of each person's truth, authority, and inspired purpose finds fulfillment in life and community.

**Guild Mission:** Guild seminars offer a way of psychological and spiritual transformation that inspires individuals to live their purpose, expand consciousness, and discover and create meaning in their lives and community.

## **Shepherding Our Mission**

*Submitted by Elizabeth Bremer,  
Secretary of the Board*

It is the time of year when we begin to prepare for the annual election of Board members, which is held each August. The Guild Board of Directors plays a central role in ensuring that the vision and the mission of the Guild continue to be realized. If you would like to participate in this vital work of the Guild, nominations for directors are being received from now through mid-July.

The Board provides strategic, policy, program and operations oversight in order to further our mission and vision. Board members consider questions such as these: How can leaders be supported and encouraged to grow and create programs? How can the Guild's programs reach new participants? How can leadership be developed for the future? How can a healthy financial basis be maintained in order for the work to continue?

Currently, the board meets approximately every-other-month, on a Sunday afternoon, in the San Francisco Bay area. Though not preferable, it is sometimes possible for members who cannot travel to a meeting to participate by conference call, and video conferencing may also be considered. Between meetings, communication is usually by group e-mail, and members contribute a few hours to projects individually or with others.

The current directors are Elizabeth Bremer, Hal Childs, Denise Dinwiddie, Harry Henderson, and Jennifer Morgan Mansfield.

If you are interested in nominating yourself or someone else for this central work of the Guild, please contact any current board member via the Guild office. We would be glad to answer questions about board work or about the nomination/election process. We look forward to hearing from you!

## **Easter Morning**

*By Nils Peterson*

Easter morning - and I wonder what death in me has risen. Outside, a rumpus of birds, yesterday's strong winds and sharp cold, gone, the day feels mellow, its light a pale gold.

I sit up in my bed, not quite at ease. I can't remember ever believing in the resurrection of the body, yet, something now struggles out of the grave, some love of life, of love, of holiness and some other thing runs to roll aside the rock.

A poem from my new book, *All the Marvelous Things*, available from Amazon. Nils Peterson

*This poem is being reprinted because several lines were accidentally deleted from the end in the last issue.*

## Response to Chaos by Lisa Yount

"Goddess with No Face" as a response to the essay by Barb Cashman.

### THE GODDESS WITH NO FACE AND NO SHAPE

I am  
Nothing Left.  
I can't speak.  
I can't see.  
I can't hear.  
I can't walk.  
I am a worn black stone  
in a halo of pain.  
I am alone,  
no future, no past, no memories.  
No one else was ever here,  
No one else will be here, ever.  
I have lost all I ever was...  
But I have not lost who I am.  
Inside me the Big Bang is waiting to happen  
all over again.  
I don't need the universe I lost.  
I *am* the universe.  
And I *will* be born.



*Blue and Purple Flowers by Lisa Yount*

## **"leave the dead to bury their own dead"**

*By Hal Childs*

To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." But he said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." (Lk 9:60; §81B)

Generally speaking, when we read this passage from the Q document represented in Luke, we would say that there is a stark conflict between attending to a family funeral and the "kingdom of God" From the point of view of the text, whether Jesus said such a thing or not, the value of the "kingdom of God" takes precedence over a normal family religious ritual like a funeral. In fact, the imperative, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead," is shockingly heartless and cold. Not only in an ancient culture, but in any culture, the funeral rite of burying one's father would be of the highest order. This makes the injunction to forget about the dead and go and proclaim the kingdom of God all the more irreverent and even unbelievable. The juxtaposition between the deeply embedded natural and cultural expectations surrounding the funeral rite for a recently deceased father and the call to proclaim the kingdom of God is extreme. Even today, such an injunction would be shocking, unbelievable and considered a bit insane. But, there he was, Jesus Christ, the supposed savior of love, demanding an absolute commitment to the "kingdom of God" at the expense of renouncing a profoundly significant family and religious obligation. Was this just a matter of conflicting values, or was there more at stake?

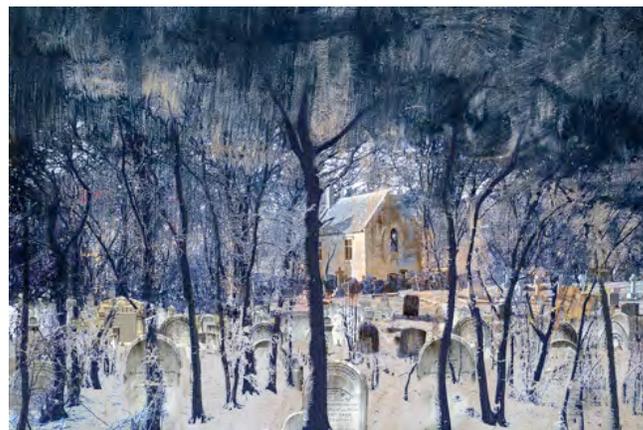
The "kingdom of God" (and we do not really know what that was back then) in this text represented something of absolute importance that transcended ordinary natural family and traditional religious bonds. It was not simply that burying one's father came in second, or had to wait. No, the son's desire and need to bury his dead father was completely negated by the injunction to "proclaim the kingdom of God." But, the need and desire of the son was not merely personal, it was an entire social and cultural orientation of consciousness that was negated. From the point of view of the text, the claim of the "kingdom of God" was absolute and the claim of the traditional religious rite was irrelevant. It seems there was no in between, no middle ground, that might have mediated between those two positions. The kingdom of God made an absolute *claim*, a *claim* that truly negated the prevailing social-religious consciousness that was simply taken for granted.

What makes such a claim that disrupts ordinary consciousness? Speaking theologically, it is referred to as a *call* from God, a vocation that reorients a life in a new direction: The Bible is full of characters who were called away from their normal social roles. From a Jungian point of view, it would be called the imperative of the Self in contrast to the ego. Another perspective is that it is soul's claim of a new truth. Soul in this usage is neither a God nor a Self, but a new form of consciousness that makes itself felt and known intuitively in those who sense its claim. Soul, in this larger sense, is first of all the given cultural norm of truth that then, historically, negates itself and transforms itself into a new form of truth. Soul is the internal ferment of culture and history, creating, destroying and recreating itself. In our passage, the "kingdom of God" represented a new order of truth that negated the prevailing truth (that was not yet old). Notice that the two truths do not exist in tolerance side by side, but that the new truth negates the status quo truth. The traditional truth is left to bury itself.

In the case of this New Testament passage, the "kingdom of God" was the newly emerging Christian kingdom of God, and the dead who were to bury their own dead were associated with Yahweh-consciousness. Conventionally this is thought of in terms of a conflict between Christians and Jews, that is, in terms of people. But, an approach in terms of soul, soul as the general ground of consciousness that is impersonal, views the prevailing truth giving birth to the new truth, while the truth that gave birth eventually fades. The new truth wants to propagate itself, and the old truth is left to its own devices (self-burial).

What was at stake in our text was more than a conflict between two gods, Yahweh vs. Christ, and it was more than competing social values: our passage gives voice to what was an emergent radically new order of reality. Yahweh-consciousness was a geographically and people bound consciousness, tied to a temple in a specific place and concrete practices in society, politics and economics; we could say that its consciousness was earth-bound. In contrast, the Christian kingdom of God was not of this world: "His disciples said to him, When will the Kingdom come? Jesus said: It will not come by expectation; they will not say: "See, here", or: "See, there". But the Kingdom of the Father is spread upon the earth and men do not see it." (*Gospel of Thomas*, logia 113) The Christian kingdom of God was not tied to any specific geographical location nor to a specific people. It was not a visible or tangible reality, it was an entirely new order of consciousness, a new truth. It was also not a subjective personal inner experience, which is a decidedly modern phenomenon. It was a new truth that expressed itself as the "kingdom of God" intimately associated with the incarnate Jesus Christ. That was then. This is now.

We are offering a seminar in the fall of this year, "Wrestling with Truth." One of our primary questions is, who or what are the dead today who are left to bury their own dead? It is my opinion that the Christian soul-truth and the modern historical-critical soul-truth have faded enough to be considered among the "dead" that are burying themselves. However, the Jewish and Christian texts are still with us, lingering within our collective psyche, haunting us with their historical significance. What is their value now? Do they speak to a new soul-truth that is emerging in our era that is negating the previous soul-truth, for...what? Or, is there a new soul-truth, a new idea of soul itself that can be applied to these once central cultural-historical texts that have defined our civilization for over fifteen hundred years that could reveal a new truth that has been there all along? And equally important, in our personal lives, what challenge do we hear in "leave the dead to bury their own dead?"



*Yet the Sun Returns by Lisa Yount*

## May Birthdays

Ruth McMullen	May 2
Rosemary Hayes	May 3
Caitriona Marcus	May 3
Karen Maki	May 5
Joyce Samati	May 6
Martha Ann Salt	May 8
Susan Thompson	May 8
Debra Anderson	May 9
Jon Colladay	May 9
Susan Isaac	May 14
John Lee	May 14
Hal Childs	May 17
Fred Davis	May 18
Julie Ristich Malm	May 27
Laura Grosvenor	May 28
Sarah Eeles	May 29
Nina Lawrence	May 31



## Wrestling with Truth

A seminar presented by the  
**Guild for Psychological Studies**  
September 28 (Sat) – October 6 (Sun), 2019

In our upside-down society, where media and technology are appropriating the whole world, and the very idea of truth is questioned, what will help us live meaningful lives in an age of pervasive anxiety?

Though it has waned and is no longer the guiding light of our civilization, the Judeo-Christian tradition has been the archetypal DNA of our collective soul. Unseen, it works still in the background of our lives.

After many decades of work with the historical Jesus, the Guild now turns its attention to consciousness, truth and the end of meaning. The death of God symbolizes a new status of consciousness that influences us all. What does the death of Meaning, a brand-new event in the history of the world, have to teach us?

What can we learn about what has happened to consciousness over the last three thousand years by taking a fresh psychological look at the Judeo-Christian tradition? How do Abraham, Moses, Job and Yahweh, along with Jesus Christ, illuminate the evolution of consciousness from a new soul perspective?

We will seek a new truth embedded in the teachings of Jesus that reflects the historical self-negating and self-transforming work of soul, which is truth ever recreating itself. As we wrestle with truth we wrestle with ourselves and engage with what is called soul-making, or making soul real.

The seminar process uses a modified Socratic method to guide group discussion. We honor the dignity of each individual to express themselves honestly and move at their own pace. Mutual respect will support us as we engage difficult truths and new perspectives.

Our work together will be enriched by the use of non-verbal approaches: meditation, expressive arts, music, body movement and awareness, and silence.

**Special Note:** All applicants, please include a letter stating your interest in attending this seminar. If you are new to the Guild's work, please tell us a little about yourself and your psychological and spiritual journey.

**Location:** Four Springs, Middletown CA

**Leaders:** Hal Childs, PhD, MFT and Patricia Calcagno Stenger, MA, MFT

**Fee:** \$1,495, plus a non-refundable fee of \$50 with registration.

Scholarships and payment plans are available.

Contact for more information: Hal Childs, 415-573-2469; [halchilds@gmail.com](mailto:halchilds@gmail.com)

Register at <https://guildsf.org/online-seminar-registration/>



## Stay Connected

Bob Ridder, Administrative Coordinator, is available for all inquiries by phone at (415) 561-2385, or by email at [office@guildsf.org](mailto:office@guildsf.org).

Send your email address to [office@guildsf.org](mailto:office@guildsf.org) so that we can keep you connected and up-to-date on Guild events. Also be sure that we have your current mailing address so that we are able to send you this yearly edition of the newsletter. Please keep us updated with your address changes.

### Mailing Address

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San Francisco, CA 94129-0385

### Guild Website

Visit [www.guildsf.org](http://www.guildsf.org) for information about seminars and events, and to register for seminars. The website also has general information about the Guild, past issues of the Threshing Floor, relevant news, and links to resources. If you would like to post information of interest to the Guild community, please email [harryhenderson51@gmail.com](mailto:harryhenderson51@gmail.com), our web administrator.

### Guild Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/guildsf>, launched in January! If you haven't yet, please "friend" and "like" us!

### Newsletter

To receive 12 issues of *The Threshing Floor* a year, please contact the Guild office. There is no charge for an e-mail subscription. For a print subscription, please send a check for \$25 to the Guild office.

Items for inclusion in the Threshing Floor should be mailed to the Guild Office, Attn. Threshing Floor Editor, or emailed to [office@guildsf.org](mailto:office@guildsf.org). The deadline for each issue is the 20th of the month. Items received after that date will be published the following month.

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Distribution: Bob Ridder

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this newsletter (by contributors other than staff and directors) are the writers' and not necessarily an official position of the Guild.

## Publishing House sales – books and CDs

Order publications on the Guild website, or contact Carina Ravely at [guildpublishing@yahoo.com](mailto:guildpublishing@yahoo.com).

### Donations

Many thanks to our donors! Your financial support in any amount helps the Guild with seminars and other events, with the training of leaders, with outreach, and with other new and ongoing efforts. Because the Guild is a registered nonprofit organization, with 501(c)(3) status, your contribution may be tax deductible. Donations should be directed to the Guild office address, or you may donate online using the PayPal link you'll find by selecting the Make a Donation link on the main page of our website.

### Volunteers

There are several people who fill necessary volunteer roles in the Guild. If you would like to be a Guild volunteer, please contact the Guild office at [office@guildsf.org](mailto:office@guildsf.org) and let us know particular volunteer roles that appeal to you. Currently volunteers are members of the editorial staff for the Threshing Floor; members of the Board of Directors; serve as continuing education coordinator; train to serve as seminar coordinator, committee person or cook; provide transportation to/from seminars for attendees; help to catalog or research Guild archive materials; write reviews for Guild books and other publications; etc.

### Friends and Members

Friends of the Guild are donors and others interested in receiving Guild information who are not Voting Members. Voting membership requires active participation in some form of leadership or committee role, or other volunteer effort, and the payment of annual dues. Voting members may receive a print subscription to the Threshing Floor upon request.

### Board of Directors

Elizabeth Bremer, Secretary  
Hal Childs, President  
Denise Dinwiddie  
Harry Henderson, Treasurer  
Jennifer Morgan Mansfield,  
Vice President

