

Springfield Memorial
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**QUAKER
INFLUENCE**
On American Ideals

AN OVERVIEW

by
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Introduction

How does one evaluate influences, or measure contributions, in relation to spiritual ideals?

The most important values in life do not lend themselves to precise measurements. For example, the *atmosphere* in a Meeting or in a home is vitally important, but one cannot devise any kind of mechanical instrument which will give exact readings of this kind.

The Quaker influence in America—how great has it been during the past three hundred years? Numerically, Friends are such a small portion of the population that one might wonder why the question should be raised at all. As a matter of fact, the influence of Friends in shaping the ideals of our country in its formative years was amazingly great.

Does this influence continue today? In what way, and in what measure?

The subject is complex and far-reaching. Then why undertake to deal with it in a small booklet?—For the simple reason that there is still a place and a need for brief, easily read booklets which give an overview of the subjects under consideration.

Hopefully, readers will become interested in further study.

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The Quakers Came Early

George Fox, founder of the Society of Friends, was born in England soon after the Pilgrims sailed for America on the Mayflower.

The Quaker movement came into being and into full strength during the rather long period of years when the thirteen British-American Colonies were slowly being settled on our eastern seaboard, during the critical formative period when these Colonies were taking direction for the future. This fortunate timing of the early Quaker presence in the Colonies made possible a maximum influence on the ideals and policies which would be followed in the emerging, developing nation-to-be.

Although the Quakers were not the first English settlers to arrive in the New World, considerable numbers did come more than a century before the Revolutionary War. In North Carolina, for example, William Edmundson and George Fox made their epic journeys to the Albemarle Country in 1672. Carolina Quakers and others were able to observe a Tercentenary some years before the national Bicentennial.

Historians and sociologists have often referred to America as the great "melting pot" for many peoples and many nations. In keeping with this figure of speech, one could say that quite a bit of Quaker flavor was added to the mixture, and that the general texture of the final product was greatly improved by this addition. We hope that it is in keeping with Quaker truthfulness (and humility) to say that the whole was spiritually enriched by what the Quakers had to contribute.

On the following pages the Quaker influence will be examined—briefly, of course. The emphasis will be on positive contributions, since there is neither time nor occasion to analyze our shortcomings, and the many things which we may have

failed to contribute. Such inadequacies will be implied when we admit that the Quaker influence was not sufficiently strong to steer our country away from a number of major national calamities—such as our recent military involvement in Vietnam.

The point for continued emphasis is that the influence of the Quakers was, and is, far greater than most people realize, far out of proportion to numbers. A Roman Catholic priest, William J. Whalen, is quoted as saying (1967): "If the world's 550 million Catholics exercised as much influence in proportion to their numbers as do the Quakers, the Kingdom of God would be near at hand." This may be an overstatement, but it does emphasize our claim.

Henry Seidel Canby, writing in the *Saturday Review of Literature* January 2, 1926, said:

The mental habits and ideals of the Quakers are stronger in the American mind today than anything else that has been brought overseas, and only to be equalled by the effects of the native environment itself . . . The Quakers permeated every corner of the infant country . . . Indeed, one need not fear overstatement in saying that the fundamental qualities of what can properly be called the American brand of idealism are essentially Quaker in character and largely Quaker in origin.

In case one tends to feel that there is indeed some measure of exaggeration in these evaluations, it is helpful to remember that at some period, and for some duration of time, the Quaker influence was very strong in five of the thirteen Colonies: Pennsylvania, Delaware, Rhode Island, New Jersey and North Carolina. In each instance, this influence was in operation when these Colonies were in their formative periods.

Three outstandingly influential Quaker Governors should be mentioned: William Penn in Pennsylvania, Stephen Hopkins in Rhode Island, and John Archdale in Carolina. Stephen Hopkins, known as one of the makers of the American nation, was the Governor of Rhode Island for nine terms.

A few individuals here and there, such as those quoted above, are clearly aware of the Quaker influence in early America, but generally speaking, this is not the case. The National Bicentennial Celebration has tended to place the major emphasis upon violence and the military aspects of American independence, neglecting to give due credit to some of the great formative influences which were operating in the early days of our country. This is not surprising, since the President's Committee was composed chiefly of politicians, to the exclusion of historians, educators, religious leaders and sociologists.

One popular misconception as to why Friends came to Ameri-

ca may need some correction. The trite answer is that they came seeking religious freedom. At best, this is only a half-truth. The first Friends to arrive in the American colonies came as missionaries, or evangelists, whichever term you prefer.¹ They came with an apostolic zeal for proclaiming the Gospel, the Truth, as they understood it and had experienced it. In fact, moving to America as an escape from persecution was not approved by early Quaker leaders. As the years passed, many Friends did migrate to America to find greater religious freedom; but this is only one part of the story. Great numbers of Friends, especially Irish Friends in the mid-18th Century, came as an escape from poverty and adverse economic conditions.

¹In the brief period from 1655 to 1662 no less than sixty men and women brought the Quaker message to the New World.

Ideals of Freedom— Religious and Political

While our most immediate concern is religious freedom, it is necessary to remember that human freedom is indivisible, and cannot flourish in one area of life while being destroyed in another.

The struggle between ideals of liberty and authoritarian oppression is as old as human history. Without probing the distant past, perhaps it is sufficient for the moment to point to the teachings of Jesus, and to the New Testament as a whole, as a background for the freedom of conscience which has meant so much to the Christian Church in general, and to the Society of Friends in particular.

America will be forever indebted to the Quakers for being in the vanguard of those who brought ideals of liberty to the New World, where the climate was favorable for growth and development. William Penn in particular promoted the concept of religious freedom, the separation of Church and State, and government recognition of the rights of conscience. All of this was based on a profound respect for human dignity and human rights. William Penn's Experiment in Pennsylvania was a notable application of human freedom within the bounds of benevolent governmental discipline.

In emphasizing Quaker contributions to religious liberty in our country, we are not unmindful of the influence of many other groups. It is just that the limitations of space in a small booklet require us to stay close to the subject at hand.

Each of the American Colonies where the Quaker influence was predominant became a haven for people of all religious persuasions. Having suffered persecution themselves, they never imposed it upon others.

By way of strong contrast, the Puritans in Massachusetts were not willing to grant religious freedom to others. They actually hanged four Quakers on Boston Common—whose only crime was preaching Truth as they understood it. One of these martyrs was a woman, Mary Dyer.¹

When news of these Quaker executions in Boston reached King Charles II in England, he dispatched a special messenger to carry an order that these hangings must stop. Ironically, this messenger was himself a Quaker. When he undertook to deliver his message, Governor Endicott commanded that his hat should be struck from his head. Upon learning that he was the King's special messenger, his hat was replaced, and the Governor removed his own!

These Quaker martyrdoms on Boston Common and the King's message of 1661 were dramatic beginning points of religious liberty in America.

No better tribute can be paid these Quaker martyrs than that of Whittier, who wrote:

The religious freedom of our age is the legacy of the heroic confessors who suffered and died rather than yield their honest convictions. We who inherit the faith and name of these noble men and women who gave up home and life for freedom of worship, have no desire to be complimented at their expense. . . We look back . . . with gratitude to God for their examples of obedience unto death.

A further glimpse of the birth of religious liberty in America appears in the "Flushing Remonstrance" of 1667. (A commemorative postage stamp was issued 300 years later.) It seems that the area of Flushing, New York, was settled by a group of non-conformists, probably from Flushing, Holland. A large number of Quakers also settled in this vicinity. In spite of this fact, Governor Peter Stuyvesant ordered that only the Dutch Reformed religion could be practiced there, and that any citizen harboring a Quaker could be fined fifty florins. The Flushing town meeting was highly displeased with this order, and issued a protest, a "Remonstrance". Governor Stuyvesant was very angry when he read the Remonstrance. He dismissed the board, fined the sheriff, and demanded an apology. For five years the Quakers held meetings in the woods. A sympathizer finally opened his house to them, only to be imprisoned and deported. In the long run, however, religious liberty prevailed.

¹To the credit of the present State of Massachusetts, it should be noted that a beautiful statue in memory of Mary Dyer was erected on Boston Common two centuries after her execution.

With religious liberty existing in the Colonies where the Quaker influence was strong, one may logically assume that this fact had a profound effect on the other provinces. In these brief pages, no attempt will be made to document this premise. It is sufficient for our present purpose to know that religious liberty did become a part of American ideals, and that Quakers contributed richly to this development.

One vitally important element which Friends brought into the general concept of freedom, whether religious or political, was that of individual responsibility and disciplined lives. As we all know, freedom without a corresponding measure of personal responsibility, conscientiously exercised, amounts to mere license, which in turn is destructive of all human values. In the highest sense of the word, religious liberty involves far more than mere freedom from persecution. As the Congregationalist John Adams said, "Statesmen may plan and speculate for Liberty, but it is Religion and Morality alone upon which Freedom can securely stand." One of the hallmarks of the Quaker faith is a high level of personal integrity, based on deep religious convictions.

In summary it could be said that the Society of Friends brought into the general concept of freedom in our country such fundamental qualities as clear sensitivity to the dignity and equality of all men and women; a deep concern for individual self-realization in terms of spiritual experience; an advanced perception of the moral decisions which have to be made concerning participation in war; and an awareness of Divine imperatives relating to social justice.

3

Justice For The Oppressed

When Europeans first came to America, they found a native people who had lived on the land for thousands of years. Surely this gave them basic rights of ownership.

All of us know something of the way in which the Incas and the Aztecs were mercilessly plundered and slaughtered by the Spaniards. But this is not a part of our story at the moment.

When other Europeans arrived on the east coast of America—Dutch, English, Swedes—they too had to formulate some policy of dealing with the natives. The story is long and complicated. In brief, one could say that the Quakers were not the first to arrive, nor were they the first to *pay* the Indians for their land. On the whole, however, William Penn's treaty (really, it was many treaties) stands as an example of justice, respect, and good will. And it does stand in stark contrast with what happened in other places. In Massachusetts, for example, when a Boston trader was killed by the Indians in 1636, the Puritans responded with an attack on a Pequot camp, slaughtering some 500 men, women and children!

As a matter of interest, Benjamin West, American-born Quaker painter who spent most of his life in England, undertook to portray William Penn's famous Shackamaxon Treaty on canvas. In turn, Edward Hicks, a lifelong Quaker, perhaps the outstanding "primitive" painter in the early history of our country, covered many canvases with variations of Benjamin West's earlier painting. Even in his many paintings of "The Peaceable Kingdom", Hicks managed to include some background image of William Penn making friends with the Indians, and paying them for the land which he needed for his Quaker settlement.

The two ways of dealing with the Indians are illustrated by two well-known paintings of our day. The first is "Pilgrims Going to Church", by G. H. Broughton, in which the women and children are being "protected" by men carrying guns. The second and later painting is "None Shall Make Them Afraid", by J. Doyle Penrose, which depicts an actual incident which

took place at a little meeting-house in Saratoga County, New York, in 1775. A little group of unarmed Quakers were worshipping in silence when a group of raiding Indians appeared. When the Indians saw that no one was armed, and that they were worshipping the Great Spirit, they quietly laid down their bows and arrows and sat down themselves until the close of the meeting. Zebulon Hoxie, who was sitting at the head of the meeting, invited the warriors to his home for food. They accepted the food, then disappeared as quietly as they had come.

So long as Quaker policies prevailed in Pennsylvania, there was harmony and good-will between the Red Man and his pale-face neighbor. Sometimes Quaker hunters slept in Indian wigwams; sometimes Indian hunters slept in Quaker cabins. Occasionally at Yearly Meeting time, children were left with Indian neighbors while the parents were away. There was mutual trust and good will.

It might be said that the highest personal embodiment of the Quaker attitude toward the Indian was found, not in William Penn, but in John Woolman. When Woolman expressed a concern to visit the Indians, he indicated that "love was the first motion." His respect for them was such that he desired to *learn* from them—" . . . that I might feel and understand their life, and the Spirit they live by, if haply I might receive some instruction from them. . . ." As one would expect, the Indians received him warmly and kindly.

After the Civil War, many years later, Quaker work in Indian schools on reservations was outstanding, but this story cannot be recounted here.

If the Quaker way could have prevailed, how differently history would have been written! Many militarists have said that the Quaker way did not work. In the light of history, it was the only way which did work—from the standpoint of Christian ethics.

Another area in which Quakers pioneered was in dealing with the institution of slavery. This problem was an enormous one, the effects of which still linger with us. Hopefully, a few brief statements can indicate something of the Quaker influence with reference to this problem.

As early as 1688, Friends in the Germantown (Pennsylvania) Meeting presented a paper to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in which they said, "There is liberty of conscience here which is right and reasonable, and there ought to be likewise liberty of body." No one could deny the truth of this first protest against the institution of slavery, but ancient and established customs do not go away easily. The plea was smothered for fear that such a radical ideal might cause dissension. The greater part of an-

other century had to pass before the general Quaker conscience was clearly awake on this vital issue.

In the course of time Woolman and a host of others began to plead with Friends, and with people of good will among all religious faiths, to abolish this evil from the American culture.

When the Founding Fathers of our country adopted a Declaration of Independence in 1776, it contained these words: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, and that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Yet most of these men owned slaves! They too were afraid of explosive issues.

In the meantime, Woolman had brought slavery to a decisive issue in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in 1758. A minute was adopted which earnestly advised Friends who owned slaves to set them free, and to make needful provisions for their continued well-being.

An interesting sidelight on the celebration of the Bicentennial year in our country is the fact that in the very year 1776 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting directed that those who persisted in holding slaves be disowned. In the same year, 1776, New York and North Carolina Yearly Meetings made it a disciplinary offense to buy, sell, or hold slaves. Baltimore Yearly Meeting followed the next year and Virginia a little later. Friends were ringing liberty bells for others—slaves!

In this respect, as in many others, Friends were a full century ahead of their times in facing up to a great moral issue. Not only in the South, but everywhere, Friends were working for the emancipation of Blacks, while clergymen in many other churches were either ignoring the issue or trying to justify the institution of slavery by citing Old Testament customs and statements, claiming in particular that Noah's drunken curse placed on Ham expressed God's will and God's decree for all Blacks for all time to come.

It is not too much to say that the campaign against the evils of slavery had its origins in the Quaker conscience. And if we wish to go a step further, we could say that the Quaker conscience was rooted in the New Testament teachings of Jesus. Our regret is that it took Friends as long as it did to come clear on the issue themselves.

Almost precisely a century *after* the Emancipation Proclamation by President Lincoln, a noted member of the United States Senate stated that he had changed his position with reference to fair treatment for Blacks. Said he, "It is a great idea whose time has come!" He was trailing the Quakers by two hundred years!

4

Ideals of Equality

The basic concept of the equality of all persons had its origins, from a religious standpoint, in the teachings of Jesus, and in the New Testament as a whole. St. Paul, struggling hard to break away from his early background, stated, "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek." And again he said, "In Christ there is neither bond nor free, male nor female."

The Society of Friends simply took the teachings of the New Testament and put them into actual practice. Early Friends accepted the precepts of Jesus as authoritative, then lived accordingly, even though such practices ran counter to the accepted customs of their times. They refused to uncover their heads and bow before the so-called nobility, and to address such persons with flattering terms such as "My Lord," "Your Highness," and "Your Excellency." They were willing to go to prison rather than to indulge in what seemed to them to be a form of human idolatry.

Does it seem to us that early Friends went to extremes insisting on what they called the plain language, and other related customs? It is helpful to remember that one extreme calls forth another, and that the nobility-system in 17th Century England with its high-born and low-born castes required a vigorous protest. Friends were deeply convinced in their souls that all persons stand on level ground before God and among one another. They were willing to suffer for this ideal, and to go to prison rather than to compromise their convictions.

Friends brought this ideal to America, and eventually it became a part of the American tradition and heritage. This is not to say, of course, that the ideal has even yet been fully realized with relation to minority groups. But more about this later.

Friends were by no means alone in bringing this ideal to the

New World. Thousands of other immigrants felt the same way. It was just that the Quakers were out front again, pioneering in religious and social reform. It was a natural development for the hardy individualistic settlers in the various Colonies to join ranks in deciding that there should never be a titled nobility amongst them.

It may be helpful to keep reminding ourselves as we go along that we are talking about the Quaker *influence* in our country. The Quakers have always been a small minority of the total population, and it should not be expected that they were always a *determining* force. It is merely that they exerted an amazingly strong influence.

In this matter of equality Friends did much in the direction of fair and equal treatment for women. (They have not yet wholly succeeded.) In church affairs, Friends were three centuries or more ahead of most other Christian bodies.

As a matter of historical fact, the first Quakers to arrive on American soil were Quaker women—preachers, or missionaries, as one might choose to call them. The coming of Mary Fisher and Ann Austin to Boston caused consternation, as indicated in George Bishop's statement to the magistrates in 1660: "Two poor women arriving in your harbor so shook ye, to the everlasting shame of ye, and of your established peace and order, as if a formidable army had invaded your borders." Incidentally, their books were burned by the town hangman. (The moral of all this: Never underestimate. . .)

One further note of interest: the Quaker wedding ceremony has never included the word "obey".

Among Friends, women sat as equals with the men in meeting for worship, and spoke in ministry as they felt Divinely impelled. All official positions are open to women, from clerk of the Yearly Meeting to elder in the local congregation.

In domestic and civic affairs, even in the nineteenth century, women were barred from the right to make contracts and to testify in courts of justice—along with "children, idiots and Chinamen!" One would expect Quaker activists to do something about this situation. And this is precisely what happened.

A century ago, Lucretia Mott, a beautiful and brilliant young Quaker woman, preached in Philadelphia. She spoke in open forums on behalf of the abolition of slavery and other reforms, often imperiling her personal safety in doing so. When she and her husband, James Mott, were sent to London as delegates to an anti-slavery conference, she found that James Mott could take his place, but that she, being a woman, had to sit in the gallery, and could neither speak nor vote.

Another woman delegate, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, was also

barred. Both were highly indignant, and resolved to hold a convention on women's rights when they got home.

This they did. At Seneca Falls, New York, they called together the first convention on women's rights. They wrote out a "declaration of independence" modeled on the great Declaration of 1776. They demanded the right to vote, and equal rights for women in terms of property, the custody of children, and the like.

Naturally the men of that day were horrified. They wrote in newspapers, they orated in Congress, they preached in pulpits—declaring that this wild, radical nonsense was against the laws of God and of nature. In spite of all this, the movement gained momentum.

Women in America today may not fully realize how much they owe to that beautiful, indomitable little Quaker lady, Lucretia Mott, and the Society of Friends in general for pioneering in the realm of making human equality a reality in our daily lives.

Today there is a sculpture in the Nation's Capitol building by Adelaide Johnson which depicts three famous early suffragists: Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony.

In the section on education, the matter of equality for women will be considered further.

5

Ideals Of Democracy In Government

The Society of Friends had a profound influence on the formation of our Constitution, and the establishment of a democratic form of government in the United States.

How could this be, when Friends generally opposed the War for Independence, and did not participate in the Constitutional Convention in 1787?

As indicated earlier, *influence* is not always in the form of direct action. Great, progressive ideals win popular acceptance very, very slowly. It is interesting to note that William Penn proposed a league of nations for Europe in 1693, some 225 years before the world got around to trying it out. In 1710 John Bellers published a tract in which he proposed an "annual Congress of all princes and states of Europe in one Federation" which would prevent disputes which might lead to war. Of course these proposals were too far ahead of their time to win immediate and popular acceptance, but it was vitally important for these ideals to be expressed.

In 1696 William Penn suggested a union of the American Colonies, almost 100 years before the Constitution of the United States came into being.

On preceding pages we have noted the many ways in which Friends promoted the establishment of the ideals of religious liberty, justice for the oppressed, and the basic equality of all individuals. These ideals had been demonstrated; they had been put into actual practice. The impact of these practical demonstrations must have been very great indeed.

In the Pennsylvania experiment, William Penn had said, "We put the power in the people." This is the foundation, the actual bedrock of democracy in government. Obviously the Society of

Friends was strongly influential in the general acceptance of this principle in the formation of our national structure.

When President Lincoln spoke of a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people", he was reflecting the basic principle upon which democracy in government is founded. Without going into detail, it could be indicated that Lincoln had Quaker ancestry through both parents and that the Quaker influence was strong in his philosophy of life. At any rate, his many acts of kindness and understanding toward Friends indicate a high level of respect and affection.

When the Founding Fathers set about the task of drafting the Constitution in 1787, Benjamin Franklin and others were quite familiar with the principles which William Penn had written into the Constitution of Pennsylvania. Alexander Hamilton said that Pennsylvania owed her peace and prosperity, not to the fertility of her soil, but to the excellence of her Constitution.

William Penn's "Holy Experiment" may have been an ideal too high to be realized fully, but the value of this idealism can hardly be underestimated in the formative days of our country. We cannot say precisely to what extent the Founding Fathers were influenced by Penn's form of government, but it is interesting to note that the document which they produced contained many of its operating principles, and even some of the actual wording.

One basic provision was *flexibility*, the possibility of amendment with changing conditions and circumstances. John Locke wrote a constitution for Carolina, but it was aristocratic and rigid. Consequently it broke down under the first strain. But Penn's endured, and in some measure was a model for the Constitution for the United States.

Religious liberty has already been mentioned, but we should remember again that religious liberty and the separation of church and state flowered first in the Colonies where the Quaker influence was strong: Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Rhode Island and North Carolina.

The right of the Congress to convene and adjourn by law, which we normally take for granted, was first established in America by Penn's frame of government. Incidentally, the name "Congress" was used in Penn's proposal for the union of European states in 1693.

The idea of two representatives (Senators) from each state was a favorite with Penn. He used it in his Assembly in Pennsylvania, along with the custom of electing one-third of them every two years, so that the whole membership would never be wholly new at one time.

The right of Congress to regulate commerce among the states

was first proposed by Penn in 1696. This was written into the Constitution of the United States, not because the Quakers were there to promote the idea, but because unfortunate experiences under the Articles of Confederation had shown the wisdom of it. In passing we might note that the capitol building in Washington was designed by a Quaker architect, Dr. William Thornton.

These details are not nearly so important as the fact that it was the Quakers who contributed so largely to the spiritual foundation upon which an enduring democracy in government could be built: an optimistic faith in the value, the dignity, the sacredness of every human being. Obviously, the pessimistic fatalism of the Puritans was inadequate. So also was the rigid authoritarianism of the Roman Catholic Church. The Quakers furnished the vital element needed for solid spiritual foundations.

Ideals of Peace, Good Will

The Society of Friends is known as one of the three historic Peace Churches, along with the Mennonites and the Brethren. All three are numerically small. Why should this be so? It has been said that no one is so unpopular as a pacifist in wartime.

In the long-range overview of our three centuries of existence, Friends have dared to be right too soon. That is, they have dared to take a position before it was popular to do so. And they have had to suffer the consequences.

As shown by the military involvement of our country during this period of time, the Quaker peace testimony has not generally prevailed. There is some measure of consolation, however, in the realization that if Quaker insights and wisdom could have been followed, the history of our country would have been spared some of its darkest blots, and its worst desolations. In our day, with nuclear annihilation threatening the very existence of life on earth, there is a new and desperate urgency involved in our peace witness.

In the formative days of our nation, Friends demonstrated that a policy of cruelty and barbarism was not necessary in dealing with the American Indians. The massive dispossession and destruction of these native Americans will haunt us so long as our nation stands. The Quaker influence was present, but it was too small to be predominant.

In this general National Bicentennial period we have seen much adulation for men of violence, men of war. Perhaps it is our particular responsibility to pay special tribute to the heroes of peace and good will, men who sought to work out our problems with the Mother Country in non-violent fashion.

In the early days of the Revolutionary War, one incident occurred in Carolina which should be known and remembered

by all of us, especially since it graphically illustrates the attitude and position of Friends. Matthew Osborne, an Overseer in the Centre Meeting, an expert gunsmith by trade, had made many hunting rifles for his neighbors in the surrounding countryside. Soon after the beginning of the war, Osborne was asked to make guns for the Continental Army. He refused to do so. Not only did he refuse to make guns for the army, but he went around to his neighbors and bought back the guns previously sold to them. These were taken back to his shop, where the barrels were heated and bent back to make them useless. Only in this way could he be sure that no rifles which he had made would ever be used in taking the life of a fellow human being. His peace testimony, his action, kept his shop from becoming a miniature munitions plant.

Two battles of the Revolutionary War were fought near North Carolina Meeting Houses—New Garden and Spring. While the Battle of Guilford Court House was much larger and more decisive, the Battle of Lindley's Mill near Spring was sharp and intense.¹ In both cases, local Friends went to the aid of wounded men on both sides of these conflicts without partiality, carrying the men into their Meeting Houses, which were made into temporary hospitals. There all possible care was extended. Those who died were buried in the adjacent cemeteries—Colonial and Loyalist soldiers together. Enemies in life lay side by side in the sleep of death. This action on the part of the Quakers incurred the wrath of the Patriots, as well as the Loyalists, who charged them with giving aid and comfort to the enemy!

In a preceding section of this booklet, attention has been called to the example of the Quakers in setting free their own slaves. During the long period of time following, they entreated their fellow-Americans to do the same. Had they succeeded, the country would have been spared the terrible devastation of the Civil War. Although the Quaker influence did not change the course of history it is good to know that our predecessors in the faith contributed what they could toward the promotion of justice and righteousness. "Blessed are the peacemakers"—even when they fail!

During the War between the States, Southern Quakers suffered severely. This story cannot be recounted here, but attention is called to a book written by Fernando Cartland, *Southern Heroes*, published in 1895.² Fortunately for us, it recounts and thus

¹Algie Newlin's recent booklet, *The Battle of Lindley's Mill*, contains much material never before published.

²This book has long been out of print, but copies can be found in the Guilford College Library, and in other places.

preserves the accounts of the sufferings of scores of local heroes of the faith.

Of course Quakers can claim only a part of the credit, but it was the sufferings of conscientious objectors in the Civil War and in the wars which have followed which caused our country to think in terms of respect for those whose moral and religious convictions would not allow them to participate in the carnage of the battlefield, nor in the violent taking of human life in any manner. In the last half-century especially we have developed an increasing respect for religious convictions, and have made legal provisions for conscientious objectors of many religious faiths to do alternative service with accredited agencies. Great numbers of young men from our many Meetings have thus done many kinds of constructive work in lieu of military training and combat duty.

To repeat an earlier statement, it is difficult to measure precisely the influence of a powerful example. Just what effect did the American Friends Service Committee child-feeding program in Europe following World War I and World War II produce in the world? Surely such a service could not go unnoticed. At any rate, the spirit of the Living Christ made it necessary. And the primary motive was to minister to human need.

Several years ago the word came to a small group of very discouraged Friends that the American Friends Service Committee and the British Friends Service Council had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. One of them was finally able to speak: "Well, all I can say is that a little love goes a long way."

7

Ideals In Education

Quaker ideals in education, as was the case with all other testimonies, were born out of deep religious convictions.

On the surface, the purpose of local monthly meeting schools, founded when there was no system of public education, was to provide instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic ("ciphering"), spelling, and other elementary subjects. A deeper purpose was to prepare boys and girls for a good life, and not merely to equip them for making money, as may be too much the custom now. The primary emphasis was placed upon the wise way in which to live one's life, and the selection of goals and purposes which were in keeping with the principles of righteousness and wisdom. This naturally involved an understanding of God's will, and an appreciation for the eternal dimensions of life. It involved instruction in moral and spiritual principles as set forth in the Christian faith.

Being primarily concerned for the spiritual nurture of their children, Friends sought to give them a "guarded" education, shielding them from evil influences, insofar as this was possible.

In general, the conviction that every individual is of sacred value, and the conviction that there is an inherent equality among all individuals, were determining factors in the development of Quaker schools. In practical application, this meant that poor children should have a chance to go to school, and that girls should have equal opportunities with boys. These basic concepts which we take for granted today were considered to be extremely radical three hundred years ago.

In 17th century England, education was essentially aristocratic, and considered to be the special privilege of the wealthy classes. Friends made a significant contribution to the beginning

of "free schools", both in England and in America. They helped to popularize the idea of education for the children of the poorer classes.

In the founding of Pennsylvania, William Penn's ideals in education were broad and advanced for his day. In his "Frame of Government" are these words:

To the end that the poor as well as the rich may be instructed in good and commendable learning which is to be preferred before wealth—Be it enacted that all persons. . .having children. . .shall cause such to be instructed in reading and writing . . .

In New York state, it was an association of Friends women who first organized a school for children from poor families. From this small beginning the Public School Society was formed, which soon had several free schools organized and in operation. Thus began the vast metropolitan school system of New York. In many states, including North Carolina, Quaker elementary schools did much to shape the public schools as they developed in later years.

During the long period when local monthly meeting schools were in existence, children from poor families were all accepted, and their proportionate part of the teacher's salary was assumed by those who were more able to pay.

The first schoolhouse in North Carolina was built around 1703 in the Quaker community of Symons Creek in the "Albemarle Country", almost two centuries before the coming of the public school system as we have it today. In this instance, as in hundreds of others as pioneer communities came into existence, meeting house and school house stood side by side, or at least in close proximity.

In these many monthly meeting schools, girls received an equal education with the boys. This concept is taken for granted today, but it was a radical innovation in that day.

When New Garden Boarding School was opened in 1837, the enrollment consisted of 25 boys and 25 girls. Guilford College, which developed from this beginning, has the distinction of being the first coeducational institution in the South. As Dorothy Gilbert Thorne reminds us in *Guilford: a Quaker College* (p. 44), the Moravians founded Salem Academy in the same general period, the Presbyterians founded Davidson, and the Methodists founded Greensboro Female Academy and Trinity College, but none of these were at that time coeducational.

One particularly interesting aspect of George Fox's religious experience was that it gave him an amazing appreciation for the world of nature. He said, "All things were new; and all the

creation gave unto me another smell than before . . . The creation was opened to me . . ." Fox was concerned that schools teach "the nature of herbs, roots, plants and trees." His ideas of nature-study may have been somewhat elementary but they pointed toward a more scientific age to come. It is interesting to note that in the past three centuries, an amazingly large number of Friends have achieved distinction in the natural sciences. The explanation for this fact may be many and varied, but the love of truth, and the freedom to search for it without undue restraint, may have been involved. A further related factor may have been the conviction that all truth is God's truth, and that God's creative handiwork is to be approached with appreciation, respect and reverence. William Penn said, "Truth never lost ground by inquiry because she is most of all reasonable." In the earliest Quaker work on botany Thomas Lawson wrote, ". . . even the least of plants preaches for the power and wisdom of the Creator."

Although not precisely in the realm of education, perhaps it would not be going too far afield to note, with some measure of regret, that the Society of Friends has not made outstanding contributions to the development of the fine arts in our country, although Edward Hicks, previously mentioned, is gaining recognition as the greatest "primitive" painter of the early years of our country. We could add that John Greenleaf Whittier's poetry is of high quality. Several of his poems have been made into hymns, such as "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind", and "O Brother Man, Fold to Thy Heart Thy Brother".

Those wishing to make a further study of Quaker influences in American education will find a rich source of information in Zora Klain's *Quaker Contributions to Education in North Carolina*, 1925, and also in the same author's *Educational Activities of New England Quakers*, 1928. Copies may be found in the libraries of our various colleges.

Compassion For The Suffering

The Quaker movement originated in England when almost unbelievable cruelty prevailed in the treatment of prisoners and the insane.

At the risk of over-simplifying, one might say that Quaker compassion arose from three major sources: the New Testament teachings of Jesus; personal inward spiritual experience; and the conviction that every individual is of sacred worth.

First generation Quakers brought with them to America ideals of love and compassion for all who were oppressed, all who were suffering from injustice of any kind. Attention has already been called to the way in which Friends dealt with the Indians in pioneer days, and the way in which they sought to secure freedom for slaves.

Friends knew a great deal about existing conditions in British jails, for they themselves had spent much time there as prisoners. During the great persecution period, many weaker individuals had died there, in the midst of filth, hunger and cold. The practical application of the Golden Rule dictated that as they themselves desired freedom from such abject misery, they should seek to alleviate the sufferings of others—when they found themselves in position to do so. Efforts toward prison reform came into the Quaker movement as a matter of faithfulness to the spirit of Christ-like compassion.

When we look at our wretched prison systems today, we cannot boast of any great effectiveness in producing ideal conditions in our country, but at least Quaker ideals have been present. We wish that these influences could be strengthened in the days to come.

In the founding of Pennsylvania, William Penn's "Frame of Government" was subject to the King's approval or veto. Penn

desired to abolish the death penalty entirely, but he was not permitted to do so. What he did do was to cut down the number of capital offenses from nearly two hundred to two—treason and murder. (Nobody was to be imprisoned for debt, nor for casting an "evil eye" on someone.) And the prisons were intended for reforming and rehabilitating, instead of revenge, a concept not even yet accepted by the public generally.

The loving-kindness of Friends also reached out to unfortunate individuals who were mentally ill. The treatment of such persons in 17th Century England was extremely cruel. They were imprisoned, chained, beaten and humiliated in such a way as to take away from them any chance of getting well. In contrast, the Quakers provided a peaceful atmosphere, loving care, and some interesting work to do.

In England the first institution for providing such care was established by the Quaker, Henry Tuke, in York. In America, Thomas Eddy of New York established the Bloomingdale Asylum. Philadelphia Quakers started the Frankfurt Asylum in 1817. The purpose expressed by the founders was to add to the required medical care for the mentally disturbed "such tender sympathetic oversight as may soothe their agitated minds and facilitate their restoration." Such ideals are taken for granted today, and we tend to forget that it was the tenderness of Quaker compassion which pioneered in this direction.

We might note in passing that a recent article in *The Medical World* contained the statement that Friends include a higher percentage of physicians than any other religious group in the country. One of the reasons given is the normal Quaker concern to be of service to people in need.

Ministering to the suffering and feeding the hungry are clearly commanded in the New Testament as an essential part of the Christian Way. Friends can claim no monopoly on this ideal—but the fact is that as a religious group they have gained some world-wide recognition for efforts in this field. The child-feeding programs in Europe after World Wars I and II stand out as spectacular examples. (One little German girl, so it is said, upon being asked how she was being cared for, replied, "Ich werde gequakert!"—I'm being Quakered.)

Honesty In The Marketplace

In colonial days and in the years to follow, our emerging new nation had to develop a stable monetary system and a sound economy. This had to be based on confidence, which in turn had to be supported by fundamental honesty and integrity. Although we cannot measure, or even make a close estimate of the Quaker influence in this realm, we do know that it was very great. The common saying that a Quaker's word was as good as his bond was basically true. Because Quaker merchants and businessmen were known to be scrupulously honest, the public at large was glad to deal with them. In the very early years, Fox had observed that "people came to see Friends' honesty and truthfulness . . . they saw that, for conscience sake toward God, they would not cozen and cheat them."

Prudence, frugality and industry were considered to be religious obligations. Idleness was looked upon as positively sinful, and a breeder of vain and evil habits. Friends who did not live circumspectly with regard to "temporal affairs" were labored with, and sometimes disowned.

George Fox offered this counsel to parents: "Train up your children in the fear of God . . . that they may be diligent, serving the Lord in the things that are good; that none may live idle, and be destroyers of the creation . . ." The ideal was frugality and industry, as contrasted with extravagant wastefulness.¹

Into the economy of our country, Friends introduced the "one-price system". Before that time, the common practice was for

¹In keeping with this ideal, the youthful William Allen wrote in his Journal: "Indulged the flesh too much this morning by lying in bed till eight o'clock. On, my lightness and chaffiness! Lord strengthen me to oppose it."

merchants to charge whatever price they could, taking all possible advantage of people who were in a predicament of some kind. In such circumstances, and in buying and selling generally, experts at haggling always had the advantage.

The influence of Quaker integrity on American business procedures in the formative days of our country was enormously strengthened by the fact that Quaker merchants prospered. The one-price system met eager public acceptance. Parents could send their children to the store in complete confidence that no advantage would be taken of their inability to handle the necessary arithmetic. As a matter of necessity, other merchants had to accept the one-price system. Obviously it was Benjamin Franklin's early Quaker training and a lifetime of observation which caused him to say in his famous *Almanac*, "Honesty is the best policy."

Through the years many people have ridiculed Quaker prosperity in the New World with such statements as "They came to America to do good, and they did well." (One might insist that they did both.) They did not believe in an idle upper class; they were prudent, frugal, and not afraid to work. And it did make a difference.

Early Friends had a great measure of self-reliance and self-sufficiency in economic matters. They cared for their own sick and disabled—and extended this care as far beyond their own numbers as possible. Accumulating some savings for this purpose, and for one's own declining years, was considered to be a moral and religious duty. They never so much as gave a thought to depending on government-relief for their poor.

If we might digress for a moment, we might observe that simplicity in lifestyles is coming up for a new evaluation in our day. After more than two centuries of prodigal wastefulness, after pollution of various kinds is threatening to desolate our land, it begins to appear that Quakers were basically *right* all the while.

Quaker integrity of character is far more than mere truthfulness in words and in business dealings. It means "living the truth" from the depths of one's being. It is a basic response to that which the Psalmist had in mind when he said, "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts." Integrity in this highest form is based on the realization that all of life can be sacred and sacramental, and that true religion permeates and penetrates all activities and relationships of life. We can be grateful that early Friends injected this ideal into the early American culture. The need for a rededication to this ideal increases with every new revelation of the basic lack of such integrity in present-day public and private life.

Simplicity In Worship

One of the greatest contributions which the Society of Friends has made to Christendom is the practical demonstration of worship entirely without ritual or ceremony. In an era when the Protestant Church was coming dangerously near to practicing bibliolatry (worshiping the Bible as a book), Friends astounded the Christian Church with the doctrine that each worshipping individual has free and direct access to the self-same Spirit that "gave forth the Scriptures".

The directness and simplicity of Quaker worship—the "gathered meeting" of silent worshipers communing directly with God in their souls—was a radical departure from the ritualistic practices of the Church of England, and from the Roman Catholic Church.

Friends were not the first people to demonstrate the fact that individuals can worship God in *silence*, but through the past three centuries they have made a great contribution to Christian thought and practice at this point. Thoughtful people everywhere are recognizing that continuous noise is not necessary in worship—and sometimes may be positively detrimental to personal communion.

In Old Testament times, Judaism tended to become more and more ritualistic, with a priestly hierarchy exercising almost total authority over the individual. The major prophets tried desperately to convince the people that animal sacrifices were not what Jehovah really wanted. In the first chapter of Isaiah we read, "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices . . . I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and fed beasts . . . bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me . . ." Later Jeremiah, Amos and Micah took up the theme, pleading for a more direct and purified form of worship.

Many similar statements are to be found in the Psalms, as in 40:6: "Sacrifice and offering thou dost not desire . . . burnt offering and sin offering thou has not required." This is echoed again in Psalm 51:16: "Thou desirest not sacrifice . . . thou delightest not in burnt offering." The culmination came, of course, in the words of Jesus: "They that worship the Father must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

History does sometimes repeat itself. The Christian Church, as the centuries passed, drifted back toward a priestly hierarchy, and an extremely ritualistic form of worship.

Most of our neighboring Protestant denominations have reduced the number of sacraments from seven to two. The Quaker witness is that while the common sacraments of water baptism and the Lord's Supper may be beautiful and meaningful symbols, neither is set forth in the New Testament as a condition of salvation.

Sometimes we say that the Society of Friends has no priests. Perhaps the exact opposite might be more nearly true: *every* individual is a priest in his own right. This is the "priesthood of all believers" carried to its logical conclusion.

Friends have contributed largely and richly to the spread of so-called lay religion—that is, a form of religion that is non-professional, non-ecclesiastical, in nature. There is a strange similarity between "The Seventy" of the New Testament (Luke 10) and "The Sixty" of the early Quaker movement. In each case, these Spirit-filled individuals who went forth witnessing were entirely non-professional, non-ecclesiastical. As in the New Testament Church, the real power of the movement lay in the quality of experience in the hearts and lives of the individuals who made up the rank and file of the membership.

The Quaker meeting for business has the same unique quality as the meeting for worship. One cannot say precisely how much this innovation has influenced other people, but it is interesting to see other groups, even civic clubs, adopting the basic principles of the Quaker method of reaching decisions—simply because of its effectiveness. When sincere truth-seeking replaces "efforts to overcome the opposition", a higher level of truth is attained than would have been possible through any other method. From a religious standpoint, it should be obvious to everyone that *voting* does not necessarily reveal the will of God—which is the primary objective in a Friends meeting for business.

With reference to marriage customs, Friends believe that only God can truly unite two hearts and lives in the highest sense of the word. For this reason it seems proper for marriage vows to be spoken in a meeting for worship—"in the presence of God and

among these friends." Early Friends refused to use either a priest or a magistrate for the "pronouncement". At first this raised legal difficulties, even persecution. With the passing years, however, the Quaker wedding, when properly carried out, was finally accepted as being legal. Friends had made their witness regarding the sacredness of marriage vows, and consequently the sacredness of the Christian home.

In like manner, Friends could not see why they should be required to put their hands on a Bible which forbids swearing, and swear by it. They simply refused—and went to jail. One might add that they couldn't see how swearing could make an honest man more honest. The Quaker refusal to take an oath in court has finally been accepted by our judicial system, and a simple affirmation suffices.

In ecumenical gatherings today, even in the World Council of Churches, the Quaker witness relative to moral and ethical issues, and with reference to simplicity in worship, is highly respected. The writings of Rufus M. Jones, Douglas V. Steere, D. Elton Trueblood and many others have been read widely among both Protestants and Catholics. When one lists the great devotional classics written in our country, Quaker writings are outstanding, especially Thomas Kelly's *Testament of Devotion* and John Woolman's *Journal*. Many leaders of different faith have suggested that John Woolman is perhaps the greatest "saint" that our country has produced.

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Influence On National Policy— Now

As a religious body, Friends have long been working for peace and the prevention of war, for justice among all people, and a score of related spiritual concerns.

Deeply stirred by the horror and the tragedy of World War II, a group of concerned Friends met at Quaker Hill, Richmond, Indiana, in the early summer of 1943, to take the initial steps in formation of a Friends Committee on National Legislation, commonly known as the FCNL.

This matter of "speaking truth to power", as the American Friends Service Committee has called it, involves a sort of built-in dilemma. When religious convictions are deep and strong, there is a compulsion to speak out boldly and fearlessly as did the Hebrew prophets, or as did George Fox when he confronted Oliver Cromwell. On the other hand, the Quaker spirit by its very nature forbids undue spiritual arrogance. Like Zechariah before his king, Friends can say, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord."

In its statement of purpose the FCNL made it clear that it did not intend to engage in pressure-group lobbying, nor the "manipulation of power", which is foreign to the Quaker spirit. It proposes rather "to work by means of quiet influence through personal contact and persuasion", and to "win the assent of reasonable minds". Its major efforts are in the direction of positive peace-making, and not merely negative opposition to war.

The custom of bringing religious insights and convictions to the attention of national legislative bodies and rulers is not new among Friends. During our long history, most of the Kings of England and Presidents of the United States have been lovingly counseled, or "labored with", by concerned individuals or

committees. (A sad note at this point is that one recent President adamantly refused to see delegations of Friends.)

The new element in the FCNL is "organized cooperation on a broad base", enabling Friends all across the country to unite their strength and resources to work more effectively than they could as isolated individuals and groups working alone. As Frederick Tolles has put it, "The FCNL is, in a sense, an institutionalizing of an age-old Quaker practice."

In establishing the FCNL, Friends were a quarter-century ahead of other denominations, many of whom even yet are not actively working in this field. We do not take pride in this fact, but rather express deep regret that other Christian bodies have not kept pace in bringing their moral and spiritual concerns and influence to bear directly on the issues which confront our lawmakers in the nation's capitol. Friends believe that the heart of the Eternal is touched by the tragedy of human events, and that we are co-workers with Him in achieving His will among men. How can we fail to take a stand on issues relating to war and peace, as though the slaughter of millions of human beings were of no concern to us?

Sometimes the Quaker voice in Washington is extremely disturbing to militarists, and to the military-industrial complex generally which tends to profit by the manufacture of munitions, and by the sale of armaments to various countries around the world. When reporting for the Greensboro Daily News on the 1967 Friends World Conference, Joe Knox said, "It occurred to me that these Quakers must be dreadfully embarrassing to other Christians. They must also be embarrassing to governments who surely wish they would hush up and go away."

From the standpoint of individual legislators, one extremely useful function of the FCNL lies in the field of research, or fact-finding. Over and over, busy, harried Congressmen turn to the staff of the FCNL for carefully researched factual information.

From the standpoint of Friends themselves, one important aspect of the work of the FCNL is keeping Friends well informed. It is not possible for each one of us individually to be in Washington all the time, and to maintain clear insights as to the moral and spiritual values involved in the many complex issues before our country. The staff of the FCNL performs an extremely vital service for us in searching out the facts in the swiftly changing currents in national and international affairs, and making these facts available to all concerned persons through the FCNL Newsletter.

The achievements of the FCNL through the past three decades have been very great, although not always spectacular. Wise and

capable leadership for this work was found in the very beginning in the person of E. Raymond Wilson, who gave the organization dedicated service and boundless energy. His recent book, *Uphill for Peace* (Friends United Press, Richmond, Indiana, \$7.95), is required reading for all who wish to be well-informed about this area of contemporary Quaker influence.

The Quaker position with reference to international relations was well expressed in a recent issue of *Quaker Life* (October, 1975) by Howard Alexander:

One of the lessons of Vietnam is that American foreign policy needs the considered judgment of laymen, as well as the skill of professionals, to keep it on a wise course. It can easily happen that Americans suddenly discover, to their dismay, that their country is drifting in a dangerous direction, rather than providing farsighted leadership in the affairs of the world. There must be a continuing process of dialog between citizens and policymakers, simply in order to insure that our form of government is working as well as it should. This dialog demands that we keep ourselves well-informed, especially in areas where world peace is concerned.

As the affairs of our nation become more complex and critical, and as the world situation becomes increasingly explosive, the work of the FCNL becomes more important. Obviously the time to prevent World War III is before it starts, not after it has begun. As a small group, Friends may not always be successful in all their endeavors, but the obligation is upon us to use every ounce of our strength.

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