



# A Friendly Letter

Issue Number Five

Eighth Month 1981

Dear Friends,

Two quick updates: First, regular readers will recall that issue #2 reported on a controversy in Iowa Yearly Meeting (FUM) over affiliation with the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL). A group of conservative evangelical Friends urged the Yearly Meeting to cut ties with FCNL, in order to be clear of the "universalism" and "humanism" which they felt dominated its activities. There were rumors that some churches might leave the Yearly Meeting if ties with FCNL were upheld.

The Yearly Meeting just met in Oskaloosa on 8/12-8/16, and as expected, this issue took up much time and generated considerable heat. Ultimately, however, the group decided to continue affiliation with FCNL. At the same time a recommendation was adopted to promote wide study of the Richmond Declaration of Faith, which is part of the Iowa discipline.

(The Richmond Declaration of Faith is a document adopted at a conference in Richmond, Indiana in 1887 as a beginning effort to heal the splits among American Friends. Some groups have wanted it made into a formal creed, but its actual status is unclear. The Declaration is something more than a historical document, but considerably less than a creed to which Friends can be required to subscribe.)

What will happen in the wake of the YM decision is uncertain, except for the fact that the controversy is not over. Further, during the debate the statement was made that FCNL was really a subordinate issue. The ultimate question is how diversity among Friends is to be handled. Should diversity be encouraged? Tolerated? Limited? Stamped out? How? By Whom? Watch this space for further developments.

Update #2: Concerning the UN Law of the Sea Treaty, the subject of my first issue. The new administration prevented the treaty's completion last spring while it reconsidered US participation in the negotiations. This decision disappointed many Friends who supported the Treaty. I have recently learned that the administration has been very surprised at the number of moderate and even conservative Congresspeople and Senators who have urged it to stick with the negotiations; in response it has softened its position a little. So to those Friends who wrote letters to Congress and the White House about the treaty, I say congratulations! *You have made a difference!* But we are not out of the woods yet. The next two months will probably be the critical time in the administration's review. So Friends and meetings that wrote letters before may want to consider writing again and renewing support for the treaty as an important step toward peace, and one which shows considerable Quaker influence.

Finally, friend, if thee is not a regular reader, I hope thee will become one by subscribing. Rates are \$12 a year for individuals and \$15 for groups.

Yours in the Light,

*Chuck Fager*

Chuck Fager



## WHERE NEW QUAKER LEADERS ARE COMING FROM

Throughout major Quaker institutions, a generation of leaders and executives is reaching retirement age. As these incumbents pass from the scene, a distinctly new leadership cadre is rapidly moving up behind them.

The veteran leaders could be called the "CPS Generation", after the experience of serving in Civilian Public Service camps as COs during World War Two, in which many of these people were directly and indirectly shaped. The new group could be called the "ESR Generation", after the Earlham School of Religion, at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana, the unique institution at which many of its key members were educated. Indeed, the influence of this small school's alumni on American Quakerism may well be much more profound than that of the CPS group in its time. ESR's 200-plus graduates are rapidly becoming the core of a new Quaker Establishment.

### *Reclaiming Quaker Identity in Quaker Leadership*

The influence of the ESR generation will likely magnified, in my judgement, because of the special qualities of their educational experience. Under the direction of its first Dean, Wilmer Cooper, and his successor, Alan Kolp, the school has been consciously training men and women (the student body is 40% female, much more than most seminaries) to exercise a distinctly Quaker style of leadership among American Friends.

ESR's founders were mostly midwestern Friends concerned over the impact the absence of a Quaker seminary was having on their churches. Their pastorates were mainly being filled by graduates of other denominations' theological schools; and predictably, these pastors tended to lead their churches in the ways they had been taught. The result was the steady dilution of these churches' Quaker identity by Methodist, Nazarene and other outside influences. (A similar trend has been evident among unprogrammed Friends' groups, but in this case the outside influences have been mostly secular or Eastern religious in character.) These influences may well have played a part in the recent controversy over relations between Iowa Yearly Meeting and FCNL described on Page One.

### *Equipping Ministers at the Quaker crossroads*

In contrast, since its beginning in 1960 ESR has been attempting to school its students in Friends history, beliefs and processes. Its concept of the pastoral vocation is likewise intended to embody Friends' values, by preparing graduates for the practice of a "servant ministry," aimed at equipping and enabling other Friends to find and express their own talents and leadings within and outside the congregation. This approach differs sharply from that of most other denominations, in which pastors are trained to become part of a clerical elite in which power and activity are centered and largely monopolized.

Perhaps as important as its philosophy of ministry, however, is the extraordinary effort ESR has put into recruiting students from all branches of American Quakerism. Dean Alan Kolp maintains a punishing travel schedule to this end, visiting almost every Yearly Meeting every year, as well as every Quaker college, from cosmopolitan, secularized Swarthmore to fundamentalist Friends Bible College. Probably no one else except a few representatives of the Friends World Committee for Consultation has a comparable range of contacts. The effort has paid off: starting with a mainly midwestern, FUM-oriented constituency, ESR has now attracted students from all five major groups of American Friends--Evangelical, Conservative, FUM, FGC, and the unaffiliated groups--and from almost every Yearly meeting (21 YMS were represented last year).



This unique mix of students is making ESR the crossroads of American Quakerism. In its classrooms the issues, doctrines and practices that have divided Friends on this continent for over 150 years are confronted, studied and struggled with in depth and over the course of an academic year. There is also much attention given to building a religious and community life among students and faculty, in which Quaker diversity has further room for expression and exploration.

The result of this intensive encounter is not universal agreement, by any means. But it does seem to have significant impact on the students' capacity to understand and tolerate the continuing differences, as well as to communicate about them with other kinds of Friends.

This work of discussing Quaker differences in depth and at length has been waiting to be done for decades. The attitudes it has produced marks a sharp break with those of the previous generation's leadership, and increases the prospects of further contacts and cooperation among the various Quaker groups in the years ahead.

#### *Estimated Time of Arrival--1985*

In the next three to five years more than ten Yearly Meetings will undergo major leadership changes. As this process unfolds, the new "ESR Generation" of leadership will become increasingly visible. At some point, I suspect about 1985, it will reach a critical mass of executive positions which will turn it into what I call a new Quaker Establishment. ESR graduates are already well represented in key pastorates in Friends United Meeting and the Evangelical Friends Alliance, and their numbers here is increasing. They are on the FUM staff, on the staffs of several larger unprogrammed Yearly Meetings, including Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York, as well as at FCNL and Pendle Hill.

The areas of American Quakerdom which will probably be slowest to show the ESR influence are those at the opposite ends of the Friends spectrum: on one end, the churches in the orbit of Friends Bible College, and on the other the American Friends Service Committee and its constituency. In both the dilution of Friends' identity has been strongest, though in opposite directions. (Both are also alike in that FBC and AFSC have both had ESR graduates on their staff, but currently do not.) Both these groups, I believe, will eventually be infiltrated by the ESR generation, because they will continue to need quality Quaker leadership, and that is what ESR is turning out in greater numbers and variety than anywhere else.

#### *What's So Good About an Establishment, Anyway?*

The elitist vices of establishments--unaccountable power, remoteness, arrogance and so forth--have been better advertised in recent years than their potential virtues, the chief of which is simply leadership. And we will need large doses of that in the tough years ahead. Thus, the present and potential contribution of the ESR generation to American Quakerism seems at this point almost wholly positive, almost too good to be true. These men and women will be a major resource for Quaker ecumenism; they evidence strong concern for our testimonies; their religious outlook has depth and openness.

About the only caveat to be added is that it is too bad ESR is so unique. No such high-powered a group as its alumni should be without competition, to limit its vulnerability to establishment failings. We could probably not support two seminaries, but they need not be the only source. I believe that large YMs and Quaker service groups should make recruitment and training of new leadership a standard part of their programs.

Perhaps this will be the best test of the ESR generation's tenure: whether their "equipping ministry" actually equips American Friends to produce future generations of leadership of comparable quality from many other sources besides ESR itself.

INSIDE: ARE YOU READY  
FOR THE NEW  
QUAKER ESTABLISHMENT?

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### THIS MONTH IN QUAKER HISTORY

We now call this month the "dog days," but it is one of the fullest in Quaker history. Consider how many great Friends were born this month: John Woolman in 1820; Maria Mitchell, the first recognized woman astronomer, on 8/1, 1818; Herbert Hoover in West Branch, Iowa on 8/10/1874. It was also a time of strong testimony and sufferings: in 1664, Margaret Fell was arrested for refusing to take an oath, and was in prison for four years; the second group of Quakers to arrive in America reached Boston harbor early this month in 1656--they were promptly arrested, their belongings confiscated, and after eleven weeks in jail they were banished. One of the most historic sufferings was the arrest of William Penn, on 8/14/1670, for preaching in Gracechurch Street, London. This was the beginning of a case which changed legal history in England and America--but since his trial came up in Ninth Month, we'll save those details for the next issue. Another legal landmark came in Rhode Island in 1673, where the Quaker-dominated Assembly on 8/13 adopted the first CO exemption from military service ever; it was signed by the Quaker governor, Nicholas Easton.

One of the most amazing items in this month was the beginning of George Fox's journey to America in 1671. He left on 8/12 aboard the ship Industry. The ship leaked constantly, and was chased by Barbary pirates for several days. Other passengers were terrified of the pirates, but Fox told them to relax, God had shown him that they would not be captured; and they weren't. But then Fox came down with a severe case of rheumatic fever, which lasted for weeks.

### QUAKER CHUCKLE

William Bacon Evans, one of the last Philadelphia Friends to wear the plain dress, once took a group to visit a nearby county jail. When introduced to the jailer, he said something like, "Friend, we have come to see thee out of a concern to visit thy inmates."

"What did you say?" replied the jailer.

Friend Evans repeated his request, and got the same puzzled response. Then he tried to explain. "Thee see, we are Quakers, who have a testimony for plain speech."

The jailer was unimpressed. "Your speech will have to be a lot plainer than that if you want *me* to understand it," he allowed.

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