



# A Friendly Letter

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Dear Friend,

Here are some signs of the times: About ten days ago, a letter came in from a company in Connecticut, advising me that they were buying profitable newsletters aimed at "upscale urban" readerships, and was *A Friendly Letter* interested in talking about the possibilities of a sale?

Well, Friends, this Letter has been called a lot of names, but this was the first time anyone has dared to label it "upscale", or thought it worth money. I tossed the letter in the trash. But maybe if they threw in a golden parachute....

Here's another sign of the times: With this issue, we begin printing on recycled paper. I was recently lobbied by some ecology-minded Friends to consider doing this, and was happy to be prodded. But there's a downside to the switch: This paper costs more than the unrecycled variety, so it will increase printing costs. And that becomes another step toward a subscription rate increase. I'm not announcing such an increase, just advising you that it may come eventually. (But that's what happens in the "upscale" world, or so I'm told.)

Another sign: Nancy Nye, head of the Friends Girls School in Ramallah, has resigned and returned to the U.S. to be with her husband, Palestinian nonviolent activist Mubarak Awad. Awad was expelled by Israeli authorities last summer. The Friends Schools in Ramallah remain closed at press time, and prospects for their being able to reopen in the near future are clouded at best. (See AFL#85 for a more detailed report.) The only good news here is that Friends have collected something over \$200,000 in emergency funds to keep the schools afloat through this school year. What happens to them after that, though, is anybody's guess.

A more hopeful sign came out of the Friends

United Meeting fall board meetings in Richmond Indiana last month. FUM's General Board had for the first time to grapple explicitly with the issue of homosexuality, in the form of a proposed policy which would have excluded admitted homosexuals from appointment to FUM's Quaker Volunteer Witness program. (The case from which this proposal arose was reported in AFL#89.)

The minute which emerged from what was described as a long and searching discussion strongly rejected discrimination against homosexuals in employment and other areas, but also reaffirmed QVW's ban on sex outside traditional heterosexual marriage. The key sentence was the following: *"The lifestyle of volunteers under appointment to Quaker Volunteer Witness regardless of their sexual orientation should be in accordance with these testimonies."* This appears to indicate that a homosexual willing to follow QVW rules would not be ineligible for appointment solely on the basis of orientation, contrary to the thrust of the proposed policy.

The minute also states that "We recognize that there is diversity among us on issues of sexuality." This may sound like a platitude to some, but it represents a big step for FUM, considering that only four years ago the H-word was essentially unmentionable in its councils, except as an object of condemnation.

Yours in the Light,

*Chuck Fager*

Chuck Fager

PS. One last sign of the times: 'Tis the season to think about gift subscriptions, and a form for this purpose is enclosed.



## REMEMBERING THE ORIGINAL "QUAKER-CATHOLIC CONNECTION"

Ever since the late 1960s, I have come across intriguing examples of Quakers and Catholics working together. While these two denominations, in dogma, structure, size and practice would seem to be almost polar opposites, nevertheless some of the best spirits in each church have repeatedly wound up side by side, especially on the frontiers of witness.

I had thought this was a new phenomenon; but that is not true. In fact, this month marks the tricentennial of the culmination of the original, and perhaps most fruitful "Quaker-Catholic Connection" of them all. This is an anniversary that's worth looking at:

### ROCKABYE SWEET BABY JAMES

When the wind changed, it was an afternoon in early Eleventh Month, 1688. The King of England, James II, was in the royal apartments at Whitehall Palace, talking with a distinguished, if plainly-dressed visitor, Robert Barclay of Scotland. Barclay noticed a large weathervane on the roof of the palace's Banqueting Hall, where it could be easily seen from the king's window. James had ordered the weathervane put there, so he would know at once, as he said in a rueful joke, when the wind ceased to blow "Popish", and had swung around in a "Protestant" direction.

In bare meteorological terms, the breeze had simply shifted from west to east. James and Barclay knew, however, that with the change would very likely come as well a change of occupants in the large and rambling palace. This prospect pleased neither the Catholic sovereign nor his Quaker subject.

The talk of it was everywhere: When he left Whitehall, Barclay may even have heard rude street musicians echoing it in the latest mocking popular tune:

*"Rockabye baby, in the tree tops,*

*When the wind blows, the cradle  
will rock,  
When the bough breaks the cradle  
will fall,  
And down will come baby, cradle and  
all."*

Now only a nursery rhyme, in 1688 this was an anthem of revolution. The "baby" was the king's infant son, barely five months old, also named James and already given the heir's title of Prince of Wales. And "when the wind blows" referred to that fateful "Protestant" east wind which had now arrived.

This wind was expected to "break" the Stuart's royal "bough" because across the English Channel in the Dutch Republic, the "Catholic" west wind had for over a week been bottling up a large fleet commanded by the Protestant Prince William of Orange. As soon as he could sail, William meant to invade England and to dethrone James. As the wind turned favorable, on 11/5, the fleet set sail, and the nursery rhyme prophecy began to come true.

### A SOMEWHAT GLORIOUS REVOLUTION

Most British historians refer to what happened next as the Glorious Revolution. This is in part because it was nearly bloodless; James's army and navy deserted him and he fled to France. William rode unopposed into London, and soon called his wife Mary over from Holland to join him. Mary was James's oldest daughter, and had been next in line for the throne until a son was born. Now, with father and brother displaced, William and Mary were crowned as dual monarchs early the next year.

The 1688 Revolution is also called Glorious because it took a major step toward establishing the primacy of Parliament over the monarchy in government; because it meant that the British throne would be permanently occupied by

Protestants; and, of greatest interest to Quakers, because it ended most of the persecution which had been wreaked on them and many other religious dissenters for almost forty long years.

By right Friends should have been ecstatic at the passage of the Toleration Act in 1689 which at long last formally legalized their public worship. And to be sure, most Quakers were relieved. Yet the change in government was not uniformly greeted with pleasure; there were Quaker losers as well as winners when James fled. Barclay was one; but the biggest loser, both among Friends and for Friends, was undoubtedly William Penn.

### A KING'S FRIEND INDEED

Penn had long been friends with James, and with his older brother Charles II. Both Stuarts had known and admired Penn's father, who had served with James as an admiral of the British fleet.

During much of Charles's reign, Penn was only an occasional visitor to the court. These were years of often intense persecution, and when he came, Penn usually brought with him lists of Friends and other Dissenters who were in jail or facing heavy fines for their unorthodox beliefs. Repeatedly he asked Charles and James to pardon and release them. And repeatedly he got results, winning freedom for thousands over the years.

His success was overshadowed, however, by the continuing waves of persecution, and this led him to ask Charles for a grant of land in the New World in payment of a debt owed his father; again Charles agreed, even knowing that Penn intended to make his colony of Pennsylvania a haven for heretics.

When Charles died in 1685 and James became king, Penn moved from being a visitor to the Court to being a full-fledged courtier.



James evidently respected the sober, candid Quaker more than most of his official advisers. Often he spent hours talking privately with him while high-ranking nobles were kept waiting restlessly outside, resenting James's attention to this commoner and Dissenter. And James was so ready to pardon prisoners at Penn's request that soon the Quaker became something of a one-man Amnesty International.

But Penn wanted to do more than obtain pardons, or even found a colony. His ambition was to influence the direction of overall British government policy, especially regarding religion. And it was here, in the arena which was then the center of everything, where the original Quaker-Catholic Connection was forged.

#### NEEDED: SOME FRIENDLY PERSUASION

England had been racked by conflict over the legitimacy and status of Catholic, Anglican and other Protestant churches for over a century, since Henry VIII had broken with the Pope. It was assumed then that there must be one national religion, and when the Catholics had been supreme, they persecuted all "heretics". Under Henry power moved to the Anglicans, and they were equally free with the rack, and the struggle seesawed back and forth. As the Reformation continued, however, new sects had appeared to challenge both, among them Puritans and, later, Quakers. In 1649 the Puritans won their chance to rule, when a Puritan army under Cromwell routed the Anglican royalist forces, abolished the Anglican episcopacy and executed Charles I, the father of James II.

In its turn, the Puritan Commonwealth had also produced much persecution, particularly of Friends, and the regime lasted only a decade before disintegrating into factional strife. The resulting power vacuum was filled in 1660 by a restored monarchy and along with it a revived Anglican hierarchy.

As bad as times often were for Friends under Cromwell, they turned worse after the Restoration. And the source of the most virulent repression was not King Charles, who had spoken in favor of toleration, but Parliament. The House of Commons then mainly represented the great landlords and the Anglican clergy. Most had suffered much during the Commonwealth years, and they were determined to get even with the rebellious Dissenters, and keep the lid on any possible renewed challenges to their power.

#### A CODE AGAINST QUAKERS—& CATHOLICS

Thus a series of anti-Dissenter, and specifically anti-Quaker laws were soon passed: The Quaker Act of 1662, which made Friends' worship unlawful and the refusal of oaths a crime, was but the most notorious. At the same time, Parliament took equally careful aim against Catholics, who were suspected of being subversive agents of foreign powers—The Pope first of all, but just as likely of his "Most Catholic Majesty," the autocratic Louis XIV of France as well. France was then the most powerful European nation, and England was periodically at war with it all through these years.

Here Parliament ran into a problem, however: It was widely suspected that the restored King, Charles II, was himself a closet Catholic, and had signed a secret treaty with Louis XIV, under which he was getting subsidies in French gold to free him from the budget restraints of Parliament. All this was eventually confirmed, and Charles openly affirmed his Catholicism on his deathbed. And what was worse, all these years his brother James, next in line for the crown, was openly Catholic, and made no secret of his desire to see England return to the Roman orbit.

This prospect alarmed not only to the Anglican-ruled Parliament, but also the Dissenters, including Friends. In 1673 Parliament passed

the Test Act, which required anyone who wanted to hold a public position to take oaths rejecting Catholicism and supporting the Anglican church. It was aimed mainly at Catholics, and above all at James, but included Dissenters and Friends in its sweep.

Parliament then went further, debating an Exclusion Bill which would have specifically denied James the right of succession to the throne, and was only kept from adopting it when Charles dissolved the Commons at the last minute.

#### A CHILD OF TROUBLE IS BORN

Unable to keep James from becoming king in 1685, his Parliamentary enemies waited nervously to see what his policy would be. They also waited for James to die. After all, he had no sons, and his two daughters, Mary, the wife of William of Orange, and Anne, were both staunch Protestants. James was widely thought to be syphilitic and unable to have more children; so his Catholic hopes might die with him.

Here the pundits were proved wrong. In Sixth Month, 1688, his wife, Mary Beatrice, gave birth to a son. This threw the king's enemies into a panic: as a male heir, who was sure to be raised Catholic, the child would displace Mary and Anne. Thus England faced a new line of Catholic monarchs. It was too much; the wheels were soon set in motion to get rid of James.

Yet it could have been different, and in fact it almost was. James might have saved his crown, and a genuine, near-universal toleration policy might have come in 1688. And if it had, the key player would have been the Quaker courtier, William Penn.

Penn had long been urging James to declare a policy of broad toleration, including both Catholics and Dissenters such as Friends. He urged this not only because tolerating "popery" was the



price for James's relief of Quakers and dissenters; but also because Penn had come to hold the then utterly radical notion that the small minority of remaining British Catholics *should* be allowed to practice their religion freely, and further that they could then be counted on to live peaceably in the kingdom without overthrowing it. This thesis exposed him to considerable ridicule then, as the archetypal politically naive Quaker. It also produced charges that he was really a secret Catholic like Charles II.

Such a policy would, Penn told James, reassure enough of his subjects that he did not intend to impose some Catholic autocracy on England, and it would also build a political alliance between the Dissenters and the crown that could in time persuade Parliament to ratify it.

#### A CLUMSY, BUNGLING ALLY

James told Penn that was what he planned to do. And in 1687 he issued a Declaration of Indulgence, which suspended the operation of the Test Acts and freed hundreds of Friends, and some Catholics as well, from jail. A group of Quakers were among the first who came to Whitehall to thank the king for this. The next year, James issued a second Declaration of Indulgence, and ordered it read in all the Anglican churches.

And there was the rub. James was one of the clumsiest, most abrasive monarchs England ever had. He believed firmly in the divine right of kings, and refused to admit that the will of "God's anointed" could ultimately be thwarted. And Penn's advice was mixed with, and corrupted by, the voices of some Catholic advisers who goaded the king into setting aside the Test Act in order to appoint Catholics to key jobs in the government, and as officers in the army. He also began increasing the size of the royal military forces, and to buy and bribe

Parliament into submission. All this naturally outraged and frightened the Anglicans, and convinced many that James's toleration of Dissenters was just a ploy, that the king was using Penn and his coreligionists as gullible pawns in a scheme to reestablish Catholic supremacy.

Suspicion of James and Catholics greatly increased in 1685, when Louis XIV suddenly revoked the Edict of Nantes, the French toleration act, and began a fierce persecution of the Huguenots. Tens of thousands of these French protestants fled to Holland and England.

#### THE TEST OF TOLERATION

Against this background, Penn soon enough may have been the only major public figure who still believed James intended to pursue a policy of genuine toleration. In 1686 he even went to Holland to plead with William of Orange on James's behalf, and asked him to support James's toleration of Catholics. William said he would accept toleration of Catholic worship, but not the repeal of the Test Act, which would allow Catholics back in public office; he wanted a Protestant government.

Back home, the Anglican leaders denounced the king's appointments of Catholics as illegal and, along with his Declarations of Indulgence, with their inclusion of Catholics, as nothing more than high-handed steps toward the reestablishment of popery. Seven prominent bishops refused the king's order to read the second Declaration to their flocks. James reacted by clapping them in the Tower of London.

Penn was among those who begged the king not to do this, and then, when the new prince was born, pleaded with him to release the bishops as a means of damage control. James refused, and the bishops were brought to trial, but the jury shocked the king by defiantly acquitting them all.

The trial of the bishops, and the birth of a Catholic prince, were the last straws. A secret invitation to William of Orange was sent by seven of the most influential British lords; and the rest, as they say, is history.

The Toleration Act produced after the revolution was a pale imitation of what Penn, and James, had in mind; in it Parliament reaffirmed the supremacy of Anglicanism as the state religion, and gave only limited, grudging relief to its Protestant rivals. The Test Act's restrictions on Catholics continued for almost another century and a half, and Friends were excluded from public life and the universities for almost as long.

#### A CONNECTION AHEAD OF ITS TIME

Yet if the "Glorious Revolution" made the Quakers only second class citizens, this was undeniably better than being entirely outside the law, as they had been for most of the previous forty years. And if it also meant political eclipse for William Penn, and misunderstanding by many historians, his ideals and motives wear rather well after three hundred years.

Even at the time, if his hopes for changing England through James were dashed when William of Orange rocked the Stuart cradle, Penn's major achievement, the founding of Pennsylvania as an international beacon of toleration and democracy, had taken root. It helped shape America, and England would catch up with him eventually. Besides, the years of forced retirement that followed turned out to be inwardly rich; from them came, for instance, his fine little reflective book, *Some Fruits of Solitude*.

And not least, this episode set the model of that most unlikely religious-political alliance, the Quaker-Catholic Connection, which has emerged spontaneously again and again, rarely as frequently or fruitfully as in our own time.



## A FRIENDLY HOLIDAY GIFT LIST

Got a holiday gift list to take care of? How about including some Quakerly items? Here is a list of some products made and distributed by Friends which have caught my eye in the past year, and which might fill the bill for some hard-to-please persons on your list. Rest assured that these recommendations are entirely personal and subjective, but I hope they might also be provocative and useful.

If you're dealing with Quakers, my experience is that things sooner or later get weighty. But let's start light, with music. There are two Quaker tapes which I not only own, but actually play over and over, with much enjoyment. The first is *NEW MOON* by Patricia McKernon, and the other is *RAINBOW PEOPLE* by Susan Stark. Both of these tapes got rave reviews in AFL#78's survey of new Quaker music; and over a year later, my admiration for their talents is undiminished.

The songs on *NEW MOON*, according to McKernon, can be described as feminine but not explicitly feminist, spiritual but not overtly religious, and politically informed without being directly political. I would also add mystical without being mushy. Her voice is strong and shapely, and the songs range from bouncy to profound. You can order *NEW MOON* from Sound Mind Records, Box 8828, Minneapolis MN 55408, for \$10.00 postpaid.

In *RAINBOW PEOPLE*, Susan Stark shows again that she has probably the finest voice I have heard among Friends, one which could probably have considerable commercial potential if she was inclined to pursue it. This tape, however, includes several songs aimed at children, as well as a downright sensuous rendering of "Simple Gifts" that has to be heard to be believed. You'll find *RAINBOW PEOPLE* at Susan Stark Music, P.O. Box 339, Rindge NH 03461, for \$10.50 postpaid.

Another creative woman Friend

whose work is worth checking out is Penny Jackim of Providence, Rhode Island Meeting and, more to our purpose, of Ahimsa Graphics. I noticed Ahimsa's products at the Friend General Conference gathering, in the craft shop where they were competing head-to-head with some items of mine: postcards, notecards and T-shirts, with illustrated quotes from Isaiah, Chief Seattle, and A.J. Muste among others. To tell the truth, I thought Ahimsa's artwork had mine beat hands down, and the way it disappeared, Friends evidently agreed.

After all, who can argue with a T-shirt beautifully calligraphed with this quote from Goethe: *"Whatever you can do, or dream you can do, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it,"* and bearing a lovely sketch of trees and plants besides? To get details of Penny Jackim's full line and prices, you'll need to write for her free brochure, from Ahimsa Graphics, P.O. Box 28788-FL, Providence RI 02908. You won't be sorry.

And now to publications. I saw a detailed reader survey taken for *Friends Journal* not long ago, and it found that Friends love books: buying them, reading them, and talking about them. The volume of book sales at FGC (close to \$4000 per day last summer) seems to corroborate this finding, as do the number of letters that come in response to book reviews in these pages. So herewith a sampling of my favorites for the year:

The first title, though, is not a book at all, but a large wall chart of Quaker history by Geoff Kaiser of Unami Meeting in Pennsylvania. The chart, which was described in AFL #88, details and illuminates the innumerable Quaker separations and reunifications in this country, and makes more sense of American Quaker history in less time than just about anything else I know of. It revised my whole understanding of the current Quaker

scene, and is easily worth the \$9.00 postpaid from Chart, Box 222, Sumneytown PA 18084.

And if you want more Quaker history, don't miss Thomas Hamm's prizewinning book *THE TRANSFORMATION OF AMERICAN QUAKERISM*. Likewise discussed in AFL#88, Hamm's book charts the impact of nineteenth century revivalism on midwestern Quakerism, and is about the clearest, most searching account of the roots of pastoral and evangelical Quakerism we are likely to get. It is a bargain at \$25.00, clothbound, from Indiana University Press.

Another process of searching that is well worth sharing is Jack Powelson's *DIALOGUE WITH FRIENDS*, in which he summarizes the course of extensive discussions, some quite heated, with Friends around the country on issues of economics, and work for international development and economic justice, which he addressed in his earlier book *FACING SOCIAL REVOLUTION*, which was reviewed in AFL#71. These books make substantial, yet digestible food for thought. Each title is \$6.95, and the pair is \$12.00 postpaid, from Horizon Society Publications, 45 Bellevue Drive, Boulder CO 80302.

And I can't overlook, for comic relief, my own *QUAKERS ARE FUNNY*, which offers 100+ pages of the Friendly humor which I have been collecting for years. It is \$8.00 postpaid from Kimo Press, P.O. Box 1361, Falls Church VA 22041.

If writing to all these publishers is a hassle, there's an easy alternative: Call the Quaker Hill Bookstore in Richmond, Indiana. Part of Friends United Meeting, Quaker Hill is a lively, operation which can get you these books, or any other title in print. They take Mastercard and Visa, and best of all, they have a Toll-Free phone number: 1-800-537-8838. What more could one ask?



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### THIS MONTH IN QUAKER HISTORY

When the calamitous Potato Famine struck Ireland in 1845, some Protestant groups saw more in the disaster than a call for help; they also sensed an opportunity for evangelism among the Irish. And so along with relief supplies, groups like the Baptist Irish Society also sent money to open chapels, distribute tracts and support missionaries. Many groups made access to their soup kitchens contingent on church attendance.

This strategy was greatly resented by most Irish, who already had a religion, Catholicism; many showed how deep their faith ran by refusing meat soup on Fridays and during Lent even while on the verge of starvation. Such evangelistic forms of relief came to be known as "souperism," a term which is still spoken with bitterness in Ireland. Even the Anglican Archbishop of Dublin twice denounced some clergy for "holding out relief...to suffering as a kind of bribe for conversion."

A signal exception to this trend was the work of the Central Relief Committee of Friends,

formed in Dublin on 11/13/1846, to coordinate the work of several regional committees already at work. The Dublin Committee, and a parallel group established in London a few days later, offered relief supplies and access to work projects solely on the basis of need and without proselytizing.

More than that, its workers soon went beyond simply alleviating the immediate distress to consider how to make permanent changes in the conditions which gave rise to the famine. Quakers set up demonstration farms to show peasants how to begin diversifying their crops and lessen dependence on the potato; they established fishing and factory projects which were intended to become job-generating businesses; and they campaigned for new land tenure laws to give the poor tenants increased rights.

Not all the Irish Quaker projects succeeded; but their relief work was free of charges of "souperism," and became a model for today's international relief and development work.

### QUAKER CHUCKLES

#### *Going Easy on Ourselves*

After a meeting had labored long over what to do about "difficult Friends", one person offered the following minute to sum up their labors: "The meeting struggled to understand if there was a difference between Difficult Friends and Different Friends, but found that differentiating between Different and Difficult Friends was understandably difficult to differentiate...."

#### *Creative Budgeteering*

When Friends General Conference Central Committee recently faced the prospect of making some painful budget cuts, one response was to brainstorm ways of making up the expected shortfall. Two of the more imaginative suggestions were: "Declare ourselves Contra 'freedom fighters' and apply for nonlethal aid", and, "sell toilet seats to the Pentagon."