



HE MAY BE ON TO SOMETHING: "This is a wild prediction, but I believe that in the years ahead we will be like the early Christians. For the first three centuries or so, there were no priests....The friends of the Lord met and prayed and something happened. There wasn't any formal priesthood and no bishops until about the fourth century."

--Father Harvey Egan, in the *National Catholic Reporter*

A Friendly Letter

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Dear Friend,

It was the last First Day of 1991, and at meeting a distraught mother stood up to speak. Wringing her hands, she announced that her daughter, an innocent of late teen age, had gone off unsuspectingly a few days before to YouthQuake, the triennial national Quaker youth gathering, in Burlington, Vermont. A relatively recent, but enthusiastic attender at our Langley Hill Meeting, the daughter had been looking forward to the conference, and to meeting other young Friends.

But once there, her mother told us, instead of finding a hotel full of liberal-minded, unprogrammed folks like us, she had phoned home in a panic to report herself surrounded by a mob of fundamentalists, waving the Bible at her and demanding that she accept Jesus as her personal savior, or go straight to perdition. She had never imagined, her mother insisted, such a thing could happen under Quaker auspices.

Listening to this anguished report, I confess I found myself grinning a bit. Not in derision, but in recognition of a basic, though inadequately identified Friendly experience: *Quaker Culture Shock*; *QCS* for short.

QCS is a psychological trauma of intense, sometimes overwhelming magnitude, that often results when a Friend--sometimes convinced, sometimes birthright--unexpectedly encounters groups of Quakers whose way of worship, doctrine, and cultural ethos seem utterly different, incompatible or even unthinkable. Fortunately, *QCS* is not fatal, and usually the disorientation is relatively brief; but left untreated, *QCS* has been known to wreck some Friends' relationships with other Friends. It has even reportedly driven a few out of the Society, in order to get away from those threatening, alien "Others."

QCS is a common occurrence, one reported here often, though previously without the label. For instance, our issue on witchcraft (#114-115) recounted several in one article! But I don't write of *QCS* only as a detached observer; my own major experience of it is only too vivid in memory: In a large Friends church in the west. The 58 seconds of silence(I timed it) was unsettling enough; then came a sermon on evangelizing for evangelism which sounded more like an Amway peptalk; by the time they got to the christian college sextet, whose women

members wore electric purple dresses with eye shadow to match, I was in a bad way. But then they launched into their own arrangement of Whittier's "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind," and as its climactic lines, "Take from our souls the strain and stress...O still, small voice of calm," blasted through the six-foot high speakers, I was sure they'd have to carry me out of there; we're talking *QCS* to the point of catatonia.

But, hey, I survived, and even learned something. And pastoral-evangelical Friends also take their *QCS* licks: One of our YouthQuake attender's pastoral roommates called home too, equally frantic, to warn her parents that she was trapped among Satan-worshippers; yet she is reliably reported to have made it home in one piece.

It was G.K. Chesterton who remarked that the reason Christ told us to love our neighbors, and to love our enemies, was undoubtedly because they're often the same people. And this sums up the essence of the *QCS* experience: The discovery that there's a lot more to Quakerism than we thought. My own conclusion is that *QCS* is a necessary rite of passage for most Quakers who wish to understand the Society of Friends beyond the cozily familiar precincts of their home meetings and churches. It can be a doorway to real spiritual growth.

Indeed, despite our young attender's discomfort, I believe she was much favored to have been thus shaken up. Other reports indicate that the YouthQuake planning committee was conscientious in trying to help their charges cope with this experience and benefit from it. She indicated as much in a debriefing session afterward, affirming that she had indeed learned much and expanded her Quaker horizons.

So if thine own encounter with *QCS* has not arrived yet, Friend, thee has something to look forward to. And my advice is not to avoid it when the time comes. Tough as it might seem, we'll all be the better for it.

Yours in the Light,

Chuck Fager

Chuck Fager

One can't talk about 1991 without talking about war. And among the many Quaker responses to the Gulf War, the most remarkable in my direct experience was the Emergency Quaker Peace Consultation. Held in Washington on 1/26-27, it attracted over 400 Friends from all over the country, and was reported in detail in AFL #118.

Here, though, I want to mention something of the logistical *tour de force* that was behind the Consultation. For the idea only surfaced among Washington area Friends in early Twelfth Month, as the rush to war accelerated. How the kernel of an idea for a national gathering was turned into a nearly hitchless event in barely five weeks was something to behold.

HOW THE BUTLER DID IT

Notwithstanding that in retrospect it seems we were clearly in the hands of Providence, there were a myriad of details to be worked out, all at once: finding a place, recruiting volunteers, making hundreds of phone calls to meetings, handling registrations, food, hospitality, workshops, money, etc., etc. It still makes my head spin to think of it. But into the center of this swirl of tasks stepped a woman with a clipboard, *Susan Butler* of Friends Meeting of Washington, and it all began to fall into place.

Susan Butler has worked for many years as a carpenter and a contractor; and it seems that a contractor is above all an organizer, one who must get the right materials and the right skilled workers doing the right things at the right place at the right time. She was a stranger to me and other planning committee members when she came forward, but her leadership abilities were soon apparent, and central.

Equally remarkable was the way other similarly skilled and creative people came forward: *Sandy Overbey*, a publications/computer consultant, rose to the task of compiling the list of phone calls to be made, preparing registration forms, the attender's list, and other paperwork. *Tom Hughes*, a

schoolteacher, said he would handle food for 500. We thought perhaps he would produce a thousand peanut butter and jelly sandwiches; *oh we of little faith!* Tom and his wife, *Meredith Hughes*, astonished us all by finding an Iranian restaurateur who was captivated by the idea. He catered the main meal with a delicious vegetarian spread, at cost, as a gesture for peace.

It was like that from start to finish; with no money in hand at the beginning, the Consultation managed to pay all its bills and still charged only a \$10 registration fee. The low fee was made possible, of course, by the equivalent of thousands of dollars in donated time and materials.

Such a synchronistic coming together of people and energy is not something one expects to be able to duplicate soon. And there were more people involved than the four mentioned here. But the remarkable combination of ideas, energy and coordination they typify that produced the Consultation not only merits the first slots on our list of Quakers of the Year; their achievement leaves me wondering what other even more remarkable peace efforts Friends might have cooked up, had the war gone on much longer....

A JOURNAL OF SHAME

The Consultation did not seek any outside publicity. But at the height of the Gulf War, Quakers did make the front page of the *Wall Street Journal*, on 2/20/91, the first such prominent exposure in this prestigious paper in who knows how long. But did the *Journal* focus its august attention on Friends to laud our peace witness in the ongoing conflagration, or--almost as good from an outreach perspective--to excoriate us for it?

No such luck. We made the *Journal's* front page because, while the war clouds were gathering apace, Iowa Yearly Meeting had bent all its institutional energies to the labor of running a lesbian pastor out of its West Branch church, despite her superior performance in the post and over the objections of the church's members.

(See also AFL#117.)

Well, 1991 was that kind of year. But that shameful episode did produce something worth remembering and recognizing: An eloquent and angry *cri de couer*, from West Branch's beleaguered Clerk, *Walter Hansen*, to the Yearly Meeting. I wish there was space to reproduce it in full here; but copies can be obtained from Iowa YM, Box 703, Oskaloosa, IA 52577.

Hansen reminded the YM, for the record, how the dismissed pastor "*had brought God's word to us through inspiring sermons as well as the compassionate loving way in which she reaches out to all people. The value of her ministry has become evident through the renewed enthusiasm which our meeting experienced and through the number of new members who were drawn by her ministry. Her spiritual gifts were recognized throughout the community of West Branch and by many throughout the Yearly Meeting.*"

A VAIN PLEA FOR SENSITIVITY

"For the past several months," Hansen continued, "*there has been much energy invested in considering the issue of homosexuality....There are people on both sides of the issue, both in West Branch Meeting and throughout Yearly Meeting....We do know, however, that we are not required by the Lord to pass judgement on the homosexual. In fact, we are taught by Christ himself that we must not judge. (Emphasis his.) Why then have we allowed so much time and energy to be spent attempting to reach consensus on how we should judge the homosexuals in God's kingdom?*"

Hansen asked that the Yearly Meeting form a committee to examine the issues involved, without presuming to the role of judge. Then, recalling the ordeal that West Branch had been through, he said the Meeting wished to "*request a review of Yearly Meeting's policy for handling sensitive situations, so that in the future, when issues such as this arise, they might be handled in a more sensitive and compassionate manner.*"

Again, no such luck. Hansen's

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letter was printed in the advance reports, then completely ignored at the YM sessions, where an even more judgmental policy against homosexuals was bulldozed through. But one hopes Hansen and the bruised Friends of West Branch will take heart. Their forbearance and eloquence are a shining exception in a tawdry incident, and bring to mind the words of the Epistle of James, that "*the prayer of a righteous man(or woman) can accomplish much.*" (5:16) And to Walter Hansen, a nod as another of 1991's Quakers of the Year.

There was a further unhappy diversion from the task of bearing witness against the Gulf War last year, namely the ill-starred crusade for "realignment." We won't go over the details of this plan for breaking up American Quakerism again (the curious are referred to AFLs #119, 123 & 125). What is worth noting here, however, is the key role in its demise played by three Friends whose efforts are otherwise little-known.

A TORPEDO HITS THE WALL

First among these is the Clerk of Indiana Yearly Meeting, **Horace Smith**. Smith is a gruff man of conservative temper and evangelical views; one would never mistake him for a liberal Quaker. But it turns out that Smith knows a torpedo when he sees one, and he quietly set his face against the "realignment" scheme. Yet without his support it could not hope to get very far in Indiana Yearly Meeting; and without Indiana, it could not hope to get far in pastoral Quakerism generally.

Next on this list is a mild-mannered North Carolinian, **David Stanfield** of Greensboro, retired now from fundraising work for Guilford College. Last summer the Executive Committee of North Carolina YM issued a declaration denouncing "realignment" as portending ruin to a generation of Friends. This statement made by far the most articulate and persuasive case against the plan, and it was later ratified by the YM in its sessions. As North Carolina is the largest of the pastoral YMs, without it "realignment" could not hope to build any real momentum. And it was David Stanfield, my sources agree, who was

the principal author of the statement that stopped it there.

The third key person in sealing "realignment's" fate was **Marlene Pedigo** of the Chicago Fellowship of Friends. Pedigo's overt role in the debate was minor: She simply wrote a letter to Sarah Wilson, the Clerk of Friends United Meeting, which was the principal target of the plan.

But her impact was substantial, because in her letter, which was copied and made available to FUM's General Board Members, she spelled out a constructive alternative to "realignment", namely *revitalization*, a focus on enriching FUM and making it the effective Quaker community it should be, rather than breaking it up. Moreover, she made her case not only in the abstract but based on research she had done into the success of similar programs in other denominations.

TAKING A BETTER TURN

With the rejection of the "realignment" scheme last fall, the General Board has opted to examine ways of revitalizing FUM. While even this road may be rocky, it has one critical advantage over the alternative: It is not a dead end. And Marlene Pedigo's prophetic word, spoken quietly and mainly from the sidelines, had much to with steering FUM towards it.

Another stream of effective, perhaps prophetic words in 1991 came from a much more widely-noticed woman, Hanan Ashrawi, the lead spokesperson for the Palestinian delegation to the fledgling Middle East peace talks. Her striking combination of persuasive reasonableness and controlled outrage seemed to the mass media in sharp contrast to earlier Palestinian statements, and she has become a familiar and formidable figure in the ongoing negotiations.

Hanan Ashrawi, though a Christian, is not a Friend. But like many another distinguished Palestinian woman, she was educated at the Ramallah Friends Girls School, under the tutelage of Friends, and in particular of **Anna Langston** of Dublin Friends Meeting, Dublin, Indiana.

Anna Langston is retired now,

after a long teaching career, eleven years of which was spent in three terms as Head of the Friends Girls School in Ramallah, between 1953 and 1974. She remembers Hanan Ashrawi as a promising student there, outspoken and articulate even then, encouraged in pursuing her studies by her father. The Girls School was known, then and now, as a place in which girls were encouraged to extend the range of their minds beyond the limits of traditional homebound women's roles.

Many of Ashrawi's relatives had become Friends, members of the Ramallah Meeting. Though she and her own family remained Orthodox Christians, her own daughters attended the Girls School, her husband has taught art there, and her sister is on the School Committee.

Anna Langston recalls that teaching at Ramallah was often difficult, not only due to chronic shortages of teachers and resources, but also because of government pressure, Jordanian and then Israeli. But the patient, unheralded labor of Langston and many another midwestern Friend deserves more than a small share of the credit for the remarkable performance of this Palestinian woman, speaking out militantly but constructively for her people.

TRUTH IS WHERE YOU FIND IT....

While we are noting the emergence of Quaker ideas and influence in unexpected places, we want to award a special **Robert Barclay Citation in Quaker Christian Universalist Theology**, which this year goes to the author of the following remarks: "*...It is clear that today, as in the past, many people do not have an opportunity to come to know or accept the Gospel revelation or to enter the Church....For such people, salvation in Christ is accessible by virtue of a grace which, while having a mysterious relationship to the Church, does not make them formally part of the Church.*"

Can you guess who wrote that? You're right, it's old **John Paul II**, Clerk of the newly-organized Vatican Monthly Meeting. (Nice place; but the Overseers say they've *gotta* do something about all that gaudy stuff on the ceiling!)

INSIDE: Culture Shock at YouthQuake; and
Our Tenth Annual Nominations for
Quakers of the Year

Forwarding & Address Correction Requested

From: Chuck Fager, A Friendly Letter
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THIS MONTH IN QUAKER HISTORY

It is in First Month that historically informed Friends recall the appearance of the classic statement of the Quaker peace Testimony, the one which declares that:

"We utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons, for any end or under any pretence whatsoever. And this is our testimony to the whole world. The spirit of Christ...which leads us into all truth, will never move us to fight any war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of this world."

Many Friends think of this 1661 manifesto as the codification of a pacifism which was foundational and unquestioned from Quakerism's inception as a movement in England in the 1650s. But in the last generation, scholarly researches, especially those of historian Christopher Hill, have shown that this is not entirely true.

In a way, it should not be surprising that this is the case. After all, Quakerism appeared in a country which had just undergone a series of civil wars, culminating in a victory for the Puritans, who were the radicals of the day. Their New Model Army, under Oliver Cromwell, established its rule by repeated victories in battle, executed king Charles I in 1/1649 and proclaimed

England a Commonwealth. Moreover, the most radical of these radicals were found in the army. Many varieties of religious radicalism also fermented there, and Quakerism, the record now shows, was no exception.

Just how and why the transition to the staunch pacifism of the 1661 declaration came about is not entirely clear. Christopher Hill, as a Marxist, tends to think it was a survival tactic after the Commonwealth, riven by factions and corruption, collapsed in 1660. The restored royal government, with Charles II on his father's throne, set about stamping out all traces of subversion; and with the 1661 declaration, Friends tried to set themselves firmly outside the ranks of rebellion.

There's too much wisdom in Hill's view to dismiss it out of hand. Yet perhaps there is another possibility: Maybe Fox and the other leaders, after supporting (either directly or indirectly) the New Model Army, had learned by hard experience that expecting a better, freer society to emerge from the Puritans' war machine was an illusion. That is, maybe they simply came to see, by continuing revelation, that violence was not the way, and resolved to work for justice and freedom without it. The record of their new approach, despite much suffering, is as good as that of the New Model Army, and in some ways better.

QUAKER CHUCKLE--PERSIAN GULF STEW

Take generous portions from the "ideologies" of Muslims, Shi'ites, Bedouins, Kurds, Jordanians, Syrians, Egyptians, Jews, Christians, Ba'athites, Turks, Emirs, Sheiks. Mix well with millions of barrels of oil.

Stir in liberated quantities of peeled emirs, spiced with essence of polygamy. Sprinkle with ripe fanatics, add leaves from burning bush...allow to ferment.

Follow the recipe outlined in the Bush-League Cookbook, *The Joy of Warring*. Allow to smoulder...to

boiling point. To avoid evaporation, add several gallons of Kurds and spicy war munitions. Serve hot over bed of shredded peaceniks.

Serve the stew with Russian vodka on the rocks. What to do with the leftovers? Nobody seems to know.

--Thanks to Molly Walsh, Clerk of Montreal Meeting; this is an excerpt from the last article by her late father, Frank Walsh, a writer in Illinois.