



**NEWS FLASH--WATCH THAT SPACE!** Asia Bennett, National Executive Secretary of the American Friends Service Committee, has told the AFSC Board she intends to leave her post by this time next year. Her decision kicks off the most significant staff search process among Friends of the decade. Friends should watch it closely.

# A Friendly Letter

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Dear Friend,

Can you read the signs of the times? Here are two of them that arrived in the mail recently. Both should be of especial interest to those who find themselves made uneasy by, on the one hand, talk of goddess-worship, witchcraft, wicca, and similar phenomena--or, on the other, by dogmatic pronouncements and anathemas. Between them they mark the parameters of much of Quakerism's internal agenda today. What we make of them will largely determine what we make of our Society.

The first, which came from Portland, Oregon, is as follows:

*Dear Friend Fager,*

*After attending Multnomah Monthly Meeting for two years. I have begun an intensive self-study of Quakerism. This has included not only Fox's and Woolman's journals, several Pendle Hill publications, but also reading three years of back issues of the Friendly Letter. This morning I read Tenth and Eleventh Month 1990 (#114 & #115).*

*The notion of combining Wiccan and Quaker ideas is more than an academic issue to me. In 1980 during a divorce I assumed the last name "Wicca". Three reasons prompted me to this action. First, I no longer wanted a "man's" name, neither my abusive father's name or my ex-husband's name. Secondly, I wished to acknowledge the long line of "strong women" i.e. "witches" that I knew was my maternal heritage. These foremothers of mine were never able to acknowledge their beliefs for the very real fear of extermination. Lastly names are powerful. A name encourages and inspires the wearer to become the name. I understand "Wicca" to mean "wise woman", one who uses her knowledge of "folk medicine" and "energies" to help.*

*Your thoughtful and fair accounting of the New York Yearly Meeting's Wiccan/Fundamentalist Christian clash provided the bridge in my mind between these camps.*

*Enclosed is my subscription. Thank you for your very good work.*

*Dawn Wicca,  
Portland Oregon*

The other is a **PROPOSED MINUTE OF RENUNCIATION** presented to the sessions of Southwest Yearly Meeting in Sixth Month by its Superintendent, Charles Mylander. It is to be considered by Southwest's local churches and acted on later. Yet it is very likely representative of majority sentiment in that body:

*Friends church Southwest Yearly Meeting has been implicated by association with some practices that we find intolerable. Through our connections with some Yearly Meetings, and through media coverage from some independent Quaker groups, we are at times linked with their views. These groups have tolerated some instances of idolatry and of attempting to legitimize homosexual activity. We affirm the love of Christ for everyone, and our acceptance of every person in spite of their sin, although we reject the sin itself. We love every sinner and hate every sin....However, we have not heretofore taken official action at a Yearly Meeting in business sessions.*

*Therefore, we renounce goddess worship, New Age practices, wicca (a form of witchcraft), Satanism and non-Christian religions as idolatry and a counterfeit to true Christianity....We renounce homosexual activity, and especially "blessing" same sex unions...as sinful and displeasing to our God and Savior Jesus Christ.*

*We announce that our true identity as Friends is found in Jesus Christ and based on the authority of scripture. We now speak out publicly against these grievous sins....While we renounce these sins, we humbly acknowledge that we fall short in many ways and invite the Holy Spirit to bring our sins into the light of Christ. Our desire is to repent of our own sins and renounce them as well.*

*We earnestly pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit for the future of Friends.*

To this last, at least, I can add a hearty **Amen.**

Yours in the Light,

*Chuck Fager*

Chuck Fager



## A "REALIGNMENT" ROUNDUP: BUMPS IN THE ROAD TO A DEAD END?

In one sense, the future course of the "realignment" debate that has been simmering recently among many Friends, especially those affiliated with Friends United Meeting, can be summed up in a single practical question: Will fifty people accept Del Coppinger's invitation?

*[The notion of "realignment" was reported in detail in AFL #119. Briefly, it is a proposal, advocated most forcefully by Steve Main, General Secretary of Friends United Meeting, to break up FUM. The proposal was formalized in First Month by a minute from Southwest YM, calling for immediate negotiations for a merger of FUM and Evangelical Friends International, on the basis of an evangelical creed that would exclude several current FUM YMs, and cause division in several others. This idea has evoked strong reactions in many quarters, as we reported earlier and shall see further below.]*

### A NEW SEVEN-POINT CREED

Del Coppinger is Superintendent of the Iowa Yearly Meeting that is currently affiliated with FUM (not to be confused with Iowa YM-Conservative, of which was said in AFL #60). His invitation, on behalf of Iowa YM, is to a Ninth Month "realignment" conference in Des Moines. Other yearly meetings may send up to five delegates each, who are prepared to affirm seven theological propositions committing them to evangelical views on the Bible, Christ, and the ordinances. Coppinger needs at least fifty registrants to cover the motel and meeting room costs.

But will that many Friends show up? As of mid-Seventh Month, this was by no means clear. *A Friendly Letter* canvassed most American YMs in preparation for this issue, and at press time the response was distinctly less than overwhelming.

Those YMS which have said they are definitely planning to send delegates include the Evangelical Friends Church-Eastern Region in Ohio, Rocky Mountain YM in Colorado, MidAmerica YM in Kansas, Northwest

YM in Oregon, and Southwest in California. Of these, however, all but Southwest are already "realigned"—that is, outside FUM: Eastern Region was never in it, while Northwest, MidAmerica and Rocky Mountain left decades ago. And Southwest has only tenuous, marginal involvement in FUM.

Wilmington YM in Ohio, after long discussion at its recent sessions, agreed to send two "observers," not delegates; and North Carolina, which meets this month, is a question mark; sources there report a wide spectrum of views on the matter, which may mean that body will lie low for now.

Another YM which needs to be listed in the uncertain column is, surprisingly, Iowa itself, the gathering's purported sponsor. It seems that Del Coppinger called for the conference on the basis of a very general approval from the YM's representative body to explore the issue further. And I keep hearing from Iowans who are chagrined and angry at having been thus cast as the spearhead of what they see as a program for division among Friends. Coppinger himself told me he expected vigorous discussion, even debate, about the matter of appointing formal delegates to Iowa's "own" conference when its annual sessions gather next month.

### REBUKES FROM THE HEARTLAND

On the other side, Nebraska YM has turned the invitation down flat; and while Western YM in Indiana has taken no formal action, reliable sources there say most leading Western Friends are strongly against it.

How strongly? Well, at Western's Administrative Council session in Third Month, members received and agreed to pass along a minute from their Valley Mills Monthly Meeting which was sharply critical of Steve Main's active role in promoting what they called "*the dissolution of Friends United Meeting*" while employed by FUM. In fact, Valley Mills called Main's role "*a complete breach of confidence among Friends*," such that the Meeting "*believes the only recourse is to ask for the immediate resignation of the current*

*General Secretary.*" The fact that Western's Administrative Council circulated this letter as part of their minutes was close to tacit approval of the sentiment. And it may be no accident that in recent weeks Steve Main has maintained a very low profile on this matter; word is that he does not even plan to attend the Iowa meeting.

Western is one of the two heartland YMs in FUM. From the other, Indiana, has come a declaration that amounts to a stinging repudiation of "realignment". It is a remarkable manifesto, the more so as it is rooted in a strongly evangelical perspective.

Indiana's Executive Committee adopted the statement on 6/17. It begins by agreeing with "realignment" advocates that "*We have seen deep division [among FUM YMs] in areas such as authority of scripture, the person of Jesus Christ, homosexuality, extreme feminism, abortion, witchcraft, and leadership.*"

### PROBLEMS, YES; DIVISION, NO

*"We do not agree, however, that a new organization is the answer. In fact, it seems that even the discussion seems to distract us from our ministry goals and concentration on reaching the lost....[We call on FUM's leadership] to keep FUM centered on Jesus Christ and his commands. If Friends on both extremes of the spectrum choose to drop out, that is their choice....We should concentrate on the areas of our immediate influence and work to be more effective there rather than being distracted by 'concerns' in areas where we have no control or influence...."*

*"Further discussion on how to streamline FUM and make it more effective would be welcome and helpful. Discussion about dividing it up and laying it down tends to be disruptive and counterproductive to ministry."* The Executive Committee's minutes, after noting the discussion on this statement, dealt with the Iowa conference summarily: "*We will not send official representation to this conference.*"

Between Western and Indiana, one could hardly ask for a colder shoulder



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*Gulie looked at the brother she hadn't seen in over a year. He had a beard, his face was tanned and a even a little weatherbeaten. He looked much older than his twenty-one years.*

*Another soldier pulled up beside him. "Sergeant Gifford," Jonah boomed proudly, "meet my family."*

*Gifford grinned and touched his blue cap.*

*"We were at meeting," Gulie started to explain. "Samuel Hadley died after the battle at Newmarket, and it was his memorial. But we had to leave early, because someone said the Union soldiers were coming to burn our houses and barns."*

*She suddenly stepped back and regarded her brother incredulously. "Thee isn't going to burn thy own family's farm, is thee Jonah?"*

*"Gulie, hush!" Mother said severely. Jonah didn't answer. His face fell and he looked down at the road. But Gifford spoke for him.*

*"I'm afraid we might, young lady," he said. "We've been ordered to destroy all the crops and material we can find, when we're not actually fighting Jubal Early and his troops, as we're hoping to do today."*

*"But Jonah," Gulie protested, "thee can tell them that we are Quaker farmers here and all along Taylor's Lane. We have nothing to do with that civil war. Tell them."*

*Jonah still stood silent. "I'm afraid it's not that simple, Ma'am," Gifford said.*

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to the whole idea, or for a more strategic defeat. They are mainly pastoral and evangelical bodies; many of their members are very uneasy about some goings on they have heard about in some more liberal FUM YMs; but they are the main financial supporters of FUM, and their leadership has clearly had a bellyful of talk of divisions and separations.

From there East and North, the prospects for delegates get slimmer and slimmer. Baltimore YM will be presented with perhaps half a dozen draft minutes supporting FUM and rejecting "realignment" at its upcoming sessions; and given its traditional aversion to creedal statements, it is unlikely to send delegates to Iowa. Neither are New York, New England, Canadian or Southeastern. And that pretty much covers FUM's North American constituency.

### UNDERWHELMING NUMBERS

What does this all add up to? Here are some figures (Numbers in parentheses reflect three assumptions—that full delegations will come from YMs whose lists are still taking shape; that Iowa will appoint delegates, and that all official delegates will attend):

Southwest-----	5
MidAmerica-----	(5)
Northwest-----	1
Rocky Mountain-----	(5)
Iowa-----	(5)
EFC-Eastern Region---	(5)
Wilmington-----	2

TOTAL -----28

It would seem there is a way to go before the "Realignment" Conference gets off the ground. But it may yet happen: individuals can also attend, and they are not required to swallow the delegates' creed first. I have not detected signs of any groundswell of rank and file interest; but "realignment" advocates insist that it is there, and perhaps it will surface.

Yet even if the Conference is held, its representativeness will be open to serious question. Maurice Roberts, Superintendent of MidAmerica YM, told

me that the official position of the Evangelical YMs is that "realignment" is an FUM affair. *"We are open to discussion, but it is not our initiative, and we are not out recruiting FUM yearly meetings."*

Perhaps not, but it is already clear that the quickest, most enthusiastic responses to Iowa's invitation, and the majority of the likely delegates, are coming from evangelical YMs outside FUM. And are we to ignore the fact that it is they who would most benefit if FUM were broken up and its property and funds redistributed? There is something rather unseemly about the alacrity with which the summons to, in essence, plan FUM's dismemberment has been accepted by the evangelical YMs. One almost hears lips smacking, and hands rubbing together. Tacky, my Friends. Tacky.

### THE MARGIN AND THE FRINGE?

Within FUM, the only all-out support is from Southwest, which has long been uneasy in FUM and is but tenuously connected with it, not even making a corporate financial contribution. Most Southwest Friends are, and long have been, much closer to the evangelical YMs in outlook. The same goes for Steve Main and those in Iowa who are behind the conference.

In which case, who will the creedally-vetted delegates to the Iowa gathering represent? Essentially those who are either outside FUM already, or who would like to be. Some of these Friends have been talking about "realignment" for years. They are, of course, free to meet and talk about it once more in Iowa if they wish.

But it is already clear that their sentiments are marginal, and unrepresentative even of the more orthodox Christian leadership in FUM. Thus, if the conference does come off, why should other Friends, in or outside of FUM, take their proposals any more seriously now than previously?

In fact, it seems unlikely that their deliberations will have much impact on FUM. By Tenth Month, when it meets again, the FUM General Board will have received at least two formal statements supporting FUM as

presently constituted, from Indiana and Nebraska. And there could well be several more, after the eastern YMs have their sessions; there are many Friends there strongly loyal to FUM as a bridge between diverse groups of American Quakers.

Whether the Board will be able to say so clearly, this should put the period to the proposal for a great new division of American Friends between the true Christian sheep and the pagan universalist goats; and none too soon.

With luck, this outcome could then lead to two further, overdue developments: First, rather than "realignment", a round of *attrition*. That is, Southwest YM should squarely face the question of whether it and FUM would not be better off with it in Evangelical Friends International, with whom most of its leaders and members feel more comfortable. Iowa YM may face a similar choice, although signals from there suggest much less solid support for such a departure than Del Coppinger once thought.

### MARLENE PEDIGO'S BETTER IDEA

If these YMs elect to stay in FUM, one hopes their leaders will accept the rebuke their "realignment" gambit has been dealt, and at long last join in making FUM what it could be, rather than continuing their feckless efforts to dominate or dismantle it.

A focus on strengthening and enriching FUM is the other desirable outcome which the end of "realignment" could make possible. Marlene Pedigo, of the Chicago Fellowship of Friends, has written eloquently and provocatively of a program of *revitalization* as an alternative. Her model is a successful effort in the Methodist church to explore both problems and prospects for its own internal renewal. This is such a self-evidently good idea, one wonders why it hasn't been explored earlier. Maybe with "realignment" out of the way, it will be.

In fact, how about a conference on *revitalizing* FUM? And why not in Iowa, where Marlene Pedigo hails from?

I'd be the first to sign up.



INSIDE: A "Realignment" Roundup

Forwarding &amp; Address Correction Requested

From: Chuck Fager, A Friendly Letter  
P.O. Box 1361  
Baileys Crossroads, VA 22041

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### THIS MONTH IN QUAKER HISTORY

Can you picture this? An unarmed middle-aged Quaker, uprooted from his Iowa farm by a summons from the White House, facing unarmed a war party of fierce, battle-hardened Kiowa and Comanches, negotiating for the freedom of a group of hostages.

Thus it was, at any rate, on Eighth Month 7, 1870. The farmer was Lawrie Tatum, as solid, practical and unflappable a Friend as you might hope to meet. White-bearded, plain-dressed, Tatum was one of many Quaker Indian agents hired under the unique policy of the Grant administration to entrust the work of Indian affairs to the Society of Friends. This program depended on just the characteristics Lawrie Tatum embodied: hard work, integrity, respect for the natives' spirit and humanity, and a commitment to change without violence.

Tatum had been assigned to the agency near Fort Sill, Oklahoma. While some of the Kiowas had accepted the government's offer of reservation life and agriculture, others, led by chiefs like the wily, eloquent Satanta, refused. *"I take hold of that part of the white man's road represented by the breech-loading gun,"* Satanta told a Quaker committee defiantly. *"The good Indian, he that listens to the white man, gets nothing. The independent Indian, is the only one that is rewarded."*

Lawrie Tatum understood Satanta's point well enough. The pattern was clear: bands of Kiowa raiders would raid farms, steal supplies and take prisoners, then trade them for food and other supplies. Often enough, the government forked over the goods to ransom the captives; and often enough, they paid first and then didn't even get their hostages back.

Tatum would have none of this. When Kiowa emissaries came to bargain, he told them no supplies would be forthcoming until after all the hostages they held had been released.

The Kiowas stalled, and called for more powwows. At the meeting on 8/7, Tatum was confronted by warriors who sat around him fully armed: some with rifles, others with bows and arrows, and one with a huge knife that he sat sharpening all through the session. Tatum later remarked deadpan that he thought they perhaps did this to intimidate him.

But it didn't work. Negotiations continued for three more weeks, with Tatum standing firm but peaceful, and finally all the white captives were released. Not that this ended problems in the region; but tatum labored faithfully at the task for another two and a half years.

### QUAKER CHUCKLE

Two items from the Friends General Conference Gathering at Boone, North Carolina last month:

A knowledgeable Friend concerned about the controversy in New York Yearly Meeting over witchcraft (See AFL #114-115) reports with a shake of the head hearing the following angry comment from one of the more "liberal" partisans in the debate: *"I don't even want to talk to those Christians about it; they are SO intolerant."*

And as if 70-plus workshops weren't enough for FGC, Friend Bob Lyon suggested several more for future consideration. Here are a few:

- \* *The Primal Shrug*
  - \* *Conquering Self-Doubt Through Pretense and Ostentation*
  - \* *Making new Friends by Quaker Cloning*
  - \* *Overcoming Peace of Mind; and not least-*
  - \* *Guilt Without Sex*
-