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## Front Matter--Quaker Religious Thought, no. 48

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# Christ's Wife: A Vision for All Women

Lisa B. Kuenning

*Comment by Lorena Jeanne Tinker*

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## Quaker Religious Thought

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*Sponsored by the Quaker Theological Discussion Group*

The purpose of the Quaker Theological Discussion Group is to explore the meaning and implications of our Quaker faith and religious experience through discussion and publication. This search for unity in the claim of truth upon us concerns both the content and the application of our faith.

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### *Editor's Page*

In *QRT* Number 44 (Spring 1977) A. Barrie Pittock appealed to Friends to take very seriously the various theologies of liberation which have been formulated in recent years. These theologies have arisen primarily within communities of people who have themselves been the victims of injustice or oppression. Liberation theology as such is primarily a movement among Latin American Christians; black theology has articulated the aspirations of American blacks; and women's theology has emerged among women who have become conscious of their subordination.

There has been little opportunity for the development of a black theology among Friends, since there are only a handful of black American Quakers. The number of Latin American Friends is much greater, but in many ways Latin American Quakerism is only now emerging as a self-conscious movement, with the formation of an organizing committee on the occasion of the 1977 Conference of Friends in the Americas and the subsequent opening of a Friends World Committee office in Mexico. The QTDG, at its conference this summer, heard its first request from Latin American Friends that we address issues of liberation theology.

In contrast, women have from the beginning played strong leadership roles in Quakerism, and the women's movement has become strong and active among Friends in recent years. A Quaker Women's Support Group has become almost an institutionalized part of many Quaker conferences. At least one QTDG conference has had its women's caucus meetings. A Women's Theology Group was founded at the 1975 Friends General Conference.

Thus it is hardly surprising that *QRT* should have devoted little direct attention to date to black theology or to liberation theology of the Latin American variety, but that issues related to women's theology should now become the focus for an issue of *QRT*. What is, in some ways, more surprising is that these issues should be raised in the form of a lead article whose thesis constitutes a direct challenge to many of the premises



which form the center of many contemporary formulations of women's theology. However, given the peculiar mission and history of the QTDG, it is not all that surprising; where else might one expect a well-reasoned appeal to the theology of George Fox and of early Friends as a basis for attacking some issue in the contemporary world?

In view of the seminal and controversial nature of Lisa Kuenning's thesis, the QTDG Executive Committee and I as editor felt it quite important that the Comments on her article should come from Friends with a variety of experiences within and expressions of the quest for women's liberation. It has been more than three and a half years since I received Lisa Kuenning's manuscript; much of the intervening time has gone past in waiting for Comments to be completed. Finally a decision had to be made to delay no longer and to go ahead with the one Comment which has been received.

Since Lorena Jeanne Tinker's Comment reflects a theological position and agenda far removed from those of Lisa Kuenning, it is not surprising that the dialogue has tended to move toward an exchange of ad hominem (ad personam?) arguments. What may be needed is a more reasoned interchange among a variety of positions, some perhaps intermediate between those represented in this issue. In order to further this dialogue, we encourage readers to write their views on Lisa Kuenning's thesis and other issues of women's theology, with a view to future publication of a variety of well-reasoned views as letters to the editor or as a possible symposium in a future issue of *QRT*.

#### EDITORIAL CHANGES

At this summer's QTDG conference, review was made of the facts that I have been finding it increasingly difficult to release time from my full-time work to devote to the editorship of *QRT*, and that a potential job change (subsequently aborted) left me with questions about my ability to continue as editor at all. Particular concern was expressed about the delay in publishing QTDG conference papers far beyond the time in which the memory of conference discussions remains fresh. As a result, two changes have been made. We have employed a part-time editorial assistant, who for a modest honorarium will undertake the needed but time-consuming work of editorial research and copy editing. Also, a second editor has been appointed. From this point on, Dean Freiday and I serve as co-editors of *QRT*. Readers will already be familiar with

Dean Freiday's work on *QRT* Number 47 (Autumn 1978), which he produced as guest editor. I heartily welcome him as a colleague in this work.

Articles may be submitted for consideration to either of the co-editors, whose addresses will appear on the inside front cover. At this writing, my own future plans are that I will be leaving Rio Grande, Ohio, within a few weeks and will be moving to Portland, Oregon. My new address appears on the inside front cover of this issue.

#### NEW PUBLICATIONS

Three recently-published items will be of interest to many readers of *QRT*. Catholic and Quaker Studies Number 4 is *The Bible: Its Criticism, Interpretation and Use in 16th and 17th Century England*, by Dean Freiday. This book will be reviewed in a future issue of *QRT*. Copies may be ordered for \$8.50, plus \$1.00 for postage and handling, from Catholic and Quaker Studies, 1110 Wildwood Ave., Manasquan, N.J. 08736.

Two new study booklets have been published this summer under the auspices of the Faith and Life Movement. Both include chapters by Friends representing a variety of traditions and viewpoints within the Society of Friends. *The Church in Quaker Thought and Practice: A Study in Ecclesiology*, is edited by Charles F. Thomas and sells for \$2.50. *Quaker Worship in North America*, edited by Francis B. Hall and published by Friends United Press, sells for \$4.95. Both study booklets may be purchased from Friends book stores or from Friends World Committee, Section of the Americas, 1506 Race Street, Philadelphia, Pa. 19102, or Box 235, Plainfield, Ind. 46168.

V. P.