

1961

The Concern of Evangelical Friends for the Fellowship of the Gospel Among All Friends, April 1961

Arthur O. Roberts Editor

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CONCERN

THE CONCERN OF EVANGELICAL FRIENDS

for the fellowship
of the Gospel
among all Friends

"Ye are my friends,
if ye do whatsoever
I command you."

John 15:14

expressing the CONCERN of evangelical Friends in the areas of theology, Biblical study, outreach, and devotional life.

dedicated to a Christ-centered renewal of spiritual life among all Friends.

praying for an enlarged Quaker witness to the Gospel throughout the world.

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George Fox College

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Silence

The prophet Zechariah records the words, "Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation."

In the midst of changing times and conditions, man's worship is essentially in spirit and in truth when he knows this kind of spiritual silence before the God whom he worships. Worship is measured neither by the amount or quality of noise nor the amount or quality of quietness. Carpets and offertories do not true silence make. The self must be stilled before God. Often in the Old Testament silence is used in reference to death. And in this vein Paul writes, "they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit."

True worship is thus the privilege of the sanctified heart and the disciplined mind: death to carnality and submission to the mind of Christ. May we find this kind of silence in our meetings for worship! George Fox referred often in his Journal to "precious" meetings. The word appears quaint to us and has lost much of its power, I suppose. But there is within it yet some of the syllables of Canaan for those who have experienced the joys of worship in which the Holy Spirit has melted hearts and minds together in the fire of His purifying, empowering presence.

Finances

If you would like to help tide the Concern over a bit of a financial dry spell, your gifts will be much appreciated. If you prefer, send in gift subscriptions for your friends, and thus increase the fruitfulness of your gift. If you have no particular recipients in mind but would wish us to apply your gift toward someone's subscription, please let us know. \$5.00 will take care of a three-year subscription. Please give serious consideration to this matter.

Send your contribution to Lloyd Hinshaw, 4995 Newton, Denver 21, Colorado. All checks should be made payable to "The Association of Evangelical Friends."

A REMINDER

FRIENDS SUMMER SEMINARY

Beginning on Thursday, July 20, and continuing through Wednesday, August 9, 1961, Friends Summer Seminary will open at Rockcleft, near the town of Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, just a few miles west of Colorado Springs. The Association of Evangelical Friends has arranged the following schedule of courses:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| "Church Administration" | T. Eugene Coffin, pastor of Alamitos Friends Church, Garden Grove, Calif. |
| "Christian Classics" | Arthur O. Roberts, Professor of Religion and Philosophy, George Fox College, Newberg, Oregon. |
| "Biblical Authority" | Ora Lovell, Professor of Religion, Malone College, Canton, Ohio. |
| An English Bible Course | Lowell Roberts, President, Friends University, Wichita, Kansas. |

Classes meet twice daily and carry three term hours credit.

Tuition for a normal two-course is \$50.00.

Room and board is provided at no cost to the student.

Pre-registration is required. Because interest is widespread and enrollment limited by present facilities, early registration is recommended. Write to Gerald Dillon, director, 1227 SE 35th Ave., Portland 14, Oregon, for descriptive literature and application blanks.

Worship in the Friends Church

(The first of the statements below comes from Keith Sarver, General Superintendent of California Yearly Meeting. The second is by Wayne Allman, General Superintendent of Iowa Yearly Meeting.)

The manner of worship in our Friends Church today is so far removed from the worship of early Friends that early Friends would not recognize it as worship in Spirit and in truth at all. "Let's all grab a hymn book and turn to page fifty-four. Everyone smile and look happy now and make a joyful noise unto the Lord." And the Lord, in His mercy, lets us get by with this. Or, the preacher utters some stately call to worship and we go through a form not at all foreign to the Methodists or the Presbyterians. In either case, and the cases are more general than isolated, there is little to resemble a meeting for worship under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

There is little need to repeat the well-known facts about the great contrasts between the worship of first generation Quakers and their contemporaries in the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches, except to remind ourselves of the fact that many of our practices of worship today are exactly what the early Friends would have called "creaturely activity." One is not so sure but that they would have been right. There are robed choirs, written sermons and prayers and even the repetition of the "Disciples (Lord's) Prayer." In fact, about the only difference between the eleven o'clock service in the average Friends Church today and the service in the neighboring Protestant church is the substitution of "Quaker communion" for the wine and wafer variety. And the former may be no closer to real communion than the latter. The body and blood of Christ may be missing in both.

No, this Friend is not cynical about modern Quaker worship—just deeply concerned. We cannot turn back the pages of history and begin anew with a duplication of the practices of the first generation Quakers, but we can recognize the eternal fact that true worship is led of the Holy Spirit and only worship inspired and directed by the Holy Spirit is Christian worship. We cannot, and we should not, return to the original forms of Friends worship, but we can and should admit that there must have been a greater power released through their worship than through our own.

Our great loss and our crucial lack is the absence of the direct and immediate leadership of the Holy Spirit in our worship. Our worship is so well planned that the Spirit rarely has an opportunity to lead us. We know that the Holy Spirit can guide the preacher in his study on Tuesday or Friday and it is not impossible for a service to be both programmed and at the same time Spirit-led. But it must be admitted that two vital elements are all but missing from the worship in many

Friends Churches today—a living silence and the exercise of the ministry of the priesthood of all believers. Few meetings for worship now begin with silent waiting upon the Lord and it is normal for the "silent period" to have a background of organ music, timed so accurately that it concludes exactly with the "amen" at the close of the pastor's prayer. Few people expect the silent moments ever to be broken by a burning, prophetic message given by a non-recorded minister.

Yes, we have all but succumbed to the worldly and creaturely methods of worship common in other Protestant churches and both they and we are the losers. At the time when other denominations are becoming ever more formal in their worship, Friends might well remember their heritage and the reasons behind it and become again a prophetic people in the area of spiritual worship.

The Purpose of Divine Worship

When it comes to the central purpose of Christian worship, certainly it should be the same for all believers. That central purpose is the reproduction of the likeness of Jesus Christ within the human heart. Paul points this up for us in his second letter to the Corinthian church, "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit," (2 Cor. 3:18 R.S.V.) This is the long range goal and purpose and it should be the purpose of every meeting for worship.

Worship

When any person is converted he takes on a measure of the likeness of Christ. In an experience of sanctification the way is prepared for an even greater likeness. But it is in the continuous exposure through worship that the likeness becomes more pronounced. It is growth in the grace of our Lord which transforms us most of all and this growth is primarily the result of worship.

"Feed me, my God, with spirit food
That I may live in Thee,
That I may grow like to Thyself,
Thine image, Lord, in me."

—Bread of Life—Cushman

A prominent American preacher tells of an experience he had while traveling in Sweden. He had been late in booking passage on a certain vessel and found that the only cabin available was one he must share with three other men. The preacher was a poor sailor and found it necessary to hit the bed when only a few hours out. He described the bed as having somewhat the nature of a cooling board. Soon a kindly-faced chap looked in and called out a cheerful greeting. Seeing the dilemma of the preacher, he walked over to straighten up the covers. When he discovered the kind of bed it was he claimed it as his. After a brief argument he left.

Early in the evening the patient went up on deck for a while only

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to discover, on his return, that his afternoon visitor was in his bed and apparently asleep. There was nothing to do but take the other bed. It was as comfortable, he reported, as the other one was uncomfortable.

When morning came the preacher sought out his unknown friend to express his gratitude. The friend was reluctant to talk about himself, but finally said that he had been in the Congo as a missionary and was going home on furlough. He had noticed how poor the bed was but saw that there was no other way to make the trade. He then said, "I hope you will pardon me."

This missionary had become so unself-conscious that he thought it not strange to be so concerned over the comfort of a stranger. But he did not get that way through any one experience. He had been transformed through the worship of a God who cares. This is the goal of all worship.

Worship, if it is real, is communication with God. It is "seeing Him who is invisible." If we miss this then worship will never have the vitality intended.

We do not know how often the young man Isaiah went to church, though there is good reason to believe he was a regular worshipper, but we do know of one time he saw God and we know something of the difference it made. Doubtless he had meditated many times over the meaning of the symbolism of Jewish worship. This time his own need was acute, his heart was heavy with sorrow and he must have been more open to God than before. The service of worship was progressing, as usual when suddenly, God was there! He was alive, aware, active. Here was communication. Here was worship. Isaiah was never the same again. Without doubt, no other experience of worship was just like this one, but the prophecy of Isaiah is evidence that there was regular communication—worship.

The Approach to Divine Worship

If the purpose of worship is the same for all Christians then there are certain factors in the approach to worship which should be much the same also. Unless there is preparation for worship on the part of the Presbyterian or the Friend, the service itself probably will bear little fruit in the life.

The first word in preparation is reverence. The writer to the Hebrews says, "Let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe." This should mean a proper respect for God. A rather frequent reflection on the experience of Moses and the Israelites on the Mount of the Law might be helpful, lest we forget that our God is a consuming flame. The thunder, lightning and the earthquake were no part of an empty show. God was in that place and He had serious business with His people. He is no less concerned for our reverence today and we are not prepared for worship unless there is an inward, holy hush.

But God would not have us afraid of His presence. Again quoting

from Hebrews, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need . . . Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." (Heb. 4:16; 10:22.)

Or, what child drew back in fear from Jesus? And God is like Christ. But there is no excuse for a careless, nonchalant approach to worship. Worship is not a party.

Our concept of the worship room as just a meetinghouse may have cost us more than it is worth. While it is true that any meeting place with God becomes a temple and that worship is an inward experience, we may well miss the quiet sense of His presence by making the church building as common as a "hall." This is no plea for a "holy of holies," but a recognition of personal discomfort over our lack of respect for a place dedicated for the worship of Almighty God. If this be heresy, so be it!

The second word in our approach to worship might well be expectancy. Some people have never had anything great happen to them in worship and they doubt that it can. But God is always present for worship. The promise of Jesus to meet with those gathered in His name must never be forgotten. Perhaps a more common word is faith. If we believe Christ to be meeting with us, how could our worship ever be dull? If nothing happens to us in worship, it may be because we really didn't expect anything to happen.

A woman once told me that I was the only preacher who had been able to keep her husband awake in church. She intended this as a compliment and it was appreciated, but in reality it was a revelation of the fact that her husband's worship experience lacked depth and meaning. It was up to the preacher to keep him awake during what should have been one of the most exciting hours of each week.

The Practice of Divine Worship

It is in our method of worship that we reputedly differ so much from other Protestant Christians. It is here that our failure is probably most poignant. While the problem is not the same in the non-pastoral meeting as in the pastoral meeting, there are problems in both.

Pick up a bulletin in nearly any Friends Church and you find a fully planned and programmed order of worship. There may be little in the bulletin to distinguish the Quaker service from the one in the neighboring Baptist Church. Probably there will be little difference in the service itself. True, we do not use the ordinances, and we may have a period designated as "communion after the manner of Friends," but this misses the point of Quaker worship almost entirely.

If we return to our definition of worship as communication with God then the time of communion can hardly be limited to the two or three minutes of "Quaker silence." Worship should never be an interlude in our busyness. There must be heart preparation and this hardly comes during the prelude unless there has been a background prepara-

tion ahead of time. We present day Quakers could learn something from Albert Day when he talks about preparation for prayer. "In a word, if you wait until you begin to pray, to try to acquire the capacity to concentrate on God, you will be guilty of too little, too late. Effective prayer begins before it begins. It begins with what you are thinking and loving and planning and doing mid all the traffic of our ways." The same might well be said about effective worship. One sometimes has difficulty "keeping up" with the order of the worship in a Friends Church.

Worship begins as we tune in on God's frequency. A number of years ago it was my privilege to meet with Friends in Evanston, Ill. The meeting gathered in silence. After only a few moments a boy about nine or ten years of age requested the singing of a certain hymn. Someone went to the piano and we joined together in worship through music. The hymn was followed by two or three brief messages. Presently the service was concluded and one had a sense of having participated in worship. The young fellow had tuned in and the message of the hymn set the pattern for all that followed. Perhaps it just happened that way on that particular occasion, but I doubt it. Dr. B. F. Andrews, an elder in the Evanston Meeting pointed out that theirs was not a meeting on the basis of silence. It was a meeting under the direction of the Holy Spirit he said. Isn't this the true mark of distinction of Quaker worship?

Certainly God can and does inspire a pastor in his study during the week and it is possible to arrange an order of worship and prepare a sermon through which God can speak to His people. But if the pastor gets all of the inspiration, does all of the preaching and most of the praying, then we have missed the way and we will be no different from our sister churches.

We have a witness to make concerning the priesthood of believers and the leadership of the Holy Spirit in worship. There is no virtue in just being different but, with the current revival of liturgical worship in nearly every Protestant church, we are in danger of losing one of our distinctive callings, i.e., "worship stands neither in forms nor in the formal disuse of forms. . . ."

My own soul would be impoverished without music. The reading of the Scriptures in worship should have depth of meaning for us all. And the sermon is one of God's chosen means of edifying believers as well as drawing sinners to the mercy seat. All of this belongs as an integral part of public worship. But worship is more than all of these. And only God can lead His people in worship. Friends, "let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe."

—KEITH SARVER

Worship in the 17th Century

Friends meetings for worship in the seventeenth century were strictly evangelical. Founded upon the doctrines of the primitive church, reality budded forth in the warm glow of the Reformation resurgence.

Vitality surged at the center. The surface crust had been broken. Religion was seen in a new dimension. The imputation of righteousness by means of conforming to set patterns of ritual without thinking minds and changing hearts could no longer be accepted doctrine.

Their meetings were characterized with humble waiting, and simplicity. Shared ministry was didactic and evangelistic appealing for a response from those who heard. Static moralizing and soothing platitudes were absent from their messages. There was enough power in their meetings for worship that the benediction was like lighting a fuse to a bomb which explodes and scatters hot fragments over the community. Friends departed as burning witnesses.

They rejected the sacramental rites which had become obscurities to spiritual grace rather than intermediary conveyers of light. Imagery, symbolics and gaudy pageantry were absent from the Friends meeting for worship. They testified to the non-essential quality of these "worship helps." They emphasized the absolute necessity of baptism with the Holy Spirit and the partaking of Christ's blood and body in a spiritual sense. The water, grape juice, wine and wafers were judged as merely incidental to the salvation of the soul. Out of such spiritual meetings came witness to faith, concern for human welfare, equality of persons, education, and missionary enterprise.

The Present Day Meeting

The evangelical meeting today is attempting to preserve the essential spirit of the 17th century Friends. The approach in itself is least important—retaining the spirit and vitality is all important. The central person in the meeting for worship is Christ. The central book is the Bible. From these two we are given the central message—Christ crucified and resurrected. The typical Friends service adequately conducted includes the following parts:

EXPRESSION

Singing
Witnessing
Giving

COMMUNION

Praying
Searching
Thanking

EXHORTATION

Teaching
Preaching
Convicting

DECISION

Confessing
Deciding
Redeeming

How does the worship service affect the people who attend? Does something happen to them? The person who comes to share and one who comes with a prayerful attitude of course is going to profit. Every attender contributes to the atmosphere—whether it be uplifting, indifferent or foul. It might be shocking to peer into the Lord's bucket as he gathers His collection of attitudes, influences, expressions, thoughts and moods from each pew on Sunday morning. When these are mixed and poured into the atmosphere, we might gain a better understanding of why the meeting for worship was either fruitful or unproductive.

What should we expect to happen in our meetings? A Lutheran minister spoke to this writer one day saying, "I believe something ought to happen every once in a while to people in the pews during a sermon." Should we not regularly expect strengthening of Christian conviction, dawning of truth, victory over sin, inspiration, knowledge, understanding, decision, change, vision, faith, hope, and trust, and many other desirable fruits of ministry?

Beliefs Which Intensify Worship

There are characteristic points in evangelical worship which intensify the meetings, providing an objective influence in a vital sense.

(1) There is belief in the personal expression of the supernatural in lives. The supernatural is not skimmed from the New Testament records to provide "outs" at will. It is quite convenient to suddenly apply the tags "figurative" or "idealistic" or "parabolic" to passages involving the touch of the supernatural through Jesus Christ. Friends believe that the miraculous hand of God can and does touch human lives in the meeting for worship. Miracles do happen in the hearts of men and women, boys and girls when God speaks through Jesus Christ to their condition. The evangelical belief in the new birth and the conversion of the soul is projected as nothing less than a miraculous touch by God. This belief in God's intervention through Jesus Christ intensifies the importance of the meeting for worship.

(2) Worship is concerned with eternal life and death. Joshua confronted his people with a challenge, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." The meeting for worship has an element of the same confrontation. Inevitably the choice between life or death is serious, but the choice between eternal life and eternal death is supremely electrifying. Determination of destiny is lifted to the point of crisis. Real worship exposes reality to the point where one can see clearly the destiny of the choices which one made. The intensity of the meeting therefore is accentuated as the group becomes so vitally involved with the matters of life or death, heaven or hell.

(3) There is belief in the resurrected Christ. Belief in Christ's resurrection and heavenly intercession for His own makes an immense difference in the concept of worship.

While walking back through the slender stocks of faith (tending to doubt each one being passed) an abrupt and reassured about-face transpires when one reaches the open tomb. Then the steps are retraced through the field of doubted tenets, and one rejoices to find each standing with eternal reliance. It is the light of the living Christ that establishes the faith and makes meetings for worship full of mystic power. The Savior of the world stands to greet each listening ear, to forgive each guilty heart, and to comfort each drooping soul.

(4) The work of the Holy Spirit is honored by evangelicals. There is considerable interest in the subject of the Holy Spirit among current religious writers. Multiple variations of judgment exist. Friends have witnessed to the personal leadership of the Comforter for many

years. In fact, the presence of the third person of the Trinity has been the central force in worship. Friends depend on the Spirit to convince the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. He inspires prayer and initiates the power of witness. Therefore recognition of His presence as the indweller of the church intensifies the meaning and experience of worship together.

Problems Being Faced Today

(1) Keeping worship vital is a challenge to every generation of Christians. It is the problem of conserving the presence of God in the midst of a people. Systems of orthodox doctrines, rules, queries, and laws without end or institutions with long traditions in themselves cannot monopolize God for any group. The Israelites in Jeremiah's day presumed that the Lord was inseparable from their temple. In essence of thought God was their prisoner. Paul Rees aptly points out in one of his searching sermons that "we cannot put God in a straight-jacket." The holding of any specific belief or the observing of any outward act in itself does not compel God to be in our midst. Many men of good meaning have attempted to pen God up in their own little systems.

For this reason the challenge to preserve a vital worship is emphasized. Fresh gleanings from the Spirit must ensue. The flow of spiritual life is not artesian simply because our grandfathers heard from heaven. We can have the same church building, the same hymn books, the same pews, the same discipline, the same declaration of faith and the same altar that our glorious forefathers possessed and yet be paupers in the Kingdom. A continuing fresh anointing from heaven must flow. There is no substitute for humble contrition and a clean life before God. The separation of religion from morals, faith from practice, and doctrine from the spirit will in every instance destroy a vital worship.

(2) Related to this problem is the danger of drifting into a stereotyped service. Visitors quickly sense this condition while it may be totally oblivious to the regular congregation. A person entering a house filled with gas fumes recognizes the smell immediately while persons living within the house are insensitive to the danger.

Evangelical Friends are not exempt from the insidious abyss of hackneyed meetings for worship. These stereotype plates need to be jerked from the church presses and carried to their rightful habitat—the city dump. New type needs to be used every week. It is absolutely imperative for the congregation to receive a shock of freshness quite often. The church cannot continue to exist on the same dead testimony of forty years ago. What happened last week to the souls of the people? Even evangelical doctrines can become a form of godliness. And in this area it is easy to sense when the fields have not been plowed for a long, long time.

(3) Another problem being faced by some churches might only be tagged as a matter of taste. This concerns our tradition of informality. Such an approach to meetings for worship has been a great testimony

to Christendom. We have misunderstood ourselves at times, however, along this line. Informality can be formalized. And to avoid hypocrisy let us confess that this has happened in a general sense over our denomination.

While yet agreeing to the advisability of the informal approach, let it not be used as an excuse for laxity. The informal service can have the touch of highest dignity. Too many times informality and laxity have become synonymous. Lack of planning, ill-preparedness, irritating mannerisms, and haphazard conducting of meetings have been excused under the heralded banner of our traditional informality. There is a cold dignity which should never be let in the church doors. On the other hand there is a warm dignity which dovetails with our tradition and lifts the worship of our Lord to spiritual heights. The conducting of the worship service on this level engenders respect in this day when the educational level of our congregations is continually rising.

(4) The prevailing emphasis in meetings is most significant. What the group is against must never be allowed to dominate the atmosphere. "Anti-ism" sometimes lends a certain sympathetic unity to groups but the foundation is never sound. All should righteously be opposed to many things such as drinking, smoking, riotous living, lewdness, war, communism, socialism, and liberal theological doctrines, to name a few. Yet the attitude of righteous anger should not be allowed to consume our worship. The spirit of "anti-ism" can develop into suspicious, condemning and pharisaical sentiments toward fellow Christians to the detriment of the church. What a group is for should be primary and what it is against, secondary. Friends' meetings for worship ought to be "launching pads" of spiritual truth and positive action. A positive offensive for Christ rather than any energy-consuming defensive program should characterize the meetings. We have tended toward the defensive, from which there will never be much progress.

Certainly there is much to defend. Even though the saying has grown trite, and yet not untrue, "The best defense is an offense," we have not sufficiently headed the advice. We can yell our lungs out and yet in reality be on the retreat. Billy Graham does not spend his time answering his critics. He realized early in his enormous ministry that to answer his critics would so consume his time and energy that it would rob his power for positive action. Worship must be on the positive side, as a charge not a drain, building spiritual energies for the frontiers.

(5) The place of meeting bears renewed consideration by Friends. Improvements are being made. Two extremes are to be avoided—the run-down building and the extravagant sanctuary. The minimum requirement for the sanctuary is cleanliness and good repair. In America today there is no excuse for the lack of either, for the smallest meeting has enough money and persons to meet this minimal standard.

Some churches are still following the standard of the little red school

house in the country of years gone by. Friends are paying a tremendous price for slow reflexes in the light of changing standards. It is true we can worship God in a barn, but the standards of today call for better things. Generally speaking, our meetinghouses could be more conducive to worship and a better witness to the dignity of Christ in the community. There is ample room for great improvement without breaking the heritage of simplicity.

(6) Use of the altar in the Friends church has decreased. In spite of diverse feelings, Friends have the right to make use of the altar as a place where man meets God. Methodists and Presbyterians far outdistance us in altar usage even though theirs is more formalized. The altar is a public witness which Friends need. One caution ought to be mentioned. The physical altar in front of our churches can become sacramental in the same sense as water baptism and the outward observance of the Lord's Supper. The altar can become mysticized and a "worship help" or in extreme emphasis—a pre-requisite to salvation. Evangelical Friends must beware of contradiction at this point.

What Looms in the Future

Our meetings for worship are the center of all church activity. Here our power is generated or depleted. Success or failure for the church is herewith pin-pointed. We face the same problem as the larger cities of today—decay at the center. The diagnosis is poor circulation. In meetings where this does not seem to be a problem the taking of the temperature periodically would be a step of preventive medicine.

(1) There is growing opportunity for evangelically minded Friends to assume leadership for the future. The editor of The Friend, published in London, wrote an editorial in the January 6, 1961, issue on a current appraisal of Friends contributive status to the world for the months ahead. He undoubtedly was attempting some shock treatment. Evangelicals cannot entirely stand exempt from his indictment of the Quaker movement. This is what he said:

. . . The Quakerism that we know is, as to the side usually turned uppermost, almost incredibly antiquarian, conservative, decorous and formal, with a corporate appearance of piety that is slightly phoney because not grounded in twenty thousand sharp personal experiences, and with machinery and modes of expression old and tired. . . When shall we stir from this doze; throw off the antique bedclothes which smother us; and meet our God not through the eyes of Fox, Penington and Woolman, but through the eyes of our contemporary Jesus Christ, born, living, crucified and risen, today, in January, 1961? . . . No one, surely, will claim that Quakerism as we know it now can clearly reveal the face of Jesus Christ in 1961. It is a veil and a disguise, whose thick folds obscure and partly falsify him.

This is a sad commentary on our movement but a genuine attempt to be realistic. It is time for evangelical Friends to step forward with a

clear concept of direction. There is real opportunity to supply the leaven to the movement. But the ability to do so in the future will come only through revitalized meetings for worship.

(2) There is hopefully coming a renewed emphasis on the importance of attending the services of the church. A writer in The Evangelical Friend recently stated, "It seems to me that in some instances the importance of worship is not realized or emphasized enough to really impress the members." Irregular attendance has been a detrimental witness to the importance of congregational worship. The existence of our churches is in doubt unless a 100% participation on the part of all members is received.

(3) The future also points toward better informed leadership. Pastors are improving their educational status. Their conducting of the services will be on a continuing higher level. Better administration will be employed. The gospel will be made relevant. A certain refinement is taking place which, at the same time, will be a ministry to all classes of people.

(4) Whether one likes it or not our meetings will tend toward a more formal approach with Protestantism in general, although not as far. There is confidence in an accompanying warmth of spiritual life and concern. The give and take of the age in which we dwell is always going to affect us in spite of likes, or dislikes, or personal resistance. The meetings for worship must be able to adjust but never compromise on essentials.

(5) With an optimistic view this writer predicts an increasing number of evangelically minded people and an increase in the average size of meetings for worship. People will soon awaken to the fact that a back-seat-sitting congregation lacks something vital—a consuming interest. The fact of visitors being ushered to the front seats with the regular members sitting behind them is one of the sins of the present day church. When ears begin to hear and hearts begin to sing with new vitality in the meeting for worship, the front seats will be filled first, rather than last.

—WAYNE ALLMAN

The Australian Friend, February 20, 1961, contains this statement: "After earnest and prayerful consideration we have decided that the stage has now been reached at which Australian Friends, who for many years constituted part of London Yearly Meeting, should take their place in the world family of Friends as Australia Yearly Meeting, and we hope to complete the change by 1964."

852 members were reported—an increase of 28 over the previous year, 14 of them by conviction—by this Friends body which had been established as a "general meeting" of London Yearly Meeting in 1902 through the efforts of John Morland and Joshua and Isabella Rowntree. Hobart Monthly Meeting reported using a new meeting house for the first time on Christmas morning, with an attendance of 104.

The Role of the Pastor in the Friends Church

By Kenneth Pitts, pastor Friendswood, Texas

With the arrival of the mid-twentieth century era we have moved into the age of the spectator. Athletic events draw the great crowds, make the big headlines, and negotiate business transactions of no small caliber. The thousands going to these games do not play, they just sit and watch others play. The spectator way of life has also invaded the American home. School youngsters often do their home work by the flickering blue light of the television screen. We have become a generation of professional watchers with minds in neutral and emotions in overdrive.

This has made its impact upon the church. We have developed a spectator pattern of worship. Every pastor faces the question, "Are my people spectators or participators?" The consequences of this inescapable situation are not all good. Spectator worship is passive, tends to become sterile and unproductive. Not only so, but professional spectators become professional critics—cold and cynical. Adjusting to this a pastor finds himself under pressure to create a program that has super appeal. It is more important for songs to scintillate than to inspire, for the sermon to console than to convict, for the service to tranquilize than to evangelize.

Friends ministers stand in a unique position of advantage to cope with this problem. In the Quaker concept of worship there is a directness of approach to God motivated by the Holy Spirit rather than ritual, and an enhanced spiritual warmth rather than psychological appeal. It is true that a transition to a more alert, efficient, and dynamic churchmanship is needed and generally long overdue among Friends; but our unique spiritual heritage must not be replaced. This is a vital part of our answer to the spectator complex of our day.

For our thinking we suggest four elements of importance relating to the pastor and the contents of the worship service. These are: spontaneous inspiration, meditation worship, spoken worship, and the message of worship. It is needful to say that in all a pastor does, says, and is he stands in a place to communicate with personalities on the spiritual level. There must be a reciprocal response between the pastor as leader and the congregation as participator.

Spontaneity is essential to inspiring and responsive worship. This has long been characteristic of Friends services—even though sometimes so misused or unused as to result in mediocrity. The absence of liturgical form allows freedom to follow inspirational leadings of a spontaneous nature. These may or may not be impromptu; the Holy Spirit can give discernment in advance as well as of the moment. Some

pastors give hours to prayerful contemplation, visualizing and sensing the Spirit's direction in the structure of the service. Certainly there must always be room for impromptu inspirations, but discernment for these spontaneous leadings of the Spirit will be more adept if more time is given to prayerful study. Inspirational variations in the order and content of the worship hour lend freshness and sparkle resulting in an immediately responsive spirit of worship in the audience.

The period of meditation worship and spiritual communion is a privilege of grace unique to Quakers. No part of our worship is more appropriate to our society with its fast tempo, tensions, and frustrations of life. A mother of school youngsters told her pastor, after experiencing the quiet worship as a new thing to her, "I love the silent prayer time; so often I go to church worried and burdened, but God's presence seems so real that they all vanish away." A workman in the radar control tower of an international airport expressed a similar thought. Here again the pastor holds the key; the approach he brings will make it more vital and effectual.

Spoken worship—testimony time—is an indispensable element in the effectiveness and fruitfulness of spiritual worship. A prominent Episcopalian Church, experiencing a spiritual awakening of major proportions, designed what they called, "The Laymen's Witnessing Service." Their plan, which is very simple, has gained wide-spread attention: each Sunday night in an informal meeting laymen relate with unembarrassed frankness how their personal experience in Christ delivers from frustration, bondage, sin, and temptations. Eager, responsive crowds are receiving great blessings from these meetings. They believe they have discovered something transcendently wonderful—and they have. Their approach is a bit different, but Friends have had the framework of this very thing for 300 years! Let Quakers, with a new vitality, give it to our mid-twentieth century society! Again it is needful that pastors give prayerful study to find more effective ways to induce and implement these spoken worship periods.

Having said all this, we must come to the divinely appointed task of the pastor, namely, preaching. Some have believed that the sermon is separate from the worship—this writer does not share that opinion. Unlike the professional clergy with his lecture-type sermons, seasonal addresses, and intellectual dissertations, the Quaker preacher's sermon, when at its best, is an earnest flow of warm spiritual truth. It is a spiritual sacrifice to God—a Christian experience in itself. The words may be forgotten and the outline may not stand out in bold relief, but the spirit, the glow, and the intimacy of the Lord in it will leave an indelible imprint upon the soul of the hearers.

This one truth must not be lost from view: It is God's will for the worship hour to be a transcending Christian experience. The limitations are on our part, not on God's part. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus—let us draw nearer with a true heart in full assurance of faith. . . ."

The Prayer Meeting

By Chester G. Stanley, General Superintendent Ohio Yearly Meeting

God's church is a going church. God's church is a powerful church. But we must be careful that we do not confuse church power with church loyalty. Certainly, just to be loyal to one's church is not enough. A preacher once said, "Those people who love their church are sure to be in attendance on Sunday morning, those who love their pastor will also be in attendance on Sunday evening and those who are in love with their Lord will be in attendance at the midweek prayer service." This may not always be a true picture of the situation but it surely has some bearing on the spiritual depth of the church in question. The midweek prayer service is the problem service for all liberal churches and for many of our so-called spiritual churches who profess a very high state of God's grace.

It has often been asked, "Just what would the Lord think if He were to come into one of our services and see the offering plates laid back upon the altar with only nickels, dimes and small money in them?" A question far deeper would be to ask, "What would He think if He were to come into one of our prayer meetings and see the sleeping of both soul and body on the part of some, and the too near total lack of interest in real praying on the part of many?" What is the reason for this lack? Is it all the pastor's fault? Or is it the fault of the laity? Maybe it is the method of order followed by the leader. Or maybe it is the lack of preparation which must be put into a service if that meeting is to be what the Lord would have it be.

There are many kinds of prayer meetings but for this study let us think of the regular midweek prayer service in which the pastor, spiritual members of the church and those truly carrying the burden of the meeting hope that interest will be created to such an extent that many will be eager to attend and also to take part in the worship of the service. Many prayer meetings seem only geared to the saints of the church without much thought or planning for the younger people and the younger Christians. Just to say we are having a prayer service, and stop with that, is not always enough. We need to give it life. Cannot we find a way of varying this midweek service so that it will interest all? Many pastors take part of the time for a real Bible study, then turn the service open to questions and discussion and later to prayer and praise. Other pastors see real merit in having all ages of the church meeting in the opening assembly part of the service, then divide to different rooms of the church for the time of prayer. The children being directed by a prayer coach, the young people having their prayer leader and the men taking a separate room from the ladies. This makes for at least four groups and in some churches it would be more. When the reports are all in, it is dis-

covered that there are four or five times as many prayers as if the same amount of time had been spent in the main meeting room with the entire crowd present. It has been suggested that a church might set apart a certain month for special prayer meetings and have something like the following (1) An old-fashioned Quaker prayer meeting (unprogrammed), (2) Something like the old Methodist Class Meeting type, (3) A love feast meeting in which those who have not been so friendly with each other would break a piece of bread and eat together and at the same time make up past differences and, by the grace of God, be good friends again. And (4) a "what hath God wrought" meeting in which only those recent, definite acts of God's blessings are openly expressed. Then this to be followed by a great time of prayer and praise in thanksgiving to God.

It is good to have lay leaders but those appointed must always be persons able to present the lesson in an interesting manner and be willing to speak up so that they can be heard by all in the prayer room. In general, we favor the pastoral leadership of this midweek service.

We might ask the question—is there power in your midweek prayer service? Do you go home feeling that you met with God and that His Spirit met with you? All who read this article can look back to some time of real distress when you found no other solution than to turn to the Lord in real earnest praying and you remember how the Spirit fell and the answers came. It is true that we will not always have the exuberant feeling in our public prayer meetings but we can pray "the effectual fervent prayer that availeth much" to such degree that our friends and our church are made conscious of the workings of God in our midst.

The midweek prayer service may not be the engine that pulls the train of your church but it must be a service with power if your church is to see the hand of God more upon the needy and your church is to be the power in the community God expects it to be. You have heard it said that the church has lost her influence upon society. If this is true, it is because she has lost her hold upon God in the prayer room. Nothing will regain that influence again but a return to the place where it was lost and there in deep contrition and supplication ask God to forgive us for our indifference and shortcomings.

"Some people want to see God with their eyes as they see a cow and to love him as they love their cow—they love their cow for the milk and cheese and profit it makes them. This is how it is with people who love God for the sake of outward wealth or inward comfort. They do not rightly love God when they love him for their own advantage. Indeed, I tell you the truth, any object you have on your mind, however good, will be a barrier between you and the inmost truth."

—Meister Eckhart, 14th century mystic, Fragment 22

"Help Us to Praise"

By Genevieve B. Cole, organist and member
First Friends Church, Portland, Oregon

One Sunday I was in a mood of discouragement as I absent-mindedly accompanied the choir during the morning anthem. The soloist's words suddenly penetrated my consciousness, "Sometimes I feel discouraged and think my work is vain, but then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again."

I felt grateful tears drop on the keyboard as those words spoke to my soul, reminding me of God's presence in our worship service for me and for my need. A Negro singer from long ago thus witnessed to me. I find it hard to understand the attitude of our Quaker ancestors who ruled out music as one means toward corporate worship at its best. Music has been used for centuries to speak to men's hearts—from "the sweet singer of Israel" to Martin Luther who remarked that he "didn't see why the devil should have all the tunes." In 1 Peter 4:7 (Amplified New Testament) the apostle says, "As each of you has received a gift (a particular spiritual talent, a gracious divine endowment), employ it for one another as (befits) good trustees of God's many-sided grace—faithful stewards of the extremely diverse powers and gifts granted to Christians by unmerited favor." The gift of music dedicated to God can be used by the Holy Spirit as one avenue into our spiritual lives.

As Friends gather to worship, we pray for the "Presence in the midst." We realize that we need more than human help to cope with the kind of life in which we find ourselves. Christ promised us His Holy Spirit to convict, instruct, comfort, guide and lead us into all truth. Every part of our worship service should be consecrated to this end—His presence speaking to our needs. One morning the atmosphere of my Sunday school class became electric with tension because of controversy; and I left with jangled nerves. I donned my choir robe and entered the sanctuary automatically. During the first hymn my mind suddenly focused on the phrase, "O send thy Spirit, Lord, now unto me." I realized in a flash what the class (and I) had lacked. I came into a Quarterly Meeting one day with resentment toward another person in my heart. The Spirit spoke to me through these words, "Breathe, O breathe, thy loving Spirit into every troubled breast." When we come seeking balm for sorrow, we sing, "When through the deep waters I call thee to go, the rivers of sorrow shall not overflow. . . ."

There are times of perplexing decision when we hear, "If thou but suffer God to guide thee. . . ." The sinner, convicted and uncomfortable in God's presence can be moved by a saint singing (with the shine of its reality on his face) of "Grace greater than all our sin" and find courage to say, "O Lamb of God, I Come."

As an amateur, volunteer organist, I have known the thrill of God's leading. One day I chose a passage from Gaul's "The Holy City" for the offertory because the anthem was to be "They that Sow in Tears." To my amazement the pastor, with no previous knowledge, used Scripture passages covering both numbers. This frequent independent planning of complementary themes has been a blessing to us in our meeting.

The worship service is not the place for entertainment, for display of virtuosity, or for contrived effect. Too often we hear secular music used thus inappropriately. Cheap, superficial songs of the day that have religious allusions trap us into irreverence when used at the time for worship. I question the suitability of so-called "evangelistic" playing when the catchy rhythms and devices of jazz musicians are used. Music for worship should be chosen with the highest standard of musical good taste and with sensitiveness to its quality for the use of the Holy Spirit. Preference should be given the reverent hymns that extol the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit whom we are worshipping, leaving the subjective gospel songs for other occasions, for the most part (although at times these may fit the spirit of the meeting, too). Children should early be exposed to fine sacred music and not be kept singing childish motion songs and choruses. Given a choice, they usually call for hymns. All this does not rule out vigor or liveliness and need not inhibit satisfying expression when "the joy of the Lord puts a song in the soul."

Those employing this gift for the Lord should aim at as excellent quality as possible. God surely cannot overrule casual planning, neglect of preparation, or indifference to an ever-higher goal. When we do our best and sincerely perform to His glory, God multiplies the effect in blessing to everyone.

One Easter morning I was moved to spiritual exultation by the words of one of the most majestic of sacred works sung over the air by a well-known choir. "And He shall reign forever and ever—King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Hallelujah!" Those moments in my kitchen prepared me for the worship to follow when we reaffirmed our resurrection faith, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." So the musicians take their place among our "cloud of witnesses," using their gift to testify to the reality of God in their hearts. Everyone who is tuned to sing God's praise can join in this prayer!

The Wayfarer, monthly of the Friends Home Service Committee and the Friends Service Council (London) in the April issue mentions the current exhibit at Westminster Abbey of a Bible translation by Anthony Purver, an eighteenth-century Friend, who spent thirty years at this task. Completed in two folio volumes in 1764, and subsidized by John Fothergill, a physician Friend, the translation aimed at keeping close to the text but making necessary accommodations to "present use of speaking or writing."

... Among Friends

Concerns for outreach are manifest in various areas of Quakerism. Oregon Friends have crossed Lake Titicaca into Peru—still among the Aymara people. On the home front the Board of Evangelism is mapping plans to establish a work in Anchorage, Alaska. Farther north, on Kotzebue Sound, California Yearly Meeting's new Christian high school enters its third year on this mission field where an effective work is being done among Eskimo people. In California itself the yearly meeting continues to meet the demands of a burgeoning population through the establishment of new churches in suburban centers. Among the older established meetings which have erected new buildings are Pasadena, with a new sanctuary just dedicated, Whittier with a fine new educational wing which also houses the yearly meeting offices, and East Whittier with new educational facilities.

With the establishment of a new church at Fairfield, Iowa has entered into the field of church extension. In an excellent article in the Iowa Friend (March), Orlando Dick suggests that much can be done to revitalize existing meetings by making each of them a center of growth. He advocates "effective working units" each with at least one full-time minister who could be released from secular responsibilities. To reach this goal he proposes consolidation of small meetings in close proximity, circuits for small, more scattered meetings, relocation of churches which have suffered from population shifts and greater mobility, a plan for growth for newer churches, and finally the establishment of new meetings within strategic centers of population.

Kansas Yearly Meeting has embarked upon a "Program for Progress" for its church extension. Building plans announced in a recent issue of the Southwest Friend include renovations at Fowler and West Glendale, relocation of the Topeka church to a newly purchased site, an educational wing for University Meeting, and new sanctuary seating 400 persons for Haviland.

Two Friends contribute articles of interest in the winter issue of the Asbury Seminarian. Harold B. Kuhn, professor of philosophy at Asbury, reflects upon ecumenicity and New Testament teaching. "Christ and the Church in Process" argues for no forced union but rather a unity based upon individual and personal sanctity, dependent in turn upon union with Christ.

Ora D. Lovell, professor of Bible at Malone College, Canton, Ohio, contributes a discussion of the role of human nature in the philosophy of education, in which some comparisons are made among liberal, neo-orthodox, and orthodox theologians. Lovell feels that educators are beginning to reflect a more realistic view of man and that the older left-wing Protestant liberalism is no longer a powerful influence.