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## HIGHLIGHTS OF *QRT* #S 95-111 (2000-2008)

PAUL ANDERSON

With the others who have contributed to this volume celebrating 50 years of *Quaker Religious Thought*, I too appreciate the opportunity to comment upon the issues of *QRT* I was privileged to edit between 2000 and 2008! Having served under the editorship of Arthur Roberts as associate editor since 1990, assuming the editorship involved a modest transition that also fit well with annual the Quaker Theological Discussion Group meetings we had started holding in 1998. Our issues between 1997 and 1999 included papers presented at the 1996 QTDG sessions held in Newberg, Oregon, and the sense of cooperation and partnership within the *QRT* advisory committee has been generous and collegial across the miles. The production of the journal has thus been both efficient and effective.

The first regular issue I edited drew together the papers presented at the Boston QTDG meetings in 1999. *QRT* #95 focused on leading Quaker women among early Friends. Our sessions were held less than a mile from Boston Commons, and David Johns' paper, "Hanging as a Flag: Mary Dyer and Quaker Hagiography," raised an important point: while Quakers opposed the hagiographies of others, they were certainly willing to hold in high esteem their own saints and their stories, especially when distinguished by martyrdom. This evoked an engaging response from Dean Freiday published in *QRT* #96, "Quaker Hagiography," where he pointed out the biblical presentations of holy lives as developed also in the history of the church. Noting the featuring of George Fox and John Woolman in the stained glass windows of the National Cathedral in Washington, DC, perhaps the vitriol of the Reformation era can be supplanted by a more generous-yet-analytical appreciation of authentic holy lives, within our groups and beyond them.

Sally Bruyneel Padgett's essay on Margaret Fell (*QRT* #95) provides an excellent example of such a life, especially with relation to her contribution to the launching of the Quaker movement and its peace testimony. Although her essay drew a fiery response from Larry Ingle, objecting to her omission of his and other works, she distinguished her

shorter *QRT* treatment from her larger doctoral work and defended her own original research and selection of secondary sources. Continuing the theme of the leadership of Quaker women, the reviews of Linda Selleck's book, *Gentle Invaders* (*QRT* #96) by Shannon Craigo-Snell and Thomas Hamm, featured the contributions of Quaker women in the education and reconstruction endeavors following the Civil War. Paul Buckley's essay on "'Darkness' in the *Journal of George Fox*" then challenges our naïve conceptions of the Light as illuminating inert darkness, when Fox saw darkness as a far more formidable foe requiring a more direct and powerful intervention from God. Not only does Buckley's essay sober us in terms of the spiritual battles we face, but it also helps us glimpse more fully the power and radicality of "the Light" in historic and theological Quaker perspective.

One of my all-time favorite issues is *QRT* #97, in which the following first-rate Quaker biblical scholars and theologians address the subject, "Uses of Scripture by Early Friends": George Fox—Ronald Worden, Robert Barclay—Dean Freiday, George Keith—Juliet Dodds, Samuel Fisher—Timothy Seid, Elizabeth Bathhurst—Mary Garman, and Dorothy White—Michael Birkel. In response to my editorial essay, "Is there a Quaker Hermeneutic" and the essays overall, Hugh Pyper responded with a counter-question: "Can there be a Quaker Hermeneutic?" In his creative and engaging way, Pyper challenges the view that *any* programmatic or methodological approach to biblical interpretation can suffice as a Quaker approach to the Bible precisely because what Friends have shown and argued is the power of being engaged by the Spirit who inspired the text inwardly and experientially. Okay, maybe *that* is the hermeneutic Friends would affirm; interestingly, it also has its biblical warrants. I recommend this issue of *QRT* be used for study groups and courses on Quakers and the Bible; much more could also be done on this important subject.

Issue #98 begins with an excellent essay on "The Individual and the Meeting" by Martha Paxson Gundry, emphasizing the interrelationship between the individual's connectedness with God—the Divine Center, formation with the meeting community, and witness to the world. Not a bad resource for meeting-membership discussions! The rest of the issue is taken up by responses to my earlier essay in *QRT* #94 on contemporary quests for Jesus. As Herbert Standing had written a letter to the editor questioning whether my treatment was too hard on the Jesus Seminar, I invited Marcus Borg (one of the leading members of the Jesus Seminar) and Mark Allan

Powell (whom Borg considers the leading analyst of contemporary Jesus research) to respond to my essay. Gary Kinkel contributed a response on his own. It was a privilege to be able to respond to such fine essays by leading scholars (both Borg and Powell have served as chair of the Historical Jesus Section within SBL), and all of them made excellent points.

Borg's critiques were pointed, yet well taken. From the inside, the work of the Jesus Seminar looks different from the views of its critics. Most helpful to me is Borg's point that "at least" 18% of the sayings go back plausibly to Jesus, which is different from concluding that "only" that much is historically reliable; our dialogue on the relation between "true" and "factual" is also worth coming back to, I believe. Borg asserts finally that "the historical approach to Jesus and Christian origins enables us to see the stories and story of Jesus better—more clearly, more persuasively, and more powerfully." (p. 27) Mark Allan Powell then presents an insightful analysis of the important contribution of the Jesus Seminar, explaining also some of the critiques it has faced from scholars and church leaders. In showing *why* Jesus matters, Powell states the obvious: "If we worshiped Zeus or Aphrodite, our faith would be relatively immune from historical critique. But the fact is, we Christians put our faith in one who lived a public life on the stage of world history." (p. 31) Kinkel raises questions about biblical scholars' divorcing too radically the Christ of faith and the Jesus of history, and more pointedly the Jesus Seminar's claiming not to be bound by faith-concerns or canonical considerations, only to expand the canon to include the Gospel of Thomas—without a due process of canonization—and to build theologically upon the portraiture of a "non-theological Jesus." In my response, I concurred with most of the authors' judgments and went a bit further here and there to suggest why a point was valid, including several of Marcus Borg's critiques. In so doing, I was able to speak directly to the contextual value of the Jesus Seminar's work, while also pointing to the work of the John, Jesus, and History Project, of which I am co-chair.

*QRT* 99 & 100 is a double issue containing important reviews of John Punshon's *Reasons for Hope* (reviewed by Arthur Roberts, Gayle Beebe and Carole Spencer) and Rosemary Moore's *The Light In their Consciences* (reviewed by Steven Angell and Corey Beals). In my view, these are two of the most important Quaker books within a decade or so, and both are required reading for any Quaker theologian or historian. Punshon elucidates the historical Quaker birthright of

evangelical Friends and commends their faithfulness to their calling; Moore's recasting of the first two decades of the Quaker movement in the light of primary sources is a must for gaining new impressions of the early Quaker movement. All of the reviews are excellent, but worth coming back to are Beebe's and Punshon's engagement on how "real Quakers" are defined, and Beals' and Moore's engagements on how modern historians' methodologies (which are essentially naturalistic) can fittingly investigate a religious movement which at its core contends to be encountering and directed by *the divine*. Issues here are not unlike the historiographic religious debates surrounding Jesus studies, as well.

The rest of this double issue deals with one of the most intriguing subjects in recent Quaker studies, advanced by Arthur Raistrick and others: the role of Quakers in science, industry, and discovery. Engaging recent science-and-religion debates, my essay sees the fact that Quakers have had a disproportionately large impact upon science as a factor of embracing the quest for truth as a spiritual calling that addresses all aspects of God's truth. Prayerful attentiveness plays a role, I believe, in genuine and fruitful inquiry of all sorts. Geoffrey Cantor gives an overview of Quakers and science, including pragmatics of dissent, Quaker values and science, dangers posed by science, and alternative explanations to recent assumptions. Grace Jantzen delivers an interpretive *tour de force* in her essay on "Coalbrookdale: Women, War and Money," asking whether Quaker industrialists were faithful in furthering the Kingdom of God or whether they supplanted it with conventional concerns. To these essays Nancy Murphy responded in a remarkably synthesizing way, drawing connections with the works of Alasdair MacIntyre, James McClendon, and John Howard Yoder. Discernment is key in deciding which aspects of science and technology to advance, and one's view of the Kingdom will centrally impact one's work in the world.

*QRT* #101 focuses on the Kingdom of God after 9/11. The lead article by Tricia Gates Brown addresses the subject directly, and Ann Riggs reminds us of "The Call of Truth—The Peace Testimony During a Time of Terror." Most poignant is David Rawson's analysis of the genocide in Rwanda, which happened under his watch as the American Ambassador to Rwanda. A son of Quaker missionaries to Africa, Rawson describes the sense of helplessness he felt as the UN presence was far too small to be effective, and as America's unwillingness to compromise on all points diminished its impact when

needed most. Cliff Marrs' calculation of the exorbitant costs of warfare, ironically often waged in the name of humanitarian outcomes, shows how inefficient war actually is in terms of saving lives and improving standards of living. What each of these essays shows is that conventional approaches to war and peace need to be re-thought and re-formed. Dean Freiday's memorial tribute to Calvin Keene, the first editor of *QRT*, closes this issue in an appreciative and endearing way.

*QRT* #102 addresses a Quaker approach to truth, and Corey Beals' essay on "Truth as a Way of Life" lays out a framework for seeking to abide in, and live out of, the truth as a holistic vision of discerning and minding the Light. Beyond propositionalism, truth as a way of life includes "the pursuit of true thoughts, true words and true deeds." (p. 15) In his essay, "Every Thought Captive To Christ," Arthur Roberts lays out an incisive critique of secularistic education, raising a vision of what Quaker education ought to be like, including seven pillars of education: God is sovereign; creation is good; truth is revealed; intelligence is embodied; humanity is of one blood; God's kingdom defines community, and Christ is God's redemptive Word (pp. 23-26). For all educators, Quaker and otherwise, this issue is worth coming back to more than once. The issue concludes with a fruitful review of Doug Gwyn's book, *Seekers Found*, by T. Vail Palmer, Jr. and Stephanie Ford. Together, with Gwyn's response, these essays help us focus on instructive "moments of truth" during the days of early Friends, and today as well.

*QRT* #103 features Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Quakers. Howard Macy considers intersections between King and Friends, featuring King's relations with Howard Thurman, Bayard Rustin, and the American Friends Service Committee. Lonnie Valentine addresses the role of conscientious objection within social change. Especially significant in these essays is the sense of know-how and support King received from Friends (especially Bayard Rustin) in his nonviolent confrontations of injustice; conversely, King also contributed to Friends in helping them put their convictions into fruitful action. Two books by Arthur Roberts, *Exploring Heaven* and *Prayers at Twilight*, were reviewed by Stephen Moroney and Tom Johnson. In the reviews and the author's response, our work on earth is clarified by regaining a clearer vision of the afterlife, whence the present life's goal and character have their authentic origin.

*QRT* #104 addresses the subject of "Cross-Cultural Outreach Among Friends." Pamela Calvert leads off by advancing *mestizaje*—a

means of affirming the values of cross-breeding between cultures. Thus, Hispanic Friends, while sharing the evangelical parentage of Quaker missionaries, also embody their worship and ministry expressions contextually and authentically. Ken Comfort responds and agrees that the voice of Friends has many accents; indeed, a variety of expressions within diverse Latin American contexts may actually be more “Quaker” at the core than they seem on the surface. In my opinion, the same can be said for African Friends. Two books on John Woolman are then reviewed by Max Carter and Canby Jones. Michael Birkel’s *A Near Sympathy* and Michael Heller’s *The Tendering Presence* collection make valuable contributions to Woolman studies, and not only that, but also to theological, literary, political, spiritual, and social-concern interests.

*QRT* #105 features two essays on “The Center of Quaker Faith and Practice.” David Johns’ essay on “A Christo-Textured Life: The Center of Practical Faith” challenges the tendency of conventional theology to stuff the risen Christ back into the tomb, fighting old battles instead of being responsive to the risen Lord. In my essay, “A Dynamic Christocentricity—The Center of Faithful Praxis,” I connect each of the Friends Testimonies (worship, ministry, sacraments, conviction, peace work/social concern, integrity/plain speech and living) with “the spiritual and unmediated reality of the risen Lord’s power and presence” at the center. The diagram, I feel, is serviceable. These essays are followed by reviews of the first 100 issues of *QRT* by Shane Kirkpatrick and Susan Jeffers. In these essays some of the most significant essays among the hundreds published in *Quaker Religious Thought* are given honorable mentions, and these reviews should be consulted alongside the reflections of the editors and others in the present issue. A complete list of back issues is included at the end as a helpful reference; it is also posted and updated on the website.

*QRT* #s 106 & 107 comprise another double issue involving four features. First, the topic of “Corporate Discernment and Decision Making” presents four essays related to Quaker decision making. Chuck Conniry and Bruce Bishop lead off with two distinctive essays on the same topic: “Discernment: Corporate and Individual Considerations.” Conniry’s essay shows how central elements of discernment are manifested in different traditions, and Bishop’s essay shows how the meeting for clearness can help individuals discern the way forward in particular matters of concern. My essay on the “meeting for worship in which business is conducted” outlines biblical, historical, theological,

individual, and corporate aspects of discernment. Eden Grace's essay, "Voting Not to Vote—Moving Toward Consensus in the WCC," tells the story of how Eastern Orthodox and Quaker leaders within the World Council of Churches helped that international body move toward a consensus model of decision making.

Under the theme, "Quaker Contributions to American Democracy," three essays break new ground. Stephen Angell brings a Quaker understanding to the American motto, *e pluribus unum*, and shows how the first century of Friends in Pennsylvania helped to foster unity within pluralism as a model for the American democratic ideal. Jane Calvert then shows how Quaker commitment to civil and nonviolent dissent—in service to the truth, from the English Interregnum on—contributed to a tradition of civil disobedience a full two centuries before Thoreau's contribution to the subject and the abolition of slavery in America. Emma Lapsansky-Werner responds to these essays, exploring ways Quakers might yet continue to make truthful contributions to public discourse within political structures and beyond them.

This issue features reviews of Ben Pink Dandelion's *The Liturgies of Quakerism* and his edited volume, *Towards Tragedy / Reclaiming Hope*, contributed by Hugh Barbour and Ruth Pitman. Especially interesting is the engagement over whether silent worship as practiced by Friends in Britain and elsewhere has evolved a form of sociological liturgism, against its original ideals and claims. Concluding this issue is "A Friendly Letter to the Vatican," in which I outline my much longer response to Pope John Paul's encyclical, and in which I argue for a new basis for Christian unity (following Everett Cattell's 1970 appeal for unity among Friends): *Christian unity under the lordship of Christ*. I also tell the story of being able to give my published essay personally to Pope Benedict and Cardinal Kasper in the spirit and hope of ecumenical dialogue.

*QRT* #108 addresses "Truth and Power" from several angles. In "Speaking Truth to Power," Newton Garver poses a trenchant analysis of the idolatry of power in American culture and invites Friends and others to embrace truth-oriented alternatives, including ten practical ways this may be done. In "Empowering the Truth," Shannon Craigo-Snell develops a most helpful analogy of how a virus—silent, yet powerful, bringing to a crashing halt professional obligations and schedules—makes a remarkable difference as an infectious and unseen form of power; perhaps that is the way truth and the Kingdom of God



advance. I think Jesus today would have added “virus” to salt, light, and leaven as an image of the Kingdom’s advance. In “Truth, Power, and Christ,” I make connections between truth and Christ, and revelation and power, as Jesus claims to be the way, the truth, and the life. Jaci Welling and Bryan Drayton then review Ben Richmond’s amazing book, *Signs of Salvation*, which poses an inviting Quaker manifesto on the basis of Scripture alone without referring at all to Quaker heroes or tradition. In that sense, Richmond’s book is much closer to the apologies of early Friends than subsequent attempts to reach to world by featuring our particular-though-valued sectarian past.

*QRT* #109 features engagements of one of the most intense debates among Friends over the second half of our movement’s history, “A Friendly View of the Sacraments.” Stephen Angell launches the discussion with an excellent overview of early Friends’ views of the sacraments, highlighting some of the reasons they objected to conventional practices of their day. Timothy Seid’s “The New and Eternal Covenant” de-contextualizes the new and living covenant with Christ (featured in Hebrews), abolishing all outward forms in the name of an inward and transformative covenant, written on hearts of flesh rather than on tablets of stone. My essay on “An Incarnational Sacramentology” builds on Alan Kolp’s earlier essay (*QRT* #57, 1984) and other treatments in *QRT* and elsewhere, arguing that God’s saving-revealing presence is manifested most clearly in the changed and changing lives of persons, both corporately and individually. Kent Walkemeyer develops the subject of *work as sacrament* and shows how living vocationally impacts our employment choices, and our carriage and being within them. Responses are then contributed by David Johns, Ann Riggs, and Corey Beals; these are some of the most energized responses among the 100 plus issues of *QRT*, and the reader is pointed to them directly. This issue is a must for any individuals or groups seeking to engage the topic of Friends and the sacraments.

*QRT* #110 begins with Cherice Bock’s “Quakers on the Spectrum of Nonviolence,” where she accounts for the disconnect between four leading Christian approaches to war, violence, and nonviolence. This essay is a must for any seeking to understand and contribute to ecumenical discussions of war and peace, and my hope is that it will provide a resource for the January 2009 Philadelphia peace conference (“Heeding God’s Call—A Gathering on Peace”) organized by Philadelphia Friends and others. The issue then features Carole Dale Spencer’s book, *Holiness: the Soul of Quakerism*, a potential successor

to Rufus Jones' analysis of Quakerism in the light of Continental mysticism, and to Hugh Barbour's analysis of Quakerism in the light of biblical Puritanism. The reviews by Stephen Angell, Margery Post Abbott, and Jim LeShana pose one of the most spirited dialogues among all *QRT* reviews, perhaps because the definition of terms is elusive, the evidence is varied, and the stakes are so high. The issue closes with tributes to Dean Freiday, by Michael Birkel and Arthur Roberts, following his passing in March earlier this year. Dean will indeed be missed, and I express my own appreciation of his life and friendship in the editorial, as well.

*QRT* #111 has been in planning for at least three years, and my hope is that it would document "The Rise and Progress of *QRT* and QTDC" for the benefit of present and future generations. I was able to procure Wil Cooper's reflections before he passed away, but I failed to garner an essay from Dean Freiday despite several solicitations by letter and by phone. Still, it has been a delight to see the contributions come in for this issue and also to note the convergences and varieties among them. What impresses me is the many ways this journal and the discussion group have continued to "speak to the condition" of the world from a Quaker perspective, from a variety of standpoints and approaches. My hope is that meeting libraries, study groups, and Quaker leaders around the world will draw liberally on these back issues of *QRT*, and that a reminder of particular resources will serve that end.

From the contributions of early Quaker women, to recent Jesus studies, Friends uses of the Bible, Quaker contributions to science and technology, peace and nonviolence studies, Quaker decision-making and congregational discernment, the center of Quaker faith and practice, a Quaker sacramentology, and fresh approaches to Quaker history and theology, the issues of *Quaker Religious Thought* #s 95-111 make a set of weighty contributions to our understanding of important issues. Believing that the truth is always liberating, readers are exhorted to make use of these and other issues of *QRT* as thought-producing resources for its being sought...and perhaps even found.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 I helped with editing issues 88 and 89, and Gayle Beebe edited issue 93. In addition, I appreciate David Johns' editing issue 103 and Howard Macy's editing issue 104. The volume/number notation was discontinued after 30:4 (2002) so that from the double issue #99 & 100 on, the issue number alone provides the sequential reference.