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## Front Matter -- Quaker Religious Thought, no. 105

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# QUAKER RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

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Cumulative No. 105  
November 2005

# QUAKER RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

Cumulative Number 105

November 2005

*Sponsored by the Quaker Theological Discussion Group*

(<http://theo-discuss.quaker.org/>)

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 application of our faith.

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## ABOUT THIS ISSUE

In this issue of *Quaker Religious Thought*, two very special interests converge. First, in thinking about the inextricable relationship between Quaker faith and practice, two essays address each of those two subjects by walking into it through the door of the other. By means of exploring an incarnational theology as a factor of letting one's life speak, David Johns develops the character of the Christotextured life as the center of practical faith. The second essay explores the subject from the other direction, then, in considering a dynamic Christocentricity as the heart of faithful praxis. In both investigations, focusing on the *center* rather than the boundaries provides a fitting way forward. After all, raising up the center of the Divine Will for humanity was the heart of Jesus' teaching and ministry, and Friends have followed in that vein with radical intentionality.

These two essays were delivered at the QTDG meetings at George Fox University in June 2004, and they continue to grow in my estimation of their importance. In considering their significance intramurally, they point the way forward in terms of getting at the heart of what Friends believe and do. Might they also provide a locus of discourse for considering what it means to be a Friend, even across organizational lines? Who knows? Perhaps. Even if they help us clarify the questions to be asked, that service is a worthy one. From asking better questions, better answers emerge. Another value might be the way a fresh articulation of Friendly concerns helps other traditions consider again the center of their own faith and practice. If that were to happen, the Christian Testimonies and Doctrines of Friends (using historic language, here) extend in their import beyond the Quaker movement, and perhaps even beyond Christianity to the broader marketplaces of ideas and expressions. Of course, such a development may hinge upon the creativity and initiative of the readership, but at least the possibility is worthy of consideration—and even prayer.

The second feature of this issue involves helpful reviews of the first 100 issues of *QRT*, carried out ably by Shane Kirkpatrick and Susan Jeffers. These reviews were presented at our QTDG meetings in San Antonio last November, and they highlight many of the contributions made by *Quaker Religious Thought* over the nearly five

decades it has been serving its readership. I have asked Phil Smith, our business manager, to prepare an updated list of our articles and authors for inclusion in this issue as a means of documenting the specific titles and authors who have contributed so helpfully over the years. Might I also at this time remind the readership that until they are exhausted, back orders are available at an excellent rate (issues 1-80 for a mere \$100, and 5 or more issues at half price: \$4); a mere perusal of the review essays and the article titles makes it clear that no serious Quaker library is complete without these issues.

In thinking about the reviews and in looking over the first 100 issues, the following impressions emerge. First, the beginnings of the journal did an impressive job of establishing a set of Quaker approaches to central elements of Christian theology. Such subjects as the Holy Spirit, the Church, humanity, the work of Christ, the Bible, mysticism, ministry, holiness, and peace received thoughtful and clear treatments by the leading Quaker theologians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Second, significant interpretations of Quaker history and doctrine have been performed over the entire scope of the journal. Especially significant has been a variety of close analyses of the beginnings of the Quaker movement, as well as focused considerations of particular epochs, developments, and Testimonies along the way. Third, a variety of contemporary issues have been addressed by the journal, both informing the readership of developments in the broader set of religious discussions and suggesting how Friendly approaches to relevant issues deserve to make a difference.

Fourth, a good number of faith and order issues have been addressed as a means of helping local meetings and organizations think about how to do things better and with greater effectiveness. Friends meetings and groups would do well to draw on these as a resource.

A fifth contribution of the journal has been to feature leading books and resources for Friends around the world, and over the last decade or so, more extensive reviews including sustained responses by authors have taken significant works beyond engaging their contents to exploring also their implications. In these and other ways, *QRT* has endeavored to serve the individual and the meeting in addressing issues central to the vitality of Quaker faith and practice.

Another feature of the authors and editors contributing to *Quaker Religious Thought* over the years also deserves mention—

contributors share a sustained fellowship across the boundaries and groupings of Friends in America and beyond. One of the reasons for this is the fact that contributors to *QRT* have tended to be the statespersons among Friends—those who travel broadly among Friends and who represent one group well to another. An additional reason for this feature is the heart of the mission of QTDDG and its publishing arm, *QRT*. The purpose of QTDDG is described as follows:

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 application of our faith.

As the goal of the organization is “the search for unity in the claim of truth upon us,” the quest for truth and commitment to following it deserves renewed consideration as a basis for dialogue among Friends and beyond. Indeed, the quest for truth and the conviction that authentic believers ought also to abide in the truth has been one of the central Quaker convictions from the beginning of the movement. In that sense, the discussion group and its journal have aspired not only to explore the historic convictions of Friends, but they have also endeavored to prepare the way for future and developing considerations of important issues. Kirkpatrick and Jeffers alert us to many good articles and issues worth taking a look at again, but the reader is also advised to look over the issues individually and to consider how they might apply to present discussions within the meeting and otherwise. I know some of my favorite essays escaped mention, and this is not a flaw of the reviews, but it speaks highly of the great wealth of resource to be found and put to service in the back issues of *QRT*!

— Paul Anderson, *Editor*

(A note to the editor from Dean Freiday was received expressing appreciation for the clarifications on his recent tribute to Calvin Keene in *QRT* #101; yet one of them was omitted. Dean wished to clarify that the Howard University School of Divinity was established long before Calvin Keene began his service there, and that he assisted in its development, rather than its “establishment,” along with many other fine colleagues.)