

1-1-1980

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## Recommended Citation

Taber, William P. (1980) "The Theology of the Inward Imperative: Traveling Quaker Ministry of the Middle Period," *Quaker Religious Thought*: Vol. 50, Article 2.

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# *The Theology of the Inward Imperative:*

Traveling Quaker Ministry of the Middle Period

WILLIAM P. TABER

Recently I stood in an old, unused meetinghouse within the smell of the salt marshes in southern New Jersey. As I stood in the ministers' gallery and gripped the handrail, I suddenly realized that Joseph Hoag, that rustic Quaker seer from Vermont, had probably preached here. Then my mind was flooded with a sense of the great stream of divine caring which had flowed forth from that gallery across the years. The names of many other ministers flashed through my mind, but I focused on just a few who might have been there: John Woolman, Elias Hicks, Thomas Shillitoe, and Joseph John Gurney. Perhaps you have also been gripped, in some old meetinghouse, by a similar momentary thrill of communion with the mighty stream of life which once flowed through that place. Perhaps you have also discovered that — if we allow the feeling of awe to take a deeper hold — the *was* becomes *is*, and a rich peace settles upon us in that dusty place. Afterwards, when we step back outside into the sunlight of the twentieth century again, we are different people — not because we have felt close to the past, but because something which was in that past is still alive and vital and flowing today, if we but allow it to live in us and through us. It is in that spirit — that the *was* can become *is* — that this paper will examine the theology of evangelism and outreach of the traveling ministry of the middle period of Quaker history.

It is not easy to say just when the era of Quietism, or the middle period, ends, for one can see survivals of Quietism among Hicksite and Orthodox Friends well after the separations. If we agree with John William Graham and others that psychic sensitivity is one of the characteristics of this type of minister, then Quietism had ended for most of Quakerism after the 1850s; he, at least, found little evidence of such gifts

after that time.<sup>1</sup> However, he may not have been aware that Conservative Friends continued — in some measure — to embody the Quietist approach and the consequent psychic sensitivity well into the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> Thus, this paper will deal with that stream of Quaker prophetic ministry which had its most characteristic flowering in the eighteenth century, but which has living links even up to the present time.

Just as this paper began with one of those mystical moments in old meetinghouses, so I believe that the classic way toward ministry and outreach in this period often began when a child felt a sense of the presence of God. Usually the child was alone, and often out of doors, as John Woolman was when he felt the divine sweetness. Having once been awakened to this reality, some children, like Joseph Hoag, would return many times to the woods in order to be alone. Most of the future ministers we are considering were one, two, or several generations removed from the beginnings of Quakerism, so that it is tempting to believe that something in the Quaker climate made it possible for them to slip so early and easily into this wider state of consciousness. However, not all of them were Friends as children, and Rufus Jones reminds us that the “mystical type” often have opening experiences as children. Even so, I hold to the theory that the powerful, dedicated ministry of the Quietist era grew organically out of a pervasive spiritual climate which often evoked such openings in sensitive children long before the days of Sunday Schools and modern forms of Quaker education. The availability of solitude and wide out-of-door spaces seems to be an important part of such nurture, as were the Quaker rhythms of daily silences and the meetings for worship. For many, the Bible played a far more dominant role in shaping their consciousness than it could today, since there were so few other books and diversions. Finally, out of that climate came a network of powerful examples, the local and traveling ministers, who could develop far more resonance in a child than seems likely in today’s world. When such a seer would hold a child and prophesy — as Aunt Peace did over the infant Rufus Jones<sup>3</sup> or as a visiting minister did over the boy Gilbert Thomas<sup>4</sup> — it made a lasting impression.

Howard Brinton and others have noted that the inward imperative generally began to emerge in a much more painful way during adolescence or early adulthood as the individual struggled with a "divided self."<sup>5</sup> From George Fox onward, this time was usually stormy, lonely, and full of anguish. Here again, the network of divinely inspired ministers might play an important role. Many of the journals record the awesome experience of having one's "state" spoken to in a meeting for worship and the consequent awakening and encouragement thus brought. The story of Samuel Bownas is still a good example, because it continues to speak to Friends today:

On First-days I frequented meetings and the greater part of my time I slept, but took no account of preaching nor received any other benefit, than being there kept me out of bad company, which indeed is a very great service to youth . . . but one First-day, being at meeting, a young woman named Anne Wilson was there and preached; she was very zealous and fixing my eye upon her, she with a great zeal pointed her finger at me uttering these words with much power, viz: — 'A traditional Quaker; thou comest to meeting as thou went from it, and goes from it as thou came to it but art no better for thy coming; what wilt thou do in the end?' This was so pat to my then condition that like Saul I was smitten to the ground.<sup>6</sup>

Thus awakened, Samuel became one of the leading traveling ministers of the first half of the eighteenth century. If we can trust the ministers' journals and the records of other Friends, many hundreds of Quaker youth have had their secret inward journeys — with their guilts, anguishes, and noble strivings — revealed through a minister during a public meeting or in the more intimate and even more awesome "opportunity" (a private meeting with a family or a few people, usually in a home). More than one story is told of a youth *outside* of the room hearing the message meant for him and being moved by it. One of the last dramatic examples of this kind of inspired pastoral care that I know of was Carl Patterson's encouraging recitation of a young man's "state" when the young man visited

the sickroom during Carl's last illness, about 1942, at Chesterhill, Ohio.<sup>7</sup>

This time of drawn-out "conversion" or "convincement" could, of course, occur at any age; we can assume that many, if not most, Friends passed through some measure of struggle before entering a more settled and mature religious life. The traditional outward results of this time of surrender and decision were dedicated attendance at meetings, dedication to the needs of the meeting and traveling Friends, and the cheerful adoption of the various testimonies. Of course, the inward eyes of the network of prophets and seers looked for something more; good as the *outward* things were, they were but the *husk* or the *necessary* result of what really counted: a transformed human being who had experienced, inwardly, the Life, the Seed, through the living, inward Christ.

The next great crisis was the call to the ministry. Some people *knew* as children, as Joseph Hoag did,<sup>8</sup> that they would become ministers, but giving in to the call was almost always a time of great struggle. For some, the struggle went on for years. Once again, the ever-mobile network of seers and prophets might furnish one or more dramatic calls, confirmations of the call, or rebukes for disobeying the call. Joseph Hoag had the help of two sermons from the traveling Abel Thomas — weeks apart — revealing his state each time while he "fixed his eyes in my face."<sup>9</sup> After months of continued resisting the call to speak, Joseph was surprised to have David Sands come to his house:

Almost as soon as he entered the door he singled me out, and not only told me that the call was right, but took hold of the reasonings and difficulties I had passed through for years, more correctly than I could myself. Then, in this moving language, said, 'As sure as thou knowest all this to be true, so sure thy exercise, thy concern, and thy call is right; and if thou wilt give up and be faithful, the Lord will be thy strength, and thy reward, and will surely carry thee through all thy straits: the path of the righteous ever was a tribulated one, and thou hast many trials to pass through, but the Lord will be thy leader and thy

rearward; and though the mountains surround thee, they shall be removed; the hills shall be laid low, and the deep waters shall be divided for the soles of thy feet; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."<sup>10</sup>

Even that was not enough; Joseph continued to delay for some time, until at last he "attended the motion" and spoke, receiving the customary peace. If the average age of a beginning minister was about 26, as Howard Brinton suggests,<sup>11</sup> some of them must have been quite young when they received the call. On the other hand, some who became "favored" ministers waited for many years before giving in; Asenath Bailey (1820-1905) of Ohio Yearly Meeting (Conservative) suffered for years before finally beginning to speak at the age of forty. We can understand the classic reluctance to speak by remembering that they felt themselves to be in the tradition of Moses, Samuel, Isaiah, Peter, and Paul, actually being a mouthpiece for the living God. Asenath often remembered the saying of David: "How can I be the son-in-law of the King?"<sup>12</sup> Indeed, most of the journals show that "the minister had gone through a sort of new birth, quite apart from that connected with conversion. To be the Divine spokesman was indeed an appalling responsibility."<sup>13</sup> For some, the opening into the ministry was eased because they were a companion to one or more traveling ministers. Just as Saul "caught" the spirit of prophecy by being with the prophets near the high place at Gibeah (1 Sam. 10:9-12), so being continually with a gifted minister in meetings, opportunities, and on horseback could become an invaluable "apprenticeship" in the ministry for a sensitive young Friend. For example, the young John Pemberton (1727-1795) began his long and influential career as a minister in the loving presence of a "master" Quietist minister, John Churchman (1705-1777), during the three years in which the younger man accompanied the older one on his ministerial work in England.

The "awefulness" of becoming a minister lay partly in the high expectations which the Friends placed on their ministers, for they expected everything and nothing all at the same time. Ministers were to do *everything* which the Light, the Master,

the Guide, the Heavenly Father (to use some of the various names) required of them; they were supposed to follow every intimation and speak every word given them in the light. Thus mothers or fathers might have to leave family, work, and friends for years while they traveled, not knowing when the Spirit would allow them to return. On the other hand *nothing* was expected of them if they felt no immediate leading, nor, of course, could they ever prepare for any sermon. Thus each new meeting, each new family visit was a fresh test of faith in which one might be called to rise without knowing what was to be said, or what difficult or perplexing words might come forth; even worse, a well-known minister might be required to remain silent throughout a meeting called just for him.

Generations of Quietist ministers endured these uncertainties for good reason. Through the "baptisms" they had endured as they accepted the "inward work of Christ" they had felt themselves cleansed and transformed, and in a very real sense grafted into the Vine, or the body of Christ, the living Zion, the true Israel. As they passed through the birth struggles into this other dimension, this life with the inward Christ, Quakers continued, sometimes, to quake and weep. On the other side of that shaking was the great sense of peace which was the living witness of those who knew the Prince of Peace. As one reads the old writing, or remembers the recent ministers of the "old style," one knows that these were not merely metaphors for them — they were descriptions of a state of being from which they found the power to live a transformed life. For them — as for all "rightly qualified members" — the *was* of the apostolic age's power and faith and union with Christ had become the *is* of a Society of Friends.

Thus, as their journals make very clear, they experienced the body of Christ not as a metaphor but as a living climate or organism from which — as well as in which — they functioned. They saw themselves not as separate leaders but as extensions of the one Life and Power. They dwelt together with the other members in the same pool of the divine presence which blended all souls together in a wonderful unity. Although Quaker ministers were expected to be very good

examples of the Quaker way of life, they were not required to be leaders all the time; they could sink back into the nurture and unity of the body until such times as they were clearly called to stand forth for the Lord. They knew that if they were "faithful," he would give them both words and power, or the "matter" and the "life." Yet even so, each new meeting was a renewed test of faith; as Hannah Stratton (1825-1903) of Ohio Yearly Meeting (Conservative) put it near the end of her life, "it don't get easy."<sup>14</sup>

Any person who "dwelt" in the Light, within the body of Christ, soon found changes coming into life. Sometimes gradually, sometimes instantaneously, a person's very perceptions about the world and the people in it might change into a more peaceful, wider view of reality. Inevitably this brought about a reordering of thoughts, attitudes, and outward affairs. Such reordering was especially important for those Friends who became active in "Society" (meaning the Society of Friends), for they had to arrange — at a minimum — to spend precious mid-week time away from their occupation at preparative, monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings, as well as at numerous committee meetings. Those who became ministers and elders had additional meetings. Thousands of farmers and business men of modest means did somehow manage, through "right ordering" or "following the promptings of Truth," such economy of time and resources. It is probable that most of the seven or eight hundred ministers who may have been active at any one time in the latter part of the eighteenth century were not wealthy.

Such reordering went far beyond simplification of affairs and greater efficiency: life in the new dimension brought with it a high order of love, bringing about a new logic and a new, more spiritual understanding of the laws of cause and effect. Thus the ordinary Friend and especially the minister might have a great yearning to encourage the "logical" reordering which brings peace, balm, and meaning to the poor, the lonely, the harassed, the frantic, and the afflicted. This vivid sense of the higher logic often gave Quaker characters great power to cut through the world's usual ways to help the troubled, the

thief, the dissolute, or the mentally ill to a higher level of self-respect.

The exercise of this higher love was one of the exciting ways in which the *was* became *is*, for we can sense from their words how deep a love the Quaker journal writers often felt for people and animals. As they might have put it, this life in union with Christ makes it possible to love as Christ told us we are to love. Such love was evidently not a put-on nor an effort, but a gift, a magnificent flow of energy and awareness and affection, almost an emanation. Of course, this was reinforced by a strong pressure throughout the official structures and writing of the Society of Friends for the exercise of scrupulous honesty and genuine charity in the spirit of the gospel. From this wider vision, this fearless face of love, comes much of the spirit of social pioneering which was strong in individual Friends even in the Quietist era, and continued to flower in Friends who were nurtured in that era, like Isaac T. Hopper and Levi Coffin. Many of those who stayed steadily in the Light, and who were faithful to the tasks of reordering and to the increasing flow of love, found that the dimensions of reality continued to widen until they could "feel" beyond the usual senses. Gifts of spiritual discernment and a sensing of "states," occasional telepathy, and foreknowledge might develop. Usually these gifts were strongest in recorded ministers and, to some extent, in elders. I would like to reiterate that, though Quaker writers from Rufus Jones onward have often used the word "psychic" to describe the amazing sensitivity of Quietist ministers, we are not talking about what I call "mere" psychic phenomena, the sort of paranormal phenomena which can now sometimes be verified and duplicated under scientific conditions. As used in this paper, "psychic" refers to a certain quality of spiritual sensory extension which has as its first "motion" — to paraphrase Woolman — love, the kind of love which flows through those who have known the transforming experience and who stay in the Light. In only one case have I read of such psychic sensitivity coming indiscriminately to a Friend during the middle period;<sup>15</sup> such gifts usually seemed to operate under the wise selection of the "inward monitor," the Master, the Guide, the Heavenly Father, or as some would say

today, the Holy Spirit. More than one minister has described the clear difference between merely having a sense of a person's or a meeting's "state" and *being told by the Light* to speak to or about that state. In other words, those who did develop a broad or general sensitivity still waited until they had a clear leading before acting on such knowledge.

Such sensitivity rarely developed very far until after a minister-to-be had made the great surrender, not once but many times, the great surrender to the Spirit's requirement of speaking in meeting. Typically the first message of such a person would be brief. Also typically, he would be filled afterward with great peace, sometimes lasting for days. If he felt the support of the network (other ministers and elders) he would continue to speak, gradually gaining in assurance and skill in knowing when to recognize the inward "motion" to rise and speak. When the ministers and elders of his Monthly Meeting and his Quarterly Meeting had stated their approval, and his Monthly Meeting had then recorded him as a minister, the gift was firmly rooted in and supported by the official bodies of the "true Israel" of which he felt he was a living, organic part. But the surrendering to the Light had only begun; it must increase and continue in order to allow increasing "incomes" of divine life and power so that he might become an even more finely tuned and responsive instrument, able to detect and follow directions for large movements and decisions — such as traveling abroad — which might take years to bring to fruition, and also able to make each day's plan in the Light, as well as to depend on the Spirit from moment to moment for the words being uttered in a meeting.

Because the work of the traveling minister was hard, dangerous, and costly, it is no wonder that many ministers would speak of being "resigned" to a call to travel under concern. The journals indicate that those who were shy and timid would continue to feel shy and timid no matter how many times that marvelous power poured through them in new meeting after new meeting in a strange land. The typical Quietist minister also seemed prone to times of severe depression. I can still remember my half amused, half curious observation as a youth that, when a minister of the "old style" announced that

he had a concern, people treated him almost as if he were ill and they should feel sorry for him. Physically, it was also exhausting to be on the move, sometimes for years at a time, holding meetings nearly every day. Extensive family visiting — from five to twelve families a day — also was an exhausting service for the minister, who must always stay keenly attuned in order to “speak to states” if that was called for by the Spirit. If the Friend did not stay keenly attuned, or if the climate in an area smothered his sensitivity, the result could be painful. As one man remembers: “I have once experienced this family sitting from an American Friend in my youth. I regret to say that it was all wrong in my case, and I thought it was pretence. The gift cannot be had by routine.”<sup>16</sup> There were physical dangers, of course, but there were also the dangers of missing the Guide, or of allowing the ego to become deflected by the respect, awe, and even adulation which could follow a gifted minister. If anyone questions the costliness of being a traveling minister, consider how many have died on their travels, how many had family members die while they were away, and what it would be like to be away from family and farm or business for years at a time, even if one had comfortable resources to care for these while one was away. Incidentally, it was the usual experience of ministering Friends that they would be led into a business or profession which allowed — if not supported — such erratic travels away from it. Even today, we still hear examples of “coincidences” or “synchronicity” of funds coming to contemporary Friends who respond to a call to travel, somewhat in the “old style.”

Their message, at its simplest, was: The *was* can become the *is*, or the *to be* can become the *is now*. I suspect that the classic Quietists would have denied that they had set out to expound a conscious system of theology or a specific “message”; they simply called people (when and as the Spirit led them to speak) to come to the same *experience* of dwelling in that same light and power and communion and guidance which the early church had known through the living, resurrected Christ, the eternal Word. They proclaimed through their lifestyle (which was always sharply poised on the knife edge between a keen awareness of this world and a keen awareness

of the leading of the Spirit) that the living presence of the Comforter, the Advocate, the Holy-Spirit-to-be, *is here now*. This message, with all its complexity when applied to individual situations, they understood very well, and on paper, or in conversation or argument, many of them could be articulate about it, even though some were illiterate or intellectually limited. Thomas Gould tells the story of such a "limited" Friend who preached wonderful sermons, using words he could not later explain, and who could scarcely carry on an intelligent conversation or properly take care of himself outside of meeting.

Over and over again, through an infinite variety of messages, each of which they believed was specifically given by the Spirit for that specific occasion, they called people out of the darkness surrounding ordinary human nature, into the Light which can transform that human nature through spiritual communion with the living Christ. They saw that the darkness around human nature could be vicious and crude or that it could be refined and cultured or even "religious" but still very blind to the reality that the *was* can become *is*. Frequently they had to warn Friends as well as non-Friends against the danger of depending on "forms" or the "letter" rather than the "life." They recognized the frightful enormity of the surrender to the Light, for the Light always required changes and sacrifices, but they — like a good doctor who knows his medicine — urged their hearers to pass through the painful experience quickly, for these ministers were living proof of the peace which followed. They knew that "he who commands gives the power to obey," and they knew that if their hearers really opened themselves to the Light, they would have to grow to follow that Light — or it could be lost. Thus, though these ministers were grateful for each soul "saved" through their words, they saw the initial entrance into the Light as only a preliminary, though necessary, step; the real question was whether a person would continue, throughout life, *to move along with the Light*. To deny the Light at any point might mean that it would be lost. Thus, the infinite variety of Quaker sermons was frequently aimed, like a surgeon's scalpel, at deftly exposing that little sin or that great omission which a

specific Friend was allowing to cloud his access to the Light. For many ministers the Bible was the one great resource. They knew it so well that it could be quoted extensively in their sermons or in their occasional discussions or disputes with non-Friends. Many made heavy use of biblical allusion and symbolism when speaking of the "states" revealed to them. Many ministers, especially as the tensions began to rise after 1800, felt called to give long expositions on the Scriptures during their sermons. When records of sermons to largely non-Quaker groups exist, they show that exposition of the Scriptures from the Quaker, experiential, point of view was a dominant theme.

I have mentioned earlier how these ministers felt themselves to be an organic part of a living body; they were instruments of the "head" of that body. In fact, one of the main functions or aspects of their ministry was that of *maintenance* of the spiritual body of which they were a part. They were divinely-inspired trouble-shooters or prophetic diagnosticians who could sniff out error or deadness or injustice or spiritual pride on the highest facing bench or on the bench behind the door. They were generally, though not always, on the side of those who favored a stronger disciplinary structure during the eighteenth century. Again and again we read of the ministers' inward struggles as they realized they had to speak the stark truth about people who "to the outward eye" seemed good and even holy. They knew that they had to speak what was given them, or they would undergo "uneasiness" or "darkness" or "suffering." More than one journal even records a minister's illness or dangerous accident which he or she attributed to unfaithfulness.

However, there was a difference in the way different ministers dealt out the unpleasant truth. For example, one can compare two very sensitive and gifted men — John Woolman and Joseph Hoag. The gentle, tactful, and effective Woolman's gifts and sensitivities are well known to most Friends. Joseph Hoag's accurate sensitivity is also clear; John William Graham records thirty-eight verified instances of Hoag's accuracy in speaking to states about which he had no previous knowledge.<sup>17</sup> His visions and prophecies about Quaker separations and the Civil War have occasionally drawn scholarly interest. Even

though he was affectionate, warm, and supportive to those whom he encouraged, Joseph could be so harsh and uncompromising in his corrective prophetic utterances that he sometimes aroused anger and opposition. Reflecting on the difference between these two outstanding ministers and others like them leads to interesting questions about the interplay between the Holy Spirit and the personality of each minister. Concerning Hoag, John William Graham felt that

these telepathic intimations and confirmations cease as soon as the book [Hoag's *Journal*] begins to be occupied with the Hicksite controversy. Joseph Hoag devoted himself to testifying against the Hicksites; and it would seem to have been fatal to his strange faculty as a seer. He lived as an active Friend and Minister till 1846, but the peace which seems to be a condition of his illumination was denied him for about the last twenty-five years of his life.<sup>18</sup>

This leads to further questions about the Quietist type of sensitivity: can it flourish when "the body" is divided and torn by controversy, when that love, "the first motion," is broken?

Happily, the minister's function in maintaining the "body" was not all negative. There are many accounts, some reaching into the twentieth century, of what psychic researchers would call telepathic sympathy and communication among the international network of ministers and elders. "Telepathy" is almost too tame and neutral a word for the "near unity" or "near affection" which bound some of these people together, if we may trust their records. It sometimes occurred that one minister or elder would correctly sense the "concern" of another and encourage him to go forward with it — even before the other had revealed it to anyone. It was not uncommon for a Friend to feel led to become a minister's "companion" only to learn that the minister had already felt led to ask him. Occasionally a Friend would know unerringly about the safe arrival — or the death or illness — of a beloved fellow minister hundreds of miles away. Thus it is not surprising that more than one minister was told by an elder — correctly — that he had

not been faithful to a leading to speak, or that he had not spoken all that had been given him. At its best, this network was deeply supportive and nourishing as a minister followed his Guide from meeting to meeting. The network would see to it that meetings were called — even several times at the same place — if he felt a “burden” for them; they would provide transportation and guides for days of local family visiting, if need be; they would provide money where needed; and they would honor the typical Quietist minister’s determination to hear no gossip about local situations which might cloud his ability to be an unbiased seer or prophet. Finally the network provided a succession of friendships and fellowship for which, as mentioned earlier, telepathy is too tame a word. I would not deny that the network could have its darker side, a point which is easily documented and which has often been made — especially concerning the power of the elders. However, to be fair to the past and to our hope for the future we need to recognize that in fortunate times and places Quakerism has been blessed with warm-hearted “true elders,” “nursing mothers and fathers in Israel,” whom the Holy Spirit had given gifts of discernment and spiritual encouragement.

Rooted in this fellowship, a minister performed whatever evocative function the Spirit called for. Sometimes he was simply to speak as an inspired teacher, expounding the Scriptures and the Quaker experience. Sometimes he would be led to give specific advice, like a spiritual director, to one person or several in a meeting for worship. Sometimes he brought encouragement or comfort or stern warning. The great and gentle men and women from afar with their outlander accents were effective internal evangelists, for they would often sense the young and tender souls ready to make the great plunge into acceptance and commitment which marked the start of a mature Quaker life. By some unerring instinct they might look that person in the face during a sermon and later go to his home, perhaps seeking an interview alone, as well as an opportunity with the family. In the same way they might become a herald to awaken a minister-to-be to his fate. These men and women became even more effective when they stayed in homes or engaged in extensive family visiting:

The practice of "visiting families" by these anointed ministers did what the confessional does for Roman Catholics and more than pastoral visiting does among Protestants, in binding the ministers to the people. It was pastoral work at its deepest.<sup>19</sup>

Family visiting has not entirely disappeared from the Conservative Friends; I experienced it as a young man and well remember something of what an elderly minister of the old style said about my future.

During the middle period most traveling ministers attracted non-Friends to many of their specially called meetings. Sometimes they held meetings especially for the non-Quaker inhabitants of an area. Sometimes they specifically sent out invitations for a special group, such as blacks, Indians, or apprentices. They might even hold a meeting in a church, particularly in non-Quaker territory. Throughout the nineteenth and even into the twentieth century, surviving ministers of the Quietist type were still actively evangelizing — when they were specifically led to do so — in jails, mines, factories, and colleges. Even in this century, ministers of the old style from Conservative yearly meetings have traveled to Japan, Norway, Germany, Egypt, Ireland, Scotland, and England. Their first goal was always to direct people to the true Source, even though the minister would seldom stay long enough to "settle" a meeting. It was enough if the minister felt "peace" and could then move on. I know of no studies of the percentage of such "outside" preaching during the eighteenth century, but I believe that it would compare favorably to the percentage of resources which a typical Protestant church of today allocates to missionary outreach. When we reach the work of Quietist-evangelicals like Stephen Grellet, Thomas Shillitoe, and William Allen, and the labors of a "Wilburite" Quietist, Daniel Wheeler, we see a flowering of the Quietist outreach into the world, even though these much-traveled Friends established few permanent Quaker colonies. Yet they must have influenced thousands of lives — some of them very influential. As John Ormerod Greenwood and others have pointed out, they did from time to time reach a precious

and hidden seed, the tiny groups in Europe who were already Quakers without knowing it until they were discovered.

This paper has suggested that evangelism and outreach were not thought of as a separate category by Friends of the middle period; they felt that it should flow forth as an inevitable outcome of dwelling in the body of Christ. They saw their first task as *dwelling* in the Light, or like Enoch, walking with God. The living network felt they must therefore maintain a solid, living base for this, and perpetuate it; thus the first step in evangelism was to reach the Quakers themselves, to make sure that this "Israel" stayed alive and pliable under the hand of the living Christ, in union with him and growing as he would have them grow. A full consideration of how the keenly sensitized Quaker conscience led to philanthropy, social pioneering, and influence on some of the structures of our world lies outside the scope of this paper, but if the influence in these areas is as considerable as some people maintain, perhaps the great effort at maintaining the Quaker "body" and the Quaker "character" have been worthwhile. This paper has also suggested, but not proved, that the actual percentage of Quietist outreaching evangelization may have been far greater than is commonly assumed. Flaws there were in the Quietist system, as subsequent generations have pointed out. However, whatever was good in that spirit and system has not entirely left us; I have a feeling that elements of it still remain fragmented or divided among our various Quaker branches. And I believe that I have seen it trying, painfully, to re-emerge here and there — one hopes in a better and more effective form. In conclusion, I have hope that the *was* may again become *is* — or, if that sounds too much like a Conservative Friend, that the *to be* can again become the *is now* in the Society of Friends.

#### Notes

1. John William Graham, *Psychical Experiences of Quaker Ministers* (London: Friends Historical Society, 1933), pp. 1-2 (hereafter referred to as Graham, *Psychical*).
2. For example, see [James Henderson], *An Autobiography of the Life and Religious Experiences of James Henderson; a Minister in the*

- Religious Society of Friends* (Barnesville, Ohio: Meeting For Sufferings of Ohio Yearly Meeting [Conservative], 1944).
3. Rufus M. Jones, *A Boy's Religion from Memory* (Philadelphia: Ferris & Leach, 1902), p. 22.
  4. Mabel S. Kantor, *Gilbert E. Thomas, His Book* (Havertown, Pa.: privately printed, 1967), p. 22.
  5. Howard H. Brinton, *Quaker Journals: Varieties of Religious Experience among Friends* (Wallingford, Pa.: Pendle Hill Publications, 1972), pp. 19-24 (hereafter referred to as Brinton, *Quaker Journals*).
  6. This excerpt is easily available in *Christian Faith and Practice in the Experience of the Society of Friends* (London: London Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, 1960), no. 45.
  7. Carl Patterson's story is available in *Carl Patterson, A Biography and Extracts of Writings* (n.p.: privately printed, 1949).
  8. Joseph Hoag, *Journal of the Life of Joseph Hoag. Containing his Remarkable Vision. Reprinted from the Authorised American Edition* (London: A. W. Bennett, 1862), p. 10.
  9. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
  10. *Ibid.*, pp. 36-39.
  11. Brinton, *Quaker Journals*, p. 36.
  12. Joseph E. Meyers, *Memorials presented to the Meeting for Sufferings of Ohio Yearly Meeting* (Meeting for Sufferings, n. d. Typescript in vault at Friends Boarding School, Barnesville, Ohio), Asenath Bailey, p. 5.
  13. Graham, *Psychical*, p. 3.
  14. *A Memorial Concerning Hannah H. Stratton, Deceased* (Winona, Ohio: New Garden Monthly Meeting of Friends, 1904), p. 4.
  15. Graham, *Psychical*, pp. 38-40.
  16. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
  17. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.
  18. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
  19. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

#### BELIEVERS' CHURCH CONFERENCE

The sixth in the series of occasional Believers' Church Conferences is to be held at Bluffton College, October 23-25, 1980. Theme of the conference is: "Is There a Believers' Church Christology?" Among the featured speakers are Rosemary Radford Ruether, T. Canby Jones, John H. Yoder, and Vernard Eller. Detailed conference programs are available from J. Denny Weaver, Believers' Church Conference, Bluffton College, Bluffton, Ohio 45817. Reservations are limited.