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In the previous issue of *Quaker Religious Thought* the invitation was given to any reader disagreeing with the dominant views of that issue on "The Paradox of the Quaker Ministry" as presented by D. Elton Trueblood and largely echoed by his critics, to send them to the Editor for inclusion in this issue. The two letters which follow were received and are being published as written.

Yes, Elton Trueblood's article is convincing, and has set off many nods of agreement as will any well-reasoned, sincere argument in any field, by one of its experts.

The only trouble is, that if we succumb to it we will have given up one of the main ideals of Quakerism.

Oh, we are accustomed to giving up ideals! They are usually so difficult to achieve, so constant in their demands that in all practicality they must be admitted to be impossible. "And, after all, this is what George Fox *really* meant!"

But is it what Christ meant? And was not George Fox trying to point us back to Christ's way, that is, to the *personal* search for God?

Yes, George Fox recognized that some individuals are more gifted in the ministry. We all recognize that all individuals are variously endowed. But in the same breath he said ". . . *but anyone* may become . . ." and it is this everyone's becoming that is most important — not becoming a minister — but becoming so close to God that one is imperatively called to tell the Good News: "He is also available to you!"

If we admit that some individuals need more human guidance than others we must also admit that it is only human to fall back on that guidance (instead of on God's) as a substitute for our own growth, especially if it is offered in official capacity!

It is *hard* to say, "No, we will not hire a meeting secretary. No, we will not hire a First Day School Superintendent — teacher — organizer — coordinator — to do all the studying and conference going and outline our work for us ('Oh, wouldn't it be love-ly!')." It is hard because we know our inadequacies — we admit our inadequacies. But we will not "knuckle-under" to them by employing a substitute to fill in for us, *if* we want to remain faithful to Quakerism's unique vision and our own possibilities of development.

We say, "All is possible to God and to them that trust in him."

Do we *believe* it?

We say, "Theology is not as important as personal spirituality," with which "all else shall be added unto you."

Do we *act* on it?

As long as we struggle with our inadequacies there is hope. As long as we see the gaps and try to fill them, ourselves, with his help (this is not just theoretical), "putting first things first" — maybe we can keep to the lay ministry — vocal *and* social.

Rufus Jones wrote, "In our fellowship there can be no delegation of responsibility for the great human business of worship and divine service. No person can do it for the group. Nobody can relieve the rest of the group of making their own approach to the Source of life and light and love. You do it yourself or it is not done — and that means a new consecration, a fresh dedication, a resolve to help answer our prayers. Our fathers suffered imprisonment and death for their faith. We do not face these dangers. Our sacrifice is a sacrifice of time, of energy, of thought, of the pursuit of wealth and the expansion of business."

The Committee on Worship and Ministry is supposed to be composed of whatever "specialists" we need in the ministry — these, to foster their own and other members' continued sensitivity and spiritual development. There is much literature to help the growth of one who makes time for it which would go a long way to make up for lack of seminary training. Other committees are supposed to make use of other "specialists'" little pieces of time, energy, and "know how."

The *idea* of a "really Quaker" pastor is so attractive; we could fit it into our philosophy so *easily* — if only we Friends weren't just as human as every human. The pastor finds himself *having* to do more, even unwillingly, (as Elton Trueblood tells us, with George Selleck adding that it didn't *start out* that way!) because his "brothers" *will* lean on him once they have him; and if he would dare say, "Look, I'm not supposed to be doing it *all*" — can anyone imagine that not one answering voice would be raised—"But what are we paying you for?" (Most people these days *do* have to *earn* a living. A person filling this type of position *should* be paid.)

Ideally, it should work; practically, it can't — just because we all have to have the incentive of necessity to do what we should (and "really" do) want to do. One of Quakerism's unique contributions will be quickly fading if we let ourselves be overpowered by this trend.

Let us not be *against* the seminary. All efforts at further learning and training are valuable. But as we incorporate the increased advantages of the availability of more knowledgeable people, let us keep not only our lay terminology, but our lay responsibility, our lay atmosphere, our lay attitude of mind. Let us continue in our striving for that ideal which is approachable. Jesus said, "If it were not so, I would have told you" and "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect." We claim to know that his spirit is available and equal to all tasks. Let us lay hold of this knowledge as *experience!* We need it if we are to practice what we preach. We will, all too humanly, ignore it if we have it practiced for us by a preacher.

But if we decide that we are not up to this challenge — that "human nature in this day and age with all the demands on our time and energy" cannot approach this ideal — let us admit it! But as we submit to the pressure and the temptation of the easy, almost-as-good way, let us do it with a little honest regret for our deserted ideal — not lamely trying to cover our retreat with, "Well, this is really what we meant all along."

It wasn't!

Wilberta N. Hardy

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I wish to comment upon the excellent discussion of the Quaker ministry which appeared in the autumn issue of *Quaker Religious Thought*. In his response to his commentators, Elton Trueblood suggests that his critics are in too close agreement with him, and implies that a response from a "pastor from Oregon Yearly Meeting" might be negatively critical — as an opposite response could be expected from the one who is "wholly satisfied" with a quiet meeting. As a minister in Oregon Yearly Meeting presently engaged in teaching rather than the pastoral ministry I wish to say a few things.

In the first place, ministers in Oregon Yearly Meeting are for the most part aware of the issues which Trueblood discusses. They are not anxious to be called "reverend" nor to paste "clergy" stickers on their car bumpers, although they may (and quite rightly) belong to ministerial associations. They seek to carry on the pastoral leadership of the meeting in conjunction with the direction of the Ministry and Oversight; to serve the church rather than to rule it. They are called of God and voluntarily supported — two prime tenets of the Quaker ministry as

envisioned by George Fox in opposition to the hireling ministry which was uncalled and tax-supported. They understand that their gifts which the church recognizes do not give them special sanctity or status over their brethren. Many are concerned about the need for emphasis upon the universal ministry and are seeking to recover that balance with the particular ministry which did mark the early Quaker movement. I expect we could stand some nudging on this point: thus Elton Trueblood's article is perceptive and relevant.

In the second place, I fear that Trueblood scores a point at the expense of attacking the "conventional Protestant clergyman." After all, Trueblood himself demonstrates cooperation with and respect for ministers from various denominations and has sometimes shamed us by showing how other Protestant groups have witnessed faithfully in our day to various concerns which we had prided ourselves were exclusively Quaker. I doubt the correctness of exaggerating the significant Christian role of many devout, Christ-honoring Protestant ministers in order to depict a Quaker ideal. The Quaker witness against a hireling minister, i. e., un-called of God and state-supported, became part of the general free-church tradition and contributed to the strength of American Christianity. The issue of the nature of the pastoral release and exercise of ministry must follow from this fact.

In the third place, we should never forget that worship is subordinate to the truth of the gospel and the command for its proclamation. The Quaker movement found its uniqueness not in the mode of worship but in its recapturing of an emphasis upon the immediacy of Jesus Christ in human experience. Worship and evangelism ought to reflect the lordship of Christ. More important than debating the propriety of the modes of worship is to ask the question: Is Jesus Christ exalted? Is the cross lifted up for the sinner to cling to and find restoration? Is the resurrection of Christ proclaimed? Does Christ himself teach us, through his Scripture and by his Holy Spirit? Unless his is the "presence in the midst" all efforts to achieve something distinctively Quaker in worship will fail, and our heritage will become known by its aesthetic approach to group dynamics rather than by the vigor of evangelical faith and experience, whether we have five minutes of silence or thirty.

As Maurice Creasey pointed out recently (*Friends World News*, Dec. 1962), both form and freedom characterized the primitive Christian church. Pastoral as well as non-pastoral Friends can profit by his reminder. All too sadly, some worship experiences demonstrate neither form nor spontaneity. In the

New Testament I do not find any prescribed order of worship — that is, a given liturgy — but rather opportunity for a demonstration of the gifts of the Spirit, orderly, and, preferably, rational (see I Corinthians 12-14), through which the church is edified. We have to be resilient enough to meet real human needs. To insist upon a traditional pattern for Sunday at 11 a.m. may be to disregard how the Holy Spirit is dealing with people. In contrast with early Quakerism, attending meeting is fairly popular and at least without persecution. When numbers of persons who thus attend our major meeting for worship are unconverted to Christianity, are seekers or inquirers or disinterested pagans in one form or another, we ought to find ways of evangelizing and instructing in the faith. So long as Quakers content themselves with one hour per week they will wrangle indefinitely on how best to use that hour for evangelism and worship. The sort of participation and pastor-less leadership which quiet Quakers esteem as the epitome of the Friendly manner of worship is often found among pastoral churches in Sunday evening and mid-week meetings (although I suspect it ought to be utilized more than it is).

Once again, may I express my appreciation for Elton Trueblood's perceptive article and to the QTDG for circulating it through *Quaker Religious Thought*.

Arthur Roberts

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