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QUAKER RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

Cumulative Number 136

March 2021

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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 the last issue of *Quaker Religious Thought* (*QRT*) I reflected that the type of Quaker theological reflection and praxis explored in *QRT* was important if Friends are to confront the strife, inequity, and injustice we can witness all around us. Now, six months later, we are experiencing the deadliest days of the pandemic, political tensions have boiled over to the point of an attempted coup by Christian Identity groups and an attempt to thwart such hallmarks of democracy as the peaceful transfer of power.

What do Quakers have to offer in a world like this? One potential way of exploring this question is to reflect on the nature of Quaker ministry, the outward facing embodiment of Quaker spirituality. The 2020 Quaker Theological Discussion Group meetings featured two panels on this topic. Conveners Christy Randazzo and Carole Dale Spencer invited participants to reflect on the challenges of ministry and what it might look like in a Quaker context. The presentations from the first session are printed in this issue. The session asked the question: “What is a Quaker pastoral theology? How is it enfolded/embodied in community?” The presenters were Ashley M. Wilcox, C. Wess Daniels, Oscar Lagusa, Derek Brown, and Phil Baisley. In these presentations, Quaker ministers named the challenges faced in Quaker ministry and, also, identified what Quaker pastoral ministry might look like in action. I invite you to spend some time thinking about pastoral theology, and how it might have a bearing on your calling to faithfulness.

The presentations in the second Quaker Theological Discussion Group session, on Quaker vocational ministry, will be printed in the Fall *QRT* issue #137.

In addition to the articles on pastoral ministry, this issue also includes the second installment of Cherice Bock’s study of the peace testimony in Oregon Yearly Meeting, which poses the history of ministry and the desire for faithfulness as a source for contemplation on the current practice of Quaker faith. The first part of her study appeared in *QRT* #133 in September 2019.

This issue also contains four book reviews, covering important studies on James Nayler, the Book of Revelation and empire, Quakers and mysticism, and, fittingly, Quakers and pastors. This meaty issue is crammed full of the latest insight in Quaker scholarship and praxis. Please enjoy!

I would also like to take some space to announce that Quaker scholar and former *QRT* editor, T. Vail Palmer, passed away, at the age of 93, on February 5, 2021. Vail's long career cannot be properly addressed in this issue. You can expect an extended memorial in the Fall issue.

Last but certainly not least, I want to express my deepest thanks to Phil Smith who has served *QRT* as business manager for more than 20 years. Phil's outstanding work has provided continuity across many editors and many changes to *QRT* procedures. Phil retired from his role with *QRT* effective January 1, 2021, but he continues to make sure the transition to a post-Phil era goes smoothly and *QRT* thrives. And as a result of this change, I am happy to announce that *QRT* has formed a new partnership with Barclay Press. Barclay Press has a long history of publishing material that is of importance to Friends, so this partnership is a great fit. I am pleased that Eric Muhr and the team at Barclay Press will be putting their talents to work for *QRT*!

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Please enjoy this issue!

—Jon R. Kershner

Editor