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November / December 1992

EVANGELICAL FRIEND

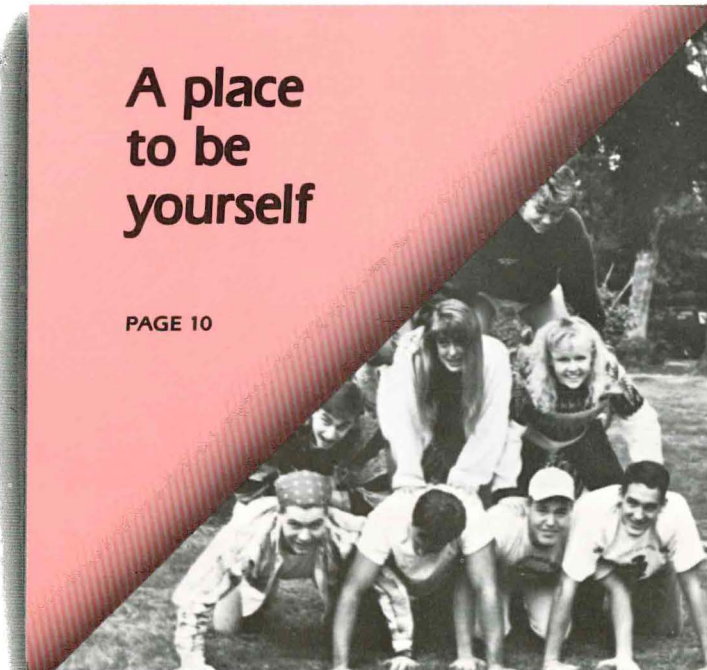
*Lord, teach us
to be living
sacraments,
and may our*

*lives reflect
the reality of
Your presence.*

M. WEIDNER '91

**A place
to be
yourself**

PAGE 10



The *Shadow* and the Substance

The most important reason for Friends testimony is to make it impossible for Christians to mistake a real experience for an unreal one.

BY JOHN PUNSHON

"CHRIST IS ALL AND IS in all." (Colossians 3:11) "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." (1 Corinthians 2:2) These are bold statements of faith made by Paul to two of his most troublesome new churches. He does not mince his words when dealing with their shortcomings, but on the other hand, he always leaves people with a vision of what he himself calls the unsearchable riches of Christ.

And the reason is a simple one. Christians have no other companion and example but Christ, who is judge over all the philosophies and values of the world, and they know the deepest truth of all, that it is by God's grace that we live and move and have our being. It is this that gives us lives of praise and glory. These things breathe from every page of Paul's letters, and his understanding and experience of the world make him proclaim them at every opportunity.

Traditionally, Quaker experience has followed Paul's pattern closely, as can be seen in the pages of Fox's *Journal* and other Quaker writings of that period. And it is grace that is the key, I am sure. The Quaker life is one of testimony and evangelism, and what also makes it remarkable is that it proclaims the possibility of a real victory over sin in the personal life of the believer. This is the fullest measure of salvation.

Consider the effects of grace, a central theme of evangelical faith. As a source of prayer and thanksgiving, it stops us from becoming preoccupied with ourselves. As a source of gratitude, it calls for action and leads to the struggle for personal and social transformation. As the root of the life of the church, it leads to continual renewal. Seen in this light, the rise of the Friends movement in the seventeenth century was a work of divine grace.

Joseph John Gurney was in no doubt that it was. "By Quakerism," he wrote, "I apprehend the teaching of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, without addition, without diminution and without qualification." Those are pretty strong words for a denominational leader to utter, but they come from a deep experience of grace that led the speaker to a particular understanding of the true nature of Christianity. It was based on grace, but it lacked two of the obvious signs the other churches had. It dispensed with the use of outward symbols for baptism and the Supper of the Lord. Friends retain this testimony today, and it is more than just a "distinctive." The disuse of ceremonies is a pointer to the way Quakers understand God's grace.

The most important reason for Friends testimony is to make it impossible for Christians to mistake a real experience for an unreal one. Ceremonies in themselves have no divine power to change us one way or another, as Paul warned the Colossians. In the second chapter of that letter, he says that they are "a mere shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ."

The distinction drawn in Scripture between the shadow and the substance is clear. Grace is invisible and unmistakable. We are baptized and called into communion in the Spirit, inwardly. Our baptism is an appeal to God for a clear conscience (1 Peter 3:21). The communion "bread" we eat cannot be purchased at the grocery store, because it is Christ, the Bread of Life (John 6:35). So it is also with the wine, water, flame, and fire of the Spirit. To be immersed in, and filled with, the Spirit of Jesus Christ is the real substance to which sacramental symbols point. The receiving of God's saving and empowering grace is always mediated through inward faith alone, not through outward forms of expression.

But it is a legitimate question to ask why Friends insist on keeping this testimony. Cannot we preserve our sense that baptisms and suppers are symbolic occasions that are important because they help us to see beyond the shadow to the substance? It would be quite wrong to say that they cannot do this in the face of many people's testimony that they can. Nevertheless, Friends testimony is not groundless, and has more to it than many people realize.

In the first place, we have to take a historical view. In the past Christians have fought, killed, and persecuted one another over who was to count as a Christian and what kind of worship Christians had to offer. The church has had long periods of intolerance because it elevated the shadow and lost the substance. Who is to say this will not recur? Whose witness will serve as a standing reminder of those unpleasant facts?

Practically, how could Christians be like that? The most straightforward reply is that they forget that the inward experience of grace issues in the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22). The fruit of the Spirit offers a far surer indication of spirituality than tongues, ecstasy, or rites. It is not clear how participation in ceremonies necessarily promotes these attributes, but *they* are the true outward measures of the Christian life, and it is to their Author that one should

look *directly* for transforming grace. The second consideration here is that special ceremonies can narrow our focus and make us overlook the multifarious channels God actually uses.

This is the source of the well-known Quaker phrase that all life is sacramental. It rests on the conviction that we should always be striving to listen, to widen our understanding of God's ways with us, and not let ceremonial restrictions tie down our imaginations. Hence, the Quaker testimony leads to a particular way of life and a characteristic kind of discipleship—a continuing opening to grace. That is no mean claim, and it can be argued that the great reputation Quakers enjoy is vitally dependent on it. So also is the freedom and equality of our church government, and the vision we have of the People of God. You can scarcely have ordinances without ordaining people to do them, and that would be the end of historical Quakerism.

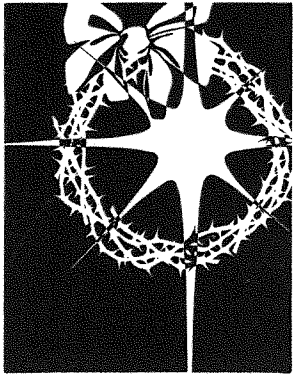
FINALLY, IT NEEDS to be reemphasized that one does not *choose* not to do what all other Christians do just to be awkward. The testimony Friends have they believe to be found in Scripture and they have set out their case in many books, most recently *Why Friends Are Friends* by the late Jack Willcuts. The testimony does not state what Friends think, it states their understanding of what God *wants*. Jeremiah looks forward to a time when there will be a new covenant written in the hearts of God's people, when that which is new comes (Jeremiah 31). Hebrews describes the shadow and the substance of this claim. In chapter 9 at verse 10 we read, "They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order."

And this is the simple point. We live in the new order, the covenant of grace. What more do we need in our heart of hearts than to know the fountain of grace, Jesus Christ—and Him crucified? **FF**



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The distinction drawn . . . between the shadow and the substance is clear.



On Christmas . . . and the Character of Sacramentality

BY PAUL ANDERSON

WHAT MAKES something *sacramental*? Have you ever thought about that question? The classic answer, going back to St. Augustine, is that a sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual reality. During the Middle Ages, the church embraced as many as 30 sacraments, but Peter Lombard reduced them to the seven that are still a part of the Catholic faith. With Luther and the Reformers, the number was reduced to two—as water baptism and communion are the two most closely connected to New Testament practices. But what is it that *really* makes something sacramental? Or put otherwise, what is the *character of sacramentality*?

Unfortunately, we Quakers have been rather shallow in our treatments of the issue. We too easily stress what we don't do and miss the whole point of a very beautiful and meaningful testimony—one that the world needs desperately to hear.

It's also true that many Christians who come to Friends from other denominations often miss the outward celebration of the Lord's Supper. It had been meaningful to them in the past, and they had not encountered the same sacrament abuses that earlier Quakers and others have. Furthermore, sacramental restlessness among Friends may be a sign that the local church leadership has not been thinking enough about how the *real presence* of Christ is experienced in the gathered meeting for worship, how *every* worship meeting should create the space for "communing" with the risen Lord, how the Holy Spirit can *fill* and *transform* the individual with Pentecostal fire, how the world can be *reached* miraculously by God, how the divine is made accessible

through outward means—the character of sacramentality.

One can appreciate the sentiment of those who advocate "liberty of conscience" regarding outward sacramental practices, especially if the local Friends meeting for worship has been sacramentally dormant. But this doesn't mean that Friends' positive testimony about the sacraments has become obsolete. It has simply been unexplored.

So just what is the positive Quaker testimony on the sacraments? In a nutshell, that God looks on the heart, and the heart that believes in Him receives Him. Outward ways of expressing ourselves to God and before others may help us at times, but they NEVER determine God's divine action toward us. Inward trust alone is the sole condition for receiving God's saving grace and sanctifying power.

THE RIGHT words? God knows our thoughts even before we speak. The right postures? God sees through to the very core of our beings. The ritually, politically, or socially "correct" way? God is above all of these. He loves us and sent His Son to die . . . that we might live in the newness of life. Forgiveness of sins, forsaking the world, spiritual immersion, divine empowerment, all of these are received through *faith in Jesus Christ alone*; and the only true outward evidence of the newness of life is the changed and changing lives of those who abide in Christ and are immersed in His Spirit. Friends believe this is what Christ came to bring, and that no religious group or method regulates the divine dispensing of grace. God looks on the heart. That is enough.

Of course, objections come from Christians especially wanting to be faith-

ful to the Scriptures, and that's a worthy concern. Clearly, some early Christians practiced water baptism and held eucharistic meals, although there was a great deal of disunity regarding the ways they did so. But let us really look at the New Testament to consider how early Christian sacramentality developed.

HOW ABOUT starting with Jesus? Not a bad place to begin.

Two of the first things you notice about Jesus is that He dined with tax-gatherers and sinners, and that He pronounced woes upon the Scribes and Pharisees. But these stories grow shamefully "tame" to our ears. Table fellowship in those days was a statement of acceptance and solidarity between parties. They believed that God was present in a special way (sacramentally) in the breaking and sharing of bread.

Jews were not allowed to eat with Gentiles or with those who were ceremonially unclean. This would taint them too. Furthermore, to be deemed a "sinner" was basically to become a social outcast. It was the price to be paid by those who did not live up to the ceremonial and legalistic letter of Moses' Law.

Social anthropologists call these "purity laws," and all cultures have them. They prescribe what members of that society must do or not do in order to become acceptable and pure.

What Jesus did in that context was absolutely astounding! By claiming to be God's envoy and by dining with the "impure" and rejecting the "pure," He declared to the world that *God's saving presence is never confined to outward ways of doing it right*. Jesus' teachings and deeds in all four Gospels make this motif abundantly clear. God looks on the heart, and those who trust humbly in Him will be saved. Conversely, those who trust in their human-made attempts to obtain God's saving favor will always founder.

The cleansing of the Temple marks another radical demonstration by Jesus, but this time it is one of judgment. The division of the masses into two camps, the pure and the impure, motivated even the poor to try to go beyond their means in purchasing sacrificial animals

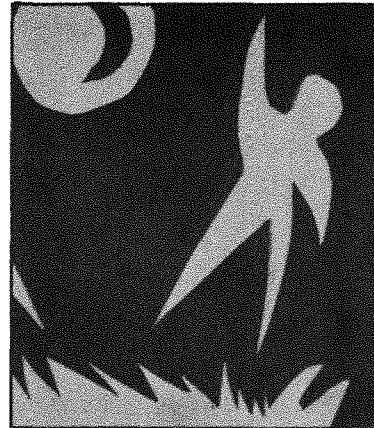
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COVER: Articles in this issue examine symbols, systems, and sacraments to find the realities from which they spring, and by which we live.
(Art by Melanie Weidner)



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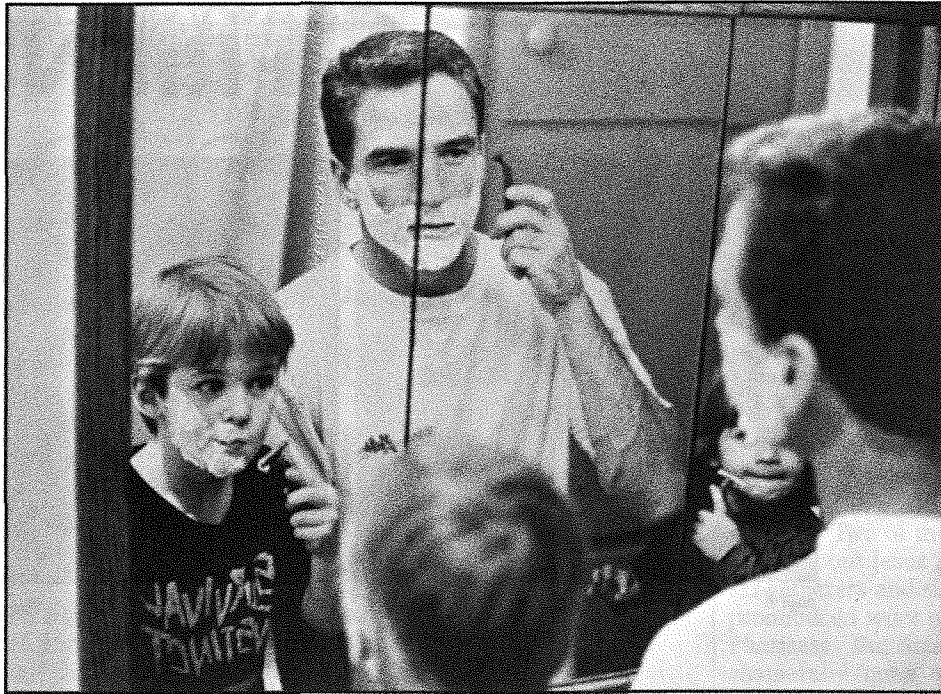
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*The issue at hand had nothing
to do with communion by means of elements.
It had to do with imitating Christ . . .*

The Sacrament of Discipleship

BY CHUCK ORWILER

"**I** WANNA BE LIKE Mike." So goes the advertising slogan. As we listen to the song we see pictures of kids doing what kids have done for a long, long time, imitating their hero. In this case it is a basketball player in the United States, but it could be a soccer player in Brazil or a gymnast in Russia just as easily. I hope that most of us can still remember trying to walk, talk, dress, or get our hair cut just like our hero. I hope we can still remember, because chances are we are still doing just that! Isn't that why the use of celebrities is so prominent in advertising? We all want to be "like Mike." Our hero may not be a sports superstar. It could be a musician, a writer, a dynamic Christian leader, or even a good friend. The point is

that we have a distinct tendency to imitate those whom we admire.

Yet, our inclination to imitate is usually superficial. That is, it is easy to wear the same clothes or style our hair the same as the one we admire, but in our attempt to imitate, are we willing to do what that person has done in order to become what they have become? Probably not. Investing countless hours in the rigors of training or education, working one's way up through the school of hard knocks, fighting off discouragement time and again—no thank you. I'll buy your brand, walk your walk, and talk your talk. I'll join those who imitate our common hero in miniature, and be quite content with that. Superficiality can have its rewards,

and it is a lot more affordable than the genuine article.

Superficiality can also be a placebo, and that is where this article is headed. Just before beginning this article I browsed through a catalog of "Christian" merchandise. I can now decorate my house and fill my closet with advertisements for Jesus. When Isaiah said, "the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" he wasn't referring to the proliferation of sacred T-shirts—prized though they be by their wearers. As a pastor I daily receive advertisements for various programs and materials that will make my church like some "successful" church. Yet, when Jesus told us that the Kingdom of God was like a pearl of

great price for which we would eagerly sell all that we have, was He simply introducing a slick stewardship campaign? I don't think so.

The point is this: *In our churches just whom are we imitating?* The answer makes a difference because we need more than just a placebo for the ills around us and among us. Dallas Willard offers an accurate summation of our situation:

"And amid a flood of techniques for self-fulfillment there is an epidemic of depression, suicide, personal emptiness, and escapism through drugs and alcohol, cultic obsession, consumerism, and sex and violence—all combined with an inability to sustain deep and enduring personal relationships.

"So obviously the problem is a spiritual one. And so must be the cure.

"But if the cure is spiritual, how does modern Christianity fit into the answer? Very poorly, it seems, for Christians are among those caught up in the sorrowful epidemic just referred to. And that fact is so prominent that modern thinking has come to view the Christian faith as powerless, even somehow archaic, at the very least irrelevant." (*The Spirit of the Disciplines*, Dallas Willard, p. viii, Harper Collins, 1988)

The problem being described here is not secular humanism, liberalism, or lack of funds in the church budget. The problem is that we in the church are failing to be a genuine imitation of Christ.

Can we be challenged by the utter profoundness of a commonplace doctrine? The doctrine is this, *the church is the body of Christ*. We should be staggered by the immensity of that description. We should be thrilled at the incredible possibilities. "We can become like Christ in character and in power and thus realize our highest ideals of well-being and well-doing. That is the heart of the New Testament message. Do you believe this is possible?" (*ibid.* p. ix)

These words stir the hearts of genuine disciples of Christ, because they speak what we so much want to see happen. We are convinced that the answer lies in following Christ, yet we expend so much effort following so much else. We can wear the right slogans, we can sing the right music, we can be polished until we shine, yet none of that has the power to transform. It is at this point that we can learn that discipleship is sacramental.

A sacrament is an outward expression of an inward or spiritual reality. *Following Jesus is a sacrament*. When we who make up the church are faithful in following our Lord we become the tangible Jesus, the



We have a distinct tendency to imitate those whom we admire.

body of Christ. This is phenomenal. Who would want anything else? Quite a number, actually. In John 6 there is the account of the feeding of the 5,000. This is followed by Jesus teaching that those who want real life must eat more than ordinary bread, even more than manna from heaven. They must eat His flesh and drink His blood. The issue at hand had nothing to do with communion by means of elements. It had to do with imitating Christ in His offering His flesh for the life of the world on Calvary. His disciples responded, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" It was just at this point that many of Jesus' followers abandoned Him (v. 66). His question to the disciples was, "You do not want to leave too, do you?"

I find this a penetrating question for me and my church. The predominate pressure on me and my congregation is not to be like Jesus, but to be like a "successful" church. That is not enough. The unchurched, my congregation, and I need nothing less than Christ himself. I want to be a sacramental Quaker. I want our church to be a sacramental Friends church where we discover the living Christ among us in all His transforming power. I want to be like Jesus. But this is a hard teaching, who can accept it?

A young girl was invited to Sunday school. It was her good fortune to have as her teacher one of those treasures so often stored in church basements. She was a plain woman, hopelessly out of style in her dress, and altogether unremarkable in her appearance. She would never be featured on the cover of a fancy Christian education publication. But she loved Jesus, and it showed.

The following Sunday the girl begged to return to the Sunday school class taught, in her words, "by the pretty lady." Hallelujah, the body of Christ was alive! "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord..." (2 Corinthians 3:18)

It would indeed be easier to buy a program or read a book or attend a conference. It would be easier to initiate an advertising campaign or change the worship format or move the church building. It would be easier to revere old traditions or sanctify new ones. It would be easier if I knew that simply and completely following Jesus would make me famous rather than make me humble.

Or would it be easier? Perhaps not. Superficiality has its own price. Let us heed our own prophet, Thomas Kelly, "The times are too tragic, God's sorrow is too great, [our] night is too dark, the cross is too glorious for us to live as we have lived in anything short of holy obedience." May we be sacramental Quakers. May we be the living body of Christ. ■

Chuck Orwiler is pastor of First Denver Friends Church.

To the Point

It is not true, as we sometimes hear people say, that Friends do not believe in Baptism and the Lord's supper. We do believe both in spiritual baptism and spiritual communion. Baptism to us means the Holy Spirit's power so known and yielded to in our hearts that we live in continual dependence upon His help and guidance. He brings us into such conscious fellowship with God and Christ that we can truly say, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20) Communion is opening the door of our hearts to the Lord Jesus and finding His promise fulfilled, "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." (Revelation 3:20) We who set aside the outward ought to make sure that we do know these inward realities.

Elizabeth B. Emmott
from *Christian Faith and Practice*

*A clearness
committee focuses
primarily on
listening for God's
word regarding
a particular situation.*



The Clearness Committee

Listening to God Together

BY MARGARET BENEFIEL AND KEN HAASE

LINDA HAS BEEN asked to serve as clerk of the Adult Education Committee at her church. The clerkship will involve a fair bit of work and organizing, and she is concerned about combining it with her career and family commitments. In trying to decide whether to accept the position, she has talked with past clerks, discussed issues with her family, and considered it in prayer. It is a difficult question; she believes she is called to serve in some way but feels cautious about her own abilities and the demands of the position. Bringing these concerns to her meeting, she asks for a **clearness committee** to help her discern whether God is calling her to serve as clerk.

A clearness committee is a discernment process used in some Quaker meetings and churches to bring the hard questions of our lives into the illuminating light of Christ's leadership. Clearness committees bring the spirit of the Quaker business meeting—our "Meetings for Worship for the Purpose

of Business"—to the choices and questions that link together the many threads of our lives.

Linda's clearness committee meets with her in prayer, asking questions, seeking clarity, sharing the ministry God gives each of its members in their gathered meeting. The purpose is not to judge the worthiness of Linda or the position, but to treat the choice or question as a window through which God's light may shine upon her life. The answer is not "yes" or "no" but "this is God's call in this place." For instance, it might become clear that Linda has a strong call to teach in the Adult Education program, but not to clerk the committee, and that her clerking would draw her away from her teaching.

The process of the clearness committees is founded upon three beliefs: that God cares about our lives, that God is present with us in our choices, and that God empowers us to do what we are called to do. In particular, the Creator of galaxies

cares about the details of the lives we create with our choices. This care becomes clear when we discern in the presence of God that is promised to us in our need. And when we have discerned, God empowers us—as individuals, as communities of support and cooperation—to act as we are called.

The Origin of the Term

The term "clearness committee" originated among English Quakers to designate the committee that ensured that both members of an engaged couple were "clear of all others" so that they might commit fully to one another. The committee's process later expanded into discerning preparation for marriage, much as a couple and a pastor do together in some churches today. Among American Friends, the term then spread to any sort of Spirit-led discernment process.

Often the elders of a meeting operated as a clearness committee, as when John Woolman discerned with the elders of his meeting about traveling with his concern regarding slavery. Soon after Woolman experienced his leading in this matter, he went to his elders to discuss it with them. After a time of prayer and listening together, they discerned with him that this was truly a leading from God. The next step was to find a companion to travel with him in the ministry. After praying and searching, his brother emerged as a possible partner. Woolman again went to his elders. They discerned with him that this was the right choice, and they issued traveling minutes for both of them.

In this example, the clearness committee is associated with a highly public witness and ministry, but more often, clearness committees are applied to the quieter issues of our daily lives. Individuals may ask for a clearness committee before joining a meeting or church, taking on a responsibility within the meeting, changing careers, returning to school, or beginning a new ministry in some other context. Couples may ask for a clearness committee before marriage, before a first or additional child, or even when considering such difficult issues as ending a relationship. In all these cases, the role of the committee is not some universal assessment of "right" or "wrong," but is a Spirit-led effort to discern God's will for a beloved individual in a particular place in his or her life.

Choices as Gifts

Clearness committees are organized around choices or around the events—transitions, crises, discoveries—that hold choices within them. A clearness committee stands with an individual or individuals in the place of choice and seeks to hear the direction in which God is moving in their lives. By prayer, by questions, and by sharing the Scriptures and

ministry God gives them—often by recalling the choices God has called them to as individuals—they seek to help in listening to God's call in another's life. At their best, they enable one to treat a choice as a wrapped box within which lies a gift from God; they help to unwrap the gift and to name what is found inside.

Clearness committees are not "brain-storming" or "problem-solving" groups. Just as a "meeting for worship for business" is not a business meeting in which we rely solely on our intellects and problem-solving skills, but bring these abilities and skills into the larger context of God's gracious care and leading and wait and listen prayerfully for direction, so a clearness committee focuses primarily on listening for God's word regarding a particular situation. The clearness committee is aware of the limitations of human problem-solving skills, and places these in the context of prayer and worship.

Neither is a clearness committee a support group, for its task is a clearly defined one: discerning God's will about a particular situation or decision. However, after a direction of movement is discerned, the committee may want to provide ongoing support for the individual(s) involved. For instance, some meetings schedule "checkups" with a newlywed couple they have found clear for marriage. Similarly, a committee that acknowledges an individual's call to ministry will often ask the meeting for a number of Friends who will support that ministry on a continuing basis.

To hear the voice of God, be it calling us or another, is a powerful experience; it is a witness that affirms our faith and draws us together in community. Serving on a clearness com-

mittee is often as much a gift to those serving as to the individual seeking clearness. And the sharing of the process with the larger community, when appropriate, brings a bit of God's truth and a reminder of God's love to all of us.

Nuts and Bolts

If a church wishes to support this kind of spiritual discernment process, it can begin by discussing clearness committees in the larger community. It may be wise to allow requests both to the business meeting as a whole and to a smaller group (such as the elders, a pastoral team, or a committee on ministry and worship) for more personal concerns. In addition, having clearness committees for membership or marriage may introduce individuals to the process, and these may supplement other kinds of preparation already in place.

Another possibility is to note the milestones in people's lives that often involve choices—graduations, retirements, etc.—and to offer clearness committees for those looking forward to such transitions. Again, while the



They seek
to help in listening
to God's call in
another's life.

Scriptures offer clear guidelines for moral choices, deciding which of several good options to choose will be made easier when explored together with mature, wise Christians.

When gathering, we have found that starting with silence is important, out of which the individual or individuals seeking guidance speak of where they are and what their concern is. Following this, maintaining a sense of worship, questions may be asked or ministry given as the spirit leads the committee.

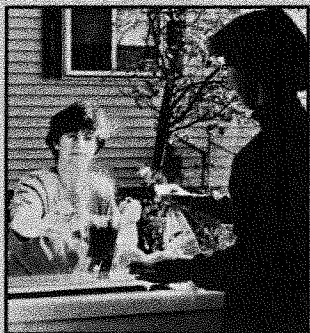
If the pace of questions and answers seems too rapid-fire, anyone may suggest a pause for silence and return to worship. Members of the committee should, of course, guard the sensitive nature of what is shared with them by keeping it confidential.

It is often a good idea to have a designated convenor who will try to monitor the "centeredness" of the meeting, and who may also attend to the passing of time and whether things are staying "on track." Sometimes multiple meetings will be necessary, and recognizing this may ease the pressure of time restriction on particular meetings. It is usually a bad idea for the individual seeking clearness to be the convenor.

Finally, don't worry too much about details or decorum. Focus, instead, on the quality of the time as worship and on opening a space for God in your hearts. If God is there, all will be well, and God will be there, among us and through us. We've been promised! (Matthew 18:18-20)

All of us have, at times, experienced God's guidance in our lives individually, but the meeting for clearness offers the added benefit of discerning Christ's leadership in community. The book of Acts mentions several instances in which early Christians clearly did the same, and Friends have taken their example seriously. "It seemed right to the Lord, and to us" was the introduction of the Acts 15 epistle, and we can experience this same level of certainty today. As evangelical Friends rediscover a time-tested tool for discerning the Lord's leading, may the benefits extend beyond the guided to the world for whom Christ died. ■

Margaret Benefiel was recorded as a minister of the Gospel in Northwest Yearly Meeting in 1991. She has served on the pastoral team at Reedwood Friends Church in Portland, Oregon, and is teaching courses in spirituality and faith development this year at Harvard Divinity School and the Earlham School of Religion. Her husband, Ken Haase, teaches and researches artificial intelligence at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and has served on the Ministry and Counsel of New England Yearly Meeting. They had wedding ceremonies in Portland and Boston in August of 1991.



Focus on opening a space for God in your heart.

Fulfilling the LOVE Commandment

BY KAREN ROBERTS

COLLABORATIVE learning. Quality Circles. Networking. Support groups. The concept of individuals becoming connected to others for mutual benefit and the achievement of common goals permeates our culture. But far from being just another fad, the redemptive potency of small group fellowships has tremendous implications for Christian growth and ministry in the world. It is there that we encounter the transforming presence of Christ and experience His love through one another.

In particular, there's an explosion of interest in "support" groups of all kinds. Support groups have been defined as intentional gatherings of 3-12 individuals on a regular time schedule for the purpose of giving and receiving encouragement and help to one another. Support or

common concern groups include everything from the many "Adult Children of..." groups and "grief and loss" groups to Musician's Fellowships and Mothers at Home with Small Children groups. In general, people are discovering what Christians have always known—that coming together with others, in particular others who have had, or are currently in, similar circumstances, can be a transforming experience.

Why is this so? And what are the implications of this new awareness of the power of small group experiences for Christian growth and ministry?

The Dynamic of Sharing
Small groups allow individuals to share. A support group creates a place where it is okay to be hurting and to talk about it with others—a place to find we're not alone. And



*‘A new commandment
I give you: Love one another.
As I have loved you, so you
must love one another. All
men will know that you
are my disciples if
you love one another.’*

telling one another our stories—both successes and failures, is greatly therapeutic. Because a support group intentionally provides an environment of unconditional acceptance, it becomes, for many individuals, the *one safe place* in which they are free to talk about the issues in their lives without fear of rejection or condemnation.

AS CHRISTIANS, we experience this dynamic of sharing in our relationship to God. In our private prayer life, we find God's unconditional acceptance for us—just the way we are. As we gather in small groups with others, we practice what we have learned from God by extending that grace to others as they share their stories with us. The theological term “grace” becomes a reality when individuals realize it is possible for others to know every-

thing about them—and still accept them. In this sense, we become grace-extending “priests” to one another, offering the same character of unconditional love we receive from Christ.

The Dynamic of Caring

Small groups allow individuals to receive nurture and care. Support groups in particular emphasize that they are where hurting individuals can come to find help.

They can be comforted when they are mourning, encouraged when they are discouraged, and loved when they feel unlovable. In many groups, members are committed to come to one another's aid, so that when real needs surface, they can be met by people doing practical things to care for one another.

Jesus commands us to love one another, yet many

individuals have no practical experience in fulfilling this great commandment. We have a culture full of self-centered and my-family-only-focused individuals. Small groups are a training ground for learning to minister to others. And small groups are a vehicle for Christians to give nurture and care to others on a continuing basis.

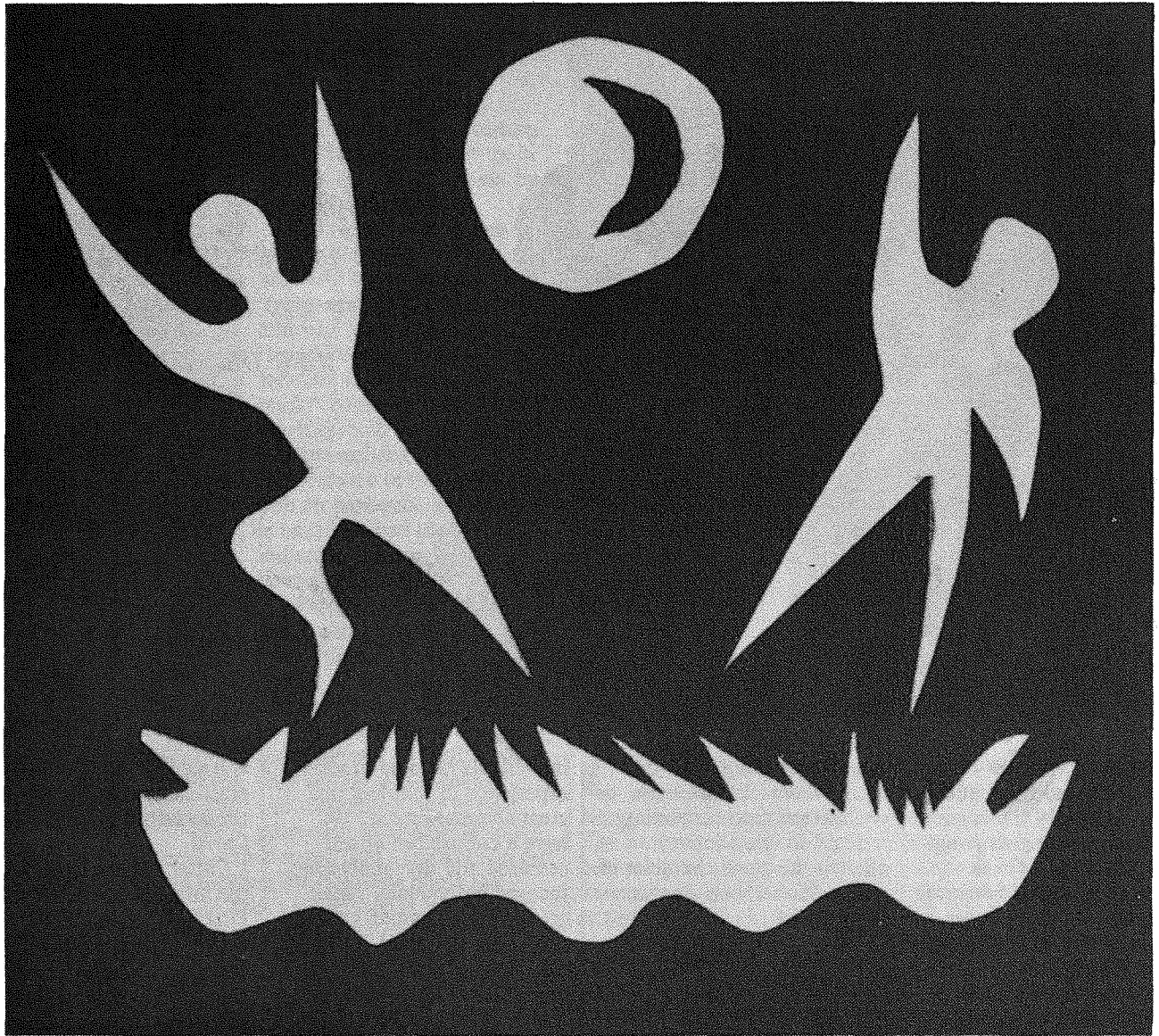
JESUS' ministry itself is a model of giving care to others. His work centered around individual people's lives. He listened, cared, and got involved. Those who got to know Him experienced the love of God incarnated in Him. If we ask, “How do we experience Christ's presence in our lives?” Jesus provides the answer: “Where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.” (Matthew 18:20) Like private prayer and the larger meeting for worship, the small group

is truly that sacramental place in which we encounter the transforming presence of Christ.

Christians are to carry on the ministry Jesus began. First, His transforming presence is encountered in the gathered meeting for worship. His love is released to the world, and His ministry is carried on when we listen to, care for, and get involved with others in small groups. ■

Karen (Hay) Roberts is a 1973 graduate of Malone College and a former member of Canton First Friends Church. An editor at South-Western Publishing Co., she resides in Cincinnati, Ohio, with her husband, Bruce, and their four children. She is a member of the Small Group Steering Team at College Hill Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati.

The Purest Praise



ART BY ALVIA BIKO

BY HANK HELSABACK

PRAISE THE LORD!" "PRAISE THE LORD!"
What a strong exhortation! The Psalms are full of this imperative. Many of them begin with these three words. We do well to heed this repeated call to praise.

But what does it mean to praise the Lord? And why do we praise the Lord?

When you hear those three words uttered today, what images come to your mind? A televangelist who has just announced the receipt of a gift of many thousands of dollars? An enthusiastic Christian brother who responds to each phrase of someone else's victorious testimony? A television talk show that bears that phrase in its name?

Do you perhaps have room for the image of a refugee who, because of his heroic popularity with the people, is forced to hide in the desert from his jealous king who is determined to kill

him? This image doesn't seem to mesh with the others, does it? But this is precisely the setting of Psalm 63. The heading of that psalm reads: "A psalm of David. When he was in the desert of Judah." Consider these words from the first eight verses:

"O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

"I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live and in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you. On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night. Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. I stay close to you; your right hand upholds me." (NIV)

How could such words of praise flow from a man who was in such a miserable situation—a man who was living in constant fear for his very life, a man who could not trust even his closest aide, a man whose physical environment took away any hope of healing rest?

Obviously, his praise was not prompted by the circumstances he was facing. This praise was a response to something far deeper than circumstances—even deeper than what God was doing in those circumstances. This praise went to the very depth of God's being. The psalmist was praising God for who He is.

This is praise at its finest. This is the kind of praise that the writer of Hebrews calls for when he writes, "Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name." (Hebrews 13:15) God is honored by this sacrifice of praise—praise that is unconditionally given.

When we reach this wonderfully simple and pure level of praise for who God is, we encounter a wonderful paradox. When we can praise God with no strings attached, with no demands of His blessings on us, then that is when God does just that—He blesses us with His presence.

David again declares in Psalm 22:3 that God "inhabits the praises" of His people, and this is a sacramental promise. God comes to live in those who lift their praises to Him unconditionally. And when He comes to live, He blesses!

I personally experienced the wonder of this reality about a decade ago. The situation was a horrible one for me—it was truly a "dark night of the soul." My family and I had just returned from a two-week trip involving family reunions, a wedding, seeing friends from a 20-year span of our lives, and worshiping with the family of God in several church fellowships. It had been a rich and emotional time, but also an exhausting one.

I shouldn't have been surprised to experience some consequences of such an intense time. But I was. I was startled when I found myself observing my interaction with another person as though I were disconnected from me. And that disconnection seemed to give the "acting" me permission to act with less inhibition

since the "thinking" me was clear across the room. That was scary!

Then I noticed that I was overreacting to almost every stimulus around me. The siren of an ambulance would start my heart pounding. Simple tasks like crossing the busy intersection would frighten me.

I began to fear that I was losing my mind. Growing anxiety made me want to avoid all contact with people, even members of my family. I was putting myself into a self-imposed solitary confinement. I was emotionally all alone except for this ugly companion called anxiety.

The darkest of the darkness came in the middle of the night several days after the onset of my strange illness.

I remember lying in bed at 2:00 a.m. in a cold sweat, fully convinced that I had lost all touch with sanity. I was trying to recite all Scriptures that had to do with God's promises of deliverance, but my poor brain was so busy going crazy that it couldn't concentrate long enough to recall a single verse. I began playing with another idea that there probably was no God. Was my conversion from atheism to Christianity simply an illusion? "All this religion stuff was a bunch of fabrications of other crazy people who are trying to cover over their insanity," rambled my

crazed thoughts. "There was no hope at all. No sanity; no God; no hope." I wished I could cry. But there was nothing but a cold and desperate panic. The best I could possibly muster was a quiet moan.

Somehow I made it through that awful night. When morning finally came, my wife called Lee, a friend who had been discipling me for several years, and asked him to come see me. When he arrived, he didn't ask me to tell the whole sordid story. He simply prayed. He prayed a psalm. He prayed a psalm of praise. Suddenly the tears began to flow down my face. I remember thinking, "My God lives! And He reigns! I may be crazy, but God still holds me. His love truly is better than my sanity."

What incredible joy filled my entire being! My anxiety didn't end abruptly that day, but an understanding of the facts of a nervous illness from emotional fatigue, the addition of some medicinal therapy, and simply resting in God's care all combined to bring about the needed healing.

Although I didn't know it then, I am convinced now that when Lee prayed that psalm of praise, God "inhabited" the praise and filled our living room with His presence. His presence healed me; and it filled me with joy (see Psalm 16:11). What a wonderful cycle was formed: His presence gave me joy; my joy erupted in praise; and my praise brought more of His presence.

Can you even begin to imagine what heaven will be like when this cycle will go on unbroken forever?

Someone has described heaven as all creation lifting praise to God. Couldn't we humans, the only creatures who have the choice to praise or not to praise, open a "window onto heaven" by lifting our hearts in praise? After all, the purest praise is simply affirming the truth about who God is, and this sacramental action is full of healing, transforming, and saving possibilities.

This month ushers in a season of thanksgiving, a time to thank God for the abundance of physical blessings—to thank Him for the abundance of caring relationships, and to thank Him for the abundance of His amazing grace through His Son, Jesus Christ. A simple way of contrasting "thanking" and "praising" is to say that we thank God for *what He does* and we praise God for *who He is*. May the people of God make this season not only a season of "thanks"-giving but also a season of "praise"-giving. It was good enough for the psalmist—and is good enough for us. **EF**

The purest praise is simply affirming the truth about who God is.

I may be crazy, but God still holds me.



Hank Helsabeck, a member of Newberg Friends Church, is a professor of mathematics at George Fox College. He also serves in a part-time staff position with the Navigators as an administrative assistant for the U.S. Navigator Prayer Ministry.



FRIENDS WRITE

You Helped!

The EVANGELICAL FRIEND for January/February 1992 was a very special issue for me. Cover to cover, it touched on some very important and sensitive issues. "Toward Healing" by Jan Wood, "Recovery Ministries in the Local Church" (how we may need them, locally) by Pat Fehlman, and "Spiritual Roller Coasters and Spiritual Liberation" by Phyllis H. Thanks for the artistic touch to "Spiritual Roller Coasters!" These articles in particular are applicable to my present need; I've made reference to them several times.

Thank you again for this issue; I realize many might feel that we don't need that stuff, but how I needed it. Thanks, too, for your consideration of these lines.

ELMA BLACK
Marengo, Ohio

A Word of Encouragement

Greetings in Jesus' lovely name. The purpose of this letter is to offer words of encouragement to Friends. These words, we believe, originated in the mind of God and are meant to be shared. They were not sought nor imagined but came while I was in prayer to God for victory in what felt like a spiritual battle.

On Tuesday, June 16, 1992, at about 2:00 p.m., after several hours of prayer, in which I was tempted to quit many times, but each time I stopped I felt the Lord say to me, "A man ought always to pray and not to faint."

I felt the life of Jesus rise up in me, I felt His authority as head of the church in me. He spoke out of that life and authority and said, "I am sending revival to the Friends church. This will not be called

pentecostal or charismatic but a Friends revival. This is a sovereign work. All will be included from the young to old. The elders will be especially used, even those that felt their usefulness in the church was over. There will be open weeping and laughter in the meetings. Children will skip for joy in your halls. Elders will be quickened by the Spirit to go to other Friends churches that they have known and prophesy revival to them also. No man will be able to stop this."

To the best of my recollection those are the words spoken within me. After this I was renewed in the spirit of my mind and the rest of the day I had only victory in my mind for Friends and a vision of continual multiplication in numbers and expansion of the Friends revival.

RONALD A. SIRKEL
Pasadena, Texas



FRIENDS READ

Seven Myths About Small Groups

Dan Williams, InterVarsity Press, 1991.

The book describes small group ministry from a different perspective by highlighting the myths that often surround such ministry. This makes it unique among the many books that have been written about small groups. Its purpose is well accomplished, making it a valuable addition to the field and deserving to be read by those who work in small group ministry.

—Philip E. Taylor

Knowing God's Will

M. Blaine Smith
InterVarsity, 1991, 239 pages.

This is the wisest book on guidance that I have met. Of course, I think so because it agrees with so much of my own experiences and thinking. But in spite of that count against it, I still think

it deserves a place in church libraries and in the hands of anyone interested in making good decisions.

Smith's basic insistence is upon responsible, careful thought in the process of decision making. But this thoughtfulness must be founded upon complete willingness to follow God's leading, sincere and continuing prayer, and searching of the Scriptures. Of course this is common to all talk about guidance, but Smith adds much to it.

He classifies decisions from those dealing with purely moral matters (like adultery) to those with no moral quality at all (like the color of tie or dress to buy). Between these are complex moral decisions, gray-area decisions (like the Corinthians' problem with eating meat offered to idols), and major life decisions (like career, marriage, positions). It is upon these last that he concentrates, with

less treatment of the other middle types. This classification of types of decision areas seems to me of great help.

But decision making is complex, he agrees and warns. Hence he uses most of the book to lay out the complexities and pitfalls and errors that beset one seeking guidance. Is guidance most often long-range or step by step? Should we be active in the process? Is guidance for a young Christian likely to be different from that for one experienced and mature in the faith? What about dreams and other "supernatural" possibilities? A "prophecy" given by someone else? Open and shut doors? One's desires, gifts, and abilities? The counsel of others? To all these Smith gives wise, seasoned attention. And there is more.

Unless you have quit making decisions, you could do much worse than getting and studying this book. —Lauren King

BY WILLARD FERGUSON

WORSHIP," according to Webster, "is the performance of devotional acts in honor of a deity; the act of paying divine honors to a Supreme Being; reverence, submissive respect; loving or admiring devotion."

John Mbiti in his book, *Concepts of God in Africa*, states, "People seek after God's help and attention through prayers, sacrifices, and offerings. They believe that He responds and helps them. This search after His attention is utilitarian, not purely spiritual; it is practical and not mystical. African people do not 'thirst after God' for His own sake alone. They seek to obtain what He gives, be that material or even spiritual; they do not seem to search for Him as the final reward or satisfaction of the human soul or spirit."

Although worship has traditionally been a part of the life of Central Africans (Rwandans), God is aloof in their thinking. They have not, in general, known Christ as a personal Savior who is involved in their daily lives. This is where preaching and living the Gospel by missionaries and African Christians of the Evangelical Friends Church, as well as others, have made a difference in the lives of many people in Burundi and Rwanda.

Worship in the true sense is an outgrowth of love to God for who He is and for what He does for the worshiper. It is an expression of gratitude for freedom Christ gives from bondage to alcohol, to witchcraft, to fear, and to other things that Satan uses to enslave people in Africa and elsewhere. As we consider the spontaneity and freedom our African brothers and sisters share in the Lord, may we also gain from their experience as to how to worship more meaningfully here at home.

Worship Within the Church

Prayer is thanksgiving and it is asking. In the Central African culture, asking for something is a form of showing respect to a person or to God as well as an endeavor to receive something of which one has need. This is due to the perception that the one asked for something is superior to the one making the request.

Because the word *worship* in English is not found in this form in the Central African language, Kinyarwanda, it is often difficult to differentiate between prayer and worship. There are the following words that are translated into English:

gusenga: meaning to pray that is also used in the sense of going to worship;

gusaba: to ask for something (to pray), asking for something;

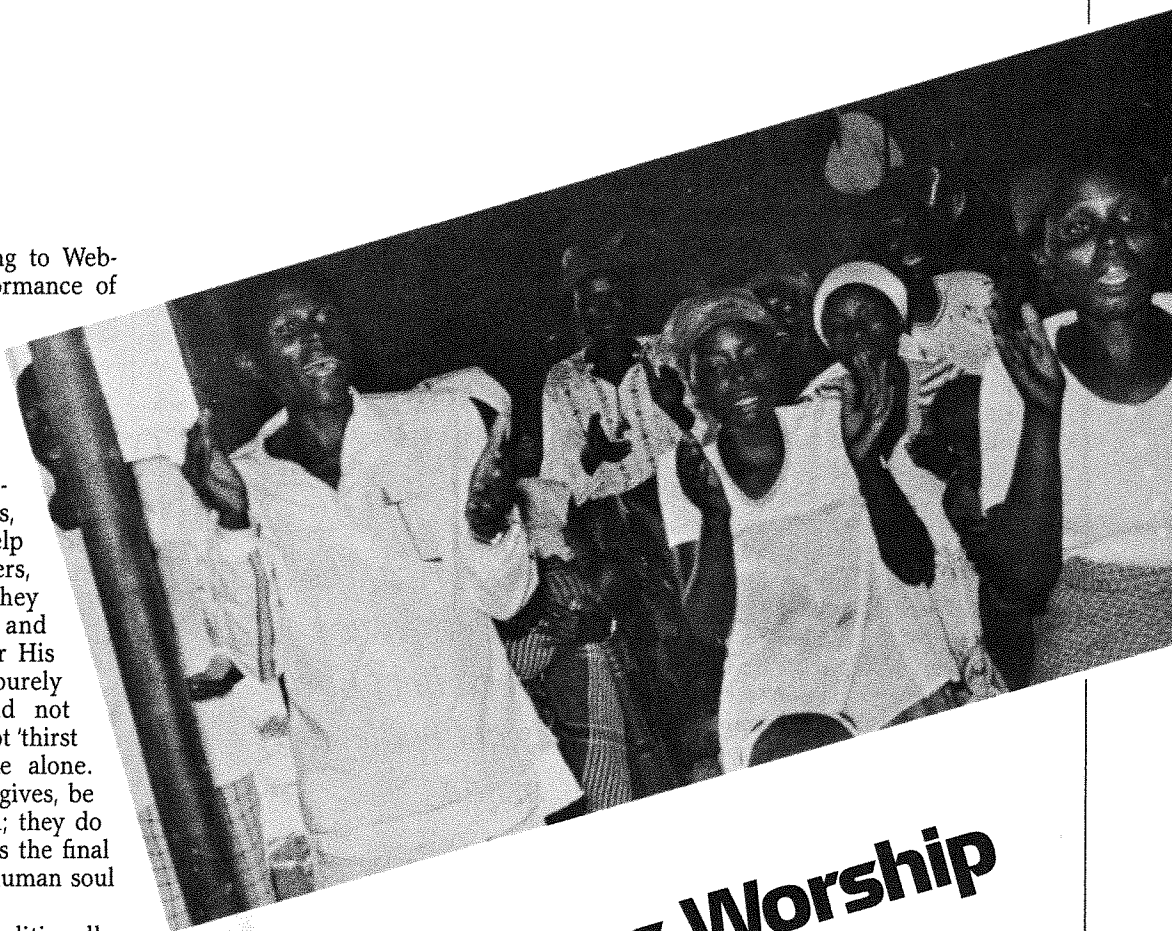
gusingiza: to praise or venerate a person or God;

gushima: to praise, or to thank;

guhimbaza: to praise.

Prayer, to those who are in love with Christ, becomes a manner of worship and praise, expressing love to Him as well as seeking favors from Him.

Singing has traditionally been used in Africa to venerate, show support for someone, or express love and adoration. Such songs are sung in honor of the president and the country. Africans also enter heartily into showing their love and praise to God by singing. They often like to show enthusiasm when they sing by clapping their hands. They love to sing to the beat of the drum, their main



Spontaneous Worship in Central Africa

instrument. It is used to lead the singing to increase their activity or enthusiasm, and other instruments can be used, like whistles, bells, horns, and guitars. Home-concocted percussion instruments are also used. An example of this is a car coil spring on which they tap a piece of metal. These instruments are especially used in special singing groups.

Worship services in Africa often last two hours or more, and therefore an ample amount of singing is enjoyed. They are, in general, event-oriented rather than time-oriented. Also because of this, many feel more free to go out for a bathroom break.

Africans have an oral tradition as opposed to the written tradition in America. For this reason, they are rich in their quantity of stories and proverbs as well as their ability to tell them. The attention of all present is absolutely captivated when these are told. Africans can portray truth very skillfully and forcefully in their stories and proverbs.

Africans can be very expressive people, and their joy and excitement for the Lord (or for other reasons) is often best expressed through dancing, a typical form of "bouncing with joy" as they sing to the Lord. This is not a regular practice in worship services in the Friends Church of Rwanda, but there are times when this expression flows out of much rejoicing in the Lord.

A time of open worship has been introduced in the services of the Friends Church in Rwanda. As God has been working in the lives of His people, this is often a time to hear numerous answers to prayer or miracles that Christ has worked in their lives:

"I was without work with no way to feed my family. I prayed and God answered prayer."

"I could not overcome my slavery to drink and tobacco, but God has given me the victory over it."

"My son threw a rock, hit, and broke the windshield of a car. I feared losing everything that I owned and possibly spending some time in jail, but God answered prayer."

This open worship time is quite often a time when a person sings a song to express his or her praise to God for something good that God has done.

Worship during times of revival becomes even more spontaneous, more exciting, and people are even more free to share what God is doing in their lives.

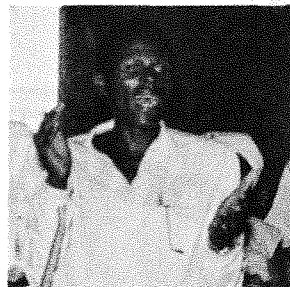
Since it is difficult for people to cut loose from all the chains that Satan uses to bind them, sometimes it requires a deep, moving work of revival for this to happen. During these times, people confess and find deliverance from slavery to

drink, to witch doctor charms and medicines, or other things that Satan has used to accomplish his work.

Some witch doctors themselves have been saved during times of revival. They have brought their charms and confessed openly how they used them to deceive people. Their idols, charms, or medicines are soon destroyed. Sometimes, they are first brought to the church to show them to all, and testimony is given of how Satan deceived them to use such to try to find favor, relief, and protection. These objects are then burned or otherwise destroyed.

During revival, people often seek opportunities to go out and tell others

In Africa, the spontaneous worship of Christ is not bottled up inside.



what God has done. In this way, if revival breaks out in one church, some of those revived enjoy going to other churches to tell people about their newfound riches in Christ.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is love, joy, peace.

Worship is an expression of our love and our praise to God. Much of this praise is rooted in what God does for His people. Since there are many physical needs, people often come during our services in the Evangelical Friends Church of Rwanda to pray and be prayed for concerning physical needs. As God answers prayer, people overflow with thanksgiving and rejoicing.

Worship Outside Organized Church Services

Spontaneous worship to Christ is observed in Rwanda in the greetings of many Chris-

tians who love the Lord. When brothers or sisters in Christ meet, at church, or on the path, they will often give each other a warm greeting (often in the form of a hug) *Yesu ashimwe* ("May Jesus be praised"). The second person answers back *Ashimwe cyane* ("May He be praised very much"), or *Nahimbazwe* ("May He be praised").

But worship is not confined to the church. Many Africans who have Christ in their hearts often spontaneously express their love for Him by singing a praise song as they go about their daily tasks.

These Africans with God's fire burning in their hearts love to make their home a place of worship (no matter how humble a place it might be). Family members enjoy gathering together in their homes to sing praises to God, to read the Bible, and to pray together.

They do not use their worship hymnals at church only. All the Christians who can afford it buy their own song books and carry them, along with their Bibles, to use both at home and at church. A songbook is a highly coveted book by churchgoers so that they can sing at home or go to a friend's house and join together singing praises to God.

Christians in Rwanda, who really love the Lord and are concerned for others, enjoy going to visit friends and relatives to sing God's praises and share with them His Word. Due to the fact that many people live in a small area, onlookers tend to join the group when some go to visit others. Since the houses are usually quite small, chairs or mats will often be placed in the front yard where people can be seated while they sing and share God's Word together.

Voices carry well as they sing in the open air, especially in the mountainous countryside during the clear evenings, and many people in the surrounding area also become aware of God's blessings.

In Africa, the spontaneous worship of Christ is not bottled up inside. It flows with refreshing abandon. Do we Americans get so isolated in our "drive-through," "garage-door-opener" world that we cannot let our worship to the Lord rub off on others in the world around us? When we consider the spontaneity of our African sisters and brothers, our hearts become set free—and so do our worship-related inhibitions. **EF**

Willard and Doris Ferguson, originally from Mid-America Yearly Meeting, have served as Friends missionaries for thirty years. From 1962-85 they served in Burundi and they currently live in Rwanda where they have served since 1986. They have four children.



Waiting for the BIG ONE

BY NANCY THOMAS

SOUTHERN California straddles uneasy ground. Earthquake fear hums like a high-tension wire, forming strange background music to all the daily routines of life in this busy metropolis known as greater Los Angeles. A common reaction of friends to the news that Hal and I were to move here was, "Oh! Aren't you afraid?"

We've been here three weeks now, and so far we've felt only one barely perceptible tremor. (Or rather Hal claims to have felt it. I didn't.) But, all the same, earthquakes hover in the forefront of people's thoughts.

We live in a student apartment near the campus of the seminary where Hal is doing graduate studies. The school's *Housing Services Handbook* devotes three pages to "Earthquake Preparedness"! Wading through the stolid, serious prose we discover that we should, as soon as possible, learn first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and regularly practice diving under the dining room table. We need to store sturdy shoes and a flashlight for EACH (handbook's emphasis) family member UNDERNEATH HIS/HER BED.

We also should store in accessible locations a two-week supply of water and canned food, as well as a formidable list of other survival necessities. The handbook neglects to suggest where in this tiny apartment I might find these

accessible locations. The bathtub comes to mind.

Our neighbor, two apartments down, tells us that we need to bolt our bookcases to the wall. On a visit to Hal's sister, two or so towns down the freeway, we observed that all her nicknacks and valuables were Velcroed to the shelves.

This is all new to us and seems somewhat exaggerated, although I imagine one good shaking will cure our nonchalance. A week ago a new friend confided a premonition, a fear of impending disaster that could come within the next 24 hours. We wondered, "Could this be prophetic?" Feeling somewhat foolish, having no direct word from the Lord, yet not wanting to ignore any warning, we took our valued pots, lamps, and pictures off the shelves and walls and set them on the floor before going to bed. The next morning, after a calm, uneventful night, we replaced them.

Maybe this is beginning to get to us after all.

And there is, indeed, danger. The San Andreas Fault exists, and Los Angeles County regularly experiences small (and sometimes larger) tremors. Someday, the Big One may come, but no one can predict when. That's what makes it scary.

Californians aren't really so strange in their earthquake preoccupation. Maybe

they exhibit, in an exaggerated form, a universal tendency to fear the disasters tomorrow may bring.

Tragedy wears many dark costumes—cancer, divorce, death of a loved one, mental or emotional breakdown, accidents, natural disasters of all stripes. It's likely that all of us will be touched directly or indirectly, by some form of disaster during the course of our lives. The larger our circle of love, the more likely tragedy will affect us. Being a Christian doesn't automatically shield us from suffering. When the Big One hits, everyone's house will shake.

So how, then, do we live, knowing that life's fabric has dark as well as light colors? "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we may be shaken to death"? Some people seem to take refuge in activity and noise, but with a restlessness that betrays underlying fear. Escape isn't the answer. Not for long.

Give in to the fear? Become preoccupied with emergency provisions, pack away all valuable vases, sleep under the kitchen table? That hardly seems like a satisfying lifestyle.

The Psalms speak of earthquakes, other disasters, and the fear that accompanies them. The poets saw earthquakes sometimes as "acts of God," tools of punishment in the hands of an angry Jehovah (Psalm 18:7). We don't like to consider that side of God's character. It's

hard to understand. After all, good as well as bad people get hurt in earthquakes. The psalmists also viewed earthquakes as expressions of God's glory and might, as the exuberant praising response of the earth to her Maker (Psalm 104:31-32). In either case, what comes through is the picture of an almighty God in control of His universe. Disasters of this type don't just happen without His knowledge. That gives me comfort, although there are still unanswered questions about suffering.

The other thing the Psalms make clear is that the only thing the righteous (that's us) are to fear is God himself. And that fear has to do with an appropriate response of awe and wonder as we begin to glimpse His greatness. We Quakers need to relearn the art of quaking in His presence.

The key to handling fear of future disaster is knowing the One who holds the earth in His hand.

God is our refuge and strength
an ever-present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the
earth give way,
and the mountains fall into the heart
of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam,
and the mountains quake with their
surging.

Be still, and know that I am God . . .
(Psalm 46:1-3, 10)

COMMON SENSE is certainly called for. I intend to prepare those bottles of water and put those sturdy shoes where I can get them. We'll probably even bolt our bookcases to the wall. But I'm not going to feed the fear. Rather I'll continue to cultivate my relationship with God, learning to be still in His presence. It helps to remember the name of this place, *Los Angeles*, and that "he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways." (Psalm 91:11)

I can't say I believe that if the Big One strikes, I won't suffer any injury or loss. Experience teaches that bad things sometimes happen to good people. But in spite of my incomplete understanding, I choose to affirm that God does protect His children, and that whatever happens to me He will cause to work together for good (Romans 8:28), my good, and that of the kingdom.

I must admit that saying, "I will trust and not be afraid," is easier than actually producing the desired emotions. I also admit that I'm writing this from a pre-earthquake position. Any post-earthquake insights will probably be more profound.

Let's hope I don't have to write them soon. ■

On Christmas . . .

(Continued from page 4)

and tithing tokens. In some cases, this reduced the standard of living significantly for the already poor, and it even made it impossible for the poorest folk to feel they had any access to God's grace. They were "sinners"—the kind of people who did not, and could not, attain ritual purity. But Jesus declared them to be acceptable in God's eyes, and He drove out of the Temple those who made a profitable trade of the religious system of purification.

But this was no mere rejection of one religious system to be replaced by another. No. Jesus came to reveal the absolute bankruptcy of all human effort and instrumentality, as far as receiving God's grace is concerned. This applied to first-century Jewish religion, and it applies to us today.

SO WHAT ABOUT the ordinances? If believing in God through Christ was enough, why did Jesus ordain the rites of water baptism and the eucharist? Or . . . did He *really*? When we look at baptism and communion in the New Testament, the following facts become clear.

Baptism

1. The central exhortation associated with baptism and the eucharist (when mentioned together by Jesus) was embracing the cross—not participating in a cultic rite. For instance, when Jesus asked James and John, "Are you able to drink the cup that I shall drink, or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" (Mark 10:38), He was not quizzing them on their willingness to get ritualistic. Obviously, He was referring to their willingness to suffer, and even to die for their Lord.

2. All the times that the baptisms of John and Jesus are mentioned together in the New Testament (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:26-33; Acts 1:5; 11:16) baptism with fire and the Holy Spirit is clearly prioritized over water baptism, which prefigures it. It always seems odd that those who insist on the literality of water baptism, fail to make the same interpretive move when it comes to baptism by *fire*, the baptism of Jesus, to which John's pointed. The "pneumatic" immersion always supersedes the "hydraulic" one in the Bible.

3. Apparently, in the fifties some of the followers of Apollos knew the baptism of John, but did not know the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Paul ran into some of these people at Ephesus (Acts 19:1-6), and when he explained that John's baptism of repentance was to help people believe in Jesus, they were then

baptized in Jesus' name by Paul. He then laid his hands on them, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Water was clearly insufficient. One must be born of water *and the Spirit* (John 3:5).

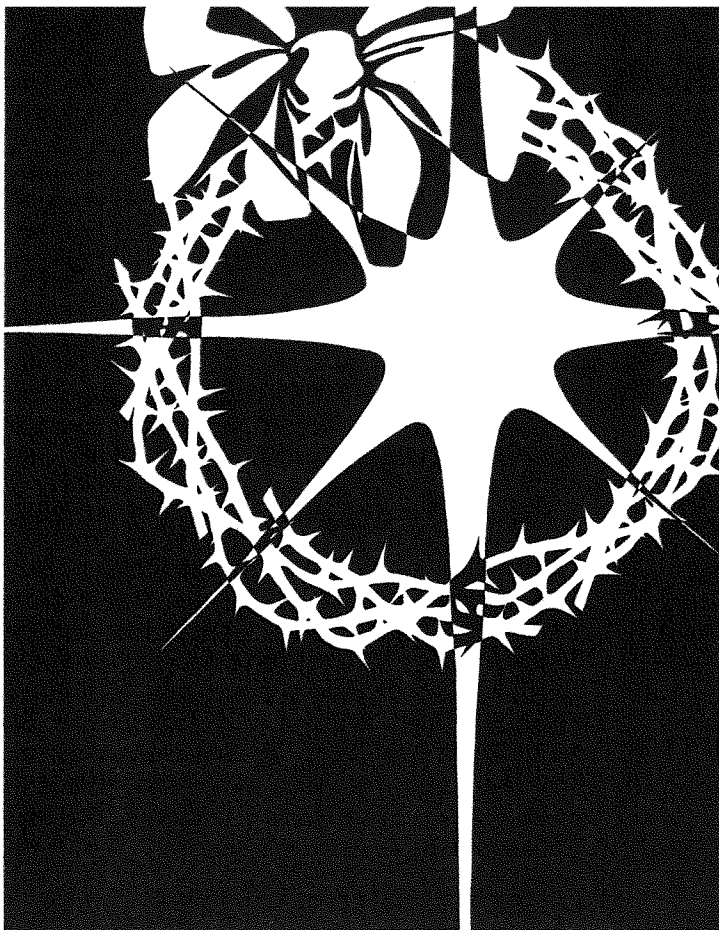
4. Perhaps because of this event, or simply because of the sometimes unclear relationship between spiritual realities and outward practices, jealous divisions arose also in the mid fifties between those who had been baptized by different Christian leaders. Some claimed, "I am of Paul," some claimed, "I am of Apollos," some claimed, "I am of Cephas," and some said, "I am of Christ." All of this partisan dissension makes Paul declare, "I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius!" (1 Corinthians 1:14) Obviously, Paul is not saying he was glad not to have evangelized more than he did. The problem was that Corinthian believers had begun to pride themselves in who had performed their outward baptisms, assuming that this made a difference in terms of their spiritual effect. This made Paul want to give up water baptism altogether.

5. Apparently, a generation or so later, some were even claiming that Jesus performed water baptisms, and John 4:2 sets the historical record straight: "Jesus Himself did not baptize, but only His disciples." While water baptism became the standard norm symbolizing the new Christian's rejection of the world and decision to follow Christ, it did not originate with Jesus' practice or teaching. It even created enough problems for Paul that he felt like leaving it behind. Spiritual immersion is always the New Testament priority.

Communion

1. Just as John emphasizes that Jesus himself never baptized, John completely omits any institution of the eucharist at the last supper (ch. 13). This is extremely odd if John's author was indeed an eyewitness who was there! Why would he not have picked up on something so important and so obvious? The only "ordinance" in John 13 is the command to love and serve one another, as Jesus exemplified by washing His disciples' feet. The more pressing question is not why did John leave the words of the institution out, but why did Mark (who is followed by Matthew and Luke) include them?

2. Mark clearly identifies the last supper with the Passover feast of Unleavened Bread (Mark 14:12-25) and connects the redemption offered through Jesus with the ultimate focus of something like the Jewish Seder meal. As they broke the bread of thanksgiving—recalling deliverance in the wilderness



A. WEIDENFELD '90

Jesus said something like, "The true deliverance symbolized by the breaking and eating of this Matzoh bread is *my body*—broken for you." Likewise, as they raised the cup of redemption—recalling the blood of the lambs, smeared on the door posts of Hebrew houses in Egypt, causing the spirit of death to "pass over" that household—Jesus said something like, "The true redemption symbolized by the Paschal lamb is really the *blood of my covenant*, which will be shed for you on the cross."

All of this suggests that Jesus was less trying to "ordain" a new ritual and that He was more seeking to *transform* existing customs by showing how they ultimately prefigure His sacrifice on the cross. The Passover points to the cross! This is the point of Mark's rendition of the last supper.

3. In 1 Corinthians 11 we see a clear move from a fellowship meal to a ritual meal in the Corinthian church. In chapter 10, Paul describes coming together for fellowship meals—perhaps like the kind that Jesus ate with sinners and tax gatherers, and certainly with His disciples at many times. What becomes clear, however, is that some participants had been abusing table fellowship (1 Corinthians 11:17-22). They were inconsiderate of one another—eating more than their share while others went hungry, getting drunk, etc. In response to this, Paul replaces the fellowship meal with a ritual meal, calling it "the Lord's

Supper" and citing the words of the institution (vv. 23-26). From then on (the midfifties in Corinth), if anyone is hungry, he should eat at home (v. 34). The Lord's Supper had evolved from a fellowship (potluck?) meal into a ritual one.

4. Between the writing of Mark and the writing of Luke (a decade or two later) we see a clear transition from the *contents* of the cup (Jesus' blood) to the *cup itself*. (Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20) "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood," reads Luke's rendition, which is very similar to Paul's. Whatever the reason for it, we clearly see an evolution from Mark's attaching Christological significance to the Jewish Passover meal to Luke's and Paul's rendering of the Lord's Supper as a Christian ceremony. Ceremonies can indeed be helpful ways of instilling group values, but this is still far from an ordained ritual by Jesus himself.

5. The instructions to eat Jesus' flesh and drink His blood in John 6:53-58 do *not* refer to the indispensability of the eucharist for salvation. This becomes clear in the light of verse 51. This "Bread" offered by the Son of Man is His flesh—given for the life of the world—and to ingest it is to be willing to go to the cross with one's Lord. After all, if one hopes to be raised with Christ on the last day, one must be willing to suffer and die with Him in the present.

The point of all this is to show that the same Jesus who came to reveal that

God's grace is not limited to those who keep Jewish purity laws did not ordain new, Christian ones to take their place. These rituals emerged within the middle to late first-century church, but not without struggle or controversy.

The more I learn about the New Testament, the more Quaker I become. The Friends testimony that true sacramentality hinges totally upon the inward authenticity of the believer's faith, not an outward means of ritual, is precisely what Jesus came to reveal. While rituals and ceremonies can be helpful for us, they never determine the receiving of God's grace. It probably wasn't until the second or third Christian generation that ritual means—as opposed to inward trust and corporate fellowship meals and meetings—were devised.

Jesus came not only to tell the world how to encounter God—He came to *be* that communication and the locus of encounter.

SO WHAT'S all this got to do with Christmas?! When God wanted to communicate His saving love to the world with finality, He didn't send us a ritual, a book, a song, or even a good sermon. He sent His only begotten Son, the Word-made-flesh. So Christmas celebrates the ultimate sacrament—the greatest ever outward conveyance of spiritual reality—the Incarnation!

Why? An incarnate form of sacramental revelation has more capacity to convey God's saving love and grace than do inanimate objects and rites. So if we think about how our spiritual lives might become most fully sacramental, three priorities remain. First, acknowledge Jesus Christ as God's saving/revealing self-communication to you personally, and do so often. There is no substitute for responding believingly to God's loving initiative. Second, create the sacramental space in your devotional life to daily feed on the Bread Jesus offers through prayer and Scripture reading. There is no substitute for being immersed in the Spirit. Third, regard the gathered meeting for worship—the people who love Christ, in whose midst He dwells—as the place to encounter the living presence of God radically. There is no substitute for communion with Christ in corporate fellowship.

When we see that God's sacramental work is finally incarnational, we begin to prioritize the concern to embody His healing/saving presence in the world. These are not just denominational distinctives. They are central insights into the meaning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and ones the world—and perhaps fellow Christians—deserve to consider. Merry Christmas! ■



EFI-NA Meeting in Colorado

The Coordinating Council of Evangelical Friends International—North America will be meeting January 14-18, 1993, at Black Forest Camp and Conference Center north of Colorado Springs. Commissions that will be meeting are responsible for the EFI cooperative programs in missions, Christian education, publications, and youth ministry.

EFI—North America encompasses the Friends churches of Alaska, Evangelical Friends Church—Eastern Region, Mid-America, Northwest, and Rocky Mountain yearly meetings.

FUM Names General Secretary

Johan Maurer was named general secretary of Friends United Meeting by the general board during its semiannual sessions October 9-13, 1992, in Richmond, Indiana. Johan is a recorded minister in Indiana Yearly Meeting and has served for the past nine years on the field staff of Friends World Committee, Section of the Americas. He will assume the position March 1, 1993.

Harold Smuck is currently serving as general secretary on an interim basis since the resignation of Stephen Main in April.

Harold Smuck, along with associate secretaries Mary Glenn Hadley and William Wagoner, provided guidance for an evening and morning spent defining the purpose of Friends United Meeting. Plans call for this process to be completed and program priori-

ties determined in meeting next March with the assistance of consultant Tom Sine of Mustard Seed Associates of Seattle, Washington.

Friendly Perspective on Personnel

The ways Quaker testimonies and beliefs can have a positive impact on dealing with personnel issues was the concern of the sixteen participants at the first Friends Personnel Conference. Presentations by John Punshon from Earlham School of Religion and Paul Lacy from Earlham College were well received. The meeting was held at Quaker Hill Conference Center, Richmond, Indiana, October 15-18, 1992.

Position Opening: PLANNED GIVING EXECUTIVE

Friends Fund, Inc., the Planned Giving organization of Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends Church, is seeking a new Executive Director due to retirement of present director.

To receive further details and/or to send resumé and application please contact:

Search Committee,
Friends Fund, Inc.
P.O. Box 190
Newberg, OR 97132
503/538-7880

Application Deadline:
January 15, 1993

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSOCIATE

Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas. Oversee financial matters: budgeting and budget control, work with accounting service; manage systems between Philadelphia, field, and London offices; with executive secretary, provide support for field staff; with administrative secretary, arrange committee meetings and conferences. Demonstrated management and computer skills, Spanish useful. Beginning salary in low 20's, good benefits. Starting date Dec. 15, 1992. Contact:

Asia Bennett, FWCC
1506 Race Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
215/241-7250



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—Dr. John P. Williams, Jr.,
General Superintendent
Evangelical Friends Church—
Eastern Region



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—Robin Johnston, President
Barclay College
Haviland, Kansas



"During the past 25 years, this magazine has helped link Friends from four yearly meetings through a clearer understanding and appreciation of each other."

—Richard Sartwell, Senior Pastor
Newberg, Oregon,
Friends Church

Evangelical Friend appreciates the support received from Friends across North America.

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E.F.C.-
EASTERN REGION

Friends Disaster Service— A Very Busy Year

Thousands of families were left devastated by the force of Hurricane Andrew in August of this year. Friends Disaster Service has sent one crew of nineteen, led by Wiley Shore of North Carolina Yearly Meeting to South Florida, followed by work crews setting up in October. The hurricane's devastation came on the heels of what had already been an active year for FDS. Rebuilding bridges destroyed by floods in Ohio, roof repairs in Louisiana, fire cleanup in Michigan, and tornado rebuilding in Kansas have stretched FDS funds and manpower. Financial help continues to be a concern for crew expenses and building materials for victims.

The annual FDS auction, which raises funds for maintenance and operating expenses for the service, was held on a sunny Saturday, September 12, in Akron, Ohio. Through the sale of craft items, pancake breakfasts, BBQ dinners, "flea market" donations, and 103 quilts, afghans, comforters, spreads, and quilted wall hangings, over \$29,000 was raised.

(Editor's note: We would like to emphasize the auction money is not used for building materials but for equipment maintenance and operational expenses only. Although the auction was successful, donations to purchase building materials are still greatly needed for Hurricane Andrew relief efforts.)

Tecumseh Celebrates 150 Years of Worship

A reunion-like spirit greeted over 300 present and former Tecumseh Friends members on September 13 as they gathered to celebrate the 150th anniversary of their worship together. "Remembering the Past, Rejoicing in the Present, Reaching to the Future" was the theme of this special day. After morning worship, dinner was served in a tent decorated with balloons. The library doubled as a "museum" for the day—posters, artifacts, old Quaker outfits, and even an old pump organ used for street meetings 70 years ago were on display. General Superintendent Dr. John Williams, Jr., spoke in the afternoon service of the forward focus of the church into the next century.

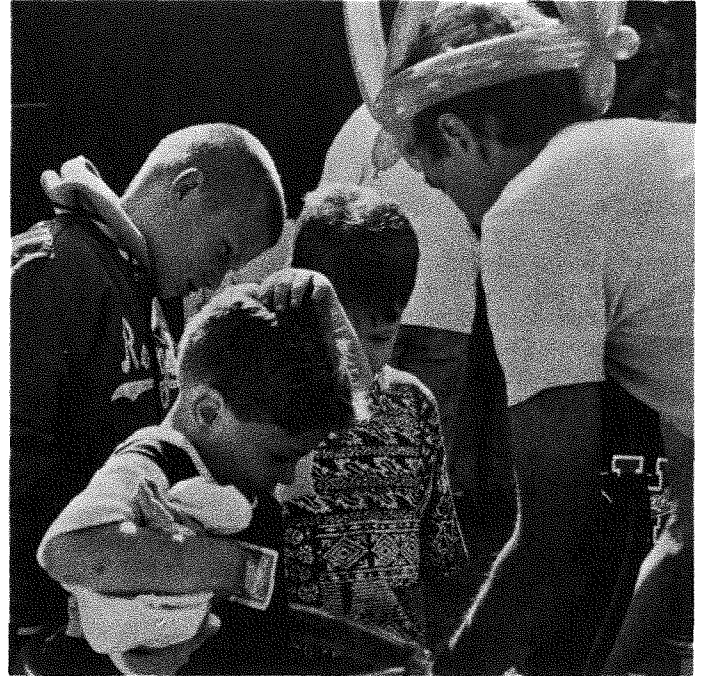
Hanover Celebrates Harvest

As an alternative to Halloween, Hanover Friends (Mechanicsville, Virginia) celebrates Harvest Fest on October 31. In its seventh year, the festival is open free of charge to the entire community, both children and adults. Games, hayrides, snack suppers, door prizes, and costume judging (non-scary costumes only!) keep 300-500 festival-goers busy during the three-hour event. Candy and face-painting add to everyone's enjoyment of this wholesome and fun night.

Construction News

Hammers pounded all over the Eastern Region as facilities continued expansion and repair. Willoughby Hills (Ohio) and Ypsilanti (Michigan) Friends churches made repairs to portions of their buildings destroyed by fires earlier this year.

Deerfield Friends (Ohio) has begun construction of a Ministry Center to better equip their



Balloon tricks for kids added to the fun and "funds" at the Friends Disaster Service auction this year.

ministries to the whole individual. Hanover Friends (Virginia) dedicated their new Christian Education wing in September, adding classrooms, choir room, and storage.

Mission Festival at Canton First Friends

As an added interest to Mission Emphasis month, Canton Friends sponsored their annual

Missions Festival October 14. Over 50 booths were spread throughout the church to showcase a variety of ministries—Friends Disaster Service, Crisis Pregnancy Center, Run for Humanity, EFM missions, Young Life, and many more. New this year was a semi trailer used by the Trucker's Ministry as an on-the-road chapel. This year Paul and

"Worship is at the heart of the Society of Friends."

—William P.H. Stephens, Jr.
Greensboro Monthly Meeting
(NCYM)

Announcing!

**Friends Worship
Today**

*Contemporary
Concepts and Practices*

Seth B. Hinshaw

*"I would like to see Seth's
new book prayerfully
studied by ministry and
counsel or Elder's group
in every pastoral meeting
in North America."*

—Jack Kirk
Quaker Life
April 1992

Co-published by North Carolina Yearly Meeting and
North Carolina Friends Historical Society

Available for \$6.50 plus shipping from the publishers
or the Quaker Hill Bookstore.

Leona Thornburg, Norma Freer, and Ron and Julie Zinn were able to share about their ministries abroad. Over 600 people were in attendance at this continually popular event. Local contemporary Christian music radio station WHLO-AM broadcast live from the church parking lot, giving these well-deserving ministries even more publicity.

Howard and Mary Evelyn Moore are returning to Taiwan as guest missionaries for six months while Russell and Esther Zinn are on home assignment. Howard recently retired from his position as area superintendent in the Eastern Region after a busy three years.



**MID-AMERICA
YEARLY MEETING**

Highlights from Yearly Meeting

Position papers on four topics of concern were developed by the Family and Social Ministries Board and approved by the representatives. These were on abortion, AIDS, homosexuality, and racism. Each of these were sent to all MAYM church offices so copies could be provided to the local media.

"Invasion 93," a new youth missions opportunity, was announced. Several mission trips will be scheduled for March 1993, under the direction of the Youth Ministries Division.

The banquet was attended by 470, including many from Youth Yearly Meeting. Bob

Mardock, assistant superintendent, spoke of the vision we must have for the cities, which are becoming more diversified. Royce Frazier, youth superintendent, was the master of ceremonies.

The evening was highlighted with a surprise tribute to Maurice Roberts, yearly meeting superintendent, who has completed his tenth year. His and Peggy's three children were surprise attenders, as well as other family and friends. A gift was given to Maurice as an expression of thanks.

Burundi Celebration

Dalene Hutson, MAYM FW president, and Mae Kellum, former missionary to Burundi, spent two weeks in Burundi where they were official visitors for the 25th anniversary celebration of Friends Women. A part of their time also included a visit with missionaries in Rwanda before returning home August 25.

Beaver-Shannon Closes

Sadness and celebration were integrated feelings as a full house attendance shared together in the concluding service for Beaver-Shannon Friends Church on June 21. Several weeks earlier the small rural congregation had made the difficult decision to lay down the church.

The church was organized in 1894 as Calvary Monthly Meeting. The building was moved to the town of Beaver, Kansas, in 1920 and renamed in 1954. The nearby Shannon congregation merged with Beaver's in 1970, thus giving it the present name. This church was always a "blue ribbon" church in its support for missions and yearly meeting programs. It served its community well for these 28 years. Several of the former pastors and members were present for the last service.

Ministers' Seminar at Friends University

Friends University's Religion and Philosophy Department hosted their annual seminar October 15. The speaker was Dr. Elizabeth Achtemeier, professor of Bible and homiletics at Union Theological Seminary. Her field of interest is to recover the sacred history of the Old Testament and to reclaim the truth that has gone on before.

MAYM Leadership Conference

Chuck Mylander was the featured speaker at a special conference for pastors and lay leaders held October 5-7 in Oklahoma City. This was a time of intensified training and prayer.



**ROCKY MT.
YEARLY MEETING**

FDFC Conducts Financial Seminar

DENVER, COLORADO—First Denver Friends Church held a financial seminar September 25 through 27 led by Chad Gates of Barclay College. The sessions used the video series, "Your Finances in Changing Times," which features teaching by Larry Burkett. In addition to the videos, individuals and families were able to have counseling and help on the writing of wills.

In another development, FDFC has launched a once-a-month Friday evening worship service named Friday at

Friends. The service is to offer a worship opportunity for people in recovery from various personal difficulties that could include substance abuse or emotional dysfunction. The service consists of worship songs, testimonies, special music, a skit, and prayer time. Pastor Chuck Orwiler reported that plans call for the services to be conducted on the first Friday of each month.

First Denver Friends also reported that Alan and Sheryl Mullikin have joined the staff as music ministers/secretary. They have moved to the Metro Denver area from League City, Texas. The couple has three sons—Trent, Bryce, and Tyler.

Omaha Launches Outreach Program

OMAHA, NEBRASKA—Evangelical Friends Church (EFC) has begun a new outreach program to the community with a brochure about the church. Church members have gone door-to-door to homes handing out the brochure and inviting individuals and families to come to services and other programs.

Additionally, the meeting has started a new youth ministry and home cells (small group Bible studies).

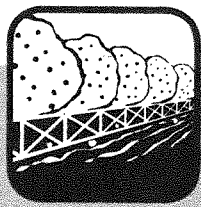
George Fox's Works

George Fox's eight volume *Works* (1831 edition) are back in print—at a great price. New introductions by Douglas Gwyn and others.

Library bound, acid-free paper. Priced at \$167.50 for 8 volumes. Sets may be ordered with \$40 deposit with balance due on safe arrival. This set would be a wonderful, lasting gift for your favorite Meeting library. Prospectus available.

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Volunteer efforts really add up.



**NORTHWEST
YEARLY MEETING**

Foster Speaks at Barclay Press Dinner

Richard J. Foster, author and founder of Renovaré, an effort working for the renewal of the church, spoke to more than 125 friends of Barclay Press September 26 at George Fox College. The dinner highlighted Barclay Press's book publishing and encouraged support for the Publishing Fund, a revolving capital fund for book publi-



Richard Foster autographs his new book following the Barclay Press Partners in Publishing dinner in Newberg, Oregon.

cation. Foster, whose newest book, *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*, was released by HarperCollins in September, urged Barclay Press to maintain its Quaker distinctives while at the same time communicating effectively with the broader Christian family and society at large. He encouraged the Press to be publishers of truth and not peddlers of gossip, and to seek

after the crisp, the clear, and the imaginative.

Barclay Press, one of the few remaining denominational publishing houses, is part of a significant literary heritage, Foster said. "Because Barclay Press is a Christian and a Quaker press, it has a specific mission and character. And its mission and charter is significant because ideas rule the world . . . and the printed word is still the best carrier of ideas."

"Barclay Press must execute its mission and charter in light of the cultural realities we face today," Foster concluded.

V.O.W. Reports Busy Year

Volunteers on Wheels, Northwest Yearly Meeting's traveling volunteer contingent, spent 1,886 hours providing assistance with six projects in the Yearly Meeting this past year.

Projects at Greenleaf Friends Academy, West Chehalis

Friends, Hillsboro Friends, Friendsview Manor, George Fox College, Newberg Friends, and the new Northwest Yearly Meeting offices saved an estimated \$21,511 in labor costs. Volunteers painted, built cabinets, constructed sidewalks and wheelchair ramps, built a 4,000-gallon underground water storage tank, cleaned, repaired water lines, built a tool shed, and dismantled a stage.

To join V.O.W. or to request assistance with a project, contact Phil Fendall, executive director, (503/659-3507).

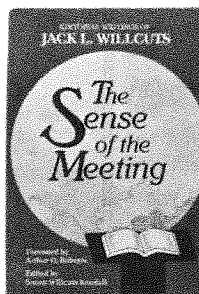
NWYM Office Relocates

The historic Gainer home on the corner of Hancock and Meridian Streets in Newberg now houses the offices of Northwest Yearly Meeting. The air-conditioned, remodeled home provides office and conference space near George Fox College and downtown Newberg. Yearly meeting staff moved in the first week of August.

Newberg Friends Church is purchasing the property at 600 East Third Street. The new address is 200 North Meridian Street, Newberg, OR 97132-2714.

NEW RELEASE

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selected editorial writings of Jack L. Willcuts

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NWYM staff on the steps of the headquarters building (left to right): Gerald Wilson, Missions Coordinator; Retha McCutchen, Associate Superintendent; Joe Gerick, General Superintendent; Terri Bowen, Administrative Secretary; Bruce Bishop, Youth Superintendent; Goldie Cline, Bookkeeper.

Mexico City considers forming yearly meeting

OUR FRIENDS MISSIONARY OUTREACH

Mexico

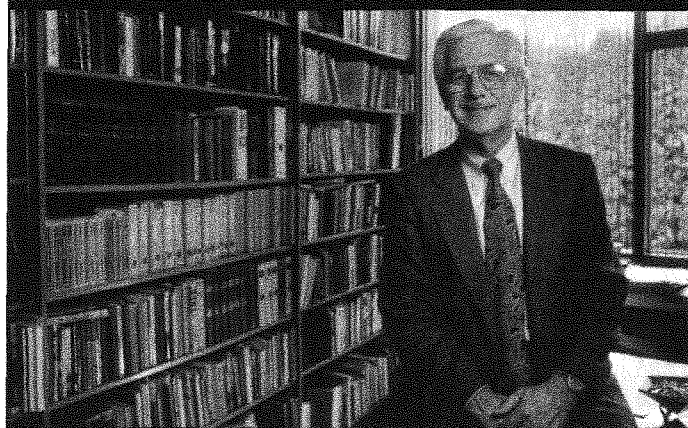
September 7 to 14 a prayer/work team composed of Norval Hadley, Duane Comfort, Paul and Peggy Baker, and Stan and Shirlene Perisho visited Mexico City to strengthen the EFM mission staff and seek direction for the work.

Representatives of all groups of Evangelical Friends met October 19 through 23 in Mexico City, hosted by EFM mission staff, to consider forming a yearly meeting together. Quentin Nurdyke of Salem, Oregon, represented EFM at the meeting.

Pray for a capable leader for the new Friends group in the Satellite area.

Brenda Chavarria came to the States in October for surgery.

RELEVANT



"For years I have been impressed with the unique blend of solid scholarship and warm-hearted spirituality characterizing the WES teaching/learning experience. Students not only learn theology and theory, but through class interaction, practicums, and internships, they apply these ageless truths to everyday problems and life situations. Thus, WES provides a model for strong, effective and dynamic ministry in today's quickly changing world."

Robert A. Crandall, Ph.D.
Professor of Pastoral Theology
Chair, Division of Pastoral Studies



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Rwanda

Four new church buildings dedicated this fall are as follows: Ruhengeri, October 25; Kanombe, November 1; Remera, November 8; and Bugesera, November 15.

University Friends Church in Wichita, Kansas, sent two representatives, Susan Johnson, Missions Committee chairperson; and Shelli Kadel, Christian education director; to the Ruhengeri church dedication.

Connie Young came to the States in late September for the birth of their first grandchild to their daughter, Susan, and husband, Mike Neifert, pastors of Lynn, Indiana, Friends Church.

Roger and Lois Wood of Edison, Ohio, have been appointed as short-term missionaries to Rwanda; they plan to leave this fall.

Curt Blasiman has resigned from the mission staff in Rwanda and will be teaching part-time at Malone College. EFM deeply appreciates his dedicated service for a year and a half at Kidaho Secondary School.

Rough Rock

Mark Roberts returned to the field early in September and Wilma joined him early in October, to finish their term that concludes in November.

Pray for Navajo leadership at Rough Rock.

Philippines

Pray for Friends at Novaliches in Manila who are being disturbed by a splinter group of another denomination.

A member of the Buyagan Friends group has been elected provincial governor over 13 municipal mayors; pray that he can exercise positive influence.

India

In September after prolonged pain, it appeared that Peggy

Hunerwadel might need ovarian surgery in the States. Praise God that her problem was cared for instead with laproscopic examination and repair in Delhi.

Other

Norval Hadley, EFM executive director, made his first visit of Friends mission work in the Philippines, India, Hong Kong, and Taiwan from October 16 through November 6.

Duane Comfort represented EFM at the annual STEER convention in Bismarck, North Dakota, October 1 through 3.

EFM sponsored a special prayer day among all regions of Evangelical Friends International on October 4.

Paul and Leona Thornburg had to cancel a few weeks of deputation this fall due to Leona's health; after her recovery they will resume their schedule.

OUR RECORD OF FRIENDS

Births

ALTIZER—Lacey Nicole, to Dwayne and Carolyn, Portsmouth, Virginia, 3/25/92

ARMENTROUT—Zachary Matthew, to Jeff and Karen, West Liberty, Ohio, 3/25/92

BERGER—Caleb Timothy, to Tim and Monnie, Deerfield, Ohio, 7/1/92

BIRKBECK—John Laurence, to Mike and Suzanne, Canton, Ohio, 6/9/92

BOYLE—Megan Renea, to Mike and Jackie, Sebring, Ohio, 6/23/92

BRAUM—Adele Jeri, to Joe and Paula, Friendswood, Texas, 6/25/92

BRIGHT—Taylor Aileen, to Byron and Mary Ann, Canton, Ohio, 8/6/92

BROWN—Amanda Mae, to Pat and Kathy, Ravenna, Ohio, 7/30/92

Changes and passages

CABASSA—Carissa Anne (23 months), by adoption to Russ and Ellen, Alliance, Ohio

CASAWELL—Tanner Scott, to Scott and Colleen, Booker, Texas, 7/22/92

CHESTNUT—Joseph Lee, to John and Kim, Hanoverton, Ohio, 9/9/92

CORBIT—Richard Daniel, to Rick and Becky, Canton, Ohio, 6/20/92

CRAM—Paige Elizabeth, to Robert and Nanci, Helena, Montana, 8/4/92

DEVOL—Heath Michael, to Terry and Kim, Canton, Ohio, 7/7/92

DOTY—Catlin Eileen, to Bill and Becky, St. Clairsville, Ohio, 5/28/92

EAGLOWSKI—Tyler Andrew, to Andy and Terri, Canton, Ohio, 8/9/92

FISCHER—Laura Laynette, to Paul and Ruth, Wichita, Kansas, 8/22/92

HALLIBURTON—Megan Michelle, to Curtis and Sharon, Booker, Texas, 7/18/92

HARPER—Sarah Ellen, to Jackie and Becky, Martinsville, Virginia, 6/6/92

KOEHN—Seth Lincoln, by adoption to Mark and Lynette, Hutchinson, Kansas, 8/22/92

LAPS—Clayton Matthew, to Tim and Cindy, Canton, Ohio, 7/22/92

LOVE—Joel Allen, to Bill and Rose, Canton, Ohio, 5/21/92

MCCARTY—Janae Alyse, to Paul and Patrice, Haviland, Kansas, 7/27/92

MICHELS—Joshua David, to Gary and Sharon (Lauffenburger), 8/13/92

MILLER—Travis Joch, to Scott and Karen, Booker, Texas, 7/10/92

MOORE—Jacklyn Christen Nicole, to David and Susan, Salem, Ohio, 8/5/92

MURPHY—Mark Robert, to Mark and Pam, Canton, Ohio, 6/18/92

MURRAY—David Tyler, to David and Tonya, Silver Springs, Maryland, 5/17/92

NEEDHAM—Kyle Edward, to Rick and Rhonda, Wichita, Kansas, 7/23/92

PARK—Christine Elizabeth, to Dan and Laurie, West Liberty, Ohio, 4/13/92

PRIGMORE—Heather LeaAnne, to Jay and Gayle, Friendswood, Texas, 6/29/92

REICH—Aaron Emmanuel, to Mark and Debbie, Mechanicsville, Virginia, 3/16/92

ROBERTS—Kendra Leigh, to Jay and Jolene, Denver, Colorado, 8/9/92

ROGERS—Conner Lewis, to Bill and Maureen, Newberg, Oregon, 7/8/92

SCARPELLA—Olivia Jane, to Jay and Pam (Robinson), 9/14/92

SCHOONOVER—Allyse Anne, to Ken and Amy, Haviland, Kansas, 8/12/92

SEAGLE—Brooke Anne, to Tracy and Kim, Columbus, Ohio, 5/7/92

SPARKS—Ian Hunter, to Jeff and Leslie, Olmsted Township, Ohio, 3/23/92

STARKEY—Cody Douglas, to Jeff and April, Dillonville, Ohio, 6/23/92

STEER—Chelsea Mae, to John and Peggy, Damascus, Ohio, 7/31/92

THOMAS—Anna Ruth, to Clyde and Carol, Newberg, Oregon, 7/28/92

UREY—Dustin James, to Bob and Shelly, Akron, Ohio, 7/12/92

WARRICK—Pamela Leslie, to Phil and Penny, Canton, Ohio, 8/28/92

WATSON—Alexander William, to Steve and Kathy, Newberg, Oregon, 7/24/92

Marriages

Sherry AYLIES and Matt WILMER, Canton, Ohio, 6/27/92

Michelle BECHTEL and Mark DEARING, Canton, Ohio, 9/19/92

Janet Lee BELAND and Randall Wayne ZIGLAR, Norfolk, Virginia, 6/12/92

Mindy BERGER and Robert STEER, Damascus, Ohio, 8/1/92

CARNER and HOLENCHICK, Damascus, Ohio, 8/15/92

Tracy CARR and Kevin NORDYKE, Newberg, Oregon, 8/16/92

Lori CUNNINGHAM and Barry SAPP, Deerfield, Ohio, 8/8/92

Debbie DRUEDESOW and Mark MOBLEY, Canton, Ohio, 7/18/92

Lori EVANS and Brian DONALDSON, Twin Falls, Idaho, 8/1/92

Donna EVERARD and John SWANSON, Portland, Oregon, 8/23/92

Rebecca GOSLIN and Kevin ORTEGA, Newberg, Oregon, 7/11/92

Misty GRIBBLE and Jo HOAVER, Lawton, Oklahoma, 6/1/92

Debra HOLDING and Gary WOODWARD, Sherwood, Oregon, 8/22/92

Paula Jo HUGHES and Michael Brian THOMAS, Columbus, Ohio, 6/27/92

Becky JACKSON and Ken GREEN, Canton, Ohio, 8/1/92

Brenda KINSER and Kelven MAYS, Portland, Oregon, 7/18/92

Charla KIRK and Nick SHAFFER, Lawrence, Kansas, 8/9/92

Jenni LOOMAN and John MARKLAND, Canton, Ohio, 9/12/92

Kim MCDUGAL and Dennis WRIGHT, Canton, Ohio, 9/22/92

Theresa MCFELEY and Christopher BALLOG, Neffs, 6/20/92

Terri NOGGLE and Clark ZARTMAN, Van Wert, Ohio, 6/27/92

Mary ONEY and Larry POWELL, Canton, Ohio, 9/19/92

Debbie POCHUBAY and John COLE, Canton, Ohio, 8/8/92

Terri RABE and Bryon DUNLAP, Booker, Texas, 8/15/92

Shannon WARD and Stephen WENGER, West Liberty, Ohio, 2/22/92

Diane WELCH and Jeff BUTTERMORE, Damascus, Ohio, 4/4/92

Jennifer WHITE and John SATTERFIELD, Vancouver, Washington, 9/5/92

Susan WIELAND and David BROADWELL, Canton, Ohio, 5/16/92

Colleen WILLIS and Jeff HARFORD, Bellefontaine, Ohio, 2/1/92

Deaths

BARKER—Lois Edith, Lorain, Ohio, 8/5/92

BEAVER—Robert, 77, Sebring, Ohio, 3/7/92

BENTZ—Ralph, 87, Canton, Ohio, 6/2/92

BRIGHT—Rose Marie, 67, Westlake, Ohio, 4/16/92

BROWN—Joyce Phillips, Eagle Springs, North Carolina, 7/18/92

BUTTS—Glenn, 79, Miami, Oklahoma, 8/14/92

CHAMBERLAIN—William Jr., 80, Alliance, Ohio, 7/6/92

COOPER—Douglas William, 71, Martinsville, Virginia, 6/20/92

CROUCH—Mamie, 95, Sebring, Ohio, 6/29/92

FERRIS—James Arthur, Cadiz, Ohio, 5/29/92

FOUST—Mildred Foster, 80, Van Wert, Ohio, 6/27/92

GOBLE—Raymond, Wichita, Kansas, 9/11/92

HILL—Helen, 97, Wichita, Kansas, 8/6/92

HOLCOMB—Bessie, 80, Martinsville, Virginia, 6/2/92

JOHNSON—Harold, 78, Alliance, Ohio, 8/26/92

KARLEN—Walter J., Alliance, Ohio, 2/92

MILLER—Willis, 85, Alliance, Ohio, 4/1/92

NEISWANGER—Jemmie R., Ravenna, Ohio, 4/15/92

PERRIS—James Arthur, Springdale Friends, 5/29/92

PETERSON—Craig, Hutchinson, Kansas, 8/18/92

PETERSON—Roy J., 80, Urbana, Ohio, 7/30/92

PAYTON—Fred, Houston, Texas, 7/29/92

PIM—Loren, Salem, Ohio, 6/7/92

SHOUP—Ethel Lorene, Salem, Oregon, 7/3/92

SHREVE—Omar, 56, Damascus, Ohio, 7/18/92

SNYDER—Elizabeth, 77, Barberton, Ohio, 9/2/92

VAUGHN—Nao (Pat), 74, Spokane, Washington, 8/17/92

WILLCUTS—Clare, Nampa, Idaho, 8/26/92

WOLFORD—Gladys, 86, Dundee, Oregon, 7/29/92

CORRECTION—It was previously reported that Ralph Whiteman, Atlanta, Kansas, died 3/26/92. It was Raymond, Ralph's father, who died.

THE WIDER WORLD OF FRIENDS

New General Secretary Appointed at Friends General Conference

Writer and speaker Bruce Birchard began working as the new general secretary of Friends General Conference in October. He replaces Marty Walton, who served in the position for seven years. Birchard has worked for Friends organizations since 1974, including the American Friends Service Committee and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. He holds degrees in anthropology from Wesleyan University and the University of Chicago. His articles have appeared in *Friends Journal* and *WIN Magazine*.

Homeless youths tutored by William Penn students



Bruce Birchard

and he authored and coedited the book *The Sun Never Sets* (1991).

Birchard brings to his new job experience in television, radio, workshops, and fundraising, along with an interest in working with young people.

Department of Education Honors William Penn College

The U.S. Department of Education recognized William Penn College for contributing faculty and student time in tutoring the homeless youths of Des Moines [Iowa] and Mahaska county. Students tutored on a twice-a-week basis last year, and this year can earn credit for participating as tutors. Other educational institutions are asking William Penn College personnel for information about the tutoring program.

Friends United Meeting Holds U.N. Seminar for Youth

Friends United Meeting is once again sponsoring a United Nations Seminar for high school sophomores through college sophomores. The seminar will take place November 21-25 in New York City, with

the theme "The Role of the U.N. in a Post-Cold-War World." Participants will study different world perspectives of the U.N., visit embassies, and stop by the Quaker U.N. office.

Women in Public Ministry Gather

Fifty-two women from 19 yearly meetings across the U.S. and Kenya met in Des Moines, Iowa, for the seventh conference of Friends Women in Public Ministry.

The July 17-19 conference theme was "From Seeds to Fruit." Speakers and workshop leaders held to the common thread of learning to recognize a call to ministry and then putting that call into action.

OUR FRIENDS COLLEGES

Focus on Celebration

The 1992 school year marks the 100th anniversary of Christian education in Haviland, Kansas. From a concern for the education of their children, Quakers started a Friends Academy one century ago. The school changed when the needs of the Friends movement and society called for different programs and skills. Through the years the Friends Academy has developed into Barclay College where men and women are preparing for Christian service in the church and in the world. The college remains one of the few training grounds for the preparation of pastors and missionaries for the Quaker denomination. Its graduates continue to fulfill the scriptural

admonition to be "the salt of the earth." Barclay provides programs in pastoral ministry, youth ministry, missions, education, and business.

A formal celebration of the 100 years of Christian education at Barclay College occurred on October 2 in Haviland.

Hundreds of alumni and friends of the college gathered to commemorate what God has done in and through the school. The program, with Master of Ceremonies Ralph Fry, featured alumni choirs under the direction of former directors Roy Clark and Bob Ham. The Fry family and Marilyn Ham, published and recorded artists, performed in the program as well as other alumni groups.

The school held an auction October 3 with an estimated 1,500 in attendance and record-breaking proceeds of \$113,000, exceeding President Robin Johnston's hopes for a "\$100,000 auction on our one-hundredth birthday." Funds raised from last year's auction totaled \$76,000. This year quilts sold for an average of \$1,000 each, bringing in a total of \$42,000. A grandfather clock went for nearly \$5,000.

The thirty-seventh annual Christmas Wreath is now underway. This is an annual

Legislative Interns

Three positions available assisting FCNL's lobbyists. These are eleven-month paid assignments, usually filled by recent college graduates, beginning September 1, 1993.

Duties include research, writing, monitoring issues, attending hearings and coalitions meetings, and maintaining files. Applications close March 15, 1993.

Friends Committee on National Legislation
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Washington, DC 20002
Phone 202/547-6000.

celebration commemorating the birth of the Christ child through greeting cards and donations to the college. All who believe in the mission of the college, "where ministry begins," are encouraged to participate in this opportunity to support the work of the college.

Old Sport Becomes New Sport

CANTON, OHIO—Talk of football abounds at Malone as preparations are made for their first football season, fall of '93. Joseph Palmisano, a native of



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Akron, Ohio, has been chosen as Malone's first football coach. A graduate of Iowa State, Palmisano has helped start two other successful collegiate football programs (Cumberland College, Williamsburg, Kentucky, and Wingate College, Wingate, North Carolina). Presently, Palmisano and assistant coach Mike Gravier (formerly from Michigan Tech) are recruiting from high school teams, transfers from other schools, and present Malone students. The program will be adding another coach in November as well as graduate assistants.

Graduation in August

In August, Malone held its first summer commencement in its 100-year history. Over 100 students received their graduate or undergraduate degrees. Subsequently, enrollment for this fall reached an all-time high of 1,805 students, including 487 incoming freshmen. The largest increases among traditional students are in elementary education, business administration, and baccalaureate nursing programs.

One of Nation's Best—GFC Rates Seventh in Survey

"One of 'America's Best Colleges'" is the ranking again going to Newberg's George Fox College.

The September 21 issue of *U.S. News & World Report*

magazine rates George Fox third in academic reputation and seventh overall among liberal arts colleges in the West. The much-publicized cover-story rankings combine statistical data with the results of an exclusive *U.S. News* survey of academic reputations among 2,527 responding college presidents, deans, and admissions directors.

GFC Peace Center Receives Major Gifts

Two gifts totaling nearly \$160,000 have been donated to George Fox College for use in peace studies. The Hazel Steinfeldt Scholarship Trust awarded George Fox College \$154,596 through the American Friends Service Committee, and in memory of her parents, Gail Jackson donated \$5,000 to GFC's Center for Peace Learning.

At the request of the late Hazel Steinfeldt of Dade County, Florida, the AFSC chose three colleges to receive approximately \$150,000 each for use in educational scholarships. The annual income from the gift will allow GFC to endow several substantial scholarships of over \$1,000.

"The reason we got it is because we're unique," says Ron Mock, director of the college's Center for Peace Learning. "We're one of the most active peace-study programs in the nation because of our extracurricular activities and study trips."

Scholarship stipulations say recipients should be students "whose commitment to work for peace and justice in the world are reflected in their career plans and goals."

Gail Jackson's father, Elmore Jackson, was one of GFC's most prominent alumni. A 1931 graduate of George Fox (then Pacific College), he was involved in international peace-

making and was the author of *Middle East Mission* and *Meeting of Minds*. He and his wife, the former Elisabeth Averill, also worked for world peace through the Quaker House in New York City.

The Center for Peace Learning was created in 1984 as a natural outgrowth of the concern and activity for peace of many members of the college community.

Ukrainian Students Visit United States as Guests of George Fox College

Eight students and four professors from Kiev State Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages in Ukraine visited the United States for a month as guests of George Fox College.

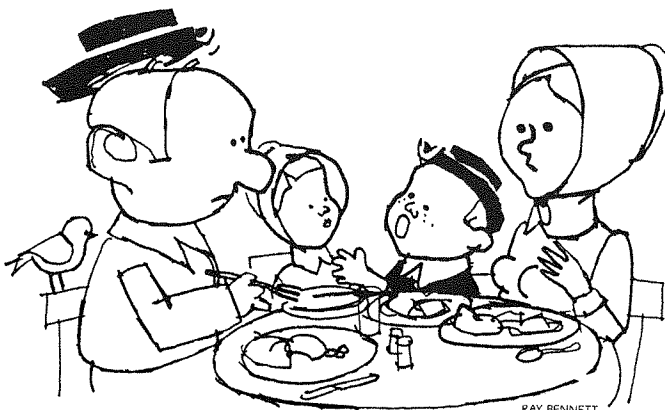
Their visit was part of a newly implemented exchange program between the two institutions, operated under the auspices of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. In that program, the visiting groups are responsible for transportation, while the host institution pro-

vides housing, meals, and programming. Next May, a like number of George Fox students and faculty will travel to Ukraine for a month-long stay.

Laurel Lee, GFC's writer-in-residence and assistant professor of writing, was instrumental in developing the exchange program.

Lee taught English at Kiev State during the summers of 1991 and 1992. She and Ron Mock, assistant professor of political science, also led a Juniors Abroad trip to Eastern Europe last spring that included a short cross-cultural program in Kiev.

The Ukrainians arrived on campus September 9. The students, all of whom are studying English, participated in regular George Fox College classes, ate in the cafeteria, stayed with host families, and took part in sight-seeing and educational field trips. In the afternoon, they attended a course developed especially for them entitled "The American Experience: A Seminar in American Life."



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When God Says

"NOW"

BY JOHN P. WILLIAMS, JR.

SOMETIMES . . . patience is a sin:

- when the child comes for help to stop the bleeding, and we say, "Come, let us patiently think through the implications of uncontrolled bleeding and plan a way to do something about your problem some day."

- when He calls for repentance today and we say, "Maybe later. Let's be patient about this. After all, I am only human."

In recounting the way Jesus enlisted His first disciples, the Gospel of Mark says this: "Without delay he called them [James and John], and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him." (Mark 1:20)

In the first chapter of Mark alone, not to mention the rest of the book, Jesus' ministry is characterized by the present-tense activity of God: Terms like "at once" (vv. 12, 18) or "without delay" (v. 20) or "immediately" (v. 42) are common.

When God says, "NOW," we cannot change His mind by anything we say or do.

He is not speaking impulsively or rashly. He is not giving in to wanton aggressiveness.

When God says "NOW," it is because His moment—indeed our moment—for decision making has come!

Only one factor can affect God's timing. It is a factor granted by God himself based upon a voluntary self-limitation He places on His power.

That factor is our choosing.

He could, if He chose to do so, require our compliance with His timing so that when He says "NOW," we would have no choice but to acquiesce.

Instead, He permits us the incredible freedom of responding to His call.

What the Lord requires of us is that we be willing to do what He asks when He asks. His NOW may be defined like this:

N eeding
O nly my
W illingness.

When Peter and Andrew, James, and John heard Jesus call them to leave their nets and follow Him, they did not have a great deal of information about Jesus or His movement. They did not have much if any history with Him. They were not given an outline of the next three years. They did not have time for a feasibility study.

They simply saw Him, heard Him, and they made their decision.

They chose to follow Him. (Clearly, their zeal lagged at times, and they failed him more than once. But He helped them finish what they had started, by His gracious forgiveness and steady compassion.)

God still says, "NOW."

- perhaps it is, "Turn off the set or change the channel. Now."
- or "Give that gift. Now."
- or "Yield that attitude to my control. Now."

- or "Tell her you love her and show her with some small act of unselfishness. Now."

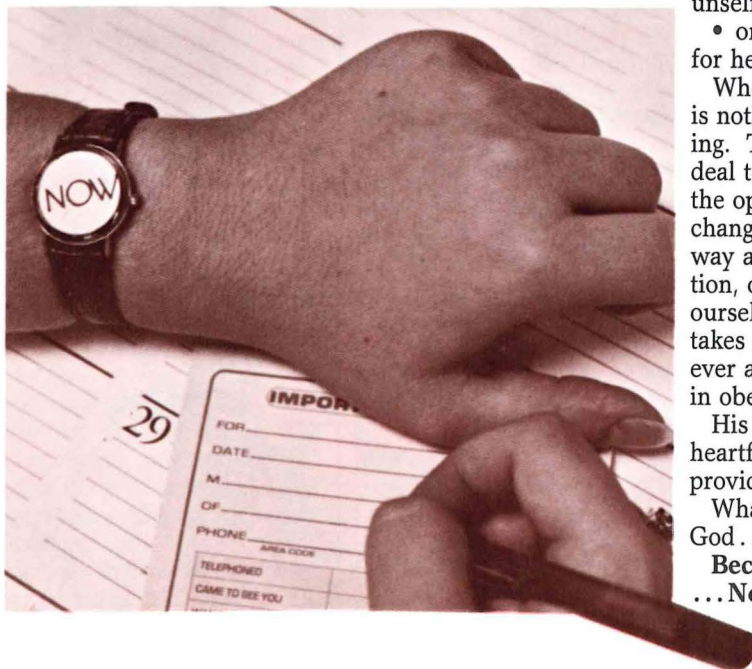
- or "Repent and turn to me for help. Now."

When God says, "Now," there is nothing to be gained by waiting. There is, however, a great deal to be lost by waiting, for the openness of our hearts may change, or He may not pass our way again with the same invitation, or we may so condition ourselves to delay that the habit takes over, preventing us from ever again responding to Him in obedience.

His "Nows" need only our heartfelt willingness. He will provide the rest.

What do you need to do for God . . . NOW?

Because of His love
...Now. **EF**



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