



Lecture 1957

William Penn

*Into  
Great  
Waters*

*Norman J. Whitney*

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## Into Great Waters

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by  
Norman J. Whitney

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The name of William Penn has been chosen because he was a Great Adventurer, who in fellowship with his friends started in his youth on the holy experiment of endeavoring “to live out the laws of Christ in every thought, and word, and deed,” that these might become the laws and habits of the State.

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An ancient prophet (it was, in fact, Ezekiel) diagnosing the expanding civilization of his time, with its perils and possible disasters, said: *Thy rowers have brought thee into great waters*. It is no longer an ancient situation in a seldom read book. It is a vivid picture of our times, ourselves, our people, our country, our world, our civilization, carried out of safe harbors into great and stormy water.<sup>1</sup>

## Our Quaker Heritage

If I were a young Friend, now, confronted by the demands and the adventures of living perilously on the “great waters” of the twentieth century, I should give humble and heartfelt thanks for the rich inheritance from the past which would be mine, and, moreover, I should read and study diligently to enter more fully into that inheritance and appropriate it to my own present need. Let us examine together some of the special treasures of our heritage from the Quaker past.

### *A New Source of Authority for Belief*

Fox says, “This I knew experimentally.” And again, “This I saw in the pure openings of the light, without the help of any man, neither did I then know where to find it in the scriptures, though afterwards, searching the scriptures I found it.”<sup>2</sup> Here is no dependence on the traditions of the elders; no submission to the authority of a divinely ordained institution with its *ex cathedra* pronouncements, or of a supernaturally inspired book with its endless confusion of interpretation. The learning (“notions”) of the universities – Cambridge, Oxford, or even Pennsylvania – does not

necessarily make of a man the minister of Truth. Rather, one simple country lad driven by his passion for reality, demanded and received a direct experience of truth. From that certainty nothing could shake him. What a promise there is here for our spiritually hungry and bewildered generation! Seek and you *can* find.

But this is more than reliance on inward certainty, ultimate as that may be. Here, too is the authority of experience. Such an authority does not demand that we believe what we know to be false, in spite of the evidence; it does not require that we close off the intelligence when we come to the consideration of religious values. Instead, it encourages us to make the scientific, the *experimental* approach, for which our modern minds are trained; it encourages us to welcome every new bit of knowledge that pushes back the frontier of ignorance; it teaches us to fear nothing but prejudice and the bigotry of the closed mind. Reason and intuition, instead of being separate and distinct, are found to supplement and support each other. Truth is seen to be its own sure defense and God, which is the God of Truth, is bigger than our finite minds. Taste and see.

An English Quaker, Edward Grubb, has expressed it in these words:

“Fox came with no new theology, woven by processes of thought; no lore of schoolmen, gained from the study of books; no dream of a coming catastrophe, when the proud should be overturned and the saints should rule the earth. He simply told men that Christ had met him; that He had satisfied his

inward hunger with the bread of his living presence; and that what he had found they could find also. They need not seek to find God through the words of learned divines or man-made preachers; for He himself was present with his light and truth in the depth of every human heart, and would reveal himself to all who would but listen and obey.”<sup>3</sup>

In this testimony all the “First Publishers” agree. Give thanks for an approach to religion which not only insists upon but promises an immediate, inward revelation of God within the sphere of personal experience.

### ***A New Birth of Freedom.***

Such a religion is properly called mystical, but Quakerism is not only mystical; it is profoundly prophetic. Now the business of the prophet is not to foretell the future but to hold up, unflinchingly, the measuring rod of God’s righteousness and judge the contemporary event in the light of eternal truth. Our Religious Society, as conceived by its founders, is uniquely free to exercise this function.

“The claims of the Inward Light demand a separation from all that was outward in religion, and left no place for a man-made ministry or for reliance on the external features of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper,” wrote Rufus Jones in *The Beginnings of Quakerism*. And Sir George Newman is quoted as saying, “The Quakers had a testimony to bear against any and every form of institutional religion ... No performance of divine service, no formal psalm-singing, no

repetition of words of prayer, no outward sign or symbol can take the place of inward Reality.”<sup>4</sup>

We have not, it seems to me, in our time been sufficiently appreciative of this freedom; its opportunities and its responsibilities. Freedom to think beyond the bounds of dogma; freedom to grow beyond the limits of creed; freedom to speak and act without fear of loss of property or position; freedom to worship without the imposition of forms or even the thoughts of others: these are the essentials of a free man’s work and worship. When an institution and a ritual are built around an idea, the idea is all too often smothered and lost in the necessity to preserve the institution. In institutions as in men there is a kind of arteriosclerosis as fatal to the health of the one as of the other. The church is no exception.

How well I remember an Iowa farmer during the war, deploring the lack of conscientious objectors in his family and in his church. He put the matter somewhat crudely but very clearly: “When you’ve got a new church building, a choir and a preacher, you’re bound to have a mortgage. And when you’ve got a mortgage, you can’t afford to have too many principles.”

There is a familiar but pertinent story of an African tribe to whom a departing missionary made the gift of a sundial. Valuing the gift greatly and fearing the effect of weather on it, they built a shelter over it. The very means taken to protect the gift shut out the light and made it worthless. The parable is plain.

Not the least part of the genius of George Fox and his associates was the adoption of a form of worship and the creation of a form of organization in which the dangers of institutionalism are reduced to the minimum. We have not, I repeat, understood sufficiently nor guarded jealously enough these freedoms, and to the extent that we have failed, we have become a sect and not a movement, a descent to which Rufus Jones declared he had never become reconciled.

You are endowed with a great freedom. Guard it well, for in it are involved the issues of life.

### ***An Insistent Emphasis on Integrity***

On the very first page of the journal in which he undertook “to set forth my public travels in the service of Truth,” George Fox records his dislike of the behavior of the older men who made up the community of his boyhood, and his resolve, “If ever I come to be a man, surely I should not do so nor be so wanton.” Few, if any, of his biographers have failed to note that a profound desire for the simple integrity in which the practices of a man’s life match the profession of his lips, was the beginning of the seeking that led to Quakerism. Elfrida Vipont portrays the initial step vividly: Tired and thirsty after a day at the fair, George joined two good-natured young men – one of them, at least, a Puritan – for a drink.

“For a while they sat chatting over their mugs of beer, and then the two older youths began to drink healths and call loudly for more ale. When George

protested that they had had enough, the others laughed in his face and told the landlord that the first one to stop drinking would pay the bill for all.

George rose to his feet quietly and, looking into their flushed faces, laid a groat on the table. ‘If that be so, I’ll leave you!’ he said, and went out of the inn, out of the fair, out of his job, and out of his home – in search of a faith that would really show itself in the lives of those who professed it.”<sup>5</sup>

The great journey from which there was to be no turning back, in spite of the great – and rough – waters that lay ahead, had begun.

Over and over again the students and interpreters of our Quaker faith and practice have pointed out this inescapable element of moral earnestness and social intensity. H. G. Wood, to my mind one of the best interpreters of Fox, declares: “Now, it is all-important for the understanding of Fox to remember that *he did not stand merely or chiefly for the general principle of the inner light; he bore witness to the inner light as expressed in clear moral judgments and in a developing moral experience.*”<sup>6</sup> The work of the light is judgment and this saves us from any easy escape into mystical quests. Both men and society must be transformed until the will of God is the will of men and the Kingdom comes on earth. For the “consistent Friend” nothing less will do.

This, again, is the “prophetic” thread in the Quaker fabric. This is the power of the Lord which Fox says “shook the

earthly and airy spirit in which they held their profession of religion and worship, so that it was a dreadful thing unto them when it was told them, ‘The man in leather breeches is came.’”<sup>7</sup>

“To maintain the Christian quality in the world of business and of domestic life, and to maintain it without pretension or hypocrisy, was the great achievement of these extraordinary people.”<sup>8</sup> This was the great credential, and Fox notes its effect: “At the first convincement when Friends could not put off their hats ... nor say you ... nor use the world’s fashions nor customs – and many Friends being tradesmen . . . lost their custom . . . and could hardly get money enough to buy bread, but afterwards, when people came to see Friends’ honesty and truthfulness and yea and nay ... *their lives and conversations did preach and reach* to the witness of God in all people . . .”<sup>9</sup> This is the Great Commission of Quakerism.

William James described the Quaker religion as “a religion of veracity rooted in spiritual inwardness.” This, Young Friends, is your inheritance from the past. What, now, of the present?

# Our Revolutionary Present

*Thy rowers have brought thee into great waters,* “with darkness covering the abyss and a tempestuous wind raging.” In order to individualize a bit of social history and bring it within the range of observation, permit me to make a personal excursion.

## *Grandfather’s World and Ours*

My grandfather was born in 1841 and when he died some three quarters of a century later he was buried in the same world to which he had been born. That will not be said of us born in the nineteenth century who have come in sight of the mid-twentieth. To be sure the Civil War was fought during grandfather’s young manhood and in some ways it approached modern warfare in character, but it was far from “total war” and only in the perspective of eight decades do we see the effects of the social forces released and set in motion in that era. Grandfather’s world was supported by an agricultural economy and patterned by a village society. It was the kind of world for which Jeffersonian democracy was designed and the only one in which Jefferson, himself, believed his ideal of democracy could function. Grandfather learned a trade, married a wife, bought a house and took upon himself responsibility for the family. He looked to the state for little; security was in his own hands. When he shod an ox or a horse, when he built a carriage or a sleigh, it was for a neighbor. Moreover, he performed the various skills involved in design, in wood or iron or paint, himself. He was the creator of a whole and responsible to his neighbor for the whole. His integrity was a part of the community’s

integrity and the integrity of the community helped to maintain his own. He was his own “capital,” his own “labor,” and his own “management.” He was a whole man, doing a whole job, in a whole community. Travel and communication were limited; man was still earthbound; horsepower was still a real and not simply a theoretical unit of measure; if a man wanted to speak to another he must do so face to face. Grandfather prospered modestly, bought a farm and built a house. These things represented achievement, success. There were changes, “improvements”; for example, a bathroom in which to my certain knowledge no one ever took a bath, although a huge wooden tub did provide running water. But there was also a leach barrel, and grandmother continued to make her own soap. There was no sociologically significant change in the way of life. The family was still the center of social experience; the church, the store and the “union” school were supplements or extensions of it.

Grandfather’s education was no more than that of the common school of his boyhood but he could “wail a portion” of the Bible and, moreover, did so each morning with such effect that those of us who heard him have never quite escaped its influence. His religion was the unquestioned Word of an unquestioned God; its expression was in going to church and being a “good provider” and a good neighbor. I cannot recall a childhood Christmas on which there was not a full-sized bag of flour for the poor relations across the way.

In the end, when his working days were over, he returned to the village, not five miles from the scene of his life’s

endeavor. He had lived a full life in a compass of ten miles. There were a few horseless carriages to frighten sober old dobbins, to stir up clouds of dust and speculation. “Danged nuisances,” grandfather called them. Although he never owned one, he learned to enjoy riding in a car and once made a trip of nearly fifty miles. But he died never suspecting that this newfangled invention and all that it symbolized was to transform the world beyond his dreaming.

Progress there has been and not the least satisfying evidence is the modern bath, foreshadowed by grandfather’s unfulfilled hope. There are no longer horses to be frightened by the speeding car, there is not even dust to be stirred on the roadway. The automobile in a short half century is itself outmoded. The modern airliner picks me up from my morning classroom, sets me down to deliver a lecture halfway across the continent and returns me in time for the next day’s work. But I often wonder if anything I have to say is worth a fraction of the social cost that is involved. When grandfather’s son was eighty years old no one of his children was with him but they all talked with him, simultaneously, across the thousands of miles that separated them in different states and communities. We accept without surprise the current experience of literally seeing what is not present. A wizard would have hard work to impress today’s world with his wonders and we no longer hang witches because there are no witches – no inexplicables.

But my cousin, who works in an automobile factory in Detroit, and who has all these, and more, marvels of the

mechanical world at his fingertip control, has no personal relationship of any sort either with the producer or the user of the vehicle on which he works. Indeed it is most unlikely that he will ever see either of them, and even less will they think of him as an individual. His work has no relation to social responsibility; he does not even live in the community in which he makes his living. His is a divided, a specialized, a fragmentized existence; his relationships with his fellows are almost all regulated by complicated, impersonal organizations, including those of the state, over which he feels no conscious awareness of control. The very words of our common speech define the new concept: he is not a man but a *hand*; and he is expendable.

Thus far the concentration of physical power with its accompanying concentration of money, markets, machines and men has brought us. Wealth and Poverty, Food and Hunger, Science and Culture, Freedom and Bondage, War and Peace. These are the antitheses of our day. Mass social problems require increasingly centralized controls and the logical end of the sequence is totalitarianism.

But man was born to be free and so he struggles and there is no peace. Instead there is "The Century of Violence" and in the midst thereof the faith which alone could make him free is destroyed by the freedom-seeking man.

It may be profitable for us to examine more closely some of the characteristics of my cousin's world, which is our contemporary society.

## *An Age of Violence and Irrationality*

It is not only our obvious willingness to use violence that should concern us but, equally, our indifference to violence. This attitude has grown almost with the days of our years. It has been estimated that all the German bombings of all Britain during the whole of World War I amounted to only about 5,000 deaths. This was properly regarded as atrocity. But in World War II, one thousand of our bombers in two days and two nights, in the city of Dresden alone, killed, burned and wounded 250,000 men, women and children. We did not regard this as atrocity; it was accepted as self-defense. No wonder one of the few genuinely significant books to come out of the second world war is entitled *Advance to Barbarism*.<sup>10</sup>

Norman Cousins reports that on a recent visit to Hiroshima a rather considerable number of people – far more than on any previous visit – asked him whether his interest in the Hiroshima maidens was inspired by feelings of guilt. Cousins answered in terms of guilt for war itself and the failure of peoples to bring the causes of war under control. It was probably not a wholly satisfactory answer, but here we approach the inner world of reality.

I once heard a distinguished German statesman-educator tell an American audience that our fears and confusions, bordering on hysteria, were caused by our unacknowledged and even largely unconscious sense of guilt over what we did at Hiroshima. It seemed to me then a disturbing but penetrating analysis; it seems to me now an even truer insight than I thought it then.

Back in 1950 Percy Bartlett, well-known English Friend and longtime Executive of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, wrote me from London: "It is clear that there are far worse things than atom bombs." He went on to speak of developments of the hormone weed killer principle that would not just smash men's bodies and the work of their hands but could, apparently, "change the form, mentality and meaning of the human race." That sounded like the ultimate horror, but short of that Percy went on to mention the controls available to totalitarianism, the moral effects of terror devices, and the unreachableness of the source of such evils. "What," he asked, "does the ministry of reconciliation mean when men are so much the prisoners of their own fears that they dare not even make friends with one another? The bottom is apparently being knocked out of fellowship, community . . . so that our association will soon be limited to the longest range rockets loaded with hormones!"

Michael Scott certainly had much the same thought in mind when he wrote from South Africa: "The organized power of the modern State, with its limitless capacity to pervert the truth and men's minds by every scientific means of communication, is driving men towards the madness of self-destruction. This hideous strength can only be met by the utmost detachment from the things of this world and the most selfless submission to a power which is greater than the physical force that is available to the modern rulers of the darkness of this world."

A reviewer of "Hiroshima Diary: The Journal of a Japanese Physician" published on the tenth anniversary of the

bombing says, “Each time has its own peculiarly appropriate horror. The horror of our time is the supreme symbol of our time – Hiroshima, the apex of modern science and of modern politics. Hiroshima is the strange and compelling summing-up of man’s potential for growth and death.”<sup>11</sup>

Truly the bomb that fell on Hiroshima fell on America, too, and the waves of its impact can be traced from violence to guilt to fear to mutual distrust and self-destruction. These are the “vultures of peace” that Milton pictures at Hell’s Gate.

The forces of disintegration, always present in society, have overtaken the forces of integration and in the resulting imbalance we suffered a moral breakdown that is akin to paralysis of the soul.

### ***A Many-sided Revolution***

This is not only an Age of Violence; it is also an Age of Revolution. The revolution takes many forms; expresses itself in varied ways. We need to examine briefly only a few of them.

This historian, Arnold Toynbee, sees it as a *spiritual revolution* which according to his timetable began “before the seventeenth century had come to an end.” (Note that this was the period of the beginning of Quakerism. ) This spiritual revolution, still in progress, is the greatest since the fall of the Greco-Roman Civilization and one of the principle sources of our present troubles. The argument

runs like this: Advocates of religious tolerance saw in the rise of scientific enquiry and application an alternative to the theological controversy which, culminating in the Wars of Religion in the seventeenth century, devastated Europe and threatened to destroy Western Civilization.

Scientific enquiry seemed harmless; technology might prove useful; intolerance and war were neither. Gradually science replaced theology in the furniture of men's minds and fanaticism yielded to tolerance. But tolerance easily descends into indifference and indifference to neglect. Before we were aware of it the baby was gone with the bath and the religious foundations on which our belief in the sacredness of the individual human personality must depend was weakened or lost. Freedom depends on God.

To say that the climate of thought of our time is predominantly scientific is to state the obvious, needed only as a reminder. The Friend who encouraged Rufus Jones to write his last book, *A Call to What Is Vital*, stated the problem in one way: "You must write a book that will help the college-trained persons who have the scientific outlook to find their way back to a vital religion. They will not accept any interpretation of religion which is inconsistent with what their minds hold as *established truth*. Hosts of youth that I know have stopped going to church because what they hear is at sharp variance with *what they know*." Now I would not ask anyone to accept what he *knows* is not true; I would not turn back the clock of knowledge; I would not revive the old, and unnecessary wars of science versus religion. We cannot live, and I should not wish to, without the benefits science has brought us.

What I ask is that we remember that science is not the only method of knowledge. Science deals with the observable, the measurable, with what can be accurately described. At its best it does these things magnificently. But there are realities, values, meanings in life that are beyond the reach of science. Science can give us means; it cannot show us the ends for which the means are to be used. For the ends, the intrinsic values and ultimate meanings, there can only be the endless quest of faith. I like Harold Loukes' illustration so much that I must share it with you, "We cannot demonstrate that we are marrying the right girl, except by going on without proof." There is contemporary significance for us in the ancient allegory of the Tree of Knowledge and the results of man's disobedience in the use of the fruits thereof:

Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit  
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste  
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,  
With loss of Eden . . . <sup>13</sup>

At this point some will wish to remind me of the current return to religion; the boom in church building and membership. I have read many of the statistics but I am not impressed. What impresses me is the analysis of Eugene Carson Blake, Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. and President of the National Council of Churches, suggesting that the religious boom may prove to be more nearly a religious bust; that it too often represents an escape from confusion and responsibility; and that it has the danger

marks of a new idolatry: the worship of false gods, including nationalism.<sup>14</sup>

What impresses me is Reinhold Niebuhr's warning that no "pietistic individualism" or moralism, no "neat formula" or orthodoxy, or "revivalistic Christianity" will be effective in challenging collective evil or in meeting the breadth and complexity of our social responsibility.<sup>15</sup> Another aspect of the revolutionary character of our time that cannot be overlooked is sometimes referred to as the rising tide of color or the *death struggle of colonialism*. Although this movement is more obvious, it is not less significant than the spiritual revolution of which, indeed, in some senses, it is a part.

The reported fact that in an early election in independent India the highest proportion of Communist votes was cast in an area of highest Christian concentration is sobering but understandable. Christian idealism bred discontent with current conditions and the Communist Party appeared to be the only agency at hand for realizing the good life promised by the gospel. Similarly it is now clear that both a century or more of Christian missionary effort in China, and the leadership of Western educated youth, played an important role in the recent Chinese revolution. It should be evident that white, western civilization cannot go about the earth preaching its doctrines of freedom, and the sacredness of individual human personality, without releasing new and explosive forces, which are bound to have consequences, unexpected, unpleasant, or both. One should not plant the seeds of change unless he wants change. The Soviet journalist, Ilya Ehrenburg, is credited with a vivid figure

which is useful here. “Americans carry an atom bomb in one pocket – and an Easter egg in the other.” Both are explosive. But we ought not to be surprised if the creative power of the Easter idea sometimes explodes first.

This phase of the revolution is not wholly ideological; it has also an economic side. Capitalist colonialism did not destroy the feudal systems in Asia but secured them to its own ends. In consequence, one study reports, “Living standards of the general mass declined, cultures stood still, and national aspirations were dimmed.”<sup>16</sup> The social meaning of all this has been interpreted in these words:

“Never before has the door to abundant life, in the physical sense of the word, been so near to opening. We now have the means to supply food, clothing, shelter, health and education to all mankind on a scale never before dreamed. We could abolish at least the more degrading forms of poverty. Moreover, the larger and less privileged portion of the human family now *knows* that this is possible. Such knowledge gives fresh impetus everywhere to man’s eternal aspiration for recognition and human dignity. This, in itself, is a new situation and lies at the root of the revolution of the common man.”<sup>17</sup>

The scope of the revolution is tremendous. India and Pakistan have won independence within a decade by the most unique revolution in human history. Together with China, which has followed a radically different course, these countries account for a billion human beings.

Although recognizing the enormous price paid, Muriel

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Lester, on her seventh visit to China, reported on the achievement of national self-respect and its reflection in a corresponding personal self-respect. No wonder recent Quaker visitors to China report that events are now commonly referred to as before, or after, Liberation. And the struggle continues. North Africans have gone to French schools and shared in the tradition of liberal thought inherited from the French Revolution. Today the issue of anticolonialism, of which Suez is only a symbol, excites frenzied passions among Arab peoples everywhere. We need only list a few of the most immediate “trouble spots” around the world to feel its range: Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, IndoChina, Kenya, South Africa, Alabama.

I list South Africa and Alabama, cultures where bibliolatry and pietism are strong, last because we need to remember that this revolution is not merely political nor wholly international. It is social and cultural as well. Freedom loving men can no more live behind a color bar than behind an iron curtain. How deep-seated the demand for release is can be felt in the determined tones of Chief Luthuli, President of the African National Congress.

“I have joined my people in the new spirit that moves them today ... Laws that tend to debase the God-given force of human personality ... must be relentlessly opposed. I have embraced the nonviolent ... resistance technique in fighting for freedom because I am convinced it is the only legitimate and humane way that can be used by people denied, as we are, effective constitutional means to further (their) aspirations. The wisdom or foolishness of this

decision I place in the hands of the Almighty. What the future has in store for me I do not know. It might be ridicule, imprisonment, concentration camp, flogging, banishment even death. I only pray the Almighty to strengthen my resolve so that none of these grim possibilities may deter me from striving to (make) our beloved country, the Union of South Africa, a true democracy and a true union ... It is inevitable that in working for freedom some individuals and some families must take the lead and suffer; the road to freedom is via the Cross.”<sup>18</sup>

The same determination to win recognition of their inherent worth and dignity as *men* and all the privileges of a truly first-class citizenship, is being demonstrated in our own country. Although by no means limited to the South, the struggle is, at the moment, most acute and most clearly dramatized there. Clearly, the days of *baaskap* or white supremacy, though they may be long, are numbered. Martin Luther King sums up the attitude: “We Negroes have replaced self-pity with self-respect, and self-depreciation with dignity.”

Paradoxically, as the struggle for human rights and recognition approaches a climax, another revolution tending to the *dehumanization and lowered dignity of men* gains momentum.

## *Arms and the Man*

I am thinking both of the effects of modern militarism and of the revolution in industry brought about by advances in technology called automation.

The so-called First Industrial Revolution worked wonders in lifting the burdens from men's arms and backs, at least in the western world, and although we have by no means caught up with the social and political consequences of that revolution, none of us, I suppose, would wish the burdens back. The age-old curse on Adam, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," has been lifted to the extent that sometimes man has eaten no bread because he had no chance to sweat. There were days in the thirties when the curse began to look curiously like a blessing. Under the impetus of World War II the process has been enormously speeded. The president and chairman of the board of U.S. Industries, Inc., has recently described the new manless manufacture. He reports: "Scientists ran the huge Oak Ridge installation from a central control room linked to some ten miles of instrument panels with only twenty human operators to the mile."<sup>19</sup> Today's best example is the oil refinery which takes in crude oil and delivers one or more finished products by a system of continuous flow directed by preset controls. The "ideal" automobile factory will be a similar manless Eden. U.S. Industries now operates in Illinois a fully automatic factory with twenty per cent less manpower than the conventional plant. The product is 155mm shells.

But it is now only the man – the “hand” – that is being left out of manufacture. Not only are motorcar engines “machined” from slabs of steel by electronic brains, but the mechanical mice or “double-domed robots,” as John Lear calls them, can “memorize and recall, count, compute, calculate, sort, measure, give orders, and make decisions.” “Furthermore,” says Mr. Lear, “they can see, feel, and hear,” Indeed, it is reported that “the newest I.B.M. wizards can talk to one another on the telephone and act on what they hear.”<sup>20</sup> No wonder Norbert Wiener insists that the modern industrial revolution is bound to “devalue the human brain” as the arm was earlier devalued by the competition of machinery, and concludes that as the Second Revolution is accomplished, “the average human being of mediocre attainments or less has nothing to sell that is worth anyone’s money to buy.”<sup>21</sup>

We have long accustomed ourselves to the idea that man – hand and head – is expendable in war. Now Nat Weinberg, director of Research and Engineering for UAW-CIO says, “Labor is on the Hook.” A special resolution adopted by his union two years ago sums it up neatly: “Properly used, they can advance by many years the realization in America of man’s age-old dream of an economy of abundance. Improperly used, for narrow and selfish purposes, they can create a social and economic nightmare in which men walk idle and hungry – made obsolete as producers because the mechanical monsters around them cannot replace them as consumers.”<sup>22</sup>

Is it possible that modern man is, or is about to become obsolete? A European observer<sup>23</sup> notes that man is now in

process of becoming part of a machinery that controls him completely, and quotes an engineer in California who expressed his impatience with modern man by saying that “man is an obstacle to progress.” Need we stop to enquire what progress and for whom?

The distinguished sociologist, David Riesman, speaks of the homogenization of men; of men who are more concerned about adjustment than achievement, about conformity than character, about morale than morality. “Being different” is the great danger in small things and great. To borrow an apt figure from *The Christian Century*, the table lamp must be in the exact center of the picture window.

These are not idle questions and speculations.

“The philosophy of technology means that man enters through his knowledge into the making of his own destiny; that none of his values can be final because they are all transition points in their own eventual outcome ... Technology is thus both ends and means; it is both a value in itself and a means to the realization of further values ... On the one hand, nuclear physics has released a source of power so god-like in its proportions that only the total mobilization of social capital through public agencies can exploit this new divinity for man’s benefit. What then becomes of the private capitalist? On the other hand, the new science of cybernetics has introduced the concept of the fully automatic factory, which needs at most the services of only a few technicians

to keep it going. What then becomes of the laborer?"<sup>24</sup>

We are, perhaps more quickly aware of the effects of long-continued emphasis on militarism. For sixteen consecutive years we have had universal military conscription and training. This is not only an unprecedented experience in American history; it is a very long time, covering the total conscious experience of today's youth. Military conscription has become the normal and accepted pattern of relationship between the individual and the state. For sixteen years we have been subject to the constant and subtle pressures of a society geared to war and a climate of opinion that accepted, if it did not glorify, the practice of violence. The army has publicly deplored the influences in American life that inhibit the making of good combat soldiers and made strong efforts to "lift the curtain" of such inhibitions. A New York City Children's Bureau spokesman is quoted as saying, "The positive correlation between the rate of delinquency and war and cold war cannot be ignored. It is hard to instill those built-in controls of hostile behavior when children are being reared in a world that reeks of hostility and in which the whole economy is geared to the ultimate in expression of hostility death and destruction."<sup>25</sup>

More impressive and more all-embracing is the testimony of Gunnar Myrdal who writes:

"The increasing influence of military *expertise* and the thinking habits of the military mind, the mobilization of scientists to work on all sorts of

projects under state direction and financed by ad hoc state appropriations, the impetus in the social sciences to think in terms of state power and state strategic interests, the growth of the state secrecy and loyalty phobias and the mounting ascendancy of state propaganda are only some of the symptoms of these psychological and ideological effects. Gradually they are remolding our basic valuations; if continued for a protracted period of time they will alter our entire culture in a direction very contrary to our inherited Western ideals.”<sup>26</sup>

The almost perfect symbol of the merging of these two forces, the military and the technological, and their impact on our lives, appears in the Associated Press story of “a new navy jet fighter, flying at supersonic speed that shot itself down by running into cannon shells it had fired seconds before.”<sup>27</sup>

We have learned literally to “install” a man in the seat of a supersonic jet plane, to make him essentially a part of the mechanism which destroys him. We have made ourselves masters of the impersonal and the inanimate. We have learned to swim in the water like a fish; to fly through the air like a bird; but we have not learned to walk on the earth like a man. Having chosen, at the beginning of modern times, to turn from the search for a truth higher than ourselves and to base our life on “facts” discovered by the senses, we are in real danger of becoming moral idiots.

It is not surprising that Norman Cousins should declare that the biggest problem of modern man is what to do with

himself or that Lewis Mumford summons us to “challenge the automatism we have submitted to ... conquer our moral numbness and inertia; ... and uphold love and reason as more precious than life itself.”<sup>28</sup>

This, *Young Friends*, is a measure of the “great waters” into which we have come. It is a grim diagnosis and one which I take no pleasure in drawing, but “... If way to the better there be, it exacts a full look at the worst.”<sup>29</sup>

## Challenge and Response

Some two years ago Bertrand Russell, surely one of the greatest minds of our time, posed the question thus: “Here, then, is the problem which I present to you stark and dreadful and inescapable: *Shall we put an end to the human race; or shall mankind renounce war?* Is all this to end in trivial horror because so few are able to think of Man rather than of this or that group of men?”<sup>30</sup>

Speaking in our Meeting for Worship of this “trivial horror” and of the divine experiment in the creation of personality represented by life on this earth, Horace Eaton offered this testimony: “I have not lost my faith in God. I believe that his purposes are eternal. I cannot believe that Truth and Love and Beauty are perishable. Man may destroy himself with the machines that he has made but in ways that I cannot understand the qualities of Goodness will endure. Whatever may come; whatever others may do; it is for us to hold fast our convictions, to keep the faith.”

I share that faith and I bring you that message.

### ***Redeeming the Past***

*Thy rowers have brought thee into very great waters, indeed; A world in which individual men become less and less and the institutions of society, church and state, become more and more. It is not a new world; it is a perennial experience of history. And as the condition is perennial, so the need and the remedy are perennial. Socrates, four centuries before the Christian era, Jesus in the first century, Fox in*

the seventeenth, and Gandhi in the twentieth all saw and spoke to our world. And they all said the same thing: The goal is Truth; the only way to find it is to live it; the only way to communicate it is through a quality of life. It is the pure in heart who see God. It is at once as simple and as profound as that.

Fox, who believed that he had discovered, and who labored to restore, the primitive “Way” of Jesus, knew by *experience* and convinced by *integrity*. And he called all those who had entered into the experience and who would witness to its truth into a Religious Fellowship of Friends. That is the meaning of the seventeenth-century word; not an institution, not a church or sect, but a fellowship of seekers who had become finders and who wished to bear corporate testimony to the joy of freedom in the Truth. He and they knew well that such freedom involves its own discipline and that such joy is, itself, holy obedience. “*If you continue in my word, you are my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.*”

This was the Society of Friends three centuries ago. It spoke with amazing power and effect to the condition of seventeenth-century England. The principle that lay at the heart of the fellowship is what we call Quakerism, and I believe that the world never needed the message of this “essential Quakerism” more than it does today. Indeed, I believe it is the condition of survival. The question for Young Friends is this: Can our Religious Society become once more the bearer of this Word? I am one of those who has not quite given up hope, but I am not sure. For three hundred years have done strange things to our Society. We

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suffer from a kind of hardening of the arteries into institutionalism of kinds that George Fox was at great pains to help us avoid. One answer would be to accept as inevitable the institutional dilemma that confronts all social and religious organization. The end of this road is death and the future of the Society of Friends will be found, as many suspect, behind it. But Truth will live; have no doubt about that; and I am unwilling to abandon the vast resources of credit and confidence accumulated in our *name* by the faithful witness of yesteryears. In a word, I would redeem the past, not for the sake of the past, but for the uses of the present.

It is an open secret today that many, particularly younger Friends, are being challenged and attracted by the Society of Brothers. Some older Friends ask why. The answer and the challenge I have found nowhere more clearly expressed than in a message from the Bruderhof itself:

“The demand of the prophetic spirit is distinguished by its call for a *people*: The Hebrew people of God of the Old Covenant, and the Christian people of the New Covenant and its conscious revivals. ‘The Holy People’ are to be set apart from the surrounding world. The peace-minded Anabaptists of the sixteenth and the Quakers of the seventeenth century saw themselves as the revival of the all-inclusive prophetic demand to form the core of the future people of God and to take up the battle with the world in new and changing forms. That was a tremendous demand. It is no wonder that later generations were not equal to its greatness, and

turned off into the domain of personal salvation; that they attempted to reinterpret the words of prophecy in philosophic or pietistic terms and in other respects adjusted themselves to the evil world to the best of their ability ... The visible people of God became one religious group among others and the salt lost its savour.”<sup>31</sup>

But if the salt has lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? Is it possible that we can by diligent searching yet find the answer within ourselves?

### *Examining the Present*

These are great days in which to be a member of the Society of Friends; not easy but challenging. The strains and tensions that torment our body today are signs of life. We are not standing still. There is a “troubling of the waters” that may be healing; there is the sound of a going in the mulberry tops that calls to action. What are the signs, or some of the signs, of the times? There are cutting edges of growth in new meetings from coast to coast in this country; there is the deep challenge of the Friends of Truth in India. In our Yearly Meetings, there are simultaneous movements toward reunion and redivision, both of which may be healthy and creative in their consequences.

At the very moment when the non-Quaker world looks with eager and hopeful expectation to such expressions of Quaker testimony as the Friends Committee on National Legislation, the American Friends Service Committee, and the World Committee for Consultation, older and more

conservative voices within the Society are ready to criticize and condemn. New efforts are being made to re-evaluate and restate the basis of our belief and there is, I hope, a growing awareness that the way to follow prophets is not to repeat what they said in past ages but to recapture what they meant in relation to the present. There are gropings toward a new spiritual reformation. We are discovering that *tolerance* can be a dangerous shibboleth; that there are differences that make a difference, and that “the more we get together the happier we’ll be” is not always true. We are beginning to ask candidly, and perhaps to face honestly, some of the real questions that must concern us. Here are a few of them as voiced by Quaker spokesmen during the past year.

What should be:

- Friends’ attitude toward missions and their conception of what sharing the Good News at home and abroad means?
- Friends’ attitude toward world religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam?
- Friends’ attitude toward the ecumenical movement?
- Friends’ attitude toward free and open group worship without clerical leadership, as opposed to a pastoral and churchly system?
- Friends’ attitude toward the meaning of membership in our Religious Society?

For some Friends the right answers to such questions are immediately obvious, but it cannot be denied that a great many others are sorely troubled about one or more of them.

No one Friend will presume to speak to any one of their issues for all Friends, but, clearly, answers must be sought and we shall do well to seek them in mutual forbearance and humility. Without attempting any specific answers, I would offer some thoughts for your consideration. I suggest only that you examine them in the light of the wisdom that is pure.

### ***In the Silence of All Flesh***

Think, for example, of the use of corporate silence “under the Light,” or in more recent phrase, “in holy obedience,” as a means of access to the springs and sources of spiritual power. In an extremely helpful article in last May’s issue of the *Friends Journal*, John Lester has brought us insights from a German writer<sup>33</sup> on this subject. Man has a sense of *Something* external to himself, primary, unique, underivable; a *mysterium tremendum* that forms the starting point of the entire religious development of history. Fox cataloged the biblical testimony of this in 1655 in a paper entitled, “To those who make a scorn of Trembling and Quaking.” It is this *mysterium tremendum* that leads us to meeting for worship where

“. . . from the silence multiplied  
By these still forms on either side,  
The world that time and sense have known  
Falls off and leaves us God alone.”<sup>34</sup>

The world falls off and we come to know each other in that which is Eternal. We are not a “congregation,” not an audience; not passive spectators or even “hearers of the

Word,” but active, responsible participants in the ministry of Truth; we undertake the most creative adventure of which the human soul is capable; in a word, we become a meeting. This, says Rudolf Otto, is “the most spiritual form of divine service that has ever been practiced.”

We know that it was Fox’s intention. We have his own statement of purpose: Hearing in Rhode Island, that some would have engaged him to remain as their minister, he wrote, “This was where they did not well understand us and our principles ... It was time for me to be gone; for if their eye was so much to me or any of us they would not come to their own teacher ... For this thing (hiring ministers) had spoiled many, by hindering them from improving their own talents;”<sup>35</sup>

The use of corporate silence in the act of worship is, as frequently noted, our most unique contribution to the religious life. Thus to practice the Presence of God is to realize the presence of men in intimate, new relationships and in new dimensions of reality. Barclay’s language cannot be improved:

“As iron sharpeneth iron, the seeing the faces one of another, when both are inwardly gathered unto the life, giveth occasion for the life secretly to rise, and pass from vessel to vessel. And as many candles lighted and put in one place, do greatly augment the light, and make it more to shine forth; so when many are gathered together into the same life, there is more of the glory of God, and his power appears, to the refreshment of each individual; for that he partakes

not only of the light and life raised in himself, but in all the rest. And therefore Christ has particularly promised a blessing to such as assemble in his name, seeing he will be in the midst of them ...”<sup>36</sup>

Out of such dual awareness of God and man rise the social testimonies through which the vivid sense of new relationships and responsibilities finds expression.

There is also a non-Quaker point of view, ably expressed by Kierkegaard, which should be added:

“The present state of the world and the whole of life is diseased. If I were a doctor and were asked for my advice, I should reply: Create silence! Bring men to silence. The word of God cannot be heard in the noisy world of today. And even if it were blazoned forth with all the panoply of noise so that it could be heard in the midst of all the other noise, then it would no longer be the word of God. Therefore create silence.”<sup>37</sup>

I am not saying that Quakers can worship only in silence. I am suggesting that this is the way of *Quaker* worship. I am saying that here is a Friends’ testimony that speaks to the condition of our time of “great waters.” It is our task to rediscover its power, revitalize its practice, and share its blessing.

## *The Meaning of Membership*

That the question of membership and the mutual responsibilities of members and meetings is a live one is evidenced by expressions from London, from Richmond, from Philadelphia and from much lesser capitals of Quakerdom. That so many meetings are struggling with this perplexing problem is one of the encouraging signs of vitality among us. The difficulty rises from the responsibility of trying to maintain a non-creedal religious fellowship whose definition and discipline is to be established by many groups, often small and widely scattered, but always autonomous. It is not surprising that diversities have developed; that reaction to a rigidly enforced pattern of outward behavior should have swung to a practical indifference to inward conviction, disguised as respect for conscience or mistaken for democracy or tolerance; that, indeed, we have drifted into a condition bordering on spiritual anarchy. Yet, this is precisely what the first Friends, in a more compact and homogeneous society, avoided through the worshiping community and the resulting "sense of the meeting."

I will try to suggest three aspects of the problem, as I see it. First, there is the problem of dispersed and diversified meetings, not based on geographical, vocational or social community of experience. How are the scattered members of such meetings, and there are many of them, living under the pressures of an age of supersonic speed, going to overcome the sheer physical obstacles to the building of the worshiping community or holy fellowship out of which a true sense of the meeting can rise? For the sense of the

meeting does not come in response to the ritual observance of “a few moments” of silence; it rises out of the unhurried communion of spirit that breeds mutual trust and confidence in which real sharing is possible; it comes from lives that know each other in that which is eternal, yes, but who have also worked and played, thought and prayed together in that which is of today, temporal. In a word, let us ask ourselves soberly, have we time to be Quakers? It was not an idle observer who questioned whether or not a *Society* such as we envision could survive in the secularized society in which we live. Responsible membership in the Society of Friends takes time and discipline.

Second, there is the question of a basic philosophy of membership. Howard Brinton has written of two differing concepts of church function: “The power of the early Church could be recovered if the Church today thought of itself, not as serving a pedagogical function, but as itself being a community which demonstrated in its own life the nature of a Christian society.”<sup>38</sup> Alexander Purdy reminds us that the first Christians thought of themselves as “a colony of heaven,” approximating the divine community. Some of the issues that perplex us will be resolved when we make up our minds; better, when we reach a sense of the meeting as to whether we want to be a preparatory school or a demonstration of the Kingdom.

Third, there is the need for definition. Membership without definition is essentially meaningless but we must not confuse such definition with creed. In the *Second Period of Quakerism*, Braithwaite tells us, the light “had led the first Friends out from the world into a definite body of

testimonies which had been the natural expression in life of the great indwelling experience which they enjoyed, and from the first years fellowship had meant this common witness to a common body of truth.” Neave Brayshaw comments more bluntly, “In other words, the Society of Friends is not merely a religious club, having as its basis of membership nothing more than profession of belief in the ‘Inner Light’; it exists to bear *corporate* witness to the principles *and practices* for which it stands...”<sup>39</sup> Such concepts of membership do not presume the imposition of a theological *creed* or *doctrine*; they do presume an active mutual concern and the responsible exercise of spiritual discipline as to matters of *conduct and behavior*. These are almost forgotten arts among us. Perhaps the three most significant of our historic testimonies for these days are the testimony against all war, the testimony against all discrimination and exploitation, the testimony against oaths. (I have purposely stated these in their negative form, believing that we vastly underrate the creative power of the kind of nosaying with which Quaker history is generously punctuated.) These are so intricately interwoven with each other and with the whole fabric of our faith that we do not have the privilege of a diner in an automat to select *a la carte*. These are necessary deductions from the principle of the inner light and it is still true, as earlier Friends remind us, that “the want of consistency in any weakens the testimony of the whole.”

Finally, whatever choices we make or decisions we reach on the meaning and responsibilities of membership, we shall not escape the keen eye of a watchful world. For

example, an observer of the contemporary religious scene at Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, noting the wide diversity of witness borne by Friends in public positions, comments, “Even the Society of Friends, which was once so skilled in the exercise of group discipline was represented in public life by divided counsels ...” and cites us “as a supreme evidence that the churches have embraced the world and succumbed to complacency.” He then asks, “How can we expect the divided and secular society to regard our professions more highly than we regard them ourselves?”<sup>40</sup>

### *Answering That of God*

Fox’s comment is clear:

“This is the word of the Lord God to you all and a charge to you all in the presence of the living God: be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come; that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one.”<sup>41</sup>

No one can or should try to escape the evangelistic urge of this oft-repeated charge of Fox to his followers. No one can be possessed of a profound Truth without seeking to communicate it; no one can be possessed by an overwhelming Love without the need to share it. The first Publishers of Truth spent themselves royally to spread the good news with which their hearts burned. It is not on the need or the right to publish truth that we are likely to differ

today but on the *what* and the *how*. A very wise and gentle non-Christian to whom this question was put in my hearing answered, “The sincere believer has both the need and the right to proclaim his message, *providing always* that he does it in deep humility and with complete respect for the beliefs of others.” This is not only a clear test; it is a severe one. Look back to Fox now: “be patterns, be examples ... *that your carriage and life may preach.*” In these two counsels, we have both the spirit and the method of a Quaker approach to missions; with humility, with respect; not by words only, but by deed and life are we to “answer that of God in every one.” And how many and how eager we shall find the listeners and how quick their response! Such an approach will save us from the arrogance of exclusive claims that injure and alienate the “other”; such an approach leaves no place for the imperialistic demands and associations that have made the missionary movement a divisive influence in our Father’s one world and have brought it into such disrepute among so many great peoples.

I once heard an earnest enquirer ask at a summer institute why modern Friends seem so much less interested in evangelizing than they were in the beginning. The answer suggested that there is not so great a difference as we suppose; that the zeal and energy of early Friends was tremendous but that they were more interested in bringing men to the Truth than in bringing them into any kind of membership. This is fully in keeping with the conviction of early Quakers that the institutional church is incompatible with the New Covenant.

The question is often put in another way: “Why cannot we shake the nation as George Fox did? ... now most people hardly know where our meetinghouse stands.” I would agree with John William Graham<sup>42</sup> that the question is largely superficial. It is true that we have lost the first, fresh rapture and enthusiasm of a new movement; it is true that we have watered down our testimonies and conformed too largely to the “world” around us; but there is also a profound change in the intellectual climate of our time. The Bible is no longer “hot off the press” as was the King James Version in the seventeenth century; science supplants theology in the popular mind; psychology rivals religion as a means of interpreting man’s inner experience. New conditions call, not for new principles but for a fresh vocabulary; Truth is still truth but each generation has the responsibility of restating the eternal in terms of the contemporary. The Society of Friends needs interpreters and Publishers today as it always has; as it always will.

### ***A Movement or a Sect?***

But such an approach as I am suggesting calls for reevaluation of our attitude toward nonChristian believers and our place among the Christian churches. Simply put, is our form of the Christian religion inclusive or exclusive?

At New York Yearly Meeting two years ago, Henry Cadbury emphasized the dignity and the service of difference. We need to explore our history and our principles to understand why we have differed, and must continue to differ. Early Friends came out of the steeplehouses in protest against formalism, conformity,

worldliness and the like. Struck by Fox's preaching Margaret Fell, then herself a church member, cried out, "We are all thieves; we are all thieves; we have taken the Scriptures in words, and knew nothing of them in ourselves."<sup>43</sup> Thousands of seekers, particularly young people, are "coming out" of the churches today for almost identical reasons. The protest is still needed. Friends have insisted that worship must not evaporate in an emotional thrill but must be translated into vigorous action. Now when the pressures are all so insistently in the direction of uniformity, it is both a social and a religious service to stand out, modestly and cheerfully but withal firmly, and make our witness as a "peculiar" people.

The young Friend, who said to me between the sessions of her Yearly Meeting, "We have wanted so much to be like everyone else that we have become like everyone else; we have lost our distinctive characteristic and our capacity to differ significantly," seemed to me to be right. A leader in another Yearly Meeting put it more bluntly, "The only trouble with New York Friends is that they are too much like New Yorkers." (It might not have been New York!) We do not want to be peculiar for the sake of being picturesque; we want to be different at the points at which we believe we have a different testimony to make. Can this be done better within the growing Councils of Churches at various levels, or independently? Some Friends are "sure" of one answer; others of another; we are certainly not "clear" as a Society.

A recent communication declares, "While we favor religious tolerance for unitarians and other pagans, we cannot, as Christians, unite with such groups."<sup>44</sup> This is a

clear and unequivocal statement of a position sincerely held and those who hold it are to be sincerely respected, but it cannot speak for all Friends, now or in the past. On the other hand, I remember once asking a weighty Friend of the orthodox persuasion what should be our answer if a mutual friend, not a “Christian,” whom we both admired for the Christlike beauty of his life and spirit, should apply for membership. My Friend’s answer was immediate, “I could not keep him out. Could thee?” This question, which sounds loud and unbecomingly insistent to some ears, has old and deep roots in Quaker thinking.

In the Journal for 1656, Fox wrote, “Great opposition did the priests and professors make about this time against the Light of Christ Jesus, denying it to be universally given.” Howard Brinton comments: “No Quaker belief aroused more opposition than the doctrine that the Light of Christ has been given to all men everywhere, since the beginning of the human race. This concept was especially repugnant to those Protestants who believed that only the elect could be saved.”<sup>45</sup>

Barclay speaks also to this question:

“... the church being no other thing but the society, gathering, or company of such as God hath called out of the world, and worldly spirit, to walk in his Light and Life ... under this church and its denomination are comprehended all, and as many, of whatsoever nation, kindred, tongue, or people they be, though outwardly strangers, and remote from those who profess Christ and Christianity in words, and have the

benefit of the scriptures, as become obedient to the holy light and testimony of God in their hearts, so as to become sanctified by it, and cleansed from the evil of their ways ... There may be members therefore of this catholic church among heathen, Turks, Jews, and all the several sorts of Christians, men and women of integrity and simplicity of heart, who ... are by the secret touches of this holy light in their souls enlivened and quickened, thereby secretly united to God, and there-through became true members of this catholic church.”<sup>46</sup>

Rufus Jones wrote: “These founders of ours had rediscovered the truth proclaimed on Jacob’s wellcurb, that *God is Spirit*, not an absentee God in the remote heavens. but as close to the spirit of man as the air is to the breathing lungs. That Principle is undoubtedly Catholic, universal, and so, a genuine basis for a world-wide movement.”<sup>47</sup>

Douglas Steere made this concern the subject of the Nitobe Lecture in 1954. He pointed out that the walls of distance, language and culture which once enabled us to live in relative isolation have fallen. In the new situation, Quakerism “is queried by the deepest levels of Buddhism, of Hinduism, and even in rare cases of Islam,” asking if it is universal and inclusive and therefore able to respect their worship and practice. It is here that we are challenged by the Friends of Truth in India through which Horace Alexander helped to realize Gandhi’s dream, based on humble acceptance of the fact that no religion can have a monopoly on the truth and the love of God.

One of the bright threads of continuity running through the Old Testament is the expanding idea of God from the tribal to the universal. Have we now reached a point in history where we must and can revitalize this conception of a universal Father to whom all men are sons and brothers and where all who worship him may do so together if only they come, not in this name or in that, but in Spirit and in Truth? What is the meaning of Jesus' saying, "Other sheep have I that are not of this flock?" What is the relationship of the Word that was in the beginning, Christ the eternal Light and Spirit of Truth, to the man Jesus of Nazareth? Are they identical and inseparable or is it true that "that which, or he who, was incarnate in the man Jesus (is) neither exhausted by nor confined to that action?"<sup>48</sup> Is Christianity a religion *about* Jesus, or is it the religion *of* Jesus who made no claim to "Christianity" but who said, "My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it?"

Calvin Keene, well-known among us for his thoughtful studies in religion, interprets Barclay as daring to believe that the outward knowledge of the history and death of Jesus is not essential for salvation ... "Salvation comes through rebirth as the inward Christ (not to be confused with the historical Jesus) is formed within them."<sup>49</sup>

"One can believe," said Arnold Toynbee, in an address at Union Theological Seminary, "that one has received revelation without necessarily believing that he has received exclusive revelation. Exclusive mindedness is one of the most fatal sins ... the sin of pride ... I suggest that we recognize all higher religions as revelations of what is good and right."<sup>50</sup>

It may well be that Arthur Morgan is correct in saying, “If religious brotherhood is to be achieved among all men, it will come, not by asking other people to throw away their religions and take ours, but by free association in the search for truth and the good life, each respecting the other’s approach, and by searching together for further light.”<sup>51</sup> This seems to me consistent with the thought and practice of Fox and his followers. We must not be misled here by language. As we all do, Fox often used inherited terminology without carefully coordinating it with his other thought. I like to believe, and do believe, that, in Paul Tillich’s beautiful phrase, Fox saw “the church beyond the Church.”

In the end, it may be that Christ can be the hope of a divided and distraught world, only in so far as we are able to make such distinctions as are suggested here: present the Word as the symbol of universal spiritual truth; the Man as the exemplar of the Way of universal Love; and offer ourselves to walk humbly in that Way.

We must heed with equal seriousness the warning of the great theological teacher, Adolf Harnack, “official Christianity can never become a prevailing world religion because it carries within itself a fatal flaw; it is a double gospel, the gospel *of* Jesus, and the gospel *about* Jesus the Christ; the two can never be reconciled”; *and* the wisdom of that Quaker saint, John Woolman, “I found no narrowness respecting sects and opinions, but believe that sincere uprighthearted people, in every society, who truly love God, were accepted of him.”

## *Into Great Waters*

It is such considerations and such challenges as these that warrant Douglas Steere in saying, “The Society of Friends stands today before a major opportunity.” These are *great waters*, Young Friends, into which thy rowers have brought thee. How will you meet them?

I have reminded you of the goodly heritage which is yours as Quakers; I have spoken to you of the desperate need of an Age of Longing and a Time of Torment; all along, I have been trying to suggest to you that Quakerism is vastly bigger than we have dared to think or to believe and that only as we enlarge our vision shall we increase our power. I have tried to set before you the ideal Society pictured by John Woolman in a farewell epistle to his Meeting in 1772: “Where people are divinely gathered into a holy fellowship, and faithfully abide under the influence of that Spirit which leads into all Truth, these are they who are the light of the world.”<sup>52</sup>

Ye are the light of the world! A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid, nor can you evade the responsibilities of the high place to which God has called you. This, too, is a place of *great waters*.

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## About the Author

Norman J. Whitney (1891 - 1967) studied English literature and was from 1919 to 1957 a professor at Syracuse University, New York . During this time he founded the Syracuse Peace Council , which he also led for many years. In 1957, he left Syracuse to work for the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), which is dedicated to peace education .

In 1941, Whitney established New York State Civil Service as an alternative to military service in the United States for conscientious objectors. Whitney worked for the AFSC as a representative for New York and New England, as a National Secretary for Peace Education and as a peace consultant.

In March 1955, he was one of the signatories to a statement by the American Friends Service Committee entitled "From the Force to Speaking the Truth", with which the Quakers submitted a study of the international conflict situation. He was a member of the Christian Peace Conference in 1960.

[https://de.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norman\\_J.\\_Whitney](https://de.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norman_J._Whitney)

## About the Lectures

The William Penn Lectures started as a ministry of the Young Friends' Movement of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. In the beginning of the last century, "Young Friends" was the community of young adults from both the Hicksite and the Orthodox Philadelphia Yearly Meetings, which reunited in 1955. The Young Friends Movement began the lecture series "for the purpose of closer fellowship; for the strengthening by such association and the interchange of experience, of loyalty to the ideals of the Society of Friends; and for the preparation by such common ideals for more effective work through the Society of Friends for the growth of the Kingdom of God on Earth." The name of William Penn was chosen because the Young Friends Movement found Penn to be "a Great Adventurer, who in fellowship with his friends started in his youth on the holy experiment of endeavoring 'To live out the laws of Christ in every thought, and word, and deed; and that these might become the laws and habits of the State.'"

The first run of William Penn Lectures were given between 1916 and 1966, and are warmly remembered by Friends who attended them as occasions to look forward to for fellowship with our community, inspiration, and a challenge to live into our faith. The lectures were published by the Book Committee of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting has granted Pendle Hill and Quaker Heron Press permission to reproduce the lectures as free ebooks.

Although it was [announced](#) in 1960 that the series would be discontinued several lectures were published in the early '60s. It appears that the lectures given between 1923 and 1931 were never published. If we come upon manuscripts of these lectures, we hope to publish them in future.

In 2010, the Young Adult Friends of PYM revived the series, officially launching the second run of the William Penn Lectures in 2011. [The series was renamed](#) the *Seeking Faithfulness* series in 2016, as part of the Young Adult Friends of PYM's concern for dismantling racism within the yearly meeting and the wider society. It no longer felt rightly ordered to have a major event named after a slaveholder. The [Seeking Faithfulness](#) series is hosted by the Young Adult Friends for the benefit of the whole yearly meeting community, and invites a Friend to challenge us all to explore new ways to practice our Quaker faith. The Seeking Faithfulness series seeks to nourish our spiritual lives and call us to faithful witness in our communities and throughout the world.