

a training in constructive citizenship which is of far reaching importance. Whether fighting forest fires in New England; aiding in our National Park Service in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina; hoeing in the "black gold" soil of the Wabash Valley, Indiana; working on the land to provide security, educational opportunities, and happiness for rural folks; or carrying on experiments in the conservation of rainfall and the preservation of forests and prevention of floods in the San Dimas Canyon of California, members of Civilian Public service are discovering themselves, the power of creative effort, and the fundamentals of democracy and religion.

Fourth, an unequaled opportunity for the training of personnel for reconstruction service at home and abroad is accorded. Already calls have gone out to the various camps for the nominations of six qualified young men to do reconstruction work in England. It is hoped that some additional opportunities of

this character may be developed both at home and abroad.

While it was the sense of the body which met on October 21st that Friends should assume responsibility for conducting the camps for 1942, it was also felt that there should be a wider basis of consultation before the final decision is made.

A number of Friends in places of responsibility in each Yearly Meeting have been informed of this situation and are asked to respond before November 5th, when it is expected final action will be taken by the Board of Directors of the American Friends Service Committee.

The remarkable degree of co-operation that has been developed with the other two historic peace churches, who have already committed themselves, the expectation of the American public and the unusual opportunity for bearing our testimony as Friends offered by these camps seem to indicate that the responsibilities which the camps impose are ones which might well be accepted with a deep sense of responsibility and of gratitude.

Contagious Christianity

By LEONARD S. KENWORTHY

You and I are interested in the future of Quakerism. More than that, we are interested in the future of Christianity. We are concerned that the basic ideas represented in the life of Christ grip mankind and renovate society. Just *how* that is to be accomplished or whether it can ever be accomplished is a perplexing problem.

There are Christians who believe that it is impossible to construct the Kingdom of God or anything approaching it, here on earth. Consequently they endure this world in the hope that they may share in a beautiful kingdom in the world to come. Their passive attitude towards the world in which they now live is sometimes tempting, but it seems to me absolutely contrary to the positive attitude towards the world around Him which Jesus preached and lived and which we as Quakers, along with other groups of Christians, are trying to emulate. As a group our concern is with the life here rather than hereafter and we feel confident that the Kingdom of God *can* come on earth.

There are those who believe that the golden millenium on earth will be brought about by God through His all-powerful will and that its arrival is scheduled in a Great Plan pre-arranged by Him down to the minutest detail. It seems to me that from such a point-of-view men are merely puppets in the hands of a mighty God who manipulates them at His will, and that God is a remote Being dwelling in the heavens and having little intercourse with men. As a Quaker I cannot hold such a concept of God or of man, nor can I believe

that Christianity will ever be spread by such a negative attitude towards the potentialities in man, or such a cold, impersonal attitude towards God. As a Quaker I believe that God has given to man the trusteeship of the earth and that He has placed in him a sensitivity to the Divine. When man through contact with the Eternal develops rather than dulls this sensitivity, he becomes God-like and can achieve the seemingly impossible. This contact with the Eternal is a continuous personal contact. Whenever men collectively develop this sensitivity to the Divine, God's Kingdom will have arrived on earth. I am convinced that this is possible.

Even if we recognize that it is possible for individual Christians to develop the Kingdom of God in their own lives and for Christians collectively to build this Kingdom on earth, the great problem remains as to the methods to be used in achieving that goal.

There are those who believe that Christianity can best be furthered when the Church exists as a political as well as a religious institution or when it wields as an organic unit tremendous political power. To me it is clear that Christ rejected this method when He refused to fulfill the anticipated rôle of a political Messiah. Thereby He set an example for His followers, not to pursue the political method to achieve the Kingdom. Further I believe that Christianity has suffered spiritually when the Church has become a political power. Christianity is not a political idea and it will never be spread by political means.

There are those who maintain that Christianity will become virile and dynamic only when individual Christians have enough faith and still others who maintain that Christianity will be furthered only when enough individual Christians participate in enough good works. Down through the centuries Christians, including that little group known as Quakers, have fought among themselves, upholding either one or the other of these two views. Occasionally individuals or groups have realized that both are essential, that they are as necessary to each other as the two blades of scissors are dependent upon each other. When Christians have discovered that truth and *lived* it, they have brought much nearer the Kingdom of God. In the history of Quakerism there have been such glorious periods of group discovery and group achievement, but they have been all too infrequent.

Too often we as Quakers, along with other religious groups, have discovered this truth and proclaimed it, rather than living it. As a result our Quakerism, our interpretation of Christianity, has lacked the essential element of growth—enough men and women who by the example of their lives bring others to this way of life. Important as ideas are, they are not enough. They must be transmitted by their incorporation into individual lives. Ideas are the blood of religion but they must flow in the bodies of men and women to retain their life.

When I think about the future of Quakerism and Christianity, I am convinced that they will never be spread by progress or ideas, be they political or economic, social or even religious. They will be spread by the contagious lives of individual Quakers, of individual Christians.

This expression—contagious lives—may seem a bit odd. Perhaps I can best explain what I mean by use of a personal experience. On the day before Christmas, Douglas Steere and I were riding on a street car in Munich. Across from us sat a young boy bursting with the spirit of Christmas. He was the embodiment of Christmas anticipation, enthusiasm and joy. He attracted everyone's attention. His happiness electrified the air. Others caught his spirit. They could not help themselves. One passenger shared his cookies with the boy, four others dug down into their pockets to find foreign coins for him as soon as they spied the tiny box he carried for his coin collection. The boy was totally unaware of the transforming influence of his presence upon a score of individuals but he had nevertheless changed the atmosphere of the car.

What Christmas did to that boy, our Christianity should do to us. It should so fill our lives and control our actions that others would immediately catch our enthusiasm, our devotion, our love for mankind, and our joy.

I understand that the word "contagious" is chiefly used when referring to sickness or laughter or yawning. Is there any reason why we should transmit to others our sicknesses, our laughter and

our yawning and not our Christianity? Why should not our religion—our Christianity—our Quakerisms—also be contagious? That I believe is the way that Christianity has always been best furthered and can be best furthered now and in the future.

Two thousand years ago a carpenter named Jesus walked along the shores of the Sea of Galilee. There He saw two brothers—two fishermen—Simon and Andrew, casting their nets into the sea. And the simple carpenter said to them, "Come and follow Me and I will make you fishers of men". Further down the shore He met James and John, also, brothers, mending their nets, and Jesus called them and they, too, followed Him. Sometimes I think the Bible account of these incidents is too simple. We are likely to assume that it was quite natural that they should follow Him. But was it so natural that four fishermen should give up their work which they had probably always done, that they should give up their livelihood, their security, and follow an unknown former carpenter? Certainly not. But the fact remains that they gave up *all* and followed Him. Moreover, they seem to have responded immediately to His invitation, spontaneously. Why? I can only believe that Jesus was so overpowering that they could not resist Him. He attracted them like a magnet. His religion was contagious. That was Jesus' method, if we dare to speak of a method which Jesus used to spread His ideas. He did not write books or give lectures or develop plans or organizations, important as these sometimes are. He touched men and women through daily contacts, and through the attractiveness of His life He drew all men unto Him.

For two thousand years the mere written account of His life has so influenced men and women that Jean Paul Richter could write of Him: "Christ, who, being the holiest among the mighty and the mightiest among the holy, lifted with His pierced hands empires off their hinges and turned the stream of centuries out of its channels, and still governs the ages." That is the contagion of which I speak.

Shortly thereafter a prominent Jew and leader in the persecution of the Christians also caught the same vision and set out to proclaim it and to live it. He battled storms, he endured prisons, he underwent floggings, he bore the ridicule and abuse of his former friends—but he triumphed. He won others to the Cause, in part perhaps by his words, but much more by the example of His life. The people of Salonica were speaking of contagious Christianity when they wrote this concise summary of the influence of Paul and his companions, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also."

In the thirteenth century a rich merchant's son in Assisi, Italy, caught the same vision, forsook his worthless, self-seeking life and gave himself up to following Christ. Gradually his devotion,

his self-sacrifice, his joy, drew others. These in turn set out by twos to proclaim the message and to live it in simple, self-forgetful lives. The contagious Christianity of Francis had brought about a revolution in the Church of Italy.

In the seventeenth century a poor weaver's son, in Fenny Drayton, England, caught the vision of bringing God's Kingdom here on earth. Up and down England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, across the Channel to Holland and Germany, across the Atlantic to the Barbadoes and to what is now the United States he went, telling people that God still spoke to men when they listened for His voice, and that He spoke to all men, not to a chosen few. People came by the score, by the hundred, and even at times by the thousand to hear him. He preached powerfully but he lived more powerfully. Eight times he was imprisoned, six years he sat in unbelievably foul jails for his faith. Constantly he was subjected to attack. But that did not thwart him. In his daily life he lived for others. He would walk eight miles to a neighboring town to protest against the unfair wages given a group of workers. He would run after a group of poor people when he discovered that their pleas for help had been turned down by a group of so-called Christians. Others caught his devotion, his self-forgetfulness. A whole new movement, called Quakerism, arose and spread around the globe because of the contagion of one man.

In the twentieth century a Japanese concubine's son joined a voluntary Bible class, conducted by an American Missionary. The story of Jesus gripped him and he became a Christian. Told that he would die soon, he resolved to give the rest of his short life to the spread of Christianity. Into tiny rooms in the slums of Kobe he went, to live among criminals, beggars, outcasts of all kinds. His many books, on economics, religion, poetry, and other fields are important; his organization of various societies has made a real contribution to the life of Japan and the world, but his greatest contribution has been the example of his life. He is one of the outstanding contemporary examples of contagious Christianity.

In the summer of 1938 an American Quaker expressed a concern to visit Friends in Germany. He delivered one lecture in Bad Pyrmont and spent the summer visiting groups and individuals throughout the Reich. His sojourn was short but his contribution to those whom he met was tremendous. What he said will only be remembered in part but the love and good-will and joy of his countenance German Friends will not forget, for Tom Kelly was an example of a contagious Christian.

To speak of others whom we also know would be inappropriate, but there are many whom we could name who illustrate what I am talking about.

When I think particularly about the future of German Quakerism and German Christianity in its other manifestations, I have hope because of the individual Quakers and the other Christians whom

I have met and whom I know exist, men and women who are imbued with the spirit of the Christ. Organized institutions can disappear and whole movements become inactive, but so long as these basic ideas represented in the life of Christ grip individuals, there is hope, not only for the survival of Christianity but for its revitalization and spread.

We must not be misled, however, by the examples I have cited, into believing that this quality of contagion is confined to men and women of seeming importance. Christianity would never have been spread by such individuals alone, nor will it be spread in the future by a small group of prominent people. Christianity exists today because millions of common people have lived the message of Jesus in their daily lives. It is quite possible that the triumphant way in which the early Christians bore their persecutions, had an important effect upon Saul so that he was brought into a condition where he could catch the vision on the road to Damascus. It is quite certain that the Romans were brought to Christianity because of the faith exhibited by those who were persecuted. The Bible class and friendly home of an American missionary in Japan brought Kagawa to Christ. The glimpse of a statue of a Negro wrought by Bartholdi burned its way into the mind of Albert Schweitzer and helped him on his way to Africa to bring the message of the Christ to the Negroes of Lambarene.

Tom Kelly brought to Germany a beautiful life but he returned to the United States from his experience with German Friends much enriched. As one of his dearest and closest friends in America wrote me not long ago, "God did something to Tom in Germany in the summer of 1938. His writing and his speaking upon his return were different from his writing and speaking before his departure. What he wrote and said when he came back to us will rank among the great literature of the mystics of all time." God speaking through the times and through the lives of German Friends did this "something" to him which brought him a remarkable spiritual ripeness.

A famous American orator and statesman, Daniel Webster, once remarked that the best argument he knew for Christianity was his aunt who lived up in the hills of New Hampshire. His testimony could be multiplied by the hundreds of thousands by those who caught a glimpse of the meaning of Christianity through some such simple unknown lovable Christian.

It would seem to me self-evident that this quality of contagious Christianity is not confined to the male members of the species, but there are always those to whom it is at least not self-evident. In the organizational life of the church men have always been the active participants, but in the spread of the message through personal example, they have certainly had no monopoly. Among Christ's most devoted followers were Mary and Martha and Mary Magdalene. Someone has

pointed out that it was the women followers who were last at the cross and first at the tomb and that it was Peter who said, "We had supposed . . ." but Mary who cried, "He is risen!" When the disciples were discouraged and ready to return to their nets, it was a group of women who rallied them. Paul was opposed to active participation by the women in the business affairs of the Church but no one should underestimate his debt to Aquila, Phœbe, Lydia, or Mary or others of his co-workers in this first great missionary movement. An important chapter in the life of Francis of Assisi deals with his enriching friendships with a small group of women, Jacopa di Settesoli, whose home in Rome Francis used as a retreat; Praxedis, whom Francis himself inducted into the Third Order; and Clare, sometimes referred to as "The Lady Poverty".

In the history of the Society of Friends women have had a tremendous influence in all phases of the Society's development. Elizabeth Fry's name is probably best known but I look forward to the day when we as a group will know more about other outstanding women such as Margaret Fell, who later became the wife of George Fox; and about Mary Dyer, one of the three hanged on the Boston Common on Tenth Month 27, 1669, for their adventurous faith. Throughout our history up to and including the present time, Quaker women have played a leading role as bearers of the message through their contagious lives. When we in Germany think of such women as Joan Fry or Elsa Fox Howard or Anne Martin, or again about those whom we know even more personally, we have ample proof of that whereof I speak.

There is no pattern into which all these men and women about whom we have spoken, fit, but there are certain characteristics which they have in common.

First of all, they have all lived close to God. To them He has not been a distant, unapproachable Being. He has been a close, intimate friend, a companion on the trail of life. Communication with Him has always been possible. He spoke and still speaks to men and women and men and women have spoken and still speak with Him. Jesus expressed this relationship simply and beautifully in the words: "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father." What a beautiful relationship. In the long night watches on the hills of Palestine, Jesus strengthened this spiritual friendship.

Paul lived a life of complete devotion, too. All his aspirations, all his activities were centered in God. Triumphant, sincerely he could say, "In Him we live and move and have our Being." All else was to him superfluous.

Perhaps no greater testimony of the personal discovery of God can be found in the annals of Quakerism than the declaration of Isaac Penington, "This is He, this He, there is no other. This is

He whom I have waited for and sought after from my childhood; who was always near me, and had often begotten life in my heart, but I knew Him not distinctly, nor how to receive Him or dwell with Him. Some may desire to know what I have at last met with. I have met with my God." The man who wrote that statement was a brilliant scholar, a man of position and reputation. His first impression of the Quaker movement was one of great disappointment. Then he met George Fox, his intellectual inferior and Penington discovered that Fox, despite his lack of learning, had found something which he (Penington) had not yet found. Helped by Fox, Penington, too, discovered that of God in himself and his life was transformed. He lived with and for God. He became an important messenger of the Truth. His writings are full of this personal relationship which he felt with God.

Every man and woman whom one can name as a contagious Christian lives close to God, and in this relationship they find an inexhaustible supply of power. The story is told that the building of a bridge across one of the tidal rivers near New York was interrupted by the discovery of a derelict at the bottom of the river. Divers put chains around the obstacle and the largest tug boats tried vainly to pull the derelict away. Then a young man fresh from a technical school volunteered his plan for removing the obstacle. The plan was tried. The flat-boats for transporting granite blocks were attached to the derelict when the tide was out. Then the waters of the Atlantic began to roll in and gradually they loosened the derelict from the bottom of the river. Infinite energy had done what man with all his technical skill could not do!

We sometimes marvel at the accomplishments of great spiritual leaders of the past and the present, and explain their power as a gift of nature. The fact often is that they were not possessed with extra-ordinary talent but that they have harnessed their lives to the great source of all spiritual energy and have found there an inexhaustible supply of power. To use another metaphor, most of us are playing on electrical organs with the power turned off. We marvel at the glorious music which pours forth from the organs on which others are playing, unaware that we too could play similar music if we only contacted the source of electrical power.

Because Paul found the great source of spiritual power, he could proclaim to others, "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me." Because Kagawa has found this source of power, he has overcome physical handicaps that were seemingly insurmountable. He has tuberculosis, he is blind in one eye and has trachoma in the other. His body is full of disease. It is said that he has not a sound organ in his body. Many times he has been told that he could not live more than a short time, but he lives despite these dire predictions. Many less prominent individuals whom we know

and love are also able to live "above all", as George Fox expressed it, because of the discovery of God and the consequent release of hidden energy. The lives of such spiritual discoverers become expansive lives.

A third characteristic of these contagious Christians is the loss of self in love for others. How true that was of Jesus! Up and down the tiny land of Palestine He wandered, spending Himself for others. He loved everyone, He served everyone. He visited Simon and found Simon's wife's mother sick with a fever. And He healed her. A leper came to Him and Jesus did not turn him away. He was moved with compassion and stretched forth His hand and healed him, too. A learned scholar came to Jesus secretly under the cover of darkness and Jesus talked with him about the questions which weighed on his mind. Jesus met the rich young man and when he did not follow the plan Jesus outlined to him, Jesus understood why and loved him as before, perhaps more so, in the hope that that would give him new strength. He crossed over into the territory where the outcast of society were chained and showed His love for them, too. He ate with publicans and sinners. He stood in the temple and saw a widow as she passed by and slipped her mite into the offering box—and understood the greatness of her sacrifice, because He was sensitive to the feeling of other human beings. One could go on indefinitely illustrating Jesus' identification with men and women of all classes and conditions of life. He gave of Himself to them all. He drew no barriers. When John came to Him and in indignation reported, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us," Jesus rebuked him and replied, "Forbid him not, for he that is not against us, is for us."

George Fox believed that there was that of God in every man. He made no exceptions. The criminal, the insane, the Indian were all God's creatures. One should love them all since God had showed His love for them all by creating them in His own image. This was no new discovery made by George Fox. It was merely a rediscovery of an eternal truth. From George Fox's rediscovery of this ancient truth and his emphasis upon it, has come a glorious tradition among Friends for work with the insane, the criminals, the Indian, the Negro, the starving children of Germany, of Russia, and of France, and aid to the persecuted of many lands.

This love for all men has led David Livingston and Albert Schweitzer into the heart of Africa, Dr. Grenfell to Labrador, Karen Jeppe to Armenia, and Kagawa into the slums of Kobe. It has led hundreds of thousands of others into less spectacular service closer home.

Furthermore, each of these individuals has found inner peace and joy, oftentimes in the midst of unrest and turmoil in the outer world in which

they have lived. Paul spoke of the fruits of the spirit as love, joy, and peace. These he had himself experienced. If ever a man went through trials and tribulations and testing of his faith, Paul did. But he found inner peace and could truthfully write to the church at Philippi, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content." Moreover, he found not merely contentment but joy in whatsoever state he was in. In this same Epistle, he wrote to the Philippians, "Rejoice in the Lord *always*, again I will say rejoice. . . . In nothing be anxious but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known unto God." And the result he assured them from his own personal experience would be "the peace of God which passeth all understanding."

Earlier I referred to Margaret Fell Fox, one of the great Quaker women of all times. Listen to this letter written by her when in Lancaster Castle prison, at a time when she was threatened with the loss of her estate, Swarthmore Hall, and her daughter Mary was ill in London, probably with the plague: "My dear daughter, keep down all unworthy anxieties. In the invisible holy life which thou art made partaker of, solace thy soul, and in a sense of the superintending power of Almighty God, rest satisfied and be content. As I have said often to thee, give up to be crossed—that is the way to please the Lord, and to follow Him in His own way and will, whose way is the best; and blessed and happy are they that repose on His arm and in His bosom. Theirs is an enduring inheritance, where there will never be any more change. Let nothing enter thy mind concerning me, for I am well content with the handiwork of the Lord. Let not sorrow fill your hearts, for we have all cause to rejoice in the Lord evermore, and I most of all." (Jones, *Children of the Light*, pp. 17-18.) That is what I mean by inner peace and joy.

Yes, you and I are interested in the future of Quakerism. More than that, we are interested in the future of Christianity. We are concerned that the basic ideas represented in the life of Christ grip mankind and renovate society. We are convinced, I hope, that the Kingdom of God can come on earth. We are working, I assume, towards the achievement of that goal. When it does come, I am convinced that it will not come through any plan or idea, political or economic, social or even religious. It will come because enough Christians have found their way to God, have found Him in their innermost souls, have found there new power, inner peace and joy and a love for all mankind. By their contagion these men and women will have spread the message far and wide and will have won new recruits for the Kingdom of God on earth. May you and I be counted among these contagious Christians.

(The author has recently returned from Friends' service in Germany, where this article was written.)