

Quakerism in the United States Today: Progress and Problems

The decade in which we are now living is an historic period for the Society of Friends. Behind us lie three hundred years of Quaker history. In front of us stretches the unknown future. It is right that we should rejoice at this time in the completion of three centuries of Quakerism and be proud of our association with this significant segment of Christianity. But it is also important for us at this juncture to take stock of our present status and to prepare ourselves for the century which lies ahead. We need to know our strengths and weaknesses as a Society as we enter the fourth century of Quakerism. We need to examine the state of our Society and its readiness to meet the challenge of this new era.

Let us look first at our progress in recent years, at the growing points in the Society of Friends in the United States today.

Progress

Renewed Interest in Spiritual Life. Throughout Quakerdom in the United States there seems to be a realization of our spiritual shallowness. Articles in Friends papers, epistles from various Yearly Meetings, talks in conferences, and messages in Meetings for Worship frequently refer to our need for a renewal of our spiritual life. The answer to Rufus Jones' penetrating query, "Are We Ready?" has been either a definite "No" or a more hopeful "Not yet."

To stop there, however, would be suicidal. Fortunately Friends have moved beyond that point. Here and there they have begun to prepare themselves as individuals and as groups. In some sections the movement for "retreats" has gained strength. Individuals from many Meetings or many individuals from a single Meeting have set aside a day or a weekend for prayer and meditation in order that they might deepen their religious life. The Young Friends movement has shown a keen interest in the spiritual life of American Quakerism.

In other areas the accent has been on "advance." Friends have become concerned over the dwindling membership of their Meetings and Yearly Meetings and the lack of attention to Friends beliefs and practices. They have tried to discover some of the reasons for these losses and to commit themselves to a deepening of their own lives in an effort to revitalize their Meetings and Yearly Meetings.

This soul-searching among Friends is probably the most significant feature of American Quakerism today. Such a sense of inadequacy, coupled with a desire to seek the eternal sources of spiritual strength augur well for the Society as it enters its fourth century. Perhaps it can be said that American Quakerism is in one of these rare moods of readiness to shift its outlook and to reemphasize the spiritual aspects of its message.

The Extension of Quakerism to New Areas. The map of Friends Meetings in the United States looks quite different today than it did 25 or even ten years ago. Philadelphia and Richmond and Oskaloosa are still looked upon as centers of American Quakerism, but new names are constantly appearing in our Directory of Meetings. Most of them are in areas where Friends groups have not been found until recently. There are Quaker groups now in all but four states.

Florida might be cited as one area of Quaker expansion. A few years ago there were no Meetings in that state. Today there are three regularly established Monthly Meetings and several other independent groups meeting for worship. An annual conference of Florida Friends has become an outstanding Quaker event in that state. It is known that approximately 1,000 Friends spend some portion of the year in Florida.

On the other side of the continent a new Yearly Meeting has been formed, known as the Pacific Coast Yearly Meeting, with 20 Meetings regularly established, and 20 other small Quaker groups associated with it. These are largely in California, but they include groups in other western states and in Mexico, Hawaii, Canada, and China. This is the only Yearly Meeting in the United States which is international in character. The membership of this group is now nearly 800.

Several Meetings have sprung up, too, in parts of the mid-west and in the south-central states where Friends have never been active. Meetings for Worship have also become fairly common in the last decade or two in college and university centers such as New Haven, Ithaca, Princeton, Chapel Hill, Oberlin, Urbana, Bloomington, and a score of other cities and towns.

Coupled with these new groups is the vitality of the Wider Quaker Fellowship with 3,825 members at the moment. Often these persons are active leaders in other church groups, but wish to maintain some contact with Friends. Sometimes they are individuals or families which are living at a distance from any organized Quaker group and yet wish to associate themselves with the Society of Friends.

In this
up new fron
ical profile
encouraging

The Move
States have
major group
have been n

These v
ment towar
Within the
gether in or
have forme
towards org
the two Balt
meeting join
Quarterly M

The ex
recent years
in most plac

Where
a more unifi
outlook, and
wide Society

The Dissen
From the ea
astonishing
ship. Within
In fact the
for Friends

Up unti
his experienc
continue to l
the Society o
through his v
personally th

In this respect American Quakerdom is on the move. It is opening up new frontiers, establishing new outposts. This change in the geographical profile of the Society of Friends in the United States is a definitely encouraging sign.

The Movement for Unity. For more than 100 years we in the United States have been plagued by separations. There have been at least four major groups, often openly antagonistic to each other. In addition, there have been many smaller splinter groups.

These wounds have not all been healed, but there is a decided movement toward reconciliation and in some cases toward organic unity. Within the past few years the Friends of New England have joined together in one Yearly Meeting. The two groups in the Philadelphia area have formed a General Meeting of all Friends and are moving slowly towards organic unity. Friends in the two New York Yearly Meetings, in the two Baltimore Yearly Meetings, and in the three Canadian groups are meeting jointly. Many Meetings have become "united" and several united Quarterly Meetings have been formed.

The exchange of epistles between the various groups has grown in recent years and visiting Friends from other "branches" are more welcome in most places than has been the case for at least a century.

Where effort is being expended to reconcile differences and achieve a more unified approach, there has come a new sense of purpose, a broader outlook, and increased vitality. This, too, is a growing point in the nationwide Society of Friends today.

The Dissemination of the Quaker Message Through Publications. From the earliest days until the present time, Friends have produced an astonishing amount of religious literature in proportion to their membership. Within recent years there has been no diminution of such writing. In fact the last ten to twenty years has been an especially fertile period for Friends in this regard.

Up until the very last days of his life Rufus Jones continued to record his experiences and thought in books which were read and will undoubtedly continue to be read by Friends and non-Friends. This is a rich legacy for the Society of Friends. There is little doubt that his influence will continue through his writings as well as through the many persons whom he touched personally throughout this and other countries.

Thomas R. Kelly did not live long enough to record in writing much of the results of his "passionate and determined quest for adequacy," but his *Testament of Devotion* has meant a great deal to many Friends and to others in different religious fellowships, and it has already become a classic of devotional literature.

Howard Brinton has confined himself largely to writings for a distinctly Quaker audience, but his interpretations of Quaker mysticism and Quaker concerns have greatly enriched the Society of Friends in recent years.

Elton Trueblood, Douglas Steere, and Janet Whitney are among the foremost interpreters of Quakerism today through the written word and their writings have helped many Friends in their search for more abundant living, and have reached and enriched the lives of even more non-Friends.

Of special significance has been the growing list of titles of Pendle Hill pamphlets, culminating recently in the *Pendle Hill Reader*, published jointly by Harper and Brothers and our Quaker graduate center.

The last decade has likewise seen a decided strengthening of publications in the Five Years Meeting, with a highly commendable trend towards a Quaker emphasis in their various Quarterlies and Sunday School papers.

The American Friend and *The Friend* now appear less frequently than in years past, and the *Friends Intelligencer* remains the only weekly Quaker journal, but these three papers continue to contribute much to American Quakerism despite their woefully small circulations.

The World Committee for Consultation has not become vigorous yet in the field of publications, but the extent to which its publication on "The Vocation of Friends" is being used is most encouraging and gives promise for the future as to the type of service it can render.

Increased Attention to Work with Young Friends. The strength of American Quakerism in the years ahead will depend in large measure upon the current work with Young Friends. Some of the leadership of the Society will continue to come from convinced Friends, but most of it will need to come from the boys and girls and young men and women in Quaker homes and young people's groups today.

Friends are certainly not yet fully aware of the importance of such religious education, but there is a heartening interest in this field. The All-Friends Conferences for Young Friends which meant so much to Amer-

ican Quakerism
lar events and ha
persons.

The establish
another encourag
Western Yearly
now have such
increase as the s

North Caro
any Yearly Mee
work with them
Young Friends
also have a full
til recently.

There is al
Yearly Meetings
Yearly Meetings
junior high sch

This increa
of American Qu
Society of Frien

Vitality of Fri
agreement on th
pattern of Amer
of interest in Qu
Friends educati

In the east
schools is gener
new elementary
Downington, G
cocas in New J
Pacific Ackwort
nificant contribu

Haverford,
panded their ph
their contacts w
gains in the Que

much
," but
and to
classic

ican Quakerism two or three decades ago, have again become fairly regular events and have already had a significant influence upon many younger persons.

a dis-
sm and
recent

The establishment of Friends Camps, chiefly for Young Friends, is another encouraging aspect of work across the United States. Indiana and Western Yearly Meetings, California, Wilmington, and North Carolina now have such centers for summer work and the number will probably increase as the success of these ventures is more widely known.

ong the
ord and
bundant
Friends.
Pendle
ublished

North Carolina Friends have the largest group of young people of any Yearly Meeting in the United States and they have considered the work with them so important that they have had a full-time secretary for Young Friends for several years. The two Philadelphia Yearly Meetings also have a full-time secretary and Western employed such a person until recently.

of publi-
trend to-
y School

There is also a growing movement for the establishment of Junior Yearly Meetings, held for the most part at the same time as the regular Yearly Meetings, and attended usually by boys and girls of elementary and junior high school age.

ntly than
y Quaker
American

This increasing concern for Quaker work with the richest resource of American Quakerism is indeed a reassuring sign for the future of the Society of Friends in this country.

orous yet
cation on
and gives

Vitality of Friends Schools and Colleges. Friends are not in complete agreement on the place of Quaker schools and colleges today in the total pattern of American Quakerism, but there seems to be a marked increase of interest in Quaker education and a noticeable increase in the vitality of Friends educational institutions.

trength of
sure upon
of the So-
of it will
in Quaker

In the eastern part of the United States the enrollment in Friends schools is generally on the increase and within the past few years a few new elementary schools have been started. These include the schools at Downingtown, Gwynedd, Merion, and Newtown in Pennsylvania, and Rancocas in New Jersey. Two other schools, Scattergood School, Iowa, and Pacific Ackworth and Pacific Oaks in California, have already made significant contributions to Quaker education through their pioneering efforts.

ce of such
field. The
h to Amer-

Haverford, Guilford, Wilmington, and Earlham Colleges have all expanded their physical plants, made great strides forward in strengthening their contacts with their respective Yearly Meetings, and made noticeable gains in the Quaker emphasis in their general educational programs. Closer

contact with other Quaker colleges by this writer might add other institutions to this list.

Pendle Hill and Quaker Hill have emerged in the last decade as two of the most significant educational institutions among Friends. Following quite different patterns, they have nevertheless exerted a powerful impact upon Friends in different parts of the United States. Their contributions in the field of adult education have been extremely important.

Widespread Participation in the Work of the American Friends Service Committee. For many years the American Friends Service Committee was predominantly a concern of Philadelphia or eastern Friends. It drew upon personnel from other parts of the United States and enlisted some support from other groups of Friends, but it was primarily run and financed by Friends along the east coast.

Even though there is some criticism of the Service Committee among Friends today and a lack of cooperation on the part of a few Yearly Meetings, it has nevertheless become a very important organ of American Quakerism. One of the reasons for this has been its genius in enlisting thousands of Friends in hundreds of Meetings in the collection of clothes, the sewing of garments, and the assembling of tons of grain for use abroad. Friends of all types have felt that it was their organization and they have become interested in its world-wide activities.

The establishment of regional offices of the Service Committee has been another distinct gain in recent years. Through closer contact with local groups and through a program of decentralization, the A.F.S.C. has rapidly become a grass-roots movement of American Quakerism. Decisions at the top level are still made frequently by a Board largely composed of Friends in the vicinity of Philadelphia who can come together quickly and frequently, but there is a growing feeling that this important agency of the Society of Friends belongs to all Friends.

Attention to Political Affairs. There has probably been no period since the withdrawal of Friends from active political life in the Pennsylvania colony in which Friends have taken as active a part in politics as they are now taking. True, there are few Quakers holding office in Congress or even in state legislatures, but the Friends Committee on National Legislation is exerting a decided influence in Washington and assisting local groups of Friends to become politically conscious and active. Through its *Newsletter*, talks by its representatives to Yearly Meetings and local

Meetings, in Washington, Quaker involvement in the movement of influence in England.

The committee on has been widespread read by persons in England.

The important one of the action at

Concern large percentage of American Rural Life Yearly Meetings Friends have but they with membership ways of en

One of Meetings Quaker participation or by membership of underpa

If Quakers give much Association experiment

Improvement to in early part

Meetings, its advice to committees throughout the country, its Seminars in Washington, and its contacts with Congressmen, it is presenting the Quaker view of religion and public affairs to many persons in positions of influence. The establishment of this Committee has also resulted in a movement among other denominations to set-up similar bodies in Washington.

The issuance of the reports of the American Friends Service Committee on "The United States and the Soviet Union" and "Steps to Peace" has been a major contribution of Friends to the political sphere. The widespread use of these booklets as study guides has resulted in their being read by several thousand persons in the United States, and by many persons in Europe through translations into other languages.

The work of Friends behind the scenes at the United Nations is an important story which cannot be told in detail as yet, but it is certainly one of the distinctive contributions of Friends to political thinking and action at present.

Concern for Rural Life. Despite the trend towards urban living, a large percentage of Friends live on farms and much of the strength of American Quakerism comes from rural Meetings. Establishment of the Rural Life Association and the setting up of rural life committees in several Yearly Meetings have been steps forward within the last decade. Friends have not found the answers to the revitalization of rural Meetings, but they are actively aware of the problem and are attempting to share with members of the Church of the Brethren and the Mennonites in finding ways of enriching rural living and in strengthening the rural church.

One of the interesting experiments now being conducted by several Meetings in the Five Years Meeting is the purchase of small farms for Quaker pastors. These plots of ground are either tended by the pastor or by members of the Meeting and are one means of increasing the income of underpaid pastors.

If Quakerism is to retain its strength in farming communities, it must give much more attention to this problem, and the work of the Rural Life Association is one means of exchanging ideas and stimulating thinking and experimentation to strengthen rural Quakerism.

Improving Race Relations. Friends were in the forefront of the movement to improve the status of the Negro in this country in the 18th and early part of the 19th Centuries, but after the Civil War there was less and

less attention paid to this testimony. Within recent years, however, Friends have begun again to play an important part in race relations. Assistance to Jewish refugees from Central Europe was highlighted for a time and aid to Japanese-Americans during World War II became a special concern for a few years. Today Friends are increasingly active in efforts to aid the Negro in becoming an integrated part of American life. Most Friends Schools have at last opened their doors to Negro children, and at least two Friends colleges have employed Negroes on their staff. A major contribution to better race relations has been sparked by the American Friends Service Committee by its efforts to find employment for outstanding Negroes in places where they have not hitherto been employed. A few Negroes have joined the Society of Friends in recent years, although their number is still very, very small.

Much remains to be done by Friends in this enormous and highly important field, but progress can be reported in the last decade in Friendly interest and action in race relations.

Establishment of Quaker Interest Groups. One of the most novel and promising developments in American Quakerism is the formation of vocational or interest groups among Friends. The Rural Life Association, to which reference has already been made, might be considered one of these groups. Another is the association of Quakers interested in labor relations, a loosely-knit federation of persons devoting their lives largely to mediation between employers and employees. Still another is the group of Friends interested in the relation of psychology and religion, which meets in an annual conference and publishes the leaflet on "Inward Light." The Friends Council on Education is a similar organization of Quaker educators which could become a much more powerful body than it is at present. The trend towards the holding of Family Institutes is another such effort to bring together persons of similar interests in efforts to improve the translation of Quaker beliefs into daily actions.

These are some of the growing points in the Society of Friends in the United States today. These are a few of the most significant developments in American Quakerism.

Problems

At the same time, however, there remain a large number of baffling issues as Friends enter their fourth century of existence. Let us look for a moment at some of these problems which retard the growth of Quakerism in the United States today and cry out for solution.

The Need for a
istics of first-cent
That was a perio
reality of God in
experiences to ot
Many of them sp
and Seekers throu

The greatest
who can speak w
perience in trans
such a vocal mini

Among silen
few Meetings wit
sons who speak.
Most Meetings su
tors hunger for s
out being fed.

Attempts hav
concern for the
noble experimen
in the vocal min
brief and often
come from wide
lem for several d
on their minds th
which come to
fewer Friends in
ters have done,
tion for the Me
empty-minded re
Friends have ne
ance? Is it poss
never have a pr
fellow-worshippe

This sad sta
such groups the
ministry as a lif
ters who are no
are calling upo

The Need for an Inspired Ministry. One of the dominant characteristics of first-century Quakerism was its inspired and inspiring ministry. That was a period of outstanding ministers who had experienced the reality of God in their own lives and were compelled to speak of their experiences to others. It was likewise a period of itinerant ministers. Many of them spent all or large portions of their time visiting Friends and Seekers throughout England and in other parts of the world.

The greatest need of Quakerism today is for scores of such ministers who can speak with conviction in modern language out of their own experience in translating the will of God into everyday action. Without such a vocal ministry Quakerism will not advance.

Among silent Meeting Friends this is a basic problem. There are a few Meetings with a richness and variety of ministry and with many persons who speak. But such Meetings are certainly few and widely scattered. Most Meetings suffer from a lack of ministry. Meeting members and visitors hunger for spiritual food and they leave Meeting far too often without being fed.

Attempts have been made among some groups of Friends to spread the concern for the ministry by not recording any persons. This has been a noble experiment and it is probably true that more Friends participate in the vocal ministry now than heretofore. Usually such participation is brief and often provocative. But there is also a place for messages which come from wide reading, Bible study, prayer, and concern over a problem for several days. Very few Friends carry the Meeting and its ministry on their minds throughout the week and keep themselves open to messages which come to them in part before they enter the Meeting house. Far fewer Friends in the United States do what some English Quaker ministers have done,—set aside periods of *general* rather than specific preparation for the Meeting for Worship. Instead, most Friends go to Meeting empty-minded rather than open-minded. Is it any wonder, then, that some Friends have never participated in the vocal ministry in years of attendance? Is it possible for a Friend to attend a Meeting for fifty years and never have a prayer or Bible verse or brief message to share with his fellow-worshippers?

This sad state of the ministry exists, too, in pastoral Meetings. Among such groups there is a decreasing number of men and women entering the ministry as a life-time calling and a sharply decreasing number of ministers who are not pastors. As a result, Friends in several Yearly Meetings are calling upon persons from other denominations to preach to them.

When the pastor is away, the worship service is cancelled. What a commentary upon the ministry in a Quaker group to assume that no one but the pastor has any message for the group!

And in the increasingly large number of pastoral Meetings where there is an "open period" of worship, few Friends ever speak. In some cases this is because of the brevity of the period, but in others it is because the concern for the ministry has not been developed.

Many a Friend today who is serving as a pastor and many other Friends who carry a deep concern for the ministry in Meetings were encouraged early in their youth by older Friends,—usually by elders or overseers in the Meeting. Is it possible that this function is being neglected today, with a resultant dearth of Quaker ministers? Is it possible that there are Friends who should be encouraged to spend a summer at Pendle Hill or a period at Quaker Hill or to undertake an extensive program of study and worship who are not being encouraged along these lines?

This need for an inspired and inspiring ministry is Quakerism's greatest challenge today. Without such messengers the Society will not advance in the fourth century upon which we are entering.

Necessity of Education on Quaker Principles and Practice.

Throughout its history the Society of Friends has made a distinctive contribution to Christianity through its efforts to recapture the spirit of Christ's disciples. It has believed that Christianity was primarily a lay movement. It has stressed the sacredness of personality and the impossibility of participation in war. It has developed an extraordinary form of carrying on the congregation's business in a spirit of worship, without recourse to voting. It has believed in and practiced simplicity of living. It has had a special message on the sacraments and the place of the Bible.

These are some of the ways in which Friends have stood apart and above the mass of Christians. These are some of the unique features of Quakerism. Without them, Friends would lose their identity. Without them, the Society of Friends might as well cease to exist.

Yet as one moves from Friends Meeting to Friends Meeting, he finds pacifists in the minority in most Quaker groups. In some places it is almost impossible to find any such persons. In many a Meeting the pastor or some prominent Friend runs the affairs of the group. In many Meetings, pastoral and non-pastoral, a few persons attend the business sessions and there is little or no difference in the way in which decisions are reached in such sessions and in those of non-Quaker groups. Ask the average

Friend in a
Bible. and it
be contrary

Among
principles and
and economic
study. After
is crowded
Quakers we
Society of F
Seekers from
a distinctive
principles and p
time.

Problem of
the complicated
that job is.
listener some
explain and s

As a res
the strength
Even those M
remain indep

As ment
tain groups t
Society today

There ar
picture. First
chiefly in Oh
groups. Thei
apart from th
tion, and sev
there seems t
Friends in the

Then the
pendent Meeti
Meetings hav
In the North

Friend in most Meetings about our position on the sacraments or the Bible and the answer will be vague, there will be no answer, or it will be contrary to the historic attitude of Friends.

Among all groups of Friends there is a need for education on Quaker principles and practices. Forums tend to concentrate on social, political, and economic problems; Sunday Schools tend to emphasize only Bible study. Attention to Quaker history, biography, principles and practices is crowded out of far too many programs of religious education. As *Quakers* we are ignorant about our own Society and its beliefs. If the Society of Friends is to speak to the condition of its own members and Seekers from other groups in the years ahead and to continue to make a distinctive contribution to Christianity, it needs to emphasize the principles and practices of Quakerism far more than it is doing at the present time.

Problem of Quaker Organization. It you have ever tried to explain the complicated structure of American Quakerism, you know how difficult that job is. One can simplify it, diagram it, and occasionally leave the listener somewhat better informed. But it is an embarrassing situation to explain and a contradiction to our belief in love as the way of life.

As a result, Friends do not speak with a united voice and much of the strength of the Quaker movement is siphoned off into divisive groups. Even those Meetings which do not want to join a branch and therefore remain independent, actually constitute another group.

As mentioned previously, there is considerable progress among certain groups toward unity. Nevertheless, we are woefully splintered as a Society today.

There are at least three separate but related problems in this general picture. First of all there is the relationship between evangelical Friends, chiefly in Ohio, Central, Kansas, and Oregon Yearly Meetings, and other groups. Their dissatisfaction with the Five Years Meeting keeps them apart from that large and most similar group. There is some intervisitation, and several fraternal delegates attend the Five Years Meeting, but there seems to be little hope of union between these two large bodies of Friends in the immediate future.

Then there is the problem of the integration of the new and independent Meetings into the Quaker movement. On the Pacific Coast these Meetings have recently decided to form an independent Yearly Meeting. In the North Central States several Meetings have not formed another

official body, but they meet at least yearly in the Lake Erie Association. Quite a few of these Meetings are joining two Yearly Meetings. But there are still many such independent groups which are cut off largely from the regularly established Yearly Meetings of Friends. The older groups suffer from the loss of this new life and the younger groups lose the strength of association with larger bodies of Friends and with more experienced Friends.

A third problem is the relation of the *Yearly Meetings* which are rapidly becoming "united," to the Five Years Meeting and the Friends' General Conference. This applies particularly to New York, Baltimore, and Canada Yearly Meetings. They might seek admission to both national bodies of Friends, but that is not altogether a solution.

As we enter a fourth century of Quakerism, American Quakerism is confronted with this baffling problem and no easy solutions are in view. Continued visitation, wider reading of each other's papers, wise counsel, love and patience are suggested as means toward the achievement of a more unified Society of Friends in the United States.

Decreases in Membership. Despite a large increase in population in the United States, Friends have made only a very slight gain in membership within the past 25 years. These gains have been primarily in North Carolina, on the west coast, in the New York and Philadelphia area, and in the new city Meetings scattered across the country.

In the same period there have been large losses in membership. This has been especially true in the mid-west. Wilmington Yearly Meeting has lost over 700 members in that period; Ohio (Conservative) over 250; Indiana (Five Years Meeting) over 500 and (over 5,000 since 1917); Indiana (General Conference) nearly 700, or more than 50% of its membership since 1910; Iowa over 700; Nebraska more than 500; and Kansas over 2,000.

Some of this has been due to shifts of population away from rural areas and the lack of Meetings in larger cities, or the inability of such city Meetings to attract Quakers who have moved there. Some of it is probably due to lack of adjustment in rural Meetings to changes in thinking and evangelistic methods. Some of it is probably due to lack of adequately trained pastors. A few studies have been made of the reasons for these losses throughout the entire middle west, as well as in some other sections, but the problem has never been attacked thoroughly.

This is another century of Quakerism and the problem of whether rural and small towns

Other Problems | major problems just which disturb sensitive

One is the question of modern society and frequently ask whether Friends occasionally schools in the Philadelphia which sometimes arise from the inflation of rising costs.

Another baffling groups such as the federations.

Many "convince" lack of attention to wonder how these reasons of such a group with Worship.

Some Five Years training and financial

So the list might enter the fourth century the slow but effective will remain unsolved. Problem solving will

There is much to the United States. We are not united in the are widely separated. seem at times weak in a revolutionary world.

This is another major problem of Friends as they enter the fourth century of Quakerism. It is not only a problem of numbers; it is likewise a problem of whether Quakerism in the United States is to lose its hold in rural and small town areas.

Other Problems Which Disturb Friends. In addition to the four major problems just mentioned, there are numerous smaller problems which disturb sensitive Friends.

One is the question of the place of Quaker schools and colleges in modern society and the support of such schools. Mid-western Friends frequently ask whether the laying down of the Quaker academies was a blow to Quakerism and the development of leadership in that area; eastern Friends occasionally discuss the large number of elementary and secondary schools in the Philadelphia and New York areas and the rivalry for pupils which sometimes arises. All Friends schools are plagued with the question of rising costs.

Another baffling question is the relation of Friends to other Christian groups such as the National and World Councils of Churches and local federations.

Many "convinced Friends" and some others are concerned about the lack of attention to art and music among silent Meeting Friends and wonder how these religious expressions can be incorporated into the life of such a group without necessarily becoming a part of the Meeting for Worship.

Some Five Years Meeting Friends are very much concerned over the training and financial support of pastors, and quite rightly so.

So the list might be continued. Many, many problems face us as we enter the fourth century of Quakerism. Some will be solved in time by the slow but effective Quaker method of reaching united decisions. Some will remain unsolved. New problems will arise with the passing of time. Problem solving will continue to be one mark of the vitality of Quakerism.

Summary

There is much to discourage us about the strength of the Society in the United States. We seem splintered. We lack a dynamic ministry. We are not united in the application of Quaker principles. We are small. We are widely separated. We are losing members in some areas. And we seem at times weak and timid in speaking to the condition of this troubled, revolutionary world.

But there is also much cause for optimism about the Society of Friends in the United States today. There is a renewed interest in spiritual life and a wide and growing band of Friends who are concerned about the deepening of our religious faith. Many Friends groups are learning to live in love and fellowship with Friends whom they have not known too well in the past. Quakerism is moving into new parts of the country and becoming a nation-wide movement. Friends are giving increasing attention to their younger members and taking a renewed interest in their Quaker schools and colleges. They are more united than ever before in the work of the American Friends Service Committee and are forming new groups to speak as a body to their fellow-countrymen and the world. Through a few "Publishers of Truth" they are speaking to a growing group of friends of the Friends and Seekers outside the Society.

There is much to make us proud of the Religious Society of Friends in this country at the beginning of the second half of this century and on the threshold of the fourth century of Quakerism. There is much to make us believe that Quakerism can and will speak in more vigorous, dynamic, and prophetic ways in the years ahead. God grant us the wisdom and the strength to carry out our mission in that fourth century of our Society.