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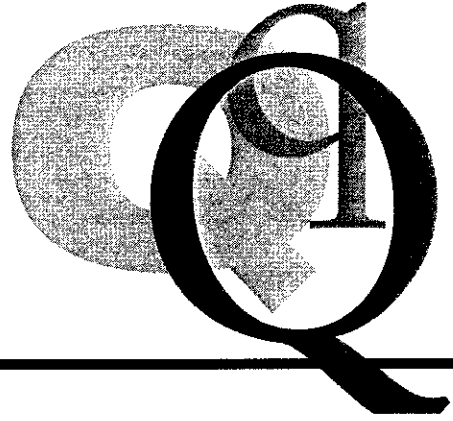PETER KIVISTO
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QUAKERS Also known as the Religious Society of Friends, the Quakers are a Christian-based religious movement that began in the apocalyptic and politically charged period after the English Civil War (c. 1650). Aligned with radical parliamentary positions that were suspect when monarchial rule resumed in 1660, Quakerism (under direction of its most influential early figure, George Fox) quickly adopted a pacifist position toward war. The persecution that Quakers suffered (largely from tithe resistance and refusal to swear oaths) prior to the establishment of limited religious toleration in 1689 contributed to the group's introversion, which continued until the end of the nineteenth century. Quakerism's basic theological claim of "indwelling divinity within all persons," in combination with its formal anticlericalism (at least during its early days), placed it at the far left of Puritanism.

People hold memberships in Quakerism through Monthly Meetings, which gather regularly for worship and meet monthly to conduct business. Monthly Meetings in the same geographic area that share similar beliefs join to form Yearly Meetings. The structure and operations of Yearly Meetings vary, but all of them follow procedures outlined in church government doctrines that they agree upon independently through consensus decision making (see Hare 1973). Historic schisms led to five main strains of Quakerism, to which Yearly Meetings may affiliate themselves: Conservative (those who adhere to practices and beliefs rooted in previous centuries); Evangelical (with pastors leading programmed, Christocentric meetings); Friends General Conference (whose members are Christian humanists and universalists); Friends United Meeting (conservative Christians, including some pastored meetings); and United (sharing equal affiliations with Friends General Conference and Friends United Meeting). Worldwide membership stands around 300,000, with people in approximately 55 countries (concentrated in the United States, Great Britain, and Kenya).

Historically, the group distinguished itself by its members' contributions to slavery abolition, prison reform, women's rights, and peace work (often through Friends Service Committees). Quakers see these undertakings as outward manifestations of what they call "the peace testimony" (which renounces war and decries conditions that foster violence), and in turn the peace testimony stems from the group's core tenet that there is "that of God in every person."

Members' belief in the reality of continuous revelation translates into a series of inspirational "advices and queries" that Yearly Meetings either produce themselves or borrow, and that are designed to orient people toward values of lifestyle simplicity, contemplation, and social action. In what Quakers call "unprogrammed" meetings for worship, people sit in silence, which anyone may interrupt to deliver a statement that he or she feels is divinely inspired and worthy of sharing.

Researchers have produced extensive studies of Quakerism. Kent (1990 [1983]) highlighted the importance of early Quakerism's "fixed price" policy in the development of Max Weber's "Protestant ethic" thesis. He also argued that development of the doctrine partly reflected feelings of deep social resentment (along lines previously identified by Nietzsche and Marxist revisionist Eduard Bernstein) rather than apolitical or antipolitical Puritan spirituality as Weber claimed. Baltzell (1979) discussed how the egalitarian and antiauthoritarian Quaker ethos of Philadelphia (founded by Quaker William Penn and settled by fellow Friends) prevented its citizens from achieving social, judicial, or civic prominence. Kent and Spickard (1994) replied, however, that Quaker theology and ethics contributed heavily to a "sectarian civil religion" that consistently protested against social and political injustices. Mullett (1984) showed that the historical complexity of Quakerism's evolving activities and beliefs makes it exceedingly difficult to place the group within sociological "sect" or "denomination" typologies.

Addressing other issues, a linguistic study (Bauman 1983) examined how seventeenth-century Quaker "plain speech" and silence served as vehicles through which Friends both conceptualized their message of spiritual and social egalitarianism and took that message into the world of social relations. Despite its pacifistic stance, Quaker families in one Yearly Meeting reported higher levels of particular types of family violence than did families in an American national study (Brutz and Ingoldsby 1984). Further studies explored Quakerism's "considerable influence on the overall development of British managerial thought" in industrial relations (Child 1964). One historian discussed Quakerism's instrumental role in British and American peace movements (Kennedy 1984), while others have documented the religion's international reconciliation efforts during crises such as the India-Pakistan War of 1965 and the Nigerian Civil War from 1967 to 1970 (Yarrow 1978). Finally, discussions exist of the group's war relief programs throughout Europe in the nineteenth century (e.g., Germany, Greece, Ireland, the Balkans, and Russia) and elsewhere into the twentieth century (South Africa, post civil-war Spain, World War I ambulance services and postwar relief, and various refuge efforts; Greenwood 1975).

See also Church-Sect Theory, Church-and-State Issues, Protestant Ethic Thesis, Max Weber

—*Stephen A. Kent*

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