

Anniversary Sermons

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by

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102nd. anniversary

THE WAY WE WERE

A Sermon

By

Willie R. Frye

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"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us..." Heb. 12:1

Many years ago, an accident victim filed suit against the man who ran into him. The victim was on the witness stand being questioned by the defense attorney. "Isn't it true," asked the attorney, "that at the scene of the accident, you said that you were not hurt?" The man on the witness stand said, "Well, you see, it was like this: I was going down the road with my horse pulling my wagon and my dog on the seat by my side..." At that point the defense attorney interrupted him. "All I want," said he, "is a yes or no answer. Isn't it true that you said at the scene of the accident that you were not hurt?" Again the man said, "Well, you see it was like this: I was going down the road with my horse pulling my wagon and my dog by my side..." Again, the attorney stopped him. "I didn't ask you that. All I want is yes or no." Finally, the witness turned to the judge and pled: "Your honor I can't answer yes or no. Won't you please let me tell my story?" The judge finally granted his request. So the man said, "Well it was like this: I was going down the road with my horse pulling my wagon and my dog sitting by my side when along came this big car from behind and hit my wagon. When I came to, my horse was lying in the ditch, my dog was in the road, and I was out in the field. Along came a state trooper. He looked at my horse and said, 'This horse has two broken legs and he took out his gun and shot him. He found my dog and he said, 'This dog is hurt too bad to live,' and he shot my dog. Then, he came over to me and said, 'Are you all right?'"

The point of this is, of course, that, in order to get the proper perspective, we need to know the whole story. That is why history is so important. In order to know who we are and where we are going, it is important to know where we have been and what has brought us to this point.

So, with apologies to Barbra Streisand, I want to take you back for a few minutes to "The Way We Were" and tell you a little of God's dealings with the Quakers in Surry County. There is no way I can tell you the whole story because there is not enough time, but I would like to touch on at least some significant events and ideas.

We are celebrating today the 102nd anniversary of Mt. Airy Meeting. Yet, in the context of larger histories, we are fairly recent arrivals. When I was pastor of Goldsboro Meeting, we were entertaining some foreign students in our home and I was telling them about our meeting there. I said that our meetinghouse was quite old and that we were thinking of building a new one. They asked how old it was and when I told them that it was built in 1927, they smiled. When I asked why they were smiling, they said that the house they were living in back home in England was over 400 years old. A word of advice: don't try

to impress anyone from Europe or Asia with the age of anything in the U.S. unless it is one of those dinosaurs they have been digging up in Arizona.

In European terms or in the terms of most other cultures, we are relative newcomers on the world scene. And from that perspective, Surry County and Mt. Airy are even younger than some other parts of our country. It was almost 150 years after the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock that the first settlers came to this area. While the earlier colonies were being settled and civilized, Surry County remained a wilderness peopled by native American Indians and wild animals. The early colonies such as Virginia and Pennsylvania were, in fact, becoming crowded by the time settlers came to this area. A major factor in this late settlement was the isolation of the area. There were no major roads; no railroad; and none of its rivers - the Ararat, the Fisher, or the Mitchell - were navigable. Raleigh was 100 miles away and the nearest seaport was 250 miles distant.

In those early days, survival was the first order of business and it was not an easy business at that. An early writer, Hardin E. Taliaferro, described Surry county as "a poor man's country..." He went on to say, "There is little good land in it. All the valuable land lies on the small rivers and creeks, in very narrow bottoms. No rich man will ever be tempted to live there." Some fledgling industry began to come into the county when Jacob Brower built a cotton mill in the 1840s on the Ararat River at Hamburg. That was followed by the manufacture of tobacco by the Fultons and Spargers after the War Between the States. Martin Banner is believed to have built the first tobacco factory within what is now Mt. Airy. But it was not until the coming of the railroad in 1888 that Mt. Airy had the transportation that was necessary for industrial development.

Today, Surry County has a fine educational system, but in those early years, there was little time for education or the finer pursuits of life. According to an article by A. H. Guernsey in Harpers' New Monthly Magazine in 1862 the adult population of Surry County in 1850 was perhaps the poorest educated of any county in the U. S. with one third of the men and over one half of the women unable to read or write.

Nor was Surry County considered particularly fertile ground for religion. Even the Moravians hesitated. They began preaching in the county in 1764 but they refused to baptize the people until they had time to see whether the Word of God would bear fruit.

The first settlers began to arrive around 1740 and among those settlers were Quakers. Just as they were the first organized religious body in the State of North Carolina, so it was the Quakers who were the first organized religious body in Surry County. No meeting was established, however, until 1772 when Friends from New Garden Meeting set up Tom's Creek Meeting at what is now Westfield.

Other religious groups began to come into the area by 1800. Foremost among them were the Baptists who soon became the predominant religion and remains so today. Their democratic government, simple services, revivals, emotional approach and their indifference toward an educated ministry were their main appeals. The Baptists were soon followed by the Methodists. Their attraction was similar to that of the Baptists.

Their evangelism, disregard of ritual, camp meetings with emotional appeals and circuit riders drew people of the area. Later, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Mormons, and others would come.

The Quakers who came to Surry County in 1740 and in the years following were quite different from their Baptist and Methodist neighbors and, I am sure, they were thought to be quite odd. They had no preachers or pastors, preferring to meet in silence. They wore the customary garb of Quakers of that day which made them look much like the man on the Quaker Oats box, and they used the plain speech of thees and thous.

Their neighbors subscribed to the Calvinistic doctrines of original sin that taught that all men were depraved but Quakers believed that while men were prone to evil, there was that of God in each one. While the gospel of their neighbors held the pessimistic view that there is no hope for the world, they believed that we are put in the world to mend it and make it better. While their neighbors preached a gospel of a wrathful God who would send the unrepentant to hell, they believed that they were to attempt to bring the kingdom of God to earth by promoting goodwill. While their neighbors willingly joined in the militias of the Revolutionary War, the Quakers spoke of peace and resisted violence. And while their neighbors bought and sold slaves, Quakers for the most part believed that owning another human being was wrong.

The Golden Age of Quakerism extended from about 1700 to around 1740 and after that, it began to decline. It especially declined in North Carolina and there were two major reasons for it. The first was that Quakers lived among people of other denominations and their young people fell in love and married their Baptist and Methodist neighbors. At first, Quakers tried to keep their ranks pure by disowning anyone who was not a Quaker. But who can stand in the way of romance? The result was that Quakers lost many of their most promising young people and their ranks were further depleted. When they stopped the practice of disownment, Quakers tended to take on more and more the doctrines and practices of their Baptist and Methodist neighbors.

The second reason that Quakers declined in North Carolina was the westward migrations. Land was opening up in Ohio, Indiana, Kansas, Missouri and other western states. The migration was so massive that Westfield Meeting was laid down in 1832. There was a further migration just prior to and during the War Between the States when Quakers made themselves unpopular by their opposition to both slavery and to the war.

By the end of the war some estimates are that there were only 600 Quakers left in the state. Other estimates place the figure at about 2000. After the war, the Baltimore Association poured money and personnel into an effort to replant Quakerism in North Carolina, but the Quakerism that returned to North Carolina was quite different from the Quakerism of the Golden Age of the 1700s. It was not a sudden change. It began with the revival movements that swept the country. The first of these was the Great Awakening which began in New Jersey in 1726 and lasted for fifty years. This was followed by a second Great Awakening that began in 1792. This movement abated somewhat during the War Between the States but took on new life after the war under the

leadership of people such as Dwight L. Moody and later under Billy Sunday. This third movement is sometimes called the Great Revival.

These movements with their emphasis on a dramatic conversion experience and a blissful life after death were especially strong on the frontier because life was hard and the only thing people had to look forward to were rest, plenty, and a beautiful city with streets of gold in another world. In addition, the semi-annual revival meeting or the campmeetings were the only diversion the people had from their hard labor in the fields. Therefore, evangelicalism first took root in Quakerism in the Midwest. In states like Ohio, Indiana, and Kansas, Quakers found themselves joining their Methodist friends in campmeetings and revivals. That brand of Quakerism found its way back to North Carolina through Friends that returned to the state and through evangelists from the Midwest.

This was a Quakerism that had been strongly influenced by the campmeeting and Revival Movement and while it maintained many of the Quaker habits, it largely resembled Methodism. It is of more than passing significance that one of the leading ministers in Surry County, Wesley Wooten, was named, not for George Fox, the founder of Quakerism, but for John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church.

Many Friends resisted the influence of the revival movement. One of my favorite stories is about a Quaker family at New Garden. There was a Methodist revival going on in the community and one morning the oldest son, sitting at the breakfast table, said to his father: "Father, I have something to tell thee." To which the old Quaker said, "Yes, son, what is it?" The boy said, "I have to tell thee that I went to the Methodist revival last night." The old man said, somewhat sharply, "Thee did?" And the son said, "That is not all, Father. I got saved." The old man said sternly, "Well it served thee right. I told thee not to go."

This little anecdote illustrates graphically the differences among Friends over the evangelical movement. While many saw it as the salvation of a declining Society of Friends, many others saw it as a serious departure from traditional Quaker faith and practice. Elbert Russell, in his *History of Quakerism*, says that the evangelical movement was the major cause of the division that took place in 1827 and 1828.

The "Great Revival" that began shortly after the War Between the States engulfed Quakerism in North Carolina. Allen Jay who was sent to North Carolina by the Baltimore Association to help re-establish Quakerism in the state saw the young people of Springfield Meeting being drawn away to the Methodist revivals and finally became a participant himself because of his fear that Quakers would lose their young people for good. The result was that, following the lead of Allen Jay, Friends began to participate in citywide revivals and meetings began to schedule revival services themselves. Following the revivals, some meetings asked the evangelists to stay on as pastors for the sake of the new converts, many of whom were originally Methodists and Baptists. These evangelists, like the Methodists, preached a fourfold gospel of salvation, sanctification, the Second Coming of Christ, and faith healing. The revivals were often characterized by emotional appeals and a strong emphasis on winning converts even through some very high

pressure tactics. One of the features of every revival was the enthusiastic counting of "souls saved" at the end. There were glowing reports to Quarterly Meeting of the number of converts and members added.

It was in the midst of the fervor of the revival movement that Mt. Airy Meeting was born. The evangelistic fervor was demonstrated as Friends in the area reached out beyond their immediate area. Quarterly meeting minutes are filled with reports of revivals and of outreach efforts. Meetings were established at Dobson, Union Hill, Pilot Mountain, Ararat, and Pine Hill. The Friends Mission was opened at Ararat, VA and evangelists and missionaries were sent "over the mountain" to the Galax and Hillsville areas. Friends ranged as far away as West Virginia and Tennessee in their evangelistic and missionary efforts and it was often the pastors of Mt. Airy Meeting that carried out these efforts.

Most of the early pastors of Mt. Airy came to the meeting first as evangelists. Perhaps the only exception was the first pastor, Joseph Potts, who was a scholarly man and whose ministry was characterized as a teaching ministry.

He was followed by Leverett Rugg, under whose leadership the meeting house was built in 1904. Rugg was much in demand as an evangelist and he and his wife organized Bible study groups and cottage prayer meetings. The meeting had Sunday evening services as well as services on Sunday morning.

Aulanger Larzelere of Indiana came to Mt. Airy in December 1904 to conduct a revival and it continued for almost a month. When the Ruggs left in the following July, Larzelere was invited to come to Mt. Airy. Leverett Rugg moved on to become the Superintendent of Evangelism for the Yearly Meeting.

One of the most dynamic couples and perhaps the most typical of Midwestern evangelicalism, were the Merediths. Mary Moon was an evangelist from Indiana who came to the Yearly Meeting in 1877. She was obviously a powerful speaker. Her audiences at a Methodist Church in Winston-Salem were estimated at as many as five thousand. She later married Franklin Meredith and they came to Mt. Airy to conduct a revival in 1908. The meeting invited them to serve as a pastoral team. They did not stay very long - only ten months - but it was a year of intense revivals, not only in Mt. Airy but also across the Yearly Meeting.

I wish I had time to tell you of Miles Reece, Leannah Hobson, Wesley Wooten, Herbert Reynolds, Davis Branon and Raymond Booth. Each pastor has his/her own story and each contributed to Mt. Airy Meeting. I do not expect that any of you remember any of those early ones but it seems good to reach back and make contact through their children and friends. It gives us a sense of connectedness. For instance, Herbert Reynolds came to be pastor of Mt. Airy Meeting in April, 1910. His son, Nate Reynolds, was a member of Goldsboro Meeting and now lives at Friends Homes.

Arlene Hobson who is the daughter of Raymond Booth (who was here from 1919 until 1921) now lives in Arizona. I have had a number of conversations with her and she has told me some interesting anecdotes.

Calvin Gregory came to the Meeting in 1921. He is the first pastor of Mt. Airy from those early years whom I knew personally. He was a kind and caring man. From the time of Calvin Gregory until now, I have had a personal acquaintance with all of the pastors of Mt. Airy Meeting, except Reuben Payne and Milo Hinkle. I wish I had the time to tell you the interesting little stories about each of them. For instance, when Pearl Millikan died, Ben remarried and he asked me to perform the ceremony at the close of Meeting for Worship one Sunday at Goldsboro Meeting. And I never would have gotten through my first funeral had it not been for the help of John Permar who came back to White Plains to assist with the service. Will Craddock told me that when John Permar was pastor of Mt. Airy, he organized a band. Will played the trumpet in that band and they gave concerts on Sunday night to overflow crowds of as many as 200 people.

Ben Millikan and John Permar were fiery evangelists as were Emmanuel and Perchie Key in the best tradition of the evangelical movement. But as Mt. Airy Meeting moved into the decades of the forties, fifties, and sixties, the meeting began to call pastors who brought back much of the tradition and many of the concerns of Quakerism from the Golden Age of the 1700s. Pastors like Clifton Pearson, Seth Hinshaw, Reuben Payne, Howard Yow, and Robert Jones led the meeting toward a recovery of basic testimonies and an expression of our Quaker Faith that harked back to the time of George Fox. A new revival began to take shape in Mt. Airy Meeting. It was a not an evangelical revival but of traditional Quaker values, customs, and theology. Once again, Mt. Airy Meeting began to feel itself called to be a "peculiar people."

And so, today, we find that we have gone full circle. We have moved from our Quaker roots through a period of becoming like other denominations to once more recovering our heritage – once again capturing what is unique about Quakerism. That is the witness that Mt. Airy Meeting makes today in this community. Those who mourn the passing of evangelical fervor would say that Mt. Airy Meeting has lost something. I think that it has regained something. It has regained that which makes Quakers unique in the world and which give us a reason for being. Without that uniqueness, we might as well merge with some other denomination. The witness we have is our witness to the inward Christ, to the worth of the individual, to the reality of the experience with God, to the sacredness of life, to peace, justice, and love. It is these that make us Quakers.

Mt. Airy Meeting has had an inspiring past, but I believe that it also has a glorious future. My message this morning has been about "The Way We Were" to help us understand and appreciate our past. But I want to leave you with the thought that the way we were is only the beginning. As we look to the future, we must turn our thoughts to the way we are going to be. If we can be faithful to our vision, perhaps some day there will be a celebration in which people look back to our day and call us blessed.

Our challenge is to value the past, to honor those who have gone before, and to look to the future. The writer of Hebrews says it perfectly: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us..."

WHAT WE YET MAY BE

A Sermon

By Willie R. Frye

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II Kings 2:9-14

During dinner last Sunday, someone suggested that he would like to hear more about our Meeting. You know what they say: Be careful what you pray for because you might get it.

I don't know if any of you ever knew a man from Pilot Mountain named Fleet Green. About the only entertainment "geezers" had years ago was to sit around a local store and tell tall tales. Fleet had quite a reputation for his stories. In the mid-fifties he had moved to Snow Camp and had become a member of Cane Creek Meeting where I was pastor at the time. (As an example of one of his tall tales, he said that one time it rained so hard and Cane Creek rose so fast that it turned the mill wheel at Dixon's Mill backward. It unground ten bushels of wheat before they could stop it).

Anyway, the story I want to tell about Fleet happened while he was still living at Pilot Mountain. One morning, he stopped by the store where the men liked to hang out and the guys sitting around hadn't had much entertainment that morning so as soon as he walked in they said, "Tell us a lie Fleet!" Fleet put on a long face and said, "Sorry boys. I don't feel like telling a lie this morning. I just saw a terrible thing a few minutes ago and it took all the fun out of me." Of course, they wanted to know what this terrible thing was so they encouraged him. He said, "I just came by the bridge down at the creek (this was the bridge on U. S. 52 just beyond Cook School Road) and there was the worst wreck down there I have ever seen. I don't know how many were killed but I saw three bodies in the road." Immediately, all the fellows jumped in their cars and headed for the bridge. Of course, there was no accident and the joke was on them. So, be careful what you ask for. They had asked for a lie and they got a whopper.

So with that preface and realizing that sequels are rarely ever as good as the original production, I am going to give you one more chapter on "The Way We Were." But I want to lead into some comments on "What We Yet May Be." I took the topic for last Sunday's message from a popular song by Barbra Streisand. My topic today is taken from a hymn written by Catherine Cameron.

Mt. Airy Meeting began in 1898 with about fifty people. The enthusiasm and dedication was so intense that reading the old minutes of monthly and quarterly meetings is like reading the Book of Acts. The frequent revivals resulted in a rapid growth of membership. The Meetinghouse was built in 1904. It was a lovely building built of granite in the gothic revival style that was popular in those days. The meeting room was not arranged as it is now. It was designed in what was called the Akron style with the pulpit placed in the front corner to the right of the present pulpit. The choir was in the other corner to the left of the present pulpit. There were folding doors along the right side of the meeting room that could be closed off for classrooms and opened for overflow crowds. The meeting room may have been divided by curtains for classes. It was not long until the meeting began talking about adding additional classroom space and

more rooms were added (probably between 1913 and 1916). By 1916 the membership had grown to 180.

The members of the meeting worked hard. Not only did it sponsor revivals, but there was a pastoral committee that carried out an energetic visitation ministry in the community. There were organized cottage prayer meetings. There were youth groups. When the Christian Endeavor Society flourished, the meeting was a part of it. The meeting was also concerned about the evils of alcohol and worked hard for prohibition. On one occasion, they, along with the other churches brought a prohibition speaker to town who was so effective that the comment in news reports was that he was such a good speaker that even the drinking people liked him.

The meeting was also a staunch supporter of foreign missions. We have in our archives the minutes of the Ladies Home Missionary Society. Do you know how they made money for missions? They did it the only way they knew how: they sewed. They made aprons and sold them. If you read those minutes and note the number of aprons they sold, you would think that every woman in town must have had at least one and perhaps some of the men did as well. They didn't make much – usually a couple of dollars a month, but then money did not have the same valuation it has now.

While the meeting was strongly evangelical, they did not neglect those uniquely Quaker concerns that have been our trademark. There are records in the minutes of speakers brought in to speak on the subject of peace, and there are petitions and resolutions sent to the president and congress asking that they support disarmament and objecting to the entry of the U. S. into World War I. There are also appeals to the governor of N. C. for the commutation of the death penalty for condemned prisoners.

They also were vigorous in maintaining a high level of personal moral conduct among the membership. On several occasions committees were appointed to wait on wayward members with the hope of bringing them back to moral conduct that was becoming to a Friend and a Christian. And there were several cases in which their efforts failed and members were disowned. And in some cases membership applications were rejected.

Money was always a problem. Times were not easy. Pastors were not well paid and often the Finance Committee had to solicit "subscriptions" from the membership to raise the money. Often the treasurer's report indicated that they owed the pastor a balance for the month. The amount they owed him ranged anywhere from \$2 to \$18.00. In 1916 the pastor's salary was \$55.00 per month and when they called a new pastor they agreed to pay him \$60.00 per month if they could raise the money. The efforts to raise that money became one of the major items of business at each monthly meeting that year. The pastor started in August and by May of the following year they had raised all but about \$10.00 of the amount needed. (Incidentally, that pastor was Henry McKinley who came to the Meeting in 1917 and left in 1919. He is one pastor that we did not know we had because his name is left off the list of pastors in the bulletin). By 1928 when John Permar served the meeting, the salary had risen to \$2000 per year. Times were so good that the Meeting decided to replace the plain glass windows in the Meetinghouse with stained glass. The young men's class was also granted permission to build a Sunday School room in the basement of the Meetinghouse. Apparently when the addition to the Meetinghouse

was built, this room was left merely as a basement room. Bausley Beasley donated the lumber and the class did the work. The cost was \$300. This was in 1927. The bubble burst in 1929 and the depression came. When the meeting called Clifton Pearson to be pastor in 1929, John Permar's salary of \$2000 was reduced to \$1200 for Clifton Pearson.

When I think of the members and of the pastors of the meeting during those early days, I am reminded of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. It traces the heroic faith of God's people all the way from Abel to Abraham to Moses and on through an unnumbered multitude of faithful people. The writer of Hebrews says that these people "through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight ...of whom the world was not worthy..." (Heb. 11:33-38)

In studying the history of the meeting, I have found some genuine heroes. Among those heroes were both the members of the meeting and the pastors. You can identify them by reading the names of the representatives that were appointed to quarterly meeting. Immediately, you know that these were the people who took the meeting seriously and nurtured it. These are the names of many of your ancestors.

God has used these people for building this particular corner of his Kingdom. They were not perfect - far from it and the business of the Meeting did not always run smoothly. I know that one pastor was fired, and that there are some very suspicious circumstances surrounding the departure of another because the meeting refused to give him a certificate of transfer to another Meeting. One had a wife that did not like Mt. Airy at all and one or two and maybe more were egotistical. They were human as were the members of the meeting. But look what they accomplished.

I have known all but two of your pastors since the time of Calvin Gregory who came to the meeting in 1922. I must tell you that several of these are among my heroes. When I was a young pastor some of them took me under their wing and with kindness brought me along to understand what it means to be a pastor. And I have to inject this little tidbit. One of these persons was not a pastor. His name was Luby Casey and he joined Mt. Airy Meeting in March of 1922 and remained a member until November of 1924. On at least one occasion he even preached for the Meeting. During the time he was here, he taught school. He told me once that it was that experience that persuaded him that he would be a better nurseryman than school teacher. It had something to do with trying to spank a young man who was bigger than he was.

I have especially fond memories of Clifton and Ruby Pearson. Clifton was one of the most successful pastors Mt. Airy has ever had. He came in 1929 and stayed until 1937 - eight years. They were the years of the depression and he successfully guided the meeting through that difficult time. Because of the granite quarry and the employment it offered, Mt. Airy did not suffer quite as badly as some other areas did during those hard times. Under the leadership of Clifton Pearson, the meeting experienced a steady growth. At the April monthly meeting in 1930 twenty-three new members were presented for membership.

The growth continued throughout Clifton's ministry. Clifton and Ruby were wonderful, gentle Quakers. There was no flamboyance or self-promotion. There were only kindness and an interest in other people. They served the Society of Friends at great sacrifice. His salary remained at \$1500 the entire time they were at Mt. Airy except for the first year when it was \$1200. And when they retired, they lived in genteel poverty on the \$50 per month that the Yearly Meeting provided and the small social security payment they received. Yet, I never heard them complain nor express regret for the sacrifices they had made.

Clifton and Ruby left Mt. Airy in 1937 and were followed by Seth and Mary Edith Hinshaw. When they came to Mt. Airy, Seth and Mary Edith were newly weds. Both of their boys, Waldo and Howard were born in Mt. Airy. Howard was to become a medical doctor and Waldo an engineer. Perhaps you are not aware of it, but it was Waldo Hinshaw who invented the MRI machine that is used so extensively now in medical diagnosis.

One of the most amusing notations in the minutes is that in March of 1938, a concern arose in Ministry and Counsel that the services should close a little before 12:00 o'clock. I never knew Seth to be a particularly long-winded preacher but there must be a message there. There are so many stories that I could tell you about Seth and Mary Edith that it would fill a book. I served with Seth on the Yearly Meeting Executive Committee, on the Friends United Meeting Board, and as a pastor. I spent the night in their home many times when we had to get up early to go to Richmond for board meetings. I remember that we sat up so late one night and got up so early the next morning that I told Seth as we ate breakfast that it certainly didn't take long to stay all night at their house.

I have many embarrassing moments but one of my most embarrassing was when, as a young pastor, Mary Edith asked me how I was doing with the recording process. I remarked somewhat resentfully that I would have been finished with it if it weren't for that Waldo Woody who was chairman of the Committee on Training and Recording at the time. It was not until later that I learned that Waldo Woody was her father. Seth and Mary Edith were wonderful people and I don't know anyone who has made a greater contribution to the yearly meeting and to Quakerism than they have through Mary Edith's art and through Seth's writings.

There is not time to tell all the stories about your pastors and I will not try. Mt. Airy Meeting has enjoyed a wonderful heritage, both from the members and the pastors. But I want to close by saying that we cannot face the future on heritage alone. Someone has commented that there is no such thing as a second generation Christian. In every day, we have to stand on our own feet, find our own experience with God, and fight our own battles. I believe that this meeting has a bright future. But it is really up to us as to whether we do or not.

I'm sure that all of us remember the story of David and Goliath. When this shepherd boy stood before the king of Israel he looked so vulnerable that Saul said, "If he's going to fight, he's going to need some armor and some weapons." So he fitted him out with his own armor and weapons. They didn't fit. David felt that they would be more of a liability than an asset, so he discarded them in favor of nothing but his slingshot. We can't wear someone else's armor. We have to be ourselves. We have to find our own mission, we have to find our own identity, and we have to do the work that God calls us to do. There is only one thing that I wish we could retain from

years gone by and that is the intense dedication that those early members of the meeting had. It almost makes one tired to read all the things they did. It was commitment that created this meeting and sustained it through the years: commitment to Christ as Lord, commitment to Quakerism, commitment to this meeting.

My hope for this meeting is that it will recapture that commitment. The prophet Elijah trained a young man to be his successor. His name was Elisha. He had been with Elijah through some of his most exciting works and some his most daring prophecies. Elijah had been a good model. According to the Biblical account, Elijah was scheduled to be taken into heaven in a fiery chariot. Elisha followed him everywhere he went on that last day knowing that something was about to happen. Finally, perhaps in exasperation, Elijah turned to Elisha and said, "What do you want from me?" And Elisha said, "When you are gone, all I want is a double portion of your spirit." And when Elijah was taken into heaven, his mantle fell from his shoulders and then Elisha knew that the spirit of Elijah had been given to him. He picked up the mantle and struck the waters of the Jordan and said, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" and the waters of the Jordan parted for him just as they had for Elijah.

That is my dream for Mt. Airy Meeting – that the mantle of our ancestors will fall on us – that we will have the same commitment and the same power that they had.