



Photo by Ronald P. Akins

FIRE AT THE CENTER

A NEW LOOK AT QUAKER RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

SUBMITTED BY BARRY MORLEY

This document is the Property of Baltimore Yearly Meeting.
For permission to copy this document, please contact the Baltimore Yearly Meeting
Office at 301-774-7663.

Through New Eyes

Much of my spiritual awakening came during the twenty-three summers I directed Catoctin Quaker Camp. Counselors, campers, and necessity opened me to the discovery of that inward source which changes everything. As I changed, the camp changed. These changes ultimately impacted the campers whose parents began to sense that something special was happening to their children. “Each year, when my child comes home from camp,” said one parent, “I don’t recognize her. But I like what I see, and it sticks. What’s going on at the camp?”

Parents began asking me how First Day school might be more like camp. At camp children live intimately with one another, eating, sleeping, playing, working, worshipping, and struggling with adversity together. I have never seen any way to replicate this combination of interrelated ingredients in a First Day school program that meets but once a week. So I always deflected the question and encouraged parents to get their children into the camping program. Even now, years after I retired, I am still asked how First Day school might be more like camp. Though I have continued to deflect the question with the same encouragement, I have finally become willing to suggest some possibilities.

Campfires are at the heart of it. As a child going to summer camp I loved campfires. During my years at Catoctin I stared at hundreds of them. I watched flames intertwine, logs shift, sparks rise. Looking back I see, without understanding what happened or why, that campfires fed me. I began to sense that no one else saw any particular campfire as I did since only I saw it from *my* place in the circle. Anyone sitting anywhere else had a different perspective, a different sense of reality, and thus saw a different fire. This taught me to be willing to look at anything from different vantage points, different angles, other perspectives. And since the most important part of a campfire is the space between billets where air flows, I learned to look at spaces. I learned, and continue to learn, how to look with new eyes into the spaces. I invite you to look at Quaker religious education from a different place in the fire circle, a different vantage point, a different perspective. Look through new eyes. Look at spaces. You might be, as I continue to be, surprised and amazed.

If we could see First Day school as space for the *unfolding of spirituality*, it might

look different to us than seeing it as *religious education*. Religious education involves gathering and selecting teachable relevant information, and then teaching it. Material is selected from a large quantity of possible sources and interpretations. The question of what should be included and what should be left out is unending, especially in a Religious Society that tolerates, even encourages, a vast spectrum of theological possibilities. Debate over curriculum is often intense, extended, and frustrating. Content is constantly being analyzed, challenged, and revised. Somehow it never satisfies completely. Is it possible that curriculum occupies space that might better be filled by awakening the spirit dweller within?

Somehow it seems important that we provide substance for our young people. But what constitutes substance for a Quaker child? Looking through new eyes ask yourself; how close is the relationship between substance and material? Is substance necessarily determined by curriculum? Is information more important than experience? If this last were true, would we spend Sunday mornings sitting silently in Meeting rather than studying? We could go to church and hear the Old Testament and New Testament readings, and the related, thoughtful, and thought-provoking sermon prepared by a trained theologian who might speak eloquently. Many of us, at another time in our lives, did this. But we have come to choose, as George Fox did, a different way. We have learned to wait in silence for spiritual opening. We have learned to look into inward spaces. How much specific information do I need before I can reach inward in Meeting for Worship?

Those of us who have ever been teachers, and this includes parent and camp directors, know that there are things that can be learned that can't be taught. We know that these are often the truly important things. George Fox's discovery of the teacher within, of the inner Light, the inward Christ, followed years of seeking answers to soul-searing questions. He wandered about England searching out one established authority after another, but found none capable of teaching him. Not until he broke through with new eyes to That of God within did he discover the inward Christ and continuing revelation. He looked through those new eyes the rest of his life.

That breakthrough cannot be taught. Through some spiritual process, it rises up from a mysterious inward source. Moses's new eyes came through a fire that burned but

did not consume. Paul was blinded by Light from the same inward source and ultimately gained new vision. I've sometimes heard the source described as a deep well, a metaphor used frequently in the Bible. In Walt Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, Snow White sees the Prince who will save her by looking into a well.

Spirituality can be encouraged, nurtured, and ultimately relied upon. And though it cannot be taught, we know it can be learned as if through some miracle. George Fox's spiritual breakthrough was a gift he longed for before he understood *what* he longed for. In a blazing act of grace he finally received it. And though he explained his discoveries to us and though we teach them to each other, they were *not* his gift to us. His gift was constant encouragement that we discover for ourselves the source from which spiritual discoveries come.

I invite you to step out from behind your reticence and look through new eyes at the purpose and possibilities of First Day school. All things Quaker emanate from George Fox's discoveries. Isn't it possible that Quaker religious education should be an extension of what George Fox intended for us? Isn't it possible that we should encourage our children toward that inward source? The essential query for a Quaker is: *Am I aware of and do I participate in my direct relationship with God?* Since we cannot teach children to make that direct relationship, it is easy to substitute information. But we have a choice. We can establish conditions which stimulate discovery. Even some of us as adults may find breaking through to that inward awareness difficult. Nonetheless, shouldn't we encourage our children to move toward what we know is the central Quaker experience?

Because children have not had time to build as many layers of defensive veneer as adults, nor to assimilate as much training in rationality, they live closer to their inner cores. Their imaginations are less quashed, their feelings are less guarded, they trust more easily, and things we call fantasy feel real to them.

I am amazed at how much learning I have had to lay aside in order to become a Quaker. I am astonished at how hard it is to lay those learnings aside. And my unlearning continues almost fifty years after it began. I'm amazed that I had the presence of inward mind to attempt becoming a Quaker. That's a gift of grace in itself.

Because of my academic training, I regarded Quaker stuff as irrational nonsense. "Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child," said Jesus, "shall not enter

it.” Somewhere along the way, without knowing I was doing it, I discarded childhood misunderstandings that might have been useful to me in becoming a Quaker. I was anxious to become an adult as modeled by other adults.

It is easy to overlook that children, like adults, put in a full work week. Going to school is their job. They are no more anxious than adults to get more of the same on Sunday. So let’s not give them more of the same. Perhaps our children might be better served if we helped them maintain a relationship with an inward life that may be slipping away. In First Day school children can be encouraged to stay in touch with the rich possibilities of their inward lives.

The Question-Circle

I remember a campfire during which we sang *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*. This led the campers to compare a canoe trip to a spiritual journey. “You follow the river,” a camper said, “the river knows the way.” “No matter what you do,” said another, “you come out where you’re supposed to.”

Talk turned to the common experience of getting hung up on rocks. At one time or another everyone gets hung up on rocks. “The rocks are like problems in life. They hold you up for awhile. But you get out of your canoe and pull it off the rock. Then you get back in and keep going.” Another child offered, “And when you get hung up someone is always there to help, especially if you swamp.”

After more discussion and adult visitor said, “Yes. But I don’t know how you get *into* the river.” A response came immediately, “You jump.” “But that scares me. You can hurt yourself jumping into a river,” said the visitor. Another response came immediately. “You have to be willing to take the risk.”

The question-circle evolved from discussions like this. The leader, hoping to get a similar exploration going, poses *the question*. As if by magic, the children provide wisdom. “I have heard Quakers talk about the Light,” the leader says. “Could you explain the Light to me so that I might understand it better?”

I once heard a child answer this question by saying, “I see the Light as a great silver cord binding me to God.”

Or the leader might say, “I sometimes hear Quakers say, ‘walk in the Light.’ It’s even in the George Fox song. Can you explain that to me, ‘walk in the Light’?”

Many answers were forthcoming. One child said, “It’s like being on a stage and standing in a spot-light. You try not to walk so fast that you step out of the circle of light.”

Or the leader might say, “I often hear Quakers talk about the way opening. I’m not sure I understand ‘way opening.’ Can you explain it to me?”

A child once answered this by saying, “It’s like going to a theater. You know, a real theater. You’ve been looking forward to it for a long time. When the day comes you get dressed up. Then you go. You get there early and look around and it’s very exciting.” I began to wonder if this tale was the kind of directionless rambling that occasionally occurs. Maybe I should intervene. The child went on. “You find your seat and you wait and wait. Just when you’re about to give up,” the child concluded, “the curtain opens and everything is there before you.”

I smiled inwardly. To myself I said, “That will do.”

Through these kinds of questions and responses the children teach each other. Participating adults are encouraged neither to instruct nor intervene. Occasionally an adult might offer a brief personal insight or observation. Though “brief” is the operative word here, brevity is not always forthcoming. Adults, who have no trouble being quiet in Meeting for Worship, get so excited in the question-circle that they can hardly contain themselves. I have seen adults damage the fabric of the process by feeling that the children really need to hear what they have to say. Perhaps the children do. But the better part of wisdom might be for the adults to choose another forum. Adult restraint is essential to the vitality of the process. The question-circle is the children’s time and they come to regard it as such.

Setting It Up and Making It Work

Invite the children to sit in a circle. The physical aspects of the circle can vary. It can be outdoors or indoors. People can sit on chairs, logs, the floor, the ground. Put everyone together. A campfire at Catoctin sometimes contains a hundred children and adults with a wide spread of ages.

Some form of fire at the center is important. Please don’t overlook this. The fire amplifies the process. I am aware that First Day school classrooms are not designed to accommodate campfires. But a circle around some candles works fine. Safety concerns

can be mollified by placing holder-mounted candles in an old fashioned, shallow, flat bottom charcoal grill (if you can locate one). Or place a metal tray on a bedside table at the center of your circle. Or devise some other imaginative solution. Electric candles are an inadequate substitute and should be avoided.

At Catoctin, during bad weather, we occasionally gathered in front of the lodge fireplace. This transformed the circle into a semi-circle or, worse, an auditorium-like arrangement with children seated in rows. The leader was ipso facto thrust into the position of performer or teacher while the children became audience. We never found a way to overcome this. A circle is essential. A fire at the center is vital.

People sitting in a circle around flame form a powerful living metaphor for an individual looking inward toward the Light. People can hardly resist sitting around fire. They are drawn to it just as people have been drawn to sit in circles around fires for as long as people have had fires. Children will come to look forward to a circle around fire the way adults look forward to Meeting for Worship. In fact, for the young people, it will become a form of Meeting for Worship.

In my years at the summer-camp, where the question-circle always included everybody, the youngest campers were entering fourth grade. I wonder what the youngest appropriate age level might be? At what age might younger children feel overwhelmed? During family camps younger children have been included with some success. However, before drawing conclusions about lower age limits, some experimentation might be called for.

Question-Circle Leadership

Large circles, with people of varied ages, seem to work better than small ones. Responses are likely to be more forthcoming and more varied. The leader maintains control easily by walking slowly around the inner edge. The children are instructed to speak only when the leader stands directly between them and the fire. When someone begins to speak, the leader stops.

In order to encourage space between offerings, the leader can pause before moving on. If an insight seems particularly meaningful, the leader can pause longer than usual to provide time for the offering to sink in. Sometimes a topic warms up slowly, in which case the leader might decide to walk around a second time, even a third. At other

times, when the children really get going, they may ask for another go round. If they do, go. To vary things, the leader might start from a different place in the circle or reverse direction.

It is appropriate for the leader to encourage children to listen to one another, even to insist upon it if necessary. If needed, the leader should make it clear that the object is not to argue, but to hear what is being said. The more the art of the question-circle is practiced the better the children become at listening. There is an obvious relationship between developing this skill and Meeting for Worship where respectful listening is expected.

Answers to *the question* are not as important as the process. It is the *process* that must be nurtured. By raising questions that cause the children to reach inward, to sort out meaning and essence, we allow them to put their feet on the path of the Quaker journey.

At first, children might be reluctant to speak from the circle. But over time they will become more willing. Over a span of months, even years, their responses and understandings will deepen. Allow them to grow. When the question-circle is first implemented, older young people, uncomfortable with revealing their feelings, might be disruptive. Do not criticize them publicly. Some gentle, private eldering later, in which the leader might ask for their assistance, often solves the problem. After some practice of the question-circle, and especially after a few years when younger people have become older, this problem disappears of its own accord.

There are no wrong answers. Nor should the quality of answers be judged. It is vital that the leader neither belittle nor correct.

Though only a few questions are needed for any session, the question-circle leader's most difficult challenge is to come up with the next set of questions and the next after that. And it's not easy after the first four or five question-circles. Coming up with good questions requires homework, even inspiration.

Questions can come from many sources. I have sometimes spent several hours silently waiting for a question. This is not dissimilar to waiting silently in Meeting for Worship. A good source of questions is the children themselves. Be alert. In responding to questions, the children are likely to *raise* questions. Points they make may lead to a next question, perhaps immediately, perhaps next week or next month. The leader should

always have antennae out for meaningful questions, questions without right or wrong answers.

A leader might derive a good question from a child's book. Young people of all ages enjoy being read to. Read a story or excerpt, raise the question, and let the responses come. Passages or stories that propose alternate forms of reality are inherently rich in questions. Look at books like *The Chronicles of Narnia*, or *The Velveteen Rabbit*, or *Where the Wild Things Are*, or *A Wrinkle in Time*. Living from the center is in itself an alternate form of reality, perhaps an ultimate form of reality. In any case, living from the center is different than popular concepts of reality which derive from the need to respond to outward stimuli.

The leader can introduce Biblical content into the non-curriculum by reading a Bible passage. For example, parables, all of which are metaphors with many possible interpretations, abound with opportunities to explore inward reality, The letters and Journal of George Fox are full of question-generating material.

After reading a passage, the leader might ask, "Have any of you ever had an experience like that?" Or, "How would you feel if that happened to you?" The fail-safe question a leader can always fall back on is: "I have some trouble understanding this. Can you help me understand it?" By asking some version of this question over many years, I came to realize that I was learning things from the children that I might not have discovered for myself.

Avoid asking what a writer meant. Sharpening analytical skills is not the object of the question-circle. What the young people *feel* about something is more germane.

There are myriad other sources for questions. For example, young people eagerly engage in weighing the nature of time. "Does time always move at the same speed or does it sometimes move slower or faster?" As soon as someone says that time sometimes goes slow and sometimes goes fast, you're off. A brief explanation of the distance concept of light-years can raise the question, "If you see a star where it was a million years ago, what does that say about now?"

I once heard this message in Meeting: "I don't find God in Meeting for Worship. I find God in coincidence." Exploration of the nature of coincidence engrosses young people and, with good leading, can lead to a discussion of way opening.

Dreams, clearly an alternate form of reality, are pregnant with possibility. “When you are in your dream,” you might ask, “is it real?” Or: “Have you ever had a dream and then later, when you were awake, your dream happened?” The young people will respond to this eagerly. This might lead to the question: “If something happens in a dream and later happens when you are awake, what does this say about time?”

I have occasionally asked a question where a response from the young people was not quickly forthcoming. Like the child who went to the theater, I learned to wait. Waiting is central to being a Quaker. Some people think that waiting means nothing is happening. But waiting is, in itself, a significant activity, perhaps the single most important for a Quaker. After all, messages in Meeting for Worship emerge from waiting. If you wait long enough for the young people, something is likely to happen. This waiting is good training for Meeting for Worship. And remember, if you lead a larger rather than a smaller group, responses will be more readily forthcoming.

But sometimes a question which really seemed perfect turns out to be a dud. At any time the leader might have to step back, reword the question, or ask a different one altogether. Just as there is no need for the children to give perfect answers, there is no need for the leader to have nothing but perfect questions.

A warning: Occasionally a child might mention something that triggers a chain reaction of feelings, something like the death of a pet. This can lead to someone else describing sadness over a grandmother’s death which leads to someone else’s upset over a loved one dying of cancer. Like an open faucet it continues, seeming to overwhelm the process.

But it doesn’t overwhelm the process. It is a gift we give the young people. It allows them to air feelings they might keep buried were they feeling vulnerable. As young people become comfortable with the setting and the process of the question-circle, they become more willing to reveal their hearts and feelings. Few other places feel safe enough for them to disclose their inward lives.

The open faucet of feelings can flow indefinitely (which probably indicates how much it is needed.) At some point the leader might feel a need to suggest moving on to another topic. And even that might not shut off the faucet. But be reassured. Our work is validated by the young people’s sense of safety. Children have sometimes said to me that

they don't even feel free to speak unguardedly at home. A child's fear of ridicule inhibits flow. Ridicule, even through subtle sarcasm, must not be allowed to creep in. On occasions when I allowed a touch of sarcasm to sneak in, my counselors later jumped all over me.

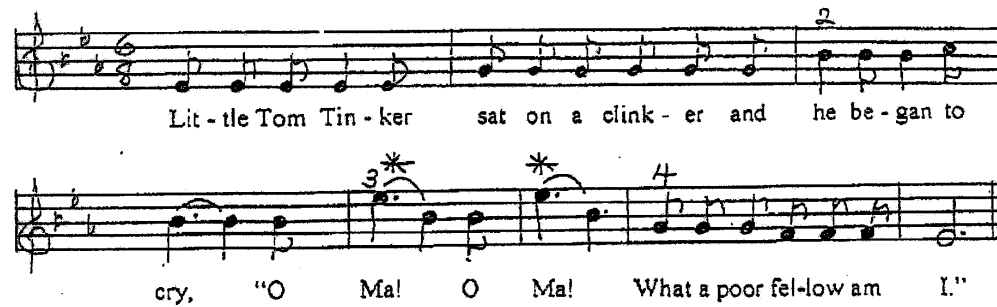
As if by grace, an individual child's responses will deepen over time, over a year, over several years. Even the children who are more silent than others will grow. Inward searching becomes ingrained in many.

End the circle-time with silence. Let the silence take its own course. When restlessness sets in, wait a little longer, then break the silence. Simply say thank you, and shake hands. Over time you'll find that restlessness will occur later and that silence will extend longer. Over years, any age group will extend its own silence. Adults need not decide how long it should last. However, lengthening of the silence will probably need to be renurtured at the beginning of each new year with its infusion of new children into a group of mixed ages. That's fine. Begin the process again.

Sing Me a Song

One summer, at a question-circle near the end of camp, I asked the campers a more specific question than usual, mostly because I wanted to know the answer. "What have you learned during your time at camp?" One child replied, "I learned to make a joyful noise." At the time, other answers seemed more substantial to me. But this statement has stuck with me, The Bible instructs us to "make a joyful noise unto the Lord," which sounds to me like an invitation to celebrate.

Begin each First Day gathering in a celebratory mode. Let there be lots of singing. Singing is a joyful noise central to celebration. Get some boisterous songs going, like the round *Little Tom Tinker*, during which, at different times, everyone leaps up and down in gleeful anguish.



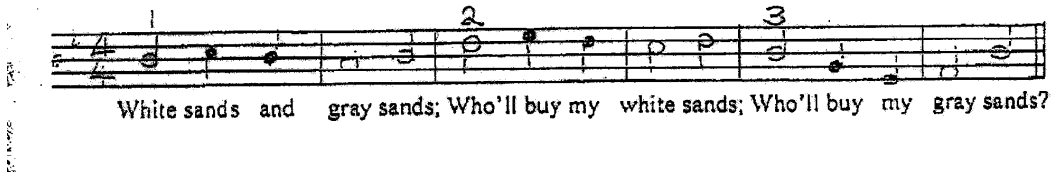
At each asterisk, the people singing the words, “O Ma!” leap up and throw their arms into the air from the feigned pain of sitting on the clinker. Needless to say this should be sung with gusto.

Little Tom Tinker creates two problems. Since houses these days are mostly heated with oil, gas, electricity, and even wood, there are few people left who know that a clinker is the incombustible, hard, sharp, almost glass-like fused residue from coal burning. This can be explained to the children and in no way diminishes their enjoyment. The second problem is more serious. Once *Little Tom Tinker* gets started, it takes on a life of its own and is not easily stopped.

Sing the round *Three Blind Mice*. Follow this with *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*. Then, have half the children sing *Three Blind Mice* as a unison tune while the other half simultaneously sings *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*. My goodness. That really works.

At this point you might shift into question-circle time and say, “I’m not sure what the line, ‘Life is but a dream,’ is all about. Can you help me understand that?” *The George Fox Song* and *Simple Gifts* can also be sung separately and simultaneously.

Feel free to include some nonsense songs and songs which include movements. Include energetic hymns. Let these give way to some of the more gentle hymns and hymn-like songs. You might try the lovely, centering round, *White Sands and Gray Sands*. The children might not find the words meaningful coming from earlier times when fine sand was used to blot wet ink (gray sands are those which have already been used and are less expensive). But the slow, legato tune, with the gentle harmonies it creates, is as centering as candlelight. Words don’t always matter in songs. The lesson is often inherent in the music.



Definitely begin the singing with vigorous songs. Children have a lot of energy. Robust singing invites them to use some of it. Later, after shifting to more centering songs, move seamlessly into the question-circle. And remain aware that the songs, like books or dreams are a good source of questions.

Build a substantial repertoire of First Day songs. Start a series of song sheets. Never mind that there are good song books galore. Familiarity with our songs helps us be us. They are the songs we sing together over a period of years. They give us identity. They are part of our celebration of ourselves. To a large degree songs should be chosen with that in mind. Occasionally add new ones that are so good they can't be resisted. Drop songs reluctantly. And keep the size of the repertoire reasonable, enough songs to allow for variety, and few enough that we know them well.

More Cause for Celebration

Life is full of things to celebrate. Look for them. Celebrate birthdays. Celebrate special occasions like robins returning in the spring or snow in April. Make First Day a joy-filled antidote to what we call the "real world."

Celebrate George Fox's discovery that the "real world" is *not* the real world, that the Real World is within where the Light that is the Light of the world burns and does not consume, where we are heard and spoken to, where we are instructed, where we can turn for solace, assistance, nurture, companionship, and thanksgiving. This is the fundamental Quaker message. Celebrate it. People who live in awareness of their immersion in God have reason to celebrate. And we have reason to nurture our young people toward awareness of living in God.

And what's a celebration without cocoa and cookies or some more imaginative equivalent. Ice cream always contributes to celebration, especially if there are sprinkles or gooey things to put on top. An occasional marshmallow roast might be considered (don't cook them over candles), even announced a week in advance. Above all, extend God's love by having fun.

Special Occasions

Don't throw out the baby with the bath-water. Do you have a Halloween party? Keep it. Do you go ice skating? Go. Maybe you have an annual pageant. Perform it. Do you have a tradition of some kind of service project? Serve. Do you have skits that portray people and events in Quaker history? Do them. Do you want to have a William Penn day or a Margaret Fell day or a John Woolman day or a Lucretia Mott day? Have it. Add to these the making of multi-candle candle-holders which can sit at the center of your question-circle. With the help of adults, make ice-cream.

Do you have fund raisers, maybe used book sales or spaghetti dinners? Use what funds are raised to help with things important to the young people, perhaps assistance for camp fees.

Enjoy an occasional picnic with charcoal grills brought in by members of the Meeting who cook, eat, and play games with the young people. Sit in a circle and sing songs from the First Day school song sheets. If you are brave, try a question-circle. Make such multi-generational activities major events for the entire Meeting. As much as possible draw young people into the life of the Meeting and adults into the lives of the children.

Urge the young people to go to one of the summer camps and/or to Yearly Meeting. Defray a significant portion of their expenses. The Meeting can choose no greater investment. Give Quaker children full opportunity to be Quakers among a wider circle of Quakers.

But keep your program based in the question-circle. The question-circle is the launch pad. On special occasions you might have to set it aside, but don't do it very often. Focus on the question-circle.

The Curriculum Gap

Unlike many religious traditions, the religion of the Quakers is primarily one of process. These proposals, oriented as they are toward training in process, omit elements of curriculum, which adults may consider important. If this is the case, search for alternative ways of teaching.

The information that constitutes curriculum is available to anyone from many sources. Books are an obvious source. Much of my knowledge of outward religion and

religious thinking has come from reading I've done from childhood on, continuing even now.

Parents have got to carry some of the weight of the religious training of their children. Every child should be read to every day. There is an enormous abundance of material that can entertain, inform, and speak to the children. These days there are movies, plays, and musicals which inform and inspire.

Try shifting some of the emphasis of the religious education committee to helping parents find quality materials. Perhaps this can be done best through Yearly Meeting sponsored workshops and epistles. Lists of age appropriate read-aloud books can be compiled and improved. Perhaps a schedule of movies, live performances, and relevant television programs should be circulated in advance. Perhaps parents should be encouraged through occasional queries like, "Do you regularly encourage discussions of dreams with your children?"

If more curriculum seems to be called for, offer a week in summer and/or a day during Christmas vacation in which material is taught. Many churches build such teaching occasions into their calendars. Design them with enough celebration and singing, even perhaps a slumber party or camp-out, to be as attractive as possible.

Staffing

It is not uncommon that Meetings struggle to fill teaching positions for their First Day school programs. I have heard R.E. committees beg for volunteer teachers. Sometimes it seems as if anyone will do. In an ideal situation teaching positions would be filled by people who are gifted. But gifted teachers are not always available.

These proposals minimize this problem. Only two main leadership roles are proposed: the question leader and the song leader. An imaginative, charismatic song leader and an insightful question leader can be real gifts to the children, the First Day school program, and the Meeting. The option exists that one person can fill both roles. The task is not overwhelming. Children usually spend some time in Meeting for Worship, take time to gather, and time to refresh. There's probably a scant half hour left for singing and question-circle.

Other leaders are optional. It may be that a second question-circle leader might work with younger children. And a third could be available to substitute. Child care

requires supervision. And then there's the piano player. Though this can be an important job, it is optional. A lot of good song leading goes on without a piano.

Adults are needed to support the program even as they are needed in whatever First Day program is presently in place. Logistics must be taken care of: setting up, taking down, planning and preparation of refreshments, cleaning up. Special activities need to be planned and executed. Schedules need to be established, and kept. Various combinations of these tasks can be allocated to the same person. But you know all this. I hope there is not a temptation to alternate question-circle leaders. It is important that the children develop a trusting, loving relationship over time with this person.

Silence

Once, at a camp question-circle, I said, "Sometimes we ask you to be quiet and sometimes we ask for silence. What is the difference between quiet and silence?" A child replied, "Quiet is empty, and silence is full."

These proposals are intended to help make silence full. The joyful noise, the singing, the celebration all feed the question-circle which in turn fills the silence. To the extent that silence is full we are all enriched. Let the young people grow into the fullness of silence rather than have silence forced upon them. Full silence is the essence of who we are. And, because the children spend their work week in school, let's call First Day school something other than school. Maybe something like Amazing but True. "Okay, children, it's time to go to Amazing but True."