

Stephen W. Angell
Earlham School of Religion, Richmond, USA

Larry Ingle has written a wonderfully insightful volume that will help to fill a considerable gap in the literature of mid twentieth-century Quakerism. He has done his very best to parse some maddeningly opaque source material, and he has presented his findings in a concise and readable format. One of Ingle's contributions is to give one of the best and most concise summaries of Evangelical pastoral Quakerism in southern California that I have ever seen, commendably rooting it in a discussion of both preceding forms of Quakerism (as that religion had existed for more than two and a half centuries prior to Richard Nixon's birth) and some contrasting forms of Quakerism (most especially the liberal unprogrammed Quakerism of the eastern USA).

Nonetheless, I was left with certain questions as I finished the book. In Ingle's opening pages, he quotes William Safire likening Richard Nixon to a layer cake. Might the pastoral Quakerism that nurtured Nixon in his youth and to which he was tied by church membership for his entire life also be regarded as a layer cake? In other words, could some of the complexity of Nixon's description of pastoral Quakerism be due to the fact that pastoral Quakerism is a very complex phenomenon itself? Ingle alludes to some of the complexities in this book—the differences between the more evangelical East Whittier Friends Church and the more mainline Whittier Friends Church and the influence upon Nixon of both fundamentalist (or inerrantist) theologies and the modernist theology he encountered at Whittier College are two examples. However, to make sense of his Quaker tradition, as he and his Milhous forebears would have had to do, it would have been necessary for them, at some level, to understand and incorporate into their being the preceding form of silent worship of Friends. North American Quakers of any branch are expected to know what to do with unprogrammed, or silent, worship when it arises. Might this account, at least to some degree, for Nixon's invocation of that liturgical form among Quakers, which, as Ingle properly points out, in the main was not his?

I was intrigued by Ingle's very brief comments on Dwight Eisenhower and wonder if he could take further his 'comparison and contrast' of Eisenhower and Nixon on religious and denominational matters. It seems that Eisenhower, during his presidency, was trying to serve as the chief priest of an American

civil religion. Ingle notes that Eisenhower attended, and became a member of, a Presbyterian Church in the nation's capital. Did this also encourage his role as a civil religion chief priest, given the very mainstream, mainline nature of the Presbyterianism he encountered there? Ingle does not mention Eisenhower's own pacifist-sectarian, River Brethren and Jehovah's Witness background from which he managed to extricate himself.¹ Did Nixon want to be the chief priest of American civil religion like Eisenhower had been? In addition to the changing times—a substantial influence in the eight years between the end of Eisenhower's presidency and the beginning of Nixon's—was one further reason that Nixon was unable to undertake the chief priest role more convincingly that he was unable to shake himself of his own childhood sectarian background, even though he knew that in some ways Presbyterianism would be more politically advantageous for him? And why exactly was he unable to change denominations? Ingle mentions his mother's influence in keeping him as a part of the Friends church. But the sects that Eisenhower had belonged to were more obscure or negative, at least in the public mind, whereas Quakerism has a generally positive image. Was one reason that Nixon was unable to change denominations his awareness of the generally positive image of Quakers and his need for that lustrous reputation, even if there were also significant ways in which Nixon could not live up to Quakerism's teachings, as Ingle clearly points out?

Is there more to be said about the relationship of Nixon with the Friends Meeting of Washington, DC, often called the Florida Avenue Meeting, which was built during Herbert Hoover's presidency, and where Hoover at least occasionally worshipped? One story that circulated about Nixon in the Florida Avenue Meeting (when I attended there after 1975) was that he was greatly offended in 1947 when he first came to Washington and showed up for an event at the Florida Avenue Meeting. A local Friend upbraided him for his untoward conduct in the campaign in which he was victorious over the incumbent Democratic representative Jerry Voorhees. The offended Nixon vowed never to come to Florida Avenue Meeting again. Would an account based on oral lore like this find any corroboration in the records of the Nixon archives? Does this lore sound plausible or even likely?

I was surprised that in his account of Nixon's presidency Ingle concentrated so completely on the Vietnam War and its consequences to the exclusion of other issues that Nixon faced. I agree with the epigraph to Chapter 9, in which H. R. Haldeman opined that Vietnam overshadowed everything else during the Nixon presidency. But when I asked my Boston University classmates who supported Nixon's re-election in 1972 why they supported him, none of them, to my recollection, cited his actions in regard to Vietnam or Indochina. They were impressed by his diplomatic opening to China, and perhaps also with his

1 Smith, G. S., *Faith and the Presidency: from George Washington to George W. Bush*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 222–24.

détente with the Soviet Union.² (Ingle waits until his last chapter on Nixon's retirement to address his attitudes towards the Soviet Union.) Are these areas of Nixon's record where more Quaker influence might be evident in his resort to diplomacy, including (in the case of China) a bold diplomacy which neither of his two Democratic Party predecessors had engaged in? Might Nixon compare here with an earlier Quaker president, Herbert Hoover, who negotiated arms limitation and arbitration treaties with other nations during his presidency?³ Or the nineteenth-century English MP John Bright, who spoke out movingly against the War in Crimea⁴ and resigned his cabinet post in 1882 after Prime Minister Gladstone shelled Alexandria,⁵ while, like Nixon, supporting a war he saw as just—the Union side during the American Civil War—using his influence to help to prevent British recognition of the Confederacy?⁶ If one were to take a wider sampling of Nixon's foreign policy actions, how then would his adherence to peace principles have to be assessed?

What changes in Ingle's analysis might be occasioned by a broader examination of the pastoral and evangelical yearly meetings, and how their support or opposition to the Vietnam War changed over time? Ingle mentions that opinions about Vietnam were about equally divided in Northwest Yearly Meeting (a meeting associated with Evangelical Friends) in 1967 (p. 165). But in Indiana Yearly Meeting, the yearly meeting approved minutes protesting at the Vietnam War in 1965 and 1966, although they approved no such minute after 1966. By 1969 and 1970, most meetings in Indiana Yearly Meeting seemed to be staunchly in support of Nixon and all of his policies,⁷ and most Indiana pastoral Quakers, at least outside the environs of Earlham, saw Nixon as one of their own and critiqued the long-haired protestors, not the President. Elton Trueblood, as Ingle notes, supported Nixon completely, until all those deleted expletives turned up in the release of the transcripts of White House tapes. Thus, were pastoral and evangelical Friends generally a part of Nixon's 'silent majority'?

Finally, a subject that involves Quakers obliquely was Nixon's relationship with ecumenical Christian organisations during his presidency. The most controversial issue in Indiana Yearly Meeting in 1969 and 1970 was the support by Friends United Meeting for the National Council of Churches, which represented mainline Protestantism but was perceived as far too liberal, especially on issues

2 A brief overview is provided by Hoff, J., *Nixon Reconsidered*, New York: Basic Books, 1994, pp. 182–207.

3 Wilson, J. H., *Herbert Hoover: forgotten progressive*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1975, pp. 189–96.

4 Cash, B., *John Bright: statesman, orator, agitator*, London: I. B. Tauris, 2012, pp. 207–11.

5 Cash, *John Bright*, pp. 222–29.

6 Cash, *John Bright*, pp. 145–74.

7 Hamm, T. D., Marconi, M., Salinas, G. K., and Whitman, B., 'The Decline of Quaker Pacifism in the Twentieth Century: Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends as a case study', *Indiana Magazine of History* 96 (2000), p. 66.

related to the Vietnam War. A large segment of Indiana Quakers preferred the more conservative National Association of Evangelicals. In fact, FUM was required to stop budgeting support for the NCC in 1970, by rural conservative Friends churches in Indiana and elsewhere. One of the major shifts in religious policy between the Lyndon Johnson and Nixon administrations was that Nixon, unlike his three predecessors, Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson, refused to have a close connection with the National Council of Churches,⁸ preferring to associate more closely with evangelical Christians.⁹ What impact might be seen in matters of national religious policy, or in Nixon's understanding of his own Quakerism, by a shift in reliance for building up a religious constituency through working with Christian evangelicals, in lieu of the NCC?

8 The increasing alienation of the Johnson and Nixon administrations over NCC opposition to the Vietnam War is thoroughly documented by Gill, J., *Embattled Ecumenism: the national council of churches, the Vietnam war, and the trials of the Protestant left*, DeKalb: University of Illinois Press, 2011.

9 Williams, D. K., *God's Own Party: the making of the Christian right*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 89–103.