



Exploring Quakerism

A Study Guide

Marsha D. Holliday



A Publication of
Quaker Press
of Friends General Conference

Leader's Edition

Copyright © Marsha D. Holliday, 2006

Leader's Edition:

ISBN 10: 1-888305-42-8

ISBN 13: 978-1-888305-42-5

Participant's Edition:

ISBN 10: 1-888305-43-6

ISBN 13: 978-1-888305-43-2

All rights reserved

Printed in the United States of America

Composition and design by David Budmen

Front and back cover photograph by Joanne Clapp Fullagar

The picture, *Young Woman or Old Woman* (see p. 21), was originally published in 1915 by the cartoonist W.E. Hill. Reprinted from the version used in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Religious Education Newsletter, 1997, with permission.

For more information about this title contact:

Quaker Press of Friends General Conference

1216 Arch Street 2B

Philadelphia, PA 19107

To order more copies of this publication or other Quaker titles call QuakerBooks of FGC at 1-800-966-4556, e-mail bookstore@fgcquaker.org or on the world wide web at www.quakerbooks.org

Contents

	Suggestions for the Use of This Curriculum	iv
	Acknowledgments	vi
1	Quaker Faith and Practice	1
2	Quakerism Is Experiential	5
3	Unprogrammed Quaker Worship	8
4	Revelation Is Continuing	13
5	The Experience of God Is Universal	16
6	Honoring the Spirit Within	19
7	Truth and Truth-Telling	24
8	Simplicity and Integrity	28
9	Friends and Diversity	31
10	Friends and Community	35
11	Quaker Faith in Action	39
12	Friends Testimonies	42
13	Quaker Process	45
14	Quaker Organizational Structure	49
15	The Roots and Branches of Modern Quakerism	53
	Suggested Reading List	58

Suggestions for the Use of This Curriculum

The purpose of this curriculum is to promote a better knowledge and understanding of Quakerism among unprogrammed Friends. This curriculum may be used for adults in Friends meetings, for junior and senior high First Day School classes, for students in Friends middle and upper schools, and for mixed-age groups and classes from middle school to adult.

It was written to be easy to use. The leader may either read the text for each session to the class or group or present the material using his or her own words. As both meetings and schools may use this curriculum, some sessions have separate instructions for each.

After the presentation, the leader may wish to use the suggested discussion questions and activities. You and your participants may have other or additional questions to ask. For young people, each session can be covered in 30 to 45 minutes. For adults, one-and-a-half hour sessions would allow a longer time for worship sharing and discussions. This curriculum works best for groups of approximately 5 to 25 people.

Each session closes with a reflection question that participants may consider before the next session. Beginning with the second session, each session opens with a time for considering that question. To prepare, participants may draw, paint, write in their journals or create something about, write music to, or meditate upon their response to the question. Friends may volunteer to read, recite, sing, or play their responses to the reflection questions; they may show their art or craft work; or they may “pass.” To allow enough time for everyone to speak, the length of the time for worship sharing will vary depending upon the number of members of the class.

The discussion questions following each presentation are meant to deepen thinking about the topic and stimulate discussion. There are no right or wrong answers.

Encourage your participants to keep journals and bring them to class for their writing and drawing assignments. In particular, they will need their journals for Session 8. In addition, you will need the following supplies:

- Quaker songbooks or photocopies of “The George Fox Song” for session 2
- Drawing materials for sessions 4, 6, and 7
- Cartoon strips for session 6
- One post card for each student and some writing paper for session 8
- A source of music such as a tape recorder or a musical instrument for session 10

For classes held at Quaker meetings—rather than Quaker schools—make an appointment with the clerk of your meeting to attend your class and find a date for your class to attend a meeting for business prior to session 9.

Give a copy of the booklet, *Exploring Quakerism—Participant’s Edition* to each participant and ask each to bring the booklet to class. This booklet contains the presentations for the sessions, the reflection questions, and the handouts. Copies can be purchased from the QuakerBooks of FGC (1216 Arch Street, 2B, Philadelphia, PA 19107) by calling 1-800-966-4556, e-mailing bookstore@fgcquaker.org, or ordering from www.quakerbooks.org. All other materials for the sessions are included with this curriculum and may be copied.

Quaker Values: A Curriculum for First Day Schools is a companion curriculum for elementary school children, and is also available from QuakerBooks of FGC.

Quotations from the Bible are from the New Revised Standard Version.

Although the author has consulted with many Friends in an attempt to describe Quakerism adequately, inevitably, this curriculum can only reflect her own understanding. No one can speak with accuracy on behalf of all members of unprogrammed meetings.

More Specifically

For junior high/middle and senior high First Day School classes, with a knowledgeable adult Quaker present to help answer questions, students could take turns leading the sessions.

For Friends middle and upper schools, this curriculum may be used as an introductory course or in homerooms or advisories. It is designed to allow student volunteers to lead the sessions.

If student leaders present this material in homerooms, homeroom teachers should be present to assure discipline. An assembly at the end of the curriculum would allow students to ask a panel of Quakers the questions that arose from the curriculum. Each homeroom or advisory could prepare one or more questions to present to the panel. Quaker board members could assist by participating in the sessions and serving on the panel at the concluding assembly.

For adult religious education, the leader may wish to spend more time on the discussion questions than on the activities. Friends new to Quakerism could take turns leading the sessions, but it would be important for a knowledgeable Friend to be present to help answer questions.

For mixed-age groups and classes from middle school to adult, this curriculum may be used in either Friends meetings or in Quaker schools. With mixed age groups, the leader may wish to spend more time on activities than on discussion questions.

Acknowledgments

The insights and advice of many Friends are an integral part of this curriculum. The Sandy Spring Friends School community participated extensively in the development of both the original version of this curriculum and the pamphlet, “Silent Worship and Quaker Values: An Introduction.” Howard Zuses, the Sandy Spring Friends School business manager, and the Sandy Spring Friends School print shop produced the original pamphlet from an article I had written. Anne Morley, a Sandy Spring Friends School teacher, encouraged me to write this curriculum to augment the pamphlet, and members of the Sandy Spring Friends Upper School Spiritual Life Committee—Hannah MacDermott, Maria Bradley, Jackie Wilson, and Ron Wetteroth—advised me and edited the initial drafts. The Sandy Spring Friends Middle School Principal, Nancy Henningsen, also helped with editing. Under the leadership of its principal, Tom Goss, the entire Sandy Spring Friends Upper School tested and evaluated the curriculum. I am grateful to the many student volunteers at Sandy Spring Friends School who, during the 1995 fall semester, led the sessions during half-hour periods once a week and met biweekly during lunch with the Spiritual Life Committee to evaluate previous and prepare future sessions.

In addition, the following Friends gave me many valuable suggestions for editing this curriculum and the pamphlet: C. J. Swet (Pipe Creek Friends Meeting); Eileen Bagus (Community); Elizabeth Meyers, Rosalind Zuses, and Frank Massey (Sandy Spring); Arthur David Olson and William Samuel (Adelphi); Shirley Dodson (Middletown Meeting Concord Quarter); Virginia and David Wood (Dayton); Gene Hillman (Annapolis); Rebecca Rawls (Langley Hill), Georgia Fuller (Alexandria); Roderic Davison, Robert Smith, J. E. McNeil (Friends Meeting of Washington); Debra Schwartz (Tacoma Park Worship Group); Marlou Carlson (Duneland); Johan Maurer (Reedwood); Marty Grundy (Cleveland); and Liz Kamphausen (Toronto), Susan Hopkins (Grass Valley). Daniel Smith (Bethesda) edited the original article that accompanied this curriculum. Chel Avery (Quaker Information Center), Esther Darlington, Eric Evans, and Rita Varley (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Library), Timothy Seid (Earlham School of Religion), and Christopher Densmore (Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College) found citations for many obscure quotations.

Maurine Pyle and Suzanne Siverling (Lake Forest Friends Meeting), Winifred Walker-Jones (Friends Meeting of Washington), Marnie Clark and Curt Torell (Chapel Hill), and Becky Phipps (Cambridge) have carefully edited this curriculum, and Suzanne Siverling shepherded it through the publication process. These Friends gave me enormously helpful encouragement and editorial advice. Special thanks go to

Friends General Conference staff, Barbara Hirshkowitz and Michael Gibson, for their assistance. Barbara has been an exceptionally insightful editor.

My husband, George, and my daughters, Lara and Sara, provided editorial assistance and loving support. Sara was one of the students who initially tested this curriculum at Sandy Spring Friends School.

1 Quaker Faith and Practice

Begin this session by having participants introduce themselves. Following that, spend five minutes describing the curriculum and the format for the class. Then in your own words or by reading aloud, present the following information.

In England in 1652, George Fox electrified a large gathering of seekers with his description of a profoundly exciting discovery. He had found that there is something within each person that enables him or her to experience and respond to the presence of God, something that enables goodness and spiritual growth, something which Friends would later call “that of God in everyone.”

This discovery had remarkable consequences, for if there is that of God in everyone, then human life is holy. If we can respond to that of God within, then revelations, or messages from God, are continuing. If everyone can have this experience, then religious authority is not limited to certain individuals, and intermediaries are not necessary. This was the beginning of Quaker faith and practice. Its appeal quickly brought many converts to this new religion, despite harsh repression from both the English church and state.

For early Friends, the realization that revelation is continuing made the search for Truth the primary purpose of the Quaker religion. Throughout their history, Friends have found that the search for Truth changed their lives. The search creates a craving for divine leadings, which requires a life style that encourages and supports those leadings. A disdain for creeds soon follows, along with a stronger emphasis on how one lives one’s life than on resolving the complexities of theology.

The founders of this new religion had various names for themselves such as “The Friends of Truth,” “Children of the Light,” “People of God,” and “Friends.” These early names are still descriptive of Quaker faith and practice, and words, like “Friends,” “Light,” and “Truth,” are used extensively among Quakers today.

Quakers have associated the word “Friends” with the biblical description of Jesus’ message to his disciples: “I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.”¹

The metaphor of Light has a biblical basis and is common in the book of John. That Christ is “the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world”² was quoted often by early Friends. In their struggle to describe what is indescribable, Friends have found this metaphor particularly useful, as light illuminates both our strengths and our weaknesses—our integrity and our shortcomings.

¹ John 15:15.

² John 1:9.

The word “truth” is significant for Friends because George Fox began his own faith journey, and subsequently, the Quaker experience, as a search for Truth. Throughout their history, Friends have acknowledged one Truth—often referred to with a capital “T”—which is of God alone. Christians have traditionally associated Truth, with a capital “T,” with Christ. Believing that there is that of God in everyone, Friends recognize that anyone, therefore, may come to know some part of that Truth. Only in God, however, does Truth reside in its entirety. What each individual thinks is true, with a small “t,” depends upon his or her limited perspective. As the Apostle Paul said, “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.”³

Quakers recognize that, when one searches for Truth with a capital “T,” one finds the same Truth in oneself that one finds in others. This is because Truth is of one nature. Therefore, Truth in me can resonate with Truth in you. This is also why Friends, when sufficiently patient, can find unity in making decisions. This experience of corporate seeking and discerning of Truth underpins Quakerism.

Friends realize that God continues to reveal Truth to us today, just as in the past. Friends, therefore, try to remain open to new revelations. Because creeds, or statements of belief, could never fully represent all Truth and may limit or confine both current perceptions of Truth and the continuing search for further understanding, unprogrammed Friends write no creeds. Friends try to learn from the insights of the past, but do not want those past insights to limit present and future insights.

Instead, Friends record their collective historic experiences, insights, and values in documents entitled *Faith and Practice*. These documents are written by yearly meetings, which are regional groupings of monthly meetings—the name given to local congregations because they meet monthly for business. Most yearly meetings have such documents, and while they contain significant differences, they also have many similarities. To help them reflect on their beliefs and actions, Friends also write advices and queries, which are statements or questions to help their members reflect upon their collective and individual faith journeys.

Without creeds, Friends have become diverse in their beliefs about God. As Friends honor the experiences that others have of God, decisions about beliefs become matters for individual discernment—for the thoughtful and critical reflection each person gives to his or her insights. Friends have always held that what people do is more important than what they believe. Those whose lives bring joy, peace, and love to others may have different theologies, but they shine with the same pure “Inward Light.”

As the search for Truth is more important to Friends than the maintenance of particular beliefs, scientific discoveries do not tend to challenge the basis of Quakerism. Like the scientific method, Quaker faith and practice rely primarily upon experience, rather than authorities, for guidance and veracity. Friends have found that they come to know Truth experientially. In the words of Howard Brinton “Quakerism is primarily a method, just as science is primarily a method.”⁴

³ Corinthians 13:12.

⁴ Howard H. Brinton, *Friends for 350 Years* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 2002), p. xx.

The diversity of beliefs about God has become so extensive among Friends that they do not even agree upon a definition for the word “God.” Friends are, however, convinced of the power of goodness in the universe. Their conviction is confirmed in the Bible and has been experienced by Friends throughout their history. That power of goodness inspires awe, wonder, and joy and is the basis for Friends faith and practice.

Using such terms as “the Inward Light,” “the Light of Christ,” “the Christ within,” and “the Seed of Truth,” early Friends developed a rich vocabulary to describe their inward experience of the Divine. In an attempt to acknowledge the equal contributions of both male and female attributes, many Friends today are careful to use either non-sexist names for the Divine or a variety of both feminine and masculine pronouns and metaphors.

Discussion Questions

- What word or words do you use to express your experience of the Divine?
- How is the term “Friends” appropriate for Quakers today?
- How are the concepts of Divine Truth and Divine Light different?
- What is the difference between faith and practice?

Activities

Announce that, at the end of each session, the class or group will receive a reflection question to think about, to draw, paint, write in their journals about, write music to, or meditate upon before their next meeting.

Then read the following reflection question to your class. Tell your class that the next session will begin with a worship sharing or a time of reflection on that question. Friends may volunteer to read, recite, sing, play, or show their response.

Conclude this session by having participants volunteer to take turns reading aloud and discussing the description of worship sharing (see p. 4).

Reflection Question

Draw, paint, write in your journal or create something about, write music to, or meditate upon the question, “What does the Divine Light illuminate in my life?”

GUIDELINES FOR WORSHIP SHARING

The following is a composite list based on guidelines from Baltimore Yearly Meeting and Friends General Conference.

The purpose of worship sharing is spiritual deepening through shared, prayerful attention to a given topic.

1. We share out of the silence. Time and space between messages are helpful to allow us to take in what others have shared.
2. Contributions are voluntary. Anyone may “pass” by simply remaining silent.
3. We try to speak more from feeling and experience than from ideas and opinions.
4. We speak briefly and only once so that everyone will have a chance to share. If there is time after everyone has spoken once or passed, then Friends may speak again.
5. We try to listen with an open heart and with acceptance. In silent listening we cherish one another and offer our love and respect. We wait for another occasion to ask questions or have discussions.
6. Experiences or feelings shared during this time together are confidential.

2 Quakerism Is Experiential

Begin this session with worship sharing or a time of reflection on the question, “What does the Divine Light illuminate in my life?” Then present the following information.

Quakerism is experiential. It relies upon each Friend’s *experience* of the Divine presence, not primarily upon scriptures or ministers. George Fox’s knowledge of the Bible was extensive, but when he said, “and this I knew experimentally,”⁵ he was declaring that his faith was based upon *his experience of God*, not upon *his beliefs about God* or upon his reading of the Bible. While preaching in 1652, he said “Then what had any to do with the scriptures, but as they came to the spirit that gave them forth? You will say, Christ saith this, and the apostles say this, but what canst thou say? Art thou a child of Light, and hast thou walked in the Light and what thou speakest, is it inwardly from God?”⁶.

George Fox’s experience of the presence of God was deeply rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition, in which biblical evidence of people’s experience of God abounds, such as Moses and the burning bush;⁷ Elijah and the wind, earthquake, fire, and silence;⁸ and the apostles at Pentecost.⁹

Born in 1624 in a village in Leicestershire, England, as a weaver’s son, George Fox had little schooling. At age nineteen, he was distressed with the corruption and hypocrisy in the church of his day. His distress caused him to begin his spiritual search. In 1647, after four years of searching, he heard a voice that caused him to realize that God’s guiding and comforting presence could be found within himself and in others. In his journal, he wrote of the priests, “there was none among them that could speak to my condition. And when all my hopes in them and in all men were gone so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, then, Oh then, I heard a voice which said, ‘There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition,’ and when I heard it my heart did leap for joy.”¹⁰

George Fox found that this inner voice could teach and lead him, and that, because the spirit of God is everywhere, he did not have to be in church or listen to religious leaders to hear that voice. He could talk directly to God. He *knew* God because he experienced God. In the words of Marty Grundy,¹¹ early Friends were converted by

⁵ John L. Nickalls, ed., *The Journal of George Fox* (London, England: London Yearly Meeting, 1975), p. 11

⁶ “The Testimony of Margaret Fox concerning her late husband,” from *The Journal of George Fox*, 1694.

⁷ Exodus 3:1–12.

⁸ 1 Kings 19:9–13.

⁹ Acts 2:1–13.

¹⁰ *The Journal of George Fox*, p. 11.

¹¹ Personal communication, winter 2002.

“George Fox’s revolutionary concept and *experience* that ‘the Lord Christ Jesus was come to teach his people himself.’ The experience that Christ—or God—could actually speak to us, teach and guide us, individually and corporately, without any intermediaries, was powerfully transforming.”

According to the twentieth century Quaker, John R. Yungblut, “Fox knew God ‘experimentally,’ that is, by way of first-hand mystical experience.” Yungblut described this mystical experience as “a sense of being known and loved unconditionally, without reservations or restrictions, for oneself alone. There follows the paradox of feeling that one was never so much oneself or, at the same time, so transcended oneself in a sense of identification with the divine.” Yungblut continued, “Mysticism is empirical religion and is therefore singularly viable in an age of scientific inquiry.”¹²

As it was with the early Friends, Quaker faith and practice is still based today on the *experience* of “that of God” within oneself, in others, and throughout the universe. Friends experience this divine presence both inwardly and outwardly, as immanent and transcendent. Inwardly, it is like a spark or seed in everyone that can respond and grow in goodness. Outwardly, it is like unconditional, universal love. The Quaker concept of “that of God in everyone” is similar to the biblical description of God creating human beings in God’s image.

The recognition that God’s presence can be experienced inwardly, as well as outwardly in the world, was not original with Quakers. When Quakerism began in England in the seventeenth century, a number of other minority religions also affirmed the inward presence of God. What early Friends *did* with that revelation, however, was original. They developed a system of leadership and organization, which honors the sanctity and value of each person while placing authority in the Divine. This system of leadership has flourished among Friends since their first generation. We will discuss this further in subsequent sessions (“Friends Value Community,” “Friends Value Quaker Process,” and “Quaker Organizational Structure”).

Having experienced God’s inward and outward presence, Friends realize that revelation is continuing, that God’s presence is universally available to all people, that human life is sacred, and that all life is grounded in God. Quaker faith and practice have evolved from these realizations.

Discussion Questions

- Where did George Fox find God?
- When has an experience of the presence of God changed your life?

¹² John R. Yungblut, *Variations on the Quaker Message* (Landenberg, PA: Quaker Universalist Fellowship, 1990), p. 37.

Activities

Sing or read together “The George Fox Song.”

After a short break, hold a meeting for worship with your class—approximately ten minutes for teenagers and 30 minutes for adults. Then ask “What was our worship like for you?”

Reflection Question

Draw, paint, write in your journal or create something about, write music to, or meditate upon the question, “How do I experience the presence of God?”

3 Unprogrammed Quaker Worship

Begin this session with worship sharing or a time of reflection on the question, “How do I experience the presence of God?” Then present the following information.

Worship is experiencing the presence of God. Worship can happen anywhere and any time to anybody. In biblical terms, when “two or three are gathered together,”¹³ they can experience that presence. Friends call this “meeting for worship.”

For Friends, inspiration and direction for worship begin as inward experiences. In meeting for worship, the Spirit ministers within the members of the group. Friends, therefore, wait in silent expectation for divine inspiration and direction. As a consequence, outward forms of ceremonies and rituals to assist the ministry—such as *pre-arranged* sermons, readings, prayers, hymns, musical orchestrations, or sacraments—are not a part of unprogrammed worship. Instead, unprogrammed Friends *spontaneously* preach, read scripture, recite inspirational works, pray, and sing. Some Friends have even chosen to dance their messages. As Friends have found that the power and awe of worship based in silence transcend words, expectant waiting has become the most commonly shared mode for corporate, unprogrammed worship.

This extraordinary emphasis on inward leadings makes the unprogrammed Quaker tradition different from most religious traditions, and different, in some ways, from worship in *programmed* Quaker meetings and Quaker churches. While all Quakers meet in worship to hear more clearly God’s “still small voice,”¹⁴ Friends in the unprogrammed Quaker tradition conduct their worship entirely in expectant waiting and listening. They take the psalmist’s advice literally: “Be still and know that I am God.”¹⁵ We will talk more about programmed Quaker churches in the last session (“The Roots and Branches of Modern Quakerism”).

With inspiration and direction for worship coming from within, Friends have found that it is essential to balance the individual’s personal leadings with biblical validation, with insights from other religious texts, with the collective historic experience of Friends, and with the discernment of their present faith community. Friends accomplish this balance through a variety of ways, which we will discuss in subsequent sessions, (“Revelation Is Continuing,” “Friends Value Truth,” “Friends Value Community,” and “Friends Value Quaker Process”). This continual balancing of the individual’s inspiration with the wisdom and discernment of the community tends to prevent the individual from becoming disorderly and the community from becoming stagnant.

¹³ Matthew 18:20.

¹⁴ 1 Kings 19:12.

¹⁵ Psalm 46:10.

Unprogrammed meetings for worship can be a surprising experience for any attendee, but they can be especially surprising for *first-time* attendees. In the typical arrangement of unprogrammed Friends meeting rooms, chairs or benches face each other, signifying that all people are equal before God and that anyone present may be led to speak. While chairs or benches in traditional worship services usually face toward a pulpit, there are no pulpits in unprogrammed Friends meeting rooms.

At an appointed time each week, Friends gather and remain for worship in expectant waiting. Sometimes the Spirit moves someone to speak. When that happens, the Friend becomes a conduit for divine revelation and the message is referred to as vocal ministry. Occasionally, there is a sense in a meeting for worship that the Spirit has brought everyone present into a shared experience of the Light. Friends value this experience and refer to it as a “gathered” or “covered” meeting. Meeting for worship ends when one Friend, designated in advance, shakes hands with his or her neighbors. Then everyone shakes hands, newcomers are welcomed, and announcements are made. Not surprisingly, no two meetings are ever the same.

Many who are new to Quakerism wonder if they should speak in meeting for worship. Experienced Friends have found that some messages coming to them during meeting are for sharing immediately while others are for personal reflection or for sharing on another occasion. Ideally, spoken messages in meeting for worship come from one’s experience and are prompted by the Spirit.

Often, those led to speak in meeting for worship find themselves powerfully moved. The name “Quaker” became attached to early Friends when George Fox told a judge that he should tremble at the word of the Lord. The name stuck because it accurately described the Quaker experience of ministry, in which speaking from a deep sense of leading can leave one trembling or shaken, overcome with a feeling of awe. Today members of the Religious Society of Friends refer to themselves interchangeably as “Friends” or “Quakers.”

So that they can reflect upon each spoken message, Friends try to allow a time of silence after each message. Sometimes a later message builds on an earlier one, but messages are not challenged, discussed, or debated in subsequent vocal ministry, as this would interrupt expectant waiting. Sometimes a Friend will describe a message from a meeting for worship as one which “spoke to my condition,” meaning that the message addressed his or her needs.

As valuable as the vocal ministry is, Friends also value the silence of expectant waiting because it allows them to listen for God’s leadings in their lives. As breaking the silence to give a message in meeting is a weighty matter, Friends who are moved to speak tend to do so with humility, with a scarcity of words, and are enjoined from speaking more than once in the same meeting for worship. Corporate worship is so important to Friends that even children and babies attend part or all of meeting for worship.

Although inspiration and direction from God are experienced within, Quakerism is outward as well. Friends find that their inner experiences lead them to outer actions. In the words of William Penn, “True godliness does not turn men out of the world, but enables them to live better in it, and excites their endeavors to mend it.”¹⁶ In later

¹⁶ William Penn, *No Cross, No Crown* (York, England: The Ebor Press, 1981), pp. 63–64.

sessions (“Faith in Action,” “Friends Testimonies”), we will discuss some of the ways in which Friends have expressed outwardly their inward experiences of the Divine.

Discussion Questions

- What is your experience of God’s presence in meeting for worship?
- How is corporate worship different for you from times of meditation, prayer, or worship when you are alone?
- If you have ever spoken in a meeting for worship, what led you to speak? How did you feel before you spoke, as you spoke, and after?
- Have some messages had more meaning for you than others? How did that feel to you?
- What is your experience of a gathered or covered meeting?

Activities

For teenagers: Hand out a copy of “Some Thoughts about Meeting for Worship,” from page 11. Have volunteers take turns reading it aloud. Then have the entire class act out a meeting for worship in which they break the guidelines. Afterwards, ask the following questions:

- Have you attended a meeting for worship where these guidelines were not followed? How did that affect your experience?
- What is a guideline?
- Why is debate not worship? Why is worship not debate?

For adults: Hand out a copy of “The Hidden Ritual in Meeting for Worship” from page 12. Allow time to read it silently. Then ask the following questions:

- A Friend has said, “Meeting for worship once a week, on the same day of the week and at the same time of the day, is a ritual.” What do you think of that description of ritual?
- Another Friend has said, “You don’t know that Quakers have rules until you break one. Then you find out very quickly.” Have you found hidden rules in meeting?

Reflection Question

Draw, paint, write in your journal or create something about, write music to, or meditate upon the question, “What is my experience of worship?”

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT MEETING FOR WORSHIP

Written by the Students and Faculty of the Quaker Life Committee, Sidwell Friends School, about 1987.

- Because it is often difficult to quiet oneself, Friends begin the process by walking quietly to the meeting place.
- Early arrivers to meeting sit farthest from the entrance so that latecomers can enter more quietly.
- Friends attempt to come to meeting with a clear mind. They do not come to meeting with a prepared speech. Nor do they come determined not to speak. Friends speak when moved by the Spirit of God.
- Messages are usually expressed as brief statements of insight, inspiration, ideas, or concerns. Because we treasure everyone's contribution, meeting for worship is not a time for discussions or debates.
- Speakers should speak loudly so that everyone can hear.
- Friends who have previously not spoken in meeting often find—after they have spoken—that it was easier than they had thought.
- One person in the meeting is assigned the responsibility of ending meeting for worship. That person signals the end of meeting by shaking hands with the person next to him or her. At that time, all others shake hands with those around them.

THE HIDDEN RITUAL IN MEETING FOR WORSHIP

Written by Maurine Pyle, a member of Lake Forest Friends Meeting, Illinois Yearly Meeting.

Quaker tradition and practice provide some concrete guidance to help us worship together. Here are a few guidelines that may be helpful in centering down.

- Try to arrive early or at least on time. When we begin together at the appointed hour, we can enter into silence more easily. If you arrive early, sit furthest from the door to allow easily accessible seating for latecomers.
- Allow a long period of silence at the beginning of worship so that people can center down. We all carry worries and need time to lay them down before we enter into the deep.
- Before speaking, ask yourself if the message is from the Spirit. Then ask yourself if your message is meant for the whole group, for yourself alone, or for you to share with someone privately.
- Allow time between vocal offerings. Deep listening allows the message to resonate within us so that we can find our personal application.
- If it is clear that your message is a leading—if it is direct guidance from the Divine—then rise to speak. Rising to speak allows your voice to be heard. Many people among us have difficulty with their hearing. Rising also symbolizes your commitment to be identified as someone speaking on behalf of the Spirit.
- Let your message come from the experience of feeling God in your heart. Friends often find themselves quaking, overtaken by joy or humility. Sometimes Friends find themselves “on their feet” and speaking without knowing how they got there. Prepared messages or readings do not come from the leadings of group worship. As the Quaker motto says, “Come to meeting neither prepared to speak nor not prepared to speak.” An exception, in some meetings, is the reading of the monthly query.
- Speak only once. This allows other voices to be heard and diminishes the possibility for debate.
- Be brief. A long or rambling message may disrupt the meditation of those around you. Your gifts of vocal ministry, of silence, and of listening are equally vital to the life of the meeting for worship.
- Be conscious of the gifts of ministry being offered by the children. Listen to them, observe them, encourage them, and love them.

4 Revelation Is Continuing

Begin this session with worship sharing or a time of reflection on the question, “What is my experience of worship?” Then present the following information.

Friends experience of that of God within has led them to realize that anyone at any time may receive and express God’s leadings. Consequently, revelations, or messages from God, are continuing. Although we are not always receptive or perceptive, the Divine is always present—imparting guidance, direction, and unchanging Truth. Friends, therefore, wait expectantly for revelations, which may come to Friends through other people, through their religious communities, through reading religious scriptures, or through sources such as art, music, nature, science, philosophy. They may come as dreams, insights, or nudgings.

Friends have found revelations to be continuing, not only throughout history but also in their individual lives. Isaac Penington, an early Friend, wrote, “There is that near to you which will guide you; O wait for it and be sure to keep to it.”¹⁷ The Bible confirms this waiting upon the Spirit. For example, Psalm 27:14 says, “Wait upon the Lord, and he shall strengthen your heart” and, from Isaiah 40:31, “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles.”

The recognition of continuing revelation has influenced Friends understanding of the Bible. Friends affirm that the same Spirit that inspired much of the writing of the Bible is still inspiring us today. Friends regard the Bible as only one source of inspiration among many. In addition, many Friends find some parts of the Bible more inspired than other parts. Although Friends consider the Bible to be a rich source of spiritual insights and guidance, they have found that no sacred literature is complete. Revelation did not end with the completion of the Bible or any other sacred texts. George Fox realized that reading about God is not the same as knowing God. He wrote, “for though I read the Scriptures that spoke of Christ and of God, yet I knew him not but by revelation.”¹⁸

In his *Apology*, Robert Barclay, an early interpreter of Quakerism, stated that the experience of the Spirit is the primary source. For Barclay, the scriptures only *talk about* the source. He wrote “because the scriptures are only a declaration of the source, and not the source itself, they are not to be considered the principal foundation of all truth and knowledge. They are not even to be considered as the adequate primary rule of all

¹⁷ “To the Women Friends that Meet at Armscott in Worstestershire,” *Works of Isaac Penington*, Vol. 3 (Glenside, PA: Quaker Heritage Press, 1994), p. 536.

¹⁸ *The Journal of George Fox*, p. 11.

faith and practice. Yet, because they give a true and faithful testimony of the source itself, they are and may be regarded as a secondary rule that is subordinate to the Spirit, from which they obtain all their excellence and certainty.”¹⁹ In Quaker faith and practice, Friends *experience* that source first-hand.

Although revelations from God are continuing, one may not always perceive them. Moreover, Friends interpretations of what they receive are not always accurate. To prevent false claims of revelation, Friends have, over time, developed four tests. Friends check the truthfulness of their personal revelations against their own past personal experiences; against the Bible and other religious literature; against the collective, historic experience of Friends; and within their faith communities—their monthly, quarterly, or yearly meetings.

If, for example, a Friend feels that he or she has had a leading to take a particular action against the death penalty, that Friend might consider his or her personal experience and previous insights, check his or her concern against the scriptures, review the historic experience of Friends, and discuss his or her concern and a possible course of action with members of his or her meeting, paying thoughtful and prayerful attention to Friends responses and being open to their guidance.

When Friends have experienced both a leading and confirmation through discernment, they must take action—they must do something about their revelation. Friends refer variously to such prophetic actions as “holy obedience,” “following God’s direction,” or “following one’s leadings.” Friends have found that they become powerfully moved to take these actions. As following one’s leadings can bring great joy, prophetic action is more than a duty or an obligation—it is a yearning.

Friends have aids that help them become more receptive to revelation. In order to promote their search for Truth, Friends practice honesty and integrity. In order to allow more time and space in their lives for the search for Truth, Friends practice simplicity. Because they recognize that revelation often comes from unexpected sources, they honor diversity. And since God’s presence is among us collectively, they practice community. These aids, which we will discuss as disciplines and testimonies in subsequent sessions, can help Friends be more receptive to revelation.

Discussion Questions

- How does one know which insights or leadings are true and which are false?
- Has God spoken to you through sources such as nature, art, music, and science?
- Have you ever had a sense that you were following a leading? If so, what happened?
- Where do new ideas come from?

¹⁹ Robert Barclay, Dean Freiday, ed., *Barclay’s Apology* (Newberg, Oregon: The Barclay Press, 1991), p. 5.

Activities

Have each participant draw an abstract picture about a revelation or a leading that he or she has had and give it a title. Have each person share it with the group.

Reflection Question

Draw, paint, write in your journal or create something about, write music to, or meditate upon the question, “Which of my revelations has impacted my life the most?”

5 The Experience of God Is Universal

Begin this session with worship sharing or a time of reflection on the question, “Which of my revelations has impacted my life the most?” Then present the following information.

Friends experience of that of God within has led them to realize that the potential to experience God’s presence inwardly is universal. It is available to all people. Anyone, anywhere, at any time can experience God’s presence directly.

Assured of God’s universal presence, William Penn said, “The humble, meek, merciful, just, pious and devout souls are everywhere of one religion; and when death has taken off the mask, they will know one another.”²⁰ In the language of the Bible, “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”²¹

The realization that God’s presence is experienced universally has led Friends to acknowledge that Quakerism is only one way to know God. Followers of other religions also know and experience God, although perhaps with different names and interpretations. Friends, therefore, honor and learn from other worship traditions, and children in First Day Schools (the equivalent of Sunday Schools) may visit other worship services with their classes.

Friends throughout the ages have supported freedom of religion for all people. Quakers’ struggle for religious freedom, despite tremendous religious persecution, contributed substantially to an increase in religious toleration in England and in the American colonies. When, for example, William Penn, a Quaker, established a government in Pennsylvania, it officially tolerated *all* religious traditions.

As early Friends convictions about equality challenged authority, many of their actions had serious personal consequences. “Hat honor” is an example. Early Friends refused to remove their hats to honor any person, even judges in court or the king of England. This profound sense of the equal worth of all people was shocking in the seventeenth century and led to the imprisonment and subsequent death of many Friends. Because Friends honored God, they did, however, remove their hats while speaking in meeting for worship.

Sadly, equality among Quakers has not always extended to people of color. For example, some meetings in the past have had separate benches for blacks and whites. Today Quakers are working toward eliminating racism—in their hearts, in their meetings, and in society.

²⁰ William Penn, *Fruits of Solitude*, #519, p. 95.

²¹ Galatians 3:27–28.

One area where Friends have been considerably ahead of their time is in the recognition of the equal rights of women. In 1667, Margaret Fell wrote, “And thus the Lord Jesus has manifested himself and his Power, without respect of Person; and so let all mouths be stopt that would limit him, whose Power and Spirit is infinite, that is pouring it upon all flesh.”²² Ever since Quakerism began in the mid-seventeenth century, Quaker women have held every position of leadership that Quaker men have held. Quakers are the first still existing religion in which men and women treat each other as equals. Such equality, although imperfect, was radical in those early times and had many ramifications.²³ Among them, Quaker women have always been involved in the business of their monthly meetings, and Quaker schools have always taught both girls and boys.

Emphasizing the equality of Quaker men and women, Margaret Fell, George Fox, and other early Friends developed a simple Quaker marriage ceremony that is still used today. During a meeting for worship, the couple—as equals—exchange the vows or declarations that they wrote together. No one “gives the bride away.” In a Quaker marriage ceremony, the bride and groom may walk into the meeting room together or each may walk in separately. Speaking of authority within marriage, Lucretia Mott wrote, “Then in the marriage union, the independence of the husband and wife will be equal, their dependence mutual, and their obligations reciprocal.”²⁴

Women from Quaker backgrounds, such as Lucretia Mott, Susan B. Anthony, Alice Paul, and Emily Green Balch, having experienced leadership roles within their monthly meetings, moved easily to the forefront of the Women’s Suffrage Movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Four of the five women who organized one of the initial events of the Women’s Suffrage Movement at the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848—Lucretia Mott, Martha Coffin Wright, Mary Ann McClintock, and Jane Hunt—were Quakers. In 1878, Susan B. Anthony drafted the language for what became the nineteenth amendment to the United States Constitution, giving women the right to vote. With the help of another Quaker woman, Alice Paul, that Amendment was passed by congress and became law 42 years later, exactly as Susan B. Anthony had written it.²⁵

The Quaker manner of attending to the business of the meeting also reflects this sense of equality. In Quaker meetings, positions of leadership are shared according to the gifts of Friends as discerned through a nominations process, and all members participate in the ministry of their meeting through committee work. To ensure the sharing of the ministry, all leadership positions and all committee assignments have term limits.

²² Margaret Fell, *Womens Speaking Justified, Proved and Allowed of by the Scriptures, All such as speak by the Spirit and Power of the Lord Jesus*, originally printed in London in 1666 (Amherst, MA: Mosher Book and Tract Committee, New England Yearly Meeting of Friends, 1980), p. 11.

²³ See Tom Hamm’s *Quakers in America*, Chapter 7: “‘A quarterly meeting in herself’: Quaker Women, Marriage, and the Family,” (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2003).

²⁴ *Faith and Practice: A Book of Christian Discipline* (Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1997), p. 68; Lucretia Mott, *Discourse on Woman* (Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson, 1850), p. 20.

²⁵ See Margaret Hope Bacon, *Mothers of Feminism: The Story of Quaker Women in America* (Philadelphia, PA: Quaker Press of Friends General Conference, 1995; and Miriam Gurko, *The Ladies of Seneca Falls: The Birth of the Woman’s Rights Movement* (Schocken, 1976).

Even the nominal leaders, the clerk and the recording clerk of the monthly meeting, whose responsibility it is to identify “the sense of the meeting” and record it, have no special authority. If a clerk wishes to speak about an issue on the agenda, he or she “steps down” from the clerk’s table and another Friend clerks the meeting. We will talk more about the meeting for worship with a concern for business in subsequent sessions (“Quaker Process” and “Quaker Organizational Structure”).

Discussion Questions

- How do I demonstrate respect for other religious traditions?
- How does our meeting demonstrate respect for other religious traditions?
- How do I practice the equal treatment of others?
- How does our meeting practice the equal treatment of others?

Activities

Organize the following game. First, ask everyone to line up by height. Then ask everyone to line up by age. Then ask everyone to line up to show that they are all equal before God. (Friends might think of a circle as such a “line.”) After the game, ask the following questions:

- What determines personal importance?
- What does it mean that, at any time, anyone anywhere can experience God directly?

Reflection Question

Draw, paint, write in your journal or create something about, write music to, or meditate upon the question, “How do I honor that of God in others?”

6 Honoring the Spirit Within

Begin this session with worship sharing or a time of reflection on the question, “How do I honor that of God in others?” Then present the following information.

The Apostle Paul wrote, “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?”²⁶ George Fox wrote, “Now the Lord God hath opened to me . . . how every man was enlightened by the divine light of Christ.”²⁷ Because Friends recognize that there is that of God in everyone, they honor the Spirit within and consider human beings holy. Some Friends affirm that all of life—animal, plant, and human—is holy. Others envision the entire universe—even the elements—as holy.

Friends have found that the most basic way of honoring the Spirit within is to avoid all violence, whether it is physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual. Friends have found that when they hurt others, they also harm themselves and deny that of God both in themselves and in those they have hurt. Therefore, Friends attempt to live in ways that allow them to find nonviolent resolutions to conflicts and to help others through service, the promotion of social and economic justice, kindness in daily living, and the support of each other’s search for that of God within.

Jesus proposed that we love our enemies.²⁸ Loving one’s enemies requires one to be friendly toward those who are not friendly in return. This does not mean, however, that one intentionally lets oneself be hurt, which, in addition to being harmful to oneself, allows and encourages wrongdoing in others. There are enormous differences between being violent (injuring or abusing others), being aggressive (using force to get what one wants), being assertive (declaring what you want and need), and being passive (allowing others to encroach on your rights). Friends affirm assertiveness.

Friends also affirm forbearance. They make every effort to show restraint in the face of provocation. In 1652, George Fox wrote, “The peacemaker hath the kingdom, and is in it; and hath the dominion over the peace-breaker, to calm him in the power of God.”²⁹ Friends try to remain “tender” toward those with whom they disagree. Tenderness, the practice of being open to that of God in others, is different from tolerance, which is the practice of recognizing and respecting the opinions, beliefs, and practices of others. Tolerance requires acceptance; tenderness requires caring.

Like the early Christians, Friends are opposed to fighting in wars. George Fox once told a group of soldiers that he could not join them because he “lived in the virtue of that life

²⁶ 1 Corinthians 3.

²⁷ *The Journal of George Fox*, p. 23.

²⁸ Matthew 5:44.

²⁹ Epistle 9.

and power that took away the occasion of all wars.”³⁰ He urged all people to find that same source of life within themselves, and to live in obedience to it. As Friends aim to live harmoniously with justice for all parties, they try to resolve disputes through the use of conflict management, mediation, and problem solving. They realize that once violence begins, there is no ideal solution. The ideal solution is to avoid violence.

The Quaker emphasis on the indwelling of the Spirit of God has had a profound impact on Quakers and has led many Friends to become conscientious objectors to military service. Over the years, conscientious objection has taken many forms. Friends have worked within the military as medics or ambulance drivers or have done alternative service outside the military, such as voluntary participation in medical tests. Some have gone to prison, rather than cooperate with the military. Nevertheless, Quakers who did join the military have often been treated tenderly by members of their monthly meetings—sometimes including those who disapproved of their choice of service.

Similarly, Friends oppose discriminatory and oppressive situations that devalue people. The Quaker colonial settlers, for example, attempted to find nonviolent resolutions to conflicts with the Native Americans. In Pennsylvania, William Penn always paid for the land that the colonialists inhabited in Pennsylvania, even paying twice for land that two tribes claimed. Although the Native Americans did not recognize the concept of land ownership, Quakers attempted to treat the Native Americans by the highest ethical standards from their perspective at that time.

Perhaps the most cruel and irrevocable infraction of the holiness of life is the death penalty. Friends were among the earliest opponents of the death penalty, and most Friends today believe that such a penalty is never justified.

Since their beginning and in accordance with their conviction that the Spirit is indwelling, Friends have tried to persuade public officials and legislators to adopt public policies that reflect Quaker principles. Today, Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) (fcnl@fcnl.org) is active in bringing Quaker principles into the legislative policies of the United States Congress.

Another aspect of guarding the sacredness of life involves our care for the earth. Out of a concern for God’s creation, Friends try to live in an ecologically responsible manner, to conserve world resources, and to care for the quality of life of all living creatures. In the eighteenth century John Woolman, for example, witnessed the abuse of horses by owners who overworked and mistreated them. While visiting in England in 1772, he saw that the stagecoach horses were driven too hard and in freezing weather. So, for many weeks, he *walked* to his destinations throughout England.

[Woolman] was early convinced in my mind that true religion consisted in an inward life, wherein the heart doth love and reverence the Creator, and learns to exercise true justice and goodness, not only toward all men, but also toward the brute creatures; that, as the mind was moved by an inward principle to love God as an invisible, incomprehensible Being, so, by the same principle, it was moved to love him in all his manifestations in the visible world.³¹

³⁰ *The Journal of George Fox*, p. 65.

³¹ *The Journal of John Woolman and a Plea for the Poor* (New York, NY: Corinth Books, 1961), p. 8.

Out of concern for animals and right sharing of world resources some Friends are vegetarians.

Friends realize that every person is at a different place on his or her spiritual journey. Many, who may not think of themselves as pacifists, find their convictions about the holiness of life deepening with time. Friends encourage each individual to examine and take responsibility for his or her personal convictions and actions. There is a legend that, as a new convert, William Penn asked George Fox if he should continue to wear his sword. George Fox is reported to have said, “Wear thy sword as long as thou canst.”

Discussion Questions

- When have you had the opportunity to show tolerance or acceptance of others?
- When have you had the opportunity to show forbearance or restraint in the face of provocation?
- Have you had the opportunity to experience tenderness toward those with whom you have disagreed?
- What are some local, national, or international public policies that appear to be in opposition to Friends values? What is your meeting/school doing to change or modify those policies?

Activities

1. Discuss “Quotations about Nonviolence:” Hand out to each student a copy of “Quotations about Nonviolence,” on pages 22–23. Take turns having volunteers read the quotations out loud and then ask the following questions:

- Which of the quotations do you find to be the most challenging?
- Are there any that you find unsettling?
- Which do you find most encouraging?

Then choose for discussion one or more of the “Quotations about Nonviolence” on pages 22–23. If your class is large enough, divide into small discussion groups.

2. “Drawing Cartoons:” Give each person or small group a copy of the first portion of a cartoon strip that shows a conflict. Have each complete the cartoon by drawing the last picture or several pictures with a peaceful solution. Alternately, use the same cartoon and see how many different solutions the class comes up with.

Reflection Question

Draw, paint, write in your journal or create something about, write music to, or meditate upon the question, “Which sword have I been unwilling to give up?”

QUOTATIONS ON NONVIOLENCE

Anne Frank: “I still believe that people are really good at heart. I simply can’t build up my hopes on a foundation consisting of confusion, misery and death. I see the world gradually being turned into a wilderness. I hear the ever approaching thunder, which will destroy us too. I can feel the sufferings of millions and yet, if I look up into the heavens, I think it will all come right, that this cruelty too will end, and that tranquility will return again.”

Exodus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 5:17: “Thou shalt not kill.”

Leviticus 19:18 and Matthew 7:12: “In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you.”

Isaiah 2:4: “They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

Micah 6:8: “He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

Jesus told us to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love our neighbors as ourselves.³² He further said to love even our enemies and pray for those who despitefully use us.³³ He told us that the peacemakers are blessed for they shall be called the “children of the Most High.”³⁴

Philippians 4:5: “Let your gentleness be known to everyone.”

James 4:1: “Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you?”

A group of early Friends in a letter to the King of England (November 21, 1660): “We utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons, for any end or under any pretense whatsoever. And this is our testimony to the whole world.”

William Penn: “A good End cannot sanctify evil Means; nor must we ever do Evil, that Good may come of it. . . . We are too ready to retaliate, rather than forgive, or gain by Love and Information. And yet we could hurt no Man that we believe loves us. Let us then try what love will do: For if Men did once see we Love them, we should soon find that they would not harm us. Force may subdue, but Love gains: And he that forgives first, wins the Laurel.”

³² Matthew 22:37–40; Mark 12:29–31; Luke 10:27.

³³ Matthew 5:21–24, 38–39, 43–48.

³⁴ Matthew 5:9.

Joseph Hoag, a Quaker who lived during the Indian Wars, argued with an army general about nonviolence. The general said, “If all the world was of your mind, I would turn and follow after.” Joseph Hoag said, “So then thou hast a mind to be the last man in the world to be good. I have a mind to be one of the first and set the rest an example.”

Lucretia Mott: “Let us strive to keep out all desire for revenge so that, being angry, we sin not.”

The Richmond Declaration of Faith (1887): “We feel bound explicitly to avow our unshaken persuasion that all war is utterly incompatible with the plain precepts of our divine Lord and Lawgiver, and the whole spirit of His Gospel, and that no plea of necessity or policy, however urgent or peculiar, can avail to release either individuals or nations from the paramount allegiance which they owe to Him who hath said, ‘Love your enemies.’³⁵ In enjoining this love, and the forgiveness of injuries, He who has brought us to Himself has not prescribed for man precepts which are incapable of being carried into practice, or of which the practice is to be postponed until all shall be persuaded to act upon them. We cannot doubt that they are incumbent now, and that we have in the prophetic scriptures the distinct intimation of their direct application not only to individuals, but to nations also.”³⁶

Albert Einstein: “Peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding.”

Marion Pritchard (Dutch rescuer during World War II): “We all have memories of times we should have done something and didn’t. And it gets in the way of the rest of your life.”

Mahatma Gandhi: “I object to violence because, when it appears to do good, the good is temporary, but the evil is permanent.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.: “The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral, begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy. Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it. Through violence you may murder the liar, but you cannot murder the lie, nor establish the truth. Through violence you murder the hater, but you do not murder hate. In fact, violence merely increases hate. . . . Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

Jimmy Carter: “War is always an evil, never a good. We will not learn how to live together in peace by killing each other’s children.”

Unknown Author: “Not fighting can be powerful.”

³⁵ Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27.

³⁶ Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:1.

7 Truth and Truth-Telling

Begin this session with worship sharing or a time of reflection on the question, “Which sword have I been unwilling to give up?” Then present the following information.

In philosophical terms, truth is what is and refers to the facts about what we think is real. Many Friends distinguish between God’s Truth, with a capital “T,” and human truth, with a small “t.” For early Friends and for most Friends in the world today, the word, “Truth,” with a capital “T” refers to Christ.

Despite how fragmentary our grasp might be, Friends rigorously attempt to discern God’s Truth. While we assume that God’s Truth is eternal and unchanging, we know that human truth is not—for what we think is fact today can be disproved tomorrow. Human truth is based on the best facts we have as we perceive them now.

Values differ from truth. Whereas truth is what is, values are what one thinks ought to be—what one strives to make real.

Beliefs differ from both truth and values. Beliefs are the convictions one has about what is and what ought to be—about truth and values. Everyone has beliefs about truth and values—about what is and what ought to be. Beliefs about what is may be confirmed or shown to be false as our knowledge grows over time. Beliefs about values are personal and subjective and not open to the same kind of scrutiny as are beliefs about what is true. One may change one’s beliefs about one’s values, but facts alone cannot prove them false.

Faith is belief for which there is no proof. As described in Hebrews 11:1, “To have faith is to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of the things we cannot see.”

The concept of “peace on earth” provides an example of the differences between truth, values, beliefs, and faith. For example, from our knowledge of facts, we *know* that it is *true* that we do not have peace on earth. We think we *should* have peace on earth; therefore, we *value* peace on earth. Because we trust God’s benevolence and power to transform hearts and minds, we *believe* that we can achieve peace on earth. Despite our lack of proof, we have *faith* that someday there will be peace on earth.

Finding the truth for a particular situation requires open and honest consideration of differing perspectives—for each of us perceive only a part of the truth. As truth may come from unexpected sources, Friends have found that the more they value diversity of opinion, the more likely they are to find the truth. They recognize that they stretch and grow if they remain open to possible changes in their faith as they thoughtfully consider ideas, beliefs, and perspectives that differ from their own. Other aids for

Friends in finding the truth are living with integrity and simplicity, checking one's leadings with one's community, and seeking unity in meeting for business, which we will discuss in subsequent sessions.

The search for truth has had profound implications for Friends. First, that search has meant that Friends must be meticulously honest. Friends are convinced that lies and dishonesty complicate their relationships with others and distract them from finding the truth. As a consequence, Friends feel they must tell the entire truth on all occasions. George Fox, for example, would not swear in court to tell the truth, in part because of the biblical admonition against swearing,³⁷ but also because swearing to tell the truth on one occasion implies that there are other occasions when one would not tell the truth.

Early Friends developed a reputation for both honesty and accuracy. Quaker shopkeepers were the first to introduce the "fixed price" system in selling goods. Unlike the rest of society in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century, Quakers would not bargain about prices. Quaker merchants set what they honestly felt were fair prices and would not change them. In addition to being "sound theology," this practice was good for business: Quakers became trusted merchants among their neighbors. In 1661, George Fox wrote,

So speak the truth, whether merchants or tradesmen, and all sorts of people whatsoever, in all your occasions, and in all your tradings, dealing, and doings, speak the truth, act in the truth, and walk in the truth; and this brings righteousness forth. For it answereth the witness of God in every one. . . and truth and equity arise both to be acted and spoken.³⁸

There is an old Quaker joke that illustrates Friends fervor for accuracy. Herbert Hoover, a Quaker and the Thirty-first President of the United States, was riding on a train that passed by a field filled with sheep. His companion remarked that the sheep had been sheared. Herbert Hoover replied, "Well, on this side, certainly." Although Friends value accuracy, they have found that it is important to distinguish between truth and mere *factual* accuracy, which can be the result of partial knowledge or, potentially, a deliberate deception.

Revealingly, Jesus said, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."³⁹ A few verses later, Jesus described himself as "a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God" (John 8:40b). In this passage, "The truth is the presence of God in Jesus."⁴⁰

³⁷ Matthew 5:34–37.

³⁸ "The Line of Righteousness," Epistle 200, 1661.

³⁹ John 8:31–32.

⁴⁰ *The New Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. IX (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), p. 637.

Discussion Questions

- Do you ever find it difficult to say or confess the truth, with a small “t”?
- Have you ever found that ideas that are different from yours cause you to think more deeply?
- When you hear ideas that you do not agree with, what helps you think more deeply about them?

Activities

1. Have the class brainstorm ideas about how one might respond to the question, “How do you like my new outfit?” (When actually, you don’t like it at all.)
2. Pass around a copy of the picture, “Young Woman or Old Woman” (see p. 27). Use the picture to show that one can see in it either a young woman or an old woman—two different and truthful perceptions. Ask the following questions:
 - What do you see in this picture?
 - Is there any other way to see it?
 - What does this picture tell us about how we see the truth?

Reflection Question

Draw, paint, write in your journal or create something about, write music to, or meditate upon the question, “What is the Truth that makes me free?”



Young Woman or Old Woman

8 Simplicity and Integrity

Begin this session with worship sharing or a time of reflection on the question, “What is the Truth that makes me free?” Then present the following information.

Simplicity is putting God first in one’s life. It requires listening for that “still small voice of God”⁴¹ and making those leadings primary for oneself. Friends find that when they put God first, then other matters find their proper order of priority.

Fran Taber, a contemporary Friend, wrote,

The first generation of Friends did not have a testimony for simplicity. They came upon a faith which cut to the root of the way they saw life, radically reorienting it. They saw that all they did must flow directly from what they experienced as true, and that if it did not, both the knowing and the doing became false. In order to keep the knowledge clear and the doing true, they stripped away anything which seemed to get in the way. They called those things superfluities, and it is this radical process of stripping for clear-seeing which we now term simplicity.⁴²

Simplicity is plainness, lack of clutter, and balance. It encourages one to affirm, not flatter or overplay words or emotions, and to avoid extravagance and unnecessary paraphernalia. Simplicity demands integrity, which is being honest in all dealings and on all occasions and adhering consistently to one’s values. Integrity is going beyond the legal requirements to the moral ones. Integrity requires harmony between the inner and the outer life, between claimed values and one’s way of living in the world. Simplicity and integrity have much in common: just as simplicity avoids cluttering one’s environment, integrity avoids complicating one’s relationships. Simplicity and integrity allow more time and space to be receptive to revelation, and so they are aids in finding the Truth.

Throughout their history, Friends appreciation for simplicity has influenced the Quaker life style and is perhaps most apparent in the lack of ornaments in Friends meeting rooms. Today, Friends tend to choose clothing, homes, furniture, transportation, and vacations that reflect a sense of moderation.

Proper stewardship is an aspect of simplicity. We are stewards over that which we own. As our possessions are opportunities to care for ourselves and others, Friends feel that their possessions are enormous responsibilities. Moreover, they feel a responsibility to reduce jealousy and rivalry by living lives that would not be coveted. In the words

⁴¹ Psalm 46:10.

⁴² Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, *Faith and Practice*, citing “Friends Face the World,” edited by Leonard Kenworthy (Quaker Publications, 1987), p. 59.

of Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting, “By observing and encouraging simple tastes in apparel, furniture, buildings and manner of living, we help to do away with unwholesome rivalry.”⁴³ Many Friends seek a simpler path, rather than being servants of materialism. They do not want to be owned by their possessions. They want, instead, to leave time and resources in their lives for spiritual enrichment and social commitment.

In his journal John Woolman lamented his thriving retail business and his struggle with “the stuff and bother” of material success. Out of concern about the terrible effects slavery had upon *both* the slaves *and* the slave owners, he diminished his retail business so he could spend more time traveling throughout the American colonies to convince Friends to free their slaves. In 1763, John Woolman wrote in *A Plea for the Poor*, “to turn all the treasures we possess into the channel of universal love becomes the business of our lives.”⁴⁴

Over the centuries Quakers have struggled with the meaning of simplicity. Until the twentieth century, many Friends thought that simplicity required a life that was devoid of the arts—that the arts were a distraction from their religion. For some early Friends, even the use of colors seemed a distraction. Margaret Fell, however, disapproved of the habit of many to wear “Quaker grey,” “all in one dress and one colour.” In 1700, she wrote,

But Christ Jesus saith, that we must take no thought what we shall eat, or what we shall drink, or what we shall put on, but bids us consider the lilies, how they grow, in more royalty than Solomon. But contrary to this, we must look at no colours, nor make anything that is changeable colours as the hills are, nor sell them, nor wear them; but we must be all in one dress and one colour: this is a silly poor Gospel! It is more fit for us to be covered with God’s Eternal Spirit, and clothed with his Eternal Light, which leads us and guides us into righteousness.⁴⁵

In a struggle similar to that of Margaret Fell, Miss Teen USA 2000, a Quaker, said that she wore her simplicity on the inside.

Today many Friends appreciate art, music, theater, and literature as creative expressions of that of God within and find that the arts can enrich, deepen, and cast new meanings upon their lives. The Fellowship of Quakers in the Arts (fqa@quaker.org) is active in relating our artistic and spiritual lives and publishes a newsletter. In Paris, France, Quakers of all ages have begun a Café Artistique where, one Saturday evening each month, they get together to present poetry, music, songs, artwork, readings, and story telling around themes such as “War and Peace,” “Childhood,” “Women in the World,” “Friendship,” “Family,” “Truth,” and “Simplicity.”

Friends have not found simplicity to be simple or easy. They have found that simplicity can require them to live with complexity and paradox. Ironically, they have found that simplicity takes profound thought and vigorous effort. The Apostle Paul

⁴³ Religious Society of Friends, *Book of Discipline* (Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting, 1978), p. 19.

⁴⁴ *Quaker Faith and Practice: the book of Christian discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends [Quaker]*, 1995, #23.14.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, #20.31.

could have been describing simplicity when he wrote, “Be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.”⁴⁶

We certainly live in a complex society and in complicated times! We have heavily scheduled lives with many demands upon our time and energy. However, when we put God first in our lives, we can prioritize accordingly, and then the unimportant and irrelevant things drop away, making decision making easier. With this right order, Friends can live busy lives, deal with complex issues, maintain a sense of balance, and do what they most need and want to do. The goal of simplicity is not specifically to live a less busy life. The goal is to get one’s priorities right, thereby to enjoy more fully God’s inward and outward presence.

Discussion Questions

- How does advertising affect you? Do you want to purchase the latest products or fashions? If so, why?
- Describe a time when you had to give something up in order to achieve something else.
- How can profound thought help us lead simple lives?
- What are your goals, priorities, or dreams in life?

Activities

Hand out paper to everyone who did not bring a journal to class. Ask your students to make a list of things they could do to make their lives simpler. Allow three minutes for teenagers and ten minutes for adults to prepare their list. Then pass out postcards and ask each person to write his or her address on it. Have each choose the most important thing from their list that they want to work on and write it on the postcard. Collect the postcards and mail them one month after this course ends.

Reflection Question

Draw, paint, write in your journal or create something about, write music to, or meditate upon the question, “What are my ideas of success and happiness?”

⁴⁶ Romans 12:2.

9 Friends and Diversity

Begin this session with worship sharing or a time of reflection on the question, “What are my ideas of success and happiness?” Then present the following information.

Friends House in London, England, has a poster that reads “In human diversity lies the creativity of God” (first issued in March 2000). Because Friends value individual differences as expressions of Divine creativity, they try to listen to everyone with respect. By doing so, they find that they can experience that of God in the other person. The practice of looking for that of God in others leads to a valuing of others and affects how one interacts with others, often leading to greater tolerance and respect.

Friends see individual differences as less important than the deeper unity that can occur among them. Friends have found that they can have unity amidst diversity and that the Spirit, which is common to everyone, can hold them together in community. An early Quaker, Isaac Pennington, wrote: “This is the true ground of love and unity, not that such a man walks and does just as I do, but that I feel the same spirit and life in him.”⁴⁷ A century later, John Woolman wrote, “There is a Principle which is pure, placed in the human Mind, which in different Places and Ages hath had different Names; it is, however, pure, and proceeds from God. It is deep, and inward, confined to no Forms of Religion, nor excluded from any, where the Heart stands in perfect Sincerity. In whomsoever this takes Root and grows, of what Nation soever, they become Brethren.”⁴⁸

Friends have found that discerning Truth begins when Friends share their experiences and insights with the meeting. Friends try to cherish and honor diverse opinions and beliefs. They have found that they can accept, honor, and interact constructively with one another without giving up their individual differences. Accepting and honoring the differing perspectives of other Friends can be both invigorating and difficult for many Friends and for many Friends meetings. Friends realize, however, that diversity helps them consider additional possibilities, thereby aiding them in their search for Truth and stimulating creativity and problem solving. While the appreciation of diversity is highly valued among Friends, it is not always easy to achieve.. Many Friends meetings have not yet found the diversity they aspire to.

As difficult as it is, Friends theological diversity is perhaps their greatest strength as a religious society, for it keeps Friends open to change and new aspects of Truth.

⁴⁷ Leonard Kenworthy, *Quaker Quotations on Faith and Practice* (joint publication of Friends General Conference, in Philadelphia, PA, and Quaker Publications, in Kennett Square, PA, 1983), p. 88.

⁴⁸ *The Journal and Essays of John Woolman*, edited from the original manuscript with a biographical introduction by Amelia Mott Gummere (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1922), p. 180.

Without a creed, and often living in different circumstances and separated from other Friends, considerable diversity has developed among Friends.

Having their roots in Christianity, many contemporary Friends find that a relationship with the living Christ is a necessity. Some individual Friends, however, do not call themselves Christians. Moreover, those Friends who are Christians may have different definitions of Christianity. There are, for example, “unitarian” and “trinitarian” Friends as well as evangelical and non-evangelical Friends.

A Friend with a unitarian persuasion may emphasize God as the creator and Jesus as a role model and teacher who may or may not be divine, or may be divine by degree. Other Friends may see God in a more traditional Christian mode as father/mother, son/child, and Holy Spirit.

Being evangelical or non-evangelical has to do with proselytizing, and most Friends, but not all, do not proselytize. Because Friends look for that of God in other religions, as well as in other people, they tend not to urge others to change religions. Although most meetings do not encourage dual affiliations of their members with another religious organization, some Friends attend other religious services as well as meeting for worship.

The Quaker Universalist Fellowship (quf@universalistfriends.org), which began in 1984, is a group of Quakers and sympathizers who are influenced by Quaker thought and acknowledge the universality of inward religious experiences. The Fellowship “tries to help Friends understand the universalistic elements in the Quaker tradition, and also to appreciate and derive inspiration from the wealth of theological diversity within the Religious Society of Friends today.”⁴⁹

Friends have found that the discipline of respecting theological diversity also helps them respect other forms of diversity, such as differences in gender, race, nationality, and class. As respect for diversity demonstrates appreciation, thoughtfulness, kindness, and caring for others, honoring diversity in all its forms is a value that is of great importance to Friends.

Nonetheless, many Friends meetings in the United States are painfully aware of their lack of racial and class diversity, and struggle with the issues of privilege and racism in their midst. Some monthly meetings and several yearly meetings have formed committees to work mindfully on issues of hospitality and inclusion. As we will see in the last session (“The Roots and Branches of Modern Quakerism”) the overall composition of worldwide Quakerism is more reflective of racial diversity.

Because of their theological diversity, Friends find it all the more challenging and all the more important to make a conscious effort to live harmoniously with other Quakers, in accordance with their common values. The twenty-second entry in the *Advices and Queries* of Britain Yearly Meeting reads:

Respect the wide diversity among us in our lives and relationships. Refrain from making prejudiced judgments about the life journeys of others. Do you foster the spirit of mutual understanding and forgiveness, which our discipleship asks of us? Remember that each one of us is unique, precious, a child of God.

⁴⁹ *Variations on the Quaker Message* (Landenberg, PA: Quaker Universalist Fellowship, 1990), p. i.

Discussion Questions

- How does your life express an appreciation for diversity?
- How does your school/meeting support diversity?

Activities

Organize “The Waders, the Plungers, and the Testers Game.” Based on the following questions, divide the class into three groups that reflect how each person initially contacts the water when he or she goes swimming:

- Do you wade into the water gradually?
- Do you plunge into the water suddenly?
- Do you test the water to decide whether you will wade or plunge?

Then give each group a copy of “The Waders, the Plungers, and the Testers Questionnaire” (see p. 34), and 10 minutes to go to their corner of the room, choose a recorder who, with the help of the group, will fill out the questionnaire, and report back to the class. After the waders, the plungers, and the testers have reported, ask the class the following questions:

- What would the world be like if everyone in the world were a wader, or if everyone in the world were a plunger, or if everyone in the world were a tester?
- Are there people who do not fit the categories of waders, plungers, or testers?
- What are some parallels of this game in your life?
- What does this activity tell us about the feelings we may have concerning diversity?

Reflection Question

Draw, paint, write in your journal or create something about, write music to, or meditate upon the question, “What kinds of diversity are present in my life?”

THE WADERS, THE PLUNGERS, AND THE TESTERS QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Which group do you belong to?

2. Describe the characteristics of your group.

3. Describe the characteristics of the other two groups.
 - a.

 - b.

4. How does your group think the other groups would describe themselves?
 - a.

 - b.

5. How does your group think the other groups would describe your group?
 - a.

 - b.

10 Friends and Community

Begin this session with worship sharing or a time of reflection on the question, “What kinds of diversity are present in my life?” Then present the following information.

Ken Smith, the Sandy Spring Friends School headmaster, has compared community to the flight of geese. He wrote,

As each goose flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the birds that follow. By flying in ‘V’ formation, the whole flock adds 71 percent greater flying range than if each bird flew alone. When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of flying alone. It quickly moves back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of it. When the lead goose tires, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies into the point position. The geese, flying in formation, honk to encourage those in front to keep up their speed. When a goose gets sick, wounded, or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help protect it. They stay with it until it dies or is able to fly again. Then they launch out with another formation or catch up with the flock.⁵⁰

Isaac Penington, a seventeenth-century Quaker, described early Quaker communities by saying, “They are like a heap of fresh and living coals, warming one another as a great strength, freshness, and vigor of life flows into all.”⁵¹

Robert Barclay, a first generation Quaker, wrote,

As many candles lighted and placed in one place do augment the light and make it more to shine forth, so when many are gathered together in the same life, there is more of the glory of God, and his power appears, to the refreshment of each individual, for that he partakes not only of the light and life raised in himself, but in all the rest.⁵²

These statements are expressions of Friends experience of the power of community.

Every member of a Quaker community brings different gifts, insights, and contributions, which collectively help achieve and maintain balance and wholeness in the life of the meeting. Simultaneously, individual Friends gain balance and wholeness from the collective wisdom of their meetings. In Quakerism, the individual needs the community as much as the community needs the individual.

⁵⁰ “The Head’s Column,” *Parents Association Newsletter*, Sandy Spring Friends School, June 1997.

⁵¹ *Works of Isaac Penington*, Vol. 4 (Glenside, PA: Quaker Heritage Press, 1997), p. 48.

⁵² *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, 1967 edition, p. 280.

Despite this symbiotic relationship, and because we each have strong individualistic differences, a viable community can be difficult to achieve and maintain. To make community work, each member of the community must protect the ego needs of every other member, while simultaneously letting go of the needs of his or her own ego. As if that isn't difficult enough, Parker Palmer reminds us that "we might define true community as that place where the person you least want to live with always lives!"⁵³ Staying together as a community requires individuals to value and respect one another. It is, therefore, essential that members of a community are caring and considerate of each other.

Although Friends think they must speak truthfully at all times, they know they must always do so with loving-kindness. Richard Foster, a contemporary Quaker, has reminded us, "How do we serve others in the world? We serve them by valuing their opinion. We serve them by acts of common courtesy. We serve them by guarding their reputation. We serve them by simple acts of kindness. We serve them by integrity of life. We serve them by honesty, truthfulness, and dependability."⁵⁴

As Friends have no creeds, they are particularly aware that they must protect each other's right to maintain personal beliefs and opinions. To do this, they each must question and challenge their own current beliefs and opinions. In Parker Palmer's words, "A true community must be ready to criticize its current conception of whatever it holds most dear."⁵⁵ It must always be "open to fresh messages and critical insight from outside itself" . . . and to "internal debate about basic questions of what's right and what's true."⁵⁶

Margaret Fell is an example of a Friend whose contributions helped to create and support her community. Born in 1614 to a wealthy family, Margaret was well educated. She, her first husband, Judge Thomas Fell, and their nine children lived in England in a huge mansion called "Swarthmore Hall." After Margaret became a Friend, her home became the center of Quakerism, where she held meetings for worship and provided hospitality to visiting Friends. She informed Quakers about one another through letter chains. For traveling ministers, she established a fund and organized the care of their children and the upkeep of their fields during their absences. She began "meetings for sufferings," which were an extended support system for families of Friends who were imprisoned. Because Quakers were not allowed to marry in English churches, Margaret and other Friends began the practice of Quaker weddings, in which couples made their vows or declarations to each other without the assistance of a priest. Like George Fox, Margaret recognized that men and women are equally important in the leadership of the community, and so she insisted on the right for women to preach—something unheard of at that time.

In 1673, George Fox wrote a letter in which he described Margaret's role among Friends as that of "a nursing mother."⁵⁷ The life and work of Margaret Fell set a standard for Friends: Quaker communities should be places of welcome and nurture.

⁵³ *A Place Called Community*, Pendle Hill Pamphlet, #212 (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1977), p. 20.

⁵⁴ *The Challenge of the Disciplined Life* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1985), pp. 228–48.

⁵⁵ Pendle Hill Pamphlet, #212, p. 18.

⁵⁶ Parker Palmer, personal communication, August 11, 2005.

⁵⁷ Manuscript Volume 47.

For Friends, community means more than local clusters of people with whom one lives, works, and worships. Friends understand that community is global. This has caused Friends to be mindful of ecological concerns and of the need to preserve our natural resources. It has also caused them to work for a more equitable distribution of the world's resources among its people. Friends are especially concerned for the health and welfare of those who are impoverished and oppressed. To address those concerns, they have established committees and organizations, such as the Friends Service Committees, to help relieve human suffering. We will talk more about one such organization, American Friends Service Committee, in our next session.

Discussion Questions

- Is my school/meeting open to internal debate about what is right and what is true? Am I open to this debate?
- How does my life express the idea that community is global? How do I care for the quality of all life?
- How is my meeting/school like a flock of geese?
- Why is kindness a necessary part of community?

Activities

Organize one of the following games or activities:

1. **The Human Machine Game:** Divide into groups of five or six people. Have each group create a machine, using the bodies of its members as parts of the machine. Demonstrate by creating a toaster with two people performing as toast, two people as the sides of the toaster, and one person as the start-up lever. After the game, ask the following questions:
 - How is working together on a project different from working alone?
 - What does working together on a project do for the participants?
 - What can we do better in groups than by ourselves?
2. **Musical Laps Game:** This game requires chairs and a source of music, such as a musical instrument or a tape recorder. Each person sits on a chair in a circle. When the music begins, everyone walks in a circle in front of the chairs while the leader takes one of the chairs away. When the music ends, each person finds a chair to sit on and the person without a chair finds a lap to sit on. As more chairs are taken away, piles of lap-sitters result. After the game, ask the following questions:

- Who has played the game, “Musical Chairs?” How did that game differ from “Musical Laps?”
 - What does the game, “Musical Laps,” suggest about community building?
3. As a group activity, draw a vision of members of your meeting working together.

Reflection Question

Draw, paint, write in your journal or create something about, write music to, or meditate upon the question, “What can I do better with others than by myself?”

11 Quaker Faith in Action

Begin this session with worship sharing or a time of reflection on the question, “What can I do better with others than by myself?” Then present the following information.

Quaker action is based on the conviction that goodness is mightier than evil. George Fox wrote, “I saw the infinite love of God. I saw also there was an ocean of darkness and death, but an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness. And in that also I saw the infinite love of God, and I had great openings.”⁵⁸ That inward experience of the love of God encourages Friends to put their faith into action. Friends expect that, with Divine guidance and power, human beings are capable of living divinely inspired lives, which further social justice and peace on earth.

Rufus Jones is an example of a life whose inward experience of the presence of God was expressed through outward actions. His widely recognized writings made him a leading interpreter of Christian and Quaker mysticism. Yet while deeply inward and contemplative, Rufus also led an active outward life, helping to found the American Friends Service Committee, Pendle Hill, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and the Wider Quaker Fellowship.

This balance of the outward with the inward was poignantly illustrated when, on behalf of the American Friends Service Committee, Rufus Jones traveled to Nazi Germany with D. Robert Yarnell and George A. Walton following the “Night of Broken Glass” in 1938. During that night, Nazis broke Jewish shopkeepers’ windows, which began the intense suffering and persecution of Jews during World War II.

Rufus Jones and his two Friends went to the Gestapo headquarters in Berlin and met with aides of Reinhard Heydrich, a high-ranking Nazi official, to plead for the safety of the Jews. Before they were allowed to see Heydrich, the Nazis left the three Quakers alone in a room that had hidden microphones. The Nazis thought that, left alone, they would talk among themselves about their *real* mission in Germany. Sitting in silent worship in the microphoned room, they never spoke. They immediately entered into a time of meditation and prayer. As Heydrich, who was in the adjacent room, listened to the silent Quaker meeting, he, in a sense, participated. The Nazis returned after two hours, admitted they had tape-recorded them, and announced that, because of the Quakers’ innocent intentions, their request would be granted. Heydrich released a number of Jews to the care of the Quakers.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ *Quaker Faith and Practice: the book of Christian discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends [Quakers] of Britain*, 1995, 19.03.

⁵⁹ Elizabeth Gray Vining, *Friend of Life: Biography of Rufus Jones* (Philadelphia, PA: JB Lippencott, 1958), pp. 280–93.

Perhaps Friends are best known for their relief work during and following wars. At those times, Friends attempt to provide food, shelter, and medical care to *anyone* who is suffering, regardless of that person's political affiliation or personal morality.

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), founded in 1917 to promote social justice, peace, and humanitarian solutions to society's problems, is well known in Germany for its "Quaker *hilfe*," or "Quaker help." In 1920, the AFSC and the British Friends Service Committee began their "*Quakerspeisung*," or "child-feeding" program. Following World War II, they helped feed "Quaker soup" to around 250,000 children every day. According to Achim von Borries,

Three times in the twentieth century the Quakers have become known in Germany as 'Quiet Helpers.' In the years of hardship following the First World War the *Quakerspeisung*, the feeding program organized by British and American Quakers, was a humanitarian undertaking which saved the lives of millions of German children. From 1933 to 1945, during the years of terror and destruction of human lives, German, British, and American Quakers aided countless people who were threatened and persecuted—in Germany itself, in the occupied countries of Europe, and wherever the victims of dictatorship and racial madness found refuge. And once again, following the end of the Second World War, Quakers from Great Britain and the United States were among the first to arrive in a Germany suffering from cold and hunger and facing an uncertain future amid enormous destruction.⁶⁰

The AFSC and the British Friends Service Committee were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1948 for these efforts in war relief.

Even though their numbers are small, Friends have a remarkable record in social reforms. Friends were among the first to recognize that mental and emotional disturbances are illnesses that need humane treatment. They were pioneers in education, child welfare, and prison reform. They were in the forefront of the movements to abolish slavery and promote civil rights. They have been active in the women's rights movement. They have promoted ecological concerns and animal rights. Almost every major social reform in the history of the United States of America has had a Quaker involved in its formation.

In the course of serving others, Quakers have frequently recognized needs and initiated reforms. For example, Quaker conscientious objectors, who had done their alternative service in mental hospitals, started the National Association of Mental Health (NAMH) after World War II.

Despite Quakers' impressive record in social reforms, Friends realize that a more important outward expression of that of God within occurs in the way Friends live their *daily* lives. For Friends, it is of utmost importance to help others through kindness and compassion in daily living and through the support of one another's search for that of God within. The essence of Quakerism is in how Friends relate to that of God in themselves and in others.

⁶⁰ *Quiet Helpers: Quaker Service in Postwar Germany* (Philadelphia, PA and London, England: American Friends Service Committee, Quaker Home Service, 2000), p. 1. See also Clarence E. Pickett, *For More Than Bread* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, & Co., 1953).

Discussion Questions

- Why do you think Quakers provide food, shelter, and medical care for anyone who is suffering, regardless of that person's political affiliation or personal morality—even enemy soldiers and civilians?
- Do you agree with George Fox that an infinite ocean of light and love flows over the ocean of darkness?

Activities

In pairs, have class members discuss the following question: “If you were to become active in a peace or social justice movement, which movement would it be, and why would you choose that one?” Then have each share his or her response with the class.

Reflection Question

Draw, paint, write in your journal or create something about, write music to, or meditate upon the question, “How do I put my faith into action?”

12 Friends Testimonies

Begin this session with worship sharing or a time of reflection on the question, “How do I put my faith into action?” Then present the following information.

Friends realize that life is holy, that anyone anywhere can experience God’s presence directly, and that revelation is continuing. These realizations are reflected in their values of simplicity, integrity, harmony, community, equality, and diversity, which are essential in their search for Truth. As Friends try to live their values, they witness or give testimony to the world.

Friends testimonies are outward expressions of God’s leadings. They are the application of Friends values to situations in their personal lives and in the corporate life of the Religious Society of Friends. Friends testimonies are action-oriented. They are not just philosophical views but commitments Friends make and attempt to follow in all aspects of their lives.

Friends testimonies express their relationships with God and among people and come from Friends struggles to live their values, according to their understanding and ability. They are responses Friends make to their life experiences. George Fox did not, for example, have a revelation about nonviolence. He was asked to join the army, and he refused. That occurred in the decade after Quakerism began and was the beginning of the Friends Peace Testimony. Douglas Gwyn wrote, “These early testimonies . . . began simply as those things which Friends could no longer do without diminishing or even belying the message of Christ’s salvation that they preached.”⁶¹ In the words of Beckey Phipps, “Our testimonies are stories, individually and corporately, of how our spirits (with a small letter ‘s’) have been transformed by the Spirit (with a capital ‘S’). Testimonies are stories of experience of lives lived in the presence of God.”⁶²

The story of Elizabeth Fry is an example of a life lived in the presence of God. Elizabeth was a late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century English Quaker. A few months after the birth of her eleventh child, she became aware of the terrible conditions at Newgate Prison, a prison for convicted women and their children. The women and children, some ill and in rags, without bedding or washing facilities, were treated brutally by the jailers and each other. When Elizabeth arrived to visit the prison, the jailers, afraid for their own safety, would not accompany her into the area where the prisoners were held. Elizabeth began her first visit by asking the women if

⁶¹ Douglas Gwyn, *Apocalypse of the Word* (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1986), p. 141.

⁶² Personal communication, winter 2002.

they would like her to start a school for their children. Receiving an overwhelmingly positive response, her safety among the inmates was, henceforth, assured.

Elizabeth brought the inmates clothes and straw for bedding. She insisted that the jailers allow the women to wash their clothes—the jailers had previously believed that the inmates were not interested in cleanliness. She taught the women to sew and arranged for them to sell the clothes and quilts they produced and keep the profits. Such prison reforms were previously unheard of. When the House of Commons asked her to give evidence of conditions at Newgate, Elizabeth Fry became the first English woman, other than the Queen, to advise the English parliament.

Friends recognize that their lives speak. Therefore, their religion is a way of life for them. With the assistance and support of their communities, Friends try to discern God’s leadings and live accordingly. Friends do not measure success in visible achievements. Their measure for success is whether they have done their best to discern and follow God’s direction in their lives. There is a saying among Friends that “they let God be the clerk of the Outcomes Committee.” As a consequence, Friends tend to remain hopeful even if the results of their leadings do not appear to be “successful” by popular standards.

A life of service is the natural result of Friends testimonies. Service is the living out of their testimonies. In 1960, London Yearly Meeting wrote,

Service is not a department of life, something outside the main current of personal living. It is sometimes deliberate, but more often is involved unconsciously in the sheer quality of the soul displayed in ordinary occupations. In our social and recreational activities our gladness and peace of mind will influence others. Special gifts will bring special opportunities and duties. These we shall not think of as tasks to be performed; they will be the natural outcome of our love of others.⁶³

As they have attempted to answer that of God in everyone, Friends have found that their common values unite them and find expression in their testimonies. Friends regret that they do not always succeed in living their testimonies; nonetheless, they continue to strive for them. Friends recognize that, no matter what has happened, it is always important to try to do the next right thing. George Fox gave the following instruction, which is the basis of Friends testimonies: “Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them. Then you will come to walk cheerfully over the earth, answering that of God in everyone.”⁶⁴

Discussion Questions

- Which Friends testimony that we have studied—honesty, integrity, simplicity, diversity, community, peace, and social action—speaks most clearly to you?
- In what ways have you had the opportunity to serve others?

⁶³ *Christian Faith and Practice in the Experience of the Society of Friends*, #594.

⁶⁴ *The Journal of George Fox*, p. 263.

Activities

Draw a picture of or write a paragraph about a time in which you remained hopeful, even if the results of something you tried to accomplish did not create a change in the external situation.

Reflection Question

Draw, paint, write in your journal or create something about, write music to, or meditate upon the question, “How does my life speak?”

13 Quaker Process

Begin this session with worship sharing or a time of reflection on the question, "How does my life speak?" Then present the following information.

Without a pastor or priest, individual unprogrammed Friends are collectively responsible for all the work of their meetings. To get their work done, all decisions of the Religious Society of Friends are made at monthly, quarterly, or yearly meetings for worship with a concern for business. This is a meeting that blends worship and deliberation.

In every situation requiring decisions in meeting for business, Friends are confident that there is a direction that approaches the Truth, and, that if they are patient enough, they can find that way. In making decisions, Friends search as a group for God's guidance and seek unity in their decision-making.

In Quaker business meetings, unity does not have to mean unanimity, or agreement without dissent. Unity is often agreement with dissent, or staying together *through* differences. It requires moving forward with guidance from God's leadings and from the values that Friends hold in common. Unity occurs when collectively the members of the meeting feel they have been truthful in their discernment of God's will. They then feel free to proceed even though there is not complete agreement on the details. This sometimes means that, out of respect for the unity of the whole, a Friend will "stand aside" and allow a decision to go forward with which he or she is not entirely comfortable but for which he or she has no moral misgivings. On the other hand, the community knows that it must listen carefully to heartfelt dissent, as God's leadings may come through anyone at any time, and that the more differing perspectives they consider, the more closely they may come to discerning the Truth.

To facilitate their business, the community selects a presiding clerk who oversees the business meeting and a recording clerk who minutes decisions that have been agreed upon. These clerks normally have two-year terms, which usually may be renewed twice. At meetings for business, the clerk and recording clerk help identify when "a sense of the meeting," has been reached.

Finding the sense of the meeting is a religious and spiritual process in which Friends seek God's guidance for each particular situation. This differs from consensus, a valuable secular process. Friends feel that, by working together, they are more likely to discover God's leadings for the right course of action, and that when the right course becomes evident, it will unite them in a common effort. Because Friends do not determine the sense of the meeting by voting, they avoid creating fractious and embittered minorities.

Friends expect to talk and pray about issues, concerns, problems, and disagreements until unity is found. When Friends in a meeting for business are unable to reach unity, there are several ways in which they may proceed. Most frequently, Friends create a small group or subcommittee to continue the discussion, investigate alternatives, and report back to the next business meeting. Friends urge dissenting individuals “to labor with us on this.” Having discerned the direction in which to proceed, specific steps forward, which may not have been previously considered, often become apparent. Friends refer to this phenomenon as “way opening.”

When the community cannot come to agreement and one or more Friends stands aside or in the way, Friends have the opportunity and responsibility to accept and cherish those with whom they disagree. In this situation, Friends wait for the way to open, for situations to change or circumstances to develop, enabling them to find the direction in which to proceed. They look to the elders of their meetings for advice. Elders are those Friends whose extensive experience and special insights give them authority in the business of the meeting.

When unclear about how to proceed, Friends “lay over,” for consideration at a later time, business decisions that have not yet found unity among their members. Friends then wait for further Divine guidance. George Fox wrote, “So Friends are not to meet like a company of people about town or parish business, neither in their men’s nor women’s meetings, but to wait upon the Lord.”⁶⁵ William Wistar Comfort, a twentieth century Friend said, “When in doubt, wait.”⁶⁶ After great patience, if way has not opened, Friends question if they have correctly understood their leading.

Quaker process may sound hopelessly slow and cumbersome, but it can be miraculously swift. John Woolman’s mission to end slave owning among Friends is such an example. In the eighteenth century, when John addressed his meeting concerning the abolishment of Quaker ownership of slaves, his meeting first rejected his proposal to travel and talk with Quaker slave owners. He persisted in his request, and his meeting eventually supported him. Before he died and a hundred years before the “Proclamation of Emancipation,” no Quaker in the American colonies owned slaves.

Leonard Kenworthy wrote, “The meeting for business is another of the unique contributions of Quakerism to the world. In fact, it may even be more unprecedented than the meeting for worship.” He continues, it is “especially suited to a religious fellowship, based on the belief that Divine guidance is as available in transacting group business as it is in conducting group worship. Nothing like it exists anywhere in Christendom or in any of the other world religions. It is uncommon, unusual, unparalleled, unique.”⁶⁷

⁶⁵ “Collection Of Many Select And Christian Epistles, Letters And Testimonies,” in *Works of George Fox*, vol. 8, p. 70.

⁶⁶ *Quaker Quotations on Faith and Practice*, compiled by Leonard S. Kenworthy (joint publication by the Publication Committee, Friends General Conference, Philadelphia, PA; and Quaker Publications, Kennett Square, PA, 1985).

⁶⁷ *Quakerism: A Study Guide on the Religious Society of Friends* (Kennett Square, PA: Quaker Publications, 1981; reprinted Dublin, IN: Print Press, 1982 and 1983), p. 81.

Discussion Questions

- Have you ever experienced “way opening?” What was that like?
- A Friend has humorously spoken about “way clogging.” Have you ever experienced that? If so, what was that like?
- How does Quaker process differ from individual decision making? How is it similar?

Activities

Hand out a copy of the quotations about Quaker process on page 48. Choose one or more of the quotations to discuss. If your class is large enough, divide into small discussion groups.

Reflection Question

Draw, paint, write in your journal or create something about, write music to, or meditate upon the question, “How do I demonstrate patience in my life?”

QUOTATIONS ABOUT QUAKER PROCESS

(Collected by Marsha Holliday from various Quaker meetings and discussions)

Quaker process opens us to God's surprises in our lives.

For Friends, Quaker process is not the end in itself. It is a way of getting closer to the Truth.

Quaker process holds together the paradox of solitude and community.

In Quaker process, the centrifugal force of individualism balances the centripetal force of corporate life.

Quaker process requires us to listen and to try to be changed.

Scientists tell us that time and space is the same thing. Quaker process comes close to that reality.

In resolving a problem, Quaker process may begin with conflict, but can end in unity.

When groups vote to make decisions, there are always pieces to pick up. In decisions made by Quaker process, there are no pieces to pick up. There are no unhappy minorities.

Decisions by Quaker process have more power than decisions made by voting.

When you attach two pieces of wood together, they hold more weight than the total held by each separately.

In returning and in rest shall ye be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Isaiah 30:15.

14 Quaker Organizational Structure

Begin this session with worship sharing or a time of reflection on the question, “How do I demonstrate patience in my life? Then present the following information.

Because God is among us collectively as well as within us individually, our communities help us experience that of God more fully. As we each possess different perspectives, the insights of community members help illuminate additional new approaches to the Truth. This is why Friends have found that decisions made by a reflective group tend to be better than decisions made on one’s own. Friends, therefore, try to remain open to Truth as it is expressed through others and often bring their personal leadings to their spiritual communities for aid in coming to “clearness.”

Clearness is a process that helps Friends discern the Truth. There are two types of clearness processes among Friends. One takes place through a committee that is requested by an individual Friend to help him or her come to a personal decision—such as which job to take or what type of higher education to attain. This type of clearness process can be used with agonizing decisions, such as “Should I register for the draft?” or “Should I take a job with a military industry?” or with more routine decisions, such as “Should I rent or buy a house?”

The other type of clearness has to do with decisions the monthly meeting must make—such as whether to approve the marriage of a couple under the care of the meeting or whether to accept an individual into membership in the meeting.

With the first type of clearness process, the individual may choose the members of the clearness committee or suggest names to the monthly meeting. With the second type, the monthly meeting usually chooses the members of the clearness committee, although they would normally consult with the individual.

The role of the members of a clearness committee is to ask questions that enable the individual to discern the Truth for him or herself. The members of the clearness committee do not tell the individual what to do.

One member of the clearness committee serves as clerk. That person makes the administrative arrangements for the clearness committee meeting, grounds the meeting in worship, monitors the questions so that they do not presume a particular answer, and determines when to close. The clearness process is a means of assisting individuals in making Spirit-led decisions—in finding the Truth for their particular situation.

The organizational structure of Quaker meetings is itself a means of making Spirit-led group decisions. Without hired leaders, the committees of unprogrammed monthly meeting are the basic and most essential component of the Quaker organizational

structure. Every member is expected to serve on one of the committees of his or her meeting. Collectively, committees have the responsibility of carrying out the ministry and the administration of their meeting. In the unprogrammed worship tradition, every Friend functions as a minister. There is no laity.

In Quaker meetings, individual gifts of ministry are discerned through a nominating process. The Nominating Committee has the responsibility of thoughtfully and prayerfully considering gifts of ministry in its members and, in consultation with each individual and with the current clerks of the committees, nominates members to the committees. Meeting for business approves those nominations.

In addition to identifying individual gifts, Friends hope and expect to strengthen those gifts and nurture leadership in their members through their roles in the meeting. The Quaker nominating process patterns itself upon the advice of the Apostle Paul:

For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us; prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.⁶⁹

In Quaker schools, end your presentation at this point and proceed to the discussion questions and activities. For Quaker meetings, continue with:

Although committees and their names and functions vary among meetings, a medium-sized meeting—with 50 to 100 members—might have, in addition to the Nominating Committee, functional committees such as:

- Ministry and Worship, which oversees all meetings for worship, including marriages and memorial meetings.
- Marriage and Family Relations, which provides support for family life.
- Personal Aid, which attends to members of meeting who are in crisis or distress.
- Peace and Social Concerns, which sponsors events to further peace and social testimonies.
- Advancement and Outreach, which publicizes the meeting and greets newcomers.
- Finance, which oversees the budget and finances of the meeting.
- House and Grounds, which attends to the upkeep and care of the property.
- Library, which purchases books and materials and administers the meeting's library.
- Records and Archives, which stores and retrieves the written history of the meeting.
- Religious Education, which oversees the educational activities of the meeting, often for both children and adults.

⁶⁹ Romans 12:4–8.

Committees typically meet once a month or as needed, to get their work done. Additional ad hoc committees may be set up for specific objectives, and committees may create subcommittees to help carry out their particular duties. Each committee is responsible to its monthly meeting and typically reports once a year in meeting for business, although it may bring concerns or problems to the meeting at any time.

Monthly meetings usually meet weekly for worship and monthly for business. Quarterly meetings are clusters of monthly meetings, usually in geographic proximity, which meet every few months. Yearly meetings are clusters of local or quarterly meetings and meet annually to attend to business that is not possible or practical for monthly or quarterly meetings to accomplish alone. Large yearly meetings may have hired staff to help carry out their work. Unprogrammed yearly and quarterly meetings have no authority over monthly meetings. Membership of individuals in the Religious Society of Friends is at the monthly meeting level.

Discussion Questions

For students in Quaker schools:

- In which circumstances would a clearness committee be helpful to you?
- How is Quakerism a part of the organizational structure of your school?

Quaker meetings:

- In what circumstances would a clearness committee be helpful to you?
- Which of your meeting's committees are of most interest to you and why?

Activities

For all teenagers: Organize the following game. If your class is large, divide into smaller groups with five or six people in each.

You are all in a van going to a basketball game. An adult is driving the car. You will be in the van for an hour on the way to the game and for an hour returning from it. There is a radio in your van. Will you listen to the radio and, if so, which radio station will you listen to? Allow ten minutes for making a decision. Then ask the following questions:

- How did your group decide which radio station to listen to?
- Was anyone unhappy with the decision?
- Do you think that anyone was afraid to speak up?
- Can you think of a better way to have made your decision?

For Quaker meetings: Together with your class, visit a meeting for business. Afterward, invite the clerk to attend your class and ask the clerk the following questions:

- How do you prepare the agenda?
- What makes meeting for business a meeting for worship?
- What are some of the problems a clerk must deal with?
- What are some of the joys a clerk experiences?

Reflection Question

Draw, paint, write in your journal or create something about, write music to, or meditate upon the question, “What are my gifts, and how can I best use them?”

15 The Roots and Branches of Modern Quakerism

Begin this session with worship sharing or a time of reflection on the question, “What are my gifts, and how can I best use them?” Then present the following information.

Although Quakerism began in England and initially spread to North America, Quakerism is geographically diverse today. Twentieth-century missionary work of programmed Friends from the United States and, to a much lesser degree, the work of British Friends and American Orthodox Friends account for the relatively large numbers of Quakers in Africa and in Central and South America. In addition, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting sent missionaries to Japan.

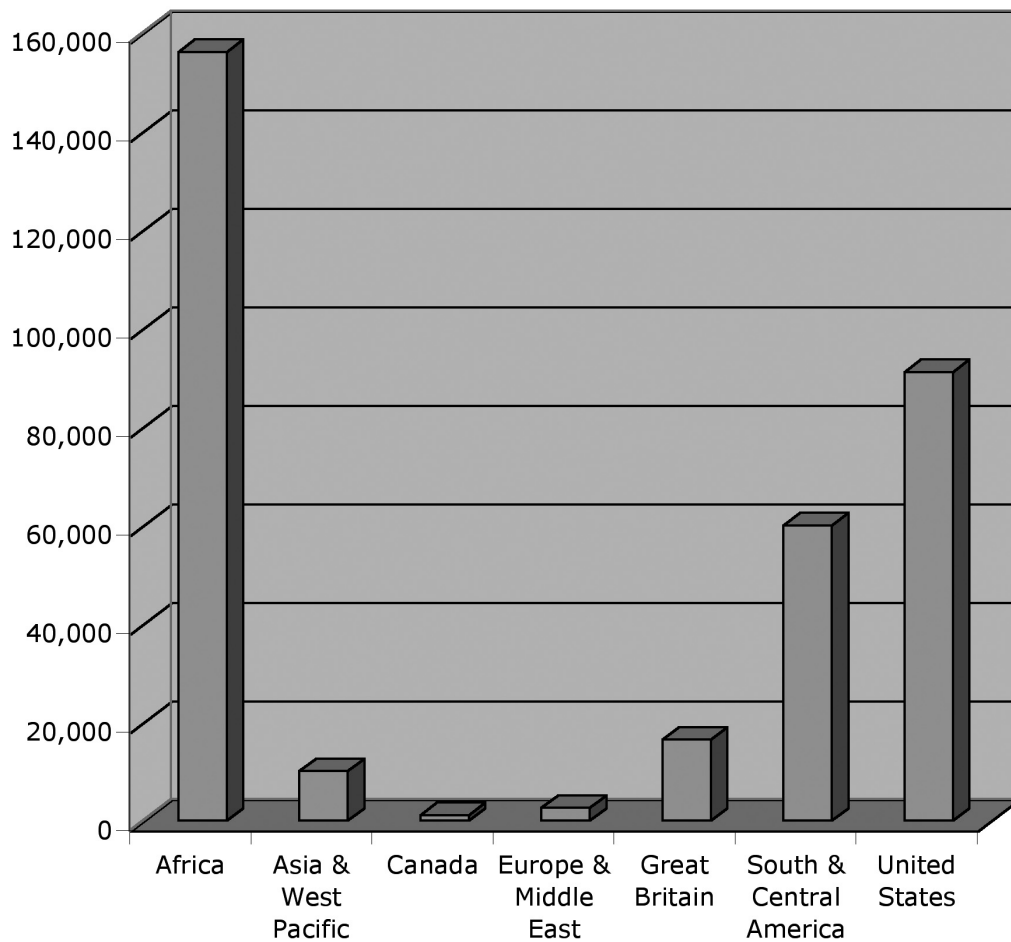
As of May 14, 2001, according to the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), there were 338,219 Quakers in the world, which is less than the capacity of seven major league baseball stadiums.

African Quakers, who number 156,162, are the largest group of Quakers in the world. 152,856 Quakers live in the Americas, with 91,106 in the United States, 60,600 in South and Central America, and 1,150 in Canada. About 19,068 Quakers live in Europe and the Middle East, with 16,468 in Great Britain. The remaining 10,066 live in Asia and the West Pacific. (See Figure 1, p. 54.)

This geographic diversity is compounded by theological differences and varied worship styles. In Africa, Central and South America, and in much of the American West and Middle West, most Friends meetings are programmed and their style of worship is more like a Protestant service—often with a hired pastor, prepared sermons, readings, prayers, hymns, and music—but usually without sacramental ceremonies such as baptism and communion. Nonetheless, most programmed Quaker meetings include at least one period of silent or “open” worship, during which anyone may speak. This open worship may last from two to twenty minutes, and, in addition, some programmed meetings also hold separate unprogrammed meetings for worship.

Friends in the unprogrammed tradition are in the minority among Quakers and are scattered throughout the world. The largest numbers of unprogrammed Friends are in England, other European countries, and the United States. North America has a total of 36 yearly meetings. More than one-half of those—the unprogrammed and Orthodox Friends—worship in silence.

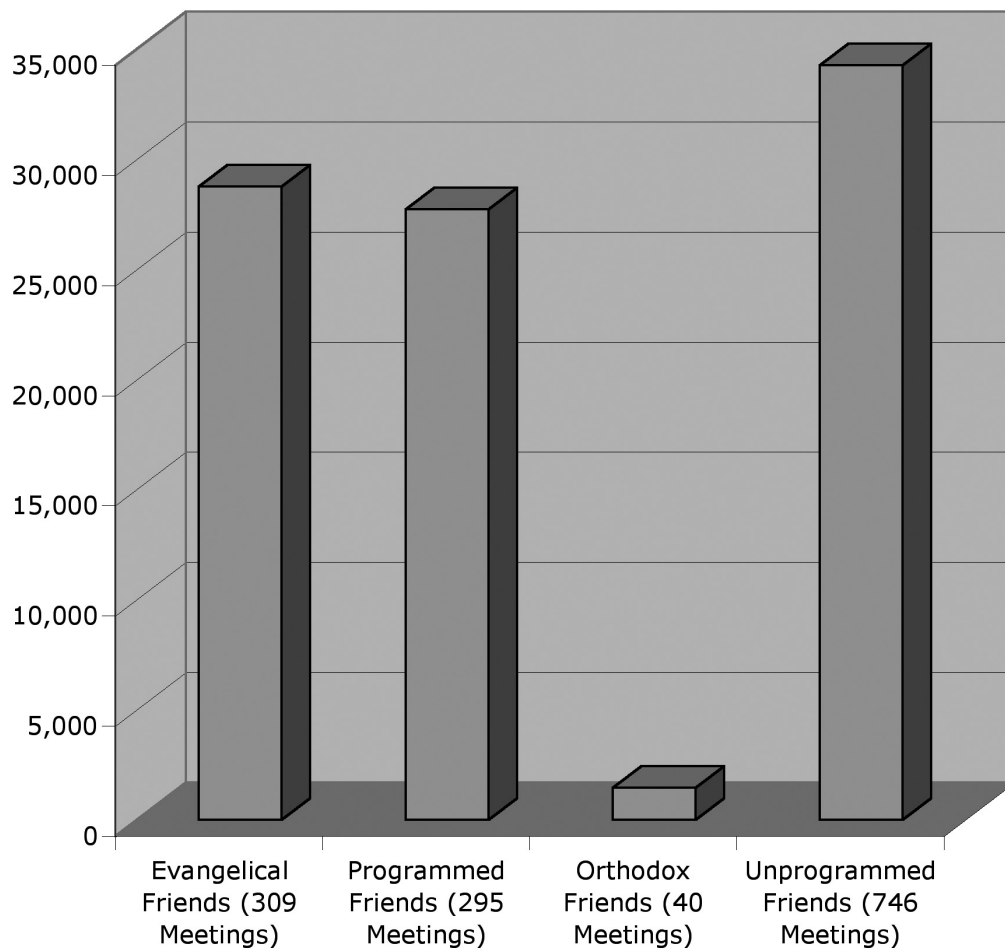
In North America (according to the Friends World Committee for Consultation, as of May 14, 2001), there were 28,776 Evangelical Friends; 27,738 Programmed Friends; 1,461 Orthodox Friends; and 34,281 Unprogrammed Friends. (See Figure 2, p. 55.)

Figure 1: Quakers Worldwide

The present differences in worship style among Friends are largely a result of historical circumstances in the United States. During the nineteenth century, many Friends, distraught over slavery, migrated from their unprogrammed meetings in the eastern United States to the American West and Midwest. Around that time, new types of Quakerism, such as programmed worship, pastoral meetings, and Quaker churches emerged in the United States for reasons including the effect of the westward migration, the Protestant frontier revival movement, and the Quaker Quietest movement.⁷⁰

Programmed and unprogrammed Friends differ theologically in their emphasis on the authority of the scriptures and the role of Christ. Friends in programmed meetings tend to emphasize the authority of the scriptures, while Friends in unprogrammed meetings emphasize the authority of the Inward Light. Unprogrammed Friends tend

⁷⁰ For more information on these new types of Quakerism and their history, see Thomas D. Hamm, *The Quakers in America* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2003); Jim Leshana, *Evangelical Friends History*, Cd-rom (Friends Center [EDCSW], 2003); and a film by Cleman Watts and Betsy Blake, *Can We All Be Friends? A Boundary-Crossing Conversation* (Coleman Watts, 2004). Geoffrey Kaiser's drawing of the Quaker family tree is available for purchase from QuakerBooks of Friends General Conference and gives an idea of the complexities of the branches of Quakerism.

Figure 2: Friends in North America

to be more universalist than programmed Friends—recognizing Christ or that of God in a variety of revelations. Orthodox Friends have aspects of both traditions: their worship is unprogrammed and their theology is Christ-centered. Despite these differences, both unprogrammed and programmed Friends trace their roots directly to the message of the early Friends.

After generations of splits and divisions, Friends from all branches of Quakerism are now engaging in dialogues to understand one another and to share their worship and insights. “Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), formed in 1937, is a worldwide association of yearly meetings and affiliated groups. It is a consultative body whose purpose is to provide links between Friends who may be separated by geography, culture, or practices that emphasize different aspects of Quakerism. It aims to facilitate loving understanding of diversities among Friends; to discover together, with God’s help, our common spiritual ground; and to facilitate full expression of Friends testimonies in the world.”⁷¹ FWCC is helping to keep the Quaker branches connected to each other and to their roots.

⁷¹ *The Manual of Procedure of Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends*, 2004, p. 43.

YouthQuake and Young Quakes Conferences are teenage programs that promote a better understanding of our theological differences. Every three years at YouthQuake more than 400 Quaker teenagers from across the United States and Canada and from a variety of Quaker backgrounds come together for a national conference to explore their Quaker faith and learn from one another. Similarly, Friends General Conference, an organization of mostly unprogrammed meetings, offers high school teenagers an annual Young Quakes Conference to explore both the biblical and universalistic roots of their Quaker tradition.

Pendle Hill, in Wallingford, Pennsylvania, and Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, in Birmingham, England, are retreat and study centers where Friends explore their Quaker faith. Yearly meetings, Friends World Committee for Consultation Triennials, Friends United Meeting Triennials, and the Annual Gathering of Friends General Conference offer opportunities for dialogues in a variety of formats. One such dialogue among Friends from different traditions occurred in 1994 in Northeastern Regional Meeting when that gathering made up a list of 50 things that all Quakers have in common. Steve Davison (New Brunswick) condensed the list to four items:

1. *A belief that we are all called as individuals to a direct, personal, unmediated relationship with God: "Christ has come to teach his people himself," there is that of God in everyone.*
2. *The meeting as a community is also called to a direct, unmediated relationship with God. This is embodied in our meeting for worship with a concern for business conducted under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.*
3. *Continuing revelation.*
4. *We are called to live our faith in lives of witness and service; this includes the faith and practice of Quaker ministry and our historical witness testimonies.⁷²*

Discussion Questions

- What do you see as the greatest challenge facing Quakers today?
- What do you think Quakers should do differently?
- While faith has roots that need nurturing, to grow it must branch out, and to be fruitful, it must have new growth. How do you think Quakerism can become more fruitful?

⁷² *Spark*, March 1995.

Reflection Question

Draw, paint, write in your journal or create something about, write music to, or meditate upon the question, “Where am I among Friends?”

Concluding Activity

Have a party.

Suggested Reading List

- Bacon, Margaret Hope. *Quiet Rebels: The Story of the Quakers in America*. Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill, 1999.
- Bacon, Margaret Hope. *Valiant Friend: The Life of Lucretia Mott*. Philadelphia, PA: Quaker Press of FGC, 1999.
- Bacon, Margaret Hope. *Mothers of Feminism: The Story of Quaker Women in America*. Philadelphia, PA: Quaker Press of FGC, 1995.
- Barclay, Robert. *Barclay's Apology, in Modern English*. Edited by Dean Freiday. Newberg, Oregon, The Barclay Press, 1991.
- Barclay, Robert. *A Briefer Barclay*. Edited by William Bacon Evans. Philadelphia, PA: Tract Association of Friends, 1978.
- Brinton, Howard, with an historical update by Margaret Hope Bacon. *Friends for 350 Years*. Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill, 2002.
- Comfort, William W. *Just Among Friends*. Philadelphia, PA: American Friends Service Committee, 1945.
- Faith and Practice of Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends*. Sandy Spring, MD: Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, 1988. (Citations for the *Faith and Practice* of other Yearly Meetings can be found in the catalog of QuakerBooks or at **www.QuakerBooks.org**.)
- Fox, George. *Journal of George Fox* (John L. Nickalls, editor). London: London Yearly Meeting, 1975.
- Gorman, George. *Amazing Fact of Quaker Worship*. London: Friends Home Service, 1988.
- Hamm, Thomas D. *The Quakers in America*. NY: Columbia University Press, 2003.
- Hetherington, Ralph. *Universalism and Spirituality*. Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1993.
- Jones, Rufus M. *Faith and Practice of the Quakers*. Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1958.
- Kelly, Thomas. *Testament of Devotion*. New York: Harper & Row, 1941.
- Kenworthy, Leonard. *An Introduction to Quakerism*. Kennett Square, PA: Quaker Publications, 1989.
- Lampen, John. *Twenty Questions about Jesus*. London: Quaker Home Service, 1984.
- Leshana, Jim. *Evangelical Friends History Cd-rom*, Friends Center (EDCSW), 2003.

- Marsh, Michael. *Philosophy of the Inner Light*. Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Pamphlet #209, November 1976.
- Morley, Barry. *Beyond Consensus: Salvaging Sense of the Meeting*. Pendle Hill Pamphlet #307. Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill, 1993.
- Palmer, Parker. *A Place Called Community*. Pendle Hill Pamphlet, #212. Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1977.
- Penn, William. *Fruits of Solitude*. Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1978.
- Penn, William. *No Cross, No Crown*. York, England: The Ebor Press, 1981.
- Punschon, John. *Portrait in Grey*. London: Quaker Home Service, 1984.
- Sheeran, Michael J. *Beyond Majority Rule*. Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1983.
- Steere, Douglas. *Quaker Spirituality*. New York: Paulist Press, 1984.
- Vining, Elizabeth Gray. *Friend of Life: Biography of Rufus Jones*. Philadelphia: JB Lippencott, 1958.
- Watts, Cleman and Betsy Blake. *Can We all Be Friends? A Boundary-crossing Conversation*. A film by Coleman Watts, 2004.
- Woolman, John. *The Journal and Essays of John Woolman*. Edited from the original manuscripts with a biographical introduction by Amelia Mott Gummere. NY: Macmillan, 1922.



Exploring Quakerism: A Study Guide

by Marsha D. Holliday

This easy-to-use manual promotes a better knowledge and understanding of Quakerism among unprogrammed Friends. Other curricula written by its author, Marsha Holliday, include *Quaker Values: A Curriculum for First Day Schools* and the tract *Silent Worship and Quaker Values: An Introduction*. Leaders will appreciate the instructions and supplemental material available in the full version while the core of the curriculum is in booklet form for participants. Useful both in groups and for self-study, all the basics of Quakerism are covered from George Fox to present day organizations serving the many branches of Friends. Lessons build on one another and each includes a reflect question for a brief period of worship sharing. A wonderful tool for enriching the lives of Friends both new and old.



Quaker Press

OF FRIENDS GENERAL CONFERENCE

1216 Arch Street, 2B
Philadelphia, PA 19107

To order more copies of this publication or other Quaker titles call 1-800-966-4556; or e-mail: bookstore@fgcquaker.org or order online at www.quakerbooks.org

ISBN 10: 1-888305-42-8

ISBN 13: 978-1-888305-42-5

\$17.00

ISBN 1-888305-42-8



90000>



9 781888 305425