



# Advancement Basics, Part Two

## Visibility & Outreach

### What can Friends do to help attract newcomers to their meetings?

There are countless ways to let seekers know that Quakers exist and that we welcome visitors. Some, including meeting signs and directory listings, work around the clock with little or no additional effort on our part once they have been set up. Others, such as checking messages or greeting and following up with newcomers, require regular attention. Some forms of outreach involve witness activities, in which many meetings already engage; these meetings might raise their visibility simply by making their Quaker identity known to other participants or by using press releases to publicize their witness in the media. This series of ideas in question form is designed to help your meeting begin to explore the possibilities.

#### Signs

Does your meetinghouse have a sign (portable or permanent)? Is it easy to read from the road? Does it give the time of meeting for worship and a phone number? Does it say that visitors are welcome? If you were a seeker, would your meeting's sign help you find Quakers? If your meeting is in an isolated location, do you find ways to post signs on main roads?

#### Telephone Listings

Is your meeting listed in the telephone book? Is it in the white pages under "Quaker Meeting" followed by the proper name? Is it in the yellow pages under "Churches - Quaker"?

#### Messages

Does your answering machine and/or your meeting's web site give the time of meeting for worship and directions? Does someone check

voice mail and/or email messages regularly and respond promptly? Does the meeting's recorded announcement give a phone number prospective visitors can call to speak with a live person?

#### Directories

Is your meeting listed in the "Churches" section of the local newspaper? Is your meeting listed in directories of local colleges, community colleges, technical schools, and universities? Is your meeting listed in packets distributed by real estate agents to new home owners and with local hotels, inns, motels, and bed and breakfasts?

#### Posters

Do you put posters or other notices concerning your meeting or its activities in local community centers, health food stores, libraries and other public places?

## Personal Contact

Do you tell other people that you are a Quaker? Do you personally invite others to meeting for worship or other meeting activities?

## Witness

Does your meeting engage in peace and prayer vigils, service, or social justice projects in your community? If so, is its Quaker identity clearly indicated?

## News Media

Do you use press releases or other announcements to newspapers, radio and TV stations to publicize meeting events? Do you publicize in media geared to diverse audiences? If there is a religion column in a local newspaper or an appropriate interview show on radio or TV, do you find ways to make Quakerism visible through these resources?

## Joint Activities

Does your meeting participate in activities with other houses of worship? Do you join activities organized by diverse groups of people in your area?

## Handouts

Does your meeting create flyers about Quakerism or Quaker testimonies to pass out at vigils or other community events, as appropriate?

## Quaker Activities at the Meeting House

Do you invite the community to activities at your meeting: simple meal fund raisers, videos, speakers, classes, forums, pancake breakfasts, pot luck suppers, parent seminars, tag sales, open houses, vigils, concerts, children's programs, and such?

## Use of the Meeting House

If you own your own meetinghouse, do you invite community groups to use it? Do your bulletin boards (portable or permanent) and

other displays communicate the diversity and vitality of Quakerism to visitors?

## Meeting Web Site

If your meeting has a web site, does it post information that would attract visitors? If the site contains time-sensitive information, is it kept up to date?

## QuakerFinder.org

Are you familiar with QuakerFinder.org, which helps Friends and seekers find meetings in the United States and Canada? Are you aware that QuakerFinder.org is geared to people who are not familiar with Quakerism and that it describes our religion in accessible language? Do you place QuakerFinder bumper stickers on your car? Do you include the QuakerFinder.org web site in your meeting's listings, ads, banners, pamphlets and flyers? Is your meeting's listing on **www.QuakerFinder.org** up to date?

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In addition to these basics, individuals and meetings have found myriad other ways to make Quakerism more visible, including: wearing Quaker T-shirts or buttons; organizing a table at a local fair; marching in a parade with a big banner; writing letters to the editor; writing op-ed articles; participating in radio and TV interviews; and donating adult and children's books to the local library.

*Outreach is the natural result of the second great commandment that we love our neighbors as ourselves. It grows out of the spiritual attitude of caring and can take many forms, limited only by our imagination.*

— Howard Bartram, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, *Outreach Ideabook*, ch. 1, p. 2