

# Power Tools – Roots / Foundational Understandings/ Basic Concepts: Resources for Purchase

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“Power Tools” are more in-depth explorations/explanations of a wide variety of topics that may be of use to Friends’ meetings, large and small, new and old. Their purpose is not just to provide “how to” guidance, but to make explicit the spiritual Truth underlying all that we do within the Quaker way. Reaffirming and intentionally trying to live into this underlying spiritual reality is the strength and attraction of the Religious Society of Friends.

The resources in this section are primarily about the roots of our faith and practice in our life together with each other and God came to be. The New Meetings Project, with editing and annotations by Marty Grundy, compiled it.

Most of these resources are available at [Quaker Books of FGC](#). They are also a good source of second hand copies of these materials, if new ones are not available.

## Roots

[\*A Living Faith: An Historical Study of Quaker Beliefs\*](#) by Wilmer A. Cooper (FUP 1990) – a theological and historical exploration of Quaker beliefs from its earliest days to the present. Includes chapters on the Quaker view of God, Christ, human nature, and the church, as well as chapters on the sacraments, testimonies, Quaker service, and the future. Includes study guide and questions.

[\*Essays on the Quaker Vision of Gospel Order\*](#) by Lloyd Lee Wilson (QuakerPress of FGC 2002) – thoughtful essays addressing aspects of Quaker faith and practice, articulating the ways in which Gospel Order has shaped lives and beliefs of Friends. Provides both an historical perspective and a contemporary understanding of meetings for worship and business, spiritual gifts, leadings, and ministry. Excellent material for group discussion or adult or high school First Day School classes.

[\*Gospel Order: A Quaker Understanding of Faithful Church Community\*](#) by Sandra L. Cronk (PHP #297) 1991 – explores the communal aspects of gospel order as the foundation of meeting community life. Material for group discussion or adult First Day School classes.

[\*On Living with a Concern for Gospel Ministry\*](#) by Brian Drayton (Quaker Press of FGC and Mosher Book and Trust Fund of NEYM, 2006) – more than an update of Samuel Bownas’s “Description of the Qualifications Necessary to a Gospel Minister (ca. 1750), here is wisdom and

advice on how to cherish, live with, and grow into the gift of ministry. It aims at the specific temptations and opportunities of our own day, while incorporating those timeless truths with which a minister of any era must grapple. A rich lode for discussions especially among those who feel a call or nudge towards ministry.

[\*Quaker Spirituality: Selected Writings\*](#) edited by Douglas V. Steere (The Classics of Western Spirituality, Paulist Press, 1984) – collection of Quaker writings illustrating how Quakers have tried to live their beliefs. Includes extensive selections from George Fox, Isaac Penington, John Woolman, Caroline Stephen, Rufus Jones, and Thomas Kelly. The introduction is a thoughtful brief introductory history of Friends. There are now an abridged version and the Introduction as a stand-alone pamphlet. Can be used for group discussion or adult or high school First Day School classes.

[\*Quaker Treasure\*](#) by Martha Paxson Grundy (Weed lecture, 2002) – explores the core of Quakerism through her own spiritual journey among Friends; emphasizes the importance of the totality of the Quaker “gestalt.” Provides an opportunity to share spiritual journeys in small groups or adult or high school First Day School classes.

[\*Silence and Witness: The Quaker Tradition\*](#) by Michael L. Birkel (Orbis, 2004) – excellent introduction to Quaker thought and spiritual life; detailed examination of discernment about when to speak in meeting and other leadings; includes selected quotations of prominent Friends; the chapter on the inward experience of worship is both an excellent introduction and a seasoned examination of centering techniques.

[\*The Authority of Our Meetings is the Power of God\*](#) by Paul A. Lacey, PHP #365 (2003) – explores the creative tension between individual and corporate responsibilities in our monthly meetings to witness to the power and authority of God. Can be used for discussions.

## **History: Where We Came from and Why We are Like We Are**

“[\*Finding a Useable Past\*](#)” by Sandra Cronk in [\*A Lasting Gift: The Journal and Selected Writings of Sandra L. Cronk\*](#) (Quaker Press of FGC and SOTS, 2009), pp. 161-170 – Friends’ testimonies originated in an understanding of living in a new paradigm. Because they were listening to the Inward Christ and the seed of God’s realm had taken root in them, therefore they lived in a new way, what today we call the various testimonies. Offers fruitful material for group discussion or adult or high school First Day School classes.

[\*A Lively Faith: Reflections on Iowa Yearly Meeting \(Conservative\)\*](#) by Callie Marsh (Quaker Press, 2011) – story of one group of Friends engaging modern culture, keeping what is precious of their tradition, discerning what changes are required. Explores important aspects of faith and practice for Friends today. In some ways updates and challenges Taber’s Eye of Faith. Marsh’s

“Conclusion: The Possibility of Transformation” especially invites discussion in small groups or adult First Day School.

[Portrait in Gray: A Short History of the Quakers](#) by John Punshon (Britain Yearly Meeting, 2006) Revised edition – a comprehensive and thoroughly readable introduction to the history of Quakerism, from its origins in 17th century England to the development of the differing varieties found around the world today. Its emphasis is on developments within Great Britain. A standard work for individual and group study of our Quaker story.

*The Eye of Faith: A History of Ohio Yearly Meeting Conservative* by William P. Taber, Jr., (Barnesville: OYMC, 1985) the Wilburite history of OYM(C) with a thoughtful explanation of the challenges facing them as of the 1970s and early 1980s. A lot has happened since then, but this provides insight into the back story, helpful for personal information and background for group study of some of the differences among U.S. Friends today.

[The Quakers in America](#) by Thomas D. Hamm (The Columbia Contemporary American Religion Series, Columbia University Press, 2003) – a concise history of the Religious Society of Friends, an introduction to Quaker beliefs and practices, and a picture of the culture and controversies of Friends today. Opens with vignettes of Conservative, Evangelical, Friends General Conference, and Friends United Meetings, reflecting Friends’ diversity in the wake of the 19th century schisms. Helpful for individual and group study of US and Canadian Quakers and how we became so diverse.

This document was downloaded from the website of Friends General Conference. Explore the many resources and opportunities we offer for Quakers, Quaker meetings, and all interested individuals. Go to [www.fgcquaker.org](http://www.fgcquaker.org).

