

Preliminary Draft:

BOOK OF
FAITH AND PRACTICE
of the
ALASKA FRIENDS
CONFERENCE

Jonathan Anderson 05.3.20 16:08

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Dear Friends,

In 1989, the Central Alaska Friends Conference Yearly Meeting appointed two of us to begin preparation on a book of faith and practice. Although distances and divergent schedules prevented our committee from meeting regularly, I've collected and edited materials into this little booklet as an initial draft and working document. I've gathered materials from our archives where possible, and from writings of prominent friends in other instances. These are simply vignettes reflecting several facets of the experience of our still-young meetings. I offer this for your consideration, criticism, and reflection.

With my love,
the editor
9/18/90

Note: The written F&P draft was scanned and reviewed for scanning errors Jan-March 2005. When scribes copy and recopy drafts, errors inevitably creep in. Friends are encouraged to check originals of quotations and send them to me for a corrected draft.

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Worship

The Kingdom of Heaven did gather us and catch us all, as in a net, and his heavenly power at one time drew many hundreds to land. We came to know a place to stand in and what to wait in; and the Lord appeared daily to us, to our astonishment, amazement and great admiration, insomuch that we often said one unto another with great joy of heart: "What is the Kingdom of God come to be with men? And will he take up his tabernacle among the sons of men, as he did of old? Shall we, that were reckoned as the outcasts of Israel, have this honour of glory communicated amongst us, which were but men of small parts and of little abilities, in respect of many others, as amongst men?"

- *Francis Howgill, 1672*

All Friends everywhere, meet together, and in the measure of God's spirit wait, that with it all your minds may be guided up to God and to receive wisdom from God.... And Friends, meet together; ... and know one another in that which is eternal, in the Light which was, before the world was. . . . And if ye turn from this Light, ye grow strange; and so neglecting your meetings, ye grow cold, and your minds run into the earth, and grow weary and slothful and careless, and heavy and sottish, and dull and dead. Epistle 149

And none go beyond the measure of the spirit of God, nor quench it; for where it is quenched, it cannot try things. So if you have anything upon them to speak, in the life of God stand up, and -speak it, if it be but two or three words, and sit down again; and keep in the life, that ye may answer that of God in every man upon the earth. Epistle 150

- *George Fox, 1657*

VERY often in these meetings for worship, which held usually for nearly two hours, there were long periods of silence, for we never had singing to fill the gaps. I do not think anybody ever told me what the silence was for. It does not seem necessary to explain Quaker silence to children. They *feel* what it means. They do not know how to use very long periods of hush, but there is something in short, living throbbing times of silence which *finds* the submerged life and stirs it to nobler living and holier aspiration. I doubt if there is any method of worship which works with a subtler power or which brings into operation in the interior life a more effective moral and spiritual culture. Sometimes a real spiritual wave would sweep over the meeting in these silent hushes, which made me feel very solemn and which carried me—careless boy though I was—down into something which was deeper than my own thoughts, and gave me momentary sense of that Spirit who has been the life and light of men in all ages and in all lands.

- *Rufus Jones, 1926*

One condition for such a group experience seems to be this: some individuals need already, upon entering the meeting, to be gathered deep in the spirit of worship. There must be some kindled hearts when the meeting begins. In them, and from them, begins the work of worship. The spiritual devotion of a few persons, silently deep in active adoration, is needed to kindle the rest, to help those others who enter the service with tangled, harried, distraught thoughts to be melted and quieted and released and made pliant, ready for the work of God and his Real Presence.

In power and labor one lifts the group, in inward prayer, high before the throne. With work of soul the kindled praying worshiper holds the group, his comrades and himself, high above the sordid and trivial, and prays in quiet, offering that Light may drive away the shadows of self-will.

....

But I have more particularly in mind those hours of worship in which no one person, no one speech, stands out as the one that "made" the meeting, those hours wherein the personalities that take part verbally are not enhanced as individuals in the eyes of others, but are subdued and softened and lost sight of because in the language of Fox, "the Lord's power was over all." Brevity, earnestness, sincerity—and frequently a lack of polish—characterized the best Quaker speaking. The words should rise like a shaggy crag upthrust from the surface of silence, under the pressure of river power and yearning, contrition, and wonder... They should not break the silence, but continue it. For the Divine Life who is ministering through the medium of silence is the same Life as is now ministering through words. And when such words are truly spoken "in the Life," then when such words cease, the *uninterrupted* silence and worship continue, for silence and words have been of one texture, one piece.

- Thomas Kelley, 1937
"The Gathered Meeting"

To meet together we think necessary for the people of God; because, so long as we are clothed with this outward tabernacle, there is a necessity to the entertaining of a joint and visible fellowship, and bearing of an outward testimony for God, and seeing of the faces of one another, that we concur with our persons as well as spirits: to be accompanied with that inward love and unity of spirit doth greatly tend to encourage and refresh the saints.

And as every one is thus gathered, and so met together inwardly in their spirits, as well as outwardly in their persons, there the secret power and virtue of life is known to refresh the soul, and the pure motions and breathings of God's Spirit are felt to arise; from which, as words of declaration, prayers or praises arise ...

And no man here limits the Spirit of God, nor bringeth forth his own conned and gathered stuff; but every one puts that forth which the Lord puts into their hearts: and it is uttered forth not in man's will and wisdom, but in the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, and of power. Yea, though there be not a word spoken, yet is the true spiritual worship performed, and the body of Christ edified; yea, it may, and hath often fallen out among us, that divers meetings have passed without one word; and yet our souls have been greatly edified and refreshed, and our hearts wonderfully overcome with the secret sense of God's power and Spirit, which without words hath been ministered from one vessel to another...

The little seed of righteousness which God hath planted in his soul, and Christ hath purchased for him, even the measure of grace and life, which is burdened and crucified by man's natural thoughts and imaginations, receives a place to arise, and becometh a holy birth and geniture in man; and is that divine air in and by which man's soul and spirit comes to be leavened; and by waiting therein he comes to be accepted in the sight of God, to stand in his presence, hear his voice, and observe the motions of his holy Spirit.

As iron sharpeneth iron, the seeing of the faces one of another, when both are inwardly gathered unto the life, giveth occasion for the life secretly to rise, and pass from vessel to vessel. And as many candles lighted, and put in one place, do greatly augment the light, and make it more to shine forth, so when many are gathered together into 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...

For not a few have come to be convinced of the truth after this manner, of which I myself, in part, am a true witness, who not by strength of arguments, or by a particular disquisition of each doctrine, and convincement of my understanding thereby, came to receive and bear witness of the truth, but by being secretly reached by this life; for when I came into the silent assemblies of God's people, I felt a secret power among them, which touched my heart, and as I gave way unto it, I found the evil weakening in me, and the good raised up, and so I became thus knit and united unto them, hungering more and more after the increase of this power and life, whereby I might feel myself perfectly redeemed.

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Sometimes the power of God will break forth into a whole meeting, and there will be such an inward travail...thereby trembling and a motion of body will be upon most, if not upon all, which, as the power of truth prevails, will from pangs and groans end with a sweet sound of thanksgiving and praise. And from this the name of Quakers, i.e. Tremblers, was first reproachfully cast upon us; which though it be none of our choosing, yet in this respect we are not ashamed of it, but have rather reason to rejoice therefore, even that we are sensible of this power that hath oftentimes laid hold of our adversaries, and made them yield unto us, and join with us, and confess to the truth.

*- Robert Barclay
Apology, 1676*

The Christ Within

Eternity is at our hearts, pressing upon our time-torn lives, warming us with intimations of an astounding destiny, calling us home unto itself. Yielding to these persuasions, gladly committing ourselves in body and soul, utterly and completely, to the Light Within, is the beginning of true life. It is a dynamic center, a creative Life that presses to birth within us. It is a Light Within which illumines the face of God and casts new shadows and new glories upon the face of men. It is a seed stirring to life if we do not choke it. It is the Shekinah of the soul, the Presence in the midst. Here is the Slumbering Christ, stirring to be awakened, to become the soul we clothe in earthly form and action. And He is within us all.

You who read these words already know this inner Life and Light. For by this very Light within you, is your recognition given. In this humanistic age we suppose man is the initiator and God is the responder. But the Living Christ within us is the initiator and we are the responders. God the Lover, the accuser, the revealer of Light and darkness presses within us. "Behold I stand at the door and knock." And all our apparent initiative is already a response, a testimonial to His secret presence and working within us.

*- Thomas Kelley, 1939
Testament of Devotion*

he is not far away from thee. Thou, like the inn of old, hast been full of other guests; thy affections have entertained other lovers, wherefore salvation is not yet come to thy house, or at least into it, though thou hast been often proffered it, and hast professed it long. But if he calls, if he knocks still, that is, if his light yet shines, if it reproves thee still, there is hope thy day is not over, nor is repentance yet hid from thine eyes.

*- William Penn, 1669
No Cross, No Crown*

But as I had forsaken all the priests, so I left the separate preachers also, and those called the most experienced people; for I saw there was none among them all 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, nor could tell what to do, 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. Then the Lord did let me see why there was none upon the earth that could speak to my condition, namely, that I might give him all the glory.... Thus, when God doth work who shall let [prevent] it? And this I knew experimentally.

*- George Fox, 1647
Journal*

For those of us who have had this experience of being kissed by God, of *knowing* God and *being known* in intimate embrace, we recall desiring private time together (prayer) and longing for each other as would two lovers whose work has separated them for a time; of being awakened at night by God as a spouse asking for us to listen to something important, spoken in soft whispers.

Sophia as God's breath is an opening provided by Grace. She is Grace, working through or as Christ/Messiah to show humans that mutuality is exactly what has been in the mind of God since before the world began.

- *Cynthia Taylor, 1989*

"DEAR FRIENDS," writes Fox to his groups, "keep close to that which is pure within you, which leads you up to God." John Woolman, the Quaker tailor of Mt. Holly, New Jersey, resolved so to order his outward affairs, so to adjust his business burdens, that nothing, absolutely nothing would crowd out his prime attendance upon the Inward Principle. And in this sensitizing before the inward altar of his soul, he was quickened to see and attack effectively the evils of slaveholding, of money-lending, of wars upon the Indians.

But the value of Woolman and Fox and the Quakers of today for the world does not lie merely in their outward deeds of service to suffering men, it lies in that call to all men to the practice of orienting their entire being in inward adoration about the springs of immediacy and ever fresh divine power within the secret silences of the soul. The Inner Light, the Inward Christ, is no mere doctrine, belonging peculiarly to a small religious fellowship, to be accepted or rejected as a mere belief. It is the living Center of Reference for all Christian souls and Christian groups—yes, and of non-Christian groups as well—who seriously mean to dwell in the secret place of the Most High. He is the center and source of action, not the end-point of thought. He is the locus of commitment, not a problem for debate. Practice comes first in religion, not theory or dogma. And Christian practice is not exhausted in outward deeds. These are the fruits, not the roots. A practicing Christian must above all be one who practices the perpetual return of the soul into the inner sanctuary...

- *Thomas Kelley, 1941*

We have slumbering demons within us. We all have also a dimly-formed Christ within us. We've been too ready to say that the demonic man within us is the natural and the real man, and that the Christ-man within us is the unnatural and the unreal self. But the case is that our surface potentialities are for selfishness and greed, for tooth and claw. But deep within, in the whispers of the heart, is the surging call of the Eternal Christ, hidden within us all. By an inner isthmus we are connected with the mainland of the Eternal Love. Surface living has brought on the world's tragedy. Deeper living leads us to the Eternal Christ, hidden in us all. Absolute loyalty to this inner Christ is the only hope of a new humanity. In the clamor and din of the day, the press of Eternity's warm love still whispers in each of us, as our truest selves. Attend to the Eternal that he may recreate you and sow you deep into the furrows of the world's suffering.

- *Thomas Kelley*

No holy bread nor blood of grape
The lineaments restore
Of Him we know in outward shape
And in the flesh no more.

He cometh not a king to reign;
The world's long hope is dim;
The weary centuries watch in vain
The clouds of Heaven for Him.

Death comes, life goes; the asking eye
And ear are answerless;
The grave is dumb, the hollow sky
is sad with silentness.

The letter fails and systems fail,
And every symbol wanes;
The Spirit over-brooding all
Eternal Love remains.

And not for signs in heaven above,
Or earth below they look
Who know with John His smile of love,
With Peter His rebuke.

In joy of inward peace of sense
Of sorrow over sin,
He is His own best evidence,
His witness is within.

No fable old nor mythic lore,
Nor dream of bards and seers,
No dead fact stranded on the shore
Of the oblivious years: -

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is He:
And faith has still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee.

The healing of His seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain:
We touch Him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.

Through Him the first fond prayers are said
Our lips of childhood frame.
The last low whispers of our dead
Are burdened with His name.

Our Lord and Master of us all!
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own Thy sway, we hear Thy call.
We test our lives by thine.

- *John Greenleaf Whittier*
"Our Master," 1891

Ministry

ONE DAY, being under a strong exercise of spirit, I stood up and said some words in a meeting; but not keeping close to the Divine opening, I said more than was required of me. Being soon sensible of my error, I was afflicted in mind some weeks, without any light or comfort, even to that degree that I could not take satisfaction in anything. I remembered God, and was troubled, and in the depth of my distress he had pity upon me, and sent the Comforter. I then felt forgiveness for my offence; my mind became calm and quiet, and I was truly thankful to my gracious Redeemer for his mercies.

About six weeks after this, feeling the spring of Divine love opened, and a concern to speak, I said a few words in a meeting, in which I found peace. Being thus humbled and disciplined ...my understanding became more strengthened to distinguish the pure spirit which inwardly moves upon the heart, and which taught me to wait in silence sometimes many weeks together, until I felt that rise which prepares the creature to stand like a trumpet, through which the Lord speaks to his flock...

All the faithful are not called to public ministry; but whoever are, are called to minister of that which they have tasted and handled spiritually. -

*- John Woolman
Journal, 1742*

How important it is not to interrupt the silent travail, or conclude our meetings before experienced minds have time to dig to the spring of life in themselves, witness the gradual arising thereof as high as the great Feeder and Waterer of his people designs. This ...[Mary Griffin] had a deep sense of, and her public appearances in the meeting to which she belonged were not generally lengthy, nor very frequent, sitting generally in silence when other ministers from abroad were present, preferring others to herself, speaking lightly of none, and very tender towards the young or inexperienced; careful not to stir up or awake her beloved until he pleased.

- Joseph Talcot, 1812

In Friends' meetings also, from the fact that every one is free to speak, one hears harmonies and correspondences between very various utterances such as are scarcely to be met with elsewhere. It is sometimes as part-singing compared with unison. The free admission of the ministry of women, of course, greatly enriches this harmony. I have often wondered whether some of the motherly counsels I have listened to in our meeting would not reach some hearts that might be closed to the masculine preacher.

*- Caroline Stephen, 1890
Quaker Strongholds*

Inward Life

For grace is a spiritual, inward thing, an holy seed, and it is sown by God, and springs up in the heart. People have got a notion of grace, but know not the thing. Do not thou matter the notion, but feel the thing; and know thy heart more and more ploughed up by the Lord, that his seeds of grace may grow up in thee more and more, and thou mayst daily feel thy heart as a garden, more and more enclosed, watered, dressed, walked in and delighted in by him.

This is a salutation of love and life from thy friend in the truth which lives and changes not.

- *Isaac Pennington, 1670*
"To S.W."

It is not the great and main work to be found *doing*, but to be found *doing aright*, from the true teachings and from the right spirit.... A little praying from God's spirit and in that which is true and pure is better than thousands of vehement desires in one's own will and after the flesh. For as long as a man prays thus, that which should die in him lives in his very prayer; and how shall it ever be destroyed, if it get food and gain strength there?... It is not thy proper work to look out at the way or think it hard (for it is not so to the true Seed), but to be travelling it in faithfulness as thou art drawn and led; and this will save thee much sorrow.

- *Isaac Pennington, 1671*
"To Catherine Pardage"

There is a river, a sweet, still, flowing river, the streams whereof will make glad thy heart. And learn but in quietness and stillness to retire to the Lord, and wait upon him; in whom thou shalt feel peace and joy, in the midst of thy troubles from the cruel and vexatious spirit of this world. So wait to know thy work and service to the Lord, in thy place and station; and the Lord make thee faithful therein, and thou wilt want neither help, support nor comfort.

Thy Friend in the truest, sincerest, and most constant love.

- *Isaac Pennington, 1675*
"To Widow Hemmings"

It is years since I have felt free to rise in time of prayer—as is the custom in our meetings—so entirely have I concurred with the recommendation of Jesus, who said, "When thou prayest enter into thy closet, and shut the door, and there pray to the Father in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." This kind of prayer is as natural to man as the air he breathes—the aspiration for divine aid, for strength to do right, the inward desire after truth and holiness, the yearning to be led to the rock that is higher than he. But when it comes to praying for rain in dry weather, or the removal of evils that have been brought upon us by our own violations of the laws of health and nature, then it is most absurd and superstitious.

- *Lucretia Mott, 1875*
Address to the Free Religious Association

The Guide

What he is doing towards thee, thou canst not know now, but thou shalt know hereafter. Only be still and wait.... The great thing necessary for thee at present to know is the drawings of his Spirit, that thou mayst not ignorantly withstand or neglect them, and protract the day of thy redemption.

Oh! look not after great things: small breathings, small desires, after the Lord, if true and pure, are sweet beginnings of life. Take heed of despising “the day of small things,” by looking after some great visitation, proportionable to thy distress, according to thy eye. Nay, thou must become a child, thou must lose thy own will quite by degrees. Thou must wait for life to be measured out by the Father and be content with what proportion, and at what time, he shall please to measure.

Oh! be little, be little: and then thou wilt be content with little. And if thou feel now and then a check or a secret smiting— in that is the Father’s love: be not over-wise or over-eager in thy own willing, running and desiring, and thou mayst feel it so and by degrees come to the knowledge of thy Guide, who will lead thee, step by step, in the path of life and teach thee to follow and in his own season,

- Isaac Pennington, 1679

I WAS AT THE PLOW, meditating on the things of God, and suddenly I heard a voice saying to me, “Get thee out from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house.” And I had a promise given with it, whereupon I did exceedingly rejoice that I had heard the voice of that God which I had professed from a child, but had never known him....

And when I came at home I gave up my estate, cast out my money: but not being obedient in going forth, the wrath of God was upon me so that I was made a wonder to all, and none thought I would have lived. But after I was made willing, I began to make some preparation, as apparel and other necessaries, not knowing whither I should go. But shortly afterwards going a gate-ward with a friend from my own house, having on an old suit, without any money, having neither taken leave of wife or children, not thinking then of any journey, I was commanded to go into the west, not knowing whither should go, nor what I was to do there. But when I had been there a little while, I had given me what I was to declare. And ever since I have remained not knowing today what I was to do tomorrow...[The promise was] that God would be with me, which promise I find made good ever day.

*- James Naylor, 1652
from the examination at Appleby*

Inner Teacher

HERE WE LEARN that the soul is immortal, and that nothing but immortality can satisfy its desires. This is proved by the experience of others and by our own experience from day to day. Solomon after all his riches, and honour, and labour, and toil, wound up in this, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit." "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." But how are we to be led into this, and how are we to be instructed in the true fear of God? We never shall do it, but as we gather to the reprovcr in our own souls. There is nothing but this principle, this Immanuel, God in man, that can ever give us a true knowledge of God. There is no outward declaration, or external evidence, however great—not all the books, doctrines, and eternal evidence ever manifested upon the face of the earth, which can ever give us a knowledge of God.

- *Elias Hicks, 1826*

THEY FAIL to read clearly the signs of the times who do not see that the hour is coming when, under the searching eye of philosophy and the terrible analysis of science, the letter and the outward evidence will not altogether avail us; when the surest dependence must be upon the Light of Christ within, disclosing the law and the prophets in our own souls, and confirming the truth of outward Scripture by inward experience; when smooth stones from the brook of present revelation shall prove mightier than the weapons of Saul: when the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, as proclaimed by George Fox and lived by John Woolman, shall be recognized as the only efficient solvent of doubts raised by an age of restless inquiry.

- *John Greenleaf Whittier, 1870*

Searching the Heart

And so he went on and said, "How that Christ was the Light of the world and lighteth every man that cometh into the world; and that by this Light they might be gathered to God, etc." And I stood up in my pew, and I wondered at his doctrine, for I had never heard such before. And then he went on, and opened the Scriptures, and said, "The Scriptures were the prophets' words and Christ's and the apostles' words, and what as they spoke they enjoyed and possessed and had it from the Lord." And 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?..." This opened me so that it cut me to the heart:... And I cried in my spirit to the Lord, "We are all thieves, we are all thieves, we have taken the Scriptures in words and know nothing of them in ourselves." And I sat down in my pew and wept.

*Testimony of Margaret Fox
concerning George Fox
at Ulverston steeplehouse in 1652*

See whether you can read this in the Light; and whether you know and see, and witness this in your own particulars.

... Therefore, all come down to the witness of God, and deal plainly with your own souls; and let the judge, which stands at the door, pass sentence upon you. . . . And freely give up that which is . . . for the Fire, to the Fire; . . . Therefore see what you are doing: for it is not the sayer, but he that doth the will of my Father. . . . And Friends, your Day of Calling is come; ye are called out of the World, and separated from the world, by the call of the Living God. . . . Beware of betraying the just and the innocent in you . . . with a form and profession of the Truth, without the life, and so betray your own souls. . . . Now, Friends, deal plainly with your selves, and let the eternal Light search you, and try you, for the good of your souls; for this will deal plainly with you; it will rip you up, and lay you open, and make all manifest which lodgeth in you; . . . by this be searched and judged, and led and guided; for to this you must stand or fall...

*- Margaret Fell
Epistle of 1658*

Thou didst omit to take up Christ's holy yoke, to bear thy daily cross; thou wast careless of thy affections, and keptst no journal or check upon thy actions; but declinedst to audit accounts in thy own conscience with Christ thy light, whereby the holy fear decayed and love waxed cold, vanity abounded and duty became burdensome. . . .
the pure eye grew dim...

*- William Penn, 1669
No Cross, No Crown*

In a time of sickness with the pleurisy, a little upward of two years and a half ago, I was brought so near the gates of death, that I forgot my name. Being then desirous to know who I was, I saw a mass of matter of a dull gloomy colour, between the south and the east, and was informed that this mass was human beings in as great misery as they could be, and live, and that I was mixed in with them, and henceforth I might not consider myself as a distinct or separate being. In this state I remained several hours. I then heard a soft melodious voice, more pure and harmonious than any voice I had heard with my ears before; and I believed it was the voice of an angel, who spake to the other angels. The words were—“John Woolman is dead.” I soon remembered that I once was John Woolman, and, being assured that I was alive in the body, I greatly wondered what that heavenly voice could mean. I believed beyond doubting that it was the voice of an holy angel, but as yet it was a mystery to me.

I was then carried in spirit to the mines, where poor oppressed people were digging rich treasures for those called Christians, and heard them blaspheme the name of Christ; at which I was grieved; for his name to me was precious. Then I was informed that these heathen were told that those who oppressed them were the followers of Christ; and they said amongst themselves: “If Christ directed them to use us in this sort, then Christ is a cruel tyrant.”

...And then I said, “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me.....” Then the mystery was opened, and I perceived there was joy in heaven over a sinner who had repented; and that that language, *John Woo/man is dead*, meant no more than the death of my own will.

- *John Woolman*
Journal, 1772
A dream of slavery

WEALTH is attended with power, by which bargains and proceedings contrary to universal righteousness are supported; and here oppression, carried on with worldly policy and order, clothes itself with the name of justice and becomes like a seed of discord in the soil. And as this spirit, which wanders from the pure habitation, prevails, so the seed of war swells and sprouts and grows and becomes strong, till much fruit are ripened. Thus cometh the harvest spoken of by the prophet, which "is a heap, in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow."

Oh, that we who declare against wars, and acknowledge our trust to be in God only, may walk in the Light and therein examine our foundation and motives in holding great estates: may we look upon our treasures and the furniture of our houses, and the garments in which we array ourselves, and try whether the seeds of war have any nourishment in these, our possessions...

*- John Woolman, 1764
A Plea for the Poor*

IN THE... MEETING I was concerned to show the dangerous and hurtful tendency of our submitting to be led and governed by the customs and manners of others, without a strict and careful examination thereof: and bringing them to the test of the light in our own conscience. For although the frequency of a thing, and a habitual conformity to that which is not right, often blunts the edge of conviction, and reconciles us to that which is contrary to truth, and derogatory to our true interest: yet the custom of sinning will not lessen its guilt.

For in the awful day of final decision, all our fig-leaf coverings will be torn off, and things will then appear as they really are: and we shall all stand in need of that substantial covering, represented by the coats of skins which the Lord made for our first parents.

*- Elias Hicks
Journal, 1813*

We never attempt to draw or define the precise relationship to the father, nor is a trinity acknowledged in our galleries. We rather urge obedience to manifest duty as a means of acceptance with the Searcher of hearts. This is the old fashioned Quaker doctrine, neither is there salvation in any other.

- Lucretia Mott, 1842

The Universal Light

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 though the divers liveries they wear here makes them strangers.

- *William Penn, 1693*
Fruits of Solitude

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 in the best sense of the expression. Using ourselves to take ways which appear most easy to us, when inconsistent with that purity which is without beginning, we thereby set up a government of our own and deny obedience to him whose service is true liberty.

- *John Woolman, 1774*

It is lamentable that the simple and benign religion of Jesus be so encumbered with creeds and dogmas of sects. Its primitive beauty obscured by these gloomy appendages of man—its investigation of honest dilemmas checked by the cry of heresy and infidelity.... I long to see obedience to manifest duty leading to practical righteousness, the Christian standard, the fruit of faith.

Lucretia Mott, 1841

I must confess to you, my friends, that I am a worshipper after the way called heresy, a believer after the manner that many deem infidel. While at the same time my faith is firm in the blessed, the eternal doctrine preached by Jesus and by every child of God from the creation of the world, especially the great truth that God is the teacher of his people himself; the doctrine that Jesus most emphatically taught, that the kingdom of God is with man, that there is his sacred and divine temple.

Lucretia Mott, 1849

You do not hear, in any of the pulpits, a definition of what love and justice, and mercy and right are. You know and all know that they are innate, and self-defined. Therefore, I say preach your truth, let it go forth, and you will find, without any notable miracle, as of old, that every man will speak in his own tongue in which he was born. And I will say, if these pure principles have their place in us and are brought forth by faithfulness, by obedience, by practice, the difficulties and doubts that we may have to surmount will be easily conquered. There will be a power greater than these. Let it be called the Great Spirit of the Indian, the Quaker "inward light" of George Fox, the "Blessed Mary, mother of Jesus," of the Catholics, or Brahma, the Hindu's God – they will all be one and there will come to be such faith and such liberty as shall redeem the world.

- *Lucretia Mott, 1873*

When questioned as to the reality and nature of the inner light, the early Friends were accustomed in return to ask the questions whether they did not sometimes feel something within them that showed them their sins; and to assure them that this same power which *made manifest*, and therefore was truly light, would also, if yielded to, lead them out of sin. This assurance, that the light which revealed was also the power which would heal sin, was George Fox's gospel. The power itself was described by him in many ways. Christ within, the hope of glory; the light, life, Spirit, and grace of Christ; the Seed, the new birth, the power of God unto salvation, and many other such expressions, flow forth in abundant streams to heartfelt eloquence. To "turn people to the light within," to "direct them to Christ, their free Teacher," was his daily business.

- *Caroline Stephen, 1890*

What do we believe?

Because we feel that Truth cannot be limited by one set of words, we have no single creed. We value a diversity of beliefs among our members. As Quakers, we look for the "Inner Light" and "that of God" in everyone. Some of the values that we as a Meeting feel are important include:

The Inner Light
Loving Community
Search for Truth
Silent Worship
Joy
Simplicity
Christian Heritage
Quaker Roots
Respect for Persons
Compassionate Service
Nonviolence in Conflict
Peace Witness
World Family
Harmony with Nature
Decision-Making through Unity

- *Chena Ridge Friends Meeting
Welcoming Brochure*

Testimonies: Peace

I told them that I lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars.

...I was come into the covenant of peace which was before wars and strifes were.

For all dwelling in the light that comes from Jesus, it leads out of wars, leads out of strife, leads out of the occasion of wars, and leads out of the earth up to God, and out of earthly mindedness into heavenly mindedness.

*- George Fox, 1657,
while in Derby jail to the
Commissioners who proposed to make
him the captain of a troop of soldiers
in the Commonwealth Army.*

“WE UTTERLY deny all outward wars and strife, and fightings with outward weapons. for any end, or under any pretense whatever: this is our testimony to the whole world. The Spirit of Christ by which we are guided, is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil, and again to move us unto it; and we certainly know, and testify to the world, that the Spirit of Christ, which leads us unto all truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the Kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of this world... Therefore we cannot learn war any more.”

*- George Fox and Others.
A declaration from the Harmless and
Innocent People of God, called
Quakers, presented to Charles II,
1660.*

While pleading his peace principles a man in his audience said, “Well stranger, if all the world was of your mind, I would turn and follow after.” Joseph replied, “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.”

- Joseph Hoag, 1812

BENEATH ALL overt acts and decisions the immense subconscious forces, charged with emotion, have been slowly pushing toward this event. There are no words which can express the gravity of the tragedy. It is one of those appalling events which test to the bottom our central faith in God, in human goodness, in cosmic rationality and in onward progress. But we must not let our cable slip in the storm. The supreme faiths of humanity have always had their births and their baptisms in baffling mysteries and in the depths of tragedy and suffering.... We shall come out of this crucible with a new and finer temper at the heart of our faith.... Out of this very flood that seems to mock at ideals of peace and brotherhood new forces will appear.

* * *

.... "Whatever may be the 'causes' that have led to this cataclysm, our main problems just now must be: How to keep our faith in God and the coming of His Kingdom; how to interpret our ideals of love and peace; how to suffer patiently and loyally where our ideals collide with systems and requirements that are 'survivals' from the past."

- *Rufus Jones, 1914*
Upon declaration of the World War

Our single strongest immediate concern is the incipient reinstatement of registration for possible military service. Living as we do in an outlying land conscious of its role as a garrisoned border, we feel the responsibility to bear public witness to the historic peace testimony of the Society of Friends and additionally to offer support and counsel to those whom the State requires to register. The Conference planned and approved activities by our meetings and committees of the Conference to this end.

- *Central Alaska Friends Conference*
1980 Epistle

DRAFT COUNSELING

We affirm the historic peace testimony of the Society of Friends (Quakers). We oppose military registration and the draft.

Young men faced by the upcoming military registration are urged to examine their consciences and act accordingly. Counseling and literature are available for those who are troubled by these difficult matters.

- *Notice in the Tundra Times, 7/23/80*

To the Editor:

Members of the Society of Friends (Quakers) believe that there is that of God in each person. We are called on to love and respect all persons and to overcome evil, not by further evil, but by good. The relationships of nation to nation, of race to race, of class to class must be based on the divine law of love if peace and progress are to be achieved. We base our peace testimony on a fundamental conviction that war and war preparations are colossal violations of this way of life are wrong in themselves, and are wrong in the sight of God.

Many Friends and other people of conscience are deeply disturbed by the vast expenditures of our federal government for war and war preparations. In excess of 50 per cent of the federal budget is devoted to present military expenditures and the debts from past wars. After looking at these troubling figures some people of conscience make a decision to withhold payment of a percentage of their federal income tax equal to that devoted to military expenditures. Some give this withheld portion to a peace tax fund, and others give the money to humanitarian organizations. The Chena Ridge Meeting of the Society of Friends declares its support for all people of conscience to make this witness for peace. While we recognize the privileges and obligations of citizenship, we reject as false that philosophy which sets the state above moral law and demands from the individual unquestioning obedience to every state command.

We urge all people of conscience to carefully consider how they may work for peace and offer our assistance to those dealing with these difficult questions.

For the Chena Ridge Meeting. Paul B. Reichardt, Clerk

- *Letter to the Editor*
Fairbanks Daily Miner
- *April 11, 1982*

Many people find it contradictory to work for peace while paying for war preparedness. Upon reflection, some people may refuse payment of all or part of that portion of their federal income tax devoted to military expenditures. Others may choose to not pay the Vietnam War originated telephone excise tax. Friends support these acts of conscience. We encourage all people to prayerfully examine the ways that they may redirect their lives to support peace rather than war.

- *Approved by the Religious Society of*
Friends, Central Alaska Conference
Yearly Meeting, Wasilla, Alaska, July
8, 1984

Friends maintain their opposition to military conscription and the registration of young men for such a system, believing that both undermine the foundation for building world peace.

We urge all men and women to consider carefully the long term consequences of "draft" registration. Furthermore, we pledge our support to those young men who choose, as a matter of conscience, not to register with the Selective Service. In addition, we deplore that receipt of Federal Student Financial Aid is dependent upon proof of registration with the Selective Service System.

- *Approved by the Religious Society of*
Friends, Central Alaska Conference
Yearly Meeting, Wasilla, Alaska, July
8, 1994

MESSAGE TO ALL MEETINGS ON THE PREPARATION OF YOUNG MEN FOR
REGISTRATION AND DRAFT

Draft and military counselors meeting at Friends General Conference, 1987, reach out on loving concern to meetings for worship throughout the United States.

Our concern is that young men facing the legal requirement to register for the draft may wait until actual induction notices are received to document their opposition to war.

Under present Selective Service procedures, there is no provision to claim conscientious objection. Until Congress authorizes a draft, applicants for I-O classification (Conscientious Objector) may not claim this classification until 10 days before the date of induction.

When they are given a hearing, they will have to establish:

1. That they are opposed to participation in war in any form,
2. That their opposition is due to a moral, ethical, or religious belief, and,
3. That their belief is sincere.

Of the three, the last is the most difficult.

Therefore, young Friends who may intend to be conscientious objectors should be encouraged to begin building files early that will support their claim. The contents of such a file could be: writings, artwork, letters with anti-war subjects, book reports, school work and other school activities that show aversion to war, testimonial letters from friends, teachers, relatives, counselors that will verify such things as preference for music with anti-war lyrics, aversion to movies with violence and/or strong pro-military messages, attendance at peace rallies, avoidance of violence as a child, activity in community social service projects, or humanitarian service of any type.

* * * *

Friends note with sadness the substantial percentage of the federal budget being devoted to military expenditures. We believe that it is self defeating to maintain our military expenditures while we decrease spending on domestic programs which promote human well-being. We believe that these military outlays bring us closer to war and are directly related to our tremendous budget deficit and the consequent destabilization of the world economy.

The biblical commandments to love one another and to trust in God are as true today as they were in the past. We violate those commandments by our armed forces and by building weaponry. Our nation's efforts to extend the olive branch of peace can only be viewed with suspicion as our military becomes involved in conflicts far beyond our borders, and as we stockpile nuclear and conventional armaments.

*- Central Alaska Friends Conference
Spring Quarterly Meeting, 1990*

Testimonies: Service

... true godliness [doesn't] turn men out of the world, but enables them to live better in it, and excites their endeavours to mend it: not hide their candle under a bushel, but set it upon a table in a candlestick...

- *William Penn, 1682*

The early Quakers were founding no sect; they were reforming Christendom, that had slumped into externals and had lost its true sense of the immediate presence and the creative, triumphant power of the living God within us all. They had a message for all, for they had discovered that, "the Lord himself had come to lead his people."

And in that same way the Quaker discovery, not of a doctrine, not of a belief, but of a Life, a life filled with God, a life listening, obedient, triumphant, holy—in that same way the Quaker discovery was only a rediscovery of the life and power and fellowship and joy and radiance which moved the early Church. Its rediscovery today is desperately needed, for the fellowship of believers has grown dim, and only a few clear voices ring out in the twilight. You and I can be the instruments of the opening of God's life. But it is heroic work, not work for the milder Quaker. The fires of God burn bright. In their light we are judged or consumed.

* * * * *

Each one of us has the Seed of Christ within him. In each of us the amazing and the dangerous Seed of Christ is present. It is only a Seed. It is very small, like the grain of mustard seed. The Christ that is formed in us is small indeed, but he is great with eternity. But if we dare to take this awakened Seed of Christ into the midst of the world's suffering, it will grow. That's why the Quaker work camps are important. Take a young man or young woman in whom Christ is only dimly formed, but one in whom the Seed of Christ is alive. Put him into a distressed area, into a refugee camp, into a poverty region. Let him go into the world's suffering, bearing this Seed with him, and in suffering it will grow, and Christ will be more and more fully formed in him. As the grain of mustard seed grew so large that the birds found shelter in it, so the man who bears an awakened Seed into the world's suffering will grow until he becomes a refuge for many.

- *Thomas Kelley, 1941*

Dear Friends,

At the request of our business meeting I am writing this traveling minute to commend Victor Valiente to your fellowship and care. Victor is an agricultural engineer from San Salvador.

....Victor's research into land reform eventually put him at risk, and some Friends at the University of Alaska helped him secure a visa to lecture there. After his arrival in mid-January (at -50° Fahrenheit) concerned acquaintances referred him to us. Victor has lived with us at Hidden Hills since then.

Because our own country has a very poor record in its treatment of Central American refugees, we have approached the government of Canada about asylum for Victor. As we have no Canadian consulate near us,.... We... contacted the San Francisco Canadian consulate. We have helped him to prepare his asylum request; Debbie Smith, an attorney with the International Institute in Oakland has agreed to take on his case...

Victor asked us to put him in touch with Friends in California. We... found Victor to be an excellent companion, helpful, and very good natured in even the very disorienting situation he finds himself in while sojourning in the sub-arctic with us. We warmly commend him to your Meeting's company.

In faith and friendship...
Chena Ridge Friends Meeting
Minute of Introduction sent to
Berkeley Friends Meeting 6/4/89

Incomparably the most important thing is that each one of us should be sensitive to the call of God to ourselves and not spend time in passing judgment on the lives of others. To some the call will be to adopt the witness of great simplicity, perhaps to live in an Indian village or in a London slum. To others the most important thing will be to maintain our ancient testimony against 'fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence whatever.' But perhaps most will be called to the humdrum tasks of serving an employer supremely well, or running a house, bringing up a family, keeping the peace with difficult neighbours, serving the community in little things - the tasks which, because they are simple, are in fact most difficult to do with dedication... Our duty is to be sensitive to what God is asking us to do, and not to dissipate our energies trying to be absolutists in several directions at once.

*- London Yearly Meeting
Faith and Practice... , 1960*

Quakers may not be able to "answer" complex human problems, but their entire heritage prepares them to "respond" to such problems. Examples of such response in Quaker history are already numerous, ranging from the establishment of work camps in areas of tension to the support of Inter-racial housing projects and the schools for young diplomats. There are probably many new developments which Quakers should sponsor, but which are waiting for the emergence of a dedicated imagination. What is needed is not a static position, but new wine in new wineskins. The testimony which the time requires is a "Testimony of responsibility."

- D. Elton Trueblood, 1966

Testimonies: Simplicity

Take heed of wronging the world or anyone in bargains, or overreaching them: but dwell in the cool, sweet, and holy power of the Lord God, and in righteousness, that it may run down amongst you; and that will keep you low. . . . There is the danger and temptation to you, of drawing your minds into your business, and clogging them with it; so that you can hardly do anything in the service of God, but there will be crying, 'my business, my business,' and your minds will go into the things, and not over the things. . . . and so when your minds are got into the riches, and cumbered therewith, ye go back into that ye were before . . . then that mind that is cumbered, it will fret, being out of the power of God.

- George Fox, 1656

UNTIL the year 1756 I continued to retail goods, besides following my trade as a tailor, about which time I grew uneasy on account of my business growing too cumbersome. I began with selling trimmings for garments, and from thence proceeded to sell cloths and linens; and at length, having got a considerable shop of goods, my trade increased every year, and the road to large business appeared open; but I felt a stop in my mind.

Through the mercies of the Almighty I had, in a good degree, learned to be content with a plain way of living. I had but a small family; and on serious reflection I believed Truth did not require me to engage in much cumbering affairs. It had generally been my practice to buy and sell things really useful. Things that served chiefly to please the vain mind in people I was not easy to trade in, seldom did it and, whenever I did, I found it weaken me as a Christian.

The increase of business became my burden; for, though my natural inclination was toward merchandise, yet I believed Truth required me to live more free from outward cumber. There was now a strife in my mind betwixt the two; and in this exercise my prayers were put up to the Lord, who graciously heard me and gave me a heart resigned to his holy will. I then lessened my outward business and, as I had opportunity, told my customers of my intention, that they might consider what shop to turn to; and so in a while wholly laid down merchandise, following my trade as a tailor, myself only, having no apprentice. I also had a nursery of apple-trees, in which I spent a good deal of time hoeing, grafting, trimming and inoculating.

In merchandise it is the custom, where I lived, to sell chiefly on credit, and poor people often get in debt; and when payment is expected, having not wherewith to pay, and so their creditors often sue for it at law. Having often observed occurrences of this kind, I found it good for me to advise poor people to take such as were most useful and not costly.

- John Woolman, 1756

Treasures, though small, attained on a true principle of virtue, are sweet in the possession, and while we walk in the light of the Lord there is true comfort and satisfaction. Here neither the murmurs of an oppressed people nor throbbing uneasy conscience nor anxious thoughts about the events of things hinder the enjoyment of it.

John Woolman - letter, 1757

Where cunning people pass counterfeits, and impose that on others which is only good for nothing, it is considered as a wickedness; but to sell that to people which we know does them harm, and which often works their ruin, for the sake of gain, manifests a hardened and corrupt heart; and it is an evil which demands the care of all true lovers of virtue to suppress. And while my mind this evening was thus employed, I also remembered that the people on the frontier, among whom this evil is too common, are often poor people who venture to the outside of a colony that they may live more independent on such who are wealthy, who often set high rents on their land. Being then renewedly confirmed in a belief that, if all our inhabitants lived according to pure wisdom, labouring to promote universal love and righteousness, and ceased from every inordinate desire after wealth and from all customs which are tinctured with luxury, the way would be easy for our inhabitants, though much more numerous than at present, to live comfortably on honest employments, without having that temptation they are often under of being drawn into schemes to make settlements on lands which have not been honestly purchased of the Indians, or of applying to that wicked practice of selling rum to them.

John Woolman - Journal, 1763

HE who toils one year after another to furnish others with wealth and superfluities—who labours and thinks, and thinks and labours, until by overmuch labour he is wearied and oppressed—such an one understands the meaning of that language, “Ye know the HEART of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

As many at this day, who know not the heart of a stranger, indulge themselves in ways of life which occasion more labour in the world than infinite goodness intends for man, and yet are compassionate toward such in distress who come directly under their observation; were these to change circumstances awhile with some who labour for them; were they to pass regularly through the means of knowing the heart of a stranger, and come to a feeling knowledge of the straits and hardships which many poor innocent people pass through in a hidden obscure life; were these, who now fare sumptuously every day, to act the other part of the scene, till seven times had passed over them, and return again to their former estate; I believe many of them would embrace a way of life less expensive and lighten the heavy burdens of some who now labour out of their sight to support them, and pass through straits with which they are but little acquainted.

- A Plea for the Poor, circa 1764
John Woolman

CHRIST'S major point throughout the Sermon on the Mount is to get rid of fears and anxieties. It might almost be said that the substance of his mission as a teacher was to set men free from the slavery of fears. "Why are ye so fearful?" he keeps saying. Stop your unnecessary worries. Cut out your excessive anxieties. It has been well said that the most ruinously expensive of all our emotions is fear. It is that very emotion of fear that has thrown our world out of joint and brought us to this unspeakable calamity...

Be not anxious for your life. He is not against ownership as such, only against excessive worry over things that moth and rust corrupt and thieves and depressions sweep away... The real issue which Jesus is discussing here is: in what does your life really consist?...

He is making a powerful plea for clarity of vision, for a place for inspiration in our lives, for insight of real values, if your eye is single you can find your way to life.

- Rufus Jones, circa 1939-1942

Friends are warned against the psychological hazards in the use of alcohol and other mood-changing drugs. They are also urged to consider the social implications of their use, of which the association of alcohol with driving is an example. They are generally clear that the illegal use of drugs tends to develop furtiveness and secrecy inconsistent with the principles of Friends.

As medical evidence mounts that tobacco, especially cigarette smoking, is injurious to health, Friends urge their members to refrain from its use.

*- Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Faith and Practice, 1976*

Avoid all advertising. It'll rile the blood.

*- Moses Bailey,
in his 10th decade*

We use what is known as "plain speech," but this is a minute part of what constitutes our understanding of simplicity. Simplicity should affect all aspects of our lives and our relationships to other people. As I see simplicity there are more reasons than one for its place in our lives. A truly simple existence should be of service to us in maintaining an open channel of communication between us and the shining of the Inner Light. We desire a freedom from that which might distract our attention from the still small voice, that which would exercise a binding control over us, and that which would hinder our full loyalty to the one and only Almighty. We also believe in a simple life as a means of witness, a witness to the fact that the goals as determined by the world are not our goals. In this sense we believe plainness is a means of communication and we desire to communicate that which is honest, sound and upright.... My occupation is making horse-drawn buggies and carts.

*- Stuart Bannister
Indiana, 1984*

Testimonies: Plain Speech

BUT AT THE FIRST convincement, when Friends could not put off their hats to people nor say “you” to a particular, but “thee” and “thou:” and could not bow nor use the world’s salutations, nor fashions, nor custom, many Friends, being tradesmen of several sorts lost their custom at the first: for the people would not trade with them nor trust them, and for a time Friends that were tradesmen could hardly get enough money to buy bread. But afterwards people came to see Friends’ honesty and truthfulness and “yea” and “nay” at a word in their dealing, and their lives and conversations did preach and reach to the witness of God in all people, and they knew and saw for conscience sake towards God, they would not cozen and cheat them, and at last that they might send any child and be as well used as themselves, at any of their ships.

So then things altered so that all the enquiry was, where was a draper or shopkeeper or tailor or shoemaker or any other tradesman that was a Quaker; insomuch that Friends had double the trade, beyond any of their neighbours. And if there was any trading they had it, insomuch that then the cry of all the professors and others was, “If we let these people alone they will take the trading of the nation out of our hands.”

- George Fox, 1653

...We cannot profit by any thing without honesty. We hear a great many excellent and plain truths declared to us, but it is only the honest and upright in heart that will profit by them. ..and were we all concerned to be honest and truly upright, it would not only tend to bring about a conversion and reformation in every individual, but it would bring us into unity together, and, as it were compel us to love one another. There is nothing like justice to induce love between man and man. It would so regulate our whole lives, and it would so regulate all our conduct, that we never could, through any medium whatever, receive any thing from a fellow creature without an equal reward for it. It would keep our minds in a continual state of watchfulness. Its tendency would be to lead us to love our neighbours as ourselves, and therefore we could not take a bribe, we never could take anything as a reward for any labour or work which we do, that should exceed its true value. Here, not only would all our moral conduct be regulated toward one another, but it would produce a confidence in one another—a confidence that could not be shaken: we should depend on one another as on ourselves. It would put an end to all hirelings.

*- Elias Hicks,
Sermon, 1826*

Testimonies: Plain Dress

The change in my dress was a great cross, as I was always given to fashionable dresses, and at this time had sundry suits of apparel of this sort. I felt a solemn covering to come over my spirit early one morning, which drew me into deep silence and attention, when I felt it required of me to conform to the simple appearance of Christ's followers: His garment was all of a piece, so ought mine to be of a piece with my speech, my life, and my conversation. This felt to be a severe stroke: no shelter was not left me, but I must appear as a fool to the world: my speech and then my garments would betray me, that I had been with Christ, and professed myself to be one of His disciples.

*- John Conron
Ireland, 1772*

THERE was I think more than one reason why the peculiar and primitive testimonies of plainness were given to, and upheld by the Society of Friends; and first, because they are congenial to the very nature of Christianity in its purest form, and agree better with Its other testimonies. And secondly, because if conscientiously maintained, they would serve to exhibit this constant acknowledgment to the world, "I am the Lord's!" And thirdly, because it would be an enclosure round about the tender plants of a rising generation: for by observing these peculiarities in language, manners, and appearance, there would not be that inclination to mix familiarly with others; and this has proved to our beloved youth a great preservation from the corruptions and vanities of the world. In this point of view, the benefit to our Society has been incalculable: for though it is not these peculiarities of plainness that cause us to be fruitful, yet by them as an enclosure, the fruit may be kept from being devoured. It is the good soil of the garden, well cultivated, that bringeth forth the fruit, but it is the fenced wall of God's providence round about, that keepeth it from being devoured by the creatures without.

And so far is this testimony from being a burden or a hardship...a choice blessing from his hand, and a blessing too, which if we as a people should begin to despise and lightly esteem, God will in his displeasure perhaps remove from us. Yea, and if the vine which he has planted, when he looked for grapes, should be found bringing forth only wild grapes, he will certainly remove this safe enclosure, and suffer the wild beast to tread it down; and he will also command the clouds that they should rain no rain upon it.

- John Wilbur, 1832

Testimonies Stewardship

And here I was led into a close, laborious inquiry, whether I, as an individual, kept clear from all things which tended to stir up, or were connected with, wars, either in this land or Africa; and my heart was deeply concerned that in future I might in all things keep steadily to the pure truth, and live and walk in the plainness and simplicity of a sincere follower of Christ. And in this lonely journey I did greatly bewail the spreading of a wrong spirit, believing that the prosperous, convenient situation of the English requires a constant attention to divine love and wisdom, to guide and support us in a way answerable to the will of that good, gracious, and Almighty Being, who hath an equal regard to all mankind. And here luxury and covetousness, with the numerous oppressions and other evils attending them, appeared very afflicting to me; and I felt in that which is immutable that the seeds of great calamity and desolation are sown and growing fast on this continent. Nor have I words sufficient to set forth that longing I then felt that we, who are placed along the coast, and have tasted the love and goodness of God, might arise in his strength and like faithful messengers labour to check the growth of those seeds, that they may not ripen to the ruin of our posterity.

- John Woolman, 1763

Dear Friends,

In our meeting for business on 12/3/89 we discussed our budget for the coming year. We committed ourselves to maintaining our level of support to charitable and social change work through contributions to FCNL, AFSC, and other organizations, and to our own meeting's ongoing programs, such as the library and the newsletter.

We feel called to attempt to provide substantially more in financial support for peace and social justice work in the Fairbanks area. A number of the Friends are working diligently on our First Day School Program, and we hope to secure an expanded selection of teaching materials. This year we plan to provide child care for all of our major functions.

As we discovered last year when we gave refuge to a Salvadoran for six months, even the most carefully planned budget cannot always anticipate the ministry we are called to do. As the year's end approaches we ask that you might consider the work of our meeting in the sharing of your resources. If you could complete the attached contribution form, it would greatly aid the work of our treasurer.

To my dear Friends, in the hope that the Lord will call us to go over our budget in service to the Kingdom of Heaven.

*- letter from the clerk,
Chena Ridge Friends Meeting,
Twelfth Month, 1989*

Property

Possession of property involves power. Such power should be exercised under a sense of concern for others and with a view toward the building of an equitable social order. Understanding that there are no fundamental or natural property rights and that all possessory rights are constantly liable to change through law, Friends should always be sensitive about the possession of property. Whatever property Friends feel is right for them to possess they should regard as a trust and as a means of furthering the kingdom of God on earth.

Friends are encouraged to use their incomes and inheritances in accordance with their testimony on simplicity: for the maintenance of their families and dependents; for the education of their children; and for meeting, with love, the human needs of the wider community.

“To turn all the treasures we possess into the channel of Universal Love becomes the business of our lives” this, in the words of John Woolman, is the meaning of Christian stewardship.

Friends should make wills in order to avoid inconvenience, loss and trouble for their beneficiaries. Friends should make their wills under professional advice in time of health and sound judgment; they should dispose of their estates as dictated by proper stewardship. A will made hastily or carelessly may invalidate bequests that are much desired by the testator. Friends are strongly advised to remember that unrestricted bequests give evidence of faith in the new insights of the future and in those Friends to whom they will be revealed.

It is recommended that trustees (to the extent their fiduciary responsibilities will permit), Meetings and individual Friends consider the creative investment of some of their capital as a constructive means of furthering social testimonies. This is not only a matter of avoiding all investments that might be considered morally wrong, but of actively seeking out some that will carry a positive witness-even those which may involve high risk or low return.

*- Philadelphia Yearly Meeting,
Faith and Practice, 1976*

Testimonies: Education

Draft Statement on a Friends School

Hidden Hill Friends School will operate under the care and with the support of Chena Ridge Society of Friends Meeting (Quakers). As Quakers we believe that there is that of God within each human being and that the education of our children should reflect that awareness. As Quakers, we speak of education as a life long process and as a whole involving education of the hands, the heart, the spirit, and the intellect. Complete education includes open exploration and discussion of spiritual ideas, including Quaker concepts. We do not, however, seek to promote any particular doctrine. Rather, we seek to create an educational community where each individual feels loved and where the special talents and skills of each student are recognized, supported and nurtured to their maximum potential. We believe that knowledge, skills, talents and maturity develop best in an atmosphere of caring and from opportunities for responsibility.

In a small classroom setting we seek to create an educational program which is tuned to the needs of the individual student; a program aimed at strengthening and nurturing the quest and joy of learning which each person has at birth. Recognizing the light of inspiration available to each individual involved in the HHFS community, we make our decisions through a process of consensus. Students, parents, and the teacher are collectively involved in decisions affecting the school as a whole and also in the decisions regarding learning approaches for individual students. With this approach ideas from each individual in the HHFS community are heard and receive a response. Implicit in this approach is the idea that the student, the teacher and the parent each have responsibilities to fulfill. Thus, the educational process is mutually decided upon rather than imposed. Students are actively involved in their own development, participate significantly in the decisions affecting them, and assume real responsibilities.

Draft Statement (continued)

As Quakers we believe that a balanced life includes time for inward contemplation and time for outward activities. HHFS will meet regularly for short periods of silent worship, after the manner of Friends. This is a time for reflection which may be interspersed with verbal messages when individuals present feel inspired to speak. We believe that meeting for worship increases our desire for clarity, our attention to others, and our awareness of our part within the larger community. While the HHFS educational program is tuned to the individual student, we seek also to build students' awareness of their position as responsible members of the larger group: the school, the Fairbanks Community, the nation and the world. This connection is made through work activities where emphasis is placed on our involvement in the community and through our use of community resources and participation in community activities.

Recognizing the continuing and rapid changes in the world we seek to equip each student with the skills which will make education a life-long learning process, rather than focusing on equipping them with a body of knowledge which will soon become out-dated. Through the nurturing of a caring and fun educational setting we hope to encourage students' natural tendency to seek and question. Through the exercise of decision making we hope to equip each student with the analytical skills to make decisions throughout life, within an ethical context, while recognizing their responsibility to others and maintaining a sense of personal integrity.

circa 1981

Testimonies: Unity with Creation

Now was I come up in spirit through the flaming sword into the paradise of God. All things were new, and all the creation gave another smell unto me than before, beyond what words can utter. I knew nothing but pureness, and innocency, and righteousness, being renewed up into the image of God by Christ Jesus, so that I say I was come up to the state of Adam which he was in before he fell. The Creation was opened to me.

- *George Fox, 1648*

I MAY HERE MENTION a remarkable circumstance that occurred in my childhood. On going to a neighbor's house, I saw on the way a robin sitting on her nest, and as I came near she went off; but having young ones, she flew about, and with many cries expressed her concern for them. I stood and threw stones at her, and one striking her, she fell down dead. At first I was pleased with the exploit, but after a few minutes was seized with horror, at having, in a sportive way, killed an innocent creature while she was careful for her young.... I beheld her lying dead, and thought those young ones, for which she was so careful, must now perish for want of their dam to nourish them. After some painful considerations on the subject, I climbed up the tree, took all the young birds, and killed them, supposing that better than to leave them to pine away and die miserably. In this case I believed that Scripture proverb was fulfilled, 'The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.'

I then went on my errand, and for some hours could think of little else but the cruelties I had committed, and was much troubled. Thus He whose tender mercies are over all his works hath placed a principle in the human mind, which incites to exercise goodness towards every living creature: and this being singly attended to, people become tender-hearted and sympathizing; but when frequently and totally rejected, the mind becomes shut up in a contrary disposition.

- *John Woolman
Journal, 1743*

SOME dunghill fowls yet remained of those the passengers took for their eating. I believe about 14 perished in the storms at sea, by the waves breaking over the quarter-deck, and a considerable number with sickness at different times. I observed the cocks crew coming down Delaware, and while we were near the land ; but afterward I think I did not hear one of them crow till we came near the land in England, when they again crowed a few times.

In observing their dull appearance at sea, and the pining sickness of some of them, I once remembered the Fountain of goodness, who gave being to all creatures and whose love extends to that of caring for the sparrows; and believe where the love of God is verily perfected, and the true spirit of government watchfully attended to, a tenderness toward all creatures made subject to us will be experienced, and a care felt in us that we do not lessen that sweetness of life in the animal creation, which the great Creator intends for them under our government.

- *John Woolman*
Journal, 1772

Sheep being rightly managed tend to enrich our land; but by sending abroad great quantities of grain and flour the fatness of our land is diminished.

I have known landholders who paid interest for large sums of money, and, being intent on paying their debts by raising grain, have by too much tilling so robbed the earth of its natural fatness that the produce thereof hath grown light.

To till poor land requires near as much labour as to till that which is rich; and, as the high interest of money which lieth on many husbandmen is often a means for their struggling for present profit, to the impoverishment of their lands, they then on their poor land find greater difficulty to afford poor labourers, who work for them, equitable pay for tilling the ground.

The produce of the earth is a gift from our gracious Creator to the inhabitants, and to impoverish the earth, now to support outward greatness appears to be an injury to the succeeding age.

- *John Woolman,*
Conversations on the
True Harmony of Mankind

SPRING

In the darkened lists of a frozen land

The earth, tilting, vanquishes night;

An angling sun spreads forth its hand,

Splitting willow buds with its light.

- *Bob Weeden, 1960*

Since Christ taught not from theory, but from the authority of love, it's no surprise that many of his recorded teachings are built on this sense of the sacredness of natural life. Above all, of course, Christ taught the direct relationship between the Individual and God, and the overriding significance of that relationship in our lives. But among his teachings concerning the world, Christ seems to have given a special emphasis to those that involved a caring, nurturing attitude.

We can see this emphasis in such parables as the Good Samaritan and the Lost Hundredth Sheep. We can see it even more plainly in Christ's advice to the Pharisee who invited him to a banquet, and in his parting instruction to Peter to "feed and tend my sheep." In his tale of the king who wished to settle accounts with his servants, Christ said that if we wish heaven to deal gently with us, we must practice gentleness in our turn. And in his story of the Final Judgment, Christ declared that he expects us to carry this gentle, nurturing policy to the *farthest possible* extreme: "Inasmuch as you do it to one of the least of my brethren, you do it unto me,"

Did Christ mean that this policy of gentleness and caring should apply to our fellow humans only, as some scholars would have us believe? Are snail darters and furbish louseworts, too "least" to appear on the list of Christ's brethren? Maybe so—but I wouldn't count on it. God *did* manifest himself a a burning bush to Moses, which seems to me to show that even bushes are as much in God's image as we humans are. If we find God's presence in nature, doesn't that make nature God's kin? Again, while Christ was teaching his disciples to "be not anxious," he declared that not one sparrow falls unless God wills it—a sure sign that God is concerned for the fate of each living thing.

In Christ's parable of the Judgment, he made it clear that neither the just nor the unjust would realise how significant the "least" might actually be until the very moment Christ told them. What does this suggest to you?

- *Marshal Massey*
Defense of the Peaceable Kingdom,
1984

WORSHIP SHARING : The Sacrality of Place

Spring Quarterly Meeting, 1990,
Central Alaska Friends Conference, Fairbanks

William Everson, the Santa Cruz poet, wrote in [Birth of a Poet](#) that a person requires three things for a fulfilled life: a sacred calling, a sacred love, and a sacred country. In each case the word sacred sets the noun apart from the ordinary, even from the repeatable. The strong suggestion is that though a person may have several callings, loves or countries, only one in each of these can evoke the deepest dedication and commitment, and can match with its own the offered spirit of the person. Everson understands "sacred country" within the Christian context, but the idea is universal. For the Hopi and Navaho fighting coal mining and nuclear power plants, the sacred country has both general meaning (the Earth itself, as a whole, is sacred) and specific identity as places where the enspiritedness of the world is especially powerful. To them a place is sacred when revelations occur there, when you make offerings to it, and when all your skills and ceremonies stem from and are bent toward it. A sacred country explains you to yourself and others, and once committed to it, your life is no longer portable: if you leave, something important stays behind.

Bob Weeden, from manuscript [Messages from Earth](#)

Testimonies: Women

Thus much may prove that the Church of Christ is a Woman, and those that speak against the Womans speaking, speak against the Church of Christ, and the Seed of the Woman, which Seed is Christ; that is to say, those that speak against the Power of the Lord, and the Spirit of the Lord speaking in a Woman, simply, by reason of her Sex, or because she is a Woman, not regarding the Seed, and Spirit, and Power that speaks in her; such speak against Christ, and his Church, and are of the Seed of the Serpent, wherein lodgeth the enmity. And as God the Father made no such difference in the first Creation, nor never since between the Male and the Female, but alwayes out of his Mercy and loving kindness, had regard unto the weak. So also, his Son, Christ Jesus confirms the same thing; when the *Pharisees* came to him, and asked him, if it were lawful for a man to put away his Wife? He answered and said unto them, *Have you not read, That he that made them in the beginning, made them Male and Female, and said, For this cause shall a Man leave Father and Mother, and shall cleave unto his Wife, and they twain shall be one flesh, wherefore they are no more twain but one flesh; What therefore God hath joyned together, let no Man put asunde.* Matthew 19.

Mark this, you that despise and oppose the Message of the Lord God that he sends by Women; what had become of the Redemption of the whole Body of Mankind, if they had not believed the Message that the Lord Jesus sent by these Women, of and concerning his Resurrection? And if these Women had not thus, out of their tenderness and bowels of love, who had received Mercy, and Grace, and forgiveness of sins, and Virtue, and Healing from him; which many men also had received the like, if their hearts had not been so united and knit unto him in love, that they could not depart as the men did, but sat watching, and waiting, and weeping about the Sepulchre until the time of his Resurrection, and so were ready to carry his Message, as is manifested; else how should his Disciples have known, who were not there?

- *Margaret Fell, 1666*
Women's Speaking Justified

Let Women then go on, not asking as a favor, but claiming as a right, the removal of all hindrances to her elevation in the scale of being. Then in the marriage union, the independence of husband and wife will be equal, their dependence mutual, and their obligations reciprocal.

- *Discourse on Women.*
Philadelphia. 1849

Too long have wrongs and oppression existed without an acknowledged wrongdoer and oppressor. It was not until the slave holder was told "Thou art the man," that a healthy agitation was brought about. Woman is told the fault is in herself, in too willingly submitting to her inferior condition, but like the slave, she is pressed down by laws in the making of which she has no voice, and crushed by customs that have grown out of such laws. She cannot rise therefore, while thus trampled in the dust. The oppressor does not see himself in that light until the oppressed cry for deliverance.

- *Woman's Rights Meeting,*
West Chester. Pa., 1852
- Lucretia Mott

On the island of Nantucket-for I was born on that island-I remember how our mothers were employed, while our fathers were at sea. The mothers with the small children around them- 'twas not customary to have nurses then-kept small groceries and sold provisions, that they might make something in the absence of their husbands. At that time it required some money and more courage to go to Boston-they were obliged to go to that city-make their trades, exchange their oils and candles for dry goods, and all the varieties of a country store, set their own price, keep their own accounts, and with all of this, have very little help in the family, to which they must discharge their duties. Look at the heads of these women; they can mingle with men; they are not triflers, they have intelligent subjects of conversation.

- Woman's Rights Convention, Cleveland, 1853

- *Lucretia Mott,*
on her Quaker upbringing

This Convention does not arrogate to itself the power of settling the propriety of a woman's choosing a particular profession. The idea of the leaders of this movement is not that women should be obliged to accept the privileges which we demand be open to her. There are, no doubt, many women who have no inclination to mingle in the busy walks of life; and many would in all probability, feel conscientious scruples against voting, or taking any office under the present constitution of this country, considering some of its provisions. That, however, supplies no objection to the coequality which we assert. This we mean to attain and keep.

This is called a "Woman's Rights Convention" but the phrase "Human Rights" would more appropriately express its principles and its aims.

- Woman's Rights Convention, New York. 1853

- *Lucretia Mott*

I have never regretted my decision to leave my training for the professional ministry to work directly for equal opportunity and civil rights by participating in specific campaigns, and more broadly by involvement in a diverse urban neighborhood at many levels. And the rightness of the decision was confirmed in another way. In joining the Religious Society of Friends, which from the beginning was non-sexist, I lost the chip on my shoulder, the need to battle my way in a predominantly male profession.... I am grateful to be a Friend, grateful for our heritage of valiant Quaker women who were free to use all their remarkable gifts and insights in many a good crusade.

- *Elizabeth Watson, 1977*

Testimonies: Harmony

Above all things take heed of judging one another, for in that ye may destroy one another, and leave one another behind, and drive one another back into the world, and eat out the good of one another

. . . so go on in the Truth, answering it in every one in the inward parts and in the power of God ... in that is your life.

- *George Fox, 1662*

Friends,

My friends that are gone, and are going over to plant, and make outward plantations in America, keep your own plantations in your hearts, with the spirit and power of God. And in all places where you do outwardly live and settle, invite all the Indians. and their kings, and have Meetings with them, or they with you, so that you may make inward plantations with the light and power of God, and the grace and truth and spirit of Christ; and that with it you may answer the Light and Truth and Spirit of God in the Indians, their kings and people, and so by it you may make heavenly plantations in their hearts for the Lord.

- *George Fox, 1682*

It is of the infinite mercy and compassion of the Lord, that his pure love visiteth any of us, and it is by the preservation thereof alone that we stand. . . .

Let him that stands take heed lest he fall; and mourn over and wait for the restoring of him that is fallen. That which is so apt to be offended, is the same with that which falls. O! do not reason in the high-mindedness, against any that turn aside from the pure Guide; but fear, lest the unbelieving and fleshly-wise part get up in thee also. O, know the weakness of the creature in the withdrawals of the life; and the strength of the enemy in that hour, and the free grace and mercy which alone can preserve; and thou wilt rather wonder that any stand, than that some fall.

This in dear love to thee.

- *Isaac Pennington,
an undated letter*

LET ALL PROMISES and obligations for payment of just debts be truly kept and performed: and due care taken that all offenses, trespasses, and differences be speedily ended and composed, in God's wisdom, according to gospel order among us, either by mutual forgiveness, Christian counsel, or just arbitration, as the case may require, and safely admit or allow; and the choice of arbitrators and umpires be of such just impartial men, as neither party can justly except against.

- *London Yearly Meeting,
Epistle, 1720*

Testimonies: The Lamb's War

...I do see the secret work of God going on in people's minds. Look not at the hard rocks, nor look not at briars, nor look not at the thorn, nor at the mountain, nor the coldness, for ... the true seeds-men must not regard the weather, the winds that blow; they sow the seed before the winter. There is a winter and there is a summer; there is a time to sow the seed, there is a time to reap. So the Lord keep you wholly in his power to himself, for there is never no fainting but to that mind which goes from the pure within.

- *Margaret Fell, 1653*

There is a spirit which I feel that delights to do no evil, nor to revenge any wrong, but delights to endure all things, in hope to enjoy its own in the end. Its hope is to outlive all wrath and contention, and to weary out all exaltation and cruelty, or whatever is of a nature contrary to itself. It sees to the end of all temptations. As it bears no evil in itself, so it conceives none in thoughts to any other. If it be betrayed, it bears it, for its ground and spring is the mercies and forgiveness of God. Its crown is meekness, its life is everlasting love unfeigned: it takes its kingdom with entreaty and not with contention, and keeps it by lowliness of mind. In God alone it can rejoice. though none else regard it, or can own its life. It's conceived in sorrow, and brought forth without any to pity it, nor doth it murmur at grief and oppression. It never rejoiceth but through sufferings. ... I have fellowship therein with them who lived in dens and desolate places in the earth, who through death obtained this resurrection and eternal holy life.

- *James Naylor, 1660*
After trial and conviction for
blasphemy, torture and
imprisonment; spoken shortly
before his death

Lay hands upon no man suddenly, I warn you and charge you all in the presence of the living God, but touch the witness of God in everyone.

- *George Fox, 1660*

Dear Friends,

Sing and rejoice, ye children of the Day, and of the Light; for the Lord is at work in this thick night of darkness that may be felt. And Truth doth flourish as the rose, and the lilies do grow among the thorns, and the plants a-top of the hills, and upon them the lambs do skip and play. And never heed the tempests nor the storms, floods nor rains, for the Seed Christ is over all, and doth reign. And so, be of good faith and valiant for the Truth; for the Truth can live in the gaols. And fear not the loss of the fleece for it will grow again; and follow the Lamb, if it be under the beast's horns, or under the beast's heels, for the Lamb shall have victory over them all.

- *George Fox, 1663*

About a month after, the same justices sent for me to Ulverston, where they were sitting, at a private sessions; and when I came there, they asked me several questions, and seemed to be offended at me, for keeping a Meeting at my house, and said, they would tender me the Oath of Allegiance. I answered, They knew could not swear, and why should they send for me from my own house, where I was about my lawful occasions, to ensnare me? What had I done? They said, if I would not keep a Meeting at my house, they would not tender me the Oath. I told them, I should not deny my faith and principles, for anything they could do against me; and while it pleased the Lord to let me have a house I would endeavour to worship him in it. So they caused the Oath to be read, and tendered it unto me. And when I refused it, telling them I could not take any Oath for conscience' sake, Christ Jesus having forbid it, then they made a *Mittimus*, and committed me prisoner to Lancaster-Castle.

So they passed sentence of *Praemunire* upon me, which was, that I should be out of the King's Protection, and forfeit all my estate, real and personal, to the King, and imprisonment during my life. But the great God of heaven and earth supported my spirit under this severe sentence, that I was not terrified, but gave this answer to Judge Turner who gave the sentence, "Although I am out of the King's Protection, yet I am not out of the Protection of the Almighty God." So there I remained in prison twenty months, before I could get so much favor of the Sheriff as to go to my own house; which then I did for a little time, and returned to prison again. And when I had been a prisoner about four years, I was set at liberty by an order from the King and Council in 1668.

And then I was moved of the Lord again, to go and visit Friends; and the first that I went to visit were Friends in prison; and I visited the most part of the Friends that were prisoners in the North and West of England, and those in my way to Bristol.

- *Margaret Fell, 1663*

I say again if it please the Lord and be his will to try you in stinking prisons and dungeons, Brideswells, houses of correction, and suffer you to be put in such places . . . I say the Lord can sanctifie such places. . . his people are all in the hand, and under the wings of Christ. . . Pray for the enemies that put you there; and if they curse and hate you, you are to bless them, and do good to them... Keep under the wing of Christ and in him is your sanctuary and saviour who destroys the destroyer, and is over all the first and the last.

- *George Fox, 1684*

Thus oppression in the extreme appears terrible, but oppression in more refined appearances remains to be oppression; and where the smallest degree of it is cherished it grows stronger and more extensive; that *to labour for a perfect redemption from this spirit of oppression is the great business of the whole family of Christ Jesus in this world.*

*- John Woolman,
A Plea for the Poor*

Where violent measures are pursued in opposing injustice, the passions and resentments of the injured frequently operate in the prosecution of their designs; and after conflicts productive of very great calamities the minds of contending parties often remain as little acquainted with the pure principle of Divine love as they were before. But where people walk in that pure light in which all their “works are wrought in God” and under oppression persevere in the meek spirit and abide firm in the cause of truth, without actively complying with oppressive demands, through those the Lord hath often manifested his power in opening the understandings of others, to the promoting righteousness in the earth.

A time, I believe, is coming wherein this Divine work will so spread and prevail that “Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor learn war any more.”
Isaiah 2:4.

*- John Woolman,
Considerations on Pure
Wisdom and Human Policy*

I regard the abolition of slavery as being much more the result of this moral warfare which was waged against the great crime of our nation than coming from the battlefield. It is true the Government had not risen to the high moral point which was required to accomplish this great object and (felt) it must use the weapons it was accustomed to employ.

* * * * *

Another result, that we may look forward to with hope, is the removal of the death penalty.

Lucretia Mott- 1868

We are not to wait until all are converted to pure non-resistants, any more than we had to wait for all to be made antislavery in heart. We are not to wait until there shall be no disposition to take revenge, but to declare that revenge shall not be acted out in the barbarous ways of the present.

Lucretia Mott- 1869

Meeting for Business

And when Friends have finished their business, sit down and continue a while, quietly, and wait upon the Lord to feel him; and go not beyond the power, but keep in the power, by which God Almighty may be felt among you.

- George Fox
Epistle, 1658

* * * * *

The Quaker meeting for business opens with an unhurried period of waiting silence. If the meeting is properly carried through, there emerges something of this mood of openness that the meeting for worship knows so well, an openness not to *my* wishes and *my* designs and *my* surface preferences, but rather to the deepest levels where the Guide's bidding may have its way and where the problem may be resolved in a way quite different from what I may have expected.

* * * * *

No votes are taken in a proper Quaker meeting for business. It is the task of the Clerk, within the plexus of this corporate exercise, either to find a resolution that is in right ordering so that the assembled Friends can largely agree with it, or to follow the Quaker rule "When in doubt, wait." A London Yearly Meeting advice reads, "The Clerks should be content to wait upon God with the meeting as long as may be necessary for the emergence of a decision which clearly commends itself to the heart and mind of the meeting as the right one." Coming back for a major decision after a month's interval of waiting often assists clarity.

The Quaker meeting for business is not a process that commends itself to the driven ones who demand a swift decision. . . .

Another highly important issue in arriving at a decision and one that calls for a good deal of inner discipline and seasoning on the part of the members is the matter of what constitutes unanimity. It should be obvious that all need not feel equally happy about the decision the Clerk finally, after getting the "sense of the meeting," has set down in the meeting as passed. . . . Something that might be called participative humility in the assembled members is certainly required in the Quaker decision-making process for it to be able to operate effectively. In this process, whose decision I have been willing to accept, I am brought to realize that the matter has been carefully and patiently considered. I have been involved throughout the process. A French writer, Alfred de Vigny, once remarked, "I am not always of my own opinion," and this flash of humility is not lost on me or on the Quaker process.

If I am a seasoned Friend, I no longer oppose the decision. I give it my "*nihil obstat*" <*nothing objectionable*>, and I emerge from the meeting not as a member of a minority who feels outflanked and rejected but rather as one who has been through the process of the decision and is willing to abide by it even though my accent would not have put it in this form.

The practice of this kind of participative humility and its capacity to help the "sense of the meeting" to emerge has done much to hold the Society of Friends together in critical moments of its life.

- Douglas Steere, 1984

Meetings for business have been organized to provide for the orderly care of such matters as are essential to maintaining our Religious Society and carrying forward its concerns. These meetings afford opportunity to appoint members to special service; to hear reports by members of committees thus appointed, to encourage friends to plan together, under Divine guidance, for work which will assist in bringing about the kingdom of God on earth.

Meetings for business have the responsibility for membership, the oversight of marriages and funerals; for aiding those in the meeting to live in accordance with Friends' principles and testimonies; for the collection of funds required to carry on the work of the Meeting; for holding titles to property and for the suitable administration of funds held in trust.

When a matter requiring decision is placed before the meeting, either by the Clerk or by any other member, time should be permitted for careful and deliberate consideration. All members who feel concerned to express a judgement should be heard. When it appears to the clerk, after general consideration of various views, that the meeting has reached a judgement, he or she shall state clearly what appears to be the sense of the meeting.

Since Friends believe that God gives guidance to all who seek it, it behooves them in their meetings to hear with attention and open minds the messages and views offered.

Members are cautioned to seek for Divine Guidance, to exercise mutual forbearance and, having expressed their views, to refrain from pressing them unduly when the judgement of the meeting obviously inclines to some other view.

If there are serious differences of opinion, perhaps held tenaciously by some who feel sure that their way is the only right one, it is frequently possible to find unity by recourse to a period of silent prayer.

Friends should endeavor humbly and reverently to conduct their meetings in the peaceable spirit and wisdom of Jesus, with dignity, forbearance and love of one another.

This general method of procedure has been satisfactorily followed by the Society of Friends since its organization and has its basis in the deep-seated conviction that men and women should come to decisions in the Spirit of Unity.

*- Chena Ridge Friends Meeting,
Discussion Paper on Business
Meeting,
largely drawn from Philadelphia
Yearly Meeting, Faith and Practice*

Queries for Business

1. Are all your meetings for worship and business regularly held?
2. What new Meetings have been established? Have any Meetings been merged or discontinued?
3.
 - a) Has the recorder kept a complete record of births, marriages, divorces, deaths and other changes in the membership list?
 - b) Does the recorder keep a list of nonmembers married to members, and of their children?
 - c) Has the recorder's list been checked by the Committee of Overseers during the past year?
 - d) Has the recorder reported to the Monthly Meeting during the past year?
 - e) Does the Committee of Overseers keep a list of attenders who are not members?
4. As to the records of the Meeting:
 - a) Are the records neatly and accurately kept?
 - b) Are the records up to date and duly signed?
 - c) Where does the Meeting keep those now in use?
 - d) Where are the record books that were formerly used?
5.
 - a) When members reside at such a distance that they cannot attend their own Meeting, as in the case of students, does the Committee of Overseers inform Meetings near which such members live?
 - b) Are such members encouraged to transfer their membership to Meetings near which they reside, when it is appropriate to do so?
 - c) Does the Meeting invite members of other Meetings residing in its neighborhood to join its membership?.
6.
 - a) Have Queries, together with appropriate passages from *Faith and Practice*, been read and considered?
 - b) Have the Advices been read as recommended?
7.
 - a) Has the Meeting placed its trust funds in the hands of a permanent corporate trustee, such as the Fiduciary Corporation of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends, for safekeeping and investment? Are exact accounts of all such trust funds kept by the Meeting or its trustee, and does the Meeting keep accounts of the application of the income from its trust funds as well as accounts of all other Meeting funds? Are all accounts duly audited by the Meeting or its trustee and the securities examined?
 - b) Has the Meeting, if not itself incorporated, made provision for holding title to its real estate by a permanent corporate trustee, such as the Fiduciary Corporation? If not, does the Meeting provide, from time to time when appropriate, for the appointment of new individual trustees to succeed those who may have become aged or infirm and for the conveyance of title by the surviving former trustees to the succeeding trustees so as to prevent a lapse in the title?
 - c) Does the Meeting carry adequate fire insurance with extended coverage and public liability insurance? Are the insurance policies regularly and frequently reviewed?
 - d) If the Meeting is itself incorporated under state law, has it adopted and maintained appropriate corporate bylaws and in other respects complied with the requirements of the state law necessary to maintain its corporate existence?
8. Does the Meeting keep in good condition the premises and burial grounds under its care?

- *Philadelphia Yearly Meeting,*
Faith and Practice, 1976
Supplemental Queries

SELECTING THE MEETING'S OFFICERS

To assist in maintaining the Meeting and in carrying out its concerns, the Meeting selects officers and standing committees. The procedure for this activity should be approved by the Meeting for Business, clearly stated in writing, and available to all who participate in the Meeting.

OFFICERS OF THE MEETING

Clerk - The clerk presides at the Meeting for Business and carries out its instruction on all matters pertaining to the accomplishment of its business. The Clerk serves for a two year term.

Recording Clerk - The recording clerk keeps accurate minutes of Meeting for Business and makes them available to the Meeting. From time to time, he or she may also conduct correspondence for the Meeting. The Recording Clerk serves for a two year term.

Treasurer - The treasurer is responsible for maintaining and disbursing the Meeting's funds; he or she also reports regularly to the Meeting. The Treasurer is a member of the Finance Committee, and may be its chair. The Treasurer serves for a two year term.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Committee on Ministry and Oversight - This committee is responsible for assisting the Meeting in the conduct of both its spiritual and organizational activities. It has five members chosen from the Meeting; the Clerk serves as a sixth *ex-officio* member. The Meeting selects a Chair for this Committee who is not Clerk of the Meeting. Committee members serve for two years, but their terms are staggered so that the entire committee's membership does not change in any given year.

Education Committee - This committee is responsible for assisting in the educational activities of the Meeting, in particular organizing the adult discussion group and assuring that someone is available for child care during meeting. It consists of four members, one of whom is the chair. A term of office is two years.

Finance Committee - This committee is responsible for assisting in the financial arrangements of the Meeting, in particular composing a budget and raising necessary funds. It consists of four members, including the treasurer who may be the chair. A term of office is two years.

In the future, the Meeting may also wish to organize a Committee on Social Concerns.

TERMS OF OFFICE

Officers need to know when their responsibility will begin and end. No one should be saddled with a job indefinitely. Terms of office will begin and end in July following Yearly Meeting. Normally, a person will serve a two year term, although the Meeting recognizes that individual circumstances may affect this matter. In general, a person will not serve more than two, 2 year terms in a given position. However, this limit is a preference not a mandate.

THE PROCESS OF SELECTING OFFICERS

In March or April of each year, the Meeting for Business, on the advice of Ministry and Oversight, selects a Nominating Committee consisting of four active Meeting participants. This Committee should include both men and women and represent a broad range of age and experience within the Meeting. The Nominating Committee consults with present office holders, the Ministry and Oversight Committee, and participants in the meeting to produce a slate of officers and committee members for the coming year. The slate is presented to Meeting for Business in May for discussion, amendment if necessary, and approval.

“Since Friends believe that God reveals His presence and gives guidance to all who seek Him, it behooves them in their meetings to bear with attentive and open minds the messages and views of other members present. This is applicable no less in meetings for business than in meetings for worship.

It is earnestly recommended that as Friends conduct the affairs of their Society they bear In mind always that this is the Lord’s work. They should endeavor humbly and reverently to conduct their meetings in the wisdom and peaceable spirit of Jesus - - with dignity, forbearance, honesty, and love.”

- Philadelphia Faith and Practice

- *Chena Ridge Friends Meeting,*
approved 5/6/84

Testimonies: Membership

This was the way that Friends used with me, when I was convinced of truth, they came oftentimes to visit me; and sat and waited upon the Lord in silence with me; and as the Lord opened our understandings and mouths, so we had very sweet and comfortable seasons together. They did not ask me questions about this or that other creed, or about this or that other controversie in religion but they waited to feel that living Power to quicken me, which raised up Jesus from the dead. And it pleased God so in his wisdom to direct, that all the great truths of the Christian religion was occasionally spoken to. Now this was Friends way with me, a way far beyond all rules or methods established by the wisdom of this world, which is foolishness with God: And this is their way with others that are convinced of the truth.

- Richard Claridge, circa 1697

MEMBERSHIP PROCEDURE OF CHENA RIDGE FRIENDS MEETING:

Introduction:

‘George Fox and his early followers,’ wrote Rufus Jones, ‘went forth with unbounded faith and enthusiasm to discover in all lands those who were true fellow—members with them in this great household of God, and who were the hidden seed of God.’ Our Society arose from a series of mutual discoveries of men and women who found that they were making the same joyous spiritual pilgrimage. This is still our experience today. Even at times of great difference of opinion, we have a sense of living unity, because we have recognized one another as followers of the Inner Christ

Membership in the Religious Society of Friends is both a privilege and a responsibility. Membership implies a readiness and desire to join in the common effort of the Society to search for and follow the Inner Light, ‘the Spirit of Christ by which we are guided.’ A member is expected, so far as able, to attend meetings for worship and business regularly, serve in offices and on committees as way opens, share in financial responsibilities, and be faithful in all actions to the Inner Light.

For Friends in this meeting, waiting for the Sense of the Divine Presence has proved the most satisfactory way of worship. From this may come revelations of the love and guiding will of God, revelations inwardly experienced that may be shared in words with others present and may lead to expression in attitude and deed.

Membership, therefore, we see primarily in terms of discipleship, and so impose no clear-cut tests of doctrine or outward observance. Friends do not accept a creed as a test of membership because, to them, no creedal statement can be adequate in describing an infinite God. Nevertheless, those wishing to join the Society should realize its Christian basis.

The Society of Friends desires to admit into its membership all persons who find that its faith and practices meet their religious needs. The receiving of members is the responsibility of the Monthly Meeting. In practice, this means that the applicant should come to know and to feel in unity with the aspirations and ways of a particular Meeting, and be prepared to share with other members in the responsibilities, difficulties, and joys of its fellowship. Membership in a Monthly Meeting includes membership in the Yearly Meeting of which the Monthly Meeting is a part, and in the Religious Society of Friends.

Our fellowship with all seekers, and our relationship to a particular Meeting, should not cause us to overlook our identity as Friends. Since, membership in a monthly Meeting is also a membership in the Religious Society of Friends, it is the duty of the Meeting to consider the applicant in light of the practices of the Society as a whole, as well as those of the Monthly Meeting. The process of considering an applicant for membership provides a Meeting with an invaluable opportunity to examine its own relationship with the Society of Friends, of which the Meeting, as a Meeting, and the members, as individuals, are a part.

Religious experience is profoundly important to Friends, but Friends are aware that religious truth comes to different persons in somewhat different ways and that seekers find themselves in various stages of growth in their experience of the divine. An open mind and heart and an earnest desire for ever increasing Light is of chief concern. Membership implies acceptance of responsibility and a sense of commitment. It implies a willingness to be used by God, however imperfect we may feel ourselves to be as his messengers. While readiness for membership implies a degree of religious insight, it does not assume attainment of perfection or an end to development. No one should hesitate, from a sense of unworthiness, to apply for membership. Participation in the life of the Meeting should bring about further religious growth. One who is able to help the Meeting's life and to be helped by it is likely to be qualified to be a member.

MEMBERS AND ATTENDERS

The Society of Friends values the attendance and participation in its meetings of persons drawn to Friends whether or not they are members of the Society. At the same time, the Society welcomes and encourages concerned persons to consider the increased opportunities for development of their religious lives which may come about through membership.

If they are willing, attenders should be included as such in the Meeting's list of names and addresses. They may be asked to serve the needs of the Meeting in all ways suitable to their qualifications other than as officers, or as chairpersons of most committees, or as members of the committees on Ministry and Oversight, and Nominations. The Committee on Ministry and Oversight should be aware of the increasing interest and participation of an attender in the Meeting's activities and when appropriate initiate discussion of membership.

Members have an obligation to attend and take part in business meetings. Attenders are also welcome. Responsibility for decisions, however, remains with the members of a Meeting. In general, ability and willingness to take ones appropriate share of responsibility for matters under discussion and for the life of the Meeting as a whole give weight to a person's participation in the deliberations of a Meeting for Business.

ADMISSION TO MEMBERSHIP (Adult)

All decisions concerning membership shall be made in a session of the Monthly Meeting.

A person who is considering joining the Society of Friends should, through consistent attendance and study, come to have a sympathetic understanding of its faith, its way of worship, its manner of conducting business and the responsibilities of membership. One should become familiar with Faith and Practice and other literature which can provide information on the history, principles, and testimonies of the Religious Society of Friends. When ready, the applicant informs the Meeting of the desire to become a member. This is usually done in a letter addressed to the clerk of the Monthly Meeting, stating why the applicant feels drawn into the fellowship of the Religious Society of Friends and indicating the extent of sympathy with Friends' principles and testimonies. The letter should be promptly acknowledged on behalf of the Meeting and given promptly to the Committee on Ministry and Oversight for consideration. The letter should be read to the Monthly Meeting, either at the first business meeting following its receipt, or at the time the Committee on Ministry and Oversight reports on the application. The Committee on Ministry and Oversight should appoint an appropriate committee to visit and counsel the applicant as many times as seems desirable. The visit should be undertaken as a serious responsibility to the Meeting and to the applicant. The emphasis should be on making sure that applicants understand that they are entering a Christian fellowship with responsibilities as well as privileges; that they desire to enter heartily into its worship and work, to take part in its service through its committees and in other ways, and to assume a just share of its financial support. Above all, they should believe that their own spiritual development will be aided by membership in the Meeting.

When the members of the visiting committee and the members of the Committee on Ministry and Oversight are convinced of the applicant's sincerity in religious aspirations and understanding of the principles of Friends, and readiness to seek to live by them, the committee on Ministry and Oversight should report its recommendation to the Monthly Meeting. The Monthly Meeting should hear this report but defer final action on the application until the next business meeting, when it should be acted upon. Upon approval of the application, the Meeting will record its acceptance and appoint a committee to welcome the new member promptly and warmly into its fellowship.

If an obstruction appears, the Committee on Ministry and Oversight should so report to the Monthly Meeting for its consideration. If the Monthly Meeting concurs, the Committee on Ministry and Oversight should endeavor to keep in sympathetic touch with the applicant, explaining the reason for the hesitation and seeking to help to remove it. In such a case, the members of the Committee on Ministry and Oversight should be particularly careful to encourage reconsideration of the decision as soon as they judge it to be appropriate.

Under exceptional circumstances the Monthly Meeting may, at its discretion, accept the applicant into membership without waiting a month.

In the case of a person whose residence is remote from Meetings of Friends and who, being convinced of our principles, is desirous of being received into membership, the Monthly Meeting to which application is made may act upon it in the same manner as if the residence of the applicant were nearby. When a personal interview is not feasible, the Monthly Meeting may communicate with the individual in some other way.

In joining the Religious Society of Friends, a member is expected to relinquish membership in other religious communions. One should obtain, if possible, a letter from such a body. A member will retain membership in another religious body, or a Friend will establish such membership, only when that member and the Committee on Ministry and Oversight are satisfied that it is in keeping with the member being a Friend.

Marriage

A marriage, according to the custom of the Religious Society of Friends, takes place during the course of a Meeting for Worship. After an appropriate period of meditation, the couple will rise and repeat to each other and to their assembled friends, their declaration of marriage.

The Meeting will then settle into another period of worship, in which Friends wait in silence for divine inspiration. During this time, anyone who feels moved to speak may do so.

Finally, the certificate of marriage will be read, and the bride and groom will each sign it. At the rise of the Meeting, all present will sign the certificate.

Although there is no officiating clergyman, it is the purpose of the ceremony that all who are present will have a real and direct part in uniting the couple in marriage.

Fox gave forth a paper on marriages as early as 1653. According to the abstract in his Journal, under the date 1667, he advised Friends to lay their intentions “. . . before the faithful in time, before anything were concluded, and afterward publish it in the end of a meeting, or in a market, as they were moved thereto. And when all things were found clear, they being free from all others and their relations satisfied, then they might appoint a meeting on purpose for the taking of each other in the presence of at least twelve faithful witnesses.” A thoroughly regular system was, however, only gradually established. Full publicity and a solemn act of contract were secured by the procedure adopted by Friends, though it was not, as we have seen, in strict conformity with the law. . . . In Fox’s view the right joining in marriage was the work of the Lord only, and could not be done by priest or magistrate; it was the Lord’s work, and those who were present were only there as witnesses. But after the marriage a Friend might carry a copy of the certificate to the magistrate if he desired to do so.

- *William Braithwaite, 1921*

CENTRAL ALASKA FRIENDS CONFERENCE

Marriage Procedure

Friends have always regarded marriage as a step of grave importance and religious significance, believing that the marriage relationship should be entered into under Divine guidance in a spirit of reverence and love. "...For the right of Joining in Marriage is the work of the Lord only, and not the Priests or Magistrates; for it is God's Ordinance, and not Man's: And therefore Friends cannot consent that they should Join them together: For we marry none, it's the Lord's Work, and we are but witnesses..."

- George Fox, Epistle 264, 1669

Friends have provided a form of ceremony in keeping with the deep religious significance of marriage. Important features are: undue haste; the emphasis on the equality of the sexes; the responsibility assumed by the monthly meeting; the statements of the marriage vows by the couple; the attention given to religious and moral qualifications, keeping in mind that married love includes care, responsibility, respect and knowledge.

The wedding itself is a meeting for worship, held after the manner of Friends, within which the marriage takes place. The bridal couple enters the meeting and takes their places at the front of the room. In giving themselves to each other, they eliminate the custom of the bride being given away by her father. No third person pronounces them husband and wife, because Friends believe that God alone can create such a union and give it significance. Neither a bridal party nor an exchange of rings is necessary Friends' procedure; however, these last two forms may be used if desired.

In an atmosphere of quiet and reverence during the period of worship the couple rises. Taking each other by the hand, they make their promises one to another, each in turn. The traditional promises are still often used, although the Meeting and the couple may choose different words. The traditional promise is: In the presence of God and these our friends, I take thee...to be my wife (husband), promising with Divine assistance to be unto thee a loving and faithful husband (wife) so long as we both shall live.

When the couple is seated again, the meeting continues in silent waiting upon God while those assembled share in the worship through prayer and meditation or through spoken messages. Either at the close of the meeting or immediately after the couple exchanges their promises, someone who has previously been asked to do so reads the certificate aloud. The marriage certificate is brought for the couple to sign, each party signing the name to be used hence forth. This is done with dignity and care in order to contribute to the atmosphere of worship.

It is usual for the bride and groom to close meeting (or the couple may designate persons to do this for them). Those present are asked to sign the certificate as witnesses to the marriage. A copy of the certificate is made for the records of the Meeting in whose care the marriage has taken place, and the legal requirements are completed by the Arrangements committee

Care of A Marriage

Care of a marriage is a responsibility of the Meeting. There is a division of function which requires two distinct committees. These are described in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice. First is the Committee on Clearness, called the Marriage Committee, second, the Committee on Oversight, called the Arrangements Committee for the purposes of the wedding. In a small Meeting it may be that some of the same people will serve on both committees, but this should not confuse understanding of the distinct functions. The Committee on Clearness is chosen from among the Overseers of the Meeting or by them, always and in any case from among those of the Meeting most skilled and sensitive in counseling. The appointment of the second committee may take into account friendship with and the preferences of the couple. This committee, in addition to helping plan the wedding, has the duty of seeing that legal requirements are met by the couple and the Meeting.

The process is initiated by a letter from the couple to the Meeting stating their intention to marry and asking that the ceremony take place under care of Meeting. A Meeting's responsibility for the care of a marriage does not end when the wedding is completed. A Quaker wedding is a declaration of the union of two individuals, but it is also an implicit agreement between the Meeting and the couple to support 'each other in love and care. The Meeting's responsibility lies with its Overseers, although the original Committee on clearness often carries out this responsibility at least as long as the committee members and the couple remains in the same Meeting.

For the Marriage Committee

Experience indicates that the Committee on Marriage should be made up of no more than two couples. They should consult before hand and should hold the interviews in a place appropriate for serious and confidential inquiry. The homes of the couple might not be used if the presence of family would tend to turn the occasion into a social one. Interviews of one member of the committee with the bride alone and another with the groom alone should follow the initial interview. The committee should see that the couple is given a copy of this Practice and provided with a Pacific Yearly Meeting (or Philadelphia) Faith and Practice so that they may understand the steps involved, and have a basis from which to question the committee. The committee should be aware of the best books on marriage and be prepared to recommend or give one or more.

The subjects to have in mind are the interpersonal, the physical, legal, economic, ethical and religious aspects of marriage, relations to family and to prior commitments, as well as the hopes the couple have for their marriage. Marriage as a binding relationship based on spiritual and sexual love asks of the partners that they be committed to share a mutual trust, that

facing each other as equals they share responsibility for a home and for the children that may come to it, for work and recreation, and for seeing that each finds the opportunity for religious growth and the fulfillment that comes from giving to the larger society in which we live. Such an undertaking calls for all the maturity a couple can possibly possess. As those who have been long married know well, a couple does not arrive at the depths of cherishing love and mutual trust through all difficulties without Divine assistance. As Quakers we put our trust in the Divine assistance when we marry.

The Marriage Committee should discuss the promises that the couple expects to repeat. The promises should be decided on early, since they appear on the wedding certificate and are witnessed to by all present. If the traditional Quaker promises are not used, the committee should consider with care what the couple intends to say. It should ask how the couple understands the terms 'in the presence of God,' 'promising,' 'loving and faithful,' 'as long as we both shall live,' and 'with Divine assistance' contained in the traditional promises. If the committee has serious reservations about the nature of the couple's commitment, the Meeting may not wish to oversee the marriage.

If it is appropriate the committee should also talk with the families of the couple. The attitude and feelings of the families are important, and it may be that they have questions or reservations which should be brought out and which would help toward insight. The family itself may be in need of being understood, and the Committee should know its members and their states of mind. In the event one of the families is not familiar with Friends beliefs and ways the committee should be sure an adequate explanation is given.

Having done all this the committee will be prepared to recommend to the Meeting on its proceeding with the marriage.

For the Arrangements Committee

There is a special mutuality in a marriage in a Quaker Meeting for Worship which should be kept in mind. Though the committee is charged with the care, all who come are not only witnesses but are also meeting with the Couple in worship.

Quaker simplicity, of course, is in everyone's mind, but we have to be careful not to confuse this with rigidity. A spirit of love and a sense of reality will tell us what is simple and what is ostentatious. When Rufus Jones married Elizabeth Cadbury in Philadelphia in 1902, she wore white satin with a white ribbon in her hair instead of a veil and had three bridesmaids and four "aides." Friends may differ on some or all of this. Sensitivity is the guide, especially sensitivity to the couple's feelings.

The Arrangements Committee may recommend that the wording of invitations makes clear that the marriage takes place in a meeting for worship. The couple with the Arrangements Committee may wish to have a marriage certificate especially prepared. Certificates are also available from Philadelphia, and the Meeting might have one on hand should the need arise. Many Quaker marriage certificates (not to be confused with the legal certificate or license) have been handed down from generation to generation and have proven to be valuable historical records.

If non Friends are to be present at the marriage, it would be well to ask a member of the committee to speak briefly when the meeting has settled on the meaning of Friends' silent worship and the nature of Friends' wedding.

The Meeting waits in silence until the couple feels moved to make their promises to each other. The promises should be clear and audible, since signatures on the certificate testify that these persons are witnesses to those promises having been made.

In the worship following the exchange of promises by the couple, messages are appropriate. The families, as well as the couple, will be happy for words of love and care and hope for the future. All need the expression of the special sense of being a family of God meeting and living in his presence. Some meetings use the reading and signing of the certificate to close meeting. Whether it is read and signed immediately after the exchange of promises or at the close of the meeting, or at some other point in the meeting depends on the feelings of the couple and the Meeting.

The Arrangements Committee should offer the hospitality of the Meeting for a reception if the couple desires.

Legal Requirements

The couple applies together at the local magistrate's office or state courthouse for a marriage license. Each takes along a piece of identification which shows a photograph and age. If either of the couple is under 18, that person must also supply written consent from both parents (forms available from the magistrate) and proof of legal custody.

There is a four day waiting period for the license from the time of application. Once issued, it is good for 90 days. At the time the license is picked up, if not earlier, the couple must provide the results from blood tests performed by physician, hospital or clinic within the previous 30 days. Normally the couple will want to allow at least four days from the time of the test for the results to come back from the laboratory.

Marriage Certificate

Certificates may be ordered from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1515 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102, or you may have a calligrapher draw up the entire certificate for you.

- adopted seventh month, 1980

Wedding Certificate

Whereas (husband) _____ of Fairbanks, Alaska, son of _____
and _____, and (wife) _____ daughter of _____ and
_____, having declared their intention of marriage after the manner of
Friends.

Now these are to certify that on the ____ day of _____, 19 ____, the aforesaid
(husband) and (wife) appeared at a meeting of their families and Friends, held at
Fairbanks, Alaska and (husband) taking her, (wife) by the hand did declare her to be his
wife, promising to be unto her a loving and faithful husband; and she (wife) did in the
same assembly, declare that she took him (husband) to be her husband, promising to be
unto him a loving and faithful wife.

And in further confirmation thereof, the said (husband) and (wife) (she, adopting the
surname of her husband) did there and to these present set their hands.

And we, having been present at the solemnization of the said marriage, did, as Witnesses,
thereto set our hands -

DRAFT ; CHENA RIDGE FRIENDS MEETING

Notes on Marriage

Although the "Marriage Procedure" of Central Alaska Friends conference and Faith and Practice of Pacific and Philadelphia Yearly Meetings provide much helpful guidance, we find that we need some additional clarification of marriage procedures for our Meeting. These notes are meant to be a guide only, based on past and current experience. They should be updated periodically as the meeting encounters new situations and achieves greater clearness on matters related to marriage.

When a couple wants to be married within the Meeting, they address a letter to the Meeting through its Clerk, requesting such a marriage. The couple should take this step at least three months, and preferably longer, before the proposed wedding date. Quaker marriage involves much more than just the ceremony itself. If the couple is to have the benefit of interaction with their Clearness Committee, and if the Clearness Committee is to complete their tasks, sufficient time is very important. Although individual circumstances may differ, the meeting may choose to decline otherwise worthy requests for marriage if adequate time is not available for the marriage procedure.

Once meeting for Business agrees to consider the request for marriage, the Committee on Ministry and Oversight appoints a Clearness committee for the couple. Central Alaska Friends suggest that this committee be made up of no more than two couples. Since couples may not always be available to serve, we feel only that a Clearness Committee, which will usually have three or four members, should be made up of both men and women. We also feel that the Committee should include both people who know the couple well and those who don't, as well as Friends of different ages and life experiences. Friends who would like to serve on a particular Clearness Committee are welcome to indicate their interest. Similarly, the couple may indicate to the Clerk or Overseers the names of Friends whom they would like to have on their Clearness Committee. However, the final decision on the Clearness Committee's membership rests with the Committee on Ministry and Oversight and those Friends whom they ask to serve.

In most cases, the Clearness Committee will meet with the couple at least three times, once with each person individually and once with the couple together. Additional meetings between the couple and the Committee may take place if they are desirable or necessary. After meeting with the couple, the Clearness Committee reports back to the Committee on Ministry and Oversight with a recommendation as to whether the Marriage should proceed. The Committee on Ministry and Oversight then makes a recommendation to the full Meeting at the next Meeting for Business. If there is a need to discuss the recommendation of the Clearness Committee, it is generally more appropriate within the smaller Committee on Ministry and Oversight than in the full Meeting for Business. Respect for the couple's privacy should be a major concern of the Meeting and its Committees in discussing a request for marriage.

There are two ways in which a couple may be married in Meeting: (1) After the manner of Friends, or (2) Under the care of the Meeting. Both ways involve basically the same procedure. Most members or regular attenders of the Meeting will be married "Under the care of the Meeting." But others who find themselves in sympathy with the Friends and their marriage procedure may request to be married "after the manner of Friends." The primary distinction between the two ways of being married in the Meeting is the degree of commitment that the Meeting makes to the couple.

Regardless of the way in which a couple is married, there is a personal commitment to those involved. Members of a couple's Clearness Committee often feel this commitment most strongly. However, when a couple is married "under the care of the meeting," the Meeting has a special commitment to support and aid those who are or intend to become an integral part of the Meeting.

LAWS AFFECTING QUAKER WEDDINGS :IN ALASKA (as of 1973)

ARTICLE 7. SOLEMNIZATION.

Section 25.05.261. Who may solemnize. (a) (Marriages may be solemnized (3) before or in any religious organization or congregation according to the established ritual or form commonly practiced therein.

Section 25.05.271. Duty of officiating person before ceremony. The officiating person shall satisfy himself that the parties presenting themselves to be married by him are the parties named in the license. If he knows of a legal impediment to the marriage, he shall not perform the ceremony.

Section 25.05.301. Form of solemnization. In the solemnization of marriage no particular form is required except that the parties shall assent or declare in the presence of each other and the person solemnizing the marriage and in the presence of at least two competent witnesses that they take each other to be husband and wife... At the time of the ceremony the person solemnizing the marriage shall complete the certification on the original marriage certificate, and he and the two attending witnesses shall sign the original marriage certificate and the necessary copies.

The license is retained by the person solemnizing the marriage. The certificate must contain, as a minimum, the information required on the form used by the state bureau, but it may be in any form.

Testimonies: Family

There is a pure principle of life in the heart, from whence all good springs. This thou art to mind in thyself; and this thou art to wait on the Lord to be taught and enabled by him to reach to in thy children. Mind therefore its leadings in thy heart and wait to be acquainted with its voice there.

And when thy children ask thee any questions of this nature, 'What God is? where he dwells? or whether he sees them in the dark?'—do not reject it; but wait to feel somewhat of God raised in thee which is able to judge whether the question be put forth in sensibility or in vanity; and which can give thee an advantage of stirring the good, and reaching to that which is to be raised both in young and old, to live to the praise of him who raiseth it.

As for praying, they will not need to be taught that outwardly; but if a true sense be kindled in them, though ever so young, from that sense will arise breathings to Him that begat it, suitable to their state; which will cause growth and increase of that sense and life in them.

Isaac Pennington, 1665

And as to thy children, daily feel the need of instruction from the Almighty, to govern and direct them, and wait daily to receive it from him; and what thou receivest, give forth in fear, and wait for his carrying it home and working it upon their hearts. For he is a Father, and hath tenderness, and gives true wisdom to every condition of his people that wait upon him; so as he may be known to all daily, and they able to be nothing without him.

Breathe unto the Lord, that thy heart may be single, thy judgment set straight by his principle of life in thee, and thy children guided to, and brought up in the sense of the same principle. As for praying, they will not need to be taught that outwardly; but if a true sense be kindled in them, though never so young, from that sense will arise breathing to him that begat it, suitable to their state; which will cause growth and increase of that sense and life in them,

Isaac Pennington, 1665

Do we feel an affectionate regard to posterity, and are we employed to promote their happiness? Do our minds, in things outward, look beyond our own dissolution? And are we contriving for the prosperity of our children after us? Let us then, like wise builders, lay the foundation deep, and by our constant uniform regard to an inward piety and virtue let them see that we really value it. Let us labour in the fear of the Lord, that their innocent minds, while young and tender, may be preserved from corruptions; that as they advance in age they may rightly understand their true interest, may consider the uncertainty of temporal things, and (above all) have their hope and confidence firmly settled in the blessing of that Almighty Being who inhabits eternity and preserves and supports the world.

In all our cares about worldly treasures, let us steadily bear in mind that riches possessed by children who do not truly serve God are likely to prove snares that may more grievously entangle them in that spirit of selfishness and exaltation which stands in opposition to real peace and happiness and renders them enemies to the cross of Christ....

...to comfort them who, through the dispensations of divine Providence, are in strait and painful circumstances in this life, and steadily to endeavour to honour God with our substance from a real sense of the love of Christ influencing our minds thereto, is more likely to bring a blessing to our children, and will afford more satisfaction to a Christian favoured with plenty, than an earnest desire to collect much wealth to leave behind us. For, "Here we have no continuing city..."

- *Pennsylvania and New Jersey
Yearly Meeting, Epistle, 1759*

I have long been convinced that families are the primary agents of social change in any society. It is in this setting that individuals first become aware that the passage of time means growth and change, that tomorrow is never like yesterday. It is in this setting that ones first daydreams about a different future take place.....

the family is not a barrier between us and a better society, but a path to that better society.

The present ambivalence about whether the family is basically a good institution for human beings stands in sharp contrast to earlier idealization of the family. There is a social myth that there was some golden age in the past when families were totally devoted to one another, totally sufficient to each others' needs, with the extended family hovering benignly.....

We do not love one another in families simply because we ought to, or because we have developed competence in loving, though indeed we "ought" to love one another and indeed loving improves with the practice of love. We love one another beyond reason and beyond design, at the far side of hurt and anger, because there is an order of loving in creation of which we are a part. It is this order of loving in creation which the Peaceable Kingdom passage in Isaiah describes.

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them....

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Isaiah 11: 6-9

- *Elise Boulding, 1978
Family as a Way into the Future*

Testimonies: Death

Friends,

Be still and wait in your own conditions, and settled in the Seed of God that doth not change, that in that ye may feel dear Edward Burrough among you in the Seed, in which and by which he begat you to God, with whom he is; and that in the Seed ye may all see and feel him, in which is the unity with him in the life: and so enjoy him in the life that doth not change, but which is invisible,

- *George Fox, 1663*
Upon word of Edwards Borough's
death in prison

THEY THAT LOVE BEYOND THE WORLD cannot be separated by it.
Death cannot kill what never dies.
Nor can spirits ever be divided that love and live in the same Divine Principle, the root and record of their friendship.
If absence be not death, neither is theirs.
Death is but crossing the world, as friends do the seas. They live in one another still.
For they must needs be present that love and live in that which is omnipresent.
In this divine glass they see face to face, and their converse is free as well as pure.
This is the comfort of friends, that though they may be said to die, yet their friendship and society are in the best sense ever present, because immortal.

William Penn, Fruits of Solitude Pt. II
1693

Bear it in mind, my friends. Nothing but the grace of God can cover us in such an hour as this. I have long sought God's counsel and help. Keep humble. Don't do anything to please the pride of the eye. Keep to duty. Don't think it will expose you: it will not. It will bring peace. The blessing of God rest upon you all. Give glory to God in the highest. Oh! that I could proclaim to all the world the sweetness I feel, and the power of the ever-blessed truth, which is more to me now than ten thousand worlds.

My case is a very doubtful one, but life is uncertain at all times. The great object of life is to prepare for death.

Do not give me anything to benumb my faculties. I want my mind clear. I want to lift up my heart to him who alone can help

- *George Howland, 1852*

FRIENDS MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR CAROL KLUMPP

14th Day, Second Month. 1990

Carol attended Chena Ridge Friends Meeting during the later months of her life. Her parents felt that a Friends memorial gathering would be what Carol would have wanted. Unprogrammed Friends (Quakers) do not have a minister or pastor. A memorial service, or any Meeting for Worship, begins as all present settle into the living silence; where Friends believe that that of God, or the Inner Light, within each person, speaks to us. Those who may be less familiar and comfortable with the silence may wish to focus their thoughts on shared experiences with Carol or on their love and caring for the individuals and group gathered here.

If, after settling into the silence, you feel moved to speak, you are welcome to do so (children and adults). Any who think to speak, should do so from the inspiration of our gathering here together with Carol's family, friends, and colleagues, not using a prepared speech or thought, but tempering anything we have brought in the silence. Expressions of thought, humor, verse, or song are all appropriate. However, no one should feel compelled to speak; the silent presence and prayer of all gathered here and our attendance in a loving and sympathetic manner is a tribute to Carol, and a comfort to those who grieve her loss.

If individuals who wish to speak will stand, it helps all to hear the message that is given and to identify who may wish to speak next. Courtesy dictates that some time pass after a message is given. The time following a message can be used in a personal search for the inspiration and leading behind the message.

Each of us can find within our hearts the knowledge that there is no greater thing in the world than pure unselfish love. Death cannot conquer, rather it teaches ever that love is supreme. Good people do not simply die. Their lives are as the tearing of the veil, they show us something of that which is eternal... Their love shall be ours, and we will continue with hope, following the example of the spirit and strength of our great comrade of Galilee. Love bridges death, and Carol lives on in our memories of her gifts and talents, and our sharing today.

- adapted from John Wilhelm Rowtree, 1905

The close of the meeting is determined by the Clerk when it seems appropriate. It is signaled by the Clerk of Meeting standing and shaking hands with a neighbor. All present are encouraged to extend the hand of friendship to those sitting around you; friends and new found friends.

And if we owe it to our beloved dead, we also owe it to our beloved living, not to dwell on their faults and lesser moments. in seeing them whole, we help them become more fully themselves.

Time does restore to us our quiet joy in the spiritual presence of those we love, so that we learn to remember without pain, and to speak without choking up with tears. But all our lives we will be subject to sudden small reminders which will bring all the old loss back overwhelmingly

- Elizabeth Watson, 1979

[For] if here love is greatest in the heart of man, must it not be greatest in God himself? And if greatest in Himself, then let the mystery of His will be never so dark, we may gird ourselves each to his life's work with something more than courage.

- John Wilhem Rowtree, 1905

Testimonies: Sacraments

[There is] no knowing the Scriptures but by the same Holy Ghost that moved the Holy men to give them forth... to know a fellowship with Christ in his death and sufferings is above the fellowship of bread and wine, which will have an end; but the fellowship of the Gospel and the Holy Spirit hath no end.

*George Fox, 1663
Epistle*

As there is one Lord, and one faith, so there is one baptism; which is not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience --...

And this baptism is a pure and spiritual thing, to wit, the baptism of the Spirit and Fire, by which we are buried with him, that being washed and purged from our sins, we may walk in newness of life: of which the baptism of John was a figure, which was commanded for a time, and not to continue for ever. As to the baptism of infants, it is a mere human tradition, for which neither precept nor practice is to be found in all the scripture.

That the one baptism of Christ is not a washing with water, appears from I Pet. iii. 21. *The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.* So plain a definition of baptism is not in all the bible: and therefore, seeing it so plain, it may well be preferred to all the coined definitions of the schoolmen.

*Robert Barclay, 1676
Apology*

The word "sacramental" has been defined as meaning "the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace," and according to Quaker belief, that "outward and visible" sign is a life lived in absolute obedience to God, a revelation of His indwelling Spirit in the heart. This, of course, is an integral part of the Christian faith, the eternal truth behind all symbols and observances. But every section of the Christian Church has some special witness to uphold, and for over three hundred years the Society of Friends has testified to this sacramental Conception of the whole of life.

Elfrida Vipoint Foulds

I believe that the group mysticism of the gathered meeting rests upon the Real Presence of God in our midst. Quakers generally hold to a belief in Real Presence, as firm and solid as the belief of Roman Catholics in the Real Presence in the host, the bread and the wine of the Mass. In the host the Roman Catholic is convinced that the literal, substantial Body of Christ is present. For him the Mass is not a mere symbol, a dramatizing of some figurative relationship of man to God. It rests upon the persuasion that an Existence, a Life, the Body of Christ, is really present and entering into the body of man. Here the Quaker is very near the Roman Catholic. For the Real Presence of the gathered meeting is an existential fact. To use philosophical language, it is an ontological matter, not merely a psychological matter. The bond of union in divine fellowship is existential and real, not figurative. It is the life of God himself, within whose life we live and move and have our being. And the gathered meeting is a special case of holy fellowship of the blessed community.

Thomas Keley, circa 1940
The Gathered Meeting

Testimonies: Family of Friends

Over 300 Young Friends from 34 countries, 57 Yearly Meetings, and 8 Monthly meetings under the care of Friends World Committee for Consultation, met at Guilford College, Greensboro, North Carolina, 19-26 Seventh Month 1985, to envisage the future of the Religious Society of Friends and to see how our lives should speak within that vision.

We have come together from every continent, separated by language, race, culture, ways we worship God, and beliefs about Christ and God. By visiting local Friends Meetings, we tasted the diversity of North Carolina Quakerism and this led us into exploring our worldwide diversity. We have been challenged, shaken up; at times even enraged, intimidated, and offended by these differences in each other. We have grown from this struggle and have felt the Holy Spirit in programmed worship, singing, Bible study, open times of Worship and sharing, and silent waiting upon God.

Our differences are our richness, but also our problem. One of our key differences is the different names we give our Inward Teacher. Some of us name that Teacher Lord; others of us use the names Spirit, Inner Light, Inward Christ, or Jesus Christ. It is important to acknowledge that these names involve more than language; they involve basic differences in our understanding of who God is, and how God enters our lives. We urge Friends to wrestle, as many of us have here, with the conviction and experience of many Friends throughout our history that this Inward Teacher is in fact Christ himself. We have been struck this week, however, with the experience of being forced to recognize this same God at work in others who call that Voice by different names, or who understand differently who that Voice is.

We have often wondered whether there is anything Quakers today can say as one. After much struggle we have discovered that we can proclaim this: there is a living God at the centre of all, who is available to each of us as a Present Teacher at the very heart of our lives. We seek as people of God to be worthy vessels to deliver the Lord's transforming word, to be prophets of joy who know from experience and can testify to the world, as George Fox did, "that the Lord God is at the work in this thick night." Our priority is to be receptive and responsive to the life-giving Word of God, whether it comes through the written Word - - the Scriptures, the Incarnate Word - - Jesus Christ, the Corporate Word - - as discerned by the gathered meeting, or the Inward Word of God in our hearts which is available to each of us who seek the Truth.

This can be made easier if we face the truth within ourselves, embrace the pain, and lay down our differences before God for the Holy Spirit to forgive, thus transforming us into instruments of healing. This priority is not merely an abstract idea, but something we have experienced powerfully at work among us this week.

Our five invited speakers presented vivid pictures of economic, ecological, and military crisis in this world today. We acknowledge that these crises are in fact only a reflection of the great spiritual crisis which underlies them all. Our peace testimony inspires us, yet we move beyond it to challenge our world with the call for justice. We are called to be peacemakers, not protectors.

It is our desire to work cooperatively on unifying these points. The challenges of this time are almost too great to be faced, but we must let our lives mirror what is written on our hearts - - to be so full of God's love that we can do no other than to live out our corporate testimonies to the world of honesty, simplicity, equality, and peace, whatever the consequence.

We pray for both the personal and inner strength as well as the corporate strength of a shared calling/struggle that will empower us to face all the trials that we will necessarily encounter. We have no illusions about the fact that to truly live a Christian life in these cataclysmic times means to live a life of great risk.

We call on Friends to rediscover our own roots in the vision and lives of early Friends whose own transformed lives shook the unjust social and economic structures of their day. They treasured the records of God's encounters with humanity found in the Bible, and above all, the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. And we call upon Friends across the earth to heed the voice of God and let it send us out in truth and power to rise to the immense challenges of our world today.

*- Epistle of the World,
Gathering on Young Friends, 1985*

International Quaker Aid — I had never heard of this committee before. It is meant to provide material assistance to Quaker communities around the world which do not have sufficient resources to meet their own needs. All of the presenters during the evening session which I attended were from Latin America. Some of the projects discussed were a biblical college in Honduras, a training center to teach sewing to women in Mexico, a health center (a complete hospital unit, in actuality) in La Paz, Bolivia, an educational mobile unit for Bolivia, a Guatemalan radio project. In a way it pained me to see Quakers enacting the traditional role of petitioners from less affluent countries making pleas for aid from the affluent North. And yet I came to see, as the conference progressed, that the Latin Americans had something far more valuable to offer us in terms of the depth of their spiritual practice and their closeness to God. It was their witness that touched me the most during this conference.

*- Paddy Lane
Report on FWCC Section of the
Americas Meeting, 3/15/90 – 3/18/90
made to Central Alaska Friends
Conference Spring Quarterly, 1990*

Testimonies: Records

All meetings for business are directed to keep minutes of their proceedings in suitable books, carefully indexed and kept in safe custody. Books no longer in active use should be stored in a central depository approved by the Representative Meeting where they can be protected from damage by fire and where, under proper restrictions, they may be open to examination.

Besides minutes, special record should be kept of: (a) births, deaths, marriages, divorces and other changes in membership: (b) all interments in burial grounds under the care of Meetings: (c) marriage certificates: (d) minutes liberating members for religious service: (e) certificates of transfer: (f) sojourning minutes: (g) conveyances and trusts and changes in the same.

Each Monthly Meeting should appoint a careful and judicious Friend as recorder to preserve in a manner prescribed by the Yearly Meeting all details concerning births, deaths, marriages, divorces and other changes in membership.

*- Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
Faith and Practice, 1976*

Queries

1. Do I extend my search for The Light to all aspects of my life?
2. Do my actions demonstrate my respect for the dignity and worth of every human being as a child of god
3. Am I living my commitments? Does my career and does my recreation reflect them?
4. Do I regularly study the Scriptures and other sources of devotional/inpirational writing and educate myself about Quaker heritage?
5. Do my actions reflect my concern that the ability to manipulate the environment not be used irresponsibly but with reverence for life and with a sense of the splendor of the surroundings?
6. Do I oppose all forms of violence and hostility? Do I actively work at peace-making at all levels in every aspect of my life? When conflicts arise, am I able to deal with them constructively and compassionately?
7. Am I supportive of the principles of simple living and do I attempt to incorporate them into my life?
8. In the setting of my personal priorities, am I willing to allocate time to devote to my most important concerns? Am I able to be supportive of others who work on worthy issues outside of my main concerns?
9. Do I assist my immediate family to encourage and support one another in their continual growth?
10. Do I view my responsibility as a citizen to be an important vehicle for implementing those changes which I cannot accomplish individually and use all positive means for supporting and publicizing that point of view?
11. Do I seek to enrich the Meeting for Worship by my own contributions both silent and vocal?
12. Do we incorporate the values and practice of silent worship into our Monthly Meetings?
13. Is our Meeting receptive to and supportive of visitors?
14. Do I view the Meeting as an extended family in which we all address one another's needs?

*Central Alaska Friends Conference
1980*

Testimonies: Advices

The Advices, should be read at least once during the calendar year, not necessarily all at one time. They may be read at meetings for worship or at whatever other times seem appropriate. They should have a quickening influence in shaping our daily lives. The reading of them should remind us that all aspects of our lives are regarded as under divine guidance. Friends should seek in all relationships to act with the awareness that they are in the sight of God.

* * *

I

Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. Seek to live in affection as true Friends in your Meetings, in your families, in all your dealings with others, and in your relationship with outward society. The power of God is not used to compel us to Truth: therefore, let us renounce for ourselves the power of any person over any other and, compelling no one, seek to lead others to Truth through love. Let us teach by being ourselves teachable,

Keep to the simplicity of Truth. Seek for its manifestations in prayer, in reading matter, in the arts, and in all experiences of daily life. Shun the use of mind-changing drugs and intoxicants, of gambling, and of other detrimental practices that interpose themselves against the Inward Light. It is the experience of Friends that these drugs, intoxicants, and practices lead to a personal willfulness and inability to listen for the will of God. Avoid in daily work those involvements and entanglements that separate us from each other and from God. Keep your recreations from becoming occasions for self-intoxication and avoid those conventional amusements which debase the emotions by playing upon them. These, too, lead to self-absorption and to forgetfulness that each person's humanity is shared by all persons. Live and work in the plainness and simplicity of a true follower of Christ.

* * *

II

Our Religious Society endures as a community of friends who take thought for outward society by first taking care of one another. Friends are advised to maintain love and unity, to avoid tale-bearing and detraction, and to settle differences promptly and in a manner free from resentment and all forms of inward violence. Live affectionately as friends, entering with sympathy into the joys and sorrows of one another's daily lives. Visit one another. Be alert to give help and ready to receive it. Bear the burdens of one another's failings; share the buoyancy of one another's strengths.

Remember that to everyone is given a share of responsibility for the meeting for worship, whether through silence or through the spoken word. Be diligent in attendance at meetings and in inward preparation for them.

Use your capabilities and your possessions not as ends in themselves but as God's gifts entrusted to you. Share them with others: use them with humility, courtesy, and affection. Guard against contentiousness and love of power: be alert to the personalities and the needs of others. Show loving consideration for all creatures, and cherish the beauty and wonder of God's creation. Attend to Pure Wisdom and be teachable.

* * *

III

Friends are reminded that it is the experience and testimony of our Society that there is one teacher, namely Christ, and that in his Spirit there are no distinctions between persons, nor any reason of age, sex, or race that elects some to domination. Live in love and learn from one another. Combativeness in family life, whereby man and wife or parents and children strive to assert a supremacy of will, is not compatible with the conviction that there is that of God in everyone. Amid the growing distempers of social existence, Friends are urged to maintain our witness of Truth, simplicity and nonviolence, and to test our personal lives by them.

The union of man and woman in marriage having a religious basis, any who contemplate it should seek divine guidance and any who enter into marriage should seek this guidance without ceasing. Within the family, adults and youth, whether formally in membership or not, should instruct one another by example in the way of life which our Religious Society has professed, seeking in all things the Inward Light as the only certain alternative to an unfriendly struggle of wills. Friends are advised to maintain closeness in their family life and, avoiding distractions and contentions, to make their homes places of peace.

Accept with serenity the approach of each new stage of life. Welcome the approach of old age, both for oneself and for others, as an opportunity for wisdom, for detachment from turmoils, and for greater attachment to the Light. Make provision for the settlement of all outward affairs while in health, so that others may not be burdened and so that one may be freed to live more fully in the Truth that shall stand against all the entanglements, distractions and confusions of our times.

* * *

IV

Bring the whole of your life under the healing and ordering of the Holy Spirit, remembering that there is no time but this present. Friends are reminded that we are called, as followers of Christ, to help establish the Kingdom of God on earth. In witnessing to the Inward Light, guard against religious intolerance. Strengthen a sense of kinship with everyone and make service, not self-promotion, the chief aim of our outward lives as Friends, as employees or as supervisors, and as citizens.

*- Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
1976, Faith and Practice*

Conclusion

DEARLY BELOVED FRIENDS, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by, but that all with the measure of light which is pure and holy may be guided. and so in the light walking and abiding these may be fulfilled in the Spirit, — not from the letter, for the letter killeth. but the Spirit giveth life.

- Meeting of Elders at Balby, Yorkshire,
1656

APPENDIX – Addresses & Contact Information

(Note: need to retype/fix all info)

NOTE—I have not edited the scan of the appendix 3/20/05

ADDRESSES FOR SOME FRIENDS ORGANIZATIONS

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Cherry Sr. Philadelphia. PA 19832 ‘Tel: 21.5-241-7000

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CANADIAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE—SI
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416-920-5213

COMITE de LOS AMIGOS LATINCMIERICANOS—
Casa de Ion Amigos.

Ignacto Macmeal 1.32. Mexico DF 06030. Mexico ‘Tel:
705.0521 or 0646

EVANGELICAL FRIENDS ALLIANCE—Hoard Harmon.
President. PC Box 190, Newber. OR 97132 ‘Tel:
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EVANGELICAL FRIENDS MISSION—PO Box 671,
Arvada, CO 80001 ‘Tel: 303-421-8*83

FRIENDS ASSOCIATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION—
PC Box 18741. Greenibora NC 27419 ‘Tel: 9)9-852-
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FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL
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FRIENDS EXTENSION CORPORATION—I01 Quaker Hill
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FRIENDS GENERAL CONTERENCE—1216 Arch Si. 2-B.
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FRIENDS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION—Havertrd College
Library, l4averford. Ilk 19041 ‘Tel: 21.5-896-1161

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Richmond, IN 4737 ‘Tel: 317.962-7573

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7250

MISSOURI VALLEY FRIENDS CONFERENCE—
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BRYN MAWR COLLEGE Bryn Mawr, PA 19083(215-
526-5000)

EARLHAM COLLEGE Richmond. IN 47374(317-983-
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Wichita. KS 67213 (316-261-5800)

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97132 Tel: 503.538.7'345

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(or their newsletters. (see pages 2-5)

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FRIENDS JOURNAL 1501 Cherry Sr.. Philadelphia,
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