

# An Introduction to Quakers

## *Silence*

*Is a natural demand  
born of a need for God,  
felt by young and old,  
in all the world's religions.*

*In silence we may worship together,  
sharing our search for life,  
sharing our quest for peace,  
sharing God's gift of love.*

Compiled From:

*Advices and Queries*, Britain Yearly Meeting

*Faith and Practice*, North Pacific Yearly Meeting

**We Hope that this pamphlet provides you with a brief description of Quaker history, beliefs and practices. It is not designed to be exhaustive or complete but provide an introduction.**

**For further study and understanding please feel free to ask a member in attendance or request a copy of North Pacific Yearly Meeting's *Faith and Practice* which offers a more detailed description of what Quakers of this Yearly Meeting believe and how we put those beliefs into practice.**

# Quakers

The Society of Friends began in England in the 1650s. Quakers believe that there is something of God in everybody. They do not have clergy or rituals and their meetings for worship are often held in silence.

## Introduction

### ***Quakers - the Religious Society of Friends***

Quakers are members of a group with Christian roots that began in England in the 1650s.

The formal title of the movement is the Society of Friends or the Religious Society of Friends.

There are about 210,000 Quakers across the world.

### ***The Essence of the Quakers***

Quakers believe that there is something of God in everybody and that each human being is of unique worth. This is why Quakers value all people equally, and oppose anything that may harm or threaten them.

Quakers seek religious truth in inner experience, and place great reliance on conscience as the basis of morality.

They emphasize direct experience of God rather than ritual and ceremony. They believe that priests and rituals are an unnecessary obstruction between the believer and God.

Quakers integrate religion and everyday life. They believe God can be found in the middle of everyday life and human relationships, as much as during a meeting for worship.

### ***What Quakers believe***

Among key Quaker beliefs are:

- God is love
- The light of God is in every single person
- A person who lets their life be guided by that light will achieve a full relationship with God
- Everyone can have a direct, personal relationship with God without involving a priest or minister
- Redemption and the Kingdom of Heaven are to be experienced now, in this world

## ***Quakers want to make this a better world***

Quakers work actively to make this a better world. They are particularly concerned with:

- Human rights, based on their belief in equality of all human beings
- Social justice
- Peace
- Freedom of conscience
- Environmental issues - Quakers seek to live simply so as to reduce the burden on the world
- Community life

## ***Holy Books***

Quakers do not regard any book as being the actual ‘word of God’.

Most Quakers regard the Bible as a very great inspirational book but they don’t see it as the only one, and so they read other books that can guide their lives.

## ***Worship***

Quaker communal worship consists of silent waiting, with participants contributing as the spirit moves them.

## ***Are Quakers Christian?***

Although outsiders usually regard the movement as a Christian denomination, not all Quakers see themselves as Christians; some regard themselves as members of a universal religion that (for historical reasons) has many Christian elements.

Tolerance is part of the Quaker approach to life, so Quakers are willing to learn from all other faiths and churches.

## ***Where the name come from***

One story says that the founder, George Fox, once told a magistrate to tremble (quake) at the name of God and the name ‘Quakers’ stuck.

Other people suggest that the name derives from the physical shaking that sometimes went with Quaker religious experiences.

The name ‘Friends’ comes from Jesus’ remark “You are my friends if you do what I command you” (John 15:14).

# Quaker ideas and beliefs

Beliefs are not just safe ledges in an uncertain reality, but rather handholds from which further heights can be reached.

*Eleven Quaker Scientists, 1989*

Religion is living with God. There is no other kind of religion. Living with a Book, living with or by a Rule, being awfully high-principled are not in themselves religion, although many people think they are and that is all there is to it.

*Bernard Canter 1962*

There is no creed or formal set of beliefs that you have to hold to be a Quaker. This is because:

- Quakers think that adopting a creed is taking on belief at second hand - they think that faith should be more personal than that and based on a person's inner conviction and on taking part in a shared search for the truth with other Quakers.
- Quakers believe that faith is something that is always developing and not something frozen at a particular moment in history that can be captured in a fixed code of belief.
- But it is possible to list many ideas and beliefs that are generally accepted by Quakers.

## ***Distinguishing Quaker ideas***

Quakers believe that there is a direct relationship between God and each believer, every human being contains something of God - this is often called "the light of God". So:

- Quakers regard all human beings as equal and equally worthy of respect
- Quakers accept that all human beings contain goodness and truth
- Quakers do not accept value judgements based on race or gender
- Quakers welcome diversity

A written list of beliefs is considered inappropriate. Quakers feel people should follow their 'inner light' rather than external rules.

They believe that God grows and changes with his creation and believe that God continues to tell human beings what they should do.

They don't believe in sacraments (either as realities or symbols) or formal liturgies or ceremonies and also refuse to take oaths.

Quakers don't believe in a clergy, they feel that all believers can minister to one another. They emphasize the importance leading your own life well as an example to others (what a person does can be much clearer than what they say).

They also practice worship in silence. They are actively involved in social and political issues and believe in pacifism and non-violence.

## ***Beliefs***

- Each person has an inner light (part of God's spirit) inside them - so there is a unity between all human beings
- Spiritual truth can only be known through direct revelation from God
- God continues to "talk" to people today
- Conscience gives a guide to conduct
- The Bible is not regarded as the only guide for conduct and belief
- Doubt and questioning are valuable tools for spiritual growth
- All human beings can have a direct experience of God - they don't need priests to help them
- There is good and evil inside all human beings, and all human beings can choose between them - everyone has the power to choose good over evil if they really want to
- Christ's life demonstrates the full truth of God
- Quakers do not agree on what happens after death. Some believe in an afterlife, some don't

## ***Customs***

Quakers do not follow a creed, they acknowledge that words are not up to the job of precisely defining belief for a whole group of people.

They believe that individuals should take personal responsibility for their understanding of faith rather than just buying a package and that each individual should try to develop themselves spiritually.

Quakers do not separate religious life and secular life and feel that all life should be 'lived in the spirit'.

They also feel that religious belief must influence a believer's actions and everything that happens in life can inspire religious insights.

Quakers do not have elaborate religious ceremonies and rituals. They regard these as unnecessary; they sometimes call them empty forms. They do not have clergy (see section on Pastoral or programmed worship).

Quakers believe that political and other action to improve this world is vitally important.

## ***Quakers and sacraments***

Quakers neither practice baptism nor celebrate the Eucharist.

They don't regard some activities as more sacred than others, nor do they believe that any particular ritual is needed to get in touch with God, so they do not believe in the sacraments practiced in mainstream Christian churches.

Instead of using 'holy' rituals, Quakers attempt to carry the sacred into every part of their lives. So, for example, they say that baptism should not be "a single act of initiation but a continuing growth in the Holy Spirit and a commitment which must be continually renewed."

## ***Life and death***

Quakers have no collective view on what happens after death. They tend to concentrate on making this world better rather than pondering what happens after leaving it.

## ***Quakers and theology***

In the early days Quakers were suspicious of theology... and many Quakers are still not keen on it, believing that experience is a better teacher.

Reasons for disliking theology include:

- Theology distracts people from looking for the 'inner light' and responding to it
- Theological ideas come from the teachings of churches that had distorted the original Christian teachings
- Theological teachings are used to control people
- Theology uses such difficult language that it hides God's truth from ordinary people
- Theological debate may give people a false idea of their own religious abilities; it would be better to spend time believing and living a good life

## **Worship**

### ***Quaker worship***

The Meeting for Worship is the heart of the Monthly Meeting and of the Society of Friends, for worship together is central and fundamental to Friends. Its basis is direct communion with God. The Meeting for Worship is the only Quaker practice which has existed from the beginning of the Society of Friends and which remains essentially the same without having gone through a process of development.

***Faith & Practice, North Pacific Yearly Meeting***

## ***Introduction***

Quaker worship is designed to let God teach and transform the worshippers.

Quakers call worship events meetings for worship rather than services.

In a Quaker meeting for worship a group of people sits in a room in silence for an hour. From time to time someone may speak briefly, but sometimes the entire hour may pass without a word being spoken.

Quaker meetings for worship are open to everyone. Children are specifically welcomed.

## ***No liturgy***

Quakers do without a liturgy because they believe that worship happens when two or three people come together to worship - nothing more is needed.

This belief comes from Jesus' statement that "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).

## ***Meeting for worship***

Quaker meetings for worship take place in *meeting houses*, not churches. These are simple buildings or rooms.

A meeting begins when two or more worshippers come together to be in the presence of God.

They usually sit facing each other in a square or a circle. This helps them to be aware that they are a group together for worship, and puts everybody in a place of equal status.

Everyone waits in shared silence until someone is *moved by the Spirit* (i.e. has a strong religious feeling) to do something as part of their worship.

A person will only speak if they are convinced that they have something that must be shared, and it is rare for a person to speak more than once.

The words spoken are usually brief and may include readings (from the Bible or other books), praying, or speaking from personal experience. Each speaking is followed by a period of silence.

Quakers believe that God speaks through the contributions made at the meeting. Some people say that there is often a feeling that a divine presence has settled over the group.



The words should come from the soul - from the inner light - rather than the mind. Quakers know that even if the words they feel moved to speak have no particular meaning for themselves, they may carry a message from God to other people.

There may be no outward response to the contribution from other people, but if there is it will be something that builds positively on the previous contribution. Discussion and argument are not part of the meeting.

The meeting ends when the attenders shake hands.

If pressed to say what they are actually doing in a meeting for worship, many Quakers would probably say that they are waiting - waiting in their utmost hearts for the touch of something beyond their everyday selves. Some would call it 'listening to the quiet voice of God' - without trying to define the word.

Others would use more abstract terms: just 'listening' (though no voice is heard), or 'looking inward' (though no visions are seen), or 'pure attention' (though nothing specific is attended to). The word 'inward' tends to recur as one gropes for explanations.

**Richard Allen**

## ***Quakers and silence***

The silence in a meeting for worship isn't something that happens between the actual worship - the silence itself is part of the worship; it provides a space for people to separate themselves from the pressures and events of daily life and to get closer to God and each other.

The people who are present try to create an internal silence - a silence inside their head. They do this by stopping everyday thoughts and anxieties.

Quakers believe that if they wait silently for God in this way there will be times when God will speak directly to them.

Be still and cool in thy own mind and spirit from thy own thoughts

**George Fox**

True silence ... is to the spirit what sleep is to the body, nourishment and refreshment.

**William Penn, 1699**

A Quaker service is not a time of individual meditation, although the description above may make it sound like that. It is important that the waiting in silence and the listening are done as a group. The people taking part are trying to become something more

## ***Pastoral or programmed worship***

Some Quakers have adopted many of the practices of mainstream churches, and have pastors and use hymns in their worship. Their services are usually like Methodist or Baptist services.

There is a Quaker hymn book, called *Worship in Song, A Quaker Hymnal*.

## **History**

### ***Quaker history***

Like many Christian groups, Quakers never intended to form a new denomination. Their founder, George Fox, was trying to take belief and believers back to the original and pure form of Christianity.

Fox was born in July 1624 in Leicestershire, England, and died in 1691, by which time his movement had 50,000 followers.

As Fox grew up he was puzzled by the inconsistency between what Christians said they believed and the way they behaved. He became a religious activist at the age of 19, and was imprisoned eight times for preaching views that annoyed the religious and political establishment of his time.

### ***Fox and social issues***

Fox got into political trouble because of his idea that there was something “of God in every person”.

This was a revolutionary attack on all discrimination by social class, wealth, race and gender and it had worrying implications for the social structure of his time.

The political establishment did not take this lying down. Quaker refusal to take oaths and to take off their hats before a magistrate, and their insistence on holding banned religious meetings in public, led to 6,000 Quakers being imprisoned between 1662 and 1670.

### ***Fox and religious issues***

Fox’s aim was to inspire people to hear and obey the voice of God and become a community “renewed up again in God’s image” by living the principles of their faith.

Fox believed that everyone should try to encounter God directly and to experience the Kingdom of Heaven as a present, living reality. He objected to the hierarchical structure and the rituals of the churches of his time, and rejected the idea that the Bible was always right.

But Fox went even further. He argued that God himself did not want churches. Churches were either unnecessary to get to God, or an obstruction (Fox often referred to churches unkindly as “steeple-houses”). Since believers should have a direct relationship with God, no one (priests, for example) and nothing (like sacraments) should come in between.

Not surprisingly, these views infuriated the mainstream churches, and Quakers were persecuted in Britain on a large scale until 1689.

## **USA**

Quaker missionaries arrived in the USA in 1656. They were persecuted at first, and four were executed.

However the movement appealed to many Americans, and it grew in strength, most famously in Pennsylvania which was founded in 1681 by William Penn as a community based on the principles of pacifism and religious tolerance.

## ***Quakers and slavery***

The origins of Christian abolitionism can be traced to the late 17th Century and the Quakers. Several of their founders, including George Fox and Benjamin Lay, encouraged fellow congregants to stop owning slaves.

By 1696, Quakers in Pennsylvania officially declared their opposition to the importation of enslaved Africans into North America. Along with the Anglican Granville Sharp, Quakers established the first recognized anti-slavery movement in Britain in 1787.

## ***Famous Quakers***

George Fox (1624-1691) - founder of Quakerism

William Penn (1621-1670) - friend of George Fox, founder of Pennsylvania

John Woolman (1720-1772) - an American Quaker involved in the abolition of slavery

John Dalton (1766-1844) - British scientist who invented the atomic theory of matter

Edward Pease (1767-1858) - first Quaker member of Parliament

Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845) - British prison reformer

John Bright (1811-1889) - British politician

Joseph Rowntree (1837-1925) - Chocolate manufacturer

George Cadbury (1839-1922) - Chocolate manufacturer

Arthur Eddington (1882-1944) - physicist

Paul Eddington (1927-1995) - actor

James Dean (1931-1955) - actor

Jocelyn Bell Burnell (born 1943) - astronomer, discoverer of pulsars

Bonnie Raitt (born 1949) - popular musician

Tom Robinson (born 1950) - popular musician

## ***Holy days***

Quakers do not celebrate Christian festivals such as Easter and Christmas (although Quaker families may mark Christmas as the secular festival it has largely become).

They believe the events celebrated at such festivals (e.g. the resurrection and the incarnation) should be kept in mind throughout the year.

Although Quaker meetings for worship generally take place on a Sunday, this is purely for convenience and not because Sunday is the Sabbath or a particularly holy day.

## **Ethics**

### ***Quaker ethics***

Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. Trust them as the leadings of God whose Light shows us our darkness and brings us to new life.

***Advices and Queries***

### ***Personal integrity***

Living with integrity presents the daily challenge of keeping our lives congruent with the Light - in essence, living in Truth. Our choices in how we use our time, spend our money, and form relationships are consistent with what we believe. Our conversation in public and private is a seamless whole. On those infrequent occasions when we are required to swear an oath, we can advance the cause of truth by simple affirmation. The greater discipline is to continually exercise care in speech, making statements that convey truth without exaggeration or omission of essential fact.

***Faith & Practice, North Pacific Yearly Meeting***

### ***Work and business***

Quakers avoid working for companies that manufacture weapons or other harmful products (nor will they invest in such companies). They prefer to choose work that has positive benefits for the community.

They maintain strict integrity in business transactions and in workplace dealings with individuals.

## ***Gender issues***

Quakers have always treated men and women as equals, and were pioneers in the movement for female equality.

## ***Animal rights***

Quakers oppose blood sports, and do not approve of businesses that exploit **animals**, such as circuses or zoos, or the fur trade.

They object to experiments on animals for trivial purposes such as cosmetics, and are divided as to whether animal experimentation should be allowed for medical research.

“...as by his breath the flame of life was kindled in all animal and sensitive creatures, to say we love God ... and at the same time exercise cruelty toward the least creature ... was a contradiction in itself.”

***John Woolman, 1772***

## ***Gambling***

Quakers do not gamble.

Alcohol and tobacco are not forbidden

## ***Alcohol and tobacco***

Quakers are not forbidden from using alcohol or tobacco (although these substances are banned from Quaker Meeting Houses), but most Quakers avoid them, or consume them moderately.

Many Quakers took an active role in the Temperance Movement of Victorian times.

## ***Sex***

Quakers are non-judgemental about sex, which they see as a gift of God. Their attention is focused on the way in which it is used in human relationships.

Sexual activity is essentially neither good nor evil; it is a normal biological activity which, like most other human activities, can be indulged in destructively or creatively.

***Towards a Quaker view of sex, 1963***

No relationship can be a right one which makes use of another person through selfish desire.

***Advices, Britain Yearly Meeting 1964***

## ***Homosexuality***

The same thinking applies to the Quaker attitude to homosexuality.

An act which (for example) expresses true affection between two individuals and gives pleasure to them both, does not seem to us to be sinful by reason alone of the fact that it is homosexual.

***Towards a Quaker view of sex, 1963***

Quakers were one of the first churches to talk openly about sexuality. Since we try to live our lives respecting 'that of God' in everyone we would want to treat all people equally. We feel that the quality and depth of feeling between two people is the most important part of a loving relationship, not their gender or sexual orientation.

***Britain Yearly Meeting***

## ***Abortion***

Quakers don't have a united view on abortion but regard it as a matter of individual conscience. Philosophically there is no Quaker doctrine of when a person becomes a person.

## ***Contraception***

Quakers don't have a collective view on the rightness or wrongness of contraception. Many Quakers do use artificial methods of birth control.

## ***Euthanasia***

Quakers don't have a united view on euthanasia. Some Quakers make 'living wills', requesting that if they become ill to the point of being incapable of living without artificial life support systems or inappropriate medical intervention, they be allowed to die naturally and with dignity.

## ***Justice, politics and society***

Quakers are active in politics and in working for justice in the world.

This comes partly from their belief that there is something of God in every human being, and that they should respect the worth and dignity of each person, and partly from following Christ's own example of social activism.

At the centre of Friends' religious experience is the repeatedly and consistently expressed belief in the fundamental equality of all members of the human race. Our common humanity transcends our differences.

***Meeting for Sufferings' Statement of Intent on Racism, 1988***

The duty of the Society of Friends is to be the voice of the oppressed but [also] to be conscious that we ourselves are part of that oppression.

## **Quaker Faith and Practice**

Quakers have played a part in:

- Criminal law reform
- Prison reform - particularly through the work of Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845)
- Reducing poverty
- Ending the slave trade
- Ending the opium trade
- Women's rights
- Anti-racism
- Human rights

and many other campaigns. Quakers are active in many charities.

### **Oaths**

Quakers will not swear oaths in court (or elsewhere) but will only affirm.

### **Pacifism and violence**

Quakers believe that war and conflict are against God's wishes and so they are dedicated to pacifism and non-violence. And from a practical point of view they think that force nearly always creates more problems than it solves.

We utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons, for any end or under any pretence whatsoever, and this is our testimony to the whole world.

**Quaker statement to King Charles II, 1660**

A good end cannot sanctify evil means; nor must we ever do evil, that good may come of it.

**William Penn, 1693**

War, in our view, involves the surrender of the Christian ideal and the denial of human brotherhood.

**London Yearly Meeting, 1916**

Christ demands of us that we adhere, without swerving, to the methods of love, and therefore, if a seeming conflict should arise between the claims of His service and those of the State, it is to Christ that our supreme loyalty must be given, whatever the consequences.

**London Yearly Meeting, 1915**

Many conscientious objectors (those who refuse to join the armed forces) are Quakers, but Quaker pacifism is not simply the refusal to fight: it includes working actively to bring about or preserve peace, by removing the causes of conflict.

Quakers, like other pacifists, are sometimes accused of being willing to give in to evil regimes rather than fight against them. They disagree, and say that they fight by non-violent means.

All forms of non-violent resistance are certainly much better than appeasement, which has come to mean the avoidance of violence by a surrender to injustice at the expense of the sufferings of others and not of one's self, by the giving away of something that is not ours to give.

***Kathleen Lonsdale, 1953***

Quakers are not just opposed to war, but to all forms of violence. George Fox was personally opposed to the use of violence. He refused to defend himself when he was attacked and often, when the violence was over, had kind words or actions for his attackers.

## ***Environment***

Quakers believe that human beings are stewards of the earth, and should care for it to ensure that each generation passes on to the next generation a world as good as or better than it received.

Quakers think that the environmental crisis is a spiritual and religious crisis as well as a practical one.

Quakers say that environmental issues are also a matter of

Quakers believe in protecting the environment © social justice: they acknowledge that those living in Britain or the USA are largely insulated from the effects of environmental problems and that such issues have a much more serious effect on the world's poor.

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

***John Woolman (1720-1772)***

Try to live simply. A simple lifestyle freely chosen is a source of great strength. Do not be persuaded into buying what you do not need or cannot afford. Do you keep yourself informed about the effect your style of living is having on the global economy and environment?

***Advices and Queries***

Richard J Foster set down some principles that Quakers can follow to live simple lives:

- Buy things for their usefulness rather than their status
- Reject anything that is producing an addiction in you
- Develop a habit of giving things away - de-accumulate
- Refuse to be propagandized by the custodians of modern gadgetry
- Learn to enjoy things without owning them



- Develop a deeper appreciation for the creation
- Look with a healthy scepticism at all 'buy now, pay later' schemes
- Obey Jesus' injunction about plain, honest speech
- Reject anything that will breed the oppression of others
- Shun whatever would distract you from your main goal

## Marriage

### ***Quaker marriage***

Quakers strongly believe in the sanctity of marriage but also recognise the value of non-marital relationships and the single life.

Their weddings are very informal compared to those from other traditions and there is no priest or minister to lead the couple as they make their vows.

Quakers believe that no one but God can join a couple in matrimony. They see marriage as more than a legal contract - it is a religious commitment.

“The right joining in marriage is the work of the Lord only, and not the priest's or magistrate's; for it is God's ordinance and not man's...we marry none; it is the Lord's work, and we are but witnesses.”

***George Fox, 1669***

The couple promise to be loving companions and take each other as lifelong partners in a spirit of freedom and equality.

### ***Divorce and remarriage***

Divorced people may be allowed to remarry at the discretion of the members of the monthly meeting.

Quakers believe that those who are divorced need to be given the chance of a new start.

### ***Blessings (Marriage) for same-sex couples***

The Quakers have welcomed same-sex unions for more than two decades, allowing local groups to celebrate same-sex commitments through special acts of worship.

In July 2009, at the Britain Yearly Meeting, Quakers agreed to carry out same-sex marriages on the same basis as marriages for opposite-sex couples.

“...22 years after the prospect was first raised at Meeting for Sufferings we are being led to treat same sex committed relationships in the same way as opposite sex marriages, reaffirming our central insight that marriage is the Lord's work and we are but witnesses. The question of legal recognition by the state is secondary.”

***Minute 25, Britain Yearly Meeting 31 July 2009***

They will also formally ask the government to change the law to allow gay people to marry.

# **Structure and Clergy**

## ***Structure of the Quaker movement***

The Quakers are organized through a series of *meetings*. While there are actual meetings the word is used here to refer to the groups of people who meet to look after particular functions.

The structure is organized at local level (Monthly Meetings, Preparative Meetings, Worship Groups); state levels (Quarterly Meetings) and Multi-state level (Yearly Meeting).

There is no organization that has worldwide authority over the movement.

## ***Meetings for business***

Individual Quaker Meetings carry out matters of business and administration at “Meetings for Worship with a Concern for Business”. The whole of such a meeting, even the most nit-pickingly detailed section, is regarded as worship.

These meetings begin with silence. When the Clerk judges the time is right, he or she summarizes the agenda before the meeting, provides any necessary background information, and lays the first item before the meeting.

People stand up to show they wish to speak, and are called by the Clerk. The traditional formula for raising an issue is to begin “I have a Concern...” When everything is said the meeting agrees a ‘minute’ (a paragraph or two) setting out the decision.

The decision is not based on a majority or a consensus, but on the “sense of the meeting”. Once a minute has been drafted and read out members can suggest modifications.

Meetings try not to take decisions by a majority vote, or even by reaching a consensus; they wait until “the right way will open and we shall be led into unity.”

The Clerk records the decisions and helps those taking part discern the will of God in the meeting, but he/she does not chair or lead the meeting.

## ***Clergy***

Our own experience leads us to affirm that the church can be so ordered that the guidance of the Holy Spirit can be known and followed without the need for a separated clergy.

***London Yearly Meeting, 1986***

*Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come; that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, an to them. Then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone.*

*George Fox, Quaker*

*1624-1691*

### *Friends Worship*

*We are met in a great task when we meet in worship, no less than to realize the Divine Presence and to create an atmosphere in which that Presence and Power can touch us into fuller life.*

*Once we remember this, we cannot but approach the occasion with reverent humility and the desire that nothing on our part may hinder or disturb.*

*It is something holy and wonderful we are trying to build up together the consciousness of the Presence with us here and the reality of communion with God.*

## Welcome

*Who are the builders of, and worshippers at, this meeting house? Are we only a sect of the past or do we really still exist today?*

*We, who have been called Seekers of the Truth, Quakers and Friends, are members of the Religious Society of Friends. Yes, we are a sect, but we do not separate ourselves from the world about us.*

*We believe God is present in every person and that peace is preferable to war. We gather in silent communal worship to await on the Spirit of God. Sometimes It moves us in other ways.*

*We have no formal creed, no ritual, dogma, nor liturgy. Instead, to help us follow Divine guidance we pose, both individually and corporately, searching queries; we strive to trust to love, rather than react to fear; we work towards peace because we believe it is the only way; we are led to implement our concerns for the equal rights of all. Many of us have been drawn to this religion—Quakerism—because of its dual commitment to spiritual awareness and social action.*

*These beliefs are not always easy to hold nor to honor with action, but our search has led us to commit ourselves to them.*

*Perhaps this approach of Friends could be helpful and meaningful to you. We welcome you to accept our invitation to search with us at this or any other meeting house or place. If you wish, please come to join with us for worship. Your children are also welcome either at Meeting for Worship or First Day School.*

## Notes or Questions

