

Introduction

Welcome to the Flagstaff Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. We would like to acquaint you with who we are and with some of our history and beliefs. This publication introduces us, but it is only a beginning. Please feel free to ask us any questions you might have.

Basic beliefs and practices of Friends

When Friends are asked, “What do Quakers believe?” they may hem and haw as they search for an honest answer. Quakers have no written doctrine to which all are expected to adhere. There are, however, generally held beliefs among Quakers; a person who is unable to agree with most of them may not feel completely at home in a group of Friends.

Quakerism began in the seventeenth century with George Fox. Then, as now, the Quaker faith was based on the belief that God’s will is continually and directly revealed to every person who seeks it. For this reason, Quakers are also sometimes called *seekers*. Although it is difficult to describe the will of God in words, Quakers refer to it *as the Light*, and devote their attention to *minding the Light or seeking the Light*. God is also said to *speak to the condition* of those who pay attention.



The majority of this booklet was prepared by the Fort Collins Friends Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. They have expressly waived all rights to their material, but asked that they be referenced appropriately. We have changed their section on the monthly meeting history, added a section on the Testimonies and made additions to the suggested readings. We have changed names of committees, reports and meetings to fit Flagstaff Friends Monthly Meeting. We are grateful for their work and that they have so willingly shared it with us.

Please note: Although we meet for worship every Sunday, we are described as the *Flagstaff Monthly Meeting* because we conduct the business of the Meeting once a month.

George Fox, an Englishman, saw a need to bring religion back to the basic original teachings of Jesus and to re-emphasize the importance of those teachings to each individual. After hearing a voice which said, “There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition,” he began to preach a view of Christianity that cut through ritual, hierarchy, social structure, and the politics of faith. Jesus proclaimed the unmediated presence of God to all persons with no limitations of time or space, doctrine or practice, text or book, power or wealth, family, rank, or status. And this was George Fox’s message, too.

Fox’s fiery teaching “spoke to the condition” of many in mid-seventeenth century England. Soon thousands were calling themselves *Children of the Light*. For Quakers, the belief that there is *that of God* in every person has always been taken seriously. In the heavily stratified society of seventeenth-century England, Quakers held that all people have equal access to God, including children, people of different races, the insane, women, prisoners, the rich and the royal, the poor and the uneducated.

Inner Light

For early Quakers, this belief that all humanity is guided by an *indwelling seed*, the *Inner Light*, or *that of God*, became a joyous burden, because it required radical changes from the thinking of the times. Of course, this belief had to be put into action. From the beginning, women were accorded an equal place in Quaker meetings. Many accepted the challenge, speaking out boldly and taking action to right social wrongs. Some women became traveling ministers. Children could no longer be treated as the mere property of their parents or employers, but had to be seen as individuals who carried a spark of divine spirit. Blacks and the indentured poor could no longer in good conscience be held in bondage. The treatment of people confined in insane asylums and prisons needed to become humane. Royalty, political opponents, and even enemies had to be seen in a new way. Early on, many Quaker men and women were persecuted or even put to death for steadfastly speaking their beliefs.

Because the Light is revealed individually to each seeker, not all

Quakers believe the same things. But there is common ground. One of the basic principles of Quakerism is that beliefs need to be translated into action. As a result, Quakers today are still often found in the front lines of demonstrations. Many write letters to editors and government officials. Friends attend public meetings, serve on committees, volunteer their services, and run for office. Friends have visited czars, kings, presidents, and dictators in an effort to *speak truth to power*. Quakers believe that steadfast attention to the Light brings a strength that can reform the world. This belief in the Inner Light “the presence of God within everyone” leads the majority of Friends to become conscientious objectors to war. While Friends are commonly called pacifists, it is clear from observing determined Quakers in action that the true pacifist is not passive, but constantly working to remove the occasions for war and conflict.

When a Friend feels strongly that a law is unjust and it cannot be changed by lawful means, he or she may decide not only to demonstrate against it but to disobey it. This decision is not made lightly and is usually *sounded out* before the whole Meeting to be sure it is the right thing to do. Such a breaking of the law is not done in secret or with the intent to escape detection or punishment. It is done openly, with a clear statement of intent and with a willingness to suffer the consequences with love and serenity. Sometimes, peacefully breaking laws leads to their change.

Friends do not take oaths. From the beginning, Friends have said, “Let your aye be aye and your nay be nay.” They believe that honesty is a daily habit, and that the taking of an oath implies that one is not ordinarily truthful. Early Friends were jailed, fined, and persecuted for this peculiar practice. Now all legal documents and courts of law allow Friends and other like-minded people to say *I affirm* instead of *I swear*.

Quaker Testimonies

Quakers believe in ongoing revelation of the Light or Truth both for the individual and for the community. Quakers show forth this truth outwardly by the way they live. Friends testify through their lives. Quakers hold testimonies of simplicity, integrity, equality, peace and

community. As their experience changes and as times change, Quaker testimonies, like their understanding of truth itself, are not fixed but fluid.

Worship Experience

Quakers have two very different styles of worship. *Programmed Friends* hold meetings that are nearly indistinguishable from those of many other Protestant denominations, such as Methodists or Presbyterians. They generally have ministers, selected Bible readings, singing, and shared rituals. *Unprogrammed Friends* have virtually none of these. Unprogrammed Friends come together in silence waiting to be moved to speak; any member may speak, but will only do so with urging from deep within. The Flagstaff Monthly Meeting is an unprogrammed meeting.

The visitor to an unprogrammed meeting will notice the simplicity of the chairs facing one another – often in a circle or a square - and the absence of a minister and of formal procedures or ritual objects. All in attendance share in a silent communion with God. Out of this prayerful silence, any person may be moved to speak. According to general practice, other members who feel they need to speak following a message will wait for a while, permitting the previous speaker's words to *season*. Often during this seasoning, the second message will change or even be seen as unnecessary.

Quakers also believe in ongoing revelation of the Light or Truth. As we listen to what has been revealed to others and listened to our own inner voice, we understand that of God in greater depth and scope. Meetings do not guarantee a profound religious experience every time. But a *gathered meeting for worship*, where the group feels as one and clearly in touch with the Light, is a deeply moving event that will not be forgotten.

All the world and all moments are holy to Friends. We do not designate special holy places, nor do we practice sacraments, as some religions do. Friends believe that rituals impose mediators between God and the individual, and that those mediators are human, not divine. We do observe marriages, funerals, and memorial services. The arrival of a new baby or a new member is also noted and

celebrated by the meeting.

Like Meeting for Worship, Meeting for Business is conducted in a spirit of prayerful waiting. Business meetings are held once a month; this is the reason local meetings are called *monthly meetings*. The purview of business meetings includes the spiritual life of the meeting, the religious education of members (both children and adults), decisions about membership, the allocation of resources, including money, to causes supported by the meeting, and so forth. There is a striking difference between a Quaker business meeting and most decision-making groups in our culture. Quaker procedures are not democratic! Instead, all Friends' business is handled by what we call Quaker process.

Quaker Process

Quaker process refers to how we decide what to do on a matter that comes before Meeting for process Business. Quaker process is a decision-making style that resembles reaching consensus, although Friends prefer to view it as “achieving unity in the Spirit.” Unlike voting, which divides a group into those who agree and those who don't, Friends only act on decisions around which unity is reached. Unlike consensus, there is no attempt at compromise or trade-offs.

Quaker process involves group discernment of what the Spirit leads the Meeting to do. This does not necessarily require unanimous agreement, though often unanimity occurs. In some cases a disagreeing individual may *step aside* or *be recorded as standing aside*, sensing that his or her concern is not of sufficient weight to stop the decision (*stand in the way*) or through a sense that the Meeting is being guided by the Inner Light. However, no one who feels that a decision is against God's will should step aside until his or her mind is clear. Clarity should not be achieved through persuasion by others in the Meeting, but through the attention of *all* participants to the Inner Light. The appearance of disagreement in a meeting is most often a signal that a period of silent waiting is needed.

Quaker process centers on group decisions instead of

individuals' points of view. Although all present may be given a chance to be heard, Friends are expected to use self-control and to only speak when led by the Spirit. A Friend should rarely speak twice on the same issue in a single meeting. Friends speak only when they have something new to add to the process, not merely to support others.

No decision can be made until unity is reached. This system may sound cumbersome; sometimes it is, but it works. Often a lone dissenter turns the group toward a final solution that is richer and more satisfying to all than any of the originally proposed alternatives. It becomes clear, after watching Quakers conduct business, that the majority does not always have the truth, nor is it necessarily on the right path.

Clerk and Convener

The member of a Quaker group who has been asked to lead or facilitate business meeting is known as the *clerk*, or the *clerk of the Meeting*. Quaker Meetings also frequently appoint committees to think through issues and to come up with options that they present to the full meeting for consideration and decision-making. The members of the Meeting community generously take on and share committee and other responsibilities with each other. The facilitators of committees and work groups may be called *clerks* or *conveners*.

The individual who becomes the clerk of a committee or a whole meeting is not its leader but its servant, charged with the orderly preservation of the Quaker process. Friends rely on the clerk to sum up and clearly state the *sense of the Meeting* after a period that includes both discussion and quiet attendance on revelation of the Inner Light. When a major item has been considered, this sense of the Meeting may be recorded as a *minute*, or written statement of position, of the Meeting.

Types of Friends

There are several different branches of Friends. Some Friends - mostly representing the programmed tradition - are strongly Christ-

centered and emphasize evangelism. Among unprogrammed Friends there are many who emphasize the role of Christ, as well as a large number who do not hold to the belief that Christ is a unique manifestation of God. Some would argue that these Quakers are not Christian. Nonetheless, the Quaker faith has unmistakable Christian roots and virtually all follow the strong moral teachings of Jesus. Because of our worship in silence, we are free to follow God's leading within each of us regarding all beliefs, including whether Jesus is divine.

People from many other faiths and beliefs have felt and do feel enriched by coming together in the wondrous divine union of Quaker meeting. As a fellowship of seekers, our doors are open to all. Some visitors may come to identify themselves as Quakers who have deep roots in other traditions and may choose to become members of Meeting, selecting the Quaker group as their primary faith community.

In sum, Quakerism is a mystical religion that enriches the lives of those who practice it. It works toward a better world by putting faith into action.

A Brief History of the Religious Society of Friends

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England were a time of social and economic unrest. Religion and politics were closely interwoven; the idea of the separation of church and state was virtually unknown. Religious debates were commonplace. Many people, disillusioned by the hypocrisy and moral laxity of the English clergy, began to question past ideas and practices, looking for new answers. For the first time, the Bible was being printed in English and people could study it directly, instead of depending on specially educated clergymen to interpret it. The movement that produced the Religious Society of Friends arose in this period of religious ferment.

George Fox was born in 1624 in Leicestershire, in the north of England. As a young man he attempted to live a life of purity and love, struggling to find the truth. He could not find what he sought in established religious organizations. After a period of agonized searching, he experienced an inward transformation that helped him

understand that the love and power of God are available to all people without the help of priests, ministers, or sacraments. He wrote,

I saw also that there was an ocean of darkness and death, but an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness. And in that also I saw the infinite love of God.

The best-known words from Fox's *Journal*, however, are those that express the conviction of an immediate and personal relationship with God:

Oh then, I heard a voice which said, "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition". . . . [W]hen I heard it, my heart did leap for joy.

George Fox traveled extensively throughout England, talking to people and holding meetings for worship. Originally, Fox and his followers did not intend to form a new denomination. They believed they were returning to a true, primitive Christianity. They were known as the *Children of Light* or *Friends of Truth* and later simply as *Friends*. The first formal structure was organized in 1652; this is generally considered the birth date of the Society of Friends. From that time, the current system of meeting organization slowly developed, consisting of *monthly meetings; half-yearly, regional, or quarterly meetings; and yearly meetings*.

The primary group is the monthly, or local, meeting. Several monthly meetings in an area may gather together several times a year, as a half-yearly, regional, or quarterly meeting. A larger number of monthly meetings may join as a yearly meeting to share certain responsibilities. The first two yearly meetings were established about 1660, based in New England and in London. There are now many yearly meetings, involving Friends from both the programmed and the unprogrammed traditions.

Women have always been prominent in Quaker organizations. Friends' belief that there is that of God within everyone led them to see that women as well as men might experience the Inner Light through personal experience. In the earliest development of Quakerism, Margaret Fell was one of the outstanding supporters of the movement and her home served as one of its central gathering

places. Other women have participated actively in every era since.

Because early Friends believed in worshipping in their own way, without ministers or sacraments, they faced a great deal of persecution. At first, Friends did not realize the full implications of their teachings and of their belief that every person should be a minister before God. Friends insisted on witnessing publicly to their beliefs. They would not swear oaths, because they believed that to do so suggested there were two standards of truth, one for everyday use and another for when one is under oath. Because they believed in the equality of all people, they would not show *customary* marks of deference to their so-called social betters, such as removing a hat, or using a formal title when speaking. In addition, they witnessed against class distinction by using the familiar *thou* and *thee* for everyone, rather than the formal *you*, which implied a social difference. They refused to pay tithes to support state-sponsored religion. Many of these actions were illegal in seventeenth-century England and many Friends who behaved in these ways suffered as a result of their beliefs.

For stubbornly making his actions and speech reflect his beliefs, George Fox was jailed many times during his life. Other Quakers were similarly determined. Before religious tolerance was established, thousands of Quakers were imprisoned and many died in prison, both in England and in the New World. The term *Quaker* was supposedly first used when George Fox, appearing before officials who were charging him, said that they ought “to tremble before the word of God.” The judge is supposed to have replied, “You are the quaker, not I.”

An emphasis on pacifism began very early in the history of Quakerism. When asked to accept an appointment in the army, George Fox wrote:

I told them I lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars, and I knew from whence all wars did rise, from the lust according to James’s doctrine. . . . I told them I was come into the covenant of peace which was before wars and strifes were.

The belief that there is *that of God in everyone* and that acts and attitudes must be in harmony with this principle led the Quakers as a group to take a definite stand against war as early as 1660. When they were suspected of being followers of a fanatic sect advocating violent overthrow of the king, the Quakers presented a declaration to Charles II:

All bloody principles and practices, we, as to our own particulars, do utterly deny, with 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.

They went on to say:

[W]e do certainly know, and so testify to the world, that the spirit of Christ; which leads us into 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 kingdom of this world.

In 1654, a number of Quakers traveled out from northern England, bearing the message of their faith to all areas of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and farther abroad. These early Quakers were known as the *Valiant Sixty*, although there may have been even more people involved. Early in the development of Quakerism, many Friends carried their beliefs to America. Several colonies declared these Quakers to be heretics and passed laws against them. Despite imprisonment, torture, and sometimes death, Friends persisted and their efforts helped to establish religious tolerance in both England and America.

The position of Quakers in America changed significantly when William Penn, a new convert and the son of an admiral in the British Navy, was given a tract of land to satisfy a debt owed to him by the Crown on account of his father's services. The King named this place Pennsylvania, and it not only became a haven from persecution but also offered Quakers the chance to practice their faith as a *Holy Experiment*. One hundred years later, the form of government that had been established in Pennsylvania was used as a model by the framers of the Constitution of the United States.

After about fifty years of rapid growth in America, the Quaker movement became stable in numbers and members began to form tightly knit communities somewhat withdrawn from the rest of the world. The Revolutionary War and the Civil War were especially difficult times for Quakers; their adherence to the peace testimony placed them at odds with other groups and resulted in the loss of many members who were torn by the conflict around them.

In consonance with their belief that all people are equal before God, Quakers in North America attempted to deal fairly with Native American peoples. John Woolman, a famous American Quaker who died just before the Revolutionary War, began to speak out against slavery. Ultimately, many Quakers came to see the Light reflected in his words. By the time of the Civil War, many Quakers became active abolitionists. Quakers were instrumental in establishing the Underground Railroad to help slaves escape to freedom in the northern United States and Canada.

During the nineteenth century, a number of divisions occurred in Quakerism. Because of differences in their interpretations of basic beliefs, several distinct varieties of Quakerism currently exist in the United States. One division happened when a number of groups of Friends decided that revival practices and salaried pastoral leadership were important to them. The pattern of worship these Friends adopted is reflected in today's programmed meetings. The freedom that individual Friends' meetings have to choose their own course of action has meant that separations and realignments have continued to take place within the Society. However, since World War II, a series of Friends World Conferences and the establishment of the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) have helped promote unity among Friends of all persuasions.

Two other organizations have developed in the twentieth century in response to Friends' perceptions of the need to act politically and globally. The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) was formed during World War I to provide relief to war victims in Europe, and to provide an avenue through which conscientious objectors might serve. The AFSC was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its handling of relief efforts following World War II. At the end of

World War II, the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) was developed. At the time, it was the only official religious lobbying group in the United States.

The Religious Society of Friends continues to evolve, and individual Quakers persist in their efforts to put their beliefs into practice. The fundamental conviction that religion is a personal experience does create great diversity within the Society. However, Quakers are united by their search for truth and by their belief that the spirit of God is to be found within all persons.

History of the Flagstaff Friends Meeting

When Pacific Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society Of Friends formed in 1947, Quakerism in Arizona was represented by a single worship group located in Tucson, which by 1949 was incorporated as a monthly meeting.

Several years after the Tucson meeting was formed, informal Quaker worship groups began in both Flagstaff and Phoenix and a half-yearly meeting of Arizona Friends was organized (now called Arizona Half Yearly Meeting, AHYM.)

Frances McAllister began a Quaker worship group in the summer of 1948. She was then a member of Orange Grove Meeting, Pasadena, California which belonged to the Hicksite faction of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting before Pacific Yearly Meeting's formation. Elias Hicks (1748-1830) was a farmer that championed the more mystical view of the inward Christ rather than the more orthodox view of the outward historical Christ.

In late 1948, Frances McAllister returned to California and would not take up residence in Flagstaff again for nearly 18 years. The worship group ceased to meet until 1952 when Mary Campbell arrived. She was a member of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's Hicksite group. In 1954, the meetings held in Mary Campbell's home disbanded due to lack of attenders. Mary joined with 8-12 "strong Unitarians" and began meeting in private homes and college classrooms. In 1959 Chuck and Mary Minor moved to Flagstaff with their 3 daughters. The Minors desired religious education for their daughters. They all continued to attend the Unitarian fellowship.

In 1963, another Quaker family moved to Flagstaff, Steven and Joan

Spencer with their 4 daughters. With the Spencers, the Minors and Mary Campbell, a worship group began to meet each Sunday at the NAU Campus Christian Center. Under the care of Phoenix and Pima Monthly Meetings, Flagstaff easily became a monthly meeting in February 1968 because most of the people attending Flagstaff worship group were members of the Religious Society Of Friends elsewhere.

In 1968, in the State of the Meeting report it was noted that the new meeting:

“ . . . remains a small gathering of individuals with separate ways of expressing common concerns for peace, for education, for economic justice, and social equality...Each of us enters into worship, but still private and separated...We are tender to the right of personal expression to the point of putting the separate above the united. In doing this, we may prevent such deeper seeking as could put some individual outside. By plain speaking we might draw all to unity and sustain the feeling of support by the Meeting.”

This statement acknowledged several situations at the time, including lack of unity on attitudes of personal living, social justice and lack of funds to support outside Quaker groups. The meeting agreed that they should “direct more attention to the spiritual core” that they held in common. This attention to the spiritual core has continued to this day.

Friends leased the building where we now worship from Frances McAllister in 1972. In 1980, the building was deeded to the monthly meeting by Frances and a holding corporation was formed. Since the 1980s, the meeting and all who attend have participated in the fabric of Flagstaff Monthly Meeting and the Arizona Quaker community, Intermountain Yearly Meeting and the national and international Quaker communities.

Some Questions and Answers

What happens during Meeting for Worship?

Each participant takes time to become quiet and center down: to open to the Spirit and experience the presence of God. This takes varying

amounts of time because the conscious mind likes to stay busy and be in control. During the meeting, a wide variety of experiences may occur or nothing at all may seem to happen. Some may find themselves feeling restless, preoccupied with a current personal concern, or involved in an effort to perceive a sense of truth or a corporate concern that relates to the whole of the meeting.

Most people new to Quaker worship find that sitting in silence takes some practice. Almost all participants experience a deep inner peacefulness. For some this may feel like meditation, while others discover a deep, nonverbal communing with God.

When urged by an inner leading, a member or attender may feel moved to speak aloud to the meeting in vocal ministry. This is generally done in simple words; messages are often brief. All listen in silence, and after the speaker finishes there is more silence. There is no discussion or debate. Others may be stimulated by the previous vocal ministry to add to the concept, but before speaking each needs to remain within the silence for a time to discover if he or she truly has a deep inner leading to speak. Such responsive sharing comes only when a period of waiting has elapsed to let the original words season a while for all present.

Sometimes our meetings pass in total silence. Some individuals speak more often than others. And some members have never felt led to speak aloud in meeting. Some unprogrammed meetings have frequent vocal ministry, and some have much less. From meeting to meeting, the types of messages brought to the meeting will be different. Like all Quakers, all meetings are individual.

What do Quakers believe about the Bible and about Jesus Christ?

Quakers believe that the personal leading of the Inner Light is the critical factor in how any individual comes to know God. Friends perceive that great problems arise when any person presses another to believe a specific doctrine verbatim. Because Quakers have no written creed to which all must subscribe, they have widely varying opinions about both the Bible and the nature of Jesus Christ.

Generally, unprogrammed Quakers do not take the Bible to be

literally true. Instead, they see it as an important expression of how humankind has experienced and may relate to God, using the historical context and the nature of language and translation as clues to understanding its value. Virtually all Quakers hold Jesus Christ in high esteem, but there is variation in belief about his unique nature and his relationship to God.

Are Quakers Christian?

Historically, yes. Currently, with the divergent beliefs of Friends, some are clearly Christian while others would not consider themselves Christian in the strict religious sense. Many Quakers hold great respect for other world religions and study them thoughtfully.

Is there a "Quaker" political orientation?

No, there is no Quaker political orientation, although the moral viewpoints of Quakers do have political implications. Because of the nearly uniform acceptance of the peace testimony, Quakers are opposed to war and the conditions that lead to war. As a result, they oppose moves by any political party towards preparation for war; at the same time, they actively oppose the injustice that is often the occasion for war. But Quakers have different opinions about how justice can be accomplished.

How do Quakers collect money and how is it spent?

There is no offering or passing of a tray during worship. Quakers believe that attending to the Inner Light will direct each individual to appropriately share resources with the Meeting. This principle relies on the moving of the Spirit of God and not the promptings of other persons.

About once a month or as they are able, attenders and members privately give money to the Meeting treasurer. There is also often a box available into which contributions can be dropped after each First Day meeting by those who prefer this method. Funds contributed to the Flagstaff Friends Meeting are automatically added to the general operating fund unless they are specifically marked for a special purpose.

Each quarter the treasurer reports to the meeting about how money is

being dispensed. Once a year, a financial forecast is agreed upon at Meeting for Worship for Business. Currently our meeting supports a variety of projects especially those related to food security, in our home community. Individuals also support activities with which they are personally concerned. We do not value expending money on ornate buildings or fixtures; simplicity is our guide. No member receives any money for services rendered.

What relevance do plain clothes and plain speech have today?

During part of their history, Quakers wore plain clothes (durable, serviceable, and relatively undecorated garments) and used plain speech (preserving the thee and thou of early social equality and protest). These practices persist among a few Quaker groups, but are generally not observed. However, Quakers do generally refrain from ostentation in their homes, cars, and clothing preferring a sustainable lifestyle and often choosing instead to provide money for causes that foster peace and justice. However, this is an individual matter, determined by each person's leading by the Inner Light.

What is the difference between an attender and a member? How does one become a member?

Everyone who comes to meeting is an attender. After a time of attending, any individual who feels directed to formalize his or her relationship with the meeting may begin the membership process. Anyone who is considering membership is invited to talk about this step with members of the Ministry and Oversight Committee, individually or together, formally or informally.

A formal request consists of a letter written by the prospective member to the Clerk of the Meeting. In this letter, the person requests membership and discusses his or her reasons for doing so. The Clerk presents the letter to Meeting for Business, the request is referred to the Ministry and Oversight Committee, and that committee forms a small clearness committee, consisting of several members of the meeting. The clearness committee meets with the applicant to determine whether he or she is clear in seeking and understanding Quaker membership.

If the committee and the individual together reach clearness that

membership is an appropriate step for the individual to take, the committee makes this recommendation to the Ministry and Oversight Committee and to the Meeting for Business. The recommendation seasons for a month, and then, if agreement continues, the individual is read into the meeting and becomes a member.

Suggested Readings

The Meeting library contains most of the books listed here. They, and many other volumes you may find interesting, may be checked out through the computer located in the library. There are instructions on how to do this inside the computer cabinet. Please be careful to return our books once you have read them. They are dear to us and we want to see them both well used and well cared for.

Ambler, Rex. *Light to Live By: An Exploration of Quaker Spirituality*. London: Quaker Books, 2002

This book describes Ambler's attempt to discover what practice early Quakers used to experience the "Light within" that changed their lives so much. Ambler went back to a process George Fox described in 1653. In this book he "outlines the stages of meditation, based on the practice of early Friends but given present-day relevance..." It is a companion volume to the _____ book which follows.

_____ *Truth of the Heart: An Anthology of George Fox selected and annotated by Rex Ambler*. London: Quaker Books, 2001.

_____ _____ them into modern English so their meaning becomes clearer. One side of the page is Ambler takes some of the important writings of George Fox and puts 17th century English and the other side is modern English.

Bacon, Margaret Hope. *Valiant Friend: The Life of Lucretia Mott*. Philadelphia: Quaker Press, 1999.

Lucretia was a Quaker minister, anti-slavery activist and champion of the feminist cause. This is a moving biography of her life from 1793 to 1880.

_____ *The Quiet Rebels: The Story of the Quakers in America*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1985.

A contemporary history of American Quakers, giving special attention to the Quaker contribution to the history and development of nonviolent action.

Brinton, Howard H. Revised by Margaret Bacon. *Friends for Three Hundred Fifty Years*. Wallingford, Pennsylvania: Pendle Hill, 1964.

A classic and readable overview of Quaker history.

Chase, Steve. *Letters to a Fellow Seeker: A Short Introduction to the Quaker Way*. Philadelphia: Quaker Press, 2013.

This book is Steve Chase's personal answer to the questions asked by those who first come in contact with Quakers. The questions, however, are the ones that longtime Quakers continue to ask themselves and share with other seekers.

Cope-Robinson, Lyn. *The Little Quaker Sociology Book with Glossary*.

A sociological perspective of Quakerism with an easy map of the historical splits in the society.

Dunham, Geoffrey. *Being a Quaker: A Guide for Newcomers*. London: Quaker Quest, 2011.

Geoffrey Durham, an especially articulate British Quaker, shares in a humorous and candid manner his journey to The Society of Friends. He then goes on to describe Friends' spiritual search and practices in plain language. An excellent read for newcomers, as well as long-time Friends who want a warm and accessible reminder of why we are Quakers.

Fox, George. *Journal of George Fox*. John L. Nickalls, editor. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends with permission from the London Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, 1995.

A lengthy volume by the founder of Quakerism, written in the English of the seventeenth century. A fine resource about the earliest experiences in the founding of the Religious Society of Friends.

Gates, Thomas. *Members One of Another: The Dynamics of Membership in Quaker Meeting*. Pendle Hill Pamphlet #371, 2004.

Thomas Gates sees membership as a lifelong process that goes through five stages. They are: 1) A sense of acceptance and belonging. 2) A discovery of shared values. 3) Putting those values into action. 4) Ongoing transformation as leadings are found. 5) Surrender and obedience to the Light. In all of these stages he talks about benefits and pitfalls for

both the individual and the meeting community.

Grace, Eden. “*An Introduction to Quaker Business Practice*”.
(Handout in Meetinghouse entryway)

Quaker business is conducted in a unique way. This article explains this process from a practical and spiritual perspective.

Hartog, Jan de. *The Peaceable Kingdom: An American Saga*. New York: Atheneum, 1971.

This extensive novel covers the early years of Quakerism, both in England and in the United States.

Intermountain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. *Faith and Practice of Intermountain Yearly Meeting*. 2009.

This reflects the spirit of our corporate body and acts as a practice and spiritual guide for our personal and community life. It has advices and queries that help us search for the inward Spirit and the Truth. It is not a book of rules or prayers but tool to help us search and maintain good order.

Kelly, Thomas R. *A Testament of Devotion*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1941.

A deep, lyrical expression of the essence of Quaker mysticism. This is one of the classic readings for individuals interested in understanding the experience of the Inner Light.

Loring, Patricia. *Listening Spirituality, Volume 1: Personal Spiritual Practices among Friends*. Washington Grove, Maryland: Opening Press, 1997.

Spiritual formation is the process of deepening the spiritual life through practices that include prayer, devotion, meditation, and listening to God. This volume examines spiritual growth for the individual.

Punshon, John. *Encounter with Silence: Reflections from the Quaker Tradition*. Richmond, Indiana: Friends United Press, 1987.

British Quaker John Punshon offers simple but exceptional thoughts on silence, prayer, discernment, and worship from the perspective of the Quaker unprogrammed meeting.

Smith, Robert Lawrence. *A Quaker Book of Wisdom: Life Lessons in Simplicity, Service, and Common Sense*. New York, New York: Harpers Collins Publishers Inc, 1998.

Robert Lawrence Smith is the former headmaster of Sidwell Friends School in Washington, DC. This is written as

advice to his grandchildren. It is a very practical guide as to how to live out the Quaker testimonies. He takes on difficult situations where it is not always clear what doing the right thing is.

Sox, David. *John Woolman, 1720-1772, Quintessential Quaker*. Richmond, Indiana: Friends United Press, 1999.

Revealing the man behind the legend as the "clear and steady voice that woke the conscience of the Quakers and ultimately, through them, of the Western world to the evil of slavery," this book provides the reader with an in depth discussion of John Woolman's exemplary personal life in the community of Quakers and also within the historical context of 18th-century America.

Woolman, John. *The Journal of John Woolman*.

There are several different editions in the library. John Woolman, an early American Friend with a strong conscience, creative convictions, and an ability to share his spiritual life through words, left a journal that has enhanced the lives of many who came after him.

There are many other Quaker authors you may find enlightening including Rufus Jones, Elizabeth Gray Vining, and Ben Pink Dandelion. *The Western Quaker* and *Friends Journal* also contain excellent articles about the current issues in Quakerism today and can be found in the library. The library also has almost every Pendle Hill Pamphlet from 1938 to present.