



W M Penn, Courtesy Library of Congress, LC-DIG-pga-00455

“I expect to pass through life but once. If therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow being, let me do it now, and not defer or neglect it, as I shall not pass this way again.”

- William Penn

Quaker Affirmations Quaker History, Part 2:

Quakers in America

Quaker Affirmation, Lesson 2

Quaker history in 3 segments:

1. 1647 – 1691: George Fox

- Begins with the ministry of George Fox until the time of his death, and encompasses the rise and swift expansion of the Friends movement

2. 1691 – 1827: The Age of Quietism

3. 1827 – present:

Fragmentation, Division & Reaffirmation

Review:

- Fox sought to revive “Primitive Christianity” after a revelation of Christ in 1647 and a vision of “a great people to be gathered” in 1652.
- Many people in England were resentful of the government-led church and longed for a more meaningful spiritual path.
- A group of Friends dubbed “The Valiant Sixty” traveled the country and the world to preach Fox’s message.
- Around 60,000 people had joined the Society of Friends by 1680.
- Friends in mid-1600s were often persecuted for their beliefs, and George Fox was often in prison.
- George Fox and many other Friends came to America to preach.



George Fox

1647 - 1691

3

Review:

What was the essence of Fox's message?

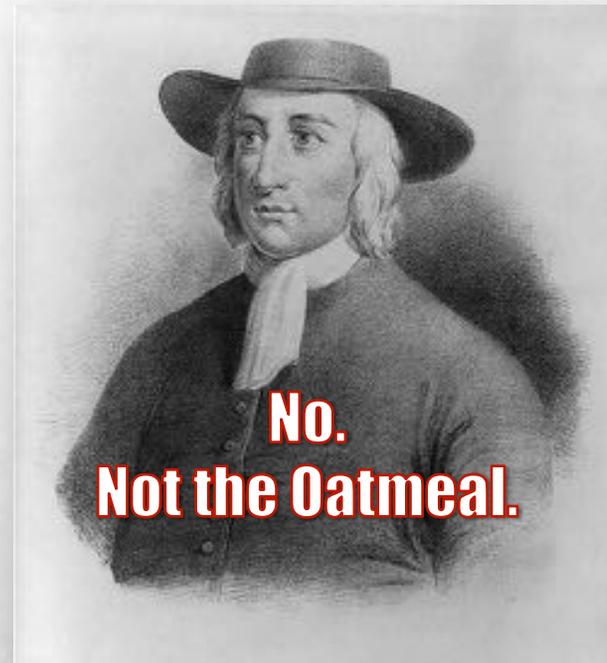
- There is that of *God in everyone*.
- The *Inner Light* lives within; it discerns between good and evil and unites us.
- Each of us may *experience God directly* without a minister or church building.
- There is no need for rituals, robes, creeds, or other “*empty forms*.”
- Everyone is of *equal worth*.
- The same *Holy Spirit* which inspired the scriptures can inspire us today.
- God's divine revelation is made manifest in the *life of Jesus*.



4

PRESENTING...

A Whirlwind Tour of Quaker History!



When and Why did Quakers Come to America?

- In 1656 two women missionaries came to spread Friends' beliefs in the New World among the colonists, and became the *first known Quakers in America*.
- In 1657 the first *Monthly Meeting* was established in Massachusetts.
- In many colonies, the first Quakers to arrive were considered *heretics*, and deported, put into prison or hung.

When and Why did Quakers Come to America?

(Continued)

- They found a *safe haven* in Rhode Island, “West Jersey,” and Pennsylvania.
- In 1682 *William Penn* founded Pennsylvania, guaranteeing freedom of religion for any colonists.
- Between 1675 and 1725, an estimated 23,000 *Quakers left England and came to America.*

Quakers Come to America:

• William Penn

“Penn, more than any other individual founder or colonist, proved to be the chosen vessel through which the stream of demand for respect for individual rights was to flow so richly into our American reservoir of precious ideals.”

~ William Wistar Comfort

- Born to affluent English family in 1644
- Became a convinced Quaker in 1667 at age of 23
- Was granted rights to Pennsylvania area in 1681 by King Charles II, and began a campaign throughout Northern Europe promoting his community and offering affordable land as well as fair government and religious freedom
- The *Founder of Pennsylvania*, and called the first city planner in the New World

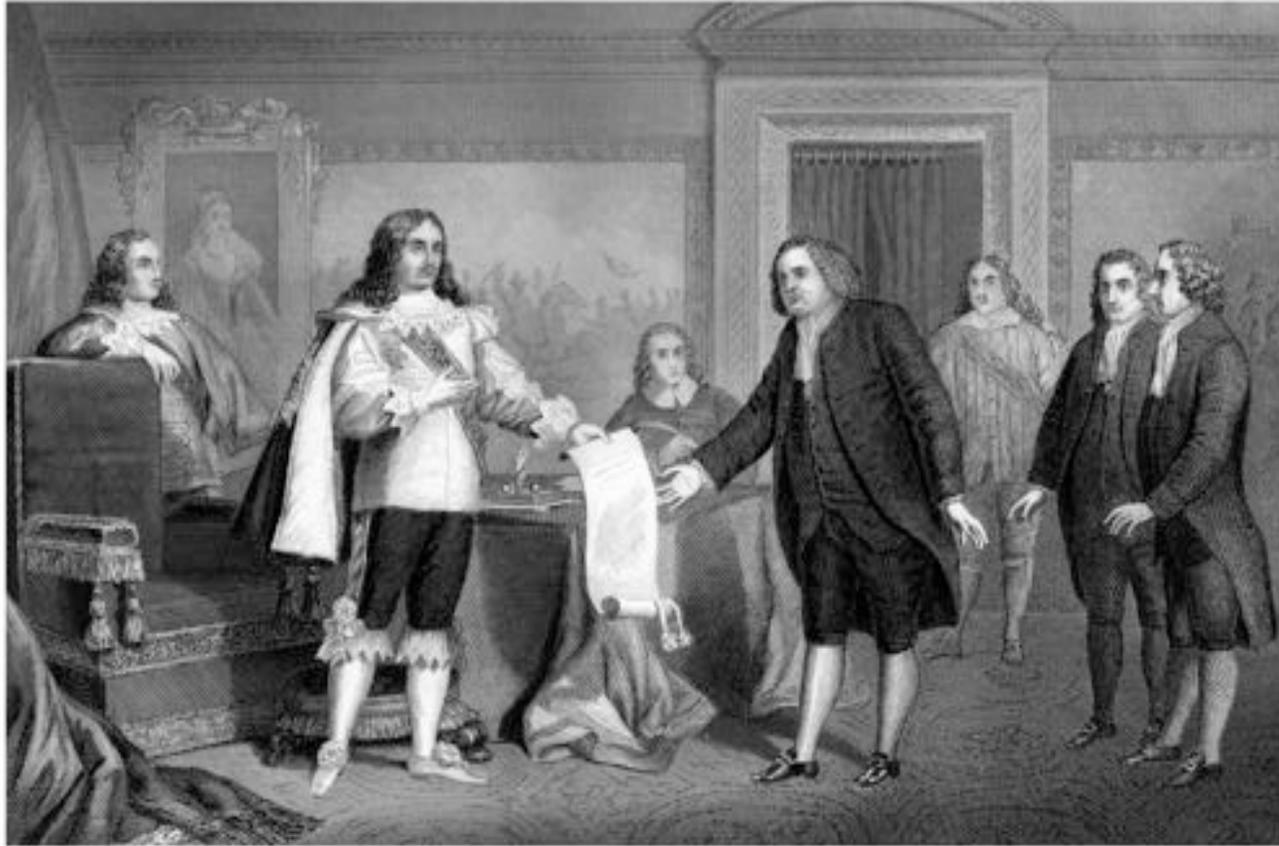


William Penn

1644 - 1718 9

William Penn, Courtesy Library of Congress
LC-USZ62-12218

William Penn Receiving the Charter of Pennsylvania from Charles II



In 1681, King Charles the II of England made William Penn “Absolute Proprietor” of the area of Pennsylvania in the New World.

Penn moved there in 1682 and began work on his “Holy Experiment”.

Penn remained in America for four years.

By 1765, Philadelphia was the largest city in the thirteen colonies.

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*William Penn receiving the Charter of Pennsylvania from Charles II, William Penn, 1644-1718, English real estate entrepreneur
Alamy Images*

Penn's Holy Experiment:

Quaker Faith in Action

What Penn Accomplished in Founding Pennsylvania

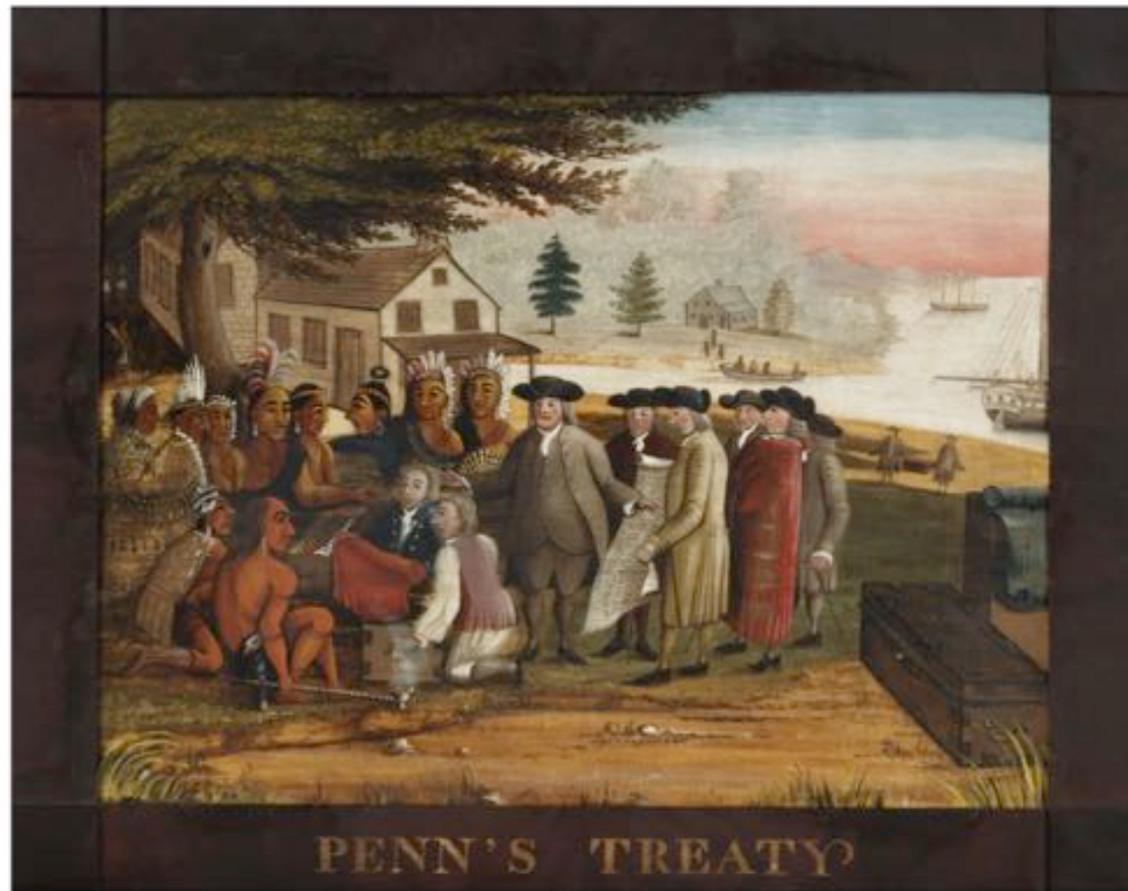
- *Separation of church and state; no state church collected money from citizens*
- Penn's design for Philadelphia reflected Quaker *respect for nature*
- Provided public *education to all children*
- Substituted *workhouses for dungeons*

What Penn Accomplished in Founding Pennsylvania (Continued)

- *Limited death penalty* to murder and treason; English law assigned the death penalty to over 200 crimes
- *Penal system was designed to reform*, not just punish
- *Equal treatment of all* citizens, including Native Americans
- Penn's *Frame of Government used as a model* by writers of the United States Constitution

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Penn's Treaty with the Indians by Edward Hicks



The Native Americans provided Penn's followers with protection and hospitality, due to their respect for Penn.

"While every other colony in the New World was visited in turn by the horrors of Indian warfare, no drop of Quaker blood was ever shed by a red man in Pennsylvania."

~ George Bancroft

13

Source: Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography, Volume 4, edited by James Grant Wilson, John Fiske, 1898, p. 714.

Penn's Treaty with the Indians 1830-1835
by Edward Hicks, 1780-1849
Courtesy Philadelphia Museum of Art

Quaker history in 3 segments:

1. 1647 – 1691: George Fox

2. 1691 – 1827: The Age of Quietism

- The next generation of Quakers were no longer persecuted, and their preaching and missionary activity diminished as *they turned “inward.”*
- Friends changed from a *movement* to an *institution*.
- Although this period included Quaker opposition to slavery, prison reform and the defense of Native Americans, Friends *began to lose their original evangelistic fervor.*
- *Strictness and silence* were in abundance.

3. 1827 – present:

Fragmentation, Division & Reaffirmation

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Quakers and Slavery:

• John Woolman

“Where the Innocent suffer under hard-hearted Men, even unto Death, and the Channels of Equity are so obstructed, that the Cause of the Sufferers is not judged in Righteousness, the Land is polluted with Blood.”

~ John Woolman

- Born in New Jersey in 1720
- At 23, became convinced that slavery was incompatible with Christianity
- Convinced many Quakers to free their slaves
- Boycotted products made by slaves – sugar, cotton, etc. – so as not to profit from the misery of others
- Died in 1772, 89 years before the Civil War began
- Due in large part to Woolman's influence, in 1776, The Religious Society of Friends prohibited their members from owning slaves

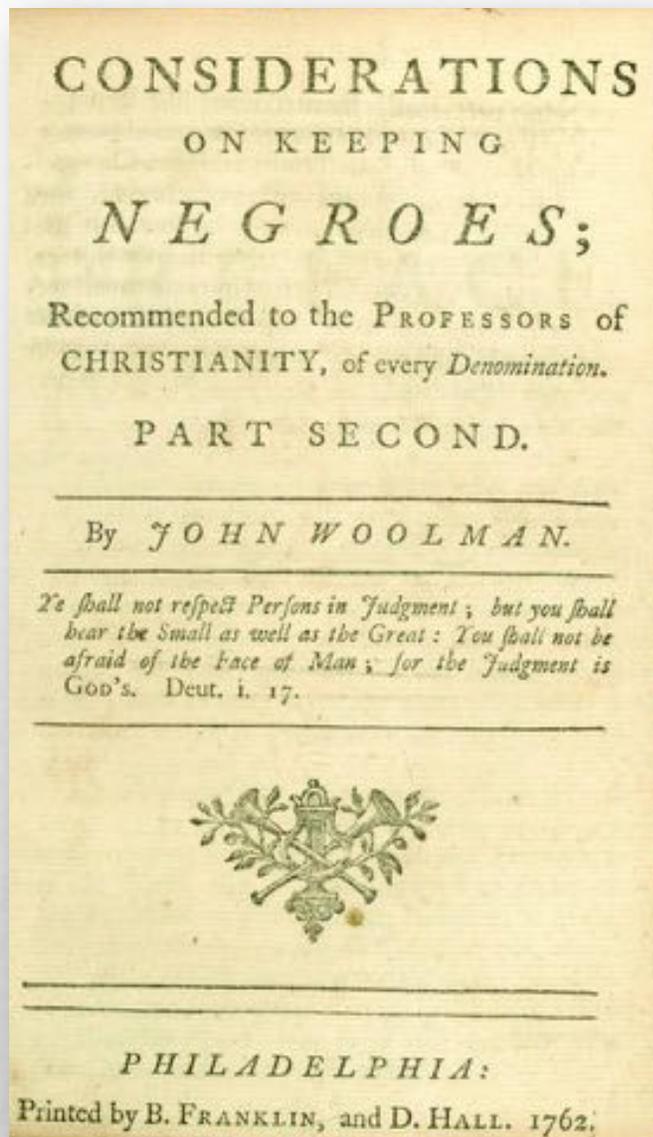


John Woolman

1720 - 1772

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John Woolman, Quaker friend of the Negro
Courtesy New York Public Library, 1232086



“Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes remains one of the earliest and most influential antislavery tracts written in North America. Composed by John Woolman in 1753, it gained approval by the Society of Friends in 1754, marking the beginnings of committed Quaker opposition to slaveholding. Prior to that point, Quakers in the American colonies had been ambivalent about the moral status of slavery, many even owning slaves themselves.”

~ Anders Walker
St. Louis University
School of Law,

17



Quakers and Prison Reform:

• Elizabeth Fry

“I love to feel for the sorrow of others.”

~ Elizabeth Fry

Meanwhile, back in England...

- Born in 1780 to well-to-do Quaker family
- An English prison reformer, social reformer and, as a Quaker, a Christian philanthropist
- Sometimes referred to as the “Angel of Prisons”
- Founded a prison school for children imprisoned with their parents
- Fry also:
 - spearheaded reforms for mental asylums
 - worked for nursing standards
 - supported the education of working women and better housing for the poor
 - founded hostels and soup kitchens for the homeless and destitute



1780 - 1845

Elizabeth Fry

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Image from *Elizabeth Fry* by Irene M Ashby, 1892
Colour photogravure after G Richmond, 1843
Courtesy Hathi Trust Digital Library and
Wellcome Images ICV No 2279

Elizabeth Fry Visiting Newgate Prison



When Elizabeth Fry visited Newgate Prison, she was horrified to find women and children living in conditions of despair, filth and brutality.

Convicted to do something about it, she continued visiting the prisons and encouraged other middle class women to do so.

Her ideals for prison reform were based on her Quaker beliefs.

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Quaker history in 3 segments:

1. 1647 – 1691: George Fox
2. 1691 – 1827: The Age of Quietism
3. 1827 – present:

Fragmentation, Division & Reaffirmation

- Friends groups disagreed about what it means to be Quaker.
- Leaders came forward with competing perspectives of Quakerism; Quakers separate.
- Three men shaped what Quakers look like today.



1827: Quakers Divided:

- **The Great
Separation**

By the 1800s...

- Change and growth challenged the Quakers.
- Under the influence of Protestant revivals, plainness was fading, and there were new views on Christ and the authority of the Bible.
- Quakers in England had been converted to an evangelical Christianity, and traveled to America to confront American Friends who believed that the “Inner Light” must be honored above the Bible.
- Quakers were interacting with evangelical Protestants in business and missionary societies, and Quaker ideas were being diluted as a result.

The three men who led the differing Quaker movements:



Elias Hicks



Joseph John
Gurney



John Wilbur

*Elias Hicks, drawn by H Inman,
Engraved By Peter Maverick
Courtesy Library of Congress
LC-USZ62-98115*

*Joseph John Gurney
by Richard James Lane
Courtesy National Portrait Gallery
NPG D35075*

*Man in nineteenth-century
dress in silhouette
Courtesy Library of Congress
LC-H822-2981-x*

Orthodox Quakers

Hicksites

- Broke off from Orthodox Quakers in a dramatic and bitter split in **1827**
- Believed that the Inner Light must be honored above the Bible and traditional Christian creeds and doctrines

Gurneyites

- Believed the authority of Biblical scripture was as important as the Inner Light

Wilburites

- Split from Gurneyites in **1845**
- Disagreed with Gurney's belief of Bible over Inner Light

1827 – Hicksite/Orthodox Separation

1845 – Orthodox Splits:
Wilbur/Gurney Separation

Hicksite Meetings became:

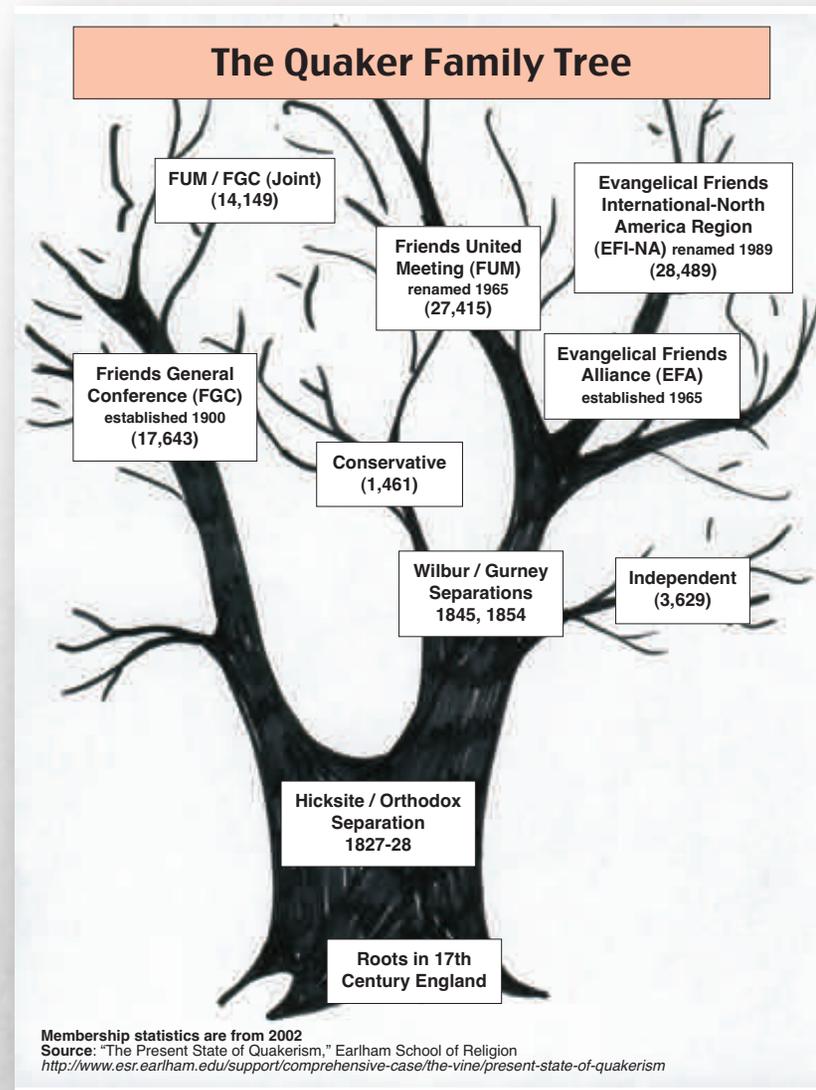
- Friends General Conference
- Unprogrammed

Gurneyites became:

- Friends United Meeting
- Evangelical Friends
- Independent

Wilburites join:

- Conservative



- 
- **BUT... More about that another day...**



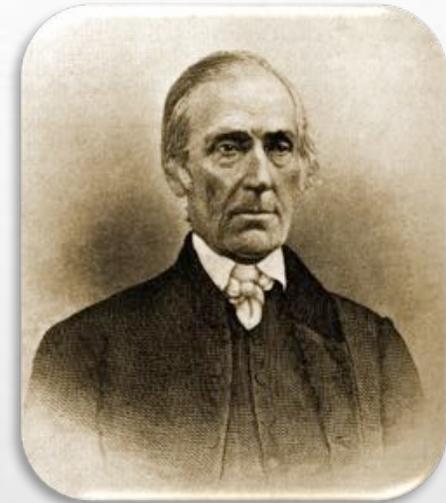
Quakers and The Underground Railroad:

• Levi Coffin

“The Bible, in bidding us to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, said nothing about color, and I should try to follow out the teachings of that good book.”

~ Levi Coffin

- Born in 1798 in North Carolina
- Developed an opposition to slavery as a child
- Immigrated to Indiana with his family in 1826 because in North Carolina Quakers were being persecuted by slave-holders
- Became successful businessman, which provided him with funds to support the Underground Railroad operations in Indiana
- Assisted hundreds of runaway slaves by lodging them in his home
- After Civil War ended, Coffin raised over \$100,000 to provide aid to free blacks



1798 - 1877

Levi Coffin

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*Levi Coffin, President of the Underground Railroad
from The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom,
1898, by Wilbur H Siebert
Courtesy Karen J Hatziorgious, ushistoryimages.com*



Quakers and Women's Rights:

• Lucretia Mott

*“Let woman then go on, not asking favors, but claiming as right,
the removal of all hindrances to her elevation in the
scale of being.”*

~ Lucretia Mott

- Born in 1793 in Massachusetts
- Women's rights activist, abolitionist, and social reformer
- Became interested in women's rights when she found that fellow male teachers were paid three times as much as female staff
- Refused to use slave produced goods like cotton cloth and sugar
- Assisted slaves in the Underground Railroad, and founded Female Anti-Slavery Society
- Organized the first women's annual rights convention and worked for women's suffrage (right to vote) her entire life



1793 - 1880

"When Mott died in 1880, she was widely judged by her contemporaries... as the greatest American woman of the 19th century."

~ Susan Jacoby

Lucretia Mott

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Quakers Helping the World:

• Rufus Jones

*“The reason we can hope to find God is that He is here, engaged
all the time in finding us.”*

~ Rufus Jones

- Born in 1863 in Maine to a Quaker family
- American writer, magazine editor, philosopher, college professor, historian, theologian, and one of the most influential Quakers of the 20th century
- Tried unsuccessfully to unite the divided body of Quakers
- Formulated new approach to missions – that of giving humanitarian aid while respecting other religions and not trying to convert people
- This led to the founding of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) in 1917
- AFSC helped war victims after WWI and WWII, and received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1947
- Viewed God as a personal being with whom human beings can interact



1863 - 1948

Rufus Jones

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Photo Courtesy the American Friends Service Committee



the-ol-o-gy

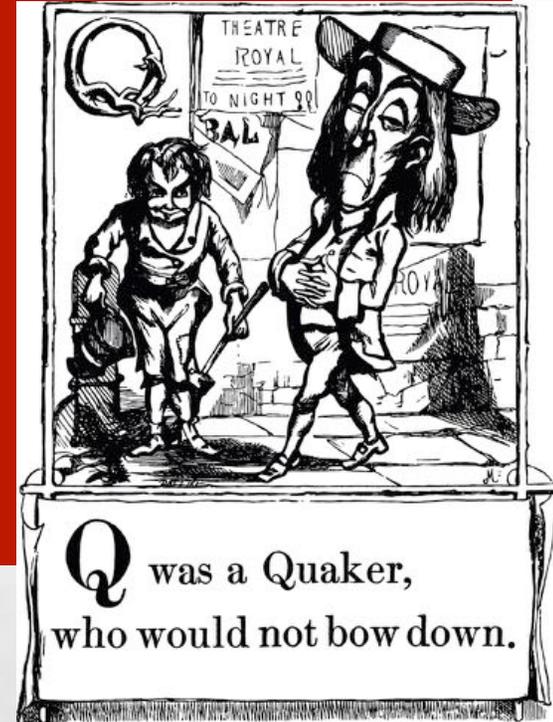
the·ol·o·gy

noun \thē-'ä-lə-jē\
Q

- the study of religious faith, practice, and experience
- the study of God and God's relation to the world
- a system of religious beliefs or ideas

Quaker Affirmation, Lesson 4

1



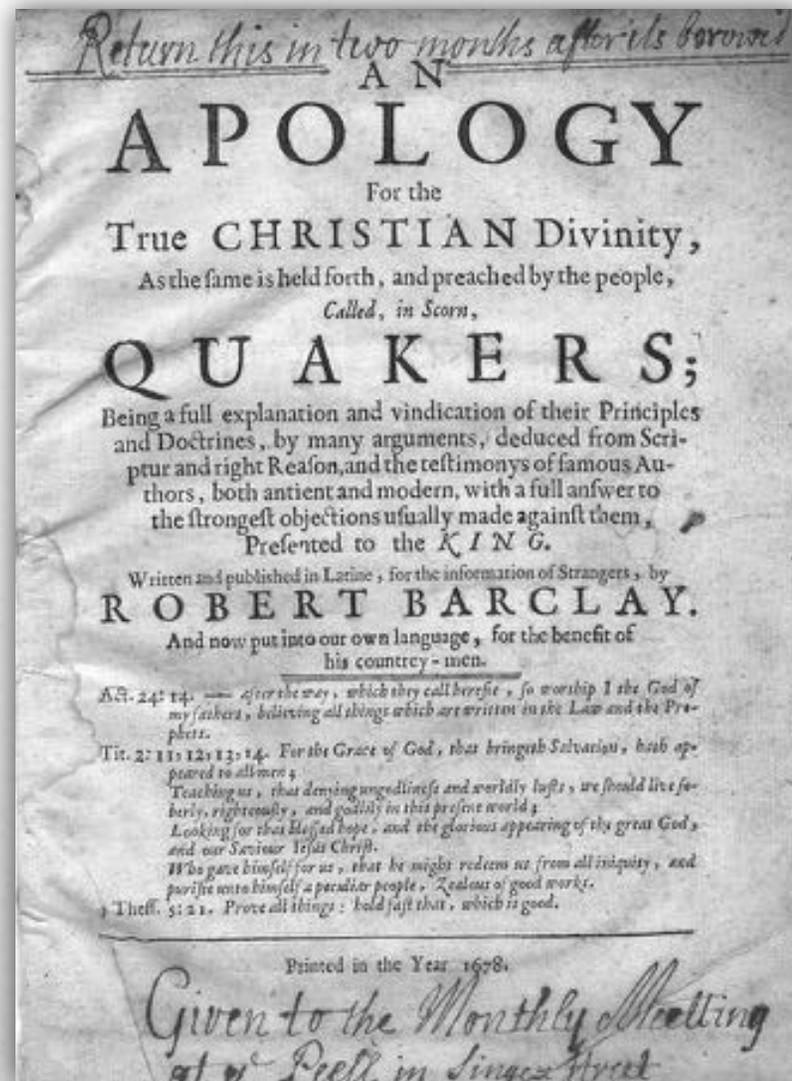
What Do Quakers Believe?

(And Do All Quakers Agree?)

- In 1676, Robert Barclay wrote *Barclay's Apology*, a powerful statement of Quaker belief.
- The word “apology” means *a written argument of theory of religious doctrine*.
- It was written to convince non-Quaker readers that Quakers were peaceful and should not be persecuted for their beliefs.
- Written in George Fox's lifetime, *Barclay's Apology* has been considered by most Friends a valid summary of their faith.

(Barclay's Apology)
“...saved the Quaker movement from extinction by giving Fox's preaching an intellectual form, capable of rational defense.”

~ D. Elton Trueblood



So...What *do* we believe?

- Quakers do not share a fixed set of beliefs.
- We seek to experience God directly, through our relationships with others, the world around us, and within ourselves.
- The spiritual experience is central to Quaker worship.
- Our core beliefs:
 - There is that of God in everyone.
 - Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality.

Who or What is God?

- God resides in each of us.
- Quakers strive to experience God.
- Everyone is known by God and, and we can all know God in direct relationship.
- Quakers use many words to describe the Divine:
 - God, the Inner Light or Light Within, Christ, Spirit, Seed and Inward Teacher.

What Does George Fox Say?

Schol. *In what is God worshipped?*

Maſt. He is worshipped in Spirit and in the Truth.

Schol. *Where is the Spirit, and where is this Truth?*

Maſt. The Spirit is within, and the Truth is within, in the inward parts, by which Spirit God is known; and by the Truth the God of Truth is known.

Schol. *What is God?*

Maſt. God is a Spirit.



From *Instructions for Right Spelling, Plain Directions for Reading and Writing True English.*
George Fox. 1769.

Photo by Reymark Franke

Why Is Jesus Important?



- Friends view Jesus Christ as both a historical figure and an inward experience.
- Jesus is a Teacher of Truth, and an example of how we should live.
- Many Friends believe Jesus to be the Son of God, whose life, death and resurrection allow us to find salvation.
- Other Friends see Christ as a prime example to be followed.
- Remember, George Fox heard, *“There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition.”*

7

What Does George Fox Say?

The Child's Lesson.

Christ is the Truth. Christ is the Light. Christ is my VVay. Christ is my Life. Christ is my Saviour. Christ is my Hope of Glory.

Christ is my Redeemer. Christ is my Rock. Christ is the Door. Christ is my King and Lord of Lords. Christ is the Corner-Stone. Christ is the Lamb of God, that takes away my sin.

Christ is the Power of God. Christ is my VVisdom. Christ is

my Righteousness. Christ is my Sanctification. Christ is my Justification. Christ is the Seed. Christ is the Resurrection.

Christ destroyeth the Devil and his works, which leadeth man and woman from God; and so Christ is the Way to God again.



L'ami des humbles
by Leon Augustin Lhermitte
Courtesy Library of Congress
LC-D416-252

What Is the Inner Light?

- It has many names: The Light of God, Light of Christ, Christ Within, That of God, Spirit of God within us, Light Within, Inward Light.
- The Inner Light refers to **Christ's light shining in us.**

“The Inner Light is the doctrine that there is something Divine, ‘Something of God’ in the human soul.”

~ Rufus Jones

What Does George Fox Say?

Sch. *What is it that gives the knowledge of God? and where is it?*
M. *The Light which shines in the heart, it gives the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus, 2 Cor. 4.*

Do Quakers Read the Bible?

- Early Friends read, studied, and quoted it often.
- The Spirit they knew within also spoke to them through the Bible.
- They believed that the power which inspired the Bible is still speaking. A belief still held by many Quakers today.
- Many Friends turn to the Bible for guidance, insight, and inspiration.
- We look at the Bible as a way to understand God.
- Many Quakers do not hold the Bible to be the final authority or the *only* source of sacred wisdom.

What Does George Fox Say?

Schol. They say the People called Quakers deny the Scriptures.

Mast. No, they own the Scriptures more then any People; for they walk in the Light of Christ Jesus, and by following him do witness the Scriptures fulfilled in them; and People that live in Sin, and that are guided by the Evil Spirit, they are contrary to the Scriptures, and it is a Book sealed

to them; and they who hate to be reformed have nothing to do to speak of the Saints and holy men of God's Conditions mentioned in Scripture.

How Do Quakers Differ...

...from other faiths?

- Early on called a “peculiar people”
- No formal creed or set of beliefs
- Inward, rather than outward observance of sacraments (like baptism and communion)
- Practice of silent worship with the faith community
- Emphasis on social service
- Historic “peace church”
- Business meetings are also meetings for worship
- Some meetings unprogrammed (no pastor)

...among themselves?

- Explore different versions of *Faith and Practice*, the “Quaker handbook.”

What About Communion?

Matthew 26:26-28

26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

27 Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

- Many Christians believe that by eating the bread and drinking the wine of the communion service, they are sharing the actual flesh and blood of Christ, or partaking of His spirit.

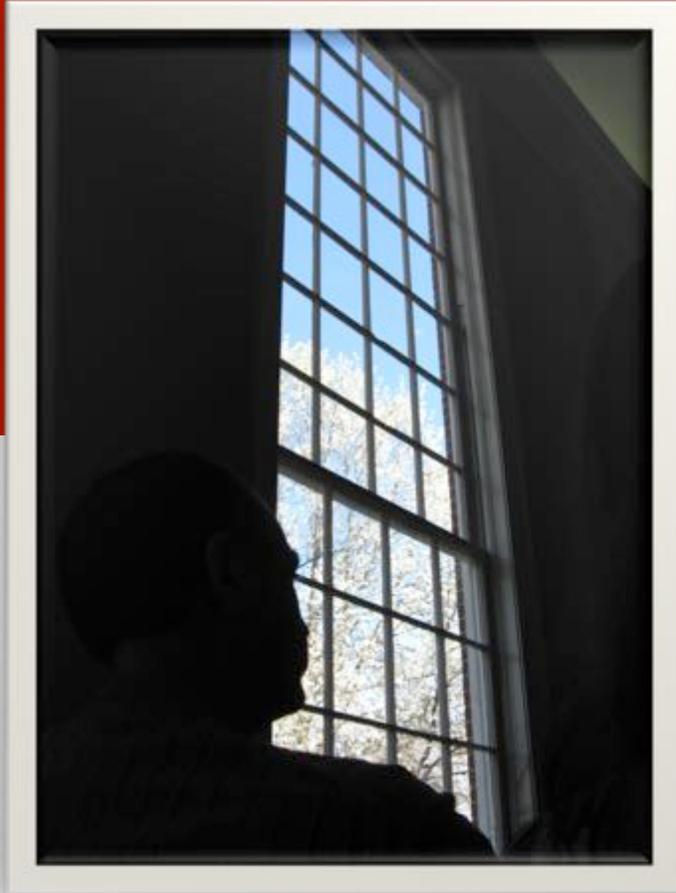
Quaker Communion

- Quakers feel that sacraments are an inward, spiritual experience.
- Friends feel that every meal is a communion, and that we can experience Christ's Spirit whenever we worship if we open our hearts to God.



What About Baptism?

- **Mark 1:8** – *I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.*”
- Many Christians use various forms of water baptism to signify the beginning of a Christian life.
- Friends believe that when a person decides to let God guide his or her life they experience a *baptism of the spirit*.
- Friends also feel that *no one time should be more holy than any other*, since all time should be spent serving God.
- Early Friends were guarding against substituting ceremonies at special times for everyday devotion and inward spiritual experience.

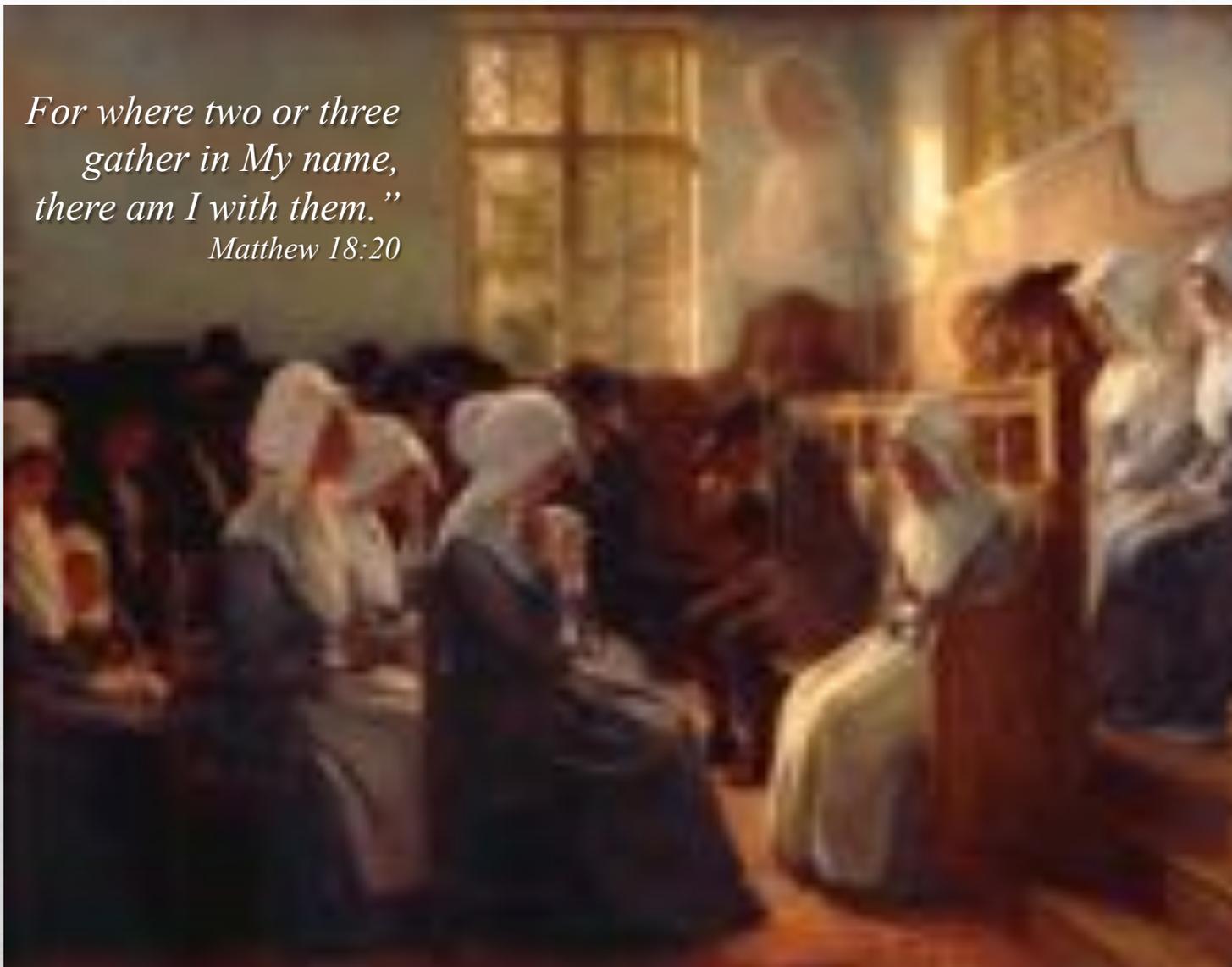


Quaker Meeting for Worship

Quaker Affirmation, Lesson 5

1

*For where two or three
gather in My name,
there am I with them.”
Matthew 18:20*



2

The Presence in the Midst by J Doyle Penrose, 1916
Reproduction used with permission of Friends United Meeting

Early Quakers...

- Refused to use pastors or outward forms of worship in order to emphasize...
 - The inwardness of worship.
 - The “priesthood” of all believers.
 - All of us are ministers and have equal access to God.
 - God uses each of us to minister to one another.
- Sat in silent meetings led by an elder on the “facing bench.”
- Would pray, speak, or read Scripture as they felt moved or led by God’s Spirit.
- Refused to use the term “churches” for the building, as God is wherever “two or three are gathered.”



“The meeting house is not a consecrated edifice, and if there is anything holy about it, it must be the lives of the people who meet there. The Friends feel that there must be a vital and sustained connection between worship and daily life. When their ideal is attained, their meeting is merely the community search for that guidance which they covet for every important act of their lives.”

~ William Wistar Comfort



Q: But wait... not all Quaker meetings
are silent, right?

A: Well, remember that great big split
that happened way back in 1827...?

Q: ???

A: Here's a reminder...



1827: Quakers Divided:

- **The Great
Separation**

By the 1800s...

- Change and growth challenged the Quakers.
- Under the influence of Protestant revivals, plainness was fading, and there were new views on Christ and the authority of the Bible.
- Some Quakers in England had been converted to an evangelical Christianity, and traveled to America to confront American Friends who believed that the “Inner Light” must be honored above the Bible.
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The three men who led the differing Quaker movements:



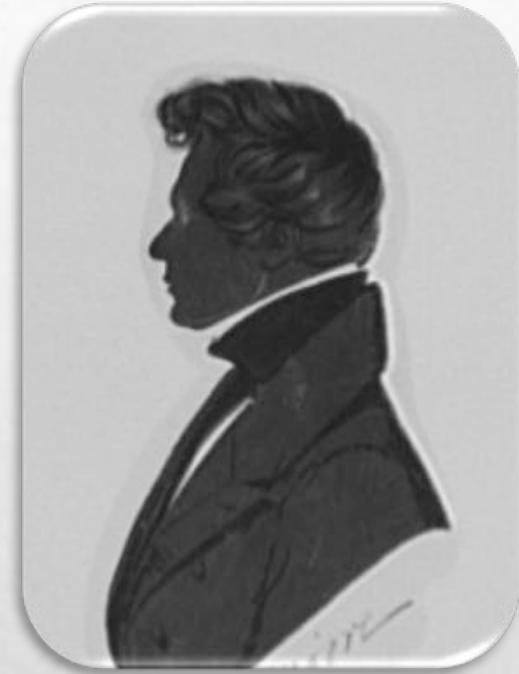
Elias Hicks

*Elias Hicks, drawn by H Inman,
Engraved By Peter Maverick
Courtesy Library of Congress
LC-USZ62-98115*



**Joseph John
Gurney**

*Joseph John Gurney
by Richard James Lane
Courtesy National Portrait Gallery
NPG D35075*



John Wilbur

*Man in nineteenth-century
dress in silhouette
Courtesy Library of Congress
LC-H822-2981-x*

Elias Hicks & the Hicksites v. Orthodox Quakers 1827: The First Split

- Born in 1748, became a farmer and a traveling Friends minister.
- Argued that the Inner Light must be honored above the Bible and traditional Christian creeds and doctrines.



1748 - 1830

Elias Hicks & Hicksites *(Continued)*

- Hicksites saw themselves as committed to:
 - freedom of thought
 - devotion to Inner Light as source of authority
 - belief in continuing revelation (God speaks to individuals through Inner Light)
- This conflict came to a dramatic head at the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of **1827** where **Orthodox and “Hicksites” split** – painfully and bitterly – into two yearly meetings.

Orthodox Friends...

- **Joseph John Gurney** was a leader among Orthodox Friends
- **Believed the authority of Biblical scripture was as important as the Inner Light**
- Gurney's followers were influenced by evangelical movements in other Protestant religions, and eventually adopted many practices of those churches
 - Organs
 - Programmed worship services
 - Paid ministers
 - Steeples on their church buildings

The Gurneyites v. The Wilburites

1845: The Orthodox Split

Joseph John Gurney The “Gurneyites”



- Born in 1788, was a banker and Elizabeth Fry’s brother
- Became an evangelical Friends minister
- Believed that writings of early Friends were in error on some points
- Valued Bible and Scripture over Inner Light

John Wilbur The “Wilburites”



- Born in 1774 in Rhode Island
- Disagreed with Gurney’s view on authority of Scripture over the Spirit
- In 1845, Wilbur and his followers divided from Gurneyite Friends and later became a branch called Conservative Friends

Orthodox Quakers

Hicksites

- Broke off from Orthodox Quakers in a dramatic and bitter split in **1827**
- Believed that the Inner Light must be honored above the Bible

Gurneyites

- Believed the authority of Biblical scripture was as important as the Inner Light

Wilburites

- Split from Gurneyites in **1845**
- Disagreed with Gurney's belief of Bible over Inner Light

1827 – Hicksite/Orthodox Separation

1845 – Orthodox Splits:
Wilbur/Gurney Separation

Hicksite Meetings become:

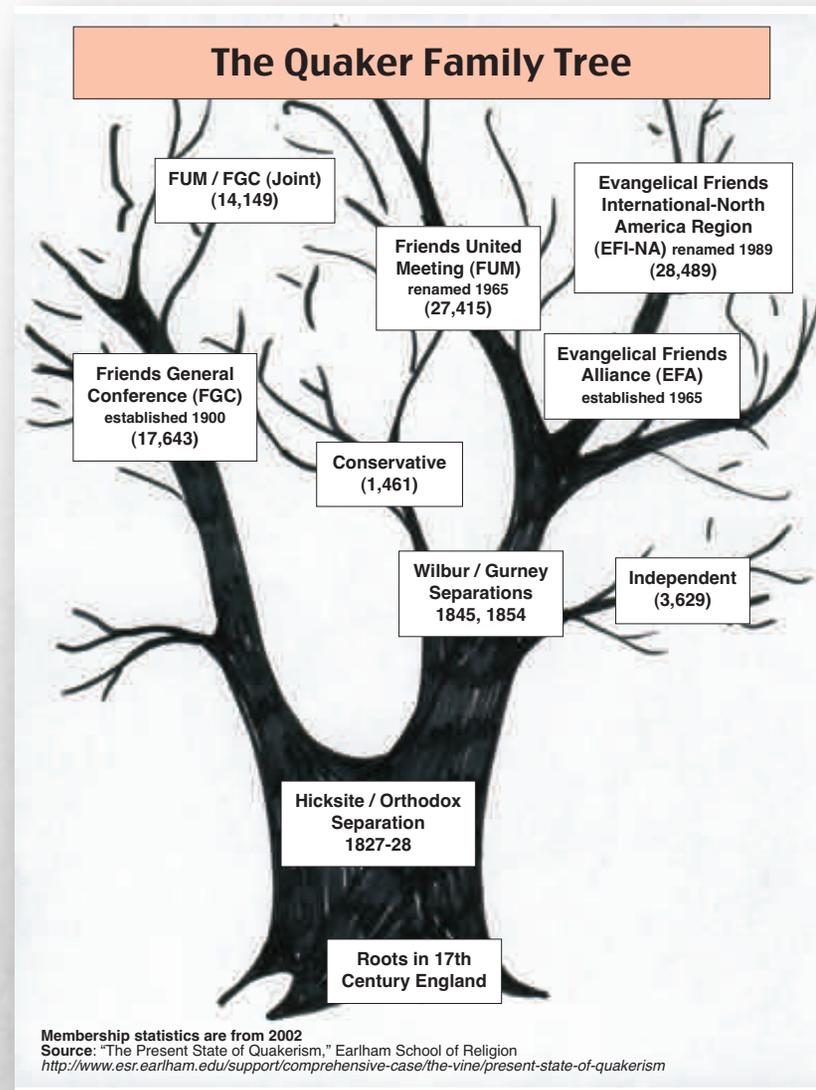
- Friends General Conference
- Unprogrammed

Gurneyites become:

- Five Years Meeting, which split to:
 - Friends United Meeting
 - Evangelical Friends
 - Independent

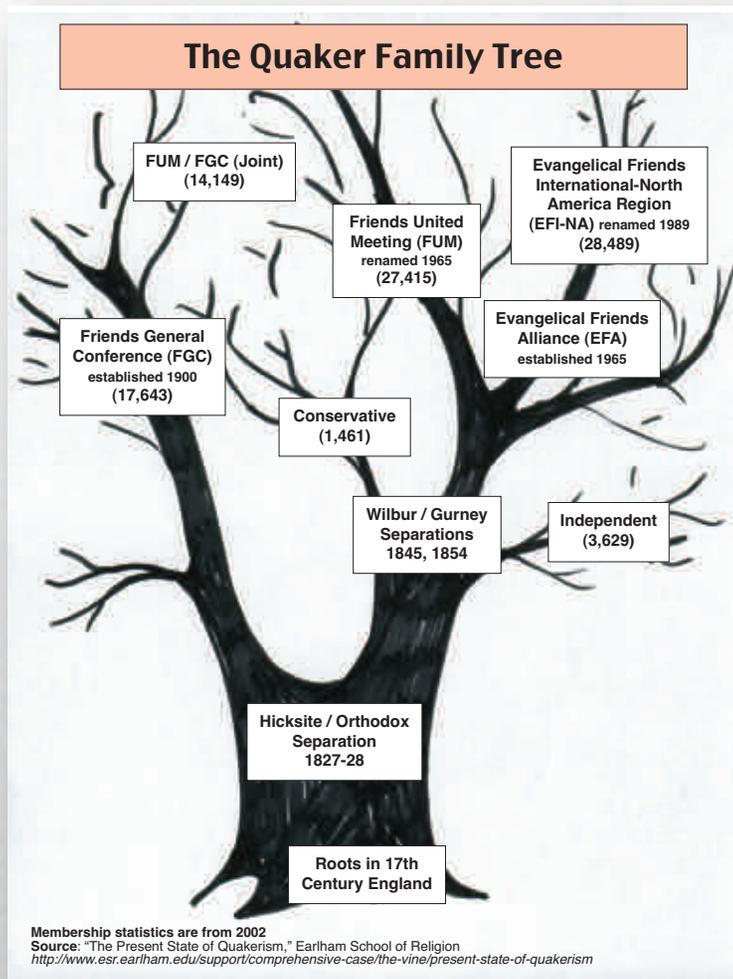
Wilburites join:

- Conservative





These splits have influenced how various Quaker groups worship...



After the tragic Quaker “split” in 1827-28, the Hicksite Quakers continued to have unprogrammed meetings, while the Orthodox Gurneyites began incorporating elements like pastors, hymns, and organs.

Today a majority of Quaker meetings are pastored, most with a period of silent worship built into the meeting time.

The Four Major Branches of U.S. Quakers

Friends General Conference (FGC)

- **Unprogrammed tradition**
- Liberal Friends who place emphasis on authority of the Inward Light
- Favor diversity in religious views
- Universalists
- 14 yearly meetings encompassing 30,000 Friends

Friends United Meeting (FUM)

- **Combination of programmed worship with some unprogrammed elements**
- Pastoral Friends
- Wide range of belief and practice
- Christ-centered meetings
- 50,000 U.S. Friends with several missions abroad

Conservative Friends

- **Maintain unprogrammed worship**
- Acknowledge authority of Christ Within and also of Christian Scripture
- Some still use plain language and plain dress
- 1600 members, mainly in rural areas

Evangelical Friends International (EFI)

- **Primarily programmed** worship; some unprogrammed
- Mission-oriented
- Strong scriptural base
- 35,000 in U.S.

In Traditional Silent Worship...

- Worship begins when the first person enters the room and sits.
- As more people enter and sit, the gathered meeting settles into seeking silence.
- Out of the silence, anyone may share **vocal ministry**.
- When a leading to speak arises, examine and test it:
 - ✧ Is it from the Spirit of God or my own ego?
 - ✧ Is it ready to be shared or does it require more reflection?
 - ✧ Is it meant for everyone or just me?

In Traditional Silent Worship, *(continued)*

- Traditionally, Friends do not bring prepared messages.
- When speaking in worship, one should use only as many words as necessary to deliver message.
- After someone delivers a message, a period of silence follows so that listeners can take what's been said into their worship.
- Meeting for worship ends when a designated Friend shakes hands with a neighbor, then everyone greets one another.

Do I have enough money?

Will it hurt someone's feelings?

What's in my best interest?

**IMPORTANT
DECISION**

Will I regret it later?

Do I have enough time?

How will it affect my future?

Is it the right thing to do?

Is it worth it?

1

Discernment

dis·cern·ment

di'sərnmənt/

noun: **discernment**

1. the ability to judge well.
2. (in Christian contexts) perception in the absence of judgment with a view to obtaining spiritual direction and understanding.



What Are Queries?

- A Quaker tradition of using questions as tools to reflect and discern God's intention for us.
- Questions that guide personal and group reflection about how our lives and actions are shaped by Love and Truth.
- Questions that remind us of spiritual values we want to uphold.
- Questions that help us align our lives with Spirit.

When Are Queries Used?

- Anytime you want to check yourself and your actions in the world
- When making a difficult decision
- When trying to deepen your spiritual life
- In times of deep reflection and meditation
- When clarity is needed about a challenging situation
- In Meeting for Worship and **Meeting for Worship to Conduct Business**
- During a **Clearness Committee**





**Meeting for Worship to Conduct
Business...?**

**Is this that Monthly Meeting I
hear so much about?**

Quaker Meeting for Worship to Conduct Business



“Despite the difference in format, meetings for business are meetings for worship in which our business is held and are conducted in the same openness to the leading of the Spirit.”

PYM Faith and Practice, 1997, p.22



Friends' Meeting for Business is built on two beliefs:

- ① God is present in everyone, which requires that we respect and value ourselves and others.
- ② We are all ministers with access to the Divine and with a responsibility to serve God.

Holding a Meeting for Business

- The meeting opens in worship.
- Out of worship, the clerk an issue.
- Anyone may speak about the issue.
- Sometimes there is silence between the speakers to listen for the Spirit beyond the words.
- After all viewpoints are stated, the clerk tries to summarize what has been said.
- If a decision is made, and Friends seem to agree, the clerk determines “the sense of the meeting” (*consensus*). There is time for comments and summary.

Holding a Meeting for Business, (*continued*)

- When the clerk feels there is consensus, he or she asks for approval. If there is approval, the recording secretary writes the decision in the form of a *minute*. There is no voting or show of hands.
- If someone feels strongly that the decision is wrong, he or she may challenge the decision or “stand aside” after saying why he or she must speak against it. Ultimately, the “sense of the meeting” is most important.
- If there is not agreement, Friends can wait until the following month to address the issue again.
- Meeting for Worship to Conduct Business is also where all Meeting Committees present their monthly report.



**And what was that
other thing...
What's a
“Clearness Committee?”**

A **Clearness Committee** meets with a person who is seeking “clearness” on how to proceed with a life decision, concern or problem, with the aim to help this person reach clarity.



Because Friends believe that every person has that of God within them, the purpose of the clearness committee is to aid the person seeking clearness in finding the *answer within* rather than seeking outside answers...



Also...



A **Clearness Committee for Marriage** may be appointed by Monthly Meeting to oversee a marriage “under the care of the meeting.”

- ◆ To help the couple find clearness that this is the proper step.
- ◆ To ensure that the meeting is ready to take the member or couple under their care.

A conference room with several white chairs and one red chair. The text is overlaid on the image.

How does a
“Clearness Committee?”
work?

First things first:

- Frame the question on which you seek clearness as fully as you can.
- Choose a clerk to lead the process.
- Select 3 to 5 committee members.

Consider friends who have:

- Personal knowledge of you
 - Wisdom and groundedness about life
 - A sense of trust between you
 - Openness to all possible outcomes
 - A capacity to listen deeply
- Clerk arranges time for committee to meet.

When the Clearness Committee Meets:

- ① An opening period of silence, in which committee members orient themselves to the well-being of the focus person and to listening inwardly. (~ 10 minutes)
- ② The focus person offers the clearness question and its context. (~ 5-10 minutes)
- ③ The members ask clarifying questions of a factual nature. (~ 5 minutes)
- ④ A period of silent reflection in which the members of the committee consider what the focus person has said. (~ 5 minutes)
- ⑤ Committee members ask reflective questions. (~1-2 hours)

Guide for Questioning:

- After period of silent worship and centering down, members question focus person.
- Clerk writes questions down.
- Allow space between questions.
- Only questions; no statements, no advice, no opinions.
- Questions should not lead the focus person to a particular resolution, but to consider a new point of view.
- Questions should be as open-ended as possible.
- An underlying assumption is that we hear God better as a group than as individuals.

How do we know when clearness has been reached?

- Group feels a shift in energy as resolution becomes clear.
- The group slows questioning and becomes silent.
- A sense of peace will be felt by participants, even if resolution is that it isn't time to know yet.
- The Clerk may ask, "Are all hearts clear?" to make sure there is nothing left unspoken that should be offered.

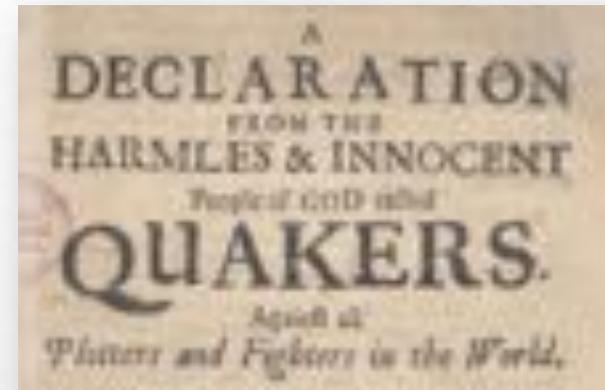
To what kind of decisions can Clearness Committees usefully be applied?

- “Is college the right next step, or should I go into the Peace Corps?”
- “Should I run for office?”
- “I’m feeling led to enter the ministry... Is this the right path for me?”
- “Are we ready to get married?”
- “Should I be a **Conscientious Objector**?”

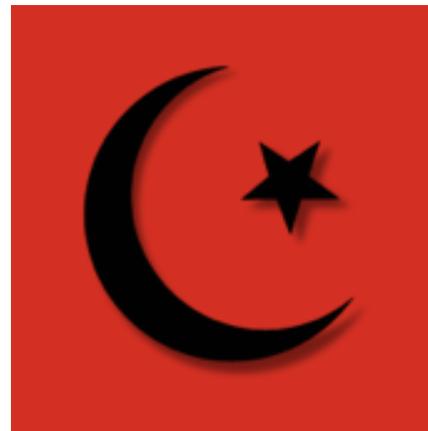
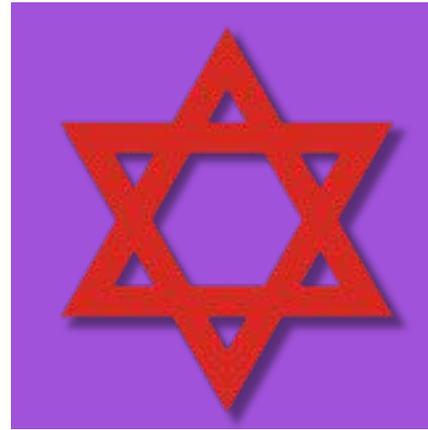


Wait...
About that last one...
What's a
“Conscientious
Objector?”

Well, it all goes back to the Peace Testimony...



- A **conscientious objector** is someone who, for reasons of *conscience*, objects to serving in the armed forces.
- Friends believe that following the Light Within empowers all people to resolve disputes peacefully.
- Many early Friends refused to participate in war, even going to prison for their refusal.
- Conscientious objection has been an important expression of the Quaker peace testimony in all major wars.



Comparative Religions

Quaker Affirmation, Lesson 7

+ What Is Religion?

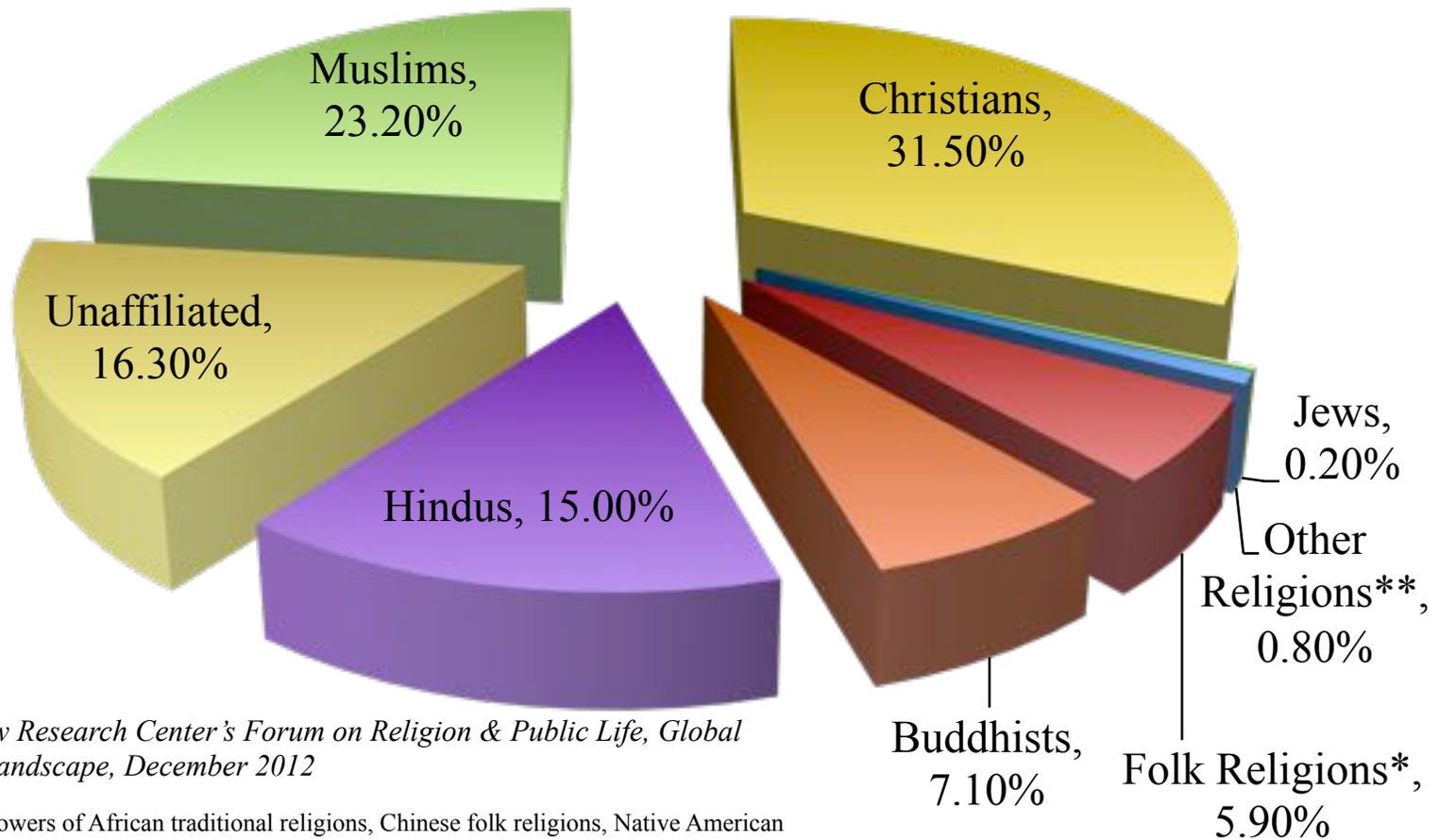
- A way of explaining life's mysteries:
 - How and why the world was created
 - Why we are here
 - What happens when we die
 - Why there is suffering in the world
- A way of explaining a supreme power, whether personal or impersonal, nameable or not.
- A way of explaining who or what created the world and all living beings.

+ **What Is Religion?, continued...**

- A way of describing a dimension beyond the physical world.
- A way of explaining how to lead a good life.
- A way of experiencing the spiritual.
- A way of worshiping the creator(s) or spiritual being(s) who are believed to have power over the world and our lives.

Size of Major Religious Groups (2010)

Percentage of the Global Population

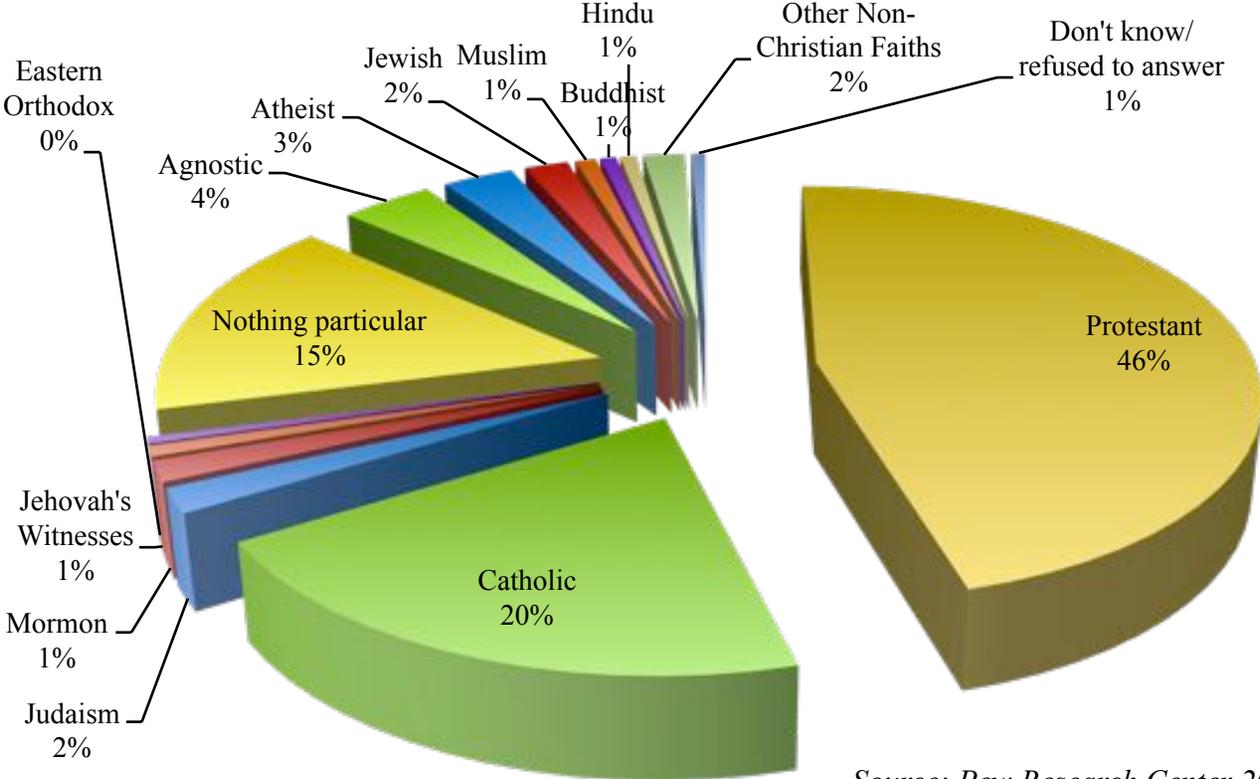


Source: Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life, *Global Religious Landscape*, December 2012

*Includes followers of African traditional religions, Chinese folk religions, Native American religions and Australian aboriginal religions.

**Includes Bahai's, Jains, Sikhs, Shintoists, Taoists, followers of Tenrikyo, Wiccans, Zoroastrians and many other faiths.

Religious Affiliation in the U.S. (2014)



Source: Pew Research Center 2014

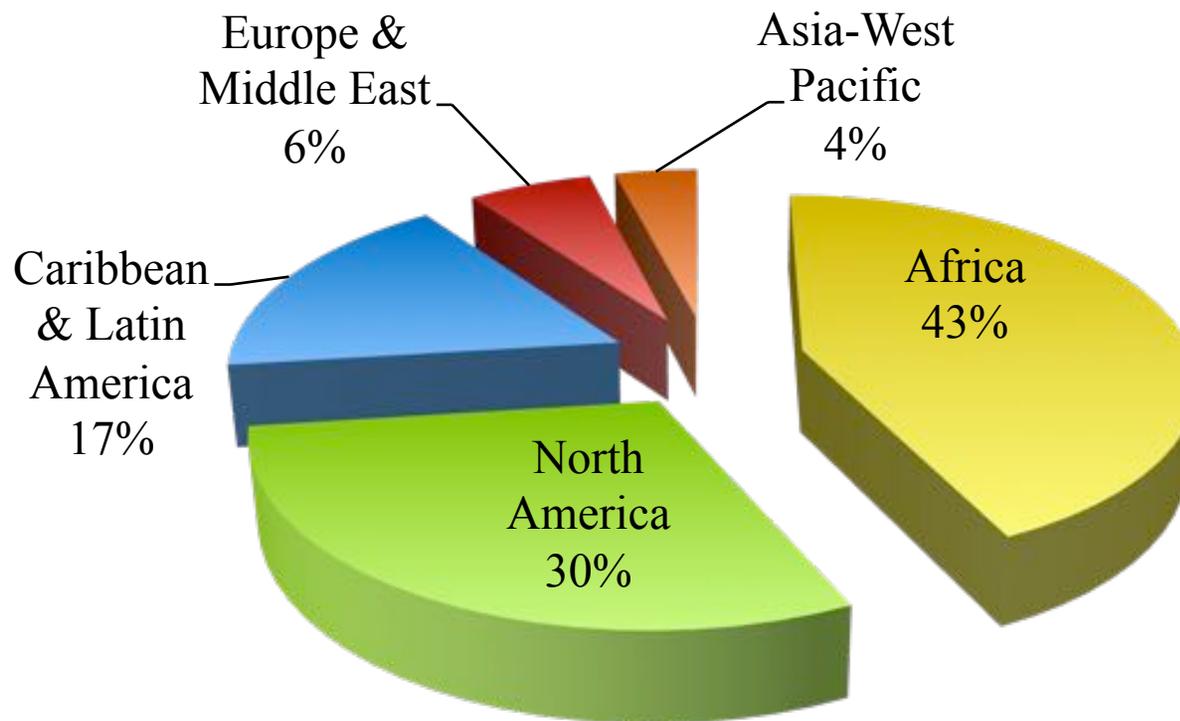
NOTE: Christians = >68%

Distribution of Quakers in the World (2011)

Worldwide: most recent membership count = 358,923

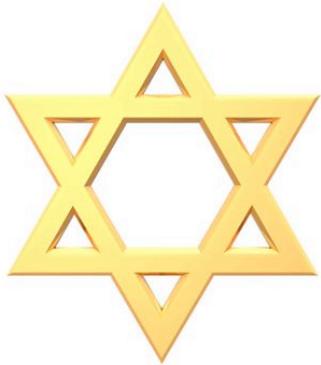
United States: 2007 membership count = 86,837

(not including children and attenders)



*Source: Quaker Information Center,
Earlham School of Religion*

We will focus on five world religions:



Judaism



Buddhism

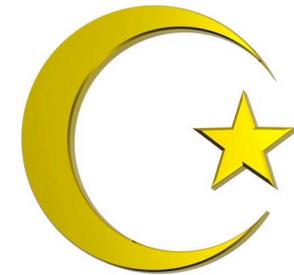


Hinduism



Christianity

Catholic
and
Protestant



**Islam
(Muslim)**

“Let Your Life Speak”

~ an old Quaker saying



*Quakers
letting their lives speak
through
music, literature, and art*

Quaker Affirmation, Lesson 8

Jordan's Quaker Meeting 2 by Ron Waddams 1981



Reproduction with permission from Larren Art Trust

Presence in the Midst by J Doyle Penrose



Reproduction with permission from Friends United Meeting



Silent Vigil

Ron Waddams
1981

*Reproduction with
permission from
Larren Art Trust*

Quakers in

Action:

What Quakers Are Doing in the World Today

Quaker Affirmation, Lesson 9

AFSC: American Friends Service Committee

- Founded in 1917 during World War I to give conscientious objectors ways to serve without joining military or taking lives.
- Devoted to service, development, and peace programs throughout the world.
- Key issues:
 - Building peace
 - Immigrant rights
 - Addressing prisons
 - Just economies
 - Ending discrimination
- Received Nobel Peace Prize in 1947.



FCNL: Friends Committee on National Legislation

- Lobbying the government since 1943.
- Talks with public officials and urges them to change government policies that spread forms of injustice.



- Sample Global and Domestic Issues:

- Climate Change
- Nuclear Weapons
- Immigration
- Sustainable Energy
- Peacebuilding
- Poverty
- War on Terror
- Native Americans
- Drones

- Policy Statement:

We seek a world free of war and the threat of war.

We seek a society with equity and justice for all.

We seek a community where every person's potential may be fulfilled.

We seek an earth restored.

Right Sharing of World Resources

- Began in 1967.
- Works to relieve poverty in the world by empowering women and families.
- Current projects are in India, Kenya and Sierra Leone.
- Gives grants to jump-start micro-businesses for women in developing countries.

The logo for Right Sharing of World Resources is enclosed in a black rectangular border. The words "Right Sharing" are written in a large, elegant, gold-colored cursive font. Below them, the words "OF WORLD RESOURCES" are written in a smaller, gold-colored, all-caps serif font.

Right Sharing
OF WORLD RESOURCES

Quaker Earthcare Witness



- Quaker organization with environmental focus.
 - Founded in 1987.
 - Organization “takes spirit-led action to address ecological and social crises” from a Quaker spiritual perspective.
 - Works via Quaker meetings to raise awareness and effect change.
 - Awards environmental mini-grants for Friends’ organizations.
-

Quaker Voluntary Service



- Young adults work full-time in professional positions at community based organizations.
 - Volunteers receive housing, food, insurance and a small stipend.
 - In addition to their work, volunteers also participate in workshops, retreats and continuing education and worship with local Quaker meeting.
 - Focus on social justice, faith, community building.
 - Current placements in Atlanta, Boston, Philadelphia, Portland.
-