

# CHRISTIAN HISTORY

The background of the cover is a detailed stained glass illustration. It depicts two men from the chest up. The man in the foreground has long, wavy, light brown hair and is looking slightly to his right. He wears a dark blue or black coat with a white collar and a dark blue sash or strap across his chest. Behind him, another man with long brown hair and a mustache is partially visible, looking towards the left. The background of the illustration shows a window with multiple panes, through which a green, leafy landscape is visible. The overall style is reminiscent of traditional religious art but with a more modern, textured feel.

Issue 117

## The Surprising Quakers

Heralds of peace  
in a world of conflict



## THE BUTCHER, THE BAKER, AND THE CHOCOLATE MAKER

Right: Quaker chocolate makers tried to treat their workers with respect and provide good pay, health care, and educational opportunities.

## SIGNS OF TROUBLE

Below: Solomon Eccles famously went naked as a sign of judgment. Originally a composer, he also burned his violin and all his music and covered himself in his own dung as signs.

**CADBURY'S COCOA**

ABSOLUTELY PURE

FOR CHILDREN CADBURY'S COCOA

*A healthy body is the preparation for a healthy mind.*

FOR ATHLETES CADBURY'S COCOA

Comfort in old age CADBURY'S COCOA

*The standard of highest purity LANCET.*

COMPARATIVE VALUE OF FOODS.				
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CADBURY'S Cocoa	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
Raw Beef and Mutton	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
Eggs	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
White Bread	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████

**CADBURY'S COCOA**

"Contains in a condensed and increased form all the full nourishing properties of the Cocoa bean." THE ANALYST.

**CADBURY'S COCOA**

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In addition, it is interesting to find that One Shillingworth of CADBURY'S COCOA contains as much nourishment as can be obtained for Three Shillings spent on some of the best Meat Extracts.

# Did you know?

QUAKER MEANS QUALITY, NAKED EVANGELISTS, AND OTHER TIDBITS



## DOING BUSINESS WITH FRIENDS

The nineteenth century saw many Quakers rise to prominence in business. Quaker businessmen owned three famed British chocolate companies: Cadburys, Frys, and Rowntrees (for more, see "Godless capitalists?" in CH 104). None of the three firms remains Quaker today. Barclays Bank, the closest thing Quakers had to a national bank for their movement, goes all the way back to Quaker goldsmiths John Freame and Thomas Gould in 1690. Freame's grandson David Barclay, a strong abolitionist and supporter of Wil-

liam Wilberforce, spent over £3,000 of his own money to free and transport to Philadelphia the slaves on a Jamaican plantation he received to settle a debt. Western Union was founded as a telegram-sending company by Quaker educator and politician Ezra Cornell, who also cofounded Cornell University. The company passed out of Quaker hands in 1881 and in 2006 discontinued the telegram service that had made it a communications empire.

But some famous products with the name "Quaker" aren't Quaker at all. The founders of Quaker Oats learned about Quakerism by reading an encyclopedia article in 1877. Quaker State Motor Oil also has no connection to Quakers, other than being named for Pennsylvania, the state William Penn founded. In fact dozens of commercial products, ranging from rugs to hosiery to bathtubs to whiskey to chamber pots, were branded with Quaker labels because marketers and consumers associated "Quaker" with "Quality."

## FIRE AND BRIMSTONE ON HIS HEAD

Early Quakers would not take up arms, but that didn't stop them from taking off their clothes. One of the most unusual things early Friends did to confront the ills of British society was to "go naked as a sign." Like the prophets of the Old Testament, they felt they were called to do strange things to preach God's message.

George Fox encouraged going naked to point out the folly of earthly wealth and success in 1652. In 1654 William Simpson wrote that he passed through Oxford naked, "signifying . . . that the Day was near at Hand . . . in which the Lord would strip you naked and bare"



**"MAY HEAVEN SO GUARD MY LOVELY QUAKER"** This girl, photographed in 1928 in Great Britain, wears traditional Quaker dress.



**SOWING PURE OATS** Today Quaker Oats says its logo promotes "honesty, integrity, purity and strength" and does not represent a specific Quaker, but early 20th-c. designs were clearly based on William Penn.

from both the English government and its state church. And famed diary-keeper Samuel Pepys noted that one day in 1667 at Westminster Hall "[Solomon Eccles], a Quaker, came naked through the Hall, only very civilly tied about the privities to avoid scandal and with a chafing-dish of fire and brimstone upon his head...crying 'Repent! Repent!'"

### NO MORE CHEWING CHEWING GUM

The Quaker practice of not speaking in worship prompted generations of parents to begin the "quiet game" to see how long children could go without making a noise: "Quaker meeting has begun. / No more laughing, no more fun" (or "No more chewing chewing gum"). It's certainly not the only time Quakers appear in poetry: Lord Byron wrote to one of the many women he fell in love with at first sight, this one a Quaker, these words:

... Let me breathe this parting prayer,  
The dictate of my bosom's care:  
"May heaven so guard my lovely quaker,  
That anguish never can o'ertake her;  
That peace and virtue ne'er forsake her,  
But bliss be aye her heart's partaker!"

Quakers have come up with rhymes (sometimes at their own expense) as well. Simon Heywood of the Sheffield Meeting in Britain penned this classic:

I'm a lonely little Quaker  
and I'm feeling very small.  
I'm the clerk of Monthly Meeting  
and there's no-one here at all.  
I've got all the minutes drafted  
and I'm ready with my pen  
but the sense of Monthly Meeting  
is they've stayed at home again. ...  
If it wasn't for the Quakers  
in the Quaker burial ground  
then I'd be the only Quaker  
for a hundred miles around. ...



**QUAKER NETWORKING** Quakers founded both Barclays and Lloyds. One of the cofounders of Lloyds trained in banking at Barclays!



# Editor's note

ONE OF OUR EDITORIAL STAFF was first introduced to the Quakers through the old rhyme "Quaker meeting has begun," employed by her mother to quiet the troops. (Read it in "Did you know?" on the inside front cover.) In my case, it was the Marguerite de Angeli children's book *Thee, Hannah!* that opened my eyes to Quaker plain dress and commitment to abolition. Thirty-five years later, I still recall Hannah's doleful contemplation of her non-Quaker friends' much fancier bonnets.

Some of us pass plain white Quaker meeting houses during our daily commute. Many know of Quaker contributions to British and American history. We might even know of George Fox, William Penn, and Elizabeth Fry, and realize that famed poet John Greenleaf Whittier and two US presidents were Quakers (Herbert Hoover and Richard Nixon).

But the full story is much more complicated. Quakerism began in a time of political and religious unrest in seventeenth-century England, in the chaos of a country that had beheaded its king and changed its religious course; it crossed the ocean to America, where Quakers got an entire colony to run (Pennsylvania); and today it continues in great numbers in Africa, where new generations are hearing the Quaker message (see p. 36).

## SEEKING THE LIGHT

Through the years Quakerism has been marked by distinctive "testimonies"—simplicity, silence, nonviolence, equality, and communal decision-making—but their practice varies widely. Modern Quakers range from groups almost indistinguishable from American evangelicals to those who frame the "Inner Light" (traditionally, Christ's light within) as a kind of universal divine. In their 350-year story, we discover abolitionists, prison reformers, and peace marchers, but also Quakers who went naked as a sign of impending judgment, Quaker

chocolate makers who set up humane workplaces during the Industrial Revolution, and Quakers who fought in the Civil War. We even find out that Quaker Oats has nothing to do with Quakers and that Whittier wanted to be remembered for *much* more than writing "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind."

What ties all these people together? One of our authors shared this statement from a group of Quakers attempting to reach consensus in 1985:

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

Jennifer Woodruff Tait  
Managing editor, *Christian History*

P.S. In issue 118 of *CH*, we're going to reintroduce a letters to the editor page. You already write us a lot, so please keep it up! Some of the most thought-provoking, interesting, and occasionally corrective letters will be selected. We're happy to be bringing this feature back.



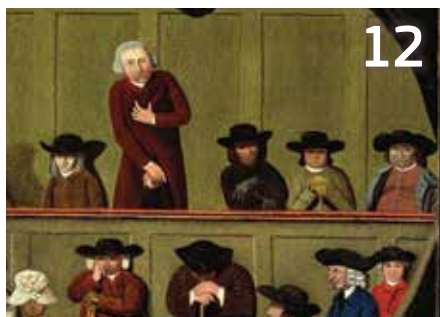
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Don't miss our next issue on the urban Reformation (#2 in our 500th Anniversary of the Reformation series). Read the stories of Zwingli, the Anabaptists, and the Church of England, and learn about how the Reformation changed sixteenth-century society and culture from top to bottom.

Read more Christian history at [www.christianhistoryinstitute.org/today](http://www.christianhistoryinstitute.org/today).

In an article in issue 34 reprinted in 115, Timothy George referred to cognitive faith with the words "'Even demons have it,' Paul wrote." It was James (2:19) who wrote: "Even the demons believe," as a reader pointed out.

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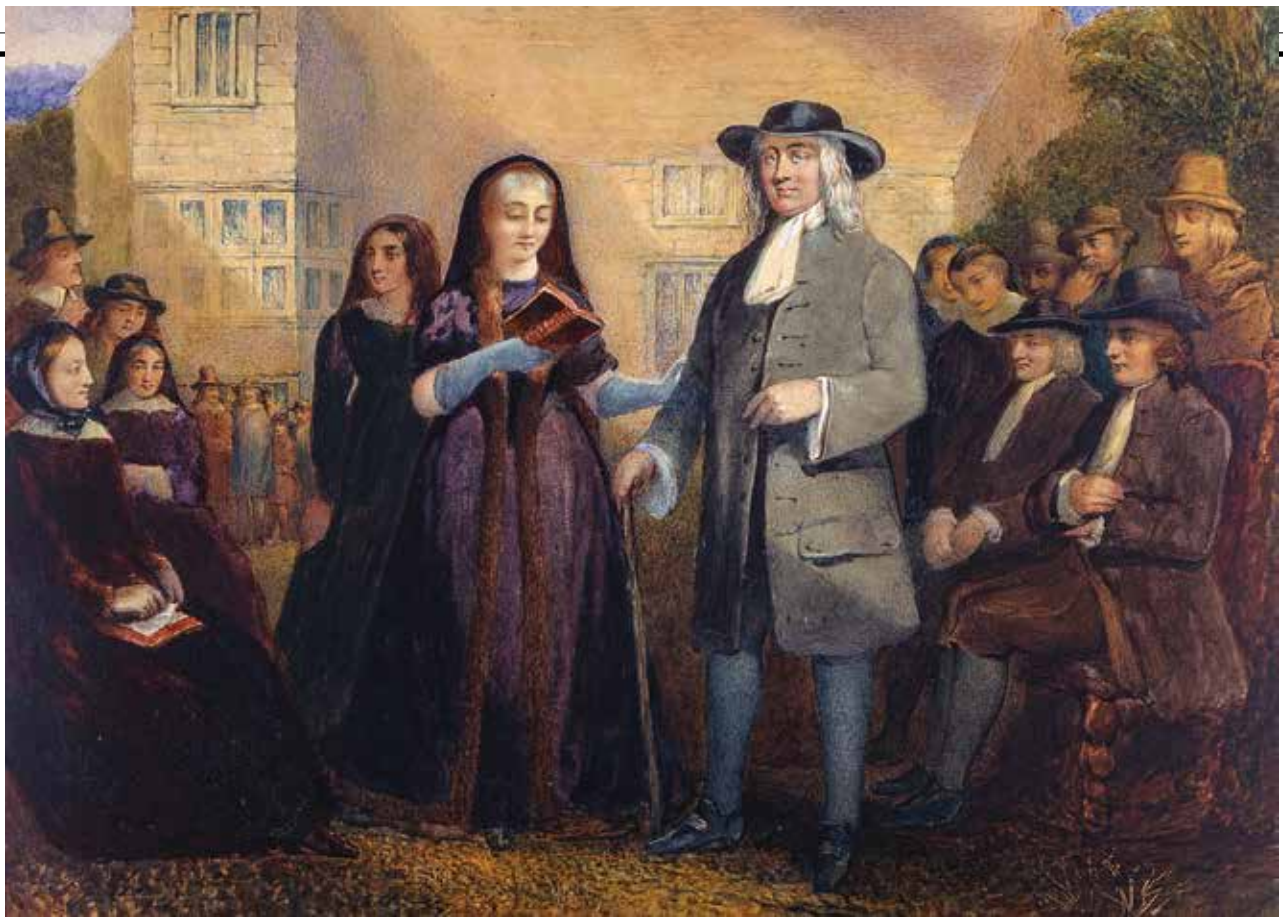
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# Seeking the light of Christ

GEORGE FOX AND MARGARET FELL FORMED THEIR MOVEMENT  
IN A TURBULENT ERA OF CHURCH HISTORY

*Max I. Carter*

**I OFTEN TELL STUDENTS** bemused by the culture at the Quaker college where I teach that Friends are “lost in the sixties”—the 1660s!

The situation in England, where Quakerism began in the mid-seventeenth century, seemed as chaotic in those days as the 1960s seemed to Americans going through them. Distinctive principles and “testimonies” observed by Friends today are deeply rooted in the issues and debates that marked the Civil War period of English history and its aftermath. We can understand those times and their influence on Quakerism through the experience of two of the foundational Quaker leaders, George Fox and Margaret Fell.

## **SEEKERS, RANTERS, DIGGERS, LEVELLERS**

George Fox (1624–1691) came of age during a time of deep divisions in English society. A century before, Henry VIII had broken from the control of Rome to establish the Church of England, but Puritans sought

**THE POWER COUPLE** Margaret Fell and George Fox began their association as fellow Quaker preachers and writers, and ended it as husband and wife.

even greater reform. Soon a number of groups splintered from the church, many with interesting names. “Seekers” and “Ranters” gave up hope for reform and left the church. “Diggers” and “Levellers” sought rights and privileges for the common folk.

Meanwhile questions arose about proper authority in matters of state, church, economics, and personal life. Finally civil war erupted as King Charles I’s Anglican forces battled the Puritan ones of Parliament. In 1649 this turbulence culminated in the beheading of Charles and the establishment of Oliver Cromwell’s government. England was now a republic. At the time this state of affairs seemed permanent.

Such chaos and upheaval led young Fox to some deep soul searching and, at times, despair. A faithful



**GATHERED FOR GOD** *Right:* On Pendle Hill in 1652 George Fox had a vision of a great people; this mural in the Pennsylvania state capitol today pictures the moment.

**"LET YOUR LIVES SPEAK"** *Below:* A turning point in the new Quaker movement came in June 1652 when Fox preached to about 1,000 people on Firbank Fell.



member of a parish church that was already experiencing Puritan reforms, the hypocrisy and lack of integrity he saw in his fellow parishioners' lives troubled him. They professed the creeds of the church on Sunday—and then behaved like anyone else during the week.

Seeking an experience of truth that was powerful enough to transform his life, he embarked on a spiritual journey that took him far and wide. He read the Bible, asked the advice of other believers, and yearned for a reality that would "speak to his condition." Nothing worked.

Finally, in 1647, as he recalled in his *Journal*,

When all my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could tell what to do, then, oh, then, I heard a voice which said, "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition"; and when I heard it my heart did leap for joy.

What he had been seeking outside of himself in others' experience, he found within, as the very presence of Christ. Fox felt that this was what he had been searching for—a truth that could be known intimately, one that had the power to bring him into new life.

### CHRIST TEACHING THE PEOPLE

Fox now began traveling to share the message that "Christ has come to teach the people Himself." People did not have to turn to the established church, the ordained clergy, the scholars of religion, or even the written documents of the faith for authority, he argued. The very Author of Scripture; the High Priest; the Prophet; Lord; and Redeemer was directly and immediately, without an intermediary, available as a Light, Life, and Power within. Fox and his early followers began to emphasize that the church is people, not buildings, and they called their places of worship "meetinghouses" and other church buildings "steeplehouses."

People saw all this as heresy at worst, and at best certainly a threat to church structure, authority, and the good order of society. After speaking to the congregation in a Derby "steeplehouse" in 1650, Fox was arrested and sentenced to jail.

When Judge Jeremy Bennett told him that he should tremble before the authority of the court, Fox retorted that it was the judge who ought to "tremble and quake" before the Almighty. Judge Bennett accused Fox of being a "quaker," or wild-eyed enthusiast.

The pejorative stuck. Fox and his friends, who had been calling themselves "Primitive Christianity Restored," "Children of Light," "Friends of Jesus," and "Publishers of Truth," among other names, accepted the term "Quaker" as consistent with their own "trembling before the Lord." (They also continued to frequently refer to themselves as "Friends" and still do so today.)

During his imprisonment, which lasted into 1652, Fox was offered early release from the "foul, stinking gaol" if he would join the militia, but he refused with a statement that later informed the "peace testimony" of Friends:

I told them I knew from whence all wars arose, even from the lust, according to James's doctrine [James 4:1]; and that I lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars; and that I was come into the covenant of peace which was before all wars and strife.

Following his first jail term (he would spend seven years imprisoned for his beliefs throughout his life), Fox began a journey on foot to the northern counties of England, far from the seats of political and ecclesiastical power. On the way he was "moved of the Lord" to climb Pendle Hill, an odd idea in days when folks didn't just go climbing random hills! Atop the hill Fox had a vision of a "great people to be gathered in the power of the Lord," and he took it as encouragement to continue to share his message.

# A man with a mission

As I had forsaken all the priests, so I left the separate preachers also, and those called the most experienced people; for I saw there was none among them all that could speak to my condition. And when all my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could tell what to do, then, oh then, I heard a voice which said, "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition," and when I heard it my heart did leap for joy. Then the Lord did let me see why there was none upon the earth that could speak to my condition, namely, that I might give him all the

glory; for all are concluded under sin, and shut up in unbelief as I had been, that Jesus Christ might have the preeminence who enlightens, and gives grace, and faith, and power. Thus, when God doth work who shall let [i.e., hinder] it?

And this I knew exper-

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

I was sent to turn people from darkness to the Light, that they might receive Christ Jesus; for to as many as should receive Him in His Light, I saw He would give power to become the sons of God; which power I had obtained by receiving Christ. I was to direct people to the Spirit that gave forth the Scriptures, by which they might be led into all truth, and up to Christ and God, as those had been who gave them forth....

Oh, the blows, punchings, beatings, and imprisonments that we underwent for not putting off our hats to men!... The bad language and evil usage we received on this account are hard to be expressed, besides the danger we were sometimes in of losing our lives for this matter, and that by the great professors of Christianity, who thereby discovered they were not true believers. —George Fox, *Journal* excerpts, published 1694



The vision proved prophetic. In the northern counties, he found groups of people who had become disaffected, just as he had, with the established Church of England and its preachers. These people, too, had left and were meeting in "chapels" (independent places of worship) or in "conventicles" (small groups of Christians who gathered without an ordained priest to read the Bible together and await the Spirit's interpretation).

This was the kindling to Fox's fire. As he shared his message of the "Real Presence" of Christ within and among them, they found it spoke also to their condition. People, in turn, would refer him to other gatherings of those ready for such a message.

Fox visited in homes, preached in churchyards, and, one June day in 1652, preached to more than 1,000 on Firbank Fell (a hilltop in the Lune Valley). There Fox's message persuaded many, and these formed the nucleus of the first group of Quaker missionaries, who would become known as the Valiant Sixty.

## ENTER MARGARET FELL

After the success at Firbank Fell, Fox journeyed to the far northwest town of Ulverston. There in late June 1652, following a priest's sermon on the authority of Scripture, Fox argued against the message saying that the Inner Light is the ultimate authority. Fox's response to the sermon had a profound impact on one woman in attendance: Margaret Fell (1614–1702), wife of a prominent judge. Fell later wrote of Fox's speech:

And so he went on, and said, "That Christ was the Light of the world, and lighteth every



**ASSERTING POWER** *Left:* When King Charles II ascended the throne in 1660 after the chaos of the Commonwealth period, he was not inclined to be nice to Quakers.

**PROTESTING INNOCENCE** *Right:* Quaker leaders drafted this petition to the king that year, arguing that they did not believe in war and would not participate in fighting.

man that cometh into the world; and that by this light they might be gathered to God," etc. I [Fell] stood up in my pew, and wondered at his doctrine, for I had never heard such before.... [Fox continued] "Then what had any to do with the scriptures, but as they came to the Spirit that gave them forth? You will say, *Christ saith this, and the apostles say this*; but what canst thou say? Art thou a child of the Light, and hast thou walked in the Light, and what thou speakest, is it inwardly from God?" etc.

This opened me so, that it cut me to the heart; and then I saw clearly we were all wrong. So I sat down in my pew again, and cried bitterly: and I cried in my spirit to the Lord, "We are all thieves; we are all thieves; we have taken the scriptures in words, and know nothing of them in ourselves."

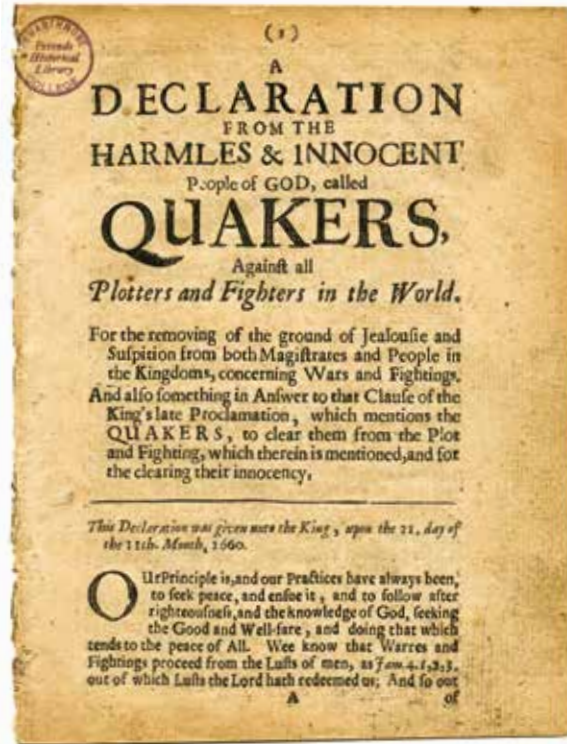
Margaret invited Fox to the Fell home, Swarthmore Hall, to further explain this "new doctrine" to her and her family. Judge Thomas Fell was away, riding circuit, and some in Ulverston were alarmed at the influence this Fox in the hen house was having on Fell's wife and daughters.

A delegation rode out to encourage Fell to return home immediately and address the situation. The judge did, and he met with Fox to hear him out. After the consultation, Judge Fell proclaimed that he wasn't convinced of Quakerism himself, but he would not stand in the way of his wife and family's embrace of it.

Judge Fell's reputation and position now protected Quakers, and Swarthmore Hall served as their "Grand Central Station." There Quakers held "meetings for worship" (as they referred to their worship services), and from there they sent forth missionaries who later returned for rejuvenation.

Margaret Fell's organizational genius helped plan and fund the Quaker enterprise from 1652 on. With the security of Swarthmore Hall as a headquarters, Fox's charismatic presence as inspiration, and the developing leadership of many other men and women who were joining the Quaker movement, Quakerism spread like wildfire. By some estimates it reached nearly 50,000 followers in the decade or so following 1652.

But the rapid growth came with its own problems. A turning point in the new movement occurred in 1656 when James Nayler (c. 1616–1660), one of the Valiant Sixty and every bit Fox's equal in the movement, undertook a symbolic act in the city of Bristol.



A central tenet of the Quaker faith is the Real Presence of Christ understood as a radical "Inward Light" that renders moot the need for outward forms of worship and ritual such as water baptism and physical communion. Christ is present, and therefore one has no need to "do this in remembrance." Christ is in the here and now, leading, guiding, and directing.

Tragically, as it turned out, Nayler decided to use an outward form to represent that very spiritual reality. Encouraged by crowds enamored of his charismatic teaching, Nayler rode into the city of Bristol on horseback as his followers waved branches and shouted hosannas.

To Nayler this was not meant to claim similarity to Christ (thus the horse, rather than a donkey), but to symbolize that Christ had triumphantly entered into the Now and into the lives of those who turned to his Light within.

Not all took it that way, especially not Oliver Cromwell and Parliament. Nayler was arrested, tried in Westminster Hall in London, and convicted of blasphemy. His tongue was bored through with a hot iron, and "B" was branded on his forehead before he was thrown in jail.

## MEETINGS AND MORE MEETINGS

Fox and Fell now had a problem. They headed up what they saw as a Spirit-led movement without ordained clergy, bishops, or hierarchy, but Nayler's actions had brought disrepute to the wider movement. How without hierarchy could they prevent others from "running amok" and further discrediting Quakerism?

## A woman with a message

Mark this, you that despise and oppose the Message of the Lord God that he sends by Women; What had become of the Redemption of the whole Body of Mankind, if they had not cause to believe the Message that the Lord Jesus sent by these Women, of and concerning his Resurrection? [Matthew 28:10, Mark 16:9, John 20:16–17].

And if these Women had not thus, out of their Tenderness, and Bowels of Love, who had received Mercy, and Grace, and Forgiveness of Sins, and Virtue, and Healing from him; which many Men also had received the like, if their Hearts had not

been so united and knit unto him in Love, that they could not depart as the Men did; but sat watching, and waiting, and weeping about the Sepulcher until the time of his Resurrection, and so were ready to carry his Message, as is manifested, else how should his

Disciples have known, who were not there?

Oh! Blessed and Glorified be the Glorious Lord; for this may all the whole Body of Mankind say, though the Wisdom of Man that never knew God, is always ready to except against the Weak; but the Weakness of God is stronger than Men, and the Foolishness of God is wiser than Men. . . .

And what is all this to such as have the Power and Spirit of the Lord Jesus poured upon them, and have the Message of the Lord Jesus given unto them? Must not they speak the Word of the Lord? . . . If the Apostle would have had Womens' speaking stopped, and did not allow of them; why did he entreat his true Yoke-Fellow [Philippians 4:3] to help those Women who labored with him in the Gospel? . . . But all this opposing, and gain-saying of Womens' Speaking, hath risen out of the Bottomless Pit, and Spirit of Darkness, that hath spoken for these many Hundred Years together in this Night of Apostasy, since the Revelations have ceased and been hid.—Margaret Fell, *Women's Speaking Justified, Proved, and Allowed By the Scriptures*, 1666



**"ARE NONE OF TRUTH'S ENEMIES HERE?"** A Quaker synod in the late 1600s shows leaders still worried about persecution.

They and their friends responded by organizing the Quaker movement into a structure that allowed for discernment of the Spirit's leading in community. Local groups of Friends gathered for worship regularly in silent assemblies awaiting Christ's leadership.

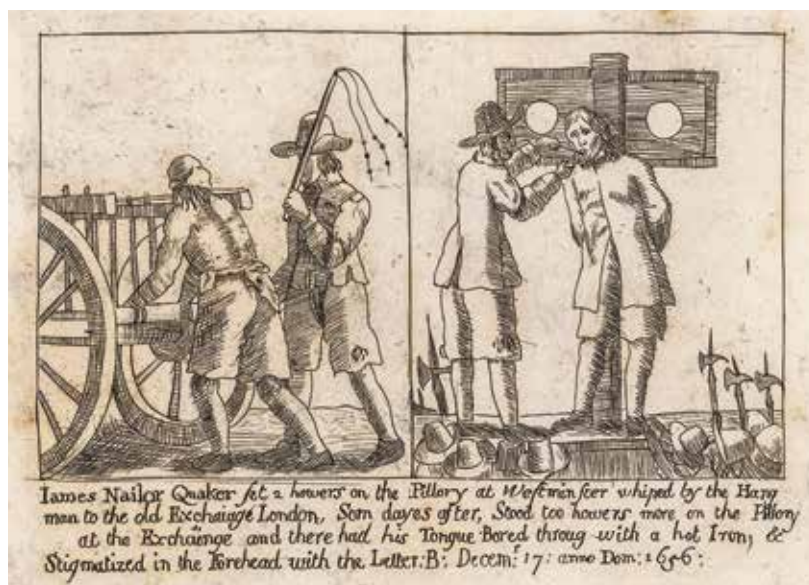
Once a month, these worshipping bodies would gather in geographical proximity to conduct the business of Friends—called, naturally, "monthly meetings." Monthly meetings in a larger geographical area would meet four times a year as "quarterly meetings," and these, in turn, would gather annually in "yearly meetings."

Fell emphasized empowering women to lead in the movement, and separate men's and women's business meetings were established so that women would develop leadership and speaking abilities. This whole organizational structure from the 1650s still holds, in large part, into the twenty-first century, although men and women are no longer separated.

In addition to this structure of meetings, committees were formed to address the concerns of Friends. And the concerns were many: Quakers suffered in various persecutions of nonconformists; writings appeared purporting to represent Friends (whether accurately or not); and the movement struggled to achieve the "prospering of Truth" and to care for one another.

Eventually "elders," "overseers," and "ministers" were designated for particular functions within what was becoming something akin to a denomination.





**A COSTLY TRIP** Left: James Nailor's horseback ride into Bristol led to his being whipped and branded as a blasphemer.

**HOME BASE** Below: George Fox gave this house near Swarthmore Hall to the Quaker movement in 1688, and in 1691 it became a meeting house.

In years to come, it would be officially named the Religious Society of Friends.

Such organization did, indeed, help discipline an otherwise unruly body steeped in the chaos of the English Civil War period, but another problem soon arose. In 1660, following the death of Cromwell and the brief, disastrous rule of his son Richard, King Charles II ascended the throne of England restoring the monarchy that had ended with his father's execution. Charles set about to avenge his father, and there were plenty of suspect groups out and about.

### DON'T PERSECUTE US

How was the new king to tell that Quakers did not necessarily want to bring him down? Large numbers of radicals who had served in Cromwell's New Model Army in opposition to Charles I had become disillusioned and turned to Quakerism. In another move that helped assure Friends' survival, Fell and others developed a statement addressed to Charles II distancing Quakers from those who had participated in armed rebellion.

Delivered to the king in 1660, this "Declaration from the Harmless and Innocent People of God Called Quakers" said, in part,

The spirit of Christ, by which we are guided, is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil and again to move unto it; and we 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 kingdoms of this world.

This declaration began a long association of Quakers with ideas of peace (see "Bearing and not bearing the sword," pp. 33–35), but it did not keep Friends from suffering under new laws making their meetings for worship illegal. However it did help assure their survival

ing Quaker meetings in her home. During her time in prison, she wrote extensively, including her most famous work, *Women's Speaking Justified* (1666). Fox dictated his most famous work, his journal, as a "look back" at his movement in about 1674. It was eventually published in 1694 after his death.

Fox and Fell were now truly a "power couple." Through the rest of their life together until George Fox died in 1691, their marriage provided grounding and guidance for the Quaker movement, even though they



were apart for long stretches of time. Each endured imprisonments, lengthy travel, and the organizational details of an expanding, international movement.

Even as Quakerism developed more and more institutional patterns, the movement begun by Fox still bore the marks of several streams of influence that had surged through English society when the first Friends gathered:

### Restorationism

Fox and Fell believed they were simply reviving original Christianity. Many Puritans, Baptists, and radical



**A FOX AT REST** George Fox's grave marker says nothing about the religious revolution he started and only gives his death date in Quaker style, avoiding pagan month names. The year started in March then, making January 1691 the 11th month of 1690.

reformers on the continent were also seeking this. Quaker emphases on the ethical teachings of Jesus about peace, integrity, simplicity, and equality arose out of these various groups' foci on restoring the purity of the early church.

### **Radicalism**

A short list of the groups seeking a radical restructuring of church and society at the time would include an array of names unfamiliar to us today but the stuff of daily headlines in their own time: Fifth Monarchists, Diggers, Levellers, Ranters, Familists, Grindletonians, and Muggletonians.

Quakers drank deeply from the same radical wells. Friends' use of "plain speech" arose out of an insistence on addressing all classes of society equally. They adopted the use of "thee" and "thou" for all classes, even though these terms were commonly used only in familiar settings. Their voteless decision-making arose from their belief that each person has access to God's truth. Male and female equality in the ministry and in society, and even the refusal of Quakers to tip their hats to higher-ranking people, were grounded in the demands of the commonest folks in the realm for a society where all were equal.

### **Apocalypticism**

These were scary times! Parliament had lopped off the head of the king, bringing to an end—it seemed at the time—a monarchy that had lasted for 1,200 years. The pillars of society were coming down. Some people wondered if the end times were upon them, while others held out hope that something great was about to be unveiled. For Friends this apocalyptic expectation

was felt inwardly in the "Real Presence of the Light of Christ" leading and directing their lives. Friends' silent worship under the guidance of Christ and emphasis on "letting one's life preach," rather than on the witness of outward symbols, arose out of this reality.


### **The alchemy of transformation**

Though we may not think much about it today, a revival of the medieval tradition of alchemy—uncovering the physical and spiritual laws that govern transformation of chemical elements—happened at the same time as the rise of Quakerism. One sees this surprising influence in Quaker insistence down through the ages on the possibility of turning to the Light of Christ and becoming transformed—through human equality, peaceful living, social justice, and overcoming sin that binds us personally and socially.

### **THE SCARLET CLOAK**

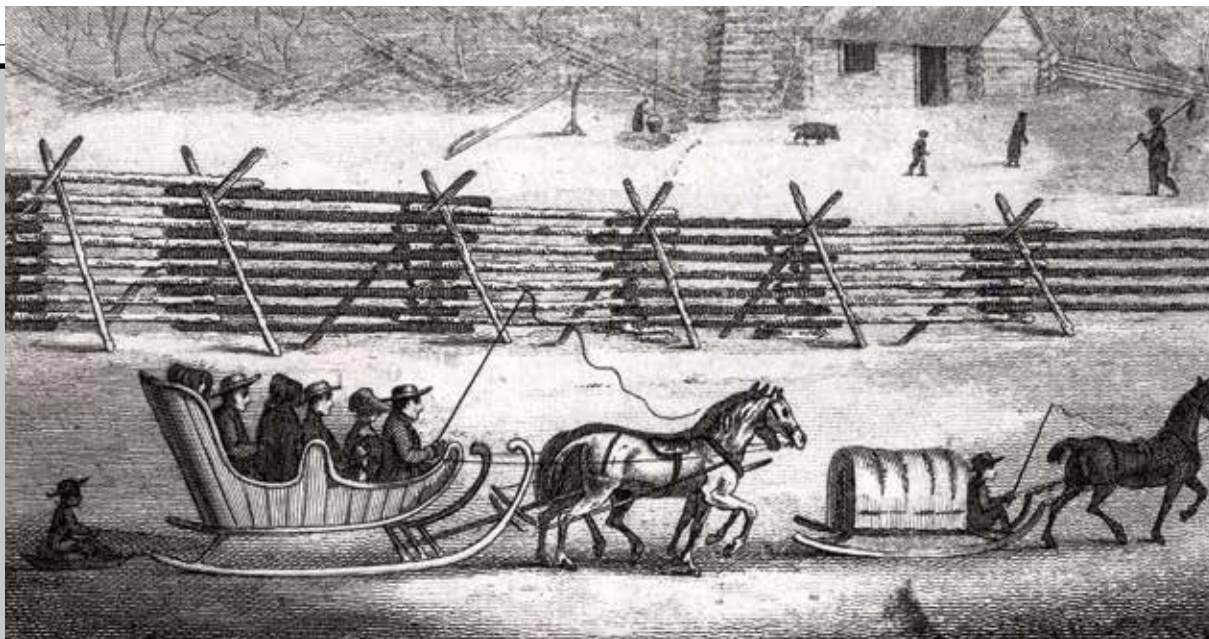
By the end of her life, Margaret Fell Fox recognized that Friends were beginning to wear the dull, drab colors that would mark them for the next 150 years. She would have none of this plain dressing; George Fox's letters to her record that on one occasion he had bought her scarlet cloth to make a beautiful cloak. She proclaimed in her last letter to a Quaker assembly in 1700 that these plain clothes were

a silly, poor gospel. It is more fit for us, to be covered with God's eternal Spirit, and clothed with his eternal Light which leads us, and guides us into righteousness, and to live righteously and justly and holy in this profane evil world. This is the clothing that God puts upon us, and likes, and will bless. This will make our Light shine forth before men, that they may glorify our heavenly Father which is in heaven [Matt. 5:16].

Friends may not have heeded her advice to look on the vivid colors of God's nature. But she and George Fox had articulated a gospel of radical Christian faithfulness and personal transformation that their followers continued. Seekers, Ranters, Diggers, and Levellers are all gone, but Quakers, forged in the fire of Fox and Fell's commitment amid an uncertain time, live on. 

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# Quaker speak

## Friends

**Friend:** A Quaker

**Birthright Friend:** Originally, a person whose membership came from being born to Quaker parents; today, common shorthand for a lifelong Friend

**Convinced Friend:** A convert to Quakerism

## Meetings

**Clerk:** The person who presides over a meeting for business

**Discipline:** The collection of rules and advice by which Friends are expected to govern their lives and conduct business, now often called “books of Faith and Practice”

**Meeting:** A Quaker congregation or gathering

**Meeting for Business:** A meeting to transact congregational business in a spirit of worship and discernment

**Sense of the Meeting:** A shared understanding of the will of God on a particular matter in a meeting for business

**Yearly Meeting:** Historically, the highest level of Quaker authority

## The Life of Faith

**Inner Light or Inward Light:** The Light of Christ inwardly revealed in lives of believers, seen today by liberal Friends as a universal divine spirit

**Leading:** An insight or action based on divine guidance

**Queries:** Originally a set of questions that meetings answered to report how truth fared among them; generally used as guides for personal spiritual growth and evaluation.

**Spirit:** For most Friends the Holy Spirit; for some, a universal principle of goodness

**GOING TO MEETING** 19th-c. American Quakers make their way, perhaps, to a meeting for worship.

**Testimony:** A principle for Quaker conduct and life

**Weight:** Spiritual influence and wisdom, as in “weighty Friend”

## Divisions (see p.23 for more)

**Hicksites:** This group emerged from the first major Quaker division (1827–1828). Followers of Elias Hicks, they opposed what they saw as Orthodox Quaker innovations and authoritarian leadership.

**Orthodox:** The larger group to emerge from the 1827–1828 schism, they opposed what they saw as the unsound ministry of Hicks and his stress on the Inner Light.

**Gurneyites:** The largest group to emerge from Orthodox Quaker schisms of the 1840s, they followed the teachings of John Joseph Gurney. They held beliefs congruent with evangelical Protestants on the divinity of Christ and the authority of Scripture.

**Wilburites:** These Orthodox Friends opposed the ministry of Gurney and are today known as Conservative Friends.

## Worship

**Programmed:** Worship with a predetermined schedule, usually including a sermon, hymns, and prayers led by a pastor

**Unprogrammed:** Worship based on silent waiting for leadings from God, rather than the expectation that any one person will speak or lead. — *Thomas D. Hamm, professor of history, director of special collections, and curator of the Quaker Collection at Earlham College*

# Testimonies of truth

WHAT HAVE QUAKERS BELIEVED THROUGH 350 YEARS?

*Paul N. Anderson*

**THEY WERE KNOWN** as “Children of the Light” and “Publishers of Truth” and eventually simply as “Friends.” Like many believers of their day, Quakers sought to interpret and follow the Scriptures apart from established religious authorities. Their focus on the Inward Light of Christ in the believer distinguished them from both the established churches and other dissenting groups. William Penn described the Quaker faith as “primitive Christianity revived” in his book of the same name, but what exactly set them apart?

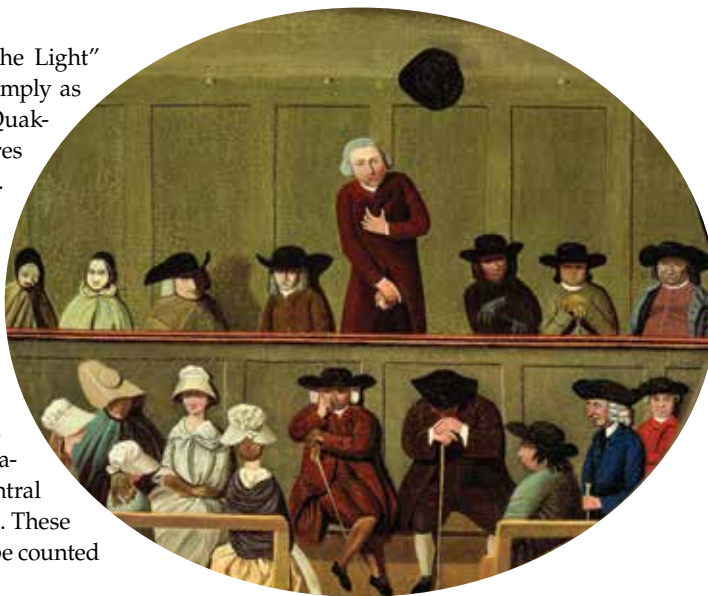
From the time of George Fox and Margaret Fell to the present, Friends have organized their lives around what they call central “Testimonies” (often written with a capital T). These testimonies came to define what it means to be counted as one of the Friends.

## **UTTERLY DENYING ALL OUTWARD WARS**

The first corporate testimony of Friends came in 1660, when Charles II restored the monarchy in England. Rather than declaring allegiance to the new king, Quakers affirmed their first loyalty was to Christ and his nonviolent way. Their letter to the king declared their peace stance and was also a not-so-subtle way of showing the new monarch they meant him no harm. Margaret Fell delivered the missive, which based its argument on Scriptures like James 4:1–3, Revelation 13:10, and Zechariah 4:6:

We, as to our own particulars, utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretense whatsoever; and this is our testimony to the whole world. . . . The spirit of Christ, by which we are guided, is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil and again to move unto it.

The peaceable work of Friends across the centuries took many forms. In 1651 George Fox opted to stay in prison rather than lead English soldiers against the Scots, saying: “I told them I lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars.” And when William Penn established Pennsylvania in 1681 as a “Holy Experiment,” he did so without an armed approach to defense or law and order (see “All who believed in God were welcome,” pp. 17–20).



**HOLD ONTO YOUR HAT** An artist imagines an early 19th-c. Quaker meeting for worship.

In 1947 Friends were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their opposition to the Crimean War and their relief work during and after the two world wars. Today the Quaker United Nations Office, Friends Committee on National Legislation in Washington, DC, and local Friends meetings and Yearly Meetings still seek to promote peace work at home and abroad.

## **AUTHENTIC WORSHIP: QUIET PLEASE!**

Another unique testimony of Friends is their manner of worship. Silence, one of the things Quakers are known by to outsiders, is not their goal; it is a means to an end. From the beginning the Quaker approach to worship embraced Matthew 18:18–20, in which Christ promises to be present wherever believers are gathered in his name.

Friends feel that God’s presence is not confined to the work of human priests or liturgies; the priestly work of Christ bridges the gap between humans and God. Early Friends found the work of the Holy Spirit powerful as they waited quietly on the Lord, with each one willing to speak or minister as led.

As early Friends became involved in public ministry, they traveled about, sharing concerns and





**POWERFUL WORDS** Above: This tile in a British meeting house garden expresses four leading Quaker testimonies.

**PREACHING PEACE** Right: Someone placed this image of George Fox in a 19th-c. frame.



encouragement. In the second half of the nineteenth century, effective ministers in North America often found themselves establishing new congregations. This led to the development of more traditional-looking pastoral ministries and “programmed” Friends meetings that followed set orders of worship (see “Quaker speak,” p. 11). This continues today, but Quakers also still affirm the words of the 1887 Richmond (Indiana) *Declaration of Faith*:

Worship is the adoring response of the heart and mind to the influence of the Spirit of God. It stands neither in forms nor in the formal disuse of forms: it may be without words as well as with them, but it must be in spirit and in truth [John 4:24].

### EVERY CHRISTIAN A MINISTER

Friends’ third testimony embraces inclusive and empowered ministry. Since at Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out on women as well as men and on the young as well as the old (Acts 2), Friends have held from the beginning that effective Christian ministry is inspired in its empowerment, compassionate in its character, and inclusive in its scope. Women and men, educated and uneducated, young and old were Jesus’ friends and partnered with him in ministry. The question is not if a Christian will be a minister, but how?

Friends understand effective ministry to be rooted in compassion and love rather than in position or status. As John Woolman (see “Unforgettable witness for freedom,” p. 28) put it: “[Ministry] is from the operation of his [God’s] spirit upon their hearts, first purifying them and thus giving them a feeling sense of the conditions of others.” Those who experience effective public ministry among Friends are “recorded” as being ordained, and some are “released for ministry” in subsidized positions.

### LIVING SACRAMENTS

Friends do not practice the use of outward sacraments. The Bible notes that John baptized with water, but Jesus baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Friends thus hold that the essential baptism is spiritual immersion in Christ and being filled with the Holy Spirit, and that the true sign of being Jesus’ followers is not participation in a religious rite, but the display of love for one another (John 13:35).

Likewise Quakers feel that the real presence of Christ is experienced fully within the gathered meeting for worship, and authentic *koinonia* (fellowship) is felt in the sharing of a meal. Sometimes the quiet waiting upon the Lord in worship is called “communion after the manner of Friends.” In a Quaker wedding, vows are exchanged in the presence of God and witnesses without the need of an officiant.

### YES MEANS YES, AND NO MEANS NO

Friends also have historically held to a testimony of equality and simplicity. In seeking to follow the way of Christ, they refuse to swear or resort to oaths, based on the injunction in Matthew 5:34–37 to let their “yes” be yes and their “no” be no. Seventeenth-century Friends resisted issuing false compliments or doffing hats before magistrates and called each other by the intimate “thee” and “thou” rather than “you” (which was the more formal term at the time). They also resisted the use of references to



**NOT DRESSED TO IMPRESS** *Left:* Quakers were distinguished for many years by their plain dress in a fancy society, as illustrated in this 1675 engraving.

**“CHASTISING A QUAKER”** *Below:* Quaker unwillingness to conform to English society sometimes led to persecution; this 19th-c. print pictures a scene from the 1650s.



social status and to titles. In business and industry, Quaker owners in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries frequently sought to provide housing and benefits for their workers (see “Did you know?” inside front cover).

In addition to plain speech and forthright discourse, Friends embraced simplicity in clothing, architecture, and design. Quaker meetinghouses still tend to be simple in their design, with benches or chairs facing each other to emphasize communal interests.

### DO WE ALL AGREE?

Quakers also upheld and still express today a testimony of consensus and discernment. They hold “meetings for worship in which business is conducted” as a spiritual means of discerning God’s will, not through negotiation but through attaining a common sense of God’s truth. As perspectives are shared, the clerk of the meeting ensures that a broad representation of understandings is shared on the floor of the meeting.

Once shared Friends are urged to release the decision to the larger gathering; if it is compelling as a way forward, this will be evident to others as well. Where disagreements emerge, Friends distinguish between matters of preference, which should not hold the meeting back, and matters of conscience. They seek a common sense of leading, although they have not always been successful in achieving it.

### LEARNED FRIENDS

Early Friends were denied access to formal venues of learning in England, but they were deeply concerned about education, particularly literacy and Bible reading. It was once said that if the Scriptures were lost, they could be reconstructed from the memory of George Fox. Friends also encouraged learning in applied fields and the sciences. They came to represent more than their share of the population as members of England’s prestigious Royal Society and made many advances in medicine, pharmacy, business, banking, science, technology, and food industries.

In 1798 Quaker Joseph Lancaster opened a free elementary school in London and soon found it filled to the brim with children wanting to learn to read. With too few teachers to serve them all, Lancaster created a tutorial system still in use in which advanced students teach beginners. Quakers have been founding schools ever since. Today famed Quaker primary and secondary schools include Sidwell Friends School in Washington, DC, known for educating children of presidents, and Ramallah Friends School in Palestine. Quaker colleges and universities in North America include Barclay, Bryn Mawr, Earlham, Friends, George Fox, Guilford, Haverford, Malone, Swarthmore, Whittier, William Penn, and Wilmington.



**LOOKING INWARD** In this cartoon mocking reactions to early gaslights, a Quaker says, “Aye, Friend, but it is all Vanity; what is this to the inward light?”

All seven testimonies (peace, silence, living sacramentalism, inclusivity, equality, consensus, and discernment) are foundational to Quaker faith and practice. Early Friends opposed the dogmatic use of creeds by churches, but they found other ways to publish the tenets of their faith. In addition to the testimonies, Friends have “upheld doctrines of faith and practice”; every Yearly Meeting makes its own articulation of common beliefs that its members are expected to uphold. Friends also make use of “advices and queries” designed to provide guidance for living out one’s religious convictions and to be read by a clerk or a pastoral elder in a gathered meeting for worship or reflected upon privately.

### THINKERS AND THEOLOGIANS

George Fox claimed that one need not be “bred” at Oxford or Cambridge to be a minister of the Gospel. But it would be the educated who ultimately influenced and recorded the theology of Friends, expressing the Quaker testimonies and their implications for the movement and for observers.

Isaac Penington, William Penn, and Elizabeth Bathurst were fine early Quaker theologians, but Robert Barclay’s *Apology* put Quaker theology on the map. Barclay (1648–1690) received his education at Scots College in Paris. Upon returning to Scotland in 1667, he joined the Society of Friends. After writing several defenses of Quaker faith and practice, Barclay laid out 15 key propositions of Quakerism in his *Thesis Theologicae* in 1675 and expanded them into the Latin version of his *Apology for the True Christian Divinity* the following year. It would soon be circulated among the intelligentsia of Europe and translated into English.

Central to Barclay’s *Apology* is the idea that humans experience directly mediated revelation, conveyed by the Holy Spirit through Scripture, reason, experience, and conscience. This revelation is rooted in relationship with God, and such is the basis for receiving the saving grace of Christ and experiencing the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

A century after Barclay, controversial and influential Joseph John Gurney (1788–1847) was born at Earlham Hall in Norwich, England, the tenth son in a Quaker banking family. As a Quaker he could not officially enter Oxford University, but with the help of private tutors there he learned biblical languages and became well versed in theological studies. Gurney’s most famous work may be *Observations on the Distinguishing Views and Practices of the Society of Friends* (now called *A Peculiar People: The Rediscovery of Primitive Christianity*).

In his travels to America (1837–1840), Gurney preached before both houses of Congress and was



greeted by President Van Buren. He also traveled among Friends, calling for more robust biblical literacy and triggering a major split. Orthodox Quakerism, which followed his teachings, centered around Richmond, Indiana. Earlham College was founded there in 1847 in the wake of Gurney’s influence.

In the twentieth-century, D. Elton Trueblood (1900–1994) followed in the steps of Quaker writer and magazine editor Rufus Jones (1863–1948) and carried the theological torch. Known as “the dean of American religious writing” in the mid-twentieth century, he expressed convictions about the ministry of every Christian, the liberating power of spiritual disciplines, and the value of the devotional classics. Trueblood encouraged dozens of emerging writers and inspired modern devotional writer Richard Foster (b. 1942).

Trueblood founded the devotional movement Yoke-fellows International, and his protégé Foster’s book *Celebration of Discipline*, originally published in 1978, launched Renovaré, an international organization promoting spiritual renewal of the church. Trueblood’s *A Place to Stand* (1969), which he considered a sequel to C. S. Lewis’s *Mere Christianity*, took its title from Greek philosopher Archimedes: “Give me a place to stand [in this case, Christ], and I can move the entire earth.”

From the days of George Fox to the present, that kind of passion has inspired many Friends to live as “Children of the Light” and “Publishers of the Truth.”

Paul N. Anderson is professor of biblical and Quaker studies at George Fox University.



# DVDS ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND THE FOUNDING OF AMERICA



## The Intersection of Church and State

In the United States, the intersection of church and state is a busy juncture with a long and fascinating history. Debates about the proper relationship between church and state date back to the time of the founding fathers, and the arguments continue to dominate the news today. The Reverend Gregory P. Seltz of the *Lutheran Hour* radio program hosts this engaging, information-packed documentary. Seltz assists viewers in understanding the multi-layered and sometimes contentious arguments that surround this issue. Despite the challenges, Seltz believes there is still tremendous potential for church and state to work together for the common good. 55 minutes with PDF discussion guide.

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## People of Faith

Survey the history of Christianity in the United States from before the Pilgrims to the present in this six-episode DVD series. You'll gain valuable perspective on the people and ideas that shaped America and see how it came to be the first nation in history based upon the ideal of religious liberty. You'll meet the spiritual visionaries, leaders, and entrepreneurs who shaped Christianity across the centuries, including Jonathan Edwards, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Martin Luther King Jr., and Billy Graham, among many others. Well researched, balanced, fast paced, and insightful, *People of Faith* features expert commentary from an array of scholars including Martin Marty, Joel Carpenter, Thomas Kidd, Kathryn Long, and more. Three hours.

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## Gospel of Liberty

Produced by Colonial Williamsburg, this program re-creates the fire of George Whitefield, the zeal of the Reverend Samuel Davies, and their pursuit of the right to worship according to one's convictions. Thomas Jefferson guides viewers to understand how the axiom that government ought not to legislate belief became a fundamental pillar of American democracy. Jefferson's insights infuse this dramatic portrayal of colonial Virginia during the Great Awakening, a turning point in the American concept of freedom. 37 minutes.

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## Saints and Strangers

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# All who believed in God were welcome

WILLIAM PENN'S IDEALISTIC CREATION OF PENNSYLVANIA

*J. William Frost*

**WILLIAM PENN** (1644–1718) was an accomplished and influential English gentleman who once disarmed a drunken man before a duel could ensue. There were many like him in the seventeenth century. But Penn *also* became a radical Quaker, a theologian, a defender of religious liberty, a political theorist—and the proprietor of colonial Pennsylvania, responsible for a territory nearly as large as Ireland. The one-time man of the sword would go down in history as a man of peace.

## DISTINGUISHED ROOTS

William's father, Sir William Penn, was a decorated ship's captain who served in two Dutch wars and conquered Jamaica for the British. Oliver Cromwell made him an admiral, and Charles II knighted him. Sir Wil-

**THE LION SHALL LIE DOWN WITH THE LAMB** Edward Hicks's famous *Peaceable Kingdom* is peaceable because Penn (*seen at left*) has made a treaty with the Indians.

liam and his wife, Margaret, about whom we have little information, seem to have been conventionally religious but not devout. Though they never became Quakers themselves, they exposed young William to religion. Perhaps out of curiosity, they even invited Quaker traveling minister Thomas Loe to speak at their home. These experiences left an impression on young William, who later described "divine awakenings" he experienced as early as age 11.

Penn went to Oxford in 1660 as a 16-year-old, but during his second year was expelled from that Anglican





institution—either for participating in a riot against the use of vestments, or for association with John Owen, a leading Puritan and former chancellor of the university. The teenager next went to France, ostensibly to take a grand tour. He was presented at court to Louis XIV and spent nearly two years studying at a moderate Calvinist academy. There Penn read the works of the early church fathers and more recent Christian humanists. His teachers advocated religious liberty for

**THE BIRTH OF PENNSYLVANIA** Above: Penn, in somber dress, talks to King Charles II and his courtiers.

**WILD OATS?** Left: The young Penn acted as a conventional gentleman after his grand tour, attending the theater and enjoying society.

Catholics and Calvinists and defended Christianity as compatible with reason.

From there Penn's father sent the young man to Ireland to manage his lands. Penn helped put down a rebellion, sought to become an army officer (his father refused), and went again to hear Loe. Soon he began regularly attending Quaker meetings for worship and became a Quaker. Quakerism provided the focus the young Penn sought, and he embraced distinctive Quaker testimonies: pacifism and a plain style of dress and speech. He left no record of ever questioning the authenticity or authority of his many experiences of the Inward Light of Christ in worship and in personal devotions.

The cost of Penn's conversion to Quakerism was great. His father disowned him (although his mother gave him money to survive on). Almost immediately after converting, Penn wrote a tract that proclaimed all other churches apostate and questioned traditional doctrines: the Trinity, substitutionary atonement, and justification by faith. He was imprisoned in the Tower of London for blasphemy, writing from his cell, "My



prison shall be my grave before I will budge a jot; for I owe my conscience to no mortal man."

In the tower he wrote a minor Christian classic. Still in print, *No Cross, No Crown* (1688) praises suffering: "No pain, no palm; no thorns, no throne; no gall, no glory." Charles II sent a moderate Anglican priest to persuade Penn to recant. Penn clarified that he accepted the divinity of Christ, but found the word *Trinity* unscriptural. This clarification, along with influence from his father and from the king's brother, brought Penn's release from prison.

### LEADING QUAKER

Penn reconciled with his father, settled down, married, and began a family, though his first three children died. He preached in Quaker meetings and traveled as a minister to Ireland and Europe. He also defended his beliefs in debates with Presbyterians, Baptists, and Anglicans, and published numerous tracts. As a former aristocrat who had influential contacts at court, Penn appealed to the king and other nobles on behalf of Friends who had been thrown in jail for withholding tithes to the established church, refusing to take oaths, and not joining in public worship.

Fearing a second Puritan revolution, Parliament after 1660 sought to force everyone to worship in the Church of England. Friends openly ignored this law. Penn now emerged as a leading defender of religious toleration. He appealed to Parliament with secular arguments for it: moral, hard-working people whose labor contributed to the country's wealth were being imprisoned and reduced to poverty.

Speaking to religious audiences, Penn used a different tone. He argued that true religion was an inward, spiritual, voluntary matter between a person and God, not subject to interference from government. If Jesus and Paul preached the Gospel for free, why should Quakers be required to pay a tithe to a hireling clergy whose church they did not attend?

Taking money without consent denied the fundamental right of an Englishman to his own property; forced worship led to hypocrisy by those who unwillingly conformed and jail for the courageous few who disobeyed. An individual's conscience, the seat of religion, could not be coerced. Government should restrict itself to being "a terror to evildoers," so that authentic religion could flourish.

Things came to a head in 1670 when soldiers locked a Quaker meetinghouse in London, forcing Penn to preach in the street. Charged with inciting a riot, Penn turned the tables and issued a pamphlet portraying the heavy-handed actions of the prosecutors and judges.



**DEAR OLD DAD** Penn's dealings with the Indians led to peace for over a century and were frequently pictured by artists, including this painting commissioned by his son.

When the jurors sided with Penn, the court imprisoned *them* and tried to force a guilty verdict. Eventually the House of Lords ruled that a jury could not be coerced, establishing a basic principle of English and later American law.

### ACROSS THE POND

With their rights still in jeopardy in England, Quakers set their sights on America as a place to finally find the freedom of worship they coveted. Penn first became involved with Quaker efforts to settle America by arbitrating a dispute over ownership of West New Jersey, which Quakers had colonized. Later he approved a New Jersey constitution providing for trial by jury, an elected assembly, secret ballot, and guaranteed rights for Native Americans. But he soon turned his efforts to the other side of the Delaware River.

Exactly why Charles II decided in 1681 to give to Penn the land named Pennsylvania ("Forest of Penn") is unclear. Ostensibly it was to honor and repay a debt to Penn's father the admiral. Yet it also served as a way to settle new land at no cost to the Crown, rid the country of troublesome Quakers, and please influential courtiers.

Penn saw the grant as a gift from God to create a "holy experiment." "Experiment" in the seventeenth century could mean a holy experience, but also a scientific experiment: Christian people creating a "city upon a

hill," a "light to the nations" with good laws, religious liberty, and hardworking, prosperous settlers.

The name of Penn's new capital expressed this ideal: Philadelphia, "brotherly love" in Greek, the city described in the book of Revelation where people did God's will. Pennsylvania was also a place where Penn, habitually in debt, could regain his fortune by selling lands and collecting quitrents (land taxes).

Penn recruited devout settlers—Quakers and other dissenters—from the British Isles and northern Europe, promising cheap lands and political and religious liberty. He first came to Pennsylvania in 1681, laid out the plan for Philadelphia, began a pattern of good relations with the Native Americans, and established a government. Then he returned to England.

### PEACEFUL REVOLUTIONS

The first Pennsylvania laws sought to create an orderly, deferential society with an aristocracy balanced by democratic elements. Drawn up by Penn and approved by settlers, they reformed abuses in the English legal system: guaranteeing trial by jury and proceedings in English; abolishing imprisonment for debt; making prisons into workhouses; and reducing capital offenses to two: murder and treason.

Pennsylvania's religious liberty meant freedom of belief, freedom to worship, no forced tithes, no established church, and no militia. Instead laws were designed to enforce morality. All who believed in God were welcome, but only Christians could hold political office. Legislation would be initiated by a council, which Penn personally appointed. There was also an elected assembly to vote on new laws. Almost immediately conflict erupted as the two groups vied for power. In Penn's absence the colony proved almost ungovernable.

Penn believed that government had a limited role: "Let men be good, and the government cannot be bad, if it be ill, they will cure it. But if the men be bad, let the government be never so good and they will endeavor to warp and spoil it to their turn." He was caught between his ideal of a model society built on peace and love and his need to collect rent from afar. Disputes between Quakers and non-Friends over the need for defense of the colony, factionalism within the Quaker community, and opposition by virtually everyone to paying Penn taxes and quitrents made the colony a turbulent place.

In 1685 King Charles died, and his Roman Catholic brother James II ascended the throne. The new king, aided by Penn, sought to bring toleration for Catholics and others to Great Britain. But James's autocratic policies and his favoring of Catholics resulted in a relatively



**MAN OF THE HOUR** Through the turmoil of his life and the bitter realities of government, Penn never wavered in his commitment to serve God and foster liberty.

peaceful revolution in 1688 that placed James's Protestant daughter Mary and her husband, William of Orange, on the throne. As an ally of James, Penn was accused of treason, lost control of Pennsylvania, and went into hiding.

### LASTING LEGACY

In debt and disgraced, Penn experienced the death of his beloved wife, Gulielmas, after lingering illness, and the death of his eldest surviving son. He responded by writing a history of early Friends, a proposal for a parliament of Europe to bring respite from perpetual wars, and a series of maxims called *Fruits of Solitude*. In 1696 he regained governmental powers in Pennsylvania and returned in 1700 to solve its problems. The colony had now become prosperous, with Philadelphia emerging as a major port.

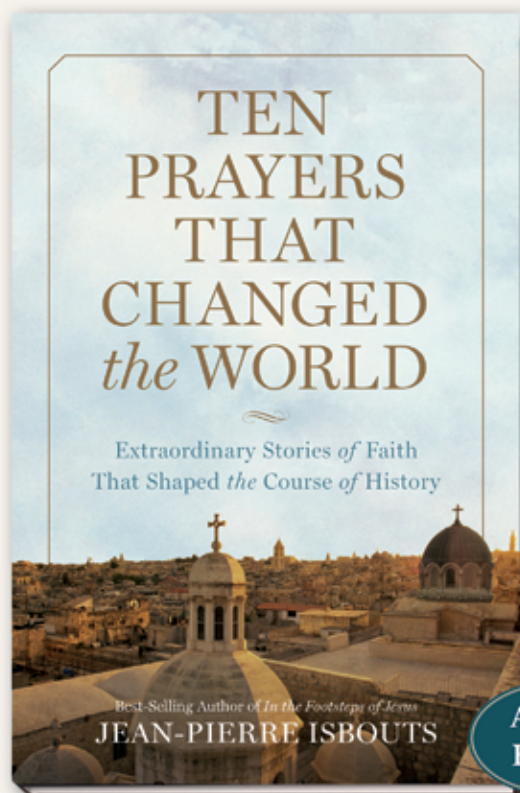
Quakers had increased their numbers, expanded settlements, overcome a schism, and enforced their distinctive testimonies. They dominated the ruling assembly in Pennsylvania until after Penn's death, but their political power and increasing wealth meant great problems maintaining religious purity. Penn, in a document called the Frame of Government, allowed the assembly to become the dominant force in government. The new Frame served as Pennsylvania's constitution until 1776 and is commemorated in the inscription on the Liberty Bell: "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land."

But disputes between Penn and the assembly continued; he became so discouraged with the colony that he offered to sell the right of government to the Crown. During negotiations in 1712, Penn had a stroke and the sale was not completed. The Penn family remained proprietors of the colony until the American Revolution. After Penn's death the colonists finally began to appreciate his contributions in creating and defending Pennsylvania as a land of religious liberty, political freedoms, and economic opportunity. ■

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# EXTRAORDINARY STORIES *that* SHAPED *the* COURSE of HISTORY



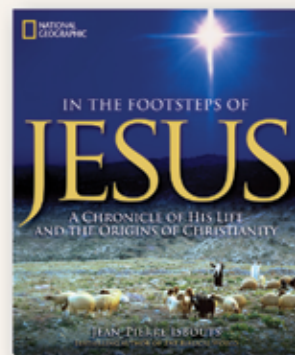
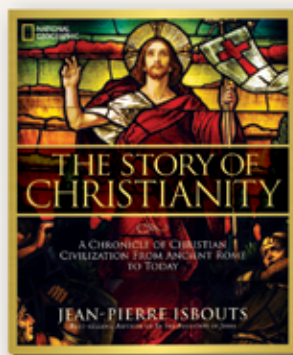
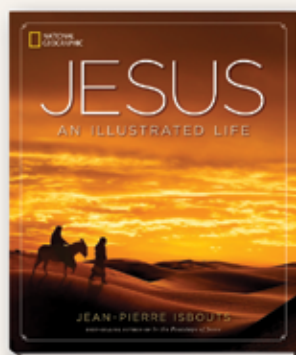
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# 350 years of a unique witness

How Quakers in Britain and the United States have been in the middle of social ferment for many years

1650

1700

1750

1800



GEORGE FOX, 1624–1691

**1649** Parliament beheads King Charles I in a political and religious dispute. During the turmoil of the next 11 years, many dissident religious groups form and dissolve.

**1652** Quaker founder George Fox has a vision while on Pendle Hill in northwest England of “a great people to be gathered.” People are drawn to Fox’s straightforward message, based on his extensive biblical knowledge and intense personal experience of the presence of God in his life.



A CARTOON MOCKING “NAKED QUAKERS” AS BEING “ABOVE ORDINANCES,” 1655

**1655** Margaret Fell (later Margaret Fox) adds her organizational genius to the Quaker movement.

**1660** The monarchy regains control as Charles II, son of Charles I, becomes king of England. The new government suspects all religious dissenters of political intrigue. Parliament passes laws banning gatherings and religious activity not authorized by the state church and imprisons many Quakers.

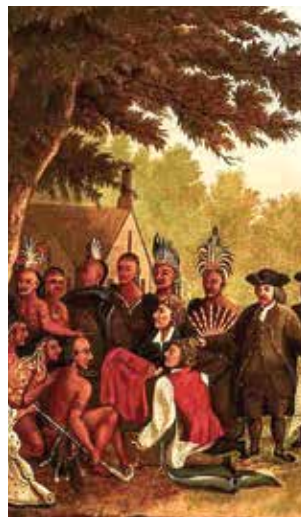
**1661** Margaret Fell presents the Quaker peace testimony to Charles II.



TRACT ABOUT THE PERSECUTION OF QUAKERS, 1660–1661

**1672–1673** While traveling in the American colonies, George Fox encourages Friends to free their slaves after a term of years and to provide for their future.

**1681** William Penn acquires a huge tract of land in the colonies as payment of a debt King Charles II owed Penn’s father. Penn leads an effort to set up a Quaker colony, guaranteeing religious liberty and extending friendly relations to Native Americans.



WILLIAM PENN'S TREATY WITH THE LENAPE, C. 1681

**1688** First official Quaker protest against slavery is held in United States, the “Germantown Declaration.”

**1689** The “Glorious Revolution” in England transfers power without bloodshed. Act of Toleration enables Quakers to worship legally.

**1754** John Woolman publishes *Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes* and travels through the South, encouraging Friends to free their slaves.

**1755** Quaker marriages are officially allowed in the United Kingdom.

**1756** European wars spread to the colonies as Great Britain and France battle for control of what is today the eastern United States and Canada. Many Quakers in government choose to abdicate political power.

**1758** Quakers begin campaigning to abolish slavery and the slave trade in the British Empire.

**1784** Friends achieve agreement among their Yearly Meetings that no member in good standing may own a slave and those who are slaveholders must make every possible effort to emancipate their slaves.

**1796** Quakers pioneer humane mental care in York, England.

**1807** Britain and the United States abolish the slave trade.

**1813** Elizabeth Fry starts prison reform work at Newgate Prison.

**1827–1828** Traveling ministers from American rural and urban Quaker groups denounce each other’s message. Quakers from largely rural settings who hold traditional, more isolationist views are called “Hicksite” after traveling minister Elias



QUAKER MEETING, 1839



Adapted from "History of Quakerism," Jamestown Friends Meeting ([jamestownfriends.org](http://jamestownfriends.org)); "Quaker and Slavery Timeline" by the Underground Railroad Society of Cass County, MI ([urscc.org](http://urscc.org)); "Our History," Britain Yearly Meeting ([quaker.org.uk](http://quaker.org.uk)); with additions by Thomas Hamm

1850

1900

1950

2000



**PAUL CUFFEE, QUAKER BUSINESSMAN, SHIP CAPTAIN, AND ABOLITIONIST, 1812**

Hicks. Urban, more evangelical Friends take the name "Orthodox" to represent a version of Quakerism that increasingly took ideas from other Protestant groups.

**1833** Slavery is abolished in the British Empire.

**1837–1845** Feuds over the ministry of John Wilbur of New England and Joseph John Gurney of Great Britain bring about splits among Orthodox Friends. Wilburite and Conservative Friends groups develop as guardians of Quaker tradition. Gurneyite groups are influenced by the Second Great Awakening and American evangelicalism.

**1865** Slavery is abolished in the United States.

**1869** Quakers traveling in the Middle East respond to a request for education and begin the Ramallah Friends Girls School to teach Palestinian girls.

**1870s** Quaker chocolate makers Cadburys and Rowntrees develop in Great Britain.

**1887** Diversity among Orthodox Friends reaches a crisis point. Some Friends who experienced religious conversions under non-Quaker revivalists begin preaching the necessity of water baptism and bread and wine Communion, activities regarded since the earliest days of Quakerism as outmoded.

**1890s** Barclays and Lloyds, founded by Quakers, become two of Britain's largest banks.

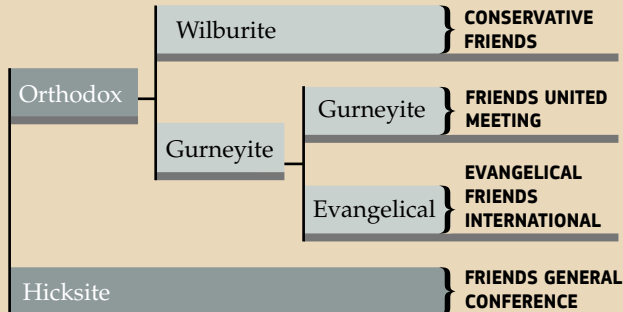
**1900** Hicksite Yearly Meetings form Friends General Conference.

**1902** American Friends establish missionary efforts in East Africa. The Gurneyite Yearly Meetings (except Ohio) form the Five Years Meeting of Friends.



**LUCRETIA MOTT, QUAKER ANTI-SLAVERY REFORMER, 1846**

#### DIVISIONS OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS



**1917–1947** Responding to the needs created by World War I and later by World War II, Friends establish Service Committees for war relief.

**1945–1968** East Coast Friends of the Orthodox branch reunite with their Hicksite neighbors, forming United Yearly Meetings in New England, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore.

**1947** Nobel Peace Prize is awarded to Quakers' British and American service organizations for war relief efforts. Worldwide membership stands at about 165,000.

**1956** Evangelical Friends groups in the United States form an association that attracts Quakers increasingly uncomfortable with leftward-leaning United Yearly Meetings.

**1960** Earlham College, a Quaker school in Richmond, Indiana, establishes a graduate seminary, marking a break with traditional disdain for graduate religious education. Today five graduate schools are affiliated with Friends groups.



**QUAKER MISSIONARIES TO KENYA HELEN AND JEFFERSON FORD, 1946**

**2002** Friends United Meeting celebrates 100 years of presence in East Africa by holding triennial sessions in Kenya, the first triennials held outside of the United States.



# Seeking freedom

QUAKERS DEVELOPED A STRONG ANTISLAVERY WITNESS OVER TIME

*Stephen W. Angell*

IN 1855 A SPECTACULAR slave rescue occurred in Philadelphia, with Quaker Passmore Williamson playing a central role. Williamson rescued a slave woman, Jane Johnson, and helped her and her two sons to depart aboard a ferry from the Philadelphia harbor. From Philadelphia African American activists spirited Johnson and her sons into seclusion, hoping to escape her closely pursuing master—United States ambassador to Nicaragua and North Carolina plantation owner John Hill Wheeler.

Nineteenth-century Quakers indeed held deep convictions on the slavery issue—an issue that formed them into leaders, sharpened their belief system, and helped divide them into factions. And their influence went beyond their own group. In 1833 after the death of England's most famous antislavery voice in Parliament, Anglican statesman William Wilberforce, Quaker Joseph John Gurney reflected on the “undeviating

**COME IN AND REST** Quaker abolitionists Levi and Catharine Coffin and Hannah Heydock welcome escaped slaves to the Coffins' home.

steadiness with which Wilberforce, during so long a course of years, pursued his mighty object, the abolition of the slave trade.” What Gurney modestly failed to mention was the part that Quakers had played in helping to generate antislavery moral principles in Wilberforce and his fellow opinion leaders on both sides of the Atlantic. The nineteenth-century antislavery movement rested on a Quaker foundation.

But that was not how it began.

## UNRIGHTEOUS PROFIT

At the outset Quakers in England, North America, and the Caribbean did not differ markedly from other Christian groups in their attitudes and practices



## WHAT A DIFFERENCE 200 YEARS MAKES

Quaker slaveholders in the 17th c. oversee slaves working their tobacco plantation.

regarding the enslavement of other human beings. In a 1671 visit to Barbados, an island where several wealthy Quaker slaveholders lived, Quaker founder George Fox advocated inclusion of slaves in Quaker worship and preached that it might be “acceptable to the Lord” if slaveholders were to free their slaves “after a considerable Term of Years, if they have served faithfully.” In another instance Fox was more specific, suggesting that slaves might be freed after 30 years of service—actually an eternity in the harsh world of West Indies slavery, where the average lifespan of a slave after arriving in Barbados was nine years.

In any event, the vast majority of Quaker slaveholders in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries disregarded Fox’s advice to manumit their slaves. Fewer than 10 percent of Quaker slaveholders in Barbados made provisions to free any slaves in their wills.

But a Quaker reformation centered in the Delaware River Valley of Pennsylvania and New Jersey reoriented Friends toward antislavery principles in the latter half of the eighteenth century. No Friend was more influential in this regard than Anthony Benezet (1713–1784), son of French refugees in Philadelphia and a teacher and author. Benezet and fellow Quaker John Woolman campaigned to free Quakers of slaveholding, starting with the influential Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and extending their efforts to other Yearly Meetings.

Benezet published antislavery tracts that combined moral and scriptural exhortation with travel narratives from explorers and slave traders. His strong grounding in facts made his warnings especially compelling. He admonished that people should not amass “unrighteous profit arising from that iniquitous practice of dealing in Negroes and other slaves . . . in direct violation of the gospel rule which teacheth every one to do as they would be done by, and to do good to all.”

Benezet was also an indefatigable correspondent, writing at length to thought leaders of his day: English attorney Granville Sharp, Methodist leader John Wesley, Queen Charlotte of Great Britain (the wife of King George III), and Virginia orator Patrick Henry. Both Sharp and Wesley reprinted Benezet’s writings or incorporated his prose into their works, influencing legions of evangelical Christians. English abolitionist Thomas Clarkson (1760–1846) based a prize-winning antislavery essay on Benezet’s publications; Wesley’s



*Thoughts Upon Slavery* (1778) was taken largely from Benezet’s work.

## STRENUOUS EFFORT

It was Sharp and Clarkson who helped to bring Wilberforce, soon the movement’s star, into the antislavery fold. Clarkson worked with public opinion outside of Parliament, while Wilberforce persuaded legislators through his eloquent speeches. As a result Britain outlawed participation in the international slave trade in 1808 and ceased West Indies slaveholding in the 1830s. Benezet’s correspondents also included less visible English Quakers who played vital roles in the English antislavery movement.

Benezet and Woolman also made strenuous efforts to convince American Quakers to free their slaves. Their efforts bore fruit. The 1758 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting decided that Quakers who bought or sold slaves would be forbidden from taking part in Quaker business affairs—a disciplinary step that stopped short of expulsion (or “disownment,” in the language of Friends). By 1784 all North American Yearly Meetings officially prohibited slaveholding among their members.

Quaker abolitionists may have been less influential within their own sect than commonly portrayed; for example, most Quaker slaveholders in the regions surrounding Philadelphia during the 1760s resigned their Quaker membership and joined other churches rather than voluntarily freeing their slaves. Nonetheless, by the last decade of the eighteenth century, virtually no American Quaker individually held slaves (North Carolina Yearly Meeting still formally held some slaves as a way of protecting them from re-enslavement by non-Quakers).



Many American Quakers in the South, where slavery was most entrenched, chose to move to the Northwest Territories of Ohio and Indiana, where it was prohibited. While all Quakers by this point would have understood themselves to be antislavery, the ramifications of that understanding varied widely.

A notable Quaker activist in the early American republic, Benjamin Lundy traveled to Missouri in 1819 to promote the idea of an antislavery constitution, but the non-Quaker Missouri whites opted for a slavery constitution instead. Lundy also promoted black immigration to Haiti, to Texas (then part of Mexico), and to Canada as well as gradual plans to end slavery, and he partnered with famed abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison (1805–1879) to publish the antislavery newspaper *The Genius of Universal Emancipation*.

Quaker businessman and sea captain Paul Cuffee (1759–1817), of mixed African American and Native American descent, traveled to West Africa, where he hoped to build healthy trade relations not based on slavery between Africa and North America. His voyages served to inspire the American Colonization Society (ACS), established in 1817 to relocate American blacks to Africa, and eventually the founding of Liberia.

One notable Quaker who promoted colonization was Benjamin Coates (1808–1887), a merchant from Philadelphia. Coates kept up a prodigious correspondence with leading antislavery figures of his time, including Frederick Douglass and Joseph Jenkins Roberts, the first president of Liberia. Coates proclaimed himself to be both colonizationist and abolitionist, and he saw the black republic of Liberia as breaking down barriers for Africans worldwide: “Liberia now lives, a grand success, acknowledged as an Independent Republic, showing the ability of the Negro race in the

**BELOVED BENEZET** *Left:* Supposedly an army officer said at Benezet’s funeral, “I would rather be Anthony Benezet in that coffin than the great Washington with all his honors.”

**SAIL AWAY** *Below:* Sea captain and Quaker Paul Cuffee supported efforts to resettle freed blacks in Africa.



conducting of affairs of state and nationality as well as in the humbler pursuit of picking cotton.”

### THE SHORTEST AND SAFEST MEANS

Until 1824 most American Quakers assumed that complete abolition would be gradual, taking place perhaps over many decades. But in that year, English Quaker Elizabeth Heyrick published a passionate tract called *Immediate, not gradual Abolition, or An inquiry into the shortest, safest, and most effectual means of getting rid of West Indian slavery*. Heyrick urged immediate abolition for humanitarian, practical, and religious reasons. She appealed passionately to the conscience of the slaveholder:

The sooner the planter is obliged to abandon a system which torments him with perpetual alarms of insurrection and massacre... the sooner he is obliged to adopt a more humane and more lucrative policy in the cultivation of his plantations.

To those “incredulous as to the efficacy” of immediate abolition, Heyrick commended “the consciousness of sincerity and consistency, of possessing ‘clean hands,’” as directed by “the Great Searcher of hearts, who regarded with favorable eye, the mite cast by the poor widow into the treasury.” This eloquent pamphlet played a large part in bringing Quakers like Lucretia Mott (1793–1880) and non-Quakers like William Lloyd Garrison to a more radical timetable. In 1831, seven



years after Heyrick's pamphlet was published, Garrison founded the American Antislavery Society and its influential publication, *The Liberator*. Mott became one of the founding members of the society.

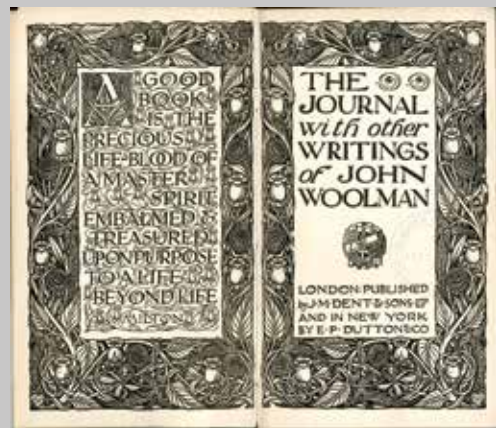
But into the midst of these shifting sands came a devastating schism. In 1827 and 1828, large majorities of Quakers in New York, the Delaware Valley, Maryland, and Virginia (and lesser numbers elsewhere) founded the "Hicksite" branch of Quakerism. The movement was named after Elias Hicks, a Quaker influenced by Enlightenment views. Hicks downplayed the inspiration of the Scriptures, the deity of Christ, and the Trinity, and also denied substitutionary atonement.

Those Quakers who opposed Hicks—often more urban and more influenced by other Protestant denominations—were called "Orthodox." The Orthodox and the Hicksites agreed on abolition, but the more radical move for immediate abolition introduced new divisions. Radical abolitionists, like Lucretia Mott and sisters Sarah and Angelina Grimké (converted Quakers from an aristocratic slaveholding family in South Carolina), felt that the only way the tiny but noisy abolitionist movement could have an effect on public policy was to get Quakers working with non-Quakers. Mott and the Grimkés were soon accused of compromising the purity of the Quaker faith by working "promiscuously" with members of other denominations.

After a highly successful lecture tour in 1838, the Grimké sisters were disowned by Orthodox Quakers—Angelina for "marrying out of meeting" the Presbyterian Theodore Weld and Sarah for attending her sister's wedding. (For more on Weld, see *CH* issue 33.) Mott, whose relationship to Quaker discipline was more cautious and circumspect than that of the Grimkés, managed barely to maintain her Quaker membership, despite several attempts by Hicksites more conservative on abolition to have her disowned. After an uncomplimentary portrait of one Hicksite, George White, appeared in a journal in 1842, White caused venerable antislavery activist Isaac T. Hopper and two of his associates to be disowned for supporting "a paper which has a tendency to excite discord and disunity among us."

### FREE LABOR, FREE PRODUCE

North Carolina native and birthright Quaker Levi Coffin (see "Seeking freedom," pp. 37–40) is best known for his work on the Underground Railroad. But in Newport (now Fountain City), Indiana, in the 1840s, Coffin devoted his energies to promoting "free produce." A number of Quakers at the time embraced this purchase of cotton, substitutes for sugar, and like items produced by free labor rather than slavery. But the economics of free-labor goods, which sold at higher prices and often were of inferior quality, were daunting, and even Quakers had difficulty living up to their good intentions in

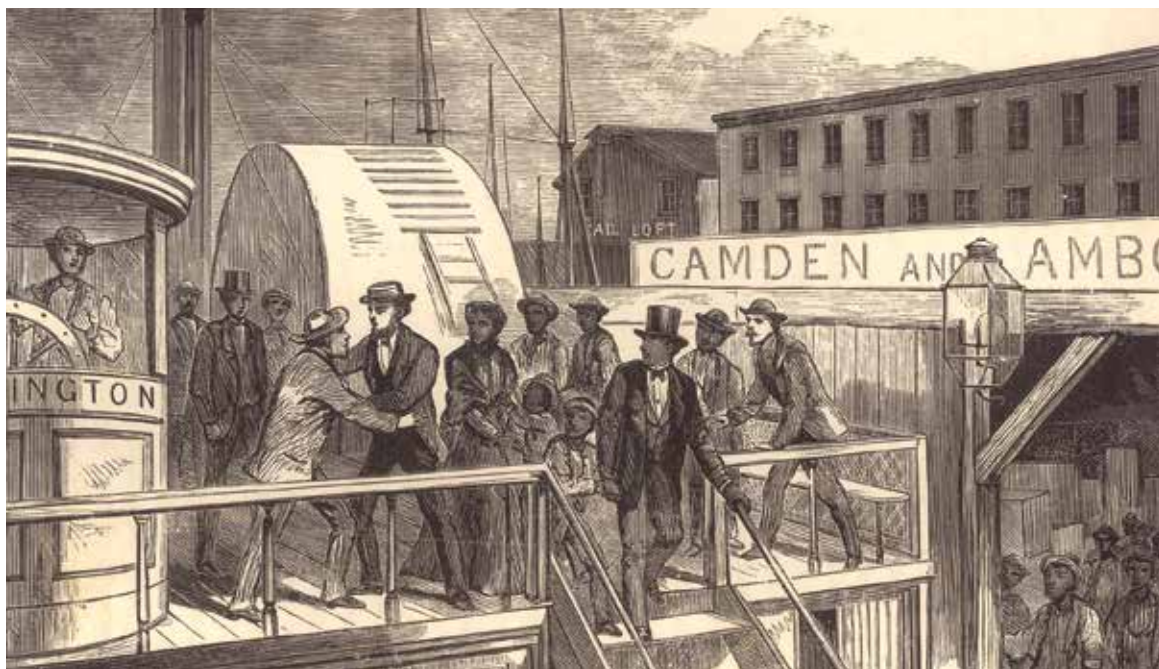


## Unforgettable witness for freedom

John Woolman (1720–1772), fourth child and eldest son of a family of 13 in colonial New Jersey, set a high standard for antislavery witness through his antislavery essays and writings. His eloquent and searching *Journal*, published posthumously in 1775, has never been out of print. At age 19 Woolman was asked by another Quaker to write a bill of sale for an African American woman. Woolman felt prompting from his conscience not to do so, but, he said, "through weakness, I gave way and wrote it." Young Woolman took the opportunity, though, to tell the other Quaker that he felt slavery was incompatible with Christianity.

Woolman would not give into any such weakness again. His essays and spoken ministry persuaded Quakers in the Delaware River Valley and elsewhere to take increasingly stronger stands against slavery. In Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Woolman served on several committees urging Quaker slaveholders to free their slaves. He took journeys further afield to witness to slaveholders in Maryland and Virginia in 1757 and to those in New England in 1760.

When he stayed under the roof of a slaveholder, he sometimes left money with his host with the request to distribute it to the slaves. At other times he attempted to pay the slaves himself. He was always direct in condemning the practice. Conversing with one proslavery advocate, Woolman stated that "the love of ease and gain are the motives in keeping slaves," adding that any attempts to justify slavery are "weak" and "unreasonable." While ministering among English Quakers in 1772, Woolman died of smallpox in York, England, at age 52. —Stephen W. Angell



this area. Meanwhile many Quakers objected to Coffin's Underground Railroad work, citing Romans 13 to question his defiance of the nation's laws in helping fugitives.

Meanwhile further schisms among both Orthodox and Hicksite Quakers developed. The more radical Quaker abolitionists in both groups formed their own antislavery Yearly Meetings. Other abolitionists cheered by this development—such as William Lloyd Garrison and Sojourner Truth—frequently attended the Hicksite antislavery Progressive Yearly Meeting at Longwood, Pennsylvania. Garrison, having in mind this association with Progressive Quakers, sometimes called himself a Quaker; Truth was more circumspect in declaring her religious commitments, but her latest biographer asserted that “Sojourner’s relationship with . . . Progressive Friends was as close as she came to a religious affiliation.” The Progressive Friends movement in Pennsylvania survived disagreements over slavery and other nineteenth-century controversies, lasting until 1941.

### HOPING IN VAIN


During the last decade before the Civil War, most Quakers grew steadily more radical on the slavery issue, while still hoping in vain for a nonviolent outcome that would end slavery and preserve the peace. It was at this juncture, in 1855, that Passmore Williamson rescued Jane Johnson, who had escaped her master, the United States ambassador.

Accused of kidnapping Johnson, Williamson served time in prison for this episode; Johnson, at great personal peril of being re-enslaved, appeared in a Philadelphia courtroom to refute the charge of

**DARING RESCUE** Passmore Williamson helps Jane Johnson and her children escape.

kidnapping. Abolitionists and local officials managed to preserve her freedom despite federal marshals’ strenuous attempts to recapture her after her testimony.

But radicalism went further still. Two Quaker brothers from Iowa, Edwin and Barclay Coppock, found abolitionism a stronger call than nonviolence and joined John Brown’s 1859 armed insurrection at Harper’s Ferry. Edwin was executed for his participation in Brown’s insurrection, while Barclay escaped Harper’s Ferry, only to die two years later while serving with the Third Kansas Infantry.

In Indiana, though more than 2,000 Quaker men of military age refused to serve in the Civil War for reasons of conscience, over 1,000 served in the Union Army. Of these over 200 died during the war. English Friends such as John Bright, a member of Parliament, aided the Union cause, successfully lobbying the conservative English government not to recognize the Confederacy nor to enter the war on the side of the Southern states. After the war numerous Friends from New England, Philadelphia, and Indiana, including Levi Coffin, worked strenuously to assist the freed slaves after their emancipation. What Benezet and Woolman had begun, they hoped to finish—by bringing African Americans to full participation in American society. Their task continues today. 

*Stephen W. Angell is Geraldine Leatherock Professor of Quaker Studies at Earlham School of Religion.*





# To act in the spirit “not of judgment, but of mercy”

QUAKER ACTIVIST ELIZABETH FRY PIONEERED A NEW APPROACH TO PRISON REFORM

*Alice Almond Shrock*

“HELL ABOVE GROUND” makes an apt description of Newgate, London’s most notorious prison in the early 1800s. The men’s cells were despicable and the women’s even worse. According to one observer, the “horror, filth and cruelty would have disgraced even a slave ship.” First to assault the senses was the stench: daily human waste, menstrual blood, birthing blood, alcohol, vomit all saturated the floor straw and produced an overwhelming odor. Then came the racket: the screaming and fighting of the felons crammed into windowless wards built for 60 but containing 300 women and children.

Such squalid conditions confronted Elizabeth Gurney Fry (1780–1845), a Quaker minister, when she first visited Newgate in 1813. But the obvious depravity and despair were almost unknown to the outside world. The improvements Fry initiated—and the fact that she dared enter the prison at all—set her on a

**NO HOPE** Women and children visit male prisoners in Newgate in 1878. Contemporaries called it a “den of wretched, wild beasts” trapped in “misery, riot, idleness, and vice of every description.”

spiritual and secular journey that affected prisons in Britain, across Europe, and in the United States.

## AROUSING AWARENESS

The sufferings of prisoners, an early concern for Quakers, originated in part from their own experiences as inside experts. At the beginning of the Religious Society of Friends, many Quakers were jailed, including George Fox and William Penn; an estimated 8,000 Quakers were imprisoned in 1661 alone. Fry’s remarkable work built on and expanded a tradition of prison visiting and aroused awareness about the brutality found in Newgate and other jails.



Fry benefited from her family's wealth and an exceptional education that combined the practical (sewing, household economy) with the intellectual (Latin, French, mathematics, history, geography). She also had support from her siblings, loyal husband, and other reforming friends. But the most important motivation was her Quaker faith.

**"Much depends on the spirit in which the visitor enters upon her work . . . the spirit, not of judgment, but of mercy. She must not say . . . 'I am more holy than thou' but must rather keep in perpetual remembrance that 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' . . . great pity is due from us even to the greatest transgressors among our fellow-creatures . . . in meekness and love, we ought to labour for their restoration."**

**—Elizabeth Gurney Fry, *Observations on the Visiting, Superintendence and Government of Female Prisoners* (1827)**

Fry was born into the large, lively Gurney family, part of a distinguished banking dynasty that would become part of Barclays, the famed British bank (see "Did you know?" inside front cover). Known as Betsy, she grew up at Earlham Hall, a stately mansion near Norwich, England. Her mother, a serious Quaker and significant spiritual influence, died when Betsy was

**"A STRIKING SCENE"** Fry's steady ministry of Scripture reading, prayer, and compassion was crucial to her success.

12. Her father, Quaker more by birth than conviction, allowed his 11 children wide latitude in their reading, dress, and behavior; they were known as "gay" Quakers, those open to current fashions and popular diversions such as music and dancing. As a youth Betsy found Quaker worship "Dis" ("disgusting") and spent much of her time either bored or busy admiring her purple boots with red laces.

In 1798 at age 17, her attitude changed after hearing William Savery, a traveling American Quaker whose ministry "touched her heart," converted her to a sober lifestyle, and set her questioning her life's purpose. She recorded in her journal, "Today I felt that there is a God—I have been devotional & my mind has been led away from the follies that it is mostly wrapt [sic] up in. . . I do not doubt that this is a time of transformation."

In her new seriousness, she renounced dancing and decorative dress (including a scarlet riding habit) to become a "plain" Friend. Deborah Darby, an eminent Quaker preacher, predicted that Betsy would become "a light to the blind; speech to the dumb; and feet to the lame." Although the prophecy thrilled Betsy, it offered little specific direction, and soon she was focused on marriage to Joseph Fry (at age 20) and motherhood. She experienced 11 births and at least two miscarriages, and throughout her adult life suffered periods of physical and mental distress. Nevertheless after another





Quaker minister alerted her to the horrors at Newgate, she immediately visited the prison herself.

Initially the jailers implored Fry not to enter the women's wards because she would surely be attacked. Despite these warnings she ventured in, Bible in hand. The unexpected presence of the quiet, composed Quaker took the convicts by surprise. She and a Quaker companion supplied clean straw, medicines, food, and flannel to clothe the cold, nearly naked children. Then Fry read from the Bible and prayed for the prisoners. Many had never heard Scripture before. The words and Fry's mesmerizing, sweetly sedate voice profoundly affected the inmates. An observer noted, "a very solemn quiet was observed; it was a striking scene, the poor people on their knees . . ."

### SPREADING CHRIST'S LIGHT

Following Quaker teachings Fry believed that Christ's light was in all, even those who had not heard of Jesus. She did not feel that the incarcerated women were irredeemable; instead, she firmly believed that kindness and sympathy would spark their reformation. To forge a bond between them, she addressed the prisoners as a fellow woman and a mother.

Fry was significant not only for what she did do—supply immediate material improvements—but also for what she did not do. She did not ridicule; she did not dictate. Instead she asked the prisoners what they needed: "I am come to serve you, if you will allow me." And then she listened. Her compassion inspired the prisoners, and soon they willingly adopted a strict

**NO LONGER A "GAY QUAKER"** Fry loved music, dancing, and fancy clothes in her youth, but resigned them under conviction to become a "plain Friend"—a choice that would one day lead her to open Newgate's doors with the key below.

behavioral code: no swearing, no fighting, no drinking. Fry asked them if they would cooperate if she started a school for the children in Newgate (for both young criminals and children born in the cells and living with their imprisoned mothers).

The women agreed. Within weeks Fry had created a classroom employing a system of mutual instruction promoted by Quaker Joseph Lancaster, whereby the main instructor taught a small group of "monitors" who then taught other groups of less advanced students.

The first teacher was herself a prisoner, an educated young woman behind bars for supposedly stealing a watch. (She maintained her innocence and was set free, but died from tuberculosis contracted in the dank

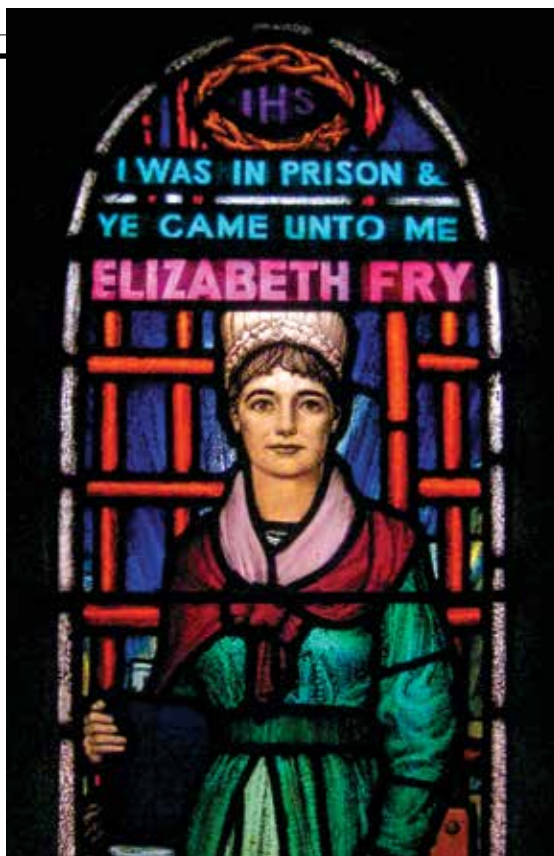
Newgate air.) So eager were many of the adults to learn that they clustered around the doorway to hear the lessons for themselves.

Fry knew that productive labor would occupy the prisoners and develop self-sufficiency and self-respect. She and her supporters supplied fabric so the women could sew and earn something for their personal needs. She persuaded authorities to grant the women more living space and to classify them according to age and seriousness of offense, separating hardened murderers from petty pilferers or those simply awaiting trial. In light of frequent sexual abuse by male jailers, she insisted that her charges always be under the care of women wardens, matrons, or visiting committees, a change that was permanently adopted.

Fry also realized that her efforts needed institutional reinforcement. Soon she and 12 others created the Association for the Improvement of the Female Prisoners in Newgate. Similar committees eventually emerged throughout the United Kingdom and in Russia, Prussia, the United States, France, Italy, Switzerland, and the Netherlands.

For the next two decades, Fry traveled extensively, consulting with these committees, assessing prison conditions, and advocating improvements. Her success became a sensation, and tourists flocked to Newgate to see Fry's work. She was invited in 1818 to give evidence





**BEACON OF LIGHT** Fry is memorialized in stained glass windows as far away from Newgate as this one in Camberwell, Australia.

and advice before a British parliamentary committee, the first woman other than a queen to be so honored.

In the same year, Fry also launched efforts to improve the brutal British system of shipping convicted prisoners to Australia. The women were clapped in chains and heavy leg irons, herded into open carts, and hauled to the docks while jeering crowds pelted

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**"I have seen, sir, Elizabeth Fry, in Newgate, and I have witnessed there miraculous effects of true Christianity upon the most depraved of human beings. Bad women, sir, who are worse, if possible, than the devil himself: and yet the wretched outcasts have been tamed and subdued by the Christian eloquence of Mrs. Fry."—John Randolph, American envoy to England (1818)**

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them with filth. The inmates, who knew what awaited them, often rioted the night before.

Fry persuaded officials to treat the women with greater humanity. She promised that if the prisoners were sent in covered carriages, she would escort each convoy and would guarantee order. The new approach worked. Once aboard Fry made sure that "each woman was given a bag of useful things," including a Bible, spectacles, a comb, a knife and fork, a ball of string, and patchwork quilt materials to occupy the prisoners on

the long voyage and give them a product to sell upon arrival. As at Newgate, the purposeful labor gave the women a sense of self-sufficiency and self-respect.

Fry continued inspecting convict ships wherever she went for the next 20 years. She believed such care softened the prisoners' hearts and made them "susceptible of impression [of God's word]." In each of her prison visits, whether in cells or on ships, she read Bible passages of hope and deliverance. One contemporary source said she always "came to comfort, not to condemn."

Despite impressive results and widespread acclaim, Fry attracted harsh criticism about her private life: detractors accused her of abandoning her own children and stepping beyond women's proper bounds. Indeed she often felt the strains of balancing marriage and motherhood with activism. Advocates of a return to hard labor and solitary confinement as crime prevention also opposed her.

### SHELTERS AND LIBRARIES

Fry denounced punishment as an ineffective deterrent and condemned solitary confinement. A constant catalyst for change, her concerns reached beyond prisons. She established night shelters for the homeless, libraries for coast guards, societies to help the poor, and the Institution for Nursing Sisters ("Fry Nurses") to modernize British nursing. She influenced Florence Nightingale's training program, and some Fry Nurses went with Nightingale to Crimea in 1854.

After Fry's death in 1845, Quakers continued to campaign for criminal justice reform. Appropriately Elizabeth's distant relative Margery Fry (1874–1958) was the first education advisor to Holloway Prison, a women's prison in London. Eric Baker (1920–1976), another Quaker, helped found and govern the human rights group Amnesty International, which was awarded the 1977 Nobel Peace Prize for promoting humane treatment of "prisoners of conscience."

In the nineteenth century, Fry's reforms received royal patronage, gained international renown, and enhanced public perceptions of Quakerism. Today she is still one of the most famous faces of the Religious Society of Friends. Indeed she has become something of a Quaker saint, celebrated in biographies and children's books, immortalized in art, and, since 2002, on the back of the British £5 note. There she is shown reading Scripture to the Newgate women, a popular reminder of her importance in history and her indefatigable efforts to act in the spirit "not of judgment, but of mercy." ■

*Alice Almond Shrock is professor emeritus of history at Earlham College.*





# Bearing and not bearing the sword

THE FRIENDS' "PEACE TESTIMONY" HAS A LONG AND COMPLICATED HISTORY

**Chuck Fager**

**THE FIRST THING** most people think of when they hear "Quakers" is "silent meetings," a characterization gleaned from childhood nursery rhymes. But the next quality many think of is "peace loving," set forth by the very first Friends in England and still at the core of what it means to be a Quaker today. But could the call to peace be held consistently? It was one thing for Quakers to advocate "no sword" while governments persecuted them. It was harder to implement a "no sword" policy when Quakers themselves became governors.

## "WE CANNOT LEARN WAR ANY MORE"

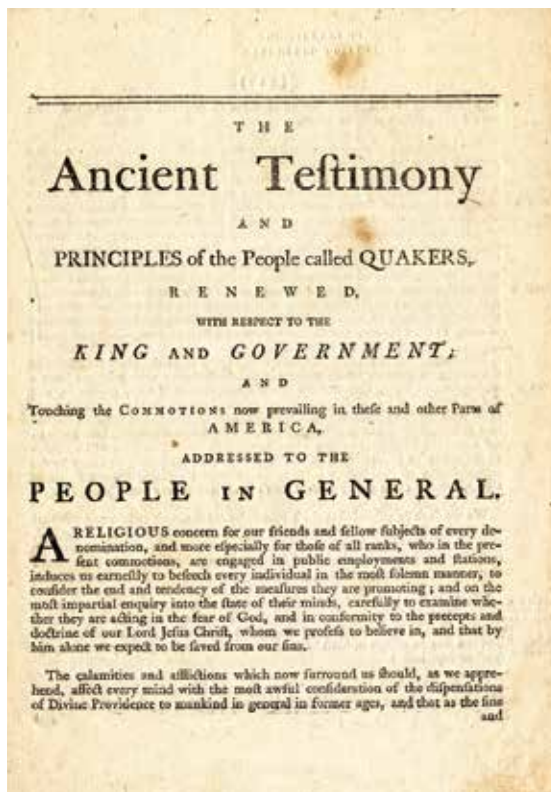
A letter of self-preservation directed to King Charles II by Margaret Fell and George Fox in 1660 started it all. Brief excerpts from the letter appear today in the Quaker books *Discipline* and *Faith and Practice*. In part the excerpts read:

We utterly deny all outward wars and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or

**GIVE PEACE A CHANCE** A novel conviction in the 1870s, the eradication of war itself has now become the unquestioned centerpiece of the Quaker peace witness.

under any pretense whatsoever. . . . The Spirit of Christ, by which we are guided, is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil, and again to move us unto it . . . [it] will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the Kingdom of Christ nor for the Kingdoms of this world. . . . Therefore, we cannot learn war any more.

These few sentences are foundational for Quakers. They are a kind of Quaker scripture, drafted by Quaker founders, preserved by Friends of all branches, and recited by Quaker faithful for three and a half centuries. But the truth about the Quaker peace testimony cannot be contained in a few sentences that are in fact altered from the original 1660 letter. In this discrepancy



we glimpse the actual history of Quaker pacifism—a much more tangled, ambivalent, and compelling saga.

The original letter actually starts out: “All bloody principles and practices, *as to our own particulars*, we utterly deny; with all outward wars...” Like other radical groups, Friends in England in 1660 were powerless, facing persecution by a newly restored monarchy that feared dissenters would plot coups. The letter to Charles hoped to ward off this persecution (it didn’t succeed, but that’s another story). The letter noted that while the Quakers had foresworn violence, they did not expect their rulers to do so: “Therefore in love we warn you [King Charles] for your soul’s good, not to . . . turn your sword backward upon such as the law was not made for, i.e., the righteous; but for sinners and transgressors, to keep them down.” This mention of the ruler’s sword rephrases Romans 13, familiar verses that are important in Western political history, having been often used as scriptural sanction for official state violence.

The 1660 letter affirms a desire to live “under the power ordained of God for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that . . . live a peaceable and godly life.” Far from banning the use of violence altogether, the Quakers relinquished the sword to the government—and also pointed out their own piety, with the hope of being spared that same sword.

#### QUAKERS IN POWER

Moreover, once across the Atlantic, Quaker settlers in Rhode Island not only coveted worldly power but

**SEEKING PEACE** Quakers in Pennsylvania and New Jersey during the Revolutionary War expressed their desire to avoid strife and submit to the king in this 1776 document.

achieved it. The colony’s 1672 election produced a Quaker governor and a majority of Quakers in the assembly. Friends held the bulk of local political power for many years afterward.

This novel development (almost a decade before William Penn began his “Holy Experiment” in Pennsylvania) was soon endorsed by no less than Quaker founder George Fox himself. He visited Rhode Island in 1672, as an honored guest of the Quaker governor, and praised the new Quaker government as a righteous triumph.

Yet with righteous power also came the matter of bearing the biblically prescribed sword against evil-doers. In England Quaker worldly power was still unimaginable. But in Rhode Island, rulership (and its sword) were in Quaker hands. What were they to do with it? In 1672 Rhode Island, there were threats of invasion by French and Dutch warships and thick forests inhabited by increasingly restive native tribes. In the summer of 1675, natives launched massive, region-wide assaults against white settlers in New England. Historian Meredith Baldwin Weddle evoked the terror Quakers felt: “. . . the fear of violence shredding all certainty and all expectations. . . . For the Quaker, alone in his small house, miles perhaps from a neighbor, fear and horror faced down the ordained love for his enemies. . . .”

We don’t know if the Friends in office underwent much soul-searching. We do know they adopted the first-ever conscientious objector statute, exempting from militia duty those whose religious scruples forbade bearing arms; and then they went to war. How did they reconcile this warmaking with the antiwar pronouncements of 1660? Apparently they didn’t bother. After all the 1660 letter contains both sentiments.

At this point, the letter’s oft-deleted phrase *as to our own particulars* comes back into focus. How much different were the “particulars” of powerless, persecuted Friends in England in 1660 from the “particulars” of Friends elected as governing authorities in Rhode Island? And how much difference did such “particulars” make?

In Pennsylvania during the 1750s, the Quaker-dominated assembly struggled over increasing calls to bear the sword against Native Americans and their French allies, and it finally yielded most political power to escape doing so. During the American Revolution, Yearly Meetings sternly warned Friends to stay out of the fighting on either side. Most Friends did stay out despite abuse from both sides and later from the victorious American rebels. Episodes of persecution also occurred during the





**DRIVING FOR PEACE** Left: Some British Quakers founded an ambulance unit in World War II especially for conscientious objectors.



**NO HARM DONE** Below: These “cannons” (actually logs meant to deceive opposing troops) were jokingly called “Quaker guns” in the Civil War.

War of 1812. But for decades thereafter, it was not a great burden for Friends to comply with the mandate in their *Disciplines*, to maintain “a faithful testimony against . . . bearing arms, training, or other military services. . . .”

### QUAKER AGAINST QUAKER

That is, it was not a great burden until the struggle over slavery boiled over. Friends had already turned against slavery, and as conflict intensified, they hoped in vain for a peaceful end to the practice. During the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln, who had Quaker ancestors, wrote to a Quaker in 1864: “Your people—the Friends—have had and are having a very great trial. On principle, and faith, opposed to both war and oppression, they can only practically oppose oppression by war. In this hard dilemma some have chosen one horn and some the other.”

Some chose pacifism, but others, including many young male Friends, joined the Union Army. The traditional penalty for thus defying the *Discipline* was “disownment,” or expulsion. Yet after Appomattox the Quaker establishment recoiled from mass disownments. Adherence became a matter of individual judgment, not community enforcement, and many dissenters were re-admitted into fellowship.

Older Quaker writers had called for Friends to stay out of warmaking and its preparations as features of a fallen and corrupt world. But after the Civil War, a demand arose that war *itself* be ended. Quaker Lucretia Mott, known today for her women’s rights advocacy, was also a tireless peace campaigner and wrote in 1876, “If we believe that war is wrong, as everyone must, then we must also believe that by proper efforts on our part it can be done away with.”

Yet at the same time, almost all American Friends had assimilated the view that they were citizens of a democratic government more than a “peculiar people” standing apart. During World War I, most draft-age Quaker men joined up to fight “the war to end war.” Pacifist sentiment

resurged between the First and Second World Wars. But Pearl Harbor abruptly banished this pacifist mood, and most draft-age male Friends joined the crusade against Hitler and the Axis without religious penalty. To be sure some Quakers still conscientiously objected and resisted the draft in both wars, but they were a minority in their own church.

Not until the widely unpopular Vietnam War did attitudes among many American Friends turn again toward an activist pacifism, with a conviction that Friends in earlier times and sources must have been activist in a similar way. Quakers sustained this commitment until September 11, 2001.

Reliving the dilemmas of 1675 and 1864, between radical Muslim terror attacks and the call to arms, some Quakers quietly supported American military actions, while others hoped against hope that all war could somehow be eradicated. But “the proper efforts on our part” that Lucretia Mott called for to achieve this lofty goal still seemed both distant and hazy. ■

*Chuck Fager edits the journal Quaker Theology, blogs at A Friendly Letter, and is the author or editor of over 30 books on Quakerism and civil rights.*



# From mud huts to Yearly Meetings

*Quaker missions resulted in Africa having the world's largest concentration of Friends today*

In 1902 North American Quaker missionaries Arthur Chilson, Edgar Hole, and Willis Hotchkiss first set foot on East African soil, settling on a cool, quiet, 1,010-acre piece of wooded land at a place known as Kaimosi. They were soon followed by Emory and Deborah Rees, who arrived by way of war-torn South Africa. Trained at Cleveland Bible Institute (now Malone University), the five were the first of many who came to Kenya from the Midwest over the next decade.

The Reeses set about transforming oral literature into written language, helping translate the Bible and English hymns into local languages and dialects. With a vision to educate and train as well as evangelize, in the next decades, Quaker missionaries founded girls' and boys' high schools, hospitals, a Bible institute, an agricultural school, a teacher training school, and a technological institute.

Within 20 years there were over a thousand Kenyan Quakers. Many women were drawn to the movement because it offered them greater freedom than their traditional African religions. Daudi Lung'aho, one of the first African converts, married fellow African Maria Maraga in the mission's first Christian wedding. Together they broke the long-standing taboo against women in Kenya eating eggs and chicken (reported to cause infertility). Eating eggs and chicken became one sign of conversion to Quakerism.

Soon the mission set up other missionary centers in Lirhandia, Malava, Vihiga, Lugari, and Lugulu, all offering education and medical care along with the Gospel. With a vision for developing indigenous leadership, Jefferson Ford from Indiana began the Friends Bible Institute at Lugulu in 1942 in mud-and-thatch

**QUAKER MEETING HAS BEGUN** Kenyan Quaker women attend an open-air prayer meeting in 2015.

huts. Moved to Kaimosi in 1950, it operated out of a mule shed until it got a more permanent home in 1954.

In the late 1940s and mid-1950s, mission centers expanded to Kenya's capital, Nairobi, to serve the less privileged families that lived in its suburbs, and to the northern part of Kenya. In the 1960s and 1970s, Quaker missions reached Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi.

By the 2000s Friends United Meeting's Africa Ministries aimed to establish Quaker missionary centers in the deep southern, central, and northern regions of Africa. Evangelism and outreach is happening throughout Malawi, Mozambique, the Congo, and southern Sudan. Thanks to Ford's forward thinking, the Kenyan mission became independent and indigenously run in 1963.

Kenya today has the largest constituency of Quakers in the world—over 45 percent of the international membership of the movement. There are over 750,000 Kenyan Quakers in 18 Yearly Meetings with 2,000 congregations; over 1,500 Quaker primary and high schools and numerous colleges; two Friends hospitals; and hundreds of clinics and dispensaries. Friends participate actively in peacemaking activities in the region. While George Fox and Margaret Fell might be surprised at how far their movement has spread, they would not be surprised at the immensity of its witness. —Robert J. Wafula, principal of Friends Theological College in Kaimosi, Kenya





# A foundation of Friends

QUAKERS WERE AT THE FOREFRONT OF MANY NINETEENTH-CENTURY SOCIAL ISSUES

**Carole Dale Spencer**

## LEVI COFFIN (1798–1877)

"It tried a man's soul to be an abolitionist in those days, when brickbats, stones, and rotten eggs were the arguments we had to meet," lamented Levi Coffin in *Reminiscences* (1876). A white abolitionist, he became one of the celebrated symbols of the Underground Railroad, the legendary secret network that aided fugitive slaves to escape to freedom.

Coffin was born to a Quaker farming family in New Garden, North Carolina. He had little formal education, being largely taught by his father at home. He wrote that he inherited his antislavery principles from his parents and grandparents who never owned slaves and were all "friends of the oppressed." As a boy he witnessed an enslaved child torn from his screaming mother and dedicated himself to work to end slavery "until the end of my days."

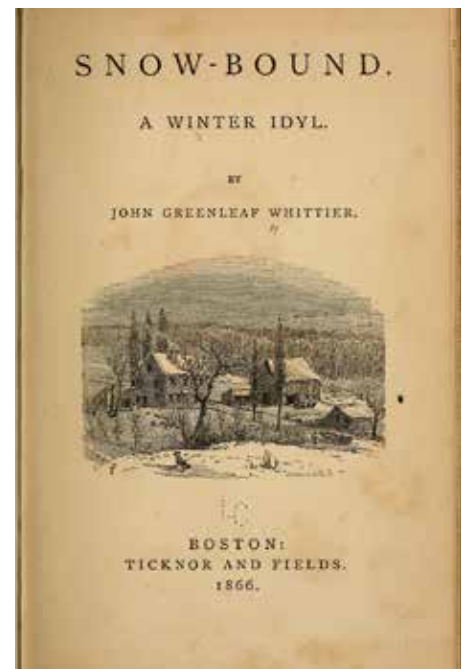
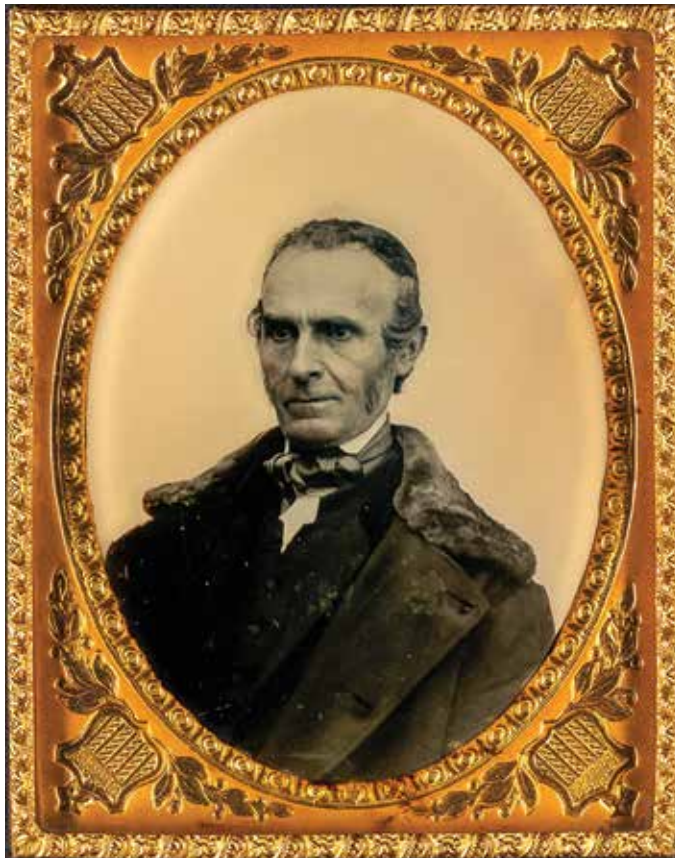
Coffin established one of the first Quaker Sunday schools in 1818, modeled on the method developed by Robert Raikes in England. A few years later, he and his cousin Vestal Coffin organized a Sunday school for slaves, teaching them Bible reading and basic

**FRIEND OF THE OPPRESSED** Levi Coffin (*back center*) and Jonathan Cable (*back right*) stand with a family of slaves they helped rescue.

Christianity. When it became too successful, some masters were alarmed and shut down the school.

In 1824 Coffin married Catharine White. They decided they could no longer live among enslaved people in North Carolina and moved to Indiana, a free state. They hid fugitive slaves in their home by day and by night placed them in wagons to transport them to the next safe house on the route to freedom: "Seldom a week passed without our receiving passengers by their mysterious road."

Quakerism was known as the antislavery church because it was the first denomination to rid its membership of slaveholding in the eighteenth century. But by the early nineteenth century, many meetings opposed immediate emancipation and the breaking of laws to aid escaped slaves. When Coffin and other Indiana abolitionists were deemed "disqualified for usefulness" by their meetings, they organized their own "Indiana



**A WEAPON IN THE WAR WITH WRONG** While we think of the beauty of “Snow-Bound” (above) as quintessential Whittier (left), he meant to persuade his readers to fight oppression and injustice, especially slavery.

Yearly Meeting of Anti-Slavery Friends” in 1842. In 1847 Coffin moved to Cincinnati and opened a “Free-produce Store” selling only goods produced by free labor (see “Seeking freedom,” pp. 24-28). He donated many of the proceeds to assist fugitives.

Many associate the Coffins with Simeon and Rachel Halliday, the couple who sheltered slaves in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s famous *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852). But Stowe’s inspiration was actually other Quaker abolitionists. However, Stowe did use one story from Coffin’s memoir: the rescue of a slave woman pursued by bloodhounds who carried her infant across the frozen Ohio River to the Coffin home. She became Eliza Harris in one of the most riveting scenes in Stowe’s novel.

After the Civil War, Coffin devoted the rest of his life to the Freedmen’s Aid Society. When the 15th Amendment was ratified in 1870, granting African American men the right to vote, Coffin gave his final speech as the “President of the Underground Railroad” and amid much applause resigned his office and declared, “The operations of the Underground Railroad [are] at an end.”

#### **JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER (1807–1892)**

John Greenleaf Whittier, the best-known Quaker of the nineteenth century, is remembered today primarily for sentimental poems about rural New England

and nature, and religious poems still sung as hymns. But Whittier was also a political poet, a fiery abolitionist, and a humanitarian. His 1867 poem “Tent on the Beach” may give us a self-description:

And one there was, a dreamer born,  
Who, with a mission to fulfill,  
Had left the Muses’ haunts to turn  
The crank of an opinion-mill,  
Making his rustic reed of song  
A weapon in the war with wrong...

Whittier was born into a poor farming family in Haverhill, Massachusetts. Like Coffin he had little formal education, but his family had a few Quaker books that he studied voraciously. He began writing poetry at age 14, inspired by the work of Robert Burns. When he was 19, his sister sent one of his poems to abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, who published it in his newspaper. Garrison encouraged Whittier to complete a high school education. The two later became partners in the abolitionist movement.

Whittier wrote widely advocating immediate and unconditional emancipation of slaves, a highly unpopular, even dangerous stance at the time. Being stoned by a mob during a lecture only intensified his commitment to the cause.

In 1838 in an atmosphere of growing violence, some public places closed to abolitionists. Reformers raised





**DYNAMIC DUO** Left: Elizabeth Cady Stanton (*seated*) and Susan B. Anthony (*standing*) complemented each other's gifts in reform work. Stanton wrote: "I forged the thunderbolts and [Anthony] fired them." Anthony was so associated with women's suffrage that *Life* magazine was still caricaturing her (*below*) seven years after her death.

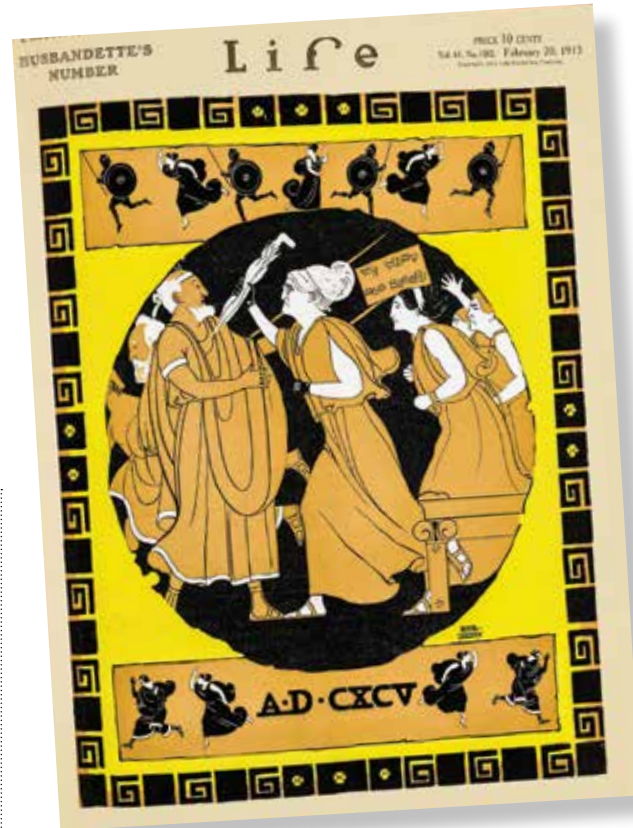
money to construct Pennsylvania Hall in Philadelphia, intended for peaceful debate around issues of social justice. Whittier, then editor of the *Pennsylvania Freeman*, wrote a long dedicatory poem to celebrate its opening. He was given an office in the building, but he never got to use it. A mob incensed at seeing whites and blacks mixing burned the building down the day after the first speeches were delivered. The mob called for Whittier to be hung. In the midst of the violence, he donned a disguise and entered the building to salvage his papers.

After this devastating event, Whittier concluded that only political means could end slavery, and he split with Garrison and worked instead with Coffin to found the Liberty Party, a short-lived antislavery political party that attempted to elect abolitionists to office.

After the Civil War, Whittier's reputation improved, and, with the publication of "Snow-Bound" in 1868, his poetry became increasingly popular. But, by his own estimation, he was always an abolitionist first and a poet second. At his death he was lauded as "the poet of freedom."

#### **SUSAN B. ANTHONY (1820–1906)**

In 1872 Susan B. Anthony became a cause célèbre when she attempted to vote in her hometown of Rochester, New York. She was arrested, tried, found guilty, and fined \$100, which she never paid. Anthony would not accept defeat. Six years later she convinced a sympathetic congressman to propose an amendment to the United States Constitution guaranteeing women the right to vote. It continued to be introduced every year until it finally passed in 1920 and is popularly known as the Susan B. Anthony Amendment.



Anthony grew up in a Quaker family known for its radical social activism. She taught school and crusaded for many social reforms but is most renowned for her leadership in the women's suffrage movement. Anthony began her reform work in the temperance crusade of the 1840s. When she was not allowed to speak at public meetings because she was a woman, she organized her own temperance society with her friend Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1852.

In 1856 Anthony became an antislavery agent. She often faced violent mobs and was once hung in effigy. She realized that women needed political rights to effect social change, and in 1866 she and Stanton founded the American Equal Rights Association to promote civil rights for women and black men. A few years later they launched a provocative newspaper, *The Revolution*, to promote universal suffrage and other radical measures: women's dress reform, divorce for women in abusive marriages, support for working women, and the newly formed National Labor Union.



**DIVIDED AND UNITED** Hannah Whitall Smith and Robert Pearsall Smith relax together in old age.

In her speeches Anthony often alluded to the Quaker practice of women preaching as the precedent for her reform activities. While retaining core Quaker values, she gradually drifted away from her Quaker meeting and Quaker customs, eventually joining the Unitarians. She even tried unsuccessfully to start her own church in Rochester, New York.

For Anthony reform became her religion. When asked by a reporter if she prayed, she responded, "Every single moment of my life, not on my knees, but with my work." In a biographical sketch of her, Stanton wrote: "Every energy of her soul is centered upon the needs of the world. To her work is worship. . . [She] has done the good given her to do, and thus in the darkest hours has been sustained by an unflinching faith in the final perfection of all things."

Anthony was publicly vilified and ridiculed most of her life, but in old age she gained begrudging respect and was honored at the White House on her 80th birthday. In 1979 she became the first American woman to be depicted on a coin.

#### **HANNAH WHITALL SMITH (1832–1911)**

Hannah Whitall Smith grew up in a well-to-do Philadelphia Orthodox Quaker family. While Anthony drifted away from her Quaker roots, Smith deepened hers. Although she had a "crisis of faith" as a young woman and resigned from her Philadelphia meeting, she remained a deeply committed Christian and never lost her identity as a Quaker, rejoining in 1886.

From her childhood Smith imagined herself as a minister and dreamed of preaching and traveling all over the world, the one avenue of public life always


open for women in the Quaker tradition. Her fame as a preacher expanded far beyond Quakerism, and she became a leading female voice in the holiness revival of the nineteenth century. In England Hannah and her husband, Robert Pearsall Smith (also a prominent Quaker), were star holiness evangelists from the United States, flavoring what was called the "Higher Life" movement with Quaker spirituality.

But scandal struck: her husband was accused of inappropriate relations with a female disciple at the pinnacle of his international fame. Robert withdrew from public life, and the two returned to the United States. That same year Hannah's *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life* (1875) became an instant bestseller, and it is still in print and read by spiritual seekers today. While she continued to write popular devotional books, her public passion turned to social reform, especially women's rights and temperance. She wrote to a friend:

I believe God has made me a pioneer, so that I do not expect much sympathy or understanding as I go along; and the breaking through of hedges, and fences, and stone walls is not a very pleasant path . . . But it is my nature, I cannot help it. . .

Like Anthony, Smith was a born feminist, but it wasn't until 1882 that she gave her first official public speech for women's suffrage. She came to her conviction, she wrote, "by the way of the gospel, that Christ came to break every yoke and set free all that were bound." Her feminism propelled her into leadership in the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and a close friendship with its president, Frances Willard, who supported the then-radical fight for female suffrage. Toward the end of her life, she proudly admitted:

I have always rather enjoyed being considered a heretic, and have never wanted to be endorsed by any one . . . to be endorsed was to be bound, and . . . it was better, for me at least, to be a free lance, with no hindrances to my absolute mental and spiritual freedom.

Surprisingly Hannah's heresy, her universalism, was rarely an obstacle to speaking invitations or book contracts. Her intimate relationship with a "mother-hearted God" sustained her through great joy and deep grief: the deaths of four of her seven children and her husband's humiliating scandal. In her autobiography (1903), she wrote: "I feel myself to have gotten out into a limitless ocean of the love of God that overflows all things. 'God is love,' comprises my whole system of ethics." 

*Carole Dale Spencer is associate professor of Christian spirituality at Earlham School of Religion and a recorded Friends minister.*



# A radical experiment

Something has gone wrong in the modern world. Men and women . . . are a confused and bewildered generation. This is not true merely of the vanquished, but of a majority of the victors . . . not merely of those who live in the cellars of bombed houses and ride in converted cattle cars; it is true likewise of those who live in steam-heated apartments and ride in Pullman drawing rooms. . . .

What if the Quaker Movement, for all its modesty and smallness, could give some lead to modern seekers looking for light on what a redemptive fellowship should be or could be? All the effort that has gone into Quakerism would thus become worthwhile. Quakerism would not be an end in itself, but would be one means to a large and glorious end. . . .

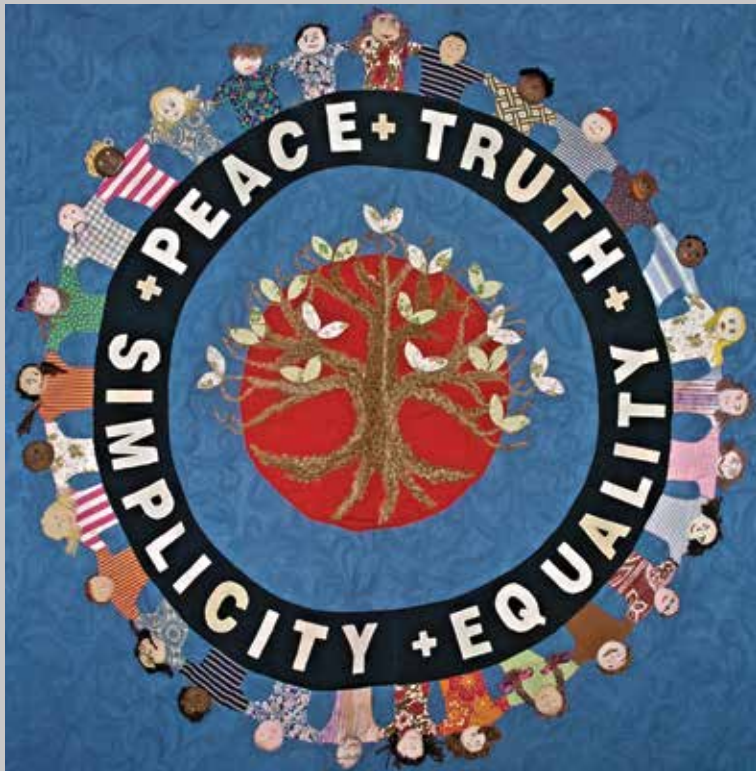
Whatever a redemptive movement may be called, wherever it may be produced, and whatever its external form, it cannot be truly effective unless it includes Veracity, Immediacy, Urgency, Fellowship, and Concern.

## CUTTING RED TAPE?

The actual Quaker Movement has often been a poor thing. It has advanced and receded many times in 300 years of tumultuous history. Seldom have all five of the vital elements been equally incorporated in the movement. Frequently Friends, who began by cutting the ecclesiastical red tape, have been unhappily successful in producing their own variety.

Friends have failed on several occasions to maintain the sacredness of their own fellowship. Sometimes they have forgotten what it is to be Quaker, persons utterly shaken in their lives, and have settled back with a complacent sense of superior virtue or attainment. But in spite of all these failings, many of which continue to this day, the movement has, from the beginning, carried within it a singular promise. . . .

Quakerism, when true to its own genius, has been ecumenical in spirit, concerned with the entire human family, and mindful of the words of our Lord when he said, "Other sheep have I which are not of this fold. . . ." The experience of George Fox on Pendle Hill in 1652 was interpreted by William Penn in a wholly ecumenical manner. Penn said that Fox "had a vision of the great work of God in the earth, and of the way that he was to go forth to begin it."



**WITH THE SIMPLICITY OF A QUILT** This quilt hangs at a Quaker meetinghouse in Norwich, England, testifying to the "testimonies" by which Quakers try to live.

. . . Fox, as Penn interpreted him, was not thinking merely of those who might be called Quakers, but of all men everywhere made in God's image even though they know it not. "He saw people as thick as motes in the sun, that should in time be brought home to the Lord; that there might be but one shepherd and one sheepfold in all the earth. . . ."

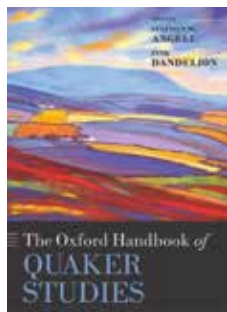
What we seek, then, is the emergence of the true church, the company of loving souls, exhibiting the mind of Christ. Our fondest hope is that our own modest experiment of a few centuries may facilitate the emergence of this sacred fellowship. We do not seek to make all men Quakers. Quakerism, as we have known it, is not good enough. What we desire is that all men be brought into a far more ideal society than any we have known. If Quakerism ever helps to usher in that larger and more ideal society, it will have done its peculiar work. —D. Elton Trueblood (1900–1994), professor of philosophy at Earlham College; from "A Radical Experiment," delivered at Arch Street Meetinghouse, Philadelphia, April 1947.

# Recommended resources

WHERE SHOULD YOU GO TO UNDERSTAND QUAKERISM? HERE ARE SOME RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CH EDITORIAL STAFF AND THIS ISSUE'S AUTHORS.

## BOOKS

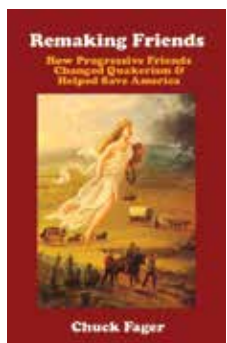
**Some good overall books** on the Quaker movement are Stephen Angell and Pink Dandelion, *The Oxford Handbook of Quaker Studies* (2013); Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* (2007) and *The Quakers: A Very Short Introduction* (2008); John Punshon, *Portrait in Grey: A Short History of the Quakers* (2003); Howard Brinton, *Friends for 350 Years* (2002); Walter R. Williams, *The Rich Heritage of Quakerism* (1987); and D. Elton Trueblood, *The People Called Quakers* (1985).



**Guides to Quaker beliefs** include Paul Anderson, *Following Jesus* (2013); Wilmer Cooper, *A Living Faith: An Historical Study of Quaker Beliefs* (1990); Leonard Kenworthy, *Quakerism: A Study Guide on the Religious Society of Friends* (1981); and Rufus Jones, *The Faith and Practice of the Quakers* (1927).

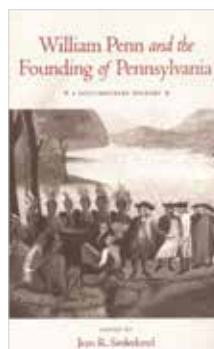


**Hear Friends speak in their own words** in Thomas Hamm, *Quaker Writings: An Anthology, 1650-1920* (2011); Mary Garman, Judith Applegate, Margaret Benefiel, and Dortha Meredith, *Hidden in Plain Sight: Quaker Women's Writings, 1650-1700* (1996); Jessamin West, *The Quaker Reader* (1992); Hugh Barbour and Arthur O. Roberts, *Early Quaker Writings: 1650-1700* (1973); and Douglas Steere, *Quaker Spirituality: Selected Writings in the Classics of Western Spirituality series* (1983). Be sure to check out full-length classic writings of Quaker authors including George Fox, *Journal*, John Woolman, *Journal*, and William Penn, *No Cross, No Crown and Some Fruits of Solitude*. And look at Friends humorously in Chuck Fager, *Quakers Are Hilarious!* (2013).

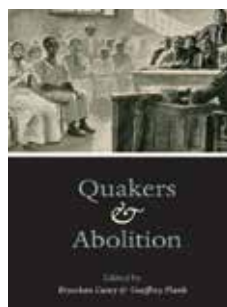


**The Quaker movement in America**, including its various splits and conflicts, is covered in Hamm, *The Quakers in America* (2003) and *The Transformation of American Quakerism: Orthodox Friends, 1800-1907* (1988); H. Larry Ingle, *Quakers in Conflict: The Hicksite Reformation* (1998); Hugh Barbour and J. William Frost, *The Quakers* (1988); and Fager, *Remaking Friends: How Progressive Friends Changed Quakerism and Helped Save America* (2014).

**William Penn** is the subject of George Hodges, *William Penn* (1929); Jean Soderlund, ed., *William Penn and the Founding of Pennsylvania* (1983); John Moretta, *William Penn and the Quaker Legacy* (2006); Genevieve Foster, *The World of William Penn* (2008); and Kevin Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom Lost* (2009).

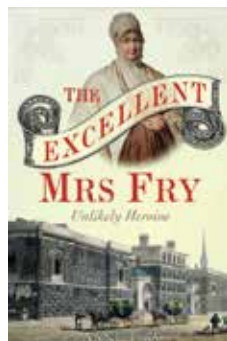


Read more about **Quakers and slavery** in David Crosby, ed., *The Complete Antislavery Writings of Anthony Benezet, 1754-1783* (2013); Geoffrey Plank, *John Woolman's Path to the Peaceable Kingdom: A Quaker in the British Empire* (2012); Harold Weaver Jr., Paul Kriese, and

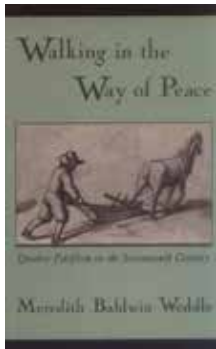


Stephen Angell, eds., *Black Fire: African-American Quakers on Spirituality and Human Rights* (2011); Brycchan Carey and Geoffrey Plank, eds., *Quakers and Abolition* (2014); Jean Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery: A Divided Spirit* (1985); Hugh Barbour, *Slavery and Theology: Writings of Seven Quaker Reformers, 1800-1870* (1985); Phillips Moulton, *The Journal and Major Essays of John Woolman* (1971); Thomas Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America* (1965); and Levi Coffin, *Reminiscences* (1876).

**Elizabeth Fry and prison reform** form the centerpiece of Anne Isba, *The Excellent Mrs. Fry: Unlikely Heroine* (2010); Annemieke van Drenth and Francisca de Haan, *The Rise of Caring Power: Elizabeth Fry and Josephine Butler in Britain and the Netherlands* (1999); June Rose, *Elizabeth Fry: A Biography* (1980) and *Prison Pioneer: The Story of Elizabeth Fry* (1994); and Janet Whitney, *Elizabeth Fry: Quaker Heroine* (1940). Listen to Fry speak in her own words in Gil Skidmore, ed., *Elizabeth Fry:*

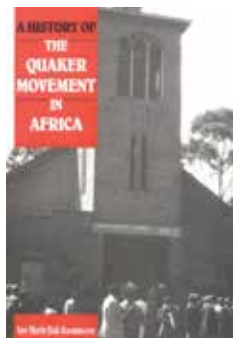
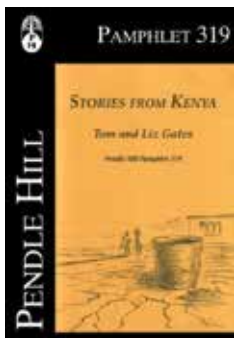




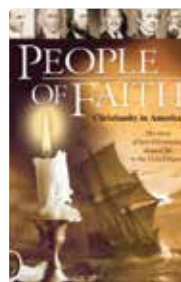
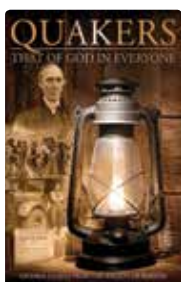


*A Quaker Life: Selected Writings and Letters* (2005).

Read more about **Quakers and peace** in Meredith Baldwin Weddle, *Walking in the Way of Peace: Quaker Pacifism in the Seventeenth Century* (2001); Chuck Fager, ed., *A Continuing Journey: Papers from the Quaker Peace Roundtable* (1995), *Sustaining Peace Witness in the 21st Century* (1997), and *Friends and the Vietnam War* (1998); Peter Brock, *The Quaker Peace Testimony: 1660 to 1914* (1990); Jennifer Edwards Baily, *World War II: A Challenge to the Peace Testimony of Quakers in America* (1982); Leonard Kenworthy, *The Friends Peace Testimony* (1977); E. W. Orr, *The Quakers in Peace and War, 1920–1967* (1974); and Jos Rowntree and Helen Byles Ford, *The Quaker Peace Testimony: An Anthology* (1949).



Finally, read about **Quakers worldwide** in Ron Stansell, *Missions by the Spirit* (2010); Herbert and Beatrice Kimbal, *Go into All the World: A Centennial Celebration of Friends in East Africa* (2002); Ane Marie Bak Rasmussen, *A History of the Quaker Movement in Africa* (1995); and Tom and Liz Gates, *Stories from Kenya* (1995).



## VIDEOS FROM VISION VIDEO

Videos treating the Quaker story include *The Quakers: That of God in Everyone*; *Saints and Strangers*; *People of Faith*; and *PAX Service*.

## WEBSITES AND PUBLICATIONS

[Quaker.org](http://Quaker.org) is an umbrella website with links to practically everything Quaker-related: from Yearly Meetings

of all the branches of Quakerism, to bibliographies, to meetinghouse locations, to Quaker businesses, to genealogy, to misuses of the name “Quaker.” Some related blogs are at [Planet Quaker](http://Planet Quaker).

The **three major modern strands of Friends** are at [Friends General Conference](http://Friends General Conference), [Friends United Meeting](http://Friends United Meeting), and [Evangelical Friends Church International](http://Evangelical Friends Church International). [Quakers in the World](http://Quakers in the World) collects information about Quakers trying to **put Quaker testimonies into practice** worldwide, and it has many resources for educators. [Quakers in Britain](http://Quakers in Britain) is the **umbrella British Friends site** with both historical and current resources. [QuakerPages](http://QuakerPages) collects **primary source documents** dealing with Friends, including a large collection of sermons.



Friends founded many **educational institutions**, and many maintain robust historical information on their websites. Check out the Quaker resources at [Swarthmore College](http://Swarthmore College), [Earlham College](http://Earlham College) (including the



[Newlin Quaker Center](http://Newlin Quaker Center)), and [George Fox University](http://George Fox University). You might also enjoy perusing the website of [Renovaré](http://Renovaré), a **devotional organization** welcoming all streams of Christian spirituality but founded by Quaker author and pastor Richard Foster, author of *Celebration of Discipline* (3rd ed. 1998).

**Quaker magazines and journals** include *Friends Journal*, *The Friend*, and the influential *Pendle Hill* pamphlets series. *Pendle Hill* is also a retreat and resource center in Pennsylvania. Quaker Heritage Press produces **historic reprints of Quaker texts**. ☐





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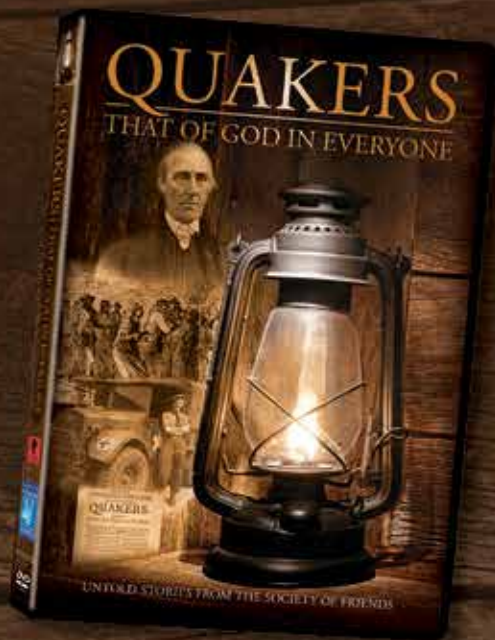
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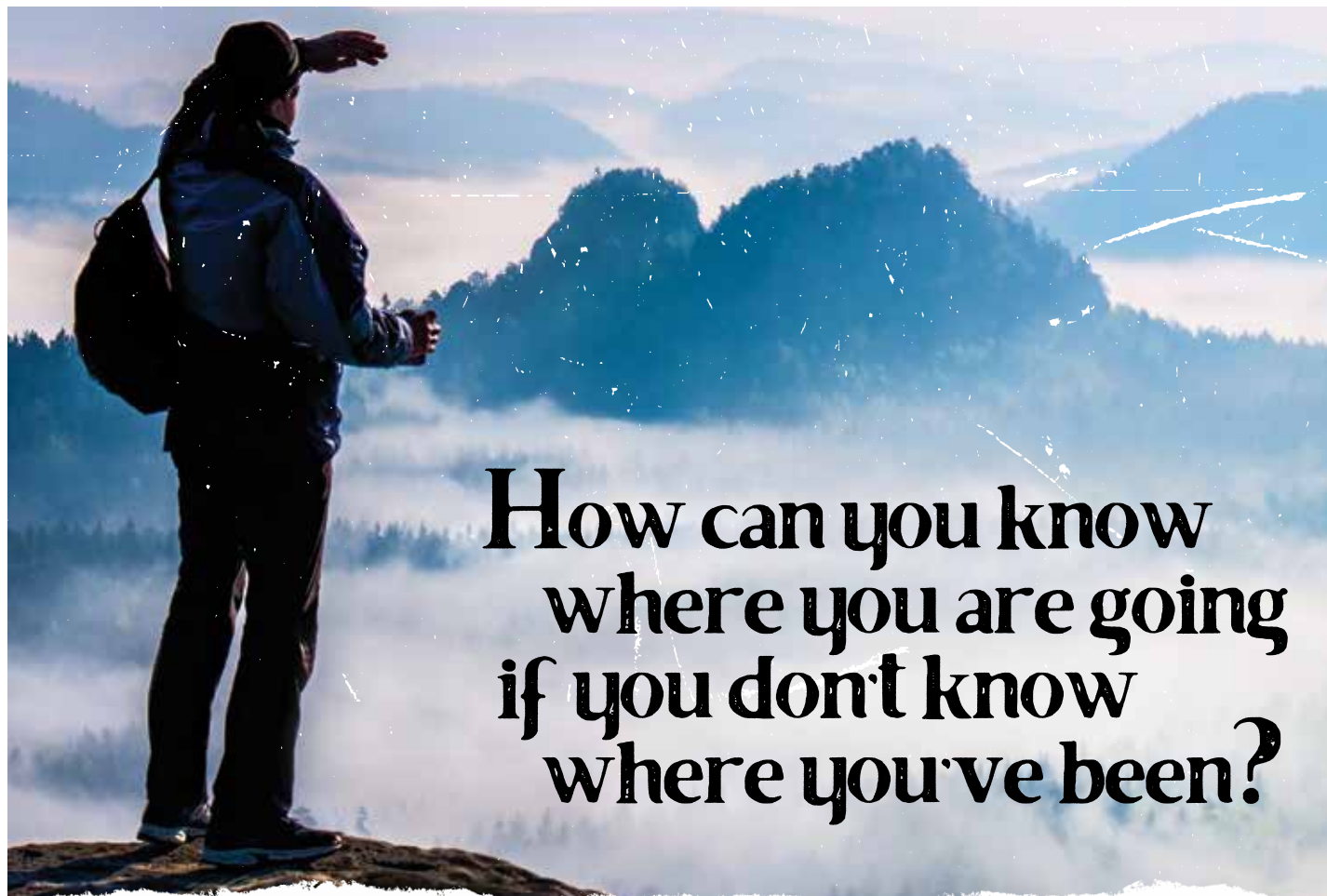
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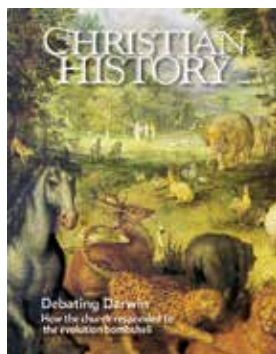
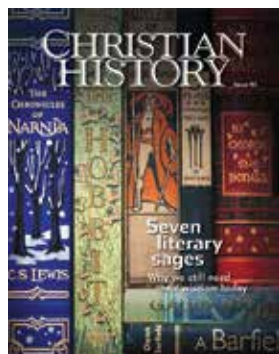
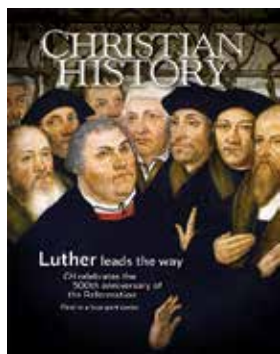
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