

THE QUAKER INFLUENCE ON THE HARLAN'S

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QUAKER HISTORY AND SOCIAL CONCERNS

Historical Context of the Influence

Our workshop for the 320th Anniversary Reunion of Harlan's in America should consider the Quaker influence on our ancestors in England and America, and the historical background of their immigration to America. The stories of our family are written on the yellowed pages of Friends Meeting records across Great Britain and America. Many of us have traveled in search of our genealogical records, but perhaps fewer of us have realized the rich religious and social heritage that is captured in those fading records. This workshop looks at the history, traditions, actions and beliefs of the Quaker faith, for a better understanding of the dynamics that influenced our Harlan ancestry.

Famed American philosopher, William James, concluded:

"The Quaker religion which (George) Fox founded is something which it is impossible to over-praise. In a day of shams it was a religion of veracity, rooted in spiritual inwardness, and a return to something more like the original gospel truth than men had ever known in England. So far as our Christian sects today are evolving into liberality, they are simply reverting in essence to the position which Fox and the early Quakers so long ago assumed." (William James, "Varieties of Religious Experience," p. 7)

William James wrote this work on religious experience in 1902 following his lecture on the subject at University of Edinburgh. He was a philosopher, psychologist and medical school graduate. He pragmatically felt that religious beliefs in all cultures throughout history gave indirect support that religious belief and experience was expedient and helpful to mankind. But he would, also, have agreed that zealous and mistaken use of such beliefs have caused much death and injustice.

Richard Green, in his highly regarded "Short History of the English People," commented on the turmoil of the early 1600's in England:

"No greater moral change ever passed over a nation." In the middle of the reign of (the first) Queen Elizabeth: "England became the people of the book and that book was the Bible." (Green, Chapter VIII)

Remember that few inventions have had greater impact on the world than printing. In 700 AD, the first printing was done by using wood blocks carved by hand in China. But printing, as we know it – from moveable type – was perfected by Johannes Gutenberg at Mains, Germany, about 1454. That press could print about 300 sheets a day.

It took printing to really give impetus to lay study of religion and other subjects. Books could be mass produced. Even so, 200 years later when George Fox founded Quakerism,

many established churches had no Bible for members. Some of the Church of England churches had only one copy. And the Catholic practice of doing all the teaching of members by priests continued in the established English Anglican Church, which succeeded the Catholic Church in England. Pope Clement VII would not sanction a divorce for English King Henry VIII in the 1530's. That brought disaster on the Roman Catholic Church.

The Reformation of religion in Europe was already well under way. In 1517, Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany. Luther, a Catholic monk, was protesting against the sale of indulgences (pardons for sins) in the Roman Catholic Church.

In 1519, the Reformation began in Switzerland. Then in 1520 the French King sought the support of Henry VIII of England against Charles V., Emperor of the combined nations that made up the Holy Roman Empire. John Calvin, a French Theologian, was leading the Reformation in Switzerland. His followers became the group called "Puritans." That group was the core of Presbyterianism and the Dutch Reformed.

Switzerland, Scandinavia, Scotland and many small German states quickly adopted Protestantism. Henry VIII did not adopt Protestant beliefs, but Parliament eventually confirmed his divorce and in 1534 Parliament passed the Act of Supremacy, making the English sovereign the head of the Church of England. While Henry VIII was embittered, it was Archbishop Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury, and the King's subjects, freed from papal interference, who established the Church of England. Under 1534 legislation, the King as sovereign was required to and did seize the wealth and land of the monasteries. Henry was succeeded by his only surviving son, Edward VI (1547-53). Edward was only nine years of age and was a mere puppet. The Anglican Book of Prayer was issued, and it was radically revised three years later in 1549. The mentors made Edward a fanatic Protestant. When Edward died of tuberculosis in 1553 at age 16, he was succeeded by a fanatically Catholic older sister, Mary. Mary had poor success in marriage. She was sure it was due to divine vengeance as punishment for heresies being practiced in the Church of England. So, Archbishop Cranmer and Bishops and others were burned at the stake. ("The Lives of Kings and Queens of England," edited by Antonia Fraser, p. 167)

Now, we must swiftly move on. The next century, the 17th, is known for the Puritan Revolution in England. In Germany and Western Europe it is known for the "Thirty Years War" (1618-1648) which virtually destroyed the many warring German states and is said to have eliminated half the population.

Meanwhile, some charged that under King Charles I (1625-1649), the Church of England was being re-Catholicized. The King had made conflicting promises to English Anglicans, Irish Roman Catholics and Puritan leaders. Eventually, Charles I was tried and beheaded.

The Puritans of Oliver Cromwell replaced the Crown and ruled for over 10 years. Under them, Calvinism took over and the Calvinist Puritans proved intolerant, punishing other forms of faith with death.

During all this, various groups broke off from the Anglican, Catholic and Puritan blocks. These groups became known as Independent or Separatist Churches. These developments and much else is covered in depth in a book by William C. Braithwaite, titled "The Beginning of Quakerism to 1660."

Out of the many seeking a more satisfying religious experience and belief came 19 year old George Fox from the north central part of England. Fox was a weaver's son, born in 1624 and apprenticed to a shoemaker. Fox had little book learning, other than the Bible. He came from an area that had many superstitions and beliefs in witchcraft, and where witches had been burned. His parents understood their serious son and at first "designed him for the ministry."

As part of his shoemaking apprenticeship, he found the solitude to think, and he early developed a character for honest and fair dealing. He was truth-loving and so innocent and plain, that he was laughed at sometimes. He would not smoke or drink. In 1647, when he was 22 years old, Fox turned from queries and somewhat private debates with men of the cloth who were of leading faiths, and he started to search his inner self or soul for God's guidance. He spent 1643-1647 wandering and seeking answers.

In May, 1652, the tall, robust Fox stood at the 1830 foot Pendle Hill summit, on the borders of Lancashire and Yorkshire Counties in Northern England. He felt keenly that God was with him and had opened to him. He so informed the innkeeper he stayed with that night. ("The Rich Heritage of Quakerism," by Walter R. Williams, pp. 1-2)

At this time, the doctrines of the great Puritan Churches – the Presbyterians, Independents and Baptists "*left little room for a first-hand experience of this kind.*" (Braithwaite, p. 35) The Puritan Churches held that God had spoken through the scriptures and probably would make no further direct communication to man until the Second Coming of Christ.

In October 1650, Fox and two companions had been arrested and charged with blasphemy for attending a lecture on "the light within you," and on the ability of the Spirit to teach and lead you to God. Blasphemy was defined in a law Parliament had passed. (Braithwaite, p. 54) He was imprisoned nearly a year for this and served more time for later alleged offenses. About this time, he also refused to serve in the army, and he was imprisoned for that. His leadership and speaking ability had been recognized so the army wanted him to start as a captain. He despised all wars.

Many who wanted to follow Fox turned aside, rather than risk prison. By this time, he had impressed a Judge's wife, one Margaret Fell. She became almost as important to the development of Quakerism as Fox. Her husband's rank enabled her to get audiences with King Charles I and his successor, Oliver Cromwell, which lightened some persecution

and confinement of each of them, and of other followers. Margaret Fell may even have aided William Penn in getting a grant of what became the Colony of Pennsylvania. Penn established the colony that was most liberal in allowing all faiths to be practiced and in its fairness and treatment of the Indians who had been in America for thousands of years. Maryland was, also, tolerant.

The Colony of Pennsylvania was founded in 1681. As you know, George and Michael Harlan were among Quakers who arrived in 1687. Philadelphia was truly the “City of Brotherly Love.” Three years before England’s very welcome “Act of Toleration” (of 1689), Penn issued a 35 page essay for a “Persuasive to Moderation to Church Dissenters.” For me, this is the rare parent of the First Amendment to our Constitution for freedom of religion, and thus, separation of Church and State.

Freedom can mean chaos. At times and in certain ways, Quaker Meetings or Churches have had to live without creed or consistent internal government. This can and has resulted in great diversity between separate “meetings” (a Quaker term for church). But I believe this freedom has produced more happiness, godliness and peace than existed prior to Fox. It was said there was a prevalent religious unbelief and religious lethargy, before the Quaker faith was developed.

Early Quakers were often grouped with other new communities of people who sought more freedom, rather than the coercion of the sole church recognized by the government and called the “Established Church.” That was the Church of England. Failure to pay tithes, attend church or follow the law on other religious matters, was severely punished.

Some of the coercive law was applied in an economic way. Crops, livestock, supplies, household goods or merchandise would be seized by the authorities. Many of the actions taken against Quakers were reported under the title “Sufferings of Early Quakers,” compiled by one Joseph Besse in London. This was republished by Sessions Book Trust of York, England. I have the volume for the Yorkshire Region for 1652 to 1690. It was re-published in 1998.

Here are three examples involving Harlan family members. In 1678, William Harlin of East Riding, Yorkshire, was imprisoned for failing to pay a required tithe of “bees and honey” (p. 142 of the above booklet). In 1682, Richard Harlin and 80 others were sentenced to prison for refusal to taken an Oath of Allegiance (p. 151). William Harland is cited four times – at p. 144, 146 and 159. Sometimes the exact sentence is not given. One sentence was prison for not attending the Parish Church in 1678. In 1682 it was three years for refusing to pay tithe. In 1684, William Harland of Farndale, Yorkshire, was fined for attending a Quaker Meeting. The one preaching at said meeting was fined five cows, two heifers, a horse, 24 sheep and four wagon loads of hay, all valued at 21 Pounds.

Often goods were seized. For instance, (on p. 145) it is reported John Kent was convicted of missing six months “from the national worship.” The bailiff went to his home and took all beds, bedding, curtains and utensils. The sentence for not being in

church was often seven or more years prison time. And some lost all they had accumulated in a lifetime. It's important to remember history! Can anybody doubt the wisdom of a separation between church and state?

The sufferings of other Quakers included death. Examples: Mary Dyer, a Quaker claiming direct inspiration from God, was said to be undermining the Congregational Church "and all authority" in Massachusetts. She was executed in 1660. In 1692, one George Burroughs was indicted for witchcraft and hanged. Some apparently charged Quakers with witchcraft. In Salem, Massachusetts, the charge brought 19 hangings, and one was pressed to death. The first emissary of the Quaker faith who was sent to the Vatican was hanged under aegis of the Pope.

My wife and I enjoyed our visit to the Lurgan Friends Meeting in Northern Ireland. It is very, very close to the original location of the first Quaker Meeting in all of Ireland, and has had regular meetings since 1654. George Fox visited in 1669. Arthur G. Chapman escorted us to the new Meeting House and the old cemetery, and he cooked dinner for us, then took us to the train station. He has written "History of The Religious Society of Friends in Lurgan." On page 22, he notes that a descendant of George and Michael Harland married the son of Abraham Lincoln, and another was the wife of President William McKinley. There were still one or two Harland's attending at Lurgan when we were there in 2003.

Traditionally, Quakers have stood for simplicity, equality, frugality, honesty and integrity. Members have always been strong in social concern for others, for the poor, the hungry, prisoners, children, the ill and the persecuted.

Quaker Testimonies on Social Issues

Quakers speak of "Testimonies," meaning they have accomplished or stood for certain principles. These include:

1. Absolute equality of men and women. Some of the earliest "Convincers to Quakerism" were women, beginning with Margaret Fell. That has continued.
2. "Friends" or "Quakers" are terms that have the same meaning. They have refused to serve in a strictly mainline military way. But they have served as non-combatants in capacities such as military medics. Quakers are in unison about opposing war with several other belief communities, such as Mennonites, Amish, Unity, many branches of Brethren, and some of the Buddhist and Hindu religions.
3. Friends opposed forced taxes for tithes to support a favored denomination or church. They, naturally, opposed mandatory church attendance and rejected the taking of oaths. Those were big issues in the 16th to 19th Centuries.

4. Without religious activists, it is doubtful men like William Wilberforce and John Newton could have ended slave trading in, or involving, England. Certainly, the most active and earliest opponents of slavery in the US were Quakers.
5. Quakers have generally opposed capital punishment. They, also, opposed excessive punishment, and, in some cases, the extent of the criminal law. In England, scores of crimes were punishable by capital punishment. Debtors were routinely imprisoned for debt. You usually had to furnish your own food and clothing while in prison, so debt could lead to death by starvation.
6. In every area of social reform, Quakers have furnished leadership well beyond what would be expected when you consider the number of Quakers, compared with much larger denominations. They have been particularly effective in hospitals, schools, higher education, prison reform, aid to the handicapped and ending the virtual enslavement of children in sweat shops.

QUAKER WORSHIP

History and Background

Quakers are commonly known as “Friends” within the Religious Society of Friends. They are known historically as one of the peace churches. Though not numerically large, this group has made a considerable contribution to the spiritual enrichment of Christendom during the past three hundred fifty years.

The founder of the Quaker movement was George Fox who sought for answers to many of life’s issues and did not find them in the established churches of 17th Century England. His search was described in the book “The Rich Heritage of Quakerism” by Walter R. Williams, as follows:

“I saw that there was none among them all that could speak to my condition. When all hopes in them, and in all men, were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could I tell what to do: then, O! 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.”

Fox was 23 years old at this time, and though working part time as a shoemaker, he began bearing witness in the midlands and northern England. He often preached in homes and in open-air meetings, but frequently went into churches which he called “steeple-houses.” As a result of disruptions perceived by these established churches, he was not a stranger to imprisonment. Justice Bennett of Derby was the first to call Fox and his followers “Quakers.” The name, now honored, was originally given in anger and derision because Fox had bidden the justice and his court to quake at the word of the Lord.

Author Williams gives us a picture of the religious climate that prevailed:

“George Fox did not grow to manhood in an age when religion was neglected. On the contrary, religion was uppermost in the minds of people generally. There was much discussion of religious topics, both of doctrine and practice, some of it sharp and direct, if not bitter. Men argued and quibbled about the scriptures, about the appointment of powers of bishops and elders, how the Psalms should be sung in the churches, whether it was wrong to eat mince pie at Christmas time, etc. When word was circulated in a community that there was to be a public discussion on some subject relating to religion, the people gathered in throngs, some to enjoy the encounter of opposing speakers; more, perhaps to judge of the truth or error of the arguments presented, and then to return to their homes with a deepened longing for a sure knowledge of God’s will.” (pg. 13)

There were many other religious sects in England during the Commonwealth period of Oliver Cromwell. These included:

- Cavaliers, constituted of the king, nobles and bishops-the people of privilege and power-who upheld the principle of the divine right of kings and of the Anglican bishops to rule over State and Church. They wore long hair or wigs and dressed in gay, extravagant clothing.
- Puritans, who favored the Presbyterian form of church government with control in the hands of Presbyters, rather than the Episcopal form with control by Bishops appointed by the ruling monarch. They did not favor separation from the Church of England, but purification of the Church. From this movement the Non-episcopal sects formed, such as Presbyterians, Independents and Baptists.
- Presbyterians, who also desired freedom from control or domination by the State, were led by John Calvin of Geneva. Based on scripture, he drew the plan for a church that was to be organization-directed, under God, by presbyters. The Scottish people had accepted this system, but it was never carried out by Parliament in England.
- Anabaptists, a group of the Church of England, who opposed the practice of infant baptism. They called for various other reforms in the practices of the Church and were considered the radicals of the Reformation. Many came across the channel from Holland and formed sizeable congregations in London, Norwich and other centers.
- Independents, who were of English origin, advocated supremacy of the people of the Church-every one a king, a prophet, a priest, with all officers and leaders chosen by the Church. Many Puritans affiliated with this group and became the Congregationalists in both England and in the American colonies.
- Familists, or Family of Love, who had their origins in 16th Century Holland, with several of their teachings having similarity to Quakerism. They refused to take oaths, to have part in warfare, or to endorse capital punishment. They did not favor outward rites and ceremonies, but placed high value on silent waiting upon God.
- Seekers, who were a heterogeneous group of persons derived from Independents, Anabaptists, Presbyterians and Anglican Churches. They felt the Church had drifted into a condition where it had nothing more than outward, ceremonial

administration. This was the group most receptive for the message of George Fox. William G. Braithwaite wrote:

“It is not too much to say that over the part of England where Quakerism planted itself most readily, the communities of Seekers had already prepared the way.” (Williams, p. 17)

In 1652, strong support for this growing movement was given by Margaret Fell, wife of Judge Thomas Fell. (It is of interest to note that a number of years after the death of Judge Fell, Margaret Fell became the wife of George Fox in 1669, and they served the Society of Friends for 22 more years.) The Fell home, known as Swarthmore Hall, was opened for meetings of Friends and continued until 1690 when the local meeting house was erected. As the Friends Movement grew in extent and influence (by now, numbering in the thousands), opposition and persecution also increased. It was an intolerant age when men craved religious liberty for themselves, but felt it their right and duty to enforce their own upon others. Oliver Cromwell stated to his Parliament, “Everyone desires to have liberty, but none will give it.” One of the most frequent charges brought against Friends was that of blasphemy, since they spoke frequently of the Indwelling Spirit or Light of God. They were arraigned for their refusal to pay tithes demanded by the state to support priests, and for disturbing religious services in “steeple-houses.” When brought before the court, magistrates were angered by their refusal to take an oath for any reason, or to remove the hat in deference to them.

The spread of Quakerism extended throughout the world. The following 1660 Minute, made at a General Meeting of Friends at Skipton in the Yorkshire Dales, read:

“We have received certain information from Friends in London of the great work and service of the Lord beyond the seas, in several parts and regions, as Germany, America, Virginia and many other places as Florence, Mantua, Palatine, Tuscany, Italy, Rome, Turkey, Jerusalem, France, Geneva, Norway, Barbados, Bermuda, Antigua, Surinam, Newfoundland, through all which Friends have passed in the service of the Lord, and divers other places, countries, islands and nations; and over and among many nations of the Indians, in which they have had service for the Lord...” (Williams, p. 60)

QUAKER ORGANIZATION

Meetings and Leadership

From the early beginnings in the mid-1600's, the Friends Movement was basically a fellowship. The uniting force which brought individuals together in small groups for fellowship and worship, was divine love. As their numbers increased, there was born in their minds the vision of reaching all England, and even all of mankind, with the message of Light and Life, of a faith that overcomes the world. In the midst of this movement, however, Fox and other leaders sensed a need for guidance in conducting business meetings, as well as preserving proper order in worship services.

So they developed an organizational format that still exists today throughout the various communions of Friends. Monthly Meetings were established for each local group. These Monthly Meetings were grouped into Quarterly Meetings. Representatives from all these meetings were to meet annually and constitute a Yearly Meeting. Before Fox died, he saw Monthly Meetings functioning throughout all of England, Scotland, and Ireland, in America and in parts of the European continent.

Historically, more common business matters to be addressed by the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings were: collections for poor Friends or those who were imprisoned (as prisoners had to buy their own food), printing and distribution of Quaker writings, supervision of marriages, and keeping careful records of marriages, births and deaths.

Today, the “Meetings for Worship for Business” where the business of Friends is done, are conducted as a continuation of the Meeting for Worship, with some being held after Meeting on a Sunday, while others are started with a period of silent worship. The Clerk is there to serve the meeting, not to lead it, and it is the Clerk’s task to assemble the thoughts expressed by the meeting into a solution acceptable to all present. There is no voting, majority rule or compromise, but there is a discernment that the final decision is accepted as the leading of the Holy Spirit. When differences arise, the clerk will ask those present to continue the silent Meeting for Worship, and this may occur several times. Often these periods of worship will result in someone understanding a different way forward, which has not been considered before. This style of business requires each person present to desire to reach unity, rather than obtain their own way.

Meetings for Worship are held as Unprogrammed Meetings or Programmed Meetings.

The Unprogrammed Meetings have no pastor, but each person is expected to take their share of the pastoral care and spiritual teaching. They do have a number of Elders and Overseers, known as Ministry and Oversight. It is their duty to have overall care of the members of the Meeting. Meetings are held in a Meeting House. There is no order of planned service. When a person is prompted or led by the Holy Spirit, they will stand and share the message given to them, whether it is a prayer, a Bible passage, something they have read something that has happened to them during the week, a thought or a song. Occasionally, the Meeting for Worship will be completely silent and no one will speak, but everyone is expected to take full part in worship by studying the Bible and other books and by spending time in quiet meditation during the week. Unprogrammed worship is the more traditional style of worship among Friends in Britain, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and parts of the United States and Canada.

The Programmed Meetings or Churches, have a worship service that resembles that of other Christian denominations, with a pastor, pulpit and choir. It may be a small group or a very large group with thousands attending. It may be quiet or lively. Many of these Programmed Meetings have now become semi-programmed in that there is a mixture of the two types of worship, with a certain

amount of the meeting prepared beforehand and conducted in the format of other churches, and the rest of the time in open worship where silent meditation is encouraged. Even though there is a paid pastor, individual members are seen as ministers and each is expected to take on their share of responsibilities, just as in the unprogrammed tradition. Programmed worship is the norm in many parts of America such as the Northwest and the Midwest.

In both traditions, there are Recorded Ministers. These are people who are formally recognized as having a particular gift of ministry. In the Programmed Meetings, these Recorded Ministers usually have advanced professional degrees. Women have historically been included among the Recorded Ministers.

Membership

At the beginning of the 18th Century, there were an estimated 50,000 Friends in England. They constituted the largest single group of Dissenters in the nation. Once The Toleration Act of 1689 had passed allowing freedom of worship, there was an increase in attendance at Friends Meetings. The reason this number is an estimate is because Meetings kept no roll of members, with all who regularly attended meetings being regarded as “belonging.” In 1737, membership rolls were actually set up by Friends. With the setting up of a membership roll began what is known as “Birthright Quakers,” meaning that if the father of a household was a member, then his wife and all children born to them should, also, be enrolled as members – and continue so, even after his death. In those early days, each birthright member would be eligible for receiving financial aid from the meeting in case of need.

By the end of the 1600’s, considerable numbers were immigrating from England and Wales to America. Six Yearly Meetings had been established in America – New England (1661), Baltimore (1672), Virginia (1673), Philadelphia (1681), New York (1695) and North Carolina (1698). By the middle of the 18th Century, American Friends would outnumber those in England, with Friends Meetings having been founded in most colonies. As further evidence of the intent of American Friends to advance the spiritual life of the membership and to uphold high standards of conduct, a Reform Movement was advanced by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and became the so-called “Reformation of 1777.” The announced reform coverage was:

“Plainness and simplicity in personal habits. Abolition of all grave-stones from Friends burial grounds. Promotion of schools for Friends children with Friends teachers. Increased use of, and production of, Friends writings. Advances in the Temperance cause: no more Friends keeping taverns. Not a slaveholder among Friends....” (Williams, p. 126)

This marked the era of “quietism” among Friends, where there was great introspection, but little outreach. Many of the more “peculiar” reforms were dropped as years went by.

Then came the revivalists of the 1800’s and early 1900’s, and many Friends were once again eager to reclaim the message and fervor of George Fox and early leaders of the movement. During this period, Yearly Meetings were added in the Mid-West and West. However, the growth in membership and change in Yearly Meetings often

resulted from division among the members, not unlike what has occurred in most Christian denominations. Despite the factors that seemed so divisive, the people known as Quakers have continued to grow with approximately 400,000 worldwide in 2007.

QUAKER BELIEFS

Historical

An early listener of Fox and a convert to the Friends movement was Francis Howgill. He expressed the core of Quaker belief in this statement:

“As soon as I heard him (Fox) declare that the Light of Christ in every man was the way to Christ, I believed the eternal word of truth....I came to see Him whom I had pierced: my heart was broken...then I saw the cross of Christ and stood by it....” (Williams, p. 32)

Another peer and fellow Friend with Fox was William Penn who founded the colony of Pennsylvania, and who wrote the book entitled “No Cross, No Crown.” In this writing he emphasized many early Quaker beliefs. One such belief was that the temple of God was not in a church building, but that man was a “temple of the living God,” and that God wanted to “dwell in them and walk in them.” In support of the modest Meeting Houses used for worship by Friends, he went on to say:

“This is the Christian church. Her ornaments are not the embroidery and furniture of worldly art and wealth. Her ornaments are the graces of the Spirit: meekness, love, faith, patience, self-denial and charity....This does not mean that Christians have no meeting places. But they are plain; without pomp and ceremony; suiting the simplicity of their blessed Lord’s life....” (Penn, p. 34)

Penn further explained the time of silence that was (and still is) such an integral part of the Meeting for Worship, by quoting the Psalmist who said, “Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble. Thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear. Ps. 10:17.” Then he said:

“Here it is-thou must not think thy own thoughts, nor speak thy own words. This is the silence of the holy cross. Be secluded from the confusions that press upon the mind in those holy retirements.... Wait to feel something divine to prepare and dispose thee to worship God truly and acceptably.... Shut the doors and windows of the soul against everything that would interrupt this waiting upon God, no matter how pleasant in itself or how lawful and needful at another time. Then the power of the Almighty will break in. And when the soul cries out, it is He alone that supplies it.” (Penn, p. 40)

Another strong belief was that one should not tip or remove their hat in recognition of someone in power, because Quakers held that honor belonged to all, not to just the select. This seeming lack of respect for the nobility and court was the last straw for sending many a Friend to prison. Penn defended the practice, even if it resulted in imprisonment, when he wrote:

“To conclude this scripture inquiry about honour, I shall summarize the subject under three capacities, superiors, equals, and inferiors. Honor, to superiors is obedience; to equals, love; to inferiors, help.... We are in favour of true honor and respect. We honour the king, our parents, our masters, our magistrates, our landlords, one another; yea, all men, after God’s way. But we refuse these customs of titles etc. as vain and deceitful; not fulfilling the purpose for which they were used.... Honour existed from the beginning; but hat-respects and most titles are recent practices. Therefore, there was true honour before hats and titles and consequently true honour stands not in them. (Penn, pp. 71-72)

The use of “thee” and “thou” rather than the plural “you” when speaking to single persons, lost relevance over the years; but, early Quakers insisted that it was pride which demanded that “you” be used when addressing persons of rank, while “thee” and “thou” were used to equals and inferiors. Today, the English language has changed to the use of “you” for both singular and plural. (Despite the general language change many years ago, it is not uncommon today for older Quakers to still use the words “thee” and “thou,” particularly in their prayers when addressing the Lord.)

When remembering the early Quakers, the picture would not be complete without mention of temperance in food, apparel and conversation. Penn had significant admonition on this point:

“Temperance in food, plain clothing, with a meek, shame faced, and quiet spirit, and honest behavior are conducive to good. Paul (the apostle) says: ‘Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but only that which is edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers; neither filthiness, nor silly talking, nor levity, which are not fitting, but instead let there be thanksgiving.’ If men and women were clothed in this Christian manner, lust, pride, vanity and wantonness would find a rebuke. Virtue would become a credit and vice, afraid and ashamed. Excess would not dare show its face. There would be an end to gluttony and gaudiness, flattering titles, and a luxurious life.... (Penn, p. 125)

Perhaps the Quaker belief most recognized by the rest of the world, is that of pacifism. In a booklet published by the Ireland Yearly Meeting entitled “The Friendly Guide to Quakerism,” it is said:

“Nearly all Friends uphold the stance of absolute pacifism, which has led Friends down the years to take active measures against war the world over through organization or individually. In times of war, Friends try to help the victims on all sides of the conflict, by participating in war relief.” (p. 23)

Generally, Quakerism has had no creed, believing a formal creed would be an obstacle, both to authentic listening and to the recognition of new insight. But some 200 years after the preaching of George Fox and the writings of William Penn, Quakers felt the need to convene a conference for the purpose of declaring a united doctrine and message. This was known as the Richmond Conference of 1887, held at the invitation of Indiana Yearly Meeting, with delegates present from American

yearly meetings, London and Dublin. The most important action of this five-day conference was the preparation, consideration and adoption of the Richmond Declaration of Faith as held by the Religious Society of Friends. It upheld the authority of scripture, and while it was accepted by most in attendance-particularly evangelical Friends, it did not end the divisions that prevailed, and that still prevail to this day.

For many years, a set of Queries (attached – copied from “The Friendly Guide to Quakerism” p. 15) has become the basis for individual consideration and conscience, in order to encourage Friends to examine whether they are living a life of self-denial and devotedness to God. In true Quaker tradition, the Queries place the responsibility on each individual to answer to the Inward Light that is to be our guide. As was written of the early ministry of George Fox:

“I heard him declare that the Light of Christ in every man was the way to Christ.” (Williams p. 32)

QUAKERS TODAY

In “Epilogue: An Ongoing Heritage,” Paul Anderson of Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends wrote an epilogue in 1987 to “The Rich Heritage of Quakers” which was first published by Walter R. Williams in 1962. Anderson writes:

“One of the significant developments over the last three decades has been a dramatic renewal of interest in the history of Quakerism.” (p. 254) In the last quarter century, one may also observe the emergence of many special interest groups among Friends. . . Many of these interest groups emerge at the ‘grass roots’ level, while others include Friends from several yearly meetings.... Attempts to express Quaker concerns in contemporary ways are carried out through the organizational structure of virtually all yearly meetings.” (pp. 260-261)

He states that in Europe, Quaker Peace and Service began as the combined efforts of the London and Ireland Yearly Meetings, working for non-violent change and reconciliation, especially as it relates to the hungry, the wounded, the displaced and the alienated. In the Americas, various service organizations have continued to work for peace and social concerns, notably the Friends Committee on National Legislation in Washington, DC. The Friends Council on Education and the Friends Association for Higher Education support Friends schools and post-secondary institutions. The largest service organization is the American Friends Service Committee whose programs include Third World Coalition, the Nationwide Women’s Program and various endeavors for peace education.

Many Yearly Meetings are represented today under various organizations to help maintain order and communication within the Religious Society of Friends. The three chief ones are Friends General Conference, Friends United Meeting and Evangelical Friends International. Most typically, the first two are comprised of Unprogrammed Meetings held in meeting houses with the open worship format, and

the latter is comprised of Programmed Meetings held in church buildings with regular church services that include music and preaching . While continued divisions among Friends are exemplified by the diversity of the yearly meetings, Anderson states:

“Particularly encouraging has been the work of the Friends World Committee for Consultation. With offices in Europe and the Near East, Africa, West Pacific and the Americas, the FWCC has been one of the most effective forces in the care of communication among Friends....This has resulted in greater understanding and closeness among Quaker leaders. The goals for the FWCC in the 1980’s were articulated as follows: ‘To facilitate loving understanding of diversities among Friends while we discover together, with God’s help, our common spiritual ground.’” (p. 262)

The Harlan Family has had a rich heritage in its Quaker faith – one that is not well known in today’s world, but one that has had great influence on our shared values and in a sense of responsibility to mankind.