

Workshop: There is no “THEY” – only “I, YOU and WE”

Quaker Faith *in* Practice: create a society we ‘know’ to be ‘true’ and just.

“True godliness don’t turn men out of the world but enables them to live better in it and excites their endeavors to mend it... [We] should keep the helm and guide the vessel to its port; not merely steal (i.e. hide) out at the stern of the world and leave those that are in it without a pilot to be driven by the fury of evil times upon the rock or sand of ruin.”

William Penn, 1682

The WORKSHOP: a more complete outline appears at the end of this report.

The workshop started with an invitation to form groups around a topic of personal concern and interest from 10 choices – each an expression of Quaker faith and/or practice in society.

Each group spent 45 minutes to a) interpret or define the topic in the form of a question or challenge and b) to name practical steps and actions that “I” and “we” can take, without waiting for the system or the others to change.

Six groups formed and returned with the flipcharts reproduced here.

Please look at their work. We ask each Meeting to take up any or all of these promptings at Meeting for Business or during a Second Hour, with the question in mind: What intentions and commitments can we make, individually, as a Meeting, or with other Friends in the Valley? What are we prepared to learn, practice spiritually, and do concretely?

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The FLIPCHARTS from SIX GROUPS

Integrity and Honesty

Challenge

To be honest **and** kind. Danger is just to be silent.
Wanting to lead and organize **and** wanting to be led.

Practical steps and actions for US – Friends and friends

1. All posts on Facebook, ask: is it True? Kind? Necessary?
2. In speaking truth to power it is hard not to be judgmental. Ask questions. Speak of our own experience, not blanket statements – this is how I feel and the effect on me.
3. Benefit from hearing other points of view.
4. Respond individually rather than to a group.
5. Continue to encourage Quakers to come from a place of love and truth as we see it.
6. In our Meetings, take a breath and step back and reconnect with our peace testimony.
7. Petitions vs. fundraising
8. If you say that something is important, how do you show it in your daily life. e.g. what about participation in Quaker affairs?

Promptings of Love and Truth

Question

How do we make a safe place where we and others can be honest and supported / supportive?

Faith in Action

Engage Friends to make our Meetings a place where we and others can be honest, safe and supported.

(Take this conversation home.)

“Truth without love is brutality, and love without truth is hypocrisy.”

– Warren W. Wiersbe, known as the ‘pastors’ pastor for his encouragement and support of people in the ministry.

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Promptings of love and truth looked within their Meetings. This is an important response to the challenge to reflect on what “I, you and we” can do in our community, close to home, here and now. After looking bravely at ourselves, Friends may wish to expand the question to include “that which love requires of us” beyond the Meeting. The same opportunity for two discussions could apply to the next question too: Unity and Diversity in our Meeting as well as in our community.

Unity and Diversity

Questions

How do we ask for a relationship?

How do we address our needs, differences and feelings?

How do we encourage ourselves to keep trying?

Faith and Practice

Make places where we can practice in a safe setting.

Equality and Simplicity

= **Respect the inherent worth of all others**

Question

How do we address our (sense of) powerlessness in the face of systemic inequality?

Faith in Action

Take inspiration from the essence of unions – working cooperatively to address powerlessness

Empower people in disadvantaged groups to work together for the common good as they know it to be true.

Circles united for education, healthcare, home, sustenance, work – all basic needs.

Work for equity (outcomes) not only equality (fairness)

(Note: Quaker skills and methods may help.)

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Immigrants, Migrants and Refugees



Question

How can we learn about the issues and needs?

Practical Steps

Websites for FSC, EMO, Lutheran Family Services. Local colleges and universities. City and state info re: sanctuary

Question

How can we connect with local efforts to address them?

Practical steps

Local immigrant / refugee programs (e.g. Augustana Lutheran Center, Corvallis; SOAR)

At NPYM Annual Session; simple meal; interest groups; \$

Right Caring for the World’s Resources

Premise

“World Resources Interconnected
– water, air, fossil fuels”

Practical Steps

Collect information and share it

Bring Awareness, Aceptance and Action, e.g.

Clean drinking water is essential for all and the planet.

Making lifestyle changes: My action is _____.

Experiencing it as a spiritual practice.

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OUTLINE

A. Topics for Group Work

1. Topics that have a prepared worksheet and questions	2. Other aspects of Quaker social responsibility from various F&P books	
Peace and the Peace Testimony Promptings of Love and Truth Immigrants and Refugees	Simplicity and Equality * Honesty and Integrity Conflict resolution and mediation	Right Caring for the World’s Resources Unity and Diversity

Reflect and choose the topic you prefer, and a back-up in case nobody else does.

3. What do you want add to this list in view of the challenges we face in our society and community today?

* **Homelessness** (which opened a discussion on ‘what can we do in the in the face of systemic inequality’?) *Groups formed around topics in green in this workshop.*

B. Forming Groups

1. If you feel a strong leading toward one topic, stand up and say it. Everybody else who chose the same one, gather around that person – and voila! It’s a group.
2. Find a place in the Meeting House to gather.
3. Come back in 45 minutes with a sheet a flipchart paper showing a) the question or issue as you refined it for yourselves, and b) practical steps or actions that you can take – preferably with others.

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C. Group Activity (45 minutes)

1. Reflect silently for a minute or two: What aspect of the topic would you like to discuss today – and what question or issue in particular?
2. Then go once round the circle to hear each person’s issue or question (without elaborating on it). See if you can quickly gather around one topic for this next half hour.
3. Then share and listen to each other in response to:
 - a. What this issue or question means to you.
 - b. What we as Quakers can and should do to ‘keep the helm and guide the vessel to port’ – practically and concretely – in our selves, our neighborhood, our community and beyond?

D. Sharing. Make a flip chart with the issue or question and 3 points you want to share with the rest of the gathering. When finished, tape it to the far wall of the Meeting Room and look at the sheets from the other groups. Notice any questions that arise in you.

E. And then what? Taking these conversations home to our Meetings.

The ARE committee in Corvallis will put this report up on the WQM website.

CFM will hold its own follow-up session at a Second Hour in February and post our progress.

Other Meetings are urged to do the same.

After that, we hope to find at least one intention, practice or action that we can pursue among Meetings, or at least support one another’s efforts.

Other Information

Corvallis ARE had time to prepare some guidance on three of the topics. The groups were free to use, select or ignore it. Several Friends asked that we include them in this mailing.

The Peace Testimony (this topic was not taken up by a group at WQM)

Britain Yearly Meeting F&P gives more than fifteen pages to 'PRACTICAL EXPRESSIONS of our Peace Testimony. They come under several headings:

- Public Protest
- Conscientious objection and withholding of tax
- Disarmament
- [Relief of Suffering](#)
- [Reconciliation and Mediation](#)
- [Building the Institutions of peace and social justice](#)
- [Right Sharing of the world's resources](#)

Group activity.

1. What would you add to this list in the circumstances we face in our society and community today? (2-4 minutes)
2. Reflect silently for a minute or two: What aspect of the peace testimony would you like to discuss today – and what question or issue in particular?
3. Then go once round the circle to hear each person's issue or question (without elaborating on it). See if you can quickly gather around one topic for this next half hour.
4. Then share and listen to each other in response to:
 - a. What this issue or question means to you.
 - b. What we as Quakers can and should do to 'keep the helm and guide the vessel to port' – practically and concretely – in our selves, our neighborhood, our community and beyond?
5. Make a flip chart with the issue or question and 3 points you want to share with the rest of the gathering.

Promptings of Love and Truth

“Truth without love is brutality, and love without truth is hypocrisy.” – Warren W. Wiersbe, known as the ‘pastors’ pastor’ for his encouragement and support of people in the ministry.

I come back again and again ... to this word Truth. ‘Promptings of love and truth’ – these two seem sometimes to be in conflict, but in fact they are inseparable. If we are to know the truth, we must be able to see with unclouded eyes, and then we will love what is real and not what is duty or fancy. Once when I was in the middle of a difficult exercise of Quaker decision-making, I wailed to an older and wiser Friend, “How can I speak the truth in love when I feel no love?” Her reply was, “Unless you speak the truth there never will be love.”
- Alison Sharman, BYM, 1986

The duty of the Society of Friends is to be the voice of the oppressed, but [also] to be conscious that we ourselves are part of that oppression. - Evi I Pinthus, BYM, 1987.

To conform a little to a wrong way strengthens the hands of such who carry wrong customs to their utmost extent; and the more a person appears to be virtuous and heavenly-minded, the more powerfully does his conformity operate in favour of evil-doers... While we profess in all cases to live in constant opposition to that which is contrary to universal righteousness... language is [in]sufficient to satisfy those obligations we are under to beware lest our example lead others wrong...

- John Woolman, 1763.

Evils which have struck their roots deep in the fabric of human society are often accepted, even by the best minds, as part of the providential ordering of life. They lurk unsuspected in the system of things until men of keen vision and heroic heart drag them into the light, or until their insolent power visibly threatens human welfare.

- William Charles Braithwaite, 1919

And today

1. Reflect silently for a minute or two: What question do you want to raise for listening and sharing on this topic in this group today?
2. Then go once round the circle to hear each person’s question (without elaborating on it). See if you can quickly gather around 1 or 2 questions for this next half hour.
3. Then occupy yourselves with the question(s) in two ways:
 - a. What this question says to you.
 - b. What we as Quakers can and should do to ‘keep the helm and guide the vessel to port’ – meaning our society, community, neighborhood, and selves.

Immigrants and Migrants

In Christianity

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me. I was ill and you comforted me, in prison and you came to visit me. I assure you, as often as you did it for the least among you, you did it for me."
— *Matthew 25:35-40*

In Islam

The Qur'an speaks of the migration experiences of many prophets prior to Islam, such as Adam, Abraham, Lot, Jonah, Jacob, and Moses. Since Adam, the father of humanity, migrated from heaven to earth, the tradition of Islam considers all human beings as immigrants.

"Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah ... the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth and comfort, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler..." (Al-Baqarah 2:177)

Non-Muslims are to be treated equally. "And if anyone of the disbelievers seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may feel the truth of Allah, and then escort him to where he will be secure." (Surah 9:6)

Today

Thirty-five years ago... Annunciation House -- a sanctuary and home of hospitality that has served more than 100,000 refugees, homeless poor and undocumented workers -- was started in El Paso, Texas. The founder and a few friends wanted to place themselves among the poor, to see where the poor would lead them. He said, "They took us to the undocumented -- the most vulnerable." – Rubin Garcia

It's fine to declare the university and churches as sanctuaries for immigrants and refugees, but who will drive them there...[bring their belongings to them, watch their home, communicate with their families]? Do we need a modern 'underground railroad'? - A member of CFM

Group Activity

1. Reflect silently for a minute or two: What question do you want to propose to the group for listening and sharing on this topic?
2. Then go once round the circle to hear each person's question (without elaborating on it). See if you can quickly gather around 1 or 2 questions for this next half hour.
3. Then occupy yourselves with the question(s) in two ways:
 - a. What this question says to you.
 - b. What we as Quakers can and should do to 'keep the helm and guide the vessel to port' – meaning our society, community, neighborhood, and selves.