

PART I  
FAITH AND LIFE



## CHAPTER 1

# *Historical Statement*

### George Fox and the Rise of Quakerism in England

**Beginnings in England** 1. Quakerism had its beginning in England at a time of great religious and political ferment. The Reformation had involved crown and church alike, and the struggle with the papacy had opened the way for numerous independent movements that affected all elements of society. Over against the formalism of the established church stood Puritan attempts at reform, as well as the search for a fundamentally different expression of religious truth which at times led to fanaticism. But there were also deeply concerned Seekers whose spiritual ideals were so similar to those of George Fox that to a great extent he drew his followers and fellow workers from them. It is impossible to determine how many of his views and practices he may have adopted from that source, but since he would accept nothing until it was confirmed by his own experience, he developed the firsthand certainty which made his teachings so effective.

**Fox. . . Childhood, Youth** 2. George Fox was born in July 1624, into a home of piety. His father, Christopher, was known in his community as “Righteous Christer” and his mother, Mary, was “a good, honest, virtuous woman.” In Fox’s own account in his *Journal*, he writes, “When I came to eleven years of age, I knew pureness and righteousness; for while a child I was taught how to walk to be kept pure.”<sup>1</sup> At nineteen years of age, experiencing deep spiritual conflict, he began a four-year period of wandering over the land, studying the Bible and seeking spiritual help from churchmen and dissenters alike. He then tells of his great

---

<sup>1</sup>George Fox, *Journal*.

religious experience, “And when all my 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, oh! then I heard a voice which said, ‘There is One, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition.’”<sup>1</sup> In 1647, at the age of twenty–three, he began the ministry that was to bring together before his death in 1691 some fifty or sixty thousand Friends in England, besides large groups in America and elsewhere.

**First Called Quakers** 3. The emphasis of George Fox on the “light of Christ” led to the adoption by his followers of the name, “Children of Light.” This was succeeded as early as 1652 by “Friends in the Truth,” or merely “Friends.” The popular name, “Quakers,” was said by George Fox to have been first applied by Justice Bennett in 1650, “because I bade them tremble at the word of the Lord.” It was said by Robert Barclay to have been applied as a term of reproach because “sometimes the power of God will break forth into a whole meeting . . . and thereby trembling and a motion of the body will be upon most if not upon all.”<sup>2</sup>

**Early Organization** 4. Although he declared that he was forming no new sect or denominational group but bringing a universal message, Fox soon found some organization necessary for his growing fellowship. Though various local and general meetings had been held previously, the first regular monthly meeting seems to have been organized in 1653. Fox writes in 1656: “About this time I was moved to set up the men’s quarterly meetings throughout the nation,” thus carrying on a work already begun and furnishing an enduring pattern of organization. General meetings had been held in various localities prior to 1668 when London Yearly Meeting began to meet regularly. Dublin (Ireland) Yearly Meeting was organized in 1669.

**Period of Persecution** 5. During this early period of Quakerism, the persecution because of the refusal to take oaths, pay tithes, and attend the established church was extremely severe. About four hundred fifty of the most gifted young

---

<sup>1</sup>Fox, *Journal*.

<sup>2</sup>Eleanore Price Mather, *Barclay in Brief*, Pendle Hill Pamphlet #28, p. 51.

leaders among Fox's followers either were killed or died as a result of the various forms of persecution. The loss of this leadership was an important factor in the decline of the evangelical fervor of the early Quakers, and, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, Quakerism began to settle into a period of quietism from which it did not emerge until well into the nineteenth century.

**Meetings for Sufferings** 6. Although there was no hesitation on the part of early Friends in recognizing the ministry of women, the first meetings for business were men's meetings; however, meetings for women were soon established, charged particularly with the care of members of their sex. The Meeting for Sufferings looked after the victims of persecution and other cases of need, and later had general charge of the affairs of the group between sessions of the yearly meeting. In most groups in America the Meeting for Sufferings was later known as the Permanent Board and later still the Representative Body. Records of births, marriages, and deaths were carefully kept by the monthly meetings, and marriages were carefully supervised. In the course of time the desire for good order, harmony and religious unity in their meetings led to rigid regulations as to the conduct of members and finally to the disownment of large numbers of persons who were not disposed to conform to certain regulations.

### **American Beginnings and Growth**

**Growth and Expansion** 1. The universal aspect of Quakerism led its messengers at an early date to the continent of Europe and as far east as Turkey and Palestine. They ministered without prejudice to Protestants, Catholics, Jews and Mohammedans, and impartially to kings, nobles, and peasants. The first Friends to cross the Atlantic went to Barbados where they had large followings. Mary Fisher and Ann Austin, who came to the islands in 1655, passed on to Boston the next summer, and, as far as is known, were the first Quaker visitors to the American mainland. These women were seized at once, imprisoned, and finally sent back to their place of departure as were the other Quaker apostles who ventured to come later. But banishment, fines, whipping, imprisonment, and even hanging of four of the number on Boston Common, 1659–1661, were not sufficient to restrain their coming. "If God calls us," they declared, "woe to

us if we come not.” Condemned persons were accompanied by followers who were “moved of their Lord to look your bloody laws in the face.”

**American Yearly Meetings** 2. George Fox and other early leaders visited America, evangelizing and aiding in the organization of meetings. The first yearly meeting to be organized was *New England* in 1661. *Baltimore Yearly Meeting* was established in 1672 (as Maryland Yearly Meeting) and *Virginia Yearly Meeting* in 1673 “by the motion and order of George Fox,” who had attended the first and second session of Baltimore Yearly Meeting. Virginia Yearly Meeting united with Baltimore in 1845. *Philadelphia Yearly Meeting* was organized in 1681; *New York* in 1695 by New England; *North Carolina* in 1698; *Ohio*, the first beyond the Alleghenies, in 1813 by Baltimore. *Indiana Yearly Meeting* was organized by Ohio in 1827 and became the fruitful mother of several other yearly meetings: *Western Yearly Meeting* in Indiana and eastern Illinois in 1858; *Iowa* in 1863; *Kansas* in 1872; and *Wilmington* in 1892. *Canadian (Orthodox) Yearly Meeting* was organized by New York in 1867; *Oregon* in 1893 by Iowa; and *Nebraska* in 1908 by the Five Years Meeting (FUM) from Iowa Yearly Meeting territory.

Current American yearly meetings, year of establishment, and affiliations are: *New England*, 1661, Friends United Meeting (FUM) and Friends General Conference (FGC); *Baltimore*, 1672, FUM and FGC; *Philadelphia*, 1681, FGC; *New York*, 1695, FUM and FGC; *North Carolina*, 1698, FUM; *Ohio*, 1813, Conservative; *Evangelical Friends Church—Eastern Region*, 1813 (name changed from Ohio Yearly Meeting, Damascus, in 1971), Evangelical Friends International (EFI); *Ohio Valley*, 1821 (name changed from Indiana Yearly Meeting in 1976), FGC; *Indiana*, 1821, FUM; *Western*, 1858, FUM; *Iowa*, 1863, FUM; *Mid—America*, 1872 (name changed from Kansas in 1978), EFI; *Illinois*, 1875, FGC; *Iowa*, 1877, Conservative; *Wilmington*, 1892, FUM; *Northwest*, 1893 (name changed from Oregon Yearly Meeting in 1971), EFI; *Southwest*, 1895 (name changed from California in 1984), FUM; *North Carolina*, 1904, Conservative; *Nebraska*, 1908, FUM ; *Central*, 1926; *Cuba*, 1927, FUM; *Jamaica*, 1941, FUM; *Pacific*, 1947; *Canadian* (union of *Genesee*, 1834, Hicksite; *Canadian*, 1867, Orthodox; and *Canadian*, 1881, Conservative), 1955, FUM and FGC; *Rocky*

*Mountain*, 1957, EFI; *South Central*, 1961, FGC; *Southeastern*, 1962, FUM and FGC; *Lake Erie*, 1963, FGC; *Alaska*, 1970, by California Yearly Meeting; *Central America* (Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador), 1970 by California Yearly Meeting; *Southern Appalachian*, 1970; *North Pacific*, 1973; *National Friends Church* (Bolivia and Peru), 1973, by Northwest Yearly Meeting; *Northern*, 1975, FGC.

**Other Yearly Meetings** 3. Yearly meetings in Africa are: *Madagascar* (Malagasy Republic, 1881, now part of the United Church); *Pemba*, 1916; *East Africa*, 1946, FUM, Friends Mission from 1902; *South Africa*, 1948; *Elgon Religious Society of Friends*, 1973; *Burundi*, 1977, interim yearly meeting status granted by Mid–America Yearly Meeting. Other African yearly meetings organized since 1977 are: Congo, Bware (Kenya), Central, Chavakali, Kakamega, Lugari, Malava, Nairobi, Nandi, Vokoli, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Yearly meetings in Asia are: *Bundelkhand*; *Mid–India*, 1907; *Japan*, 1917; *Taiwan*, 1977, by Evangelical Friends Church–Eastern Region; *Near East* (occupied West Bank and Lebanon) 1929 (originally Syria and Palestine Yearly Meeting), FUM.

Yearly meetings in Australasia are: *Australia*, 1964 and *New Zealand*, 1964.

Yearly meetings in Europe are: *Britain Yearly Meeting*, 1668 (name changed from London Yearly Meeting, 1994); *Ireland*, 1669; *Norway*, 1818; *Denmark*, 1875; *Pyrmont*, 1925 (Germany); *Netherlands*, 1931; *France*, 1933; *Sweden*, 1935; *Switzerland*, 1944; *Germany*, 1969.

**Historical Sketch, North Carolina Yearly Meeting** 4. In 1672, George Fox and William Edmundson, engaged in a great mission in the “service of truth,” traveled to America. William Edmundson first made his way into Carolina, and near Albemarle Sound in the general locality of the present town of Hertford, he visited Henry Phillips and his wife, the only Quaker settlers in Carolina. Henry Phillips called the inhabitants together and Edmundson had a meeting with them; the next day he held a meeting at the home of Francis Toms, and “a blessed meeting it was, for several were

tendered with a sense of the Power of God and received the truth and abode in it.” These two meetings mark the planting of Quakerism in North Carolina.

A few weeks later, George Fox reached Carolina and spent eighteen days traveling through the Perquimans, Pasquotank, Chowan region and preaching to the people. In 1676, when Edmundson came the second time, he reported that he found Friends “finely settled,” but no record of organization prior to 1680 is preserved. For that year there are minutes of Perquimans Monthly Meeting recording a “general meeting” held at the home of Francis Toms. At that meeting Christopher Nicholson and Ann Atwood announced intentions of their marriage which took place the eleventh of second month 1680.

The Quarterly Meeting (now known as Eastern) was organized in 1681 with the home of Christopher Nicholson as its meeting place. In 1698 Pasquotank Monthly Meeting was set up; it usually met at the home of Henry White until after 1703 when the meeting decided “to erect a meeting house with as much speed as can be.” This meeting house at Symons Creek takes its place in colonial history as the first church erected in the state of North Carolina.

North Carolina Yearly Meeting met for the first time in 1698. Existing minutes date from 1708.

Settlement of piedmont Carolina began just before the middle of the eighteenth century and migrations from Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Nantucket brought Quaker settlers into the Cane Creek, New Garden, and Deep River areas in considerable numbers. Fifty years later Friends from the older meetings in eastern Carolina joined the westward migration; many families went on to Indiana and Ohio, but many remained to strengthen the meetings of central Carolina. By 1759 Friends were so strongly settled in this new center that it seemed expedient to set up a quarterly meeting which took the name Western. Within its original limits, three other quarterly meetings developed as settlements grew: New Garden, set up in 1787; Deep River, in 1818; and Southern, in 1819. Eastern Quarter meanwhile established one other quarterly meeting, Contentnea, in 1789.

The rapid growth of Western Quarter led to changes in the meeting place for the North Carolina Yearly Meeting. As early as 1776 Friends



began asking that it convene in Western Quarter in alternate years. In 1787 the request was granted, and in 1787 the North Carolina Yearly Meeting met at Centre Meeting House. Meanwhile, a new meeting house was being erected at New Garden, and when it was finally completed in 1791, the North Carolina Yearly Meeting convened there. Until 1813 it alternated between Symons Creek and New Garden; from 1813 until 1833 it met annually at New Garden, except for the session of 1881, which met at Friendsville, Tennessee, with Friendsville Quarterly Meeting (set up in 1871, transferred to Wilmington in 1897). Expansion into Tennessee had been quite steady and this was the second quarterly meeting established there, the first being Lost Creek (1802–1888). There had also been a quarterly meeting at Bush River for meetings in South Carolina and Georgia between 1791 and 1808. The last quarterly meetings established in North Carolina were Yadkin Valley, set up in 1889; Surry, in 1898; and Northwest in 2000.

From 1883 until 1905 the North Carolina Yearly Meeting met at High Point; since 1905 it has met annually in New Garden Meeting House or at Guilford College, and recently (since 2001) at Black Mountain, North Carolina. In 2002 North Carolina Yearly Meeting had nine quarterly meetings, seventy-four monthly meetings, two preparatory meetings and a membership of 10,985.

### **Evangelical Movements of the Nineteenth Century**

**Ministry of Gurney**      1. The development of American Quakerism has been greatly influenced by the visits of prominent English Friends. Hannah Backhouse made extensive visits in the 1830s, encouraging Bible reading and study, and the organization of Bible classes and Bible schools. Her cousin, Joseph John Gurney, who later visited nearly all the American yearly meetings, gave the Bible a still more important place in Friends' consideration and placed a new emphasis on conversion and on justification through the atoning death of Jesus Christ. Other influences reinforced these movements and when the exclusiveness that had kept Friends from outside contacts was weakened, the great American revival of the 1850s reached the younger members.

**Evangelists**      2. In 1860 Lindley M. Hoag of Iowa and Sybil Jones of New England were present at Indiana

Yearly Meeting and encouraged a special meeting for the young Friends that became a time of vocal exercise and testimony by hundreds. As a result, an unusual group of young men and women were ready for the work of evangelism which followed. The revival movement, checked by the Civil War, reappeared and continued throughout the 1870s and the 1880s under the leadership of such evangelists as John Henry Douglas, Robert Douglas, Nathan and Esther Frame, Allen Jay, and many others. There was some opposition to the new methods and some excesses developed, but the movement spread, reaching the pillars of the meetings and the general community alike.

### Development of the Pastoral Ministry

***Pastoral  
Ministry  
Origins***

1. The development of the pastoral ministry during the latter half of the nineteenth century was due to the growing demand for trained leadership. The change probably would have come eventually but more slowly if it had not been for the impetus given to it by the evangelical movement. Many were brought into membership by the revival meetings who had had no experience in the practices and methods of the Society of Friends nor any knowledge of their doctrines and traditions. "In places there were whole Meetings with only a few birthright members. Often converts in a series of meetings would join Friends merely because the preacher was a Quaker, and they had no other denominational preferences."<sup>1</sup> This called for a teaching ministry and for pastoral care such as had never been rendered in the traditional type of Quaker meeting with its system of distributed responsibility.

***Employment  
of Pastors***

2. It was natural, therefore, that the evangelist should be asked to remain in the community and devote his entire time to his ministry and the shepherding of the flock. The feeling against the paid ministry diminished, and references to it were omitted in revisions of the Discipline. Definite employment and financial assistance were provided for ministers and evangelists who were called to serve as pastors. The Meeting on Ministry and Oversight became also the Pastoral Commit-

---

<sup>1</sup>Elbert Russell, *The History of Quakerism*, p. 483.

tee and was given the responsibility of selecting the pastor and supervising his work. These developments were obvious departures from the early practices of Friends, meeting as they did at the hour of worship in a silence that might continue through the hour, or that might be broken by any one of the several resident ministers or other members of the congregation. The change to current forms took place gradually but not without regret and even opposition on the part of many. In some areas the older forms still survive, but the pastoral ministry is the prevailing pattern in most American yearly meetings.

### **Origin of the Five Years Meeting (Now Friends United Meeting)**

#### ***Concern for Unity***

1. It was apparent that, if some formula of unity could be devised, it would tend to prevent further divisions among Friends if new issues or divergent leadership should again arise. The years after the separation in 1828, a conference of the “Orthodox” yearly meetings was held in Philadelphia where a testimony was formulated which they all adopted as a statement of belief. Other conferences were held in 1849, 1851, and 1853, following the Wilbur–Gurney separation, but were ineffective since not all the meetings were represented. Western Yearly Meeting twice asked for a conference but without success. Finally, in 1887, in response to a proposal made the year before by Indiana Yearly Meeting, twelve yearly meetings, including London and Dublin, sent delegates to a general conference held in Richmond, Indiana. Specially invited members from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (Arch Street) were also present but not as official delegates. The principal work of this conference was the formulation of the Richmond Declaration of Faith, which was later adopted by six of the yearly meetings represented. London, New England, and Ohio yearly meetings did not adopt the declaration, while Dublin, New York, and Baltimore gave their general approval without formal adoption.

#### ***Origin of Five Years Meeting***

2. A second conference with the same American representation met at Indianapolis, Indiana, in 1892. It was largely concerned with the consideration of the pastoral ministry to which it gave its approval. It also planned for united foreign missionary activities and for another conference to be

held in the same city five years later. When this third conference met in 1897, it approved the idea of a uniform discipline which was to provide for a quinquennial conference with delegated powers. The new discipline was prepared and submitted to the yearly meetings in 1900 for approval; its adoption by eleven yearly meetings by 1902 opened the way for the organization of the Five Years Meeting. The first session was held in Indianapolis in 1902. With the exception of 1912 when the meeting was again held in Indianapolis, succeeding sessions through 1969 have been held in Richmond, Indiana. Of the yearly meetings represented at the Conference of 1897, only Philadelphia and Ohio remained outside of the new organization. Canadian Yearly Meeting joined the Five Years Meeting in 1907 and with the organization of Nebraska Yearly Meeting by the Five Years Meeting in 1908, the number of thirteen constituent American yearly meetings was reached. Oregon Yearly Meeting withdrew in 1926 and Kansas in 1937. Due to the Great Depression the 1932 sessions were postponed to 1935. Since 1960 the sessions have occurred every three years, and in 1966 the name was officially changed from Five Years Meeting of Friends to Friends United Meeting. In 1972, triennial sessions were held at the American Baptist Assembly, Green Lake, Wisconsin; in 1975 at Wilmington College, Ohio; in 1978, at William Penn College, Oskaloosa, Iowa; in 1981, again at Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana; in California Yearly Meeting in 1984; in 1987 at Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina; in 1990 at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana; in 1993 at Hamilton College in Clinton, New York; in 1996 at Indianapolis, Indiana; in 1999 at College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia; in 2002 in Nairobi, Kenya.

### **Other Cooperative Agencies**

**American Friends Service Committee** 1. As a channel for service in a wide range of humanitarian activities at home and abroad, the American Friends Service Committee has achieved wide recognition. It was organized in 1917 to train and equip conscientious objectors to compulsory military training (for war relief and reconstruction work in Europe) in the First World War. Its work has been continued through the years in

Europe and America, and more recently in Asia and Africa, as a religious expression of the Society of Friends in fields of social action. Whatever concerns human beings in distress, whatever may help free individuals, groups, and nations from fear, hate, or narrowness — these are subjects for the committee’s consideration. With the belief that “that of God in everyone” will respond to unselfish love and constructive goodwill, the committee attempts to interpret religion in concrete ways as a reconciling influence wherever violence and conflict have developed. Its work has been supported by all groups of Friends and by many non-Friends, and it has cooperated closely with the Friends Service Council (London).

***Friends World Committee for Consultation*** 2. The development of so many yearly meetings throughout the world and the outreach of Friends in a wide variety of mission and service projects led to the formation in 1937 of the Friends World Committee for Consultation, with headquarters presently in London and other offices in Nairobi, Philadelphia, and Auckland, New Zealand. This consultative committee, made up of representatives from most but not all yearly meetings, serves primarily as a cooperative instrument by which Friends of all types may come to know each other and work together more effectively. It functions primarily through representative meetings triennially, from the first in Denmark in 1938 to the fifteenth in Kaimosi in 1982. Two international gatherings, now called the first two World Conferences, met in London and Swarthmore in 1920 and 1937. A third was held at Oxford, England, in 1952; at Guilford College, by the invitation of our yearly meeting, in 1967; and in 1991 jointly at Tela, Honduras, Elspeet, Netherlands, and Chavakali, Kenya. The FWCC sponsors a variety of additional regional conferences, Young Friends International Pilgrimages, workshops on worship, missions and service, and makes possible the representation of world Quakerism at the United Nations as a non-governmental organization.

***Friends Committee on National Legislation*** 3. The Friends Committee on National Legislation is a working committee of Friends and like-minded persons who feel a special concern for the political area of religious life. It is autonomous, yet seeks by every means possible to keep itself responsive to

concerns of the Religious Society of Friends. Two-thirds of the members of the General Committee are appointed by yearly meetings of the Religious Society of Friends in the United States and other Friends organizations. About one-third of the General Committee are appointed at large.

Among the committee's concerns are: world disarmament under law; supporting and improving the United Nations; economic development of underdeveloped countries; preserving civil liberties, and advancing civil rights.

The committee testifies before congressional committees regarding proposed legislation; interviews members of Congress; publishes a monthly newsletter; publishes periodical action bulletins on vital congressional issues; and encourages Friends and others to visit with and communicate with members of Congress.