

**Section
III:
Lesson
7, 8, 9**

Opening Quotes

**Normative
Testimonies**

Simplicity

Peace

Integrity

**Community/
Responsibility**

Equality

In Conclusion

PowerPoint

**Attachments:
Brochure**



**QUAKER
QUOTE**

"Be patterns, be examples, in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come; that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one."

**Faith In Action:
Friends' Testimonies**

Opening Quotes:

Quakers should "Walk the Talk"

**When we act on our beliefs,
when we put into outward practice our inward beliefs,
we are giving them visible expression or incarnating them.**

Discuss the following quotes:

**Jesus told his followers to
"let your line shine before men that
they might see your good works."**

Faith Without Works-

James told the early church that "faith without works is dead."

Or as Donald Miller author of Blue Like Jazz said,

"what I believe is not what I say, what I believe is what I do."

Normative Testimonies

Most of what is included in the Life and Action section of our Faith and Practice can be summed up in the 5 testimonies usually associated with Quakers:

Simplicity
Peace
Integrity
Community/Responsibility
Equality



Early Quakers likened their brand of religion to
"New Testament Christianity Revived"

One fact of Quaker history emerges, early Friends invented no new doctrines; they merely rediscovered the basic, elemental teachings of Jesus. Every single testimony which they proclaimed and practiced had been in the teachings of Jesus all the while.

-Seth Hinshaw.

The Kingdom of Our God

In the early chapters of the gospel of Matthew (5-7), Jesus begins his public ministry picking up the message John the Baptist had been proclaiming, "Change your life, God's kingdom is here" (The Message) or in more traditional language "Repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand." In his first recorded message, the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus lays out what has come to be known as "the Kingdom Manifesto", the lifestyle and values of this new kingdom.

The Kingdom of God is at hand

Since Quakers understood the kingdom of God to be a present reality, and one they were helping extend, they believed the kingdom values as taught by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount were not just about how life would be lived someday when the kingdom was fully come, but were meant to be an INTEGRAL part of the life of every believer.

Children of Light

Quakers fully embraced the words of Jesus in the name they gave themselves, the Children of Light.

You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. . . In the same way, let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

This "letting your light shine before men" involved a witness to the Living Christ in all of life, not just in words spoken to share the good news of the kingdom, but in deeds and actions as well.

How many testimonies were there?

Although we talk about "testimonies" today, the early Quakers had only one testimony—a radical obedience to the Light of Christ that affected every part of their lives. As was noted, Fox felt that the church had been in a state of apostasy since the time of Constantine (c 329 AD), and refocusing on these "kingdom values" was a major part of reviving and restoring New Testament Christianity. We use the acronym SPICE to refer to some of the ways this testimony of obedience to Jesus was lived out. All of these components simplicity, peace, integrity, community and equality were grounded in the Sermon on the Mount.

Simplicity

To early Quakers, simple living was what Jesus was talking about in Matthew 6: 32, 33

So do not worry saying, what shall we eat or what shall we drink, or what shall we wear? For the pagans run after all these things and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and these things will be given to you as well.

Or as Fox put it, Friends should “free themselves from luxurious, self-indulgent ways of living’ and seek a depth and purity of life consistent with ‘the Light within.”

The Parable of the Sower and the Seed

In this parable, Jesus said that the seed that fell among the weeds and was choked out was like people who let the pursuit of possessions and wealth and the “cares of this world” keep them from producing a harvest for the kingdom.

Early Friends were very concerned that they not become over-extended in their business pursuits or unduly occupied with the things of this world.

A “Visit” from John Woolman

Teacher: John Woolman is an important figure in any study of Quakerism. His interpretation of the moral issues of his day and his ability to see those problems through the light of Christ made him stand out among Friends.

(Enter student dressed as John Woolman)

Woolman: I was born in 1720 to a Quaker weaver and farmer who taught me the early on the value of hard work. I recorded a childhood incident in my Journal that gives an example of what was important to me in terms of my moral character. Would you mind if I read it, Friends?

“Once going to a neighbor’s house I saw on the way a robin sitting on her nest, and as I came near she went off, but having young ones, flew about, and with many cries expressed her concern for them; I stood and threw stones at her, until one striking her, she fell down dead. At first I was pleased with the exploit, but after a few moments was seized with horror, as having in a sportive way, killed an innocent creature while she was careful for her young. I beheld her lying dead, and thought those young ones, for which she was so careful, must now perish for want of their dam to nourish them; and after some painful consideration on the subject, I climbed up the tree, took all the young birds and killed them; supposing that better than to leave them to pine away and die miserably.”

Friends, I learned from this experience that it is wrong to “say that we love God and at the same time exercise cruelty toward the least creature moving by His life.” Another issue of the utmost importance to me was slavery. When I was twenty, I decided that farm life was not for me and went to work at a general store in town. One day my employer asked me to draw up a bill of sale for a slave he owned, and I was much troubled by this. Eventually I decided to do it since the slave was going to an elderly Friend and would be treated well, but I told both parties that I felt slavery was a practice that went against the Christian faith. The next time I was asked to write a bill of sale for a slave, I politely declined. I also felt that I could not take advantage of the labor of slaves in any way, and so I did not use dyed cloth, for the dyes were made by slaves. Instead I wore plain, un-dyed clothes. I did not use West Indian sugar or molasses or any other products raised by slave labor. This was a very distinctive witness to the Friends of my day.

As a traveling minister, I had many opportunities to share my views on slavery and the equality of all people. When those I stayed with were slave owners themselves, I always attempted to reimburse their slaves for their labor, often to the embarrassment and consternation of the Friends who had offered me hospitality. I was always polite but firm in my upholding of the testimony of equality, and eventually Friends came around to see the truth in this matter.

I hope you young Friends will wait on the Lord to show you what must be done in your day. *(Exit John Woolman)*

Teacher: John Woolman’s belief in equality went beyond his concern about slavery. He lived in a time of tension between Indians and white settlers, and Woolman worked to promote understanding between the two groups. Shortly after a settlement had been attacked, Woolman and a friend set out to visit the Native Americans. They were very successful at reaching a mutual respect with the Indians and helped to soothe some of the ill will that had been so detrimental to their relationship. Woolman was a founder of the group in New Jersey that later set up the first Indian reservation in America.

Another important aspect of Woolman’s life is a curious one which is paralleled in some of the journals of other Friends of his time and even earlier. After several years of running a successful business, Woolman was in a position to expand his business and become financially well-off. But he felt a call to reduce the amount of business he was transacting so as not to exceed what he needed. John Woolman felt a call to simplicity that went against the idea of worldly success, and he chose to obey God over mammon. His life is a testament to the leading of the Light of Christ.

Queries on Simple Living

- Do you observe simplicity and moderation in your manner of living?
- Do you give proper attention to the rules of health?
- Are you careful to avoid all places of amusement that are inconsistent with Christian character?
- Do you practice total abstinence from tobacco, narcotics, and alcoholic beverages?
- Do you avoid such undue expansion of your business responsibilities as to endanger your personal integrity?
- Are you truthful and honest in your business transactions, punctual in fulfilling your promises, and prompt in the payment of your debts?



Peace

There is strong evidence both in the writings and actions of the early church that the entire Christian movement was pacifist in nature until the time of Constantine, giving literal and radical obedience to the words of Jesus:

But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also . . . Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.

This was extended beyond the individual's response to society as well from Jesus' words to Pilate, "my kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."

Friends' Historic Peace Testimony: *We utterly deny all outward wars and strife, and fighting with outward weapons, for any end or under any pretense whatsoever . . . And we certainly know and testify to the whole 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.*
-George Fox, 1660

The Battle of Guilford Courthouse

Just before the Battle of Guilford Courthouse, British troops camped around Deep River Meeting. The main part of the battle of Guilford Courthouse took place around New Garden Meeting leaving the dead to be buried and countless numbers of wounded soldiers from both sides in need of care. Cornwallis sent 70 mortally wounded men from the main battlefield, and they along with many other American and British soldiers filled the meeting house as well as the homes of Quakers in the community. Friends cared for the living and buried the dead, regardless of which army they were from.

Though General Nathaniel Greene, the American commander, had been a member of a Friends Meeting in New England his plea for New Garden Friends to give at least their sympathetic support to the cause for independence fell on deaf ears. To them war was contrary to the will of God and they could not aid in any way either side in the conflict.

When the retreating British stopped at Cane Creek they "collected" a large number of sheep and cattle from the Quakers in the community, and then butchered them on the Meeting house grounds and cut up the meat on the benches inside the meeting house.

We condemn war as the greatest violation of the sacredness of human life and reaffirm our faith that all war is absolutely contrary to the plain precepts of Christ, and the whole spirit of His Gospel. We hold that no argument of necessity or policy, however urgent or peculiar, can avail to release individuals or nations from obedience to the teachings of Him who said, "Love your enemies." It is our purpose to live in that spirit that takes away the occasion for war and to suffer violence, if necessary, as did our Lord, but never return evil for evil.

North Carolina Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice

That Life and Power

But I told them I lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion for all wars.

- George Fox

He who has brought us to Himself has not prescribed for man precepts which are incapable of being carried into practice, or of which the practice is to be postponed until all shall be persuaded to act upon them. We cannot doubt that they are incumbent now, and that we have in the prophetic Scriptures the distinct intimation of their direct application not only to individuals, but to nations also (Isaiah 2:4, Micah 4:1). When nations conform their laws to this divine teaching, wars must necessarily cease.

- Richmond Declaration of Faith, 1887

Peace and Justice

Quakers also became concerned with addressing the causes of war and have tried throughout their history to work for both social and economic justice believing there can be no real peace without fairness and justice for all.



A "Visit" from William Penn

Teacher: William Penn is probably the most widely-known and admired Quaker among the Friends who influenced the formation of this country. He was a convinced Friend who came from the aristocratic class of England. He was a dashing, sophisticated, generous man who worked all of his adult life to free religious people from persecution for their religious beliefs. Penn chose to give up his life of comfort in order to dedicate himself to establishing a colony in the New World where religious freedom would be a reality for all people. (Enter student dressed as William Penn)

Penn: I had an experience when I was ten years old that prepared me for my later conversion to Quakerism. I was alone in my room when the room was suddenly infused with a glow of light. It lasted only an instant but it left me feeling warm and very close to God. This feeling stayed with me throughout my youth. I was expelled from Oxford because this mystical experience made me resent the hypocrisy of the religious attitudes I found there. My father, who was an admiral in the British navy, was very angry with me. He sent me to mainland Europe to complete my education.

When I returned to England the suffering of my people during the Black Plague and the London Fire deeply depressed me. I went to Ireland on family business at that time and attended a Quaker meeting where one Thomas Loe spoke. I sat among those plain-dressed Friends in my sword and plumed hat. When Friend Thomas had finished speaking, I was so moved that I could only stand and cry. I was 22 years old when I left that meeting and started out in my new life. I adopted a new style of Quaker clothes, simple but elegant. I had a hard time giving up my sword. I asked George Fox what I should do and he said, AWear it as long as thou canst. I soon found my heart too full of love to carry a weapon of steel at my side.

I served many months in English prisons because of my Quaker beliefs. When I came out of prison, I was determined to establish a colony in the New World where people could worship as they chose. I married a Quaker girl named Gulielma Springett and obtained a charter from King Charles for land across the sea in exchange for a debt he owed my family. The constitution I wrote for that colony, which became Pennsylvania, was my most important contribution to your nation. In my dealings with the Indians in Pennsylvania, I always endeavored to follow the leading of God in the direction of peace. I will read you part of a letter I sent to them.

"Now this great God hath been pleased to make me concerned in your part of the world, and the king of the country, where I live, hath given me a great province therein; but I desire to enjoy it with your love and consent, that we may always live together as neighbors and friends; else what would the great God do to us, who hath made us, not to devour and destroy one another, but to live soberly and kindly together in the world? Now I would have you well observe, that I am very sensible of the unkindness and injustice that have been much exercised towards you by the people of these parts of the world, who have sought themselves, and to make great advantages by you, rather than be examples of goodness and patience unto you, which I hear hath been a matter of trouble to you, and caused great grudgings and animosities, sometimes to the shedding of blood, which hath made the great God angry. But I am not such a man, as is well known in my own country. I have great love and regard towards you, and desire to win and gain your love and friendship by a kind, just and peaceable life ..."

(Exit William Penn)

Teacher: Penn eventually returned to England to settle a border dispute between Maryland and Pennsylvania. After this was taken care of, he continued to work with King James II to secure the release of 1300 Quakers being held in prison. Penn was so happy with his success in this matter that he stayed on in England and worked at gaining the release of other religious dissenters. William Penn's generosity (along with a not very sharp head for business, it must be said) left him poor in his final years because he had more or less given away his inheritance out of love for his fellow man.

Queries on Peaceful Living



- Do you consistently practice the Christian principles of love and goodwill toward all men?
- Do you work actively for peace and for the removal of the causes of war?
- Do you observe the testimony of Friends against military training and service?
- Do you endeavor to make clear to all whom you can influence that war is inconsistent with the spirit and teaching of Jesus?
- Are you concerned that our economic system so functions as to sustain and enrich the life of all?
- Are you giving positive service to society in the promotion of peaceful methods of adjustment in all cases of social and industrial conflict?
- Do you as workers, employers, producers, consumers, and investors endeavor to cultivate goodwill and mutual understanding in your economic relationships?
- Do you intelligently exercise all your constitutional privileges and thus seek to promote Christian influence locally, nationally and internationally?

Integrity

As was noted, to the early Quakers this was the most important testimony of all. When God gave the ten commandments to the children of Israel, they were told “do not take the Lord’s name in vain.” Although this command has often been associated with swearing, the original meaning was much deeper and more comprehensive, about not living up to the name of being God’s people. Fox made a strong distinction between “professors” and “possessors”, those who claimed to know Jesus and those whose lives bore out that claim.

Do not swear

Again you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.’ But I tell you, do not swear at all, either by heaven for it is God’s throne, or by the earth for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem for it is the city of the Great King.

Let Your Yes be Yes

And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. Simply let your Yes be Yes, and your No be No; anything beyond this comes from the evil one. Matthew 5: 33-35

Early Friends were perplexed by a society that required them to swear on the same book in which Jesus told them not to swear at all by anything.

Living It Out

In addition to refusing to swear oaths in court, the testimony for integrity also led Friends to be scrupulous in truth telling. Integrity meant telling the truth all the time so there was no need on any occasion to swear to tell the truth. It also led Friends to set fixed prices on their goods and services, rather than changing the price depending on who was buying.

It also led Friends to some very particular testimonies in seeking to have their “walk match their talk.” For example, not only could a person opposed to slavery not own slaves, but they could not with integrity purchase goods or services produced by slave labor.



A "Visit" from Lucretia Mott:

Teacher: Lucretia Mott is remembered as one of the most gentle and yet determined American Quakers. Her beauty, often spoken of by Friends, was more than skin deep. She had an inner radiance which was evident to all who met her. She was dedicated to the tasks which she set for herself: raising a family, working for women's rights, and abolishing slavery.

(Enter student dressed as Lucretia Mott)

LM: I was born in 1793 on Nantucket Island, the daughter of a sea captain. As a child I loved to imitate people. Sitting still in meeting was hard for me. Once when I was daydreaming, I happened to hear some Friends speaking about simplicity. They were saying that worldly pleasures could be a stumbling block in a person's spiritual life. I went straight home and cut the fancy ribbons off my shoes with a pair of scissors. Many years later, when I was given a beautiful shawl with a lovely fringe around the bottom, I remembered the testimony of simplicity and cut off most of the fringe, leaving a ragged, knotted edge. I couldn't bring myself to cut it all off. I wore the shawl for many years with the ragged edge.

When I grew up I married James Mott and we lived in the Philadelphia area. We had a family of six children. My children's parties became famous because I gave each child little packets of candy with anti-slavery messages on them, such as "Take this, my friend, you need not fear to eat it; No slave hath toiled to cultivate this sweet." I was never able to separate my religion from my everyday life. When my son died of fever, I nearly died myself. After this experience, I was moved to speak in meeting and I discovered I had a gift for inspiring others with my ministry. I became a Quaker minister shortly thereafter. I am told that my power as a public speaker was rare for a woman in my day.

I was appointed by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to attend an anti-slavery event in England, and I traveled by boat to go there. I was astonished when I was refused my seat at the conference because I was a woman. I returned to Philadelphia determined to work for women's rights. I presided over the first Convention of American Women in Pennsylvania Hall. A mob broke into the Hall objecting to the anti-slavery program of the convention, not to mention the presence of negroes in the Hall. I was frightened by the mob, but I held firmly to the integrity that had been instilled in me and I stood by my principles. Negroes were always welcome at my home and white people who didn't like it were welcomed not to return.

(Exit Lucretia Mott)

Teacher: Lucretia Mott demonstrated time and again her integrity, both through her strong-willed adherence to her principles and through her brilliant intellect. Though she was often involved in controversy and in challenging the beliefs and practices of others, she was a pious woman and considered every act a religious one. This spirituality flowed from her and into others as she endeavored to follow the leading of the Light.

Community/Responsibility

Friends put a strong emphasis on living in community with God, and with one another. Fox used the phrase “coming to know each other in that which is eternal” to describe what happens in community. Along with Scripture, the gathered community was the place where individual leadings were weighed and tested (remember the three legged stool).

Checks and Balances

Friends lived under the authority of their local meeting community. In the early days, people could not move or marry or even travel without the approval of the community. Quakers like John Woolman would not even publish their writing without first getting the approval of the local meeting.

Reconciliation

Friends were also very conscious of their responsibility to maintain community by reconciling their differences and living in harmony with one another and with the entire world. Elton Trueblood refers to the need for a “Testimony of Responsibility”, which is basically what Howard Brinton meant by the testimony of Community. If the whole world is our community, then we will take responsibility for other people and for the environment. Quakers are the social conscience of Christianity and must be on the cutting edge in terms of living a simple and sustainable life.

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother, then come and offer your gift.

-Matthew 5:23-24

A “Visit” from Elizabeth Fry:

Teacher: Elizabeth Fry, born Betsy Gurney in 1780 to a wealthy English family, could have chosen a life of comfort and ease after marrying Joseph John Fry, a man of financial substance. Instead, she bore eleven children, all of whom lived to adulthood, and despite her often ill health, she worked diligently for prison reform in England as well as becoming a Quaker minister and serving as a hostess for her husband in his business entertaining. She always reached out on a personal level to those around her in need of Christian compassion. After Margaret Fell, she is the most famous woman in Quaker history because of her tireless efforts on behalf of the downtrodden.

(Enter student dressed as Elizabeth Fry)

EF: I was one of seven lively daughters raised at beautiful Earlham Hall, where music and dancing were frequent. My family was Quaker, but we were wealthy and enjoyed all the pleasures that wealth afforded us. One day in meeting, while I was admiring my new red shoes with purple laces, a man named William Savery rose to speak. After he was finished I cried. Afterwards, I began to think about some of the things he said and I became unhappy with my life of ease and pleasure-seeking. Later, on a trip to Ireland, I met a spiritually powerful woman named Deborah Darby, who looked directly at me and said, “You will be a light to the blind, speech to the dumb, and feet to the lame.” That day I wrote in my journal, “I know now what the mountain is that I have to climb. I am to be a Quaker.” I was so serious about this calling that not long after I opened a school for poor children in the laundry room of Earlham Hall, eventually enrolling 80 students.

My marriage was not an easy one. We quickly had eleven children. All the while I was expected to fulfill the social obligations of a female member of London’s high society. I was a Quaker minister and was expected to sit on the facing bench during meeting. Since John and I didn’t believe in spanking our children, other members of the meeting frowned upon our wriggling bunch of children each First Day. They criticized us for not controlling them. I accepted their criticism with a humble heart, but I did not use violence against my children.

When I heard of the terrible conditions of the women prisoners at Newgate Prison, I became determined to visit them and see first hand. I always remembered the words spoken to me by Deborah Darby. I went among the wild and filthy women of Newgate in my bonnet and somber dress. The prison officials were appalled when I picked up a dirty, naked, disease-ridden child off the floor of the prison and spoke to the women about improving conditions for their children. What surprised the officials even more

was that the women began responding and trying to do as I instructed them. The success of these trips was such that I became known internationally. I organized a committee of other well-to-do women to work for prison reform, and the Quaker bonnet became a symbol to the prisoners for the love and work of Christ in their lives.

(Exit Elizabeth Fry)

Teacher: Elizabeth Fry was always sensitive to the needs of others. She used her connections, her talents, and her skills in the service of God's kingdom. She used her money and status for social reform. She was a natural organizer and a skillful nurse. She lovingly read the Bible to prisoners at Newgate. She was a caring, gentle woman who loved God and her fellow human beings. This is what Quakers are to do.

Queries on Community



- Do you love one another as becomes the followers of Christ?
- Are you careful of the reputation of others?
- When differences arise, do you make earnest effort to end them speedily?
- Do you seek the conversion and spiritual development of your young people?
- Do you endeavor to instruct them in the principles and practices of Friends?
- Do you strive to create a community life that will promote their mental and physical well-being?
- Who and/or what is your community? Your meeting? Your town? Your world?
- What responsibility do you have to this community?



Equality

Just as Peter learned that God was “no respecter of persons”, early Friends understood that the Light of Christ was present in each and every person, so all were equal. In the early days, they refused to take off their hats or bow or use formal language as an honor to those whom society saw as “higher class”, but treated everyone the same regardless of rank or social position.

The Spiritual Capacity of All People

Early Friends recognized the spiritual capacity of all people and were among the first to allow women to take an equal part in the ministry.

Quakers were also insistent on the spiritual capacity of all men including Native Americans and enslaved Africans.

The Governour with his Wife received us lovingly: but there was at his house a Doctor who would needs Dispute with us. And truly, his Opposing us was of good Service, giving Occasion for the Opening of many things to the People, concerning the Light and Spirit of God, which he denied to be in Every one; and affirmed that it was not in the Indians. Whereupon I called an Indian to us, and asked him,=whether or no, when he did Lie, or do Wrong to anyone, there was not something in him, that did reprove him for it? And he said, There was such a thing in him, that did so reprove him, and he was ashamed, when he had done wrong, or spoken wrong.

- George Fox, 1672

We at present have peace with all the nations of the Indians . . . The Tuscarora king seems to be a very wise man and I look upon their outward civilizing as a good preparation for the gospel, which God in his season without doubt, will cause to dawn among them.

- John Archdale, 1686

Friends and Slavery

Friends of the Western Quarter made a motion for some notice to be taken in respect to the Querie Relating to buying and selling Negroes, and Friends appointed a committee to consider the same and make report to the next sitting of this meeting. . . We do give it our Judgement that no Friend in unity shall buy a Negro or other slave Excepting it be to prevent the Parting of man and wife or Parent and Child.-

The Manumission Society

An extensive Manumission (setting people free from slavery) Society came into existence at a general meeting in July, 1816. Meetings were to be held alternately at Centre and Deep River in April and October. The group advocated a doctrine of immediate and unconditional emancipation.

The Underground Railroad

Under the leadership of Levi Coffin and his cousin Vestal Coffin, an “Underground Railroad” was established. This was a series of Quaker homes stretching from North Carolina to Indiana.

Do you know why 18th century Quakers all dressed in “Quaker gray”?

James 2:1-4: *My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing the fine clothes and say, “here's a good seat for you,” but say to the poor man, “you stand there”, or “sit on the floor by my feet”, have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?*

Some say Quakers dressed in gray because the dyes for other colors came from plantations where slave labor was used. Obviously, since Quakers were wearing gray before they even had a testimony against slavery, this is not the reason. The real reason comes from this Scripture in the Book of James. Dressing the same was a part of the Quaker testimony for equality. You could not tell who was rich or poor, or show favoritism if everyone dressed the same. Margaret Fell Fox who saw the beginnings of this before her death called it a “poor and silly gospel”, pointing out the magnificent colors God had put in the universe in things as simple as flowers.

Unto the least of these

In another message, Jesus took equality even further by saying that if “you did it unto the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.” So Quakers understood when they were serving others, particularly those who were less fortunate, they were performing service to Christ himself. And since Christ is the true Light “that lights every man” all were equally children of God.

There is no difference

Elizabeth Fry, in speaking of her work among those incarcerated at Newgate prison said: *Much depends on the spirit in which the visitor enters her work. She must not say in her heart I am better than thee, but must constantly keep in mind that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”*

A "Visit" from Levi Coffin

Teacher: Levi Coffin was a tall, slender man with a large nose and piercing bright eyes. He became very much angered by the practice of slavery as a young boy. He spent his life trying to help black people who had been enslaved in this country. Levi Coffin possessed a wonderful sense of humor which he used to persuade others of his point of view.

(Enter student dressed as Levi Coffin)

LC: I was born in 1798 in North Carolina. I grew up in an area with many slaves. My parents, like most Quakers in the area, owned no slaves. One day, when I was seven years old, I was helping my father chop wood on the side of the road. A large group of slaves came down the road. They were chained together and being driven by a man with a whip. When my father asked one of them why they were chained, his answer changed my life. He said they were chained because their wives and children had been taken from them and their owners were afraid they would try to run away to get them back. I tried to imagine what such a life would be like. This experience haunted me and I decided to spend my life working to free other Negroes from having that experience.

I grew up and married, and like many other Quakers, my family and I moved westward to Indiana to escape the southern slave culture. I set up a general store in Newport, Indiana which I ran for many years. I helped many slaves escape who made their way through my community. I became know far and wide as the "President" of the Underground Railroad. Some of my customers did not approve of my "activities", but my business still prospered.

Later I felt that God was calling me to move to Cincinnati, Ohio to open a free wholesale produce store which sold only those goods not produced by slave labor. Unlike many such small businesses that went under because of not making a profit, I was able, with hard work, to keep my business afloat. I used my buying trips to the south as opportunities for ministry, speaking to everyone I met about the evils of slavery. I spent a good deal of my own money on food, clothing and transportation for the slaves. The Prince of Wales once came by to see the "southern depot of the Underground Railroad." I waved at him from the front porch and continued amusing my guests with stories of escaped slaves I had helped.

(Exit Levi Coffin)

Teacher: Levi Coffin was a good Quaker and a successful businessman. He knew the Bible very well and used it to the advantage of his testimony of equality. He was always careful to tell the truth, even if it was not the whole truth about a runaway slave. Once a marshal asked if he had seen two runaway slaves and he said, Yes, I saw them at the gate, without adding that they had entered the gate and were currently eating breakfast at his house. Levi Coffin allowed God to lead him, and God led him to help his oppressed people.

Queries on Equality



- Does your attitude toward people of other races indicate your belief in their right to equal opportunity?
- Do you believe in the spiritual capacity of men of all races and do you recognize their equality in the sight of God?
- Are you aware of your responsibility as a Christian to help in the elimination of racial discrimination and prejudice?

To labor for the perfect redemption from the spirit of oppression is the great business of the whole family of Jesus Christ in this world.

-John Woolman

In proper balance with personal evangelism, there must be dedicated service -wherever there is any form of human need "thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" means that we commit ourselves to being instruments of His love and compassion in achieving this end.

-Seth Hinshaw