Becoming Friends

Living & learning with Quakers

Developed for Quaker Life and Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre by Ginny Wall

Acknowledgements

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Dear Friends

Welcome to *Becoming Friends: Living & learning with Quakers,* the learning project from Woodbrooke and Quaker Life for those who are new to Friends and their meetings.

Friends around Britain Yearly Meeting have asked us for help providing the next stage of learning and support for newcomers to Friends after outreach programmes like Quaker Quest and Quaker Week have finished. Friends have told us that they hope for new ways to help newcomers deepen their understanding of Quakerism and their feeling of 'belonging' in their meetings, whether or not they are currently considering applying for membership.

We have worked closely with individuals and groups of Friends to develop and trial a course that meets these objectives. The result is *Becoming Friends*: an exciting, interactive learning experience that offers newcomers flexible course materials, accessible in an online or paper format, combined with options for support from meetings, in particular from a *Becoming Friends* 'companion'.

The *Becoming Friends* course has been designed to be as flexible as possible, with participants working at their own pace and for as long as they wish. There are options for working alone and with others, using a variety of approaches, and there is a choice of learning units and activities to suit a wide range of interests and learning styles.

We hope that meetings will want to provide a *Becoming Friends* 'companion' to support newcomers working with the learning materials. The companion can help newcomers find out more about Quakerism by sharing their own knowledge and experience and by helping to arrange conversations and interactions with other Friends. There is guidance for meetings working with *Becoming Friends* at page 278. Courses for *Becoming Friends* companions are available through Woodbrooke and Quaker Life. See www.woodbrooke.org.uk/becomingfriends or ring 0121 472 5171 for more information.

Experienced Friends and newcomers who took part in trials of *Becoming Friends* reported that the regular conversations between newcomers, companions and other Friends were a highlight of the learning experience for all concerned. One newcomer said of the course, "It made me talk to loads of other Friends…it gave me a good excuse to do what I wanted to do anyway." Another trials participant said "both of us …learned so much through the Becoming Friends project and felt the whole experience had been a blessing."

Whether you are a newcomer to Quakerism or an experienced Friend, we hope that you find the *Becoming Friends* learning experience both interesting and enjoyable.

A free demonstration of the online *Becoming Friends* course is available at http://moodle.woodbrooke.org.uk . To sign up for the online course go to www.woodbrooke.org.uk/becomingfriends

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Permissions

Permission was kindly given to use extracts from:

Barratt Brown, A. *Wayside Sacraments* (Yorkshire Friends' Service Committee. Friends' Literature Committee, Scarborough 1932)

Bennett, Denise *Quaker Meeting* poem (Quaker Monthly, London October 2008)

Britain Yearly Meeting *Quaker Faith & Practice* (The Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, Fourth Edition 1995, 2005, 2009)

Britain Yearly Meeting *Quaker Identity and the Heart of Our Faith* Quaker Life Study Materials (Quaker Life 2008) and various Quaker Life and Quaker Peace & Social Witness publications

'Caban' contribution to Britain Yearly Meeting discussion forum (BYM forum, 14.12.08)

Courbon-Taylor, Amyon and Stuart, David *Quaker Meeting* poem (Quaker Monthly, London August 2008)

Durham, Geoffrey *The Heart of Quakerism* (presentation to London Quakers 2009)

Fischer, Kathleen *Women at the Well: feminist perspectives on spiritual direction* (SPCK, London 1989)

Gillman, Harvey *A Light That Is Shining: an introduction to the Quakers* (Quaker Books, London 2003)

Gillman, Harvey *Consider the Blackbird: Reflections on Spirituality and Language* (Quaker Books, London 2007)

Gillman, Harvey *Reflections on membership and belonging* (previously unpublished, 2008)

Gillman, Harvey and Heron, Alastair (eds.) *Searching the Depths: essays on being a Quaker today* (Quaker Books, London 1996)

Gorman, George *The Amazing Fact of Quaker Worship* (Quaker Books, London 1973 – Swarthmore Lecture 1973)

Hosking, Anne extract from unpublished letter (1986)

Kline, Florence Ruth and Grundy, Marty (eds.) *Companions Along The Way: spiritual formation within the Quaker tradition* (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, Philadelphia 2000)

Levin, Jennie *Hearts & Minds Prepared* study pack (Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre 2003) McNaughton, Marion & Roe, Lizz *Finding the Prophetic Voice for our time* (Woodbrooke Journal 21, 2007)

McNaughton, Marion Presentation to QPSW Conference 2009

Morley, Barry *Beyond Consensus: Salvaging Sense of the Meeting* (Pendle Hill Pamphlet 307, Pendle Hill Publications, Pennsylvania 1993)

Nhat Hanh, Thich *Peace is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life* (Rider, London 1995). Reprinted by permission of The Random House Group Ltd.

Norris, Gunilla *Being Home: discovering the spiritual in the everyday* (Paulist Press Inc., New York/Mahwah, NJ 1991, 2001). Reprinted by permission of Paulist Press Inc. www. paulistpress.com.

Punshon, John *Encounter with Silence: reflections from the Quaker tradition* (Quaker Home Service 1987)

Smith, Jaci *Peace is not a dirty word* (article on BYM website 03.11.09) This article was previously published in DEA (Development Education Association) Journal, October 2006. *extracts from Twelve Quakers and God* (Quaker Quest, Hampstead Monthly Meeting, London 2004)

Wildwood, Alex *Tradition and Transition: opening to the Sacred yesterday and today* (Woodbrooke Journal 9, 2001)

Yamanouchi, Tayeko *Ways of Worship* (Friends World News 113, Friends World Council for Consultation 1979)

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Welcome to Becoming Friends: Living & learning with Quakers

Before you begin...

- This course aims to be very flexible and to give you plenty of choice.
- There's a wide range of material and activities on offer, but you can choose to do as much or as little as you like, and tailor the course to your own interests.
- There's guidance and a simple framework for approaching the course in the Opening Unit, if you find this helpful....
- ...but please feel free to use the course materials as a resource, choosing activities that interest you and approaching them in whatever way feels right for you.

Opening Unit

Introducing the course, meeting your Becoming Friends companion and planning the path

Opening Unit Becoming Friends



Opening Unit aims

This opening unit aims to help you:

- Find out about the Becoming Friends course, its structure and approach
- Plan your learning path using the Becoming Friends learning units
- Reflect on your own spiritual journey as you begin the course
- Meet your Becoming Friends companion and agree how you will work together

Guidance for working through this opening unit

- 1. The introductory information (pages 8–12) and frequently asked questions about the course (pages 13–15) are a good place to start.
- 2. You might like to arrange a meeting with your Becoming Friends companion (if you'll be working with one) at an early stage so that you can begin getting to know each other and plan how you will work together. You could talk to your companion about which topic units to work with. There's guidance about this meeting on pages 16–18.
- 3. Choose one (or more if you like) of the Introductory activities on pages 19–21 to begin the process of finding out more about Quakerism and reflecting on your own spiritual journey with Friends.
- 4. There is an option to explore some of the topics covered in this unit further by following up reading and links in the Further exploration section on page 22.
- 5. The Closing activity on page 23 provides an opportunity for reflection at the end of the unit.
- 6. There's no time limit for working through this unit you can take as long or as short a time as you like.

Introduction to the course

Becoming Friends aims to be an engaging, interactive and flexible course that provides an opportunity to find out more about Friends in a way that is true to the experiential nature of our Quaker faith. There are many wonderful books about Quakerism, and some will be referred to during the course, but Becoming Friends aims to avoid just taking a 'here's a good book to read' approach.

Activities on offer will include:

- reading
- watching video extracts
- listening to audio clips
- taking part in conversations with Friends in your local or area meeting
- exploring Quaker and other websites
- spiritual practices
- reflection through conversation, writing and creative media

Throughout the course, you will be able to choose the activities you prefer, so we hope that this will enable you to learn in a way and at a pace that suits you.













Opportunities for sharing and support

An important part of the course will be the opportunities provided to speak to Friends about spiritual questions or issues and to share something of one another's faith journeys. This could be:

- reflecting with a Becoming Friends companion
- talking to other Friends in the local area
- engaging with Quaker websites
- discussing issues in online forums
- meeting in a small learning group with other newcomers or local Friends

Opening Unit Becoming Friends

A reflective journey

You will also be invited at regular intervals through the course to reflect on what you are learning, both about Quakerism and your own spiritual journey. This 'reflective' approach fits well with the Quaker belief that experience is central to the spiritual life.

Reflecting on our learning is a key element of the Becoming Friends course; it places an open attentiveness at the heart of our spiritual journeying. For Quakers, experience and experimenting are central to our understanding of ourselves and our faith, so the course includes many opportunities for reflection both as you learn and afterwards.

During the course, you may find it helpful to practise becoming more aware of your learning experiences through means such as:

- private reflection
- writing in a journal or book of spiritual discipline (there's guidance for journalling in Appendix 2 – Guidance, on page 282)
- drawing or creating something
- conversation face to face or by phone with your Becoming Friends companion or another friend
- group sharing
- sharing in an online discussion forum
- using the reflective journal facility on Woodbrooke's Moodle site
- adding to an online blog (something you set up separate from the course)



Structure of Becoming Friends

Opening Unit

This unit is about introducing the course, meeting your Becoming Friends companion (if you will be working with one) and planning the path. It lays the foundations for the rest of the course, so everyone is encouraged to work through this introductory unit.

Eight topic-based units (choose any)

These units cover different aspects of Quaker faith and practice, ranging from beliefs about God to living faithfully in the world.

You can choose *as many or as few* of the units as you like, *in any order*. You can follow your interests or main questions about Quakerism. A good place to start could be the Silence and Waiting unit, which explores the Quaker experience of silence, worship and spoken ministry, or Experiencing Quaker Community, which introduces the ways that Quaker communities are organised, nurtured and led. Where there are links between learning in different units, these will be highlighted so that they are easy to follow up.

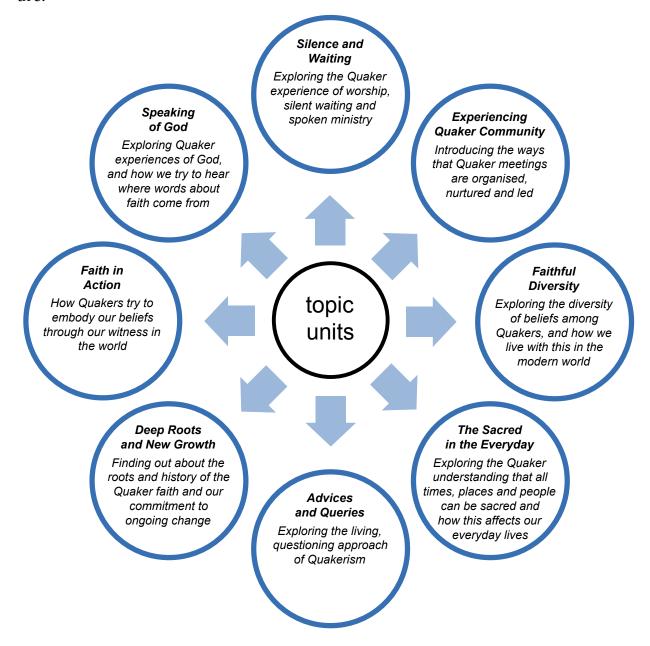
You might like to talk to your Becoming Friends companion about your choice of learning units, the order and timescale for working with them, or you might prefer to begin with one and see how you get on before making any further choices.

Closing Unit

When you have finished the topic based units you have chosen, there is a last unit to engage with, which offers opportunities to reflect on your learning throughout the Becoming Friends course, on the journey you have shared with your companion, on any steps you wish to take to further your learning and spiritual development from here, and to take time to say goodbye.

More about the topic based units

The topic based learning unit titles (choose **any** and follow them in **any order**) are:



In each topic unit there will be three types of activities to choose from:

Distinctives: exploring the distinctive Quaker way in relation to that topic

Discovering: more about Quaker people and community, structures, resources and events

Deepening: opportunities for personal reflection and journalling, prayer or spiritual practice and spiritual friendship conversations

Each of these aspects of the learning process will feed into the others.

Some frequently asked questions about the course

Who is the course for?

This course has been designed to help those who are new to Quakers find out more about Quakerism, explore your own understanding of and connection with different aspects of our faith, and get to know Quakers better.

Do I need to be considering applying for membership?

The Becoming Friends course is not aimed at bringing participants into membership of the Religious Society of Friends. The course is for anyone who is interested in finding out more about Quakers, however recent their involvement with Quakerism.

If, however, you find that the process of taking part in the course does lead you to consider applying for membership, then please approach the overseers or elders in your local meeting and they will explain the membership procedure to you.

It may also be helpful to know that a number of Friends still draw on their experience of and participation in other faith traditions, finding that it enriches their experience of Quakerism. This may be the case for you.

What is a Becoming Friends companion?

An integral part of the Becoming Friends learning experience is the offer of support from a Becoming Friends companion while you work through the course. This experienced Friend will help you discover more about the Quaker way and provide you with a supportive, listening presence as

you reflect on your learning. Usually your companion will be someone from your local area, but this may not always be possible, so some people may access an online Becoming Friends companion for this support.

You may feel that you would prefer to work through the course without a companion, in which case alternative ways of being supported include taking part in online discussions (there will be opportunities for these



throughout the course), opting for activities that involve talking to Friends in your meeting, and making use of the existing support systems in your meeting, such as elders and overseers.

Please note that wherever course activities suggest working with a 'Becoming Friends companion', this can also be taken to include any experienced Friend you would like to work with on that activity, if you do not have a specific Becoming Friends companion.

Whether or not you work with a Becoming Friends companion, there will be opportunities to become part of the Becoming Friends online community throughout the course, and we hope this can become an enjoyable and supportive part of the learning experience for people who choose to work in this way.

Can I do the course online or on paper?

There are different ways of accessing the Becoming Friends course. Becoming Friends is available as an interactive online course using the Moodle learning platform, and as a paper based course.

Both versions offer a wide variety of opportunities to find out about Quakerism and explore your own relationship with the Quaker faith. If you're doing the course on paper, you can always go online to do some activities if you want to.

In some areas, Quaker meetings may offer group sessions using the Becoming Friends materials.

What kind of religious language will the course use?

Language used in the Becoming Friends course aims to be inclusive and to allow for a wide variety of approaches to the spiritual life. We hope to explore and celebrate the diverse nature of Quaker faith and the British Quaker community throughout the course. If there are times when you are not entirely comfortable with the language used, try to sense for the truth beyond the words, even if the words themselves may be strange or difficult. This effort is in itself a profound experience of the Quaker way.

How can I get hold of a copy of Quaker faith & practice?

You will find *Quaker faith & practice* in your local meeting house. It has a red cover and is usually on the table during meeting for worship. You may be able to

borrow a copy during this course: ask your Becoming Friends companion for help with this.

You can also find it:

- online at: www.quakerweb.org.uk/qfp
- in the Quaker Centre bookshop, tel: 020 7663 1030 email: quakercentre@quaker.org.uk or go to www.quaker.org.uk/bookshop

References in the Becoming Friends course are to the fourth edition published in 2009. You will find copies of previous editions in meeting houses, with slight variation in section numbering.

Meeting your Becoming Friends companion

You may have been told about this course by your local meeting, and have been offered a Becoming Friends companion who will work with you and support you while you participate in the course. If this has not yet happened, please speak to your local overseers to find out who coordinates the Becoming Friends companions in your area, so that you can be offered this support if it is available locally. If it is not available in your area, we may be able to offer the support of a Becoming Friends companion online.

Once you know who your Becoming Friends companion will be, you can arrange to meet so that you can get to know one another and plan how you would like to work together. Becoming Friends companions will have been prepared for this role, and will be familiar with the structure and approach of the course.

If, on the other hand, you would prefer to work through the course without a Becoming Friends companion (or none is available in your area), don't forget that alternative ways of getting support and hearing about different Quaker experiences include:

- being part of the Becoming Friends online community
- the Discovering activities in each unit that involve talking to local Friends about different aspects of their faith
- using the existing resources in your meeting, such as study groups, elders and overseers

Suggested elements for a first meeting with a Becoming Friends companion:

1. Worship and hellos

Taking time in silence together at the beginning will help to ground your conversation in worship.

2. Ground rules

It is helpful to consider ground rules for your work together, such as how you want the relationship to work, what kind of support you would like from your companion, whether you are going to take notes of sessions together, any particular issues regarding religious language or beliefs.

Becoming Friends Opening Unit



3. Confidentiality

Consider the confidential nature of your conversations together, and any limits which you want to place on confidentiality.

4. Getting to know each other

You might like to share with one another about one or more of the following 'getting to know you' questions:

- What first brought you to Quakers?
- What do you most value about Quakerism?

5. Sharing about the Opening unit's 'Introductory activities'

You might take some time to share any reflections on the Introductory activity that you chose from the Opening Unit.

6. Looking at the Becoming Friends learning materials together

Have a look at the course materials together. If you have any questions about the course, raise these with your companion as s/he may be able to answer them, or can help you find the answers elsewhere.

7. Making choices about which learning units you wish to follow

Consider the topic based units together. Are there some that you feel drawn to working with? You don't have to make hard and fast decisions at this stage, but it may be helpful to consider the options together.

8. What's coming next?

Think about the next stages of your learning journey. Which unit are you going to work with next? Is there specific support or resources that you would like your companion to help you access at this stage?

9. Practicalities

Look at the activities in your chosen learning unit: you may wish to arrange conversations with Friends in your local or area meeting, a visit to another meeting or Quaker organisation, or perhaps do some searches online. Can your companion help you with any of this?

10. Meeting times and places

What times and places will suit you both for meeting up over the next few weeks or months as you work through the course? Are there any other practicalities to sort out?

11. Reviews and endings

Do you want to agree an overall timescale for your work together, perhaps including an interim point at which you will review progress and consider if both of you are happy to continue with your commitment?

12. Worship, and arranging next meeting

After all the conversation and practicalities are finished with, spending a few minutes in worship together can help bring you back to the spiritual ground for your work together. Don't forget to make arrangements for your next contact or meeting.

Introductory activities

Choose one (or more if you like) of the following five activities

Introductory Activity 1

Ask a Quaker a question

Is there a question about Quakers or the Quaker way that you would like to find the answer to? It might be something apparently trivial, or something very important to you. The Becoming Friends course is all about exploring your questions about Quakerism, so here is your opportunity to use it as an excuse to ask a Quaker a question. This could be your Becoming Friends companion, an elder, overseer or other experienced Friend at your meeting, or you could use the 'Ask a Quaker' facility on the Quaker Week website: www.quakerweek.org.uk

- You could record the results of this activity in a journal or blog
- You might like to share your question, and any answers you receive, with your Becoming Friends companion when you next meet

Introductory Activity 2

Find out how people came to Quakers

You could do this activity by:

- going to the Quaker Week website at: www.quakerweek.org.uk and exploring the information about Quakerism. You can watch some of the short 'talking heads' videos on the 'Introducing Quakers' page, where Friends talk about how they came to Quakerism. Do any of their experiences echo or contrast with your own?
- asking one or two local Friends to talk to you about how they came to Quakers (your Becoming Friends companion could help you arrange this).

Take some time to reflect on your own experience of coming to Friends. You might like to write about this in a journal or book of spiritual discipline, or use creative methods to respond, such as drawing, modelling, or music.

You could share some of your reflections with your Becoming Friends companion when you next meet.

Opening Unit Becoming Friends

Introductory Activity 3

Watch the video 'An introduction to Quakers'

Watch 'An introduction to Quakers' made by Friends at Watford Quaker Meeting. You can access the video in a number of different ways:

- online at
 - > www.watfordquakers.org.uk/videos.html
 - www.quakerweek.org.uk/intro/quaker-worship
 - www.youtube.com as 'Introduction to Quakers'
- on the DVD *An introduction to Watford Quakers*, available from the Quaker Centre bookshop (see Further exploration for contact details).

As you watch, you may like to note down any questions or issues that the video raises for you. You could share these questions with your Becoming Friends companion when you next meet, or simply come back to them at the end of the course and see if you have found answers or different understandings of any of the issues.

Introductory Activity 4

Questions for personal reflection

Take some time to reflect on one or more of the following questions:

- Where have you come from on your spiritual journey?
- What treasures do you bring with you?
- What do you want to give up or leave behind from previous faith experiences?
- What brings you to Quakers?

You could:

- respond to the questions in writing (you'll find guidance for journalling in Appendix 2 – Guidance on page 282)
- respond by drawing or using another creative method
- go online and blog about them
- discuss them on a Quaker discussion forum:
 - > the Britain Yearly Meeting forum at: www.quakerweb.org.uk/forum
 - www.friendlink.org.uk (aimed mainly at young Quakers)
 - > the Opening Unit forum

• share some of your reflections with your Becoming Friends companion when you next meet

Introductory Activity 5

Introduce yourself on the Opening Unit discussion forum

Go to the Opening Unit forum in the Becoming Friends online course. Find the 'Introduce Yourself' discussion thread and make a posting which tells other course participants

- your name
- where you live and what local Quaker meeting you attend
- something that has made you smile in the last week

Try to add a comment to at least one other person's posting, so that you begin to get to know other people who are currently following the Becoming Friends course.

Opening Unit Becoming Friends

Further exploration

If you would like to explore some resources that give a more detailed introduction to Quakerism, here are some suggestions for reading, listening or viewing.

Celebrating the Quaker way, Pink Dandelion, Quaker Books, 2009

Coming home: an introduction to the Quakers, Gerald Priestland, Quaker Books, 2003

An introduction to Quakerism, Pink Dandelion, Cambridge University Press, 2007

An introduction to Watford Quakers (DVD), part 1 'An Introduction to Quakerism', Just Film, 2007. Also available at: www.watfordquakers.org.uk/videos.html or www.quakerweek.org.uk/intro (or on www.youtube.com as 'Introduction to Quakers').

A light that is shining: an introduction to the Quakers, Harvey Gillman, Quaker Books, 2003.

Meeting Quakers: a lively introduction to the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain (DVD), Quaker Home Service Outreach Committee, Quaker Home Service, 2000, 2007.

New light: 12 Quaker voices, edited by Jennifer Kavanagh, O Books, 2008. Individual themes also available in the 'Twelve Quakers and...' series, Quaker Quest, 2004–2007.

Portrait in grey: a short history of the Quakers, John Punshon, Quaker Books, reprint 2006.

Quaker faith & practice: the book of Christian discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, 4th edition, Britain Yearly Meeting, 2009 (first published 1995).

Quaker speak, Alastair Heron, Quaker Outreach in Yorkshire, 2003.

Searching the depths: essays on being a Quaker today, edited by Harvey Gillman and Alastair Heron, Quaker Books, 1996

Many of these titles are available from the Quaker Centre bookshop:

Friends House 173 Euston Road London NW1 2BJ

Tel: 020 7663 1030 Fax: 020 7663 1001

Website: www.quaker.org.uk/bookshop Email: quakercentre@quaker.org.uk

Many of them will also be in your local meeting house library. You could ask your Becoming Friends companion to help you track down titles that interest you.

Closing activity

As you finish your exploration of this Opening Unit, you are invited to reflect on what you have gained from the unit, how your understanding of both yourself and Quakerism has changed, and what areas you would like to explore further.

This closing reflection can be a very good opportunity for sharing with your Becoming Friends companion, or you may prefer to write in a journal or book of spiritual discipline (there's guidance for journalling in Appendix 2 – Guidance on page 282), or to reflect using creative methods such as drawing, collage, modelmaking or working with materials such as textiles or wood.

You might use one or more of the following questions as a focus for your reflection:

- What have you gained from your work on this unit, whether as a result of positive or more challenging experiences?
- In what ways has your understanding changed as a result of your work on this unit?
- Are there areas that you would like to explore further either as part of your own spiritual journey or relating to Quakerism?
- Has anything arisen that you would find it helpful to reflect on with your Becoming Friends companion?

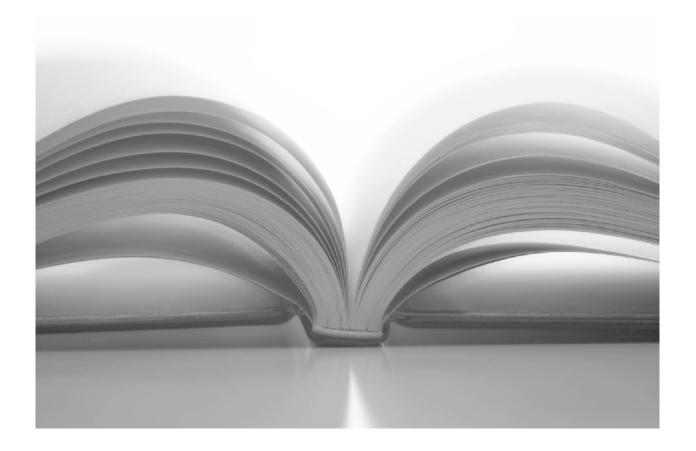
Opening Unit Becoming Friends

Guidance for working through a topic unit

- 1. Each unit includes several activities in each of the sections Ouaker Distinctives, Discovering and Deepening. You might like to choose one or more activities from each section (but *one* is enough –you don't have to do them all!). This selection from the three 'D's will help you achieve a balance between finding out about the Quaker faith, engaging with local Friends or practical activities, and spending time in reflection. Work through the activities in the order that feels right to you.
- 2. When considering which activities to choose, don't forget to consider options that take you out of your comfort zone, or away from your usual preference for learning style or content. We sometimes learn more through experiences that do not appeal to us at all at first.
- 3. You can take as long or as short a time as you like on each unit, from a week to several months. It may be a good idea to think about which activities you are going to work on at an early stage, so that you can arrange any contacts with other Friends suggested in the Discovering section it could be useful to meet up with your Becoming Friends companion for help with this.
- 4. You will be invited to take time to reflect on your learning, especially through the Deepening activities and Closing activity in each unit. If you have a Becoming Friends companion, you may choose to meet regularly, but in any case, it could be helpful to arrange a meeting with them, perhaps towards the end of the unit, so that you can reflect on your learning together.

Advices and Oueries

Exploring the living, questioning approach of Quakerism



In this unit we invite you to explore the advices and queries, a collection of questions and statements reflecting the experiential, questioning and experimental nature of Quaker faith. They are designed to provoke deep reflection and invite us to explore our relationship with God and the world at a deeper level, both as individuals and as a community.



Advices and Queries unit aims

This unit aims to help you:

- become more familiar with the advices and queries, and the living, questioning faith that underlies them
- find out about their significance in the lives of Quakers
- reflect on your own understanding of and relationship to some of these guiding principles

Overview

The advices and queries are

intended for use in our meetings, for private devotion and reflection, as a challenge and inspiration to us as Friends in our personal lives and in our life as a religious community, and as a concise expression of our faith and practice readily available to enquirers and to the wider world.

Quaker faith & practice 1.05

This short collection of gentle but searching questions and challenging statements is a very good introduction to the Quaker faith, and to the current concerns and lives of members of the Religious Society of Friends. While Quakerism is a non-credal religion, the small book *Advices & queries* (also incorporated into *Quaker faith & practice* in chapter 1) gives a good indication of how Friends relate to God, to one another, and to the world as a whole.

In the Quaker tradition of speaking the unadorned truth, the questions are very direct, without asking how we 'think' or 'feel' about each issue, but simply how we live out these truths in our own lives. This is no catechism which instructs the faithful in what to believe, but rather a series of prompts that invite Friends to live faithfully, to reflect on their experience of the Divine and to pay attention to the things that really matter in life. A fundamental Quaker insight expressed in the advices and queries is that our living faith involves being willing to change, to live adventurously and to consider it possible that we may be mistaken.

A much loved quotation from an epistle to 'the brethren in the north', issued by a meeting of Quaker elders at Balby in 1656, sums up the spirit of the advices and queries:

Dearly beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by, but that all, with the measure of light which is pure and holy, may be guided; and so in the light walking and abiding, these may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not from the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.

Quaker faith & practice 1.01

You are invited to explore this tool for the spiritual journey through engaging with the activities in the 'D' sections of this unit, and to listen to your own responses as you go. It is not so important to understand all of the advices and queries immediately (this may be a life's work!), but to begin to let them challenge and inspire you as you embark on the next part of your journey...

Quaker distinctives

You will find *Advices & queries*:

- in your local meeting house, both in a little red book and in the first chapter of the larger red book *Quaker faith & practice*
- included in an 'Enquirer's Pack' from Friends House: ring freephone 0808 109 1651 or email outreach@quaker.org.uk to request one
- online at: www.quakerweb.org.uk/qfp/qfpchapter1.html

They are often referred to as 'the advices'. Some contain more of a 'query' for the reader than others.

Distinctives 1

Reading sections of Advices & queries

You could read one section of *Advices & queries* and take time with the questions and statements, so as to reach your own understanding of them. The sections are as follows:

- A&q 1–7: the inner life
- *A&q* 8–13: meeting for worship, and *A&q* 14–16: meeting for worship for business
- *A&q* 17–20: moving from worship to community
- *A&q* 21–30: living as a Quaker
- A&q 31–42: testimonies and faith in action

You may like to take one section at a time over several days or weeks.

Distinctives 2

Listening to Advices & queries

You may prefer to listen. There are mp3 audio files of *Advices & queries* available in this unit of the online Becoming Friends course. Why not download the audio files and listen on your computer or mp3 player whenever it suits you?

Distinctives 3

How young Friends made their own advices and queries

You can read the engaging story of how young Friends at an American Quaker summer camp came to appreciate the strength of working with advices and queries, rather than a set of imposed rules.

Turn to page 38 to read the story.

You will also find it on pages 7–11 of *Beyond Consensus* by Barry Morley (see Further exploration for details).

Distinctives 4

Watch the video 'Are Quakers Woolly Minded Liberals?'

This video was made by Friends at Watford Quaker Meeting. It includes reflections on how Quakers approach Truth, and the difficulty of being prescriptive and clear when trying to remain open to the movements of the Spirit. You can access the video in a number of different ways:

- online at
 - www.watfordquakers.org.uk/videos.html
 - www.youtube.com as 'Are Quakers Woolly Minded Liberals?'
- on the DVD *An Introduction to Watford Quakers* available from the Quaker Centre bookshop (see Further exploration for contact details).

Distinctives 5

The history of the advices and queries

You might like to read about how the advices and queries came to be a central part of Quaker faith.

You will find this in section 1.04 of *Quaker faith & practice*.

See also Discovery 4 if you're interested in the history of the advices and queries.

Discovery

Discovery 1

Discussion about the advices and queries

Introductory comment:

I don't think that there can be a 'Quaker way', the *Advices and queries* are not rules but starting points for questioning and thought. We go to meeting to wait upon the spirit, that spirit which is within and which will lead us. It is a sacrificial situation in which we offer ourselves and wait for guidance. Once it appears that we are being led we have the meeting as a fire in which we can test our leadings and which can offer support.

Caban Dec 14 2008 post to BYM Quaker discussion forum

You can consider the introductory comment, then go to the Advices and Queries unit forum and post your own thoughts on the issues raised. You might like to comment on other posts on this forum too.

Alternatively, you could discuss this introductory comment with your Becoming Friends companion, or others in your meeting, perhaps informally over coffee, or you might ask your companion to help you set up a group session.

Discovery 2

Comparing the advices and queries with the Ten Commandments or other church teachings

You could read the Ten Commandments by looking them up in a Bible at Exodus 20: 2–17, or look at part of another church's official teachings, for example:

- the Catholic Church's catechism also available online at: www.catholicchurch.org.uk/ccb/catholic_church/what_does_the_catholic_church_teach/catechism or www.vatican.va/archive/catechism/ccc_toc.htm
- the Anglican Communion's 'Thirty-Nine Articles of Faith' in the Book of Common Prayer also available online at: www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/acis/docs/thirty_nine_articles.cfm

Read sections alongside the advices and queries. How do they compare? What differences do you notice in the content, in the language?

How do they speak to you?

Discovery 3

What's your favourite of the advices and queries?

Ask one or two Friends in your meeting what is their favourite, or one that they feel is especially important. Ask them to explain the reasons for their choice.

- You could do this during the coffee time after meeting for worship, or
- You might like to ask your Becoming Friends companion to help you set up an informal meeting with other Friends in your meeting to talk about this question

Discovery 4

Advices and queries from former times

These can provide a fascinating insight into the development of the Quaker way.

- Look at the Queries of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting from 1806 on pages 42–43, or online at: www.qhpress.org/texts/obod/queries.html.
- Look in your meeting house for old versions of *Advices & queries* they were included in a book called *Church Government* before the single volume *Quaker faith & practice* was brought out
- If this catches your interest, you could go to the library at Friends House or Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, and ask staff to help you find even older copies (there are some dating back to the 17th century)

Read sections and compare them with the current version of *Advices & queries*. What do you notice? What has changed in the content, and in the language used?

Do you feel drawn to any of the older advices and queries? You might copy out any that speak to you, and use them for your own guidance.

Discovery 5

Reflecting on the advices and queries with a group

Your Becoming Friends companion or an elder in your meeting could help you set up a small group session to explore the advices and queries. You might use the *Advices & queries* cards on pages 44–50 as a prompt for discussion.

- 1. Spread out the cards on a large table, or on the floor and spend a few minutes looking at them until you feel drawn to one, then pick it up.
- 2. In pairs, reflect on what this advice means to you, how it inspires or challenges you. How would you rewrite it to make it even more relevant to you? Spend five minutes, in turns, sharing your thoughts with your partner.
- 3. Come back together as a whole group and spend some time in worship sharing mode, where Friends have an opportunity to share at depth with one another any insights, experiences or challenges they have found during part 2 of the exercise.

Guidance for worship sharing is found in Appendix 2 – Guidance on pages 283–284.

Discovery 6

Reading Advices & queries in meeting for worship

Sections 1.05 1.06 and 1.07 of *Quaker faith & practice* cover arrangements for the reading of *Advices & queries* in meetings for worship and business. Depending on local procedures, you might ask to join the rota of those reading *Advices & queries* in meeting for worship. You could ask your Becoming Friends companion to help you with this.

- Be aware of how you go about choosing which advice to read, and of any ministry you or others feel led to give in connection with it
- Be aware of the working of the Spirit in this process

Deepening

Deepening 1

Taking one of the advices and queries deeper

You could write out, type or record one of the advices and queries. You might like to choose which one very carefully, or prefer to take a 'random' selection and see how it speaks to you.

- Carry this with you, or stick it up somewhere you will see it, for several days or longer, and read it at odd moments during your day
- Does it speak differently to you at different times, or when you are in different moods? What can you learn from this?

You could reflect on this experience with your Becoming Friends companion when you next meet.

Deepening 2

Taking an advice apart

You might like to choose one of the advices and queries and copy it onto a large piece of paper or card: you can write it out, or take the text from the online *Advices & queries* and copy and paste, or use one of the *Advices & queries* cards (pages 44–50) and enlarge to print it out.

- Cut up the text so that it is in simple phrases, or parts of sentences. Try moving the phrases around on a table or the floor, rearranging them in different orders and patterns.
- Pay attention to your responses to any of the words or phrases: do some seem to 'sparkle' or attract you, while others may cause you discomfort or difficulty? You may like to stay with one of these 'sparkling' or 'difficult' phrases and use it as a starting point for meditation, prayer or writing.

This is a form of 'sacred reading' or lectio divina, which was an essential part of the monastic tradition's approach to reading scriptures. It is used by many Quakers today as a spiritual practice. See page 270 in Appendix 1 – Spiritual Practices for further guidance.

You could reflect on this experience with your Becoming Friends companion when you next meet.

Deepening 3

Writing an advice and query

What issues regarding the spiritual life are important for you at the moment? You might spend a short while in silent reflection, then choose one of these areas to work with for this activity.

Write an advice and query that speaks to you at the moment about your chosen issue. Consider what language you feel comfortable using, but that would also be helpful to other Friends.

Consider your own response to the advice and query that you have written – you may like to spend some time reflecting, meditating or praying with it as your focus. Allow it to speak deeply to you.

You could reflect on this experience with your Becoming Friends companion when you next meet.

Deepening 4

A personal book of discipline

This could be made up of three or four advices and queries that you have chosen to work with, possibly including your own from Deepening 3, or some from former times that you have found through Discovery 4.

- You may like to choose ones that you feel especially drawn to at this time, or you may prefer to make a random selection and follow the 'winds of the Spirit'.
- Write or record them in your own personal book of spiritual discipline, which might be your journal, your online reflective diary, or a piece of paper you will keep in a chosen place.
- Discuss with your Becoming Friends companion or another Friend why you have chosen these particular advices and queries, and any hopes or resolutions that you wish to make in order to live by their wisdom.

You could reflect on how you have got on with this exercise at a future meeting with your Becoming Friends companion.

Deepening 5

Reflecting with your Becoming Friends companion

You might like simply to spend time with your Becoming Friends companion reflecting on the place of the advices and queries in their life, and in your own.

- You could ask your companion which advices and queries have been important to them at any particular times in their life.
- Are there any advices and queries which your companion has found especially challenging or difficult?
- Does this reflect your own experience?
- Are there ways in which either of you would like to work with the advices and queries in future?

Further exploration

If you would like to explore the subject of advices and queries further, here are some suggestions for reading, listening or viewing.

Beyond consensus: salvaging sense of the meeting, Barry Morley, Pendle Hill Pamphlets 307. May also be found in the *Hearts and minds prepared* pack.

An Introduction to Watford Quakers (DVD), 'Are Quakers Woolly Minded Liberals?', Just Film, 2007. Also available at: www.watfordquakers.org.uk/videos.html (or on www.youtube.com as 'Introduction to Quakers').

A light that is shining: an introduction to the Quakers, chapter 1 and 2, Harvey Gillman, Quaker Books, 2003.

Listening spirituality 2: corporate spiritual practice among Friends, Patricia Loring, Openings Press, 1997.

'Our queries and our conduct: past, present and future', David Maxwell, *Woodbrooke Journal*, Summer 2001, No 8.

Quaker faith & practice 11.42 (conclusion to chapter 11).

Many of these titles are available from the Quaker Centre bookshop:

Friends House 173 Euston Road London NW1 2BJ

Tel: 020 7663 1030 Fax: 020 7663 1001

Website: www.quaker.org.uk/bookshop Email: quakercentre@quaker.org.uk

Many of them will also be in your local meeting house library. You could ask your Becoming Friends companion to help you track down titles that interest you.

Closing activity

As you finish your exploration of the advices and queries, you are invited to reflect on what you have gained from the unit, how your understanding of both yourself and Quakerism has changed, and what areas you would like to explore further.

This closing reflection can be a very good opportunity for sharing with your Becoming Friends companion, or you may prefer to write in a journal or book of spiritual discipline (there's guidance for journalling in Appendix 2 – Guidance on page 282), or to reflect using creative methods such as drawing, collage, model-making or working with materials such as textiles or wood.

You might use one or more of the following questions as a focus for your reflection:

- What have you gained from your work on this unit, whether as a result of positive or more challenging experiences?
- In what ways has your understanding changed as a result of your work on this unit?
- Are there areas that you would like to explore further either as part of your own spiritual journey or relating to Quakerism?
- Has anything arisen that you would find it helpful to reflect on with your Becoming Friends companion?



Extract for Distinctives 3: How young Friends made their own advices and queries

From Beyond consensus by Barry Morley

This pamphlet is about the problem of distinguishing between 'consensus' and the Quaker 'sense of the meeting'.

I can illustrate the problem by drawing from my own experience as director of Catoctin Quaker Camp. I drove back to camp late one evening. As I came up the mountain road, my headlights fell on eight counselors who had gathered on a bridge just beyond camp property. Three of them were smoking cigarettes. The others were socializing. It is policy that no one smoke at camp. By smoking beyond the camp's boundary line, off-duty counselors maintained the letter of the policy. That was their intent. But I didn't want smoking outside the camp's property to become a significant social occasion which attracted smokers and non-smokers alike.

At the next staff meeting I expressed my concern. 'If you must smoke,' I said, 'I'd appreciate your going off to do it alone. I don't think it should be part of the fabric of the camp's social life.'

A long, heated discussion followed. (I've learned that addressing people's addictions always leads to long, heated discussions.) It became clear that the counselors really did enjoy one another's company and that going off with the smokers *was* an important part of the camp's social fabric. 'After all, we work hard and don't get to spend much time together.'

I pressed my points forcefully, twisting a few arms in the process. Because of my position as director my concerns carried weight. Still, I was unwilling to impose authority. I wanted agreement. So we all compromised, and after more than an hour of wrangling, achieved consensus. We allowed ourselves to settle for the arrangement that a smoker might go off to smoke with one or two other people.

But I knew that we had not reached a sense of the meeting. For years we had nurtured sense of the meeting among us. We knew what it felt like. Clearly, this wasn't it. I watched, sociologist-like, to see where this journey into forging a consensus would take us. Within a few weeks it took us back to the bridge just outside camp where groups of counselors hung around while some of them smoked. I learned what I had already suspected. I had gotten agreement without commitment. If I wanted commitment it would have to come through the sense of the meeting. Little did I suspect that an explosive issue lurking in the background would provide that opportunity.

Late in the winter a long article appeared in a Sunday edition of *The Washington Post* which described the struggles of a young man to recover from his

involvement with drugs. The young man had been a counselor at Catoctin Quaker Camp. Though his performance had never given indication of a drug problem, one sentence in the article said that he had, on one occasion, brought drugs into the camp.

Reaction was swift. A meeting was called. Frightened parents demanded assurances that drugs would never be available to children at camp. Given the climate at the time, I knew that I could not make that guarantee. Arguments triggered by understandable fear and frustration grew heated. Acrimony was hurled and thrown back. Deep wounds were inflicted.

When counsellors and staff arrived the following summer for their week of precamp, I opened the first business meeting by saying, 'Let me tell you about my winter.' To virtually the same set of counsellors who had reached the smoking consensus, I laid out all sides of the drug issue as objectively as I could. I concluded by saying, 'In a few weeks I have to go to yearly meeting. They'll want to know what we've done about this. I think the best way to begin is to let you ask me questions for the purpose of clarification or information gathering.' The questions went on for an hour, most arising from disbelief over implicit lack of trust in their work. The intensity of the reaction seemed to them disproportionate.

Finally I said, 'I think we should set this aside for now. Take time to talk about it among yourselves. We can discuss it again at tomorrow night's business meeting. I also suggest that I not be there. You might talk more freely without me.' All of this was approved.

At the next night's business meeting we dealt with a few agenda items. Then I excused myself and retreated to my cabin. The meeting went on for two hours. Another closed meeting was asked for and scheduled. I had decided I would not inquire about those meetings; rather, I would wait until someone approached me. No one did.

If anything, the work of opening the camp went more smoothly than usual. Spirits and enthusiasm were high. Whatever process counselors and staff were working their way through seemed to spark their sense of purpose. Assigned jobs were completed. Unassigned jobs were undertaken. The 'things done' list grew. The 'things needing attention' list shrank. Paddles and life jackets were hung in rows. Canoes were washed and racked. Kitchen equipment was scrubbed. Climbing ropes and gear were checked and double checked. Overnight tarps were grommetted and roped. Pack-out food was procured, organized and stored. Shelters were cleaned and repaired. Overnight camping gear was distributed by unit. The rope swing and volleyball net were up. In business meetings, sense of the meeting came easily. But I remained ignorant of the direction of people's 'drug policy' thoughts.

Campers arrived and camp began. It ran like a finely tuned engine. The first week's overnight trips went out and returned. Around the campfire, hero stories abounded. But I continued to wonder about drugs and *The Washington Post*.

One morning a counselor came to me and said, 'We need to have another meeting and you need to be there.'

'When?' I asked.

'Tonight would be good,' she said.

After we had gathered, we took an extended moment of silence. With high hopes I asked, 'So where are we with this?'

A young woman answered. 'We can't seem to get anywhere. We've started to go around and around.'

'People are uncomfortable about making rules other people have to obey,' said another young woman.

A spasm of mini-panic displaced my hopes.

Then Ethan said, 'All we can do is ask each other questions.'

'Like what?' I asked.

'Like, 'Am I being true to myself?"

A ray of hope replaced my mini-panic. 'Like what else?' I asked.

'Like 'Am I being true to the spirit of Camp Catoctin?...."

'Do you people know what queries are?' I asked.

I was surprised that no one did. 'Queries are questions you ask yourselves. They keep you focused on whatever you want to focus on. When Ethan said, 'Am I being true to myself? Am I being true to the spirit of Camp Catoctin?' he was asking queries.'

'I don't see how that helps us,' said another young man.

'Well,' I said, 'if you wrote a set of queries, we could ask one at each business meeting. Then you could meditate on it for a minute. This would help you keep it in mind; or at least close to mind.'

'We could do that,' someone said.

In time honored Quaker fashion I suggested that a committee be appointed to develop a set of queries. When I asked who would like to be on it, everyone's hand went up. With some difficulty, we whittled the committee down to eight. I asked Ethan if he would be convenor. He said he would.

'When would you like to meet?' I asked.

'As soon as this is over,' he replied.

I explained that Quaker committee meetings are open and that people not specifically appointed to the committee might participate. We concluded with a moment of silence after which I left. Everyone else stayed.

The second week's overnight trips went out and returned. Around the campfire, hero stories abounded. Surely, camp had never run so well.

Then Ethan came to me and said, 'We need another meeting and you need to be there.'

Copies of the queries were handed out. We began the painful and time consuming process of arranging language and clarifying meaning. I was not yet completely satisfied when Charlie said, 'We don't need to nit-pick words any more. We know what our values are.'

The meeting fell silent. We had found the sense of the meeting, that place where silence acknowledges God's presence among us. The silence went on and on. It seemed a shame to end it.

When I went to yearly meeting I was asked what my response had been to the *Washington Post* article. I passed out copies of the queries. 'These are wonderful,' someone said. Yearly Meeting also fell silent.

That sense of meeting held for six years. At Catoctin Quaker Camp six years constitutes a generation of counselors. When a similar issue arose, it involved alcohol. This time, when the sense of the meeting was reached, it came in the form of a minute: 'We encourage each other to refrain from the use of substances which might harm our performance or the camp's reputation.' This, too, held.

from *Beyond consensus: salvaging sense of the meeting* by Barry Morley, Pendle Hill Pamphlets 307



Rules of Discipline of the Yearly Meeting of Friends Held in Philadelphia 1806

Queries

First Query. Are all our religious meetings for worship and discipline duly attended; is the hour observed; and are friends clear of sleeping, and of all other unbecoming behaviour therein?

Second Query. Is love and unity maintained amongst you. Are tale-bearing and detraction discouraged. And where any differences arise, are endeavours used speedily to end them?

Third Query. Are Friends careful to bring up those under their direction, in plainness of speech, behaviour, and apparel; in frequent reading the holy scriptures; and to restrain them from reading pernicious books and from the corrupt conversation of the world?

Fourth Query. Are Friends careful to discourage the unnecessary distillation or use of spirituous liquors, frequenting taverns and places of diversion; and to keep in true moderation and temperance on the account of marriages, burials and other occasions?

Fifth Query. Are poor Friends necessities duly inspected, and they relieved or assisted in such business as they are capable of. Do their children freely partake of learning to fit them for business: And are they and other Friends children placed among Friends?

Sixth Query. Do you maintain a faithful testimony against oaths; an hireling ministry; bearing arms, training, and other military services; being concerned in any fraudulent or clandestine trade; buying or vending goods so imported, or prize goods; and against encouraging lotteries of any kind?

Seventh Query. Are Friends careful to live within the bounds of their circumstances, and to keep to moderation in their trade or business: Are they punctual to their promises, and just in the payment of their debts; and are such as give reasonable grounds for fear on these accounts timely laboured with for their preservation or recovery?

Eighth Query. Do you take due care regularly to deal with all offenders in the spirit of meekness, without partiality or unnecessary delay, in order for their help; and where such labour is ineffectual, to place judgment upon them in the authority of truth?

Ninth Query. Is due care taken to keep a regular record of births and burials?

And in the preparative and monthly meetings, when all the foregoing queries are read and answered, the following advices are to be read with a suitable pause between them:

That no young or single persons make or encourage proposals of marriage with each other without consent of parents or guardians, or keep company with those who are not of our religious society, upon that account; and if parents give their consent to, or connive at their children's thus keeping company, or marrying, that they be dealt with according to our discipline: And if any of our members have been present at marriages accomplished contrary to the rules of our discipline, that they also be dealt with.

That all public gifts and legacies be strictly applied to the uses intended by the donors; or, if any unforeseen occurrence should render such compliance difficult or impracticable, that an early application be made to the meeting for sufferings for its advice or assistance; and that timely care be taken for the renewal of trusts.

That Friends intending removal be careful to apply for certificates; and that the cases of such who remove without certificates, or of sojourners coming from other places and appearing as Friends, without producing certificates, be properly attended to.

That Friends carefully inspect the state of their affairs once in the year; and make their wills and settle their outward estates whilst in health.

And it is further recommended that in conducting the affairs of our meetings, Friends endeavour to manage them in the peaceable spirit and wisdom of Jesus, with decency, forbearance and love of each other.

2. Bring the whole of your life under the ordering of the spirit of Christ. Are you open to the healing power of God's love? Cherish 1. Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. that of God within you, so that this love may Trust them as the leadings of God whose grow in you and guide you. Let your worship and your daily life enrich each other. Light shows us our darkness and brings us Treasure your experience of God, however it to new life. comes to you. Remember that Christianity is not a notion but a way. 3. Do you try to set aside times of quiet for 4. The Religious Society of Friends is openness to the Holy Spirit? All of us need rooted in Christianity and has always found to find a way into silence which allows us inspiration in the life and teachings of Jesus. to deepen our awareness of the divine and How do you interpret your faith in the light of to find the inward source of our strength. this heritage? How does Jesus speak to you Seek to know an inward stillness, even today? Are you following Jesus' example amid the activities of daily life. Do you of love in action? Are you learning from encourage in yourself and in others a habit his life the reality and cost of obedience to of dependence on God's guidance for each God? How does his relationship with God day? Hold yourself and others in the Light, challenge and inspire you? knowing that all are cherished by God. 5. Take time to learn about other people's experiences of the Light. Remember the importance of the Bible, the writings of Friends and all writings which reveal the 6. Do you work gladly with other religious ways of God. As you learn from others, can groups in the pursuit of common goals? you in turn give freely from what you have While remaining faithful to Quaker insights, gained? While respecting the experiences try to enter imaginatively into the life and and opinions of others, do not be afraid witness of other communities of faith, to say what you have found and what creating together the bonds of friendship. you value. Appreciate that doubt and questioning can also lead to spiritual growth and to a greater awareness of the Light that is in us all.



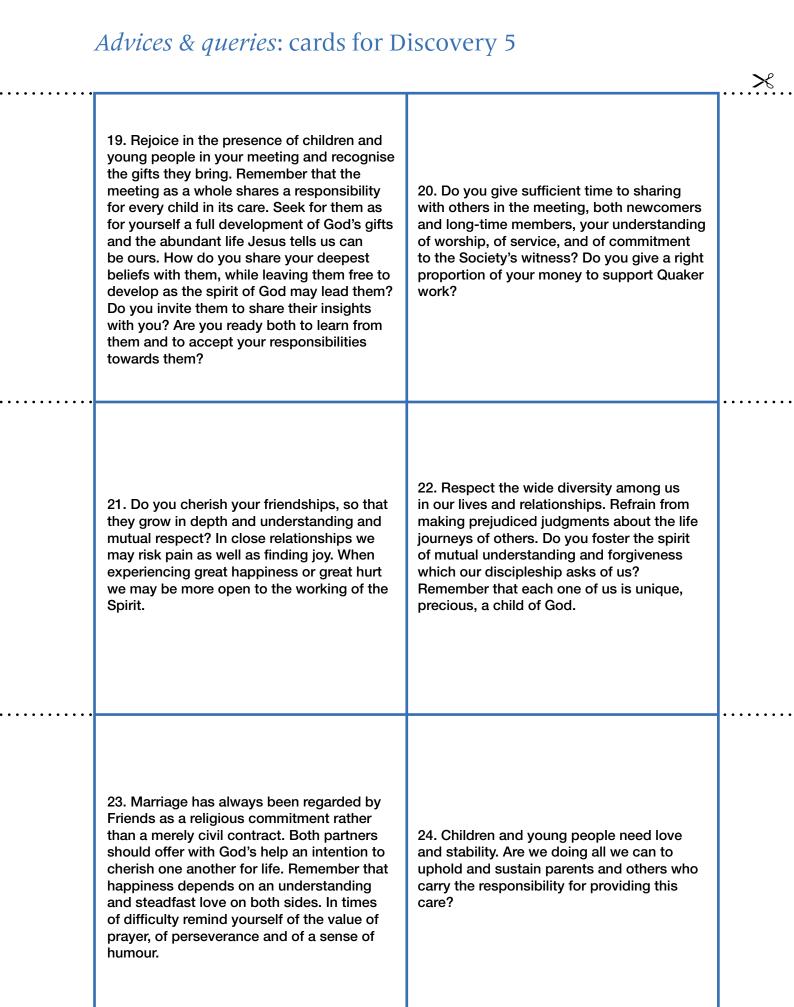
- 7. Be aware of the spirit of God at work in the ordinary activities and experience of your daily life. Spiritual learning continues throughout life, and often in unexpected ways. There is inspiration to be found all around us, in the natural world, in the sciences and arts, in our work and friendships, in our sorrows as well as in our joys. Are you open to new light, from whatever source it may come? Do you approach new ideas with discernment?
- 8. Worship is our response to an awareness of God. We can worship alone, but when we join with others in expectant waiting we may discover a deeper sense of God's presence. We seek a gathered stillness in our meetings for worship so that all may feel the power of God's love drawing us together and leading us.

- 9. In worship we enter with reverence into communion with God and respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Come to meeting for worship with heart and mind prepared. Yield yourself and all your outward concerns to God's guidance so that you may find 'the evil weakening in you and the good raised up'.
- 10. Come regularly to meeting for worship even when you are angry, depressed, tired or spiritually cold. In the silence ask for and accept the prayerful support of others joined with you in worship. Try to find a spiritual wholeness which encompasses suffering as well as thankfulness and joy. Prayer, springing from a deep place in the heart, may bring healing and unity as nothing else can. Let meeting for worship nourish your whole life.

- 11. Be honest with yourself. What unpalatable truths might you be evading? When you recognise your shortcomings, do not let that discourage you. In worship together we can find the assurance of God's love and the strength to go on with renewed courage.
- 12. When you are preoccupied and distracted in meeting let wayward and disturbing thoughts give way quietly to your awareness of God's presence among us and in the world. Receive the vocal ministry of others in a tender and creative spirit. Reach for the meaning deep within it, recognising that even if it is not God's word for you, it may be so for others. Remember that we all share responsibility for the meeting for worship whether our ministry is in silence or through the spoken word.

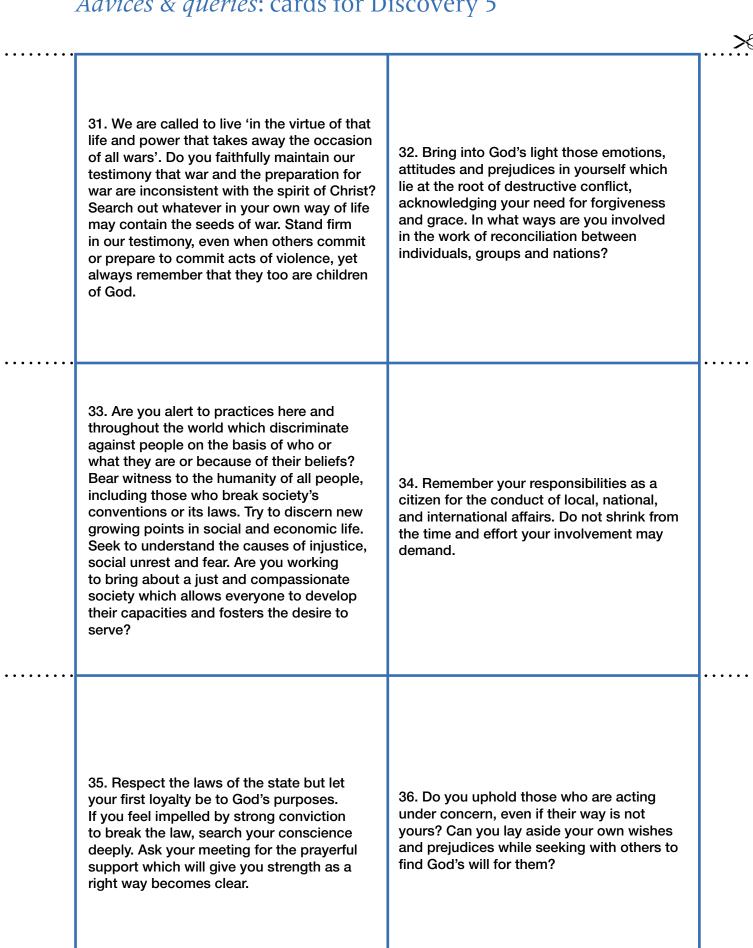
Advices & queries: cards for Discovery 5

13. Do not assume that vocal ministry is never to be your part. Faithfulness and sincerity in speaking, even very briefly, may open the way to fuller ministry from others. When prompted to speak, wait patiently 14. Are your meetings for church affairs held to know that the leading and the time are in a spirit of worship and in dependence on the guidance of God? Remember that we right, but do not let a sense of your own unworthiness hold you back. Pray that your do not seek a majority decision nor even consensus. As we wait patiently for divine ministry may arise from deep experience, and trust that words will be given to you. guidance our experience is that the right Try to speak audibly and distinctly, and with way will open and we shall be led into unity. sensitivity to the needs of others. Beware of speaking predictably or too often, and of making additions towards the end of a meeting when it was well left before. 15. Do you take part as often as you can in meetings for church affairs? Are you familiar enough with our church government 16. Do you welcome the diversity of culture, to contribute to its disciplined processes? language and expressions of faith in our Do you consider difficult questions with an yearly meeting and in the world community informed mind as well as a generous and of Friends? Seek to increase your understanding and to gain from this rich loving spirit? Are you prepared to let your insights and personal wishes take their heritage and wide range of spiritual insights. place alongside those of others or be set Uphold your own and other yearly meetings aside as the meeting seeks the right way in your prayers. forward? If you cannot attend, uphold the meeting prayerfully. 17. Do you respect that of God in everyone though it may be expressed in unfamiliar ways or be difficult to discern? Each of 18. How can we make the meeting a us has a particular experience of God and community in which each person is each must find the way to be true to it. accepted and nurtured, and strangers are When words are strange or disturbing to welcome? Seek to know one another in the you, try to sense where they come from things which are eternal, bear the burden and what has nourished the lives of others. of each other's failings and pray for one Listen patiently and seek the truth which another. As we enter with tender sympathy other people's opinions may contain for into the joys and sorrows of each other's you. Avoid hurtful criticism and provocative lives, ready to give help and to receive it, language. Do not allow the strength of our meeting can be a channel for God's love your convictions to betray you into making and forgiveness. statements or allegations that are unfair or untrue. Think it possible that you may be mistaken.



Advices & queries: cards for Discovery 5

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	25. A long-term relationship brings tensions as well as fulfilment. If your relationship with your partner is under strain, seek help in understanding the other's point of view and in exploring your own feelings, which may be powerful and destructive. Consider the wishes and feelings of any children involved, and remember their enduring need for love and security. Seek God's guidance. If you undergo the distress of separation or divorce, try to maintain some compassionate communication so that arrangements can be made with the minimum of bitterness.	26. Do you recognise the needs and gifts of each member of your family and household, not forgetting your own? Try to make your home a place of loving friendship and enjoyment, where all who live or visit may find the peace and refreshment of God's presence.
	27. Live adventurously. When choices arise, do you take the way that offers the fullest opportunity for the use of your gifts in the service of God and the community? Let your life speak. When decisions have to be made, are you ready to join with others in seeking clearness, asking for God's guidance and offering counsel to one another?	28. Every stage of our lives offers fresh opportunities. Responding to divine guidance, try to discern the right time to undertake or relinquish responsibilities without undue pride or guilt. Attend to what love requires of you, which may not be great busyness.
	29. Approach old age with courage and hope. As far as possible, make arrangements for your care in good time, so that an undue burden does not fall on others. Although old age may bring increasing disability and loneliness, it can also bring serenity, detachment and wisdom. Pray that in your final years you may be enabled to find new ways of receiving and reflecting God's love.	30. Are you able to contemplate your death and the death of those closest to you? Accepting the fact of death, we are freed to live more fully. In bereavement, give yourself time to grieve. When others mourn, let your love embrace them.



Advices & queries: cards for Discovery 5

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×	37. Are you honest and truthful in all you say and do? Do you maintain strict integrity in business transactions and in your dealings with individuals and organisations? Do you use money and information entrusted to you with discretion and responsibility? Taking oaths implies a double standard of truth; in choosing to affirm instead, be aware of the claim to integrity that you are making.	38. If pressure is brought upon you to lower your standard of integrity, are you prepared to resist it? Our responsibilities to God and our neighbour may involve us in taking unpopular stands. Do not let the desire to be sociable, or the fear of seeming peculiar, determine your decisions.	•
	39. Consider which of the ways to happiness offered by society are truly fulfilling and which are potentially corrupting and destructive. Be discriminating when choosing means of entertainment and information. Resist the desire to acquire possessions or income through unethical investment, speculation or games of chance.	40. In view of the harm done by the use of alcohol, tobacco and other habit-forming drugs, consider whether you should limit your use of them or refrain from using them altogether. Remember that any use of alcohol or drugs may impair judgment and put both the user and others in danger.	
	41. Try to live simply. A simple lifestyle freely chosen is a source of strength. Do not be persuaded into buying what you do not need or cannot afford. Do you keep yourself informed about the effects your style of living is having on the global economy and environment?	42. We do not own the world, and its riches are not ours to dispose of at will. Show a loving consideration for all creatures, and seek to maintain the beauty and variety of the world. Work to ensure that our increasing power over nature is used responsibly, with reverence for life. Rejoice in the splendour of God's continuing creation.	•

Deep Roots and New Growth

Finding out about the roots and history of the Quaker faith and our commitment to ongoing change



This unit invites you to explore the historic beginnings of Quakerism in 17th-century Britain, and how it developed from there to the present day. The Quaker commitment to being open to new inspiration and possibilities means that the Quaker faith has grown and changed over the last 350 years; but the heart of our faith – our belief in 'that of God' in all people and our experience of the power of silent worship to transform our lives – remains unchanged. So the deep roots of Quakerism still nourish our lives today.

Deep Roots unit aims

This unit aims to help you:

- find out about the roots and history of the Quaker faith
- understand how the deep roots of Quakerism still nourish Friends today, enabling us to continue to grow
- explore your own response to the roots of the Quaker faith

Overview

At a time of political and religious turmoil, early Friends as a people felt themselves to be gathered, guided and ordered by God. From their experience of the immediacy of the presence of Christ sprang the form of worship and the way of life which became the distinctive testimonies of Friends, and which were upheld with courage in the face of great persecution.

From the beginning, Quakerism has grown and developed in response to social and religious change and through a commitment to being 'open to new light' (*Advices & queries* 7 in *Quaker faith & practice* 1.02), wherever it may come from. Like a well-rooted tree, the Quaker faith has accepted new directions of growth and weathered many storms.

Deep roots

George Fox, widely regarded as the founder of the Quaker movement, was a very serious-minded young man disillusioned by what he saw as the failure of those who professed themselves to be Christians to live up to their Christian standards. In 1643 he left his home seeking a new way.

Fox came to believe that God could speak directly to each person without the need for priests or churches, and he set out to spread his message, hoping to bring believers back to an original and pure form of Christianity.

George Fox's preaching rapidly recruited others seeking a faith which gave coherence and purpose to their lives. This faith is rooted in Christianity, but it was radical, and has remained so, because the early Friends found the basis of their faith was the individual relationship with and experience of God.

Early Friends believed that the Second Coming of Christ was actually happening within their own hearts, minds and spirits: they felt themselves to be in communion with the spirit of Christ and as a result completely transformed. Many felt called to follow Fox's example and began preaching this new way of seeking the presence of God always present within the human heart.

For the first Quakers, this conviction that there is 'that of God' in everyone led them to a radical understanding that all persons are equal before God and that the old social distinctions, reflected in language, conduct and dress, were wrong: this is the source of the Quaker Testimony to Equality. So all titles and forms of deference, such as removing your hat in the presence of social 'superiors', were to be abandoned, and women's participation in Quaker life was accepted alongside that of men. Their commitment to Truth demanded honest, simple speech, and a refusal to acknowledge double standards by taking oaths. For early Friends, it was also clearly wrong to pay tithes (church taxes) to support clergy, buildings and practices which were distortions of the original message of Christ. Such flouting

of the laws and conventions of the day brought heavy punishments upon the first Quakers. George Fox himself spent many years in prison, and Friends had their possessions removed and suffered violence and persecution.

The first Quakers had a vision of the world transformed by Christ, who lives in the hearts of all: they sought to make the vision real by putting emphasis on Christian practice rather than primarily on dogma or beliefs. They recognised the realities of evil and conflict, but found it contrary to the spirit of Christ to use war and violence as means to deal with them. This led to the development of the Quaker 'Peace Testimony' which remains fundamental for Quakers today.

New growth

By the 18th century, when it became clear that the whole world would not follow the Quaker way, Friends withdrew into their own communities. But their faith and practice continued and were expressed in new developments such as schools in which girls' intellectual development was valued and the curriculum was closely related to everyday life and work.

The religious upheavals of the late 18th and early 19th centuries led to further changes in the Religious Society of Friends. The prison visiting of Elizabeth Fry and the involvement of Quakers in the abolition of the slave trade were obvious results of a fresh engagement with the world outside their own communities. At the same time, barred from English universities and the professions, Quakers entered into business and were pioneers in banking, science and industry. Their known honesty helped them to flourish in commerce.

Long term change-making in the world

From these early times, Quakers have taken a long-term, patient approach to living out our faith in the world, sticking with our testimonies whether it makes us unpopular or leads to a Nobel Prize. The Quaker approach is often to work for long-term goals or sustainable change that is well rooted in local communities: this means being prepared to stick at action for as long as it takes, or to work quietly away from the limelight. The ways that the testimonies are expressed has changed over time, but the fundamental commitment to equality, simplicity, peace and truth remains at the root of Quaker witness in the world.

A prophetic community

The wide spectrum of belief and witness among present day Quakers is not incompatible with the faith of the early Friends: direct spiritual experience remains the core of Quaker faith, whether this is understood as experience of God or of a spirituality inherent within humanity itself. Being deeply rooted but open

to new growth enables Quakers to respond with careful discernment to the needs of the time, both spiritual and practical, as a prophetic community that continues to speak Truth to the world:

The Truth is one and the same always, and though ages and generations pass away, and one generation goes and another comes, yet the word and power and spirit of the living God endures for ever, and is the same and never changes.

Margaret Fell *Quaker faith & practice* 19.61

Quaker distinctives

Distinctives 1

An overview of Quaker history

There is a brief but detailed overview of Quaker history you might read, in an extract from *A light that is shining* by Harvey Gillman. This extract can be found on pages 70–74.

You could also look at a Quaker timeline, which charts significant events in Quaker history alongside major events in British and world history. The timeline can be found on pages 75–79.

For more detail about early Quaker insights and experiences, you can read chapter 19 of *Quaker faith & practice* or one of the books referred to in Further exploration.

Distinctives 2

Meeting early Quakers

Some of the lives or insights of early Quakers are described in the following extracts from *Quaker faith & practice*:

- George Fox (1624–1691): *Qf&p* 19.01–19.04
- Margaret Fell (1614–1702): *Qf&p* 19.07
- James Nayler (1617?–1660): *Qf&p* 19.09
- Isaac Penington (1616–1679): *Qf&p* 19.14
- William Dewsbury (1621–1688): *Qf&p* 19.05
- Mary Fisher (1623–1698): *Qf&p* 19.27
- Mary Dyer (d.1660): *Qf&p* 19.18
- Thomas Ellwood (1639–1713): *Qf&p* 19.16
- William Penn (1644–1718): *Qf&p* 19.28 and 19.47

You can also find more detailed accounts of some early Quakers' lives:

• in Wikipedia by clicking on their name in the list given at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:English_Quakers

• by asking your meeting librarian for books on Quaker lives

You might also like to read extracts from:

- the Journal of George Fox at: www.strecorsoc.org/gfox/title.html
- the Journal of 18th-century Friend John Woolman at: www.strecorsoc.org/jwoolman/title.html

These journals are also available in most meeting house libraries (or to buy from the Quaker Centre bookshop – see Further exploration for contact details).

Distinctives 3

Listen to talks about Quaker history

You might like to listen to two talks about Quaker history given by Ben Pink Dandelion, Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre's Tutor in Postgraduate Quaker Studies, called 'Who are the Quakers?' and 'The history of Quakerism'.

These talks can be downloaded from the Woodbrooke website at: www.woodbrooke.org.uk/news.php/6/a-very-short-introduction-to-quakerism

Distinctives 4

Quakers as a prophetic community

Early Friends felt inspired to speak prophetically (with an understanding transformed by God) to the world of their day; this is still part of the Quaker way. In the following two extracts the speakers urge Quakers to act as a prophetic community. They are separated by 350 years, so the language they use is different, but both are rooted in the same Quaker experience:

- George Fox (1656): *Qf&p* 19.32
- Marion McNaughton (2007): this extract by Marion McNaughton can be found on pages 80–83

Quakers discovered at an early stage that a prophetic community must also be a disciplined community, or it can lead to excessive individualism or impulsive action. So Friends have a long tradition of 'taking the community with you' when being open to new growth; this usually involves a process of waiting and discerning the way forward until the community is ready to act.

- The 'Nayler incident' in 1656 was a key stage in developing this discipline: *Qf*&p 19.11 and 19.12
- for a fuller account see also: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Nayler

• A modern Quaker speaks of being 'centred, rooted, practised in waiting on God' when working with conflict, a modern prophetic role: *Qf&p* 20.71

Distinctives 5

The history of Quaker structures

You may be interested to read about how Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings came into being and how they evolved from the early days of Quakerism to the present day:

- Yearly Meeting: *Qf&p* 6.01
- Meeting for Sufferings: *Qf&p* 7.01

For a history of the advices and queries: *Qf&p* 1.04. See also Advices and Queries unit: Discovery 4 for an activity exploring old versions of *Advices & queries*

Distinctives 6

Quaker faith in action - in it for the long run

The following extracts bear witness to the steady, rooted Quaker approach to putting faith into action:

- 'slow but sure' change making in the world: *Qf&p* 23.13
- the long term work of the Quaker United Nations Office in building the institutions of peace and social justice: *Qf&p* 9.03 and 24.49
- see also: www.quno.org
- Education for Peace article at: www.quaker.org.uk/education-peace and pages 84–85

You can find out about Quaker actions in the past, where work still continues today on the modern equivalent of the same causes:

Abolition of slavery

- Qf&p 23.24-23.29
- online Quaker exhibition at www.quaker.org.uk/quakers-and-abolition-slave-trade
- information on the BBC website at: www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/abolition/abolitionists_gallery_03.shtml

Conscientious objection to war

• *Qf&p* 24.14–24.16 and 24.27

Keeping children safe from war

Kindertransport during World War II:

- read about Quaker work on the Kindertransport in *Quaker News* Winter 2008 edition find a copy of this edition in your meeting house library, or download it from: www.quaker.org.uk/qn
- see an online Quaker exhibition of memories and tributes to Kindertransportees at: www.quaker.org.uk/kinder

Recent work with child soldiers in Uganda:

• read about Quaker work with child soldiers on pages 86–87 and at: www.quaker.org.uk/uganda

Prison reform & criminal justice

• *Qf&p* 23.94–23.100, and info on the Britain Yearly Meeting website at: www.quaker.org.uk/justice

Discovery

Discovery 1

What do our Quaker roots mean to us?

A modern Quaker, Deborah Rowlands, explains what her Quaker roots mean to her in an extract from *Quaker identity and the heart of our faith*.

You'll find this extract on pages 88–89.

If you would like to read the full text of *Quaker identity and the heart of our faith*, see Further exploration for details.

You could also ask your Becoming Friends companion, or another Friend in your meeting who has been a Quaker for a long time, about what their Quaker roots mean to them.

Discovery 2

Quaker history through the Quaker Tapestry

You might like to look at panels from the Quaker Tapestry that deal with events and people from Quaker history, and follow up any that interest you by discussing them with your Becoming Friends companion, or others in your meeting, or by finding books and information about them in your meeting house library or online.

You could:

• visit the Quaker Tapestry exhibition at Kendal, or contact them for more details:

Tel: 01539 722975

Email: info@quaker-tapestry.co.uk Website: www.quaker-tapestry.co.uk

• find out if there's a book with pictures from the tapestry in your meeting house library, or you could order a book or postcards from the exhibition

Quaker Tapestry panels about Quaker history include:

- A1 George Fox's convincement
- A2 James Nayler
- A3 James Parnell; Meeting for Sufferings

- A5 The voyage of the Woodhouse
- A6 John Woolman
- A8 Manchester Conference 1895
- B1 Firbank Fell: George Fox preaching
- B2 Mary Fisher
- B3 John Bright
- C1 Swarthmoor Hall
- C2 Margaret Fell
- D1 George Fox; Lichfield, Pendle Hill
- E1 George Fox at Ulverston: healing
- E5-6 Elizabeth Fry

Discovery 3

Exploring the Quaker timeline

Why not find an event or person that interests you or that you know nothing about on the Quaker Timeline (see Distinctives 1), and find out more? You'll find the timeline on pages 75–79.

You could:

- ask your Becoming Friends companion or an experienced Friend what they know
- see what it says in Quaker faith & practice
- look online at: www.wikipedia.org
 for example, see their article on the Valiant Sixty at:
 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valiant_60
- see if there's a relevant book in your local meeting library
- ask what anyone knows on a Quaker discussion forum:
 - > the Britain Yearly Meeting forum at: www.quakerweb.org.uk/forum
 - www.friendlink.org.uk (aimed mainly at young Quakers)
 - > the Deep Roots unit forum

Discovery 4

Talking about Quaker stories from the past

You might like to explore some Quaker stories from the past. Look through the Distinctives activities for examples, or you could read about:

- William Penn and his sword: *Qf&p* 19.47
- John Woolman writing a will: *Qf&p* 20.46
- Mary Hughes 'radiant with love': *Qf&p* 18.13

How about asking one or two Friends in your meeting to share with you Quaker stories that speak to them? The introductory questions below may be helpful. You could do this during the coffee time after meeting for worship, or your Becoming Friends companion might help you set up an informal meeting with other Friends.

Or you could consider the introductory questions, then go to the Deep Roots unit forum and post your own thoughts in response. You might like to comment on other posts on this forum too.

Introductory questions:

- 1. Are there any particular stories from Quaker history that speak to you?
- 2. In what way do they enrich your life as a Quaker now?

Discovery 5

Take a tour of or a course on Quaker history

Swarthmoor Hall is sometimes called the historic 'birthplace' of Quakerism. For more information you can contact them:

Tel: 01229 583204

Email: info@swarthmoorhall.co.uk Website: www.swarthmoorhall.co.uk

- You can take a mini virtual tour of Swarthmoor Hall at: www.swarthmoorhall.co.uk/360_view.htm
- or read about the history of the hall and early Quakers at: www.swarthmoorhall.co.uk/history.htm

You can also take a virtual tour of '1652 country' – the places where George Fox and early Quakers met & worshipped – at: www.strecorsoc.org/qkrcntry/qc01.html (click on the photos at the bottom of the page).

Tours of the actual places in the '1652 country' and courses on Quaker history are run by Swarthmoor Hall and Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre. For details of tours or courses coming up, contact:

• Swarthmoor Hall – contact details as above

• Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre

Tel: 0121 472 5171

Email: enquiries@woodbrooke.org.uk Website: www.woodbrooke.org.uk

Deepening

Deepening 1

How do Quaker stories speak to you?

You might like to reflect on a person or incident from Quaker history that interests or appeals to you in some way. You can find examples in the Distinctives and Discovery sections of this unit, and there are Quaker stories in the *Journeys in the Spirit* series, available from Quaker Life or at: www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschild (issues 27–43). Reflect on why or how this Quaker person or story speaks to you.

You could talk to your Becoming Friends companion, or write in a journal or book of spiritual discipline, perhaps using these questions as a focus:

- Does this person or story resonate with something in your own life?
- How does this person or story show the 'breaking in' of new light, or the importance of rootedness in the spiritual life?
- How do your roots, spiritual or personal, nourish you?
- In what ways are you being invited to undergo change or growth now?

Deepening 2

A prayer reflecting on our Quaker roots, and seeking openness to new growth

Margaret Benefiel, a contemporary American Quaker, has written a prayer which reflects on the depth of the Quaker tradition and our meaningful encounter with it today.

You can find the prayer on page 90–92.

You might like to take some time to reflect deeply on your own response to the prayer; you could write or respond creatively.

You could also reflect on this with your Becoming Friends companion when you next meet.

Deepening 3

An image for your own rootedness

Consider the image of Quakerism as a well rooted tree, able to grow and even accept grafts, because of its rootedness. What image works for you to express your own rootedness, spiritually or personally?

You could express or reflect on this image of your own rootedness:

- by drawing, painting, or using another creative method
- in music, song or movement
- in writing
- by going online and blogging about the image
- by discussing the image on a Quaker discussion forum:
 - > the Britain Yearly Meeting forum at: www.quakerweb.org.uk/forum
 - www.friendlink.org.uk (aimed mainly at young Quakers)
 - > the Deep Roots unit forum
- by sharing with your Becoming Friends companion when you next meet.

Deepening 4

Reflecting with Quaker mystics

The writings of Quaker mystics from the past continue to inspire and challenge us on our spiritual journeys. The following extracts from *Quaker faith & practice* are by Quaker mystics:

- Isaac Penington: *Qf&p* 26.70 'give over thine own willing'; *Qf&p* 10.01: 'our life is love'
- George Fox: Qf&p 2.18 'be still and cool'; Qf&p 26.03 'all things were new'
- Margaret Fell: Qf&p 19.61 'the Truth is one'
- Francis Howgill: *Qf&p* 26.71 'return home to within'
- James Nayler: Qf&p 19.12 'a spirit ... that delights to do no evil'
- John Woolman: *Qf&p* 20.10 'a precious habitation'; *Qf&p* 26.61 'a principle which is pure'
- Thomas Kelly: *Qf&p* 2.22 'an inner, secret turning'; *Qf&p* 26.62 'shining into the darkness'
- Rufus Jones: *Qf&p* 26.32 'beauty breaks through'

Is there one extract, phrase or word that speaks to you in particular? You could incorporate it into your spiritual practice over the next few days or weeks, reading it or repeating it in the way of 'sacred reading' (see page 270 in Appendix 1 – Spiritual Practices for guidance about 'sacred reading'). You could print it or write it out and keep it somewhere that you will be able to see it.

You could also share some of your reflections with your Becoming Friends companion when you next meet.

Deepening 5

Engaging with the Quaker discipline of waiting for the right time for action or change

Advices & queries 28 (in section 1.02 of *Quaker faith & practice*) advises that 'every stage of our lives offers fresh opportunities', inviting us to 'discern the right time to undertake or relinquish responsibilities' and to 'attend to what love requires' of us.

This is a way for an individual to follow the Quaker community discipline of waiting and discerning the right time to act or make changes (see Distinctives 4). You could reflect on your own process of being open to 'fresh opportunities', and how you know it's the right time for change. You could write or respond creatively to the following questions:

- Have there been times in your life when waiting for the right time for action or change has proved fruitful?
- How did you know when it was the right time?
- If you have acted too quickly or without the discipline of waiting, what effect has this had on the change or action you took?
- Would it help to use the question 'what does love require of me?' in your discernment?

You could also share some of your reflections with your Becoming Friends companion when you next meet.

Further exploration

If you would like to explore the subject of Quaker history and roots further, here are some suggestions for reading, listening or viewing.

- A faith to call our own. Quaker tradition in the light of contemporary movements of the *Spirit*, Alex Wildwood, Quaker Home Service, 1999 (Swarthmore Lecture).
- 'Finding the prophetic voice for our time', Marion McNaughton and Lizz Roe, *Woodbrooke Journal*, Autumn 2007, No 21.
- 'James Nayler: a pearl of faith', Stephen Sayers, *Woodbrooke Journal*, Autumn 2006, No 19.
- A light that is shining: an introduction to the Quakers, Harvey Gillman, Quaker Books, 2003.
- Living the way: Quaker spirituality and community, Ursula Jane O'Shea, Quaker Books, 2003 (first published by Australia Yearly Meeting, 1993). This is in the *Hearts and minds prepared* pack.
- *Minding the future*, Christine A. M. Davis, Quaker Books, 2008 (Swarthmore Lecture).
- Pictorial guide to the Quaker Tapestry, The Quaker Tapestry at Kendal, 1998.
- Portrait in grey: a short history of the Quakers, John Punshon, Quaker Home Service, 1984.
- *Previous convictions and end of the millennium Quakerism,* Christine Trevett, Quaker Home Service, 1997 (Swarthmore Lecture).
- Quaker faith & practice, chapter 18, 'Faithful Lives'.
- Quaker faith & practice, chapter 19, 'Openings'.
- Quaker identity and the heart of our faith, Quaker Life Study Materials, Quaker Life, 2008, including Deborah Rowlands on 'Roots' and Rex Ambler on 'The prophetic message of early Friends'. Available online at: www.quaker.org.uk/sites/default/files/Faith-and-practice-proceeding.pdf or in hard copy by contacting Quaker Life on 020 7663 1140 or email: ql@quaker.org.uk
- *Quakerism: a theology for our time*, Patricia Williams, Sessions, 2007.
- Quaker Peace & Social Witness pages on the Britain Yearly Meeting website: www.quaker.org.uk/qpsw
- Quaker Tapestry website: www.quaker-tapestry.co.uk
- *The Quakers: a very short introduction,* Pink Dandelion, Oxford University Press, 2008.

Quakers in Britain: a century of change 1895–1995, Alastair Heron, Curlew Graphics, 1995.

Rooted in Christianity, open to new light: Quaker spiritual diversity, Timothy Ashworth and Alex Wildwood, Pronoun Press & Woodbrooke, 2009.

Searching the depths: essays on being a Quaker today, edited by Harvey Gillman and Alastair Heron, Quaker Books, 1996. 'Building on our Traditions' chapter by Rosalind Priestman.

Street Corner Society website pages: www.strecorsoc.org/docs_qq.html and www.strecorsoc.org/quaker.html with links to a wide selection of online historical Quaker texts including George Fox's and John Woolman's journals.

Swarthmoor Hall's website: www.swarthmoorhall.co.uk

Testimony and tradition, John Punshon, Quaker Home Service, 1990 (Swarthmore Lecture).

'Tradition and transition: opening to the sacred yesterday and today', Alex Wildwood, *Woodbrooke Journal*, Winter 2001, No 9. This is in the *Hearts and minds prepared* pack.

Woodbrooke's website or brochure for details of courses about Quaker history: www.woodbrooke.org.uk

Many of these titles are available from the Quaker Centre bookshop:

Friends House 173 Euston Road London NW1 2BJ

Tel: 020 7663 1030 Fax: 020 7663 1001

Website: www.quaker.org.uk/bookshop Email: quakercentre@quaker.org.uk



Many of them will also be in your local meeting house library. You could ask your Becoming Friends companion to help you track down titles that interest you.

Closing activity

As you finish your exploration of Quaker history and roots, you are invited to reflect on what you have gained through this unit, how your understanding of both yourself and Quakerism has changed, and what areas you would like to explore further.

This closing reflection can be a very good opportunity for sharing with your Becoming Friends companion, or you may prefer to write in a journal or book of spiritual discipline (there's guidance for journalling in Appendix 2 – Guidance on page 282), or to reflect using creative methods such as drawing, collage, model-making or working with materials such as textiles or wood.

You might use one or more of the following questions as a focus for your reflection:

- What have you gained from your work on this unit, whether as a result of positive or more challenging experiences?
- In what ways has your understanding changed as a result of your work on this unit?
- Are there areas that you would like to explore further either as part of your own spiritual journey or relating to Quakerism?
- Has anything arisen that you would find it helpful to reflect on, with your Becoming Friends companion?



'Origins and development: the growth of the Ouaker outlook' from *A light that is shining* by Harvey Gillman

What we at this period of our history find striking about early Quakers in the 1640s and 1650s is their emergence at a time of revolutionary change which was breaking down old ideas of a strictly defined social order. The Roman Catholic Church had long ceased to have any power in Britain, although it was still feared by the political establishment. There was conflict in the Church of England between its Puritan and Catholic wings. There were questions about the role of the bishops; about the role of women (in the Baptist, Quaker and other Separatist communities women had an increasingly important place but it was among Quakers alone that women were fully accepted as having equal status in the worshipping group) and so on. Faction begat faction, as each group tried to establish its own particular truth.

As well as being overtly theological in nature, these conflicts were political and social in the widest sense. The whole question of how society could best be governed for the benefit of everyone was being raised and many of the answers given were radical. As George Fox (1624–1691) travelled up and down the country, he met with others who also had spent time seeking for a more intimate relationship with God. This search was taking them away from the mainstream churches, and was eventually to lead to the founding of what is now known as the Religious Society of Friends.

These men and women who later became Friends brought with them ideas they had found in the varying factions they had come from, and for a period the Quaker movement was a much less coherent movement than it later became. In today's world of rapid change with fewer than one quarter of the members of the Society born of Quaker parents, we can see a parallel. The challenge to modern Quakerism is a similar one: how today to fuse ex-Baptists, ex-Anglicans, exatheists, ex-Buddhists, ex-practising Jews, ex-so many things, into a united society (though not a uniform one).

The seventeenth century

In the seventeenth century it was George Fox who put his stamp on this emerging group. It would be a mistake however to equate a movement with one man, charismatic though he may have been. Throughout the north Midlands and the North West, groups had already set themselves apart from the mainstream churches. Many of them met in silence without priest or pastor. Many of them

had already rejected outward sacraments and were waiting for a new spirituality. [...]

It was Fox with his administrative ability and Margaret Fell (1614–1702) who later became his wife, who were able to fuse these groups into a society which has survived, while most other religious groups originating at this time have died away. Yet the Quaker movement was not to be united easily. There were clashes of personality as well as of principles. James Nayler (1617–1660), whose enthusiasm and charisma sometimes led his followers to excess, clashed with Fox on a number of occasions. In the 1660s John Perrott, an Irish Friend from Waterford, protested against the increasing centralising of decision-making among Quakers and condemned the custom of removing hats when a Friend prayed aloud in meeting, and of shaking hands at the end of meetings. This almost led to a schism, but in spite of these differences Quakers spread and grew and met greater persecution. Between 1650 and 1687, it has been estimated that 13,000 Friends were imprisoned, 198 were transported and 338 died in penal institutions or of wounds inflicted upon them while they were attending meeting.

Persecution did not cool the ardour of the men and women who left family and home to become 'publishers of Truth'. It is from this period that the Quaker custom of 'speaking truth to power' arises. In 1657 Mary Fisher (1623–1698), who had sailed to Massachusetts to witness for the truth, travelled to Constantinople to try to convince the Sultan. Others sought audience with the Pope and met with imprisonment or death at the hands of the Inquisition. Mary Dyer was hanged for her beliefs in 1660 on Boston Common by the very Puritans who had left England to find liberty of worship. But it was this revolutionary desire to publish the truth that God was immediately accessible to all human beings that eventually led to the founding in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries of Quaker groups in centres throughout Europe, North America and the Caribbean.

The eighteenth century

Like most fervent movements, the Quaker movement began to lose something of its impetus as its founding members died. From being a movement to preach a new or regained truth, it took on the characteristics of an inward-looking sect, handing down traditions and regulating the activities of its partisans. From being a revival of the true universal church, Friends now saw themselves as a remnant keeping precious their past insights. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries they became a 'peculiar' people, suspicious of the outside world, wearing distinctive clothes, speaking a language full of distinctive jargon, addressing each other as 'thee' and 'thou', and although they still held public meetings now and again, very few newcomers were attracted to them.

But this introspection was not total and Friends were still concerned about conditions in the world around them. John Bellers (1654–1725), for instance, forms a link between the early persecutions and the subsequent period of retrenchment, yet he carried on the social witness of the first generation of Quakers with his schemes for the welfare of destitute children and in his writings he speaks of the 'labour of the poor being the mines of the rich'. His theories

influenced later radicals such as Robert Owen and Karl Marx. Similarly John Woolman (1720–1772) was one of the first of the Society to condemn slavery, urge economic boycotts and care about conditions aboard ships. He also prompted Friends to see the connection between the way they lived, the possessions they owned and the violence and oppression which were part of the economic and political institutions of their day.

The interest some Friends showed in the social conditions of their day was matched by the fascination of other Friends for the natural world. If helping other people was a sign of the Christian life, the exploration of nature was a sign of human appreciation of a divinely inspired universe and the Quaker contribution was considerable. John Fothergill (1712–1780) played a notable role in the medical world; as did Peter Collinson (1694–1768) in botany. Towards the end of the period, John Dalton (1766–1844) and William Allen (1770–1843) made great contributions to chemistry. One of the most important discoveries of the eighteenth century, the smelting of iron by using coke rather than charcoal, was made by Abraham Darby (1678–1717) at Coalbrookdale in Shropshire. This and other inventions at Coalbrookdale had great bearing on the growth of the Industrial Revolution.

The nineteenth century

Gradually as the nineteenth century advanced Quakers began to look outwards from the small world of their own denomination as they were more and more open to religious and social insights from other traditions. The outside world had already witnessed the Methodist movement of which Quakers at first were very suspicious and yet this movement went on to influence most of the churches in one way or another. Some Quakers by the end of the eighteenth century believed that their Society had become too complacent, too introspective, and like many in other churches felt the need for greater personal commitment. During this period, often described as the 'quietist' period of Quaker history, the Bible had been read in the home, but there was fear in the Society that too much reliance on it at worship would interfere with the still small voice in the heart. Under the impact of the evangelical movement and the teaching of the Quaker evangelical Joseph John Gurney (1788–1847) these dissatisfied Quakers turned again to the Bible. They felt that without Biblical and doctrinal authority they were powerless to overcome the world of sin and separation and came eventually to place a greater emphasis than did their immediate forebears on personal salvation and the doctrine of atonement.

In this they realised that they were close to Christians of other persuasions and this led them to cross the barriers of distrust and to work with others to improve the society around them. Again William Allen was typical of this movement. His work with the Anti-Slavery Society and with the London poor reveals how Quakers were taking their religious convictions into the public arena and were beginning to co-operate with other churches. Similarly Joseph Lancaster (1778–1838), one of the first advocates of popular education on a national scale, drew other nonconformists into a society that later became the British and Foreign

Schools Society. One of the best known of all Quakers, Elizabeth Fry (1780–1845), belonged to an old Quaker family, the Gurneys. She seems first to have worn her membership of the Society quite lightly, but she was converted to a more evangelical faith and the fervour of this faith led her to prison visiting and then to prison reform.

There was however a backlash in more conservative Quaker circles who were afraid that such worldly activity and evangelical theology would dilute Quakerism. Eventually these conflicts led Quakers in North America to split up into different factions. Some of these divisions still remain, although gatherings are held to broaden mutual understanding of the different Quaker traditions. Even today the conferences are not always easy affairs when theology is discussed, yet there is much greater co-operation than previously.

There has always been a tension among Quakers between, on the one hand, the idea that the leadings of the light within were sufficient for spiritual fulfilment and, on the other hand, a reliance on the Bible and the atonement for sins through the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. This tension was brought to the surface by the evangelical emphasis on scriptural authority and the perceived need for salvation, a position held by many prominent Quakers towards the middle of the nineteenth century. Later in the nineteenth century, the tension grew into conflict as among some Friends the growing belief in the scientific method was leading to a reassessment of the nature of authority and historical accuracy. Texts were being studied and questioned, and Biblical infallibility, a belief close to the hearts of many an evangelical according to which the Bible was literally true, was no longer being taken for granted. This led to three distinct trends among Quakers: the traditionalists or conservatives, who quietly relied upon the Light of Christ within; the evangelicals for whom the Bible was growing in importance as a source of authority; and the new modernists or liberals whose theology was suspect to both the others as it questioned both the distinctiveness of some of the old customs and the literalness of the Bible. Under the impact of the new Biblical criticism and the work of Charles Darwin, the modernists were questioning their faith and were trying to see how the new knowledge fitted in with the old certainties. Whereas in the United States these trends resulted in splits, in Britain there has been no comparable division.

The twentieth century

There was no doubt that for many (often contradictory) reasons, groups of Quakers were confused about the direction their Society was taking. This search for a new direction and revival came to a head in a national conference held in Manchester in 1895. Under the leading of John Wilhelm Rowntree (1868–1905), Quakers saw the need for a greater commitment to an understanding of the origins of their Society, to a new teaching ministry (which eventually led to the creation of Woodbrooke College, the Quaker study centre in Birmingham), and to a new vision of the role of Quakers in the twentieth century.

This was on the whole a triumph for a more liberal, outward-going emphasis but if it was a form of religious liberalism it was a liberalism enhanced by a

mystical awareness of the presence of God. The notable exponent of this stream of Quakerism was the American, Rufus M. Jones (1863–1948). For him the personal experience of God is a mystical experience. In his *The Flowering of Mysticism*, he describes it thus: 'Mysticism is an immediate, intuitive, experimental knowledge of God, or one might say it is consciousness of a Beyond or of Transcendent Reality or of Divine Presence.' The emphasis in this book is on the light within; less is placed on historical crucifixion.

The last quarter of the twentieth century and the beginnings of the twenty-first century have brought about the transformations in the Society which I shall consider in chapter Six. What is important about these different historical emphases in Quakerism is that to a varying extent they are still alive in the Religious Society of Friends. There are still enthusiasts who wish to carry the message of George Fox into the market place; quietists who feel that too much outward activity gets in the way of the Spirit; evangelicals who witness to the effect in their lives of Jesus Christ, their saviour and redeemer; liberals whose gospel is a social one and whose emphasis is on religious humanism; mystics who speak of the Spirit in all things; radicals who try to deconstruct the nature of religious experience, and others who would simply call themselves Christians, for whom no other title quite fits their understanding of religion. Indeed, it is one of the joys, though not unmixed sometimes with anxiety, to have all these Quakers sitting down together in worship. For it is worship which brings Quakers together. And it is out of worship that arises the Quaker idea of service in the world.

from *A light that is shining: an introduction to the Quakers,* Harvey Gillman, Quaker Books, 2003

for Distinctives 1: Ouaker timeline

1547-53 Edward VI

1509-1547 Henry VIII

1553-1558 Mary I

1558–1603 Elizabeth I

1599-1658 Oliver Cromwell

1559 Act of Uniformity

1559 John Knox founded

Church of Scotland

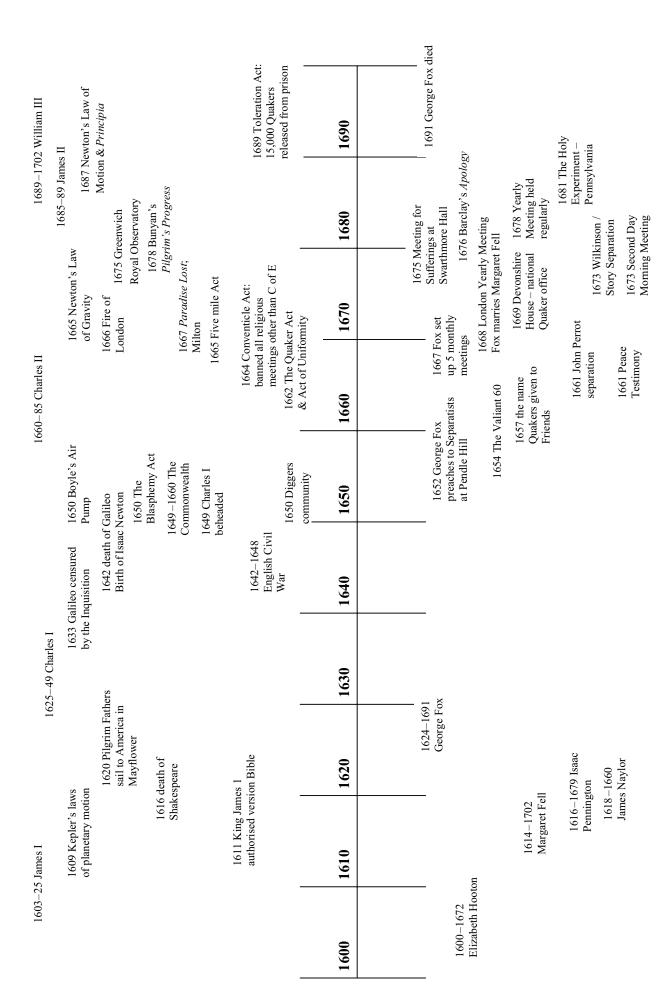
1549 Book of Common Prayer

1534 Henry VIII Defender of Faith.

1538 Bible in

every church

1590	
1580	
1570	
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	1798 Malthus on Population 1791 Paine, Rights		us.	1796 1st successful vaccination	ft: Rights		1789 French Revolution Fall of Bastille, 14/7				etreat,	s Society ed for 1 st				
			1/91 Fame, Kigr of Man		1792 Wollstonecra Vindications of the	1792 Wollstonecraft: Vindications of the Rights of Woman			1790	Ī	l 1796 The Retreat, York aker	1793 Religious Society of Friends used for 1st time.	1784 Women's YM in Britain	1783 1 st printed edition Book of Extracts	in anti	
	ven		ıct	1781 Watt's Steam Engine		of	1776 US Declaration of Independence 4/7	rican War ce	1780		1779 Ackworth Quaker School		1784 W Britain	1783 1 st printed of Book of Extracts	1772 Quaker involvement in anti Slavery movement	1774–1856 John Wilber
	1770-1827 Beethoven	ake	1762 Rousseau, The Social Contract	1764 Spinning Jenny	1769 Water frame for spinning	1765 Linnaeus: classification of plants & animals	S	1775–83 American War of Independence	1770		_			xpels slave	1772 Q Slavery	1774–1856
1760–1820 George III	1756–1791 Mozart	1757–1827 William Blake	1762 Rousseau	1764 Spi	-	1765 Linnaeus: c plants & animals 1768–71 Cook world voyage	1768–7 world v		1760				1756 Pennsylvania – Quakers relinquish control	1761 LYM expels slave	owners	
					1750 onwards development of roads and canals				1750		0.	o)FP		1748–1830 Elias Hicks
	и		shuttle' for				1739–48 Methodist Evangelical revival		1740		1737 Membership defined in Rules of Settlement. Gave rise to Birthericht Mombership	1737 Membership defined in Rules of Settlement. Gave rise to Birthright Membership.		1738 Book of Extracts issued. Forerunner to QFP		1748-
1727–60 George II	1732–1809 Haydn		1733 'Flying shuttle' for	weaving al	ubble		i é		1730		1737 Memb Rules of Set Bindonicht			. Is		Voolman
1714–27 George I			e 1719 1 st London hospital 1720 South Sea Bubble		ide Act	·		1720		_	1723 Recorded Ministers: MM started	recording.			1720–72 John Woolman	
	1703–91 John Wesley		1709 Abraham Darby:	17]		1714 Longitude Act	-		1710	hool,	_	pans		Counsels led to to silence		
1702–14 Anne	1703–91 Jo	70021		Smell					1700	1702 Friends School,	Saffron Walden	1702 LYM issued	Cautions and Counsels to Ministers; led to withdrawal into silence			

1820-30 George IV

1837-1902 Victoria 1830-37 William IV

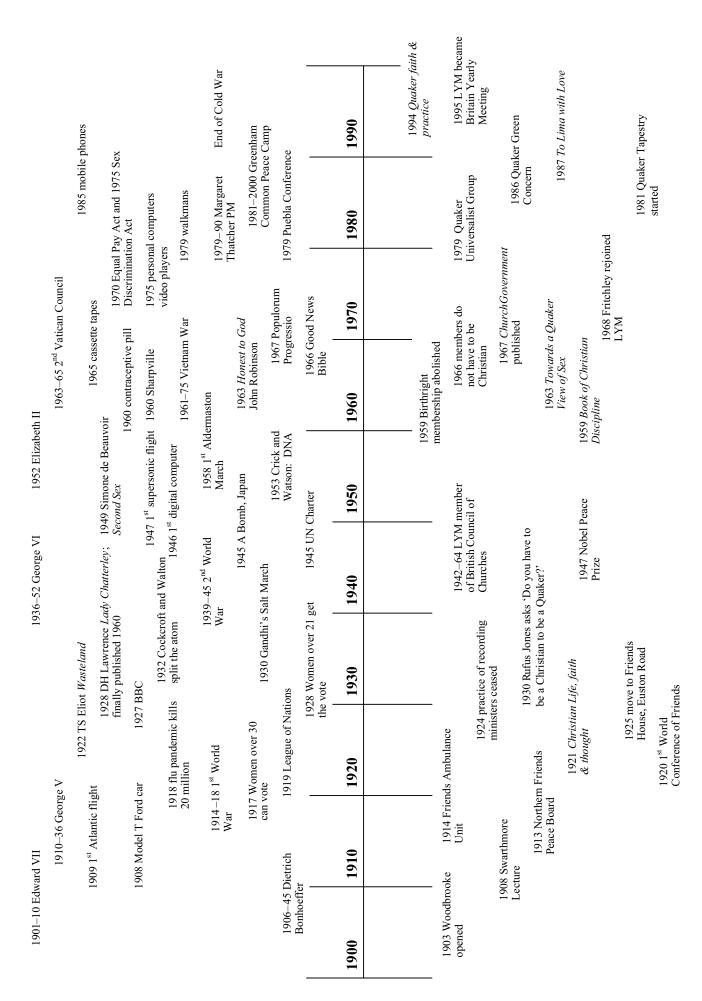
1895 Marconi, wireless and telegraph

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ulation

1897 Freud
begins analysis

y 1897 Scarborough Summer School 1885 Women's Co-operative Guild 1895 Manchester Conference 1892 Kier Hardie MP 1896 YM open to women 1887 Richmond Declaration (US) Gurneyite. 1886 The Gospel of Divine Help Edward Wordsell 890 1st London tube 1884 A Reasonable Faith critical of dogmatic evangelicalism 1885 Pasteur, inoculation 1885 electric lighting 1890 1882 Married women's property Act 1884 Fabian Society 1878 Women admitted to London university 1875 Booth and Salvation Army 1879–1955 Einstein 1876 Bell, telephone 18801868 Friends Foreign Mission Association founded 1871 Descent of Man, 1866 Non conformists admitted to Oxford and Cambridge 1869 Fritchley schism Subjection of Women 1865 Lister, antiseptics in 869 JS Mill The 1861 Revision of Book of .866 Mendel, Laws of Darwin 1860 Peculiarities of dress and speech optional 1861-65 American Civil 1857 YM open to all Friends members without penalty 1859 Quakerism Past & Present, JS Rowntree 1859 marriage to non Hereditary 1859 Origin of the Species, Darwin surgery Discipline 1854-56 Crimean War 1860 Temperance Union 1845 Adult School Movement 1848 Communist Manifesto 1846 Lister, 1st use of 1852 Friends 1845 Wilbur/Gurney split 1833 Friends admitted to Parliament. Joseph anaesthetic 1850 1839-1922 George Cadbury 1840 Voyage of Beagle, Darwin 1842 Sibford School 1836-1925 Joseph Rowntree Pease 1st Quaker elected 1833-41 1833 Abolition of Slavery 1831 Faraday, electricity 1840 1833 Factory Act 1829 Stephenson's Rocket 1831 The Mount School 1825 Darlington Stockton 1827 Hicksite Separation US Act 1824 Advices & Queries LYM in present form 1830 1824 Trade Unions recognised 1823 Bootham School Railway 1819 Atlantic crossing 1813 Davey's safety lamp 1811-16 Luddite Riots 1813 Elizabeth Fry at 1820 steam ship 1811–89 John Bright, Quaker Cabinet Minister Newgate Prison 1807 Anti Slave Trade Act 1808 Sidcot School 1810 1800





from 'An orientation to prophecy' by Marion McNaughton

Quakers as a prophetic community

As Quakers today we have inherited, from Judaism and then Christianity, a long prophetic tradition of richness and complexity and it is ours to use. So how are we choosing to respond to it? Today in the Quaker family we interpret prophecy in different ways, yet I believe there is an underlying unity in our practice, and if we understand our tradition as a whole, we can make this diversity a gift not a stumbling block. Here are some key elements:

- Quaker prophecy is the experience of the word of God, alive among us, directly felt and recognised. It can come out of silence, speech, scripture, song, however we worship, however we minister.
- There is always a message of some kind: enlightening, clarifying, demanding.
- The message is intended for us and for others. Who they are can be familiar, those in our meetings, or still unknown, those we reach out to. These are the tasks of teaching and mission.
- There can be both individual Quaker prophets and also prophetic Quaker communities. Both have their strengths and their limitations. Both can exist together.
- George Fox never felt he needed to verify his leadings, but noted that whenever he consulted scripture, he found them confirmed. After the fall of James Nayler, Friends came to understand that prophecy must be tested, and we do this today. Some of us confirm leadings by reference to scripture, others by reference to the collective discernment of the gathered meeting. But the leading from God always remains primary.
- Quaker prophecy today, as in the Hebrew tradition, has the same dual purpose, the same triangular relationship with God. To enlighten, nurture and extend the spiritual community. And also to speak truth to those in power, to take prophetic action, to press for change in the world.
- We can do both! We must do both! Both are holy. Abraham Heschel, a Jew, marched from Selma to Montgomery with Martin Luther King in 1965. It was a bloody, confrontational event, but it was for him a deeply spiritual occasion. When he returned, he told his daughter, 'I felt as if my legs were praying'.

There is a whole spectrum of prophetic possibility open to us, calling for our attention. Do we practise it all? Or do we settle for just a part, just one place on the spectrum? What does the Lord require of us? I see our diversity as an uncomfortable challenge that we hold out to each other, for all of us to be more than we are being at present. Some of us concentrate on silent waiting, some on proclamation, some on mission, some on social action. All of these things are part of the prophetic tradition, and none of us fulfils them all. So we serve as uncomfortable reminders and loving prompts to each other – Friend, is there something you are neglecting?

What kind of voice?

So what kind of Quaker prophetic voice is needed today? What will enable people to hear the voice of God? What will bring the changes we long to see?

Let us go back to Jeremiah* for a moment, prophesying for twenty three years without anyone listening to him. His name has been immortalised for this. The dictionary says:

Jeremiah: someone who is pessimistic about the present and foresees a calamitous future; a person given to woeful lamentation and complaining.

Well, I don't know about you, but I find it incredibly hard to listen to someone filled with woeful lamentations and complaining, for twenty three minutes, let alone twenty three years. The Hebrew prophets were always ready to blame the people for refusing to hear the word of God. But I have to wonder, could it have been something to do with the way the word of God was being preached? Did the prophets fall into the trap of expressing their own frustration and anger? Did their own despairing voices sometimes speak louder than God's?

I was recently at a conference when a Friend who was deeply concerned about a matter of great spiritual importance, stood up and lectured us for a long time about how urgent this was, how we must all stop what we were doing and turn our energies to this one problem. We listened with sinking hearts. When he finished and sat down, the person next to me leaned across and whispered, 'This nagging has to stop!' This was not the response he had been hoping for.

How can we help each other from falling into this trap? Let us think for a moment of those self-appointed prophets we all turn away from. They are well-intentioned. But they drown us in their urgency and their fear. They make us feel guilty and inadequate. They blame us. They depress and immobilise us. They are doing their best but they are having no effect. This nagging has to stop.

If we want to bring the Kingdom of Heaven we must have insight, skills, compassion, abounding love, and methods that work. We must be people that

^{*} Jeremiah 25:3 'For twenty three years...the word of the Lord has come to me, and I have spoken persistently to you, but you have not listened.'

fill other people with hope, not despair. It is no good being right for twenty three years if no-one is listening to us.

Effective prophecy energises and encourages people. It acknowledges their failures and inadequacies, but it doesn't blame – it comforts and consoles. It believes in people. It is an invitation to return to God. And because it is deeply rooted in God, it can bring others to God;s presence. Open Isaiah at chapter 40 and hear the unknown prophet we call Second Isaiah pour out love and consolation:

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.

This is a prophetic voice we can respond to. It lifts our hearts, it renews our strength, we can 'mount up with wings like eagles'.

So what do we need in prophecy that will enable people to hear the voice of God? It is very simple. Jean Leclerq, a Benedictine, has said:

We must love the age we live in. From the point of view of faith, the best age for each of us is the one God has placed us in, the one he has given us, and which we must give back to him.

We must love the age we live in.

Sometimes this is very hard to do, but it is our task.

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

1 Corinthians 13

Effective prophets work from a place of love. They nurture us, they inspire us to engage with our faith in deeper and deeper ways. We are inspired, we lead committed lives which return us always to our spiritual core. It is circular. Our outward lives are shaped from within, our actions bring us closer to God, and we live God's truth in the world.

Because whatever form it takes, prophecy is essentially mystical. God breaks through. The world is imperfect, but it is still wholly of God, wholly divine. The prophets are those who enable us to see that God is always available to us, the kingdom is always about us. Rosa Parks, one of my inspirations, one of the enablers of the American Civil Rights Movement, sat down in the middle of a bus and simply enacted the kingdom of heaven, a world of justice and equality. And God's voice was heard. One of the people sitting at the back, unable to move, said later, It was holy in that bus.

When we can prophesy with this kind of love, this kind of clarity, this kind of holiness, God's voice will be heard.

We have come a long way as a people of God. We have grown and changed. We have found new ways and held on to old ways. We are still gathered, waiting to hear God's voice, waiting for prophecy to flourish amongst us. We will hear God's voice again and again ...saying familiar and comforting things, saying challenging and uncomfortable things. In love, let us listen with open hearts.

from 'Finding the prophetic voice for our time', Marion McNaughton and Lizz Roe, *The Woodbrooke Journal*, Autumn 2007, No 21



Peace is not a dirty word

There has been a tendency for those of us in the peace education field to shy away from referring to it as such. In an effort to sell education for peace, we have packaged it to fit with the PSHE [Personal, Social and Health Education] and Citizenship agenda, calling it human rights, conflict resolution, anti-bullying... anything to make it less problematic for schools. Each of these is an element of educating children and young people to be peaceable, to appreciate the potential of conflict when handled creatively, and to celebrate difference. But, as we concluded at the last Peace Education Network (PEN) meeting, 'peace is not a dirty word'. I can't imagine that many would disagree with this. And yet, providing education for peace to schools can be so controversial.

Herein lies a quandary. Why is it that the concept of peace is so applauded, but working in a non-violent way to achieve it is suspect? Should we present our work in a way that will cause least offence and get us through the door of schools, or does this reinforce the reticence and infer that working for peace is somehow distasteful or, worse still, tantamount to indoctrination? Should we be upfront about our message even if this presents schools with a challenge and may reduce the direct work we are able to do?

I personally believe that education for peace is greater than the sum of its parts. It is not just about teaching children about their rights or putting on an Africa day where children learn that the continent exists and that they eat different food there. I believe that this pragmatic response to getting into schools actually compromises the tenets of what we are trying to achieve. I figure it's the approach taken that makes the difference between providing peace education and educating for peace.

I don't think it is possible to teach students that child-on-child bullying is wrong, without challenging bullying behaviour between teachers, parents and on the international stage. To try undermines our credibility and makes nonsense of what we are teaching. Equally, citizenship education must be about more than turning out young people who will vote every four years and won't speed or drop litter. It is about encouraging young people to look at the community and world they live in and question what they see.

I guess this is where the controversy comes in. But I work for the Religious Society of Friends, and Quakers generally don't have a problem with being viewed as controversial. Because of their involvement in, and position on, activities such as non-violent direct action, they have, collectively and individually, regularly been viewed as subversive over the years. *Quaker faith & practice* 24.11 advises, 'we

should not automatically accept the categories, definitions and priorities of the world'.

Although not a Quaker myself, I chose to work for them because I am in sympathy with the beliefs and values they aspire to; values of truth, integrity and peace, which I believe are integral to education for peace. Quakers acknowledge the realities of conflict and of evil, but contend that war and violence are not effective means of dealing with them. Instead, they determine that we must 'wage peace', using tools which include 'speaking truth to power', and living and working as a 'witness' to these values. According to the Quaker way, how each individual undertakes this is for personal discernment.

So how do I relate all this to getting peace education into schools? To witness means not only telling, but demonstrating to children that truth and integrity are important in working for a more just society. And whilst 'speaking truth to power' usually refers to engaging with those who are central to political, economic and military decision-making to present an alternate worldview, I believe the concept can be similarly applied to the 'gatekeepers' in schools and LEAs.

The current fact-driven education system, with its emphasis on testing, creates an environment where structural violence is almost inevitable. This academic violence undermines our educational system and creates a generation of passive learners. Education should not inhibit children, it must teach them to think for themselves and empower them to learn for learning's sake, not simply to pass exams. Affecting the way in which children are educated is an integral part of educating for peace.

Education for peace is about identifying that young people have the power to change things they see as wrong in their community and more widely, as well as developing in them the imagination to find alternative responses to conflict. I believe that the means we employ to provide education for peace are indistinguishable from the content of the lessons. We must be uncompromising in presenting what we provide for school otherwise we compromise what we offer young people.

Jaci Smith, Peace Education Advisor

This article was previously published in *DEA* (*Development Education Association*) *Journal*, October 2006.



Uganda

Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) has been undertaking work and partnerships in Uganda since October 2000.

QPSW in Uganda

Based in Gulu District, the home of the Acholi people, QPSW's Uganda programme is committed to building a peace that will last.

Since 1986 the conflict between the Lord's Resistance Army and the Ugandan Government has continued to destroy the lives of the two million people living in the north of Uganda.

The majority of the population live in camps for displaced people, dependent on food aid and subject to the violent attacks of the LRA, including the regular abduction of children who are forced to join its ranks.

Peace but not peace

Since 2006 the Juba Peace talks have achieved an unprecedented series of agreements between the rebels and the Government of Uganda that set out steps for peace and development. While a 'final peace agreement' has not been achieved, the LRA is not currently active in Uganda and people are starting to move tentatively back to their village homes. The LRA remains unchecked, however, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where it continues to threaten the region's stability. Many abducted Ugandans remain within its ranks.

Our work

Coordinated from Friends House in London, a small team of QPSW staff supports local groups who are working towards a peaceful resolution of the brutal conflict. A current focus is the reintegration of the many formerly abducted children who have been able to escape from the LRA, and are returning to their communities. Part of this process involves seeking reconciliation between communities and those who have harmed them, in order that society might move into a well-founded future.

Empowering Hands

To contribute to this need, QPSW is working with Empowering Hands, a group of 30 girls who had been abducted or otherwise affected by the conflict, to help them explore their place in society, and encourage their peers through sharing their experiences on radio and through drama. EH's network of peer support groups is currently developing its work to reach those who are now moving away from

the camps of displaced people. Their focus remains enabling those caught up in the conflict to develop trust in each other in a way that assists society to function better.

Justice and reconciliation project

In 2008 QPSW has published two pieces of research in partnership with the Justice and Reconciliation Projects, a local research-based group in Gulu. The findings of *With or Without Peace* and *Sharing the Burden* are helping to direct our own work and that of others in the field of re-integration.

Reflecting on peace

Working with the Mennonite Central Committee, QPSW is supporting a handful of key local peacebuilders to come together on a regular basis to reflect on their own approach to peace and its effectiveness. This group seeks to offer moral support at this difficult time in Uganda, as well as enabling new ideas and insights to be shared.

Civil society leaders

As a member of the Northern Uganda Advocacy Partnership for Peace (NUAPP) QPSW has supported a recent visit of civil society leaders from northern Uganda to the UK. The aim of the visit was to allow these local leaders to meet policy-makers and parliamentarians to bolster international support for the conflict's peaceful resolution. This visit included valuable time in Northern Ireland where the leaders met community representatives whose experience they see as comparable to their own.

Partnerships

Relationships are the bedrock of QPSW's approach in Uganda. Our work in northern Uganda is developed through ongoing communications with local groups and individuals seeking to build peace.

In the UK we are a member of NUAPP, a coalition of UK-based NGOs (NUAPP's current members are Christian Aid, Conciliation Resources, QPSW, Tearfund and World Vision). NUAPP exists to connect UK-based policy-makers with information and opinion from peacebuilders in northern Uganda in order to build UK and international support for a permanent peaceful resolution to the LRA conflict.

from Quaker Peace & Social Witness Uganda pages at: www.quaker.org.uk



'What does Quakerism mean to me?' by Deborah Rowlands

1. Roots

I was asked to take part in this presentation as 'a traditional Quaker'. I expect most of you know the quote from Samuel Bownas, a Quaker of the seventeenth century who was told:

'A traditional Quaker; thou comest to meeting as thou went from it, and goes from it as thou came to it but art no better for thy coming; what wilt thou do in the end?' I saw by experience wherein my shortness had been in being contented and easy with a form of truth and religion, which I had only by education . . . but all this though very good in its place, did not make me a true Christian; I was but a traditional Quaker. (*Qf&p* 19.60, part)

Like Samuel, I got the Quaker habit early in life. Both my parents come from families whose Quaker roots go back to the seventeenth century – and then I married into the Rowlands family, which gave my children another different pile of Quaker antecedents to live down – or up – to.

My Quaker forbears didn't always have an easy time of it – more than one on both sides of the family were disowned for 'walking disorderly' in some way including fox hunting and teenage pregnancy. They were plain country Friends – grocers, weavers and manufacturers – not the great names of Quaker history. Doubtless, each in their turn struggled over their faith and how to live by it. This faithfulness, and the testing of it over the last three hundred and fifty years, is part of the experience the Society has to build on.

The picture is my grandmother, Laura Jane Moore – I think she has an even more worried look than me! She grew up in the 1880s when the Society was still strongly evangelical:



Heaven and Hell were ever present realities and entered into all the details of our lives. This made it extremely difficult for me, with my always thoughtful and logical mind. I might see a bird fly across the sky or a dog running along the road, and would wish I were that bird or dog so that I need not believe what seemed impossible.

Whilst still at school, she was reading *A reasonable faith*, one of the books that led up to the Manchester Conference of 1895, which is one of the turning points towards the liberal phase, which characterised the twentieth century.

The Quakerism that I grew up with saw itself as a natural part of the Christian Church. I have served Friends on national ecumenical bodies, but also, for the past ten years I have belonged to a local ecumenical fellowship that meets every month to read the Bible together, pray and share ideas about our faith. We have experienced times of deep sharing, despite very real differences of faith, and I have grown immeasurably through the gentle challenge of their strong convictions. It is natural for me to use the imagery and language of the Bible, and Quaker writing based on it, to express my understanding of the Spirit.

Like my grandmother, I have found Quakerism is a reasonable faith. I can bring into it my scientific and mathematical training, and my aesthetic, moral and emotional senses too; it accepts and uses all of me. Religion and Life are one, or neither is anything, said John Wilhelm Rowntree. The Spiritual Life is first of all a life, said Thomas Merton. Jesus calls us, not to a new religion but to Life, said Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Quakerism gives me a path for an integrated life, one that has wholeness; a spirituality that links inextricably the individual, how we are together as a Society, and what we do with our lives.

from Quaker identity and the heart of our faith, Quaker Life, 2008

Extract for Deepening 2: A prayer reflecting on our Quaker roots and seeking openness to new growth

Prayer by Margaret Benefiel

Oh God, we thank you for the great depth of the Quaker tradition. ... You have met us throughout our history, very deeply, both as individuals and corporately.

As Sarah Jones admonished in 1650: 'Seek not the manifestations but that which manifests.' We see how when we seek you, the source of the manifestations, you meet us in a very deep place, and you transform us. You transform us as individuals. You transform our families. You transform our meetings.

And God, as we allow you to do your transforming work in us, and as we rely totally on you, not focusing on the manifestations, you strip away what is not essential.

Sanctify us to be your vessels.

You also give us eyes to see through the manifestations in the ocean of darkness so that we can unmask the powers, speak truth to power, and allow you to do your powerful work in transforming society.

And God, as we seek to know what Quaker spirituality is, we know that it is revealed in the lives of those who came before us, and in our own lives.

We know that as we hear the stories of other Friends' walks with you

We know that as we hear the stories of other Friends' walks with you, as we let our stories be drawn out of us by Friends who listen deeply to us as we steep ourselves deeply in the stories, we meet you.

And so, God, we give you thanks for people like Sarah Jones, one of the earliest Quaker writers, for George Fox, for Margaret Fell, for John Woolman, for Catherine Phillips, for John Wilbur, for Lucretia Mott,

for Marjorie Sykes,
for Thomas Kelly,
for Simeon Shitemi,
for Elise Boulding,
for David Niyonzima,
all of whom at different times and places
have lived into what it means not to seek the manifestations,
but to seek that which manifests,
and to allow you to shape them and transform them
and work through them in the gathered community,
and in the world at large.

And God, when we ask the question,
'Is it important that there be a Quaker spirituality?'
we can only lay that one at your feet,
acknowledging that you have worked powerfully in the past,
you continue to work powerfully in the present,
and that if you want to continue to work through the Society of Friends,
you will show us that.
You will show us how.

You will keep us alive in the ways that you want us to be alive.

Please forgive us when we make idols of our forms, when we make idols of our traditions.

Help us to continue to seek you anew, each day, in each time and place in which we find ourselves, in each culture, in each transformation which goes on in our society.

We know that Quaker spirituality is only worth something when it is the continual new life breathed by your Spirit.

Help us let go of forms and structures that have served us well in the past when they no longer serve us now, when they no longer serve your purposes.

Help us come to you with that radical trust that you will lead us into what we need for our time, for our place, for the future.

We confess that we too often get into ruts and we focus on the manifestations instead of that which manifests. We think that the particular committee structure we have at our meeting, the particular way that our worship flows, is the only way or the best way.

Soften our hearts to be aware of your nudges as you breathe life into some of the forms that we have and as you invite us to let go of other forms we've been using and move into something new.

God, as we seek to be faithful Quakers, to learn from our own tradition and to learn from other traditions, we pray that you will help us to go deeply into our own tradition and to courageously encounter ourselves and one another at those deep places.

As we read journals and letters and epistles, and listen for that place where words come from, as we go deeply into our own tradition and encounter other Friends' relationships with you; The more deeply we go there, the more deeply we will be able to receive what other traditions have to offer us.

We will be able to connect with the deep stories of those traditions as well.

So give us the courage not to stay on the surface and sample just a little bit of everything, but to plunge into the depth of our particular path, and then experience the deep connections that will lead us to [friendship] with other traditions.

We know, God, that we're at a time in the history of our world when the transformative power that early Friends experienced and that Friends throughout the centuries have experienced, is greatly needed.

And God, we offer ourselves to you, to be available for you to work in us in those ways, in those same ways that you have worked in Friends of old.

We want to be vessels who are completely available to you. So please give us the courage and openness to give ourselves completely to you, and to see what will happen when we let your power work through us. Thank you, God. Amen

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Experiencing Ouaker Community

Introducing the ways that Quaker meetings are organised, nurtured and led



This unit invites you to find out more about the Quaker experience of being a Spirit-led community. This distinctive understanding and approach to community is evident in our local and national structures, how we run and nurture our meetings, and the Quaker way of doing business and making decisions.

Experiencing Quaker Community unit aims

This unit aims to help you:

- become more familiar with the ways that Quaker meetings are organised and led
- understand how we live out our commitment to one another and nurture our community as Quakers
- explore your own response to experiencing community with Quakers

Overview

The Quaker approach to community invites each of us to live up to our unique potential, while learning to go beyond the boundaries of our own small selves as part of our commitment to one another. This is a profoundly counter-cultural approach and it is at the heart of the Quaker way. Early Quaker Isaac Pennington described the experience of community among Quakers in this way:

Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying for one another, and helping one another up with a tender hand.

Quaker faith & practice 10.01

Of course, Quaker meetings are in no way perfect as communities. We often fail to live up to Isaac Pennington's description, and experience our human inadequacy and brokenness. As members of the Religious Society of Friends, however, we continually renew a commitment to trusting in something greater than us as individuals: our community embodies, however imperfectly, Divine love at work in the world. Quakers have developed traditions of spiritual hospitality and nurture to promote a healthy community and to deal with conflicts when they do arise. These include our system of pastoral care under the guidance of elders and overseers, and specific tools for addressing concerns such as meetings for clearness and threshing meetings (see Distinctives 1 for more on these).

Our way of making decisions reflects the Quaker understanding that the Spirit is at work in our community. Our business meetings are also meetings for worship based on silence, and they carry the same expectation that

God's guidance can be discerned if we are truly listening together and to each other, and are not blinkered by preconceived opinions. It is this belief that God's will can be recognised through the discipline of silent waiting which distinguishes our decision-making from the secular idea of consensus.

Quaker faith & practice 3.02

This process of waiting for the guidance of the Spirit involves learning to let go of our own personal agendas and allow decisions to be 'discerned' rather than voted on, argued about or pushed through. In the words of John Punshon, 'the meeting for business cannot be understood in isolation; it is part of a spiritual discipline.' (*Quaker faith & practice* 2.85).

Quakers do not have ordained ministers, so we all share responsibility for the wellbeing of our meetings. However, certain roles such as elders, overseers

and clerks are filled by Friends for specific periods of time to ensure that our communities are effectively led, organised and nurtured. For Quakers,

to be without an ordained clergy is not to be without either leadership or ministry. The gifts of the Spirit to us include both. For us, calls to particular ministries are usually for a limited period of time, and those gifts pertain to the task rather than the person. In one lifetime a person may be called to a number of ministries.

Quaker faith & practice 12.02

'Ministry' may involve being asked to serve in a particular role such as elder, or it may be very different: we all have gifts and all minister to one another. For some Friends their ministry may involve working with children and young people, while for others it may be providing a warm welcome for visitors, working on the meeting house garden or introducing Quakerism to enquirers through outreach activities such as Quaker Quest or Quaker Week.

Quakers are part of a community that goes beyond the local meeting. Although the local meeting community is probably the first point of contact for most Friends and is where we attend meeting for worship, our membership is actually of our area meeting. The area meeting covers something like a county or city and is made up of several local meetings. In Britain, 'Britain Yearly Meeting' is the name of the national body to which all area meetings belong, and is the final constitutional authority of the Religious Society of Friends in England, Scotland, Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. A yearly meeting is a forum for working out the ministry and witness of Quakers in the wider world; it is also an annual assembly of Quakers to which all are welcome, where worship, work and fellowship are shared by the national community of Friends.

Quaker distinctives

Distinctives 1

The healthy Quaker meeting

There is guidance about how Quakers try to nurture our communities in *Quaker faith & practice*: in *Advices & queries* 17–22, which is in section 1.02; in section 12.01; and in the introduction to chapter 12, 'Caring for one another', If you prefer listening to the *Advices & queries*, there are mp3 audio files of them available in this unit of the online Becoming Friends course.

You might also like to watch the video 'An Introduction to Quakers' in which Quakers discuss their experience of community, among other themes. You can access the video in a number of different ways:

- online at
 - www.watfordquakers.org.uk/videos.html
 - www.quakerweek.org.uk/intro/quaker-worship
 - www.youtube.com as 'Introduction to Quakers'
- on the DVD *An introduction to Watford Quakers*, available from the Quaker Centre bookshop (see Further exploration for contact details).

To find out more about specific Quaker discernment and support methods, you could read the following sections of *Quaker faith & practice*:

- meetings for clearness: Qf&p 12.22-12.25
- threshing meetings: *Qf&p* 12.26
- support groups: *Qf&p* 12.27
- guidance if you have a particular concern: *Qf&p* 13.08
 - > for more about 'concerns', see the Faith in Action unit

Distinctives 2

Local, area and national Quaker structures

These structures fulfil different roles but are all interrelated. They changed in 2007, so copies of *Quaker faith & practice* earlier than the fourth edition will not reflect current arrangements.

You might like to look at two diagrams giving an overview of the relationships between the different Quaker structures. You'll find these diagrams on pages 108–109.

You could read the following sections of *Quaker faith & practice* online, or in the fourth edition book, for an introduction to the roles of different meetings:

- local meetings: *Qf&p* 4.33
- area meetings: *Qf&p* 4.01–4.02
- Yearly Meeting: *Qf&p* 6.04–6.05
 - Yearly Meeting history: Qf&p 6.01
- Junior Yearly Meeting: Qf&p 4.21
- Meeting for Sufferings: *Qf&p* 7.02
- centrally managed work: *Qf&p* 8.02
 - ➤ more about the four central committees: *Qf&p* 8.08–8.11

Distinctives 3

The Quaker business method and decision-making

The Quaker Life leaflet 'How Quaker meetings take decisions' gives a clear overview of this process. You'll find the text of this leaflet on pages 110–112.

You could also read the helpful introduction to Quaker decision-making on the Scottish Quaker website: www.quakerscotland.org/businessmeetings

You might like to watch the video 'Who's in charge and how are decisions made?' made by Friends at Watford Quaker Meeting about the Quaker approach to decision-making. You can access the video in a number of different ways:

- online at
 - www.watfordquakers.org.uk/videos.html
 - > www.youtube.com as 'Who's in charge and how are decisions made?'
- on the DVD *An introduction to Watford Quakers*, available from the Quaker Centre bookshop (see Further exploration for contact details).

Distinctives 4

Elders, overseers and clerks

You could read the following sections of *Quaker faith & practice* to find out about the roles of elders, overseers and clerks in our meetings, and the nominations process by which they are appointed:

• elders and overseers: *Qf&p* 12.11

• elders: *Qf&p* 12.12

• overseers: *Qf&p* 12.13

• clerks: *Qf&p* 3.12

• nominations process: *Qf&p* 3.23

Distinctives 5

How do Quakers approach ministry?

Section 10.05 of *Quaker faith & practice* discusses the Quaker understanding of ministry (other than spoken ministry in meeting for worship – see Silence and Waiting unit for more on this).

You might also like to listen to or read about Quakers' experiences of ministry:

- there are audio clips about ministry on the Becoming Friends online course
- you'll find these extracts on pages 113–114

Distinctives 6

Children and young people in Quaker communities

Quakers seek to ensure that children and young people are welcome and integrated into Quaker meetings. The following sections of *Quaker faith & practice* talk about how Quakers try to do this:

- *Advices & queries* 19: Qf&p 1.02
- taking the nurture of children seriously: *Qf&p* 10.10
- a baby in meeting: *Qf&p* 2.50
- children as respected community members: *Qf&p* 2.75
- Junior Yearly Meeting as community: Qf&p 21.06

See also Discovery 5 for more about children and young people.

Discovery

Discovery 1

What's Yearly Meeting like?

To find out more about national Quaker gatherings and structures, you could ask your Becoming Friends companion to arrange for you to talk to a Friend with experience of any of these:

- Yearly Meeting
- Junior Yearly Meeting or other events for young people
- a national Quaker conference
- Quaker Life: Central Committee or Representative Council
- Summer Gathering

You might ask the Friend what the gathering was like – how was it organised and how was community nurtured? What did they find enjoyable or challenging about the experience?

You could also join in a discussion about experiences of national Quaker gatherings on a Quaker discussion forum:

- the Britain Yearly Meeting forum at: www.quakerweb.org.uk/forum
- www.friendlink.org.uk (aimed mainly at young Quakers)
- the Experiencing Quaker Community unit forum

Discovery 2

Exploring membership and belonging

How do we come to feel a sense of belonging, or come to consider applying for membership as Friends? Harvey Gillman considers these questions in 'Reflections on membership and belonging'. You'll find this article on pages 115–117.

You could also look at editions 25 and 26 of *Journeys in the Spirit* (a resource for Friends working with children and young people), which are about 'belonging and joining'. Read through the materials and try out any of the activities that interest you – sometimes activities aimed at young people work very well for adults too! *Journeys in the Spirit* is available

- in many meeting house libraries (ask your librarian)
- online at: www.quaker.org.uk/journeyschild

 from Quaker Life Email: ql@quaker.org.uk

Tel: 020 7663 1013

Discovery 3

How have local Friends experienced their role as elder, overseer or clerk?

Ask your Becoming Friends companion, or another experienced Friend in your area, about their experience in the role of elder, overseer or clerk.

- What was this experience like?
- What were the main responsibilities of the role?
- Did they receive any training or support?
- Were there aspects of this service that were a particular challenge or joy?

Discovery 4

What are Quaker business meetings really like?

Why not arrange to attend a Quaker business meeting in your local area? Your Becoming Friends companion can help with this and explain local procedures. You could discuss your experience afterwards with your companion or other experienced Friends – use some of the questions below if they are helpful.

You might also ask your Becoming Friends companion to help you set up a small group session to explore local Friends' experience of Quaker decision-making and our business method: you could use the questions below as starting points for discussion.

- Do your business meetings seem to you like meeting for worship?
- Do you seek to discern the will of God for the meeting as a whole?
- Have you experienced occasions when a decision has been reached that really felt Spirit-led, or otherwise?
- Are you listening to the Spirit speaking through human beings and to the response of those who listen?

• When the meeting moves towards a decision with which you are not in sympathy, do you accept this with good grace?

Discovery 5

What's going on for children and young people locally and nationally?

You could ask to discuss this locally with an overseer or other person with responsibility for children and young people in your meeting (your Becoming Friends companion can help arrange this).

- What provision is made for children and young people in your meeting?
- How well are they integrated into the life of the meeting?
- Are their insights and energy welcomed in the meeting?
- In what ways do they challenge Friends locally to renew their commitment to worship and action?

To find out what is going on at a national level, you could explore:

- the pages about working with children and young people at: www.quaker.org.uk/cyp
- the Young Quaker Space website at: www.yqspace.org.uk

Discovery 6

How is my local meeting nurtured?

Ask your Becoming Friends companion, or another experienced Friend, about spiritual hospitality and nurture in your local meeting, and how Friends promote the health of the meeting community. You could ask:

- What efforts does the meeting make to grow closer as a community?
- Are there ways for Friends locally to share their joys and concerns, and those things in their inner life which matter most to them?
- What activities has the meeting used for fostering friendship in the meeting?
- How does the meeting deal with difficulties or conflicts when they arise?
- How do Friends locally minister to one another outside meeting for worship?

Deepening

Deepening 1

Your own sense of ministry

What gifts do you have? Do you experience a sense of calling to any particular ministry? Section 2.66 of *Quaker faith & practice* speaks about ministry.

Perhaps you would like to spend time reflecting on the questions this raises for you.

- You might like to use the 'ministry cards' on pages 118–120 to reflect on your own sense of ministry. Cut the cards out and try moving them around on a table or the floor: are there any which speak to you, either in a positive or negative way?
- You could also reflect on ministry with your Becoming Friends companion when you next meet.

Deepening 2

Your own experience of community

A healthy community is a place of growth, through both the nurture and the challenge we experience within it. Section 10.19 of *Quaker faith & practice* speaks of the challenge of community.

- Does this reflect your own experience?
- How have you been shaped by your experience of community, either with Quakers or other people?
- What gifts or challenges do you bring to your local Quaker community?

You could also reflect on this with your Becoming Friends companion when you next meet.

Deepening 3

Responding creatively to the experience of community

The Quaker way of experiencing community includes the invitation to:

- let go of our own agendas and desired outcomes
- allow ourselves to be upheld, even prayed for, by others
- hear the truth, even when it is uncomfortable for us.

You might like to take some time to reflect deeply on your own response to these invitations. You could:

- respond by drawing, painting or using another creative method
- respond in music, song or movement
- respond in writing
- go online and blog about your response
- discuss your response on a Quaker discussion forum:
 - > the Britain Yearly Meeting forum at: www.quakerweb.org.uk/forum
 - www.friendlink.org.uk (aimed mainly at young Quakers)
 - the Experiencing Quaker Community unit forum
- share some of your reflections with your Becoming Friends companion when you next meet.

Deepening 4

Learning to listen as spiritual friendship

Learning to listen to one another at a deep level is central to the experience of spiritual friendship and discernment at the heart of our Quaker community life. You could try an exercise in deep, prayerful listening with your Becoming Friends companion, or ask someone else you feel drawn to do this with.

You'll find the listening prayer practice on page 268.

You could use one of the example focus questions given in the exercise:

- In what ways have you experienced God in your life during the last week?
- 'What has been going on in your prayer life this month?'

or use one that asks about community, such as:

• 'Is there a time when you have felt truly upheld and cared for in a community or group situation?'

or use a question of your own.

You may wish to reflect on how you have got on with this exercise at a future meeting with your Becoming Friends companion.

Deepening 5

Reflecting on your local Quaker community

You might like to spend time on your own or with your Becoming Friends companion reflecting on your response to any of the following questions:

- How are you feeling upheld by your local Quaker meeting?
- Do you have an awareness of the other members of the local Quaker community?
- Do you have a growing awareness of the contribution you already make to sustaining the quality and depth of worship and community in your local meeting?

Further exploration

If you would like to explore the subject of Quaker community, decision-making and structures further, here are some suggestions for reading, listening or viewing.

Advices & queries 14–15 and 17–22, in *Quaker faith & practice* 1.02.

Beyond consensus: salvaging sense of the meeting, Barry Morley, Pendle Hill Pamphlets 307. This is included in the *Hearts and minds prepared* pack.

Beyond majority rule: voteless decisions in the Religious Society of Friends, Michael Sheeran, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1983.

An introduction to Watford Quakers (DVD), part 1 'An Introduction to Quakerism', Just Film, 2007. Also available at: www.watfordquakers.org.uk/videos.html or www.quakerweek.org.uk/intro (or at: www.youtube.com as 'Introduction to Quakers').

A light that is shining: an introduction to the Quakers, Harvey Gillman, Quaker Books, 2003.

Listening spirituality 2: corporate spiritual practice among Friends, Patricia Loring, Openings Press, 1997.

Quaker faith & practice 2.88–2.91, spirit of worship in decision-making.

Quaker faith & practice, chapter 3, 'General counsel on church affairs', especially sections 3.02–3.07 – decision-making and 'sense of the meeting'.

Quaker faith & practice, chapter 10, 'Belonging to a Quaker meeting'.

Quaker faith & practice, chapter 12, 'Caring for one another'.

Quaker speak, Alastair Heron, Quaker Outreach in Yorkshire, 2003.

Quality and depth of worship and ministry, Committee on Eldership and Oversight, Quaker Books, 2001.

Scottish Quaker website: www.quakerscotland.org/businessmeetings

Woodbrooke's website or brochure for details of courses about nurturing our meetings and training for Quaker roles: www.woodbrooke.org.uk

Many of these titles are available from the Quaker Centre bookshop:

Friends House 173 Euston Road London NW1 2BJ

Tel: 020 7663 1030 Fax: 020 7663 1001

Website: www.quaker.org.uk/bookshop Email: quakercentre@quaker.org.uk

Many of them will also be in your local meeting house library. You could ask your Becoming Friends companion to help you track down titles that interest you.

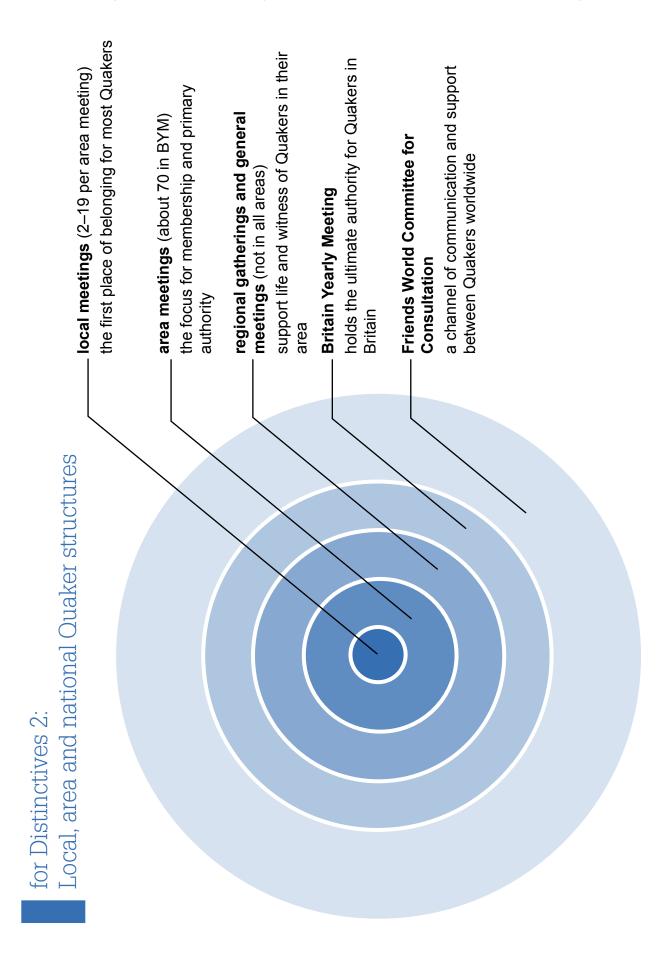
Closing activity

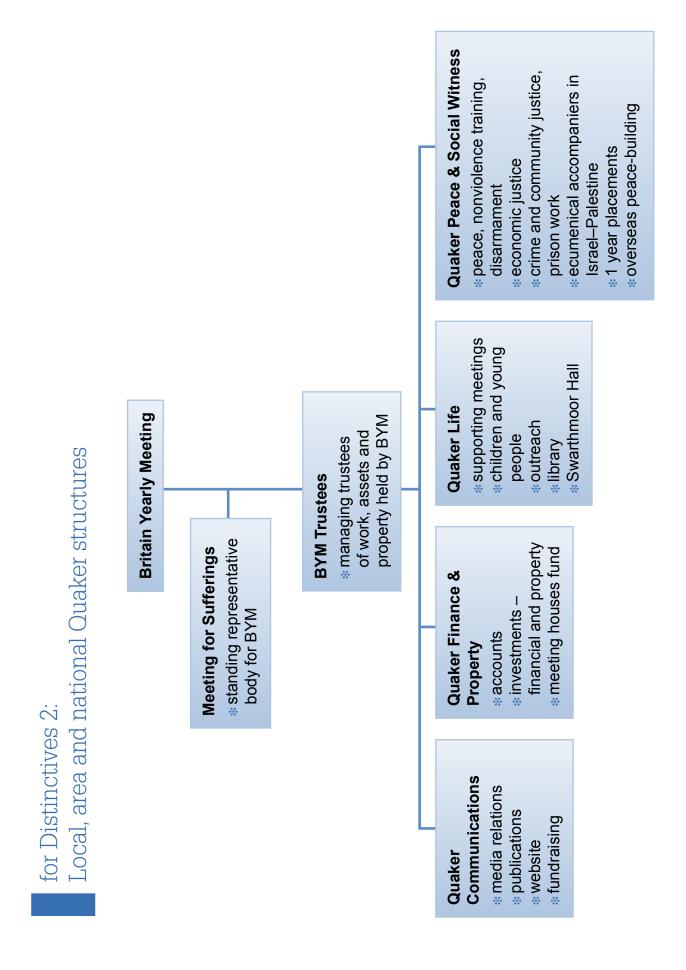
As you finish your exploration of the Quaker experience of community, you are invited to reflect on what you have gained through this unit, how your understanding of both yourself and Quakerism has changed, and what areas you would like to explore further.

This closing reflection can be a very good opportunity for sharing with your Becoming Friends companion, or you may prefer to write in a journal or book of spiritual discipline (there's guidance for journalling in Appendix 2 – Guidance on page 282), or to reflect using creative methods such as drawing, collage, model-making or working with materials such as textiles or wood.

You might use one or more of the following questions as a focus for your reflection:

- What have you gained from your work on this unit, whether as a result of positive or more challenging experiences?
- In what ways has your understanding changed as a result of your work on this unit?
- Are there areas that you would like to explore further either as part of your own spiritual journey or relating to Quakerism?
- Has anything arisen that you would find it helpful to reflect on with your Becoming Friends companion?







The following is the text of a leaflet published by Quaker Life.

How Quaker meetings take decisions

This is intended as both a guide for newcomers and a helpful reminder to more experienced Friends.

What's special about a Quaker business meeting?

A Quaker business meeting is essentially a meeting for worship, except that it has a pre-arranged agenda. Whether it be a working party, a committee, a local, regional or national meeting, the process is the same: Friends coming together in silence in order to draw closer to God and each other, and to seek the guidance of the Inward Light.

What's going on in the meeting?

A meeting starts with a period of quiet worship. The clerk then opens the business part of the meeting. As in a secular meeting, someone presents an item, and answers questions of clarification. But rather than debating the matter, the gathering then tries to discern, in an atmosphere of worship, what love requires of us. Spoken contributions are offered as ministry and are wrapped in silence. If things seem to be getting heated, the clerk or another Friend may ask for a period of silence. A touch of humour often helps the process. No vote is taken, as we are not trying to reach consensus or establish the will of the majority, but to work in harmony with the Spirit. This approach can be very liberating, because it ensures that minority views are not dismissed or suppressed. A minute is drafted by the clerk and presented to the meeting; it is for all those present to agree the record of their deliberations.

Can I come to a business meeting if I am not a member of the Religious Society of Friends?

Yes – attenders are usually welcome to attend open business meetings. You will need to let the clerk know in advance that you would like to come. You may be asked to withdraw for certain agenda items.

What is my role in the meeting?

As in any meeting for worship, your primary role is to listen respectfully to others and to 'the promptings of love and truth in your heart'. Even if you disagree strongly with another contribution, listen patiently to each to learn what you can, trusting that you will be heard in the same spirit. It is helpful if you prepare beforehand, read the papers and reflect prayerfully on the business, but

remember that responsibility for the outcome belongs to the meeting as a whole, not to any individual. Come to the meeting with heart and mind prepared – not heart and mind made up.

What is the clerk doing?

The clerk is rather like a cross between a chair and a secretary. Clerks prepare the agenda, do the necessary administration and guide the meeting through the items of business. The clerk has to try and discern the outcome of each item (often called 'the sense of the meeting'), and to prepare a draft minute to lay before the gathering. Although it is the meeting that is really in charge, clerks carry a lot of responsibility. We need to support them and do all we can to avoid making their job more difficult by holding private conversations while a minute is being drafted, for instance, or by quibbling over a good-enough minute.

Who can speak, and how often?

Once an item on the agenda has been introduced to the meeting anyone may speak, but remember, this is a meeting for worship. If you feel led to minister, test your prompting first. Equally, don't let shyness or a sense of unworthiness hold you back – you have a responsibility to help the meeting by sharing any relevant insight or information you may have. In formal meetings it is the practice to stand and wait to be called by the clerk; if another Friend is called or the clerk stands, you should sit down again. There is no need to repeat a point which has already been made, or to speak twice to the same matter unless asked to do so. Try to resist the temptation to be argumentative. The point is not to win an argument but to uphold our community as we work together for a better world.

Are minor matters dealt with differently from main items?

Some matters may be complex or controversial, and a wide range of views will need to be expressed. It may take more than one meeting to find unity; a rushed decision driven by the clock may well turn out to be unsatisfactory. Other matters will be routine or minor or relatively straightforward, so that they can be swiftly dealt with. Though the process remains the same, it is not necessary to consider every item at great length or in deep solemnity. That said, a matter that looks routine beforehand sometimes turns out to raise unforeseen controversy!

What if I don't agree with the minute?

If you feel the minute doesn't reflect the sense of the meeting, or is badly worded, there will be an opportunity to comment after the draft minute is presented. If you don't agree with the decision reached, try to set aside your disappointment and accept that the decision has nevertheless been reached collectively through the discipline of waiting together in the Light, in a sincere search for love and truth. The right decision is important, but no more so than reaching it by the right process – a process in which you played your full part. Remember that unity is not the same as unanimity. You may need to continue reflecting on the matter and talking it over with other Friends. Sometimes, at a subsequent meeting, it becomes clear to the meeting that a new direction is needed.

Isn't all this asking too much of people?

The discipline we have laid upon ourselves is a demanding one. Quakers are human, not saints. A more experienced or self-confident Friend may drown out a quieter voice that the meeting needed to hear. Strong feelings on an issue may make some Friends intolerant or even aggressive. But it is worth struggling with the challenge, for when the process works the reward is a powerful sense of rightness and unity.

Further reading:

Quaker faith & practice, chapter 3

Barry Morley, Beyond consensus: salvaging sense of the meeting

Patricia Loring, Listening spirituality

Michael Sheeran, Beyond majority rule

Further copies of this leaflet and information about the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) may be obtained from:

Quaker Life Friends House 173 Euston Road London NW1 2BJ

Email: ql@quaker.org.uk

Tel: 020 7663 1140

It is also on the website: www.quaker.org.uk/how-quaker-meetings-take-decisions



Ministry extracts

Friend 1

My ministry as a Quaker concerns how I live my life, sustain relationships and try to be open to the Light. In my local meeting it involves supporting the clerk, coming up with ideas and seeing them through if the meeting says that's what they'd like, and bringing some cheer in individual relationships as well as in business meeting. Currently skills I have which Friends are making use of include clerking a trustee body, line-managing a senior member of staff, and keeping the area meeting paperwork under control during a hiatus in finding clerks. I notice that some people in meeting really appreciate ordinary friendship: a postcard when I'm away, a phone call when I've missed seeing them. I also notice that this releases in them reciprocal signs of friendship which I find builds the feeling of Friends as a community. I feel very fortunate that retirement gives me availability for more actions which I regard as ministry. These actions are giving and receiving: the blessing of receiving ministry is as important to me as the giving of ministry.

Friend 2

I have come to experience all of my life as Quaker ministry, including the times that I do not live up to the Light, and maybe especially those times. The 'Equipping for Ministry' course has taught me that the most important thing is commitment to obeying the Light. I continue to feel called to be here in this city as manager of this meeting house but have begun to see that the task is to be myself in this place.

One of the other things that has become more important to me as a ministry is to uphold and love in prayer those Friends I have come to know in a deep spiritual way as kindred spirits. I have a sense that it is the manifestation of the Spirit within that person that I am called to help grow and that it will happen, perhaps in spite of me!

Silence, time alone and deep listening are increasingly important for my inner wellbeing. I have also begun to understand and experience decision-making in a different way. I need time now for decisions to be properly discerned otherwise they are likely to have consequences that I have not thought through and are wrong. It seems strange to talk about daily discernment as a ministry. But I come back to where I started: all of a committed life is ministry.

Friend 3

I wake up in the morning and consider the day ahead, the things I must do. Whether it is housework, or looking after guests, or visiting prison, or shopping for an elderly Friend, or spending leisure time with my husband, or talking to young offenders – whatever my activities, these I consider to be my ministry, the work God has given me to do that day, and I pray that I may do it well, with God's help. The 'Equipping for Ministry' course enabled me to form a daily spiritual practice which allows me to do this.

Friend 4

I think the only way I minister outside meeting for worship is the voluntary work I do at Claridge House* and the meeting for healing I have at my home once a month. My poor health makes it difficult for me to do much for other people on a more personal basis. However, the work that is being done at Claridge House is really important as it enables people to have time for rest and relaxation which gives them an opportunity to take stock of their lives. So, although it is only a small contribution I am able to give, it does help.

Friend 5

(who is based in Russia and travels among Friends as part of his ministry)

One of Friends House Moscow's roles is as a resource to the Russian-speaking world. Seekers come onto our website forum and ask deep, difficult questions! BYM's Quaker faith and practice is being translated into Russian and gets posted there as sections are completed and then the discussion takes place on finding the right words to capture the meaning and then discussion of the meaning itself! Of course you cannot beat face-to-face encounters and so sometimes we travel. The advantage of Russia being so big is that it takes time to get there, and this helps to have heart and mind prepared, especially if you are on a train for a couple of days.

Two particular delights stand out in my memory: a Quaker wedding in Kazan in the worst blizzard for years; and holding a membership interview in Siberia in springtime. And you can't rush these precious personal sharings. Sergei and I spent a long weekend in Altai province high up in the mountains near the Chinese border. He got married at Friday lunchtime and in the evening, with his bride, we caught a plane to go and see Vadim. Travelling in the ministry brings untold pleasures but none more so than the intimate sharing of spiritual journeys and rites of passage.

^{*} Claridge House is a Quaker centre for healing, rest and renewal, associated with the Friends Fellowship of Healing.



Reflections on membership and belonging

As a spiritual nomad who has pitched his tent amongst Friends, I am fascinated by the issue of membership. To some this is a theological issue, to others a social one, to yet others, a psychological question. What am I joining (and why not); why, how; and what is the meaning of the step anyway? These are some of the questions attenders may ask themselves when membership is raised.

Recently, in a meeting for clearness for someone contemplating joining Friends, it came to me in the silence that there were at least four concerns that might beset anyone reflecting on this. I shall put them in terms of four polarities (or paradoxes): exploring/finding; inner/outer membership; acknowledging the real/aspiring to the ideal; and giving to/taking from the life of the meeting. A fifth paradox occurs to me as I write this: leaving behind/taking up. And there is something else which unites all these concerns.

Friends in Britain Yearly Meeting do not see membership in terms of salvation, although we might say that in a sense we are saved from isolation into community. We do not equate membership with having found the truth. We do not proclaim that here alone truth may be found. For me membership has been a matter of finding a milieu in which exploration is validated, where finding is rejoiced in, and where not finding is accepted as part of the journey – even losing is not seen as a disaster. We find because we have explored; we explore because we have found. What I have explored and found is relationship with fellow seekers and with that power to which, symbolically, I give the name God or Spirit. This is usually expressed as discipleship. We are learners, sometimes humble, in the school of Christ.

To be alive is to be on a spiritual journey as we seek for connection, meaning, and ways of being and acting in the world. Why then limit as it were this spirituality to membership of one group? If being alive and being self-aware were sufficient for deepening one's participation in the family of God, why then the need to make public something which is already present, why make outer what is already inner? And if one is already committed to the Quaker way, why the need to put a name on a list to prove it? Again to write personally, I have found in my own life that I cannot split the inner from the outer. Indeed the division seems to me to be an artefact of the mind. Where does the inner end and the outer begin? Membership among Friends seems to me to be more about making a public commitment. Just as in a relationship, we know that a public ceremony is a statement both of present joy and future commitment, with change as an inevitable part of human existence, so it seems to me that membership is an outer ratification of a state of being and of growing. However being committed

to one person does not deny friendship to others. We belong to the universal by being part of the small local scene. It is hard to embrace the whole of creation if you have difficulty with the small patch of soil on which you are standing. For me, being a Friend is a way into being a mature human being. Being mature is something about acceptance of self and an awareness of the needs of self for interconnectedness.

This leads me to the real/ideal polarity. I once met someone who told me that he had no partner because no one was ever good enough. With that sort of desire for perfection, he probably never would. The contemporary flight from membership of all sorts is partly a result of our disenchantment with the religious and political ideals that have been held out before us and have led to the mass destruction and oppressions of the twentieth century. We do not want to be hurt again. But there is a time when we may realise that the neurotic pursuit of ideals is harmful, that elements of beauty and truth may still be found in the details of existence, that maturity is, in the lovely words of the American Quaker John Jungblut, a hallowing of our diminishments. Most of us have experienced the irritations of church politics even among Friends; we have heard and seen behaviour that is not Quakerly; we have most of us been disappointed to find bigotry and unkindness amongst those we worship with. For me my association with Friends has led me to expect less and hope for more. In spite of my vexations, I still want to remain part of the human race; in spite of what I find an intense selfintrospection among Friends (of which no doubt I am a part), I still feel I want to proclaim my membership to this small band of travellers. And I cannot live out my life in reaction to the hurts of the past.

For some, membership of Friends is about 'having made it'. Indeed there is something in the history of Friends which suggests membership is a recognition of virtue: a church of the saved, not of the sinners. No wonder our perfectionism has led several people to talk about not being good enough. And then to realise that you do not have time to commit to this and that committee or group or go to this place or that meeting adds to the sense of guilt. I know people who have resigned from Friends because they have felt guilty about not having time for the organisation. There are times in our lives when we have time; there are times when we need to take and times when we can give. Such is the dilemma of being human. Membership is about aspiration and turning to the light; it is surely not about getting everything right.

The fifth of the dilemmas may be seen in terms of leaving behind/taking up. In the evangelical schema of salvation the wicked self is put aside in the new life in Christ. I would prefer to talk of the self being transcended, transformed, but not dismissed. We are all we have been; we are the result of all those we have met. Our path is made up of lots of side roads, diversions, ends which seemed to be dead but which have brought us to new life. There is much in my own life I am sorry for, ashamed of, but I am where I am because of having been there, and having become aware (more or less) of what I have done. I have to accept my past journey, even repent of parts of it, but not let the future be bound by it.

In conclusion it seems to me that membership is about grace and forgiveness; about hope and about accepting reality. About worshipping together and being vulnerable together. It is fraught with dangers, not least the one which makes people see you in a false light – no, I am not a bible-basher; a fundamentalist; a wearer of a broad brim hat; a virtuous paragon; an exemplar of minimalist frugality. I am a human being who reaches out to others and to the Spirit within. I have a holistic understanding of the spiritual life; I have joined these other human beings who are equally frail and sometimes misguided and who sometimes dream dreams (and have nightmares) and have visions of a divine commonwealth. They dare to think that everyday life is where this commonwealth is being established.

Harvey Gillman 2008

*			
	spoken ministry in meeting for worship	prayerfully supporting individuals in meeting	
	helping others feel closer to God	service on committees and other Quaker bodies	
	doing practical jobs around the meeting house	coming regularly to meeting for worship	
	reading from something brought to meeting	a call to political action or witness	
• • • • • • • •	listening to others	writing articles or stories for Quaker or other publications	

	•	×
spiritual friendship	going to Quaker business meetings	
bringing flowers or food to meeting	encouraging others to develop their gifts	
visiting sick or needy people or prisoners	participating in or leading study groups	
joining in public vigils or local faith activities	working with other churches	
letter writing	voluntary work	

×		
	helping with tea and coffee after meeting for worship	helping with children's meeting
	making time to attend Quaker social events	being a parent or carer
	visiting other Quakers	telling Friends about good Quaker courses or events I've attended
	calling in on or doing shopping for a neighbour, or member of my meeting	my job
	campaign work	

Faithful Diversity

Exploring the diversity of beliefs among Quakers, and how we live with this in the modern world



This unit invites you to find out more about the diversity of beliefs among Quakers in Britain (and elsewhere in the world) and how we hope to find unity in that diversity by being open to different people's expressions of truth: Quakers try to connect with 'that of God' in everyone, by embracing a deliberate spiritual practice of openness and listening to those who are different from us.

Faithful Diversity unit aims

This unit aims to help you:

- become aware of the diversity of faith perspectives among Quakers in Britain and beyond
- understand how Quakers try to respond to both the gift and challenge of being a diverse faith community
- reflect on your own experience of and response to diversity of belief

Overview

Quakers share a way of life rather than a set of beliefs. We seek to experience God directly, within ourselves and in our relationships with others and the world around us. Our unity is based on shared understanding and a shared practice of worship, not on our beliefs all being the same.

The Quaker way has its roots in Christianity and finds inspiration in the Bible and the life and teachings of Jesus. Quakers also find meaning and value in the teachings of other faiths; we acknowledge that ours is not the only way.

This Quaker openness to 'new light, from whatever source it may come' (*Advices & queries 7*, in *Quaker faith & practice 1.02*) has led to a growing diversity of faith among British Friends over the last century. Our community now includes Friends whose faith perspective is based in traditional biblical Christianity, alongside Friends who describe themselves as Buddhist Quakers, Jewish Quakers, non-theist Quakers, pagan Quakers and humanist Quakers.

This diversity of faith perspectives is experienced by Friends as both a challenge and a gift: it calls us to listen to one another with ever deepening awareness.

Beyond Britain Yearly Meeting, in the world family of Quakers, there is also a rich variety of experience, some of which is unfamiliar to Friends in Britain. Some Quakers make frequent and joyful use of song and Bible study, and may be led by a pastor; for others silent waiting on God is the basis of worship, from which spoken ministry develops. Many Friends from around the world have a vivid experience of personal salvation through the teaching, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; many hesitate to express their deepest spiritual experiences in words. It is important for many British Friends that we see ourselves as part of the world family of Friends, learning about and connecting with Quakers in other traditions as well as our own.

George Fox advised early Friends to

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 everyone.

Quaker faith & practice 19.32

The Quaker spiritual insight into the fundamental equality and worth of all people – seeing 'that of God' in all people – springs from deep experience and has been re-affirmed by successive generations of Quakers. We have a fundamental commitment to equality and inclusion in our own Quaker family and the wider community, affirming the love of God for all people, whatever their age, sexuality, race, religion, state of health, disability or gender. (You can explore the Quaker commitment to equality further in the Faith in Action unit).

Quakers try to connect with 'that of God' in everyone, by embracing a deliberate spiritual practice of openness and listening to those who are different from us. This affects how we relate to one another as Quakers, how we build relationships with other churches and faith communities, and how we relate to the people that we meet in our daily lives.

Quaker distinctives

Distinctives 1

Quaker faith & practice on diversity of belief

You could read any of chapter 27 'Unity and diversity' in *Quaker faith & practice*, or you may prefer to read some of the following sections for a quick overview:

Quakers and other faiths: Qf&p 27.01 and 27.03

• Jesus: *Qf&p* 27.09–27.10

Quakers and the Christian church: Qf&p 27.18

• creeds: *Qf&p* 27.25

• the Bible: *Qf&p* 27.34

• priesthood: *Qf&p* 27.35

• sacraments: *Qf&p* 27.38

• being a 'bridge people': *Qf&p* 27.44

Distinctives 2

A Quaker faith in transition?

In 'Tradition and transition: opening to the sacred yesterday and today' (see Further exploration for details), modern Friend Alex Wildwood writes about the Quaker faith in a time of transition. He discusses the pluralism of belief among British Friends, and how he sees this as an opportunity for spiritual growth.

You'll find an extract from 'Tradition and Transition' on pages 134–135.

Distinctives 3

Are Quakers Christian?

You might like to watch the video 'Are Quakers Christian?' made by Friends at Watford Quaker Meeting. It includes reflections on how different Friends relate to the Christian tradition and Quakerism's roots within it. You can access the video in a number of different ways:

- online at
 - > www.watfordquakers.org.uk/videos.html
 - www.youtube.com as 'Are Quakers Christian?'
- on the DVD *An Introduction to Watford Quakers* available from the Quaker Centre bookshop (see Further exploration for contact details).

Distinctives 4

Quakers around the world

Robert Vogel, an American Friend, writes about 'Quakers around the world' in an extract from *Searching the depths: essays on being a Quaker today* (see Further exploration for details). You'll find this extract on pages 136–137.

If you are interested in finding out more about Quakers around the world, you could also:

- read sections 9.01–9.02 of *Quaker faith & practice*, which discuss the world family of Friends
- look at books of faith and practice from other Quaker Yearly Meetings around the world online at: www.quakerinfo.com/fandp.shtml
- check out the information about different kinds of Friends on the website of the Friends World Committee for Consultation at: fwccworld.org/kinds_of_friends/index.shtml
- view a graph showing numbers of Quakers worldwide in 1937 and 2007, also on the FWCC website, at: fwccworld.org/kinds_of_friends/index.shtml

Distinctives 5

How do Quakers relate to other faiths?

The video 'How do Quakers relate to other faiths?', made by Friends at Watford Quaker Meeting, includes reflections on the approach that Friends take to interfaith work and diversity within our own community. You can access the video in a number of different ways:

- online at
 - www.watfordquakers.org.uk/videos.html
 - > www.youtube.com as 'How do Quakers relate to other faiths?'
- on the DVD *An Introduction to Watford Quakers* available from the Quaker Centre bookshop (see Further exploration for contact details).

Discovery

Discovery 1

How are Quakers approaching ecumenical and interfaith work?

The Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) works on ecumenical and interfaith work at a national level.

You could have a look at a recent issue of QCCIR's newsletter 'CIRcular' and discuss any issues raised by it with your Becoming Friends companion. You can download recent editions of CIRcular at: www.quaker.org.uk/newsletters or you could look in your local meeting library for recent copies.

You could also look at the inter-church and interfaith information at: www.quaker.org.uk/inter-church-and-interfaith or read any of the leaflets at: www.quaker.org.uk/inter-church-and-interfaith-leaflets

To find out more about ecumenical and interfaith work going on locally, talk to Friends in your local or area meeting who are currently serving on ecumenical or interfaith bodies about their work (you could ask your Becoming Friends companion to help arrange this).

Discovery 2

How diverse is belief in my local meeting?

You might like to ask your Becoming Friends companion or an elder to discuss with you the diversity of belief in your local meeting, and how this comes out in spoken ministry in meeting for worship. It is important to keep this conversation general, rather than naming names of individuals in meeting.

- How does this compare with what you and your companion know of the diversity of belief in Britain Yearly Meeting generally?
- Are there aspects of this diversity that you find challenging, or welcome?

Discovery 3

Reflecting on the grounds of our faith with a group or companion

You could ask your Becoming Friends companion or an elder in your meeting to help set up a small group session exploring the faith perspectives among local Friends, using the questions below as a focus (or you might prefer to simply discuss the questions with your Becoming Friends companion).

Share the following questions with the group as starting points for reflection, and perhaps ask your companion or an experienced Friend to lead this. It might be helpful to write or print out copies of the questions.

- Do you describe yourself as Christian?
- How do you relate to the Christian roots of Quakerism?
- What is the ground of your faith as a Friend?

After people have had a brief opportunity for personal reflection on the questions, spend some time in worship-sharing mode as a group, sharing with one another any responses, insights, experiences or challenges relating to the questions.

Guidance for worship sharing is found in Appendix 2 – Guidance on pages 283–284.

Discovery 4

Discussion about what diversity means to us

You could consider the introductory questions below, then go to the Faithful Diversity unit forum and post your own thoughts on the issues raised. You might like to comment on other posts on this forum too.

Alternatively, you could discuss the introductory questions with your Becoming Friends companion, or others in your meeting: you could do this informally over coffee or ask your companion to help you set up a group session.

Introductory questions:

- What does diversity of belief mean to you personally?
- What have you experienced as a blessing and a challenge of diversity?

Deepening

Deepening 1

Your own faith journey

You might like to consider the different approaches to faith among British Quakers that you have encountered during this unit, using these questions:

- Where would you place yourself in relation to Christianity and other approaches to faith found among British Friends?
- In what ways has your faith, or faith identity, changed during the course of your life?
- How is your relationship with Quakerism affected by your faith identity?

You could

- respond to the questions in writing
- respond by drawing or using another creative method
- go online and blog about them
- discuss them on a Quaker discussion forum:
 - the Britain Yearly Meeting forum at: www.quakerweb.org.uk/forum
 - www.friendlink.org.uk (aimed mainly at young Quakers)
 - > the Faithful Diversity unit forum
- share some of your reflections with your Becoming Friends companion when you next meet.

Deepening 2

Reflect on Advices & queries 16 and 17

Advices & queries 16 and 17, found in section 1.02 of Quaker faith & practice, focus on diversity and answering 'that of God' in others. If you prefer to listen to Advices & queries, there are mp3 audio files available in this unit of the online Becoming Friends course.

- You could spend time reflecting on these advices and queries, allowing them to speak to you at a deep level.
- You may find it helpful to respond to the advices and queries in writing or using creative methods.

• You could also reflect on this experience with your Becoming Friends companion when you next meet.

Deepening 3

Your own response to diversity

What is your own response to diversity of belief among Quakers and in the wider community?

You can use the Diversity cards on pages 138–140 as a prompt for your reflection. Copy or print the cards and cut them up. Then spend some time ordering or sorting the cards to reflect which kinds of faith positions you are more comfortable with, and which you are more challenged by, or want to know more about.

- Reflect on what this sorting process reveals to you, both about yourself and your own response to diversity
- Do you feel led to respond in any way?

You might wish to reflect on how you have got on with this exercise at a future meeting with your Becoming Friends companion.

Deepening 4

Reflecting with your Becoming Friends companion

You might like to spend time with your Becoming Friends companion reflecting on how each of you responds to the challenge of diversity among Quakers.

- Are there aspects of being part of a diverse faith community which your companion has found especially challenging or welcome?
- Does this reflect your own experience?

Further exploration

If you would like to explore the subject of faithful diversity further, here are some suggestions for reading, listening or viewing.

CIRcular, Quaker Committee for Church & Interfaith Relations newsletter. Available in local meeting house libraries or to download at: www.quaker.org.uk/newsletters

A faith to call our own: Quaker tradition in the light of contemporary movements of the Spirit, Alex Wildwood, Quaker Home Service, 1999 (Swarthmore Lecture).

Friends World Committee for Consultation website: fwccworld.org/kinds_of_friends/index.shtml#

Interfaith pilgrims: living truths and truthful living, Eleanor Nesbitt, Quaker Books, 2003 (Swarthmore lecture).

An introduction to Watford Quakers DVD, Just Film, 2007. Also available at: www.watfordquakers.org.uk/videos.html includes: 'Are Quakers Christian?' and 'How do Quakers relate to other faiths?' (also on www.youtube.com as 'Are Quakers Christian?' and 'How do Quakers relate to other faiths?').

New Foundation Fellowship website: www.nffuk.org
Quakers in the UK seeking fresh understanding of the radical Christian vision
of George Fox.

Previous convictions and end of the millennium Quakerism, Christine Trevett, Quaker Home Service, 1997 (Swarthmore lecture).

Quaker faith & practice, chapter 9, 'Beyond Britain Yearly Meeting' including ecumenical and interfaith links.

Quaker faith & practice, chapter 26, 'Reflections'.

Quaker faith & practice, chapter 27, 'Unity and diversity'.

Quaker identity and the heart of our faith, Quaker Life Study Materials, Quaker Life, 2008. Includes sections about diversity of faith perspectives among British Friends. Available online at: www.quaker.org.uk/sites/default/files/Faith-and-practice-proceeding.pdf or in hard copy by contacting Quaker Life on 020 7663 1140 or email: ql@quaker.org.uk.

Quaker Universalist Group website: www.qug.org.uk Universalist Quakers in the UK.

Rooted in Christianity, open to new light: Quaker spiritual diversity, Timothy Ashworth and Alex Wildwood, Pronoun Press & Woodbrooke, 2009.

Searching the depths: essays on being a Quaker today, edited by Harvey Gillman and Alastair Heron, Quaker Home Service, 1996

To Lima with love: the response from the Religious Society of Friends in Great Britain to the World Council of Churches document Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, Quaker Home Service, 1987

'Tradition and transition: opening to the sacred yesterday and today', Alex Wildwood, *Woodbrooke Journal*, Winter 2001, No 9. Also in *Hearts and minds prepared* pack.

What canst thou say? Towards a Quaker theology, Janet Scott, Quaker Home Service, 1980 (Swarthmore lecture).

Young Quaker Space website: www.yqspace.org.uk

Many of these titles are available from the Quaker Centre bookshop:

Friends House 173 Euston Road London NW1 2BJ

Tel: 020 7663 1030 Fax: 020 7663 1001

Website: www.quaker.org.uk/bookshop Email: quakercentre@quaker.org.uk



Many of them will also be in your local meeting house library. You could ask your Becoming Friends companion to help you track down titles that interest you.

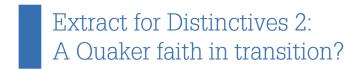
Closing activity

As you finish your exploration of faithful diversity among Quakers, you are invited to reflect on what you have gained through this unit, how your understanding of both yourself and Quakerism has changed, and what areas you would like to explore further.

This closing reflection can be a very good opportunity for sharing with your Becoming Friends companion, or you may prefer to write in a journal or book of spiritual discipline (there's guidance for journalling in Appendix 2 – Guidance on page 282), or to reflect using creative methods such as drawing, collage, model-making or working with materials such as textiles or wood.

You might use one or more of the following questions as a focus for your reflection:

- What have you gained from your work on this unit, whether as a result of positive or more challenging experiences?
- In what ways has your understanding changed as a result of your work on this unit?
- Are there areas that you would like to explore further either as part of your own spiritual journey or relating to Quakerism?
- Has anything arisen that you would find it helpful to reflect on with your Becoming Friends companion?



Extracts from 'Tradition and transition: opening to the sacred yesterday and today' by Alex Wildwood

Throughout our history Quakers have been non-credal in the sense that belief in propositions is not what defines our faith. But today a growing number of British Friends make the unwarranted leap from this fact to the statement that belief is irrelevant or unimportant to Quakerism. I have heard it said that you can believe what you like as a Quaker, and I think that this is a serious misrepresentation of our faith and the real root of the 'problem' which some people see in our diversity today. Clearly any group needs to have some sense of a common practice and identity, a shared belief system. Even a group such as liberal Friends, with a strong emphasis on experience, must recognise that experience never exists in a vacuum. We are always trying, through dialogue with others, to make sense of our shared identity of being 'Quaker'. This is especially important in a time of transition such as our own.

Ben Pink Dandelion identifies three implicit 'articles of faith' in the theologically 'liberal' phase of Quakerism which became dominant by the early twentieth century and continue to be influential to this day:

- Faith is rooted in experience
- Faith has to be 'relevant' to the age
- We are open to new light (and revelation is progressive).

[...]

I see the growing awareness of the preciousness and fragility of our planetary home and a developing sense of the awesome mystery of the universe we inhabit as signs of ... emergent spiritual awareness. Today increasing numbers of people are seeking not dogmatic formulations of faith and morality or doctrine imposed from outside but an authentic way of life in which values and meaning arise from within. They are hungry for a living experience of Spirit, something which points them to the Reality beyond and all around themselves, our embeddedness in the greater-than-human world. Hence the growing interest in 'Green' Spirituality, in paganism and shamanic and other nature-based religious practices.

There is a growing realisation (or perhaps it is better described as a remembering, for it was there in the earth-centred cultures which our industrialised civilisation has all but eradicated) that the dualism inherent in much of Western religion – the separation of body–mind, flesh–spirit, male–female, heaven and earth, human–animal – is at the very root of our problem.

[...]

As we explore what has meaning for us today in the 'previous convictions' of earlier generations of Friends we will have to marry these with both our scientific understanding of our evolving universe and with our painful awareness of the very real threats to our world. In doing this it is helpful to see faith as a verb, to appreciate faithing as a process we engage in both individually and collectively. We are constantly 'faithing the future' in the light of greater knowledge and awareness.

Seen as a process, it is important to acknowledge that there are stages to faith development both for the individual and the collective. My sense is that we are today facing a collective rite of passage, a coming of age of truly global proportions, as humanity moves from its spiritual infancy to a growing realisation that we are, in Matthew Fox's phrase, 'co-creators' with the divine. We are moving, in other words, to that place predicted by early Friends 350 years ago – when religion would be something known 'experimentally' rather than as a dogmatic formulation of belief.

[...]

Traditionally the basis of our unity in meeting for worship and in our business meetings – and therefore of our discernment of call and our witness 'in the world' – has been the sense of Christ as 'the Presence in the midst', the Guide who led us in our 'seeking the will of God'. Yet today this fundamentally Christian basis of our unity as Friends can no longer be assumed. I believe what is most important is that we are conscious and explicit about this, that we name this as a transitional time.

I believe that we are now being invited to embrace both what Quakers have advocated as a relationship to Christ in our hearts, and an evolutionary sense of a new inclusive spirituality rooted in the earth, the body and the feminine – and that at the deepest levels of experience these two are not in contradiction. I also believe that Friends, unencumbered by dogmatic formulations of faith, have much to offer the many seekers of this age. Our Quaker meetings and experimental worship could indeed be laboratories for William Penn's 'experiment upon the human Soul'. I believe there is again 'a great people to be gathered' as we clarify and maintain our distinctive Quaker experience of the Christian revelation and combine this with a wider, more inclusive sense of Spirit.

[...]

A pluralist Quakerism only works if each of us feels free to speak at a deep level of our encounters with the Spirit – both within and beyond the traditional 'frame' of religious experience. If we lose either polarity of our Quaker heritage – our distinctive sense of being 'rooted in Christianity' or our sincere willingness to be 'open to new light' – then we will have lost what our evolving tradition has valued as the Truth.'

from 'Tradition and transition: opening to the sacred yesterday and today' by Alex Wildwood, *Woodbrooke Journal*, Winter 2001, No 9



Extract from 'Quakers around the world' by Robert Vogel

In most countries there is only one expression (or mode of worship), with the notable exception of the USA. In Canada, the continent of Europe, the Middle East, Australia and New Zealand, Quakers worship in silence-based unprogrammed meetings. In most parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America where missions were established, Friends hold programmed worship services. Only in the United States does one find all expressions of Quakerism; from 'liberals' to 'conservatives' to 'orthodox' to 'evangelical'. [...]

One common element is that virtually all these groups claim George Fox as their founder. Reading his *Journal*, one can find statements that support different emphases. Fox's first deeply spiritual experience was that 'There is one, even Jesus Christ, that can speak to thy condition' (1647). Later in his ministry, Fox counselled: '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' (1656).

Then in 1671, Fox wrote a letter to the Governor of Barbados which is essentially a near-repetition of the so-called 'Apostles Creed'.[...] Today Liberal (unprogrammed) Quakers emphasize the phrase 'that of God in every one', while Evangelical Friends find Fox's early experience and the Barbados letter important for them. [...]

It might help to remind ourselves that the first Quakers thought of their movement as a revival of primitive Christianity: today, the question of whether one is a Christian or not would not occur to the majority of Quakers, considered worldwide. During the 1991 World Conference of Friends, Duane Comfort of Evangelical Friends Mission said, 'We are Christians first and then add our Quaker distinctives.' Zablon Malenge, former General Secretary of the Africa Section of FWCC [Friends World Consultation Committee], put it this way: 'In Kenya, A Quaker is one who has graduated from a Christian level to something more than Christianity. Christianity then forms the basis of Quakerism.'

It is largely due to the missionary efforts of programmed and pastoral Friends that their message has spread to the Middle East, and parts of Asia, but especially to eastern Africa and to Latin America. This missionary work has brought into the Society a large number of people in the technologically 'less-developed' countries who are poor in this world's goods. FWCC estimates that there are

122,000 members in Africa, 51,000 in Latin America and about 4,000 in Asia. The numerical centre of the 'Quaker world' has shifted to the South Atlantic area, and this will surely affect the future of the family of Friends.'

from 'Quakers around the world' by Robert Vogel, in *Searching the depths: essays on being a Quaker today*, edited by Harvey Gillman and Alastair Heron, Quaker books, 1996

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	A traditional Christian who believes Jesus Christ died to save us from sin	A person who describes himself as a 'neo- classical Graeco-Romano pagan'
	Someone with no particular set of beliefs but who finds meditation practices helpful	A Buddhist
	A Muslim	A Buddhist who voices strong views about karma and reincarnation, such as 'suffering in this life is the result of bad karma from a previous life'
	A non-theist (someone who does not believe there is a God)	A secular humanist who considers all religious belief to be superstition
	An evangelical Christian with conservative moral views (eg about abortion and homosexuality)	A person for whom participating in sacraments is very important
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A Baptist	Someone who describes herself as 'post-Christian'	
An Anglican	A modern Pagan	
A Roman Catholic	A Hindu	
Someone who says the only religious label they want is 'Quaker'	A Christian priest or minister	••••••
A member of the reform tradition of Judaism	A Christian who questions the language and imagery of traditional Christianity	

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	A person who is both a Quaker and a member of another faith community		
	A Pagan who worships the triple goddess and the horned god		
	Someone who describes herself as 'a spiritual seeker'		
••••••	Someone who is opposed to the main elements of Christian belief		
••••••	Someone who describes himself as a non- denominational Christian		••••••
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