

## **The Quaker Peace Testimony**

Our oldest testimony and the one that still unites all branches of modern Friends. A Declaration of the Faith and Practice of the People Called Quakers 1660: "We utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence whatsoever."  
- George Fox

With the belief that there is that of God in all human beings, Quakers also find that if we physically harm one another, we are then also hurting God. And so, we strive for nonviolent confrontation and peaceful reconciliation in all our interactions. Going a step further, we are called to look for that of the Divine in one another and to find love for those that oppose us.

The peace testimony does not mean that Quakers engage in passive resignation. Some Quakers have engaged passionately in the peace testimony by protesting wars, the death penalty, and torture, by refusing to serve in armed forces if drafted, seeking conscientious objector status when available, and participating in acts of civil disobedience. Historically, Quakers have not fully aligned with the peace testimony, as some Quakers have engaged in armed combat against what they saw as a greater evil, and others will allow for a defensive use of force as their conscience and understanding of a conflict requires of them.

By following the peace testimony, we try to live in ways that promote justice and avoid the causes of war; we deny war's legitimacy and seek creative alternatives; and we undertake, with impartiality, to aid those who suffer from violence and war's devastation. Modern Friends also strive to find the underlying causes of violence and examine their own role in supporting oppression. Some Friends connect to the peace testimony matters such as the choice of financial investments, the purchase of fair-trade products or products farmed and mined in war-torn areas, and the awareness of the uses of our tax dollars.

### **Peace**

Friends' peace testimony challenges us all to be peace educators. We may not all be teachers, but we are all communicators, and we all need to be learners. Peace education should be seen as an integral part of our peace testimony. But it is essentially something one does, and not something one talks about... Peace education therefore aims at changing our own individual behaviour. Eva I Pinthus, 1982

### **Advices on peace**

Friends are earnestly cautioned against the taking of arms against any person, since "all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons" are contrary to our Christian testimony. Friends should beware of supporting preparations for war even indirectly and should examine in this light such matters as non-combatant military service, cooperation

with conscription, employment or investment in war industries, consumption of goods that were made available by violence against others, and payment of war taxes. Friends are advised to maintain our testimony against war by endeavoring to exert an influence in favor of peaceful principles and settlement of all differences by peaceful methods. We are encouraged to lend support to all that strengthens international friendship and understanding and give active help to movements that substitute cooperation and justice for force and intimidation. We are also encouraged to work toward eliminating the underlying causes of violence and advocating for justice at all levels of society. It is essential to examine our own role in supporting oppression, considering our choices of financial investments, knowing where our purchases come from, choosing fair-trade products, avoiding products farmed and mined in war torn areas, and assessing the role our tax dollars play.

“May we look upon our treasures, and the furniture of our houses, and our garments...and try whether the seeds of war have any nourishment in these our possessions.”

*SILENCE*

#### **Queries on peace**

1. How do we maintain Friends' historic peace testimony?
2. How do we “live in the virtue of that life and power which takes away the occasion of all wars?”
3. How are we exerting our influence in favor of resolution of all differences by truly nonviolent methods?
4. How do we strive to share our understanding of the basis of our peace testimony and its applications to how we live and what we buy or use?
5. How do we educate ourselves and others about the impacts of colonial, political, social, and financial oppression, and how do we work toward relieving their results today?
6. How can we help to ameliorate the harm done to non-combatants during war?
7. How do we educate ourselves and support others in developing skills to support transformation of conflicts?
8. How do we seek justice for those who are marginalized by current economic and political systems?

Do you bring into God's light those emotions, attitudes and prejudices in yourself which lie at the root of destructive conflict, acknowledging your need for forgiveness and grace?

In what ways are you involved in the work of reconciliation between individuals, groups and nations?

What keeps the world from realizing peace?

What keep me from realizing peace?

### **MLK Jr.**

Now let me hasten to say that this is not a concession to or a justification for physical war. I can see no moral justification for war. I believe absolutely and positively that violence is self-defeating. War is devastating. And we know now that if we continue to use these weapons of destruction, our civilization will be plunged across the abyss of destruction

However, there is a type of war that every Christian is involved in. It is a spiritual war. It is a war of ideas. Every true Christian is a fighting pacifist. In a very profound passage, which has been often misunderstood, Jesus utters this. He says "Think not that I am come to bring peace. I come not to bring peace, but a sword." {Mt 10:34–36} Certainly he is not saying that he comes not to bring peace in the higher sense. What he is saying is: "I come not to bring this peace of escapism, this peace that fails to confront the real issues of life, the peace that makes for stagnant complacency." Then he says, I come to bring a sword—not a physical sword.

Whenever I come a conflict is precipitated between the old and the new, between justice and injustice, between the forces of light and the forces of darkness. "I come to declare war on evil. I come to declare war on injustice

This text is saying in substance Peace is not merely the absence of some negative force—war, tensions, confusion but it is the presence of some positive force—justice, goodwill, the power of the kingdom of God.

I had a long talk the other day with a man about this bus situation. He discussed the peace being destroyed in the community, the destroying of good race relations. I agreed that it is more tension now. But peace is not merely to absence of this tension, but the presence of justice. And even if we didn't have this tension, we still wouldn't have positive peace. Yes it is true that if the Negro accept his place, accepts exploitation, and injustice, there will be peace. But it would be an obnoxious peace. It would be a peace that boiled down to stagnant complacency, deadening passivity and

If peace means this, I dont want peace:

If peace means accepting second class citizen ship I dont want it

If peace means keeping my mouth shut in the midst of injustice and evil, I dont want it

If peace means being complacently adjusted to a deadning staus quo, I dont want peace.

If peace means a willingness to be exploited economically, dominated polically, humiliated and segregated, I dont want peace.

In a passive non-violent manner we must revolt against this peace.

Jesus says in substance, I will not be content until justice, goodwill, brotherhood, love yes, the kingdom of God are established upon the earth. This is real peace. Peace is the presence of positive good.

Finally, never forget that there is an The inner peace that comes as a result of doing God's will. Our Father God, who dost overarch our fleeting years with thine eternity and dost undergird our weakness with thy strength, in the midst of the pressures of another day, as we face its vast concerns.

Above all else save us from succumbing to the tragic temptation of Of becoming cynical

## **Gandhi**

“- I shall not fear anyone on Earth.

– I shall fear only God.

– I shall not bear ill will toward anyone.

– I shall not submit to injustice from anyone.

– I shall conquer untruth by truth. And in resisting untruth, I shall put up with all suffering.”

“You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.”

## **Rumi**

“The quieter you become, the more you are able to hear.”

“Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it.”

“Be like the sun for grace and mercy. Be like the night to cover others' faults. Be like running water for generosity. Be like death for rage and anger. Be like the Earth for modesty. Appear as you are. Be as you appear.”

## **Mariano Puga**

se Dios lo entienden los simples, yo te alabo padre porque te revelas a los pequeños a los considerados como nada. Sí padre, yo te alabo porque te diste a la maravilla de tu hermano, tú que dijiste haz con tu hermano lo que te gustaría que hicieran contigo, y lo haces porque crees que el Dios de los cristianos y el Dios de todas las religiones es pobre, un Dios sin poder, no milagroso, que se hizo último entre los últimos, asesinado, martirizado, como un inocente abandonado, como un “ejecutado político”. Ése es nuestro Dios, el que resucitó y proyectó un modelo de una humanidad nueva, para todas y todos(...)”

Él, precisamente, me enseñó a ser una cristiana que lucha por los pequeños, los explotados y abandonados por el sistema. No se atrean a decirme que no conozco a Dios.

*[google translate]*

*God understands the simple, I praise you father because you reveal yourself to the little ones, to those considered as nothing. Yes father, I praise you because you gave yourself to the wonder of your brother, you who said do to your brother what you would like them to do to you, and you do it because you believe that the God of Christians and the God of all religions is poor, a God without power, not miraculous, who became last among the last, murdered, martyred, as an*

*abandoned innocent, as a "political execution". That is our God, the one who rose and projected a model of a new humanity, for all (...)" He, precisely, taught me to be a Christian who fights for the little ones, the exploited and abandoned by the system. Don't you dare tell me I don't know God.*