

FRIENDS CONSULTATION
ON
DOING THE TRUTH

1 John 3:18

Quaker Hill Conference Center
Richmond, Indiana
December 11-14, 1986

Sponsored by
Earlham School of Religion
and
Quaker Hill Conference Center

PREFACE

1986 marked the seventh annual Friends Consultation held at Quaker Hill Conference Center, jointly sponsored by the Conference Center and the Earlham School of Religion. The Consultation this year was held on December 11-14 with 54 in attendance, representing 23 yearly meetings and 19 states, plus representation from Canadian and London Yearly Meetings. These Friends come from a broad spectrum of Quakers in North America, including Friends United Meeting, Friends General Conference, Evangelical Friends Alliance, Conservative Friends, and Independent Yearly Meetings.

The purpose of these gatherings is not only to bring Friends together to consider a particular topic of common interest, but to have Friends interact with each other across the artificial boundaries of the Society. Our experience has been that Consultation attenders in the past have come to know one another at a deep level and that they begin to communicate about common Quaker concerns, which otherwise are seldom discussed. This is not to suggest that Friends' differences will easily disappear, but it does mean that through such occasions as these Friends are learning to be more open to each other and willing to share ideas and concerns which could, in time, help to unite Friends.

We want to thank several Quaker funds, especially the Chace Fund and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Bequest Fund, which have made significant contributions to the Consultation travel pool. This makes it possible to bring together a broadly representative group of Friends without the limitations of geography and Quaker affiliation. We endeavor to keep repeat attenders to a minimum, and not have more than one person from any given meeting. Our alumni/ae list has now reached approximately 250 persons who have had this Consultation experience at Quaker Hill.

This year's topic on "Doing the Truth" grew naturally out of the previous year's Consultation on "Discerning the Truth." This year's Prospectus will be found following the Table of Contents. Three major papers were presented, the texts of which are duplicated in this book of findings. Each paper was followed by a plenary discussion session. Perhaps the most important work of the the Consultation went on in small groups, of which there were seven, which met four times during the three-day weekend. Summaries of their findings are printed here also. Two important role plays on the Consultation theme were played out by volunteers from the group. Two previously selected Participant-Observers circulated among the sessions and the small groups, and then at the end made a summary report which is included in this report. Morning and evening worship groups were held, evening hymn sings, table fellowship, free time activities (including a

tour of Earlham College and Quaker places in Richmond) are scheduled each year.

The Spirit of God clearly seems to be at work in these Consultations to help Friends encounter one another in significant and lasting ways. We look forward to next year's Consultation which will be held December 10-13, 1987. Several topics are under consideration, and planning will begin soon. Yearly meetings and previous attenders will have an opportunity to nominate persons to a pool of names from which approximately fifty attenders will be invited.

We invite comments and suggestions of Friends as we proceed with these Consultations from year to year. We hope that the model developed at Quaker Hill can be used effectively elsewhere to bring Friends together to consider in depth topics of importance to the on-going work of Friends.

Because of increasing production costs the price of this year's booklet is \$7.50. All previous booklets will remain at \$5.00. This includes mailing costs.

For the Consultation Steering Committee,

Wilmer A. Cooper, Coordinator
of the Consultation

Eldon Harzman, Director of
Quaker Hill Conference Center

Please Note: Additional copies of this booklet and previous Consultations are available from the Quaker Hill Conference Center, 10 Quaker Hill, Dr., Richmond, IN 47374.

Friends Consultation --	
1980, On Service	Out of Print
1981, On Ministry	\$5.00
1982, On Eldering	\$5.00
1983, On Membership	\$5.00
1984, On Spiritual Authority and Accountability	\$5.00
1985, On Discernment	\$5.00
1986, On Doing The Truth	\$7.50

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PROSPECTUS

FRIENDS CONSULTATION ON DOING THE TRUTH

The theme this year is both Quaker and biblical in its derivation. "Doing the truth" is a traditional Quaker way of speaking when Friends choose to act on the truth as discerned from God's will. I John 3:18 expresses it this way: "...let us not love in word or speech but in deed and truth."

Doing what we know to be right or what we have discerned to be God's will is often difficult, and as a result we frequently find ourselves vulnerable. This is true for us personally and for us corporately, as members of our meeting, our community, and our society. It is difficult enough to discern the truth, or what we believe to be God's will, but the real test comes in carrying out the truth that has been laid upon us.

In Friends practice responding to the will of God has often been referred to not only as "doing the Truth," but as "walking in the Light" or "minding the Light," or in Thomas Kelly's words, responding to God in "holy obedience." Friends have always claimed that our outward lives should be consistent with our inward sense of calling and our proclaimed faith. We do not believe in a double standard. We are called to live up to the measure of the light and truth which has been given us. To accomplish this we soon discover that we cannot do so in our own strength, but we need to be empowered by God's spirit and grace. To this end we are called to be not just hearers but doers of God's word of truth.

The purpose of this Consultation, therefore, is to assess our performance personally and corporately as "doers of the truth." To what extent are we faithful to the measure of the Light that is given us? What obstacles, both within and without, prevent us from responding fully to the call of God in our lives? In what ways can our meetings nurture the life of holy obedience in us? These and other questions will be considered in plenary and small group sessions as we meet together.

FRIENDS CONSULTATION ON DOING THE TRUTH

Co-sponsored by

Earlham School of Religion
and
Quaker Hill Conference Center
Richmond, Indiana

December 11-14, 1986

Clerk: SHELDON JACKSON
California YM

Thursday, December 11

5:00 p.m. Arrive and get settled
6:00 Dinner
7:00 Introductions and background of Consultation
7:30 BIBLICAL AND QUAKER PERSPECTIVES
DORLAN BALES, Mid-America & Nebraska YM
8:30 Response and plenary discussion
9:15 Break
9:30 Worship Epilogue

Friday, December 12

7:30 a.m. Breakfast
8:30 Worship -- unprogrammed
9:15 Small Groups meet to get acquainted
10:15 Break
10:30 HOW TO LIVE FAITHFULLY AT HOME AND IN THE MEETING
JUDY BRUTZ, Iowa (FUM), Lake Erie, Ohio (C) YM
11:30 Response and plenary discussion
12:15 Break
12:30 p.m. Lunch
Free time
3:30 HOW TO LIVE FAITHFULLY IN THE WORLD
SHIRLEY DODSON, Philadelphia YM
4:30 Responses and plenary discussion
5:15 Break
6:00 Dinner
7:30 Small Groups meet with assigned tasks
9:00 Hymn Sing
9:30 Worship Epilogue -- ALASTAIR HERON

Saturday, December 13

7:30 a.m. Breakfast

8:30 Worship -- unprogrammed

9:15 Small Groups continue with assigned tasks

10:15 Break

10:30 ROLE PLAYS ON "DOING THE TRUTH"
LINDA SELLECK, Indiana YM
Plenary discussion to follow

12:30 p.m. Lunch
Free Time (Tour of Earlham and Richmond for those interested)

3:30 Small Groups continue with assigned tasks

5:00 Free Time

6:00 Dinner

7:30 Reports from Small Groups in Plenary Session

9:00 Hymn Sing

9:30 Worship Epilogue -- KARA COLE

Sunday, December 14

8:00 a.m. Breakfast

9:00 SUMMARY REPORT BY PARTICIPANT/OBSERVERS
ANN MILLER, Indiana & Ohio Valley YM
MARK KELLEY, Iowa (FUM) YM

10:00 Consultation Evaluation and Guidance for
Future Consultations

10:45 Break

11:00 Closing Worship

12:00 p.m. Lunch

1:00 Departure

FRIENDS CONSULTATION
ON DOING THE TRUTH -- I JOHN 3:18
11-14 DECEMBER 1986

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**LIVING IN THE REAL SUBSTANCE OF RELIGION:
BIBLICAL AND QUAKER PERSPECTIVES ON DOING THE TRUTH**
Dorlan Bales

Occasionally, I strike up a conversation with a stranger who discovers my church connection and says, "I admire you Quakers, but I could never be good enough to join your church." I know the new acquaintance is trying to compliment me, but at that moment I feel mortified.

No, I am not embarrassed about my Quaker heritage. We have a wonderful legacy, an inspiring tradition which insists that the gospel be lived out even when that is difficult, which insists that we demonstrate our friendship with Jesus by doing what he commands. Many of our spiritual ancestors were radically good in an evil world, practicing an allegiance to God which was more important than their loyalty to the state or to status. What embarrasses me is that for the most part we American Quakers today are hard to distinguish from the conventionally religious part of society's mainstream. By and large we are welcome in the professions, in government, in corporate offices, in all the institutions which maintain the status quo. We are sufficiently like the world that we give it no reason to take offense at us. Like other acceptably religious people, we are occasional reformers, mainly concerned with finding the right church leadership, balancing the church budget, and keeping the meetinghouse in good repair.

It could be that God is satisfied with our respectability, our charity work, our enlightened political activity, our warm fellowship around steaming casserole dishes, and our struggles to attract young people who will maintain our institutions. But when I read the Bible, or study the writings of Quaker heroes and heroines, or listen to our contemporary prophets, I become uncomfortable with my own busyness as usual and start wondering what it would mean for Quakers to become radical Christians once again.

God's Truth-Doing in Bible Times

The God of Abraham, Moses, Elijah, the Isaiahs, and Jesus is a God of revolutionary holiness, one who requires undivided loyalty. For those who would be followers of God, thoroughgoing repentance and change is required, a different mindset, a different orientation to the world, an outlook in which everything is seen with different eyes. In Old Testament times that meant Israel's being different from other nations, a people ruled ultimately by God's holy law. In New Testament times, it meant living in the power of Jesus Christ's Holy Spirit. It

meant living in the world, but not being of it. Both the Israelites at their best and the early Christians rightly saw themselves as beacons of light to the nations, distinct in their faithfulness. Proclaiming and living God's truth was their vocation, their reason for existence.

Israel's truth-doing was rooted in Yahweh, the God of Truth. Truth was not a speculative matter, an abstract concept for the Hebrew people. Truth was known in covenantal relationship with God. The biblical covenants are a record of God's initiative to create a people unlike "the nations," a people sustained and ruled by God, a people who would be a divine instrument for blessing all the earth's inhabitants. These covenants called for steadfastness, truth, faithfulness, justice, and mercy to be lived out by the Hebrews in response to Yahweh's mighty acts and self-revelation. Israel's sacred history is complemented by the psalmists' eloquent praise of God's truth-doing, hymns about the wonderful deliverance of the nation from enemies, and God's mercy to individuals. The people sang together, "Make me to know thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me, for thou art the God of my salvation; for thee I wait all the day long."¹ The covenant law was precious to the Israelites, for it made plain the way of righteousness, the way which pleases God.

Despite God's faithfulness, the covenant with Israel was not kept well. Israel was frequently judged to be "like the nations", unfaithful and in need of chastisement. In spite of the hostility their messages aroused, prophets arose who called Israel back to God. Remember Elijah on Mt. Carmel in his contest with the prophets of Baal? "How long will you go limping with two different opinions?" he asked. "If the Lord, is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him."² Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the other prophetic messengers challenged the people and the kings of Israel to turn from worship of wealth and military might to the one God, the one who had covenanted with them. Each prophet in turn reminded Israel that God requires truthful, faithful living, not just saying the right words in the temple rituals. As Jeremiah said, "O Lord, do not thy eyes look for truth?"³ Though the prophets' words were seldom heeded in their own time, the righteous continued steadfast in their hopes for a new day when God's truth would be done.

That new day dawned in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the one Christians call Lord and Master. Jesus' ministry, death, and resurrection showed forth God's truth in both word and deed. In Jesus, a new covenant was given for all who were able to receive it. Being his disciple meant healing and reconciling the way Jesus did; loving the poor the way Jesus did; speaking out against injustice and hardheartedness the way Jesus did; suffering the way Jesus did; and having deep fellowship with others who believe that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. Jesus warned his followers against lip service, saying, "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?" and compared those who do not do the truth to those who build a

house without a foundation.⁴ As he emphasized the connection between love and doing the truth, Jesus warned disciples that they would endure persecution at the world's hands because they had been chosen out of the world and belong to it no longer.⁵ Jesus spoke harshly about his own society, and he had no illusion that the earthly powers would receive his message, though he yearned for them to do so. Jesus knew that only a few would respond to his life and teaching, and he called upon his disciples to be the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the leaven in the loaf, sufficiently transformed by God's Spirit to have an impact upon the world for good.

Even a hasty reading of the New Testament reveals both the joy and the pain of being Jesus' disciple. As early Christians followed Jesus' example, they reaped both the reward of the Kingdom's presence and the opposition of the world's powers. Recently Robert Webber wrote an article in which he described the process of becoming a Christian in the third century. Conversion took three years, in order to allow time for the new community members to live the faith as well as learn about it. The early church knew the difference between Jesus' way and the way of the world, and expected that it would take many months to wean a new Christian away from his or her former lifestyle. First the demands of the gospel were made clear, and change of vocation called for if the old vocation was related to the powers of evil. The list of forbidden vocations included idol-maker, astrologer, soldier, and civil magistrate. The first phase, with its emphasis on a clear "no" to the kingdom of evil, was followed by a period of purification and supervised discipleship.⁶ In short, becoming part of the church in the third century was a life-changing, life-orienting process of "putting on Christ" in the context of the discipling community. In that era the church took seriously John's warning about cheap grace: "By this we may be sure that we are in (Christ): (those) who say (they) abide in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked."⁷ Truth was not head-level propositions, but the divine impulse to which community members became conformed, as the indwelling Holy Spirit came to regulate both their knowing and their doing.

Early Quakerism: God's Truth in Christ Creates a New Community

Unfortunately the counterculture, first-allegiance-demanding, persecuted church became in the fourth century the state religion of the Roman Empire. Christianity became a cultural requirement, a civil religion. The agape meal and worship characteristic of the house church setting was forgotten as ritualized observances in the great basilicas took their place. Despite the monastic renewal movements and saintly individuals who transcended the Christian status quo, the powerful state church lost much of its ability to do the truth as understood by the Old Testament prophets, Jesus Christ, and the early church. Instead of the truth meaning Jesus' new covenant reality, wholehearted pursuit of God's will and Kingdom, repentance,

servanthood, righteousness, and love, the truth came to be defined in self-serving ways by the culture-dominated church.

In response to the church's worldliness, renewal movements appeared from the fourth century onward. In seventeenth-century England a radical group called Quakers declared their loyalty to Christ in terms deliberately drawn from the Bible; but, unlike their Puritan contemporaries, they would not seek or even accept worldly power as a means of reforming the church or society. Early Friends' revolutionary faithfulness meant independence from the world's outward powers and many of its cultural assumptions. Quaker conviction was only the beginning of the Lamb's war against evil in themselves and the world. George Fox urged his readers to walk in the truth, saying that "it is not he that only talks of truth, but (mark), he that doth truth."

Quakers were not content with mere assent to truths, for they knew that truth is not the opposite of ignorance, but rather the opposite of unfaithfulness. As Robert Barclay put it,

though thousands should be convinced in their understandings of the truths we maintain, yet if they were not sensible of this inward life, their souls not changed from unrighteousness to righteousness, they could add nothing to us. For this is that cement whereby we are joined 'as to the Lord,' so to one another, and without this none can worship with us.⁹

The early Quaker emphasis upon doing the truth was not individualistic. Lewis Benson wrote that "for early Friends truth was something far greater than the message they preached. It was for them a comprehensive term that embraced publishing truth, receiving truth and being gathered into a fellowship of Friends in the Truth."¹⁰ Barclay spoke for early Friends when he wrote that the church is a people

gathered by God's Spirit,...who through their hearts being united in the same love, and their understandings informed in the same truths, gather, meet, and assemble to wait upon God, to worship him, and to bear a joint testimony for the truth against error, suffering for the same, and so becoming through this fellowship as one family and household in certain respects, do each of them watch over, teach, instruct, and care for one another...¹¹

The economic, social, and even physical suffering which came with rejecting the world's ways and spirit was accepted by early Friends as part of being Jesus' disciples. Fox knew what a hard choice this is, and said of Adam Sandys and his wife, "if they could have had the world and Truth together they would have received it."¹² William Penn, too, surely struggled with Fox's call to reject the world's ways. He wrote about the denial of the lawful self in No Cross, No Crown, chapter four, and the apocryphal story about wearing his sword as long as he could is a

fine illustration of the call to Christian discipleship. Though Robert Barclay was tempted as a young man to strive for riches, his experience of Christ's power among the Aberdeen Quakers was strong, strong enough to be the decisive force in his life.

Second and third-generation Quakers evidently had great difficulty resisting the lure of social standing, wealth, and reasonable religion which emphasized morality more than the cross. In 1757, John Woolman, struggling with the matter of war taxes, looked back upon early Friends and the changes which had taken place in the intervening years. He wrote,

The profession of our predecessors was for a time accounted reproachful, but at length their uprightness being understood by the rulers, and their innocent sufferings moving them, our way of worship was tolerated, and many of our members in these colonies became active in civil government. Being thus tried with favor and prosperity, this world appeared inviting; our minds have been turned to the improvement of our country, to merchandise and the sciences;...but in our present condition I believe it will not be denied that a carnal mind is gaining upon us.¹³

Because of the faithfulness of John Woolman and others, the Society of Friends experienced a measure of renewal in mid-eighteenth-century America, despite the fact that most weighty Friends continued to enjoy the finest of plain things and managed to preserve their reputation and influence. After the Civil War, Quaker participation in American frontier revivalism brought numerical growth, a renewal of piety, and an increase in missionary zeal there. But as we look back at Friends history since the first generation, it seems that just as the early church was co-opted by the world's powers, Quakers soon lost their early conviction that they were called to be the "pillar and ground of truth."¹⁴ In general, it seems that since 1689 Quakers have been increasingly comfortable with the world's ways and rewards. Today's Society of Friends has by and large forgotten what fighting the Lamb's war against the world's evil powers means, because for so long we have been content to moralize, preserve our respectability, work for social reform, and offer charity to the world's needy ones. It is time for us to ask what following Jesus like early Christians and early Quakers did could mean at the close of the twentieth century.

Doing the Truth Today

The Need for Gospel Truth

It is tempting to think that the world was worse in the first century or the seventeenth, that with a few adjustments here and there our twentieth-century American world could resemble what God has in mind for humanity. The temptation to think well of the hand that feeds us is strong, but the prophets

of our time have done their best to help Christians see that all of our society's structures are captive to the same principalities and powers which oppressed people in Bible times. Martin Luther King, Dorothy Day, Rob Tucker, Dan Berrigan, Jim Wallis, James and Shelley Douglass, Ron Sider, Tom Sine, Tony Campolo and others have courageously unmasked the greed and prideful power-seeking which underlie much of America's economic, political, social, and religious life.

The very technology and affluence which makes the world "smaller" and more comfortable for us has served to undermine face-to-face relationships and interdependence, to weaken the family and church settings in which the Kingdom of God may find expression. Instead of talking with one another, families sit and watch television. Instead of sharing and working and praying together, churches compete with one another to provide inspiring and entertaining programs for attenders to watch. Television isolates people even when they watch with others, and makes viewers passive recipients of popular values which are frequently the opposite of the gospel. Thomas Dubay notes that despite the reams of writing and the hours devoted to group dynamics and practical psychology, we may be the loneliest society in human history.¹⁵

The lack of connectedness is reflected in our housing and lifestyles. Many people live in apartments or air conditioned houses in the suburbs with family rooms in the back. Sitting on the front porch makes no sense in these settings, even if there were a front porch, because neighborliness has nearly disappeared. Standardized shopping malls and their theatres supplement television as purveyors of the world's messages. Holidays and family celebrations have come to be defined by our materialist culture as occasions for buying things. Corporations which offer goods and services are ordinarily more concerned with profits than with the wholesomeness of what they sell or the impact of management's style upon the family life of their employees. America has become a huge anti-community where the principalities and powers encourage anonymous separateness and people have come to expect a high rate of turnover in their human relationships.

Politicians' concern for the truth and their entire constituency's welfare is frequently secondary to maintaining the status quo which favors the rich and powerful who can contribute the money to re-elect them. Make no mistake. The principalities and powers are in control of society in our technological era, just as they were dominant in Jesus' time when the Roman Empire held sway.

The Worldliness of the Church

What is the church saying and doing in the midst of our fallen, captive society? One does not hear the term "worldliness" in church meetings much these days, perhaps because

the word was misused a generation or two ago. When I was young, preachers condemned worldliness. In those days it meant going to movies, dancing, smoking cigarettes, drinking alcoholic beverages, and telling off-color jokes. It is time to reclaim that word, to invest it with deeper meaning. In the biblical sense, worldliness is not so much a set of bad behaviors, but a passive acceptance of popular values which are contrary to the Kingdom of God which Jesus announced.

Despite Jesus' popularity, few churchgoers live much differently six days a week than their unchurched neighbors do. Religious conservatives and religious liberals alike have preferred the world's security and glory to following Jesus' way of truth. Both have regularly spiritualized and privatized the gospel, setting aside its radical call. Churches of every label routinely preach grace without discipleship, a spectator religion of health, wealth, and nationalism, a false gospel thoroughly compatible with the anti-Christian mainstream culture all around us. Today church membership often means no more than attending worship and an occasional committee meeting. Jobs, hobbies, and leisure organizations frequently have higher priority in members' lives. The church has allowed itself to be a comforting caboose rather than the locomotive which powers the lives of those who gather in the name of Jesus.

And, sadly, this seduction by the culture's individualistic consumer religion is well advanced in the Society of Friends today. Surely Paul would say to us, "you were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?"¹⁶ As Thomas Kelly said, there are plenty of Quakers to follow Christ halfway,¹⁷ right up to the point where Christ's call begins to disrupt our worldly success. The fiery, salty, yeasty, illuminating presence in the world typical of early Christians and early Quakers has given way to a polite understanding negotiated with the world and its powers.

The problem is not withdrawal from the world, if that ever was a Quaker problem, but being subverted by it. The world's powers will tolerate our religion as long as it sticks to Sunday morning activities and humanitarian assistance, as long as it does not resist too much the will of the Pentagon, Wall Street, Madison Avenue, and other powerful institutions, as long as we concentrate on bringing hope and comfort to individuals and temporary aid to society's losers. The powers are pleased so long as those who name the name of Jesus demonstrate by their lives that their ultimate allegiance is to the gods of this world and their false promises.

Tamed Christianity appeals to some, but many people find it hard to see what difference mild civil religion makes in the world. In his book, Brother to a Dragonfly, southern prophet Will Campbell, who founded Koinonia Farms, relates a conversation with an earthy, irreverent friend named P.D. who compared the contemporary American church to an Easter chicken.

"You know, Preacher Will, that church of yours and Mr. Jesus is like an Easter chicken my little Karen got one time. Man, it was a pretty thing. Dyed a deep purple. Bought it at the grocery store."

I interrupted that white was the liturgical color for Easter but he ignored me. "And it served a real useful purpose. Karen loved it. It made her happy. And that made me and her mamma happy. Okay?" I said, "Okay."

"But pretty soon that baby chicken started feathering out. You know, sprouting little pin feathers. Wings and tail and all that. And you know what? Them new feathers weren't purple. No siree bob, that fool chicken wasn't really purple at all. That fool chicken was a Rhode Island Red. And when all them little red feathers started growing out from under that purple it was one hell of a sight. All of a sudden Karen couldn't stand that chicken any more."

"I think I see what you're driving at, P.D."

"No, hell no, Preacher Will. You don't understand any such thing for I haven't got to my point yet."

"Okay. I'm sorry. Rave on."

"Well, we took that half-purple and half-red thing out to her Grandma's house and threw it out in the chicken yard with all the other chickens. It was still different, you understand. That little chicken. And the other chickens knew it was different. And they resisted it like hell. Pecked it, chased it all over the yard. Wouldn't have anything to do with it. Wouldn't even let it get on the roost with them. And that little chicken knew it was different too. It didn't bother any of the others. Wouldn't fight back or anything. Just stayed by itself. Really suffered too. But little by little, day by day, that chicken came around. Pretty soon, even before all the purple grew off of it while it was still just a little bit different, that fool thing was behaving just like the rest of them chickens. Man, it would fight back, peck the hell out of the ones littler than it was, knock them down to catch a bug if it got to it in time. Yes siree bob, the chicken world turned that Easter chicken around. And now you can't tell one chicken from another. They're all just alike. The Easter chicken is just one more chicken. There ain't a fool think different about it."

I knew he wanted to argue and I didn't want to disappoint him.

"Well, P.D., the Easter chicken is still useful. It lays eggs, doesn't it?"

It was just what he wanted me to say. "Yea, Preacher Will. It lays eggs. But they all lay eggs. Who needs an Easter chicken for that? And the Rotary Club serves coffee. And the 4-H Club says prayers. The Red Cross takes up offerings for hurricane victims. Mental Health does counseling and the Boy Scouts have youth programs.¹⁸

Living Communities with Kingdom Vision

Will Campbell's point should be painfully obvious to concerned Quakers, since we've been in the world's chicken yard more than three hundred years. If today's Society of Friends is to escape the confines of our culture's status quo, a radical re-visioning is needed. We need a model of the church which is Holy Spirit inspired and encouraged by the testimony of the earliest Christians and the earliest Quakers, a vision of the Kingdom of God lived out in our own time. John Howard Yoder calls Jesus' gospel the original revolution, for those who repented of the world's way and were reborn became a counter-culture church, a distinct community which blessed the poor and renounced violence. Without Quaker communities which seek the Kingdom of God passionately, without people who put doing God's truth before all else, the amount of truth-doing among us is apt to be conventionally moderate.

Part of the difficulty lies in the fact that the world has succeeded in conforming Christians' minds to its definition of truth. Check your dictionary and you will see that the world defines truth as that which is generally agreed upon, legal, and dependable, or as that which is factual, actual, and measurable. The problem with these worldly definitions is that truth defined this way is compatible with hardness of heart. When the sinful human status quo taken as the measure of truth, custom, legal precedent, and selective factuality can be used to resist God's will.

In Jesus Christ we see a different definition of truth, one that goes far beyond the Pharisees' conventions and the scientists' empirical verifiability. In Christ we find truth defined in terms of covenant faithfulness initiated and made possible by God. Biblical truth is a matter of the heart as well as of the head, which makes love and righteousness indispensable to a right definition of truth from a spiritual perspective.

As long as our vision of the truth fails to transcend the world's, modern Quakers will have conventional churches and meetings rather than covenanted, Kingdom-seeking fellowships. Without an understanding of truth as love and justice we will continue to think of the early church and early Quakerism as movements to be admired, but to which we need not aspire. It

seems to me that the radical nature of gospel truth is too seldom heard or understood in a Society of Friends which has made its peace with the world. Jesus' teachings have been spiritualized into privatism and his Kingdom postponed to a time after death or a cataclysmic second coming. In Paul's words, we have "suppressed the truth,"¹⁹ that we may serve false gods of wealth, worldly security, and social acceptance. For Friends there has been such a lengthy truce in the Lamb's war that the principalities and powers no longer fear us. Religion as dull habit is all too common. Never has renewal been more needed by American Quakers.

Friends have much to learn from the radical Christian movements of our day: the Gospel Temple in Philadelphia, Reba Place Fellowship in Evanston, the Sojourners Community and Church of the Savior in Washington, D.C., and the house church movement. Throughout the centuries it has been small, committed fellowships which have brought renewal to the church. Where would Christianity be today without the witness of the Benedictines, the Franciscans, the Anabaptists, the Quakers, and the Wesleyans? Each in turn have been witnesses to the radical gospel of Jesus which turns the world's values upside down. In each case a shared common life set them apart from conventional religion and the world around them. Each founding generation had that spirit of unity which was the distinguishing feature of the early church.

Because doing the truth as it has been revealed to us in Jesus Christ requires a firm "no" to the world's priorities and values, alternative communities with a different set of values must come into being. Without such a faith community, an individual or family will be overmatched, will find it almost impossible to escape the worldly culture's version of reality. Christians who desire to overcome the world's values must immerse themselves in Christian fellowship so that God can renew their minds and alter their fundamental identities.

A faith community is not united simply because all accept the lordship of Christ or because the members pray together, but only when they agree deeply as to what Christ's lordship means and how fully it is to be lived, and when they agree to support one another in the Kingdom way. As Jim Wallis says in Agenda for Biblical People, the church is called to be an alternative social reality, a community of faith, struggle, and resistance. Such Christian communities will have a new understanding of faith and the world, they will adopt less encumbered lifestyles, and will respond creatively to the world's needs. Fortified by the presence of the Holy Spirit as they study the Bible, pray, worship, and serve together, these Christians will become more dependent upon one another than upon the world's powers and structures for their security. These communities may form within existing churches, they may be ecumenical groups which relate to several existing churches, they may be house churches or religious orders. But in every case the level of involvement and commitment on the part of members will be high enough to free

them from dependence upon the world and for the work of ministry. Doing the truth is not simply doing good works, even working for churches or non-profit groups. Rather, it is a life lived in Christian community, a life which exists for servanthood, a life willing to suffer at the hands of a world which cannot or will not hear the gospel.

Practically speaking, this "no" to the world and "yes" to God will mean refusing physical or financial participation in war, finding ways to identify with the poor, calling legislators to account in God's name, living simply, and finding means of financial support which liberate us for truth-doing rather than committing our best energies to earning money.

Choosing to live in Christian community, with all its risks and sufferings, is an enormous step of faith. Because in community we cannot hide from the truth others share. In the presence of those brothers and sisters who have also pledged to put the Kingdom of God first we cannot suppress for long the truth we dimly know. All our resistances to surrendering our comfort, privileges, and worldly security are revealed as Jesus Christ the Light and Truth draws us into fellowship with himself and other disciples.

Choosing Christian community means going beyond sponsoring programs to becoming a truth-living people. It means narrowing the gap between intending and doing, and closing up the space between what we do and who we are. Jesus did not say, "Believe the right things about me," or "do your part for a better world." He said, "Take up your cross and follow me." When Christians lay down their lives for one another and Christ's Kingdom all else, even the lawful self, must become subordinate. The gospel fellowship becomes the center of one's life and autonomy gives way to the interdependence of a human fellowship converted to Jesus' yoke.

Conclusion

Like the people of Israel in Elijah's time, most American Quakers seem to be limping along with two different opinions. With part of our hearts and lives we agree with Jesus and George Fox and John Woolman. But another part of our lives is of the world. Jesus warned us that we cannot serve two masters, and Paul urged his readers not to be conformed to this world, but lately we Quakers have not taken them seriously enough. We have lived as if we could have the best of both worlds, the benefits of both masters.

The first generation of Quakers saw the necessity of choosing, and their revolutionary faithfulness had an impact which is still being felt today. They testified to a holy Kingdom which cannot be experienced by reforming ourselves and the world. They testified to the necessity of rebirth, of radical reorientation which overturns the world's values.

We have today, as John Woolman had, a "fresh opportunity to see and consider the advantage of living in the real substance of religion, where practice doth harmonize with principle."²⁰ May knowing Christ the substance lead us to community, to deeply committed fellowship which will enable us to do the truth in the twentieth century. May the God of Truth deliver us from our cultural captivities and empower us to be people of the truth, people with conviction and imagination, people able to embody a Christian alternative in our time. "...let us not love in word and speech, but in deed and truth."

FOOTNOTES

¹Psalm 25:4-5.

²I Kings 18:21.

³Jeremiah 5:3.

⁴Luke 6:46-49.

⁵John 15.

⁶Robert Webber, "Ethics and Evangelism: Learning from the Third-Century Church." Christian Century, September 24, 1986. Volume 103, No. 27, pp. 806-808.

⁷I John 2:5-6.

⁸George Fox, The Works of George Fox, 8 volumes, Philadelphia: 1831, VI, 172. Quoted by Lewis Benson, "Friends and the Truth" in The Truth Is Christ, New Foundations publication No. 5, George Fox Fund, Gloucester, England, 1981, p. 57.

⁹Robert Barclay, An Apology for the True Christian Divinity, Philadelphia: Friends' Book Store, 1908, pp. 340-341.

¹⁰Lewis Benson, The Truth Is Christ, p. 58.

¹¹Robert Barclay, Apology, p. 264.

¹²George Fox, The Journal of George Fox, ed. John Nickalls, Cambridge University Press, 1952, p. 113.

¹³John Woolman, The Journal of John Woolman, Whittier Edition Text, New York: Corinth Books, 1961, pp. 76-77.

¹⁴I Timothy 3:15; Fox, Journal, p. 24.

¹⁵Thomas Dubay, Caring, Denville, N.J.: Dimension Books, 1971, p. 15.

¹⁶Galations 5:7.

¹⁷Thomas Kelly, A Testament of Devotion, New York: Harper and Row, p. 53.

¹⁸William Willimon, "A Crisis of Identity", Sojourners, May 1986, pp. 24-28.

¹⁹Romans 1:18.

²⁰John Woolman, Journal, p. 79.

²¹I John 3:18.

HOW TO LIVE FAITHFULLY AT HOME AND IN THE MEETING
"Becoming a Beatitude-People"
Judy Brutz

Living faithfully at home and in the meeting is to live in the power and the life that take away the occasion for all wars. All wars include war with oneself as well as war with one's family or with one's meeting. Coming into the fullness of living faithfully is a life-long process of being transformed by the Spirit into a new creation, into people who do justly, who love mercy, who walk humbly with their God, and who know the ministry of reconciliation of God and people in their daily lives. (2 Corinthians 5:17-19; Micah 6:8) In other words, to become people who live the Beatitudes in every aspect of life. Is the Religious Society of Friends such a people? Are we becoming a Beatitude-people? (Matthew 5:3-10)

I have not heard Friends, or others, use the term "Beatitude-people." I have heard "Kingdom-people" and "Peacemaker," and of course "Friends," but not "Beatitude-people." I wish to share with you a dream I had about the Beatitudes.

In the dream I was both observer and participant. As an observer, I saw members of the Society of Friends, less than twenty in number. I could not make out any faces, nor did I know any identities. As I looked at these Friends, I knew that because these Friends had been living out of consciences guided by the Holy Spirit, they were about to be rounded up by some kind of authority and imprisoned for an indefinite period of time. Deep within me I was very worried for these Friends, wondering whether they had the inner strength for whatever might occur. At that moment I was given the inner guidance to "Learn the Beatitudes." I understood this advice as coming to discern the Beatitudes in their deepest meaning. As we were about to be rounded up, I found myself calling out quietly to these Friends, "Remember, Friends, our testimonies." The dream ended there. I woke up immediately, feeling the strength of the guidance to learn the Beatitudes.

I did not understand then, nor can I say that I do now, what the full implication of this guidance and dream may have for any of us. In the year that has followed this dream, I have begun to see possible connections between the Beatitudes and concerns I have been struggling with for over ten years in the Religious Society of Friends. In the light of these concerns this presentation will explore the challenges we need to meet if we are to become a Beatitude-people.

Becoming a Beatitude-people requires that we meet our God in our deepest selves, and in that on-going meeting with the Spirit that we grow into doers of the truth. Members of our families and our meetings have intimate inter connections in our facing our deepest selves, and so the challenges we face take place in the context of the home and in the meeting. There are three challenges which we need to meet: 1) to know and acknowledge fully as a faith community who we are in our human condition, 2) to open ourselves to inner healing and healing of relationships, and 3) to share in the corporate responsibility for responding to individuals and families in healing ways.

The First Challenge

To know and acknowledge fully as a faith community who we are in our human condition. (Psalm 51:6)

The beginning place for this challenge is to admit that members of the Society of Friends are not perfect. The problem is that just to admit that without going any further would be giving ourselves an excuse for not taking responsibility for our attitudes and actions.

It is the "fully" and "in our human condition" that are the catches in this challenge. That one word, "fully," makes the difference between making excuses and being honest about oneself. That one phrase, "in our human condition," invites us to consider the reality of our brokenness, violence, and our pain. Having already admitted to being imperfect, it is not too much of an extension to admit to being broken and in pain, but to being violent?

I would like to address for a few minutes the question of being violent. It is very frightening and threatening for us who believe in the peace testimony to consider that we might be destructively violent to any people, let alone our own family members. (Brutz, 1984b) However, research I have done on Quaker families show that we are not really different from anybody else. In a study of one yearly meeting, Quaker wives and husbands pushed, grabbed or shoved their spouses; slapped them; and kicked, bit or punched their mates. Quaker mothers and fathers threw things at their children; pushed, grabbed or shoved their children; slapped their children; kicked, bit or punched their children; and hit or tried to hit their children with something. (Brutz and Inglodsbay, 1984)

I wish that I could report that no violence more severe occurs in the Society of Friends, but that is not the case. Since doing the initial survey of the one yearly meeting, there has been additional information from many different non-survey sources which indicate that extreme abusive violence, and even incest, are occurring within all branches of the Religious Society of Friends. These sources of information include self reports, reports from members of ministry and counsel, pastors,

and therapists who work with Quaker families. These traumatic and sometimes fatal situations have included birthright Friends as well as convinced, and have been reported for all age groups, and contrary to popular belief women have also been involved in abusing their spouses.

In addition to physical and sexual abuse there is also psychological abuse. As any therapist will tell us, violence does not necessarily have to be physical to be damaging to the parties involved. Psychological warfare can be highly destructive to a person's ability to relate well in deep and lasting relationships, as well as being destructive to her or his integrity as a capable, worthwhile child of God. In some families the psychological warfare is carried on in silence for long periods of time. In these families anger and rage while not being openly expressed, eat away at its members like an unseen and unknown cancer.

There are other insights from the survey research which give us food for thought. Religious commitment, as reflected in participation in meeting life and also reflected in a felt commitment to the Society of Friends, does seem to be related to lower rates of marital violence. This statement is based on the finding that the average rates of marital violence were lower for the group of respondents who had high commitment scores than were the rates for the group who had low commitment scores. (Brutz and Allen, 1986) Since this finding is based upon averages, it is possible, therefore, that a family who is highly involved in meeting and also feels a high commitment could be very abusive to one another. Unfortunately, data from the non-survey sources give evidence of such situations.

We might wonder whether the rates of marital violence would be lower for birthright Friends. Surely, being raised in a Friends home would make a difference. Actually there is some support for this theory from the survey data. But, again, data from the non-survey sources give evidence for severe abusive violence in homes of birthright Friends. The survey research further suggests that the rates of marital violence for convinced Friends gradually approach the rates for birthright Friends, but it seems to take at least 20 years of association with the Society of Friends for the rates to be similar. (Brutz and Allen, 1985)

We might wonder whether commitment to the peace testimony would make a difference in the rates of marital violence. Surely, families who are involved in peace activism, and therefore supposedly pacifists, would be less likely to be violent at home. Findings from the survey data give us a mixed answer on this question. For wives it is so. The average rates of marital violence toward husbands were lower for the group of wives who had high peace activism scores than for the group of wives who had low peace activism scores. But for husbands, it is not so. The average rates of marital violence toward wives were higher for the group of husbands who had high peace activism

scores than for the group of husbands who had low peace activism scores. (Brutz and Allen, 1986)

As I have wrestled with these data from the survey research, and poked around first with one variable and then another, and continue to do so, I have been deeply exercised with questions such as, "What does it mean in our personal and meeting lives to have religious commitment?" "What does it mean to be a pacifist?" "For the religious pacifist, does pacifism involve some kind of on-going development?"

As a beginning place for answering the questions on pacifism from a research base, I traveled among Friends during the summer of 1985. I went to five different yearly meetings as they met in session, went to the gathering of Friends General Conference, went to homes, and monthly meetings. I covered thousands of miles from Iowa on up into New England. I made contact with Friends from all branches of the Society of Friends. From these contacts, 25 audio-taped interviews were made with Friends who are pacifists.

Although this project will not be completed until sometime in 1988, there is information to be shared here.¹ It seems that pacifism does involve a life-long unfolding in which the pacifist becomes more sensitive to what constitutes violence, and becomes more aware of the variety of contexts in which pacifism can apply. Violence initially is seen as physical fighting between individuals outside the home. As sensitivity increases as to what is violent, then the person's definition broadens. After physical fighting, the next inclusion is psychological fighting between individuals, again, outside the home. Then various forms of institutional and economic injustices are included. The next type of inclusion are personal issues such as interpersonal relations involving oneself. Specific mention of violence in the context of the family, if made, is integrated into the definition of violence last of all. The sensitivity to violence takes a course from focusing on interpersonal relations away from oneself, to incorporate universal issues, and finally to include concerns about one's personal network.

The meaning of pacifism also changes for the pacifist, and it seems that as the definition of violence broadens, so does the definition of pacifism. Initially pacifism is seen only as the avoidance of international conflict, the next inclusions are in the areas of social justice, then interpersonal relations are incorporated. The last area to be included, if it is, is the family. There is another dimension of change that might occur as the definition of pacifism broadens, and that is a shift from attempting to avoid conflict to being active in relationship building.

Another area of interest in interviews with Quaker pacifists, was their answers to the question, "How is your spiritual development connected to your development as a pacifist?" Of all the questions I asked, the answers to this

question surprised me most. The young pacifist or the older adults who were new to pacifism said, "There is no connection." Those pacifists with somewhat greater sensitivity and awareness to violence and pacifism would fumble their answers. They had trouble articulating the connection, although, they felt there was one. Some would talk to me about Jesus and his life, but were not able to articulate how Jesus' life was related either to their spiritual growth or to their growth as pacifists. In contrast, those Friends who had the broadest understanding of violence and pacifism would say, "Well, my spiritual growth and pacifism are one and the same."

I have reviewed a lot of research here. What is its relevancy to our first challenge of knowing and acknowledging fully as a faith community who we are in our human condition? The research gives us evidence which cannot be ignored, that our human condition includes destructiveness. Even while we are a religious people, committed to our historic peace testimony, and believe that we are in direct relationship with our God, we are capable of damaging and destroying the people closest to us. (Matthew 15:3-20) Our history, structure, practices, and beliefs, in themselves do not prevent us from being destructive. What is needed is an inner transformation brought about by inner healing and healing of relationships, which is the concern for our second challenge in becoming a Beatitude-people.

The Second Challenge

To open ourselves to inner healing and healing of relationships. (Isaiah 61 and 58)

I have come to realize in my own faith journey that the deepest, most profound question we can ask of ourselves is, "In what ways am I being violent?" This question allows us to see our destructive patterns. This question helps to remove the barriers to meeting the divine healer within our deepest selves. This question moves us from an idealized picture of ourselves to a realistic understanding of who we are.

When our idealized pictures, either as individuals or as a corporate body, are challenged by reality, we are likely to experience fright, anger, denial, avoidance of the information, or attempts to discredit the evidence or the source. As the reality of the new intelligence begins to seep in and to make sense, we are likely to experience intense grief as we fathom that we are not who we thought we were. Working through these reactions to arrive at a more realistic understanding of self involves painful, liberating growth.

How do we go through the liberation needed to bring us into being a Beatitude-people? This process which began with our acknowledgment as a faith community to our human condition now turns inward into self and family as we seek to meet with our God in the depths of our being.

There is not a person in this room who does not know suffering in her or his personal life. Yet we all too easily ignore or deny, in part or in total, both our inner condition as well as the condition of our family relations. In the face of our suffering we may bear stoic smiling expressions. We may further remove ourselves from our own condition by allowing ourselves to be over-extended in various commitments. After all, a suffering world always needs involvement from committed people.

Either chronic stoicism, which is the pretending all is well when it is not, or over-extension of one's self can help create a condition toxic to growth spiritually, personally, and relationally. This condition is called "denial" by psychologists and therapists. Denial operates as a defense mechanism which prevents a person or family from facing the source of their emotional pain. In extreme cases denial produces amnesia, oblivion to somatic symptoms of emotional pain, and difficulties in recognizing one's part in any problem. People who are in this state of denial, if they come to a therapist, will be brought in by someone else. They will have great difficulty in understanding why they should be in therapy and are likely to blame and to project their feelings on to others. Denial is a major dynamic in dysfunctional families, and is the major obstacle to healing.

Even in situations where denial is not extreme, chronic stoicism leads to communication patterns in the family which are detrimental to members being nurtured and affirmed. When people's inner states are ignored by others, they come to question their own self perceptions and are likely to devalue themselves. They become isolated from each other. Effective, caring, decision-making and problem-solving are seriously eroded by these truncated communication patterns which ignore the inner condition of the people involved. In these families, the interpersonal relations become ripe for spiraling destruction. In many ways the family members become enemies to one another. (Micah 7:6)

When pretending goes on in families, children are frequently the unseen casualties. Children are no dummies; they hear, see, and feel. Their senses are keener than their cognitive and emotional development, and therein lies a difficulty. They need help in interpreting what they take in. When communication patterns are faulty, one result is that no one is likely to help the child make sense of what is going on in the family as a whole. Consequently, the child is likely to take on guilt for the family problems. Children in these situations devalue themselves and can become suicidal.

Pretending results in broken relationships, addictions, illness, and even death. Pretending also leads to spiritual suicide. In order to hear the still small voice within, one must be able to hear and know suffering, not turn it off. Individuals and families in trouble are not in positions to be Beatitude-people. They are instead a people who are losing life, they

cannot hear, and in not hearing are not able to extend mercy, justice, and compassion to others or to themselves. (Matthew 13:12-15)

How is healing available to us when there are so many barriers to becoming whole? A great deal of self-initiated work is needed to open us to the possibility for healing. Within the family healing needs to take place in our relationships with God, self, and other family members.

For Friends who find Scripture to be comforting and a source for guidance, the following themes may be useful in attaining a perspective on God's healing relationship to us:

The Lord came to heal the brokenhearted and to bind their wounds. (Psalm 147:3; Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18; Jeremiah 31:8-9)

God is near those who have a broken spirit and contrite heart. (Psalm 34:18, 51:17)

We are searched, and known in all that we do, in our setting down and standing up. (Psalm 139; Hebrews 4:12-13)

We need to acknowledge our condition (Psalm 31:9-16) and to be honest. (Psalm 51:6)

Our enemies are likely to be from our own household. (Micah 7:6; Matthew 10:34-37; Luke 12:51-53)

We will be raised from our dead state. (Ephesians 5:13-17)

We need to ask that our eyes be opened. (Matthew 20:32-34)

We need to ask that we be made clean. (Mark 1:40-42)

We need to ask and it will be given. (Matthew 7:7-8)

There is a resting place for our souls. (Matthew 12:28-30)

There is healing. (Malachi 4:2; Matthew 4:23-24; Hosea 6:1; Revelation 22:2)

Healing is increased by our practicing mercy, and by not hiding ourselves from our own family members. (Isaiah 58:6-12)

Our faith community is an important source for healing. (1 Corinthians 12:26-31, 13; Galatians 6:1-10; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Ephesians 4:11-16; James 5:16)

Scriptures can be comforting, reassuring, and encouraging. However, it is up to us to worship and pray, and it is up to us to take action about ourselves and our families. In our relationship to ourselves, self-work can be greatly facilitated by working with a therapist. In any case, self-work involves coming intimately to knowing and to accepting ourselves in our human condition. It involves uncovering and removing emotional and spiritual pustules. It involves forgiving ourselves and people in our lives for hurts done. It involves being restored as a full daughter or son of God.

In addition to initiating self-work, we need also to initiate work on our relations within the family. As with self-work, therapists can be invaluable in facilitating healing in these relations. Healing of family relations involves, in part, improving communication, freeing from dysfunctional patterns, accepting that each one is human, improvement of decision-making and problem-solving skills, and the exploration of religious-spiritual issues as they pertain to the healing and growth of family members. Marriage and family therapy can also be helpful in opening inner healing of the individuals involved because it works on removing the relational restrictions to hearing the inner condition.

Work on self and relations is aimed at removing obstacles to spiritual, personal, and relational growth. These barriers include false identity, denial, ignorance, over-extension in activities, and chronic stoicism. Our efforts in removing obstacles, act in cooperation to invite and welcome the Divine Healer into our lives.

As healing and growth occur, several changes result. The way we relate to other people changes. We are more likely to be compassionate, to be more sensitive to injustice and violence of any kind, to be relationship builders, and to be assertive as reconcilers when the situation calls for it. The way we relate to God also changes. We are more likely to be aware of the divine presence, to seek out and to follow divine guidance, and as we are led, to be more willing to take bold stands regardless of the consequences. We become doers of truth. We become a Beatitude-people.

In the second challenge we explored obstacles to healing within individuals and families, scriptural perspectives on healing, and finally what initiatives individuals and families can take to become open to healing. In the third challenge we will consider barriers within the corporate body to healing, and three major types of actions we can initiate within our faith community to help us become a Beatitude-people.

The Third Challenge

To share in the corporate responsibility for responding to individuals and families in healing ways. (1 Corinthians 12:26, Galatians 6:1-10)

Our meetings and the larger Society of Friends, as well, are necessary to our healing and liberation in becoming a Beatitude-people. We are all part of one another, and what affects our smaller family systems also affects our larger family system of the faith community. We, as individuals and families, make up the corporate body, so it is not surprising, therefore, that we carry into our larger family denial, chronic stoicism, over-extension in commitments, and not being aware of, nor being able to hear, each other's inner condition. As a result, attitudes and unwritten rules can be in operation which act as major blocks in ministry and counsel's being able to respond to individuals and families in healing ways. While pastors, because of their training, can be somewhat freer from this, they, too, are affected.

In leading retreats and workshops with members of ministry and counsel, and with pastors, the following are examples of attitudes and rules which they identified as blocking them from responding in healing ways to meeting members and their families:²

- Don't interfere in family life.
- Only deal with someone's problem, if it affects the meeting.
- Don't act until someone asks for help.
- Time heals.
- It's better if the problem person leaves meeting.
- Denial that there is a problem.
- The professionals should handle it, but we don't want to over-burden them.
- If we ignore it, it will go away.
- If we give it attention, it will only make it worse.
- Don't rock the boat.
- I can't be responsible for someone else.
- Don't hurt anyone's feelings.
- Love solves everything.
- Avoid emotions so they won't get out of hand.
- Depression is only self pity; therefore it's better not to reinforce it by acknowledging it.
- Fears of being rejected if we approach someone who is having a problem.
- Don't talk with mourners about their loved one because this will only increase their pain.
- Avoid anger and conflict at all costs.

There are other blockages to healing within the corporate body, as well. One, discussed in the first challenge, is a false identity. Another is stereotypical thinking where we decide how we are going to respond to a person according to characteristics and assumptions we make about the kind of person we think she or

he is. We respond to those characteristics and assumptions rather than the person's inner condition. Consequently, we are unlikely to know when the person grows and changes because we have blocked a sensitivity which would allow us to hear and perceive their growth. We don't allow them to change. Furthermore, we are likely to withhold mercy and compassion when it is needed because we are oblivious to the need.

As a faith community there are actions we can initiate to support us, as a corporate body, in being healing to our members. There are three kinds of action we should take: 1) to equip members of ministry and counsel, pastors, and therapists with skills and knowledge, needed for responding in healing ways to individuals and families, 2) to develop counseling and educational programs and materials to support healing and growth of individuals and families in our meetings, and 3) to support continuation of research and its applications into the equipping, counseling, and educational programs. I will consider briefly each of these supporting actions.

1) Equipping

Equipping programs would be designed specifically for members of ministry and counsel, pastors, or therapists. The goals of the programs for ministry and counsel and pastors would be: a) to evaluate the specific needs of those taking part in the program, b) to provide information on human growth and development, and family issues, and c) to provide training and practice in skill areas such as listening, problem evaluation, pastoral care, crisis intervention, and making referrals.

I do not see members of ministry and counsel as being qualified, or in a position, to do counseling. Pastors, on the other hand, are frequently involved in doing counseling, many without having previous training. Pastors, therefore, would benefit in receiving additional training in pastoral counseling, including pre-marital, early marital, and grief counseling.

The goals for equipping therapists would be predicated on their already being credentialed in their chosen professional field. Depending on their background in the family area, programming would cover human growth and development, family systems, and family studies. Also to be included would be the place of religious-spiritual dynamics in therapeutic interventions.

2) Programming

We need to develop counseling services, and educational programs and materials to support the healing and growth of individuals and families in our meetings. Such services and programs should be specifically geared to Friends by

incorporating our religious-spiritual life as a content area to be examined.

I wish to particularly emphasize the importance for including the religious-spiritual dimension in counseling as a regular course. All too often therapists are trained, and reinforced in agency practice, to deal with this area only if the client raises the subject. The two factors of the therapist's attitude and the counseling setting being secular, collude to discourage the client from raising spiritual issues. When religious matters are raised in such situations, they are most likely to be raised by couples in mixed-religion marriages, and to be over marital disagreement on religious practice. In counseling settings, guided by the unwritten rule not to discuss spiritual issues, it is highly unlikely that a client will bring up her or his relationship with God in the context of the problem for which help is being sought.

In considering the place of religious-spiritual issues in counseling we may ask ourselves several questions. How is wholeness to come about if we don't deal with the nearness of God in people's broken, everyday lives? How is wholeness to come about if we don't allow a place for a person to figure out their anger against a God they feel is unjust? Or to update the theological dictums they carry around in their heads?

In light of these considerations, it seems imperative that we have our own counseling services. How might this be brought about? The initiative would appropriately come from ministry and counsel at the yearly meeting level. One possibility could be for therapists within the membership to come together to discuss the feasibility of setting up such a service. Possibly several yearly meetings could cooperate in such an effort.

Let's not re-invent the wheel. It would be well to consult yearly meetings that have such services. Their particular model might not work for everyone. But undoubtedly, they would have helpful information to share. Two such yearly meetings which have counseling services are Baltimore and Philadelphia.

In considering setting up counseling services, it seems to me that ministry and counsel at the yearly meeting level should have authority over the services by having the personnel committee come from its membership and by recommending to the yearly meeting that it authorize and endorse the service's existence. Also ministry and counsel would do well to require that the personnel of the counseling services go through an equipping program, as discussed above, and issue certificates to therapists who have gone through the program. I recommend these suggestions as a protection from unauthorized and possibly unqualified people setting up a counseling practice in the name of Friends.

In addition to counseling services, there is a need for the development of the educational programs and materials used not

only for equipping but also programs for individuals and families. Particularly needed is training in listening and responding to the inner condition, both to oneself and others. Also we need to be educating about peace and violence within the context of the home. (Brutz, 1986) It would be helpful to identify programs which are in existence in the Society of Friends, in other faith traditions, or even under secular auspices. Programs which are sound in their knowledge base and well presented can be adopted and adapted.

Another type of programming we can benefit from are support groups. Examples that come to mind are AA, Adult Children of Alcoholics, Overeaters Anonymous, Compassionate Friend, etc. These groups are valuable because they encourage self-honesty and the sharing and support of one another particularly in regard to the places of pain and brokenness. We, as Friends, need to be doing this kind of sharing in our fellowship. We also need to be developing our own programs and materials. Joint efforts across yearly meetings and branches will be needed, as well as funding to support personnel and other costs.

3) Research

The earlier part of this presentation gave evidence of the importance that research can have in helping us to recognize our potential for destructiveness, and in helping us gain insights in how we grow as pacifists. Research can have multiple functions: to help break down false identities and images, to provide important understanding in human growth and development, to provide insights into problems, to aid in identifying needs, and in evaluating the effectiveness of programs. The results of research are invaluable in designing curricula and incorporating into program materials. Financial support will have to be forthcoming, if this option is to be open to our use.

The challenges we have explored in becoming a Beatitude-people are: 1) to know and acknowledge fully as a faith community who we are in our human condition, 2) to open ourselves to inner healing and healing of relationships, and 3) to share in the corporate responsibility for responding to individuals and families in healing ways. In the concluding section called, "Beyond Challenge," we will reflect on the meaning Beatitudes have for us in our faith and practice, and for the corporate whole of the Religious Society of Friends.

Beyond Challenge

The Beatitude dream holds for me hope for our future as Friends. It seems to me that becoming a Beatitude-people is an answer to the advice in the dream to "Learn the Beatitudes." This paper has taken as its task the exploration of what that might entail for us in our homes and in our meetings.

The dream also makes a connection between our testimonies and the Beatitudes, "Remember, Friends, our testimonies." I would like to look at that connection in relation to the peace testimony. Do we need to have a re-statement of our peace testimony to include the family?

One of the surprises for me ten years ago when I attempted to do a Quaker literature review on the connection of the peace testimony and the family, was there were no such writings. (Brutz, 1984b) I still feel absolutely incredulous! When I turned to the Books of Discipline from London and Philadelphia yearly meetings, dating from around 1800 to the present, there was only one edition which came close to making the connection between the peace testimony and the family without actually stating it. In the 1972 edition of Philadelphia are included one query and one advice on nonviolence in the family.

In our Books of Discipline how should we address the relevancy of the peace testimony to family relations? Do we want to restate our testimony? In an exercise of writing down my religious concern, this is how I restated the peace testimony:

I have talked over these things with you so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have trouble; but have courage! I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)

In our peace testimony we affirm our faith and commit ourselves not to fight with outward weapons. Our faith and our commitment come from the inward experience of Christ's transforming power and love.

As we witness to the world that it is Christ's love, power, and truth which overcome human conflict in the world, we also witness that it is His love, power, and truth which overcome conflict within the family and which overcome the violence within our hearts.

Christ's truth is consistent over time. We are not led to be peacemakers in one situation and to be violent in the next. The spirit lays upon us both the burden of being peacemakers in all life situations, and also provides the means to lighten the load. Within our strength and skills we often do not live up to the task set before us. We need to face the discrepancy between the statement of our beliefs, and our words and action within the privacy of our homes. We need to learn how to accept and trust God's gracious changing in our lives. (Brutz, 1984a)

Further thoughts on testimonies. Where is our testimony on the family? Do we have one to make to the world? It seems to me that we are very hazy on this subject. Here are some possible sources for our haziness asked in question form:

Are we hazy because we have been resistant to do in our homes what is necessary to becoming a Beatitude-people?

Are we hazy because of our continuing to carry on the schisms among Friends by perpetuating anger, condemnation, and stereotypical thinking about each other?

Are we hazy because we have too much at stake in remaining the same, or at least that's what we think? When do we take the leap of faith and go into unchartered waters without knowing where we will go?

If we were to have a testimony on family, I would hope that its focus would be on the role the family has in helping its members become Beatitude-people. The emphasis would be on meeting God in our deepest selves, and the place of the family in inner healing and healing of relationships.

You may have noticed in this presentation that I did not present the role of the family in terms of defining who peoples the family. Let me assure you as a therapist and researcher that family type is not what causes family problems. Discussion over who should or should not constitute a family are smoke screens which prevent us from dealing with the real issues. Our real concern must be with knowing and responding to each other's inner condition, of being able to extend and to receive mercy and compassion, of being able to hear the still small voice within. Our real concern is to be doers of the truth as a Beatitude-people. We can now ask with each Beatitude, who, then, are the Beatitude-people?

Who are poor in spirit?

Those who understand and acknowledge their inner condition; who know in what ways they are violent. These are the ones who are poor in spirit.

Who are the ones who mourn?

Those who grieve the reality of their condition, and the hurt and injustices they have either caused or enabled; who have become more sensitive to what is violent in life; and who grieve for injustices in the world. These are the ones who mourn.

Who are the meek?

Those who are available and willing to learn from others, regardless of who the others are; who wait expectantly for God's guidance, timing, and methods for action. These are the ones who are meek.

Who are the ones who hunger and thirst after righteousness?

Those who long for the fruition of the Peaceable Kingdom on earth where the relationships with God, oneself, and others are healed; and who long to be

doers of the truth. These are the ones who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Who the merciful?

Those who extend kindness and compassion to all people, regardless of who those people are. These are the merciful.

Who are the pure in heart?

Those who are liberated from violent or judgmental attitudes to others; who are forgiving of the wrong doing from others, regardless of who those people are; and who rest in the living presence. These are the pure in heart.

Who are the peacemakers?

Those who are led by the Spirit to be relationship builders; who are ministers of reconciliation between God's mercy and compassion and people's brokenness, regardless of who those people are; and who will take the action as they are led to do by the Spirit, regardless of whether their actions are accepted and approved by other people. These are the peacemakers.

Who are persecuted for righteousness' sake?

Those who, as a result of all these attitudes and actions, are being criticized, rejected, imprisoned, or even killed. These are the ones who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

Footnotes

¹Brutz, J. Violence and Peace in the Lives of Pacifists. Research and writing in progress. Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Family Environment, Iowa State University, Ames, Ia.

²Gathered from members of ministry and counsel from Baltimore, Illinois, and New York Yearly Meetings, and pastors in Iowa (FUM).

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HOW TO LIVE FAITHFULLY IN THE WORLD
Shirley Dodson

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

(Matthew 11:28-30)

Commitment

What is it like to work for peace and social justice in a world where war, poverty, greed, fear and numbness frequently prevail? Where our efforts often fail to achieve the results we seek? The myth of Sisyphus seems much of the time to be an accurate expression of reality: the stone pushed with so much effort to the top of the mountain comes crashing back down to the bottom again. It's not hard to see oneself as an over-burdened pack-horse, heavily laden with the cares of the world, plodding along, disheartened.

Yet here is a promise: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." All you have to do is accept my yoke, and "learn from me." The yoke is described as "easy," and the burden, "light."

I don't know much about farming, but it seems to me that accepting a yoke is an all-or-nothing thing; the yoke is either on or off. If we accept the yoke that is offered to us, we are making a commitment to live with that yoke.

Thomas Kelly, in A Testament of Devotion, urges us to make this commitment. He wants us to give our lives over to God, fully and without reserve. Only in this way can we become the persons we are meant to be, only in this way can the Spirit work fully in and through our lives. Kelly writes that this complete holy obedience is rare, but when someone like John Woolman or Francis of Assisi walks the path of devoted obedience, step by step, miracles happen and history is changed.¹

I know no other way to talk about living faithfully in the world except by starting with holy obedience, with submission to God. I know that I am too weak to try to go it alone. The problems of the world are too great. Without rootedness in the Spirit of Christ, I would lack the strength, courage, and patience to act in the right way, over the long run.

There are humanists who, decade after decade, strive to create a better, more just and peaceful world. They do this without the support of religious faith. I know and admire humanists like this. Because of them, I cannot say that it is impossible to be a good person or to create a better world without faith in God. Humanists like these, while lacking the experience of God, somehow have found within themselves the resources needed for remarkable, life-changing, loving work in their neighborhood and world.

But I am not one of them. I came to God in desperation, having tried just about everything else. I was willing to turn my life over to God because I didn't see any other way to find meaning and direction. And from the first day that I prayed to learn God's will for my life, I've felt guided, from time to time, to take certain courses of action.

I resonate with Thomas Kelly when he implores us to follow God the other half of the way, to give ourselves up completely to doing God's will. A half-hearted desire makes life more complicated by adding another, supernatural dimension to personal moral dilemmas. A weak, partial commitment results in weak, partial actions, often done in ambiguity and tension. Missing all too often is the joy and certitude that come when one's whole being says, "yes" to an action -- "yes, this is the action I must take, because the source of goodness and love within me cries out that it is so."

Giving oneself up to God is not a one-time motion. This submission needs to be repeated frequently, because the temptations to stray away are great. Many times I've held back part of myself, so that I could continue repeating habitual, comfortable patterns. But God wants us whole, and all of the time. Only when we make a total commitment can we know what it really means to be a channel for the Spirit.

What happens when we turn our lives over to God, when it finally occurs that our whole being seeks to do God's will? Many of you know what happens. God guides us, prompts us, nudges us, one step at a time. Sometimes this direction seems crystal clear, unmistakable. At other times, discernment may be difficult.

I am still a child in my faith, and have many things to learn. Others of you have travelled farther, and along different paths. I feel that it is important, however, that each of us share what we ourselves have experienced, rather than repeating the words of others. In this way, we remain honest, and hopefully make the way easier for those just starting out.

When I try to put into words the working of the Spirit in my life, I remember the first time that I ate yogurt. I was sixteen, and living in the Netherlands with a Dutch family. The evening I arrived, I was served a meal which included a large bowl of rather thin yogurt. I ate the other food I was served,

and took a few spoonfuls of the yogurt (rather politely, I thought), leaving the rest in the bowl. The next morning at my place at the breakfast table there was only one item of food -- my unfinished bowl of yogurt. It just sat there. I took a breath, ate it all, and ultimately yogurt became one of my favorite foods.

God's will for me, as best I can understand it, is like that bowl of yogurt. It is what God is giving me at this moment. I may not like it, but that is what God is offering me. If I refuse to accept it, sooner or later it will come back to haunt me. If I accept it, and do the best I can with it, more will be given to me, and I will be able to grow in the Spirit.

It might be reassuring if God's will were revealed all at once, but that has not been my experience. Rather it comes step by step, with new steps building on the previous ones. In my own case, this is good; if I had known in advance some of the experiences I would face, I don't think I could have taken it. Strength and knowledge come gradually.

It is an awesome thing to experience gentle spiritual promptings over an extended period of time. After awhile, the conclusion becomes inescapable that God really cares what we do. It also becomes clear that no aspect of our lives will remain unchanged if we submit ourselves fully to the Spirit.

God calls us to be perfect. What does this mean, when we know ourselves to be fallible and weak? One way that this perfection is explained is as personal wholeness: be a complete person; integrate the disparate parts of your personality. I believe this is an important part of the perfection to which we are called. But I believe that if we focus too much on personal integration we may miss the element of spiritual empowerment; God is calling us to be more than we ever thought possible, and is ready to give us the power to transcend personal limitations we thought were inescapable.

The Bible contains many stories of people called to tasks for which they felt unsuited. The story of Moses is a prime example. Exodus 3 describes how Yahweh speaks to Moses out of the burning bush and says to him, "Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring forth my people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt." (3:10) Moses, you may recall, basically thinks this idea is crazy -- he replies, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?" (3:11) He feels quite inadequate. He raises one objection after another; saying, "Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either heretofore or since thou hast spoken to thy servant; but I am slow of speech and of tongue." (4:10) Finally Moses says something I imagine many of us have wanted to say in difficult situations, "Oh, My Lord, send, I pray, some other person." (4:13) As you know, Yahweh prevails in the end, and Moses does lead the Israelites out of Egypt.

I wonder if, under the guise of a "realistic assessment of our abilities," many of us fail to heed God's will for us. Obviously not all of us are called to all tasks, and many tasks require skills and preparation. But it is all too easy to shut out from consideration a certain sort of ministry on the grounds that others are better suited for it, when in reality we are reluctant to make the effort to grow.

When we are told to love our enemies, turn the other cheek, and go the extra mile, surely we are not expected to do so out of a sense of enlightened self-interest. So it is with the call to be perfect. It simply doesn't make sense if looked at from the perspective of common sense. It begins to make sense to me, however, with the words, "Thy will be done." These actions aren't possible for me, but there is One through whom what seemed impossible has come into being. If I can submit myself to this One, this Spirit of goodness, in holy obedience -- if I can let myself be used as an instrument of God's love -- who knows what can happen?

I have talked about obedience at length because it seems to me to be essential to living faithfully in the world. Faithful action grows out of commitment to do God's will. It seems that sometimes we may focus a great deal of energy on trying to discern God's will, when the real problem is that we haven't made a firm commitment to act on what we discern. If we can make the first motion -- submission to the Spirit -- then discernment may come relatively easily, and the second motion -- action -- may follow with amazingly little impediment.

Faithful Action

Friends have extensive, varied experience in seeking to follow individual spiritual leadings. Although our inward experiences differ, many Friends find that what happens to them more or less fits a usual pattern. First there is the awareness of an inner prompting to take action on a concern. Next, the leading is tested against one's deepest values, the insight of others (including the meeting community), and the wisdom of the Bible and other writings. If one's own sense of inner clarity and certainty is confirmed, action is taken. Finally, there is the joyful experience of release and freedom which can accompany an action.

If we have the experience of God working in our own lives, and can generalize from this experience, we have an experiential basis for many Quaker testimonies. We believe that the same Spirit works in the lives of all persons, no matter their nationality, race, wealth or creed. When we speak of "answering that of God in everyone," we affirm that God's presence in our lives is something we have in common with everyone on the face of the earth.

The belief that we can "answer that of God in everyone" stands behind our testimonies concerning equality, peace and social justice. If God can work through each of us -- if we are equal in God's sight -- none of us should consider ourselves superior to any other person. How can we kill, or support the killing, of a person who may well be God's instrument? The source of goodness within us rebels against the cruelty and unnecessary suffering humans inflict on each other and calls for healing and new life.

I believe there is potential strength in our basic beliefs that we have not fully tapped. Do we really act on our belief that we can answer that of God in everyone? In speaking to those with whom we disagree, or in writing to legislators, do we consciously appeal to the source of goodness within them? Can we answer that of God in those whose ideology, culture, and class background is radically different from our own? If we are not doing these things, what is standing in our way? Perhaps we lack confidence, or are afraid, or are acting out of secular, rather than spiritual motivation.

Thus far I have focussed overwhelmingly on inward spiritual experience. Our discussion gets more complicated when we include political considerations and the impact of action in the outside world.

As soon as we move from inward attitudes to outward deeds, we bring into play a complex and constantly changing political and social reality. Faithful action requires perceptive, thoughtful awareness of what is happening in the world. We cannot deliberately "do the truth" unless we have a sense of what is actually happening and what is significant both in the physical word and spiritually. At the same time, our knowledge will always be limited by our finitude.

In addition, our attitudes are conditioned by our social class and nationality. The Bible relates that God frequently works through the poor and dispossessed. Few of us fall into that category. Liberation theologians and other Marxists tell us that our understanding of the world is closely related to our class interests. I have found no way to refute that claim. When we talk about living faithfully in the world, most of us do so from the starting point of being white, middle-class Westerners who consume far more than our share of the world's resources and live in a heavily militarized society.

When we are considering specific actions in the world, we need to be aware of our own limitedness and biases to determine if a particular course of action is properly ordered. Centuries of horrible deeds done "in the name of God" rightly make us extremely cautious about ascribing divine mandate to our personal and corporate behavior. If we are able to look back with dismay on deeds claimed to have been done with divine approval, we may be able to recognize that we, too, are culture-bound, and in need of a broader perspective.

I feel that one of the most important challenges Friends face is that of recognizing our socially ingrained biases and seeking release from them. For example, our perspective on what is an acceptable standard of living for ourselves comes from our comfortable upbringing. Our frequent, fearful aversion to Marxism and Communism derives, almost always, not from a careful study of theories and their application, but from the stereotyping we have soaked up in our culture. We may limit the working of the Spirit in our lives by failing to get beyond the biases we have inherited from our society.

"Doing the truth," as I understand it, depends on a willingness to recognize reality as it is, whether we like it or not. It involves an openness to experiencing reality in new ways, from different perspectives. We cannot get out of our own skin, but we can walk a mile in another person's shoes. What, for example, is daily life like for a Nicaraguan coffee worker? What is it like for a Communist party member in Moscow? For a black child in Soweto? What would it be like to speak to that of God in them? What are they trying to say to us?

Some questions may make us uncomfortable, but if we fail to find answers to them, we may find ourselves unable to understand world events. Why, for example, have so many people in the Philippines been attracted to the Communist New People's Army? Why, after years of social programs, is there still so much poverty in the United States? This sort of question may require us to rethink ingrained presuppositions.

Obviously, each of us cannot shoulder the full burden of the world's problems. We can, however, renew our commitment to be open to service as an instrument of God's peace and love. I believe that God does not require of us more than we can handle; what is asked, is our willing obedience.

To this point I have focussed on what an individual Friend can do. Like many Friends, I tend to think individualistically, and am most comfortable when discussion concerns my responsibility for personal action rather than my responsibility to influence and act in concert with a group. Rob Tucker woke me up.

In "Revolutionary Faithfulness," Tucker gives a powerful critique of Quaker action. He notes that we are limited by our individualism and primarily middle-class backgrounds. If we are Friends are to achieve our full potential, we need to break out of these limitations.

Tucker urges Friends to stop being reformers and become spiritual revolutionaries once again. He notes six revolutionary elements in early Quakerism. First, Friends believed that their actions made a difference in world history. Second, they had a vision of a radically different world order. Third, they came from diverse class backgrounds and were alienated from the status quo. Fourth, they acted as a community rather than an

organization of separate individuals. Fifth, they submitted themselves to discipline under the leadership of God. Finally, they developed an organizational apparatus to further the institution of a new way of life.² These factors were behind Friends' phenomenal early growth and influence. Could Friends today once again become such faithful revolutionaries?

Clearly, a lukewarm faith, strong individualism, and unwillingness to alter comfortable patterns would get in the way of any such change. So, too, would limited vision. Once again, I feel that the source of our strength lies with our commitment to follow the leadings of the Spirit of Christ. At the root of revolutionary faithfulness is obedience to God.

What would happen if Friends as a body renewed our corporate commitment to be channels of the Spirit? What if we corporately sought to learn and do the truth with new inspiration? We are already doing many good things, especially as individuals. Is there not, for many of us personally and for Friends corporately, a more fulfilling and meaningful way?

Fear

I want to turn now to the reality of fear. This has been the major obstacle to doing God's will in my own case -- crippling, gnawing, often partially repressed fear that renders me useless if I give in to it.

There is a lot that a person can be afraid of when it comes to living consciously in the world. The world which hits us through our television screens is not a safe one, but a world of car accidents, wars, hunger, bomb attacks, and the ever-present danger of nuclear annihilation. It is no wonder that many people don't want to deal with this world, but wish it would go away and let them pursue their personal lives in peace. It is not a pleasant thing to imagine oneself or one's family destroyed in an explosion. This fear hits us at a sub-conscious level, and can paralyze us into inaction.

If we do want to try to live faithfully in the world, there may well be additional fears. There is the fear of being different, and therefore not being liked by others. There is the fear that action we take may bring harm to ourselves or people we love. And there is the fear of failure.

I have not found it helpful to try to overcome these fears by facing them head-on. They seem to grow more ominous. What has helped me, however, is the promise of God's presence: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." (Psalm 23:4)

In preparation for going to the Nicaraguan war zone with Witness for Peace, I took part in a commissioning service organized by the Sojourners community in Washington, DC. The

service included a song that I carried with me all the way to Nicaragua and back again. The words are in part as follows:

You shall cross the barren desert,
but you shall not die of thirst.
You shall wander far in safety
though you do not know the way.
You shall speak your words in foreign lands
and they will understand.
You shall see the face of God and live.
Be not afraid. I go before you always.
Come follow me, and I will give you rest.
(from "Be Not Afraid")

We are not alone when we are seeking to do God's will. There is One who goes before us, guiding us. So long as we commit ourselves fully to following the leading of the Spirit, God will not leave us.

The presence of God casts out fear. I find that I am most afraid when I am least centered in the Spirit, when somehow I am blocking out all awareness of God. Fear falls away if I can let go of my own concerns and open myself, as best I am able, to God.

God does not promise, however, to spare us from suffering and humiliation. Nor are we promised success in a worldly sense. The Cross makes this clear. If even Jesus could feel forsaken by God, perhaps we too will face this most awfully lonely of experiences. Sometimes God may require us to live through situations almost too painful to bear. It is as if God were saying, "This pain you are feeling, this is the way the world is now. You need to understand this fully if you are to become an instrument for healing."

Who among us is not loaded down with concerns? "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30)

Footnotes

¹Thomas Kelly, A Testament of Devotion. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941), p. 52.

²R. W. Tucker, "Revolutionary Faithfulness," in Quaker Religious Thought, vol. ix, no. 2. (Winter 1967-68), pp. 6-8.

ROLEPLAY 1
Linda Selleck

The Situation

Last year a clearness committee helped a young member of Peaceful Friends Meeting work through his decision to become a teacher at the Friends Boys School in Ramallah, located in the occupied West Bank. Peter has completed the first year of his three-year term, but is troubled about staying in Ramallah. He has written to the committee seeking guidance and counsel. Each member has received the letter below from Peter describing his dilemma.

The Letter

Dear Friends,

I wish so much that I could meet with you all in person to discuss what is on my heart and mind. You know how I value my spiritual nourishment among Friends, and how I have searched for a way to act upon our peace convictions. Last fall it seemed that I was in the right place, doing work that was helpful and being a witness for Friends' beliefs and testimonies in a troubled land. But I have seen and experienced much that has caused me to doubt the validity of our peace testimony.

Our students are Palestinians. They have grown up in an occupied land and have no political rights. They have memories from earliest childhood of armed Israeli soldiers on street corners, of constant harrassment by officials, of not being allowed basic rights and freedoms in their homeland by the Israelis.

Last month something horrible happened. In a town not far from here some high school girls were fatally poisoned. One of them was a cousin of one of my students. He and I carefully followed the investigation of this crime. The authorities allowed no non-Israelis to be part of the investigation -- not even Palestinian doctors were allowed to examine the bodies.

My students have expressed anger, fear, and most of all frustration over being powerless. They have no way to challenge the Israeli authorities, or change the system peacefully. My beliefs in non-violent activism have been challenged by this and other situations. I am beginning to understand the activities of groups like the Palestinian Liberation Organization. I don't

think pacifism is always a responsible stand. I don't see how I can continue to teach for Friends and worship with Friends while these doubts grow. I feel very much alone. I am considering resigning from my teaching post at Friends Boys School.

Please help me,

Peter

Your Task

Discuss Peter's letter and compose a reply that will hopefully minister to Peter during this distressing time and offer him guidance in making his decision.

- Role 1: You are the clerk of the committee. Your task is to guide the discussion and pen the letter.
- Role 2: A rather new Friend, you have doubts of your own over the effectiveness of the peace testimony in all situations. You are reticent about voicing your honest thoughts.
- Role 3: A conscientious objector during World War II, you have personal reflections and experiences to offer Peter.
- Role 4: You are a relative of Peter's. Frankly, you would be glad to have him home. The whole family is concerned about his personal safety while over there. However, you want to help Peter find clearness about his decision.
- Role 5: You believe that no situation can justify a violent response. Peter simply has to accept the peace testimony to remain a Friend. Perhaps Peter should resign.

ROLEPLAY II
Linda Selleck

The Situation

Busy Bee Friends Meeting has always been a small, but active, concerned Friends fellowship. However, each new activity accepted by the business meeting demands more time and energy from the committed core of members.

It has come under the attention of ministry and counsel that the Smith couple, longtime members and active supporters of all of the various concerns of the meeting, have legally separated. The news is a shock and has saddened all. Ministry and counsel appointed two elders to visit with the Smith family to discern how best to minister to these hurting Friends. Ministry and counsel also charged these elders to ask the Smiths whether their meeting activities had a part in the disintegration of their marriage. If so, how can the meeting learn from their painful situation?

The elders met with the Smiths and their teenage son several times. The elders reported to ministry and counsel that indeed much time and energy spent on meeting activities and away from family contributed to the family breakdown. They are particularly concerned about the bitterness the son is expressing towards Friends in general.

Your Task

As members of ministry and counsel, discuss the problems and try to draw up some recommendations to take to the meeting for business to prevent further tragedies.

At the conclusion of your meeting, you are not able to complete the task during this meeting time. You all pull out date books and try to schedule another meeting before the next meeting for business session. You all have many conflicts because of other committee meetings, school affairs, work commitments, family celebrations, doctor's appointments, etc.

Role 1: As clerk of ministry and counsel, you have been concerned about overactivity for some time. But each time you challenged the business meeting not to take on another concern, the sense of the meeting was to go forward with the work. As the discussion progresses and clearness is not evident, you are

tempted to ask folks whether they would like you to write up your own recommendations on behalf of the committee and present them to the business meeting.

- Role 2: As a birthright Friend, you have always supported the meeting work and concerns. However, your own marriage dissolved ten years ago. You never told anyone that one of the biggest problems was that your spouse, a non-Friend, resented the time you gave to the work of the meeting.
- Role 3: You are struggling with balancing your own commitments to the meeting with personal responsibilities. In fact, you came to this meeting ready to announce your resignation from ministry and counsel.
- Role 4: You missed the last two meetings because you were at other committee meetings for Friends' institutions. You aren't quite sure what has been going on with ministry and counsel, and are constantly interrupting the discussion to find out more details.
- Role 5: A faithful Friend, it grieves you that your own child did not remain part of the Society of Friends. Your child often accused you of not spending enough time at home. Yet you were recorded for your gifts of ministry, and always thought that the sacrifice of family time was an unfortunate part of your responsibilities.
- Role 6: You are one of the elders who visited the Smiths. At this meeting you share some of the information learned about the family. One of the more surprising pieces of information is that the Smith's son has been attending a Methodist youth group.

SMALL GROUP TASK AND SUMMARY REPORTS

An important part of the Consultation was the small group discussions. Participants were divided into groups of six or seven each with as much geographic and yearly meeting distribution as possible. The groups met for fellowship and in-depth sharing, discussion of the papers presented to the plenary sessions, and work on an assigned task.

Group Task

It is suggested that the small groups focus their attention on the task set forth below. If any particular group has a strong leading in another direction, it should follow that leading. In either case a report back to the entire Consultation will be expected on Saturday night. At the start please designate someone to keep record of your proceedings and be prepared to give a ten minute summary report Saturday night.

Background for the Task

The Apostle Paul in Romans 7 expresses a feeling which most of us experience everyday of our lives. Read Romans 7:7-25. If we seek to "do the truth" or to "do the will of God," this dilemma which Paul addresses often seems very real to us. Do I (we) often hedge on doing what I (we) know to be right? If so, why? What do I (we) do to try to work through this problem? How do I (we) work toward a resolution of it?

Focusing on this dilemma members of the group should share how this plays out in their own lives, personally and corporately. Try to share specific examples with the group. (See on the next page some hypothetical examples, but it would probably be better to use examples from your own experience in fulfilling the task.)

YOUR TASK is to delineate THE BASIC PRINCIPLES which have helped you to respond positively to "doing the truth." It is suggested that you try to ferret out a half dozen (more or less) principles which you have found helpful in working through this dilemma in your own lives. Then, through your reporter, be ready to share these principles with the Consultation group Saturday evening. (Remember the reports will be limited to approximately 10 minutes for each group.)

Some hypothetical examples where these principles might come into play.

1. I am a heavy smoker and know that for health and other reasons I should quit smoking. But I can't seem to bring myself to stop. What can I do about it? What is my responsibility to myself? What ways can my family, friends, work associates, or meeting be helpful?
2. I am a high tech engineer and suddenly discover that the project I am working on is designed to help build a laser beam device to be used in the SDI ("Star Wars") program of our government. As a Quaker with an uneasy conscience about preparation for war, or the production of defensive weapons, what do I do? Do I quit an otherwise good job which fits my technical skills? What do I say to my family which is dependent on me economically?
3. A member of my meeting is a stock broker and has been found to be using "inside trading information" to buy and sell stock for personal gain, as well as for the gain of clients. Everyone in the meeting thinks this is wrong and that this member should be dealt with in some manner. How does the meeting help the member to see that business dealings of this kind betray the Quaker testimony of integrity? How does the meeting help the member discontinue a practice which he/she probably knows is wrong in the first place?
4. Your meeting has set up a halfway house in the community to help mentally ill children and school dropouts who need rehabilitation assistance. This is a stable middle class and otherwise peaceful community, and the local citizens are angry about having the house in their neighborhood. They are especially unhappy that the meeting (or church) has sponsored the project with little, if any, prior consultation with the community. As a member of meeting (or church) what do you think should be done? Are you prepared to sacrifice the program to satisfy the community? Do you think that you should just hope that in time the trouble will blow over? What do you believe would be responsible action on the part of the meeting (church)?

Summary Reports

GROUP 1

Our group looked for principles of doing the truth by first centering down in a few moments of silence. We then shared stories from our own experiences of leadings toward doing the truth; we shared both successes and failures. These were told in an atmosphere of worship sharing. From these stories came the following principles, to which we feel committed:

1. We will practice listening for and discerning truth, being open to our leadings.
2. We will strive to be humble, to recognize and accept ourselves as flawed; we will trust in our basic goodness and in the ability of the Ocean of Light to overcome the Ocean of Darkness.
3. We will acknowledge and accept where we are now and be willing to start from here. We will not let past error immobilize us.
4. We will hold problems and mistakes in the Light. We will seek to learn from them and be healed and then move on.
5. We will practice doing truth in small ways. Where right action seems impossible or futile on one level, we will seek the way through, where we can begin.
6. We will strengthen our trust and faith that way will open, even when we cannot recognize or foresee the plan or means.
7. We will be willing to take risks and to live on the edge of our faith. We will expect and be open to miracles.

GROUP II

The Twelve Principles Of Doing The Truth
to the tune of "The 12 Days of Christmas"

The first principle of doing the truth is LISTEN TO GOD.

The second principle of doing the truth is BE OPEN TO MIRACLES.

The third principle is when led astray RETURN TO THE TRUTH.

The fourth principle of doing the truth is SEEK GROUP SUPPORT.

The fifth principle of doing the truth is BE PATIENT.

The sixth principle of doing the truth is LIVE UP TO THE LIGHT
THOU HAST.

The seventh principle of doing the truth is SEEK SIMPLICITY.

The eighth principle of doing the truth is BUILD UP YOUR FAITH.

The ninth principle of doing the truth is KEEP YOURSELF INFORMED.

The tenth principle of doing the truth is ACT IN GOD'S LOVE.

The eleventh principle of doing the truth is ALLOW GOD TO COME
IN.

The twelfth principle of doing the truth is NURTURE YOUR
SPIRITUAL LIFE.

Reflections upon which the twelve principles were based.

- Allow God to come in to the situation.
- Follow evolving circumstances which open opportunities for action - a miracle.
- When led astray, return to the original truth.
- Seek family, group or meeting support - peers. Submit to the community of God.
- Live up to the light revealed.
- Be patient.
- Seek simplicity/obedience to the spirit.
- Seek an ongoing spiritual life. Be aware of your journey with God.
- Keep informed. Recognize personal bias.
- Act in God's love.
- Build faith so that it can be a foundation for action.

GROUP III

Our small group was perhaps the most diverse here. It included the greatest extremes of the spectrum of faith, thought and feeling represented here, as well as the range between them. We had to work very hard to be open to hear one another, to find the places where our experiences converge -- although we may name them differently -- and to be respectful and tender with those

parts of our experience that are simply divergent. To do that required considerable depth and trustfulness in sharing personal experience. Our time together was a stretching and enlarging time, with all the discomfort, pain, frustration, anger, grief -- and ultimately bondedness in affection -- implied in such a time.

In our joint search for basic principles on "doing the truth," our first principle was that we do not proceed from principles in the sense of universally applicable formulations of truth. Rather we find ourselves always in concrete situations which offer us particular choices. Our doing of the truth is a function of the choices we make.

In making those choices, we look for guidance in a number of places. We do not all look in the same places; and when we do, we accord them different weight. Some of us seek a spiritual mentor or guide, although others are comfortable with that kind of guidance only if it is clear that it is a matter of facilitating the relationship with the Holy Spirit, rather than substitution for it. While all of the group were comfortable in looking to exemplars, not all accepted Jesus as the fullest manifestation of God in humanity. For them it was equally or more comfortable looking to the example of Gandhi, Martin Luther King, or the Buddha. In prayer, some but not all felt free to claim the gifts of the Spirit in discerning and doing truth.

We were all agreed on three primary elements in guidance which act as checks and balances on one another -- although again we gave them differing weight. For most, the primary guidance comes from the Inward Light/Inward Christ/Holy Spirit, sought in prayer or coming unbidden. For these people Scripture is a precious check on and elaboration of the inward guidance. However for one member of the group, Scripture is the primary source of guidance and regarded as "an operating manual for life."

We all looked to the corporate body as the third major element in our guidance, as a place in which to test our leadings to do truth, to be challenged and to be held accountable for our obedience and accountable not to exceed our guide. We also found ourselves in heart felt agreement in yearning for spiritual community not only for guidance but for nurture and support in our growth in doing the truth. No one felt that his/her meeting functioned adequately in this respect.

We were also agreed that whatever we do in the service of truth must be grounded in love -- whether we encourage, witness, or admonish. As we explored this principle we were led to examine the dark forces of the society we live in which act to callous the heart of others, whether from fear or greed or from the dehumanizing of our relationships in institutional structures, in business or in hierarchies. It became clear how hard we must work to keep the heart open to the full humanity of others, else we will not be able to be serviceable to truth.

We also found ourselves hindered on hearing and doing the truth by the need to forgive and to be forgiven. While holding onto old guilt, resentments, anger and hurtful memories we cannot be fully open to hear and do the will of God.

However we also were agreed that it is precisely from these places of pain and woundedness -- both healed and unhealed -- that we are led to minister and witness more deeply and truly than we usually can from our strengths.

We further found that our pain can be a leading in guiding us to the places that require ministry and healing. So also can be our anger. And last of all our joy -- not only the joy which is the fruit of the Spirit but that joy which can take us to places of communion and community and celebration with others.

GROUP IV

We have found that our greatest progress in working on our task came when we spoke experientially. Having done this, we wish to share these few advices and findings.

First, we would be careful to not always see "doing the truth" as always the dramatic event. There are in fact multitudes who do the truth each day as a routine way of their life. If real doing the truth is extending mercy and compassion to those around us and to hear the inner condition of people then these are maybe the bedrock of this concern.

It could be said that they have so internalized the living principles of Christ and have so become "beatitude people" we take them for granted. We should beware of this.

Yet there are times in each of our lives when a "stop" or "start" occurs. There was testimony and evidence from many to "stop" doing evil. We also shared instances of our "starting" to do good.

In these cases we felt there was a common thread that to "stop" or "start" we had to rely upon more than ourselves. There was a spiritual movement within and we came to share God's involvement in these movements.

In some of these cases we went to God for help. In other cases, called by us Jonah examples, though God was ready to nurture and support us, it took some of us a while to accept that help. When we did, the way became clearer and the path easier.

We want friends to know that when we are called to do the truth that it is with reason, maybe divine reason that we may not comprehend, but still reason. As well, there will always be someone to receive the truth we are to do.

We have learned by sharing our experiences that we should be careful to define what success is. This is connected intimately with there being a reason. As we may not understand the reason we may not as well know how to judge our success.

God does not call us to faithfulness without moving ahead and preparing the way. We also found situations not as clearcut as those above. We recognize that some are in situations where things could be worse if others were in that person's role. This is a difficult and ambiguous situation.

We are aware that we should not attribute to God concerns that in fact, though worthy and pure, come from ourselves. On the other hand, there are things that we do because we stand in the stream of our faith and practice that are from God. We need not a lightning bolt from the heavens for each and every doing of the truth.

We must learn to nurture all of the doers of truth and when doing the truth ask for nurture. We are to be the rod and staff that comforts.

We must give to God the praise and glory for our success. We recognized the joy and the release when we have done the will of God. Truth doing, though often frightening is not always a somber and grim affair.

We looked at Paul who thought he was doing the truth, God's will, in persecuting Christians. He was on fire for God in his work. Then he fell to the ground, blinded and convinced by God of the truth to be done.

Then Paul waited eight years preparing to do the truth. He went forward bringing about the Kingdom of God to this earth and preaching the Good News Gospel.

Might we join with him in the essence of his life that I will eat anything, go anywhere, sit down with anyone to show the love of God?

We must become a more tender people, to learn to listen with our hearts. Being a listener, being a prophetic listener is a crucial part of doing the truth.

GROUP V

In doing the truth, the process of discernment needs to be ongoing. We resounded to Shirley Dodson's reference to doing the truth "half way", and see this as a result of an incomplete process of discernment wherein there is a block or stoppage. Some of this blocking may be attributed to fear which may be either recognized or unconscious. A recognized fear may be one in which we perceive the threat of failure. Unconscious fears or

anxieties may entail a resistance to who and what we might become if we follow our leading. Other unconscious factors may derive from childhood sources in feelings of unworthiness to be called to do the truth.

A useful schema for examining the obstacles to full discernment and to follow the leadings all the way may be provided by Dr. Kubler-Ross' projection of the stages of death and dying. These stages she described as fluid, not following any inviolate order. They are: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Looking briefly at how this schema may help us identify blocks and stoppages we examine each state. Perhaps it may not be too fanciful to say that in doing the truth there is a kind of death of the human will.

Denial. We may deny a leading or deny promptings to a leading by in effect saying that it didn't happen. Judy Brutz's description of chronic stoicism is a type of denial which may also block one's process of discernment by suppressing what is truly occurring in our lives. An incapacity to be in touch with one's childhood experiences may be another form of denial. To lose touch with the child in one's self may be to have lost touch with a significant source of one's leadings.

Anger. We may feel anger at being led into a situation that appears unacceptable. We might feel led into difficult relationships. Our anger may be felt even in a prompting to speak in meeting for worship when we feel reluctant to do so. There are many examples in Scripture of anger expressed at God for having been led to places where one feels inadequate. The blocks to the fullness of discernment and to doing the truth may lie in the unexpressed and displaced angers which immobilize.

Bargaining. One related kind of bargaining about leadings and doing the truth may be to say, "Not now, but later." We may also ask for some sign to determine whether or not we follow through. In effect we prescribe the sign from God.

Depression. Depression may come as the result of the failure to follow a leading and to do the truth. This may be indicated by feelings of lethargy, inactivity lack of interest and abandonment of commitment.

Acceptance. This may be best illustrated by Thomas Kelly's "resounding yes." There may be a clear sense of "This is where I should be."

A principle of fully discerning leadings and doing the truth, may be that we make use of the meeting community to clarify and test our leadings and to provide sustaining support in following them through. We may require a fellowship of validation. We also need the sustaining prayers of the community and their reflection of God's guidance. Specific ways of using the resources of the community may be through committees of clearness and spiritual friendships. In order to foster this use

of the community we need to be willing to be vulnerable with each other.

GROUP VI

Members of our group gave a number of specific examples of when they had had clear leadings and followed them through: one of these was in fostering children, a potentially dangerous situation involving teenagers and bikers, an 18 year affiliation with black inner city families, and the giving away of a sum of money. From these and broader ranging experience we were able to draw out the following "advices on living the truth" -- using this term as we found it more inclusive than doing the truth.

Prayer support is almost indispensable, and at least invaluable, to our life in the truth. We can gain great strength from the support of friends, or a community around us, especially from spiritual fellowship with these people. We recognize that practical and spiritual support from the family and the meeting is important, but not always forthcoming. Doing the truth is sometimes a lonely path. Developing an understanding of our base in our historical community through reading scriptures, Quaker works and other spiritual writings is another source of great strength.

We find the need in our lives for times of withdrawal, for quietly centering in the Spirit of Christ, and have experienced the value of trying at all times to be centered. We need to be patient, a true leading may be revealed over a period of time, it is not for us to manipulate our lives, God will tell us when to act and when to wait and will guide us in the truth.

When we follow a leading, we find that the way comes clear and we have the strength and resources to do it, and latent talents may be evoked. Although at times we may feel we fail, this may indeed be a point of growth; from the death of the vision we perceive, new life may start. Any success is not our own, it is God's in acting through us.

In fulfilling God's will we are fulfilling our own deepest will. Although this is sometimes strenuous and painful we find joy and peace in doing it.

We must be sensitive to the hurt that doing the truth may cause to others and recognize the changing relationships that may be involved, but we can be confident that it will never require the real betrayal of others.

We need to establish a habit of obedience, living the truth in the little things of our daily lives, and develop a strong faith slowly so that we can be better able to do the larger tasks to which we are called.

GROUP VII

We recognized that our expectations for our time together were that we're being Spirit led and that each of us brings our special piece of truth to share that can be put together with all the others as in the story of the blindmen trying to discover what the elephant is like, each knowing only one part of the whole elephant. One knew the tail, another the trunk, another the ear, another a leg. Each was only partly correct. Then another came and put his hand on the place where the elephant's heart was beating and said, "Feel that beat, the pulse of the life force of this elephant? It connects all our pieces and brings life to the whole elephant." Together we seek to have a greater sense of the whole and especially the source of its life force.

We discovered we experience validation that success in "doing the truth" comes with God's help and grace, not by doing it by our efforts alone. We're aware of the importance and power of prayer in "doing the truth", the need to be open and willing to request prayer support as well as other types of support from others.

In "doing the truth" we can not be side-tracked by our "worldly standards" of fairness in this life as God's ways are at work and God never promised "fairness" in this life.

We wondered about the possibility of evil forces at work and if evil is real. We've had experiences that show us we have a choice, we are free to choose what we give power to in our lives. A message shared in one Friend's experience spoke to our condition in this area: "We are all sinners. We want our own way."

This led us to the question of what makes us choose to say "yes." In identifying what gets in our way of saying "yes," we found it useful to apply some of the major obstacles to healing such as failure to listen, ignoring our inner-condition, refusing to recognize and accept our responsibility, denial and fear. We realize that to say "yes" leads to spiritual life, to say "no" leads to a measure of spiritual death, and continual "no" responses lead to an ultimate spiritual death.

A question that Friends have struggled with throughout history surfaced, "How do we know whether we are following our own thoughts or the leadings of God?" There seems to be a necessarily fine balance between humility and confidence which has characterized the Quaker experience from the very beginning. The traditional Quaker use of the word "concern" is for the strong sensing by an individual (or a group) that "this has been inwardly laid upon me by God, and I must do it." Such a conviction must be "tested" in the committed worshipping group, such as a monthly meeting: "Please can we search together in prayer and worship to see whether it is actually what God wants?" Such "means of testing" can only be as religiously valid as is

our discipleship -- that practiced discipleship that each Friend present has brought to that occasion from her or his daily life. We are so out of practice in such discipleship -- in seeking to be led by God in our everyday lives -- that what today we carelessly call "concerns" are often matters we are "concerned about," with no necessary sense of God's leading and imperative.

"Doing the truth" should be derivative from living in the truth, not an aim in itself. The consequence of living in the truth is a process that becomes a lifestyle.

Our caring about what this all means for our personal and corporate growth led to an awareness that we can find our strength through our weakness. We actually may be able to respond to the call to deal with our own darkness and suffering which could be our growing edge. We, like our fellow humans, find it hard to face and deal with the dark side of our lives. We can find our strength through identifying and dealing with our weakness. We may find the revival of an old traditional tool helpful in our corporate growth in "doing the truth." The original purpose of elders and overseers was to be a nurturing support to the ministers in the spiritual care of the meeting, meeting together preparing for worship by centering and bringing the spiritual presence to the meeting place.

We feel a concern for corporate "truth seeking" and "truth doing" and experienced that happening in our silent worship together. Perhaps our most startling discovery was that we found ourselves practicing "doing the truth" together in our small group, worshipping during our last time together. We invite Friends to join us in our practicing.

Small Groups

GROUP 1

Evans Long Room

Rosalind Wiggins, Convener
Rona Kicklighter
Peggy Bonnington
Vernie Davis
Richard Bernard
Wilmer Cooper
Steve Finn

GROUP 5

Evans Library

Laura Fowler, Convener
Sara Bur
Sharon Trivett
Joanne Hemenway
Eldon Harzman
Kenneth Burton
Bill Brown

GROUP 2

Evans Dining Room

Charles Ansell, Convener
Lissa Field
Beth McDonald
Shirley Dodson
John Huyler
Doug Kinser
Dan Treadway

GROUP 6

Woodard Lounge

Anne Olsen, Convener
Mary Smith
Janette Shetter
Frances Hill
Gene Hillman
Dorlan Bales
Richard Sheron

GROUP 3

Evans Lounge

Neal Thomas, Convener
Kara Cole
Pat Loring
Marilyn Schiffman
Sheila Ratzlaff
Donald Laitin
Howard Swayne
William Strachen

GROUP 7

Woodard Conference Room

Shirley Bechill, Convener
Deborah Shaw
Kathryn Damiano
James Eblin
Laurence Smith
Alastair Heron
Sheldon Jackson

GROUP 4

Woodard Solitude Room

Gordon Browne, Convener
Judy Brutz
Margaret Springer
Linda Selleck
Steve Ross
Carl Gregory
David Martin

PARTICIPANT OBSERVERS

Are not assigned to any particular group, but may participate in all groups.

Mark Kelley
Ann Miller

PARTICIPANT/OBSERVERS SUMMARY REPORT
Ann Miller and Mark Kelley

With a sense of anticipation, Friends from 23 yearly meetings, 19 states, Canada, and Great Britain gathered at Quaker Hill Conference Center December 11-14, 1986, to share concerns on "Doing the Truth." "Cross-fertilization" was the stated purpose of the Consultation, according to the introduction by Wilmer Cooper. And the cross-fertilization was evident as Friends learned to appreciate each other in new ways, as well as growing in their understanding about doing the truth.

This gathering contained all the diversity that Friends are known for, and there were times when Friends struggled to understand each other. As we prepare to leave, some of those differences remain; but as we ate together, visited together, worked together, and especially as we worshiped together, we discovered that the differences need not disappear before stereotyped walls can start to crumble.

During the in-between times of the schedule, Friends seemed to relish the opportunity to learn from each other. Americans learned about Canada and Great Britain. "Liberals" asked for insights from "Evangelicals." Unprogrammed Friends asked about silent worship among programmed Friends. This one-on-one sharing soon made labels irrelevant as we shared person-to-person about common problems. Perhaps the greatest ministry of this Consultation was those times we found ourselves talking about our pain and problems to someone who surprisingly was uniquely qualified to minister through similar experience.

Last night at 1:30, I (Mark) found questions that bothered me being answered with remarkable clarity in one of these chance conversations. Such experiences remind us that any encounter of two people is an encounter of two beings indwelt by the Divine.

This common human condition in spite of varied backgrounds was never more apparent than during the role play session. We laughed as one and applauded as one as we recognized ourselves all too well in the representative actors up front. And perhaps, we gained insight as one through the forceful presentations of dilemmas we face as we process truth in groups.

In our small groups, composed of Friends from the different branches of the Quaker tree, we shared our personal experiences of struggle and success, of brokenness and healing and worked with the assigned task of naming from our experiential knowing the principles or advices that have guided us in responding positively to "doing the truth." Each small group developed its own identity and way of relating to and working with the same

assigned task, as was evident in the diverse and creative reports from the small groups. Some groups saw their task clearly and organized quickly a way of accomplishing that. Others struggled with the task and labored with each other and the different faith perspectives that members of the group were coming from. As we worked to listen to the different experiences that have shaped us, as we worshipped together and prayed for each other, we were graced with a movement toward unity and growth in understanding and acceptance of each other as Friends in spite of the differences in expression that remain.

To begin our report by talking of the encounters outside of the schedule and in the small groups is not to say that the scheduled presentations did not speak to our condition, however. For each of the three presenters drew a picture of "doing the truth" as we honestly experience it. The papers spoke of the struggle to live in truth, the hindrances to obedience, and the joy of following the leadings of the Inner Light.

Dorlan Bales began the Consultation with a powerful paper that covered the history of "doing the truth" and concluded with suggestions for the future of Friends in developing lives of truth. "Truth" tends to be an abstract term for 20th Century society. But Dorlan reminded us that it was a concrete relationship for the ancient Hebrews. They saw truth as faithfulness to a covenant relationship.

The early Christians as well as the early Quakers were clear that complete obedience to God meant rejection of the world's ways and rejection by the world, Dorlan continued. George Fox refused on several occasions to accept worldly power to enhance his ministry. Faithfulness in 17th Century England could not be complete unless one was independent from the world's powers, processes, values and rewards.

"A passive acceptance of popular values" may be the greatest hindrance to living the Kingdom of God. This was perhaps the most piercing remark by Dorlan regarding contemporary Quakerism. The church and the Society of Friends are accepted by society because we have accepted society's values. He then closed with a stirring challenge to form small, committed fellowships to help us develop a set of values different from the world around us.

An area that quickly surfaced as neglected by Friends in doing the truth is the family. Judy Brutz's message summarized her research which found that Quakers are just as likely to be perpetrators of family violence as any other sector of Americans. Following her presentation, several Friends who had suffered violence in their Quaker homes shared their stories. Their honesty and vulnerability were powerful reminders to us that Friends have often had a big gap between their public faith and their private lives.

"Becoming a Beatitude-people" was the title of Judy's address. To become a Beatitude-people requires that we meet God

in our deepest selves -- and out of this encounter we do truth. The first of three challenges that Judy gave us was "to know and acknowledge fully as a faith community who we are in our human condition." We will never move on to doing truth until we consider the reality of our brokenness, violence and pain. This includes the truth that our human condition (even as pacifists) includes destructiveness in its physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions.

Judy's second challenge was "to open ourselves to inner healing and healing of relationships." Here she was most helpful as she identified the barriers to meeting the Divine Healer (which we discovered were also barriers to doing truth). Denial, pretending, false identity, overextension, and chronic stoicism are patterns of response to pain which "create a condition toxic to growth spiritually, personally, and relationally." Through therapy, openness to the Spirit and each other, Friends need to become aware of their pain, so that the Divine Healer can touch it.

Finally, Judy challenged us "to share in the corporate responsibility for responding to individuals and families in healing ways." "We are all part of one another, and what affects our smaller family systems also affects our larger family system of the faith community." With these words, Judy encouraged us to take responsibility for the healthy response to the pain of those in our meetings. She read a list of all too common myths that encourage denial, chronic stoicism and overextension in our corporate relationships and thereby make it impossible to hear each other's inner condition. Friends can work to overcome these barriers through equipping their leaders, programming, and sponsoring of relevant research.

With Shirley Dodson's presentation we turned our attention to "How to Live Faithfully In the World." We were supported in this weighty consideration of working for peace and social justice in a pain-filled world by the promise of Jesus, whose words enclosed Shirley's:

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30)

Reminding us that there are no half-way measures in accepting a yoke, Shirley affirmed that she knows "no other way to talk about living faithfully in the world except by starting with holy obedience, with submission to God." Although acknowledging that there are some humanists who find within themselves the strength to work for a better world without an experience of God, Shirley confessed, "I know that I am too weak to try to go it alone. The problems of the world are too great."

With our response of whole-way commitment to God, we experience being empowered and prompted to do tasks that often exceed "a realistic assessment of our abilities." If we can commit ourselves to the "One through whom what seemed impossible has come into being...then discernment may come relatively easily, and action may follow with amazingly little impediment." Miracles can be expected.

Moving from inward attitudes into faithful action, Shirley challenged us to examine our culture-bound perspectives and to be open to experiencing the daily life of persons from other cultures by walking a mile in that other's shoes. She called us to a renewed corporate witness of revolutionary faithfulness that can come about if we are willing to give up our comfortable patterns and our strong individualism.

The fears which put a stop to our actions are best overcome, in Shirley's experience, by embracing the promise of God's presence. We may still be required to "walk through the valley of the shadow of death" and "to live through situations almost too painful to bear" in order to understand the pain of the world and to become a channel of God's healing, but we need not be paralyzed by our fear, for the presence of God with us casts out fear.

In reflecting on the whole of our time together during the Consultation, we found some common threads running throughout it and weaving together a picture of what "doing the truth" has come to look like for us. One of these threads is our commonly felt need for prayer and spiritual nurture for ourselves, each other, and the corporate body to which we belong. While some may have named this with different words, there was agreement in the reports from small groups that attention to the movement of the Spirit within us is the way in which we come to discern and to share in God's action in the world. The spiritual discipline of listening to God, to each other, and to ourselves has been experienced as a crucial part of "doing the truth." The prayer support of each other is invaluable, if not indispensable, in acting upon the concerns which we feel to be laid upon us by God.

Likewise in the presentations, Dorlan reminded us that our inner rebirth, our transformation by God's Spirit, is necessary if we are "to have an impact upon the world for good." Judy told us that while sensitivity to violence in the family context is the last to be integrated into the definition of violence, Friends holding the broadest understanding of pacifism and violence were also those who saw the greatest connection between their spiritual development and their development as pacifists. This total inner commitment of ourselves to God was spoken of by Shirley as the first motion in "doing the truth."

The second common thread, that of our over-extension, recognized and named by Judy in her presentation, is closely related to our spiritual need to return and wait upon the Lord for right ordering to be given. This connection was echoed in

our personal experiences shared, in the role-plays, and in messages given in meeting for worship. The verbs in the Matthew passage quoted by Shirley -- "come...take...learn...rest" -- call us to recognize the inward and outward dynamic rhythms of discipleship.

Another common thread in small groups and in the large one, and one that sets this gathering apart in the experience of many of us, is the quality of honesty and openness that have characterized the sharing of stories of our own struggles with darkness which have stood in the way of our "doing the truth." As we have shared our dark side, our experiences of sin and suffering, with each other, we have come to feel that many of those pain-filled experiences have been redeemed; for we have recognized that often our most helpful ministry comes from being able to speak out of our own experience of woundedness to others who are going through similar dark places in their own lives.

Realization of our brokenness has led us to acknowledge our fourth common theme, our deep need for community in working for our own and other's healing and in carrying out the particular concerns that God has laid upon us. Judy reminded us that part of our self-initiated work in healing can be to choose to become related to a faith community; Dorlan, that Barclay spoke of early Friends being "gathered by God's Spirit...to bear a joint testimony for the truth against error, suffering for the same, and...becoming through this fellowship as one family." So today, in "doing the truth" in "the loneliest society in human history," Dorlan called us to recognition that alternative communities of those who have had the world's values turned upside down by the radical good news of Jesus and who come together to live out that kingdom vision are "narrowing the gap between intending and doing, and closing up the space between what we do and who we are."

During the Consultation small groups became family, became community for each other. This was experienced by each group in their own peculiar and precious way. Two incidents that I (Ann) will long remember and treasure which I was privileged to experience in my role as participant/observer as I traveled among the small groups were as follows:

One occurred in the group, composed of Friends from the broadest spectrum, which had the greatest initial struggle to listen and hear each other deeply. During their last session together, there was the heart-felt expression of one who said, "I almost don't want to go home" because it meant leaving the spiritual community and support that had been found in their meeting together.

The other happened in the last session of another group which, recognizing that in my assigned role I had not had opportunity to share in community to the same degree, responded by praying for me and laying on hands.

The deeply felt need for the support of each other in "doing the truth" and the personal stories of several who are feeling led by God to form Christian communities caused one participant to wonder aloud if this might be an indication of the place where the Spirit is moving us within the Society of Friends to take the next step in revolutionary faithfulness.

The final two themes that we participant/observers heard repeated form the complementary pair of fear and joy. There is fear which precedes and often hinders doing the truth, and joy which accompanies and follows doing the truth.

The importance of fear was first presented by Shirley Dodson, who confessed that "crippling, gnawing and partially repressed fear" is often her "major obstacle in doing God's will." In the plenary response that followed and in small groups and individual conversations throughout the weekend, the rest of us echoed her. Shirley was also thanked for suggesting that it is usually not helpful to face fear head on. Others mentioned that hearing the struggles of others in doing truth is one helpful antidote to fear.

Joy was both talked about and lived out as we shared together. One Friend shared in a small group the joy of remarkable intervention by God when it seemed impossible to continue in truth without breaking commitments to other people. Another shared in worship the joy of discovering her way had not been God's way. Some spoke of release from the expectations of others as they began following leadings.

Together, we shared joy in

Stretching for "39 seconds"

Christmas carols

"Rhythmic exercises"

The Busybee Friends Meeting

"The 12 principles of Doing Truth" a la Norman Luboff

The Bethlehem Inn the night before the big game

Perhaps the observation that I (Ann) personally feel the most joy in being able to make is that during the Consultation we did not just talk about "doing the truth." We DID truth. We filled full with meaning the biblical injunction that we "...not love in word and speech but in deed and truth." (I John 3:18) In sharing the travel pool funds, in our formation of community here, in the work of inner healing that happened among us, as we stopped each evening at nine o'clock to pray for our world and particularly for those in South Africa, we participated in the revolutionary truth of Jesus who proclaimed:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because God has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.
God has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:18-19)

Questions For Further Study

Much was said about the importance of support groups and communities of faith, but little was said about how to develop these. How do we enter or form communities of faith that actually help us to overcome fear, denial, and over-extension? Can monthly meetings fill this need, and if so, how must they be modified?

One assumption that went relatively unchallenged was once we discern God's will, it does not change until we finish that task or path. But haven't most of us experienced discovery of God's will through trial and error? Don't we often follow a leading only half way to its "conclusion" only to find that we are led to change our direction?

Along with this comes the question, "Do we discern truth and then do truth, or do we discern truth by doing truth?"

Another question raised by the first roleplay and not dealt with in depth is "How do we respond to the dilemma of feeling led of the Spirit in two contrary paths, due to the complexity of our world?"

In many ways, we were challenged to think deeper and more creatively about our peacemaking testimony. This might be a good topic for a future consultation -- non-traditional implications of the peace testimony. Judy Brutz shocked us with the disclosure that many of us do not practice non-violence in the home. The discussion after the first roleplay suggested that non-violence (physically speaking) may produce a violent result in emotional and political ways. Are there other spheres of living where we have not been fully faithful in applying the principles of peacemaking?

I (Mark) was surprised that the topic of simplicity was not discussed more. Most of those whose examples of holy obedience we treasure made simplicity a vital part of that holy obedience. Do we have any idea of how or any ability to live a simple lifestyle in our affluence? How do we move from a consumptive mentality to a satisfied attitude? How can communities of faith challenge and support each other in this area?

As participant/observers we wish there were space to mention each of you by name and acknowledge the special blessing that each has been to this Consultation. There are, however, a few

people we would like to acknowledge by name for their faithful obedience.

Alastair Heron has been a special gift to us all. He has brought us the gift of continuity with last year's Consultation on Discernment by his presence here this year as we have sought to address the step of doing what we discern as truth. His ability to move us back to the heart of the topic when we have begun to go afield has been a gift in plenary sessions. In his sharing of the work of the London Yearly Meeting on the nature of Quaker concern and in our one-to-one conversations with him, we have been blessed. Perhaps most important for us has been his presence as exemplar and embodiment of holy obedience among us.

To Wil and Eldon we give thanks for continued faithfulness in both the wholistic visioning and attention to details that have made our experience here together possible.

To the presenters for your long prayerful and thoughtful hours of preparation, experientially and on paper, we thank each of you -- Dorlan, Judy, Shirley, and Linda -- and pray that you may continue to be centered in God's will for your lives, knowing that the blessing of God's presence that casts out fear will be with you on your journeys.

There are many "unsung heroes" we want to thank. Our appreciation is extended to...

The 7 group conveners who led small groups with skill and sensitivity,

The kitchen and housing staffs of Quaker Hill,

Sheldon Jackson, who clerked with grace and humor,

Cherie Giannitelli for her organizing, receiving and receipting,

The Friends who provided transportation to and from the airport.

And last, but foremost, each and every participant. For it has been your commitment, time, honesty, humor, and contributions which have made this Consultation a time of "doing the truth."

MEMORANDUM

FRIENDS CONSULTATION ON "DOING THE TRUTH"
I JOHN 3:18

TO: Consultation Participants

FROM: Wilmer Cooper and Eldon Harzman

It has been our custom before previous Consultations to send some background reading material. This year we are discovering a dearth of written material on the subject of "doing the truth." In this memorandum we would like to share some thoughts on our topic and indicate some readings to which some of you may have access.

First a word about how this year's topic grew out of last year's Consultation on Spiritual Discernment. Our attempt then was to focus on how we discern the truth in terms of spiritual leadings and discerning God's will. Certainly we did not exhaust the subject last year, but it seemed to lead naturally to how we carry out what we already know to be true and right for us; thus the topic, "doing the truth."

A basic and central principle for Friends is that we try to live out what we believe, and not just talk about it. Friends want to be known for putting their faith into action, and they want to demonstrate in their lives a correspondence between their inner leadings of the Spirit and their outward behavior. Thus Friends hold to a sacramental view of life in which our outward lives are supposed to give expression to the inward life of the Spirit.

Perhaps one reason not a lot has been written on how we "do the truth" is because we take for granted that to be a Friend involves integrity on our part in living out our faith in daily life. It is not insignificant that the renowned Harvard professor, William James, once described Quakerism as "a religion of veracity rooted in spiritual inwardness." This means that we have a lot to live up to, but it also reflects pretty well our own sense of who we are as Friends and what we are called to do and be in the world.

In pondering our theme for this year it seems to us that the testimonies of Friends, for which we are so well known, represent our way of "doing the truth" in our daily lives. Furthermore, it is our way of fulfilling the biblical injunction that we "...not love in word and speech but in deed and truth." (I John 3:18) When we look at the traditional testimonies of Friends: peace,

simplicity, truth-telling, equality, etc., they all require that we give evidence of the faith that is in us by witnessing to these spiritual truths in the world. The famous phrase attributed to George Fox, "let your lives speak," is an outward testimony to the inward spirit of Christ which we wish to emulate. "Doing the truth" is two-dimensional: it needs to be rooted in the life of the Spirit and prompted by following the leading of the Spirit; but, secondly, it must be outwardly enacted in our daily lives in relationship to other people. Thus the Incarnation can take on new and concrete meaning for us when our inner spiritual leadings become incarnated in the personal and societal lives of our families, meetings and communities.

Here are a few suggestions for reading, although we realize that many of you will not have access to most of these titles. We also hope that as you become aware of readings appropriate to the subject you will let us know, or come prepared to share that information at the Consultation in December. We recommend that everyone read (or re-read) Thomas Kelley's chapter on "Holy Obedience" in A Testament of Devotion. If you do not already have a copy of this Quaker classic, then you owe it to yourself to obtain a copy.

Richard Ullman, "Doing the Will of God," Part II of Between God and History: The Human Situation Exemplified in Quaker Thought and Practice, London: Geo. Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1959.

Kenneth E. Boulding, The Prospering of Truth, 1970 Swarthmore Lecture, London Yearly Meeting.

Cecil E. Boulding, Apology for Perfection, Pendle Hill Pamphlet No. 138, 1964.

R. W. Tucker, "Revolutionary Faithfulness," Quaker Religious Thought, Vol. IX, No. 1, Winter 1967-68.

Leslie D. Weatherhead, The Will of God, Abingdon Press, 1944.

We hope that this memorandum and suggestions may stimulate some thoughts in you which will help further our common task at the forthcoming Consultation on "doing the truth."

SELECTIONS FROM THE EPISTLES OF GEORGE FOX

The following are two selections from the Epistles of George Fox which relate to "doing the truth." These are taken from Selections of The Epistles edited by Samuel Tuke, and republished by Friends United Meeting, 1979. See pp. 24, 28.

To all Friends everywhere.

1653

Dwell in the Truth, and walk in the love of the Truth, in patience, and every one in your measure keep your habitations, and learn that good lesson of Jesus Christ, "to be low and meek in heart", giving no occasion to the adversary by evil doing. But walk all honestly and uprightly; for the upright and meek in heart know God, and God delights in the upright and righteous. Thus walking, ye will be bold as lions, resisting the wicked with your spiritual weapons, not by bloody hands, as the wicked are tearing and rending the just that dwell in the Truth. For "the lions want, and hunger, and rage, but ye that fear the Lord shall want no good thing; and they that wait upon the Lord, he will give them their hearts' desire." I witness the words of the Lord to be true, praised be His name.

Oh Friends! dwell in the fear of the Lord, and take heed of presumption, that your minds run not out into vanity and lightness, that the world may not take occasion, and the Truth suffer; but every one keep your habitation, where God hath called you, and take heed of deceit, and form nothing in your own wills or minds: but, putting off the old man with his deeds, grow up in the inner man, as trees of righteousness which the Lord hath planted, growing in wisdom and understanding to do the will of God, and not our own wills.

He that doth the will of God, abideth in that which endureth for ever, and seeth all flesh to be as grass, and the "glory of the world to pass away." Woe unto you proud men, who compass the earth to set your nests on high; all your gods of gold and silver must perish, and that mind that holds them up, must perish. But all Friends, mind that which is eternal, which gathers your hearts together up to the Lord, and lets you see that ye are written in one another's hearts; meet together everywhere, growing up in the Spirit to the Lord, the Fountain of life, the Head of all things, God blessed for ever! Let not hard words trouble you, nor fair speeches win you; but dwell in the power of Truth, in the mighty God, and have salt in yourselves to savour all words, and to stand against all the wiles of the devil, in the mighty power of God. G. F.

To Friends in the Ministry.

1654

All Friends, who are moved of the Lord to speak the word of the Lord, whom the Lord hath made to be his mouth, speak not your own words to feed the sensual part of man, in your own wills; for there God is not honoured, and wisdom is not justified.

Therefore be servants to the Truth, and do not strive for mastery, but serve one another in love. Wash one another's feet; take Christ for your example, that I may hear of no strife among you. Therefore mind not high things, but fear, and condescend to men of low degree; for the fear of the Lord keeps the heart clean, and the pure in heart sees God.

And friends, spread yourselves abroad, that you may be serviceable for the Lord and His Truth. And Him who was promised to be the Covenant of God to the Gentiles, and the New Covenant to the Jews, hold forth to them both; that all may know Him to be their Leader to God, and the prisoner to come forth unto Him.

Love the Truth more than all, and go on in the mighty power of God, as good soldiers of Christ, well fixed in His glorious gospel, and in His word and power; that you may know Him, the life and salvation, and bring up others into it. G. F.