

# Features Religion

## Who are those Peculiar People?

By Ryan Page

Since Quakerism's beginnings in the left wing of seveneenth-century English Puritanism, the Quakers have become a highly diverse religious society.

Quaker thought runs gamut from Quaker fundamentalists to Quaker Buddhists. The anchors which connect the early Society of Friends to the modern Society are its testimonies of simplicity, integrity, equality, and peace along with their theological testimonies.

The four main theological principles of Quakers are direct immediate accessibility to God; the ability and responsibility to act on God's revealed will; the gathered meetings worship is in spirit and in truth and is shown in expectant holy obedience and the use of consensus.

In modern Quakerism, different groups emphasize different testimonies. The Hicksite branch emphasizes the social testimonies (integrity, simplicity, equality, and peace) more than the theological principles. Gurneyites and Updegraffites, on the other hand, emphasize theological testimonies. Each section has produced its own share of prominent Quakers.

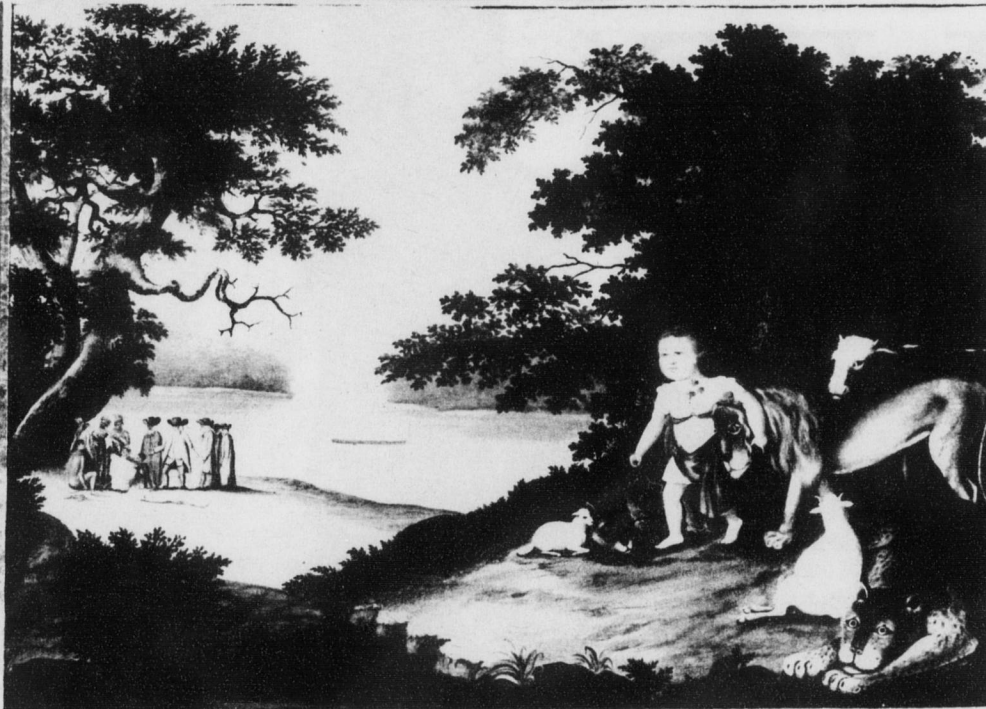
**"Modern-day Quakerism is somewhat akin to tofu. It does have substance, but it picks up its flavor from the culture around it."**

**-Max Carter**

The surroundings of Quakers have served to influence their thought significantly. Max Carter, Guilford's campus minister, says, "Modern-day Quakerism is somewhat akin to tofu. It does have substance, but it picks up its flavor from the culture around it." Paul Lacey, former clerk of the

The leopard with the harmless kid laid down  
And not one savage beast was seen to frown

The wolf did with the lambkin dwell in peace  
His grim carnivorous nature there did cease



The lion with the fatling on did move  
A little child was leading them in love

When the great PENN his famous treaty made  
With indian chiefs beneath the Elm-tree's shade.

Edward Hicks, a prominent Quaker, rendered this version of The Peacable Kingdom in 1826.

**"Trying to clerk a gathering of Friends is like taking a herd of kangaroo for a walk."**

**-Paul Lacey**

city of Bristol. Four Quakers were hung on Boston Commons in the early days of the Society.

Other colonies, however, had a strong Quaker presence, including North Carolina, Maryland, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and, of course, Pennsylvania, which was founded by the famous British Friend, William Penn. Robert Jersey, an early Quaker theologian, became governor of East Jersey.

The Quakers constituted a significant thread in the fabric of American history. At one point there were Quaker governors in half the original thirteen colonies. Many leaders of the women's suffrage movement were Quakers. Quakers freed their slaves sixty years before the Emancipation

faculty meeting at Earlham College, once said, "Trying to clerk a gathering of Friends is like taking a herd of kangaroo for a walk."

George Fox founded the Society of Friends in the mid-1600's in the midst of the turmoil of the Puritan revolution. The basic message early Quakers held was that Christ is present within each person guiding and directing and that, by opening up to that Light within, each person can have a personal experience of Christ's presence. (Quakers used Christ, Light, and Spirit interchangeably to describe the presence within.)

Early Quakers grew rapidly in numbers and quickly spread across Great Britain and beyond. They called for a revival of "primitive Christianity," appealing to those who were dissatisfied with the institutional church.

Quakers were not necessarily a welcome development. John Nayler, one of the founding Quakers, received two public whippings with over 300 lashes each, was branded on the forehead with a "B" for blasphemer, and had his tongue bored through with a hot iron after an incident in the British

from the pastor, the advance plan for the service can be altered if the speakers feel led to change their topics or to remain silent and let others speak. The leading of the Spirit remains the central element of Quaker Worship regardless of the particular style of the meeting.

When Quakers meet for business, decisions are made on the basis of consensus. Since Quakers view everyone as equal, the few dissenters are not forced into the majority's notions. If the sense of the meeting is not unanimous, the decision is postponed until the differences can be settled.

The peace testimony of the Quakers is perhaps their most well known. The Society of Friends has from its inception denied "the carrying or drawing of a carnal sword against any." Quakers are famous for their pacifism, which led Voltaire to write that the Quakers were the only Christians who actually acted like Christians. The Society is still highly active in many peace and social justice activities and

organizations, such as the American Friends' Service Committee.

Max Carter offers insight into how the Quakers find common ground among their diversity of belief: "The response [to God's will] is more important than belief. One's actions in harmonizing one's life to the central principles [of that will] is more important than 'right belief' of 'dogmatic correctness'."

Or, in the words of religion professor Mel Keiser, "The measure of Light we have may vary from time to time; perfection lies not in completeness but in the fittingness of our response to it."

Proclamation, and many stops on the Underground Railroad, including one in the Guilford College woods, were operated by Quakers.

The four theological principles are the basis of the Quaker meeting (the Quaker equivalent of church). In the unprogrammed tradition, which is that style of worship the early Quakers used, there is no liturgy of plan for the meeting. The members are silent until they feel moved or led by the Spirit to speak. Through this worship of silence, Quakers feel that it is Christ himself who leads the service.

Even in the programmed meetings, which include hymns, scripture meeting, and a message

**Computer Services Training Schedule**

Thurs., Sept. 10	2-3:00	VAX Mail/VMS	B201
Fri., Sept.	11 9-11:00	WP Dos	B101
Mon., Sept. 14	10-11:30	VAX Mail/VMS	B201
Mon., Sept. 14	2-4:00	WP Dos	B201
Tues., Sept. 15	11-12:30	PC Mail/Dos	B201
Wed., Sept. 16	9-10:30	WP VAX	B201
Wed., Sept. 16	2-4:00	WP Dos	B201
Thurs., Sept 17	1-2:30	VAX Mail/VMS	B201
Mon., Sept 21	10:30-12	WP VAX	B201
Tues., Sept 22	9-10:30	PC Mail/ Dos	B101
Wed., Sept 23	9:30-11:30	WP Dos	B101
Wed., Sept.23	7-9:00pm	WP VAX	B201
Tues., Sept 29	10-12:00	WP Dos	B101
Thurs., Oct 1	2-3:30	WP VAX	B201

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