

GOD'S PLAN FOR HOW TO LIVE A PEACEFUL LIFE

By

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This course, on how to be a peaceful person, is based on Fox's pastoral letters and my book about them, *No Man's Copy, The Pastoral Letters of George Fox*. I read the letters in Canby Jones' edition of them, *The Power of the Lord is Over All*. I see Fox's ideas and beliefs as being fresh and new, and needed today as much as when they were first written. So I have written about him and his beliefs in the present tense.

There are a number of direct and indirect quotes and allusions to Fox's pastoral letters throughout the text. The ABC about the God of Peace is based on them.

What I know about the Lamb's War, I learned from reading Canby Jones' book *George Fox's Attitude Toward War*. I have a number of direct quotes and indirect allusions to it also.

INTRODUCTION

George Fox, the founder of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), was a religious genius, a theologian, a social reformer and an extraordinarily good and kind human being. The crown of Fox's experience is his knowledge and passionate love of God and his ability to share this with others. His pastoral letters on God the Creator are incredibly beautiful. There is a goodness, wholesomeness, depth and genuine excitement to his belief in God that isn't often found in this world.

A universalist, he believes that every man and woman may know God. A Universal God who pours out His Spirit on all men and women, young and old, rich and poor, with dark or light colored skin, so that all may know and worship Him. He also believes in the universal Christ who died for every man and woman, not for the sins of Christians only.

All people have great value because they are created in the Image of God and Christ the Light lives within them. This also means that all people are equal. Fox makes this equality commonplace, very everyday, by saying that women should not stay at home and do the dishes while men go out and do interesting things. Equality means that everyone may have spiritual insights and come to know God. However this brings great responsibility and every individual is held accountable no matter if they are free or slaves. Fox also sees that all individuals have a right to liberty of conscience.

Fox believes that God specially chose and loves him; he also believes that everyone else is "chosen" and loved, too. No one should stand on the sidelines and leave getting to know and love God to some intermediary. They should be active in their own redemption. Walking, dwelling and living in God "who scatters the clouds and keeps their eyes clear."

His faith is anchored in the Bible – principally he read the King James Version – which also authenticates Fox's authority. Christ the Light inspired the scriptures and now helps us to understand them. But they are only a declaration of the fountain, not the fountain itself. After giving a long and elaborate biblical argument to prove a certain premise, Fox writes that Christ is sufficient.

The precept underlying all of Fox's beliefs and the one that makes them work is purity. Purity is absolutely essential to being a holy and righteous person. If anyone wants to know God, follow their conscience, get into heaven, they should mind that which is pure in them which will guide them to God.

Fox had a rare moral clarity and can distinguish right from wrong. He knows about the evil power of the devil but makes withstanding temptation sound easy. "When it troubles you just sink down in that which is pure and all will be healed, hushed and fly away." A genuine mystic, he makes this sound easy, too. All anyone has to do to be a mystic is to turn their minds away from the world and inward to God.

Fox does not condone war in any form or participate in it for any reason. He denies all outward war. He did not resist violent attacks upon himself. Many times he was beaten mercilessly but he never resisted or struck back. He had great physical strength and courage and although he was often bloody, sore and bruised, by the power of the Lord, he made quick recoveries. Canby Jones in his book *George Fox's Attitude Toward War* quotes Fox's statement, "I stood stiff and still and let him strike" to characterize his personal conduct.

When asked to join the army, Fox said, "I told them I was brought off from outward wars. They came down again to give me press-money (to serve in the military) but I would take none. After a while at night the constables fetched me up again and brought me before the Commissioners, and they said I should go for a soldier, but I told them I was dead to it. They said I was alive. They offered me money twice, but I would not take it. Then they were wroth and I was committed close prisoner without bail."

Sometimes Fox is quiet under persecution and does not call attention to himself, and he advises Friends to do the same. They are not to "be puddling" in their own canal but keep meek and low and in the way of Peace. At other times he confronts his persecutors – even the most exalted of them, the King of England – and again advises Friends to do likewise. His focus is on this world, where he wants Friends to have productive, meaningful lives, loving and serving God.

In Letter 215 written in 1662 Fox defines his position on violence and how Friends are to deal with it:

Live in Christ and bear fruit to glorify God.

Live in the Truth. Be faithful and valiant in it.

By which you may see over that which stains, corrupts, cankers, loads and burdens the creation. By which Power of God and Truth you may answer the Spirit of God in all.

Be tender to one another for that is the least love.

Let your backs and cheeks be ready to the smiters. Fear not suffering; fear not him that can kill the body only, but can't hurt the soul; fear not him who can spoil your goods.

Let your patience be perfect for it is the Good that overcomes the evil; the Lamb Christ is Victorious.

George Fox left an heritage of witnessing for peace which has been a source of inspiration to Friends for more than three hundred years. Friends' duty, our job, is to keep the Peace of the Prince of princes. The spirit of Christ leads into all Truth and never asks any one to make war. The Quaker Peace testimony tries to build trust between people and nations. The Peace testimony has found expression as conscientious objection, disarmament and relief work for victims of war. Quakers have been particularly concerned for children caught in the midst of

war. Fox's belief in universality, the brotherhood of all people, is demonstrated in the Peace testimony. Friends should guard against placing their dependence on fleets and armies. Instead they should pray to the Father of the Universe that He breathe the spirit of reconciliation into the hearts of his erring and contending creatures. The human family is one, children of one Father. How can any one war against the members of one's own family? Fox believes in the worth of all persons; war is the most terrible destroyer of this worth.

THE GOD OF PEACE

May grace and Peace be yours in ABUNDANCE. God BRINGS the BLESSINGS of Peace to all nations and all people. Do His will, and you will be COMPLETE in everything good.

DEPART in Peace for a harvest of righteousness is sown for those who make Peace. God gives us an EVERLASTING Peace for the EARTH which can be ENJOYED. Peace flows as a river from the Rock and FOUNDATION of Life.

GOD, the HEAVENLY Teacher of Peace, creates us in His IMAGE, and fills us with all JOY. We seek his everlasting KINGDOM which is above all strife.

God, the Father of peace, fills our hearts with LOVE, LIFE and MERCY.
NO Peace is chaos; Peace is ORDER.

God gave us His Son, the King of PEACE, the PRINCE of Life. Such a PEACE the world cannot take away.

Peace is sometimes QUIET, sometimes jubilant. It RESTORES AND RECONCILES all things and is SAFETY and SANCTUARY.

TRUTH is peaceable.

God gives us Peace, love and UNITY. He is not a God of VENGEANCE but One who fills our hearts with WISDOM. The name of the Eternal eXalted God is Peace. So be at Peace among YOURSELVES.

THE QUAKER PATH OF PEACE

George Fox makes whole what others only saw in part, a complete plan for the way to live a peaceful life. A universalist, Fox believes that everyone may know God, who pours out His Spirit upon all men and women. He uses universal, inclusive language such as “*all, everyone, people everywhere, citizens*” when he writes of those individuals whom God loves.

Fox also believes in a universal Christ who, by the grace of God, enlightened and died for everyone, gave himself as a ransom for everyone, and is the propitiation, not for the sins of Christians only, but for the sins of the whole world. He enlightened everyone in “general and particular.” He saves all people but is also the intimate Friend of all of us.

GOD’S PLAN FOR THE WAY TO LIVE A PEACEFUL LIFE.

Fox believes that God, who loves us with an unlimited love, has a plan for each of us to live peacefully in the world.

1. We are created in the image of God so we can be like Him peaceful, loving and good.
2. Christ lives within us as the Light and we are enlightened by Him; Christ the King, the Lamb, is the sovereign ruler of the universe
3. God is our Father. We are created in His image and He lives within us as the Light so we are members of His family. This makes everyone equal. Men and women of every religion, skin color and ethnicity participate in this equality.
4. We can witness too, and “answer the peace and goodness in all persons.”
5. We live in God’s peaceful Kingdom on earth; we will live in God’s heavenly Kingdom for eternity.

CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

We are in the Image of God in that we can be pure, holy, and righteous. These are moral characteristics. What Fox is telling us is that we can live good moral lives. An image is a copy though for we certainly are not God. However, we are in God's image in that we know right from wrong, good from evil. We are capable of loving others, of living a peaceful life.

CHRIST LIVES WITHIN US AS THE LIGHT

Christ lives within us as the Light and gives us knowledge and understanding. Fox’s primary belief and the central belief of the Religious Society of Friends is that Christ Jesus said, “I am the way who doth enlighten every man that cometh into the world, and no man cometh to the

Father but by me, every man having a light from Christ the way which leads to the Father.” Christ has many names but His true and best name is Christ the Light who has enlightened every man and woman who come into the world.

The true Light comes from God the Father and is glorified with the Father of Light. The Light enlightens every man and woman in the world but the Light is not of the world, being immortal and eternal. The Light gives knowledge of God by whom the world was made. Men and women do wrong things because they do not affirm their faith in the Light.

The Light lives within everyone, helps them, shows them what is right and wrong. Everyone should stand still in Him who discovers all things and makes them readily seen and understood. All sinners must be brought to the Light, for the Light reconciles sinners to God and to one another. The Light destroys the devil, the author of darkness, who is out of the truth.

The Light is the healer. He is concerned for all hurting, weary, sick, sinful humans. He is the binder up of the broken, restorer and seeker of the lost; he brings back those who are driven away. He is the Mediator between God and man, reconciles us to God, justifies us to God, breaks our bonds of iniquity and blots out our sin.

EQUALITY

One of Fox’s new ideas is that there should be genuine equality for both men and women. He lived in a time when rigid class structure existed with no real equality for men, let alone for women. In our own time – where there is most probably the closest approach to equality for women in the United States that there has ever been – it is not the genuine equality Fox envisioned.

Genuine equality for both men and women has always been a Quaker ideal. But the grubby, everyday reality is that there is very little equality between men and women, between the races. This is why the Quaker idea of the equality and worth for all people, because God lives within them and has created them in His image, is so important. In a world in which people behave as if they are created in God’s image, there would be genuine equality for all. Everyone would be free to do God’s will in their lives; they would be creative and live up to the image of God within them.

In Letter 360 written in 1679 Fox gives a concise, clear statement of the Quaker position on equality of men and women. There are no gender barriers to getting to know and love God. "God pours forth his spirit upon all flesh." We are all sons and daughters of God. There may be great ethnic diversity and religious experience but there are no arbitrary intermediaries to cut women off from God, or men either.

Equality does not mean some sort of unisex to Fox. Men are men; women are women. Women and men, wife and husband, are like Eve and Adam before they fell. Help- meet in

righteousness, made in the Image and likeness of God. Help-meets is an expression used in the King James version of the Bible. A modern translation of the Hebrew might be colleague or co-worker. This is not a relationship of a superior and an inferior being but help-meets, husband and wife, sharing, helping each other. At a beautiful Quaker wedding one of the vows was to be allies, friends working together, not enemies.

When we think about equality, we tend to think of equality for women. The unstated premise is that men have equality so we need only be concerned about equality for women. This is, of course, not so. But Fox seems to be thinking along similar lines when he writes about faithful women and prophetesses. Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary, the mother of James, would seem to be first among equals. For it was they who first preached Christ's Resurrection to the apostles. These women were the first to believe and afterwards the apostles came to believe, too. Since God chose women for this special role, Fox seems to be saying, it follows that honorable women may preach and teach.

Both men and women have the opportunity to use the talent that God has given them. As husbands or wives, as parents, they have equal responsibilities. Women, as well as men, certainly may have careers. In Fox's opinion the most important of careers – disciples, prophetesses and ministers. Every man and woman is to teach and order their own children so that God may be glorified in all their families. Every man and woman should train their children in the fear of God.

All persons do not have the same abilities. Some have a greater understanding and are better able to teach and stir up others into righteousness. Nonetheless, God makes a way open for everyone and only expects us to live up to the measure within us. For in this measure, which is given to everyone, we may see what is contrary to God. Our job is to improve this measure, so that we can see, hear and understand God's will for our lives. Fox emphasizes over and over again that God takes care of us. We just have to stand still in that Power which brings peace.

Fox believes that men and women have equal access to God and equal responsibilities and obligations in marriage. Both men and women may use the gifts that God has given them, making the idea of women preachers a reality.

ANSWER THE GOD WITHIN EACH PERSON.

Answering means finding the God or the Good within every person; the truth and goodness within one person speaks to the truth and goodness in the other person. We can understand others, have empathy with them. We can witness too, and answer the peace and goodness in everyone. Friends first job in behaving toward others is to answer that of God in them and to witness to the life of God in themselves. Even captives have the responsibility of answering that of God in others. All persons deserve this respect and courtesy. Using inclusive language Fox tells us to answer that of God, the good in all, in our words and lives. In other words, we must answer that which is equal, just and true in ourselves and in every man and woman.

Fox also believes that each of us has authority from God to know His Power which shall never be shaken nor changed. We should answer the witness of God in everyone through this authority. We can also understand the power and authority of darkness through the God of Power. To make this all work God gives us the gift of an endless life, to live with Him forever.

Friends are to spread God's blessed Truth abroad, and answer it in all people; they are to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one. Friends should answer the Light and Truth in every man and woman, especially those who are oppressed.

Fox believes that all the problem in the world can be solved if we answer and witness to the God and the Good within everyone. For Fox healing comes when everyone is brought to the Light which answers the principle of God in all. All sinners must see the good in themselves and in others.

However if people do not believe in Christ the Light; if they are out of the Image of God, out of the life of God, out of the True Covenant, out of the True Church; if they are out of the doctrine of Christ that says love your enemies, there will be violence and war.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

All Friends, everywhere are to keep out of wars for those who pretend to fight with carnal weapons for Christ are deceived. His warriors only fight with spiritual weapons. Friends are called to Christ's peace. For his kingdom is not of this world, therefore his servants do not fight.

We are to seek the glorious Kingdom of God, which stands in righteousness and holiness. His kingdom has both "come" and is "coming" to those who give him first place in their lives and loyalties. It is "come;" present within each person who consciously tries to do what God wants them to do with their lives, and who give Christ first place in their lives and loyalties. The Kingdom is also "come" with Christ reigning over the world. The Kingdom "coming." is the final stage of humanity. The petition:"Thy kingdom come" from the Lord's prayer indicates that Christ thought of the Kingdom in terms of the future. Fox does too. This Kingdom is never to be destroyed. God's goodness becomes the everyday standard for the universe. The Kingdom is not a human kingdom but spiritual and eternal. Christ, the conquering King of judgement becomes Christ the conquering Lamb who will conquer all evil whether individual or universal.

The Kingdom is present right now so we needn't be concerned about necessities like food, drink and clothes because they will follow. Still Fox wants Friends to prosper in the world; the Kingdom of God helps us to do this.

Quoting Luke 17:21 in letter 300 Fox writes that the Kingdom of God is known within. There we will find love, joy and peace for evermore. The Light enables us to see the Kingdom of Heaven. If we go from the Light, it is possible to lose our place in the Kingdom.

True peace is known only in Christ's kingdom. We are citizens of this heavenly Kingdom in which all the faithful will be delivered from the power of darkness. All true Christians live in this kingdom in this world and the next.

We must seek and enjoy the everlasting Kingdom of Peace in which we come to know peace and the end of war. In the Kingdom of Peace all people live in harmony and neighborliness. Friends live in the Peaceable Kingdom of Christ Jesus. (The Peaceable Kingdom is the vision of all people living in harmony and neighborliness, seeking the good and welfare of all.) We are to live in and mind the kingdom of Christ the Prince of Peace and not meddle with the powers of the earth. We are not of this unrighteous world but are heirs of an eternal kingdom where no corruptible thing enters. Our weapons are spiritual yet mighty. Through them the strongholds of the devil, the author of wars, fighting, murder, and plots, will be destroyed.

Christ is the answer.

Christ is the answer. “Dear friends and brethren in the world” Fox writes “should be of good cheer for Christ the Lamb has overcome the world.” In Him we overcome the devil and his works. Without Him we can do nothing. But through His power and strength, we are able to do all things.

Christ is the answer to all human ills; He is sufficient. Power is Christ’s name. He has all Power in heaven and earth given to Him so that we all may feel his living and divine Presence among us. He is Christ the King, sovereign ruler of the universe who has authority, jurisdiction and power over all men. Everyone owes Him allegiance. *Fox’s belief in the universal kingship of Christ is the keystone of his faith and also of his attitude toward war.* Christ begins his rule in the hearts of his saints, and through them he will reign over all the world.

Christ, as King, will judge all nations, send the wicked to eternal torment, bring immediate joy, and deliver the righteous to his kingdom. He is victorious.

The following passage, which in encapsulated form is all of Christianity, shows clearly that all we have to do is stand and wait. Christ will do the rest. It also is a messages of hope to Friends who are held in prison.

For the voice of the Bridegroom is heard in our Land. Christ is come amongst the prisoners to visit in the prison houses. They have all hope of release, free pardon and to come out freely, for the debt is paid. And he that comes out of prison shall reign. Letter 16 1652

Fox believes in the value of all people and that everyone has spiritual insights so even prisoners in foreign lands may speak to their captors be they kings or princes. He doesn’t say that the most learned should speak for the group, but that each individual should speak. How is this possible? As always Christ is the answer. For through Him the captives are more than conquerors.

THE LAMB'S WAR

Friends should keep out of the bustlings of outward war, for those who are in the Lamb have spiritual weapons. Friends should not fight in an outward war with material weapons instead we should fight in an inner spiritual war – the Lamb's war – with spiritual weapons. An idea unique to Fox and the early Friends, the Lamb's war means the sovereign rule of Christ the king over all nations, all people, and throughout all history. It is also a program of social and religious revolution in the name and through the power of Jesus Christ.

Friends must not fight in any earthly war for any cause, whether for the kingdom of Christ or for the kingdoms of this world but must only fight in the Lamb's War, a heavenly war, an inner spiritual war. Fox demands great allegiance and implicit obedience from Friends about this. For we must follow Christ the King who reigns over all principalities and powers. (Principalities and powers are angelic beings, often evil ones.)

The Lamb makes war in righteousness and will subdue, conquer and be victorious over human sin and the power of the devil. Fox doesn't think it a mystery that the Lamb should have victory over all the wild, uncontrollable, the wolfish part of human nature, for He is clean and holy. Friends need not fear the devil with his Beast's Horns and Heels for the Lamb will be victorious over the Wild Beasts. Fox writes Beast with a capital B when he means the devil; he uses a small b to denote the uncontrollable part of human nature. The Lamb will plague the beast. The Lamb is order; the devil is disorder.

Early Friends were not to fear the devil but arm themselves like men of war, babes and soldiers in the Lamb's war. The purity of a Friend's inward life shows them how to live each day. This purity makes them such good persons that they cannot do evil deeds. Fox writes that we must be such good people on the inside that it spills over in love and generosity to others. This kind of person can not be involved in violence or war.

And so in Him be faithful, who is your crown. Let no man take your crown from you. Yea, I say, be faithful to him, who was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," (Rev. 13:8) who reigns and sits down at the right hand of God, till all his enemies be made his footstool. Letter 231, 1663
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Fox advises Friends to follow the Lamb, Christ, King, Prince, Royal Seed, who makes war in righteousness. He will subdue all things to himself. Friends should be faithful to Christ the Lamb, who takes away human sin and breaks the devil's power over it.

The Lamb was the special defender of Friends under persecution so they should not fear suffering for Christ suffered. They should let their backs and cheeks be ready to the "smiters." They should not fear him that can kill the body only, but can't hurt the soul. However Fox has great concern for Friends who have been whipped and mocked. Others have been killed and

have proved to be “pure gold that has come forth brighter and brighter”. He writes with great tenderness to them in Letter 192, 1660: From a lover of our soul’s eternal Good, and of our establishment in Righteousness and Peace in this day of the Lamb’s Power, Glory to the Highest forever!

GOD’S POWER TAKES AWAY THE OCCASION OF ALL WAR

Fox maintains that he lives in the “virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars.” Friends were to stand in the fear of the Lord God, his power, life, light, seed, and wisdom. For they are more than conquerors, and will see the end of all wars, and of that which causes wars. Fox’s job is to be a reconciler, valiant for truth and a fighter in an inward war. Imprisoned, beaten, denied the right to worship as he chose, he is still able to see that disputes can be settled by peaceful means, and that war and violence are unjustifiable.

The origins of outward war are the lust, covetousness and disobedience of men and women, their treason to Jesus Christ, and the design of the devil. The devil is a major cause of war and strife because he incites men and women to the desire for power, status and wealth to which war gives expression. The Lamb destroys the devil but this conquest must begin anew in the heart of every Friends. The great act of betrayal which led to war and every other evil occurred, Fox writes, “When man went from that of God in himself.” In other words when they abandoned the Light.

The epistle of James, chapter four verses 1-3, gives men’s lusts as the origin of war.

From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?

2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

Fox believes that Friends experience of the Lamb Christ makes these lusts irrelevant.

Canby Jones shows real insight – in his book *George Fox’s Attitude Toward War* – into the inward dimension of this conflict. Early Quakers refused to take off their hats, bow, or say “you” to individual persons regardless of their social station. In turn, they did not seek deference. In order to be inwardly pure a Friend could not want to be honored by others. When the Lamb had won this inward victory, then the Quaker was ready to witness against the shallow niceties of courtly courtesy. “Hat honor,” and insisting on “thee and thou” to all men were relatively minor outgrowths of a total change of the inner life and allegiance of Quakers. (In a P.S. to Letter 53, 1653 Fox wrote that to honor all men is to reach that of God in them.)

The conflict of the Lamb's war had other social aspects. Since Christ forbade it, Friends refused to swear oaths. More Friends went to prison for refusing to swear that they were not Roman Catholic agents or for refusing the oath of allegiance to the crown, than for any other cause.

After the penal laws of 1661, when Friends held meeting for worship, soldiers barred the doors against them. In the economic sphere, Friends invented the fair price for articles on sale as a testimony against the cheating involved in much common haggling over prices. Fair treatment for the insane, just treatment of “Indians and Negroes,” also men for whom Christ died, were other aspects of the Lamb's war. Fox confidently expects that the Lamb's war will overthrow social and ecclesiastical evil. Quakers, spiritual revolutionaries, speeded it along.

SUFFERING, PERSECUTION, IMPRISONMENT

For we here are under great persecution, between thirteen and fourteen hundred in prison: an account of which has lately been delivered to the King. Besides the great spoil and havoc which is made of Friends; goods by informers; and besides the great spoil upon two-thirds of our estates, and upon the twenty pound a month acts, and for not going to the steeple house; and besides many are imprisoned and premunired for not swearing allegiance, both men, women, widows and maids; and many are fined and cast into prison, as rioters, for meeting to worship God; and we are kept out of our Meetings in streets and highways in many places of the land, and beaten and abused; therefore prize the Liberty, both natural and spiritual, that you enjoy.

Letter 386, 1683

When forcibly attacked, Fox always allowed his attackers to do their worst. He expected the same of Friends. They were not only to accept beatings but joyfully receive fetters, irons and stripes. Suffering is a gift of God. Undaunted by violence, Friends were to be bold and courageous for the Truth. All evil is transitory and God will overcome it. Prison and outward bonds have an end but the Lamb is eternal. All prophets, apostles and martyrs were tested; Friends should rejoice in their sufferings.

Men and women, young and old were beaten, abused and imprisoned. Friends suffered for not swearing allegiance to the king; Friends were not allowed to hold Meetings for Worship. Possessions and means of livelihood are confiscated on the word of paid informers.

The law of Praemunire was revived to deal with those persons who refused the oath of allegiance. The King revived an ancient fourteenth century law of Praemunire to punish those persons who refused the oath of allegiance. Under this law, the crown seized Friends' property, denied them their civil rights and put them into prison with terms that could last indefinitely. This law accounts for the fact that many Friends were confined for such long terms.

The Lamb is the special defender of Friends under persecution so they should not fear suffering for Christ suffered. They should let their backs and cheeks be ready to the “smiters.” They should not fear him that can kill the body only, but can't hurt the soul. Friends have been tried by the spoiling of their goods, by bonds, by whippings, by “mockings” and reproach. Some have been tried unto death and have proved to be pure gold that comes forth brighter and brighter.

Comforting Friends in prison, Fox reminded them that the Lamb Christ will never forsake them. He is the strong tower in whom those who are persecuted and suffer may find refuge. Christ suffers right along with them. Persecution is the trial of their faith. In 1663 Fox writes in letter 226, “Dear Friends keep low for there is no danger.” In other words the Lamb is our protector so even if things look bad, we are all right.

WHAT CAN FRIENDS DO TO HELP THEMSELVES?

As soon as Friends are beaten, accused, arrested, or have their property confiscated, Fox tells them how to collect the papers that they will need to go to court. He is concerned about day to day life and how Friends are to survive. He is especially concerned about the seizure of property necessary for livelihood. He was not only interested in the spiritual inner life but also interested in Friends as saints living in the world. He was not only interested in life after death but in practical everyday things.

Fox did not avoid confrontation and advised Friends to confront their persecutors. He does this in the Declaration of 1660 to Charles II: A Declaration from the harmless and innocent people of God, called Quakers, against all sedition, plotters, and fighters in the world for removing the ground of jealousy and suspicion from magistrates and people concerning wars and fightings. He presented the declaration to the King on the 21st day of the 11th Month, 1660. It sets the standard for the Quaker peace testimony and documents Fox’s position on all violence. “We do utterly deny all outward wars, and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end and this is our testimony to the whole world. Friends are to seek peace, to be righteous, to know God, to provide for the welfare of others and to encourage peace for all.”

Fox wanted to set Friends apart from those suspected of plotting to overthrow the established authorities.

Friends had not hurt any person nor stolen their possessions.

Friends had not plotted against anyone, nor had they incited any rebellion against the king.

Friends had not retaliated, when others wronged them,.

Friends had not resisted the authority of legitimate government officials except when it was for conscience’ sake.

Fox maintained that Friends were persecuted for their worship. In Letter 238, 1664, he wrote, “They can find no occasion against you except that you worship God in spirit and obey the commands of Christ Jesus.” Then he makes it very personal because Christ is our Friend, and He has a “fellow feeling” with us. When Friends are suspected of making war, it is without any evidence. But Friends shouldn’t be surprised or overwhelmed by this. The Lamb suffered; the Godly must also suffer. We shows our love for Christ by sharing His sufferings. Saints, Friends, will see the end of all wars but they must suffer first.

Friends should be confident for God will lay no more on them than they can bear. Those who suffer gain the victory which brings in the eternal covenant of Christ's peace. They must have patience, love God and one another. For the God of Peace supports and strengthens them through all their sufferings so that He may be glorified.

Friends should have faith in the Lamb who will be victorious. Fox did not want Friends to be involved in any kind of strife but to know the spirit which preaches peace by the Lamb. Fear him who can spoil our goods for the "fleece will grow again." However, Fox has practical advice for Friends on confronting their persecutors and presenting their case in court.

Fox believed that if Christ suffered Friends should willingly suffer, too. Often Friends did suffer for refusing to swear allegiance to the king, and not raising their hats to their "social superiors." (The refusal to do this is not just an empty act but one asserting equality and bearing witness to the humanity of all people.) On the word of paid informers, possessions and means of livelihood were confiscated.

Friends should keep a copy of all their sufferings and the names of their persecutors. When they are served with writs (for example for not paying tithes), copies should be made for presenting in court. Those who are beaten or wounded when going to meeting, and those who are bruised in meeting or taken out of meeting should make copies and have them witnessed by two or three who saw the events take place. These documents should be either taken to court or sent to the King. In this way, the persecuted can keep a-top of those who wish them evil.

Although Friends cannot count on being treated fairly, they should organize their defense in the county. Any persecutions from justices, constables and bailiffs should be written down, signed, and witnessed and presented to the judge when he comes. For God, who is just is ready to plead Friend's cause, and will give a true judgement. After an appeal to the local county judge, Friends should deliver their appeal to the head of the nation, the King.

Fox understands both the spiritual and the practical aspects of the early Friends' dilemma. Although he expects Friends to have total allegiance to the Lamb, he still gives detailed instructions about confronting persecutors, preparing documents, and going to court and how to behave there. He also wrote a great many documents confronting the persecutors and trying to change their minds.

POWER OF THE MAGISTRATES

Magistrates are civil, judicial, and police officials. Fox believes that magistrates have a legitimate right to use force but that they are not to persecute individuals for practicing their religion. Religious protesters, Fox strongly believes, should not be punished and beaten, knocked down and tumbled up, and struck with cudgels and fists by the orders of magistrates. He maintains that although early Friends do not lift up a hand against their persecutors, they are imprisoned as peace breakers. Fox believes that magistrates should not concern themselves

about religion. A strict believer in the separation of church and state, Fox accuses the state of usurping functions that rightly belong to God. "Where does God have His due," he asks, "when Caesar will have all?"

The obligations of both magistrates and Friends are clear to Fox. Magistrates must set prisoners free and in the future use only spiritual weapons. All the jails should be opened and the prisoners brought out of the nasty holes and dungeons. Friends should not pay taxes to the magistrates, nor worship as they dictate and certainly not bear arms for them. However, they should pray for their welfare. Magistrates are to keep the peace but they are not to bear carnal weapons and fight with the men of peace. Christ is the bond of peace which no man can take away.

Friends have a civic duty to serve the common good by taking their turn watching for thieves or spotting fires. Persons in positions of secular power and authority, magistrates, can ask this of them. What they could not ask was for Friends to violate their religious principles by forcing them to carry guns. (In some places Friends were fined for not carrying swords and guns.)

SPIRITUAL WEAPONS

And so, be faithful in his Power you having on the armor of Light, which was before the power of darkness having on the breastplate of Righteousness, the shield of Faith, the helmet of Salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God, which was before the world was, through which you may savor and discern Wisdom. Quoting Eph. 6:14-17 in Letter 252, 1667

In the language of Ephesians the weapons of a Christian are the armor of light, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, feet shod with the gospel of peace and above all, the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. Men are called above all to allegiance to God and his kingdom and the only weapons which promote its coming are the weapons of the Spirit. Such a spirit means that Friends are not against any man but seek only to bring them blessings.

Clothed with inward, spiritual weapons like men of war, babes and soldiers in the Lamb's war, Friends have the victory. II Corinthians 10:3-4 describes the nature of spiritual weapons: For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh. (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.) The weapons of the Spirit are kindness, unfeigned love, propaganda of the truth, persuasion, rebuke of sin in high places and fearless preaching.

We are to put on the Armor of Light and stand fast in the Power of God. The breastplate of Righteousness saves and preserve our hearts and minds. With the shield of Faith we have the victory. Christ Jesus is our head, our helmet of Salvation. The sword of the spirit, the Word of God mortifies, crucifies, baptizes, cuts off and plunges under corruption

Fox believed that both he and his followers lived in a covenant of peace, right now, whose only weapons were spiritual ones -- kindness, love, truth, persuasion, propaganda and non-resistance. Carnal weapons are illegitimate. Individuals who use these throw away the spiritual ones. The weapons of the Spirit are what you might expect persuasion and non-resistance. Then two more that you might not: rebuke of sin in high places, confronting persons of high social rank and fearless preaching.

The only offensive spiritual weapon is the sword of the spirit, the word of God, inspired words. Fox has confidence in the Word of God which is in our hearts and in our mouths. Christ's name is "the Word of God." The written word and the spoken word are all spiritual weapons and we are to use them to God's Glory. Children of the Light and the Day are to mind the Word of the Lord, the word of God within, the Word of faith who was in the beginning and makes everything clean. We must grow up in the Living Word Christ who brings the glad tidings of salvation. We have victory over the world because we know the Word who reconciles us to God.

The Word is called a Lamp and a Light; the Light leads us into the virtue of the Word.

Fox is able to write letters because they are the word of God to Friends.

Also interested in the spoken word, Fox admonishes Friends not to let their tongues run at random, not to busy ourselves with careless words. The Light checks us when we speak an evil word. For the religion of an individual who does not control his tongue is vain. Friends are not to be profane and not to make morally offensive speeches. Our conversation should be chaste. Friends who have words – true words, Christ, Scripture – and act contrary to it must go away empty.

Then as now, preaching on a street corner is a difficult thing to do. Most Friends should stay behind in their own Meeting place. Several grown up Friends – strong, mature, devout – should go out to preach the truth. This should not be taken lightly for it is "the counsel of the Lord!" From God's mouth to Friend's ears.

Friends don't have to be talking all the time though. "My dear Friends, be faithful for even though never a word be spoken in your Meetings, you will feel the Seed of God among you all."

But he accepts suffering even though he believes that those who persecute and kill are traitors to Christ. He prays for and blesses his persecutors, for if you love your enemy, you cannot kill him. We are able to live a peaceful life because God loves us with an unimaginable love so He created us in His Image. He helps us to live in the world by giving us the Light. His Kingdom on earth is a peaceful and joyful one. He shows us how to answer the God in others, that which is good in them, so that we may understand others and get along with them.

The End

REVIEW QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD'S PLAN FOR HOW TO LIVE A PEACEFUL LIFE

1. Who is George Fox?

George Fox is

the founder of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

a religious genius, theologian, social reformer.

an extraordinarily good and kind human being.

passionate lover of God

writer of more than 400 pastoral letters.

2. What do we mean by calling George Fox a universalist?

He believes that everyone may know God.

He uses universal, inclusive language such as "*all, everyone, people everywhere, citizens.*"

He also believes in the universal Christ who died for every man and woman.

3. What does it mean to be created in the Image of God?

Everyone can be pure, holy, and righteous, live good moral lives. know right from wrong, love others, live a peaceful life.

4. For what reasons are people valuable?

They are created in the Image of God,.

Christ lives within them and died for them.

God loves each and every individual.

5. What does equality mean?

Equality means that everyone may have spiritual insights and come to know God.

6. What does the phrase "liberty of conscience" mean?

7. What one principle underlies all of Fox's beliefs and makes them work?

The principle of purity. If anyone wants to know God, follow their conscience, get into heaven,

they should mind that which is pure in them.

8. What is Fox's attitude toward war?

Fox does not condone war in any form or participate in it for any reason.

He did not resist violent attacks upon himself but accepted suffering even though he believed that those who persecute and kill are traitors to Christ.

Fox prays for and blesses his persecutors but sometimes he confronts them verbally, and advises Friends to do likewise.

9. In what ways does Fox advise Friends to deal with violence?

Live in Christ; live in the Truth.

Glorify God.

Answer the Spirit of God in all and

Be tender to one another.

Do not fear suffering.

Remember that Good overcomes evil.

The Lamb Christ is Victorious.

10. What is George Fox's heritage of witnessing for peace?

Friends' job is to keep the Peace of the Prince of princes.

Christ leads into all Truth and never asks any one to make war.

The Quaker Peace testimony tries to build trust between people and nations.

The Quaker Peace testimony has found expression as conscientious objection, disarmament and relief work for victims of war.

The Peace testimony demonstrates Fox's belief in universality, the brotherhood of all people.

11. Who does God love the best?

Me, myself and I. God loves everyone the best.

12. Name some characteristics of the God of Peace.

He brings the blessings of Peace, gives us an everlasting Peace.

His peace flows as a river from the Rock and Foundation of Life.

He is the Teacher of Peace,

His heavenly Kingdom is above all strife.

As the Father of peace He fills our hearts with mercy.

His Peace is order.

He has given us His Son, the King of Peace.

God's Peace reconciles all things and is Safety and Sanctuary.

The name of the Eternal exalted God is Peace.

13. What are the five parts of God's plan which help each of us to live peacefully in the world.

1. We are created in the image of God so we can be like Him peaceful, loving, and good.
2. Christ lives within us as the Light and gives us knowledge and understanding.
3. All people have equality because God is our Father and we are all one family in God.
4. We can witness too, and "answer the peace and goodness in all persons."
5. We live in God's peaceful Kingdom on earth; we will live in God's heavenly Kingdom for eternity.

14. How do we answer the God within every person?

Answering means finding the God or the Good within every person

The truth and goodness within one person speaks to the truth and goodness in the other person.

We can understand others, have empathy with them,

We respond to that which is equal, just and true in ourselves and in every man and woman.

All sinners must see the good in themselves and in others.

15. What does it mean that Christ lives within us as the Light and gives us knowledge and understanding?

This is the central belief of the Religious Society of Friends. Christ Jesus is the way who enlightens, i.e., gives knowledge and understanding.

16. Who is the Light, and what does the Light do for us?

The Light comes from God the Father and is glorified with Him.

The Light is not of the world, being immortal and eternal.

The Light gives knowledge of God.

The Light lives within everyone, helps them, shows them what is right and wrong.

The Light reconciles sinners to God and to one another.

The Light destroys the devil.

The Light is the healer.

He is the Mediator between God and man, reconciles us to God, justifies us to God.

17. What does it mean that Christ the Lamb is victorious?

He reigns and sits down at the right hand of God.

He has authority, jurisdiction and power over all men.

Everyone owes Him allegiance.

He begins his rule in the hearts of his saints (Quakers), and reigns through them over all the world.

He will judge all nations, send the wicked to eternal torment, and deliver the righteous to his kingdom.

He reigns over all principalities and powers. (Principalities and powers are angelic beings, often evil ones.)

He makes war in righteousness and will subdue all things to himself.

He is the crown of Friends and deserves their fidelity.

He is victorious over all the wild, uncontrollable, the wolfish part of human nature.

He is the special defender of Friends under persecution.

He has great Power. Through His power and strength, Friends will be able to do all things.

He has destroyed evil, the devil, sin, and death.

18. What is genuine equality for both men and women?

Both

have equal access to God.

have equal responsibilities and obligations in marriage.

may use the gifts that God has given them.

19. How does having the power of an endless life make us free?

20. When will the kingdom of God come?

His kingdom has both come and is coming.

It is “come;” present within each person who tries to do what God wants them to do with their lives, and who give Christ first place in their lives and loyalties.

The Kingdom is present right now so we needn't be concerned about necessities like food, drink and clothes because they will follow.

It has also “come” with Christ reigning over the world.

“Coming.” is the final stage of humanity. The petition: “This Kingdom is never to be destroyed. This Kingdom is not a human kingdom, but spiritual and eternal.

21. What is the Kingdom of Peace and how do we relate to it?

We must seek and enjoy the everlasting Kingdom of Peace in which we come to know peace and the end of war. In the Kingdom of Peace all people live in harmony and neighborliness. Friends live in the Peaceable Kingdom of Christ Jesus. (The Peaceable Kingdom is the vision of all people living in harmony and neighborliness, seeking the good and welfare of all.)

22. Why did Fox maintain that Friends were persecuted for their worship?

Except for conscience sake, Fox asserted, Friends had not resisted the authority of legitimate government officials. Friends were persecuted because they “worship God in spirit and obey the commands of Christ Jesus.”

23. Why must Friends suffer?

Christ the Lamb suffered; the Godly must also suffer. We show our love for Christ by sharing His sufferings. Saints, Friends, will see the end of all wars but they must suffer first.

Suffering is a gift of God.

24. How can Friends, under persecution, help themselves?

Although Fox expects Friends to have total allegiance to the Lamb, he still gives detailed instructions about confronting persecutors, preparing documents, and going to court, and how to behave there. He also wrote a great many documents confronting Friends’ persecutors and trying to change their minds.

1. Keep a copy of all their sufferings and the names of their persecutors.
2. Copies should also be made for writs to present in court.
3. Copies of acts of persecution should be made and then witnessed by two or three who saw the events take place. These documents should be either taken to court or sent to the king.
4. Organize their defense in the county against any justices, constables and bailiffs who have persecuted them. The evidence should be written down, signed, and witnessed and presented to the judge when he comes.
5. After an appeal to the local county judge, Friends should deliver their appeal to the head of the nation, the king.

25. How did the reinstatement of the fourteenth century law of Praemunire effect Friends?

Under this law, the crown seized Friends’ property, denied them their civil rights and put them into prison with terms that could last indefinitely.

26. What were the spiritual and the practical aspects of the early Friends' dilemma?

27. What is the Declaration of 1660 to Charles II?

It is a defense of Friends, made in order to set apart from those suspected of plotting to overthrow the established authorities.

1. Friends had not hurt any person nor stolen their possessions.
2. Friends had not plotted against anyone, nor had they incited any rebellion against the king.
3. Friends had not retaliated, when others wronged them,.
4. Friends had not resisted the authority of legitimate government officials except when it was for conscience' sake.

This declaration sets the standard for the Quaker peace testimony and documents Fox's position on all violence.

28. What are the principal duties of Friends?.

Friends are

- to seek peace,
- to be righteous,
- to know God,
- to provide for the welfare of others,
- to encourage peace for all.

29. What is the Lamb's War?

The Lamb's War is an inward war fought with inward weapons in which Fox and early Friends are to accept suffering. The purpose of the Lamb's War is to bring the truth and blessing of God to men.

Early Friends were not to fear the devil but arm themselves like men of war, babes and soldiers in the Lamb's war.

30. What are some of the social aspects of the Lambs war?

Early Quakers refused to take off their hats, bow, or say "you" to individual persons regardless of their social station.

Friends refused to swear oaths.

Friends invented the fair price for articles on sale as a testimony against the cheating involved in much common haggling over prices.

Friends believed in humane treatment of the insane and Just treatment of Indians and Negroes.

Fox confidently expects that the Lamb's war will overthrow social and ecclesiastical evil.

31. According to Fox, what is the Power of the magistrates?

Magistrates have a legitimate right to use force but they are not to persecute individuals for practicing their religion.

Fox, a firm believer in the separation of church and state, thinks that magistrates should not concern themselves about religion.

32. According to Fox, what are the obligations of the magistrates?

The obligations of magistrates are
to set prisoners free.
to use only spiritual weapons.

33. According to Fox, how are Friends to relate to magistrates?

Friends should not pay taxes to the magistrates, nor worship as they dictate and certainly not bear arms for them. However, they should pray for their welfare.

34. Do Friends have a civic duty?

Friends have a civic duty to do such things as watch for thieves or to spot fires. Magistrates, persons in positions of secular power and authority, could ask this of them. What they could not ask was for Friends to violate their religious principles by forcing them to carry guns.

35. What are spiritual weapons?

the armor of Light
the breastplate of Righteousness
the shield of Faith
the helmet of Salvation
the sword of the spirit
the Word of God
Christ the Word
the written word
the spoken word

The only offensive spiritual weapons are the sword of the spirit, the word of God, inspired words. Persuasion, truth, preaching against sin in high places, and confronting persons of high social rank are all spiritual weapons.

36. What are the four main parts of George Fox's attitude toward war?

1. Wars originate among Christians when they act as traitors to Jesus Christ.
2. He believes in, lives, and uses the Lamb Christ's power to avoid giving any reason for war.
3. Fox believes that Friends are called to a covenant of peace to use only spiritual weapons.
4. Christ teaches us to love all our enemies, accept suffering as God's gift, and bless and pray for those who persecute us.

37. How do we know that God loves us the best?

Our names are written on God's heart and His name is written on ours.

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[*George Fox's Attitude Toward War*, originally published by Academic Fellowship, Annapolis, Maryland, 1972, is out of print. As it is an eloquent statement of the pacifist position, I thought that Friends would like to read it. So I asked Dr. Jones if I could add it to the Las Cruces Peace Organization's web site. He was agreeable to this. My daughter and younger son helped me so now you can read:

A short biography of George Fox

The original text of the book

The original text with underlining removed and some of Fox's seventeenth century spelling modernized.

A summary of the book

You can find this at Las Cruces Peace Resource Organization web site: <http://geocities.com/lcpronm/> Go to the home page and click on peace books.]