

## CHAPTER TWO

### PEOPLE MEETING AS LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS: THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Recall that adult or popular education, Lindeman depicts as “a co-operative venture in non-authoritarian, informal learning the chief purpose of which is to discover the meaning of experience”<sup>1</sup> and that, Johnson defines as a “morality of cooperation among equals.”<sup>2</sup> Adult education, nevertheless, might better be illustrated and understood through exploration of an example. For, as David E. Shi asserts, “ideas and practices . . . in the abstract are inert . . . . Analysis of ideas and ideals requires the context of human activity, the context of lives lived in the struggle bringing abstract ideas into daily life.”<sup>3</sup> To illustrate, a study of the work of Quaker minister Lucretia Mott to educate adults through public speaking can serve as an example of nineteenth-century popular education.

#### **Prologue to a Society with a Mission to Educate**

This dissertation explores the instructive work of Lucretia Mott through her speeches and her public speaking. For, at a time when tradition barred women's speaking in public assemblies of men and women, this female Quaker minister spoke publicly to educate about important social and ethical concerns. Lucretia Mott's perspective rested on a foundation of Quaker ideas and practices experienced in the context of the nineteenth century. Speaking freely from one's knowledge or experience has been a remarkable component of Quaker spirituality. One is reminded of the critical questions posed by the first Friend to preach, George Fox: “What *canst* thou say? . . . and what thou speakest is it *inwardly* from God?”<sup>4</sup> More importantly, however, guiding Friends was another Quaker maxim: “Let your lives speak.” The Society had a mission to learn and to teach what amounted to a “morality of cooperation among equals.”<sup>5</sup>

#### An Exploration of Quaker Ideas and Ideals

To explore Quaker “ideas and ideals”<sup>6</sup> in the context of a half-century of human activity in the public life of Lucretia Mott obviously requires sufficient comprehension of Friends' ideas, ideals, customs, and practices. Thus, Chapter Two first explores the educational aspects of Quaker history and spirituality in order to adequately inform this research for analysis and interpretation. The [meeting for worship](#) and [meeting for business](#) are most uniquely Quaker; more importantly, they are the Society of Friends' primary educational structures. Hence, centrally this chapter focuses on aspects of the meeting for worship and the meeting for business. These relate particularly to the experiential learning--formal, non-formal and informal--in which adults

---

<sup>1</sup> Lindeman, Eduard C., “What is Adult Education?” 1925, 3, quoted in Brookfield, *Learning Democracy*, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson, “Really Useful Knowledge,” 5.

<sup>3</sup> David E. Shi, *The Simple Life: Plain Living and High Thinking in American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 9.

<sup>4</sup> The Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, *Quaker Faith and Practice: The Book of Christian Discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain* (London: The Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, 1995).

<sup>5</sup> Johnson, “Really Useful Knowledge,” 5.

<sup>6</sup> Shi, *Simple Life*, 9.

are involved. For instance, the Friends' process of decision-making in a meeting for business that seeks resolution through arrival at a point of "unity"<sup>7</sup> rather than by "majority rule"<sup>8</sup> is explored.

### The Significance of a Child's Early Guidance and Education

Secondly, the chapter explores the formal schooling and some non-formal and informal childhood learning experienced by the young Lucretia. The significance of learning related to early influences was suggested by Jack Mezirow. His study of transformative learning in adulthood explains that childhood perspectives, examined and reflected upon after childhood, present the opportunity for change in adulthood.<sup>9</sup> Mezirow emphasizes that "uncritically acquired"<sup>10</sup> perspectives from childhood form a person's initial frame of reference. The importance of acquired perspectives that can also lead to questioning the perspectives accepted by most Americans, warrants a review of the literature and pertinent primary documents related to Lucretia Coffin Mott's schooling.

Chapter Two, therefore, investigates the formative experiences and influences, rooted in the Society of Friends that helped to shape Lucretia Mott's perspective. Following a review of literature about Friends' tenets, ways and customs, this chapter responds to a critically important question for this study: What experiences helped to shape Lucretia Coffin Mott's perspective before she became a recorded minister of the Society of Friends at age twenty-eight? This chapter explores the first twenty-five years of her life. The chapter surveys literature about the [guarded education](#) then common in Friends' schools. Other chapters address specific aspects of Lucretia Coffin Mott's Quaker education related to abolition of slavery, rights of women, and peaceful ways to address injustice.

### Exploring Facets of the Society of Friends

This exploration of important components of Quakerism illuminates the Friends' beliefs, perspectives, and customs--"ideas and ideals"<sup>11</sup> --common during the first twenty-five years of Lucretia Mott's life. This time span begins with Lucretia Coffin's birth in 1793, continues through her formal schooling, and concludes in 1818, just before Lucretia Mott first spoke publicly.

During this time, Lucretia Mott was absorbed in Friends' culture as a learner, not as an educator or agent of change. Therefore, the following segment--exploration of the overarching questions about Quakers--focuses solely on the Society of Friends in order to learn and understand Quakerism itself. One purpose of the researcher's design is to examine the Friends without any influence by Lucretia Mott. Another purpose, more significant to this study, is to

---

<sup>7</sup> Michael John Sheeran, "Friendly Persuasion: Voteless Decisions in the Religious Society of Friends," diss (New Jersey: Princeton University, 1977), 2.

<sup>8</sup> Sheeran, "Friendly Persuasion," 1.

<sup>9</sup> Jack Mezirow, "How Critical Reflection Triggers Transformative Learning," in *Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood: A Guide to Transformative and Emancipatory Learning*, ed. Jack Mezirow and Associates (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1991), 1-20.

<sup>10</sup> Mezirow, "How Critical Reflection Triggers Transformative Learning," 3.

<sup>11</sup> Shi, *Simple Life*, 9.

examine the activities of Lucretia Mott from 1818 to her death in 1880, for evidence of the Quakerism absorbed during her first twenty-five years. That inquiry will take place over the course of Chapters Three, Four, and Five. While Lucretia Mott may seem strangely absent from the following study of Friends' ways, she could be considered present much as she was: as a learner. With that understanding, the study turns to the Friends' beliefs and customs.

To analyze and interpret the Friends as a Society with a mission to educate requires knowledge to satisfy three overarching questions about the Society of Friends:

- (A) What teachings--central theological convictions--do Friends learn?
- (B) How do Friends exemplify their religious beliefs?
- (C) What engages adult Friends both as learners and as educators?

Before the study tries to understand what ought to be known, consider first the broad-brimmed hats and the quaint bonnets--or maybe conscientious objectors or social justice activists--that often come to mind with the words Friend or Quaker or Society of Friends. These single aspects are like silhouettes. This study suggests a silhouette--an anecdote to bear in mind--as the Friends are considered: "swimming upstream."<sup>12</sup>

### **(A) The Society of Friends' Central Theological Convictions**

The distinguished historian of Quakerism and a former Hollis Professor of Divinity at Harvard University, the late Henry J. Cadbury, conveyed the idea of a Friend in the following emblematic anecdote. A person "swimming in the river can be identified at a distance by a bystander as a Quaker because the [person] was swimming *upstream*."<sup>13</sup> To understand better the Quaker impetus for swimming upstream--a Quaker silhouette--requires analysis of the educational environment and the pervasive political and religious domination endured by seventeenth-century English people. The interests of early Friends, as Quaker historians explain, converged not on "subtleties of theology" but on application of their beliefs "to the exacting requirements of daily life in whatever sphere they found themselves."<sup>14</sup> The Friends sought to form a society founded on a faith focused on everyday life. What milieu provided the fertile ground from which Quakerism arose? The study now considers that milieu.

### **The Educational Context That Gave Rise to Friends' Learning for Everyday Life**

First, to guard against "present mindedness . . . [that is] a shallow attention to meaning"<sup>15</sup> on subjects such as religion and politics, one must consider historical perspectives.<sup>16</sup> As

---

<sup>12</sup> Henry J. Cadbury, *The Character of a Quaker* (Wallingford PA: Pendle Hill, 1959), 29.

<sup>13</sup> Cadbury, *Character of a Quaker*, 29.

<sup>14</sup> William Wistar Comfort, Revised and Reissued with additions by Edwin B. Bronner, *The Quakers: A Brief Account of Their Influence on Pennsylvania, The Quakers: A Brief Account*, Ed. Frederick B. Tolles, Pennsylvania History Studies: No. 2, Second Printing, July, 1989 (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania Historical Association, 1986), 7.

<sup>15</sup> Lerner, *Why History Matters*, 123.

<sup>16</sup> Krathwohl, *Methods of Educational and Social Science Research*, 511.

historians stress, what B.R. White aptly calls a “deep sense”<sup>17</sup> pervaded seventeenth-century Europe that the church, the “one true church, . . . [the] legitimate church,” held society together.<sup>18</sup> Olwen Hufton maintains the decisive factors of the principal “intellectual debates” were scriptural interpretations and religious faithfulness.<sup>19</sup> B. Reay emphasizes that “everyone thought in religious terms . . . [and] religion and politics were inseparable.”<sup>20</sup> Reay contends that religion acted as “the legitimizing ideology” for rulers at the same time religion acted as “the revolutionary idiom” for the ruled.<sup>21</sup>

Seventeenth century England, particularly the two decades between 1640–1660, witnessed the English Civil Wars, the execution of King Charles I, establishment of the Commonwealth headed by Oliver Cromwell and finally the Restoration of the Monarchy under King Charles II in 1660. Mark Goldie characterizes England’s state following the Restoration of the Monarchy as a “persecuting society.”<sup>22</sup> According to Goldie, this era marks the last attempt in English history “when the ecclesiastical and civil powers endeavored systematically to secure religious uniformity by coercive means.”<sup>23</sup> Historians portray this troubled period's critical element as the outgrowth of numerous independent religious groups beyond the ken of the national Church of England and the reformative Puritan movement.<sup>24</sup>

### **Learned Truths and their Sources**

During this turbulent time, dissension clearly splintered church and state, sources of what Merriam and Simpson call “authoritative knowledge.”<sup>25</sup> From authoritative knowledge, derived from “sources of truth” such as institutional officials and the documents and decrees of Church and State, individuals accept as personal beliefs what they interpret as “truth and reality.”<sup>26</sup> At this time of change in the religious, political, social, and economic structures of England, historians and theologians agree, early Friends founded their Society.<sup>27</sup> The Society of Friends questioned the “truths,” the authoritative knowledge presented by Church and State.

What “truths?” To illuminate the educational setting into which the Society of Friends emerged, the researcher draws on the work of Margaret Heathfield. She presents examples of

---

<sup>17</sup> B.R. White, “The Twilight of Puritanism in the Years Before and After 1688,” in *From Persecution to Toleration: The Glorious Revolution and Religion in England*, ed. Ole Peter Grell, Jonathan I. Israel and Nicholas Tyacke (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 309.

<sup>18</sup> White, “Twilight of Puritanism,” 309.

<sup>19</sup> Olwen Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe, 1500-1800*, vol. 1 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), 417.

<sup>20</sup> B. Reay, “Radicalism and Religion in the English Revolution: An Introduction,” in *Radical Religion in the English Revolution*, ed. J. F. McGregor and B. Reay (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 3.

<sup>21</sup> Reay, “Radicalism and Religion,” 3.

<sup>22</sup> Mark Goldie, “The Theory of Religious Intolerance in Restoration England,” in *From Persecution to Toleration: The Glorious Revolution and Religion in England*, ed. Ole Peter Grell, Jonathan I. Israel and Nicholas Tyacke (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 331.

<sup>23</sup> Goldie, “Theory of Religious Intolerance,” 331.

<sup>24</sup> Reay, “Radicalism and Religion,” 9-10; Sheeran, “Friendly Persuasion,” 12.

<sup>25</sup> Merriam and Simpson, *Guide to Research*, 3.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>27</sup> Ingle, “From Mysticism to Radicalism,” 79-94; Brinton, *Quaker Practice*, 14.

"Catholic Counter-Reformation thought and Presbyterian (Calvin/Puritan) thought."<sup>28</sup> First, Catholic thought that Margaret Heathfield quotes:

From *Jesuit Rules for Thinking with the Church*:

That we may be altogether of the same mind and in conformity with the Church herself, if she shall have defined anything to be black which to our eyes appears to be white, we ought in like manner to pronounce it to be black. For we must undoubtingly believe, that the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of the Church . . . is the same. <sup>29</sup>

Second, Heathfield illustrates:

from the Presbyterian [Calvin/Puritan thought]:

The authority of the Holy Scripture . . . is in its infallible truth and divine authority . . . . Nothing is at any time to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men . . . . The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself. <sup>30</sup>

Such truths gave birth to questioning and learning among early Friends.

### **Adult Education Rooted in Christianity**

Friends, as noted before, reflect what Cremin identifies as the “essentially educational character of Christianity, as a movement, as a complex of institutions and as an ideology.”<sup>31</sup> Cremin claims that Henry VIII’s command to have an English language Bible translation placed into every church had “irrevocable” consequences in the lives of clergy and laity alike in what today would be called “popular education.”<sup>32</sup> Remember Johnson traces the history of adult education to a historic root in Christianity. Johnson sees this locus of education as grounded in alternatives to develop a social order founded on the Christian ethic seen as a “morality of cooperation among equals.”<sup>33</sup> Adult educator Michael Law also links one of the roots of Anglo-American adult education to the “theological precept of equality in the sight of God.”<sup>34</sup> Law cites Edward Thompson’s work that relates this historic root of adult education to the “dynamics, the informality and systematic character . . . of the inherently educational practice”<sup>35</sup> of seventeenth-century Anglo-American Christians. An example of such Christians would be the Society of Friends.

---

<sup>28</sup> Margaret Heathfield, *Being Together: Our Corporate Life in the Religious Society of Friends*, Swarthmore Lecture 1994 (London: Quaker Home Service and Woodbrooke College for the Swarthmore Lecture Committee, 1994), 20.

<sup>29</sup> "Jesuit Rules for Thinking with the Church," in *Documents of the Christian Church*, ed. Bettenson (London: Oxford University Press, 1750s), 363-364 quoted in Heathfield, *Being Together*, 20-21.

<sup>30</sup> "Authority of the Holy Scripture," in *Documents of the Christian Church*, ed. Bettenson (London: Oxford University Press, 1750s), 344-345 quoted in Heathfield, *Being Together*, 20-21.

<sup>31</sup> Cremin, *The Colonial Experience*, 139.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 141-43.

<sup>33</sup> Johnson, "Really Useful Knowledge," 5.

<sup>34</sup> Law, "Rediscovering Hope in a New Era: Possibilities for the Radical Tradition of Adult Education," 208.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

The principle English controversies of the time, J. F. McGregor says, centered on the “true model of church government.”<sup>36</sup> Harder to categorize than larger denominations were the “independent” groups.<sup>37</sup> McGregor asserts that George Fox fitted belief in the guidance of the Inner Light “to accommodate a particularly effective model of congregational order” and distinguishes George Fox’s accomplishment as “unique.”<sup>38</sup> This model, the primary focus of the third overarching question in the current chapter, encompassed the distinctly extraordinary structures, practices, and operations of the Friends' meetings for worship and business. The study now begins to introduce the principles and practices behind the Quaker silhouette: swimming upstream.

### Learning the Friends' Beliefs

During their formative years, four theological perspectives evolved that distinguish Quaker convictions.<sup>39</sup> The Society’s principles and practices, established then, continue as Quakerism’s “essential core.”<sup>40</sup> Quaker historians say that Friends stressed those four “distinguishing convictions” with such “continuous intensity” that they came to be regarded as a “peculiar people.”<sup>41</sup> Frost might consider these convictions as the “intellectual component” of the Friends Christianity.<sup>42</sup> The question naturally arises: what distinguishes Friends' teachings?

### Four Teachings That Distinguish Friends

Four convictions inform Quakers' perspectives and distinctly characterize the Society of Friends. Summarily, these convictions include belief in:

- (a) the Inner Light--that of God--in every human being as a guide for living
- (b) the universal endowment of grace in all humans ,
- (c) a universal call to Christians to examine society for ways to move in the direction of "moral perfection,"<sup>43</sup> and
- (d) the enduring disclosure of God’s will beyond the written contents of the Bible.<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> J. F. McGregor, "Seekers and Ranters," in *Radical Religion in the English Revolution*, ed. J. F. McGregor and B. Reay (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 121.

<sup>37</sup> Independent groups embraced what J. F. McGregor calls a “disparate range of enthusiastic doctrines [that] . . . created . . . problems of interpretation.” McGregor defines enthusiasm as “immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit superseding any worldly or scriptural authority.” McGregor, "Seekers and Ranters," 121. Though three enthusiastic groups, Seekers, Ranters, and Quakers, are identified by McGregor, only “Quaker enthusiasm, the doctrine of the indwelling light” can be associated and identified from its beginnings with an “informal evangelical movement” McGregor, "Seekers and Ranters," 122.

<sup>38</sup> McGregor, "Seekers and Ranters," 121-22.

<sup>39</sup> Comfort, *The Quakers: A Brief Account*, 9; Sheeran, "Friendly Persuasion," 17.

<sup>40</sup> *Witnesses for Change: Quaker Women Over Three Centuries*, ed. Elisabeth Potts Brown and Susan Mosher Stuard (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 15.

<sup>41</sup> Comfort, *The Quakers: A Brief Account*, 7.

<sup>42</sup> J. William Frost, "Secularization in Colonial Pennsylvania," in *Seeking the Light: Essays in Honor of Edwin B. Bronner* (Wallingford & Haverford PA: Pendle Hill Publications & Friends Historical Association, 1986), 106.

<sup>43</sup> Sheeran, "Friendly Persuasion," 17; Comfort, *The Quakers: A Brief Account*, 9.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-10.

This study now considers briefly each of these four convictions. The topics are germane to examination of the speeches and work of Lucretia Mott as an educator of adults.

### Friends' Preeminent Belief

According to Quaker historians who draw on William Penn's 1672 declaration, the "most eminent article of the faith of Friends," is the belief in the Inner Light.<sup>45</sup> William Penn (1644 - 1618) described the Inner Light as that "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." William Penn defined the Inner Light as a "divine principle revealed to humans by God."<sup>46</sup> The Inner Light must not be confused with the "natural light of conscience."<sup>47</sup> The Inner Light -- what George Fox called "that of God" in everyone -- was "a divine Light planted by God in every person for his or her guidance if one chooses to use it."<sup>48</sup> For Friends, this first distinguishing teaching counts as the "central and seminal theological belief."<sup>49</sup> According to Friends, George Fox set this Inner Light of Christ as "the ultimate authority for the individual and for the Church."<sup>50</sup> Thus, the spark that ignites learning, distinguishes Quakers, and provides the rationale that upholds the essence of Quaker principles and practices, as noted earlier, is belief in and the experience of the Inner Light of Christ as a primary guide. George Fox relates his experience of this revelation as:

The Lord God opened to me by His invisible power that every man was enlightened by the divine Light of Christ, and I saw it shine through all; and they that believed in it came out of condemnation to the Light of life.

George Fox, *The Journal of George Fox*.<sup>51</sup>

"That every man was enlightened by the divine Light of Christ," according to Rufus Jones, is George Foxes' "central teaching."<sup>52</sup>

That enlightenment emanates from "a meeting place of the human spirit with the Divine Spirit" within each person.<sup>53</sup> Howard Brinton attributes to the Light three paramount capacities. First, the Light conveys "religious truth and moral values."<sup>54</sup> Second, it empowers action on that truth. Third, the Light enables Friends "to achieve cooperation and unity among themselves."<sup>55</sup> From that experienced conviction flows the logic of the worship, discernment, organization, practice, methods and social testimonies of the Society of Friends.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> Comfort, *The Quakers: A Brief Account*, 7.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>48</sup> Comfort, *The Quakers: A Brief Account*, 8.

<sup>49</sup> Stoneburner, "Introduction," 4.

<sup>50</sup> Comfort, *The Quakers: A Brief Account*, 8.

<sup>51</sup> George Fox, *The Journal of George Fox*, A Revised Edition by John L. Nickalls with an Epilogue by Henry J. Cadbury and an Introduction by Geoffrey F. Nuttall (Philadelphia: Religious Society of Friends, 1648), 33.

<sup>52</sup> Jones, "Introduction," 101.

<sup>53</sup> Rufus M. Jones, "Introduction," in *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Rufus M. Jones, with an introduction and notes (New York: Capricorn Books, 1963), 32.

<sup>54</sup> Brinton, *Quaker Practice*, 15.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>56</sup> Jones, "Introduction," 31-47.

## The Golden Rule for Friends

The second conviction Quakers describe as a belief in “universal grace.”<sup>57</sup> This belief holds that every human being is “endowed with the ability freely granted by God to resist evil and do good”<sup>58</sup> providing they will to do so. This fundamental principle for Quakers expresses itself in daily life as “a religious expression of the Golden Rule” that is, if humans receive just and kind treatment they will respond with similar behavior.<sup>59</sup>

## Social Obligation as a Moral Commitment

The third “distinguishing conviction”<sup>60</sup> Sheeran describes as “a universal call to moral perfection and religious union with God.”<sup>61</sup> Quakers believe that all Christian people and societies are obligated to move toward “perfection.”<sup>62</sup> This belief sets the viewpoint from which a Quaker looks at human culture. The emphasis is not on the attainment of “perfection” but on the examination of society for “improvements which can be made and which ought to be made.”<sup>63</sup> This important conviction undergirds Quaker efforts to effect “social betterment,”<sup>64</sup> what some look at as reform efforts.

## Spiritual Truths Revealed Gives Opportunity for Learning

The fourth conviction is ongoing revelation of God's will. Sheeran calls this “a continuing progressive revelation of God’s will through the ages.”<sup>65</sup> Friends stipulate that this “continuing revelation” is available “to those who inquire and seek for it.”<sup>66</sup> As Dean Freiday pictures the Friends, “The central christological image for Friends was Christ as Prophet...in the role of Teacher by his living presence.”<sup>67</sup> This belief moves beyond centuries’ old “Christian ideals held up”<sup>68</sup> into what Quakers describe as “new ways of righteousness.”<sup>69</sup> One writer concludes that “Quakerism...discouraged finite answers to infinite questions” and, therefore, demanded “a sturdy inner faith in a continuing revelation.”<sup>70</sup> Comfort describes such Quakers as follows:

Those who believe in a continuing revelation . . . look for new revelations of spiritual [Truth](#). For them the Bible was not an unchanging blueprint permanently prescribing a church-controlled state and human society. To the Quakers it has seemed that God has

---

<sup>57</sup> Comfort, *The Quakers: A Brief Account*, 9.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>61</sup> Sheeran, “Friendly Persuasion,” 17.

<sup>62</sup> Comfort, *The Quakers: A Brief Account*, 9.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>65</sup> Sheeran, “Friendly Persuasion,” 17.

<sup>66</sup> Comfort, *The Quakers: A Brief Account*, 10.

<sup>67</sup> Freiday, “Apostolicity and Orthochristianity,” 44.

<sup>68</sup> Comfort, *The Quakers: A Brief Account*, 10.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>70</sup> Nancy Reid Gibbs, *Children of Light: Friends Seminary, 1786-1986* (New York: Friends Seminary, 1986), 12.

promised to be eternally with his people and to lead them into new ways of righteousness as they were capable of entering upon them.<sup>71</sup>

The conviction of continuing revelation positions Friends to ask questions and to listen for a spiritual response to secular or civil problems.

Thus, with its distinguishing convictions, this Quaker faith for daily living has been described as “a way of life.”<sup>72</sup> In Rufus Jones' appraisal: Quakers' bold experiment “endeavored to carry the consciousness and inspiration of God into all the activities of life and to raise the tasks of daily work and business and to turn them into avenues of ministry and service.”<sup>73</sup> The idea of the Quakers' bold experiment entailed continuous, lifelong learning and the challenge to exemplify the convictions they believed equipped them for the tasks and ethics of a new world. The question that then arises asks: how do Friends exemplify their religious beliefs?

### **(B) Friends Teach Their Religious Beliefs by Example**

Early Friends envisioned the beliefs and practices of Friends' meetings as a model of what George Fox believed would be, in time, the “government of Christ”<sup>74</sup> for “all nations,” for society. Sandra Cronk writes that George Fox spoke of [gospel order](#) to describe the relationship among the “practices of worship, decision-making, and daily living” for Friends.<sup>75</sup> George Fox clearly speaks of this “gospel order,” established and practiced among Friends, as a model for “all . . . people” in whatever society, when he says:

This order of the gospel, which is not of man nor by man, but from Christ . . . The everlasting gospel was preached . . . that all nations might . . . come into the order of it, so now the everlasting gospel is to be . . . preached again . . . to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people.<sup>76</sup>

### **Early Friends organized for a new world.**

God's “order” is the order to be practiced by Friends for social betterment and the eventual “perfection” of all society “ordered” to the glory of God.<sup>77</sup> In their nature, the practice of gospel order and the betterment of society are educational. Cronk emphasizes that gospel order meant not just a “personal relationship” with Jesus. Cronk describes the all encompassing aspects of gospel order, for a group, a community, a society, as a “people who lived the way of faithfulness together” who shunned values and practices in the dominant “social order” if

---

<sup>71</sup> Comfort, *The Quakers: A Brief Account*, 10.

<sup>72</sup> Lyn Cope-Robinson, *The Little Quaker Sociology Book: With Glossary* (Melbourne, FL: Canmore Press, 1995), 192.

<sup>73</sup> Rufus M. Jones, *An Interpretation of Quakerism* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1930, 1995).

<sup>74</sup> George Fox, *The Journal of George Fox, Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Rufus M. Jones, With an Essay on the Influence of the Journal by Henry J. Cadbury*, ed. Rufus M. Jones (New York: Capricorn Books), 462.

<sup>75</sup> Sandra L. Cronk, *Gospel Order: A Quaker Understanding of Faithful Church Community* (Wallingford PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1991), 3.

<sup>76</sup> George Fox, *The Journal of George Fox, Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Rufus M. Jones, With an Essay on the Influence of the Journal by Henry J. Cadbury*, 462-63.

<sup>77</sup> Comfort, *The Quakers: A Brief Account*, 9; Sheeran, “Friendly Persuasion,” 17.

perceived to be opposed to “God’s will.”<sup>78</sup> The term “order” included all aspects of personal daily life lived in the “power” of God in such a way as to both sustain and increase the meeting’s or society’s relationship with God. According to Cronk, Friends interpreted “order” to mean “the characteristics of daily living.”<sup>79</sup> The essence of “gospel order” remains Friends’ belief that “one cannot live God’s new order alone.”<sup>80</sup> Thus, gospel order requires a social context, that is, a society.

Early Friends became immersed in a mission that envisioned the creation of a new world organized to God’s order. Friends developed and practiced a way of living by God’s order in preparation for the eventual “perfection” of all society “ordered” to the glory of God.<sup>81</sup> Friends’ mission evoked a hunger to learn and a vision of an educated world.

Quakers exemplify their religious beliefs through “testimonies” considered to be the ethical or “practical component”<sup>82</sup> of Quakerism. A [testimony](#) effectively demonstrates Quaker efforts to address needed changes in society. Ched Myers defines a testimony as the “standard of faith” through which “a group of people covenants together to observe...gospel order.”<sup>83</sup> These testimonies, described as “ancient” in relation to the Society’s history, evolved in response to Quaker convictions about the “universal call to moral perfection”<sup>84</sup> and “continuing revelation . . . available . . . to those who inquire and seek for it.”<sup>85</sup> The intent of testimonies is to examine society for states capable of movement closer to “perfection”<sup>86</sup> through the betterment of social structures and conditions under which people live. The social testimonies of the Society of Friends are what Howard Brinton calls “definite patterns of behavior.”<sup>87</sup> According to Sandra Cronk, testimonies represent that aspect of gospel order,<sup>88</sup> through which the “corporate prophetic symbols” become embodied in daily living.<sup>89</sup>

This corporate symbolism represents the living presence of “Christ as Prophet . . . in the role of Teacher,”<sup>90</sup> a central image for Friends. To illustrate this prophetic function, the conviction that revelation is ongoing situates Friends to question current problematic situations--e.g. racial prejudice--and the conviction that the moral perfection, the social betterment, of the world is possible, poises Friends to listen for guidance to work at solutions--e.g., preferential provision of education--for problems.<sup>91</sup> What “testimonies” have Friends embraced? The social testimonies of the Society of Friends, Brinton gathers under four broad categories: equality, simplicity, community, and peace.<sup>92</sup> The various testimonies are meant to give witness to

---

<sup>78</sup> Cronk, *Gospel Order*, 4.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>80</sup> Cronk, *Gospel Order*, 7.

<sup>81</sup> Comfort, *The Quakers: A Brief Account*, 9; Sheeran, “Friendly Persuasion,” 17.

<sup>82</sup> Frost, “Secularization in Colonial Pennsylvania,” 106.

<sup>83</sup> Ched Myers, *The Witness* 77, 6 (1994): 6.

<sup>84</sup> Sheeran, “Friendly Persuasion,” 17.

<sup>85</sup> Comfort, *The Quakers: A Brief Account*, 10.

<sup>86</sup> Sheeran, “Friendly Persuasion,” 17; Comfort, *The Quakers: A Brief Account*, 7-10.

<sup>87</sup> Howard H. Brinton, *Quaker Education In Theory and Practice* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Press, 1967), 12.

<sup>88</sup> Cronk, *Gospel Order*, 3.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>90</sup> Freiday, “Apostolicity and Orthochristianity,” 44.

<sup>91</sup> Sheeran, “Friendly Persuasion,” 17; Comfort, *The Quakers: A Brief Account*, 10.

<sup>92</sup> Brinton, *Quaker Education*, 12.

transformed perspectives that early Quakers developed as part of their education for living a “New Creation.”<sup>93</sup> Thus, the behavior of the individual and the community materially demonstrates, that is, testifies to intellectually and spiritually embraced beliefs.

### **To Think of all as Equal**

Brinton identifies equality as the “earliest social testimony” based on the practice of the belief of “that of God” in every human.<sup>94</sup> Geoffrey Nuttall says the testimony to equality reflects “the essence of the Quaker message . . . [that gives Friends an] egalitarian attitude toward society’.”<sup>95</sup> As Howard Brinton makes clear, this equality relates to “worth in the sight of God” not to various abilities. This testimony respects every individual. It rejects the valuation of humans by category such as sex, race, country of origin, or economic status. Implicit in this testimony is the refusal to either “flatter or humiliate” because of distinctions or privileges among people.<sup>96</sup>

Early Friends practiced equality in the exercise of ministry in Friends' meeting for worship and meetings for business. Women and men acknowledged the possibility of being channels for God’s message for the group. Brinton suggests that under the testimony of equality could rest freedom of religious expression for which Friends struggled.<sup>97</sup> Because of a lack of the freedom of religious expression, early Friends were persecuted in England and in some American colonies.

### **To Learn to Live Simply**

Simplicity in all aspects of life was crucial for George Fox and for all Friends since the foundation of their society. Rufus Jones suggests that “simplicity of life” represents the “real principle” expressed in the first years of ministry of George Fox. Fox said:

Moreover, when the Lord sent me forth into the world, He forbade me to put off my hat to any, high or low; and I was required to Thee and Thou all men and women, without any respect to rich or poor, great or small.<sup>98</sup>

Many forms have given expression to this testimony: dress, speech, language, behavior, to include “the one-price system in selling goods” first introduced by Quaker shopkeepers to establish fair prices and eradicate preferential pricing privileged by barter or prestige.<sup>99</sup>

---

<sup>93</sup> *The Influence of Quaker Women on American History: Biographical Studies*, ed. Carol and John Stoneburner, Studies in Women and Religion, vol. 21 (Lewiston/Queenston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), 10.

<sup>94</sup> Brinton, *Quaker Practice*, 71.

<sup>95</sup> Peter Brock, *The Quaker Peace Testimony 1660 to 1914* (York, England: Sessions Book Trust, 1990), 10.

<sup>96</sup> Brinton, *Quaker Practice*, 70.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>98</sup> Fox, *The Journal of George Fox, Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Rufus M. Jones, With an Essay on the Influence of the Journal by Henry J. Cadbury*, 105.

<sup>99</sup> Brinton, *Quaker Practice*, 72.

## To Teach Non-Violence by Example

Perhaps the most well known aspect of Quakerism is the peace testimony, which dates from 1660. An early Friend, William Penn, in 1693, spoke about his belief in this testimony. He admonished that, "a good end cannot sanctify evil means.... It is as great a presumption to send our passions upon God's errands, as it is to palliate them with God's name." This testimony is examined in more depth in Chapter Five.

## To Educate for Humanity's Living as One Society

Community can be thought of as the corporate life, that is, the inter-dependence among individuals gathered in a society.<sup>100</sup> The Quakers at the start of their movement envisioned the whole world joined in one society of friends, all children of Light. Richard Bauman calls this first intention as being "based on common divine leadings to proclaim a particular spiritual vision for the convincement of all mankind."<sup>101</sup> This community testimony "becomes manifest" within a Quaker meeting as members share their resources which Brinton enumerates as "spiritually, intellectually, socially, and economically."<sup>102</sup> Community is built through the furtherance of "inter-dependence" and the reduction of "self-centeredness and conflict."<sup>103</sup> This testimony of community relates also to the religious responsibility for the ministerial, pastoral and administrative aspects of the monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings of the Society of Friends. Outside the context of the meeting, community is encouraged in social services where the work is done "*with* rather than *for*" those who have experienced distress, such as victims of war.<sup>104</sup>

## Education Immersed in Social Change

Friends' testimonies address "structural changes in society"<sup>105</sup> required for gospel order to become universal. Brinton stresses the "educational effect"<sup>106</sup> produced in the individual engaged in an effort to address "structural changes in society."<sup>107</sup> In precisely such efforts, as this research will demonstrate in future chapters, Lucretia Coffin Mott worked to educate adults and continued her lifelong learning. Meanwhile, recall that this review of literature focuses only on the Friends in order to learn and understand Quakerism itself before examination of her sermons and work. Therefore, the study now reviews literature related to the third question: What engages adult Friends both as learners and as teachers?

---

<sup>100</sup> Brinton, *Quaker Practice*, 66.

<sup>101</sup> Bauman, *Let Your Words Be Few*, 138.

<sup>102</sup> Brinton, *Quaker Practice*, 66.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 66-67.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

## Education the Essence of Unique Meetings

Friends' search for an experience of early Christianity evoked a hunger to learn and a vision of a world educated to live by God's order. In thinking about Friends' meetings, remember that Friends' actions flow from their beliefs. Douglas V. Steere, who writes about Quaker spirituality and especially the meeting for business, asks readers to be mindful of Friends' convictions pictured as a "frail web of the Quakers' presuppositions."<sup>108</sup> He says,

There is the faith in a guide. There is a faith in a continuous revelation that is always open for fresh disclosures. And there is the respect and affection for each other that assumes each one's openness and each one's concern for the right clue to the resolution of the problem, a resolution that may with patience carry the group to a sense of clearness.<sup>109</sup>

With these presuppositions as a basis for understanding, the study now considers what the concept of 'meeting' means to Friends.

## The Ideas of Meeting and Covenant for Friends

The etymology of the word "meet" derives from the idea "to encounter, find, assemble."<sup>110</sup> For Friends, the consummate encounter is the meeting of the "human spirit with the Divine Spirit,"<sup>111</sup> which takes place within the one who seeks the presence of the Divine. To find companions and surroundings to experience this encounter, not to build a religious structure or ritual, became the Friends' reason for meeting. Friends in a locale formed a meeting as a society that seeks to experience "a meeting of the human spirit with the Divine Spirit."<sup>112</sup>

## Learning to Live in Covenant not by Contract

Early Friends saw themselves, Douglas Gwyn argues in his recent scholarly study, as living the promise of Christianity. He describes this view as a covenantal relationship. He claims that "covenant--faithful, promise-keeping relationship--is the hidden, binding force in society."<sup>113</sup> Gwyn compares covenants to contracts. The covenant's "religious or moral" basis for a public "open-ended" way of relating Gwyn differentiates from the "secular and value-free," stringently defined and circumscribed "private" obligation of a contract.<sup>114</sup> He describes his historical study from a theological perspective as "both a study in historical theology and a

---

<sup>108</sup> Douglas V. Steere, "The Quaker Meeting for Business," The 19th Annual J. Barnard Walton Memorial Lecture, Southeastern Yearly Meeting, (Avon Park, FL: Southeastern Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, 1995, 10/4, 1982), 2.

<sup>109</sup> Steere, "The Quaker Meeting for Business," 2-3.

<sup>110</sup> Walter W. Skeat, *An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, This Impression (New York: Oxford University Press, inc., 1879-1882), 370.

<sup>111</sup> Jones, "Introduction," 32.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>113</sup> Douglas Gwyn, *The Covenant Crucified: Quakers and the Rise of Capitalism* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1995), 1.

<sup>114</sup> Gwyn, *The Covenant Crucified*, 1-3.

theology of history."<sup>115</sup> He claims Friends' importance stems from their living prophetically. He describes that significance, as follows:

Historic *significance* lies in their gathering into a witnessing community, a covenantal sign to the world. They understood their worship and their way of life as forming a covenantal sign 'answering that of God in every one.' Calling men and women universally to repent of their faithless ways and come to the 'covenant of life, light, and peace'.<sup>116</sup>

Friends, as "a witnessing community"<sup>117</sup> that meets and works corporately, create challenges and tasks that involve learning and education. Now to learn about the environment in which such a community can develop.

### **Housing the Meetings for Learning**

When George Fox and early Friends said "church" they meant "the community of spiritual believers."<sup>118</sup> What others called churches, Quakers called "steeple-houses."<sup>119</sup> From the eighteenth-century, Friends gathered for worship in meeting houses described as plain.<sup>120</sup> Meeting houses are devoid of any accoutrements: no altars, no pulpits, no icons. There are no reminders of ordained hierarchy to inhibit the speech of worshipers.

The meeting house was generally rectangular and the "seating arrangements . . . consisted of two or three rows of raised benches along the longer sides of the room facing the other benches. The raised seats are called 'facing benches' or 'the gallery' and were occupied by older and more experienced Friends." This arrangement afforded beginning worshipers the opportunity to observe others who can serve as examples.<sup>121</sup> Having considered the physical environment for Friends' meetings, how do adults become Friends?

### **Beginning to Learn as a Friend**

Women and men, were "taught to participate actively in the sacramental qualities of all life."<sup>122</sup> Friends have no outward sacramental rituals, not even one to signal Quaker conversion or initiation. Friends refer to initial participation in the Society as a "two-stage" process of change called "convincement."<sup>123</sup> In the first stage, one becomes "convinced of the [Truth](#)" often through education by Friends' preaching or by the example of Friends' living. Convincement was followed by what Sheeran describes as "a long slow struggle worked out in the silence of the

---

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., x.

<sup>116</sup> Gwyn, *The Covenant Crucified*, 20.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>118</sup> Jones, "Introduction," 93.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>120</sup> Brinton, *Quaker Practice*, 27.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 27-29.

<sup>122</sup> *The Influence of Quaker Women*, 9.

<sup>123</sup> Sheeran, "Friendly Persuasion," 18.

Meeting for Worship."<sup>124</sup> Through conviction, a reflective process known as the "wrestle with conscience"<sup>125</sup> in the nineteenth century, Quakers experienced empowerment.

Quakers use many names to refer to knowledge of God in one's inner being.<sup>126</sup> Carol Stoneburner names some of Friends' descriptions of the presence of God within: "indwelling Christ,' 'Inner Light,' 'Teacher within,' '[Truth](#),' and 'the Seed'."<sup>127</sup> The inner struggle and divine Presence, Stoneburner says, set a pattern of receptivity and action. Being receptive--open to The Light, The Seed of God--developed into human energy and power to affect the world and make a "New Creation."<sup>128</sup> This pattern of receptivity and action in the Divine-human relationship empowered the "convinced" person for activity in the world<sup>129</sup> and energized a Society with a mission to educate.

### **Friends' Conception of the Self as Knower**

Historian Phyllis Mack says that Friends' attitude in relation to the self "differed radically" from the attitude that dominated western culture. Mack's claim that "Quakers trusted . . . action and behavior more than words to demonstrate authenticity" expresses the material demonstration of testimonies to witness--as individuals and a society--to spiritual beliefs. Mack says:

Quakers . . . believed that the deepest, most hidden, most authentic aspect of the self was divine love and knowledge of both nature and ethics, a knowledge of which our own conscience . . . is a pale shadow . . . . Quakers aimed for nothing less than the experience of God's presence . . . . They also wanted friendship and spiritual unity with the entire community of Quakers. Quakers trusted the language of the body (action/behavior) more than that of words to demonstrate the authenticity of this spiritual rebirth.<sup>130</sup>

Friends accepted that each human being could directly communicate with God. Quakers believed that God created each person with both an ability to experience God's presence and an ability to live in accord with the continuing revelation of God's will.

Each Friend listens to learn God's guidance in a specific moment and about a particular concern. Consideration of an individual's learning takes place within the meeting for business, which this chapter explores. Thus, Friends believe that every person is capable of knowing God's guidance and that a person, as knower, demonstrates a relationship with God, not through espousal of doctrinal beliefs, but through ethical actions in everyday circumstances.<sup>131</sup> "Personal religious experience,"<sup>132</sup> according to Carol Stoneburner, instructs Friends as knowers.

---

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> *The Influence of Quaker Women*, 9.

<sup>126</sup> Stoneburner, "Introduction," 4.

<sup>127</sup> Stoneburner, 4.

<sup>128</sup> *The Influence of Quaker Women*, 10.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>130</sup> *Witnesses for Change*, 36-41.

<sup>131</sup> Stoneburner, "Introduction," 2.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 5.

## Organized to Learn

George Fox was central among early Friends. One of his great [openings](#) was that “the Lord would teach His people Himself.”<sup>133</sup> Thus, for Friends, the central image of Christ is in the “role of Teacher by his living presence.”<sup>134</sup> The genius of George Fox and early Friends is the establishment of structures to allow for the educational experience of being taught by the Lord through the inner knowledge of personal experience and through others similarly taught.

## Organized From the Bottom Up

The Society of Friends' organization builds from the monthly meetings. From its earliest days, neither an individual nor a Quaker family but the members--the group--gathered as the monthly meeting<sup>135</sup> form the Society's basic and "smallest unit" of Quakerism.<sup>136</sup> The preparative meeting consists of persons joined voluntarily in worship who are represented by any or all of the worshipers at the monthly meeting for business. A monthly meeting consists of one meeting for business in a geographic area and one or several preparative meetings for worship, again geographically related.

Only at the monthly meeting level may an individual enter into relationship and become a part of the Society of Friends.<sup>137</sup> Meeting level entrance, as Sheeran says, assured that the local Friends could "judge the quality of candidates" for membership and “Friends found in that local assembly the religious experience which was the touchstone of their lives and basis of guidance in their actions.”<sup>138</sup> Early Friends, Edwin Bronner says, knew who belonged to “the fellowship of believers” even though they did not keep lists of the worshipers at meetings.”<sup>139</sup>

## Representative Governance Guides Pyramidal Structure

Some or all members of that monthly meeting may then represent the monthly meeting at the quarterly meeting for business, and likewise for the yearly meeting for business. The quarterly meeting is “representative of monthly meetings” geographically related, much as the [yearly meeting](#) is “representative” of various quarterly meetings, geographically related.<sup>140</sup> The Friends meetings structure is described as being "organized...by a pyramid of meetings differentiated by how frequently they met; the higher the level, the less frequent the meeting "<sup>141</sup>: preparative, monthly, quarterly and yearly. The practices involved in the meeting for worship and the meeting for business are the same at each level.

---

<sup>133</sup> Fox, *The Journal of George Fox, Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Rufus M. Jones, With an Essay on the Influence of the Journal by Henry J. Cadbury*, 75.

<sup>134</sup> Freiday, "Apostolicity and Orthochristianity," 44.

<sup>135</sup> Brinton, *Quaker Practice*, 33.

<sup>136</sup> Thomas Woody, *Early Quaker Education in Pennsylvania* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1920), 17.

<sup>137</sup> Brinton, *Quaker Practice*, 33.

<sup>138</sup> Sheeran, "Friendly Persuasion," 25.

<sup>139</sup> Bronner, "Quaker Discipline and Order," 327.

<sup>140</sup> Woody, *Early Quaker Education*, 15-19.

<sup>141</sup> "Guide to Genealogical Resources at Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College" (Swarthmore, PA, n.d.).

## Organizational Structure Promotes Education

Thomas Woody's classic work on Anglo-American Quaker schools points clearly to the relationship between the Friends' seventeenth-century organizational structure and the Friend's unprecedented ability to place as a central focus education. Woody concludes that the "organization and interrelation of the meetings"<sup>142</sup> supports the activity of education throughout the Society of Friends. These meetings operate by representative governance through a method whereby "unity" in decisions, not uniformity of decision-making, is practiced. Woody asserts that it was "by virtue of this organization (that) schools were set up."<sup>143</sup>

This organizational structure, viewed through the lens of adult education, can also be seen to have fostered the non-vocational education of adults, as learners and educators, in multiple ways. Instances include the epistles sent from yearly meetings, traveling ministers or Public Friends who went from meeting to meeting, and representatives of one meeting to another level of meeting. Today, scholars might see such activities as components of adult education, for instance, reflection and collaborative learning. The study turns now to the context in which Friends' experiential learning primarily occurs.

### The Unique Meetings of the Society of Friends

The [meeting for worship](#) and [meeting for business](#), according to Howard Brinton, are exclusive to the Society of Friends. Only in these Friends' meetings "is Quakerism unique and clearly distinguished from all other sects and opinions."<sup>144</sup> Some other religious bodies may, as he says, "share with Quakers belief in what can be called "distinguishing convictions."<sup>145</sup> Further, other groups of believers might practice ethical behaviors to testify and give witness to their faith. These Friends' meetings for worship and meetings for business, Brinton asserts, "constitute definitive types of community life."<sup>146</sup> The meetings for worship and for business provide the context in which Friends practice their convictions and exercise their beliefs. This distinctly extraordinary meeting structure with its constituent practices and operations are educational in nature. Moreover, Brinton identifies these meetings as the Friends' "chief religious educational agencies."<sup>147</sup> Among Quakers, Parker Palmer says, the "image of 'meeting' [is] central, concrete, and spacious,"<sup>148</sup> and permeates all the meetings starting first with the meeting for worship.

---

<sup>142</sup> Woody, *Early Quaker Education*, 20.

<sup>143</sup> Woody, *Early Quaker Education*, 14.

<sup>144</sup> Brinton, *Quaker Education*, 11-12.

<sup>145</sup> Comfort, *The Quakers: A Brief Account*, 7.

<sup>146</sup> Brinton, *Quaker Education*, 11-12.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>148</sup> Parker J. Palmer, *Meeting for Learning: Education in a Quaker Context*, The Pendle Hill Bulletin No. 284 (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1976), 1.

## The Context of Friends' Experiential Learning in the Meeting for Worship

Friends characterize their worship as “the search for communion with God and the offering of ourselves—body and soul—for the doing of God’s will.”<sup>149</sup> Brinton suggests that the “divine-human bonds” fostered in meetings for worship “produce inter-human bonds.”<sup>150</sup> Friends describe the meeting for worship as the “heart” of their Society.<sup>151</sup>

### A Nineteenth-Century Study of Friends' Meeting

To learn as much as possible about Quakerism when Lucretia Mott lived, Thomas Clarkson's study is helpful. Brinton describes Clarkson's three-volume work, *Portraiture of Quakerism*,<sup>152</sup> as “the most complete description of the Quaker cultural pattern.”<sup>153</sup> Trained in history at the University of Cambridge in England, Clarkson's classic work on the slave trade will be discussed in Chapter Three. Clarkson, a non-Quaker, was motivated to write the Friends' “moral history,” he says, “to exhibit to the rest of the world many excellent customs of which they were ignorant, but which it might be useful to them to know.”<sup>154</sup> Clarkson's narrative most closely portrays the Quakerism that was prevalent during Lucretia's earlier years. Brinton says “the Quaker way of life as developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries survived in many places through much of the nineteenth century.”<sup>155</sup> Brinton admonishes, however, that “a living culture cannot be transmitted by description, however exact. To be really understood, it must be felt and lived.”<sup>156</sup> Clarkson's richly detailed account, nevertheless, allows us to imagine peaking in the window of a Quaker meetinghouse of the last century.<sup>157</sup>

### Friends Listen for Guidance to Obey

In the meeting for worship, Friends wait in silent “communal sitting.”<sup>158</sup> Roman Catholic “centering prayer” authority Father Basil Pennington compares Roman Catholic with Quaker practice. Pennington notes that Friends’ “waiting in silence” is focused not only on meditation or in praise and thanksgiving to God but on “obedience” to the Inner Teacher, Christ.<sup>159</sup>

---

<sup>149</sup> Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, *Faith and Practice: A Book of Christian Discipline* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1997), 17.

<sup>150</sup> Brinton, *Quaker Practice*, 64.

<sup>151</sup> Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, *Faith and Practice*, 17.

<sup>152</sup> Thomas Clarkson, *A Portraiture of Quakerism, as Taken from a View of the Moral Education, Discipline Peculiar Custom, Religious Principles, Political and Civil Economy, And Character of the Society of Friends*. (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1806).

<sup>153</sup> Howard H. Brinton, *Friends for 300 Years: The History and Beliefs of the Society of Friends Since George Fox Started the Quaker Movement* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, 1952, 1964), 187.

<sup>154</sup> Thomas Clarkson, *A Portraiture of Quakerism As Taken from a View of the Moral Education, Discipline, Peculiar Customs, Religious Principles, Political and Civil Oeconomy, and Character, of the Society of Friends, Vol. 1* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1806), ii.

<sup>155</sup> Brinton, *Friends for 300 Years*, 187.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

<sup>157</sup> Clarkson's descriptions closely depict what the researcher observed during the meetings for worship and business at the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting held March, 1998. As noted in appendix A, the Philadelphia Quakers purposefully emulate and nurture their seventeenth-century roots.

<sup>158</sup> Basil Pennington, O.C.S.O., “Centering Prayer and the Friends,” in *Spirituality in Ecumenical Perspective*, ed. E. Glenn Hinson (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 134.

<sup>159</sup> Pennington, “Centering Prayer,” 135.

Pennington, who draws on the work of Douglas Steere,<sup>160</sup> distinguishes the difference in silent Quaker worship: Friends “wait for a word of guidance, for themselves personally and for the community.”<sup>161</sup> Thomas Clarkson clarifies this basis of the Friends' religion, he says,

The Spirit of God . . . the Quakers usually distinguish by the epithets of Primary and Infallible. But they have made another distinction with respect to the character of this Spirit; for they have pronounced it to be the only infallible guide to men in the spiritual concerns . . . . This conclusion has indeed been adopted as . . . a doctrine of the Society . . . that the Spirit of God is the primary and only infallible, and the Scriptures but a subordinate or secondary, guide.”<sup>162</sup> They sit therefore in silence, and worship in silence.<sup>163</sup> . . . . A man does not depend at these times on the words of a minister, or of any other person present; but his own soul, worked upon the divine influence, pleads in silence with the Almighty its own cause.<sup>164</sup>

Clarkson says the silence also prevents worshippers from transgressing "by pretending to worship...or by uttering language that is inconsistent with the feelings of the heart."<sup>165</sup> Friends wait to learn and then speak to educate others about Divine guidance for action. Specifically, how do friends learn during meeting for worship?

### **The Ways Friends' Learn in Meeting for Worship**

In a meeting for worship, components of the complete silence--what Friends consider the “living silence”<sup>166</sup> --are “vocal ministry” and the “spoken word.”<sup>167</sup> These utterances rise out of, rather than interrupt, the silence and are intended for the “gathering as a whole.”<sup>168</sup> Vocal ministry gives voice for the whole meeting in “expression of adoration, thanksgiving, penitence and petition”<sup>169</sup> aspects typical of prayer. On the other hand a spoken word speaks, not for an individual, but to the meeting as a whole.

How does the "spoken word" happen? A worshiper, gathered into the silent meeting, becomes aware of a message for the meeting. Often, the messenger stands and speaks the message. According to Howard Brinton, the message commonly has certain qualities. The spoken word carries a message that

---

<sup>160</sup> Douglas V. Steere, "Introduction," in *Quaker Spirituality: Selected Writings*, ed. Douglas V. Steere, Preface by Elizabeth Gray Vining (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), 3-53.

<sup>161</sup> Pennington, "Centering Prayer," 135.

<sup>162</sup> Thomas Clarkson, *A Portraiture of Quakerism As Taken from a View of the Moral Education, Discipline, Peculiar Customs, Religious Principles, Political and Civil Oeconomy, and Character, of the Society of Friends*, Vol. 2 (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1806), 152.

<sup>163</sup> Clarkson, *A Portraiture of Quakerism*, Vol. 2, 293.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, 300.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, 300.

<sup>166</sup> Brinton, *Quaker Practice*, 22.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

- (a) sees the subject as God would . . . [that is] religious.<sup>170</sup>
- (b) speaks a specific message not previously prepared; it is "spontaneous" or extemporaneous.<sup>171</sup>
- (c) the messenger communicates as an "instrument through which the Spirit speaks . . . [that is] non-personal."<sup>172</sup>
- (d) is stated "simply and directly . . . [and] . . . recognized as true by its very character [that is] non-argumentative."<sup>173</sup>
- (e) states the gospel message in a way that can be "fully grasped [by anyone, that is it is] . . . simple,"<sup>174</sup> and
- (f) preserves the most silence, "brief."<sup>175</sup>

Significantly, the content of the spoken word gathers worshipers into a "spirit of unity [that is] unified with itself and other utterances."<sup>176</sup> Clarkson explores how a person might first speak and then become a Quaker minister.

### Quaker Ministers

The person who would speak in a meeting for worship relies on an internal sense and motivation. Except for examples of other Friends, there was no formal training or apprenticeship, no rite of ordination. Any Quaker, man or woman, is free to speak. If a person feels a call to be a minister, the act of speaking in meeting affirms that person's call to ministry. From Clarkson's description one infers the exercise of agency related to ministry, that is, the person must first choose to speak and the minister must decide when to speak publicly. Also in Clarkson's description is seen the mutuality of interaction between individual initiative and group discernment, reminding one of the covenantal relationship of a community. He cites "men or women" as being eligible for Quaker ministry, though he conforms to the linguistic custom of using the masculine. Clarkson found:

The way in which Quakers, whether men or women, who conceive themselves to be called to the office of the ministry, are admitted into it . . . is simply as follows: Any member has a right to rise up in the meetings for worship, and to speak publicly. If any one therefore should rise up and preach, who has never done so before, he is heard. The congregation are all witnesses of this doctrine . . . . If after repeated attempts in the office of the ministry the new preacher should have given satisfactory proof of his gift, he is reported to the monthly meeting to which he belongs. And this meeting, if satisfied with his ministry, acknowledges him as a minister, and then recommends him to the meeting of ministers and elders belonging to the same. No other act than this is requisite. He receives no verbal or written appointment, or power, for the execution of the sacerdotal office. It may be observed also, that he neither gains any authority, nor loses any privilege, by thus becoming a minister of the Gospel. Except while in the immediate

---

<sup>170</sup> Brinton, *Quaker Practice*, 23-24.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-25.

<sup>174</sup> Brinton, *Quaker Practice*, 25.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 25-26.

exercise of his calling, he is only a common member . . . . When ministers are thus approved and acknowledged, they exercise the sacred office in public assemblies, as they immediately feel themselves influenced to that work.<sup>177</sup>

The ministers never prepare to speak or write a message or sermon beforehand. All ministry rises out of the prayerful silence.<sup>178</sup> Before uttering a word or preaching, a person would first rise from the position of their meetinghouse seat and stand before they spoke.<sup>179</sup>

## Public Friends

A minister can feel a [concern](#) to visit or preach in a distant meeting. Both men and women ministered as [Public Friends](#) and both travelled in the ministry. Often two ministers, e.g. two women, would travel together. The minister would present that concern to the monthly meeting for business and, if the meeting agrees, it gives a "certificate" or [minute](#) for the minister's proposed purpose. The minute is recorded in the meeting record. Clarkson 's account reveals that Friends developed relationships over great distances. He says often a minister may not be known at the meeting the minister proposes to visit. The minute confirms the meeting's [unity](#) with the visit.<sup>180</sup> Clarkson says:

Such as thus travel in the work of the ministry, or Public Friends as they are called, seldom or never go to an inn at any town or village where Quakers live. They go to the houses of the latter. While at these, they attend the weekly, monthly, and quarterly meetings of the district as they happen on their route. They call also extraordinary meetings of worship.<sup>181</sup>

These Public Friends strengthened the trans-Atlantic bonds among Friends.

## The Good Order of Quaker Meetings for Worship and the Work of Elders

From early Quakerism, more gifted and practiced Friends were "qualified to have more responsibility . . . for the good order"<sup>182</sup> of meetings for worship. Called "elders"<sup>183</sup> these Friends bore responsibility for the "spiritual vitality"<sup>184</sup> of the meeting for worship. Elders encouraged the spoken and vocal ministries and discouraged "long and burdensome discourse" in the meeting for worship.<sup>185</sup>

Clarkson describes the relationship between the monthly meeting and the quarterly meeting and the function of those who are elders:

---

<sup>177</sup> Clarkson, *A Portraiture of Quakerism*, Vol. 2, 263-65.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 278-78.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 280.

<sup>180</sup> Clarkson, *A Portraiture of Quakerism*, Vol. 2, 267.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 267.

<sup>182</sup> Brinton, *Quaker Practice*, 31.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 31-32.

It is one part of the duty of the elders, when appointed, to watch over the doctrine of young ministers, and also to watch over the doctrine and conduct of ministers generally.<sup>186</sup> To every . . . meeting four elders, two men and two women, . . . are appointed. These are nominated by a committee appointed by the monthly meeting, in conjunction with a committee appointed by the quarterly meeting. And as the office annexed to the name of elder is considered peculiarly important by the Quakers, particular care is taken that persons of clear discernment, and such as excel in the spiritual ear and such as are blameless in their lives are appointed to it. It is recommended, that neither wealth nor age be allowed to operate as inducements in the choice of them. Indeed, so much care is required to be taken with respect to the filling up of this office, that, if persons perfectly suitable are not to be found, the meetings are to be left without them.<sup>187</sup>

Important as elders are, they are limited in their function which is to see that all preaching is for "exhortation of one another for good."<sup>188</sup> Clarkson enumerates the significant limitations on the elders, as follows:

They can make no laws, like the antient synods and other convocations of the clergy, nor dictate any article of faith. Neither can they meddle with the government of the church. The Quakers allow neither ministers nor elders, by virtue of their office, to interfere with their [discipline](#). Every proposition of this sort must be determined upon by the yearly meeting or by the body at large.<sup>189</sup>

The interplay of the individuals' freedom to speak and the community's assurance that the elders protect the peace of the meeting for worship from repeated offenses through unsound speech shows the relationship between individuality and mutuality among Friends.

### Decision-Making in the Business Meeting

Within a meeting for business are made what Sheeran describes as "decisions by mutual consent."<sup>190</sup> Douglas Steere says the meetings for business function for Friends as the "corporate method of arriving at decisions."<sup>191</sup> This process differs from value-free consensus, defined in the dictionary as "mutual agreement or harmony." Friends' decision-making process is rooted in worship with the expectation of "divine guidance manifesting itself through the unity of decisions."<sup>192</sup> Thus, the meetings' less familiar but accurate title is 'the meeting for worship for business'.

Sheeran's seminal scholarship about the development of the meeting for business focuses on the "process of reaching decisions by mutual consent of all present without resort to a voting

---

<sup>186</sup> Clarkson, *A Portraiture of Quakerism*, Vol. 2, 271.

<sup>187</sup> Clarkson, *A Portraiture of Quakerism*, Vol. 2, 270-71.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 277.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 277.

<sup>190</sup> Sheeran, "Friendly Persuasion," 4.

<sup>191</sup> Steere, "The Quaker Meeting for Business," 2-3.

<sup>192</sup> Sheeran, "Friendly Persuasion," 2.

arrangement based upon some form of majority rule."<sup>193</sup> Sheeran emphasizes the “extraordinary authority” that intensifies the “legitimacy” of decisions when they are believed to be “divinely guaranteed.”<sup>194</sup> Quaker belief in continuing revelation allows for “fresh divine guidance for new circumstances” through this same process.<sup>195</sup> These practices demonstrate the interaction between belief (the distinguishing conviction of ongoing revelation of God's will) and the organizational structure.

### **Important Lessons Missed by Non-Quaker Decision Making**

A negative picture of customary decision-making in the seventeenth century appeared in a 1662 document that Sheeran found as he researched the inception of Friends' business meetings.<sup>196</sup> The document shows what seems to have not worked in the seventeenth-century. One questions if such methods have improved or succeeded over the last three centuries. By inference, the strident methods identified in the description suggest how seventeenth-century Friends resolved that their decisions ought not to be made:

. . . not by contests, by seeking to outspoke and overreach one another in discourse, as if it were controversy between party and party of men, or two sides violently striving for dominion, in the way of carrying on some worldly interests for self-advantage; not deciding affairs by the greater vote, or the number of men, as the world, who have not the wisdom and power of God.<sup>197</sup>

Friends abandoned such customary decision-making.

### **Friends' Exceptional Learning about Decision-Making**

The kernel of Quaker thought that grew into the Friends remarkable practice of decision-making by "general mutual concord" Sheeran found in that same 1662 document.<sup>198</sup> The document offers a new way of decision making. Sheeran distinguishes the early Friends' “deliberations” and decision “to determine” things “by a general mutual concord” as “singular.”<sup>199</sup> The document says:

In the wisdom, love and fellowship of God, In gravity, patience, meekness, in unity and concord, . . . and in the holy Spirit of [Truth](#) . . . In love, coolness, . . . as one only party, . . . to determine of things by a general mutual concord, in assenting together as one man in the spirit of Truth and equity, and by the authority thereof.<sup>200</sup>

Since the seventeenth century, Friends have practiced decision meeting by arriving at “unity.”

---

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>196</sup> Sheeran, "Friendly Persuasion, 20.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 20.

### Three Lessons Leading to the Development of the Meeting for Business

Three points illuminate the context from which the remarkable meetings for business developed.<sup>201</sup> First, the Friends' believe that "God guides individuals and groups"<sup>202</sup> that seek Divine guidance. Often that guidance comes through an individual who receives a leading--a call arising from a concern--toward "a particular action."<sup>203</sup> However, what happens if, as Sheeran ponders, a leading might prove "embarrassing."<sup>204</sup> Just such a situation introduces the second point.

Second, internal discord among Friends arose from two situations. One problem relates to James Nayler, whom Sheeran says, "vied with Fox himself"<sup>205</sup> for early leadership but who was led astray and imprisoned for his actions--though he later repented and returned to the Friends.<sup>206</sup> The other problem involves, as Sheeran says, John Perrot's "hat controversy" arising from a leading that "he should not remove his hat when he (or anyone else) prayed aloud in meeting for worship."<sup>207</sup> The contention, according to Sheeran, centered on "the idea that the individual Friend should act according to his own leadings no matter what others may hold, even if one's leadings are exactly the opposite of the agreement of Friends."<sup>208</sup> This insight, Perrot claimed, came as an "express commandment from the Lord."<sup>209</sup> George Fox considered both Nayler's and Perrot's actions as one's "that gave bad example amongst Friends."<sup>210</sup> Third, the increased sufferings among Friends that resulted from increased persecution of Quakers after the 1660 Restoration of the Monarchy required a systematic way to address the needs.<sup>211</sup>

George Fox responded to these crises, Sheeran says, by "initiating a regular, if minimal, superstructure above the local units . . . to communicate and advise in a consistent way."<sup>212</sup> Over the first fifty years of Friends' meetings, this process of Quaker decision-making was developed.<sup>213</sup> Quaker historian Margaret Hope Bacon cites the inception of the meeting for business as "the birth of that delicate balance between individual freedom and group authority, which has lain ever since at the heart of Quakerism."<sup>214</sup>

---

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 18-19.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>204</sup> Sheeran, "Friendly Persuasion," 24.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>206</sup> Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *James Nayler: A Fresh Approach* (London: Friends' Historical Society, 1954), 20.

<sup>207</sup> Sheeran, "Friendly Persuasion," 34.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 34-35.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>214</sup> Margaret Hope Bacon, *Mothers of Feminism: The Story of Quaker Women in America*. (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1969): 20.

## A Sense of the Meeting for Business

The meetings for business embody the “Quaker method of governance, rooted in the silent Meeting for Worship.”<sup>215</sup> The meeting for business is the arena in which the practices, which have been emulated in such endeavors as conflict resolution, emerged and were refined over the centuries. In a meeting for business the sense of the meeting describes the unity reached. A summary description of meeting of business practices follows:

Quaker business procedure is decision-making by a whole group . . . which is called a '[sense of the meeting](#)'--an agreement with which everyone feels comfortable--is arrived at through the expression of disparate views within which a commonality emerges and is discerned as the answer. Friends . . . in their concern to avoid rending the social fabric of the community . . . recognize that a small group or even one person can have a deeper, more fruitful insight than the majority . . . [Thus] there is no building of coalitions, no amassing of votes, no victory by the majority . . . . The responsibility to participate, whether orally or not, in the discovery of the fitting answer calls upon one's creative capacities more than does registering one's vote.<sup>216</sup>

Clarkson describes the types of subjects Friends addressed when they gathered at the meeting house for business. Friends, however, first have a meeting for worship, which he says,

All persons, both men and women, attend together. But when this meeting is over, they separate into different apartments for the purposes of the discipline . . . . The [minutes](#) of the last monthly meeting are then generally read; by which it is seen if any business of the Society was left unfinished. Should any thing of this sort occur, it becomes the first object to be considered and dispatched.

The new business in which the deputies were said to have been previously instructed by the congregations which they represented comes in. This business may be of various sorts. One part of it uniformly relates to the poor. The wants of these are provided for, and the education of their children taken care of, at this meeting.

Presentations of marriages are received; and births, marriages, and funerals are registered. If disorderly members, after long and repeated . . . Admonitions, would have given no hopes of amendment, their case is first publicly cognizable in this court. Committees are appointed to visit, advise, and try to reclaim them . . . .

The fitness of persons applying for membership from other Societies is examined here. Answers also are prepared to the [queries](#) at the proper time. Instructions also are given, if necessary, to particular meetings belonging to it, suited to the exigencies of their cases; and certificates are granted to members on various occasions.<sup>217</sup>

---

<sup>215</sup>Elizabeth B. Keiser and R. Melvin Keiser, *Quaker Principles in the Crucible of Practice*. Cross Currents 43, (Winter 1993-94): 477.

<sup>216</sup> Keiser and Keiser, *Crucible of Practice*. (1993-94):478-481.

<sup>217</sup> Clarkson, *A Portraiture of Quakerism, Vol. 1*, 219-20.

More important, perhaps, than the freedom of subject that prevails within the meetings for business is the emphasis, according to Clarkson's history, the Friends place on the freedom of speech. One of Clarkson's reports about speech concerns a poor person:

In transacting this and other business of the Society, all members present [at any of the Levels] are allowed to speak. The poorest man in the meetinghouse, though he may be receiving charitable contributions at the time, is entitled to deliver his sentiments upon any point. He may bring forward a new matter. He may approve or object to what others have proposed before him. No person may interrupt him while he speaks.<sup>218</sup>

This emphasis on speech--freedom of, responsibility and respect for speech--is educational for the youth that also attend these meetings for business. Clarkson continues talking about the meetings for business or what he proposes could be "schools for virtue" He enumerates the educational opportunities that are available:

it has since been agreed that young persons should have the privilege of attending them; and this, I believe . . . that while these meetings would qualify them for transacting the business of the Society, they might operate as schools for virtue.<sup>219</sup>

The youth who are sitting by, are gaining a knowledge of the affairs and discipline of the Society, and are gradually acquiring sentiments and habits that are to mark their character for life. They learn, in the first place, the duty of a benevolent and respectful consideration for the poor. In hearing the different cases argued and discussed, they learn in some measure the rudiments of justice, and imbibe opinions of the necessity of moral conduct. In these courts, they learn to reason. They learn also to hear others patiently, and without interruption, and to transact any business that may come before them in maturer years, with regularity and order.<sup>220</sup>

The youths' learning "to hear others patiently without interruption" reflects the Friends' insistence on respect for the individual and freedom of speech. Lastly, Clarkson provides a rich--and rare--description of the process by which Friends conducted their meeting for business to reach unity:

I cannot omit to mention here the orderly manner in which the Quakers conduct their business on these occasions. When a subject is brought before them it is canvassed, to the exclusion of all extraneous matter, till some conclusion results. The [clerk](#) of the monthly meeting then draws up a [minute](#) containing, as nearly as he can collect, the substance of this conclusion. This minute is then read aloud to the auditory, and either stands, or undergoes an alteration, as appears by the silence or discussion upon it to be the sense of the meeting. When fully agreed upon, it stands ready to be recorded. When a second subject comes on, it is canvassed, and a minute is made of it, to be recorded in

---

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 219.

<sup>219</sup> Clarkson, *A Portraiture of Quakerism, Vol. I*, 186.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 219.

the same manner. Before a third is allowed to be introduced. Thus each point is settled, till the whole business of the meeting is concluded.<sup>221</sup>

Among all the meetings and processes of the Society, one important aspect concerning ways adult Friends learned as a Society is by means of the [Queries](#) published in the Discipline.

### **The Book of Discipline**

The *Book of Discipline* summarizes the faith and practice to which Quakers are “committed.”<sup>222</sup> For the Friends, the [Discipline](#) draws from the Latin root “to learn” and serves as a guide.<sup>223</sup> Each of the several autonomous Friends' [Yearly Meetings](#) periodically revises and issues the *Discipline*, however, there were few variations among the *Disciplines*.<sup>224</sup> The Discipline is revised and issued periodically by each particular [Yearly Meeting](#). Two principle aspects are included; first, internal matters, and, second, the testimonies and the “moral conduct of individuals.”<sup>225</sup>

One important aspect decided at the yearly meeting level, and printed up in the *Discipline* itself are the [Queries](#). Through Queries the Society maintains a questioning attitude.

### **A Practice of Asking**

Queries are related to the Society's testimonies. Queries help adults assess how they are keeping the covenants to which they have agreed. Henry Cadbury describes “Queries” as “one of the most important historical clues” to understanding Quakerism. He says Queries are a “distinctive feature” of the Society of Friends. To provide an initial idea about Queries, a part of every revision of the *Book of Discipline*, Cadbury notes that while they began “as a technique of collecting from all localities information that would permit a Yearly Meeting as a whole to know the condition of the parts,” later development had other consequences. Cadbury describes the consequences of Queries, as follows:

The Queries became a prod to the authorities of the local meeting with respect to their duty of keeping the whole membership in line . . . . Hearing them (the Queries) read and answered at least once a year in Yearly, Quarterly, Monthly and even Preparative Meetings, the ordinary member had brought home . . . clearly enough . . . what was expected . . . . Definite written answers were required at each state . . . . The conscientious member would know . . . if . . . guilty or not guilty in the matter.<sup>226</sup>

Friends gave men and women the opportunity to assess for themselves their participation in the mission of the Society.

---

<sup>221</sup> Clarkson, *A Portraiture of Quakerism, Vol. 1*, 219.

<sup>222</sup> John Punshon, *Portrait in Grey: A Short History of the Quakers* (London: Quaker Home Service, 1984), 138.

<sup>223</sup> Warren Sylvester Smith, *One Explorer's Glossary of Quaker Terms* (Philadelphia: Friends General Conference, 1992), 3.

<sup>224</sup> Thomas D. Hamm, "Hicksite Quakers and the Antebellum Nonresistance Movement," *Church History* 63, Dec. (1994): 568n.

<sup>225</sup> Clarkson, *A Portraiture of Quakerism, Vol. 1*, 180.

<sup>226</sup> Cadbury, *Character of a Quaker*, 17.

Nine Queries from the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting 1831 *Rules of Discipline*, ask for responses to questions, examples of which follow:

First Query. Are all our religious meetings for worship and discipline duly attended...?

Second Query. Is love and [unity](#) maintained amongst you?

Aretale-bearing and detraction discouraged?

And where differences arise, are endeavours used speedily to end them?

Third Query. Are Friends careful to bring up those under their direction, in plainness of speech, behaviour, and apparel; in frequent reading the holy scriptures....<sup>227</sup>

Queries to assess their individual responsibility and meeting conditions offers the opportunity for regular examination.

Ched Myers' analysis pinpoints the two-edged sword of the Query:

A “Query” is a sharply focused question designed to challenge persons or a group to live up to a corporately adopted standard of faith and behavior . . . .<sup>228</sup> As a vehicle for community self-assessment, this discourse tries to preserve a delicate balance. It presents questions to the common life, not accusations, yet they are *hard* questions, not merely rhetorical ones. It is by definition open to constant rearticulation.<sup>229</sup>

### Asking Replaces Telling

Ched Myers has asked if, "it is possible for people of strong conviction to learn to speak more interrogatively and less declaratively. Myers cites the Friends as examples of people who have, he says, "sought to replace declarative with interrogatory theology."<sup>230</sup>

Myers suggests that an adult education theorist who has also used this approach is Paulo Freire as part of “conscientization” (Myers 1994). Myers quotes Freire as saying, “The educator’s role is to propose problems about the codified existential situation in order to help the learners arrive at a more and more critical view of their reality.” The key to “empowerment and liberation” becomes evident “more from posing the right question than by insisting upon the right answer.”<sup>231</sup> Myers put forth the idea that “perhaps if we learn to share questions with each other and the world . . . dialogue will come more easily.”<sup>232</sup>

### Teaching and Learning from Questions

An attitude of inquiry, of questioning--in particular, the Queries--flows through the entire meeting structure of the Society of Friends. Before the flow of Queries is considered, recall the representative structure of the meetings: preparative or meetings for worship send representatives

---

<sup>227</sup> Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, *Rules of Discipline* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, John Richards Printer, 1831), 75.

<sup>228</sup> Ched Myers, *The Witness* 77, 6 (1994): 6.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, . 6.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

(with no upper limit on their number) to the monthly meetings for business; then, the monthly meetings send representatives to the quarterly meetings; finally, representatives are sent from quarterly meetings to the yearly meeting.

Texts of the *Disciplines* are archived and available for examination. What is very much more difficult to find is a description of the process through which the Queries have become such an important part of the Society. Clarkson's historical methods preserved and made available a detailed account of this process. The following presents Clarkson's description of this process: (Notice the interplay of questioning--silence to allow a response to emerge--freedom to speak any response--assurance that the response is receiving complete attention--item possibly referred for advice to be agreed to by the group before being offered--with the assurance that each item is treated completely before any new item is addressed.) Clarkson reports:

At the yearly meeting level, Queries are crafted to inquire about the state of the Society as a whole. The Queries come from the yearly meeting level. The Queries are first responded to at the monthly meeting level, the smallest unit in the structure. The monthly meetings' answers are reported at the quarterly meeting levels. The quarterly meetings' reports are then reported on at the yearly meeting level. A committee at that level summarizes the responses to the Queries. The committee's report is read to the yearly meeting and when the process is complete the report is approved line by line or word by word, if necessary, before it is sent out as a report.<sup>233</sup>

At the monthly and the quarterly meeting levels, the identical process is followed to ascertain the most complete answers to the questions. The following excerpt accurately describes the how-to of this process:

The clerk of the quarterly meeting . . . reads the first of the appointed queries to the members present, and is then silent . . . a deputy from one of the monthly meetings comes forward, and producing the written documents or answers to the queries, all of which were prepared at the meeting where he was chosen, reads that document which contains a reply to the first query in behalf of the meeting he represents . . . from the second monthly meeting . . . from a third . . . till all the deputies from each of the monthly meetings in the county [quarterly meeting boundary] have answered the first query. When the first query has been thus fully answered, silence is observed through the whole.<sup>234</sup>

Again, the significant place of verbal exchange among Friends appears in Clarkson's narrative:

members present now have an opportunity of making any observations they may think proper. If it should appear by any of the answers to this first query that there is any departure from principles on the subject it contains, in any of the monthly meetings which the deputies represent it is noticed by any one present. The observations made by one, frequently give rise to observations from another. Advice is sometimes ordered to be given, adapted to the nature of this departure from principles; and this advice is

---

<sup>233</sup> Clarkson, *A Portraiture of Quakerism, Vol. 1*, 230-31.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, 230-31.

occasionally circulated through the medium of the different monthly meetings to the particular congregation where the deviation has taken place.<sup>235</sup>

The Queries are an integral part of the Society of Friends and, as such, are also considered in the women's meetings for business. The innovation of women's meeting began very early among Friends. George Fox and Margaret Fell were both instrumental in establishing the precedent of women's meetings and activities.

### **Margaret Fell and the Women's Meeting for Business**

Among those who early became convinced of the message of George Fox, Margaret Fell became a "co-leader."<sup>236</sup> Kunze says that "Fell's role in establishing the earliest Quaker women's meeting . . . was pivotal in offering a model of sectarian female leadership and a model for subsequent Quaker women's meetings."<sup>237</sup> Writing in 1666, Fell became the first of Quaker women who wrote favoring "a female public ministry." Fell wrote a book titled *Womens Speaking Justified, Proved and Allowed by the Scriptures, all such as speak by the Spirit and Power of the Lord Jesus*.<sup>238</sup>

### **Revolution of "Nearly Equal" Share for Women**

Clarkson recounts repeatedly the remarkable "justice" exhibited by the early Friends regarding participation for women. Note that the ability to set the "laws" that is, the authoritative knowledge for what Friends believed, was reserved to men. He writes that George Fox:

introduced, also, into his system of discipline, privileges in favour of women, which marked his sense of justice, and the strength and liberality of his mind. The men he considered undoubtedly as the heads of the church, and from whom all laws concerning it ought to issue . . . But he did not deny women on that account any power . . . . He believed them to be capable of great usefulness, and therefore admitted them to the honour of being, in his own society, of nearly equal importance with the men . . . . He laid it upon the women to be particularly careful in observing the morals of those of their own sex . . . . He gave them meetings for discipline of their own, with the power of recording their own transactions so that women were to act among courts or meetings of women, as men among those of men . . . . By the new and impartial step he raised the women of his community beyond the level of women in others and laid the foundation of that improved strength of intellect, dignity of mind, capability of business, and habit of humane offices, which are so conspicuous among female Quakers at the present day.<sup>239</sup>

Over the years from the inception of women's active participation in the Society of Friends in the mid 1600s to the time of Clarkson's writing, Quaker women as group, rather than extraordinary

---

<sup>235</sup> Clarkson, *A Portraiture of Quakerism, Vol. 1*, 230-31.

<sup>236</sup> Bonnelyn Young Kunze, *Margaret Fell and the Rise of Quakerism*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, (1994):

2

<sup>237</sup> Kunze, *Margaret Fell*. (1994): 5.

<sup>238</sup> Margaret Hope Bacon, *Mothers of Feminism*, (1980): 16.

<sup>239</sup> Clarkson, *A Portraiture of Quakerism, Vol. 1*, 184-85.

individuals, exhibited "dignity of mind." Here is Clarkson's recounting of a monthly meeting for business:

I may now mention that . . . the women proceed in their own . . . meeting also. There are women-deputies and women-clerks. They enter down the names of these deputies, read the minutes of the last monthly meeting, bring forward the new matter, and deliberate and argue on the affairs of their own sex. They record their proceedings equally.<sup>240</sup>

Young women--like Lucretia Coffin Mott--had the opportunity to attend what Clarkson called the "schools for virtue" of the monthly meetings for business:<sup>241</sup>

The young females, also, are present, and have similar opportunities of gaining knowledge, of improving their judgments, and of acquiring useful and moral habits, as the young men. It is usual, when women have finished the business of their own meeting, to send one of their members to the apartment of the men, to know if they have anything to communicate. This messenger having returned, and every thing having been settled and recorded in both meetings the monthly meeting is over, and men, women, and youth of both sexes return to their respective homes.<sup>242</sup>

Clarkson's invaluable historic descriptions bring to life Brinton's claim that the meeting for worship and the meeting for business are the Society of Friends main educational agencies.

### **Other Opportunities for Learning**

What other "historical" meetings are in the practice of Friends? First, the "retired meeting" described as held "in the pure silence of all flesh" at which no spoken or vocal ministry was expected. Other instances of Friends' meetings include meetings for learning, for marriage, in memorial of a dead Friend, to name just a few "meetings."<sup>243</sup> Also, Friends met in an informal meeting called an opportunity which arose unexpectedly in worship often amid people gathered for social or other reasons. A visiting Friend, often a Public Friend, might ask for such an "opportunity" for a "family visit" when traveling. This practice was a "highly important element" among early Friends and during the lifetime of Lucretia Mott.<sup>244</sup>

Another meeting, the [threshing meeting](#) was first addressed by "Public Friends who, often with Bible in hand, used all their powers of utterance to convince their hearers of Truth. The name arose from the purpose of the preacher to "separate the wheat from the chaff." This type of meeting was later used to "try and seek [unity](#) on a controversial issue."<sup>245</sup> Threshing meetings do not often appear in Quaker literature. Interest in this aspect is engendered by the need to understand forums in which issues can be examined and considered and yet no "decision" is required until "unity" or a more unified way to address an issue can be agreed upon.

---

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 220.

<sup>241</sup> Clarkson, *A Portraiture of Quakerism, Vol. 1*, 186.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid., 220.

<sup>243</sup> Palmer, *Meeting for Learning: Education in a Quaker Context*, 1.

<sup>244</sup> Brinton, *Quaker Practice*, 30-31.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

## Friends Learn from Epistles and Advices

[Epistles](#) serve as another means by which Friends were educated over large geographical areas, both within and between Yearly Meetings. An [Advice](#) is friendly counsel from the group on what it means to live by a commonly accepted testimony.<sup>246</sup> The London Yearly Meeting and the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting exchanged epistles on an annual basis, according to Bronner, and they “contained a summary of conditions as well as fraternal greetings.”<sup>247</sup> Another expression of this learning is contained in a Minute--a minute records the Friends’ corporate decisions. It documents the summary statement of agreement, the unity – not uniformity-- expressive of the [sense of the meeting](#) arrived at during a meeting for business.<sup>248</sup>

To some notable degree, Quakers moved away from the dichotomies of clergy/laity in the church, male/female roles for responsibility and nurturance, and public/domestic as opposite spheres of human activity, all widespread nineteenth-century American ideas. Friends, therefore, taught by presentation of alternative models in order to educate the public about values dominant in American culture. The introduction of the Society of Friends’ four distinctive convictions, the Friends’ testimonies, and the unique concept of meeting for worship and meeting for business, begins to frame awareness of the magnitude of differences between Quaker spirituality and other faiths. Out of that religious experience, Public Friend Lucretia Mott spoke to educate the public about issues of civic interest.

This exploration of important components of Quakerism illuminates the Friends’ beliefs, perspectives, and customs--ideas and ideals<sup>249</sup> --then common. The study now responds to a critically important question for this study of popular education practiced by a lifelong learner. What experiences helped to shape Lucretia Coffin Mott’s perspective? This period, which begins with Lucretia Coffin’s birth in 1793, includes her formal schooling.

### Quaker Education and The Formative Years of Lucretia Coffin Mott

Education has been integral to the Society of Friends from its inception especially in the absence of a professionally trained ministry. When George Fox saw that education at Oxford and Cambridge did not necessarily fit men to be ministers, he also saw, as Rufus Jones says, “that it is not safe to call all people to obey the voice and follow the light without broad-basing them at the same time in the established facts of history and nature.”<sup>250</sup> Jones finds evidence of George Fox’s concern for education in his direction to establish for males’ and for females’ education “in whatsoever things were civil and useful in the creation”<sup>251</sup> further documented in

---

<sup>246</sup> Ched Myers, *The Witness* 77, 6 (1994): 6.

<sup>247</sup> Bronner, "Quaker Discipline and Order," 332.

<sup>248</sup> Cope-Robinson, *Little Quaker Sociology Book*, 188.

<sup>249</sup> Shi, *Simple Life*, 9.

<sup>250</sup> Jones, "Introduction," 39.

<sup>251</sup> Fox, *The Journal of George Fox, Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Rufus M. Jones, With an Essay on the Influence of the Journal by Henry J. Cadbury*, 461.

George Foxes' 1667 recommendation for the establishment of boarding schools "one at Waltham for boys and one at Shacklewell for girls."<sup>252</sup>

On his 1681 visit to the American Provinces, George Fox received William Penn's gift of land in Philadelphia. In turn, George Fox deeded sixteen of those acres to the Philadelphia Friends with the stipulations for acreage, as follows: "ten . . . to put Friends' horses when they came to the meeting . . . [some land for] a garden . . . with all sorts of physical plants, for the lads and lasses to learn . . . to convert them to distilled waters, oils, ointments, etc. [and] . . . six acres for a meeting house and a school house and a burying place."<sup>253</sup> Two hundred years after the beginning of William Penn's Holy Experiment, this ground became the "burying place" for Lucretia Mott.

A major Quaker legacy--conveyed through William Penn--is the goal of a useful education for every child. Penn's *Frame of Government* directed, "All children, within the province, of the age of twelve years, shall be taught some useful trade or skill, to the end none may be idle, but the poor may work to live, and the rich, if they become poor, may not want."<sup>254</sup> Since the seventeenth century, Quakers continued George Fox's expressed concern for useful educations for boys and for girls. Lucretia Mott benefited from Quaker emphasis on education.

#### Friends' Education in New England

To trace the record of Quaker education in New England, especially on Nantucket Island where Lucretia began to learn, the principal secondary source is Zora Klain's seminal study that published critical minutes from the "voluminous" Monthly and Yearly Meeting minutes of New England Friends.<sup>255</sup> American Friends continued English Friends' belief "in a careful elementary education for all their children, and the mastery, even by the wealthy, of some trade."<sup>256</sup> Klain quotes from the advice<sup>257</sup> sent by the London Yearly Meeting to the New England Friends as follows:

And Dear Friends, it is our Christian and Earnest [Advice](#) and Counsel to all friends concerned . . . to provide School-Masters and Mistresses, who are Faithful Friends, to teach and instruct their Children, and not to send them to Such Schools where they are taught the Corrupt Ways, Manners, Fashions and Language of the World.<sup>258</sup>

Klain says that evidence of New England Quakers' concern comes from a review of meeting minutes in which appear, " . . . recurring [queries](#) asking if they had arranged 'to teach their

---

<sup>252</sup> Zora Klain, *Educational Activities of New England Quakers: A Source Book*, (Philadelphia: Westbrook Publishing Company, 1928), 6.

<sup>253</sup> Henry J. Cadbury, "Quaker Education--Then and Now," *The Friend* 113, no. 9 & 10 (1939): 8 *Friends' Council on Education, Anniversary Meeting*, vol. 113, *Two-and-A-Half Centuries of Quaker Education* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting).

<sup>254</sup> Comfort, *The Quakers: A Brief Account*, 27.

<sup>255</sup> Klain, *Educational Activities of New England Quakers*, xi.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>257</sup> London Yearly Meeting. Minutes for 1-IV-1691; 13-III-1695 as quoted in Klain, *Educational Activities of New England Quakers*, 8.

<sup>258</sup> Klain, *Educational Activities of New England Quakers*, 8.

Children and not to Send them to such Schools where they are Taught ye Currupt ways, manners, fashions and Tongue of ye world'."<sup>259</sup>

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, in 1788, sent an advice to the New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) that, Klain says, "was of paramount importance to education and the establishing of Quaker schools in New England."<sup>260</sup> The advice urged ". . .the settlement of schools . . . throughout the whole extent of the Yearly Meeting'."<sup>261</sup> In 1790, NEYM sent an advice to subordinate meetings saying,

. . . we cannot omit mentioning a concern that has spread amongst us for the increase of domestick Education throughout our Yearly Meeting . . . that we who make a high Profession may not seem negligent in inculcating useful learning with a good Education, as an Act to Morality and Virtue and which hath often been found to be a Guard to both."<sup>262</sup>

In 1794 the NEYM sent an advice ". . . to take into consideration the situation of Education in General . . . [and] to recommend to the Several Monthly meetings to set up at least one school in each Meeting under the direction and at the expence of the same ."<sup>263</sup>

In summary, while the Friends' elementary curriculum included reading, writing, and arithmetic, the emphasis centered on religion.<sup>264</sup> By mid-eighteenth century, they endorsed "instruction in modern foreign languages"<sup>265</sup> and later shared the educational focus of other Americans. According to Klain, Friends "set out to educate their children in a manner commensurate with . . . the rapid growth of a young and virile nation of which they were a part."<sup>266</sup> Klain notes that Quakers schooled their youth most often with "literature produced by Quakers themselves . . . ."<sup>267</sup>

Henry Cadbury describes some of the elements of Quaker education: They substituted their own Latin textbooks for the usual books with stories of pagan gods, just as they avoided "January" and "Saturday" in their calendars. They long excluded fiction, drama and music from the curriculum for similar Quaker scruples. Their religious interest in education was largely negative, that it should not be harmful to religion. They laid stress, too, on the example of the teacher's own life."<sup>268</sup>

Cadbury noted the "disciplined character, the unselfish leadership, and the intelligent social interest" that Quaker teachers have exhibited.<sup>269</sup> Among Quaker teachers are many fine

---

<sup>259</sup> Klain, *Educational Activities of New England Quakers*, 8.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>262</sup> Klain, *Educational Activities of New England Quakers*, 17-18.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>264</sup> Woody, *Early Quaker Education*; Klain, *Educational Activities of New England Quakers*, 9.

<sup>265</sup> Klain, *Educational Activities of New England Quakers*, 9.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>268</sup> Cadbury, "Quaker Education--Then and Now," 15-16.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

examples of people--including Lucretia Mott--who worked in accord with the maxim to: "Let your lives speak."

### **Adult Learning Widespread among the Friends**

In the United States formal Quaker education proceeded from elementary to secondary schools,<sup>270</sup> though the earliest Quakers in 1656, had brought across the Atlantic "books and pamphlets" to distribute to adult Puritans in New England.<sup>271</sup> Cadbury says,

There was much adult education, as for example, through Friends' libraries and reading circles. There was also much self-education. Especially in the field of natural science, self-made scholars in unacademic life have been a striking phenomenon of [Friends].<sup>272</sup>

Quaker adult education, similarly, has been a de facto part of the Meeting for Business since its inception.

#### The Purpose of Education for Quakers

Quaker scholar Howard H. Brinton poses the question most relevant to the education of both children and adults: What is the purpose of education? Brinton suggests that a "complete philosophy of life" must undergird the purpose of education.<sup>273</sup> Accordingly, Brinton describes Quaker educational thought, as follows:

Education . . . must minister to the needs of body, mind, and spirit, it must be both for time and for eternity, it must partake of both the human and the divine . . . . Standards of behavior, according to the Quaker view, ought not to be derived from society as it is at the moment, but from society as it ought to be.<sup>274</sup>

This perspective reflects Friends' conviction about the possibility of working toward the moral perfection of society. Knowing for what purpose any educational effort is made continues to be a critical component demanding the attention of those who educate adults.

### **Background for Consideration of Lucretia's Learning**

Consideration of particular aspects of Lucretia Coffin Mott's Quaker education appears in the appropriate chapters related to abolition of slavery, rights of women, and peaceful ways to address injustice. What follows establishes the background for consideration of the Friends' overarching principles and customs to which Lucretia refers or exemplifies without specific mention of a Quaker tenet. Contemporaneous manuscripts served as the references for required religious curricular content presented to students in the elementary and secondary schools.

#### A [Guarded Education](#) in Lucretia Mott's Time

---

<sup>270</sup> Klain, *Educational Activities of New England Quakers*, 7; Brinton, *Quaker Education*, 39.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>272</sup> Cadbury, "Quaker Education--Then and Now," 16.

<sup>273</sup> Brinton, *Quaker Education*, 1.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

For Quaker children education beyond primary schooling had to occur in a school free from contamination with “the world’s people”: non-Quakers. In the Revolutionary War, the “neutral position” of Quakers, with their peace testimony, had stirred opposition from non-Quakers and that intensified Friends’ need to strengthen education of young Friends.<sup>275</sup> “Survival [not] dogmatic delicacy”<sup>276</sup> of the faith was uppermost; the children must receive “a religiously guarded education.”<sup>277</sup> For Quakers, “divine revelation was a gift, its application a skill.”<sup>278</sup> William Kashatus, historian of Quaker education, described “‘a religiously guarded education’ as an idiosyncratic education. By the late eighteenth or the beginning of the nineteenth century, a ‘religiously guarded education’ would have required every Quaker child’s reading the works of William Penn, Robert Barclay, and George Fox.”<sup>279</sup> Examples of their writings are interspersed in this and other chapters.

### Lucretia Coffin's Learning Environment

The many Quaker inhabitants as well as its being the center of the whaling industry distinguished Nantucket, the island off the continental United States’ coast and twenty-four miles south of Cape Cod.<sup>280</sup> While Quakerism came to Nantucket in 1659, records of the Nantucket Monthly Meeting date from 1708.<sup>281</sup> Into the Coffin family on Nantucket Island, Lucretia was born January 3, 1793, and counted among her relatives two of Nantucket’s original settlers and, as cousins, Maria Mitchell--the nation’s first woman astronomer--and Benjamin Franklin. Lucretia was second of the seven children born to Anna and Thomas Coffin. Her mother sustained the family as a dry goods merchant during Thomas Coffin’s extended voyages as a whaling ship’s captain.<sup>282</sup> In the Quaker family, as Kashatus says, a child would learn “by example and practice the basic tenets of the Quaker faith.”<sup>283</sup> From her earliest years, according to biographer Otelia Cromwell, Lucretia saw women “shouldering the burdens of housework, bearing and rearing children, mastering the details of business, and teaching school.”<sup>284</sup> In Lucretia Coffin’s childhood, Quaker culture with its peculiar beliefs, practices, and ways, and women Friends active in the worlds of religion, education, and commerce were the norm.

### Lucretia Coffin's Early Schooling

---

<sup>275</sup> William C. Kashatus, *A Virtuous Education: Penn’s Vision for Philadelphia Schools* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1997), 81.

<sup>276</sup> Gibbs, *Children of Light: Friends Seminary, 1786-1986*, 15.

<sup>277</sup> Bacon, *Valiant Friend*, 20-21.

<sup>278</sup> Gibbs, *Children of Light: Friends Seminary, 1786-1986*, 11.

<sup>279</sup> William C. Kashatus, Personal telephone conversation, Nineteenth-Century Quaker Education and Lucretia Coffin Mott (Philadelphia, July 3, 1995).

<sup>280</sup> Bacon, *Valiant Friend*, 8-9; Robert J. Leach and Peter Gow, *Quaker Nantucket: The Religious Community Behind the Whaling Empire* (Nantucket, MA: Mill Hill Press, 1997), 9-12.

<sup>281</sup> Klain, *Educational Activities of New England Quakers*, 115.

<sup>282</sup> Bacon, *Valiant Friend*, 9-12.

<sup>283</sup> Kashatus, *A Virtuous Education*, 83.

<sup>284</sup> Cromwell, *Lucretia Mott*, 20.

Lucretia 's mother, Anna Coffin, taught her the alphabet and numbers before she began school at the age of four.<sup>285</sup> She began her formal education at the Friends school attached to the Meetinghouse, which Nantucket Quakers built in 1797.<sup>286</sup> Lucretia spent five hours each day<sup>287</sup> "every day, throughout the Year."<sup>288</sup>

The "Rules...for the Government of the School," drawn up by a Committee at the direction of the Monthly Meeting<sup>289</sup> include such items as: "on Fifth day, the Children...proceed with the Master and Mistress from thence to Meeting, and seated where one of the Committee with the tutors may have the Oversight of their orderly behavior therein."<sup>290</sup> The "Rules of Conduct" that aimed toward development of "a modest civil manner to all" further state:

. . . . Be always silent in your Studies, so that your voices shall not be heard, unless you are saying your lessons, . . . hold no discussion with your School fellows during the hours of Study . . . . Behave yourselves always in an humble and obliging manner to your School fellows, never provoking one another, contending or complaining about frivolous matters, but courteously use the word *please* . . . never returning Injuries, but learning to forgive . . . . Never tell a lie knowingly, nor defraud any person by word or deed, Swear not at all . . . . Mock not the aged, Blind, Lame, Deformed, or Idiotic, play not in the Streets, or ever for gain, throw no sticks, Stones, Dirt, Snow Balls, or anything at any person . . . utter no indecent Expression . . . but according to the best of your knowledge demean yourselves in a modest civil manner to all. Let your Language be the plain Language, and spoken with propriety everywhere . . . . Be not forward . . . to mock or Jear your School fellows for being Corrected, lest it should happen to be your own case.<sup>291</sup>

Clearly, Friends intended schoolchildren to be concerned with behavior and speech.

### Primers for Quaker Children

The Nantucket Friends Meeting records indicate that in the eighteenth century they had twice purchased "both sorts of George Fox's Primers for Quaker children."<sup>292</sup> The 120-page primer<sup>293</sup> begins with alphabet cases, followed by alphabetized sections of undefined "Words of many syllables divided - A. A-bo-li-shed, a-bo-mi-na-ti-on, ab-sence, ab-sti-nence, . . . and mid-way gives "Directions to Read and Spell truly"<sup>294</sup> and concludes with Roman numerals, and

---

<sup>285</sup> Bacon, *Valiant Friend*, 13.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>287</sup> Bacon, *Valiant Friend*, 13.

<sup>288</sup> Nantucket Monthly Meeting Minutes 2-III-1797, as cited in Klain, *Educational Activities of New England Quakers*, 119.

<sup>289</sup> Nantucket Monthly Meeting Minutes 29-XII-1796, as cited in Klain, *Educational Activities of New England Quakers*, 118.

<sup>290</sup> Nantucket Monthly Meeting Minutes 29-XII-1796, as cited in Klain, *Educational Activities of New England Quakers*, 118.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*, 120-121.

<sup>292</sup> Klain, *Educational Activities of New England Quakers*, 115.

<sup>293</sup> George Fox, *Instructions for Right Spelling, and Plain Directions for Reading and Writing True English. With Several Delightful Things, Very Useful and Necessary, Both for Young and Old, to Read and Learn by.* (Boston: Printed by Rogers & Fowle, Reprinted 1743).

<sup>294</sup> Fox, *Instructions for Right Spelling*, 70.

"Almanack" with directions for its use. Central to this book is a "Catechism" in interrogative form where the student poses a question and the teacher presents to young scholars Quaker beliefs about knowing God:

Sch. [Scholar] What is it that gives Knowledge of God, and where is it?"<sup>295</sup>

Mast. [Master] The Light which shines in the Heart, it gives the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Christ Jesus, 2 Cor. 4"<sup>296</sup> ....

Sch. Is the Light Sufficient for Salvation?

Mast. Yes, by believing in the Light, thou shalt be a Child of Light.<sup>297</sup>

Sch. Who are the true Christians called Quakers in this Age?

Mast. It is in Scorn and Derision that they are so called, to render them and the [Truth](#) obvious to the People, that so they might not receive the Truth and be saved; Yet Quaking and Trembling is no new Thing; for thou mayst read of Quakers in the Scriptures, as in Heb. 12.21 . . . . Hab. 3.16..<sup>298</sup>

The Catechism also explains additional peculiarities in Quaker language and attributes the names of days to the idolatry of "Pagan Saxons."<sup>299</sup>

Sch. How did the primitive Saints call Their Days and Months?

God made the World in six days . . . .

Sch. Who invented these Names of Sunday, Monday, Etc. and Calling the months March, Apr, etc.

Mast. The old Pagan Saxons in their idolatry were the first that brought in the Names of the Days after that manner; and these called Christians, have retained them to this day. The first Day of the week they worshipped the Idol of the sun, from whence came Sunday, the second Day of the week they worshiped the Moon, from whence came Moonday or Monday, the third day of the week the Idol of the Planets, which they called Tuisoc, from whence came Tuesday....<sup>300</sup>

The Catechism then tells young Quakers the "marks" by which they will know "Ministers . . . and false Prophets"--the hireling Ministry to which Lucretia Mott refers so frequently in speeches:

Sch. Who have been the Ministers and Instructors of these People that they are erred so from Scripture Example? Let me have some Marks and signs by which I may know the Deceivers and false Prophets?

Mast. The Marks the scriptures give of deceivers and false prophets are these: I shall set them down in short, that thou mayst remember them better.

1. They are such as bear rule by their Means. Jef. 30.31, Mat. 10. 19.20
2. They are such as seek for their Gain from their Quarters. Isa 56
3. They seek for the Fleece and make a prey upon the People

---

<sup>295</sup> Fox, *Instructions for Right Spelling*, 47.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>298</sup> Fox, *Instructions for Right Spelling*, 56-57.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., , 60-61.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid., 60-61.

4. They are such as preach for Hire and Divine for Money, Mic. 2. II....<sup>301</sup>

Another primer prepared in 1673, by Robert Barclay--described as the Quaker's systematic theologian--was re-printed in 1752.<sup>302</sup>

In that Catechism "composed for Children"<sup>303</sup> young Friends learned this message: "God is Light, and in him is no Darkness at all."<sup>304</sup> The Catechism describes the Light as an:

Inward Principle then, that is be the guide and Rule of Christians . . . . By the Anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you, and ye need not that any Man teach you, but as the same Anointing Teacheth you of all Things, and is Truth, and is no Lie; and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.<sup>305</sup>

Young Lucretia would have learned that the Inner Light is the guide for her life--not a church minister, not even a written text, even if it is the Bible. Her Quaker education continued even after her family moved from Nantucket.

### **Advanced Quaker Schooling with Curriculum Identical for Boys and Girls**

The Coffin family moved from Nantucket when Lucretia was eleven. Brief enrollments in Boston schools preceded the arrival of the Coffin sisters, Lucretia and Eliza, at Nine Partners Boarding School in 1804.<sup>306</sup> From Lucretia's advanced schooling At Nine Partners, established in 1799, near Poughkeepsie, New York, Lucretia Coffin continued to receive benefit of a "a religiously guarded" education.<sup>307</sup>

For the boys and the girls at Nine Partners, the curriculum was identical; however, the young people received instruction and all other amenities separately in single sex arrangements.<sup>308</sup> According to Margaret Bacon, the regimen at Nine Partners also included classes year round. Pupils studied "reading, writing, accounts, English grammar, geography, and memorized large amounts of poetry."<sup>309</sup> The pupils all attended Quaker meeting for worship at least twice a week.<sup>310</sup>

About the meeting for worship Lucretia learned the following response to the question

---

<sup>301</sup> Fox, *Instructions for Right Spelling*, 62.

<sup>302</sup> Robert Barclay, *Catechism and Confession of Faith, Approved of, and Agreed Unto* (Urie, Scotland: James Franklin at Newport, RI, 1752, 1673).

<sup>303</sup> Barclay, *Catechism and Confession*, Introduction.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>305</sup> Barclay, *Catechism and Confession*, 3-4.

<sup>306</sup> Bacon, *Valiant Friend*, 20-21.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*, 20-21.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

"What reason is given for our worshipping in silence?"<sup>311</sup>:

As God is a spirit, so the soul of man proceeding immediately from him, is likewise a spirit; therefore the intercourse or communion between the soul and its Creator, must be inward and spiritual; hence we conceive that true and acceptable worship may be performed in silence, according to the declaration of our Saviour, 'God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth'.<sup>312</sup>

Following the lesson that "God is a spirit, an Almighty Being, who inhabits eternity, without beginning and without end"<sup>313</sup> the text presented a synoptic view of "principle professions of religion: Paganism, Judaism, Mahometanism, and Christianity."<sup>314</sup> This school text enumerated the "fundamentals of Christianity [as follows]:

A belief in Jesus Christ the Son of God, his personal appearance on earth, his miracles, death, being made a propitiation for our sins, and in the doctrines and precepts of the New Testament<sup>315</sup>

Then after ascribing Friends' agreement "with other christians in these particulars"<sup>316</sup> the text moved to the distinguishing factors in response to the answer where Friends' "principally differ" from other christians.<sup>317</sup> The text made the following identifications:

We decline the use of the ordinances, viz. Baptism and the sacrament, believing that worship can be acceptably performed in silence; that war and oaths are unlawful: that no human appointment can qualify a person to preach the gospel; and our ministers receive no pay for preaching.<sup>318</sup>

This primer also addressed specifics for what counted as "unprofitable employment of the time."<sup>319</sup> Specifically, the text asked, "are singing, music, dancing, cards and theatrical entertainments proper amusements?"<sup>320</sup> The answer, which shed light on the Quaker educational emphasis, explained,

when we view man as a reasonable being, we think his amusements should be improving and rational: and when we consider him as a professor of the christian religion, we expect him to be manly, serious and dignified; but as these diversions are trifling, we conceive

---

<sup>311</sup> The Teachers in the Nine Partners Boarding School, "The Following Questions Were Offered by The Teachers in the Nine-Partners Boarding School, to Their Pupils, and the Answers Given in by Them.: The Scholars Had the Liberty of Recurring to Books for Aid, When They Found Themselves Unable to Give Proper Answers Without Such Assistance," BX7619.02F5 1815, Friends Historic Library (Swarthmore College, 1815), 5.

<sup>312</sup> The Teachers in the Nine Partners Boarding School, "The Following Questions,."

<sup>313</sup> Ibid.

<sup>314</sup> The Teachers in the Nine Partners Boarding School, "The Following Questions,."

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid.

them to be unworthy his attention, beneath the dignity of his character, and an unprofitable employment of the time bestowed upon him for nobler purposes.<sup>321322</sup>

The text then asked, "Why do we not with other professing Christians, ascribe more holiness to the first day of the week than to any other?"<sup>323</sup> The students were reminded,

We believe all days alike holy in the sight of our creator, and that we are under equal obligations every day to walk in fear and reverence before him; yet we consider the setting apart some time for cessation from labor, attending on public worship, and other religious exercises not only a reasonable duty but a profitable practice; and the law of the land, and the general consent of other societies appropriating the first day of the week to that purpose, we cheerfully unite in its observance, without attributing any inherent holiness to it<sup>324</sup>

The children received lessons in history and etymology while they were educated about the calling of "the days and months according to their numerical order."<sup>325</sup> Their Quaker textbook expanded on the elementary lessons about names for days of the week with a moralistic overlay,

Because the other names were derived from heathen idolatry, and if the Jews were commanded 'in all things to be circumspect and make no mention of the name of other Gods, nor let them be heard out of their mouth,' surely christians ought not to be less careful.<sup>326</sup>

This Quaker reference book for young scholars at Nine Partners then set out George Fox as the society's founder, and established his birth in England in the early seventeenth century.<sup>327</sup>

Importantly, the text sets forth Fox's experience as "exemplary" in the face of "much opposition and many persecutions."<sup>328</sup> Therefore, students learned the expectation that to be a model Friend would entail personal suffering. The text praises his moral choices not his words or even his deeds. The text taught that Fox "suffered long and severe imprisonments, was cruelly beaten, to the great injury of his health; all which he bore with exemplary patience and fortitude."<sup>329</sup> From that beginning the text traces through the "leading divisions of christianity."<sup>330</sup> The text recited the Roman Catholic and Protestant divisions' "principal tenets."<sup>331</sup> From Martin Luther's "publicly and zealously" opposing the sale of indulgences "to raise a sum of money to finish St. Peter's church"<sup>332</sup> and the Pope's "granting indulgences, that is,

---

<sup>321</sup> Ibid.

<sup>322</sup> Clearly Quaker concern with their non-preferential language, nonetheless, assumed the single-male-sex-reference to which the general population was accustomed and subject at this time in history.

<sup>323</sup> The Teachers in the Nine Partners Boarding School, "The Following Questions,."

<sup>324</sup> The Teachers in the Nine Partners Boarding School, "The Following Questions,"

<sup>325</sup> Ibid.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid.

<sup>327</sup> Ibid.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid.

the liberty to do what the rules of their church forbid."<sup>333</sup> John Calvin was then described as differing from Luther in that he, "did not admit . . . of any subordination amongst the clergy . . . . He believed God had chosen a certain number unto everlasting glory...<sup>334</sup> and, finally, that "Jesus Christ by his death and sufferings made an atonement for the elect only."<sup>335</sup>

Many years later, Lucretia wrote of her Quaker education and its effect, "I however always loved the good - often in childhood desired to do the right and being trained in the Religious Society of Friends had no faith in human depravity."<sup>336</sup> By the time Lucretia Coffin completed her studies at Nine Partners, she was thoroughly schooled in Quaker spirituality. She had a finely honed sense of justice. She was poised and motivated to respond.

### Summary

The remembered history of adult education, as considered in Chapter One, influences the on-going philosophy and purposes of the field and its practitioners. This study aims to find some of the field's less explored roots through study of the work of Lucretia Mott who educated adults through public speaking. Societal injustices moved her to speak in public arenas to educate adults about justice related to abolition of slavery, rights of women, and peaceful ways to address injustice.

Lucretia Mott's perspectives rested on a foundation in the Society of Friends. The ideas, practices, and methods to conduct meetings for worship and meetings for business, however, are singular in Quakerism and unfamiliar to non-Quakers. Hence, this chapter reviewed the Friends' history, principles and practices in order to facilitate the illumination of her work as a nineteenth-century female Quaker minister.

The Friends arose in the educational context of seventeenth-century England when the social turmoil of dissension splintered church and state who, traditionally, serve as the sources of "authoritative knowledge."<sup>337</sup> In this social turbulence, Friends founded a society with the characteristics of an "inherently educational practice"<sup>338</sup> that Michael Law found among some Christians of that era. The first question that guided this review was what teachings--central theological convictions--do Friends learn? A review of scholarly and denominational literature revealed four convictions that distinguish Friends. Briefly, those convictions include: every person's ability to be in communion with the Divine because of the Light within; the ability of all humans to live by the Golden Rule; the call of all Christians to work for social betterment through moral improvement; and, ongoing revelation of God's will that enabled social betterment.

A second question, asking "how do Friends exemplify their religious beliefs?," guided a review of denominational works. That exploration found that what Friends call 'testimonies' exemplify the embodied ethics through which Quakers attest to a transformed perspective for

---

<sup>333</sup> Ibid.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid.

<sup>335</sup> Ibid.

<sup>336</sup> Mott, "Notes on the Life of Lucretia Mott as Given to Sarah J. Hale,."

<sup>337</sup> Merriam and Simpson, *Guide to Research*, 3.

<sup>338</sup> Law, "Rediscovering Hope in a New Era: Possibilities for the Radical Tradition of Adult Education," 208.

moral ways to live as individuals and as a community. The testimonies--with certain revised components responsive to changing societal problems--are grouped under the broad concepts of equality, simplicity, community, and peace. The behavior of the individual and the community materially demonstrates, that is, gives witness to intellectually and spiritually embraced beliefs.

From a review of historic and denominational works, the third question, "what engages adult Friends both as learners and as educators?," was explored. From this endeavor came an exposition of the Friends' vision of their Society as a new order for the world to live by, and knowledge of the Friends' structural organization. This literature reviewed works that increased understanding of the concept of 'meeting,' the organization of the Society's meeting structures, and the practices that apply at each of the organization levels. These meetings have an educational milieu in which adults learn and teach and young adults begin to learn about the practical aspects--such as the encouragement of adults' speaking from their own experience in a respectful listening atmosphere. Speaking from experience and being discerning listeners are practices that Quakers value highly.

Lastly, Chapter Two explored Lucretia Coffin's education through which she gained intellectual, practical, and most importantly, spiritual grounding in the principles and practices of the Society of Friends. The reflection of this foundation will be explored first in Chapter Three which examines Lucretia Mott's sermons and speeches and her work as a public speaker related to the rights of women.

## GLOSSARY

**Advices:** "Extracts from minutes and epistles of early Friends intended to supply guidance, caution and counsel to monthly meetings and their members on various aspects of daily life."<sup>339</sup>

**As way may open or As the way opens:** "Proceeding with a proposed project "as way opens" means taking one step at a time (prayerfully), so as to become clear what to do."<sup>340</sup>

**Clerk:** A clerk functions as one "responsible for the administration of a Friends meeting for business [to include] preparation, leadership, and follow up of" of matters considered."<sup>341</sup>

**Concern:** "A course of action taken under deep religious conviction."<sup>342</sup> A concern "is felt to be a direct intimation of God's will."<sup>343</sup>

**Discipline:** The *Book of Discipline* summarizes the faith and practice to which Quakers are "committed."<sup>344</sup> For instance, the Book of Discipline for the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and the Yearly Meeting in England describes "a yearly meeting's history, structures, and procedures, including advices, queries, and often quotations...from the experience of Friends.... The word discipline comes from the root word disciple."<sup>345</sup>

**Epistles:** "A public letter [sent among] Friends groups to supply information, spiritual insight, and encouragement."<sup>346</sup>

**Gospel order:** Phraseology used by George Fox and other early Friends "to describe the new covenant order of the church under the headship of Christ."<sup>347</sup> Sandra Cronk writes that George Fox spoke of gospel order to describe the relationship among the "practices of worship, decision-making, and daily living" for Friends.<sup>348</sup>

**Guarded Education:** For Quakers, "divine revelation was a gift, its application a skill."<sup>349</sup> William Kashatus, historian of Quaker education, described "'a religiously guarded education' as

---

<sup>339</sup> Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, *Faith and Practice: A Book of Christian Discipline* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1997), 215.

<sup>340</sup> Lyn Cope-Robinson, *The Little Quaker Sociology Book: With Glossary* (Melbourne, FL: Canmore Press, 1995), 180.

<sup>341</sup> Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, *Faith and Practice*, 216.

<sup>342</sup> Trevett, Christine, *Women in the 17th Century*, Ebor Press, York, England, 1991: 5 as quoted in Cope-Robinson 1995: 198

<sup>343</sup> Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, *Faith and Practice*, 216.

<sup>344</sup> John Punshon, *Portrait in Grey: A Short History of the Quakers* (London: Quaker Home Service, 1984), 138.

<sup>345</sup> Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, *Faith and Practice*, 215.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*, 217.

<sup>348</sup> Sandra L. Cronk, *Gospel Order: A Quaker Understanding of Faithful Church Community* (Wallingford PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1991), 3.

<sup>349</sup> Nancy Reid Gibbs, *Children of Light: Friends Seminary, 1786-1986* (New York: Friends Seminary, 1986), 11.

an idiosyncratic education that would have required every Quaker child's reading the works of William Penn, Robert Barclay, and George Fox."<sup>350</sup>

**Leading:** Sheeran defines "leadings," an ongoing part of the Quaker experience from their founding, as "inner religious movements which 'lead' one to believe...that God is calling one to a particular action."<sup>351</sup> A sense of being called by God to undertake a specific course of action. A leading often arises from a concern.<sup>352</sup>

**Meeting for business:** These meetings are essentially educational in nature and are the Friends' primary "educational agencies."<sup>353</sup> Within a meeting for business are made what Sheeran describes as "decisions by mutual consent."<sup>354</sup> Douglas Steere says the meetings for business function for Friends as the "corporate method of arriving at decisions."<sup>355</sup> This process differs from value-free consensus, defined in the dictionary as "mutual agreement or harmony." Friends' decision-making process is rooted in worship with the expectation of "divine guidance manifesting itself through the unity of decisions."<sup>356</sup> The meeting for worship and meeting for business are the Friends' "unique" structures<sup>357</sup> in which to practice their convictions and testimonies as a covenantal "witnessing community."<sup>358</sup> This exclusive Quaker process is identical for a meeting for business at the monthly, quarterly and yearly meeting levels.

**Meeting for worship:** "A gathering of individuals in quiet waiting upon the enlightening and empowering presence of the Divine; the central focus of the corporate life of the Society of Friends."<sup>359</sup>

**Minute:** "The record of a corporate decision reached during a meeting . . . for business."<sup>360</sup> Official records of proceedings kept for all Quaker business meetings (preparative, monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings), along with their committees."<sup>361</sup>

**Openings:** What early Friends experienced as being "directly revealed in [the] soul so that [a person] assuredly knew it to be true"<sup>362</sup> or "a spiritual opportunity or leading."<sup>363</sup>

---

<sup>350</sup> William C. Kashatus, Personal telephone conversation, Nineteenth-Century Quaker Education and Lucretia Coffin Mott (Philadelphia, July 3, 1995).

<sup>351</sup> Michael John Sheeran, "Friendly Persuasion: Voteless Decisions in the Religious Society of Friends," diss (New Jersey: Princeton University, 1977), 24.

<sup>352</sup> Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, *Faith and Practice*, 218.

<sup>353</sup> Howard H. Brinton, *Guide to Quaker Practice* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill, 1955), 58.

<sup>354</sup> Sheeran, "Friendly Persuasion," 4.

<sup>355</sup> Douglas V. Steere, "The Quaker Meeting for Business," The 19th Annual J. Barnard Walton Memorial Lecture, Southeastern Yearly Meeting, (Avon Park, FL: Southeastern Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, 1995, 10/4, 1982), 2-3.

<sup>356</sup> Sheeran, "Friendly Persuasion," 2.

<sup>357</sup> Howard H. Brinton, *Quaker Education In Theory and Practice* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Press, 1967), 11-12.

<sup>358</sup> Douglas Gwyn, *The Covenant Crucified: Quakers and the Rise of Capitalism* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1995), 20.

<sup>359</sup> Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, *Faith and Practice*, 218.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>361</sup> "Guide to Genealogical Resources at Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College" (Swarthmore, PA, n.d.), D-3.

**Preparative Meeting:** "An organized group of members of an established monthly meeting which ordinarily gathers for worship at another place."<sup>364</sup>

**Public Friend:** A Public Friend signifies one who expresses religious beliefs as a preacher.<sup>365</sup> Public Friends traveled among groups of Quakers, and interacted "with the larger society"<sup>366</sup> to educate and speak about societal concerns. Lucretia Coffin Mott ministered as a Public Friend. For a Public Friend, the sectarian and secular roles converge through the practice of speaking.

**Queries:** "A set of questions, based on Friends' practices and testimonies, which are considered by Meetings and individuals as a way of both guiding and examining individual and corporate lives and actions."<sup>367</sup>

**Sense of the meeting:** "An expression of the unity of a meeting for business on some . . . concern."<sup>368</sup>

**Testimony:** "Friends testimonies (religious and social) are an outward expression of inward spiritual leadings and discernments of truth and the will of God. Testimonies are the application of Friend's beliefs to situations and problems of individuals and society ."<sup>369</sup>

**Threshing Meeting:** "A meeting held to discuss a controversial issue. At such a meeting all points of view are heard, but no decision is made."<sup>370</sup>

**Traveling Minister:** "Friends recognized both women and men ministers who felt called...to speak to a specific group or person."<sup>371</sup>

**Truth:** "The revealed will of God, as experienced in communion with the Inner Light or Inward Christ."<sup>372</sup>

**Unity:** "The spiritual oneness and harmony whose realization is a primary objective of a meeting for worship or a meeting for business."<sup>373</sup>

---

<sup>362</sup> Rufus M. Jones, "Introduction," in *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Rufus M. Jones, with an introduction and notes (New York: Capricorn Books, 1963), 74-75.

<sup>363</sup> Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, *Faith and Practice*, 219.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*, 219.

<sup>365</sup> Carol Stoneburner, "Introduction," in *The Influence of Quaker Women on American History: Biographical Studies*, ed. Carol and John Stoneburner (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), xiv.

<sup>366</sup> Stoneburner, "Introduction," 1.

<sup>367</sup> Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, *Faith and Practice*, 219-20.

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.*, 220.

<sup>369</sup> Cope-Robinson, *Little Quaker Sociology Book*, 195.

<sup>370</sup> *Faith and Practice*, North Pacific Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, 1993, quoted in Cope-Robinson, *Little Quaker Sociology Book*, 195.

<sup>371</sup> Cope-Robinson, *Little Quaker Sociology Book*, 195-96.

<sup>372</sup> Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, *Faith and Practice*, 221.

<sup>373</sup> *Ibid.*, 221.

**Yearly Meeting:** "Those Friends from a geographically extended area who gather in annual session to worship and conduct business together . . . [and] denotes the total membership of the constituent monthly meetings."<sup>374</sup> The Yearly Meeting meets for "several days...annually to conduct business, formulate the discipline, receive reports and concerns from its constituent meetings, review the state of the Society, and communicate with other yearly meetings and non-Quaker organizations."<sup>375</sup>

---

<sup>374</sup> Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, *Faith and Practice*, 221.

<sup>375</sup> "Guide to Genealogical Resources," D-7.