

Welcome to Quakerism 101

General Instructions to Participants

Quakerism 101 will follow the Friends General Conference (FGC) curriculum of readings and discussion.

I hope to have all the readings posted on the Meeting Website for participants to download and read prior to the session to which the readings relate. In my best case scenario, all of the readings will be posted prior to class and in my worse case scenario, all readings will be posted at least one week prior to the session to which the readings relate.

There are seven (7) 1-hour sessions planned for 2010, unfortunately the curriculum is designed to have six (6) 2-hour sessions. This puts a little pressure on all of us and the only way to reduce the pressure and make our time together pleasant and meaningful is for all of us to read the readings prior to the session. If we can do this, we will not need to recap the readings prior to the discussions for those who have not read the assignment for the session.

Friends (Quakers, I hope you forgive me for using the term 'Friend(s)' more frequently than the term 'Quaker(s)'; when I was growing up I was taught that Quaker was a pejorative and forbidden to use it. Our faith is experiential, and eminently pragmatic, and evolving with the times...sometimes it is very difficult to ignore the prejudices learned at Grandma's knee) have always been seekers, relentlessly seeking the 'Truth' and listening for the 'Word' (see John 1:1 – 1:34, the “Quaker Gospel”), keeping the tradition, questions will be expected and dealt with accordingly.

Reading Assignment

The readings for the first session, Unit A, are:

- Howard Brinton, Friends for 350 Years, chapter 1

There is only one copy of Brinton's Book in the library and participants may wish to purchase a copy from FGC - 800-966-4556 (9 AM-4:30 PM EST)

- William Penn's Preface to George Fox's Journal

There are several copies of Fox's Journal in the library and for unfettered reading one should point their browser to <http://www.strecorsoc.org/gfox/title.html>

- The Journal of George Fox, chapters 1-2

See <http://www.strecorsoc.org/gfox/title.html> or library copy

- Margaret Fell, selections, from London Yearly Meeting Christian Faith and Practice [1960]

PDF in 'Session 1, Unit A' folder

- Edward Burrough, "The Death of Mary Dyer"

PDF in 'Session 1, Unit A' folder

In addition, a Quaker Chronology is offered in the 'Session 1, Unit A' to help with the correlation of people, events and time.

During and after reading, you may find reflecting on the following queries useful.

What did Gorge Fox and early Friends discover? How have you, yourself had a similar experience?

Have you ever felt inner restlessness and pain as did George Fox? If so, how did you respond.

At least twenty openings (revelations or insights) are recorded in the first two Chapters of George Fox's Journal. How would you describe these openings in your own words? Which of these do you feel is the most important for today?

What does Margarete Fell mean when she says that George Fox spoke in her household and they were 'convinced'...what is Quaker "convincement"?

Why did Margarete Fell cry "we are all thieves..." Are Friends today "thieves"?

Where did Friends like Mary Dwyer find the strength to face imprisonment and death? Does Mary Dwyer's witness make sense in today's world? Can you think of people in our own era who have made similar witnesses? How do you respond?

Despite intense persecution, the early Quaker movement grew rapidly, why do you believe so many people were attracted? Are there implications for Friends today?

Where are you on your spiritual journey? Are you satisfied with where you are? Suppose you learned that you only had months to live – what would you want to do with your life before you died?

Are there ways you can strengthen your own spiritual life?

See you all on the 17th.

~JW.