

## Christian Peacemaking

Unfortunately many Quakers oppose war based on the armament potential of the secular contestants rather than on the testimony of Christ Jesus, who removes the occasion of war within us if we hear and obey His commandments. For example, during the “Cold War” peace groups, including some Friends, noted that the US had greater nuclear power than the Soviet Union. These groups urged our government to reduce, but not eliminate, our weapons of mass destruction, hoping that our adversaries would follow our example. The secular need for arms reduction was emphasized rather than inviting heads of state to wait on the Lord together to discern His tenderness and guidance.

Of course there were individual Christian pacifists who, in their love for and obedience to the Lord Jesus, would neither produce nor use weapons. They proclaimed the sinfulness of physical as well as psychological violence, but their voices did not permeate the peace movement.

Today this secular opposition to war continues, as people compare the evils of our government with the crimes of the former Iraqi leader. Is that what the Christian Quaker peace testimony elucidates? Are we so bereft of spiritual insight that we cannot be motivated by the Lord to refrain from violence because He commands us to love our enemies and forgive our trespassers?

George Fox declared that Friends must live “in the virtue and power that took away the occasion of war,” and his fellow preachers likewise urged peace. The early Friends witnessed to gospel order by living in the peaceable kingdom, even when they were challenged by Satan and the governing powers to renounce their commitment to Christ’s peace. They knew “that the Spirit in Christ, by which we are guided, is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil and again to move unto it; and we do certainly know, and so testify to the world, that the Spirit of Christ, which leads unto all truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the Kingdom of Christ nor for the Kingdoms of the world.”

Those Friends were peacemakers, ready to turn the other cheek in conflict situations. They followed Christ’s admonition that we love our enemy, even those who crucified Him. Because Fox and other first generation Friends were cognizant of God’s teaching in the scriptures of truth, they realized that the Lord required them to “turn their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.”

Early Friends provided schools for deprived

youngsters, teaching them trades that offered opportunities for working on farms and in factories producing goods that were peace oriented rather than armaments of war. This enabled young people to receive Christ’s peace. Can we not learn from this?

Those Friends, in their quest for peace, reminded potential Christians receiving the gospel that Paul in his letter to the Ephesians urged Christ’s followers to “put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (Ephesians 6: 11-12)

Fox often spoke of the need for the power of God to overcome evil within and without. We peacemakers should wait on that same power ourselves. God, not we, has the spiritual love needed for reconciliation.

This does not preclude the possibility of our suffering in our quest for true peace. But Fox and other Quakers knew that eventually Jesus would relieve our pain if we follow Him. Remember that Fox suffered cruel imprisonments but everything became clear in his understanding of the gospel of Christ.

As long as we follow politically inspired leadership in our desire for God’s peace, we will fail. Once we recognize what Fox knew clearly – that we desperately need God’s love in our peace work – then we will engage in prayerful waiting to discern what the Lord requires from us and, when we are obedient, we will be true peacemakers in the Lord.

Arthur Berk  
Affiliate member of  
Rockingham Monthly Meeting  
*This message originally appeared in The Conservative Friend No. 25 in 2006, and is reprinted by permission.*



## Worship Groups

These groups practice waiting worship in the manner of Conservative Friends. It is best to make contact before making plans, as their schedules need to be adjusted to accommodate their regular participants. For worship at OYM monthly meetings see [www.ohiょyearlymeeting.org](http://www.ohiょyearlymeeting.org)

Meeting	Location	Contact Person	Contact Information
Friends Gathering in Jesus Christ	Evanston, Illinois (near		
Goshen Meeting	Scone, Scotland	Paul Thompson	UK # 01738 620688; Bookseeker @blueyonder.co.uk
Lubbock Friends of Christ	Grace Presbyterian Church Building, Lub-	Sara Scribner	sarabscribner@aol.com meeting is at 4820 W. 19th Street, Lubbock, Texas 79407
Midlands Quakers	Stonebroom, Derbyshire,	Allistair Lomax	UK # 01773-875962 ripleychristianquakers@hotmail.co.uk
Richmond Christ-centered Unprogrammed Friends' Mid-	Richmond, Indiana	John Jeremiah Edminster	835 NW B Street, Richmond IN 47374; meets Third Day (Tuesday) evenings 6:15—7:15 PM; contact john.edminster@gmail.com / text (917)
Tahlequah Worship Group (Allowed Meeting under care of Hominy Monthly Meeting)	Tahlequah, Oklahoma	David Nagle	Fifth Day (Thursday), 7:30 PM 536 Summit Avenue Tahlequah OK 74464 Contact David Nagle at (918) 885-2714
Uxbridge Worship Group	Corner of Routes 98 and 146A, Uxbridge MA (Address for GPS only—no mail to this address: 479 Quaker	Constance Bair-Thompson	First Days, 9:00 AM (from first Sunday in April through October, we meet in the Uxbridge Friends Meetinghouse at above address; the rest of the year, we meet in private home—call 774-481-1212 for meeting location) Website: <a href="http://www.uxbridgefriends.org">www.uxbridgefriends.org</a> Please check website for when we are holding meeting for worship as we may not meet every week.
Whittier Worship Group	Whittier, California	Kim Palmer	kimpalmer11@yahoo.com

## Financial Contributions Appreciated

*The Conservative Friend* is financed through contributions from readers, with help from OYM. Small donations for *TCF*, as well as larger ones, are gratefully accepted. Please make checks (postal orders for donations outside US) to “*The Conservative Friend*” and send them to Sharon Helms, 2485 Bogie Lake Road, White Lake, MI 48386. The value of a subscription is \$10/year. Any excess over \$10 that a person contributes for a given year’s subscription is probably tax deductible, because *TCF* is a publication of Ohio Yearly Meeting.

*The Conservative Friend* is published up to four times a year (based on amount of material received) under the care of the Wider Fellowship of Conservative Friends Committee of Ohio Yearly Meeting of Friends, Barnesville, Ohio 43713. For more information about OYM, visit [www.ohiょyearlymeeting.org](http://www.ohiょyearlymeeting.org)

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The editor welcomes articles for publication, those written recently as well as excerpts from earlier Friends’ writings.

# The Lamb's War Today

## Biblical Background

In the Old Testament we find the origins of using the lamb as a symbol for the people of God. In Exodus 12:1-13<sup>1</sup> we see the lamb standing for the children of Israel escaping bondage and becoming as a people unto God. In the story of Abraham and Isaac we find the beginnings of the willingness of the father to sacrifice his son. However, because the time was not yet ready for this, a ram was provided as a substitute.<sup>2</sup>

1. And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

2 And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen. And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. (Genesis 22:12-18 KJV)

Note the prophetic statement “God will provide Himself a lamb.” John the Baptist announced the fulfillment of this prophecy in John 1:29: *And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? and again in 1:36: And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!*

In Isaiah chapter 53 there is further prophecy of the Lamb being sacrificed. Verse 7 reads: *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.* This theme is picked up in the New Testament in Acts 8:32-3 (... *He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.*) and in 1Peter 1:18-19. (*Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*)

In the Book of Revelation, the use of the figure of the Lamb of God for Jesus Christ reaches its fullest development, as for example, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.*

(Revelation 5:12-13) .In Revelation 6:15-17<sup>3</sup> we see the struggle of the forces of this world with the Lamb. The word “wrath” conveys intense anger with elements of rejection for an unacceptable offense. Revelation 12:10-11<sup>4</sup> tells of the struggle between the Lamb and the accuser. Later<sup>5</sup> Satan, called “the dragon,” gives the beast

3 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? (Revelation 6:15-17)

4 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. (Revelation 12:10-11)

5 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like

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(the force of evil) power to make war with the saints and the Lamb, but eventually (Revelation 14:8) Babylon, the place of the anti-Christ falls. In Revelation 7:9-17<sup>6</sup> salvation comes to those which *come out of great tribulation and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*. There is a song of praise to God and the Lamb in Revelation 15:3-4.<sup>7</sup> The marriage supper of the Lamb and the bride (the church) is announced.<sup>8</sup> The kingdom of God or the city of God, also called New Jerusalem, has no need of an outward temple or outward light, for the Lamb is both the temple and the light.<sup>9</sup> Revelation 22:1-5<sup>10</sup> celebrates the glory of the new life in Christ.

unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13:4-8)  
 6 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. (Revelation 7:9-17)

7 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. (Revelation 15:3-4)

8 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him:

## Early Friends

The first generation of Friends developed the term "Lamb's War" to portray the struggle of Christ with the forces of Satan or evil. For early Friends this was not an abstract theological concept but a reality that they experienced themselves, immersed in this epic struggle that was occurring on a cosmic, national and individual level. As Wilmer Cooper (in *A Living Faith*, pg. 115) wrote, "Fox used the language of Revelation to detail his interpretation of history. For example, the whore of Babylon<sup>11</sup> symbolized alienation from God caused by the Antichrist. The dragon<sup>12</sup> represented Satan. The beast in Revelation 13 continued the dragon image of evil, and Fox linked this to the false church of persecution, swearing, oaths, tithes and false teaching. The woman in Revelation 12 was the image of the true church, which had been forced into the wilderness by Satan, thus marking the apostasy of the church from the time of Christ to the seventeenth century."

This struggle touched all areas of early Friends' life – personal relationships, economic relationships, political relationships, religious relationships, etc. Friends came into conflict with the state when they were obedient to Christ's injunction not to take oaths and to swear not. They refused military service and the payment of tithes. They avoided the vain

for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. (Revelation 19:6-9)

9 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. (Revelation 21:22-23)

10. And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. (Revelation 22:1-5)

11. And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. (Revelation 17:5)

12. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Revelation 12:9)

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social customs of their day. They stood for honest dealings and forthrightness in speech. They avoided the vain amusements, diversions and fashions of the day, choosing clothing that was simple, modest and a witness for their faith. They took seriously scriptural injunctions<sup>13</sup> in their moral behavior.

For first-generation Friends, the Lamb's War was a struggle of an absolute nature, with no room for compromise and lukewarm commitment. Early Friends did not see themselves as initiating the struggle. They understood that it was led by Jesus Christ and that they were His followers being led into this great and epic spiritual battle.<sup>14</sup> It was a holy war. The weapons provided by God were spiritual in nature, as opposed to the carnal weapons used by the Lamb's opponents.<sup>15</sup> Early Friends felt sustained in absolute obedience to Jesus Christ by the power of His cross. In his Epistle 222

13. For example: Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another. (Galatians 5:19-26)  
 14. And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. (Revelation 19:11-15)  
 15. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; (Ephesians 6:10-18)

(1662), Fox urges "you must bow at the cross of Christ, which is the power of God...for who bends, and submits, and yields, and bows to the power of God within...which power of God keeps the mind over all outward things, in the everlasting power of God above them." However, at the end of his lifetime, Fox began to sense that a sea change was occurring among Friends.

### Sea Change

A sea change occurred in England in 1689 when William and Mary replaced James II on the throne. The new monarchs believed in religious toleration, and with the passage of the Acts of Toleration, Friends found permanent relief from the great suffering that they had endured. The last of the leadership of the first generation of Friends were passing on at this time, and a new outlook spread among Friends.

With a softening of the effort of the state to use governmental powers to enforce a state religion and to stamp out religious dissent, came a softening of the stridency, absoluteness and seeming radicalism of the first generation of Friends, ushering in an era that is now called Quietism. In response to the Acts of Toleration, London YM in 1689 issued the following advice: "Walk wisely and circumspectly toward all men, in the peaceable Spirit of Jesus Christ, giving no offense nor occasions to those in outward government, nor way to any controversies, heats, or distractions of this world, about kingdoms thereof. But pray for the good of all; and submit all to that Divine power and wisdom which rules over the kingdoms of men." (quoted in Walter Williams, *The Rich Heritage of Quakerism*, p119) The leadership three years later advised, "Let all study to be quiet and mind their own business, in God's holy fear, and none be meddling or exercising themselves in things too high for them." (Williams, p.120) In *Let Your Words Be Few*, Richard Bauman contrasts the early period of Quakerism and Quietism with "a realization that Friends might have purchased their survival at the sacrifice of the energy and power of the direct inward spiritual experience that had energized the first publishers of Truth." (p.51-2) As a prelude to this, Bauman cites the epistle of London YM of 1672 that cautions ministers to "take heed of aggravating reflections and forward clashing at persons or people, with unreasonably and rashly using names of distinctions; which will be resented as reproachful to them, and not only stumble and prepossess their minds with prejudice, but also hinder their convincement." Bauman observes that "this is not war but diplomacy. One need only try to imagine James Parnal or Richard Farnsworth in the mid-1650s moderating his preaching out of a concern for provoking resentment or appearing reproachful to see how enormous a change is represented here." (p.145-6) With the onset of Quietism, Friends abandoned the Lamb's War and accepted their place as a sect free to pursue its peculiarities and inter-

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nal needs. Many of the witnesses and ways that were essential to Friends continued among them, but Quietist Friends no longer expected the world to be converted to Christ's way as early Friends had.

Ohio Yearly Meeting is the last remaining yearly meeting that retains significant attitudes and practices from its Quietist heritage. I believe that God has preserved this remnant for a purpose that is unfolding and will soon unfold, for us to be instruments for His work here on earth under dramatically different conditions. Is the era of toleration slipping away, to be replaced by new challenges that have not been encountered by Friends for more than three centuries? In the evolution of Quietism there has been a slow but steady accommodation to the world. However, important, basic components of Christian unprogrammed faith remain among us that again are becoming attractive to people all over the world. One of these components is our understanding that Jesus Christ is the Word of God to be experienced as present here with us and to be sought and found within ourselves. Another component is that the Scriptures were inspired by the Word and have been preserved by God for our use for doctrine, reproof, for correction and for instruction. A third component is our retained understanding of and mechanisms for recognizing and nurturing God's gifts among us. In addition, we affirm that all of life is under the care of our Lord. Are we at the threshold of and even now being called to a new work in God's Kingdom? The impact on us individually and as a people could be enormous and far-reaching.

### Liberal Idea of "Progress"

The liberal idea of "progress" by mankind has increasingly been a force in our world, including in Quakerism in general. This understanding has its roots in the Enlightenment of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries that emphasized the power of human thought to understand all truth. Anything that cannot be understood by the rational use of our minds is denied as invalid and not worth being encumbered with. This mindset continues with us and tends now to question everything, to disdain faith and to abhor authority of any sort. It has evolved into liberalism and modernism with their "politically correct" attitudes. It fosters a materialistic secularism that functions in many ways like a religion. It views scientific process as the means to come to knowledge about all reality. It has, to quote Wilmer Cooper, "a one-story or one-dimensional world-view, which means that basic distinctions between the holy and profane, the sacred and the secular - even between good and evil - are ignored, if not erased. Taken to its logical conclusion, this denies the presence of evil in the world, or sees it as simply the absence of the good." (*Living Faith*, p. 29)

Quaker liberalism's outlook was summarized by That Of God In Everyone, although in many places

now a discomfort with the use of "God" has led to replacement of that word with "good." Again quoting Wilmer Cooper, "Insofar as 'that of God in everyone' has theological meaning today, its association with Christ has been largely abandoned, whereas for George Fox this identification was essential. It has also come to mean that God as they understand the deity, has been parceled out among all persons so that everyone has a 'piece of God' within, and that it is this that gives worth and dignity to human beings. This suggests a humanistic view of life devoid of a sense of God transcending creation, history, and humanity, which can easily revert to a form of pantheism antithetical to Fox's sense of the greatness and goodness of God and the supreme presence and transforming power of God at work in the world. Thus, the net effect is a denigration of God and an exaltation of humanity. Somehow, this belies Fox's overwhelming sense that 'the power of the Lord is over all.' (*A Living Faith*, p. 30)

The tendency in the western world to elevate humans and the hoped for march to a freer and more decent world have led to a secular force that especially dominates in western Europe and increasingly also in the United States. It has been especially opposed in the US by Evangelical Christians and Roman Catholics, with resultant deep divisions that have polarized American society. This secular force, with its attendant globalization, expects to dominate the world, and is being challenged by an increasingly militant Islam. We see other dividing forces at work, such as an increasing polarization in this country between the rich and the poor. The media and the entertainment industry - which are allied to a mass, materialistic, consumer society - increasingly dominate our culture, even its religious aspects, and Christian services regrettfully become a type of superficial entertainment. The physical environment is being plundered and irretrievably changed, with mass extinctions of many species and alteration of the physical environment on which we depend for ecological services. We expect to have a wide variety of food available to us, sometimes grown 6,000 miles away. Our federal government has taken on a debt of unimaginable size that depends for financing on people in other parts of the world, especially Asia. Should something panic the holders of the US debt, the meltdown of our economy and the society built upon it would be catastrophic.

The sustainability of all this is being increasingly questioned. What will happen when we reach the breaking point? How far off is this? Will we be prepared should an even more cataclysmic event occur than what has happened already? We saw how 9/11 was deeply upsetting for so many people.

- Jack Smith, Rockingham Monthly Meeting  
*This message was originally delivered at the General Gathering of Conservative Friends, Barnesville, Ohio 6/17/2006; a very condensed version appeared in The Conservative Friend # 25. This full version is reprinted by permission and will conclude next issue.*

## Regarding COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Dear Friends,

You have all probably heard of the COVID-19 pandemic. At this time we don't know if the spread of the disease has crested or if it is in the early stages of a larger health crisis.

Epidemics have passed through Ohio Yearly Meeting on earlier occasions. Horton Howard (who was a doctor) contracted cholera and died during the 1833 epidemic. By the time of the Spanish influenza epidemic of 1918, Ohio Friends honored local quarantines, even postponing quarterly meetings.

Like the Spanish flu of 1918, the coronavirus appears to especially target people over 65. Public health officials have recommended "social distancing" as a means of slowing the spread of the epidemic and lowering the likelihood that hospitals will face too many infected people at once.

Because many of our members fall into the disease's target age range, we obviously want to face

this health crisis with appropriate caution and help everyone to stay as healthy as possible. The following are some general guidelines that would be good for Friends to consider at least initially.

- Members should wash hands more frequently than usual.
- Meetings should have hand sanitizer and tissues available and should wipe door knobs.
- After meeting, Friends should consider expressing our love to each other by touching elbows rather than by shaking hands. It would be good if Friends could maintain a distance of three to six feet from each other.

Friends, let's consider using these temporary measures to take care of each other during this epidemic.

- Seth Hinshaw  
Keystone Fellowship Monthly Meeting

## For The Friend, 1894

In the rise of our beloved society, after many had been turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to the power of God, that eminent servant, George Fox, was moved of the Lord to set up meetings for discipline, for the maintenance of our testimonies, support of good order, and as he termed it, take care of God's glory. He admonished Friends to hold all their meetings in the power of God. I do not understand that he made any distinction between meetings for worship and meetings for discipline as to the foundation on which they were established, or the ground on which they were to be conducted, but said, "Hold all your meetings in the power of God," for in speaking of meetings for discipline, he said, "The authority of your men's and women's meetings is the power of God," and he advised Friends to live in the spirit and power of the Holy Ghost, which is the authority of our men's and women's meetings.

I have feared there is a tendency in this age of creaturely activity, for man to take the conducting power of our meetings into his own hands, and thus in a measure set at naught the doctrine of the leadership of Christ over our meetings for discipline.

I have desired that we might heed the injunction, Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not to thine own understanding, acknowledge Him to direct our ways, and that we might hold all our meetings for discipline on their original foundation, and merit the Divine blessing of holding them in the power and authority of the great Head of the Church. For I believe the business of our meetings is the Lord's work, and that it is His prerogative to not only qualify but command His servants to labor in his cause.

That we cannot conduct the business of our meetings in our own wills and wisdom, give sentiments or names on committees of our own choosing to the honor of Truth, any more than the Gospel can be preached without an unction from the Holy One.

As the hand of Uzza was withered by being placed to the ark unbidden, so do I believe our spiritual strength will be weakened if we give sentiments in meetings or names on committees from any other motive than from an apprehension of duty. Before the youthful David went to meet Goliath, the armor of Saul was put upon him; (David said to Saul, "I cannot go with these for I have not proved them," and David put them off him. 1 Samuel 17:39) Instead of depending on outward shield and buckler, he went in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel. So I believe it is with us as a people in conducting the business of our meetings. All our own planning and scheming to attain certain desired ends in our own will and wisdom, comparable to the armor of Saul, when proved as in the light of the ever blessed Truth and weighed in the balance of the Sanctuary I believe will be found wanting, and that we will be brought to see as in the visions of light as George Fox saw it formerly—that we are nothing, that Christ is all—and that our strength and protection in best things, does not lie in outward shield and buckler, but in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, who has promised to give wisdom to those that ask aright and a spirit of judgment to those that sit in judgment.

- Sheldon Smith  
Springville, Iowa, 1894  
submitted by Mary Alice Pino

c/o Phil Helms  
2485 Bogie Lake Road  
White Lake MI 48386

Return Service Requested

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## Gathering of Conservative Friends, 2020

Dear Friends of Jesus,

All Conservative Friends, and those of like mind, are invited to share in a weekend feast. Our desire is that we wait together to drink in this Christ. All are to come with a thirst for Him. "For He came not to heal the healthy, but those who are sick." It has been our experience that when we come to Him empty of self-centered desires, then (and only then) we will receive food that the world knows nothing about. (John 4:32)

The gathering of Conservative Friends will be held at the Stillwater Friends Meeting house, in Barnesville, Ohio, Sixth Month 26-28, 2020 (June 26-28, 2020).

"On the last and most important day of the feast Jesus stood up and said in a loud voice. 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. If anyone believes in me, rivers of living water will flow out from that person's heart as the Scripture says.' Jesus was talking about the Holy Spirit." John 7:37-38

On Behalf of the Ohio Yearly Meeting  
Wider Fellowship Committee,  
Nancy Hawkins

Register with Sharon Helms at  
[philandsharon04.01@sbcglobal.net](mailto:philandsharon04.01@sbcglobal.net)

Registration deadline: Sixth Month 10, 2020  
(June 10, 2020)

### Online Bible Study with Henry Jason

Henry Jason's online Bible Study group meetings are Second Day from 7:30—8:30 PM Eastern time, on Zoom. They began with the Gospel According to Mark. Missing the early meetings should not be an impediment to joining.

If anyone has any questions, they should not hesitate to contact Henry directly. His number is (650) 348-7569. His email address is [henry@henryjason.org](mailto:henry@henryjason.org).

Below are the instructions for participating over Zoom:

To join by computer enter this URL in your browser: <https://zoom.us/j/3803638838>  
If joining by telephone, dial: US :+1 669 900 6833 or +1 929 436 2866  
Those connecting over the telephone will need to enter the Meeting ID when prompted.  
The Meeting ID is: 380 363 8838

Those connecting with a computer for the first time will be given simple instructions to automatically download and install a Zoom "app". This is not difficult at all, but first-time Zoom users are encouraged to connect five or ten minutes before the group starts. The OYM zoom account is under Susan Smith's name.