

Sacraments—Catholics have 7 and Protestants have 2—Quakers say all of life is sacramental
[Quakers] do not reject the spiritual realities toward which sacraments point. We recognize baptism as the transformation of life through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We recognize communion as the presence of Jesus Christ in our corporate worship. We recognize ordination as the diverse giftedness for ministry of all people. We recognize these things, and rejoice in them, but we do not believe that the church should seek to initiate them through ritual means.¹

A sacrament is a visible expression of the invisible God.

*A sacramental moment is a sacred time in which God's presence is real to us,
 touches us, blesses us.*

*The gossamer curtain that often hides the face of God is pulled aside.
 We see, feel, know God.²*

Rather than limit this encounter with the Living God to ritual acts in worship

Whether 2 or 7 or any other number

—it is any time and all the time

Life is sacramental

There is no separation between sacred and secular

Wilmer Cooper says: *Friends have developed the testimony about the sacramental view of all life, maintaining that it is not just in special sacramental events (such as baptism and communion) that we experience the grace of God, but that all occasions of life and every meal have the potential to become sacred means of God's grace... This concept of the sacramental view of life also coincides with the Quaker testimony that there are no uniquely sacred times (days) or places; instead, all of life has the possibility of becoming an outward sign of an inward grace.³*

A sacramental moment is when you are most aware of the presence of the Living God

This morning we sang songs about how God is present in nature

That's the most often response—we see God in the beauty of our world

But the truth is that God is everywhere all the time

Any moment that God chooses is a sacramental moment

Any time our eyes are opened is a sacramental moment

A friend of mine was having some kind of a medical procedure and the Dr was talking during it

She asked him to be quiet because she was in her "happy place" and he was disrupting that

That place you go to where all is well and at peace

That's what "Centering" is about—we center down and go to our "God space"

That place in our mind where we can settle and Meet God

Sometimes those encounters are profound and amazing—moving us deeply

Mostly there is just a knowing that God is present—a sweet resting place

Kind of a check in—touching bases with the Presence of God

¹ Eden Grace, *Reflection on what Quakers bring to the ecumenical table*,

<http://www.edengrace.org/sacraments.htm>

² Jan Wood, *Christians at Work*, page 111

³ Wilmer Cooper, *A Living Faith*, pages 93-94

Sometimes this encounter with the Living God is aided by external aids

The beauty in creation
The joy of fun
The love in friendship
The message in art
The melody in music
Gathering with community in worship

But this encounter with the Living God isn't dependent on anything—it is everywhere all the time

Because God is everywhere all the time

Learning to see God in the present moment

As Elton Trueblood said, *The water which washes children's clothing*

*Is as holy as water that is called "holy water" when it has been blessed by a priest.*⁴

Learning to see God in everything and in everyone

When I was in Spokane as a youth pastor—I had 2 small groups of youth

The studious youth wanted to do a Bible study of the minor prophets—we met in my house

The creative youth weren't up for sitting down and doing a study of anything

This group met in my car and we went on a "God hunt"—looking for God

They named themselves the Wiezeleace People—Weird Zealous People for God

We had fun adventures exploring our world together

Everything from seeing God in the constant flowing of the Spokane River

To talking to the nuns at the monastery and learning how holy water is made

Some explorations were crazy, some profound, some mundane—all experiential

The kids had something profound there—it is not about a ritual, no matter how significant it is for some

It isn't a representation of something spiritual or something that happened long ago

The important truth for us is that God is everywhere and every moment has sacrament in it

It is the encounter with the Living God that transforms us—not the ritual

Our focus is on the real encounter with the Divine Presence

And allowing that to work its miracle of transformation deep within

Without that, nothing else matters

I want us to explore this idea of sacraments in the Quaker tradition a bit further

Next week we will explore what it means to "live sacramentally"

⁴ Elton Trueblood, *The People Called Quakers*, page 138