

What would it look like today, if we were to revive the energy of 17th Century Quakerism?

Quakers felt they had rediscovered Christianity as it was established by Jesus

Their core beliefs and values were lived out in dramatic ways that bore witness to those beliefs

Knowing God directly

Radical equality for all people and all genders

Being peacemakers

Speaking truth to power

Living and speaking with honesty and integrity

Do we put God at the center of everything we do?¹

"The life with God is the center of life, and all else is remodeled and integrated by it." Thomas Kelly

Everything we do comes out of this center of life with God—it is the basis of gathering together

It is the reason for our action and for our activism

It is the way we face life—with God accompanying in all of life 24/7

It isn't just the "spiritual parts of life" that are centered in God—but all of it!

The mundane, the practical, the secular parts, all decisions—both big and little

We invite the Light to bring Light into the shadows and to show us the way to live with God

We reorient our lives from simply doing good to following God

To discerning which of the many good things are mine to do in the full power of God

Recognizing that good things can derail us from the greater good of God's purposes

We turn at any moment and many times a day—asking God what I'm to do now—what is mine to do?

We even invite God into our play and the intimacies of life—our entire life is with God

This is a counter cultural way to live—particularly in our individualistic me-first American society

Our culture teaches us that we should strive to do whatever makes us happy

But it is a relentless pursuit that always leaves us wanting

Jesus said, *"Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don't worry about missing out. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met."* Matthew 6:33 MSG

Do we model a radically faithful society that is in the world but not of the world?

"Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world.

God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill." Matthew 5:14 MSG

If early Quakers saw themselves as reviving primitive Christianity for all people—a Light to the nations

No wonder they were very public—they were called to transformation of all people

Today—how do we let our Light shine forth in ways that impact all of society?

"God is not a secret to be kept."—the same thing is true of Quakers

We aren't a secret society that meets in a hidden location

One way we interact with the world is through our economic systems and our finances

Yet it is easy to get caught up in the world messages of "not enough"

We slip into worry and preoccupation about all of this

No [one] can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Matthew 6:24 RV

Mammon is the worship of wealth and personal accumulation and power

¹ Questions and some thoughts taken from *Primitive Quakerism Revived* by Paul Buckley with Inner Light Books

To serve this god of Mammon is to be controlled by it—with an insatiable thirst for more
Mammon's poor cousin is worry and fret of "not enough"—still driving the need for more

We are called to live counter culturally in the upside down Kingdom of God as "mammon—busters"
We live faithfully, asking God to show us the way, trusting that we are enough!
Yes, we are in the world in that we use money, banks and the like
But we follow God—choosing to trust the journey rather than be driven to more
For one thing, it is how we do our spending plan each year, including a "faithfulness gap"

Are we "radically faithful" in the face of world systems around us?
Do we choose the third way when it presents itself?
Do we live our lives "out loud" so that the Light can shine forth?

Do we form faithful communities that worship together in love, trust, patience, joy, and humility?

Early Quakers were a community of people who had heard a divine call to come together
And become a covenant community—bound to Spirit and to each other
It was against the law for early Quakers to meet for worship outside the state church
But they did so anyway and did it publicly—actually making arrest easy
Even when the adults were arrested, the children continued to meet each Sunday
Being a covenant community meant being there for each other
When parents were arrested—the Meeting cared for the children and for the business
If gathered by God—they had spiritual and temporal obligations to and for each other

We also have a sense that we've been brought together—not necessarily of our own volition
We have not come together because our friends are here or the style of worship wows us
We're here to Listen to God in community, believing that God is speaking to us
And that we can empower one another to live out God's call to us
We have Spirit work to do together—work enhanced by the community
We are a commuter community of Christ centered Quakers
It will look different than it did in 17th century England—we have our own call
We are a covenant community stays together through good and bad
Through agreement and disagreement
We don't all have to agree—but we stay together in sturdy trust in God
Finding way forward as we wait together

The amazing thing about North Seattle Friends Church is that tries to live out primitive Quakerism
God is at the center of our being and our church—God is the center of everything we do
We model a radically faithful society that is in the world, but not of the world
We are a faithful community that worships together in love, trust, patience, joy, and humility
While I'm proud of who we have become—I also invite us to Listen for the next steps

The three-part dance:

Centered through stillness,

In Spirit gathered

Do we dare reflect the Light?

Friends: A people called to listen, gathered to seek, sent forth to serve.²

² A Peculiar People by New England Yearly Meeting and the FWCC Triennial theme, 2000