

Friends' understanding of peace has always meant our refusal to fight, whether it be personally or in war
Early Friends took passages of scripture to heart, believing that peace was the only option
To love our enemies—Matthew 5:43-44 at Luke 6:27-35
To love God and love our neighbors as ourselves—Matthew 22:36-40
To fight against the powers of this world that cannot be fought
with flesh and blood or physical weapons—Ephesians 6:11-12
Because of their belief that all people can hear and know God—John 1:9, 10:27, 15:12-17
They came to believe in the equality of all people before God—Galatians 3:28
And did not feel it their right to fight against others in ways that could take their lives
"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." Matthew 5:9 NRSV

To that end, we have had a multitude of responses, from refusing to serve in the military
To some feeling called to do so
While we stand by our peace testimony,
we also guard the freedom to choose and follow leadings—putting trust in God
Gratefully, Quakers have worked to help create conscientious objector and non-combatant status

But, in reality, our peace testimony is about so much more than an anti-war stance
or pacifism as understood by many people—a simple refusal to fight—to be passive, doing nothing

We are called to be peacemakers!
That means working actively to create peace and standing against injustice
George Fox said,
"I lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars..."

First that means living at peace with oneself and with God—finding inner peace
Living in the *"peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,
[that] will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."* Philippians 4:7 NRSV

Which then calls us to live in peace with our neighbor—family, friends, coworkers, community...
To build positive and healthy relationships
Learning to do healthy conflict when we disagree—which we will
Treating those that are "other" as Jesus said in the story of the Good Samaritan
We extend that to others around the world—treating everyone with love and respect

Out of living at peace with oneself and with God—come leadings of ways to live that out in our world
Friends typically call those leadings testimonies
Unlike the old fashioned "testimony time" that some of us grew up with
Friends' Testimonies are ways in which we live out our faith by what we do
Testimonies come out of our being with God and are expressed in what we do
Friends' Testimonies are outward expressions of an inward leading of the Spirit
They arise more out of a concern for following God, than a passion for social justice
Traditional Quaker Testimonies are Integrity, Simplicity, Peace, and Equality
Modern Friends often use the acronym SPICE or SPICES to make them easier to remember
Of course the P stands for Peace
However, all of them in concert are how we live out our peace testimony
You can't really do one in isolation or pick and choose what is convenient
To make it easier for us to organize and remember them, I will use the acronym SPICES

All testimonies have an inner aspect, which is then lived out—it starts personal, then addresses society at large

S = Simplicity—focusing on what is truly important and letting the other things fall away
At its core—simplicity in worship—waiting in the presence of God for God to speak
Simplicity takes us back to being single minded and focused on Christ—what is ours to do?
Then we live with a spirit of enoughness and generosity,
abandoning ourselves to radical following of Christ’s leading

P = Peace—often stated as Peace and Social Justice
Seeking justice and healing for all people; taking away the causes of war in the ways we live
Active peacemaking, reconciliation, caring for victims of war, working towards global justice
Using non-violent means to address issues of poverty, domestic violence, racism, sexism, etc.

I = Integrity—living as people who act on what we believe, tell the truth and do what we say we will do
Living clear lives in all parts of our life
Living with a sense of transparency—that what you see is what you get
Honesty and a Quaker emphasis on truth
It includes honesty and truth in the public life and business dealings

C = Community—supporting one another in our faith journeys; sharing with and caring for each other
We actually intersect with multiple communities and recognize value in each one
Importance of doing life together and that it matters that everyone is included
But it is also a spiritual “we” in contrast to the individual relationship with God
God has called us as a people to do our spiritual journeys together
Finding ways to support one another in the practical aspects of life, as well as the spiritual

E = Equality or Equity and Inclusion—treating everyone, everywhere, as equally precious to God;
recognizing that everyone has gifts to share
Quakers refused to use titles and other means of elevating certain persons over others
Providing opportunity for everyone’s voice to be heard
Where there is lack of opportunity, providing equitable solutions so all voices are heard

S = Stewardship or Earth Care—valuing and respecting all of God’s creation;
using only our fair share of the earth’s resources;
working for policies that protect the planet
God has entrusted the care of creation to humanity—are we faithfully living into that trust?
Being good stewards of all that we have while being sensitive to the needs of others

The list isn’t exhaustive
Just as modern day Quakers added community and stewardship or earth care
We can add others as leadings arise
although most ways we live out our faith fit in these categories

Together, they constitute what Fox meant when he said...
“I lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars...”