

Chapter III

LIFE AND ACTION

Way of Life

Way of Life

The Quaker religious faith leads to a Life way of life. In Friends' thinking, the practice of Christian faith is not primarily a matter of taking part in rites and ceremonies. What is of primary importance is that we should open ourselves to the Light of Christ and try to live in obedience to the leading of God's spirit. Friends' missionary outreach and social service activities alike have grown out of this continuing attempt to translate Christian faith into life and action. The corporate testimonies and concerns that are set forth in this chapter, and the standards of conduct that are recommended, have grown out of Friends' experience in trying to be faithful to the teachings of Jesus and to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in their lives as individuals and as a religious society.

Evangelism and Extension

New Testament Evangelism

The early Christians, in obedience to the divine compulsion to share with others the spiritual riches of Christ, became zealous apostles of the new message of love, peace, and good will among mankind. This early evangelism was not a campaign to develop a new religious cult, but was rather the sharing of the joy of a spiritual transformation. With a zeal and power that stand as a pattern for any age, these first evangelists soon carried the "good news" to the entire Mediterranean area.

Publishers of Truth

In a similar manner early Friends were irresistibly moved to share their experience of a direct approach to God without meditating instruments. Their message of free access to divine redemptive grace was preached without regard to the social rank, race or religion of those who would listen. As a result of their work as earnest "publishers of truth", Quakerism spread rapidly during the seventeenth century. Those who were convinced sounded forth their message, first in England and soon in foreign lands, in the faith that a response would be found among many of like spirit. As early as 1660 they could report "great work and service of the Lord beyond the seas", ranging from Palestine and Turkey in the East to Newfoundland and Virginia in the West.

Period of Quietism

Early in the eighteenth century the Friends as a group lost interest in active witnessing in and to the outside world. They became introspective and largely concerned with maintaining a testimony against "creaturely activity". This period of quietism, which continued through the rest of the eighteenth century, was characterized by extreme sensitivity to states and conditions, and by a rare union of tenderness and strength as revealed by the journals and advices of the time. Even though withdrawn from contact with the outside world, many Friends led surrendered and dedicated lives.

During the period of quietism, there were fruitful labors by individuals who responded to deeplyfelt calls for special service at home and abroad. Among these were John Woolman, William Allen, Daniel Wheeler, Elizabeth Fry, and Stephen Grellet with their concerns for Indians, Negro slaves, Russian serfs, and prisoners in body or spirit throughout the world. But as one might expect, from the weakening of the evangelistic impulse there resulted not only a loss of membership but also a decline in spiritual vitality.

New Awakening

Then a new wave of religious revival swept over America, bringing with it a new spirit of evangelism. Among Friends, the early nineteenth century was marked by a renewed interest in

proclaiming the gospel of Christ to the world as the seventeenth century founders had done. Unfortunately, this period of the new awakening was marked also by controversies in the Society of Friends over matters of doctrine and practice, leading to the "Orthodox" - "Hicksite" separation of 1827-28 and to the "Wilburite"- "Gurneyite" separation of 1845-54.

While retaining the distinctive Quaker emphasis on the indwelling Christ, "Orthodox" or "Gurneyite" Friends wanted to give more attention to some doctrines of historic Christianity which they felt had been neglected. They wanted to promote systematic Bible study and introduce active evangelistic methods which would alter the form of Quaker worship as then practiced. The "Hicksite" and "Wilburite" Friends, while differing from each other in doctrinal outlook, both kept the traditional form of Quaker worship, resisting such innovations as hymn singing and pastoral leadership.

Evangelistic Methods

As westward migration continued on across the continent, the greatest expansion and numerical growth occurred among Friends who followed the "Orthodox" or "Gurneyite" path, using active evangelistic methods and gradually developing a "programmed" style of worship with pastoral leadership. Wilmington Yearly Meeting and the Friends United Meeting to which it belongs are of "Orthodox" or "Gurneyite" origin.

We recognize the ministries of witnessing, preaching, teaching, Christian service, and fellowship groups as divinely approved methods for carrying the Christian message wherever the way opens. Evangelistic efforts of various kinds are acceptable and may be found helpful if adapted to the needs of the Meetings which use them.

Pastoral Leadership

Friends have no ordained clergy. There are no ceremonial rites or sacraments to be administered by a special priesthood. Even in the "programmed" meeting for worship, vocal ministry is considered to be a shared responsibility.

Early Friends, reacting to their perceptions of the clergy in seventeenth century England, proclaimed a testimony against the training of "hireling ministers". Though the custom of "recording" persons who displayed a gift for vocal ministry began early in Quaker history, it was not until late in the nineteenth century that some Friends Meetings began to provide means to free persons for pastoral service. As more meetings felt a need for trained and steady leadership, the practice spread. The feeling against "hireling ministry" gradually diminished, and meetings with paid pastoral leadership came to be the prevailing pattern in many Yearly Meetings of Friends.

"The equipping ministry" (see Ephesians 4:11-12) is an expression often used to describe the role of the Friends pastor, who must exercise his leadership in harmony with the conviction that ministry is a function to be shared by all the members. The founding of the Earlham School of Religion in 1960 gave to Friends for the first time in their history a graduate school of their own where men and women could prepare themselves for this kind of leadership.

Need of Steady Building

Though periods of intensive evangelistic effort may be spiritually beneficial, the work of deepening and enriching the religious life of the Meeting should be carried on continually. The most stable and healthful conditions usually result from constant and steady building. Regular attendance at worship and the fullest possible participation in the work of the Meeting should be encouraged, not only for the growth of each individual member but for the health of the Meeting. The relationship of children with the Meeting through junior membership provides a great opportunity for special work in preparing them for adult membership. Friends should remember the importance of reaching out to people outside the Meeting sharing their message and concerns, and whenever appropriate, inviting others to join them.

Missionary Outreach

The earliest activities of the Society of Friends were essentially missionary in character. These activities had important and far-reaching results, but gradually the conviction grew that such brief and transient visits were not enough. Needs were recognized which required services continuing for many years, or even for the lifetime of the workers. This made necessary a greater financial outlay and more systematic methods of securing support.

Beginning in 1866 with the establishment of a station in central India by English Friends and in 1869 with the work of American Friends in Ramallah, near Jerusalem, mission work under the care of English and American Friends has extended around the world. At first such work was carried on by committees of concerned Friends, but later it generally became part of the organized activities of the various Yearly Meetings. Many of the missionary efforts both at home and abroad are now administered as a united effort by the Wider Ministries Commission of the Friends United Meeting.

Intelligent Adaptation

Discerning leaders in the mission field have become convinced that the desired spiritual objectives cannot be achieved by a reproduction in other lands of the American culture and form of church life. Friends, therefore, should not insist upon a particular form of worship but should encourage forms of expression and organization that are in accordance with the aptitudes and experiences of the people among whom they are working. To implant Christ's principles of living should be always the primary aim.

A Universal Mission

The love of Christ constrains His followers to "go into all the world". As one acts in accordance with this motive, the spirit of obedience grows and ripens into a fruitage of outgoing love and compassion for those who are in need of the gospel. Fresh revelations of truth will come and new opportunities for service will open as each new generation seeks to understand and respond to the will of God in its own day. Twentieth century Friends are challenged by these words of George Fox, as were those to whom he addressed them in 1656:

"Let all nations hear the word by sound or writing. Spare no place, spare not tongue or pen, but be obedient to the Lord God and go through the world and be valiant for the Truth upon earth.... Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one."

Friends and Education

Christian Education

The Christian nurture of children and young people is an essential goal for Friends. A plan for religious education should be part of every Meeting's program. Though the focus may be on children, adult members too should have opportunities to grow in knowledge as well as in grace.

Friends' First-Day Schools

American Friends became interested in Bible Schools soon after their origin in England in 1780. A "Society for the Institution and Support of the First-Day or Sunday Schools" was organized in Philadelphia in 1791, with Friends among its members. Some Friends opposed these schools on the ground that such organized study of the Bible was a departure from the Friends' position of dependence on spiritual guidance. Nevertheless, Bible Schools were carried on in scattered areas in the early part of the nineteenth century, and multiplied rapidly after 1830. Held first in homes, then in Friends' schoolhouses, they later became an integral part of most Meetings.

Present-Day Need

In contrast to earlier days when most Friends' children had their weekday education in Friends' schools, the great majority now attend public schools. The unity of the family life that formerly prevailed is often broken up by the diversified interests and responsibilities of members of the household, thus rendering family worship more difficult. Many parents feel poorly equipped for guiding the spiritual growth of their children. These changes in the atmosphere in which Friends' children are reared make it especially urgent that the Meeting should have a good plan for religious education for both children and adults.

Objectives and Content

Acquaintance with the history and principles of Friends, with the Bible, and with the history and teachings of Christianity are among the objectives of such a plan. A growing understanding and appreciation of Jesus and commitment to follow him, an increasing sense of the reality of God in human experience, and a deepening respect for the personality of others should be among the developmental goals. Preparation for worship and an introduction to the Quaker method of arriving at group decisions should also be included. Those who will serve as teachers and leaders in this work should earnestly prepare themselves.

Quakers and General Education

Although certain that education alone "was not sufficient to fit a man to be a minister of Christ", early Friends were none the less determined that the young people under their care should not be hindered in their development by lack of education. Far in advance of his time, George Fox advised that schools be provided for "girls and young maidens" as well as for boys, for instruction "in whatever things were civil and useful in the creation". William Penn also held advanced views on the importance of right methods and aims in the education of children. Schools were opened in Pennsylvania in 1683, only two years after Penn's grant, and a Friends' public school was set up in Philadelphia in 1689.

School and Meeting

The democratic structure of the Society of Friends has given emphasis to the usefulness of intellectual training as an aid to spiritual development and effective Christian service. Monthly Meeting minutes and other records from the very beginning contain many expressions of concern that the education of the young should be promoted and safeguarded. School and Meeting have constantly gone hand in hand as expressions of Quakerism throughout the world.

Institutions of Learning

With their many elementary and secondary schools, Friends pioneered in the development of educational opportunities and standards in this country. Though not so numerous as they once were, Friends' elementary and secondary schools, along with a number of Friends' colleges and the Earlham School of Religion, play an important part in carrying out Friends' objectives and developing leadership for the Society of Friends. Wilmington College offers persons in the Yearly Meeting opportunities for a Quaker education. To maintain its Quaker identity, Wilmington College turns to Wilmington Yearly Meeting and other Yearly Meetings for personnel, students and financial support.

Aims of General Education

"The aim of education is the full and harmonious development of the resources of the human spirit. Human nature has within it the promise of a divine growth; upon this we base our faith as a religious community. There can, therefore, be no task nearer our hearts than to help all our members towards the fulfillment of this promise. Such fulfillment means that body and mind alike bring all their gifts to fruition in the unity of the Spirit. Here is a clear call to educative effort as a part of the very purpose of the Christian religion. We desire to testify in word and deed to the truth that religion gathers

the whole of life into its domain. We believe that there are godlike possibilities in every man. We must proclaim a Christian gospel of education which in breadth and depth shall be worthy of this faith. . . The intellect is an integral part of man's spiritual equipment; and its development brings with it a growth in personality and an increased power of facing difficult moral issues. The man whose mind is many-sided has a special contribution to make to the solution of the complex personal and social problems of modern life." (London Yearly Meeting, 1925, p. 93, par. 10).

The Social Order

Early Reforms

The abolition of slavery, prison reform, the humane treatment of the mentally ill and retarded, systematic relief for the poor, provisions for their employment and self-help, the education of poor children, the prevention of injurious employment of children in industry, and the use of fair and fixed prices for goods and services are some of the activities in which Friends pioneered in times of much indifference and even vigorous opposition. They established for themselves new ethical standards and sought earnestly that these be applied to every victim of oppression or wrong.

Concern for Justice

George Fox felt a deep concern for justice in social and economic relationships. According to his conception the practical workings of Christianity reached into every phase of human relations, so that whenever inequity or injustice was discovered, there was a matter for spiritual concern and remedial action. His intense and constructive evangelism in the social and economic fields gave a quality to early Quakerism that has survived changing conditions from the simple, localized industrial and economic systems of his day to the world-wide complexities of modern times. The Quaker concern for justice was manifest in such well known Friends as Elizabeth Fry in prison reform, John Woolman, Anthony Benezet, Joseph Sturge, and John Greenleaf Whittier in the abolition of slavery; and John Bellers and William Allen in the relief of the poor and unemployed and in promotion of popular education.

Change Without Violence

The profound changes wrought by the industrial revolution and the effects of modern invention challenge Quakerism to adapt its philosophy to the new conditions and prove its applicability to present day problems. The theory of violent coercion relies on the ability of one group to impose its will upon another by mere preponderance of physical strength. The yielding of the weak to the strong does not prove that the right has been vindicated nor that opinions have altered.

The slower but more effective process of education is a field in which Friends are called to use the weight of enlightened influence. The mere enactment of good laws does not in itself constitute reform; just and fair administration is also necessary. Friends, among others, are called to demonstrate that economic wrongs can be righted and that justice for oppressed minorities or for any underprivileged group can be secured without the use of violence.

Ethical Obligations

The development of a sensitive conscience concerning the existing maladjustments, unfair practices, and positive evils of our economic system should be a vital concern to all Friends. As consumers all should endeavor to control their purchases so as to encourage healthful living conditions and adequate wages. The producer is under an ethical obligation to produce goods under sanitary conditions and without deception as to quality. Upon employers rests the responsibility to see that their employees receive adequate wages and general treatment that will not dwarf but rather develop their personalities. Employees should feel obligated to render loyal and efficient service to their employer and to exercise proper care in the use of tools and machinery and in the handling of materials used or produced in their work. As an investor the individual should strive to avoid support of enterprises which

promote social or economic injustice. The problem of distribution in the world's economic order should be a matter for profound Christian concern. The availability of the necessities of life to all people is highly important in the promotion of the political and economic stability of the world.

Social Redemption

In every social or business relation ship Friends should seek diligently and experiment actively to find ways of bringing a social order based on the Christian principles of justice, love, and good will. So keenly did early Friends feel their responsibility as individual members of society that, when they observed the violation of moral and religious principles, they assumed an attitude of penitence for society's sins. A greater measure of such responsibility must be felt by Christians of the present day if they are to be effective agents in carrying on the work of social redemption.

Friends and the State

Under Authority

The first authentic pronouncement of early Friends on their relation to the state was made in the days of Oliver Cromwell in the form of an advice from a meeting of ministers and elders. It urged fellow members to accept public office, if they could rightly do so, as a means of serving their community. George Fox professed his loyalty to Protector and King in turn, declaring, "Our prayers are for them that are in authority, that under them we may live a godly life in peace". In those days of unsettlement and strife, Friends utterly disowned all plottings and armed resistance against the government.

Limitations of Authority

Friends do not see their governmental rulers as having unlimited authority, but give their ultimate allegiance to God. If occasion arises when it is necessary to refuse obedience to unjust laws, such conscientious objection should not be entered into lightly or hastily, and should be made with love and forbearance toward those who disagree, and willingness to suffer the consequences. The conquest of evil is to be effected only by the overpowering force of truth and righteousness. Friends' testimonies in support of these principles in the days of their persecution and their steadfast insistence on the right of the freedom of conscience, peaceable assembly, and worship did much to gain religious liberty for citizens of both England and America.

Crime and Punishment

Friends' influence has been felt in the abrogation or modification of harmful laws and customs in many fields. Government by spiritual forces rather than by arbitrary compulsion and the prevention of criminal acts rather than their punishment are the primary objectives of Friends. Our testimony against capital punishment is based on the belief that it is a violation of the sacredness of human life, that it disregards the fundamental capacity of all persons to respond to right influences, and that it gives no opportunity to reform the offender.

Ever since the days of Elizabeth Fry, Friends have been active in prison reform. Today many Friends are involved in the ministry of prisoner visitation, education, and the overall improvement of prison life. By acting on this concern, Friends feel that they can offer the prisoner hope for a changed life, and reduce the likelihood of repeat offenders.

Highest Allegiance

Friends regard the state as a social instrument to be used for the cooperative promotion of the common welfare. The source of its authority and the most reliable guide in its administration should be the inward convictions of right possessed by its citizens. "Our highest allegiance as Christians is not to the state but to the kingdom of God. But this does not mean that we have not duties, as Christians, toward the state and the nation to which we belong, or that our attitude toward the state should be a negative one, or

one of indifference." (London Yearly Meeting, 1925). Good government depends on observance of the laws of God by those in authority. It behooves all Friends to fit themselves for efficient public service and to be faithful to their performance of duty as they are gifted and guided by the inspiration of God.

Justice in Interracial Relations

Racial Equality

The views of Friends on justice in interracial relations are based upon their conception of the light within as an endowment of all mankind. This belief makes it impossible for Friends to draw lines of distinction in capacity or privilege between races or nations. George Fox, in an epistle to Friends in America wrote, "Let your light shine among the Indians, the blacks and the white, that ye may answer the truth in them, and bring them to the standard and ensign that God hath set up, Christ Jesus." When Fox visited Barbadoes he was deeply moved by the sinfulness and cruelty of slavery.

Woolman And Slavery

In 1688, Germantown Monthly and Meeting in Pennsylvania made what slavery is believed to be the first official protest of any religious body against slavery. Although Philadelphia Yearly Meeting acknowledged the protest by a minute that a paper had been "presented by some German Friends, Concerning the Lawfulness and Unlawfulness of Buying and Keeping of Negroes", their position on the question was far from clear and it was not until 1758 that the Yearly Meeting was ready to call on Friends everywhere to free their slaves. There had always been those who had testified against the practice, and much effective work had been done in the preceding decades, notably by John Woolman. His faithfully-borne testimony to the necessity of making conduct conform to profession was so fruitful a message that Friends were generally free of slaveholding by 1780. Their efforts were then devoted to the convincing of society in general of the iniquity of slavery.

The Black Race

Preceding the Civil War the homes of many Quakers became stations for the "Underground Railroad" by which thousands of slaves gained their freedom. After the Emancipation Proclamation, Friends became very active in aiding Blacks to establish themselves as free citizens in the full enjoyment of their rights. Since the Civil War, various Yearly Meetings have founded schools and orphans' homes for Black children, and many individual Friends, in the belief that there should no distinction of privilege on the basis of color, have cooperated with numerous movements for the promotion of the social and economic welfare of Blacks.

The American Indian

The Indians have at times been treated most unjustly and cruelly, both officially and unofficially. The record of Friends' relations with the Indians has been one of continuing good will from the time of William Penn. During the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries a number of missions and schools were maintained among the Indian tribes, notably by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting among the Shawnees first in western Ohio and later in Indian Territory when they were moved by the Government.

In 1869 missionary work among the Indians was placed under the care of the Associated Executive Committee of Friends on Indian Affairs, and has been carried on principally among the tribes of Oklahoma. In recent years the American Friends Service Committee has monitored Indian trials and worked with Indians in large urban areas as well as on reservations. The Friends Committee on National Legislation has taken an active interest in legislation affecting Indians.

Of One Blood

The methods by which justice for all for all races can be secured are primarily spiritual. Their success will be measured by the depth of the divine concern that is the spring of all effective effort. Race

prejudice or a feeling of racial superiority tends to invalidate all attempts to secure justice in interracial relations. It is the concern of Friends that Indians, Spanish speaking, Blacks, Orientals, and every victim of prejudice or oppression may share with the most favored the heritage of justice, freedom, and brotherly love which is their equal right. For God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." (Acts 17:26). Friends believe that any racial discrimination is essentially a violation of God's law of love, whether by legal enactment or by inequitable practices which interfere with democratic liberties or cultural or economic development. To dwell together in friendly relations on a basis of mutual respect, courtesy, and understanding works toward the fulfillment of this law of love.

Justice in International Relations

Penn and Conciliation

Throughout their history Friends have cherished the testimony that justice in international affairs, as in every other sphere of human life, can be achieved only by peaceful methods. The use of military force leaves the causes of disputes unsettled and often aggravated; the participants themselves become embittered and assume an attitude of hatred that is likely to precipitate another war. William Penn in 1693 drew up a plan for the peace of Europe, in which he provided for a permanent tribunal for the settlement of international differences. From that time the testimony of Friends has been in favor of mediation, conciliation, and arbitration instead of war which has been condemned by them as one of the greatest violations of the sacredness of human personality and as an absolute contradiction of the message and spirit of Christ.

War Renounced

Statements against war have been issued by Friends during practically every military crisis since the earliest days of history. In 1660 the following declaration was made to Charles II by George Fox and others: "We utterly deny all outward wars and strife, and fighting with outward weapons, for any end or under any pretense whatever. . . And we certainly know and testify to the whole world that the Spirit of Christ, which leads us 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 this world." In 1805, London Yearly Meeting thus advised in an epistle: "Guard against placing your dependence on fleets and armies; be peaceful yourselves in words and actions, and pray to the Father of the universe that He would breathe the spirit of reconciliation into the hearts of His erring and contending creatures." The spirit of this testimony has been maintained through the years, and Friends groups such as the Friends United Meeting have approved minutes denouncing war, and sent their appeals for peace to world leaders.

Conscience and Responsibility

Friends hold that it is inconsistent with the teachings and example of Jesus to participate in war or preparation for war. They have sought, and in recent years have generally been granted exemption on grounds of conscience and religious conviction. They recognize, however, that a consistent policy of non-violence must include a willingness to face personal risk in administering relief to all victims of the tragedy of war and in performing other non-military service. Although Friends teach compliance with the law, there have been and continue to be some members of their Society that cannot conscientiously register with the draft. These Friends feel that they must make a witness against the total war system, and therefore choose prison or exile instead of alternative service. Still other Friends choose to join the armed forces, feeling that they cannot conscientiously refuse military service or choose alternative service. The Society of Friends holds all of its members in prayerful concern, feeling that this decision is up to the individual conscience. Although they urge and teach the position of conscientious objection, they hold in their loving concern those who cannot comply with this teaching. Friends who are not subject to military service must also search their lives for the seeds of war and seek to avoid practices that contribute, however subtly, to the war system.

Foundations for Peace

Friends emphasize the fact that the most effective way to end war is to remove its causes, such as misunderstanding, the desire for revenge, the spirit of aggression, and economic, racial, and territorial rivalries. This calls for the utmost endeavor to demonstrate the working power of fair dealing, universal equity, friendliness, and sympathy. The intricate network of modern life demands that Friends use every legitimate means to influence the attitudes of their government towards other nations, that all may conform to the highest standards of justice and good will as taught by Jesus. They should equip themselves with a knowledge of the needs and opportunities of whatever ministries of Christian friendship exist in the world-family of nations. They should cultivate the personal skills and abilities that will enable them to become interpreters of the Christian way of life which is a sure foundation for enduring peace.

War Relief

The work in Europe of the Friends Service Council (London) and the American Friends Service Committee during and after the World War of 1914-18 may be cited as one example of the practical application of Friends' philosophy to international affairs. This work included the reconstruction of devastated areas and the feeding of children and other victims in Germany, Russia and elsewhere. During the Vietnam war for another example, in an effort to bind the wounds of those directly affected, the American Friends Service Committee set up a hospital in South Vietnam assisting mostly in the production of artificial limbs. In keeping with the Friends' tradition of helping all victims of war, some members sailed to North Vietnam with medical supplies for the civilian population injured as a result of American aerial bombardment. In an effort to promote friendly understanding and good will around the world, American Friends, through the American Friends Service Committee, in cooperation with Friends of London and Dublin Yearly Meetings, have established centers of religious fellowship, international comity, and reconciliation in important cities of Europe and Asia.

Testimonies on Family and Personal Life Sanctity of the Home

Marriage

Marriage, if rightly conceived and faithfully maintained, is regarded by Friends as the most sacred of all social arrangements. The family was Jesus' favorite illustration of the nature of the Kingdom of Heaven. He honored and blessed marriage as the truest example of divine-human cooperation in perfecting a social structure "for the help and continuance of the human family"¹ and "for the mutual assistance and comfort of both sexes that they may be help-mates to each other in things temporal and spiritual." Marriage, therefore, "should be entered upon discreetly, soberly, and in the fear of the Lord." It can never be truly accomplished by prescribed forms of the church, legal sanctions, or ministerial pronouncements, but should be consummated as an inward, voluntary, spiritual union of hearts, in the free initiative of mutual choice and outwardly expressed by the contracting parties. Sanctions of church and state are the social acknowledgments of the true marriage into which those enter "whom God has joined together," and are, therefore, to be held in high regard and to be observed with fidelity.

Family Life

The faithful fulfillment of the marriage covenant is essential to the welfare of the family, the proper nurture of children, and the strength of the social structure. Every effort should be made in the spirit of mutual forbearance and forgiveness to reconcile all differences in family life. Failure to practice mutual consideration and to search for divine guidance in all of the interests and problems of family life often destroys the cohesive power of love, causes the disruption of the home, and, in many cases leads to

¹ Richmond Declaration of Faith, p. 54

divorce. Friends recognize that in some situations of troubled marriage, divorce is chosen as the least destructive alternative. Friends who have been involved in divorce should make serious efforts to solve the problems that contributed to the break up of the marriage. Meetings should provide ministry to persons involved in divorce to help minimize the destructive force of the fierce emotions which are present.

Homes should be testimonials to the grace of God in human relationships and, if established under the care of the Meeting and continued in warm Christian fellowship, have great assurance of permanence and success.

Recreation and Amusements

Health and Recreation

Recreation and well chosen physical activities are important in the maintenance of physical and spiritual health, but the question of the type of activity to be pursued must be answered by each individual in line with accepted Christian principles and standards. The problem of proper recreation and amusements resolves itself into the question: Does this or that activity tend to promote the abundant life of which Jesus spoke? Some classes of amusement are unquestionably unwholesome and degrading; self-respect, as well as high spiritual motives, should rule them out. Border line forms may raise doubts, and if such doubts cannot be intelligently and conscientiously resolved, these amusements should also be avoided.

The Meeting and community should cooperate in furnishing wholesome and constructive recreation which would provide for social and mental as well as physical needs. Friends should be active among those who insist upon high standards of quality and moral influence in all forms of entertainment. The natural desires of youth for beauty, activity; social fellowship, and romance must be recognized with wisdom and understanding, and sympathetically guided into wholesome Christian living.

Healthful Living

Alcohol and Drugs

The testimony of Friends regarding the use of alcohol is based on the belief that the human body is the temple of the Lord and that to mar it is to dishonor Him. Any pleasurable or exhilarating effects produced by alcohol or drugs are but temporary and tend to react injuriously on both mind and body. Scientific research and experimentation show that alcoholic beverages tend to dull the ethical sense, impair the judgment, effect the eyesight, and slow up muscular control and coordination. On the highways, drivers in this condition, often cause accidents and/or loss of life. Therefore, each has need to be aware of one's social responsibility and that by example one influences others. Friends recognize that social drinking is not a sound basis for friendship. Friends recommend total abstinence from alcoholic beverages and from misuse of drugs.

Tobacco

Friends have consistently borne testimony against the use of tobacco as a wasteful and harmful self-indulgence which tends generally to make the constant user indifferent to the discomfort thrust upon others. Discoveries of the probable contribution to cancer from the use of cigarettes increase our concern. Our testimony appropriately applies to the cultivation, manufacture, and sale of tobacco.

Health Practices

Health Practices

The belief that the human body is the temple of the Lord further leads to the belief that all poor health practices should be deplored. Friends encourage all to practice good nutrition and to follow the best practices known to them to preserve their health be it through preventative medicine or curative medicine prescribed by the individual's physician.

Gambling and Lotteries

Something for Nothing

Friends are strongly urged to abstain completely from seeking monetary gain or personal pleasure or entertainment through any form of gambling methods or devices. To receive value when no value is given, results in wrong attitudes towards property and is destructive of character. The precarious gains of winner are at the cost of many losers. The current practice of states to legalize lotteries for the purpose of financing government should be deplored and protested.

Judicial Oaths

Swear Not At All

The word of Jesus, "Swear not at all," emphasizes the importance of honesty in speech. Friends' position in regard to the taking of the judicial oath is not merely a negation of a procedure which they believe to be wrong, but it is positive evidence of an ideal by which they endeavor to regulate their lives. They base their attitude upon the principle that the truth is to be spoken at all times. When oath is to be taken before a judge or in court, instead of taking the legal oath, Friends simply affirm that they will speak the truth. Most states now have provision by law whereby persons are permitted to make the affirmation rather than take the oath.

Secret and/or Discriminatory Organizations

Freedom of Action

The rights of individuals to freedom of action, within proper bounds, must be maintained, but it is the duty of the Meetings to warn its members against whatever may interfere with the development of Christian character. Although such organizations may have benevolent and useful provisions for their members, Friends are cautioned against membership in any organization which will directly or indirectly diminish sympathy with any portion of mankind or tend to take the place of the Church of Jesus Christ as the center of their interest or activity.