

Friends and Equality

“Meet the Friends,” part 3 of 4

Pastor Ken Redford

Welcome to today’s class! Whether you’re here as a prospective member to formally join the church, or if you’re here just to learn more about our history and distinctives, we are glad you’re here.

The Friends church, also known as the Quakers, began in the seventeenth century in England under the leadership of founder George Fox. Today, Friends number some 300,000 people around the world. Meridian Friends Church, founded in 1963, is joyfully affiliated with 40 other local Friends Churches in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho as part of the Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends Church. Our yearly meeting is part of Evangelical Friends International. To learn more, visit www.meridianfriends.org and check out our “About us” tab.

What is the historic Friends testimony about equality?

God does not show favoritism based on gender, race, education, or background.

“When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” John 8:12

The inward light, Light of God, Light of Christ, Christ within, That of God, Spirit of God within us, Light within, and inner light are related phrases commonly used within the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) as metaphors for Christ’s light shining on or in them. It was propagated by the founder of the Quaker movement, George Fox, who “preached faith in and reliance on 'inward light' (the presence of Christ in the heart)”. The first Quakers were known to sit in silence and meditate on the words of the Bible until they felt the inward light of God shining upon them and the Holy Spirit speaking. Early Quakers taught: “God reveals Himself within each individual's conscience and consciousness by the Holy Spirit, Christ Himself being the Light to illumine man's sinfulness and lead in the way of truth and righteousness. ... this light is in all men by the grace of God to lead them to Christ, and that the same light will give daily guidance to the Christian.” Source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inward_light

Belief in spiritual equality has led Quakers to:

Practice and promote _____ and the _____ of everyone

- Used “plain _____”
1956 Gary Cooper movie “Friendly Persuasion”
- Opposed the English _____
Stephen Hopkins
- Promoted women’s _____
Susan B. Anthony
- Known for honest dealings with _____
William Penn
- Known for early and active opposition to _____
William Wilberforce (England)
John Woolman (North America)

Emphasize _____ as the only _____ of His church

- Open _____
- Corporate _____
- Endorsement of _____ as leaders, pastors, and preachers
- A reluctance to _____ on church business matters
- All Christians are _____

“So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”
Galatians 3:26-29

“You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ... you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”
1 Peter 2:5,9