

# *Faith and Practice*



Friends School of Baltimore

## Friends School Mission Statement

Founded in 1784, Friends School of Baltimore provides a coeducational, college preparatory program guided by Quaker values of truth, equality, simplicity, community, and peaceful resolution of conflict.

By setting high standards of excellence for a diverse and caring community, Friends seeks to develop in each student the spiritual, intellectual, physical and creative strengths to make a positive contribution to the world.

Recognizing that there is that of God in each person, the School strives in all its programs, policies and affairs to be an institution that exemplifies the ideals of the Religious Society of Friends.

## Friends School Philosophy

Friends School seeks to live the conviction that there is that of God in each person. This conviction guides all teaching and personal interchange. Because Friends values diversity, we cherish our differences and view them as opportunities for learning. All members of the community strive to work together toward the best development of individual and group potential in a co-educational environment that is inclusive, respectful, and supportive of all people.

Quaker education is a pilgrimage—a seeking after Truth that is not static or fixed, but is in a continual state of fulfillment. Friends endeavors to be a learning community for both students and employees. It needs and seeks the support and cooperation of all members of the School community—students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni, and friends—in achieving its goals. The School values its freedom to experiment and to enter fields of controversy. The School cherishes simplicity, reflection, meditative concern, and hope—values that permeate every aspect of Friends School life and which are most directly practiced in regular Meeting for Worship.

Friends is a college preparatory school and has developed a Pre-K-12 program intended to be most effective for young people who will prosper in an enriched and challenging academic environment. All divisions of the School work to achieve a joyful, nurturing, child-centered community that fosters a variety of age-appropriate experiences. The School believes that it should educate for the whole of life and that its intellectual environment should foster the development of fulfilled and morally informed individuals.

Friends School believes that through self-awareness, growth, and service to others, that of God in each person is made manifest.

# *Faith and Practice*

## of

### Friends School of Baltimore

While the Society of Friends has no formal creed, it holds as the basis of its faith the belief that God endows each human being with a measure of the Divine Spirit. More simply stated, there is that of God in everyone. The gift of God's presence and the light of God's truth have been available to all people in all ages.

*Faith and Practice of Friends School of Baltimore* describes beliefs and practices of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) that guide everyday life. It is designed to give students, staff, parents, trustees, and the interested public a description of these Quaker beliefs and practices, and to provide a starting point for reflection on their role in the school community. This Faith and Practice can be used as a reference point by members of the Friends School community to reflect on the progress of their own spiritual journeys and to help in making life choices.

This *Faith and Practice* is intended to be a living document that is open to revision in the continuing search for truth.

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## *Queries:*

1. How can we make Meeting for Worship in the school community meaningful for everyone?
2. Do I enter the Meeting in an attitude of quiet expectation and openness?
3. Am I careful not to disturb the Meeting by calling attention to myself or by communicating non-verbally with my friends?
4. As I sit in Meeting, am I open to new learning and growth?
5. Do I listen with empathy and an open mind, believing that God's truth is available to every other person as well as to me?
6. Do I stand to speak when I feel moved by the Spirit within?

## The Quaker Spirit

The Religious Society of Friends is guided by the understanding that there is “that of God” in each human being and by the importance of a continuous search by each individual for increasing knowledge and wisdom. From these understandings, the values of speaking truth, treating all human beings with respect, living simply, striving for community, and resolving conflicts through peaceful means can naturally unfold. These values, known as testimonies when lived through one's life, form the foundation of the philosophy of the Quaker Spirit at Friends School.

## Meeting for Worship

As a community we gather quietly for Meeting for Worship, usually once a week. Understanding that there is that of God within every person and that the light of God's truth is accessible to everyone, we sit in silence, waiting and listening. For some younger members of the community, sitting in silence might mean simply practicing being quiet. For others it is centering, a time to rest from the day's activities. And for others, Meeting is a time for deeper reflection, for contemplation, for prayer.

Any person may be moved to stand and speak during Meeting. We listen to each other with open minds, quietly, not arguing mentally, not judging, not rushing to formulate a response. After a time of quiet reflection, another person may stand to speak. Some Meetings are entirely silent; others evolve into a thoughtful sharing of comments, ideas, wisdom.

The experience of sitting together in silence, open to the Light within, helps to overcome our differences and approach the sense of oneness. As George Fox tells us, “in the Light wait, where unity is.”

## Truth and Continuing Revelation

In the process of worshipping silently in a group, as well as in individual meditation, we wait for leadings from the Spirit. These may come in messages from others, or in our own openness to our spiritual resources. This principle of being open to new truths is termed “continuing revelation.”

In the realm of a Friends school, this principle means that new truths may be revealed from many sources: teachers, students, administrators, parents, scholars, and our own inner inspiration. The prospect of truth leads to openness in listening to and respecting the ideas of others. We do not limit ourselves to one approach to education. The possibilities of continuing revelation through individual and corporate discernment are central to curriculum development in a Friends school. In this manner, the spiritual and educational are woven together.

## Nurturing the Gifts of Each Person

Seeking, bringing out, and nurturing each person’s individual gifts and contributions to the classroom and community are integral to education at Friends School. We make a conscious effort to treat each person as a unique individual, worthy of love and care and capable of great accomplishments, no matter what his or her gifts may be. At the same time, we cultivate the responsible exercise of individual freedom in our diverse community.

The School encourages active listening in the classroom, which is a “meeting for learning,” and in other gatherings. We often use cooperative strategies for learning between students and teachers as well as among students. We respect that of God in each person and each individual’s own search for truth and experience in the light. We sincerely attempt to maintain an openness to wisdom which can come from any corner of the classroom, meeting, or other gathering.

### *Queries:*

1. How does my life reflect the belief that we continue to receive teachings and Truth from the Spirit directly, as well as through others who seek wisdom?
2. In what ways am I open to knowledge and to the ideas and beliefs of others?
3. How do I promote a climate of respect among others for considering the ideas of all?
4. Am I willing to speak from deep reflection, sharing my own insights?

### *Queries:*

1. How can I become more open to the emotional, intellectual, and spiritual needs of the people around me?
2. Do I listen to and respect the light within each person?
3. How can I contribute to a learning environment or meeting that incorporates respect for each person’s own knowledge and perspective?
4. How do I help my classes to be meetings for learning? Do I listen with an open mind?

## The Responsibility of the Individual

When a community holds at its core that there is that of God in every person, each individual has a responsibility to the community as a whole to live that belief. Embracing the idea that all of us are seekers, we weave into our lives certain testimonies that speak of our faith and give significance to our lives. We value truth, equality, simplicity, community, and a harmony gained through peaceful resolution of conflict. These testimonies help to guide our actions, keeping before us an awareness of our relationship to other people and to our environment. As part of the life and program of Friends School, we ask every individual in this community to reflect upon and take ownership of these testimonies.

### *Queries:*

#### THE TESTIMONY OF TRUTH

1. Do I try always to speak the truth?
2. Do I listen carefully, deeply, and respectfully to what others have to say?
3. Do I hear constructive criticism with humility and without thought of retaliation?

#### THE TESTIMONY OF EQUALITY

1. Am I respectful of persons regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, culture, gender, income, age, sexual orientation, physical or learning differences?
2. Do I see and celebrate the differences among those I meet?
3. Do I avoid participation in, and tacit approval of, exclusive groupings?

#### THE TESTIMONY OF SIMPLICITY

1. Do I value persons for their actions and integrity, rather than their physical appearance or economic background?
2. Do I spend resources carefully, living with less so others may have enough?

## THE TESTIMONY OF COMMUNITY

1. Do I willingly engage in community service?
2. Do I willingly give of my time and energy to committees that serve the health of the community that is Friends School?

## THE TESTIMONY OF HARMONY

1. Am I committed to peaceful resolution of conflict?
2. Do I practice peaceful means to work out differences?
3. Am I committed to an environment that is free of bullying, and other forms of harassment, for all members of the school community?

## Queries

### FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

1. Do I treat every member of the Friends School community with dignity and respect?
2. How do I take actions that encourage tolerance and acceptance?
3. Do I speak out against prejudice and discrimination?
4. How do I convey the message to others that prejudice and discrimination are unacceptable?
5. How do I participate in Friends School's commitment to assuring a diverse community?

### FOR THE COMMUNITY

1. How do our school environment and curriculum embrace the concept of equality and create tolerant and open-minded students?
2. How does our School communicate to the larger community that prejudice and discrimination are unacceptable, and how does it seek to teach the significance of the human equality and dignity of all people?
3. How does our School provide resources as required for student recruitment, financial aid, faculty hiring, special fund raising, and other initiatives that support the opportunities for the School to reflect the broader society in which we live?

## Equality

We appreciate the wisdom of Martin Buber's words that, "We are all human before we are of one race or another, and it is on this common ground of being human that we live truly and on which we meet." The concept applies to the many differences in individuals and groups, and these differences are crucial aspects of a meaningful education. We believe in the equal right of each human being to be treated with dignity and respect.

We are committed to building and sustaining a diverse community. We seek to broaden the community's experience in the understanding of and sensitivity to differences in people regarding race, ethnicity, religion, culture, gender, income, age, sexual orientation, physical or learning differences.

We work to create an environment which fosters dignity for all members of the Friends community and beyond, and empowers people to act with conviction to counter obstacles that derive from prejudice and ignorance. It includes the clarity of knowing when and how to "speak truth to power"—that is, to stand up for what is right. It enables a respect for differences while celebrating what all have in common. It encourages all voices to be heard and fosters interaction among all groups for the common good.

The School continues to develop and implement an inclusive curriculum, which reflects diverse perspectives and encourages critical thinking.



## Simplicity

Simplicity is not dull. It reflects a beauty of style and a refinement of character which illuminate the lives and work of those who practice it. According to Robert Lawrence Smith in his book *A Quaker Book of Wisdom*, “The simplicity of lifestyle that Friends extol is not based upon forsaking worldly goods and pursuing some vision of a less complex bygone era. It’s more like a reliable standard that is always available, a first cousin of moderation that can become a way of life....For Friends the word “simplicity” describes a way of life that follows naturally from a way of worshipping.”

“An educational principle of a Friends school is the development of a mature self-discipline that enables each member to enter more fully into Truth.” (*The Peculiar Mission of a Friends School*). In order to achieve this self discipline, the vestiges of wasteful consumption, rivalry, excesses in speech, dress, and behavior yield to the search for personal and institutional integrity and ultimately for Truth.

## Queries:

### FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

1. Do I cultivate healthful and moderate habits?
2. Do I avoid over-indulgence?
3. Do I let my possessions and the desire for things dictate how I live?
4. Do I use my time thoughtfully and consciously?
5. Am I aware that my words as well as my actions contribute to the climate of the school community?

### FOR THE COMMUNITY

1. How do we reinforce the values of quality and economy and avoid both wastefulness and extravagance as we improve our educational enterprise and environment?
2. How does our commitment to simplicity guide us in being good stewards of our land, buildings, and resources?
3. How does the School’s presentation of itself in publications and other media speak to the testimony of simplicity?
4. How does the School’s use of public spaces and its campus speak to the testimony of simplicity?

## *Queries:*

1. How do I strive to live in harmony with those around me?
2. When I disagree with someone or become angry, how do I handle the various levels of conflict?
3. How do I seek ways to promote peace both within my community and in the world?
4. How can I maintain an attitude of peace in times of turmoil and conflict?
5. How can I articulate a position that supports peace when I am surrounded by others' desires for attack and revenge?

## Peace

The testimony of peace calls us to strive for harmony among all people, nations and individuals. If we recognize that every person has a spark of God within, and we are all striving to live according to that light, we will try not to harm one another or to treat others aggressively.

The testimony of peace is interconnected with the Quakers' other testimonies. If we live in peace, we create community. If we treat all people as if they have the same spark of God in them that we have in ourselves, we practice equality. If we seek to eliminate conditions of inequality in the world, and to value people over possessions, we encourage simplicity.

Quakers object to the use of violent means to resolve differences and have long been associated with pacifism in response to military conflict. In 1661, George Fox and his followers declared to King Charles II, "We...utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons, for any end or under any pretense whatsoever." Throughout their history, Quakers have supported individuals in conscientious objection to participation in war. However, since the Civil War individual Quakers have wrestled with their own decisions about war and peace with the support of the community.

At Friends School, we strive to promote harmony among all members of the community. Students learn techniques of conflict resolution that they apply throughout their years at Friends. At all levels and in all divisions, we encourage open discussion of differences, leading to understanding and tolerance.

## Decision Making

### THE SENSE OF THE MEETING

In reaching decisions, Friends honor that of God in everyone. In searching for divine guidance, they invite each person to contribute to a decision from his or her measure of Light. Friends do not vote. Rather than using ballots or a show of hands to allow a majority to “win,” thereby overriding the beliefs and preferences of a minority (or minorities), Friends strive, through thoughtful deliberation, to find “a sense of the meeting” that, put into words, becomes a decision that all can support. The weaving of individual voices into a single vision takes time, open-mindedness coupled with conviction, a measure of faith, and goodwill. In the secular world the word “consensus” describes an outcome lodged in general agreement. Most Friends prefer the concept “sense of the meeting” to describe the promise of insight that encourages people with disparate views to search together for positions to hold and actions to take.

### THE CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

Gatherings of faculty or students or parents or alumni or trustees can be considered “Meetings for Worship with a concern for business” in which to discern the divine will for Friends School. Although the school, as a corporate entity, has levels of authority and feels the press of deadlines, decision-making is sensitive to Quaker process. The discussion, without the strictures of a system like *Roberts’ Rules of Order*, is open and free-flowing, but there is also a commitment to “right order” that guides groups as they labor together to make decisions.

Ideally, all meetings begin with silent worship during which those attending can set aside preconceived ideas, prepare to listen to the thoughts of others and the spirit within, and become disposed to move forward as a group. An agenda provides an overview of the business ahead and often differentiates between informational items and matters requiring a decision.

### *Queries:*

1. Do I understand that as we make decisions we are seeking the divine will for Friends School?
2. Do I understand the difference between a decision made by voting and a decision made by consensus that a group has arrived at through seeking the sense of the meeting?
3. Do I come to meetings with clarity about my own deepest convictions? At the same time, am I open to weighing facts, opinions, and ideas as the group reaches a decision?

## *Queries:*

1. Do I fully understand and work comfortably with decision making in the spirit of Friends?
2. Are meetings held in a spirit of worship, understanding, and optimism? Do I set aside my own preconceived notions, seeking divine guidance as it emerges in the course of discussion? Does the pace of meetings, as we seek truth, encourage thoughtful consideration of information and ideas?
3. As we seek a sense of the meeting, do I listen with respect and genuine interest to each person's point of view, whether or not I agree? Do I weigh pros and cons in a fair and logical way? Do I hold proposed decisions in the light of their future impact?
4. Do I understand that groups speak through their actions but also through any failure to act?
5. Do I come to meetings having read materials and otherwise prepared? Do I actively participate? Do I balance self-expression and self-restraint? When clear, do I stand up to be heard and speak in such a way as not to put others down?
6. When a decision has been reached, do I support it publicly? When necessary, do I respect confidentiality?

The School runs its meetings in ways that encourage the shaping of decisions that all can support. To develop agreement requires careful management by committee chairs or clerks who, while they do not direct meetings, do guide the process. It should be clear to everyone as discussion begins where the final responsibility for any decision lies (only with the head of school, for example, or with a subgroup of administrators, with the students or faculty or alumni or parents, or with some or all of the board of trustees). Discussion is candid. No one dominates a discussion. As in Meeting for Worship, silence frames remarks. Should discussion become heated, the clerk may call for a period of silence before exchange of ideas continues. Minutes should record the high points of discussions, and reading back “a minute” written on the spot confirms the wording of any decision that the group reaches.

Process rather than time is of the essence. As do Friends, school groups try to “lay over” decisions of significance; proposals presented and discussed at one meeting may not be approved until the next meeting. Time between meetings allows further conversation, more gathering of information, and careful review to be sure a decision will square with school precedent and School philosophy.

Consensus is not the same as compromise. To compromise is to pare down a proposal, each “side” giving up something. Consensus pools ideas and information to build a better proposal. For Quakers, “sense of the meeting” implies spirit-led decision making. In our school setting, this might mean allowing as fully as possible the flow of creative energy of a group of people working together to shape a common vision.

All should be clear that consensus does not require unanimity before action can occur. In Friends’ meetings, anyone not comfortable approving the “sense of the meeting” may choose to “step aside,” allowing business to go forward. There are occasions

when someone is neither comfortable with a decision nor comfortable stepping aside; then, for the time being no decision is reached. Friends recognize that failure to act is itself an act, but right action may often require the redirection that comes only when a single person objects out of his or her conviction.

Sometimes business must be confidential, but ordinarily the goal of Friends is to be open about decisions and the reasoning supporting them. No matter the tenor of the discussion, once a decision is reached, all support it publicly. Good record keeping is important; minutes are kept on file, and significant decisions appear in policy statements and policy manuals.

In business meetings, as in worship, there is a spirit of curiosity and optimism as everyone, in Quaker parlance, “waits for the way to open.” What results from this well-ordered style of decision-making is often surprising—new, and more enlightened than the thinking any one person has brought to a meeting.

## *Queries:*

### FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

1. In what ways can I seek a greater understanding and knowledge by sharing what I am learning with others who are sharing with me what they are learning?
2. Are grades and academic honors the only measure of my growth as an interested, creative student? How can I keep grades and sought-after recognition in perspective?
3. How can my individual light combine with others to create a greater light rather than trying to outshine others?
4. In expressing my energy and best effort in competitive events, what are the ways for me to avoid slipping into destructive conflict with my opponents where winning at any cost submerges the values of cooperative teamwork and good sportpersonship?
5. Do I value the fruits of cooperation and friendship as well as the satisfaction of individual success and victory?

## Cooperation and Competition

Quakers believe that there is the spirit of God's truth in each individual. We seek to recognize that spirit in others; and as a group, we benefit from expressing and sharing our truth. Friends place a high value on seeking through collaboration what is true in knowledge and right in action.

At Friends School, this philosophy is reflected in the classroom, on the stage, in the studio, and on the playing field. Students are encouraged to discover and pursue their individual talents and to recognize that growth in others. This development is accomplished in a cooperative atmosphere of self-discovery, intellectual growth, and academic, artistic, and athletic achievement. Students can find definition of their accomplishments by a growing understanding of their own potential, rather than by simply seeking to surpass other students.

"Doing one's best" to express all one's talent and potential is very different from "being the best" in a socially competitive sense. Students, faculty, and parents are encouraged to aim their efforts towards "doing one's best" rather than "being the best." This departure from the commonly held goal of "being the best," which is often at a cost to others, is challenging. Perhaps the challenge is most clearly seen in athletic contests.

Athletics offers a particular opportunity to increase social and emotional maturity, as well as physical abilities and mental concentration. Athletic contestants must struggle for appropriate balance of the competitive urge to win and the spirit of good sportpersonship and teamwork. All strive to engage in a fair contest, treat others with respect, and accept the results with dignity.

Recognizing that comparisons between people are inevitable, Friends School strives for a consistent model of valuing the fundamental worth of each student, faculty member, and employee. At the same time, Friends acknowledges its responsibility to prepare each student to enter a world where an individual's efforts are judged and rewarded and where one's well-being may depend upon others and their opinions. At Friends School, we seek to strike a balance between compelling societal standards of excellence in achievement and the

equally important nurturance of spiritual values imbued from the pre-primary levels through upper school.

In a Quaker setting, a child's education begins in a sheltered and nurturing way, with ample praise, recognition, and reward; extra care is taken to uphold the fundamental worth of every child in the face of competitive pressures. As a young person matures, he or she learns how to interact as a thoughtful, principled individual in a community of widening values. Students are encouraged to develop a healthy self-image and a healthy group identity, while learning that excessive personal "specialness" or group elitism can undercut the harmony of any community and of the wider society. At Friends School, the lessons in the classroom, in the studio, and on the playing field and the exemplary interactions of staff, students, and teachers show "what love can do."

## FOR THE COMMUNITY

1. In celebrating our successes and milestones together at various levels of our learning and achievement, how do we clearly acknowledge the fundamental worth of every person in his or her life journey?
2. How do we provide separate opportunities to recognize and reward special achievement in the arts, academics, and sports?
3. How can we be careful that celebrations of achievement do not engender destructive feelings of excessive pride or inferiority?
4. How can the very quality of our interactions with one another change society?

## *Queries:*

1. As a Friends school, how do we find ways to “let our lives speak” on the issues of social, civic, and environmental responsibility in our community?
2. How do we respect the “light of God” in each individual and his or her right to be treated with dignity and respect?
3. How do we acknowledge and appreciate the diversity among our friends and associates, avoiding unkindness, prejudice, and mistreatment?
4. Do we support and actively participate in programs in our community that promote harmony and equality regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, culture, gender, income, age, sexual orientation, physical or learning differences?
5. How do we show concern for the environment in our use of natural resources, living simply and in harmony with nature?

## Friends School as a Caring Community

The basic Quaker belief in a “seed” of the light in every human being and the “infinite love of God” provides a foundation for Friends School’s commitment to social, civic and environmental responsibility. As members of the Friends School community, we recognize the interdependence of all things and the need to live simply, making a contribution to the renewal of nature and the continuing diversity of life. At Friends School, we are aware of the fragility and sacredness of each person. The many instances of exploitation, discrimination, injustice and strife throughout the world call us to action as a Quaker community to promote harmony, equality, peace and simplicity on our campus, in our communities and in the world.

At Friends School, our community service and outreach programs are integrated throughout our curriculum in each division and provide an opportunity for the Friends School community to become involved in social witness and action. According to Robert Lawrence Smith in his book, *A Quaker Book of Wisdom*, “True service, Quakers believe, responds to need wherever it exists in the human family—not simply to the problems of our direct kin, close friends, and political allies.” Students, faculty, staff, and parents at Friends School are involved in a broad range of projects such as organizing relief efforts for victims of wars or natural disasters. Students gain real life experiences in our own community by serving at schools, shelters, soup kitchens, and other agencies.

The Friends School’s commitment to environmental responsibility is demonstrated in a school-wide science curriculum which affords students the opportunity to investigate the interconnectedness of the universe. Activities on special days unite students across divisions in projects to improve our environment on our campus and in our community. Beginning in Lower School, children explore their roles as “stewards of the Earth” through units on conservation, recycling,



energy, and ecology. The examination of this interrelationship continues in Middle School curriculum emphasizing responsible land use and human impact on the environment. In Upper School, critical issues in environmental science are incorporated in the science curriculum covering such topics as global warming, habitat destruction, and energy generation.

Recognizing the uniqueness of each individual and his/her right to be treated with dignity and respect, we strive each day to act responsibly in our relationship with each other, our community, and the world around us. In classrooms, students are taught to respect each other, live peaceably, and use conflict resolution techniques to settle differences. As a Friends school, we are called on to examine our actions and behaviors so that they reflect a caring, interdependent community.

## A Brief History Of Friends School

Quakers appeared in England in the late 1640s during the turbulent time of the Puritan Revolution. While they eschewed any sort of religious hierarchy, their originator and most prominent preacher was George Fox. Quakers often ran afoul of the authorities in the 1650s and 1660s because of their radical beliefs (for that time) in equality and pacifism, and their refusal to swear judicial oaths. While they grew in England, many saw America as a more welcoming location for them to worship without interference. Many settled in Pennsylvania under the leadership of the Quaker proprietor William Penn. Quakers also saw Maryland as relatively tolerant, and they established thirty meetings in Maryland between 1650 and 1690. As Baltimore grew in the late 1700s, large numbers of Quakers settled in the city, building a meetinghouse at Fayette and Aisquith Streets in 1781.

A group of Baltimore Quakers established Friends School in 1784, to provide a “guarded education” for their children. It was under the care of Baltimore Meeting, which had just built a Meetinghouse at Fayette and Aisquith Street, near Fell’s Point. At first, ten to fifteen Quaker children attended classes which were held in the Meetinghouse. By 1800, the Quaker children moved into their own building nearby at Baltimore Street and Central Avenue. The teacher had to collect fees from the families, \$4/quarter for reading and writing, \$8/quarter if math was included (in 1818).

As the city of Baltimore grew, many Quakers moved to its new center, close to the Inner Harbor. They built a new Meetinghouse in 1805 on Lombard Street, on the site where the Holiday Inn now stands. In the 1840s, the Lombard Street Meeting, which then had oversight of the School, moved the School to their Meetinghouse. Up to 1864, the School remained small, hiring only Quaker teachers to teach Quaker children. The average enrollment from 1850 to 1864 was just 42 children.

1864 marked the arrival of a new principal, Eli Lamb, a Quaker educational entrepreneur, who wanted to build Friends School into a larger institution. In 1865, he added high school classes, making Friends the first private high school in Baltimore. It was also the only co-educational school in Baltimore in the post-Civil War era. He opened the School to children of other faiths; as of 1883, the School taught 50 Quaker children (13% of the total) and 320 who were not Quaker. Quakers had also begun to assimilate into the larger society, and a Quaker and Christian education was appealing to Baltimore’s rapidly growing middle classes.

For a second time, a population shift in Baltimore brought about another relocation of the School and Meeting. In the 1860s and 1870s, Friends School families began to move out of the Lombard Street area, which was becoming heavily commercialized and industrialized, and to move to Bolton Hill, a neighborhood directly to the north. Parents wanted a more residential setting for their school, and Eli Lamb then moved the School to McCulloh Street in 1887. For the next eleven years, there was no formal link between the Meeting and Friends School. The Meeting also moved to Park Avenue in Bolton Hill and set up its own elementary school. In 1898, Eli Lamb and the Park Avenue Meeting agreed to merge the two schools and to build a new school building next to the Meetinghouse. In 1899, Friends School reopened in its new location, already blessed with a reputation for excellence. Its graduates were automatically admitted to Johns Hopkins, Swarthmore and Baltimore Female College (Goucher) without having to take an entrance exam.

Eli Lamb retired in 1899, followed by John Gregg and then Edmund Wilson, who ran Friends School from 1903 to 1927 and increased enrollment from 201 to 550 students. While Edmund Wilson was a Quaker and the Education Committee of Park Avenue Meeting oversaw the school, neither required the students and faculty to attend Meeting for Worship.

In the 1920s, there was growing pressure to relocate the School in North Baltimore, where many of the families lived. The Education Committee agreed to such a move in 1926 and bought a 24-acre tract of land on Charles Street for \$80,000. The School started construction on the primary building in 1928, and the School moved out in stages, with the Upper School building opening in 1936. The School could not escape the hard times of the 1930s, and enrollment dropped to 288 in 1936-37 and did not return to 500 students until after 1945. Principals William Pike and Edwin Zavitz ably oversaw the relocation and kept the School solvent during the depression. Park Avenue Meeting decided to follow the School and built a new Meetinghouse adjacent to the School in 1949, taking the name of Stony Run Meeting.

The most divisive issue of that era was the question of integration. No school in Maryland, a border state, was integrated before 1952. While the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954 did not apply to private schools, Bliss Forbush, the Headmaster from 1943-60, and Canby Robinson, Chair of the Education Committee, decided to end segregation. Implementation would be cautious; for 1955-56, black children would be admitted only to the Kindergarten; in each succeeding year, the next grade would be integrated. An emotional meeting with the Education Committee and

parents in the Old Gym revealed that 60% of parents opposed the change. Nevertheless, the School went forward with its plan, and Stony Run Meeting promised financial support if an exodus of families would jeopardize the School's solvency. While 18 students withdrew from the School over this issue, enrollment actually increased by nine for 1955-56. When the Education Committee announced in 1963 that Friends School would be open at all levels to all races, parents accepted the decision without much comment. Within a decade, integration had been achieved, which paralleled a national change of consciousness.

In 1960, the Education Committee appointed Byron Forbush as Headmaster, following his father. The late 1960s saw some student criticism, particularly over the dress code. While this passed in the 1970s, the idea of empowerment for all groups within the School community remained. Community members who were not Friends asked for representation on the Education Committee, which had been limited to Quakers. Dean Esslinger, the School's historian, noted that financially "the School had outgrown the Meeting". The School's budget in 1973 came to \$2 million, compared with \$23,000 for the Meeting. On the other hand, some in Stony Run Meeting feared that adding non-Quakers to the Education Committee would diminish the Quaker values in the School. Nevertheless, the School separated from the Meeting in 1973 to form its own legal identity, and the Meeting then established a new Board of Trustees to oversee the School, with the requirement that fifteen of the twenty-two members had to be members of the Religious Society of Friends. In a subsequent change, half of the twenty regular members of the Board must be Quaker.

Byron Forbush served as Head of Friends for 38 years and oversaw the gradual growth of the School from 664 students in 1960 to 1010 in 1997-98. While new buildings and programs were added, the School kept its reputation for academic excellence and sought to maintain Quaker values, as all students grades 1-12 participated in Meeting for Worship and community service activities. After Byron Forbush's long tenure, Jon Harris assumed the leadership of the School as Head from 1998 to 2002.

In many ways, Friends School's history mirrors that of our country. The School began in 1784, the year after England recognized our independence. The School had modest beginnings, but then grew and grew. It could not insulate itself from the issues of the times, such as the wars, the unrest of the 1960s, and integration. Nevertheless, throughout these changes, the School sought to nurture in students timeless Quaker values.

# Faith and Practice of Baltimore Yearly Meeting

*August, 1988*

**12. Education** (*section 12 under the heading on FAITH, B. Life of the Spirit*) Education has long been important to Quakers. Friends feel that education is a lifetime effort to develop an open and informed mind and a seeking and sensitive spirit.

It became apparent to early Friends that some form of education would be necessary for leadership and ministry if the Society were to be effective in promoting Truth. In 1668 George Fox urged that schools be established for girls as well as boys. John Woolman, in 1758, cautioned Friends to “watch the spirit of children” and “nurture them in Gospel Love.” And, in 1831, Joseph John Gurney exhorted, “We shall never thrive upon ignorance.”

Friends are concerned to educate for individual growth, community responsibility, a knowledge of God’s world and a sense of wonder at continuing revelation in this changing universe.

## **c. Friends’ Educational Institutions** (*part c. in section 12*)

Formal education among Friends was developed early. In 17th century England, Quakers as dissenters could not attend local church schools or the universities. Friends designed their own schools to provide an education in “whatsoever things are useful in the creation,” as George Fox put it. Some of these schools were open to all and became the forerunners of the free schools which developed in the 19th century on both sides of the Atlantic.

In America, Meetings sponsored elementary and, later, secondary schools to provide education in a religious atmosphere designed to prepare the pupils for active membership in the Society of Friends. Many Friends’ schools survive as elementary or secondary schools, or as colleges. Baltimore Friends were involved with Philadelphia Friends in the founding of Swarthmore College. As in other well-known colleges such as Bryn Mawr and Pomona, some Quaker connection continues. Others, such as Haverford, Earlham, Wilmington, Guilford, Malone, Whittier, William Penn, George Fox, Friends University and the more recently established Friends World College, retain a more direct connection with one or more Yearly Meetings.

Friends' schools traditionally offer opportunities to put ideals into practice. They nurture students spiritually and intellectually. They seek to create an environment where pupils can grow together toward Truth through a wide range of experiences. They promote a way of life compatible with the Quaker interpretation of Christianity and are a means of Friends' outreach. While each Friends' school is unique, each is a caring community based on belief in that of God in each human being. Respect for the individual and a spirit of give and take among pupils and teachers characterize Friends' schools.

For many years Friends have been concerned about the problem of exclusivity in private schools, especially in those carrying the name of Friends. Those concerned with any Quaker-related school would agree that each institution has a continuing responsibility to discourage snobbishness and feelings of false superiority, to encourage economy and simplicity and to cultivate a realization that with special opportunities go special obligations. A Meeting that has direct responsibility for a Friends' school, or that has any Friends' school in its community, should assist the school to maintain its Quaker character.

## A Glossary of Quaker Terms

The Religious Society of Friends, often called Quakers, formed as a group in the middle 1600's in England. Today, the worldwide membership of the Religious Society of Friends is approximately 300,000.

“The Religious Society of Friends holds as the basis of its faith the belief that God endows each human being with a measure of the Divine Spirit. The gift of God's presence and the light of God's truth have been available to all people in all ages.” (from the introductory statement in *Faith and Practice of Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends*, 1988.)

**Affirmation, *n.* or affirm, *v.*** A legal declaration made by Friends or others who conscientiously decline to take an oath. “I affirm such and such is so.” rather than: “I swear ...” Swearing an oath implies having a double standard in regard to speaking the truth.

**Attender:** Someone who comes with some frequency to Meeting for Worship and other Meeting functions, but has not yet sought or been accepted into membership in the Society of Friends.

**Breaking Meeting (“closing meeting”):** Term used to designate the ending of the Meeting for Worship when those who sit at the head of the Meeting shake hands with the person next to them.

**Center Down:** An endeavor to quiet our restless thoughts and open our hearts, in order that we may hear God speak directly to us.

**Clearness, Committee for:** A committee specially formed to assist a person or the meeting to clarify thinking about an important decision or concern, such as marriage.

**Clerks:** The presiding clerk is the person who conducts the business and who formulates the “sense” of the meeting of a formal Meeting for Business or a committee. A business meeting may also have a recording clerk. These responsibilities are similar to a chairperson and a secretary. The Clerk of a Monthly Meeting is main officer of the group selected by a nominating committee and approved by the Monthly Meeting. Being a clerk has few standing powers of authority and the person serves without payment. The authority of the organization resides with the whole membership of the Monthly Meeting when it meets for business. Particular responsibilities are delegated to individuals and committees who are required to report back to the Monthly Meeting.

**Concern:** A concern, whether of an individual or a Meeting, is a formulated interest so deep and vigorous that it motivates to action. It is often a spiritual leading to action — task-oriented; and when completed, the concern is laid down.

**Consensus:** A group business decision-making process requiring unanimity of agreement that is similar but not identical to the Quaker business process of finding the “sense of the meeting.”

**Continuing Revelation:** The belief that God still speaks to people directly, not just through historical Holy Scripture.

**Convincement:** The process of coming to certainty on an important matter, such as, membership in the Society of Friends.

**Corporate:** The Quaker use of the term corporate refers to the action of a group's seeking together the will of God for their individual and community life. The Meeting for Worship is corporate worship. The activity of the group decision process—quiet waiting and group discussion - is intended to reflect the group's corporate search for truth.

**Discernment:** The process of arriving at the right course of action through spiritual perception and clear rational thought.

**Eldering:** The act of encouraging and/or questioning an individual's behavior and/or expression. Eldering is to be done with courtesy and loving concern for the individual, even when it is offered as a correction.

**Facing Benches or Facing Seats:** The benches in the front of the Meeting room, facing the body of the Meeting, where once only Friends ministers, elders and other leaders sat. Today, in most Meetings for Worship anyone is welcome to sit anywhere in the room, including the Facing Benches. At wedding and memorial services, the couple and/or family often sits on the Facing Benches.

**Faith and Practice** (or **The Book of Discipline**): An official edited book of Friends' testimonies, beliefs, and practices compiled by a Yearly Meeting body of Friends. The book is meant to provide guidance (queries and advices) for individuals and organizational groupings of the religious body. The structure and membership of the group, the procedures of well ordered business, the legalities of marriage, and stewardship of group property are explained. These are sources of tradition and not dogma. They are periodically updated to respond to current needs.



**First Day:** Sunday. Quakers have traditionally referred to the days of the week by number, avoiding the days named for pagan gods. This is not a firm Quaker custom today but more a familiar usage. We would tend to refer to First Day school, rather than Sunday school for the children.

**Gathered Meeting:** A phrase used to describe those special occasions when the Meeting for Worship attains a generally felt sense of divine Presence, touching the hearts of all worshipers and unites them in a common experience of holy fellowship. A Covered Meeting is synonymous.

**Hold in the Light:** An offering by an individual or group to keep in prayerful thought someone who is suffering in sickness or in need.

**Inner Light:** This refers to the presence of God in our hearts and lives, a reality, which guides and directs us, which gives us strength to act on this guidance, and thus brings us into unity with the Spirit of God. Also called the Truth, the Spirit of Guidance, the Inward Light, the Christ Within or the Holy Spirit.

**Leading:** Being moved by the Holy Spirit or Inner Light of Christ. A spiritual motivation.

**Meeting for Business:** The gathering of members and attenders where the business of the Society of Friends takes place. For a particular local grouping of Friends, this is on a monthly basis, thus the name Monthly Meeting. Business follows the traditional practices of Friends; there is no voting. Agreement for group action is reached by arriving at “a sense of the meeting,” a process similar to but not the same as consensus.

**Meeting for Worship:** The gathering of Friends for the purpose of worshipping God. Traditionally, Friends met in silent, expectant waiting for leadings of the Spirit, which might inspire anyone of the group to offer a message or prayer. Today this form of worship would be called unprogrammed. There are also Friends groupings where they worship in a more programmed way similar to other Protestant denominations.

**Meeting House:** The Quaker equivalent of a church building, which houses a large, simple meeting room in which Meeting for Worship is held. The building may have rooms for other First Day functions for children and adults. Friends may worship anywhere there are few distractions and a sense of quiet: a rented hall, a home, or in the outdoors.

**Membership:** When an attender of a Meeting wants to join the Meeting he or she applies for membership. The process may vary slightly from one Meeting to another; but usually, the applicant writes a thoughtful letter to the Meeting. This is followed by visit to the applicant from several seasoned Friends who are appointed to help the Meeting assess the person's familiarity with Quaker faith and practice and to recommend to the Meeting their assent of the applicant's readiness. Then the Monthly Meeting would, in its regular business meeting, consider the application and could approve the person for membership.

**Message:** A spoken message or ministry by an individual inspired by Divine leading in a Meeting for Worship. A message may come to an individual that personal or not for the group, and it is a matter of discernment whether or not to stand and deliver the message to a gathering.

**Monthly Meeting:** The local organizational unit of the Society of Friends, meeting for business once monthly. Cities may have several Monthly Meeting groupings. A group may be as small as a hand full or as large as 500 in membership.

**Minute:** A minute (singular or plural, minutes) is the recorded action of a Quaker business decision(s), formalizing the "sense of the meeting." This is usually formulated during the business proceedings and read and agreed upon by the assembled group. All such minutes are recorded by a recording clerk as the minutes of that particular meeting and carefully kept for all time (or so it seems). Even appreciations or sympathies may be "minuted" and communicated through corporate agreement.

**One Is Moved to Speak:** In the quietness of the Meeting for Worship one feels the need or the urge to speak. This is considered to be the urge of a spiritual leading and not a public speaking opportunity.

**Opening:** An opening is a revelation of the Spirit of Guidance, an insight into the truth of the moment, a spiritual knowing. See also To Proceed as Way Opens.

**Plain Language:** Refers to the use of "thee, thy, thou, and thine" by Friends. The plain language bears witness to the testimony of early Friends concerning the equality of all people before God. Plain language and plain dress became the outward hallmark of Friends in wider English society of the late 1600's. Today few Friends follow these traditional public statements of speech and dress; but confusion persists identifying Quakers with other plain dressing settlers of Pennsylvania, the Amish, who continue a similar tradition today.

**Popcorn Meeting for Worship:** A derisive term for a meeting where one person after another speaks often in reaction to one another, without periods of thoughtful silence between messages. Some meetings filled with too many messages may be noisy and appear to lack a spiritual center. These may be experienced as the opposite of a Gathered Meeting.

**Proceed as Way Opens:** This refers to being open: waiting for guidance, avoiding hasty judgment or action, and attuning to the Truth of each moment so as to move forward. It is the spiritual guidance which may come in a time of seeking or entirely unexpectedly, bringing intimations for previously unforeseen direction.

**Quakers:** The unofficial name of the Religious Society of Friends. It was the name given them because of their “quaking” when speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in the early days of their founding. Many Friends report feeling this inner quaking and confusion when the urge to speak in Meeting for Worship is especially strong within them.

**Queries:** A device to prompt individual and corporate self-examination. The questions give opportunity to ponder their implications and to examine our own conduct in the light of them. Questioning can suggest a moral and spiritual approach to our everyday dilemmas and accrued blindnesses without dictating the result of the enquiry.

**Right Ordering:** Done in keeping with Quaker precedent and practice. This is an oral and a written tradition, the experience of over 300 years of Quaker living. Some of these practices and processes are in the various Faith and Practice Books of Discipline of the Society.

**Sense of the Meeting:** In reaching decisions on items of business, Friends do not vote. After full consideration of a matter and allowing for the development of new insights, the collective judgment of the Meeting is gathered and expressed by the clerk for the approval of the Meeting. If there is marked divergence of views and no decision is reached, the matter is postponed (held over) until a later date for further consideration.

**Standing Aside:** Within the Quaker business process, when persons are not in unity with the growing “sense of the meeting” but is not strongly opposed to it, they can stand aside and not try to thwart the action of the group, letting the decision for action go forward. If they had a strong concern, they could singly stop the movement of the group toward a decision, but they could also respectfully stand aside. In either case, in Friends process they would be heard and considered and not overridden. This is slightly different from abstaining in a voting business process.

**Testimonies:** Convictions based on the long experience of Friends that have given direction to their lives. Areas of concern where Quakers have taken principled stands, letting their lives speak their truth. Some of these testimonies are: seeking for Divine Guidance, simplicity, integrity, peace as opposed to war, temperance in all things, affirmation instead of “swearing” in court, the worth of each individual regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, gender orientation, or religion. The Testimonies are guidance, situationally considered, not binding rules of behavior.

**That of God in Every One:** An expression used by George Fox, the founder of Quakerism: “. . . answering that of God in every one.” See also Inner Light.

**Threshing Session:** A business or ad hoc meeting session intended to get issues out in the open where everyone may say what is on his or her mind. Recommendations may come from such a process that would go to a committee or the Monthly or Yearly Meeting for action.

**Truth:** A synonym for Light, Inner Light, Christ within, the Spirit of Guidance.

**Unity:** The ideal of corporate agreement harmonized by the Spirit of Guidance. Being out of unity speaks of an individual or group being out of harmony with the testimonies of Friends and the ethos of the larger group.

**Weighty Friend:** An influential member and leader of a Meeting, sometimes referred to as an elder.

**Witness:** To witness, to let one’s life speak, is to stand up for a truth or deeply held belief. It is an expression of what one divines as the will of God for a particular situation. The Quaker testimonies arose out of repeated individual and corporate witness and have become shared beliefs or truths which guide our lives.

**Yearly Meeting:** The grouping of many Monthly Meetings from a particular geographic area (often the size of a small country) that meets together annually for mutual worship, business, and support. The Yearly Meeting has an advisory and supportive role to the Monthly Meetings, but has no religious authority over them.

*Note: A more comprehensive glossary is available at the Stony Run Meeting Library in the section called Readings About The Society of Friends.*

## Bibliography and Notes

Should you wish to explore Friends, Quakerism and Quaker views of education further, you may find these books helpful. Most of these books are in the Stony Run Meeting Library and many are in the libraries of Friends School. Most are available for purchase from the book table at Stony Run Meeting House, on internet bookstores, or the Friends General Conference Bookstore: [www.quakerbooks.org](http://www.quakerbooks.org) or (800) 966-4556.

*The Amazing Fact of Quaker Worship.* George H. Gorman, Quaker Home Service, London, 1979, describes the Quaker worship process in an easy to understand format.

*A Book of Quaker Wisdom.* Robert Lawrence Smith, William Morrow Inc., New York,, 1998: A little book of Quaker beliefs in practice by a Quaker educator.

*The Courage to Teach.* Parker J. Palmer, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, 1998: A thoughtful book on teaching and learning from an author with a Quaker background.

*Faith and Practice of Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.* Sandy Spring, MD, 1988: Guidelines for Quaker organization and practice.

*Friend: The Story of George Fox and the Quakers.* Jane Yolen, Seabury Press, New York, 1972. A biography of the founder of Quakerism written for young adults (presently out of print but in libraries).

*Friends for Three Hundred Years.* Howard H. Brinton, 1952 original, Pendle Hill Publications, Wallingford, PA, 1965: A standard, readable guide on Quaker beliefs.

*Friends for Two Hundred Years.* Dean R. Esslinger, Friends School of Baltimore, Baltimore, MD, 1983: The History of Friends School of Baltimore (presently out of print but in libraries).

*Growing into Goodness.* Paul A. Lacey, Pendle Hill Publications, Wallingford, PA, 1998: On Quaker education by Quaker educator and college professor. Excellent and thoughtful.

*A Guide to Quaker Practice.* Howard H. Brinton, Pendle Hill Pamphlet No. 20, Wallingford, PA, 1955: A pamphlet providing a brief overview of Friends' practices.

*The Journal of George Fox.* ed. John L. Nickalls, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1952: The journal of the founder of Quakerism.

*The Journal of John Woolman.* Oxford University Press, New York, 1971: A Quaker who traveled among the Indians and early American settlements and lived this faith.

*A Living Faith: An Historical Study of Quaker Beliefs.* Wilmer A Cooper, Friends United Press, Richmond, IN, 1990: A theological and historical view of Quaker beliefs by the founding dean of the Earlham School of Religion.

*Minute by Minute: History of the Baltimore Monthly Meeting of Friends, Homewood and Stony Run.* Barbara C. Mallonee, Jane Karkalits Bonny, and Nicholas B. Fessenden: A history of Baltimore Friends from the time of their first arrival on Maryland shores in 1672 to the present. Published in 1992 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Baltimore Monthly Meeting [the group that also founded Friends School of Baltimore].

*The Peaceable Kingdom; A Peculiar People; The Lamb's War.* Jan de Hartog, Scribners: A trilogy of Quaker historical novels (presently out of print but in libraries). The first volume about the beginnings of Quakerism is perhaps the most interesting and stands alone.

*The Peculiar Mission of a Quaker School.* Douglas H. Heath, A Pendle Hill Pamphlet No. 225, Wallingford, PA, 1982.

*Quaker Faith and Practice: The book of Christian discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quaker) in Britain, Second Edition.* London, 1995/1999: A recently revised resource. The second half of the book is a rich collection of testimonies of Friends through the generations, showing the working of the Living Spirit in our midst, and the first half references church government and practices.

## Internet Sites

<http://www.quaker.org/> *Comprehensive Quaker links*

[http://dmoz.org/Society/Religion\\_and\\_Spirituality/Christianity/Denominations/Religious\\_Society\\_of\\_Friends/Organizations/](http://dmoz.org/Society/Religion_and_Spirituality/Christianity/Denominations/Religious_Society_of_Friends/Organizations/) *Open Directory—Quaker links*

<http://www.bym-rsf.org/> *Baltimore Yearly Meeting of Friends*

<http://friendscouncil.org/> *Friends Council on Education*



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