

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

- Are we willing to trust that non-violent methods will make peace?
- Do we work for positive goals rather than against what we don't want?
- What is it that blocks our efforts to act constructively?
- If war is not the answer, what are effective alternatives?
- How can we encourage greater respect for human dignity?
- Can we refuse to identify others as "the enemy"?
- What are some creative ways to resolve conflicts?
- Do we acknowledge that people may act out of different perspectives and needs, not always from bad intentions?

## SOURCES and RESOURCES

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- (1) *Speak Truth To Power: A Quaker Search for an Alternative to Violence*, American Friends Service Committee, 1949-54; <http://www.quaker.org/sttp.html>
- (2) *George Fox's Attitude Towards War*, Friends Bulletin, March 2004
- (3) QuakerInfo.com, [http://www.quakerinfo.com/quak\\_pce.shtml](http://www.quakerinfo.com/quak_pce.shtml)
- (4) *Martin Luther King, Jr. Companion*, Coretta Scott King
- (5) *Peace Testimony*, Martha Leavitt, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
- (6) *Friends Peace Testimony in a Time of Terrorism*, Robert Griswold  
American Friends Service Committee: Carries out service, development, social justice, and peace programs throughout the world. [www.afsc.org](http://www.afsc.org)  
FCNL Booklet: *If War is not the Answer, What is? Peaceful Prevention of Deadly Conflict*. Friends Committee on National Legislation brings the concerns, experiences and testimonies of Quakers to bear on policy decisions in the nation's capital. [www.fcnl.org](http://www.fcnl.org) 800-630-1330

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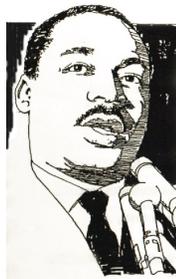
# QUAKER PEACE TESTIMONY

## If War is Not The Answer

Quakers have long been known as pacifists who oppose war and violence. In past wars many have either refused to register for the draft or have been conscientious objectors. Historically, Quakers have been imprisoned or have died because of their refusal to take up arms or to engage in the makings of war.

In 1654 George Fox, founder of Quakerism, stated that he "lived in the life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars." <sup>2</sup>  
"Quakers cannot engage in war as a method for settling international disputes, for war is a test of strength, not a search for truth and justice. We do not fear death, but we want to live and we want our children to live and fulfill their lives." <sup>1</sup>

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we've seen the works of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi as they practiced nonviolence in search of freedom.



*Sooner or later all the peoples of the world, without regard to the political systems under which they live, will have to discover a way to live together in peace.*

—Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. <sup>4</sup>

## THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: A TIME FOR WAR—OR PEACE?

With talk of never ending war, it is crucial to consider whether peaceful strategies can be effective.

In 1954, in response to World War II and the Korean War, Quakers published *Speak Truth to Power*.<sup>1</sup> Here are some of their thoughts:

We had but to conquer nature and the Golden Age would be upon us. Now we have succeeded. Man has in large measure mastered the instruments of physical power. He has probed the secrets of the atom. He knows how to manipulate money and markets, machines, and other men, to his own advantage. He can fly in the air and sail under the sea. *But he has not yet learned how to walk on the earth in peace.*

This is also an age of revolution. Never before has the door to abundant life...been so near to opening. We now have the means to supply food, clothing, shelter, health and education to all mankind on a scale never before dreamed. We could abolish at least the more debasing forms of poverty. Moreover, the larger and less privileged portion of the human family now knows that this is possible. Such knowledge gives fresh impetus everywhere to man's eternal aspiration for recognition and human dignity.

How can we speak to the world-wide longing for the liberation of the human spirit, when our own spirits are infected with fear?

Far from making us more secure, our policies are increasing the insecurity of the United States and of the rest of the world. Military weapons have been developed to the point of such absolute power that the entire world is now approaching absolute insecurity. The H-bomb gives us, not the power to secure ourselves, but only the power to destroy the world.



*Democracy and violence can ill go together. Evolution of democracy is not possible if we are not prepared to hear the other side.*

*Nonviolence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man. --Mohandas Gandhi*

## AN ALTERNATIVE TO VIOLENCE<sup>1</sup>

What is this non-violent method that we suggest? It is the effort to maintain unity. It is the concept of universal community that forms a common thread. It relies upon love rather than hate. It seeks to change the attitude of the opponent rather than force his submission through violence. It is the refusal to break the unity and thus exclude 'others.'

Moreover, it is just this sense of unity that is required to sustain the system of law and justice upon which the hope of peace rests.

## THE PEACE TESTIMONY LIVES FROM WHAT WE BELIEVE AND WHAT WE DO

- The peace testimony is a spiritual discipline that manifests itself in nonviolence and respect and caring toward all people.  
*—Robert Griswold<sup>6</sup>*
- We cannot become peacemakers until we have made peace with the suffering we have caused ourselves and others. This change of heart will necessarily involve a great deal of painful self-examination.

Suffering is not an argument either for or against peacemaking. Suffering is the consequence of a world lost in the delusion of violence.  
*—Robert Griswold<sup>6</sup>*

- The peace testimony is not just about negatives. It requires us to live as peacemakers - with families, colleagues and neighbors as well as internationally. Over the centuries, Friends have been involved in a variety of efforts such as relief for war victims, seeking to foster understanding among diplomats of hostile nations, mediation, and training people in how to respond nonviolently in conflict situations.  
*—Martha Leavitt<sup>5</sup>*
- Friends' peace testimony is not a creed, in the sense of a statement of belief true for all time. On the simplest level, 'testimony' means 'bearing witness'. Like everyone else, Quakers live in the real world. Insights which are gloriously clear in the spirit translate into words or actions which seem muddled and imperfect. To accept as a certainty the spiritual conviction which underlies the peace testimony is not to be certain of the outcome. *—Martha Leavitt<sup>5</sup>*