



Who are the Quakers?

Early Quaker history

The Religious Society of Friends, also known as Quakers, or Friends, emerged from religious turmoil in mid-17th century England. People dissatisfied with the established churches began to worship together, influenced by an itinerant preacher, George Fox, who spoke of a direct spiritual experience, without the need for clergy or religious rites.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, Quakers were subject to persecution and imprisonment for practising their faith, and this was a factor in the migration of many Quakers to America, and the founding of Pennsylvania.

Womens Speaking

Justified, Proved and Allowed of by
the SCRIPTURES,
All such as speak by the Spirit and Power
of the Lord JESUS.
And **WOMEN** were the first
that preached the Tidings of the Resurrection of
JESUS, and were sent by CHRIST'S
Own Command, before He ascended
to the Father, *John 20.17.*

by Margaret Fell
Originally Printed in the Year, 1666, in London

Written by Margaret Fell in 1666, during four years in prison for her refusal to take an oath and for promoting Quaker principles.

Source: Images taken from report by New England Yearly Meeting of Friends, 1981.



George Fox
by Thomas Fairland, published 1822

“Be patterns, be examples ... Then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone.”

George Fox, 1624–1691,
To Friends in the Ministry, 1656

Source: Religious Society of Friends in Britain

Quakers in Australia

The Society first took root in Australia as a result of a visit in the 1830s by two English Quakers, James Backhouse and George Washington Walker. They were charged with enquiring into the condition of the penal settlements, the welfare of the Aborigines and free settlers.

Quaker communities were established in Hobart, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide and continued to spread throughout Australia.

Oldest surviving Meeting House in
Australia – Adelaide, built 1840.



Source: http://www.wildquakers.org/friends_meeting_house_adelaide



Quaker faith and practice

Quakers believe that there is “that of God” in everyone, also described as the inner light.

‘This is the truth which we know and try to live... that every person is capable of response to the divine Spirit...

[which] leads us into love and care of all humankind, who are our kin; that the Spirit shows us the living truth which cannot be fettered by words.’

Janet Scott

What Canst Thou Say: towards a Quaker theology.
Swarthmore Lecture, London, 1980

Australian Quakers reflect on their faith, practice, history and challenges today in *This we can say: Australian Quaker life, faith and thought*, 2003. www.quakers.org.au



Chelsea Meeting for Worship. Nelson Ethelred Dawson 1891.

Source: Religious Society of Friends in Britain



Centring Down, John Perkin.

Source: Religious Society of Friends in Britain

Quaker faith in action

Our desire to live our faith has led Quakers to adopt and express principles – sometimes called testimonies – such as a commitment to peace, integrity, equality, simplicity and, more recently, care of the earth.

As well as bearing witness for peace, Quakers have long supported social and economic justice. For example Elizabeth Fry, an English Quaker, was well known for her work on prison reform, education for women and children, and visiting women convicts prior to their voyage to Australia.



Quaker testimonies panel, Horfield Meeting House (Bristol) Peace Garden.
Photograph: Jon Davey

Source: Friends in the Field Quaker Meeting, Photograph: Jon Davey

