

Revivals And Church History :: Quakers a people of God

Quakers a people of God - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/5/2 14:31

[Image: <https://www.sermonindex.net/images/quakers01.jpg>]

Quakers a people of God

Quakers have been a people of reproach in this earth since George Fox started the movement. I find there is much truthful testimony in the sayings and lives of quakers and the church needs to take heed to these people who originated this movement back to God in the england.

Re: Quakers a people of God - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/5/2 14:43

The Friends Church was begun a little over three hundred years ago (1647 to be exact). George Fox, the founder, went to church with his devout Anglican parents until he was nineteen. Then he began to feel that there's got to be more to religion than this. George Fox spent the next four years trekking all over England going from church to church and preacher to priest looking for an answer to his questions.

At that time the official church of the land, the Church of England, carried on its worship with elaborate ritual and ceremony in stately cathedrals. Another group, the Puritans, (so-called because they wanted to "purify" the Church of England) stressed the judgment and wrath of God. Neither of these alternatives satisfied many of the common people. They had been reading the newly published King James Bible and knew that vital religion was possible.

Into this situation came young George Fox, a weaver's son, searching for inward peace and a group of people that consistently practiced the Christian faith. He knew the Scripture so well that a Dutch historian would later observe that if some how all of the Bibles in the world came to be destroyed, it could have been reproduced from memory by George Fox.

Anyway, George Fox kept on moving around the English countryside and one day the lights turned on for him (he said he heard a voice). He realized (or heard) this basic truth: "there is One, even Jesus Christ, who can speak to thy condition." Wow! There it was: the answer that satisfied him, the answer that finally got to the heart of things.

This experience led him to four basic conclusions. First, he realized that Christ is a present reality, not just a good man who lived a long time ago and said some good things. In addition to being risen and "seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven," Christ lives here in the present moment and can communicate with and give guidance and power to those who open their hearts to Him. After all, he told His followers, "...I am with you always, even to the end of the world." (Matthew 28:20)

Second, George saw that a Christian is not necessarily someone who has his/her name on a church membership list or who has done something religious. The mark of an authentic Christian is a changed life. A Christian is someone who has been transformed from death to life in a firsthand encounter with Christ. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." (John 1:4)

Third, it became clear to him that the Church is not a building at the corner of Eighth and Elm or any other site. Neither could it be identified with ecclesiastical (that means "church") hierarchy or with an institution established by the state. The church is the fellowship of people who have had their lives changed by Christ and in whose hearts Christ lives.

Fourth, George understood that a minister is one who serves and who makes Christ real to others. All of the academic degrees and learning in the world cannot make a true minister of Christ. It is Christ's call to men and women which makes them ministers.

This became the central message of Friends--and still is. That's the good news for people who are turned off by the rules and rituals of religion. And George Fox began to tell everybody about this phenomenal discovery. Actually, this is not a new truth. The Bible had long since stated, speaking of Christ, "there is salvation in no one else." (Acts 4:12) But George Fox began to take the Biblical teaching about the adequacy of Christ more seriously than most people did.

Within a few short years there were thousands of persons throughout England who had found Christ as a living presence in their lives even as George Fox had. They became "finders" and worshipping groups of them took the name "Friends" from John 15:15 where Jesus told His followers, "I have called you FRIENDS, for all that I have heard from my Father I

have made known to you." Those who opposed the awakening that Friends were bringing to the Church called them "Quakers" in derision because when some of them spoke in a moving way they sometimes trembled in the power of the Lord. Friends felt that this was actually a compliment and eventually did not hesitate to use the name themselves.

For fifty years George Fox and his followers crisscrossed Europe and America with this simple and fresh message that Jesus Christ was the answer to everybody's problem. Thousands of people who were tired of formal religion without much life became part of the Friends movement.

Then in the early 1700's something happened that was just about the undoing of the whole thing. The next generation of Quakers began to say things that should never have been said. "Let's major on the minors." There were certain things that Friends did that many other Protestants did not do and those things took on way too much importance. For example, George Fox would sometimes spend an hour in silent prayer and then he would preach for two or three hours. These second generation Quakers opted to forget the sermon and concentrated on silent prayer. That's where the whole idea of Quakers sitting in silence got started.

Well, once the message of Christ was diluted a whole bunch of Quakers turned inward and the dynamic of the Friends movement died. Many of the stereotypes people have of Quakers comes from this period. One historian stated that Friends "settled down into a peaceable, respectful sect proud of their past and content to preserve their distinctive. Pleasure, music and art were taboo; dress was painfully plain and speech was Biblical...They gained few new converts and lost many old members.

Friends made a most profound affect on the course of American history. The first Quaker missionaries arrived on America's shores in 1656, one hundred and twenty years before the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Mary Fisher and Ann Austin landed at Boston where the Puritan authorities had them seized and kept under close guard. A hundred of their books were burned in the marketplace and they were dispatched to Barbados on the next departing ship. Their bedding and even their Bibles were confiscated to pay the jailer's fee. The Pilgrim Fathers wanted religious freedom for themselves but offered it to no one else.

Friends were welcomed in Rhode Island which was founded as a haven from the intolerance of Puritan Massachusetts. So overwhelming was the response there that at one time half of the population were Friends, and the colony elected Quaker governors for thirty-six consecutive terms--more than a century. Friends were also well received in Maryland. Lord Baltimore established the colony as a refuge for persecuted English Catholics and was willing to give liberty of conscience to others in religious matters. Spokespersons for the Quaker faith made some deep inroads into Virginia as well.

In 1657, a boatload of Quaker missionaries from England landed on Long Island. One of them, Robert Hodgson, drew large crowds to his meetings. He was arrested, imprisoned, flogged and treated very severely. At last some of the Dutch colonists interceded on his behalf and secured his unconditional release. Many continued to respond to the Friends message in spite of a firm edict issued against it by Governor Peter Stuyvesant. Finally on December 27, 1657, the citizens of Flushing drew up a magnificently worded protest reminding their Governor that their charter allowed them "to have and enjoy Liberty of Conscience according to the Custome and manner of Holland, without molestation or disturbance." This came to be known as the Flushing Remonstrance. It was the first time that a group of settlers in the New World petitioned the government for religious freedom. It was commemorated in a United States postage stamp issued three hundred years later.

Meanwhile the persecution of Friends in Puritan Massachusetts grew more intense. Friends were lashed behind carts and whipped from town to town. They were branded with a "H" for heretic; they had their tongues bored through with a hot iron; their ears were cut off; they were banished. Finally Governor John Endicott succeeded in having the death penalty invoked for any Friends who returned to the colony after being banished beyond its borders. Four Quakers were hung on Boston Common--William Robinson, Marmaduke Stephenson, William Leddra and Mary Dyer. She was the first woman to suffer death on these shores for her religious convictions. Today a statue of her stands on Boston Common, a reminder to all that our religious freedom was bought at a precious price.

In 1671, George Fox along with twelve others came to America and trekked up and down the Atlantic Seaboard. In 1672, he and a William Edmondson, who had already preached successfully in Ireland, became the first preachers who ever held any kind of Christian worship within the borders of the Carolinas. Later, John Archdale would become the Quaker Governor of the Carolinas and one-half of the representatives of the legislature were Friends.

The outbreak of persecution of Friends back in England again led seventeen Quakers to purchase East Jersey to serve

as a refuge where Friends could practice their faith without interference. Robert Barclay, the brilliant young Scottish Quaker theologian, served as Governor of the colony for a time.

Then, in 1681, William Penn accepted the grant of land which became Pennsylvania as the payment of a debt which King Charles II owed his father. The Duke of York, who later became King James II, threw in the territory of Delaware in on the deal. Penn landed in his colony on the good ship "Welcome" in 1682. He met with the Indians under the great elm at Shackamason, the ancient meeting place of the tribes and made friends with them. He purchased land from them at a fair price and concluded a treaty with them that was agreeable to all. A century later the humanistic French philosopher, Voltaire, would observe that this was the only treaty ever made between white men and the Indians that was never sworn to and never broken.

In his carefully worded Frame of Government for Pennsylvania Penn gave the citizens both liberty and responsibility. He designed a government dedicated to religious freedom, to equality and peace. He laid out Philadelphia as the first planned city in the New World. Pennsylvania was Penn's "Holy Experiment," his attempt to apply the Christian principles held by Friends to the practical business of government. The guidelines of the Frame of Government gave the citizens the freedom to develop to the fullest of their potential and they and the colony prospered. For decades Pennsylvania stood as a model to the world of democracy, liberty and harmony.

When the Founding Fathers met in the latter part of the 1700's to write the Constitution that would design the government of the United States, they turned to William Penn's Frame of Government for Pennsylvania. If they had turned to Puritan New England for their model there would have been an established state church. If they had turned to aristocratic Virginia for their model there would have been a privileged class. Most of the rights and freedoms that we take for granted as a part of our way of life in America today were originally set forth in Penn's Charter of Liberties for his colony. Friends were the original architects of the free society that we enjoy.

Re: Quakers a people of God - posted by AniLiDodi (), on: 2004/5/2 18:37

This subject is very interesting to me. I have been studying the Quakers for some time now, due to a Prophetic dream the Lord gave me.

Dream: I was in the Spirit and I seen the map of the USA. As I was viewing the USA, I seen several dots indicating cities, but the only one that was standing out in Bold letters was a city in Pennsylvania. The name of the city was "Quaker." I pointed to that city and prophesied, "Jerusalem will one day be there."

Now, you would think that it was Philadelphia that was indicated, but it was Pittsburgh, Pa.

I have been seeking the Lord since. I have shared this with others in the body of Christ and one young lady indicated a dream she had. She said that the Lord was leading her to a city in Pennsylvania that was called Iron City.

I am from Pittsburgh, PA and Iron City is another name for the Burgh. It is called the Steel City or Iron City.

There is more, but I thought I would share this prophetic dream in light of what was put on this forum.

If you study the teachings of the Quakers, you will find that much of what they taught is what the Lord is leading those called outside the camp to.

All For His Glory,
AniLiDodi (I am MyBeloveds)

Re: - posted by rocklife (), on: 2004/5/2 20:14

I am sure historically, Quakers were wonderful obedient Christians, but now they openly support and defend homosexuality. Just a word of warning. If I have read wrong information about them, I mean no offense, but the public information says they openly defend and support homosexuality now. The religion has strayed from the Bible.

Re: Quakers - posted by AniLiDodi (), on: 2004/5/2 21:39

You know, I find that more Christians look for the negative than that which is of God or that which is Spiritual. There are many so called "Christians" that support the homosexual agenda as well. That is not what we are talking about. I do not think, nor do I believe that "ALL" Quakers or "ALL" Christians support ungodly agendas. But, we are sharing based on what the Lord is speaking to us, not what we think He is speaking. You can either know by the Spirit or you perceive based on your own understanding.

I can see why He speaks in parables. Those who think they know truth are blind to truth. Those that are searching or open to truth as it relates to the Lord and how He sees, are able to perceive truth.

I have found that more forums are looking to debate than to live the life of a covenant relationship with the Lord. It is getting too old and is no different than those that are inside the camp.

AniLiDodi

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2004/5/2 23:08

Hi AniLiDodi,

Welcome to the site! I hope you find much here to encourage your walk with the Lord.

Would like to address briefly a couple of points.

I believe that Jina (rocklife) is not stressing the negative as much as throwing up a concern and one that is warranted in light of much of what I have heard even on this site regarding aberrations of what was the original intent of the Friends, the Quakers. Actually this appears to have started very early on according to this book. I have also been reading some things on the Anabaptists and there are some close parallels as to what their motives were at the outset.

Certainly this is regarding the early history and is far removed from present day activities as you rightly alluded to.

Quote:

-----I have found that more forums are looking to debate than to live the life of a covenant relationship with the Lord. It is getting too old and is no different than those that are inside the camp.

I do hope that you will find that *not* to be true here. Yes, we do have vigorous debate at times, but for the most part the members here are big hearted and are willing to share not only their knowledge but also truly care for one another. I know there is a built in problem with this communication style and that can often be one of inflection. As you become more accustomed to the writings of others and hear their views and their hearts, it helps to round out where they are coming from.

Hope all this is of some help.

As to the issue at hand...This is great Greg, I am learning much from this book, hope there is more to follow!

May the Lord continue to lead us all into His Truth.

Re: - posted by rocklife (), on: 2004/5/3 1:06

Yes, crsschk, thank you for expressing that, we can all learn and pray for discernment when studying history and learning from those who came before us. I just wanted to tell others who may be interested in looking in to Quakers further. I pray God's Holy Spirit to guide His into all truth. Peace, in Jesus' name. amen.

Re: Quakers a people of God - posted by matthew (), on: 2004/5/4 10:26

The founders notwithstanding, I grew up in a 'friends' church and my father is now a pastor of a friends church. The 'friends' are a conservative sect of Quakerism. I am much grieved with what is happening in much of the Quaker church today. I have seen contemplative prayers used to "connect" to God in silent meetings, The acceptance of Homosexuals, and a proud disregard for the sacraments. Moreover they seek a "new word" from the spirit and accept that "word" even when it contradicts scripture. Therefore in many of their meetings the "feelings" provided by the "spirit" lead to a disregard for the scriptures. Many also see the Holy spirit as a "Light" and speak of Him as impersonal force.

I fear that though the Quakers began as a people of God that now they have descended toward eastern mysticism.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/5/4 12:19

Quote:

-----I fear that though the Quakers began as a people of God that now they have descended toward eastern mysticism.

There are some great comments already in this thread and I have gotten a few private responses also. I would just like to clarify the reason and intent in bringing up this thread. I have had a entire set of the works of George Fox for a few years now and its been something that I have been engrossed into at times. I really see the spirit of Christ in George Fox at times and its amazing to see the moving of God in the early quakers. With that said I would also have to agree with a few people on this thread that modern quakers are nothing near the likes of the early quakers. In Spirit or in Power. There was something very special with men like George Fox, Penn, etc. but now we have to men really seeking the light within the kingdom of God.

As I showed in the image from a old book about quakers that they were heavily persecuted by other so-called christians. And there whole founding of the movement was in the model of new testament christianity. Sadly it can be said now its a different religion, but it started off as a true example of a new testament church, not perfect but how would I have loved to be in a fellowship with the likes of fox and others, to hear him expound the word of God for hours on end like the apostle paul, and have the minds and spirits of men captivated on every word from above.

Also in this thread I have not layed out a exact history of the quakers, I just wanted to start this venue to openly discuss this topic and for people to benefit from the early quaker testimony, especially that of George Fox.

Re: Quakers - posted by AniLiDodi (), on: 2004/5/4 21:15

I must say that I have been blessed by the response and the gentle loving spirit that was very evident from "great Greg."

The Quakers are not the issue here, but what the Spirit is saying. I did not know any of the teachings of the Quakers until the Lord gave me that dream about a year ago. It was just a week or so ago that I read George Fox's teachings and was amazed at how much of what was written was much of what the Lord is sharing with me or this hour and season. Of course, that was the Lord's timing, because I may not have seen or understood it as I seen it today, had I not been taken outside the camp, stripped, untaught and re-taught anew. Just as the Lord was giving me a vision of where He is leading His covenant bride, did I read more about the Quakers. Of course, I have yet much to see and learn.

Remember that we are living in a time where the "church" or Christians as we know them today, have taken much of what the Lord intended and perverted it to the doctrines of man. The Lord is not telling or asking us to be Quakers. But, the Spirit is leading us to search out something that must have been something He inspired at a time it was birthed. Just as we speak of the birth of the church in Acts, is not how the church is today, but it was truly the beginning of the "Way" of the Lord.

We have to look past the view of any of the teachings of today and hear what the Spirit is leading us or teaching us in this season we are transitioning into. We (for those who understand) are beginning a journey that has not been travelled other than by the Lord and that means that the map has not been drawn other than by the Spirit. As one that has a pioneer spirit, I know that the map is drawn as I step forward and prepare the way, along with others that are on that same journey. Let those who understand what I am sharing here, understand by the Spirit alone.

We really have to be open to the leading of the Spirit and look past all that is viewed today in any denomination. This is

not about any denomination at all, but it is about a covenant relationship. The Lord will use many things to teach us, including the Quakers. Let us not be blind to the leading of the ways of the Lord that are so far past our own understanding and ways. As I read what was shared by George Fox, it confirmed so much of what the Lord is speaking to me today. I can see what He said that I would have much opposition from leaders, get kicked out of churches, etc. The message that the Lord is preparing to send forth, will not be readily received or accepted.

All For His Glory,
AniLiDodi (i.e, I am MyBeloveds)

Re: - posted by matthew (), on: 2004/5/7 9:00

Thank you for the clarification--I agree entirely.