

**FRIENDS' WAYS**  
**A Canadian Curriculum**  
**Of Quaker Testimonies**

**Week 5**  
**Conflict and Struggle in Meetings**

**Introductory Quotes and Queries:**

I still hope for healing of our broken, fragmented society (*The Religious Society of Friends*). But instead of hoping our disagreements will all go away someday, as I did when I first learned about our history of schisms, now I hope we'll learn how to learn from those disagreements. I have learned that if we are willing to talk about them, and listen to each other, our differences can be a strength as well as a weakness; and if we enter every experience with an open heart, there is much joy in the unfamiliar as in what we have grown up with.

~ W. Geoffrey Black, 17 years old

from *Whispers of Faith: Young Friends share their experiences of Quakerism*

Let us then try what love will do,  
For if people did once see we love them  
We should soon find they would not harm us.  
Force may subdue, but love gains.

~William Penn (Quaker)

Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,  
nothing is going to get better.  
It's not.

~ Dr. Seuss

Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness;  
and bearing one with another,  
and forgiving one another,  
and not laying accusations  
one against another;  
but praying one for another,  
and helping one another  
up with a tender hand....

~ Isaac Pennington, 1667 (Quaker)

"I have never lost the enjoyment of sitting in silence at the beginning of meeting, knowing that everything can happen, knowing the joy of utmost surprise; feeling that nothing is preordained, nothing is set, all is open. The Light can come from all sides. The joy of experiencing the Light in a completely different way than one has thought it would come is one of the greatest gifts that Friends' Meeting for Worship has brought me." - Ursula Franklin, 1979

## Queries

1. During conflict, do I adhere to the discipline of speaking truth in love?
2. When involved in disputes, do I seek truth and reconciliation rather than victory?
3. Do I seek to hear the causes of misunderstanding, fear, or defensiveness in others, and do I try to share something of myself that may help explain anxiety and fear around an issue?

## Short Readings (photocopied)

Queries 17, 22, 32 from Quaker Faith and Practice, BYM

## Recommended Readings

Marshall B. Rosenberg, *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*. California, Puddledancer Press, 2003

Marshall B. Rosenberg, *Practical Spirituality: The Spiritual Basis for Non-Violent Communication*. Puddledancer Press, 2005

Kay Pranis, *The Little Book of Circle Processes*. Pennsylvania: Good Books, 2005

Rex Ambler, *Light to live by: an exploration in Quaker Spirituality*. London: Quaker Books 2002 (A printing of the Richard Cary Lecture)