

Testimony

Doing the truth



“The choice of the word ‘testimony’ is instructive. The testimonies are ways of behaving but are not ethical rules. They are matters of practice but imply doctrines. They refer to human society but are about God. Though often talked about they lack an authoritative formulation...”

Quaker faith & practice 20.18

Quaker testimony is our faithful response to the inward guidance we have received. This guidance prompts us to live in new ways within the world. When we are faithful, our actions match our words (we ‘walk the talk’). In her book *Testimony: Quakerism and Theological Ethics*, Rachel Muers describes two essential features of this. Quaker testimony is:



An act of refusal and interruption: we refuse to go along with some aspect of the world that is unjust or destructive. This disrupts assumptions, and interrupts ‘business as usual’.

An experiment in new possibilities: if we interrupt and refuse to go along with something, we have to offer alternatives. These alternatives are ‘holy experiments’ that test out new possibilities.

Ecological Reflection

From an ecological perspective, there are many false assumptions that need to be questioned. For example, that humans can own the rest of the creation, that we are somehow separate from it and in control of it, and that there are no limits to our use of it. By attending to the guidance of our Inward Teacher, we can discern how best to challenge and disrupt these false assumptions. We need to try out ‘holy experiments’ that bring us into a more just and healthy relationship with the rest of creation. These experiments can help inspire and give hope to others too.



Query

What potential refusals and interruptions are being prompted in you at this time? Are you willing to challenge unjust, unhealthy and destructive ways of living, and join with others in developing ‘holy experiments’ that try out new ways of living, offering inspiration and hope to those around you?