

Baltimore Yearly Meeting

2024 Annual Session Theme

A testimony to social justice: Rise up and let your life speak

The word 'testimony' is used by Quakers to describe a witness to the living truth within the human heart as it is acted out in everyday life. It is not a form of words, but a mode of life based on the realization that there is that of God in everybody, that all human beings are equal, that all life is interconnected. It is affirmative but may lead to action that runs counter to certain practices currently accepted in society at large. Hence a pro-peace stance may become an anti-war protest, and a witness to the sacredness of human life may lead to protests against capital punishment. These testimonies reflect the corporate beliefs of the Society, however much individual Quakers may interpret them differently according to their own light. They are not optional extras, but fruits that grow from the very tree of faith.

Harvey Gillman, 1988, quoted in *Quaker Faith & Practice: The book of Christian discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain*, sec. 20.12 (1995).

How does your life speak to the calling of the Spirit?

Many Friends today have been called to public witness about white supremacy, peacemaking, the carceral state, health care, public education, and environmental stewardship, as historically Friends have witnessed on slavery, women's suffrage and the penal system.

How are you led to respond to the call to affirm human dignity, root out prejudice, and rejuvenate our culture of activism?

"Whatever you do, do all to the Glory of God"
- 1 Corinthians 10:31