

Integrity

from Wilmer Cooper, *The Testimony of Integrity in the Religious Society of Friends*, PHP #296 (1991)

“. . . the testimonies grow out of our inward religious experience and are intended to give outward expression to the leading of the Spirit of God within;

“From the beginning Friends believed that they could have direct and immediate communication with God which would enable them to discern right ethical choices. But they soon experienced certain common leadings of the Spirit which became formalized into testimonies. These testimonies served as common principles and standards of behavior and action which they believed the consistency of the Spirit’s leading required of them. At the same time they believed that they must be convinced of the ‘truth’ of the testimony each time they were called upon to enact it in their lives. Otherwise the testimonies would become lifeless rules of conduct, which would then be ‘out of the truth.’” (p. 7)

“It has become commonplace for Friends today to talk about Quaker values, a term drawn from society at large to describe a kind of secularized version of religious faith commitments. Values are projected ideals or goals which are rationally determined, whereas Quaker testimonies are derived from religious faith and experience fashioned out of a life of prayer, devotion and worship, joined with spiritual discernment and commitment.” (p. 11)

“The essence of early Quakerism is precisely in a demand for complete integrity of the individual in his relation to God, to other people, and to himself” (p. 12, quoting Cecil Hinshaw, “Christian Perfection in Quakerism, p. 1)

“The Testimony of Integrity is grounded in the early Quaker understanding of ‘Truth,’ often spelled with a capital ‘T.’ . . . For Friends, truth referred to the gospel life and the Spirit of the living Christ, which they found in the Christian Scriptures.” (p. 13)

“When Fox said he was to turn people ‘to the Truth in the heart,’ he intended to avoid at all costs a second-hand knowledge of God. . . . the truth Fox talked about was truth to be obeyed. And because Fox believed that this truth ‘came by Jesus’ as experienced by the early Quakers, it was truth to be obeyed according to the will of God as revealed in the life, teachings and ministry of Jesus. Integrity, therefore, involved discipleship and holy obedience. Jesus was seen as the personal embodiment of this kind of truth. [thus confirming the meaning of John 14:6]” (p. 14)

“The Testimony of Integrity can be articulated and practiced by Friends in four distinct ways.

* *The first is truth-telling, or simply not telling lies. . . .* (p. 18)

* *Second, Integrity calls for authenticity, for genuineness, and for veracity in one’s personhood.* (p. 19)

* *Third, Integrity calls for obedience, or if you prefer, faithfulness to conscience illuminated by the Light Within.* (p. 20)

* *Fourth, the root meaning of the word ‘integrity’ calls for wholeness.* The word comes from the Latin *integritas*, which refers to a state or quality of being complete, that is, a condition of wholeness. The word ‘integrity’ and the mathematical term ‘integer’ all have a common meaning. When we look at this common meaning of *integritas*, or ‘integrity,’ it points to a unity, which when applied to persons, we call community. Integrity creates a sense of togetherness and belonging when applied to persons in community. Integrity forms the basis for a covenant relationship in which persons exercise a sense of responsibility and accountability toward one another.” (p. 21)

“The crying need is for integrity in daily life, and Friends would do well to undergird all of their outward testimonies with the Testimony of Integrity, which must begin within the sanctuary of our own souls.” (p. 28)