

Theory and practice have to be one.

The Living Witness is challenge, exercise, and affirmation.

The Joyful Hope is the emotional climate in which **The Living Witness** is working and growing. As we build the loving fellowship we move towards the ideal goal, the life of fulfillment, here and now.

We advance in small steps. Sometimes it seems as if we are not advancing at all. But if **Joyful Hope** is our partner, we are learning from errors and will do better next time.

Quakers may be slow in many ways, but they do not give up, and this counts. If one Friend can not go on and has to rest, there are many others taking his place and carrying the work forward.

The Minimum Quaker

By Edmund P. Hillpern

Committed Friends are never alone.

The late Edmund Hillpern of New York Monthly Meeting, a psychotherapist, was Chairman of the Committee of Counseling for Quakers. He said that his brief statement is the "result of many months of dialoguing in New York City and for 50 miles around."

Reprinted from the Friends Journal of July 15, 1967

The Minimum Quaker

By Edmund P. Hillpern

In discussion about Quakers a non-Friend said: "Quakers enjoy complete freedom; they have no dogma, no creed, no minister, no bishop. Quakers can believe anything."

In this context, "anything" means nothing. In trying to clarify concepts I am asking: What is the minimum a Friend ought to accept? What is so essential that a person who does not approve it should not be admitted to the membership of the Religious Society of Friends?

The following principles constitute (for me) the minimum.

The Inner Light **The Corporate Search** **The Living Witness** **The Joyful Hope**

The Inner Light is the need and the ability of man to search for the purpose of his existence. All of us are reaching out for the eternity which is beyond us but of which we are a part. We are reaching out for God, Christ, Brahma, Buddha, Mazda, Satyagraha.

As Quakers we are reaching out directly, without the mediation of a minister or priest, a bishop or a pope, a guru or voodoo, a ritual or a sacrament, a visible idol or an invisible magic. He who is seeking **The Inner Light** shall find by experiment, by trial and error, by insight and by grace.

The Inner Light is esoteric. It is akin to beauty, goodness, truth and love. It is experience. It is the affirmation that

man does not and can not live by bread alone.

Human nature compels us to search for the meaning of life. A life without meaning is not worth living. It is a shadow life. It is a symptom of disintegration, decay and death. It is black emptiness.

The Search for the **Inner Light** is basic.

The Corporate Search is the Quaker method of distinguishing truth from error. As a lonely seeker I may confuse illusion with revelation, personal satisfaction with universal understanding. But sharing my deepest experienced with the Meeting gives me response verification, security. In the Meeting and with the Meeting I may – on rare occasions – be blessed with the awareness of the whole truth, of the Divine Presence.

In the worshiping meeting, individual Friends merge into a corporate body of worldwide Quaker fellowship. The "I" is transformed into that "we" which is the manifestation of the eternal goal. Of the at-one-ment of the Kingdom.

The Corporate Search is the unique gift of Quakerism to the religious life of western culture. Quakerism is group-centered. George Fox made a discovery three hundred years ago which is in complete agreement with today's most advanced finding of psychology and sociology.

The Living Witness is the imperative result of the **Corporate Search**. It has been thus expressed by Jesus: "I tell you if these remained silent, the stones would cry out." As we advance from searching to finding, we are eager to make our lives a witness for truth. We want to find expressions of the truth in our daily activities. Our life has to be increasingly the application of our religious principles.

The Living Witness aids us to be "open" and flexible and to avoid the great danger of becoming an establishment.