

## PART I – FRIENDS HISTORY, BELIEF AND PRACTICE

### CHAPTER I – Historical Summary

**The Beginning of Friends-** Friends, also called Quakers, had their origin in seventeenth- century England. As a young man, George Fox longed for a genuine faith which he did not find in the cold, legalistic church of his time. He looked in vain for human help and studied the Bible so thoroughly that he learned much of it by memory. After four years of searching, he found inner peace through trusting Jesus Christ as his Savior. Soon he began to tell others about the Gospel of Christ as God's way to free people from sin. As Fox shared the reality he had found, others responded and joined him in spreading the good news of salvation. Thus, a movement of Christian renewal was born in 1647 which was to become known in time as the Friends Church, or Society of Friends. A rapid period of growth began in June 1652, in northern England powered by Fox's Pendle Hill Vision of many to be gathered in and the tireless efforts of Fox and members of the Valiant Sixty who spread the Gospel everywhere.

After the evangelistic fervor of the first century the second generation of Friends settled into a period known as Quietism and focused mostly on their own spiritual development. However, even in this time of quiet they were extremely involved in addressing social issues of their day.

**The Message of Friends-** Fox and early Quakers declared that salvation is a personal matter between the individual and God. No human mediator or outward ordinance is necessary. Therefore, the Friends message with its clear, spiritual interpretation of the Gospel was a logical conclusion of the Protestant Reformation. With its emphasis on spiritual reality and without dependence on outward rites, Quakerism fulfilled the development of doctrine begun over a century earlier by Martin Luther.

Friends endeavored to rediscover New Testament doctrine in its threefold nature of knowing about Jesus Christ historically, knowing Him personally in religious experience, and following His pattern of life. They recognized the role of the Holy Spirit in revealing sin and leading people to new life in Christ. Rather than merely dispensing with all outward ordinances, they taught positively that true baptism is that of Christ's Spirit within, and real communion takes place in fellowship with the Bread of life.

**Friends as a Church-** The dynamic message of Friends attracted thousands of people, and the early Quaker movement grew rapidly; some have called it an "explosion". They are thought to have taken the name "Friends" from the statement of Jesus in John 15:14 that "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you". They also called themselves "Friends of Truth" or "Publishers of Truth". The term "Quaker" was originally a derisive nickname. For legal reasons it became necessary in England to use the name "Society of Friends" as English law recognized only one established Church.

Many consider the word "church" belongs to the total invisible body of believers. Therefore, some Friends hesitate to use the word to refer to any one part of the body of Christ (as a certain denomination) or to the building used as a place of worship. In a spiritual sense Fox and his followers did use "church" freely when referring to the group of believers to whom they ministered. Today, many Friends congregations call themselves the Friends Church. Others are careful to use the term "meeting" for a group of believers and "meetinghouse" for the place of worship. Our legal name is Evangelical Friends Church – Mid America Yearly Meeting.

**The Living Witness of Friends-** The beliefs of early Friends led them into practical action. Among ethical testimonies held by Friends were these: religious freedom, opposition to slavery and civil bondage, just treatment of minorities (especially Native Americans), humane and remedial treatment of offenders, prison reform, compassionate care of the mentally ill, and aid to war victims and others in physical need. Friends taught and practiced peace as opposed to war, calling upon Christians to arm themselves with the Spirit rather than the weapons of this world. According to Christ's command, they emphasized a single standard for truth. Consequently, many countries now accept the affirmation in place of a legal oath.

Because of the testimonies of early Friends there is more civil and religious liberty in the world. All have benefited greatly from the courage of Friends faithful to what they believed. They were often put in prison for refusing to comply with requirements which they felt were contrary to the Gospel of Christ. Some forfeited their property; others were beaten, or even killed, because they took a stand for justice and freedom.

**Friends Around the World-** Between 1654 and 1660 individual Friends from England had left a personal witness in more than 20 foreign countries. This antedated the modern missionary movement by more than a century. In the latter half of the 19th century English and American Friends caught a vision of world need and since then have established missions in several lands. A number of those missions have now become indigenous churches. In 2000 the Friends World Committee reported there were organized groups of Friends in 43 countries. There are approximately 280,000 Friends in the world, but 90 percent of them live in the United States, Kenya, Bolivia, Guatemala, Great Britain, or Burundi.

**Friends in America-** The missionary vision of English Friends soon spread their witness in America. In 1661 New England Yearly Meeting was established in Rhode Island, where Friends were especially influential in government. Before 1700, other Yearly Meetings were set up in Baltimore, Virginia, Philadelphia, New York, and North Carolina for the English colonists. Overland travel was so difficult, separate Yearly Meetings were almost a necessity. William Penn's colony (Pennsylvania) was an example of what Friends today call "church extension". The numerical strength and influence of colonial Friends reached its peak about 1750. As more non- Quakers came to America, the peace testimony grew unpopular in the face of the French and Indian War. Also, as Quietism increased among Friends, the Quaker influence in government diminished markedly during the latter half of the eighteenth century.

During the 19th century Friends experienced a quickening of spiritual life, and new Yearly Meetings were again set up. Baltimore established Ohio Yearly Meeting in 1813 for all Friends meetings west of the Allegheny Mountains. Growth was phenomenal and Ohio set up Indiana Yearly Meeting in 1821. Since then, twenty-six Yearly Meetings were formed in the remaining years of the 19th century, fourteen of which have ceased to exist or have merged with other Yearly Meetings. In the 20th century at least twelve new Yearly Meetings have been established. Along with spiritual renewal came divisions among Friends. Due to disagreements in doctrine and church authority, and augmented by personality conflicts, the "Great Separation" took place in American Quakerism in 1827-28, with major splits occurring in four Yearly Meetings. Smaller divisions took place later in the century. Conferences about special concerns were held in Philadelphia in 1829, and in Baltimore in 1849. The first General Conference of the Yearly Meetings was held at Richmond, Indiana, in 1887. It was attended by delegates from London and Dublin Yearly Meetings, as well as from all those in America except Philadelphia and it was represented unofficially.

Afterwards it was decided to hold similar conferences of the American Yearly Meetings every five years (changed to triennial sessions after 1960). In 1897 it was decided that a uniform book of discipline and a closer union of the Yearly Meetings would be desirable. The resulting *Constitution and Discipline* was adopted by New England, Wilmington, Indiana, and Kansas in 1900, by California, New York, Western, and Baltimore in 1901, and by Oregon, North Carolina, and Iowa in 1902. The new organization was called the Five Years Meeting (officially changed to Friends United Meeting in 1966). Nebraska joined when it was organized in 1908. Canada Yearly Meeting was received into the organization in 1907 with the privilege of adapting the Discipline to its own needs. Later, Cuba, Mexico, Jamaica, and East Africa Yearly Meetings also affiliated with the Five Years Meeting. In 1983 the East Africa Yearly Meeting divided into three groups; since then, two others have emerged, as that area has the largest concentration of Quakerism in the world. In 1986 California Yearly Meeting changed its name to Southwest, and then changed affiliation to Evangelical Friends International in 1995.

The Friends General Conference, composed of the "Hicksite" branches of Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, Ohio, and Indiana Yearly Meetings, together with Genesee and Illinois, was organized in 1900. What was Indiana Yearly Meeting is now two separate Yearly Meetings— Indiana Yearly Meeting and Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting. Six new Yearly Meetings later became affiliated with this group, Southeastern chose affiliation also with Friends United Meeting. In 1945 New England Yearly Meetings were united after the Gurneyite-Wilburite divisions of 1845. In 1955 various bodies in Canada joined to form Canadian Yearly Meeting. The two New York groups also united that year, as did the two Philadelphia bodies. Baltimore was not united until 1966. All of these except Philadelphia are affiliated with both the FGC and FUM. The five Yearly Meetings with dual membership in 2000 comprised 15.4% of the Friends in the United States and Canada. A new yearly meeting not affiliated with any larger Friends group; the Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting was formed of former Northwest Yearly Meeting churches in 2020.

The earlier unity achieved in the Five Years Meeting was shattered by the modern fundamentalist issue in American Protestantism. Numerous Friends across the country became concerned about the growing influence of so-called modern thought. The Quaker emphasis tended to be on either evangelism or humanitarianism but not both. Oregon Yearly Meeting withdrew from the Five Years Meeting in 1926. That same year some dissatisfied members in Indiana and Western Yearly Meetings organized Central Yearly Meeting. In 1937 Kansas Yearly Meeting also withdrew from the Five Years Meeting. Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting was set up in 1957 by a majority of monthly meetings from Nebraska Yearly Meeting.

Recent scholarship has focused attention upon the evangelical nature of early Quakerism; this led to greater cooperation among groups of evangelical Friends. The Association of Evangelical Friends began meeting triennially in 1947 to encourage Christ-centered faith among Friends. That organization was terminated in 1970. Meanwhile in 1962 the formation of an Evangelical Friends Alliance was planned; in 1965 its constitution was approved by Ohio (now Evangelical Friends Church - Eastern Region), Oregon (now Northwest), Rocky Mountain, and Kansas (now Evangelical Friends Church - Mid-America) Yearly Meetings.

The purpose of EFA was to foster a clear evangelical witness, and to promote cooperation among evangelical Friends in Christian education, publications, youth work and missions. The Evangelical Friends

Mission was initiated by it in 1978. Iowa and Alaska Yearly Meetings were associate members of EFM, Iowa supports work in Mexico City, and Alaska was being helped in training workers for her own missionary outreach in the north.

In 1989 the EFA was reorganized to become Evangelical Friends International. The purpose of this organization is an international alliance of Friends Churches that officially accept and communicate the evangelical doctrines of the Christian Faith as defined by its statement of faith. It is organized by geographical regions: Africa, Asia, Latin America, and North America. Evangelical Friends International – North America is composed of the following Yearly Meetings: Alaska, Evangelical Friends Church – Eastern Region, Evangelical Friends Church – Mid America Yearly Meeting, Friends Church – Southwest, Northwest Yearly Meeting, and Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting.

As mentioned above the yearly meetings with dual membership comprised 15.4% of the total Friends membership in 2000. In addition, the number of affiliated Yearly Meetings and the percentage of their membership of total Friends in the United States and Canada in 2000 were as follows: Friends United Meeting (only) 6–30.7%; Evangelical Friends International – North America, 6–29.4%; Friends General Conference (only) 8–18.9%; Conservative, 3–1.6%; unaffiliated, 5–4.1%.

Various other efforts toward greater unity and growth are seen among American Friends, as well as on the world Quaker scene. The Friends United Meeting has begun a more aggressive church extension program. The Quaker Theological Discussion Group provides a forum for debate which seeks to help Friends find clarity in doctrine. Nearly all American Yearly Meetings were officially represented at the 1970 "Gathering of Concerned Friends" in St. Louis where significant sharing gave new hope for understanding and communication among Quakers. Since then, there have been a number of conferences sponsored by various groups, including the Friends World Committee for Consultation. Some have been regional, as were those of the Faith and Life movement. National conferences include the Friends Ministers' Conferences, "Youthquakes," and meetings of the Yearly Meeting Superintendents. International conferences held include a series of World Conferences held in widely scattered places.

## **CHAPTER II – Friends in Evangelical Friends Church – Mid America Yearly Meeting**

**Establishment of Kansas Yearly Meeting-** Friends first came to Kansas as missionaries to the Shawnee Indians who had been moved to northeast Kansas (part of Missouri Territory) from Ohio. The Friends Shawnee Indian Mission near Kansas City was opened in 1836, with a boarding school and meeting house. When Kansas Territory was opened for settlement in 1854, large numbers of Friends came. The first quarterly meeting in Kansas, known as Kansas Quarterly Meeting, was established in 1862 in northeast Kansas by Indiana Yearly Meeting. At Lawrence, Kansas Yearly Meeting officially came into being in 1872, made up at first of meetings in eastern Kansas and southwestern Missouri. Soon Friends formed other meetings in Kansas and Missouri, and some migrated far to the south and west where they established meetings in what are now the states of Oklahoma, Texas, and Colorado. Since 1925 the annual sessions have been held either in Wichita or Haviiland, Kansas. The name "Kansas" was dropped in 1978 in favor of "Mid- America". The name was changed to "Evangelical Friends Church – Mid America Yearly Meeting" in 2000.

**Friends and Missions-** Besides their work among Indians in Kansas and Oklahoma, Kansas missionaries labored on Douglas Island, Alaska, from 1887-1911. Other Kansas Quakers went as missionaries to Japan, China, Cuba, India, Kenya, Mexico, Palestine, Jamaica, Central America and South America.

In the fall of 1933 Kansas Yearly Meeting (now Evangelical Friends Church – Mid America Yearly Meeting) commissioned Arthur and Edna Chilson, and their daughter Rachel, to open a new mission field in central Africa. In 1934 the Friends mission in Urundi (now Burundi), known as the Friends Africa Gospel Mission (FAGM), was started. FAGM was both evangelistic and service oriented, seeking to fulfill major goals of evangelizing, discipleship, and church planting, to serve the whole person through medicine, education, technical aid, agriculture, and community development. It cooperated closely with other Protestant missions in the Gitega Literature Center, Grace Memorial Press, Kibimba Normal School, and Mweya Bible Institute and Seminary and the school for missionary children. In 1959, the 25th anniversary year, Burundi Quarterly Meeting was established. Interim Yearly Meeting status was granted in 1979. In 1984, the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the mission, the Burundi Friends Church became a full Yearly Meeting.

Friends in Burundi have faced extreme crises from time to time due to local political upheaval. Many of the finest and most highly trained leaders went to their death under persecution (1965 and 1972), giving brave testimony to their faith in Jesus Christ. After fourteen years of effective witness the voice of Radio CORDAC was stilled in 1977 when the Burundi government decided no longer to permit private radio stations. The last of the Friends missionaries were forced to leave in 1985 when the government denied them visas. In spite of the hardships and limitations put upon the churches there, they continued to grow. By 1987 there were 41 congregations with a membership of over 4,500, and they were also active in church extension beyond Burundi into Zaire.

Throughout the 1990's there has been an ongoing atmosphere of political instability and tribal warfare. This resulted in churches being closed for a period of time and some being taken over by the government to serve as refugee camps. The persecution and killing resulted in some leaders having to flee the country for a time, and others were in hiding. As a result, the major thrust in the support of Burundi has been in the areas of reconstruction and leadership development. In spite of the persecution or perhaps because of it, the church continued to grow.

In January of 1998 there were approximately 14,000 church members in over 70 congregations. Dynamic growth continues through Sister Church projects and the strategy of planting "Hill Churches" in neighboring villages throughout the country. At the same time, with a new Peace School in 1999, and Christ's heart for reconciliation, Friends sent out a call to peace with the love of Christ in a land of adversity. In August of 1999, Mid-America Yearly Meeting sent David and Mae Kellum back to Burundi for a two-year term to encourage the churches. The Great Lakes School of Theology was launched in Bujumbura in January of 2000 in order to train pastors and leaders to serve in Friends Churches. Sixteen students from the countries of Congo, Rwanda, and Burundi, formed the first class. This program has since transitioned into the Great Lakes Leadership training program with each yearly meeting conducting courses independently with oversight by the Evangelical Friends Mission.

In 2006, since there were no longer any EFC Mid-America Yearly Meeting sponsored and supported missionaries on the Burundi field, the yearly meeting committed itself to form a deeper relationship with Evangelical Friends Mission. EFC - MAYM joins other Yearly Meetings in supporting the work in Mexico, the Philippines, Rwanda, North India (Friends of Garhwal), International Friends Ministry, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Ireland.

**Friends and Education-** Before the development of public schools it was customary among Friends to establish monthly meeting elementary schools to provide for their children's education. As early as 1856 there is record of a Friends elementary school in Leavenworth County, Kansas. By 1866 the monthly meeting schools were being attended by 152 Friends children. In 1872 the newly formed Yearly Meeting took as a major concern the provision of high school education for its youth. There was never one central high school for the Yearly Meeting, but during the years of 1877 to 1914, and scattered in four states, a total of 12 academies had been started by the quarterly meetings. The last of the academies to close was Haviland in 1968 (See the list in Part V, Chapter II).

In connection with the Haviland Academy, a Bible Training School was begun in 1917 for the purpose of teaching English Bible and training Christian workers. In subsequent years the school grew to include a 2-year junior college program and in 1948-1950 a 4-year curriculum. Since the closing of the Academy in 1968, the college (renamed Barclay College in the spring of 1990) has developed a four-year degree program with emphasis on pastoral and youth ministry along with majors in Bible/theology, missions, sports and recreation ministries, business, education, and psychology, and nursing. From 1996 to 2008 the college offered Home College Courses making available college level classes in Bible and ministry that could be completed at home. The college also operated a degree completion program — *ADVANTAGE!* — with majors in business, psychology, Christian ministry, and Bible/theology at a number of sites in Kansas, and several other states. Both programs have been replaced by an online program now serving students around the world with most of the majors offered at the college. Barclay College has had a master's program since 2011.

The doors of Friends University were opened in Wichita in September 1898, with 53 students, a president, faculty and magnificent building—the gift of James M. and Anna T. Davis who had purchased the property of the defunct Garfield University. His requirements of Yearly Meeting interest and financial support were met, and in 1903 Friends University officially became the responsibility of Kansas Yearly Meeting. As the college grew, the percentage of Quaker students and alumni declined as did the percentage of financial support from Yearly Meeting churches. Although the Yearly Meeting continues to have close affiliation with the college, changes in the structure of the University Board mean the Yearly Meeting no longer has control. As a liberal arts college, Friends University has trained thousands of men and women who have distinguished themselves in business, education, industry, and science and at the same time made valuable contributions to their churches and communities.

From 1964-1978 Friends Special School in San Antonio, Texas, helped to educate needy and emotionally disturbed children, prepare them for employment, and bring them under Christian influence and teaching. It had to close after state-level policies affected the funding program on which it was dependent.

The Houston Graduate School of Theology began holding classes in 1983, having developed its initial relationship with the Texas Area Friends Churches. It was a Friends seminary, which focuses its education opportunities on the wider Christian community. In 1988 the seminary was accorded a formal relationship as an educational ministry within Evangelical Friends Church – Mid America Yearly Meeting. In 2004 the seminary officially ended its designation as a Friends Seminary becoming a multid denominational institution.

**Youth of Evangelical Friends Church – Mid America Yearly Meeting-** Young people are a vital part of Evangelical Friends Church – Mid America Yearly Meeting. In 1887 a Christian Fellowship Union was organized to provide opportunities for greater communication and fellowship among youth. The name Christian Endeavor was adopted in 1892 to coincide with the national organization of young people. An increased identity with other young people among Evangelical Friends prompted the new name of Friends Youth in 1964. A variety of conferences and retreats have contributed greatly to the spiritual growth and development of young Friends of Evangelical Friends Church – Mid America Yearly Meeting. In response to a concern for our own campgrounds, in 1950 Kansas Yearly Meeting opened Camp Quaker Haven near Arkansas City, Kansas. Quaker Haven provides excellent opportunities for camping with cabins, dining hall, chapel, the David E. Cox Memorial swimming pool, miniature golf, and other recreational facilities. It has the capacity to accommodate 300 people and is in constant use by Evangelical Friends Church – Mid America Yearly Meeting and other groups.

In 1979 the position of Superintendent of Youth was established for the purpose of coordination and administration of the youth programs of the Yearly Meeting. The Superintendent of Youth works closely with the youth leaders in EFC-MAYM churches to sense the needs of the youth and provide direction for the youth program. Through such activities as camping, summer ministries, short-term mission trips, Student Conferences, and sponsor-teacher training, also resource materials and program development, the Superintendent of Youth helps to provide for the needs of youth and the development of the youth program in the local church.

### **CHAPTER III – A Glance at Quaker History\***

1624	Birth of George Fox in Leicestershire, England
1647	Fox’s discovery of Jesus
1652	Fox’s Pendle Hill vision; beginning of Quaker movement in Westmoreland
1661	Establishment in Rhode Island of “The Yearly Meeting for Friends in New England”
1672	George Fox and William Edmundson’s visits among American Friends
1682	Arrival of William Penn in Pennsylvania; beginning of his “Holy Experiment” in government
1689	Toleration Act in England after the accession of William and Mary
1691	Death of George Fox
1746	John Woolman’s visits in the Carolinas
1756	End of Quaker control in Pennsylvania Assembly
1776	Abolishment of slaveholding among Quakers
1813	Establishment of Ohio Yearly Meeting
1821	Establishment of Indiana Yearly Meeting
1845	Wilburite-Gurneyite (Conservative-Progressive) separation in New England
1827-1904	Further Conservative separations in Ohio, Iowa, Kansas, Canada, and North Carolina Yearly Meetings
1857-1860	Visit of Friends, Robert and Sarah Lindsey from Yorkshire, England, among Friends in Kansas, California, Oregon (and elsewhere)

- 1860 Establishment of Iowa Friends Boarding School (later Penn College, 1872)
- 1863 Establishment of Iowa Yearly Meeting
- 1869 President Grant's appointment of Quakers to supervise the Indian service in the Central and Northern Superintendencies and nine other agencies
- 1872 Establishment of Kansas Yearly Meeting
- 1887 Richmond Conference of Yearly Meetings
- 1892 Opening of Friends Haviland Academy (became Friends Bible College, 1917)
- 1893 Establishment of Oregon Yearly Meeting
- 1895 Establishment of California Yearly Meeting
- 1898 Establishment of Friends University, Wichita, KS
  
- 1900 Organization of Friends General Conference
- 1902 Organization of Five Years Meeting; beginning of Friends Africa Mission in Kenya
- 1917 Beginning of American Friends Service Committee
- 1934 Beginning of Friends Africa Gospel Mission in Burundi
- 1937 Beginning of Friends World Committee for Consultation
- 1943 Beginning of Friends Committee on National Legislation
- 1945-1966 Union of separated groups within New England, Canada, Philadelphia, New York, and Baltimore Yearly Meetings
- 1945-1970 Association of Evangelical Friends
- 1957 Establishment of Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting
- 1966 Five Years Meeting name change to Friends United Meeting; establishment of the Evangelical Friends Alliance
- 1970 St. Louis "Gathering of Concerned Friends"
- 1978 Name change to Mid-America Yearly Meeting; beginning of Evangelical Friends Mission
- 1983 Opening of Houston Graduate School of Theology
- 1984 Establishment of Burundi Yearly Meeting
- 1987 Legal status for Friends Church in Rwanda
- 1989 Evangelical Friends Alliance reorganized as Evangelical Friends International
- 1990 Friends Bible College renamed Barclay College
- 2000 MAYM name change to Evangelical Friends Church – Mid America Yearly Meeting
- 2008 Evangelical Friends International name change to Evangelical Friends Church International

\*Dates of special interest to American Friends,  
particularly to those in Evangelical Friends Church – Mid America Yearly Meeting.

#### **CHAPTER IV – Beliefs**



## Section I – Basic Beliefs

Friends believe that Gospel-centric New Testament doctrines are essential to Christianity. Fundamental truths considered as vital and life-giving are as follows: The Fatherhood of God; the deity and humanity of Jesus, the Son; the ministry of the Holy Spirit; Christ's atonement which reconciles believers to God; the resurrection of Jesus Christ which assures true believers of life after death; the high priesthood of Christ who gives access to the Father by forgiving sins; and the individual priesthood of believers who may approach God directly without human intervention.

While Friends do not stress a formal written creed, they do state the primary principles of their faith in order to make their doctrinal position clear. Not wishing to be dogmatic, they record certain beliefs which are held as basic to their faith. The following pages outline these beliefs. For a more complete statement on essential doctrines, refer to the historical documents (Part V, Chapter VI, Secs. I-II), or to books listed in the annotated bibliography, (Part V, Chapter I).

1. **The Bible-** The Holy Bible was given by the direct inspiration of God and is sufficient to inform people of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 3:16-17; John 20:31). The Bible is the written authority by which all guidance should be measured for truth (Psalm 19:7-14). God's Holy Spirit, who inspired the Scriptures, also interprets them, working through those yielded to Him within His Church (2 Peter 1:20-21). Genuine guidance from God is in accord with the Holy Scriptures (Acts 17:11).

2. **God-** There is one sovereign God who is revealed through the Bible in the person of His son, Jesus Christ (Deuteronomy 6:4; Hebrews 1:3; John 1:18). God is the Maker and Preserver of all things; He alone is worthy of worship (Genesis 1-2; Nehemiah 9:6; Exodus 34:14; Colossians 1:16-17). In the unity of the Godhead exist three equal and distinct, yet inseparable persons: The Father; the Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Spirit.

3. **Jesus Christ-** Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is the second person of the Trinity and is God's revelation of Himself to the world (Hebrews 1:3; John 1:18). He was divine and yet human, being conceived by God's Spirit and born of a virgin (Matthew 1:20). Through the blood He shed dying on the cross, Jesus Christ became the atonement for sin, thus providing direct access to God by His priesthood (Hebrews 5:7-10; 1 Corinthians 15:3; Romans 3:24-26; 1 John 2:2). Upon His resurrection from the dead, He ascended again to the right hand of His Father, assuming the role of Intercessor and drawing people to God by His Spirit (Mark 16:19; Hebrews 7:25). When Jesus Christ returns to earth, He will receive His Church and judge the world (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; Romans 2:16).

4. **The Holy Spirit-** The third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, proceeds from the Father and the Son but is equal with Them (John 15:26; John. 16:13-15; 2 Corinthians 3:16-18). The Holy Spirit convinces people of their sin, gives life to penitent believers, and sanctifies the child of God (John 16:8; John 3:5; Acts 15:8-9; 1 Peter 1:2). He enables one to love God supremely and to give evidence of the Spirit's presence in their lives (Galatians 5:22-23). The Holy Spirit works through individual lives as well as in corporate groups of the Church, enabling people to serve in various ways as the Spirit chooses (1 Corinthians 12:7-11).

5. **People-** Created in the image of God, at first man and woman enjoyed unbroken fellowship with their Maker (Genesis 1:26, 3:8-9). By their disobedience they incurred the displeasure of God and the penalty of spiritual death (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:6-24). Consequently, all are born with a sinful nature; there is no inherent principle which naturally leads people to salvation outside the atoning provision of Jesus

Christ for all mankind (Ephesians 2:3). While people are sinful by nature, they can be redeemed from sin's penalty, which is eternal death, because Christ paid this penalty in full (Isaiah 53:6; Romans 5:8; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 John 2:2).

Through His sacrificial death, Jesus Christ destroyed the wall separating all persons from God. By the individual priesthood of believers, everyone stands equal before God and may approach Him directly (1 Peter 2:9; Hebrews 4:16).

6. **Salvation-** Salvation is a personal matter between people and their Maker (Philippians 2:12-13). It consists of forgiveness for sins as well as sanctification or the cleansing of sinful human nature (Titus 3:7; 1 John 1:9; Isaiah 1:18). People can be redeemed because of the atoning death of Jesus Christ and the direct work of the Spirit (1 Peter 3:18). The Holy Spirit restores people to fellowship with God the Father and enables them to love Him wholeheartedly (Hebrew 12:2-3; Ephesians 3:16-17). Salvation does not depend on outward ceremonies or symbols (John 4:21-24; Matthew 3:11).

Sanctification is the work of God which is accomplished through the baptism with the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer who is yielded totally to God (Isaiah 44:3; 1 Corinthians 6:11; John 14:15-17). The believer is thus empowered to witness to the living Christ (Acts 1:8). Sanctification is both an act in which one's heart is cleansed and a process in which the life is continuously disciplined to God's holy standards (2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 6:10-13).

7. **The Church-** Those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior are born again into His kingdom by His Spirit (John 3:5). These persons make up the true Church of Jesus Christ which is spiritual in nature and universal in scope (Matthew 16:18). By His Spirit, Christ is present whenever two or three people meet together in His name (Matthew 18:20). Such a meeting is a local church which is a visible manifestation of the Church universal. Every believer should be related to a local visible part of Christ's universal Body in order to worship, witness, and work more effectively for the glory of God. Every believer is committed to be involved in the stewardship of God's Kingdom through the Church until the Lord returns (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).

8. **Liberty-** Christian liberty is to be granted in all areas not essential to one's final salvation. Due to human imperfection, there are differences of faith and practice among God's children, but they anticipate a time of greater unity in the faith. Until that time there must be unity in essentials but liberty in non-essentials, with love in all things (Galatians 5:13; 1 Corinthians 10:23-33).

9. **The Lord's Return-** We have experienced the coming of the Living Christ in and among us, the foretaste of God's glorious reign and basis of our hope (Romans 8:23). At His second coming, Jesus Christ will return in power as King of kings to consummate His rule over individuals and nations by the final triumph over Satan (Revelation 19:11-20). The dead shall be resurrected, some to eternal life, others to everlasting punishment (Daniel 12:2). All shall be judged by God and receive just recompense for their deeds (Hebrews 9:27). The blessed ones shall live forever in heaven, but the lost suffer eternally in hell (Matthew 25:31-46).

## **Section II – Faith in Action**

### ***A – Testimonies Regarding Sacred Worship***

1. **Prayer-** No practice in Christian living is more often spoken of in the Scripture than prayer, both as duty and as privilege. The Bible gives examples of and instruction in this practice. In the Old Testament Daniel is an outstanding example, because he faithfully and openly prayed to God three times a day, in spite of the King's decree to the contrary. The Psalms are filled with prayer to God. Reading them, the Christian learns of the rich rewards from such a practice. Our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, as our sure example in holy living often gave Himself to prayer. He also often instructed His disciples, and thus Christians of all generations, to pray faithfully and to expect God's answer (Matthew 7:7; John 16:23; James 5:16b).

A sense of need is a sufficient call to prayer. Hence the burdened sinner may come boldly to the throne of grace and find a welcoming Father from Whom forgiveness can be obtained. Similarly, burdened Christians can find in prayer the assurance of God's love and relief from their burdens as they cast all their care on the Lord (1 Peter 5:7).

Prayer is the life breath of Christian living and gives the Christian unbroken access to his Heavenly Father. It is thus essential to the maintenance and development of the Christian life. We believe that it should be the daily exercise of individual Christians within our fellowship; that our families should set apart a time for collective prayer, Bible reading, and praise; and that in our public services of worship we should give importance to prayer and praise.

2. **Christian Worship-** Worship is a privilege for Christians. It is a spiritual experience in which believers give themselves to communion and fellowship with the Heavenly Father, a time when they consciously feel and give adoration and love and gratitude to God. It is a time of reverent coming before the Almighty God as a child of His by grace.

The first preparation for profitable worship is a humble spirit which recognizes the grace of God in giving us this privilege. Equally important is a contrite spirit which is submissive to His Lordship and superior will for our daily living. When these attitudes prevail, worship is full of meaning and reward (Psalm 51:17).

Worship may be silent or vocal, taking various forms; it does not depend on certain ceremonies or traditions. Worship is a natural outgrowth of union with Christ and should be directed by His Spirit. The service of worship will usually include times of prayer, praise, and preaching. During public worship services we should also allow sufficient time for reflection, meditation, and decision.

Public worship not only helps Christians in their spiritual growth, but also serves as the focal point of the church's local ministry and is a testimony to the surrounding community of the importance of worshipping God. As such, our members should attend the services of their congregation regularly and faithfully. They should impress upon their children the same religious practice, believing that they will aid in leading their children to salvation, a growing faith, and to the worship of God.

From the beginning of His earthly life (Matthew 2:2) and throughout the ages of time (Revelation 4:1011), the Lord Jesus Christ has been, is, and will be the object of worship. We make Him the center of our

worship and delight in collectively and personally giving Him praise and adoration as God. Without His presence through the Holy Spirit our worship would have neither meaning nor depth.

Believers are committed to the work of God, not only to manifest personal righteousness as the fruit of a new life, but also to share their faith. All Christians are called upon to witness by word and deed, in Christlikeness demonstrating love, forgiveness, and the way of peace. Certain ones are called and ordained by God for a special service of leadership in His Church; their service may be that of teaching, evangelizing, pastoring, or administration. The church should recognize such special gifts among its members and encourage their use.

**3. The Sacraments-** True baptism is the inward receiving of God's Spirit by asking in faith for Him to become Lord of one's life. Communion is the continuing fellowship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Both baptism and communion are spiritual realities beyond the mere physical, outward ordinances.

As Friends, we are compelled to grant liberty to one another in areas that are not essential to salvation, including the use (or non-use) of the physical elements in the observance of communion and baptism. Individuals and congregations throughout Evangelical Friend Church-North America should look to the example of Jesus Christ, search the Scriptures, and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in how they view and participate in the sacramental life of the Church, while demonstrating respect for how the Spirit of God may lead others on this issue. As Evangelical Friends we affirm: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity."

\*At the 2019 EFC-MAYM Ministry Conference, this topic was discussed in great detail, leading to the following minute: *Mid-America Friends continues to believe that communion and baptism are inward works of the Holy Spirit that can never be supplanted by the outward signs, but can be supported by them when practiced by Friends, both individually and collectively, as an act of Christ-centered, Spirit-led worship.*

### ***B – Testimonies Regarding Christian Living***

Early in their religious lives, Christians learn that it is necessary to make many decisions about behavior. They discover some practices which, though common in society, could potentially hinder their Christian growth and witness. Therefore, making right decisions about such matters will determine their growth in life and witness. Knowing that growing Christians have a greater delight in their own lives, Friends hold the following testimonies as guidelines toward Christian growth which we understand to be taught in the Bible. It is our desire that Christians within our fellowship experience speedy and rich progress toward the attainment of fullness in Christ.

**1. Harmony in the Church-** Harmony in the church family is essential to its good witness in the community and to its worship of and service to its Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. Watchful care should therefore be taken to maintain that harmony. The congregation, and especially the pastors and elders, should be concerned that nothing be permitted to bring disruption to the peace and unity of their fellowship. They should be quick to discern conflicts among the members of the congregation. In the event that dissension or resentment does arise, the pastor and elders should admonish all parties of the serious threat involved in their attitudes and make every effort, especially following the pattern laid down

by our Lord Himself in Matthew 18:15-20, to reach reconciliation (1 Peter 1:22; Hebrews 13:1; 1 John 4:21; Matthew 5:23-25).

2. **Simplicity of Living-** Because the pressure to follow a style of life like that of the non-Christian society is so great upon Christians, Friends insist that our citizenship is not of this world. The New Testament command (Romans 12:2), "Be not conformed to this world," reminds us that in all our living we must take care that our manner of dress be modest and decent in every way. We must also take care that we not be seduced by the attractions and abundance of earthly goods and thus fall into covetousness.

- **Weddings.** Since the wedding ceremony is solemn and holy, Friends feel that it should be simple and reverent. We should take care to make the entire ceremony one of Christian celebration, watching in the choice of music and all other parts of the service that it be an occasion of seeking God's blessing on the union and His guidance in the establishment of the home.
- **Funerals-** Knowing that our bodies have been made of dust (Genesis 3:19) and shall return to dust, Friends ought to avoid extravagant and expensive funerals and memorial stones.
- **Memorials-** When a congregation feels that it would be a fitting tribute and possible testimony to others, Friends may prepare a memorial statement of the exemplary life of the deceased member. The statement should be forwarded to the local Presiding Clerk, for possible presentation at the next business session (Part II, Chapter II, Section I, C,1, A).

3. **Unwholesome Habits-** Friends should be especially watchful against being involved in unwholesome habits. Both 2 Corinthians 7:1, where we are instructed to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit," and 1 Corinthians 3:17, where we are told that "if any man defile the temple of God (which temple is our bodies), him shall God destroy," serve as a basis for our testimony against such habits.

Unwholesome habits include the abuse of alcohol, drugs, and any other substance or behavior that might lead to addiction or dependance. Abundant suffering has resulted to those who have been ensnared by these practices. Such suffering has included a waste of health, mind, money, the home, and often the very life of the one who indulges in such habits. In addition to the personal harm suffered, the Christian's godly example is also damaged. If new Christians find it difficult to break any of these habits, loving care should be extended to them along with every assistance so that they may come to freedom from them.

4. **Entertainment/Media/Social Media-** With the wide availability of entertainment and social media, Friends should carefully consider how they spend their interest, time, and money. These forms of amusement can and do have a large influence upon character and life.

Our members should avoid attending or being involved in movies, television programs, performances, and other forms of media of a demoralizing nature (Philippians 4:8-9; Romans 12:2; Ephesians 5:3). Members should avoid lotteries, wagering, or any kind of gambling. Friends should guard themselves from pornography in all forms. For those who struggle with these kinds of habits, the church should extend care and grace while supporting the recovery of those affected.

Social media platforms have become commonplace and, special attention should be given to how one represents themselves in these arenas. Our Christian witness can and should encompass all areas of life, which now extends to our digital footprint. Friends should refrain from unnecessary disputes, harsh words, or any forms of unwholesome talk (Ephesians 4:29). When possible, Friends should engage matters of importance in person rather than online.

### *C – Testimonies Regarding Christian Households*

1. **Marriage-** God designed marriage for humanity (Genesis 2:18-25). As first described in Genesis and later affirmed by Jesus, marriage is a God ordained, covenant relationship between a biologically born male and a biologically born female (Matthew 19:4-6). This lifelong, sexually exclusive relationship brings children into the world and thus sustains the stewardship of the earth (Hebrews 13:4; Genesis 1:28). Biblical marriage – marked by faithfulness, sacrificial love, and joy – displays the depth of the relationship between God and his people (Ephesians 5:31-32).

A union so solemn is to be entered into only after much forethought, planning, and prayer. Friends should seek earnestly the will of our Lord concerning their choice of a spouse, remembering the apostolic injunction, "do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Corinthians 6:14a). Parents should use watchful care to help their children find spouses of Christian character and commitment.

In some cases, physical abnormalities may arise during fetal development in-utero which can make individual biological sex indistinct at birth. In these rare cases, pastors and churches should use prayerful discernment when considering their advice and/or consent regarding marriage of such persons.

2. **The Family-** The family (nuclear, single-parent, blended, multi-generational, adopted, foster, etc.) is the basic unit of human relationship, and as such is also the foundation unit of society. The many biblical references to the family assure us of its divine origin and of God's concern for the family and the home (Ephesians 6:1-4; Psalm 127:3a; 1 Timothy 5:8).

3. **Singleness-** Just as marriage should display the depth of relationship between God and his people, singleness, vowed or dedicated, should display the breadth of God's relationship with his people. Because they are not limited by a vow to one person, single people have more freedom and time to express the love of Christ to a broad range of people (1 Corinthians 7:32-35). Single Friends choose to practice celibacy as long as they remain unmarried as part of their commitment to Christ (1 Corinthians 7:8; Matthew 19:12). Being single in no way minimizes the potential for ministry or influence a Friend has in the church, and the body benefits greatly from the perspectives that single people bring.

4. **Divorce-** The sanctity of the marriage covenant requires Friends to seek earnestly to nurture their relationship, to prevent serious marital discord, to seek Christian counseling when needed, and to make every effort toward a happy, harmonious, and holy marriage (Ephesians 5:33; Matthew 19:6). The break-up of many marriages in our day lays great responsibility upon the congregation to be sensitive to the needs of those becoming involved in such crises and to be quick in loving concern for them. If divorce occurs, the church should offer a redemptive ministry to all members of the family (Galatians 6:2; Romans 12:15; John 13:34).

When they are called upon to conduct weddings for divorced persons, we ask our ministers to consider the circumstances carefully in conjunction with scriptural admonitions (Mark 10:11-12; Matthew 19:89; 1 Corinthians 7:39), and perhaps in consultation with the leaders of their congregations, before deciding whether to perform the ceremony. Persons who have been divorced and are living consistent Christian lives should not be hindered from being members of the church nor from working in it.

5. **Parents and Children-** The responsibility of parenthood is given by God. (Psalm 127:3). The Scriptures often speak of this responsibility and give guidance for bearing it. Parents should turn to God for wisdom and guidance in raising of their children. The Bible commands, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord" (Ephesians 6:1), and throughout its pages examples clearly support its teaching that obedience is the right attitude of children to parents. On their part, parents should be sensitive to the concerns and needs of their children so that they can freely speak their hearts to each other (Ephesians 6:4).

Parents have great spiritual, as well as physical, material, and educational responsibility for their children (Deuteronomy 11:19-21; Proverbs 22:6; 1 Timothy 5:8). Knowing that their children face the pressures of temptation from all sides, particularly in their schools, Christian parents have a great responsibility to guide them into a real understanding of what they believe and what they should do in the face of such temptation. Parents should, from the beginning, have a concern that their children come to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. This concern will move them to pray faithfully with and for their children, to try to build a home atmosphere that will draw them to God, to encourage them in regular attendance of services of worship and in Christian service, and to provide them with Christian instruction in the home (1 Timothy 3:4).

#### *D – Testimonies Regarding Christian Ministry*

1. **General Ministry-** Believers are committed to the work of God, not only to manifest personal righteousness as the fruit of a new life, but also to share their faith (Matthew 28:16-20; 1 Peter 3:15; 2 Timothy 1:8). All Christians are called upon to witness by word and by deed, in Christlikeness demonstrating love, forgiveness, and the way of peace (1 Peter 1:5-8; Colossians 4:5-6).

2. **Public Ministry-** Friends believe certain people are called to be ministers of the Gospel; for the edifying and equipping of the church, the Holy Spirit confers on them the gifts of ministry (Ephesians 4:11). This calling will be evidenced in the life and work of the public minister. While there will be those who also have administrative ability or unusual insight into the Scriptures, it is this distinctive call of God which sets apart a person to serve in the Gospel ministry. Freely received, this call and gift should be freely and devotedly given in service to God and the Church.

3. **Leadership in Ministry-** Christ-centered Friends believe in the universal call to ministry that extends to all believers (Acts 2:17). In ministry leadership, Friends recognize that both men and women are equal recipients of the divine call of God. As such, Friends' ecclesiology embraces a nonexclusionary view of public ministry (not as a concession to modernity but in obedience to the Bible and the Holy Spirit) that the Lord calls both women and men to serve as leaders and pastors in His church.

4. **Stewardship-** Friends believe that the Old Testament practice of bringing one-tenth (the tithe) of the increase of one's labor to the temple as God's storehouse is the most satisfactory basis for Christian stewardship (Malachi 3:10). Jesus commended sacrificial giving which exceeded this, implying that true

giving extends beyond the tithe (2 Corinthians 9:6-7). Time, money, talents, and strength belong to the Lord. As His stewards, Christians hold them in trust to be used for His glory (Matthew 25:14-30).

It is recommended that Friends should make their wills while in health and strength of judgment so that distribution of their estates may be done in justice and wisdom, to the satisfaction of their own minds. They are urged to consider financial needs of the various ministries of the local church and the Yearly Meeting and, where possible, remember them with suitable bequests.

5. **Use of Church Property-** Church properties are dedicated to the service of the kingdom of God and to the communication of the full Gospel to all people. As such, Friends believe that property should be treated with care and stewarded well. The way we use our resources is in direct relation to our communication of the Good News to those in our scope of influence and ministry. We encourage Friends to purchase, construct, and maintain their worship facilities with prayerful consideration of their function, remembering the moderation and simplicity which is the testimony of Friends and to the Church of Jesus Christ.

6. **Business Practices-** Friends should seek divine direction in all their business affairs. They should undertake endeavors only after prayer and seeking God's guidance (Matthew 6:33). While it is to be hoped that we will have adequate income, we must remember that the search for riches is a threat to Christian life (1 Timothy 6:10). Careful attention should be given to all our dealings in order not to bring dishonor to our testimony or to the church. Friends should be especially careful to pay debts and to fulfill all commitments. If business failures occur, we must do everything possible to fulfill all obligations.

### *E – Testimonies Regarding Christian Relationship to Government and Society*

1. **The Poor-** The Christian virtue of love should characterize Friends in caring for the material needs of the poor within our membership. Also, as means are available, such care should be extended to others' needs, remembering that we are admonished to do good to all, especially those of the household of faith (Galatians 6:10).

2. **Schools-** Friends should take real interest in the educational programs affecting their children and all children of our communities. We should work for the election of suitable members of the boards of education, the employment of teachers of Christian character and example, and the development of educational programs which consider the influence of their contents and activities on the children involved.

3. **Civil Government-** Friends are convinced that the New Testament requires the Christian to hold the government and its leaders in respect, and that the basic principles of government can be directly traced to the Scriptures (Romans 13:1-7). Therefore, it is necessary that we obey the laws of the nation insofar as they are not in conflict with our obedience to God. When it becomes necessary for Friends to disagree with the practices and requirements of government, we should do so out of concern for the promotion of righteousness and not out of delight in controversy or strife.

Friends should use the ballot, with prayer and guidance, to vote for candidates and measures which will promote righteousness, giving much consideration to the personal and spiritual qualifications of candidates regardless of political affiliation.



4. **Capital Punishment-** The Bible emphasizes the sacredness of human life and the worth of each person before God (Psalm 139:13-18; Psalm 8). Capital punishment, Friends feel, is a pre-emption of the authority of God, the righteous Judge, over life (James 4:12; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). The restraint of evil can be more effectively handled by other methods than the death penalty.

5. **Peace and War-** Friends feel that life is sacred, and that war and violence are not consistent with Christian principles (Matthew 5:38-48). It is our firm conviction that war is wrong as a method of settling disputes, destructive of our highest values, and productive of the seeds of future wars. We, therefore, as a church, unequivocally support young Friends who as conscientious objectors to war refuse military service. And we are concerned to find alternative solutions based upon justice and righteousness for all peoples and are deeply moved to participate in the new calls to peacemaking which are being sounded in our day. At the same time, we support and pray for individuals (and their families) serving in our Armed Forces.

6. **Oaths-** Friends seek to evidence Christian holiness by conducting their personal, family, business, and civic responsibilities with honesty. Personal integrity includes consistency of speech. In allegiance to Christ and obedience to His clear commands, Friends refrain from profanity of speech and from swearing to legal oaths (Matthew 5:33-37; James 5:12). One should tell the truth whether under oath or not. A form of affirmation is given in the following paragraph. ("You do most solemnly and sincerely, and truly declare and affirm that the testimony you will give in the cause now in hearing will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and this you do under the pains and penalties of perjury."). We are grateful that the civil authorities have long granted us, and all others of like mind, the right to this practice.

7. **Organizational Alignments-** Many organizations make attractive appeals for membership and involvement. Friends must carefully study such organizations – the time, commitment, and money required, as well as the likely influence of the organization upon them. Especially, we will then avoid affiliation with organizations that present a diminished or distorted understanding of the Christian faith and those that keep their tenets shrouded in secrecy.

8. **Equality of Persons-** Friends have long been convinced of the equality of all persons and find that Scripture compels us to this view (James 2:1-12). We are, therefore, concerned for those who are underprivileged, neglected, and victimized by injustice and persecution. Friends repudiate discrimination on the basis of sex, race, social class, or nationality. In all their dealings they seek to bind up the hurts of those who are injured, to be just, respectful, sensitive, and moved by the love of Christ. Any person should find freedom to worship and participate in the life of our congregations regardless of these differences. We witness to the dignity and worth of all before God.

Further, Friends support and advocate for the right of every person to enjoy access to public accommodations, employment on merit alone, use of qualified leadership, and suitable housing. Friends should support such concerns in all ways that are non-violent and that maintain respect for authority and law.

9. **Stewardship of the Earth and its Resources-** Friends believe that when God in the beginning gave man and woman dominion over the earth, He did not grant them license to do whatever they might wish with its riches, but that rather He made them the stewards of what was and remains God's by creation and rulership (Genesis 1:28). We, therefore, are permitted the use of the earth and its resources, but as stewards

must use them wisely, carefully, and as under the eye of their owner. Wasteful and destructive use of the earth's resources, Friends believe, are foreign to good stewardship. Moreover, the use of natural resources to support an extravagant style of life while others must exist in poverty and squalor is contrary to the Scriptures (1 John 3:17). Consequently, both in our own practice and in what we urge upon the governments of the world, Friends should be conscientious examples of acceptable stewardship.

10. **Abortion-** Friends believe that all life is a gift of God (Genesis 2:7; Job 33:4). We hold that abortion on demand or for reasons of personal convenience, social adjustment, or economic advantage is morally wrong. Friends believe an appropriate and morally acceptable alternative to abortion is to arrange for immediate adoption upon birth. They believe that married couples have the right to exercise their preferences as to means of preventing or avoiding conception.

11. **Homosexuality-** Friends uphold a biblical view of sexuality and marriage (Matthew 19:4-6; Hebrews 13:4). As such, Friends believe that homosexual acts go against our God-given sexual nature (Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11). This stance does not limit the ability or calling on Friends to love each person as one made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). We willingly stand in the gap and hold this tension as part of our mission to love our neighbors as ourselves.

### *F – Testimonies Regarding Certain Issues*

1. **Security of the Believer-** Friends believe that the security of the believer, even for eternity, is indicated in God's Word and witnessed to by the Holy Spirit to the individual, but we do not hold this security to be unconditional. As repentance and faith are the human condition of acceptance of God's free offer of salvation, so obedience and faith are necessary to continuance in that salvation (Hebrews 5:9, 1 John 2:4).

2. **Healing-** We believe that God provides divine healing in response to believing prayer, in ways which must be considered miraculous. There are also times when God does not heal. Though we do not understand this, the apparent lack of healing does not necessarily result from individual sin or lack of faith (John 9:2-3). Despite this mystery we are deeply confident of the love and power of God and urge Friends to continue to pray for the healing of the sick. We also caution against teachings which are divisive and do not build the kingdom of God in love. We do not accept the view that a person is guaranteed to be divinely healed in this life as a part of the atonement.

3. **Gifts-** The Holy Spirit is the indwelling agent of leadership for each Christian and will always lead in harmony with the Holy Scriptures. Growth and maturity come as the Spirit is allowed to lead in the individual life, producing love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Gifts, or abilities, are also given by the Spirit to be used to encourage and strengthen each other (Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4). While each gift is Spirit-given, Friends emphasize seeking the Giver of those gifts. Those who claim any of the gifts should avoid the snare of assuming exalted spiritual power or authority. Such "holier than thou" attitudes are not in keeping with the true fruit of the Spirit.

As believers receive gifts, love will provide the motivation for the best use of each one; however, no one gift is given to all believers (1 Corinthians 12:11, 29-30). The evidence of the presence of the Holy

Spirit in a believer's life is the fruit resulting from His control (Galatians 5:22-23).

4. **Glossolalia (Speaking in Tongues)**- There are differences (among our members as among other Christians) of interpretation of the Scriptures which speak of glossolalia as to whether the term refers to actual languages or to ecstatic utterances and whether this is a valid gift for our time. Nevertheless, we agree on the following points:

- a. The will of God as revealed in the Scriptures is our conformity to His holy character as manifested in a holy life. All spiritual experiences, gifts, and fruit of the Spirit are a means to that end (Romans 8:29).
- b. Speaking in other tongues does not constitute the essential sign of the baptism with the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-31). The evidence of the fullness of the Holy Spirit is the fruit of the Spirit, and especially divine love, emanating from a truly transformed life.
- c. "Speaking in tongues" should not be made an occasion of division or strife among us (Galatians 5:22).
- d. To maintain unity despite our differences, we must practice mutual submission. To avoid becoming divisive, we should voluntarily refrain from certain freedoms, the practice of which may become a stumbling block to those for whom Christ died (1 Corinthians 8). We acknowledge that some use the gift of tongues in private devotion, however, it is our decision that we voluntarily refrain from the use of tongues in public services. If individuals, or churches are led by the Holy Spirit to use tongues in public services, we point to the explicit guidelines set forth in 1 Corinthians 14:26-28.

5. **Cults and Related Practices**- Friends believe that all access to God is through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, and that therefore the use of mediums, clairvoyants, fortune tellers, astrologers, and any other alleged means of extraordinary knowledge or help is contrary to the will of God.

We oppose all dabbling in spiritism, spirit possession and worship, and Satanism, as well as the denial of the reality of Satan. Rather, we believe in the existence of the Evil One, "that old serpent which is the Devil, and Satan," (Revelation 20:2) who tempted our first parents to sin, and through their disobedience brought about the fall of our race, with all its attendant degeneracy, unhappiness, and misery. We believe that Satan has revealed this evil character and purpose in his mighty opposition to Christ in the temptations in the wilderness and to His reign in all ages. But we also believe that his power is limited, and that in God's own time he will be chained and finally cast into the lake of fire (Genesis 3; Matthew 4:1; Job 1:6; Revelation 20:10).