

Worship Sharing 11/16/21

Testimony

“Our testimonies arise from our way of worship. Our way of worship evokes from deep within us at once an affirmation and a celebration, an affirmation of the reality of that Light which illumines the spiritual longing of humanity, and a celebration of the continual resurrection within us of the springs of hope and love; a sense that each of us is, if we will, a channel for a power that is both within us and beyond us.”

Lorna M Marsden, 1986

For a Quaker, religion is not an external activity, concerning a special ‘holy’ part of the self. It is an openness to the world in the here and now with the whole of the self. If this is not simply a pious commonplace, it must take into account the whole of our humanity: our attitudes to other human beings in our most intimate as well as social and political relationships. It must also take account of our life in the world around us, the way we live, the way we treat animals and the environment. In short, to put it in traditional language, there is no part of ourselves and of our relationships where God is not present.

Harvey Gillman, 1988

Testimonies are not imposed on members of the Society of Friends, but they are re-affirmed corporately and re-expressed sufficiently often to be both a challenge and a way of living for most Friends. They are part of our distinctive witness. They do not make it any easier to live a life of faithfulness to God’s leadings, for they give rise to many dilemmas and compromises as we live in a society which is often based on other presuppositions. We cannot help being immersed in it even whilst trying to change its norms. Finding ways of expressing the testimonies that are relevant to present times is a continuing challenge. Such expressions will not necessarily seem practical, tactful, sensible, expedient or in line with some current vogue of thinking, for they are based on what seems right in an absolute sense of inner conviction.

Chris Lawson, 1987

Queries

How do these quotes speak to your condition?

How does Friends Testimony work as “a celebration of the continual resurrection within us of the springs of hope and love” in your experience.

What dilemmas and compromises do you experience living our testimonies today?