

Wednesday, January 13

George Fox and Margaret Fell: Tremble at the Word of the Lord

by Pr. Tim Madsen, for Saint Laika's



Today Saint Laika's remembers George Fox and Margaret Fell, innovative thinkers and devoted servants of Christ, who are known best as the founders of the Society of Friends, sometimes known as the Quakers. The seventeenth century was a period of great upheaval in England. The sixteenth century had bequeathed to the future an established church and the "Book of Common Prayer," but there was pushback and dissent among many citizens against the Church, the bishops and the sacraments. In large measure, the entire Reformation was a reaction against the medieval Catholic Church and the turmoil of the seventeenth century was also more of the same. The Puritans felt a need to purify the Church of England from Catholic trappings. The Baptists rejected the Medieval Church's acceptance of infant baptism. Others rejected the notion of bishops with their power to ordain. Tensions were heightened by the Stuart Kings vacillations between reform and the return to Roman Catholicism.

George Fox was a truly original thinker. He experienced great disappointment in his own spiritual journey from the outward expressions of Christianity in England. He wrote of it this way: "I saw there was none among them all that could speak to my condition. And when all

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O God,
I find myself at the beginning of another day.
I do not know what it will bring.
Please help me to be ready
For whatever it may be.

If I am to stand up, help me to stand bravely.
If I am to sit still, help me to sit quietly.
If I am to lie low, help me to do it patiently.
If I am to do nothing, let me do it gallantly.

I pray just for today,
For these twenty-four hours,
For the ability to cooperate with others
According to the way Jesus taught us to live.

"Your kingdom come, your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven."
May these words that he taught us
Become more than words.

Please free my thinking and feelings
And the thinking and feelings of others,
From all forms of self-will,
Self-centeredness, dishonesty,
And deception.
Along with my brothers and sisters,
I need this freedom to make my choices today
According to your desires.

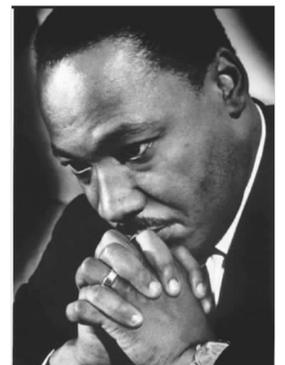
Send your Spirit to inspire me
In time of doubt and indecision so that,
Together, we can walk along your path.

John Veltri

God, we thank you for the inspiration of Jesus. Grant that we will love you with all our hearts, souls, and minds, and love our neighbors as we love ourselves, even our enemy neighbors. And we ask you, God, in these days of emotional tension, when the problems of the world are gigantic in extent and chaotic in detail, to be with us in our going out and our coming in, in our rising up and in our lying down, in our moments of joy and in our moments of sorrow, until the day when there shall be no sunset and no dawn.

Amen.

Martin Luther King, Jr.



We are holding Gathered Worship at our usual time of 10:30 AM: We will continue to livestream our service. If you would like Home Communion, please email or call the church. Our ZOOM Worship login, "Worship and Meetings", can be found at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85167890638?pwd=eHptd21KN01Vc0QyS2pSNVU4U3hUQT09>

ID # 851 6789 0638 Passcode: 860145

Wednesday Exegesis continues to offer in-person and Zoom, using Pr. Dan's account:

ID# 460 550 4086 Passcode: 600776

Both of these accounts can be found at <https://zoom.us/>. You will need to download the app to your computer, phone or device. Then, to join our Zoom meeting simply go to: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/4605504086> If you are using dial-up, find your local number at: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/4605504086>. To watch the recording of Sunday's service go to Trinity's YouTube Channel [here](#).



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my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could tell what to do, then, oh, then, I heard a voice which said, "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to your condition."

Relying on this "inner voice" as he would call it, he completely recast Christianity as an inward movement of the Spirit. All externals were gone: clergy, sacraments, outward rites. Preaching from his own inner convictions he gathered together groups of people who found meaning in what he said. "The Society of Friends," he called them.

For following his inner voice, he suffered several stints in jail. At Derby in 1650, he was imprisoned for blasphemy; a judge mocked Fox's exhortation to "tremble at the word of the Lord", calling him and his followers "Quakers". That name stuck to the movement. It's their unofficial name to this day. After a time of both struggle and growth, the movement found success in North America.

Margaret Fell first encountered George Fox in 1652. She became convinced of the rightness of his theology and opened her home and resources to the movement. Her most famous writing was "Women Speaking Justified" a rationale for women having the same right to preach and teach as men. Her husband died in 1658 and she married George Fox several years later.

The Glorious Revolution of 1688 brought an end to the Stuart Monarchy and William of Orange was invited over to be king. The "Act of Toleration," passed in 1689, ended the persecution of religious minorities. Tired out by the struggle and in failing health, George Fox died on the thirteenth of January, 1691. Margaret carried on the work until her death in 1702

Scripture. In "Psalm Thirty-Six," verses seven to nine, we read:

"How precious is your steadfast love, O God! All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house and you give them drink from the river of your delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light."

Prayer. Almighty God, your Holy Spirit gives various gifts to each one of us. We praise you for the gifts of grace imparted to your servant George Fox and we pray that by his teaching we may be led to a greater appreciation of the inner voice that speaks from your heart to ours; through Jesus Christ, our saviour and lord. Amen.

Follow Pr. Tim on St. Laika's at <https://www.facebook.com/stlaikas> or at saintlaika.com.

In times, "when the problems of the world are gigantic in extent and chaotic in detail," to quote Martin Luther King, Jr. from page 1, I find myself drawn to history, where the stories are, more often than not, gigantic and chaotic. But if I read enough of them, and follow them through to their eventual conclusion, I see with the psalmist above, how precious is God's steadfast love. With John Veltri I pray for the grace to stay in this day only, doing whatever the Spirit bids me do. These stories, these 'saints', these prayers I refer back to, serve to bring me into God's presence, trusting that, all appearances to the contrary, all is well.

Suellen