

Weekly Notes
December 13, 2013

Simplicity

Among the many benefits of being a Friends School is the guidance we have for how we carry ourselves. The Quaker Testimonies are the basic principles of good living which Quakers and Quaker institutions use to order their lives and conduct. The testimony of simplicity seems to have special relevance for the month of December.

The Earlham School of Religion describes the testimony in this way:

The Testimony of Simplicity carries the Quaker ethic a step further by applying it to the details of daily life. Just as the external trappings of ritual and doctrine were felt to interfere with the inner spiritual communion essential to true religious worship; so, too, the presence of physical luxury—to say nothing of the consumption of alcohol, tobacco or excessive eating—was also felt to impede the development of a person’s inner spiritual growth. Living a life of material simplicity also allowed Friends greater latitude for charitable giving, which had the salutary effect of bringing them still closer to the perfection of God. In contemporary times, the Testimony of Simplicity has gained renewed credence with the ascendance of the ecology movement, which decries the heavy burden excessive human consumption places on the environment.

For those of us who are finding the demands of the holiday season overwhelming, the testimony of simplicity gives welcome perspective and respite. Often in the rush to shop, buy and give, we strain the very relationships we wish to reinforce, and undermine the tranquility we crave. We hope that our school’s emphasis on simplicity will help all of us see and cherish the true gifts of the world, which include the hope and joy that our children bring us.

We hope that you will partake of the fellowship that our school offers and join us in the singing we will have next Thursday at 9.

The faculty will have a rare chance to enjoy fellowship as we dine together next Friday. Please remember that there will be no after-school care next Friday. Thank you for allowing all of us to enjoy one another’s company as we begin our winter break.