

Adult First Day Program Notes – 3 April 2022

This week Tampa Friends read the Friends Journal article *The Peace Testimony and Ukraine* by Bryan Garman for our Adult First Day Program.

Many Friends expressed being extremely distressed by the situation in Ukraine and felt the need to do something to stop the Ukrainians' suffering. We understand, as George Fox stated, that "war is a test of strength, not a search for truth and justice" and that war "proceeded from the 'lusts of men.'" Our historic peace testimony calls Friends to avoid war and violence, yet there have been Quakers who have participated in past wars as they were led by their discernment.

For some Friends, though, adherence to the peace testimony is absolute, in line with early Friends assertion: "Our principle is, and our Practice have always been, to seek peace and ensue it, seeking the good and welfare and doing that which tends to the peace of all." Friends spoke of the work of Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) with its emphasis on making peacebuilding a priority by crafting congressional recommendations for a more ethical and effective U.S. foreign policy as being the way to enhance peace and minimize the occurrence of wars. Out of the discussion, a Friend commented on the need for Quakers to resist paying taxes for war.

Later, another Friend then shared information on the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund, a topic that Friends were interested in spending time in discernment on at a Committee of the Whole meeting or perhaps a future AFDP. Adhering to our peace testimony is difficult, but as Garman ends his article, "...it may well offer us the best chance we know to seek peace, to pause so that we can see the divine even in our enemies, and to weigh competing truths."