



MEMORANDUM

TO: All Readers and Especially to Our Fellow Methodists & Reformed Puritans

DATE: December 15, 2024

RE: MEMORANDUM FOR CLARIFICATION- DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION
FOR THE METHODIST LAW CENTRE
“Independent Methodism and the Gurneyite Quakers”

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

With the splintering of the United Methodist Church and the emergence of new Methodist denominations, we have become most attracted to the Quakers or The Religious Society of Friends—not because any intellectual curiosity but ostensibly through a spiritual audit of our deepest-held Christian beliefs and experiences. Notably, one does need to be a member of the “Quakers” to already be one in practice and belief, and we find this to be especially true of we “orthodox Methodists.” Henceforth, our “Methodism” is co-terminous with that of the Religious Society of Friends (i.e., the Quakers), particularly that of the Gurneyite-Quakers and the Independent Methodists with whom the Gurneyties found synergy and communion. Lastly, to the by fellow Christians of the African Methodist churches, it is our firm belief that the “Free African Society” commenced as an extension of, inter alia, the Quaker meetings of 18th-century Philadelphia. Hence, the “Methodism” of the Methodist Law Centre is that of the Quaker religion.

Faithfully Yours,

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EXHIBIT A



“Spiritual Bedfellows? The Quaker-Methodist Connection”²

This article was first published in The Friend on 16 February 2018.

By Unnamed Blogger

“Five years ago, I was involved in a Quaker-Methodist dialogue event at Woodbrooke, in which a third of the participants identified as Quaker, a third as Methodist, and a third had an active involvement in both communities. Over the past two hundred and fifty years, in Britain and globally, Quakers and Methodists have interacted, intermingled, and inter-influenced one another. This relationship has not always been a comfortable one, but it has often been significant. Why is this?”

“These two groups emerged within early modern Britain: the Quakers, during the mid-seventeenth century; and the Methodists, during the mid-eighteenth century. Both were charismatic Christian renewal movements that achieved rapid growth due to the vigorous public preaching campaigns of itinerant ministers. Both were condemned for

² https://aquakerstew.blogspot.com/2018/03/spiritual-bedfellows-quaker-methodist_2.html

religious enthusiasm, were regarded as a threat to social order, and were accused of being Catholics in disguise. Each adopted a name that was originally used as a term of abuse by their opponents.

“Because Methodism began as a renewal movement within the Church of England, it differed from traditional Quaker faith and practice in a number of significant ways. These included the presence of an ordained clergy, a commitment to the outward sacraments, expressive and emotional programmed worship, Scripture as the primary religious authority, and the importance of the ecumenical creeds. However, if we look at the words of John Wesley (1703-1791), it is possible to observe convictions that fit well with a range of historic Quaker concerns and emphases. I have identified seven examples that reflect the close connection between Quakers and Methodists, each illustrated by a short passage from Wesley’s writings.

God’s love is unconfined, so salvation is available to all:

“How freely does God love the world! While we were yet sinners, "Christ died for the ungodly." While we were "dead in our sin," God "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." And how freely with him does he "give us all things!" Verily, free grace is all in all! The grace or love of God, whence cometh our salvation, is free in all, and free for all.” Sermon 128, Free Grace, 1740

Real transformation is possible in this life, so our lives can reflect God’s love:

“By salvation I mean not barely according to the vulgar notion, deliverance from hell, or going to heaven, but a present deliverance from sin, a restoration of the soul to its primitive health, its original purity, a recovery of the divine nature, the renewal of our souls after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness, in justice mercy and truth.” A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, 1745

War is evil and an example of human sin:

“And surely all our declamations on the strength of human reason, and the eminence of our virtues, are no more than the cant and jargon of pride and ignorance, so long as there is such a thing as war in the world. Men in general can never be allowed to be reasonable creatures, till they know not war any more. So long as this monster stalks uncontrolled, where is reason, virtue, humanity? They are utterly excluded; they have no place; they are a name, and nothing more.” The Doctrine of Original Sin, 1757

Slavery is evil and an example of human sin:

“Give liberty to whom liberty is due, that is, to every child of man, to every partaker of human nature. Let none serve you but his own act and deed, by his own voluntary action. Away with all whips, all chains, all compulsion. Be gentle toward all men; and see that you invariably do with everyone as you would he should do unto you.”

Thoughts Upon Slavery, 1773

Social justice and acts of mercy are the essential fruits of faith:

“Do you not know that God entrusted you with that money (all above what buys necessities for your families) to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to help the stranger, the widow, the fatherless; and, indeed, as far as it will go, to relieve the wants of all mankind? How can you, how dare you, defraud the Lord, by applying it to any other purpose?” Sermon 126, The Danger of Increasing Riches, 1772

There should be toleration in matters of belief and conscience:

“Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion? Without all doubt, we may. Herein all the children of God may unite, notwithstanding these smaller differences.” Sermon 39, The Catholic Spirit, 1755

Creation is good; God loves all creatures, therefore, so should we:

"If the creator and Father of every living thing is rich in mercy towards all; if he does not overlook or despise any of the works of his own Hands, if he desires even the meanest of them to be happy according to their degree – how comes it to pass that such a complication of evils oppresses, yea, overwhelms them?" Sermon 60, The Great Deliverance, 1782

“During the eighteenth century, relations between Quakers and Methodists were cool in principle, but rather warmer in practice. John Wesley, being the good Anglican churchman, was highly critical of the sectarian dimensions of the Quaker faith, especially its form of worship, its rejection of the sacraments, its quietism, and its willing acceptance of women as ministers. These views may also reflect his family’s Puritan lineage.

“However, Wesley maintained good relations with individual Quakers, some of whom provided financial support for his philanthropic works. He also drew on Robert Barclay’s Apology, when developing his arguments against the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, and on the writings of Anthony Benezet, in his anti-slavery works.

“The synergies between the two traditions went beyond mutual cooperation. A group calling themselves the ‘**Quaker Methodists**’ developed in Cheshire in the early nineteenth century. They combined Quaker practices such as unprogrammed waiting worship, plain speech and dress, non-sacramentalism and the rejection of a paid ministry, with Methodist class and band meetings, a circuit system and a preaching plan. Over time, however, the Quaker influence weakened, and the group merged into the **Independent Methodist movement**.

“During the eighteenth century, within North America in particular, the impact of the Wesleyan revival on Friends was to prove more significant and divisive. At this time, many Quakers moved towards an Evangelical Protestant position.

“It is said that, for those Friends who felt that their Quaker communities had lost spiritual vitality, the expressive and emotional aspects of Methodist worship, along with its strong commitment to social reform, seemed inherently attractive. In many ways, the Hicksite-Orthodox schism, and the Gurneyite-Wilburite separation which fractured the Quaker family in America, were fuelled by disagreements over the compatibility of Protestant Evangelicalism with the Quaker way. **Gurneyite Friends, who have incorporated a number of Wesleyan emphases into their faith and practice, inherited a strong missional imperative from their Methodist cousins.** Today, as a result, it is this expression of Quakerism that has grown and spread most widely, accounting for a significant majority of Friends in the world.

“In view of these long-standing connections and interrelationships, metaphorically speaking, I would suggest that George Fox and John Wesley have been close spiritual bedfellows for over two hundred and fifty years. It will be interesting to see how this relationship develops in the future.”

EXHIBIT B



Rev. Richard Allen (A.M.E.) and Rev. Absalom Jones (Episcopal)

TRANSCRIPT

PREAMBLE OF THE FREE AFRICAN SOCIETY

"Philadelphia"

"(12th, 4th mo., 1778)* -- Whereas, Absalom Jones and Richard Allen, two men of the African race, who, for their religious life and conversation have obtained a good report among men, these persons, from a love to the people of their complexion whom they beheld with sorrow, because of their irreligious and uncivilized state, often communed together upon this painful and important subject in order to form some kind of religious society, but there being too few to be found under the like concern, and those who were, differed in their religious sentiments; with these circumstances they labored for some time, till it was proposed, after a serious communication of sentiments, that a society should be formed, without regard to religious tenets, provided, the persons lived an orderly and sober life, in order to support one another in sickness, and for the benefit of their widows and fatherless children."

ARTICLES.

"[17th, 5th mo., 1787] -- We, the free Africans and their descendants, of the City of Philadelphia, in the State of Pennsylvania, or elsewhere, do unanimously agree, for the benefit of each other, to advance one shilling in silver Pennsylvania currency a month; and after one year's subscription from the date hereof, then to hand forth to the needy of this Society, if any

should require, the sum of three shillings and nine pence per week of the said money: provided, this necessity is not brought on them by their own imprudence.

And it is further agreed, that no drunkard nor disorderly person be admitted as a member, and if any should prove disorderly after having been received, the said disorderly person shall be disjointed from us if there is not nit amendment, by being informed by two of the members, without having any of his subscription money returned.

And if any should neglect paying his monthly subscription for three months, and after having been informed of the same by two of the members, and no sufficient reason appearing for such neglect, if he do not pay the whole the next ensuing meeting, he shall be disjointed from us, by being informed by two of the members its an offender, without hiving any of his subscription money returned.

Also, if any person neglect meeting every month, for every omission he shall pay three pence, except in case or sickness or any other complaint that should require the assistance of the Society, then, and in such a case, he shall be exempt from the fines and subscription during the said sickness.

Also, we apprehend it to be just and reasonable, that the surviving widow of a deceased member should enjoy the benefit of this Society so long as she remains his widow, complying with the, rules thereof, excepting the subscriptions.

And we apprehend it to be necessary, that the children of our deceased members be under the care of the Society, so far as to pay for the education of their children, if they cannot attend the free school; also to put them out apprentices to suitable trades or places, if required.

Also, that no member shall convene the Society together; but, it shall be the sole business of the committee, and that only on special occasions, and to dispose of the money in hand to the best advantage, for the use of the Society, after they are granted the liberty at a monthly meeting, and to transact all other business whatsoever, except that of Clerk and Treasurer.

And we unanimously agree to choose Joseph Clarke to be our Clerk and Treasurer; and whenever another should succeed him, it is always understood, that one of the people called Quakers, belonging to one of tile three monthly meetings in Philadelphia, is to be chosen to act as Clerk and 'Treasurer of this useful Institution.

The following persons met, viz., Absalom Jones, Richard Allen, Samuel Baston, Joseph Johnson, Cato Freeman, Caesar Cranchell, and James Potter, also William White, whose early assistance and useful remarks we found truly profitable. This evening the articles were read, and after some beneficial remarks were made, they were agreed unto."

***NOTE: The correct date is 1787.**

