

# Epistle 373

by George Fox

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*George Fox encourages Friends to have regular Yearly Meetings to promote spiritual growth, resolve disputes, and spread the truth.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 51:6, Matthew 5:37, John 4:24, 1 Corinthians 10:31, 1 Corinthians 15:47, Ephesians 4:12, Philippians 3:20, James 3:17

**Topics:** "Unity in Christ", "Commitment to Truth"

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## Description

George Fox emphasizes the importance of holding a Yearly Meeting for Friends to gather in the spirit of the Lord, fostering unity, peace, and the growth of truth among them. He encourages the community to resolve differences and strengthen their bonds through shared worship and fellowship, highlighting the blessings that come from such gatherings. Fox also urges the Friends to uphold their commitment to truth by addressing the issue of swearing and oaths, advocating for a return to their original principles. He expresses his desire for the community to live in godliness and to glorify God in all their actions, while also encouraging them to be examples of true Christianity. Ultimately, Fox calls for a collective effort to grow in love and truth, ensuring that their conversations and lives reflect their faith.

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## Transcript

Dear friends, with my love in the Lord to you all: it hath been often in my mind, from a sense of the spirit of the Lord; which thing I shall lay before you, and commend it to the witness of God in all your consciences.

The thing is this: that if you had (once in a year) a Yearly Meeting, as they have in Holland, Germany, and Friesland, and at Rhode Island, and in England, and elsewhere, which is, and hath been, of great service; for Friends to see one another, and know how the affairs of truth prosper [Dan 8:12?], and how Friends do grow in the truth of God, to the comfort and joy of one another in it; in which the Lord Jesus Christ is exalted. And if there should be any difference among Friends, it may be ended at the Yearly Meeting, by some Friends out of the meeting, which could not be ended at other meetings. So that all things (by the truth and power of God) may be kept in peace and love, all dwelling in the wisdom of God, that is from above, which is pure, and peaceable, and gentle, and easy to be entreated [Jas 3:17]. And so for you once in a year to meet together in the Lord's power, and to wait upon him in his spirit and truth [John 4:24] one day, and then another day you may have a Yearly men and women's meeting in the Lord's power; which in time you may find and feel a great service in the Lord's spirit and power; in which you may feel his presence and blessing flow among you. And as for place and time, I shall leave it to your best

convenience; and the Lord direct you, that you may do all things, whatever you do, to his glory [1 Cor 10:31]. For you know that in other countries, or provinces, they have either Half-Year Meetings or Yearly Meetings, except it be in Jamaica, which several times hath been in my mind for you to have one there; for where they are settled, they see a great service in them; and the Lord hath owned them, and honoured them with his presence, and that keeps all in a sense of a care of his glory, and a care of one another, that they may be kept and preserved in God's eternal truth, in meekness, in gentleness, and in tenderness, and in love, that edifies the body of Christ [Eph 4:16/12], the second Adam, the Lord from heaven [1 Cor 15:47]. And so that all of you, in godliness, holiness, and righteousness, may spend your days to the glory of God; that your conversations may be in heaven [Phil 3:20], and not below in the earth, among the wicked; that the Lord God, and his son Christ Jesus, may be glorified in you all, who is over all, blessed for ever. Amen.

And, friends, it would be very well, if that you brought on your case of not swearing, and taking oaths, which hath been lost through that spirit which was unfaithful: now the same governor is come over again, in whose time (when he was there formerly) that act was obtained at the assembly, in which your yea and nay [Mat 5:37] was taken instead of an oath and swearing. Therefore, see if you can prevail with this governor and his assembly, to have the same act renewed again, and to clear yourselves from that spirit which was the cause that the act was repealed. So with my love in the Lord Jesus Christ to you all.

And my desires are, that you may all be preserved in God's power, to his glory; and that you may grow in the truth, and with the truth answer the truth in every one's inward parts [Psa 51:6]; so that ye may spread the truth abroad, and that with it your hearts may be united together. And walk in it, and in the love of it; for love edifies the body of Christ. And that ye may be good examples in the truth, and in righteousness and holiness, and show forth christianity in the possession of it, above the outside professors.

G. F.

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