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# Quakers oppose any torture

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Ever since the first reports surfaced of torture and abuse of prisoners in U.S. custody, Quakers have been deeply concerned about these violations of law and human rights. In response, the Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (to which York Friends Meeting belongs), approved the following minute:

"Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends abhors the abuse of prisoners of any classification, in any place. We call upon all governments and combatants both to declare their rejection of abuse and torture and to adhere strictly to the conventions for the humane treatment of all detainees. We are also deeply dismayed by reports that our own government in recent years has acted in ways that legitimize such practices and make of them an example to others. We are grateful for the prophetic voices that have called for an end to these practices, and we regret that there are not many more. We urge Friends everywhere to find ways to take up such a witness by public education and organized effort."

U.S. government officials, from the president on down, continue to give convoluted justifications for human rights violations, and to redefine torture, while denying using or condoning such practices. Meanwhile, evidence of such atrocities keeps coming to light, and recent polls indicate that many Americans find torture acceptable. Quakers have taken a clear stand against all such abuse. Many years ago, Quaker William Penn said, "A good end

## TODAY'S THOUGHT

How far that little candle throws its beams! So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

cannot sanctify <sup>evil</sup> means, nor must we ever do evil that good may come of it." Today Quakers still believe that to be true.

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