What canst thou say? This issue of QHE gathers uniquely Quaker voices to address some of the greatest challenges facing Higher Education today. Potentially disruptive innovation and financial crises are forcing most, if not all institutions, to reexamine our missions and the manner in which we carry them out. All the essays in this issue grew out of presentations at the June 2012 conference of the Friends Association for Higher Education. The authors respond to these challenges from a Quaker perspective, exploring what we might have to contribute to the discussion.

Donn Weinholtz (of The University of Hartford) opens this issue with an article that describes one of the ways in which educational institutions are attempting to respond to market pressures: institutional prioritization. Julie Meadows (of Presbyterian College) invites her readers to “one-up” her attempt to specify the value of a liberal arts education. She welcomes contact with suggestions and responses. Patricia E. Berg (from Malone University) criticizes the commonly-perceived divide between liberal arts education and business courses. She shares ways in which a values-based pedagogy can vitalize and energize a business curriculum. Diane Reynolds (from Earlham School of Religion) looks to the past for inspiration in the present, and tells us of two lives surprisingly parallel: Thomas Kelly and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Can their response to the pressures of 1930’s fascism be relevant to the pressures we face today? Mark Rembert (a Haverford College Alumnus) was invited to give a plenary speech at the 2012 FAHE conference. He has taken a leadership role in energizing and organizing his community in the wake of devastating economic changes. He spoke on the values and benefits of his Quaker education in preparing him to embrace this challenge. We close this issue of QHE with Mark’s written notes for his speech.

Submissions: QHE is published twice a year, in the spring and the fall. Articles submitted for possible publication should be sent as Word documents to: either weinholtz@hartford.edu or to dsmith4@guilford.edu. Since QHE is not wed to any particular referencing format, you may use the professional style of your choice. In case you want to send a hard copy, our addresses are: Donn Weinholtz, Department of Educational Leadership, University of Hartford, 223 Auerbach Hall, 200 Bloomfield Ave., West Hartford, CT 06117 and Donald Smith Guilford College, 5800 West Friendly Ave., Greensboro, NC 27410. If you would like to discuss an idea that you have for an article, our telephone numbers are: 860-768-4186 (DW) and 336-316-2162 (DS).
Mark your calendars now for June 20-23, 2013 at Malone University to consider Holistic Higher Education: To What End? The call for papers with queries is available now through this link; submissions will be accepted through January 15, 2013, and reviewed in the fall and winter.
Tuition driven colleges and universities throughout the United States are deeply distressed due to financial pressures stemming from their high costs, the Great Recession and competition from on-line programs. In their recent book, *The Innovative University* (Jossey Bass, 2011), Clayton Christensen and Henry Eyring conclude that most colleges and universities can no longer afford to maintain their organizational, curricular, extra-curricular and residence models based roughly on those originating at Harvard. In particular, they challenge the continued viability of common approaches to:

1) face-to face instruction;
2) rational/secular orientation;
3) comprehensive specialization, departmentalization and faculty self-governance;
4) long summer recess;
5) graduate schools atop colleges;
6) private fundraising;
7) competitive athletics;
8) general education and majors;
9) academic honors;
10) externally funded research;
11) up-or-out tenure, with faculty rank and salary distinctions; and
12) admissions selectivity.

Furthermore, Christensen and Eyring argue that simple pruning of programs is not going to be sufficient for surviving this storm.

Nevertheless, eliminating programs is posited as a necessary first step for most colleges and universities to move forward. In another recent book, *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services: Reallocating Resources to Achieve Strategic Balance* (Jossey Bass, 2010), Robert Dickeson lays out his strategy for proceeding through the difficult process of reviewing programs for purposes of budget cutting and/or reinvestment. In the remainder of this article, I briefly review *The Innovative University* as well as *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services*, summarizing key points and offering a some criticisms. I conclude with a brief, first-hand account of my own encounter with Dickeson’s prioritizing model.

**The Innovative University**

Christensen and Eyring explore the conditions described in *The Innovative University* through the lens of Christensen’s theory of disruptive innovation, the perspective he previously applied to examining how bottom-feeding competitors in the steel and auto industries overtook the giants in their fields by offering lower-cost options. Until the advent of online learning, Christensen and Eyring argue, residential, 4-year colleges and universities did not have the competition necessary to force them into convulsive change. (For example, although community colleges developed a starkly different and cheaper higher education model, they became feeder colleges for the 4-year schools, rather than replacements.)
The authors persuasively argue that, across industries, disruptive innovators initially offer inferior products. However, they do so in such a cost efficient manner that they are able to obtain a foothold, only to subsequently refine their products and eventually put the expensive, traditional suppliers on the defensive. (Think of Toyota and Honda vs. GM, as well as the University of Phoenix and others vs. all of traditional higher education.) Christensen and Eyring also argue that there are many aspects of traditional higher education far superior to online education. Thus, the great challenge facing the traditional institutions is to maintain what they do best, while harnessing online technology for their students’; and their own, best interests.

In a nutshell, Christensen and Eyring’s recommend altering traditional colleges and universities in the following manner: 1) transitioning from face-to-face instruction to a mix of face-to-face and online instruction; 2) replacing the dominant rational/secular orientation with an increased attention to values; 3) moving from comprehensive faculty specialization to an increased focus on interdepartmental cooperation; 4) initiating change via goal-specific innovation teams, rather than depending on departmentalization and traditional faculty governance; 5) eliminating the long summer recess in favor of year-round learning focused on specific learning outcomes; 6) replacing comprehensive graduate schools atop colleges and universities with smaller, streamlined schools made up only of strong programs; 7) refocusing private fundraising efforts to emphasize fundraising for mentoring students, especially undergraduates and those requiring needs-based aid; 8) de-emphasizing competitive athletics, while greatly expanding other student activities; 9) replacing general education distribution requirements and concentrated majors with cross-disciplinary, integrated general education, and customizable majors with certificates and associates degrees nested within bachelor’s degrees; 10) increasing emphasis on student competence with regards to learning outcomes as opposed to traditional, GPA-based, academic honors; 11) scaling up undergraduate involvement in research; 12) eliminating up-or-out tenure, substituting customized scholarship and employment contracts, while minimizing faculty rank and salary distinctions; 13) moving away from admissions selectivity towards expansion of capacity, especially through online learning. This is an extraordinarily heavy dose of change, likely to be daunting to most college and university top administrators. Yet, Christensen and Eyring argue that leaders refusing to take up the challenge leave their institutions exposed to great risk.

Even though The Innovative University is an easy and engaging read full of provocative insights and recommendations, I was troubled by the major case study upon which the case for change is built, the transformation of Ricks College into Brigham Young University – Idaho. While Christensen and Eyring salt their book with many brief snapshots of single-shot changes at colleges around the country, they dive deeply into the total Ricks-to-BYU metamorphosis. Although the case is intriguing, its generalizability is limited by its uniqueness. The change at Ricks College was launched via a directive
from Gordon B. Hinckley, at the time the powerful President of the The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons). Hinckley’s command was subsequently implemented with the weight and resources of the Mormon Church behind it. Few schools, if any, are capable of initiating change at this scale, without encountering potentially crippling blowback from those being displaced or reassigned. I am inclined to believe that college and university presidents attempting too much change too quickly will also place their institutions at risk.

A brief video of Christensen and Eyring explaining why they wrote The Innovative University is available through Amazon. You may want to view it to help you decide if you want to read the book.

Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services

“Many institutions have been operating in a financially unsustainable way for many years. Now that economic conditions are forcing institutions to reduce or restructure their program offerings, critical questions and challenges face campus leaders. Which programs are most important to the institution’s mission, overall financial health, and competitiveness? How do I ensure the institution is stronger as a result?

Join Bob Dickeson and Larry Goldstein for an in-depth examination of a proven method for prioritizing academic and administrative programs.”

(From Academic Impressions)

So goes the online pitch inviting college administrators to a recent workshop spelling out the key steps of Dickeson’s prioritizing model. Briefly, there are nine stages to this approach, as outlined in Dickeson’s book: 1) recognizing the need for reform; 2) identifying responsible leadership; 3) reaffirming institutional mission; 4) defining what constitutes a program; 5) selecting appropriate criteria; 6) measuring, analyzing, prioritizing; 7) anticipating process issues; 8) implementing program decisions; and 9) achieving strategic balance. An important aspect of the model involves recruiting trusted faculty to do much of the initial prioritizing work, although some administrators, preferring a more top-down approach, may choose to have the administration take on the bulk of the work.

Dickeson obtained a head start in this game by getting on the market early with a clear, implementable package (an earlier edition of his book appeared in 1999.) He touts a proven method and provides brief case studies from a range of colleges and universities to illustrate what can be accomplished. However, this information strikes me as minimal and carefully selected to support his arguments. Without the benefit of longitudinal evaluation studies documenting the strengths and shortcomings of Dickeson’s approach, it seems too early to judge its overall merit. Nevertheless, Dickeson has captured a wide audience of administrators anxious for solutions to the vexing problems confronting them. Indeed, he has attracted many hundreds of college and university officials to the workshops in which he markets his model. (You can read more about the issues and
recommendations Dickeson addresses at Academic Impressions.)

While the types of evaluation studies of the Dickeson model that I would like to see are lacking, some disturbing anecdotal evidence is emerging. The unfolding case at Columbia College of Chicago, where staunch opposition emerged to a top-down prioritization process, is probably the most prominent example. Inside Higher Education has discussed the Columbia College situation, and Academe Blog has further details.

Disclosure and Reflection

My own institution, the University of Hartford, has been moving through Dickeson’s process throughout the past year. Under the tutelage of an outside consultant (Larry Goldstein), two large committees, one focusing on academic programs the other addressing administrative programs, marched through the steps presented in the book. Sworn to secrecy regarding their deliberations, the committees worked throughout the spring semester culminating in lengthy June meetings – several hours a day, four days a week – and two reports which the University’s central administration kept under wraps until the end of September.

Hartford has published a description of the entire process, including an extensive President’s message. If you read the List of Recommendations found at this link, you will see that 29 programs on the academic side were recommended for Restructure and another 41 were recommended for Divestment. My own program, the Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership, is included on the Divestment list. For multiple reasons, it is likely that our program will survive. However, if it does, it appears that nearly $600,000 for reallocation may have to be found elsewhere. Thus, the burden will be moved to others. (Note: A recent Inside Higher Education article focused on prioritization at the University of Hartford. The article strikes me as an overly favorable portrayal, but my bias in this matter is obvious.)

Whenever institutions engage in processes such as these, there is a substantial human toll. Although at the University of Hartford we have been assured that tenure will not be broken and that the university will fulfill its obligation to teach-out all divested programs, such assurances provide little comfort to untenured faculty and staff. Also, students seriously question the quality of the instruction that they will receive if faculty leave, and they wonder whether or not the value of their degrees will be diminished by their program’s closure. In response to such concerns, as director of the program, I sent a letter to the program’s faculty, staff, students and alumni. Below is an excerpt.

I would like to stress that our program remains strong. We have outstanding students and graduates who provide important leadership throughout Connecticut and beyond. The research conducted within the program has resulted in many important contributions to the literature and to our various communities. Our faculty is bright, committed, and caring. We continue to attract ever-increasing numbers of diverse and talented students from around the region, the nation and the world.
Please be assured that, should the ongoing review process have any negative impact on the Educational Leadership program, the university is committed to providing ample time and instructional support, including dissertation advisement, for all current students to complete their degrees. Also, it is important for you to understand that the released report contains recommendations, not final decisions, and the process is still unfolding.

It was difficult for me to write this letter. It was also difficult for me to write the closing section of this article; not something I imagined when I initially agreed to write it. Recently, I read David Ross and Ed Dreby’s chapter, *Microeconomics: Markets and Choices*, which appears in *It’s the Economy, Friends: Understanding the Growth Dilemma* (Quaker Institute for the Future, 2012). They wrote:

“Change can hurt: Innovation, ingenuity, and the human capacity to learn are constantly expanding our understanding of what is possible. New enterprises are created while others shut down in a process Joseph Schumpeter named, “creative destruction.” …..many are hurt by innovations and the social change that results. Not only can change destroy communities and jobs, it can destroy the ecosystem. The balance between innovation and stability is hard to find.” (p. 34)

As their reference to the ecosystem shows, these Friends were addressing changes that go well beyond those we are encountering within our colleges and universities. Nevertheless, much of their message applies well to what some of us are beginning to experience on our campuses. We should ask ourselves how we, as Quakers, are called to act when confronted with such circumstances.

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Don Smith
Seduction and the Liberal Arts

Julie Meadows,
Presbyterian College

The starting place for this paper is deep concern about the terms in which education is being described in this country. Young people are told that they should get at least an associates degree in order to improve the economic competitiveness of their country.\(^1\) That education might matter for other reasons is largely absent from the national conversation on these issues. This is troubling, but more troubling still is the message it sends to our students about who they are and what role they have in the world. The rhetoric of academic sacrifice for the economic competitiveness of one’s country is only a stone’s throw away from the rhetoric of personal sacrifice for the military success of that same country. In either case, young people are called upon to sacrifice their own well-being for a “higher good” whose claim on their lives is never justified.\(^2\) In the absence of any alternative rhetoric, they may not even think to question these claims.

Arguments about jobs numbers drown out any examination of job quality. The professions are by no means immune to this creeping dehumanization of work. Doctors are assigned targets for how many patients to see and how little time to spend with each one; more and more professors are adjuncts who teach for a pittance and have no job security.

In its turn, higher education in the U.S. is under attack by the advocates of “accountability” – that is, countability. Colleges and universities are pressured to conform as much as possible to a business model under which the “outputs” are satisfactory employees.\(^3\) From this increasingly powerful perspective, only measurable things are valued; only quantifiable things are real.

Faced with this context, liberal arts education needs eloquent champions indeed. But defenses of the liberal arts run aground in several places. Problems arise whether we argue for its practicality, defend its importance to Democratic society, or appeal to the model of “whole person” education. I will explain why I think each is problematic, then explore a way forward that begins with careful scrutiny of the term “liberal.” My experiences in the classroom have forced me to choose between competing definitions of “liberal” education, and this has changed...

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\(^3\) See, for example, Robert C. Dickeson, Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services (San Francisco: Josey-Bass Publications, 2010).
my understanding of my own role, and of the larger role of the liberal arts.

To adequately defend the liberal arts, we have to be able to address the charges of snobbery and exclusivism – charges that a liberal arts education is all very well for affluent young men and women whose future is already safely assured, but that no such luxury is practical for others. The current economic realities bring into question whether such an education is valuable even for the elite.

We have to admit, first, that these charges are partly fair – higher education is exclusive; it is, in our society, increasingly a luxury item. It's also fair to ask questions of value, and of quality, when it comes to education. What are students learning? Are they learning enough? What's not fair is dictating ahead of time a very narrow range of possible answers, or even a single possible answer: success in consumer capitalist terms.

If we capitulate to the demand for “practicality” by citing job placement statistics and lifetime earnings figures, we present liberal arts colleges as a gateway to social status and economic well-being, a somewhat shaky claim and one that offers no hint of why such a system should be preserved.\(^4\)

In our justification of the liberal arts, would it be better to see our students as future citizens, hopefully a broader view than seeing them only as potential employees? Certainly there is abundant evidence that the weakness of American public education is problematic for our attempts to maintain a working democracy. In this case, everyone should receive something like a liberal arts education, in or maybe just after high school. This is not at all a bad idea (and not at all a new one, either), but it still leaves open the question of the purpose and value of selective liberal arts colleges.\(^5\)

Perhaps we resist both categorizations, and say that we aim to address our students not just as prospective employees or future citizens, but also as “whole people.” We point to the life-changing, liberating nature of a liberal arts education. We may believe strongly in this; it may have been true for us. Certainly it was true for me. But this way of talking about what we do is still problematic. It suggests that the lives of those who have been educated at liberal arts colleges are more worthwhile than direct talk about class: it’s a false hope to think that we will eliminate inequality through better schools.

Furthermore, we open ourselves up to being evaluated on the same grounds. See Dan Berret, “All About the Money: What if lawmakers and students used starting salaries to evaluate colleges and their programs?” The Chronicle of Higher Education, September 18, 2012.

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\(^4\) There is a debate now about whether it will still hold in the future, but the old advice is that college graduates earn more than non-college graduates, so it’s in students’ economic interest to get a college degree, even if they need to take out a loan. What may be good advice for individuals, though, won’t work for the whole country: if everyone has a college degree, it doesn’t give anyone a competitive advantage. John Marsh makes this case in Class Dismissed: Why We Cannot Teach or Learn Our Way Out of Inequality (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2011). Marsh is explicit that the rhetoric about improving schools is a way of avoiding more

the lives of those who have not. Do we believe this to be so? Are the lives of those who have been educated at liberal arts colleges more worthwhile than the lives of those who have not?

Without ever clearly articulating what exactly the value of a liberal arts education is, and without meaning for it to happen, we have landed ourselves back in the snobby and exclusivist camp. You’d understand if you had one, we sometimes seem to be saying. Ouch. We have to do better.

Fortunately students press us to explain the value of everything we do, over and over again. When I began teaching, I would describe the liberal arts in more or less classical terms: a liberal arts education trained one to read carefully, write clearly, and care about the exploration of questions of meaning and value, an exploration that was best pursued in community. This ran me into a problem, however. Unlike the community where I was deeply and persuasively indoctrinated into the deep mysteries and rituals of the liberal arts – I mean, “went to college” – the one where I found myself teaching lacked the communal ethos that had supported these enterprises. In their absence, it became obvious how extensively values and community undergirded the teaching and learning of the skills I was calling “the liberal arts.”

I increasingly came to see my teaching in terms of a set of values, not just a set of skills, and I began to articulate these values to my students. To read a text well, we have to be willing to listen carefully before imposing our own ideas or making our own judgments – that is, we need humility. To write clearly, we have to think in terms of the ethical responsibilities we bear to those who will read our words – that is, we need to practice a kind of hospitality. To explore ideas in community, we need to be willing to change our minds – but also willing to stand by our convictions. In either case, we will need courage.

The confusion of values and aims in my new academic setting opened up a space for me to clarify my own goals. How should justice, my central concern as teacher and scholar, be incorporated into my teaching? To answer that question, I had to work through some confusion about the multiple meanings of the term “liberal.”

In one sense, the “liberal” in liberal arts carries the sense of liberation, of freedom from prejudices and the ability to see the world as it really is, avoiding the many forces (advertisers, politicians) that would deceive and mislead us. I believe that a liberal arts education at its best can and does do this; this is what my own liberal arts education wrought. I was eager for my students to experience this kind of liberation, but hesitant to press any specific point of view upon them. Even as I explored the potential of contemplative pedagogies, I worried about the extent to which, merely by assigning personal reflection as a task, I was already imposing values on my students, whose freedom from such impositions was somehow sacred to my role as educator. This hesitation

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6 My undergraduate degree is from St. John’s College, in Annapolis, MD. To be fair to my current employer, I should note that few institutions have the clarity of purpose of that one.

7 This question arose during a discussion in the new Contemplative Studies Group at the 2012
stems from the other meaning of “liberal”: implying a kind of forward-thinking political stance that does its best to remain neutral as regards to questions of value. While reasoned argument is respectable, passionate defenses are suspect, as somehow impinging on a person’s freedom of choice. To lure, entice, or even seduce someone is intellectually and morally suspect.

The world does not allow us to remain neutral for long. A conference on Environmental Ethics exposed me to the fear and grief that anyone paying attention to the state of the natural world discovers. I noticed that the business professors who took BB&T Foundation funding for a course on the Moral Foundations of Capitalism that included reading *Atlas Shrugged*, in full, were not similarly concerned about preserving the freedom of their students to think for themselves. Rather than advocating passionately for justice, I had stayed on ground that now seemed to me disappointingly neutral. Lastly, the language of business started to assume a dominant role at my college. It was presented as some kind of exciting new magical key, a tool that could solve our problems without requiring that we mire ourselves in thorny discussions of value. This was not in itself surprising. What was surprising was how few people questioned the values implicit in these “measurements,” measurements that, to me, seemed directly opposed to everything that we claimed to stand for.

I’d like to say that my teaching became dangerously radical. That’s not the case. But it did become increasingly erotic. If you’ve been persuaded by the division of kinds of love into eros, philia, and agape, I’ll have to ask you to suspend that set of categories for just a few minutes. By the erotics of teaching I mean the energy of human beings who are physically present to one another, and whose work is to share with one another things that they love – to lure, entice, and maybe even sometimes seduce.

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8 “Human Flourishing and Restoration in the Age of Global Warming” at Clemson University in September of 2008. It was here that the grim outlook of our natural world hit home, and here that I was introduced to thoughtful philosophical responses. I met Roger Gottlieb, whose teaching and writing have been an inspiration.

9 If, as Wayne Booth so beautifully argues in *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989), the books we read affect us not just after we read them, but while we read them, *Atlas Shrugged* can only be seen, using Booth’s metaphor of books as friends, as a very bad friend: the kind that intends us harm.

10 For the point of view I disagree with here, see Stanley Fish, *Save the World on Your Own Time* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

11 For example, the measurements we used pitted academic departments against one another, by counting numbers of majors as a measurement of “success.” But the liberal arts aim to soften, not solidify, the distinctions between disciplines. See Robert C. Dickeson, *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services*, (San Francisco: Josey-Bass Publications, 2010). My purpose here is not to blame my colleagues, but to describe a problem that I believe to be widespread.

12 This view of *eros* relies heavily on the work of Cynthia Willett in *The Soul of Justice: Social Bonds and Racial Hubris* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 2001). I am grateful to my friend Duane Davis, Professor of Philosophy at UNC Asheville, for pointing out that Plato’s
I found that this new way of approaching my job involved two things. The first, as happens in Plato’s *Republic*, that most liberal and illiberal of texts, was an awful lot of promise-making. That is, teaching the liberal arts requires some way to persuade students that there are some worthwhile things, maybe even the *most* worthwhile things, that must be actively pursued before one can experience them. This is directly at odds with the consumer model of the self, in which we face an array of options among which we “freely” choose. The general education program at my college works something like this – its purpose being to expose students to a range of academic disciplines so that they can then choose the one they like best (or find easiest, or get the best grades in) as they major. How, in such a situation, do we tell our students that the hardest classes, or the ones they have the least facility for, might prove the most rewarding? I found myself becoming very explicit: we will practice conversation about important human questions in this course, because conversation about important human questions is one of the great pleasures of being human. I believe in this and I want you to get a taste of it, before the semester is over. While that taste often comes in week thirteen, it’s something to hear my students say, ah, if only we could start over, now that we know how to talk to each other. Too many people with liberal arts educations have never had this experience. How will we recognize the loss of experiences we have never had?

The second was a constant search for beautiful models of writers who paid attention, who showed us how to pay attention, and who showed us that paying attention reveals things as yet unseen and maybe even unsuspected. I started to pepper my students with invitations to fall in love, and in doing so recognize their own erotic nature. But this bears striking resonances to the work of contemplatives from Ancient Greece onward; this is spiritual work. I had to admit that my aim was not just to develop my students into good thinkers or communicators or even into people freed from prejudice. My aims as an educator had far more content than that.

My hope was to help them develop into persons who would be attentive to each other and the world around them, and whose attentiveness might lead them to try to be just. This was not simply treating them as “whole people,” it was treating them as people who were, *most* importantly, people with souls. It was to take a clear stand for some ways of life, and a clear stand against others. In simplest terms, we might say, with Kant, that we ought never to treat people as things, as turning students into prospective employees (“outputs”) is wont to do. In fact, we may become very bad at “outputting” prospective employees. Liberal arts education, at its best, will tend to mis-fit students for easy integration into our current economic system. They will want to live human lives, not sub-human ones.  

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*Symposium* offers a commentary on the erotics of teaching. I reject the emphasis on *agape* as somehow distinct from and better than other forms of love. The Incarnation seems to me profoundly *erotic,* and to ascribe to it some form of love that has been ‘purified’ of bodily desire is to deny its very essence.

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13 Martin Luther King, Jr. called for us to be “maladjusted.” “But there are some things within our social order to which I am proud to be maladjusted and to which I call you to be
If we claim, perhaps courageously or outrageously, that our work is always, whatever else it is, spiritual work, work of love, work imbued with values, and that our students, whoever else they are, are always human beings with spirits that respond to careful attention and nurture, this changes the nature of the game when it comes to defending the liberal arts. Being clear about what we do opens up the problem, and brings with it a challenge. It places liberal arts education in a larger category, that of the education of the spirit – a category to which it has no exclusive or even primary claim. If the hope is that human beings become persons who are attentive to each other and to the world around them, there are other ways to reach that goal. Disciplined attention and care can be developed in a number of ways, and academics might find that they share a sense of purpose with a much broader range of people than we could have guessed.

Furthermore, academia may not even be the most effective of these communities in terms of providing alternatives to the dominant narratives that would reduce our students to their measurable outputs, de-valuing their bodies, their relationships, their communities, the natural world that sustains them, and their souls. Poet/farmer Wendell Berry writes movingly – and justly – about academia’s contributions to the destruction of our land and our communities. So, such a stated goal opens up liberal arts education to a degree of scrutiny. How well are we meeting that goal? And, how does our pursuit of that goal differ from others’? The absence of a lively and serious debate about the nature of our aims is one mark of our failure to pursue them adequately.

I can think of at least three risks of this approach. First, there is the fear of being accused of doing “woo-woo.” A recent editorial in the New York Times proposed that Philosophy “get over” its claim to be about “love of wisdom,” since such fuzzy and pseudo-spiritual claims detract from the authority of a discipline that’s really about the science of being. “Ontics” as a title would make philosophy’s purpose and value clear, and crucially, respectable. My response to this problem is simply to say that we need to get over this particular fear. What we do is “woo-woo,” and, furthermore, we claim that “woo-woo” is vitally important to the future of humankind and the planet. Second, there is the claim that academics should not engage politics. My response

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here is that if we’re so obviously turning all of our students into political liberals, where have they all gone? The continual accusation of “political bias” in academia forces too many of us to quell our own political impulses, leaving our students with no sense of themselves as political beings. Humane education is not clearly Democratic or Republican. It values tradition and community, even as it values the common good, and the rights of minority groups. It helps us see what’s not being said at all, even as we weigh the truth or falsehood of what is. The most crucial topics for national debate are left unclaimed by either party.16

Third, it raises the question of our own status, as practitioners and exemplars. We need to explain more clearly the nature of our work and the resources it requires. But we run the risk of facing squarely the real limitations of our jobs. Contemplative pedagogy demands contemplative practice, but who can be contemplative with a 4/4 load and research requirements? What community supports us? How are our own erotic needs – for community, for friendship, for renewal – being met? A recent article in the Chronicle of Higher Education asks, “Why are Associate Professors So Unhappy?” In interviews, mid-career academics describe themselves as isolated, overworked, and underappreciated. They have too little time for scholarship, and the scholarship they do isn’t as important as they thought it would be.17 Academic life is not sustainable for us, as academics. If we were clear about what we are trying to do, what would we need to change to make that possible?

If you’ve been listening for resonances here between the classroom and Quaker practice, you will have heard a few. I assumed that, after setting up the problem, I would be writing a paper about the resources Friends have to address that problem. But as I wrote this essay, I noticed that the same problems threaten Quakers as threaten the liberal arts. We, too, suffer from confusion about the meanings of the word “liberal,” so much so that it’s seen as inappropriately interfering with the freedom of others to suggest that they show up on time for Meeting.18 This gets in the way, not just of our corporate worship, but of our corporate witness.

On the other hand, Quakers do have something vital to offer when it comes to describing the value of the spiritual life, and the value of the liberal arts, and the value of the human person, in terms that neither offend Christians nor enrage atheists. And this is what we must do, over and over and over again, as passionately and tantalizingly and seductively as we possibly can.

For his ongoing support of my passion for education, as well as his generosity in hunting down references for this article, I am grateful to my husband, Jim Thompson.

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16 For example, the many issues linked to poverty. See John Marsh’s previously cited work, Class Dismissed: Why We Cannot Teach or Learn Our Way Out of Inequality (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2011).


18 I speak, of course, from experience.
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Connecting the Dots: The Long Term Impact of a Liberal Arts Education in Business

Patricia E. Berg
Malone University

“In a teacher’s consciousness the child has been sent to his telescope to look at the stars, in the child’s consciousness he has been given free access to the glory of the heavens” (Whitehead, 1929, p. 33).

A technical education in business contradicts what a liberal arts education in business should be. But there is a way to connect the dots so that a liberal arts education in business not only educates students with the how-to technical aspect of business, but adds real world skills and adaptability that opens access to the “glory of the heavens.”

A liberal arts education in business is a form of delayed gratification, which seems to have gone out of style in today’s fast-food-get-it-now, online and degree completion culture. This poses a challenge for liberal arts universities who are striving to compete for market demand without sacrificing the value of the liberal arts educational journey.

The Purpose of a Business Education

The purpose of a business education at the undergraduate level goes beyond merely training in a skill for immediate application in the corporate world. The impact may not be realized until long after graduation has occurred. This is where a liberal arts education stands apart from technical training. A liberal arts education creates a spark for learning and a well-rounded knowledge base in diverse topics, avoiding the focused memorization approach to knowledge that Whitehead (1929) described as “packing articles in a trunk” (p. 33).

If universities only train in technical business skills, a student may be able to create a balance sheet, financial report or marketing plan, but he would be ill-prepared to face the daily challenges of managing staff, setting and reaching goals, critically thinking or developing contingency plans for when things inevitably go wrong. Life is messy. Business is messy. Careers are messy. If higher education becomes a neatly wrapped package of memorized technical skills, students are not prepared for the messiness of the corporate world.

So what should a liberal arts education in business include? Takei (2011) studied best practices within the liberal arts education at Central Washington University and concluded that there were two educational components crucial to the overall success of a liberal arts education: teaching (class-wide technical skills) and mentoring (one-on-one managerial skills). The class wide teaching is what we are most comfortable with. However, the individual mentoring is just as important, and involves working with students outside of the classroom on projects, presentations, securing internships and connecting them with business leaders in the community.

This approach merges together two diverse and distinctive venues of higher learning only available in the liberal arts
education in business and the strength of this educational journey lies in that diversity. Together, they create a well-rounded student who becomes trained in his field of interest as he journeys into becoming a lifelong learner.

Corporate Influence

From the very beginning, universities have been influenced by corporate America. The University of Chicago was funded by corporate investors (mainly John D. Rockefeller), and so began the concern about the corporate influence on higher education. The question then becomes whether the purpose of education is about pleasing corporate America by teaching specific, technical skill sets and preparing the graduate for the here and now or educating students in the broad sense to become lifelong learners, preparing them to be the leaders of tomorrow. One is a quick fix and the latter reflects long term gratification.

The reality is that the corporate world has a great deal of impact on what we teach our business students. They hire them. They train them. They promote them. They fire them. They could, in essence, be considered the ultimate university customer. Students go from a desk in our classroom to a desk in their offices, and if they are ill-prepared for what the corporate world offers, no one wins, and our enrollment may suffer as well.

Connecting the dots between these two diverse worlds involves a two-step approach: both Co-Ed – Coordinating with and educating business as to the value of a liberal arts education in business and Co-Op – Cooperating with and integrating business skills in the classroom.

Co-Ed – Coordinating and Educating Business

The corporate world does impact the classroom world, and it should. However, it is the university’s responsibility to educate the corporate world about the value of a liberal arts education in business. This involves building relationships with corporate leaders, asking them to sit on university committees, guest lecture in business courses, and help to develop curriculum that reflects their needs. But it also involves educating business leaders about the advantages of having a well-rounded, liberally educated student to work for their company. The corporate world must realize the value of the depth and breadth of knowledge needed to grow successful business leaders who will shape the face of tomorrow’s corporation.

Depth – Depth of knowledge must include technical skills. However, technical knowledge (such as planning, leading, organizing and controlling) changes over time and technical skills quickly become outdated. It is the ability of graduates to be lifelong learners which allows them to contribute and to grow our corporations. This is where knowledge breadth comes in.

Breadth – Technical knowledge is merely the baseline from which students begin their educational journey, but it is adaptability (the ability to adapt to change) and coachability (the ability to be lifelong learners) which helps them succeed in the dynamic and chaotic business world.
Business students must be educated in both technical skills (depth) which gives them a firm foundation and a liberal arts education (breadth) which gives them the ability to adapt and thrive in today’s corporate world. The key is not to produce amateurs, but to graduate experts who are leaders, not merely managers. As Whitehead (1929) stated, “During the school period (K-12), the student has been mentally bending over their desk. At the university they should stand up and look around.” It is the liberal arts education in business which asks students to stand up and look around and hold together what Palmer (2007) referred to as diverse paradoxes, like breathing in and out. What universities are struggling to accomplish is difficult, but necessary if the liberal arts education is to survive this fast-paced, fast-food, degree completion and online era. Universities must join together what has been historically separated:

We separate head from heart. Result: minds that do now know how to feel and hearts that do not know how to think.

We separate facts from feelings. Results: Bloodless facts that make the world distant and remote and ignorant emotions that reduce truth to how one feels today.

We separate theory from practice. Results: Theories that have little to do with life, and practices that are uninformed by understanding.

We separate teaching from learning. Results: Teachers who talk but do not listen and students who listen but do not talk. (Palmer, 2007, p. 68)

As educators, when we merge these paradoxes, we add to the breadth and depth of the educational journey. Then, as we work with business leaders (through building relationships and integrating them into our classrooms) we work to develop curriculum that reflects their needs. In the end, we help shape the face of tomorrow’s corporation.

**Co-Op – Cooperate with and Integrate Business Skills in the Classroom**

There are various methods of integrating business skills in the classroom. The two that will be presented here are Findlay University’s Partnership Model and The Corporate Classroom.

**Findlay’s partnership model.** This partnership model pairs small business owners with student teams who make three presentations throughout one semester. This works well for an upper level business course, integrated business course or free enterprise course. The three presentations are (1) a SWOT analysis of the small business, (2) a marketing and financial analysis of the small business and (3) a complete business action plan with recommendations. According to Yates & Ward (2009), this model engages students with business owners/leaders in active learning by doing which is a great way to integrate real world business skills in the classroom.

The Findlay partnership model provides several benefits to students. As students engage with business owners/leaders, they are better able to see how their academic skills can be implemented to improve real world business
achievement. Students are also able to work in a professional setting, build their resume attributes and begin to network within industry. The model also provides benefits to business owners/leaders who gain a free business consultation, adding an outside perspective and analysis of their current business strategy and market position. Business owners/leaders also have the opportunity to improve the liberal arts education process, benefiting all with stronger business leaders for tomorrow.

**The corporate classroom.** This teaching model involves establishing corporate hierarchies in the classroom as students complete a team project. Professors establish their class as a corporation with the professor serving as the CEO. Students are invited to apply to be Group Managers (GM), giving some leadership experience and others teamwork experience. GMs then interview and hire group members, using managerial skills such as decision making, organizing, empowering and delegating. Groups choose and complete their project as GMs serve as hierarchical managers, scheduling all group meetings, organizing the project, delegating tasks and reporting regularly back to the CEO (professor).

GMs are expected to handle all group conflict as it arises, only involving the CEO if needed, and are responsible for group progress just as a manager would be in industry. At the end of the semester, the CEO (professor) evaluates the GMs, and the GMs evaluate group members, and all evaluations are factored into the final project score along with the project completion and success. (For additional information, see Berg, 2003, p. 8)

**Conclusion**

The conflict between the corporate world and the liberal arts classroom lies somewhere between cooperation and consternation. It is the liberal arts university’s obligation, the professor’s calling, to connect the dots between the two diverse worlds through a two-pronged approach: Co-Ed (Coordinating with and educating business as to the value of a liberal arts education in business) and Co-Op (Cooperating with and integrating business skills in the classroom). By merging these paradoxes, both depth of technical knowledge and breadth of adaptability are integrated into the educational journey.

The challenge for today’s liberal arts university is to continue to value the long term impact of a liberal arts education in business, while also competing in today’s fast-food-get-it-now, online and degree completion culture. Educators must stand firm to value long term educational gratification to give students “…free access to the glory of the heavens” (Whitehead, 1929, p. 33). The question then becomes whether or not today’s liberal arts universities are bold enough to hold out the telescope.

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Although separated by nationality and denomination, Quaker mystic Thomas Kelly and Lutheran pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer had surprisingly similar faith journeys. Both were transformed by their encounters with the divine, and for both, their search for meaning was structured by their shared social location as Euro-centric early twentieth century white males. In their most famous writings, which were informed by their experiences of German totalitarianism, each man shared a similar quest: to find a vehicle for the Christian faith that would transcend the limitations of convention. Each came away with the conviction that developing small, cohesive “monastic” student groups was critically important to reinvigorating the church and hence society. In an era of increased isolation, in which online education is aggressively marketed as the answer to the cost of higher education, Bonhoeffer and Kelly’s monastic models are relevant to the survival of Quaker liberal arts colleges.

Thomas Kelly was born in 1893 in southwest Ohio, to an evangelical Quaker farming family of modest means. He graduated from Wilmington College with a degree in chemistry, then attended Haverford College, where he fell under the influence of Quaker theologian Rufus Jones. This encounter led him to a master’s and then a doctorate in philosophy at Hartford Theological Seminary. Because of the cost of his education, Kelly would battle “crushing debt” problems that hung “like a noose” over his head for most of his life. Also, until 1938, as a poor farm boy he felt a sense of intellectual inadequacy that he hoped to overcome through a PhD from Harvard. That dream crashed spectacularly when he failed his oral exams, but his deep distress over this failure led to his first great spiritual breakthrough in December, 1937.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was born in 1906, 13 years after Kelly, to a wealthy and distinguished German family. From the age of six, he grew up in sophisticated Berlin, a far cry from rural Ohio. The sixth of eight children, Bonhoeffer lived in a grand house with a large staff of servants. Although his family suffered temporarily from troubles brought on by World War I, Bonhoeffer’s entire life was cushioned by money. As the grandson of a countess and son of a prominent psychiatrist, doors opened for him to attend the best universities, where he wrote not one but two dissertations, standard at the time for those teaching in German universities, and moved in elite German and international circles.

Bonhoeffer was ridiculed by his older brothers and met with scant support from his father when he announced his intent to pursue a pastoral career. Few in his

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social set saw the Lutheran church as a place for a person of talents to make a mark on the world.\textsuperscript{22} Thus, the young Bonhoeffer announced: “If the church is feeble, I shall reform it!”\textsuperscript{23}

In 1924-25, Kelly and his young wife Lael Macy Kelly spent 15 months in Germany, primarily in Berlin, on behalf of American Friends Service Committee.\textsuperscript{24} They participated in the founding of the Quaker German Yearly Meeting.\textsuperscript{25} When the couple returned to the U.S., Kelly accepted a teaching position at Earlham College in Indiana. Once home, he recognized that Germany had broadened his religious perspectives:

“I found there in Germany a new Quaker movement. Men in it were facing essentials in a way I never had. They were inquiring regarding the essence of religion and coming to conclusions far more daring than I had ever dreamed for myself.”\textsuperscript{26}

Kelly abandoned what he called the “narrow” and “undeveloped” evangelical Quakerism of his youth and embraced a new version of Quakerism as a “mystical fellowship, which transcends the ordinary barriers of religious organizations.”\textsuperscript{27}

Bonhoeffer had a similarly transformative experience crossing the Atlantic in the opposite direction. Arriving in 1930 for a year at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, he soon abandoned his parochial religious outlook\textsuperscript{28}, replacing nationalism and militarism with ecumenicalism and pacifism. Bonhoeffer’s outlook underwent transformation as a result of his cross-cultural encounters, most notably through attending the black Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem and through such fellow seminarians as the black student Frank Fisher, and the Frenchman and pacifist, Jean Lasserre.\textsuperscript{29}

Both Kelly and Bonhoeffer sought to enliven their faith traditions. Kelly

\textsuperscript{22} Bosquanet, 44, also Church historian J.S. Klan explains that following World War I, “The enormous impact on the Evangelical Churches of the loss of the Kaiser and the princes cannot be overstated.” J.S. Klan, 440. During the 1920s, when Bonhoeffer completed his theological training, the church lost 2.5 million members, as people embraced the idea of the “Fatherland, “ which, according to Klan, “became the undefined religion of millions of souls ... heroism became the highest virtue.” (Klan 441)

\textsuperscript{23} Bosquanet, 45.

\textsuperscript{24} Although both Bonhoeffer and Kelly were in Berlin at the same time twice—in 1924-25 and in 1938, there’s no published record that they ever met. Since almost all of Bonhoeffer’s papers and letters have been published, any record of a meeting would be lurking among unpublished Kelly papers. Since Bonhoeffer did not become famous until well after Kelly’s death, Kelly may not have particularly noticed Bonhoeffer if the two did meet. However, Bonhoeffer, from a different social class, may never have been introduced to Kelly.


\textsuperscript{26} Kelly, 54.

\textsuperscript{27} Kelly, 54.

\textsuperscript{28} As a young pastor to a German church in Barcelona in 1927-28, Bonhoeffer believed that an ethic of love for family and Volk allowed a nation to defend itself against aggression. He wrote: “love for my people will sanctify murder, will sanctify war.” (\textit{Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works English}, vol. 10, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996, 618). Also, “Strength also comes from God, and power, and victory, for God creates youth in the individual as well as in nations [Volk], and God loves youth, for God himself is eternally young and strong and victorious,” he writes in his “Basic Questions of a Christian Ethic.” (\textit{DBWE}, 10, 373).

\textsuperscript{29} Most Germans, Bonhoeffer included, had a bitter feelings towards the French over the Versailles Treaty. Nevertheless, Lasserre became a close friend.
believed that “Quakerism needed men who could make its ministry a vital and living organism.”

He followed in the footsteps of Jones, who wanted to rescue Quakerism from its growing provincialism and adherence to “narrow conventions.” Kelly criticized contemporary Quakers for a cooling down, a shrinking back, a delicacy not found either in Scripture or in their founders.

At the same time, 1924, the youthful Bonhoeffer ruminated on “the present calamity” and “the terrible plight” of the German Protestant church, which, bleeding membership, “concealed a great deal that, frankly and honestly, was nothing but materialism.

Casting for a solution, Kelly and Bonhoeffer both initially turned to the “Orient” as a way to gain a new perspective on the problems of Western Christianity. Troubled by what he termed the “narrow exclusiveness” of much of Christianity, Kelly longed to travel to the East. He wrote to Harold H. Peterson, a Quaker living in India, of hoping to “sit at the feet of the professors of the Orient to learn their wisdom.” He believed it important to discover Eastern religion first hand, writing to another friend: “One can hardly comprehend fully the quest of the Buddhist sitting under the Bo Tree when one is sitting under a sugar maple in an Midwest cornfield.” Arriving in Hawaii, he wrote to a friend that it was, “a real opportunity to develop the basic familiarity with Eastern philosophy which I wanted.” Kelly hoped to stay on the island for several years but an offer to teach at Haverford brought him, with his family, to Philadelphia after only a year.

Like Kelly, Bonhoeffer also yearned to travel the Orient. In 1931, Bonhoeffer hoped to go straight from Union Theological Seminary to India to study Eastern religions. However, by April 1931, he concluded it “was just too far,” as he wrote in a letter to his grandmother. Back in Germany later that year, when the Nazis were capitalizing on the worldwide economic crisis, he wrote a friend, “I would like to see still one more great country in order to judge whether the solution will possibly come from there - India; for otherwise things appear to be beyond repair, the great death of Christendom seems to have arrived.” In 1932, he wrote to his friend Edward Sutz: “I can hardly think of [the Manhattan year] without experiencing a great desire to travel again, this time to the East. There must be other people on earth who have deeper knowledge and more capacity than we have …”

In 1934, while serving as a pastor for two German congregations in London,
Bonhoeffer’s interest in India continued and he wrote to Gandhi, receiving a letter of invitation in return.

Looking back at Kelly and Bonhoeffer from a twenty-first century perspective, we note that both men were seeking “Orientalism,” what Edward Said described as a Western mode of appropriating Asia. According to Said, since the late 18th century Orientalism has denoted a way of dominating and systemizing the Orient—“of knowing about it, teaching it, having authority about and over it.”

To the West, the “Orient”—always conceived as a monolithic whole that stretches from the Middle East to the Far East and never what, in reality it is, a multiplicity of diverse cultures—represented the exotic Other, which, weaker, more feminine and more mysterious, could be consumed for the benefit of European and American culture.

Clearly, both Kelly and Bonhoeffer hoped to find a way to fill the “narrowness” they perceived in western society through appropriating the wisdom of the “East.” This “Orient,” of course, was mythic—a vessel which could be filled with whatever was required to “fulfill” Western needs. Hence, Kelly could write of wanting to experience the “absorptive attitude of the Oriental faiths,” whatever that might mean, and could state, confidently, without differentiating between the multiplicity of Eastern cultures or religions, that “the [Eastern] concern is to reflect in order to live the good life.

Knowledge [in the “Orient”] is not abstraction.”

Likewise, Bonhoeffer commented on “the distant, fertile, sunny world … of India.” In such “sunny” worlds, in true Orientalist fashion, Bonhoeffer could experience his “animal existence awakened, not the kind that degrades a man, but the sort that delivers him from the stuffiness and spuriousness of a purely intellectual existence and makes him purer and happier.”

If both men sought a presence or wisdom in the “Orient” that was missing from “provincial” Christian culture, both, ironically, found the depth of faith they were seeking in large part through the distorted mirror of Nazi Germany.

Thomas Kelly travelled to Germany in 1938, to assess the Quaker situation. What he witnessed shocked him. Kelly wrote to his wife:

... Until you have lived in this world of despair and fear and abysmal suffering of the soul, you can never know how serious the consequences of a chance anecdote may be, in the way of life imprisonment, beatings with clubs, family separations, death … Many a time we sat in the middle of a room and whispered.

He also wrote to his wife of the loss of integrity in Germany, of “a great undermining of character” as people...
capitulated to the regime out of fear. “Suffering of the body” he wrote, “is only the vestibule of suffering. Suffering of soul, of spirit, is terrible. ... Dear people, how I love them! Dear people, how they suffer!” He wrote too of vicarious suffering, of the desire to help people, a concept similar to Bonhoeffer’s notion of Stellvertretung, vicarious representative action.

In Nazi Germany Kelly had his final spiritual awakening. According to Douglas Steere, in the 1941 introduction to Testament of Devotion, Kelly’s 1938 German experience led him, in Kelly’s own words, to be “melted down by the love of God.” In the cathedral in Cologne, Kelly felt God “laying the whole congealed suffering of humanity upon his heart”—but with the divine help to bear it.

Kelly had what he described as a “very difficult” adjustment back to the United States. The security of his “park like” suburbs around Haverford seemed “a travesty.” His family described him as in a “daze.” His heart remained with the his friends in the “Blessed Community” in Germany, a place he deemed “vital.” In contrast, his comfortable Philadelphia surrounding seemed “humdrum,” the US, “pasty and artificial.”

Bonhoeffer traveled back to Manhattan in June, 1939, where, coincidentally, Kelly’s brother-in-law, Paul Macy, picked him up at the boat dock. After four anguished weeks, Bonhoeffer left the refuge offered in the US to return to Germany. His heart, like Kelly’s, was with the “brothers” there. Like Kelly, he was distressed at the triviality of life in the United States, writing:

One sat for an hour and chatted, not at all stupidly, but about matters that were so utterly trivial to me, whether a good musical education is possible in New York, about raising children, etc. etc., and I thought, how usefully I could spend these hours in Germany.

Paradoxically, Christ seized the hearts of both men most fully in a nation that was doing its best to eradicate Christianity from its midst.

After his arrest in 1943, Bonhoeffer found that “silence and the love of life” he hoped to find in India in a prison cell in Berlin. The “view from below” that a Nazi prison afforded became for Bonhoeffer the “new” perspective that he was seeking.

Bonhoeffer’s heart and soul had been poured into the seminary at Finkenwalde, run by the Confessing Church, which opposed the Nazi-run Ayran Church. In this monastic type community, Bonhoeffer had found his life’s calling, although he had previously dismissed state-run seminaries as a waste of time.

50 Kelly, 99
51 Kelly, 100
52 Kelly, 109
53 Steere, 120
54 Steere, 120
55 Kelly, 109
56 Kelly, 109
57 Kelly, 109
58 Kelly, 108
59 DBWE 15, 182.
60 DBWE 15, 221, 222.
61 DBWE 15, 222.
62 Bethge, 419.
At Finkenwalde, the seminarians not only studied theology, but listened to music together, including the then-exotic Negro spirituals Bonhoeffer had brought back from Harlem, played musical instruments, performed Shakespeare and participated in sports.

Likewise, Kelly founded a student group at Haverford after his return from Germany in 1938 that met weekly at his home to read devotional classics such as Augustine’s *Confessions* and Brother Lawrence. Following the reading, one student remembered that “Lael Kelly would bring in the crackers and peanut butter and laughter and jolliness prevailed.” As at Bonhoeffer’s seminary, the group would listen to records, such as Kelly’s recording of Gregorian chants. A student described it as a “little religious order grounded in seeking God and thankful for the life that resulted from the corporate search.” Kelly wished for his students to become “a band of itinerant preachers like George Fox, shaking the countryside for 10 miles around.” One student remembered the idea as “utterly fantastic and repulsive to us.” Nevertheless, a number of group members later became involved in larger Quaker service organizations.

Both Bonhoeffer and Kelly, seeing the urgency of the crisis at hand, forced themselves to jettison the superfluous and focus on the essentials they believed would help build a better world. What was left standing at the point of crisis was not appropriating Eastern religions, adopting new technologies or new programs or building new buildings, but pouring energy into developing strong support groups of spiritually and ethically discerning individuals.

Bonhoeffer, seeking community, visited monastic-type communities, including Woodbrooke in England, to find a more holistic model for preparing pastors. Likewise, Kelly, on his return from Nazi Germany, groped for community beyond the classroom, a community that would grow deeper roots. Both teachers were *urgent* about building small groups. Both found the most profound spiritual expression in the “ordinary and commonplace” rhythms of life. As Kelly put it, he came to recognize living in suburban Philadelphia was a “holy trust, out of which we must make something that is an offering to the wounds of this terrible world.”

While Bonhoeffer’s and Kelly’s monastic circles shared similarities, Kelly’s model is clearly closer to the American liberal arts experience. However, both attempts at community building share commonalities:

1. Each developed largely within institutional boundaries but operated with little institutional supervision. Bonhoeffer’s Finkenwalde was supported by the Confessing Church, a breakaway from the sanctioned German Christian (Nazi) Church. The Confessing Church largely left curriculum-building to Bonhoeffer. Kelly created a Haverford student group, but ran it independently.
2. Participation was self-selecting, voluntary, and only attracted a minority of students.

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63 Kelly, 120.
64 Steere, 122.
65 Kelly, 120
66 Kelly, 120

67 Kelly, 110.
68 Kelly, 103.
3. Bonhoeffer could have as easily gone to America or to India to live with Gandhi; Kelly didn’t have to invite students to his home. Both were driven by a deep sense of urgency — their commitment to the group was deep.

4. Both Kelly and Bonhoeffer introduced culture and music and “fun” into the mix.

5. Both pushed their students’ boundaries, Bonhoeffer through advocating pacifism in the context of a culture of young pastor trainees eager to avenge Versailles: “The majority of the students completely rejected his suggestion that conscientious objection was something a Christian should consider.” Kelly, as we have seen, urged his students to embrace a George Fox-like evangelism that rubbed against upper middle class American cultural norms.

The question that underlies all of this is why the experience of Nazi Germany made developing small, holistic, monastic groups seem so critical to both men. Why did such groups seem imperative, not frivolous? Why did such a seemingly tiny gesture become of primary importance to them?

One answer might be that both Kelly and Bonhoeffer, had they still been alive when the book was published, would have agreed with Frederic Jameson’s contention in *The Political Unconscious* that change bubbles up to the top from below. Both men might echo John Woolman, who in his “A Plea for the Poor” writes

A day of outward distress is coming, and Divine love calls to prepare against it. Hearken then, O ye children who have known the light, and come forth. Leave every thing which Jesus Christ does not own. Think not his pattern too plain, too coarse for you. Think not a small portion in this life too little. But let us live in his spirit, and walk as he walked: so shall we be preserved in the greatest troubles.⁷⁰

Quaker colleges already have the infrastructure and methodology to build strong spiritual/intellectual communities in a context of egalitarianism and might do well to more fully embrace that tradition, which is at the heart of Quakerism. In a world that is increasingly commodified, hurried and “cyber,” some students hunger for meaningful living interactions. Both Kelly and Bonhoeffer would likely have advocated for not taking the opportunity to build human capital for granted. Instead, like Woolman, they sought, in a “pattern … plain,” a way to build up that community.

Further, not only does holistic, spiritually-based community help students enter into the world in useful and transformative ways, it also offers colleges sustainability in the potential to build an alumni system that can help institutions themselves survive.

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28
Building a Sustainable Local Community

Mark Rembert
Energize Clinton County

Thank you very much for having me as a speaker here today.

Given that you are a group of educators, I’d like to begin talking about me and my generation, a group with which many of you are probably very familiar at this point. It is also a subject on which I am very familiar, given my membership. My generation also happens to be the most studied generation of all time, and since sustainability is ultimately a social issue, I want to make use of some of these studies as a point of reference for my discussion.

Many call us the Millennial Generation. Most of you are probably familiar with that term at this point, but for those who aren’t, it refers to those born roughly between 1980 and 1995. But I’d like to proclaim us the Green Generation. For us, environmental issues have been consistently woven throughout our lives. I can vividly recall images of Vice President Al Gore leading an Earth Day cleanup on Nickelodeon, or the face of a Native American, standing on the side of a Los Angeles freeway, crying as a bag of fast food is thrown at his feet, or learning about Climate Change in science class. We were taught valuable tips about flipping the switch when we leave the room, turning off the water while we brush our teeth, and reducing, reusing, recycling. As we grew older, we watched An Inconvenient Truth during our pivotal college years, and we rallied around electing the country’s first Green Jobs president.

There is no question that these efforts have been successful in shaping us into a Green Generation. A national study by the Center for American Progress found that two thirds of young Americans agree with progressive perspectives on energy, sustainable living, and climate change. The message to us was clear: if you DO the right thing, we can save the planet.

Yet, I do not share this with you out of optimism about the current state of my generation and its likelihood to transform our country into a more sustainable society. For all the progress we have made on marketing environmental causes and educating people on environmental impact, we face an increasing environmental crisis. While some may point to recent history as a great interval of progress for the environmental movement, with relatively significant investments being made in renewable energy and energy efficiency, along with the rise in corporate environmental responsibility, these achievements have been over-shadowed by environmental disasters like the Gulf oil spill, the nuclear meltdowns in Japan following the Tsunami, and most recently the destruction of rural communities in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia in our unending search for fossil fuels. This is just to name a few. And while we might blame these issues on corporate bad behavior, we are also witnessing the dismantling of years of progressive legislation that promoted environmental protection and conservation. Just this past week, the Senate passed a Farm Bill which slashed funding for conservation programs that protect soil and waterways. Four years ago Democrats and President Obama pledged support for a Climate Change bill which has yet to pass, even as scientists
argue that we are approaching a point of no return.

And of course we are not limited to just an environmental crisis, but I will spare you all the anxiety of listening to me hash out the political, social, and economic crises that are simultaneously unfolding.

And so I ask, where is Generation Green? Where did all of that education go? What about the polls that show our overwhelming support for environmental causes and sustainable practices? Why is that we understand the need but fail to take substantial action to change the situation? Where is our leadership? Why are our efforts failing to move the needle in these issues?

I believe that these answers lie in the other side of my generation: Generation ME, the consumer generation. Recent studies have pointed to a troubling trend towards individualism and a concept of self based primarily in material possessions. A recent survey of more than 9 million high school seniors and college freshmen found that the proportion of students who said it was very important to be wealthy increased from 45 percent for baby boomers to 75 percent for Millennials. The percentage who thought it was important to keep up with politics fell from 50 percent for boomers to 35 percent for Millennials.

And perhaps most worrisome, the biggest drop was in whether youths felt the need to develop a meaningful philosophy of life. Seventy-three percent of boomers thought that was important, compared with only 45 percent of Millennials.

Now, there will be some who will say this is no problem at all. In fact, looking at these trends, it becomes clear that my generation is caught in a struggle between the need for collective action, and an ethic of individualism. Therefore, we’ve tried to frame collective action in terms of self-interest. We celebrate companies that “go green” to “make green.” We use marketing techniques to make sustainability cool and hip. We put up solar panels to show off our effort, and strive for certifications that we can wear as a badge. We make sustainability convenient, and easy, and scoff at the idea that sustainability demands limits on the lives we live or the things we consume.

While self-interest is without question a powerful motivating force, we are coming dangerously close to elevating greed and self-interest to the status of virtues. Meanwhile, it is becoming more widely accepted that economic growth and technological progress will always do more harm than good, and that through our collective self-interest the solutions to our crisis will ultimately emerge.

Now the goal of this talk is not to completely throw my generation under the bus and leave them there. I am here today because I am, in my nature, optimistic. I believe in the possibility of change and transformation, and I believe that our inherent inner light gives us all the capacity to thrive and live in peace with nature and our fellow man. But to do so we’re going to have to make a radical shift in the way we conceive of and address our problems.

If we share concern about our trend towards embracing greed and self-interest as a primary driver of progress, then we must consider its balancing force: community. And in this sense, I don’t mean merely a place where people “live, work, and play,” or more crudely, a place to be consumed. I mean community as a place where rooted people share a common future, and are held
together by the principle that each member of the community is needed; not for their economic value, but because of the role their presence has in shaping the community. A community in which limits are not regulated or imposed, but arise out of mutual standards of trust, concern, and respect. To quote Rufus Jones, a community with a “unity of purpose.”

Within this context, sustainability is transformed from something we do into a natural outgrowth of our membership in our community. Our care for our place leads us to care for our local environment, to ensure good work and livelihood for our neighbors, and to create an equitable and just social environment where all can thrive.

Although I imagine that it won’t take much for me to convince many of you of the value of this vision, I recognize this description of community is not widely supported by our culture or society. Communities with a unity of purpose are becoming less and less common, and the generational trends I highlighted earlier do not lend themselves to the conclusion that a resurgence will naturally emerge. That being said, our recent economic crisis has created an environment in which the characteristics of this concept of sustainable communities are emerging, perhaps out of necessity, but increasingly out of intention.

This has been the experience of our community. In 2008, Wilmington experienced the economic equivalent of a hurricane. Overnight we lost our largest employer and with it more than 10,000 jobs. In a moment, it was clear that our community’s sustainability was seriously threatened. This experience sparked an awakening. After many years of dependence on a single large employer, people began to realize that they were now co-dependent on each other. Through this crisis, a new desire emerged among community members to take a more active role in rebuilding a stronger, more sustainable community.

It was at this time that I had recently returned home, while en route to the Peace Corps, and crossed paths with my old friend Taylor Stuckert — a returned Peace Corps volunteer. Even though we had left the community of Wilmington for many years, the crisis deeply impacted us as well, and we decided to commit ourselves to being part of the process of rebuilding our community instead of working abroad. We founded an organization called Energize Clinton County, and we began developing initiatives that built a community of united purpose by engaging our neighbors in the process of local economic development. Our work has taken many forms, such as a county-wide Buy Local campaign, supporting the growth of small farmers, helping homeowners and businesses save energy for reinvestment in the community, and bringing home some of our best and brightest young people to cultivate a new generation of leadership.

Let me be clear, these efforts are not enough. As I mentioned before, sustainability must be based in a different way of being, not a different way of doing. While our initiatives can instruct and point to a different way of being, they are, on their own, just things that we do.

When we talk about transformational change towards sustainability, we are talking about a generational change. At the heart of this change is education, and we must have institutions committed to supporting educational experience that equips a new generation with the character and skill to rebuild communities of purpose.
This is where I see the role of Quaker institutions for higher education as absolutely critical. If Quaker colleges are to take sustainability seriously, they must be active in shaping students to form sustainable communities.

I’d like to propose three ways in which Quaker colleges can be active in this regard. First, they must teach a curriculum that supports sustainable communities. In this sense, maintaining a rigorous liberal arts curriculum is more important than ever. Undoubtedly, all institutions of higher education are feeling the impact of the economy. I’m sure many of you are dealing with declining resources, but I imagine that there is also a growing pressure to move towards job-based curricula that promote specialization. While preparing students for economic success is important, limiting their education to just professional development will leave them ill-equipped to take on the effort of rebuilding communities. To create a community requires broad perspective and wide-ranging approaches. The challenges communities face are economic, sociological, philosophical, biological, and spiritual. Leaders of sustainable communities must have a broad grasp of all of these areas to be successful.

The second area of focus that I recommend for Quaker colleges is to cultivate a rich community experience on campus. I had the fortunate opportunity to experience a vibrant community of united purpose as a student at Haverford. Living within the Honor Code challenged me at a young age to live in a community guided by trust, concern, respect, and mutual understanding. For many eighteen-year-olds, this is a completely foreign, yet transformational, experience. As institutions with a Quaker heritage, you have a rich tradition to draw upon to shape an on-campus life that can help to prepare students for a broader community life.

Finally, I believe Quaker colleges can play an important role in supporting sustainability by fostering the spiritual development of their students. As I have discussed previously, our generational trends are self-interest and greed in a culture dominated by materialism and consumption. Our religious institutions must continue to cultivate a message and model for a life lived for love, care, and compassion through a fulfilled spirit. Quaker colleges have a great opportunity to heal the spiritual wounds that many young people will bring with them to college and to help them find a life fulfilled by more than just material desires.

With that, I’ll conclude. Thank you once again for inviting me to speak here today.