

# Quaker Higher Education

# QHE

A Publication of Friends Association for Higher Education

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## Welcome to Quaker Higher Education

By Donn Weinholtz - Editor

This is the first issue of *Quaker Higher Education*, Friends Association for Higher Education's new, online publication. At least for now, *QHE* will be appearing twice each year, with an issue in the spring and another in the fall. *QHE* is not a formal, refereed journal. Rather, it consists of solicited pieces chosen because of their likely interest to FAHE members and to others concerned with Quaker post-secondary education. The goal here is to promote collegial sharing.

All of the articles included in this brief, start-up issue were either adapted from sessions at the 2006 FAHE Annual Conference, or conceived out of conversations at the conference. In fact, *QHE* grew out of one such conversation. Hopefully, it will continue to evolve as an increasingly valued vehicle for disseminating scholarly work. In order to assist in that process, a special session has been scheduled for the 2007 FAHE Annual Conference, June 14-17 at Earlham College. If you would like to offer suggestions regarding *QHE*'s future, please attend *Introducing Quaker Higher Education*. The time and location will be announced when the conference calendar is finalized.

This issue of *QHE* contains four articles covering a broad range of topics.

Occasional future issues may be dedicated to exploring single themes in greater depth.

The first article, by **Gary Farlow** of the FAHE Executive Committee, offers a rationale for *QHE*. (Thank you, Gary, for supplying a veneer of legitimacy.) The second, by **Abigail Adams**, is a memoir, case study examining some of the dilemmas encountered when a Friend conducts research on other living, breathing Friends; in this case a Quaker anthropologist studying Quaker missionaries in Guatemala. The third article, by **Gregory Barnes**, is an historical piece revealing Friends less-than-stellar record on environmental issues, until relatively recent times. And the fourth, by **Blaine Lukkar**, shares an insider's view of teaching reflective discernment regarding one's career in the Interdisciplinary Leadership for Social Change program at Guilford College.

I hope that you enjoy the selection.

P.S. If you would like to submit an article for possible publication in a future issue of *QHE*, my contact information is:

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## *Quaker Higher Education - Why.*

By Gary Farlow

In academic circles writing down and circulating the considered fruits of one's efforts is considered the measure of both *raison d'être* of the academy and the measure of accomplishment. The question arises, do these fruits have any value beyond collating and organizing the thoughts of the writer? ("by their fruits you shall know them").

The response of the academy to selecting the fruits of its collective labor is the peer review process. The assumption is that errors and misjudgments can be caught early and corrected or dismissed before misleading some poor undergraduate trying to write a term paper. This process generally works well so long as there are adequate reviewers with adequately wide knowledge to spot the errors and misjudgments inherent in human enterprise and the nut cases that are also inherent to humanity. This process as designed is intended to promote work of lasting value and is by its nature conservative of tradition and received wisdom.

How then to have a public conversation within the academy? At one time, at least in my field of physics, journals had a letters section where speculations and questions could be posted. The public conversation between Albert Einstein and Neils Bohr on the question of uncertainty in physics is a wonderful example. This occurs less and less. There also have evolved 'Letters' journals where new, exciting, cutting edge and therefore possibly speculative work could be published. These have in my own field become prestige journals, highly reviewed, and

therefore no longer suitable for public conversation.

Trade journals and newsletters have also evolved as a medium through which interested parties can solicit reports on current efforts, provide news, or advocate policy. Frequently these trade journals have large sections devoted to questions and answers. Unfortunately, except for specific facts, the content is not necessarily well considered nor substantiated. It must also be admitted these are advocacy publications. I have found that when in the form of news letters these can be rather gossipy. Expense has made online publication of the above attractive and this is now common.

The Executive Committee of the FAHE has begun exploring avenues for public conversation about one of its core missions which is the promotion of Quaker values in higher education. Among these are a Google discussion group and this new online journal. The online journal is envisioned as a place to thoughtfully explore this core mission in a way that is widely accessible. It could have been set up as a formal peer reviewed journal but by the nature of peer reviewed journals it would then not lend itself to a public conversation. It could have been set up for posting of articles by interested parties, but that would not have promoted thoughtful and considered contributions and allowed the content to easily diverge from its intent. *Quaker Higher Education* is set up to provide a competently edited forum for a public conversation on Quaker values in higher education. It is hoped that young scholars can use this forum to come to the attention of the larger community of Quakers in Higher Education. Do we expect scholarly standards? Of course we do: we expect that of our students.

Is it a prestige publication? Of course not: Seeking prestige would not be entirely Quakerly. We do expect it to be respectable in the larger higher education community and to be representative of the ‘fruits’ of Quakers in higher education. Shall we therefore as Quaker scholars, teachers, and educational administrators embark on an

experiment to see what thoughtful consideration and love can do for the academic world?

**Gary Farlow** is an Associate Professor of Physics at Wright State University and a member of the FAHE Executive Committee.

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**“In this World, but not of This World”: An Unprogrammed Friend and Anthropologist Reflects on Fieldwork among Evangelical Friends**

*By Abigail Adams*

In 1990, as Guatemalans prepared for elections that would transfer power from a civilian to a civilian for the first time in nearly forty years, I spoke with a U.S. nurse who worked in that country’s east. Although she could not vote in this election, she favored one “candidate”: former dictator General Efraim Rios Montt. The Constitution prohibited him, a coup leader, from holding executive office. Furthermore, Rios Montt, an evangelical Christian and former military dictator (1982 to 1983) is associated with the worst of Guatemala’s genocidal violence. With the eyes of the seer, she was describing the “spiritual warfare” in Guatemala that she sensed all around her, supernatural forces of evil that were battling the Christian faithful.

She was a missionary, I was an anthropologist. She was discussing spiritual warfare, I was conducting social science. She sought to live “in this world but not of this world,” I worked as a lobbyist. She was a born-again

evangelical Christian, I was a member of a theologically liberal faith.

I took notes, noting how fellow anthropologists would “eat up” this material on U.S. missionaries involved in conflict regions subject to U.S. policy. Anthropologists regard missionaries as intolerant of non-Christian, non-Western ways of life, and as handmaidens of imperialism. I was beginning doctoral research in cultural anthropology, a fragile process I hoped would eventually land me a coveted job in academia. This interview seemed to be going well.

She was Quaker. So was I.

A month’s work later, I moved to another fieldsite.

I now revisit that decision, as well as hopes for continuing research with the evangelical Friends of eastern Guatemala. FAHE provides me a wonderful opportunity for discernment; several of us are considering the following queries: What happens to Friends and scholarship when Friends research and produce scholarly work on other Friends? What happens to the researcher’s faith and our relationship with our faith community? How do we handle potential conflicts between our Quaker loyalties and uncomfortable research material? How does our

research benefit from the potential insider's insight?

Anthropologists describe these queries as cultural reflexivity, the two-pronged dilemma that all researchers working with another culture learn about their own culture—and cannot shed their enculturation and social statuses when entering the field. Cultural research becomes more complex when one's subject is culturally “close to home.” Many anthropologists address this challenge by choosing a “foreign” fieldsite first, and later, a “home”-sited inquiry. The initial cross-cultural stretch gives the researcher the distance to review one's “home” with more perspective. My faith and identity find their primary home among Quakers, an ancestral home with conflicting housemates—in part, the same conflict over proselytizing that anthropologists and missionaries have.

The Friends mission was a rich site for my dissertation's exploration of the claim that counterinsurgent Guatemala was undergoing an “evangelical boom.” The Evangelical Friends Alliance missionaries in eastern Guatemala welcomed me warmly, when I asked to visit them in a pre-research fieldtrip. From California, their churches founded one of Guatemala's five original Protestant denominations in 1903, a few years after the United States won the Spanish-American war. The missionaries built their headquarters in Chiquimula, a regional center in Guatemala's rugged east. They initially had little success converting either the Ch'orti' Maya people or the Spanish-speaking Ladino majority of the region. Then, with the invitation of the U.S.-owned United Fruit Company (UFCo), they held services among banana workers in rooms provided by the

Company. UFCo was a key player in the 1954 U.S.-sponsored coup in Guatemala that ended democracy, began over 36 years of military rule, civil war and bloody counterinsurgency.

Rios Montt, whom the Guatemalan Friends supported, was one of those military dictators. The Guatemalan Friends, in fact, sponsored one of his first public appearances since his fall from power. In 1988, Rios Montt visited the headquarters of the Chiquimula-based denomination, taught Sunday School and raised funds for their radio station campaign.

I was fascinated—and honestly, angered—by their seeming distance from the Friends historical peace testimony and advocacy for Native Americans. However, the picture was much more complex. The U.S. Friends had worked for decades in this region, often times with the poorest of the poor. The U.S. missionary featured in the opening of this essay had, with her husband, helped a group of Ch'orti' Maya people secure a settlement in Guatemala's northern regions. They had carried out this longterm work in social justice, even though the mission and home churches regarded such projects as tangential to evangelism and church building. The Friends churches had finally began to grow in the 1970s, tripling in the number of congregations by the time I arrived in 1990. Nevertheless, after nearly a century, this was not a booming evangelical field by any account, serving at most 30,000 attenders.

I faced many conflicts of interests. Besides the longstanding friction between missionaries and anthropologists, I felt strongly opposed to any support for Rios Montt, having previously worked in the region as a

journalist for three years during the 1980s wars. But many other anthropologists have overcome obstacles such as these.

The deal breaker was my loyalty to Friends, all Friends of our wider fellowship. Involved with unprogrammed Quakers since high school and a graduate of Haverford College, the first meeting I joined (Monteverde, Costa Rica) was affiliated with the Friends World Committee for Consultation. I knew about pastored and evangelical Friends, and cared about our diverse ways of being Friends in an increasingly globalized world.

I made the right decision to move my doctoral work. At that point, I was vulnerable, a proto-anthropologist undertaking the project that would serve as the basis for my career for several years. Despite the famed holism of anthropology, I had to be single-minded. My dissertation committee would not have been sympathetic to any diversionary audiences or sets of concerns.

I also felt vulnerable about discussing my faith in both the field and write-up. In the field, I felt dishonest because I was not the born-again Christian the Guatemalans assumed all Friends were. In the write-up, author reflexivity would be obligatory. Ethnographers freely shared reflections about their privileged or marginalized

racial, ethnic, class, sexual or gender subject positions. But those practicing Christian faiths, even universalist, rational versions, were still in the closet as near as I could tell, perhaps because of Christianity's infamy of imperialistic ethnocentrism, and the perceived impasse between science and religion.

So I moved to the Verapaz, in northern Guatemala and another historic Protestant denomination, the Nazarenes. Results? Research in the Verapaz plunged me into discussion about my faith. Few interviews, few friendships, moved far before I answered the question, "What do you believe?" Following William Christian in his study of Spanish pilgrims, I introduced my faith to my readers; I would say that in difficult times, like most Guatemalans, I turn to friends for help. Failing that, unlike most Guatemalans, I turn inwards rather than toward divine figures. Nevertheless, I found that I was open to the validity of practices directed towards divine beings—and that I was willing to immerse myself in hours of worship quite different from that which I choose to sustain myself. I am ready for the "return home with perspective" to the eastern Guatemalan Friends.

**Abigail Adams** is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at Central Connecticut State University.

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## **Toward a Green History of American Quakerism**

By Gregory A. Barnes

Nearly a century ago, Baltimore Yearly Meeting (Women's) began an epistle to its counterparts in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting as follows:

Friends have so frequently been in the front in some of the reforms in our national life that it is most gratifying to find them still alive to the needs of the hours, with willing hearts ready to make sacrifices for the great moral uplift so much needed in many avenues of life.<sup>i</sup>

Clearly, American Quakers have long taken pride in their moral clairvoyance. With this tradition in mind, I was led to wonder whether we have been similarly prescient about the need to preserve the environment. I decided to sample records from our forebears' earliest days in Philadelphia and to review the Quaker role in the larger American environmental movement during succeeding years.

William Penn, at least, showed a striking environmental consciousness. He was determined to establish a green country town, believing that country living surpassed life in the city:

“Creation,” he once wrote, “provides a direct link to its source. Understanding and cultivating it . . . is the best thing we can be about.”<sup>ii</sup> His original plans for Philadelphia effectively called for a line of contiguous arboreta stretching up the Delaware River. The First Purchasers would be entitled to some 800 feet of river

frontage, their property to include gardens, orchards, and fields.<sup>iii</sup>

We should not ascribe modern motives to Penn's thinking: he saw green space as protection against plague and fire. Still, in organizing the much reduced area he was ultimately able to claim—1200 acres between the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers—he showed himself both green and orderly. He chose a grid plan, at the time a new idea for London following its fire of 1666, and called the north-south streets by numbers. He rejected the east-west street names—those of settlers--chosen by his surveyor, and called them after plants instead. The northernmost of the early streets were named Vine and Sassafras, the southernmost Cedar. Surely only a true environmentalist would call a street Sassafras.

His contemporaries in the Society of Friends, however—judging from the early minutes of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting—saw nature as little more than a source of metaphor: “wilderness” meant moral decline and “storm” a crisis. Corporate texts ignored the beauty of green, fertile, well-watered eastern America. One would not expect the colonists to rail against pollution of the air or streams, but why no references to plowing a straight furrow or tending one's garden or husbanding animals efficiently.

Throughout the 18th century, Quakers seemed to pay little attention to nature as a part of the divine order, with Woolman the occasional exception.<sup>iv</sup> To be sure, men like the Bartrams, Humphrey Marshall, and later, William Darlington showed a strong interest in botany. Still, Benfey argues that these men made the best of limited choices:

“The prevailing judgment that music, art, and drama were wicked . . . and unworthy of the time and attention of the God-centered man, left little room” for study of matters other than science.<sup>v</sup>

Among Quaker institutions, perhaps only Friends Hospital (est. 1813 in Philadelphia) seemed ahead of its time environmentally, with its design that maximized the circulation of fresh air and light for the benefit of its mental patients. Otherwise, wherever we sense a Quaker awakening in conservation or environmental matters in the 18th and 19th centuries, we tend to find compelling variant explanations. A prominent land-grant college (Cornell) was founded by a Quaker, for example, but most were not. Haverford and Swarthmore developed oasis-like campuses but the model was pioneered elsewhere and the early curricula showed little emphasis on botany; even the famous arboreta of these two institutions are 20th-century phenomena. The national park system, inaugurated with Yellowstone, in 1872 and the Sierra Club (est. 1892) came into being without apparent Quaker leadership. Contemporaneous yearly meeting Books of Discipline continued to cast aspersions on outdoor activities, such as games and horse-racing.

Change began about 1915; witness the words in this epistle from Ohio Yearly Meeting:

The story of loyalty to conviction, which brought the pioneers to the wilderness land, we believe, can never be adequately told.

They came to the majestic hills and noble forests of the then Great Northwest Territory to establish the Faith of the Society

of Friends, where they, their descendents [sic] and others, might find abundant spaces for homes . . . .<sup>vi</sup>

By 1925 PYM (though not many other yearly meetings at that time) recanted its opposition to outdoor activities.

The scope of those recreations which the meeting could fully sanction may have been in some respects too restricted . . . .

We therefore earnestly commend to our members that they choose such recreations as out-door sports and games from which the elements of chance and stakes are absent, nature study and woodcraft, gardening. . .<sup>vii</sup>

Other meetings followed suit in the next quarter-century.

Environmental consciousness in the larger U.S. society is sometimes dated to the 1954 Scott/Helen Nearing book, *Living the Good Life*.<sup>viii</sup> But Quakers were catching up. The next year, Howard Brinton wrote:

As people, we are obliged to cherish the earth and to protect all its resources in a spirit of humble stewardship, committed to the right sharing of these resources among people everywhere. Query: How do we exercise our respect for the balance of nature? Are we careful to avoid poisoning the land, air, and sea and to use the world’s resources with care and consideration for future generations and with respect for all life?<sup>ix</sup>

In the 1960s, Quakers began staking out an environmental position along with their enlightened compatriots. Right Sharing of World's Resources dates its beginnings to a conference at Guilford College in 1967. Greenpeace (1972) had a Quaker founder, although Quakers later withdrew out of concern for the organization's methods. In 1972, PYM's *Faith and Practice* made a straightforward environmental declaration: "Am I clear that I am the steward, not the owner of property in my care? Do I simplify my needs, making choices that balance self-sufficiency (to avoid unnecessary dependence on others) and fair sharing of resources?"<sup>x</sup>

To answer my research question, then: No, Quakers (excluding Penn) were not particularly prescient in environmental consciousness. But given that environmentalism has today virtually become one of our testimonies—with green buildings a new imperative—we may belatedly find ourselves in the forefront of the movement.

**Gregory Barnes** is a Quaker writer living in Philadelphia and currently completing a biography of Quaker peace activists George and Lillian Willoughby.

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**Leadership for Social Change at  
Guilford College.**

By *Blaine Lukkar*

*"Define what matters most, plan for  
what matters most, act on what matters  
most...to you!"*

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**NOTES**

<sup>i</sup> Collected in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (Women's Branch), Proceedings, 1915

<sup>ii</sup> *Some Fruits of Solitude* (Scottsdale PA: Harald Press, 2003), 80

<sup>iii</sup> See Jean R. Soderlund, ed., *William Penn and the Founding of Pennsylvania 1680-84: A Documentary History* (Philadelphia; University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), 82

<sup>iv</sup> See in particular his "Conversations on the Harmony of Mankind."

<sup>v</sup> Theodore Benfey, *Friends and the World of Nature* (Pendle Hill Pamphlet 233, 1980), 11.

<sup>vi</sup> Ohio Yearly Meeting to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends, 1915.

<sup>vii</sup> Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, "A Book of Christian Discipline," (Philadelphia: PYM, 1925), 99-100.

<sup>viii</sup> *Living the Good Life: being a practical account of a twenty-year project . . .* Harborside, ME: Social Science Institute, 1954.

<sup>ix</sup> Howard Brinton, *Guide to Quaker Practice* (Pendle Hill, 1955), 90.

<sup>x</sup> Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, *Faith and Practice* (1972), 213-4.

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So reads an Interdisciplinary Leadership for Social Change (ILSC) flyer plastered around campus

When students arrive at our Career and Community Learning center by the droves in March and April of their senior year, the staff braces itself for the yearly crunch. At this time, a light

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flashes in the mind of seniors and stops them in their tracks. Since they were four years old, their routine has been pretty much the same. They wake up early each morning nine months of the year, go to classes, come home, do homework and spend the remaining part of the day with family or friends. Summer rolls around and the students take a break, eventually exploring the world of summer jobs or internships when they are old enough. No long term plans are needed because at the start of the fall, they are back in school—back with teachers who tell them what to do, how to do it and by when it must be done. Many Guilford seniors do not think about life after college until they are literally staring it in the face.

Rather than a portrait of the disorganized procrastinator, the situation described above consists of the very students who give Guilford its reputation as an institution that prepares students to change the world. Interdisciplinary Leadership for Social Change began with the realization that far too many of our well educated, highly experienced students have no clue about their next steps after graduation. Staff and faculty who come to know these students so well lament the fact that students cannot clearly articulate their strengths or next steps. In the midst of a rigorous academic schedule, life changing semesters studying abroad and fascinating internships, a key piece is lost in the students' educational experience—reflective discernment.

Along with the other opportunities ILSC makes available to students; we offer three seminars every semester, each designed for a specific point in the students' time at Guilford. The first seminar introduces first and

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second year students to the concept of social change and provides a space in which they may begin to explore their passions and name their gifts and skills. It is during this seminar that students conscientiously begin their vocational discernment process—the pursuit of their “life’s work.” The second seminar coincides with a student’s internship. Students analyze issues of social change from the focal point of their internship and explore possible models of leadership that might be applied to the organization where they intern. The third seminar is geared toward seniors. It is here that students focus on integrating academic and experiential learning at Guilford and prepare for their upcoming transition to the professional world. In addition to conversations about their post graduation hopes and fears, students develop a digital showcase portfolio that serves to effectively communicate their strengths, unique skills developed at Guilford and personal information they wish to share with potential employers. From the beginning of their time with ILSC, students are encouraged to save essays, writing samples, biographies, and reflections they feel they might want to include in their showcase portfolio during their senior year. In addition to displaying their resume, this portfolio provides potential employers with a personal perspective into the life of the Guilford graduate.

From the moment we begin working with students, we make it clear that the vocational journey is *their* process. While we provide a framework for discernment, support and mentorship as they begin this journey, the questions they ask themselves must come from within each student.

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We work with a broad definition of social change. For some, social change may mean engaging in electoral politics, community organizing or attending protests—though not all identify with this activist stereotype. We're also thinking of the teachers who are aware of justice issues as they work with third graders, the artists whose work deals with community issues, the ESL volunteer who yearns for a healthy, multicultural society, the staff of non-profits who wonder if they're just applying band-aids and the environmentalist who educates others about how to best care for our ecological communities—all of us who struggle to do our part to create a better world. Each of these examples is connected by a common interest to work toward the betterment of humanity and the world around us.

One of the most valuable and unique aspects of our work is connecting alumni working for social change with students who wish to make a difference in the world after Guilford. Our alums are a priceless asset to our program and their generous commitment of time and energy is truly astounding. Alumni

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working for change feel a commitment to the development of current Guilford students and serve as excellent mentors. Through alumni panel discussions and one on one mentoring at internship sites, alumni and students share their common Guilford experience. Students receive a glimpse into the alum's own discernment process. The alums share how they make difficult decisions, get through the low points and apply their Guilford education to their own vocational search.

ILSC is a young program and we continue to learn as we go. Our hope is to connect with other institutions that are doing similar work and, hopefully, begin forming a support network in which we can share, learn and grow. We welcome your correspondence!

**Blaine M. Lukkar** is Interdisciplinary  
Leadership for Social Change  
Coordinator at Guilford College

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