

Quaker Higher Education

QHE

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Welcome Back to QHE

Donn Weinholtz – Editor

I hope that the summer treated you well, and that your fall got off to a very good start.

This issue of *Quaker Higher Education* focuses upon two separate topics; 1) a Quaker approach to college governance and 2) campus ministries at Quaker colleges. Governance is addressed in a single article by **Paul Lacey** entitled, *Decision-Making in a Quaker Context*. Initially presented in 1977 as a talk to new students entering Earlham College, Paul's article was suggested by Earlham's president, Douglas Bennett, because it so insightfully explains a Quaker perspective to the processes underlying college governance. Paul's piece kicks off a series of governance-related articles by campus leaders that will appear over the next several issues.

The idea for a set of articles regarding campus ministries surfaced this past June at the FAHE annual meeting session on future directions for *Quaker Higher Education*. **Max Carter**, from Guilford College, suggested that *QHE* might provide a forum for Quaker campus ministers to communicate with each other about their activities, filling a gap that has existed since the laying down of the campus ministry interest group several years ago. Picking up on the suggestion, I asked Max to submit several queries for campus ministers to answer. Along with Max, William Penn's **Spencer Thury**,

Wilmington's **Martha Hinshaw Sheldon**, and Haverford's **Helene Pollock** supplied the responses included here. Articles focusing on two more campuses, Earlham and George Fox, are scheduled for the spring issue.

Several other recommendations that will help to shape future issues of *QHE* emerged at the FAHE session. Friends suggested that, while a peer reviewed journal would have merits, our limited resources, diverse disciplines and lack of clearness about how to handle peer review in a Quakerly fashion all argue for maintaining *QHE* in its current, non-refereed format. **Steve Gilbert** shared advice regarding supplementing written text with voice recordings, the first of which appears at the end of this issue. A *Letters to the Editor* section was proposed, as was the possibility of recruiting student interns. Thanks to all who made the session lively and informative, and special thanks to **Mary Lee Morrison** for copy editing this issue.

If you would like to submit an article or letter for possible publication in *QHE*, my contact information is:

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Decision-Making in a Quaker Context

by *Paul A. Lacey*

I am going to begin what I have to say by quoting the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, who said that “all real living is meeting.” That may be a grim idea for some of you. You are sitting in a meeting, and I am addressing a meeting. Perhaps some of you are dreading a meeting with some distant relative whom you have an obligation to visit. Hall meetings, class meetings, business meetings, meetings for worship – if that is the sum total of all real living, things are worse than we thought.

Of course that isn’t exactly what Buber meant, but it has a connection. Think of what it means to meet another person. What we are aware of first is difference between us, separation. I am here and you are over there. But when something good and meaningful happens between us, we come together; we find similarity, mutuality, perhaps a high degree of identity in common. I am here and you are there, but we are also someplace together, in a center which we share. Certainly a number of you have already met people you can call friends and some others who give promise of being friends if you meet often enough. That is the sense in which I want to talk about the phrase “all real living is meeting:” the great possibilities for knowing meaning in our lives come through encounters with other people, strange situations, new demands, in which we experience difference which leads to identity, conflict which leads to reconciliation. We have a meeting of the minds, we say, or we really met someone where he really lives.

Now, I describe the experience this way to emphasize that meetings are not guaranteed successes, and that they

can be hard unsatisfying work. If you meet your mother’s second cousin Arthur, you could be discovering a wonderful life-long friend, but you could also be meeting a complete dud. The same, of course, is true for him.

You have heard a certain amount about Quaker methods of governance and decision-making, and if you know nothing else you know that we do things in the pattern of the Quaker business meeting – that word again. I want to tell you something more about our methods of arriving at decisions, but I want you have in mind both the risk-taking and the frustration and the satisfaction implied in the word “meeting,” as I have been using it.

To begin with, Quaker business procedure grew up in the early days of the Religious Society of Friends as a way of resolving the most practical matters in a religious context. That is, the group which met to consider committee reports, the treasurer’s report, and the like, sat in a meeting for worship in which business was held up to the Light for guidance. Every meeting was held in the expectation of Pentecost. Friends spoke literally of being led to action, of feeling the way open. They met each other in that which is eternal; they also met God.

The business procedures presupposed a highly homogeneous group, for whom both the vocabulary of action and experience were held in common. Edward Burrough, an early Quaker leader, wrote a letter of advice on business meeting which is cited in Arnold Lloyd’s *Quaker Social History*. First of all, these were meetings “for the management of truth’s affairs.” As Lloyd describes it, “All members who

were sound of principle and judgment were to feel free to attend. They were particularly urged 'not to spend time in needless, unnecessary and fruitless discourses,' but equally were not to reach quick decisions by vote. They must determine, not in the way of the World by hot contests, by seeking to outspoke or overreach one another in discourse..... but in love, gentleness and dear unity."

Now this is a tall order. Friends were to wait and try to open themselves to God's leading, because they knew the wisdom and power of God directly. If they earnestly sought to be led, treating each other in love, gentleness and dear unity, the truth would be revealed to them all. They would express the sense of the meeting as a single unified perception of what they should do. That is a statement of the ideal, but of course the fellowship of the saints rarely approached the ideal.

Howard Brinton, writing on Quaker education, distinguishes what he calls three classes of doctrines which are characteristic of Friends. The first is the doctrine of the Inward Light which can lead every human being who will be open to leading; the second concerns the meetings for worship and business, social institutions created so that the group can search for a corporate understanding of the leading of the Light; the third doctrines concern the social testimonies of community, pacifism or peacemaking, equality and simplicity. Brinton says Quakerism is unique only in the second class of doctrines, those having to do with meetings for worship and business which are laboratories in which we can test the leading of the Light of Christ and express them in the social testimonies. Those meetings also shape the small

community of believers who exemplify in their life together what the larger community can be like.

Howard Brinton emphasized that these doctrines are closely interrelated and animated Quaker schools and colleges when those were homogeneous communities. He goes on to note that Quaker schools and colleges face a dilemma whether to allow themselves to develop "solely as institutions of excellent standing, meeting the needs of families who can afford the luxury of private schools, or shall they appeal to a more limited constituency by discovering and applying the distinguishing characteristics which a Quaker school ought to embody today?"

As long as I have been at Earlham, we have been on the horns of that dilemma, and I assume we will remain in that awkward position for as long as any of you are here. That is to say, we cannot resolve the question in an either-or fashion. We wish to discover and apply the distinguishing characteristics appropriate for a Quaker college today, but that surely means for a heterogeneous student body like yourselves, for whom many things early Friends took for granted, are in serious doubt. For that matter, you know that the Society of Friends is highly heterogeneous.

We have stayed on the horns of this dilemma because no other position was more tenable – if the mental image that conjures up isn't too awkward to contemplate. Howard Brinton asked "Can a Quaker educational community be conducted on the principles of the Quaker meeting for worship or for business with the consequent embodiment of the social doctrines of community, pacifism, equality and simplicity?"

In a fumbling, tenuous, imperfect fashion, we have tried to answer that question in the affirmative, particularly by the way we govern ourselves. I want to emphasize this point: we often do the job badly, we are often inconsistent and mistaken, sometimes unfaithful to the principle we enunciate, but as an institution we try to be a Quaker educational community, we try to conduct our affairs on the principles of the Quaker meeting for business, and we hope to see the social testimonies embodied in our life together. It is easy to dismiss our failings as hypocrisy – a word which springs much too readily to the lips of people at Earlham – but I want to emphasize that even when we fail there are a substantial number of people trying to understand how to be faithful to Quaker business procedures.

Now, what is the business meeting like? I have already described it as a meeting for worship in which practical matters are held up to the light. Let me describe it in a bit more detail. A clerk presides over the meeting whose job is both to introduce the business and to gather the sense of the meeting about what should be done on each subject. The clerk calls on people who wish to speak and from time to time he or she may try to express what is being said and the direction the meeting is going in its quest for agreement. That is, the clerk will try to phrase in words acceptable to the group whatever measure of agreement there is. If that is well done, the group can recognize what is still to be considered, what it has unity on, and what is still a matter of doubt, disagreement, or lack of clarity. Notice I spoke of the clerk expressing the sense of the meeting. We speak often of consensus, or the substantial agreement of the whole group, but it is also

important to think of what is meant by the “sense of the meeting.” The clerk does not count votes, but it is his or her duty to weigh what is said, to take into account the weight of experience and wisdom behind each contribution in the discussion. This is very hard to do well, and it can be very frustrating to everyone. At times it seems clear that a great deal of wisdom and judgment are on one side of a question and that there is less on the other. The meeting may be moving toward a very definite sense of what should be done, even though several people are opposed or unconvinced. When that happens, the meeting as a whole may want to postpone action until those who are unconvinced have more time to consider their position, or until they can convince the others that the sense of the meeting is mistaken, but that is not an absolute requirement. I make this point with some vigor because a number of people get the idea that they can always have a personal, private veto over what everyone else wants to do. That is not the case. The sense of the meeting does not have to be unanimously agreed on. If there is still division, the meeting has to consider whether it should proceed when there is not complete unity, and those who disagree on the action being considered must ask whether they shouldn’t unite with the meeting, agreeing that the sense of the meeting is to go ahead.

In practice, meetings can be so concerned with achieving unanimity or overwhelming consensus that they search for compromises to make everyone feel better, or they put decisions so vaguely that the decision commits no one to anything significant. Some times meetings get so vague and indirect that no one says anything

significant. Sometimes meetings get so vague and indirect that no one knows what is really being said. You may have heard of the Friend who, when he heard a name of which he disapproved suggested for a committee, said, "That is not a name which would have occurred to me." Now that is a strong expression of disapproval in some circles, but no one could be blamed for thinking it isn't so direct as it might be. I noticed another way Quakers have of arriving at consensus through compromise when I attended a meeting of Meeting for Sufferings in London Yearly Meeting last spring. A statement was brought forward which had substantial support, but also some strong disagreement from a few weighty Friends. Of course, whenever we talk about the text of a statement, there are suggestions for additions, corrections and other improvements. At the end of the discussion, the meeting did something as typical as it is frustrating. It enlarged the drafting committee to include some of those who were opponents, so that the statement which came forward next time would be more evenly-balanced. The meeting also asked that the statement be shorter. Think about the action: the meeting enlarged the committee and therefore the scope of the statement and asked that the statement be shorter. The effect will be to make the statement more general, but it will also require the opponents to take their share of responsibility for the statement.

I have been describing meetings of Quaker groups, but of course when we talk about decision-making at Earlham we are talking about a method, which is not understood only, or even primarily, as a religious activity. Not everyone who goes to community council meetings, (where student-elected

representatives and a small number of appointed faculty and staff members meet regularly to deal with issues of general community concern) or who attends a dormitory hall meeting, does so expecting to be led by God to make the decisions before the meeting. There is, in fact, a very great danger to our life together if we try to make every issue a supreme moral or ethical test of ourselves and of the business method. A friend of mine who has lived a number of years in experimental religious communities once said to me that he was never able to see that there was a way of determining what color the Holy Spirit wanted the community to paint the dining room walls. If asking for divine guidance on a matter essentially neutral in its meaning or – at the worst – if you happened to have people with strong opposing views, you painted the walls half one color, half the other. Now if there is anything worse to imagine than the discussion of the moral implications of paint colors, it is the effect on people who have to dress up their personal preferences for blue, white or green in high-flown moral language. Yet I can assure you that over-using the method of arriving at decisions lets us in for that kind of excess. Parliamentary business methods encourage long-windedness, pretentiousness, trickiness perhaps, but Quaker business procedures can encourage all of that and self-righteousness as well. In the recent past we have seen people argue not just against the wisdom of a decision taken perhaps years before they thought of coming here as student or faculty member, but against its very legitimacy – as though the Quaker procedure required not only an absolute democracy, but also behaving as though this is the first day of creation.

Let me emphasize these points. Quaker business procedure, even when it is following the principle of one-person-one-vote, is more and less than that. Greater wisdom and greater experience receive greater weight in a decision, but wisdom and experience are not merely assumed to belong to the older people here. I remember a faculty member from another college telling me about a proposal in their faculty meeting that failed because it was proposed by an assistant professor. All the assistant professors were for it, but all the associate and full professors were opposed. Even now, when it is harder to get tenure and younger faculty are more conscious of their exposed situation, you could not determine weight by rank in the Earlham faculty, and certainly there is no sense that the person speaking to business is an assistant, associate or full professor. Neither does the procedure require that every decision be reopened just because someone new has arrived. You join an on-going institution whose direction and shape you may have some opportunity to influence, but the obligation is greater on the newcomer to know and understand what has happened, to cover more of the distance in reaching a meeting with others.

Let me illustrate my point with an example. Several years ago, when I was an administrator, we were trying to decide between two candidates for a position on the faculty. The department was divided between a majority and minority view, based largely on two different conceptions of what the department program should be. That is, the majority were saying, "We need someone who can teach Shakespeare." And the minority was saying, "No, never mind Shakespeare, we need someone to teach creative writing, someone who is a

writer." I use this example as an illustration – the department was not English. Both Faculty Affairs Committees, the committee elected by faculty members and the Student Faculty Affairs Committee, were in favor of the majority's candidate, primarily because that candidate seemed a stronger teacher. Students in the department, however, agreed with the minority and demanded their preferred candidate. We had, therefore, what I came to call a monster meeting, where everyone with an interest had a chance to present his or her point of view to everyone else. After two hours, it was evident that there was no possibility in the short run of reaching agreement and that Academic Dean Joe Elmore and I were going to have to take the advice of all these other participants, weigh the arguments, including our own, and make a decision, or the department would begin the next year one person short. As I was leaving the meeting, I asked one highly vocal student whether she thought she has been heard. She answered, "that will depend on what you decide." My reply was, "No, that wasn't what I asked. I asked whether you were heard, not whether you convinced me. If I heard you I should be able to restate your argument and conclusion well enough that you recognize it as your own. That is a preliminary requirement to trying to weigh it against other points of view in order to determine what seems best given all these arguments for doing two mutually exclusive things."

I tell this story because it illustrates how easily we can do violence to the whole system of consultation, advising and recommending on which our decision-making rests. That student was so sure she was right that she was already preparing to accuse me of not listening, of pretending to consult, if I

didn't come to the conclusion she had arrived at. Perhaps she would have called me a hypocrite if I didn't agree, or she might have argued that my decision lacked legitimacy if I came out with a conclusion she didn't like.

I am not trying to blame one student for a reply to a question. I am showing how easy it is to refuse to meet another person. I could cite examples of administrators or faculty members being just as arrogant, doing just as much damage to the process of reaching decisions. It is very tempting to believe that anyone who can't be convinced by my passionately argued beliefs is not acting in good faith. It is also tempting to block action until everyone comes to my point of view, or to railroad through a decision against my opponents because they are not acting in good faith.

Now, it is reasonable to ask why we go about decision-making this way, if it has so many headaches. There are several reasons which are persuasive to me. The first is that it is an expression of my religious faith – my faith that when people are open to being led to do the best or the right thing, they will be led. But beyond that, I believe our way of consulting and arriving at decisions is both politically and educationally valuable. I believe the statements in Earlham's compendium of rules and practices for community life, *The Little Red Book*, fail to do justice to the political aspects of our method. "Political" is too often contrasted with "religious" as though one was always a synonym for dirty and the other a synonym for clean. Quaker principles have always held that political process can also be an expression of God's will, and I believe that about the political system which is imbedded in our methods. I am not one of those who

thinks that voting is a dirty activity. It is another way of getting at decisions, and it is worth noting that the same religious ferment which led to the Quaker business meeting also led to other forms of religious democracy, including that of the Congregationalists and other groups who place great emphasis on the equal participation of each communicant in the business affairs of the church. "Vox populi, vox Dei" – the voice of the people is the voice of God. The Book of Acts tells us the first Christians cast lots to determine who would take Judas' place as an apostle. They believed that God would use the laws of chance to make God's will known. There are a number of ways with a better or worse chance of showing us God's will – including voting or seeking the sense of the meeting. And every method of consulting on decisions is also political in the sense that many different groups' interests have to be taken into account in order to arrive at actions that gain the assent of those affected by them. When we say "let's enlarge the committee to include critics" that is a political act – not necessarily to co-opt people or neutralize them but to make the possibility of effective consensus greater. I believe the Quaker business procedure has much to offer as a purely political system: it makes people realize that a majority is a frail thing, so it is better to aim for the widest possible acceptance of actions than to force them through just because 51% of the voters want them; it puts a high premium on considering one's opponents as people also trying to achieve the common good, so it also emphasizes arriving at decisions by appealing to what is noblest in people, not just to the narrowest self-interest. It also puts emphasis on careful reflection, reasoned argument – not

hasty emotional decisions. It can enhance the possibilities of a good life in community rather than exacerbating disagreements.

The method is also educational, in the way that meeting is educational – meeting other people, meeting new ideas, even meeting oneself by thinking through what one really believes or wants. We can learn from what others believe and want. Perhaps their vision of the way we should live together is so admirable that we become convinced. Perhaps our practical solution to a problem is so persuasive that we can serve ourselves and everyone else by presenting it for consideration. Perhaps asking for the widest expression of opinion will reveal terrible weakness in a plan which made good sense to the few who were least affected by it. And, as important as anything, we may learn how to behave respectfully, democratically, wisely in a lot of other areas of our lives as a result of working together to decide about life together at Earlham.

There are dangers in building up our method too much. When you consider that perhaps 90% of every year's budget has been committed by previous decisions, for example, it may be frustrating to think of such an elaborate system being used for making decisions about the remaining 10%.

I want to acknowledge such difficulties, but I also want to emphasize that any opportunity we have for making decisions about making our life together more meaningful is an opportunity worth taking. You will spend a great deal of time in your dormitory hall, so it matters that you learn how to confront and resolve issues there, whatever else is happening around you. Learning to live together with mutual respect, learning

how to confront the thoughtless or selfish roommate, learning how to shape your living situation to be supportive of your personal and educational needs – these are very important goals. Don't disparage them because someone tells you that all the power is in the faculty or administrative council. You may notice that this is the first time I have spoken of power. It is not a word which sufficiently speaks to our situation. In a sense, no one here, from the president to the newest student has a lot of power to make the institution do anything. We all can have a certain amount of power to prevent things from happening. We can get around rules, or make such a fuss that people abandon their wishes. We may have a lot of power to neutralize one another, but that is ultimately the most frustrating kind. The faculty has the power to compel all of you into humanities classes; those who are compelled into my class have the power to frustrate the goals of the course by refusing to do the work, refusing to take part in discussions or write the papers; I have the power to fail you if you don't do the work. But what will have been gained if we operate only according to our power? Nothing, unless you think of anger and frustration as a gain.

Of far greater positive impact, I believe, is the influence we have with one another. Teaching rests on persuading and influencing people, rather than on compelling them alone. And we are influenced by persuasive arguments, by good examples, by our respect and affection for the people who are making their case to us. And I am influenced primarily by people who seem to me to care about me, my opinion, what I value in life. Why should I change my mind to agree with someone who gives no evidence of

trying to understand why I hold the views I do? If he can show he has heard through my views and tried to accept them, I will be much more willing to do the same for his views. And perhaps the result of such an encounter is that we are both persuaded to a position neither of us saw before.

In such a sense it is possible to say you can all be involved in decisions-making at Earlham. You can have influence as you show that you have more than narrow self-centered desires shaping what you recommend, as you listen to others and try to practice respecting them, respecting your own integrity, searching for what is best for everyone. And of course what I am

saying about you I would say of every faculty member and administrator, from the newest to the president, the faculty as a whole and the community council. When we are at our best, things are not decided by appeal to authority or challenges to legitimacy, they are decided by meeting – overcoming divisions without eliminating differences, knowing oneself and others in a common search for the truth, going outside one's personal prejudices and wishes to ask what is best for the whole community. We invite you to join us in this process, because we believe it will help both you and the rest of us.

Spirituality, Religion and Campus Ministries At Quaker Colleges

(Editor's note: The four authors featured below all received the same set of queries, however their responses were submitted in two distinctly different formats. Two developed their articles discretely, query-by-query, while the other two submitted holistic essays. I

have clustered the query-by query responses together in a single section, presented first so the full set of queries can be clearly reviewed by the reader.)

Quaker Ministries at Guilford College and William Penn University

By Max Carter and Spencer Thury

- 1. What informs your students about what it means to be a college student today? Popular culture? Religious faith? Influence of peers? How does ministry on campus fit in the mix?*

(Guilford) One of my colleagues is

fond of saying that even our Quaker students are "products of American teen culture." Indeed, they are. While Guilford students are a bit different from some college students, given that they have chosen this place, they still come to campus having stewed in the soup of American popular culture. The majority of our students list no religious preference, and those who do are typically nominally religious. They might describe themselves as "spiritual"

or "seeking," but they are predisposed to distrust religious orthodoxy. However, once they hit Guilford College campus ministry and recognize the Quaker affinity for openness and seeking, we see many begin a spiritual (and often religious!) journey here.

(WPU) College students at William Penn University get their identity from all of the above. Many will say that they have a religious affiliation, but often that influence is debatable. Campus ministry at WPU fits into that mix and I have found it to be accepted. Most of the student leaders are either involved in campus ministry and / or committed to their church. There is a genuine support for each other between spiritual life and campus leadership which has been worked for and maintained. Most of the student body leaders are consistently involved in spiritual life at some point.

2. Does religion and spirituality have a place at the table on your campus? Is it integrated into campus culture or relegated to an office where such issues are addressed?

(Guilford) Our students tell me that this is a place where they can openly talk about spiritual issues, even G-d, by whatever name they might call the Divine. It is not unusual for classes to begin with a moment of silence; there are more than 17 weekly worship, prayer, meditation and other religious opportunities; religious issues are not frowned upon in class discussions; students and faculty acknowledge an appreciation for the open, inquiring, and respectful atmosphere

(WPU) Campus ministry definitely has a place. As an example, the student body

president asked the activities director very directly about giving campus ministry whatever we want for activity dates because of the way we serve the rest of the campus and fill holes with our programming. Spiritual issues are addressed in offices, but are also integrated into the campus culture where students have the opportunity to decide who and what they will represent.

3. What role do the normative testimonies of Friends play on your campus? Do they inform the campus ethos? In what ways are they lifted up by organized campus ministry?

(Guilford) The normative testimonies have helped shape Guilford's published core values, are embedded in the strategic plan, and are integrated into the campus ethos religiously, culturally, and academically. Campus ministry regularly offers programs on the peace testimony, simplicity, community, and spirituality. Equality and integrity deeply inform attitudes. Specific courses are taught in these areas, and speakers, volunteer work trips, and other programs address the normative testimonies consistently.

(WPU) The normative Quaker testimonies are played out as they are relevant to students. Fortunately, a culture of silence and mediation is popular among today's God seekers. Justice and mercy are hot topics for students that have been on the mission field. Chapel attenders enjoy and value the open worship time of praying for each other and being heard. The universality of the priesthood is celebrated as students, staff and faculty all share responsibilities of the chapel service where I as chaplain facilitate.

The peace testimony has not been addressed in a forum, but has often been referred to in counseling and in small groups positively, especially in the light of the Iraq war and the crisis at Virginia Tech. Simplicity works its way into everything I do, as well as different definitions of integrity. William Penn University is a very diverse campus for a small Iowa town with a rich history of serving people in crisis. Racist comments are not consistent with maintaining the environment here, but continue to be a hot topic for discussion. Quaker testimonies are often discussed, but they are not always credited as being our testimonies, just simply as a universal wisdom. "Quaker values" are taught in the classroom as required for graduation by a recorded Friends minister/professor of which there are many on campus.

4. In what ways does campus ministry address the issue of substance use, materialism, individualism, and other characteristics of current campus culture?

(Guilford) We have formed small groups for those who are seeking accompaniment in remaining healthy in college. Two of these are called "Am I the Only One?" and "Friends Along the Way." Campus ministry consistently publishes pieces about these issues in our bi-weekly newsletter, hosts weekly substance counseling small groups, and advocates with the Administration for alcohol and other drugs-free programming. Campus ministry offers alternative programming when alcohol events are afoot on campus.

(WPU) Campus ministries use the Fellowship of Christian Athletes

program called, "One Way To Play." Eighty per cent of the student body at WPU are athletes so programming must work around their games and students being drug free is important for the coaching staff. OW2P discusses being drug and alcohol free supported by faith in God and leadership, committed to the team, and accountable to others who are playing clean.

5. What are the most vital ministries on your campus now? What characterizes them and accounts for their success?

(Guilford) Hillel is active, connecting Jewish students as minorities in American and Guilford culture; Buddhist meditation is huge, pointing to a hunger for spiritual practice; Quaker quiet worship in the morning and evening is well-attended, again displaying an openness to religious discipline. Work trips are over-subscribed, underscoring the interest students have in getting out of their own skin and "doing good" in the world.

(WPU) Chapel has brought together a number of people from different backgrounds, but InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, the one evening program on campus has seen the most and quickest growth. They have their finger on the pulse of today's college student. They are spiritual leaders using solid truth, and relationships to direct their meetings. They have a simple, team-led, biblically based program and do it very well. Free pizza at the start of every meeting has not hurt them either.

On the whole, campus ministry is alive at William Penn University. I was hired on at part-time, but a number of supporters have forced the issue to make me full-time. I end up in the middle of heated discussions about issues that concern us often over lunch or a hallway chat, and people come back later to my office to fill the holes in for me. Quaker campus ministry is more than what you

can see, and the glory belongs to students who make the right choices as they are led by the spirit of God.

Max Carter is Director of Friends Center and Campus Ministry Coordinator at Guilford College. Spencer Thury is Campus Minister at William Penn University.

The Nature of Campus Ministry at Wilmington College

by Martha Hinshaw Sheldon

Each year at New Student Convocation, the Admissions office welcomes new students and shares with them their class academic characteristics.

“As of this hour, there are 446 new students, including 383 freshman & 63 transfer students. The most popular area of academic interest is education, which nearly 20% of our new students listed as their preferred major. The other most popular majors are athletic training, business & accounting, agriculture, and undecided.” (which I prefer to call open minded). *“The average ACT score is approximately 21, the average high school GPA was nearly 3.2. Their out of class interests include music, art, theatre, athletics and community service. This is a diverse group of men and women. They come to us from Ohio and 8 other states and Sweden. They come to us from rural areas, small towns, and major metropolitan areas; from as far away as Sweden and as close as South Mulberry Street. Sixty-eight members of this group are students of color. These are our entering students.”*

Each year, I want to stand up and say “Now it is my turn. This is your spiritual nature. . . .” One member of the Wilmington community, Jim Reynolds, Vice President of Academic Affairs, sums up the spiritual nature of students today in the following statement, which also looks at what informs students about what it means to be a college student today.

“There is a cohort of students today who are much more religious and spiritually in tune and who wish to make their spirituality a co-focus of their lives as they come to college. Many of these students were deeply influenced by the events of September 11, 2001 and have found that they wish to find a deeper meaning to their lives than just finding a good job that pays them well. They are less influenced by popular culture, gravitate to peers/mentors who share their world view, stay closely connected to their extended family and are serious about how they might make a difference in the lives of others. I think this cuts across all genders, religions, and ethnic backgrounds, and it is the reason that I have hope for the future of colleges like Wilmington that provide something other than a quick way to employment.

The challenge for us, and perhaps for campus ministries in general, is that many of these students don’t seem overly interested in an organized approach to spirituality.

If they are, they tend to lean towards the charismatic or ritualistic religious denominations with which they are familiar and within which they feel grounded. These students are interested in institutional core values that are congruent with their own, and that's where I think Wilmington has an opportunity. It might not necessarily translate to a broader base of students who participate in organized campus ministries, but it should make for a more engaged group of students, if we are to connect them to the core values of the college."

Of course, along with student spirituality on the main campus at Wilmington College, we must also consider the situation on the branch campus where the faculty and staff have a greater influence in informing students about what it means to be a college student. These students are usually first generation, and have finished a two-year program at a community college. They come in apprehensive about "real college" and often are anxious that they will fail.

Regarding whether religion and spirituality have a place at the table on our campus and are integrated into campus culture, certainly from the education department the answer is "Yes!" For many the choice to teach is a calling which some students speak of voluntarily. And some faculty actively give religion and spirituality a place at the table by regularly addressing the question of how to be a teacher with strong religious convictions while working as an agent of a public school. As faculty member Lisa Bauer reports, *"We discuss ideas of how to ACT as a Christian, as God would have you act, and witnessing in this way rather than by discussing religion with children or actively trying to proselytize. We also discuss the need to give respect to all religions and whether we can*

appropriately include the study of different faiths in our classrooms."

In and out of the classroom in the branch campus and on main campus there are many opportunities to discuss and address spiritual issues. On the other hand, from a healthy critical position some feel that the college portrays itself as largely secular and downplays the religious nature of its Quaker heritage. They know of the potential and feel that we fall short.

What role do the normative testimonies of Friends play on our campus and how do they inform the campus ethos? In what ways are they lifted up by organized campus ministry?

At Wilmington College, Quaker values are discussed in classrooms throughout the campus in terms of inner light and also in terms of valuing all people. Some feel that in a private institution we have more freedom to deal with God than we would in a public institution. Our Quaker testimonies are made public and referred to fairly often, more by faculty than students, but there are big questions about whether they really inform governance policies, student life issues, and curricular development. We have the added bonus of having a fairly new and highly visible Quaker Heritage Center that provides opportunities for the community (students, faculty, staff, parents, prospective students and families) to be exposed to the testimonies.

Regarding the issues of substance use, materialism, and individualism, our situations again differ on our branch campus and our main campus. At the branch campus such matters are primarily discussed by students and faculty in and outside of the small and intimate classes. Because the students are mostly adults, individualism is the most-often addressed topic. Materialism and Quaker values are other important issues discussed.

Some feel that on the main campus we too often look the other way rather than confronting substance abuse. Drinking is a serious issue on campus which many seem to ignore. Students often hear mixed messages on these issues and some feel that the presence of fraternities and sororities on campus has not been helpful in this regard. Others feel that the presence of fraternities and sororities are a healthy and useful means of encouraging and developing community on campus, especially since many fraternity and sorority members are among the most active participants in student government, service learning, mentoring and many other socially-related programs.

So what are our vital ministries? At Wilmington College they do not always look like traditional ministry. Besides the weekly Bible study and faith groups that are critical in the traditional sense of building relationships and strengthening faith, our vital ministries often take the form of programs that challenge and transform the spirit in each of us, and they are integrated into significant parts of the curriculum and co-curricular activities. These programs include the Westheimer Peace Symposium – a day of speakers on

various issues of justice transformation; the Issues and Artists series – four speakers throughout the year; Faith and Life Forums – 4 forums for college and local community members to discuss faith issues; the on-going strong relationship between our students and the FCNL lobbying weekends; the growing activities of the Center for Service and Civic Engagement; and, as has been mentioned earlier the physical presence and programs of the new Quaker Heritage Center which are many and varied.

Finally, the most vital ministries on campus are not always apparent as they involve personal relationships between students and instructors that grow and transform the mind and spirit. We intentionally take care of our students and try to minister to each individual according to his or her needs. Everyone working in the college has a ministry, the ministry of helping students along in their academic and spiritual journeys.

Martha Hinshaw Sheldon is Campus Minister at Wilmington College

Quaker Integrity and Haverford's Honor Code

by Helene Pollock

Haverford's student-administered Honor Code challenges each student to live a life of integrity. In my experience, Haverford students actually do take the Honor Code seriously – not only academically, but also in their broader experience. Haverford's Honor Code is not a set of rules; it is a way of life that

grows out of an inner intentionality relating to academics and social life on campus.

At first glance, Haverford's Honor Code looks quite Quakerly. So is the Honor Code a sign of faithfulness to the Quaker testimony of integrity?

I decided to take this question to two Quaker students (Haverford's student body is about 6.5% Quaker).

The first student I spoke with, a senior, began talking about a personal struggle with what she called “disillusionment.” This had to do with her initial set of expectations about the Honor Code, which turned out to be unrealistic. As a senior in high school, when she realized that she would be attending Haverford, she concluded that the Honor Code was going to be so pervasive and all-encompassing that people would be thinking about it most of the time. By the time she reached her sophomore year at Haverford it had become clear to her that people didn’t actually think about the Honor Code very much. So she began to have doubts. Is the Honor Code irrelevant?

During my 16 years at Haverford, I have often heard students talking about a “disillusionment” with the Honor Code that tends to show up during sophomore year. The experience seems to be so common -- among Quaker and non-Quaker students alike -- that I’ve wondered if it isn’t a predictable aspect of the maturing process that goes on during the college years, as adolescent idealism is deepened and tempered by increasing life experience.

So I moved on from the student’s sophomore disillusionment to ask her about the way she sees the Honor Code now, as a senior. In doing so, I had confidence that she and I would be operating on a common set of assumptions regarding the behavioral standards associated with the Honor Code, in the social realm (where all relationships are expected to be governed by “trust, concern and respect”) as well as in the academic realm (where the faculty expects the highest level of academic integrity).

So I asked her this question: “Even though there isn’t a great deal of discussion about the Honor Code, is it

something that you and your friends follow, in terms of your behavior?” She shot me a piercing glance that said, unmistakably: “*What kind of a question is that? Of course we follow the Honor Code!*” Duly chagrined, I said nothing, but I went ahead and I asked her about the wider student body. She lowered her glance, and said softly that she imagined that there might be some classmates who would be capable of violating the Honor Code, though she hadn’t met anybody who had actually violated it. Clearly, the possibility of anyone violating the Honor Code – however tentative – was deeply troubling to her.

Then I asked her if, in her opinion, adherence to the Honor Code meant that students were living the Quaker testimony of integrity. She said yes, quite tentatively, but she went on to point out that the Honor Code is not associated with Quaker faith and practice. So, we were left with the unmistakable question: How can we know whether or not the Quaker testimonies are being followed at Haverford if we don’t talk about the Quaker testimonies?

The student went on to state clearly that she wished there could be more conversations among students about the Honor Code, Quaker issues, ethical concerns, etc. So I asked her why that wasn’t the case. She speculated that it could be due to the fact people in her age group generally avoid talking about “religion,” even though many students consider themselves to be “spiritual.” She said that she discusses spiritual matters with her friends, such as the question of whether abortion or suicide can ever be justified, and they don’t agree. She and her friends also criticize the lack of genuine commitment to community service among Haverford students in general. While these and other topics are apparently addressed

informally, there seems to be an underlying desire that there be more frequently and open discussions about Quaker-related topics – presumably in relationship to the Honor Code as well as other matters.

I posed this same question -- about the Honor Code and the Quaker testimonies -- to another student, a young man who is a sophomore. He had this to say: “People support the Honor Code because it’s a great idea, but they don’t have any idea where it comes from, or where we could be headed towards. People don’t see spirituality at all. The Honor Code springs from the same basis that Quakerism does – the commitment to live devotionally, to be continually conscious of the way we interact with ourselves and others, which leads to the testimonies of community, stewardship, service, and equality, and the absolutism of Love, which is really important in bringing the Kingdom of God on earth. The Honor Code is based on some of those same concepts – primarily the idea of building a perfect community. I keep thinking about how it applies to everything in life, not just one aspect of life, but very few people see it that way. Most people have a definite commitment [to the Honor Code] at some level – they want to reach an understanding – but some are stagnant. It’s in the back of all of our minds, but very few people understand it. But in the end, we can’t fully understand everything.”

What I heard from these two students sounded quite similar to what I have been hearing from students during my years at Haverford College. I find that Quaker students generally perceive a connection between the Honor Code and Quakerism for themselves, but they reject the idea that Quakerism should be presented in a way that is coercive or normative in relation to the Honor Code.

Students strongly reject the idea that Quaker faith and practice should be seen as a “party line.” That reticence is one factor leading to a certain ambiguity in the way in which some Quaker students experience the Honor Code.

There can be a tendency to decry the ambiguous position that Quaker students are in, and to criticize Haverford College for its lack of clarity regarding the Quaker elements in its institutional ethos. From that starting point it’s all too easy to point to secularism as the culprit – secularism in families and schools, secularism in academia, even secularism in Quaker meetings. One might wonder how much openness there is to a life-changing experience of the Inner Light in a situation where so much energy is turned toward materialism, competitiveness and “measuring up” in terms of outer, conventional measures of success. In *Generation Me*, Jean M. Twenge suggests that a narcissistic self-focus is pervasive as a generational characteristic for young adults today. She sees an excessive emphasis on “self- esteem” in K-12 education as a contributing factor.

As we face these pervasive trends, in our ambiguous situation at Haverford College, Quaker students and others are asking for more frequent and deeper conversations about spirituality, ethics and meaning. It is clear to me that instead of decrying the ambiguities we need to probe them. We need to seek Divine Guidance to lead us along a newly illumed pathway. If we were to take the advice of George Fox and the early Friends, we would trust in Truth and the Principle of God to guide us, knowing that the Light will “judge out” all the “self” that needs to be discarded.

Helene Pollock is Director of Quaker Affairs at Haverford College

Quaker Voices

This issue closes with *Quaker Higher Education's* first *Quaker Voices* segment, which hopefully will become a regular feature showcasing interviews with and readings by a wide range of Friends. Special thanks to **Steve Gilbert** of the TLT Group for suggesting having links to recorded voices and to providing

this recording of **T. Canby Jones** reading *Children of Light*.

To listen to the reading, click on the link below and make sure to have the volume turned up on your computer. For your reading pleasure, the full text is provided following the link

Children of the Light

Written by **Thomas R. Kelly** on the evening before he died - December, 1941.

Read aloud (approx. 3 minutes) by Kelly's friend and colleague, **T. Canby Jones**, age 84, June 2, 2006:

<http://archive.tltgroup.org/2006/06BuildingBridges/ChildrenLight6-2-2006.mp3>

Children of the Light

Thomas R. Kelly, *The Eternal Promise*, Friends United Press, 1966, pp. 162-163

The Light for which the world longs is already shining.

It is shining into the darkness, but the darkness does not apprehend it.

It is shining into the darkness, but the darkness is not overcoming it.

It is shining in many a soul and already the new order has begun within the kingdom of the heart.

It is shining in many a small group and creating a heavenly-earthly fellowship of Children of the Light.

It will always shine and lead many into the world of need, that they may bear it up into the heart of God.

With trembling awe at the wonder which is ever wrought within us, we must humbly bear the message of the Light. Many see it from afar and long for it with all their being. Amidst all the darkness of this time the day star can arise in astounding power and overcome the darkness within and without.

It is given to us to be message-bearers of the day that can dawn in apostolic power if we be wholly committed to the Light. Radiant in that radiance, we may confidently expect the kindling of the Light in all men until all men's footsteps are lighted by that Light, which is within them.

Our fellowship groups are small, but they can be glorious colonies of heaven, cities set on a hill. It is a great message which is given to us — good news indeed — that the Light overcomes the darkness. But to give the message we must also be the message!
